Christian-Muslim Dialogue for Sustainable Peace and Development in the Oromia

Region Ethiopia from 1991-2022

Weldu Abraham Hailu

(Reg. No. 17/00482)

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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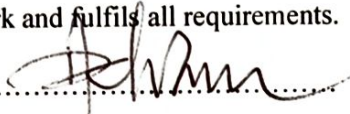
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Signature of the student: ....

Name of the Student: Abraham Hailu Weldu

Date: 12/8/2022

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1. Signature of the Supervisor 1: ....

   Name of the Supervisor 1:   Rev. Prof Sahaya G. Selvam

   Date: 23/8/2022

2. Signature of the Supervisor 2: ....

   Name of the Supervisor 2:   Dr Kifle Wansamo

   Date: 11 Aug 2022

3. Signature of the Supervisor 3: ....

   Name of the Supervisor 3: Prof Samuel A. Nyanchoga

   Date: 12/8/2022

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate my work to my mother and father, who became shepherds in my place. By then, I should have been looking after the cattle as the only boy at home. But to send me to school, my father and mother started shepherding the cattle again. I cannot forget! I am also grateful to them for they taught me how to love Muslims by letting us live together under the same roof, eating from the same traditional big plate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

This study set out to explore the role of Christian-Muslim dialogue in enhancing sustainable peace and development in the Oromia region in Ethiopia. In relation to the knowledge gap, researchers had not critically and empirically explored the issue of Christian-Muslim dialogue to find out how dialogue can enhance sustainable peace and development from the Ethiopian Christian perspective. The following objectives were set for the study: to analyse the historical Christian-Muslim relationship in the Oromia region of Ethiopia; to examine the importance of the religious values enshrined in Christianity and Islam for enhancing constructive dialogue in Oromia, Ethiopia, and to assess the impact of the Christian-Muslim dialogue on sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia. The research used phenomenological design among the qualitative research methods to reach the participants' salient perspectives. The research utilized an integrated theoretical framework: Intergroup Threat Theory and Critical Social Theory. From Nairobi, the research was carried out online in Ethiopia, particularly in Addis Ababa. It used the snowball sampling technique. There were 23 individual key informants and five focus group discussions with five participants in each focus group; thus, the number added totalled 43 participants. The study also utilised secondary data. The data was analysed using narrative data analysis and thematic data analysis. The study came up with the following findings: the history of peaceful coexistence has remained stronger than the conflicts. Hence the religious values of compassion, love, peace, reconciliation and mutual respect emanating from both religions are strong instruments of dialogue and can enhance sustainable peace and development. The theological reflection section highlighted this aspect from a social transformation perspective. It also emerged that Christian-Muslim dialogue enhances collaboration, mutual respect and working for common purposes. These are geared towards addressing historical injustices and eradicating poverty. They take the road map with economic, political, and social inclusivity, justice, and good governance. In addition, the study found that the Muslim and Christian dialogue alone is insufficient to ensure sustainable peace and development, necessitating the government and Abba Gada, the traditional actors need to be included. The study's recommendation is crucial for social policy transformation and building a more just, inclusive, peaceful, prosperous Oromia and Ethiopia.

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ABBREVIATIONS/ ACRONYMS

ADB	African Development Bank
AQIM	Al Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb
AU	African Union
CD	Compact Disc
CDA	Child Development Associate
CFTA	Continental Free Trade Area
CHS	Commission on Human Security
CST	Critical Social Theory
DA	Document Analysis
DICAC	Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission of Ethiopian Orthodox Church
DIIS	Danish Institute for International Studies
DVD	Digital Video Disc or Digital Versatile Disc
EAD	Encoded Archival Descriptions
ECC	Ethiopian Catholic Church
ECFE	Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia
EECMY	Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus
EIAP	Effective Inter-Religious Action in Peacebuilding Program
EIASC	Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council
EKHC	Ethiopian Kale Hiwot Churches
ENA	Ethiopian News Agency

EOC	Ethiopian Orthodox Church
EOCDICAC	The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FLN	National Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
GHR	Gerald and Henrietta Rauenhorst
GPI	Global Peace Index
IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
IPBI	Interfaith Peacebuilding Initiative.
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IRCE	Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
KAAD	Katholischer Akademischer Ausländer-Diens or in English, The Catholic Academic Exchange Service
KAICIID	King Abdullah Ibn Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue
KII	Key Informants
LMF	The Lutheran World Federation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MONET	Monitoring der Nachhaltingen Entwicklung/Monitoring Sustainable Development

NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
OAU	Organization of African Union
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
PROCMURA	Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa
RFBF	Religious Freedom and Business Foundation
RIIFS	Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies
SD	Sustainable Development
SDAC	Ethiopian Seventh Day Adventist Church
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SFCG	Search For Common Ground
SSD	Security, Sustainable Peace and Development
SSPD	Security, Sustainable Peace and Development
SWVP	Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace
TUCREC	Tangaza University College Research and Ethics Committee
UIC	Union of Islamic Courts
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America
VCD	Video Compact Disc

WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WCF	World Congress of Faiths
WCRP	World Conference of Religions for Peace
WDC	World Dialogue Council
WPDC	Wajir Peace and Development Committee
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Abba Gada: In the context of Ethiopia, this term signifies the religious and cultural authority of the Oromo people, well recognized by most of the Oromo people, the government, and civil society. Hence, many political and religious leaders fail to score any substantial transformational activities in the Oromia region without their consent.

Christian-Muslim Dialogue: In the current study, Christian-Muslim dialogue carries the meaning of being intentionally, nationally, and locally structured and recognized by the government in Ethiopia as one wing of the Interreligious Council of Ethiopia (IRCE), harnessing common goals of sustainable peace characterized by cohesion and sustainable development.

Historical Christian-Muslim relationship: In this research, the historical Christian-Muslim relationship is dealt with from the Christian-Muslim narratives' perspective. The terms refer to their historical relationship building the narratives that impact their dialogue negatively or positively.

In-group: In Intergroup Threat Theory, the group of people belonging to a specific group that considered part of the group by the members and by themselves.

Interfaith dialogue or *Interreligious dialogue:* The terms refer to reciprocal formal and informal respect, cooperation, mutual support, and positive interaction between people of different religions, faiths, and traditions. The research has used the terms interchangeably.

Narratives are coherent stories that human beings make out of their everyday scattered and often conflicting experiences. In this research, narratives mainly concentrate on the cherished stories that affect the past, present, and future peace and development negatively or positively in the Oromia region, Ethiopia.

Out-group: In the same Intergroup Threat Theory, individuals or groups of people who pose a threat to the in-group are considered not part of the group that feels secure and protected.

Peaceful Coexistence: The term is born in an interfaith context. In this study, peaceful coexistence means the followers of Islam and Christian religions living and working together peacefully for sustainable peace and development.

Politicisation of Religions: In the current research, the term signifies inappropriate use of religion mostly by politicians and some religious leaders in politics for the sake of grabbing power or clinging to political power for the personal benefits of a group or individuals. In short, the politicisation of religion is the abuse and misuse of religion to gain political advantages over others. In this sense, religion is considered the instrument of oppression and of the ruling class.

Religious Values: In this study, religious values indicate the values of Christians and Muslims that enhance the Christian-Muslim dialogue and are perceived to have a crucial role in directly or indirectly thrusting sustainable peace and development. Most of the religious values the research deals with which arising from the Qur'an, the Bible, Hadith, and Christian Traditions.

Religionisation Politics: This term refers to the misuse of politics by mixing with religion to benefit from the religion and its structures for political purposes seeking inappropriate support from religious authorities of any level. Also, religious leaders use political support to

appropriate their religious or economic benefits. This is seen as the religious leaders or ordinary believers interfering in the matters of politics in order to gain ranks or other favours in the religious and political structures to get access to resources and places of honour.

Security: In the current study, security includes two kinds of concepts: state-centred security and human security. State-centred security has to do with the country's military and sovereignty. On the other hand, human security directly deals with the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and the fulfilment of their aspirations in creating political, social, environmental, and economic gains, particularly in attaining food and shelter. As far as both or one of these last elements is jeopardised, peace is challenged. Therefore, the current study understands that in order to guarantee human security, the Christian-Muslim communities on the ground have to own it.

Social Transformation: It signifies individuals or groups working and succeeding to bring about positive changes that sustainably increase the quality of life of many people on a big scale. In the current research, working for sustainable peace and development is considered working for social transformation. Social transformation signifies individuals or groups working and succeeding to bring about positive changes that sustainably increase the quality of life on a big scale. Sustainable peace and development work deals exactly with holistically changing people's lives.

Stakeholders of Sustainable Peace and Development: This refers to the key actors or the main contributors to the process of enhancing sustainable peace and development. In the current

research, in the context of the Oromia region, the term signifies the four agents of peace and development, i.e., Muslims, Christians, Abba Gada, and the government.

Sustainable Development: The development safeguards the needs of the present and future generations. Sustainable development is profoundly owned and managed by the regional government and interfaith community, particularly Muslims and Christians, by including all ethnic and religious groups in the region. In the current study, the development must be economically equitable and socially inclusive to be sustainable, leaving no ethnic, religious group or gender behind.

Sustainable Peace: In the present research, sustainable peace refers to authentic peace that goes beyond totalitarian political peace based on fear and unity created at the expense of silencing any challenging body in the region. Sustainable peace, instead, is understood as the peace obtained by addressing the root causes of the conflicts, historical injustices, and poverty. This peace is achieved when all the peace stakeholders reach a consensus on the kind of peace they want to achieve.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This section starts with the researcher's experience living and working with Muslims both in and outside the country. It then specifies the background to the problem and the problem itself, explaining the critical need for Christians and Muslims to engage in productive dialogue to enhance sustainable peace and development. Next, the study identifies the research objectives that help fill the knowledge gap and bring further social transformation to the Oromia Region in Ethiopia. Following that, it gives the significance of the study and the scope and delimitations of the study.

1.1. Insertion

The researcher worked with Muslims in Sudan and Egypt for 12 years. He has positive and negative experiences involving Christian-Muslim coexistence and dialogue. The researcher had positive experiences in Ethiopia with Christians and Muslims living together amicably in one house, eating from the same traditional plate called *Maid*. His first role model was a Muslim runner. The researcher worked with Rainbow Union, which consisted of Muslims, Christians, NGOs and Traditional Religion leaders. The Union worked effectively in community dialogue, bringing peace and development. For instance, the Rainbow Union built the first high school in the area. The group's action was a clear sign for the researcher that when Christians, Muslims and other religions' adherents unite, they can enhance peace and development, hence social transformation.

Despite this positivity, the researcher also had negative experiences. One of the negative experiences was in Sudan, where the researcher worked for 12 years. In the 1990s and 2000s,

Sudan had strict Sharia Law within which the building of churches was not allowed. After several years of trying to obtain permits to build a church, the researcher, with other ecumenical council members, wrote an official letter to the government seeking permission to build churches and Christian minority recognition in the Muslim majority society. Rejecting the request, the government imprisoned the researcher for four days and expelled him from the Darfur region, where he was working as a missionary. Similarly, in the 1990s, more than 1000 Christian women were in one prison alone in Khartoum, accused of breaking the Sharia Law. These women were convicted for preparing traditional alcohol, yet this was their only way to bring up and educate their children.

Reflecting on these experiences triggered the researcher's desire to carry out the study. In particular, when Muslims are the majority and follow strict Sharia Law, Christians Suffer. He wondered what would happen in the near future in Oromia Region, where Muslims appear to be already the majority. What about Ethiopia, which is moving in the same direction as a Muslim majority country? What will happen to the rights of non-Muslims? What will happen to this nation that is proud of having a long journey of peaceful coexistence, security and development? Will the Christian-Muslim dialogue contribute to the solution? What else can contribute to keeping a peaceful and prosperous Oromia and Ethiopia even when Muslims become the majority?

1.2. The Background

Globally, the Christian-Muslim historical relationships have exhibited both negative and positive narratives. The narratives started during the period of Prophet Muhammed in the 7th century when an intense Islamic violent expansion began. Within a short period, Islam spread to Asia, Europe, and Africa (Haghnavaz, 2013). When Muslims conquered the Iberian Peninsula by force (Irwin, 2019), Christians of Europe were shocked and reacted through

severe and violent actions. In Spain, Queen Elisabeth and Prince Ferdinand of Aragon gave the Muslims an ultimatum to either leave Spain altogether or be converted to Christianity (Irwin, 2019). In contemporary times the Christian-Muslim relationship in the United States has been marred by conflict and the terror attacks of September 11[th,] 2001(Boediman, 2019). These incidents and wars have continued to provoke negative narratives among Christians and Muslims alike.

Regionally, the military conquest of Northern Africa in the 7th century by Muslims generated many negative narratives in the minds of the Christians (Hays, 2018). During the forceful conquest, Muslims used harsh and systematic reduction and extinction of Christian communities (Boediman, 2019).

On their part, Muslims have negative narratives about Christians too. In Africa, Muslim narratives relate Christianity to African nations' painful colonial history (Tan, 2017). They argue that most of the present fundamentalist groups rose as reactions to the unfair and unjust treatment of their Christian or non-Christian leaders, who were too close to the West governments (Iheanacho, 2016).

Globally, despite the negatives, there have been positive narratives emanating from Christian-Muslim relations. For instance, Christians recognise and respect the Medina Charter, which was signed in 722 (Embong et al., 2020). Also, Muslims are known for their great scientific discoveries when Europe was in the medieval dark age (Jain, 2010). In addition, many agreements and alliances were signed and kept during the Crusade era. This allowed both communities to share sacred spaces, commercial dealings, and exchanges of science and other essential ideas (Mourad, 2018).

In the West and North Africa, show Islamic religion is the most prominent instrument of liberation against the colonial forces (Krause, 2021). On their part, Muslims are people of a trade by tradition (Cartwright, 2019). Muslims also acknowledge that Christians in Africa

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introduced education, hospitals, and expertise in conflict resolutions, bringing peace and development (Shaib, 2020).

When we look at the Christian-Muslim relationship from the national perspective, there is an indigenous group that is socio-political and democratic. This group is among a system of the Oromo people and is called Abba Gada. The group benefits both Christians and Muslims (Debele, 2017). From all these, both Christians and Muslims can be part of the Abba Gada system without abandoning their religions. Christians and Muslims having this experience generate narratives of mutually built unions under the umbrella of Abba Gada Christians and Muslims. They easily engage in Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Among the things which abstract the Christian-Muslim dialogue is the harsh treatment of Muslims, particularly the Oromo Muslims, by the Christian kings. In the history of Ethiopia, Emperors Tewodros the II (1855-1868) and Yohanis the IV (1872-1989) promulgated decrees for the mass conversion of the Muslims in the 19th century (Abbink, 2011). These tragic events negatively challenged the Christian-Muslim dialogue and continue to do so today.

Within this leadership, there are negative narratives in the Oromia region, where reciprocal biases both by the Christians accusing Oromos inclined to Islam and Muslims accusing the Amharas and Tigrians of inclining to Christianity, are present (Ostebo, 2008). This means that for Christians, the Oromos pose an Islamic challenge, whereas, for Muslims, Amharas and the Tigrians represent the oppressive Christian regimes of Ethiopia. Furthermore, from a Christian perspective, Muslims were allegedly accused of aligning with the colonial powers (Ahmed, 2006; Ostebo, 2014). These challenges pose suspicion reducing the fruits of Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Another incidence is when Christians were haunted by Imam Ahmed Ibn Ibrahim Al-Gazi, locally known as Ahmed Gragn (1506 – 1543). Imam Ahmed brutally conquered three-

quarters of Ethiopia. Most of his soldiers were Oromos and Ethiopian Somali population (Abbink, 2011). After Imam Ahmed's narrative, Christians became afraid of Muslim tyranny. Similarly, the harsh treatment of emperors, particularly that of Emperor Tewodros II, which aimed at the Muslim Oromos, remains a challenge to Christian-Muslim dialogue. Also, Menelik II's brutal killings of the Southern Oromo in his expansionist campaign of Ethiopia is also a negative recorded narrative among the Oromos. The emperor is accused of killing millions of Oromos, cutting women's breasts, and amputating men's right hands. Because he was a Christian, Muslim narratives argue that Emperor Menelik, in the name of Abyssinia, expanded the Amhara domination and Christianity domination simultaneously (Horo, 2020).

The given historical narratives of the Christian-Muslim relationship, including their leaders, give the background related to objective one. The next part that deals with the religious values is about the background for objective two.

When we look at this Christian-Muslim dialogue from a religious values perspective, it exhibits two trajectories. First, dialogue enhances sustainable peace and development; second, trajectory, religious foundations of conflict that contribute to insecurity and lack of development. Some values and scriptural texts also promoted conflicts between Christians and Muslims.

In this part of the background, some of the religious values enshrined in the respective religions and enhance Christian-Muslim dialogue are addressed. These are faith, mutual respect, mutual recognition, love, compassion, peace, and reconciliation. In the history of religions, the Middle East is the birthplace of the three Abrahamic religions. With these, the region has been the arena where religious values and ideologies have served as the source of

peaceful coexistence and reconciliation among the adherents. On this note, religion is the basis for peace and coexistence.

Despite this situation, the area has experienced conflict and divisive ideologies. These have complicated the possibilities of peaceful coexistence and development. This situation has aggravated the religious claims of exclusive region ownership (Little, 2018). The Jews, based on their traditions and Holy Scripture, argue that God has given Palestine to their ancestors. Similarly, Muslims argue that they are the descendants of Abraham, they have the right to Palestine, particularly to Jerusalem, which Prophet Muhammad visited. Christians add their claim based on the gospel accounts that Palestine is the birthplace of Jesus, the founder of Christianity. Therefore, it belongs to them. These positions have continued to nurture a rift among the Jews, Christians, and Muslims, affecting the values earlier discussed.

In Africa, the aforementioned religious values are known to promote dialogue, peace, and development (Little, 2018). With this, religion has radically changed social life and history (Ludovic, 2021). However, on one part, there has been a negative contribution, where religion creates violence and complicates the political and socio-ethnic grounds in Africa. This happens when scriptural texts and ideologies initiate and expand terrorism and conflicts (Odhiambo, 2014). These conflicts are complicated due to their tones of the colonial era grievances and socio-political affiliations that are linked to the West. One example is that of Nigeria's *Boko Haram.* This conflict is characterised by colonial-era grievances, political injustices, and ethnic and religious inequalities (Sant'Egidio, 2019; Thurston, 2016).

In addition, according to Ludovic (2021), religion in Africa remains important despite the rapid processes of secularisation. For example, religious diplomacy becomes an effective tool when national and international state actors in Africa fail to bring peace between different warring parties. For example, in the 1990s show, religious leaders were chosen to preside over the national political conferences, which had serious socio-political issues threatening the

disintegration of nations. A case in mind is when the religious leaders carried out effective political facilitation in Benin, the Republic of Congo, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a result, those countries passed peacefully from one-party to multi-party systems (Ludovic, 2021).

Christians and Muslims have also been instruments of relief, health, education, and development in Africa. Notably, the Kenyan Muslim-based group called Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC) and the Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace (SWVP) are worth raising (Ludovic, 2021). There is also a joint and experienced Christian-Muslim Dialogue organisation founded in 1959 in Ghana (PROCMURA, 2022). It is called Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA). The basic principles of PROCMURA are Christian-Muslim dialogue to promote peaceful coexistence and to build holistic development of the human person. It is the oldest and pioneer interfaith organisation in the continent of Africa (Global Ministries, 2019).

In Ethiopia, religion has contributed to peace and development on the one hand and violence, instability, and socio-religious discrimination on the other hand. From a Christian point of view, Islam has allegedly threatened Ethiopian Christian identity and its unity, so the followers of Islam were sometimes controlled and forced to accept Christianity (Ficquet, 2015). These controversies caused deep-seated hatred and sporadic full-blown conflict among Christians and Muslims in the country (Abbink, 2020). Despite the negatives, when the country was at the brink of disintegration during the *Zemene Mesafint* (between the mid-18th and mid-19th centuries), the Ethiopian Orthodox, a non-state actor by then, contributed immensely to providing a theologically informed political ideology of unity in the country (Girma, 2021)

Similarly, the contemporary Christian-Muslim relationship of Ethiopia shows tensions arising from religious fundamentalism or excess religious practices of the adherents of both religions. Antigeng (2019) argues that recently there has been evidence of conflicts between

the Christians and Muslims in different parts of Ethiopia. For example, Muslim youth attacked the neighbouring Christian churches and communities after their prayers on Friday to practice their religious convictions and values in concrete ways (Abbink, 2011).

Nevertheless, nationally, there is an Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia (IRCE) founded in 2010 with the support of the Government. This brings to play the history of Christian-Muslim collaborations which goes back to the arrival of the first Muslim refugees from Mecca to Ethiopia sent by the Prophet Muhammad himself in the seventh century (Ostebo, 2014). These collaborations and tolerance have become the cornerstone of establishing IRCE (IRCE, 2019). The IRCE promotes peace and peaceful coexistence by enhancing collaboration among religious institutions. It preserves the long-standing moral values, religious ethics, interfaith understanding, and tolerance among communities in Ethiopia. Furthermore, the IRCE works for religious communities and their institutions, helping them to stand together for peace, justice, human dignity, mutual respect, tolerance, and development (Karbo, 2013).

In the Oromia region, the contribution of religious values in bringing dialogue or conflict can look at two essential causes of Christian-Muslim religion-based conflicts (Abbink, 2020). Generally, Oromos feel that socio-economic power-sharing is not working. Therefore, a struggle against the predominantly Christian kingdoms has been in the form of religious resistance under Islam and Traditional religions. The second cause of religious conflicts and unrest in Oromia has been due to the Salafi groups coming from Saud Arabia (Erlich, 2007). The *Salafi* groups still have a strong sense of duty to propagate new and reformed faith in the form of Mission or *Da'wa* (Ostebo, 2008). This extremist religious approach has caused continuous unrest and conflict in several parts of the Oromia region (Antigegn, 2019). From the foregoing discussion, it is plausible to state that religion enhances both dialogues for positive peace and development. On the other hand, it may contribute to explosive conflict and

destruction. These conflicting trajectories form the basis for this study, as indicated in the statement of the problem.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Both National and international scholars (Abbink, 2011, 2014, 2021; Ahmed, 2006; Debele, 2017; Ostebo, 2007, 2008, 2014; Ostebo & Tronvoll, 2020; Tilahun, 2015) have carried out studies on the country's politics and socio-religious interactions of Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia, especially in Oromia. Although these have helped to understand the Christian-Muslim relationship immensely, the role the Christian-Muslim dialogue that is based on the Christian-Muslim history and religious values play in enhancing sustainable peace and development has not been explored in a focussed manner. Therefore, the knowledge gap is that the role of Christian-Muslim dialogue has not been critically studied within the confines of an empirical study from the Ethiopian Christian perspective. Hence, this research sought to analyse the history of the Christian-Muslim relationship and the religious values of the two faiths in enhancing dialogue which is essential for peace and development, by focussing on the Oromia region, Ethiopia.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

This study sought to analyse the role of Christian-Muslim dialogue for sustainable peace and development in the Oromia Region, Ethiopia. This quest considers the importance of narratives and religious values for dialogue in the history of Christian-Muslim relationships. In this relationship, some historical narratives show the majority's dominance over the minority. Based on the dominant narratives, Christians, who were the majority, oppressed Muslims, who were the minority. The narratives thus predict a Muslim majority oppressing a Christian

minority. So as to avoid such a possibility, the research also considered it important to focus on the existing positive narratives that gave generally peaceful coexistence. Subsequently, the research sought to explore the role of Christian-Muslim dialogue in helping to move the focus from grievances and conflicts to building sustainable peace and development.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

1.5.1. General objective

To explore the Christian-Muslim dialogue for sustainable peace and development in the Oromia Region in Ethiopia.

1.5.2. Specific objectives

The specific objectives were:

1. To analyse the historical Christian-Muslim relationship in the Oromia region of Ethiopia.
2. To examine the importance of the religious values enshrined in Christianity and Islam for enhancing constructive dialogue in Oromia, Ethiopia.
3. To assess the impact of the Christian-Muslim dialogue on sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia.

1.6. Research Questions

The research questions of the study were:

1. What is the historical Christian-Muslim relationship in Oromia, Ethiopia?

2. What is the importance of the religious values enshrined in Christianity and Islam for enhancing constructive dialogue in Oromia, Ethiopia?

3.   What is the impact of Christian-Muslim dialogue on sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia?

The current research followed the qualitative research method; hence a hypothesis is not compulsory. From the point of Methodology, the research questions suffice. However, after the data collection and analysis, it became clear that some kind of hypothesis was required. The reason behind this is that the views of the participants were that, although there is already a good level of practical examples of that dialogue enhancing peace and development, there is still an urgent need to do more in the area of Christian-Muslim dialogue in order to achieve lasting and genuine peace and development in Oromia.

Therefore, the developed hypothesis argues that when there is an honest and practical dialogue between Christians and Muslims, addressing the root causes of poverty and conflict, particularly the injustice and socio-economic exclusions, there is a high likelihood of achieving sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia. This is because Christians and Muslims account for more than 90% of the population (Abbink, 2011; Ostebo, 2008).

1.7. Significance of the Study

The current study is instrumental to Agenda 2063 and SDGs 2030. As concerns Agenda 2063, the first inspiration outlines the vision of the AU to create a prosperous Africa through the implementation of inclusive growth and sustainable development. The agenda also brings forth its 13th goal, the determination of the AU to work tirelessly on building peace, security and socio-political stability. In 2016, the interfaith leaders of Africa gathered in Abuja for AU-Interfaith Dialogue Forum. Eventually, they agreed to establish a 10-year interfaith development agenda for all African Union Member States to implement Agenda 2063 effectively. Therefore, the current study is academically instrumental and contributes to raising awareness towards implementing this Agenda 2063 (Lempert, 2017).

Regarding SDGs 2030, the research concentrates mainly on two pillars of Sustainable Development: Social Sustainability and Economic Sustainability. Regarding Social Sustainability, the research argues that inclusive dialogue focuses on addressing the root causes of conflict and poverty. They cover the issues of social discrimination, human rights, inclusivity, wealth and domination, as well as sharing equitably. Concerning the pillar of Economic Sustainability, the research argues that, as a priority of the Christian-Muslim dialogue, there is a need to tackle the issues of poverty. There is also an awareness of the common responsibility not to overuse the resources in an abusive way, lest we discriminate against the coming generations.

Similarly, this study is significant to the Institute of Social Transformation (IST) and Addis Ababa University, the Institute of Peace and Security. The study addresses the issues that threaten peace and development in relation to the importance of inclusive dialogue. Other academic institutions are engaged in analysing religion's growing role in bringing about peace, creating wealth, and exacerbating conflicts. The research informs the ruling party, the Prosperity Party in general, and the Ministry of Peace in particular when they lay policies to address the historical grievances and socio-economic exclusions in Ethiopia. Furthermore, the research is instrumental in providing a scientific analysis of an inclusive dialogue approach to the Interreligious Council of Ethiopia (IRCE). This research is important because it contributes to sustainable peace and development by unearthing Ethiopia's destructive nature of religious extremism. Through interfaith dialogue, the researcher holds that Christians and Muslims have a more peaceful and prosperous future when they embrace equality, mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and national cohesion.

Regarding the Oromia Region, the main stakeholders of peace and development: the local government, traditional leaders known as Abba Gada, and the faith-based civil society leaders, are all encouraged to understand how the existing grievances in Oromia can be

promptly addressed. If not well dealt with, there can be instabilities in the region and the country, leading to civil war and even secession. Therefore, there is a need to concentrate on Christian and Muslim religious values that contribute to security, peace, and prosperity.

1.8. Scope/Delimitations of the Study

Although the context of the study points to the broader Ethiopian political, economic, social, and religious landscape, the Oromia region, which includes the capital of the nation, Addis Ababa, is the geographical scope of the study; Addis Ababa is the sample city. Therefore, the content scope is limited to three areas: the narratives of Christian-Muslim history, Christian-Muslim religious values related to their dialogue, and the role of dialogue between Christians and Muslims for enhancing sustainable peace and development. The methodological scope includes qualitative research methods and phenomenological and narrative research designs. It also utilizes phenomenological and narrative research approaches.

Concerning the time scope, the study focuses on the period starting from when the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) took power, i.e., 1991 until 2022. Therefore, the exact time scope is from 1991-to 2022. However, this time frame shall include some historical events outside the period that have apparently significantly influenced the present Christian-Muslim relationship.

One of the reasons for starting with the EPRDF-led Government period is that allegedly the conflict between the Christians and Muslims grew sour during this time due to the high level of freedom the government granted to the different religions. Additionally, apparently, the EPRDF perceived that there was a political Islam in the making. Hence, according to the former government, Islam catalysed by some Salafist groups posed a threat to the country's unity, peace, and development. Therefore, the authorities employed a heavy hand on Muslim radical

groups. These jeopardized the inclusive dialogue required to build sustainable peace and development.

The reason for us, including the present government, is that although the current Prosperity Party-led government has recognized religion as an important social capital. However, it needs to avoid the instrumentalization of religion. Only then can there be the neutrality of religion from politics. This position then guarantees a reconciliatory and moral compass of the society journeying towards further dialogue for sustainable peace and development. The current government also has the duty to abide by the secular constitution to contribute to the country's peace, development and security.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has given the insertion showing the researcher's experience of living and working with Muslims both in and outside the country from the age of seven. It then specifies the background to the problem and the problem itself, explaining the critical need for Christians and Muslims to engage in productive dialogue to enhance sustainable peace and development. Next, the chapter identified the research objectives that help fill the knowledge gap and bring further social transformation to the Oromia Region in Ethiopia. Following that, it gave the significance of the study as well as the scope and delimitations of the study.

The following chapter has tackled the objectives further to investigate the existing knowledge in the form of the literature review on the field, particularly regards the role of Christian-Muslim dialogue in enhancing sustainable peace and development.

<center>**CHAPTER TWO**</center>

<center>**LITERATURE REVIEW**</center>

Introduction

  This chapter presents a review of the literature related to the study. The first section starts with the general theoretical literature review on interreligious dialogue that also touches on the history of Christian-Muslim coexistence in Ethiopia. Next, this literature review section delves into Christian-Muslim religious values enhancing dialogue. This is followed by literature on sustainable security, peace, and sustainable development. The theoretical literature review follows the sequence of the study objectives. The second section of the chapter is on the empirical literature review, which addresses empirical studies related to the study objectives. (The TUC-IST guidelines require that the two sections, theoretical and empirical literature review, be addressed separately.) Finally, section three discusses the study's applicable theoretical and conceptual framework.

2.1. Theoretical Literature Review

  The theoretical literature attempts to look into historical and contemporary Muslim Christian dialogue based on three objectives of the research. The first objective explains the importance of the historical Christian-Muslim relationship in the form of narratives. Second, the role of the religious values enshrined in Christianity and Islam for enhancing dialogue. Third, the research explores the literature on the relationship between Christian-Muslim dialogue, sustainable peace and development in the Oromia Region, Ethiopia.

2.1.1. Objective One: Importance of Christian-Muslim narratives for dialogue

Narrative inquiry presents the coherent stories that human beings make from everyday life (Murray, 2018). In the narrative inquiry, the study assumes that human beings can express their lives' significant, strong and painful events through stories. Therefore, narrative data deals with the long-lived experience of people expressed in storytelling. It underlines the importance of giving voice to the chronological events that mark their lives and the lives of their families as well as their religious or ethnic groups. Creswell (2007), in his definition of narrative, brings the importance of spoken or written texts which give an account of events or actions chronologically connected. In other words, the narrative approach gives special consideration to a history narrated by individuals.

In the research context, particularly in relation to objective one, the importance of narratives is analysed to understand how Christian and Muslim narratives contribute to their dialogue leading to sustainable peace and development globally, regionally, nationally, and locally.

Globally, there are several narratives in the history of Christian-Muslim relationships. The narratives started with the period of Prophet Muhammed in the 7th century and were characterised by an intense Islamic expansion (Haghnavaz, 2013). Christians narrate that the forceful invasion of Islam was one of the first causes of conflict between Christians and Muslims. Islam's religious and territorial expansion exacerbated the conflict when Islam continued expanding rapidly to traditionally Christian territories in Southern Europe (Smith, 2015). Up to date, Christians narrate how shocking it was for them when Muslims conquered the Iberian Peninsula and stayed for more than seven centuries (711-1492) (Irwin, 2019). Christians perceive this as Islam religious, territorial expansion negatively affecting the efforts of Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Muslims also have narratives that obstruct the Christian-Muslim dialogue. As Islam was expanding rapidly to the West, to Palestine, South-East Europe and North Africa, Christians used every method they saw as beneficial to halt Muslim expansion (Smith, 2015). For instance, the Christian Queen Elisabeth and Prince Ferdinand of Aragon gave the Muslims a choice: either leave Spain altogether or be converted to Christianity. Most of them left leaving behind their historic property and the beloved ones who converted to Christianity (Irwin, 2019). Although some pretended that they were converted, they secretly practised their Islam faith until Phillip the III allegedly committed ruthless religious cleansing of Muslims (Tremlett, 2017). For instance, the Barcelona attack in 2017 by ISIS was to restore Spain, especially Al Andalus, the centre of the Umayyad Caliphate in Europe of the Middle Age, to Muslims (Woolf, 2017).

Another Muslim narrative about the Christian is the Crusades that took place from 1095-to 1492; they felt bitter about how Christian civil and religious leaders waged war against them, especially in Palestine and South-Eastern Europe. Muslims perceive the event as a Christian's overreaction and claim Palestine exclusively based on the scriptures, while it belonged to Jews, Christians and Muslims (Kiboi, 2017). They narrate that there is a degree of continuity in anti-Islamic rhetoric and attitudes in the people and governments of the West (AbuKhalil, 2016). Muslims add that the consequence of Muslims' apparent lagging behind Western innovations and scientific progress is due to the colonial brutality of Western governments and Christian religious leaders (Mohamed & Baqutayan, 2011, p. 24).

Similarly, the Muslims feel deeply outraged by Islamophobia, which still harasses them for the simple fact of belonging to Islam. Today Muslims argue that in the West, Islamophobia, instead of being subsided, tends to be a continuum of anti-Muslim sentiments throughout history (Olowo, 2021). They remember the tragic Islamophobia event in New Zealand on March 15, 2019, where a non-Muslim man killed 50 worshipping Muslim women,

children, and men in cold blood (Poynting, 2020). That is why some Salafist Islamic groups in the World perceive the West as "evil" and immoral, so the West has to be destroyed and replaced by Islam (Eveslage, 2013). Al Qaida, Taliban, ISIS, and other Islamist groups are the concrete expressions of the negative narratives in many Muslims' hearts.

Globally, there are also positive narratives in Christianity and Islam that enhance Christian-Muslim dialogue. The following concrete narratives are worth visiting. First, Christians recognize and respect the Medina Charter (Embong et al., 2020). The charter was written and ratified between the Muslims, the predominant inhabitants of Medina and several other minority inhabitants: the Jewish, Christians, and other traditional religion adherents. The main objective of the Medina Charter was to achieve peace, unity and protection for the minority groups. The signatories were Muslims led by the Prophet himself and several other groups under non-Muslim. Hence, according to Muslim understanding, the Medina Charter gives a basis for the relationship between Muslims and other residents of a country or town in Islamic countries. The Charter was signed in 722 (Embong et al., 2020).

Another positive narrative is about Islam's great scientific discoveries and growth that occurred when Europe was in the medieval dark age. Then, the scientific innovation centres of Islam were Baghdad in Iraq, Cairo, Damascus and Cordoba of South Spain. In addition, they recovered and developed modern science from ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Greece, India and China (Jain, 2010).

Both Christians and Muslims agree that even during those dark periods of Crusade and mutual hatred accompanied by expulsions, there were4 narratives that indicated positive signs of Christian-Muslim co-existence. For instance, during the Crusade, they narrate that many agreements and alliances were signed to share the sacred spaces, commercial dealings and exchanges of science, and other important ideas (Mourad, 2018).

On the level of Africa, despite the positive coexistence, polarization between Christians and Muslims is still abundant. Some narratives are more recent, while others stem from past and colonial history. In recent times, some of the negative Christian narratives about Muslims have been highlighted regarding Nigeria with *Boko Haram*, Somalia with *Al Shabab,* and the Muslim Brothers of Egypt and Sudan are known. Other small but very influential groups function in Chad, the Central African Republic and in Mali. Singling out Mali, it shocked the world when many historical and sacred places and monuments of traditional Islam were demolished. These include many historical religious sites (Iheanacho, 2016). These groups and their negative narratives challenge the Christian-Muslim dialogue in the areas.

In addition, Muslims' negative narratives connecting Christianity is connected with painful colonial history in Africa are significant. They argue that colonial leaders brought Christianity to pacify the African populations. Religion was meant to cover their brutal self-centred agendas and systems that robbed Africa of her rich cultures and resources (Tan, 2017).

On the part of Christians, there are positive narratives about Muslims in Africa in relation to the long struggle to free nations from colonial power. In West and North Africa, Islam Religion was the most prominent instrument of liberation against the colonial forces. An example could be taken from the rebellions in the Batna region in Algeria led by Ahmed Ben Bella, a freedom fighter in 1954. Ben Bella founded the National Liberation Front (FLN) and strongly supported Pan-Africanism with Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. Similarly, another Muslim leader in Niger, Mohammed Kaocen (1880–1919), led a rebellion known as the Kaocen. He was from the Tuareg Ethnic group who rebelled against the French colonial powers leading to the country's freedom (Krause, 2021).

Another element that is significant in relation to the narratives is trade. Trade connects both Muslims and Christians. Muslims are people of a trade by tradition. Prophet Muhammad

himself was a merchant. Muslims have picked the tradition of the trade from their founder and expanded it far to China, Europe and different parts of Africa. UNESCO supports the idea stipulating that Islam is born in the commercial community of Mecca in Saudi Arabia by a Merchant religious leader, Prophet Muhammad (Cartwright, 2019). Islam encourages involvement in fair trade and commerce. Muslims believe that when a person in the business engages in honesty and in ways that do not contradict the command of Allah, he/she is rewarded by Allah, leading towards success. Hence, Muslims championed trade in Africa. As a result, Christian and traditional as well as civil society leaders recognize the expertise of Islam in making business agreements. In Africa, this fame and expertise in business have become part of the narratives that enhance dialogue within various societal sectors, including Christians.

Muslims have positive narratives about Christians in Africa. For example, Christians have contributed significantly to introducing education and hospitals to Africa. Also, Christians have enhanced formal peace negotiations. For instance, there was a successful event in both Sudanese and South Sudanese history where the Christian religious leaders were instrumental in achieving the Addis Ababa Agreement, known as the Addis Ababa Accord. It was signed on the 27th of February 1972. The agreement stopped 17 years of civil war in Sudan. Due to the agreement, the civil war stopped for ten years (1972-1983). It was organized primarily by the Sudan Council of Churches, World Council of Churches, and African Council of Churches, supported by the Ethiopian government (Shaib, 2020).

When we look at the narratives of Ethiopia, on the one hand, there are positive narratives that uphold the Christian-Muslim peaceful coexistence. The first outstanding story is about Prophet Muhammad sending his followers when they threatened extinction in the 7th century. The Christian king warmly welcomed and protected the refugees sent to Abyssinia, the modern Northern part of Ethiopia (Ahmed, 2006). Another scholar adds a related narrative

about Prophet Muhammad reminding those "Muslims 'to leave the Ethiopians alone as long as they don't bother you'- implying coexistence and respect for the Ethiopian emperor's positive role in maintaining the original Islamic community" (Abbink, 2014, p. 268).

On the other hand, when we look at the history of Ethiopia, the Christian Muslim narratives are mirrored in the tragic events associated with Ethiopian Emperors. The Emperors Tewodros the II (1855-1868) and Yohanis the IV (1872-1989) announced mass conversions of Muslims in the 19th century (Abbink, 2011). The fear of Emperor Tewodros triggered the harsh measures against the Wollo Oromo, who were mostly Muslims. He suspected that one day they would seize power and convert the entire empire to Islam, prompting him to cause unforgettable sufferings against Muslims. He amputated limbs and executed Oromo Muslims of Wollo in thousands (Balcha, 2005). Similarly, Emperor Yohannis concentrated on the mass conversion of the Muslims. Those who refused were killed or sent to exile. These tragic events still carry venom, which challenges the Christian dialogue.

The Ethiopian empires that had made Orthodox Christianity the national religion have undermined the equality of religions and even the existence of other religions, despite their historical and numerical significant presence. Ethiopia was considered a Christian Island. All these narratives affect the Christian-Muslim relationship negatively. An international scholar, an expert on the socio-religious context of Ethiopia, wrote recently about how Christianity and Muslims have used ethnicity and religion for political and economic interests:

These devastating episodes were motivated by calls to supreme religious identity and authority (of Islam) but always intermingled with territorial, economic and political power motives. Both expanding Christianity… and Islamic conversions created a landscape of tension and competition between different ethnic and religious communities that consolidated societal pluralism. (Abbink, 2020, p. 200)

There are also narratives enhancing Christian-Muslim dialogue in the country. In Ethiopia, it is customary for Christians and Muslims to show solidarity when one group or individual from another group faces calamities or holds a festive of any kind. In addition, national and international scholars have recognized the tradition of the long-standing peaceful coexistence of the Ethiopians. Ostebo (2008) argues that the narratives of the longstanding and accepted religious plurality and the tradition of peaceful co-existence must have contributed to avoiding religion-based conflict among Christians and Muslims of Ethiopia. Also, Ahmed (2006) confirms the idea that the occasional tensions, competitions, and misunderstandings between Christians and Muslims cannot remove the tradition of tolerance and shared sentiments of peace and collaboration. Similarly, Abbink (2011) speaks about the Ethiopian accommodative interreligious relationship.

This section has given both the positive and the negative narratives involving Christians and Muslims. It has discussed narratives in the global and regional fora and in different historical times. In the end, it has brought to light the narratives in Ethiopia. The current study seeks to address how positive narratives can be adopted toward sustainable peace and development in Ethiopia, particularly in Oromia. The next section deals with the second objective, whose focus is Christian-Muslim religious values affecting their dialogue.

2.1.2. Objective two: Christian-Muslim values in enhancing dialogue

2.1.2.1. Christian-Muslim Holy Scriptures and Traditions

In this study, religious values signify the values of Christians and Muslims that enhance the Christian-Muslim dialogue. These values are perceived to have a crucial role in thrusting sustainable peace and development.

Before embarking on the values, examples of literature that apparently negates the values are discussed. Two main ones are given, one from the Christian perspective and the other from a Muslim perspective. It must be admitted that some scriptural texts both in Islam and Christianity, trigger violence (Kiboi, 2017). For instance, there is an unhealthy understanding of Galatians (4:21-26), where Paul compares the two sons of Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael. Ishmael is the traditional father of Muslims and is seen as the child of a slave woman, Hagar.

On the other hand, Isaac, the father of Jews and Christians, is seen as the son of a free woman Sarah. According to Kiboi (2017), this text served as an unhealthy theological background for the bloody Crusade of the Medieval age. This text does not promote dialogue because of its mistaken historical implementation.

Similarly, the sections of the Holy Quran revealed to Prophet Muhammed when he was fighting wars to capture Medina militarily contain several verses that instigate violence and jihad (Odhiambo, 2014). For instance, in the version this research uses, the translation of the Qur'an by Al-Hilali and Khan (2011), in the third Sura of the Qur'an, there is a jihad-oriented text that says: "Yes, if you hold on to patience and piety, and the enemy comes rushing at you; your Lord will help you with five thousand angels having marks (of distinction)" (3:125). Another similar text says: "And Allah did indeed fulfill His Promise to you when you were killing them (your enemy) with His Permission" (3:152). In short, the verse appears to indicate that during jihad, it is God/ Allah who fights with those who are fighting the jihad, and God

fights on their behalf. This approach in the Qur'an eventually puts an obstacle to the Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Therefore, it could be said confidently that in Christianity, particularly in the OT and in Qur'an, we find verses with the tone of a war cry. These have contributed to wars in the history of Christian-Muslim relationships. However, many verses are sources of peaceful coexistence, particularly in the New Testament and the Qur'anic verses revealed when Prophet Muhammed was in Mecca at the beginning of his mission (Ronzani & Onyango-Ajus, 2003).

However, these are more texts and religious concepts that highlight the values instrumental to the Christian-Muslim dialogue. Some of them are faith, mutual respect, love, compassion, faithfulness/loyalty, forgiveness/reconciliation and peace.

Faith: Both Christians and Muslims believe God himself reveals their respective religions (Kiboi, 2017). They believe that God granted the Qur'an to the Muslims and the Bible to the Christians. Most of the revealed contents of those religions have similarities. That is why Nadvi and Abdullah (2014) argue that Christians and Muslims have a shared faith in several matters of divinity and Holy Books. They also believe in the holy men and women in the scriptures. Muslims go so far as to say that those Muslims who do not believe in the prophets, who are mostly included in the Bible, are not true Muslims. They believe that Jesus is one of the prophets sent by God/Allah (Nadvi & Abdullah, 2014), and the Christian books of the Old Testament and the New Testament as God's revealed books. However, on the part of many Christians do not believe that the Qur'an is a revealed word of God, at least officially (Marshall, 2021).

Mutual respect and recognition: These twin values are recognised by Christians, Muslims, their Holy Scriptures, and their traditions as tools for enhancing Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Muslims have concrete bases for respecting the Jews and Christians. They call the Jews and Christians *Ahl Al Kitab,* meaning "the people of the Book." In other words, Muslims believe that, like themselves, the Jews and Christians have "Revealed Books" (Niaz, 2014). There are privileges to the people of the book. For instance, they can marry a wife from them, but they should not get married to others from polytheistic religions (Islam, 2014). This shows mutual respect and recognition, and so enhances dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

In addition, Islam encourages Muslims to build good relations with non-Muslims because they are human beings, regardless of their religion, colour or ethnicity. For instance, the Qur'an states:

> And indeed We have honoured the Children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with At-Tayyibiit (lawful good things), and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preferment (Surah al-Isra 17:70).

In other striking acceptances of the Qur'an, the followers of non-Muslim religions are noted, stating that if it were not the will of God, they would not exist. Qur'an says: "We have prescribed a law and a clear way. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one nation, but that (He) may test you in what He has given you; so compete in good deeds" (Al-Ma'idah 5:48).

There is also a very similar concept repeated in chapter 11: "And if your Lord had so willed, He could surely have made mankind one Ummah [nation or community (following one religion i.e. Islam)]" (Sura Hud 11:118). Therefore, religious diversity is included in the plan of God for human beings.

On the part of Christians, their Tradition and theological reflection recognise Muslims and other non-Christian Traditions. Christians are morally obliged to approach them with great respect and sensitivity. Vatican II in *Nostra Aetate,* a Declaration on the Relation of the Church

with Non-Christian Religions, specifies that there are tremendous spiritual and human values enshrined in that Tradition (religions). They provide answers to deep mysteries of human conditions and give expressions to religious experiences and the longing of millions of their adherents to date (Burrows, 1993). Hence, Christians recognize the positive contribution of Muslims to others. This attitude of mutual respect and recognition contributes to the Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Forgiveness and reconciliation: Forgiveness and reconciliation are significant values for Christians and Muslims. In Christianity, several verses explain the importance of forgiveness through the spirit of forgiveness, reconciliation and love in the Old Testament less than in the New Testament. In the OT, forgiveness is mainly something sought from God. It is also in the more personal forgiveness or a group asking for forgiveness from God for themselves or interceding for others by imploring or presenting sacrifices for forgiveness. The example is cited in the translation of the Bible that this research uses, the New Revised Standard Version Bible (Ridling, 1989), (Leviticus 5:14-16, 6:67; Numbers 28). However, some other interpersonal examples of asking for forgiveness from each other can lead Christians to dialogue with Muslims. We have salient examples of forgiveness and reconciliation in the story of Joseph, who was sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers is significant (Genesis 45:1-15). They reconciled and saved their family from hunger. In the NT, the subject of reconciliation and forgiveness is abundant. When we concentrate on the teaching of Jesus Christ, he exercises interpersonal forgiveness and passes it on to his disciples as a commandment. He instructs his disciples to forgive 70 times seven (Matt. 18: 21-22). These Christian examples of forgiveness and reconciliation contribute towards Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Similarly, Jesus says in the prayer of "Our Father", "And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us" (Lk. 11:4). Jesus brings in the requirement of

forgiving if we have to be forgiven. In support of this, the unmerciful servant who refuses to forgive is thrown into jail in the parable (Matthew 18:21-35). In conclusion, Jesus adds, "So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart" (Matthew 18:35). Extending beyond forgiveness, Jesus instructed his followers to "bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you" (Luke 6:28). "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).

Similarly, the Qur'an and the Hadith note the Muslim scriptural approach to forgiveness and reconciliation. There are quotations about forgiveness between God/Allah and individuals as well as groups. There are also quotations encouraging interpersonal reconciliation as acts of faith in the Qur'an (TMV Team, 2021). For instance, Qur'an says: "The recompense for an evil is an evil like thereof; but whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allah. Verily, He likes not the Zalimiin (oppressors, polytheists, and wrong-doers)" (Quran 42:40). This quotation encourages Christian-Muslim dialogue, calling them to reconciliation instead of returning evil for evil because the end result is pardon and blessings from Allah.

Similarly, the Prophet in the Hadith brought in the values that related to forgiveness and reconciliation even better than fasting and prayers. Abu Darda narrates: "Shall I not tell you of what is better in degree than extra fasting, prayer, and charity?" They said, "Of course!" The Prophet said, "Reconciliation between people. Verily, corrupted relations between people is the razor." The Source is Sunan al-Tirmidhī 2509, and according to Al-Tirmidhi, the grade is Sahih. Therefore, both Christians and Muslims have values of forgiveness and reconciliation. This twin value encourages dialogue between them.

Compassion and mercy: In Christianity, compassion is the characteristic of God. The example is shown in Exodus. God talking to Moses, said,

'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.' (Ex. 3:7-10)

With this spirit of compassion, Christians join hands with all others, including Muslims in dialogue to free and give life to others. Also, in Psalms, we observe how God protects and advocates for the poor and eventually frees them based on compassion.

For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence [,] he redeems their life; and precious is their blood in his sight. (Ps. 72:12-14)

In Islam, the origin of Zakat, an Islamic charity, is related to the works of compassion toward the poor, orphans, widows, children and other marginalised suffering members of society, including the internally or externally displaced. The Qur'an describes the target of Zakat as a sign of compassion:

As-Sadaqtit (here it means Zakat) are only for the Fuqarti' (poor), and Al-Mastikin (the poor) and those employed to collect (the funds), and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards Islam), and to free the captives, and for those in debt, and for Allah's Cause (i.e. for Mujahidun - those fighting in a holy battle), and for the

wayfarer (a traveller who is cut off from everything); a duty imposed by Allah. And

Allah is All-Knower, All-Wise. (At-Taubah 9:60)

In some cases, the Qur'an speaks of compassion as empowering the weak and needy, for example, "And We wished to do a favour to those who were weak (and oppressed) in the land, and to make them rulers and to make them the inheritors" (Al-Qasas 28:5).

The Qur'an also rejects hoarding wealth without being compassionate to those who are more in need, "And those who hoard up gold and silver [Al-Kanz: the money, the Zakat of which has not been paid] and spend them not in the Way of Allah, announce unto them a painful torment" (At-Taubah 9: 34). Hence, the Qur'an considers the works of charity and compassion to be the works of Allah or rather the works that please God/Allah.

In addition, mercy and compassion are part of core Islamic values; there are several quotations in the Hadith. Particularly some narratives relate one's being merciful and kind to others with God being merciful to them. In the Hadith narrated by Jarir, the Prophet said: "Allah does not show mercy to those who do not show mercy to people." And Al-Bukhari and Muslims have authenticated this Hadith. In the Hadith narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr, the Prophet said, "Those who show mercy will be shown mercy by the Merciful [Lord.] Show mercy to those on earth, and He Who is in the heavens will show mercy to you." This narration is repeated by At-Tirmidhi and authenticated by Al-Albani. When the prophet insists on compassion, one of his followers says: "We all show mercy, O Messenger of Allah." Then the Prophet responds, "It is not the compassion that any one of you shows to his friend. It is the compassion and mercy that you show the people in general [that I mean]." Al At-Tirmidhi repeats the same narration. According to the narration of Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari, relating a true Islamic faith with being merciful to one another, the Prophet says, "You can never be (true) believers until you show mercy to one another." Evidently, mercy and compassion are core

values in both Christianity and Islam. In this study, these add to the values needed in Christian-Muslim dialogue

Love: In Christianity, love is one of the most important values upon which both the Old and New Testaments are built. In the Old Testament, the love of God comes especially in Deuteronomy: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (6:4-5).

In the New Testament, Jesus starts with the same statement and completes with the addition of the love of the neighbour:

> 'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Mat. 22: 36-40)

In Islam, the first love is kept for Allah and His Messenger Prophet Muhammad. As it is described in the Qur'an, Allah is above everything else. In Islam, Allah is identified by love and deserves to be loved. Qur'an has two names of Allah, which are directly related to love: *Al Wadud*, the loved and *Al Muhib,* the lover. In the Qur'an, Allah says that if one holds to someone or something dearer than God to him, let him wait for punishment from Allah:

> Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving hard and fighting in His Cause, then wait until Allah brings about His Decision (torment). And

Allah guides not the people who are Al-Fiisiqun (the rebellious, disobedient to Allah).

(At-Taubah 9:24)

As concerns interpersonal love, the Hadith narrates (without number) that the Prophet "None of you will attain (perfect) faith until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself" (Al-Bukhari and Muslim). Also, in Qur'an, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves" (Al-Baqarah 2:222). However, Allah does not love the following: "Truly, Allah likes not the transgressors" (Al Baqarah 2:190). "And Allah likes not the disbelievers, sinners" (Al Baqarah 2:276). Qur'an adds, "And Allah does not like the Zalimun (polytheists and wrong-doers)" (Al Imran 3:57).

In Islam, it appears that sometimes love is primarily kept for those with the same faith. In the Qur'an it says: "The believers are nothing else than brothers (in Islamic religion). So make reconciliation between your brothers, and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy" (Al Hujurat 49:10). However, in practice, there are many areas within which Muslims support both Muslims and Christians. In conclusion, Muslims have many quotations and concepts on the importance of love. In this study, these teachings are a great asset for Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Peace: Biblically, peace has many similar meanings. The Hebrew word for peace is *Shalom*. The word carries the meaning of concordance, completeness, making whole, soundness, well-being and welfare. In Greek, peace is also translated as *Eirene*. It gives the meaning of quietness, rest, health, joining more than one thing, or tying something together into a whole and restoring the broken relationship (Rashid et al., 2020). The concept is repeated more than 340 times in the Bible to highlight the importance of peace.

Regarding interpersonal peace, the prophet Isaiah speaks about peace among the nations that the Lord grants. When God grants peace among peoples, they shall beat their swords of war into ploughshares for ploughing fields to bear harvest.

> He shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (Is. 2:4)

In Qur'an and Hadith, the primary source of Islamic law, there are teachings on peace. Both Qur'an and Sunnah encourage the attitude of peace. Even the term 'Islam' has its root in the verb 'salima', closely related to salvation and peace. It particularly refers to the peace achieved by complete surrendering to God and his divine law *Sharia* (Religion and Ethics, 2016). It also has the meaning of gaining salvation. In Islam, Peace is one of the holy names of Allah. Maybe that is why the Qur'an says that God detests any violence and disturbances of the peace. "Allah likes not mischief" (Al Baqarah 2:205). Islam seeks a peaceful situation whenever it is possible. Muslims may fight to combat aggression that challenges peace but patient to keep the peace. The following two Qur'anic texts appear to address God's preference for peace: "And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you, but transgress not the limits. Truly, Allah likes not the transgressors (Al Baqarah 2:190). Qur'an adds,

> And fight them until there is no more Fitnah (disbelief and worshipping of others along with Allah) and (all and every kind of) worship is for Allah (Alone). But if they cease, let there- be no transgression except against Az-Zalimun (the polytheists and wrong-doers). (Al Baqarah 2:193)

Qur'an also allows the following of one's religion without disturbance. People should not be compelled to change their religions. They can practice their religious values peacefully. Prophet Muhammad said: "There is no compulsion in religion" (Al Baqarah 2:256).

In the Qur'an, peace is the work of God who puts affection in the human heart: "Perhaps Allah will make friendship between you and those whom you hold as enemies. And Allah has power (over all things), and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (Al-Mumtahanah 60:7).

In an interpersonal relationship, there is a Hadith (without number), where the Prophet said: *"Do you know what is better than charity and fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind"* (Muslims & Bukhari). These insights describe the tradition of Islam and the value of keeping the peace, which is even better than charity, fasting, and prayer. From these discussions, peace is key in both Christianity and Islam.

This section has interrogated core values that encourage dialogue in Christianity and Islam. Notably, faith, mutual respect and recognition, forgiveness and reconciliation, compassion and mercy, and finally, peace have been explored. All of these contribute towards enhancing Christian-Muslim dialogue. Particularly, this study puts them into practical perspective as linked to sustainable peace and development, a concern that is left out in the previous literature.

2.1.2.2. *Positive and negative practical effects of religion on dialogue*

When we look at the Christian-Muslim dialogue from a religious values perspective, it exhibits two trajectories. First, religious foundations of conflict have contributed to the insecurity and lack of development. The second trajectory is about dialogue enhancing sustainable peace and development.

Globally, we begin by considering the conflictual situation in the Middle East. In the history of religions, the Middle East is the birthplace of the three Abrahamic religions. Hence, the region has been the arena where religious values and ideologies have served as the source

of peaceful coexistence and reconciliation among the adherents. But on the other hand, it has also been the source of conflict and divisive ideologies that complicated the possibilities of peaceful coexistence and development.

In particular, the conflict among the three Abrahamic religions has its roots in their respective religions. This conflict has been aggravated by the religious claims of exclusive ownership of the region (Little, 2018). In other words, religious ideology and scriptural texts have been at the centre of the conflict. First, Jews, based on their traditions and scripture, argue that God gave Palestine to their ancestors, beginning with Abraham, the Patriarch. Therefore, they are convinced that they have a non-negotiable right to the place. Hence, they can conquer and expand their territory by force or by negotiation. Second, Muslims argue that they are the descendants of Abraham and they share the right to inherit Palestine similarly, according to the Qur'an, Prophet Muhamad visited Jerusalem and prayed there; hence they deserve to inherit it. Third, Christians add their claim based on the gospel accounts that Palestine is the birthplace of Jesus, the founder of Christianity. Therefore, each lays claim to the land. The three claims were at the heart of the conflict in Crusade history. Though they did not abandon the claim altogether, Christians interpreted it differently. With this position, the Christian conflict between Jews and Muslims appears to have subsided. In contrast, the religion-based conflict between the Jews and Muslims continues to date. These conflicts negatively influence peace and development.

At the same time, religious values have promoted peace and development. The literature considers interfaith groups from different religions, particularly Jews, Muslims, and Christians, who work for peace and development based on those religious values and ideologies. For example, more than 15 organizations in Israel and Palestine are based on religious values promoting peace and development for the region (Wang, 2014).

Interfaith Encounter Association (IEA) is one such interfaith group working from faith-based values. The organization particularly champions a concept of religion, instead of becoming the source of conflict, to become an instrument of peaceful coexistence and development. At the close of 2019, the group reported that they had more than 3200 programs in various communities to promote peace and stability. The participants are from Jews, Muslims, Christians and other religious denominations. The program includes people of different ages and walks of life, guaranteeing inclusivity for effective results (Little, 2018).

With this example of interfaith group, the literature analyses an experience in the USA. Though the general socio-political construct appears secular in the region, religion lies in the deep fabrics of the same society. Like in the Middle East, the USA is influenced by religions that are the source of values that motivate peace and development. Though the same is seen as a source of conflict and ideologies that trigger violence, the focus is more on practical experiences of the religious values; nevertheless, let us first look at public perception and the significant September 11 attack.

September 11th, 2001 event and Christian-Muslim responses

The public perception of Christians and Muslims in the USA is that Muslims promote terrorism and Jihad. The classic example that they recall is the event of September the 11th, 2001. On that day, a group of Muslim terrorists attacked the Twin Towers and other facilities in the USA. One of the root causes of the attack was that some extremist Muslim groups were rejecting any modern and secular demonstration of the world based on the interpretation of the Quran and religious values. According to them, the ungodly world was evil and against God; it had to be demolished and replaced with the world based on Sharia Law (Eveslage, 2013). Therefore, they felt that they had a moral duty to strike two centres of power: The Twin Towers, the signs of modern economics; the Pentagon, the sign of political power in the West. One of the USA

responses to the September 11th attack was War on Terror, particularly focusing on Afghanistan. The war lasted for more than two decades. This highlights how some religious values can be triggers of violence.

The September 11th event also worsened Islamophobia in most parts of the West, where both the guilty and innocent Muslims were perceived as dangerous and hence harassed. There were many root causes of the terrorist attack in the USA, but the direct trigger was religious ideology. Nevertheless, it is also understood that the same religious values that triggered the violence were the cause of the people coming together to make sense of the tragedy. They provided psychological, financial, and material support, meaning, consolation, and a degree of peace and reconciliation. Many faith-based organizations tackled the long healing journey of those affected by September 11/2001. Many Americans claimed to have benefited from religion and its spiritual strength in coping with the traumatic experience of the terrorist attack (Uecker, 2008).

Faith-Based Organizations in the USA

Faith-based organisations draw their inspirations, principles and guidance for their actions from faith or a particular interpretation of a faith (Hoda & Gupta, 2015). For instance, there are many faith-based organizations in the United States. Some of them are joint organizations from different and more than two religions with the same purpose. InterAction is a mixed faith-based organization working together in the USA. They are united because they are founded on similar values and principles that inherently motivate and sustain the perceived action. InterAction is a convener of and voice for faith-based organizations united to eliminate extreme poverty and promote human rights and dignity awareness. They promote communities based on environmental integrity and sustainable peace (InterAction, 2022).

Response of Faith-Based Organizations in Europe

When we look at Western Europe, we observe a similar scenario of religions triggering conflicts, Islamophobia, and reciprocal suspicion and through its religious values uniting, motivating actions that make Europe more humane, inclusive, and peaceful. We can take the problems of Islamophobia, terrorist threats and attacks as examples. Lately, Islamophobia has been increasing in Europe (Kazanci, 2022), with a strong terrorist come-back feeling in Europe. This is especially before the Coronavirus; during the pandemic, they briefly subsided their activities. According to Spanish terror reports, extremist Muslim groups, like ISIS and *Al Qaida*, are still threatening, especially in Spain and France (Counter Extremism Project, 2021). They indicate the desire to bring back the golden era of Islam when the Muslims had the upper hand in Southern Europe socially, economically and politically. That was when most of the Iberian Peninsula, Andalucía being its stronghold, was in the hands of a Kalifate (Eveslage, 2013). The terror attack indicates their desire to push for the regaining of the territory. Among the worst was the terror attack in 2017, where 13 civilians died and 120 were wounded (Gencturk, 2022).

Both terrorism and Islamophobia have their roots in the history of Christian-Muslim relationships. In the history of the Christian-Muslim relationship, there has been a long period when Christians and Muslims were equally convinced that they had a religious duty to defend their respective religious values and territories against each other (Frost, 2019). This position generated conflicts in the name of religion, which primarily aims to create peace.

However, several European interfaith organisations are still committed to peace, unity, and compassion based on their religious values. Lately, religion has gained momentum due to its ability to contribute critically to ensuring peace, inclusion, and cohesion (Griera & Nagel, 2018). Religious values continue to empower and motivate adherents of different

religions in faith-based organizations to work effectively for peace, cohesion and community development. In this religion enhances faithfulness, a sense of purpose and resilience in the lives of the interfaith actors for sustainable peace and development (Schmidt et al., 2016).

Islamic Relief Worldwide is one of the European Muslim faith-based organizations striving to promote unity and harmony among the Christians and Muslims of Europe. They highlight in their priority identity and priority statement that they are guided by the timeless teachings of the Qur'an and prophetic examples of Muslims in history. In particular, they focus on the values of sincerity, excellence, compassion, social justice and custodianship during their actions and policy-making (Islamic Relief, 2019).

Response of Faith-Based Organizations in Africa

In Africa, Christian and Muslim religions have sometimes confused nations and brought conflicts. Another time, they untied and brought peace and development to the people. Due to Africa's religious nature, religion plays a crucial role in influencing the actions of the inhabitants negatively or positively. Hence, Africa has no clear cut between secular and sacred (Mbiti, 1991). Religion is not separated from the socio-political life of the people. With this position, Africa believes religion can radically change social life and history (Ludovic, 2021).

When we look at religion in relation to violence, political and socio-ethnic grounds in Africa, it is notable that it has contributed to providing scriptural texts and ideologies that initiate and expand the cause of terrorism and conflict. Regarding the concern of conflict, *Boko Haram* brings forth the discourse of colonial-era grievances, political injustices, and ethnic and religious inequalities in Nigeria. However, Thurston (2016) argues that the policymakers in Nigeria do not provide a long-term solution for the *Boko Haram* issue as they only concentrate on security threats, ignoring the political and religious dimension of the extremist group.

Boko Haram is against the West and the Nigerian politicians who advocate for modern ways of life. Religiously, the *Boko Haram* group wants the Nigerian society to go back and keep the undefiled ways of Islam according to the chosen *Salafs*, the Muslim leaders immediately after Prophet Muhammad. *Boko Haram* in the Hausa language means 'Western education is not allowed for Islam.' In the statement's true meaning, Western education includes learning and all the political and social lifestyles of the West (Thurston, 2016). Mohammed Yusuf founded the *Salafist* movement in 2002 in Nigeria. It seeks to abolish the secular system of government and establish *Sharia* Law in Nigeria (Okechukwu & Ibietan, 2012).

The Central African Republic (CAR), a Christian majority country, suffers from different political parties scrambling for resources. They utilize politics and religious and ethnic divides in the country. In CAR, Christians are the majority, and Muslims the minority. There have been devastating conflicts between Christians and Muslims for over a decade. They draw motivations and energy from religion, leading towards civil war. The illiterate people are easily swayed by the politicians who use religious values or ideologies to gain support and militants. The Christian militias are called *Anti-Balaka*, whereas mercenaries from Chad and Sudan support the Muslim militias, *Seleka.*

Since 2013, when the *Seleka*-dominated rebels took power through a coup ousting President François Bozizé, the religiously motivated violence has increased. After controlling the capital, Bangui, helped by Chadian and Sudanese foreign fighters, the targeted killings, sectarian violence, and other mass killings, including in the worship places, escalated. Notably, in 2014, *anti-balaka* groups unleashed violence against *Seleka* and the Muslim community based on their religious identity. As a result, the Christian majority group killed many innocent Muslim civilians. For instance, out of 436 Mosques, 417 were destroyed by the *anti-balaka-* related groups (Ochab, 2018).

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Despite the conflict, religious leaders are motivated by the religious ideals of peace and cohesion among the people. This is especially based on those who have been trying to mediate peace and reconciliation among the political authorities. They are mainly from Christian and Muslim religious denominations. Since 2013, Cardinal Nzapalainga, the Archbishop of Bangui; Imam Oumar Kobine Layama, the President of the Islamic Community of CAR (CICA); and Reverend Pastor Nicolas Guerekoyame-Gbangou, the President of the Alliance of Evangelicals of CAR, have spearheaded many reconciliation and peace accord events. They have referenced peace and cohesion nationally and globally in CAR (Ludovic, 2021).

In Ethiopia, religion has contributed to violence, instability and socio-religious discrimination. From a Christian point of view, Islam has allegedly threatened Ethiopian Christian identity and its unity. So, the followers of Islam sometimes were controlled and forced to accept Christianity (Ficquet, 2015). Christians felt that they had to defend their religious values. That caused deep-seated hatred and sporadic conflicts among Christians and Muslims (Abbink, 2020).

A historical background also witnesses how religious values have an important role in keeping the country united and uncolonized up-to-date (Girma, 2021). Most Christians are Orthodox Church adherents. Research conducted by the Research Gate confirmed that religion remains a very important factor in their lives in Ethiopia (Pew Research Center, 2017). When the country was on the brink of disintegration during the *Zemene Mesafint* (between the mid-18th and mid-19th centuries), the Ethiopian Orthodox, which was a non-state actor by then, contributed immensely by providing a theologically informed political ideology of unity in the country (Girma, 2021).

However, when we approach the role of religion in enhancing peace and development from the Muslim religious values perspective, there were times in Ethiopia when Islam became a source of tension and conflict. A typical historical example is the 16th century (1529-1543).

Then, the Muslim apprising led by Imam Ahmed ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi terrorised Ethiopia through bloody civil war. From an Islamic religious values perspective, it was a sacred duty of Imam Ibrahim and his soldiers to fight the religious war known as *jihad* to defeat the Christian kingdom that was a permanent threat in the south of the country and bring the Christian Abyssinia to the *Umma*, the family of Muslim (Cartwright, 2019).

In the contemporary Christian-Muslim relationship of Ethiopia, there have been tensions arising from religious fundamentalism or excess religious practices of the adherents of both religions. An Ethiopian writer, Antigegn (2019), argues that recently there has been evidence of the rising conflicts between the Christians and Muslims in different parts of Ethiopia. For example, Muslim youth would go out to attack the neighbouring Christian Churches or Christian communities after their prayers on Friday to practice their religious convictions and values in concrete ways (Abbink, 2011).

There were also times when Muslim religious values helped to reconcile, unite and collaborate with Christians defending each other's celebrations and worship centres. For example, in 1990/91, the Marxism-oriented regime of Ethiopia had little respect for religious practice and asked to move the *Tabot,* the Orthodox religious sign of the Ark of the Covenant. Muslims joined the Christians in defending the Christian celebration and protecting the *Tabot* (Ahmed, 2006). This kind of collaboration and reciprocal support kept the general sense of peace in the country.

When we look at the contribution of religious values in bringing peace, development and, at times, conflict in the Oromia region, there are two essential causes of Muslim religion-based conflicts. Historically, the first conflict is that Oromia Region has been under pressure from Ethiopia's Christian Northern and central parts (Abbink, 2020). Generally, Oromos feel that socio-economic power was not shared fairly for centuries. A struggle against the predominantly Christian kingdoms has resulted in religious resistance under Islam and

Traditional religions. The second cause of religious conflicts and unrest in Oromia was the *Salafi* groups coming from Saud Arabia. They were trained and motivated by the Saudi regime, which was interested in establishing solid Islamic ground in Ethiopia. The *Salafi* groups still have a strong sense of duty to propagate new and reformed faith in the form of Mission or *Da'wa* (Ostebo, 2008)*.* This extremist religious approach has caused continuous unrest and conflict in several parts of the Oromia region (Antigegn, 2019).

On the contrary, Islam's religious values have also contributed to the peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims in Oromia. Muslim-based institutions promote values that enhance tolerance and peaceful coexistence. For example, the Interreligious Council of Ethiopia has done relief, peacebuilding and reconciliation work utilizing Christian and Muslim religious values. When the war broke out between Guji Oromo and Gedeo, peace was restored when all the main religious leaders of the region (Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Lutherans and Abba Gadas) discussed and supported the peace process using their respective religious values (Catholic Relief Services & World Vision, 2018). However, there are limited attempts to analyse the role of Christian Muslim values in enhancing dialogue leading to sustainable development in Ethiopia, particularly the Oromia Region. It is due to this that the present study was sought

2.1.3. Objective three: the dialogue for sustainable peace and development

Before addressing how Christian-Muslim dialogue enhances sustainable peace and development, it is worth explaining the contemporary meaning of sustainable peace and development.

2.1.3.1. Contemporary understanding of peace and development

Sustainable Peace

Tilahun (2015) argues that the classical concepts of Galtung (1967) give a holistic picture of sustainable peace. Galtung divides peace into two categories: negative peace and positive peace. When negative peace refers to the absence of violence and war, positive peace refers to the integration of human society with the absence of structural and cultural violence and the prevalence of justice, harmony, and equality (Galtung, 1967). Therefore, sustainable peace is closely related to the positive peace of Galtung. Like positive peace, sustainable peace is not satisfied with the absence of violence; it includes the absence of structural and cultural violence. In particular, positive peace and sustainable peace have the aspect of human security. Because without sustainable human security, peace is neither positive nor sustainable.

Traditionally, security is closely linked to a state-centred and fundamentally militaristic national security (Gaines, 2006). However, today, security is much broader as it includes the elements of sustainable peace and development. Fortunately, this makes it directly linked to poverty. For this reason, in its national security strategy, the United States emphasizes that in reducing security threats, the reduction of global poverty is crucially important (Gaines, 2006). Therefore, the UN calls for a paradigm shift in understanding human security, including the complex and comprehensive needs of human security and the traditional state-centred and militaristic approach (UN Human Security Unit, 2009).

Based on this, the United Nations Commission on Human Security (CHS) defines human security as a means to protect the vital core of all human lives by enhancing human freedoms and human fulfillment. Furthermore, it means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity. Therefore, human security complements state

security by adding the aspects of enhancing human rights and freedoms; creating systems that support economic, political, social and environmental aspects of human development.

In the contemporary understanding, sustainable peace is also "a thoroughly endogenous process" of peacebuilding, restoration and peacekeeping (International Peace Institute, 2017). The United Nations defines sustainable peace as the final goal and the process of building a shared vision of a society where all the members' needs are considered. It thus considers all the activities that prevent the outbreak and escalation or the recurrence of conflict. The UN further explains that sustainable peace addresses the root causes of conflict as a shared task and responsibility to be undertaken by the government and other stakeholders. All assist the parties in conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, recovery, reconstruction and development (United Nations, 2016). The peace that can positively influence is the one that is firmly based on local traditions, cultures and religions. On that note, the peace that is spearheaded by the local leaders and assisted by the international community is the one that is considered sustainable. The peace that external institutions or NGOs negotiate has a time frame, whereas the peace based on the indigenous people and their resources is not a time-bound intervention. Hence, it surpasses the limitations set by the funding cycles of donors. When the peace process is assumed by the national government and the local people, it becomes an ongoing effort, thus sustainable and lasting (International Peace Institute, 2017).

As early as 1998, the former Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, wrote, "matters of international peace and security, providing support for regional and sub-regional initiatives in Africa, are necessary and desirable. Such support is necessary; because the United Nations lacks the capacity, resources and expertise to address all problems that may arise in Africa" (Annan, 1998, p. 13). However, this does not mean that complex issues such as international terrorism, climate change and environmental challenges should entirely be left to the respective indigenous people or continent and Africa in this case. On the contrary, there is a demand for a

unified and well-coordinated global effort with the regional and local governments and institutions' leadership and institutions. Still, the respective continent is on the steering.

Interfaith dialogue is closely related to the indigenous people. That is why interfaith dialogue is considered one of the guarantors of the sustainability of peace. The public, in general, trusts in their religious leaders. Even militant groups tend to trust more religious leaders than the government (Neufeldt, 2011). Therefore, when the leaders of different religions are in dialogue, they can facilitate sustainable peace as part of the indigenous people. This is the peace that this study seeks to contribute towards its realization in Ethiopia, particularly Oromia.

Sustainable Development

Historical development of the existing definitions and interpretations of the term "sustainable development" goes back to the last century (United Nations, 1987). The Brundtland Commission, formally known as the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), coined the first formal definition of sustainable development in 1987 (United Nations, 1987). Gro Harlem Brundtland, the former Prime Minister of Norway and the head of the commission appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General at the time, Javier Perez de Cuellar, guided his commission in coming up with the formula that synthesises the urgent need for development and care for the environment. The definition states that sustainable development is the development that satisfies the immediate needs of the present-day people without putting into jeopardy the needs and the opportunities of future generations (United Nations, 1987). The formula gave birth to instrumental models of sustainable development. Today there are four similar and interconnected models of sustainable development: The Three Pillar model, Prism of Sustainability Model, Egg Sustainability model and Two-Tiered

Sustainability model. This research will focus on the main model, the Three Pillars or Circles model of sustainable development.

Three Pillars model or Three Circles model of sustainable development

Based on the findings of the Brundtland Commission (United Nations, 1987), the Monitoring of Sustainable Development Project (MONET) of the United Nations described sustainable development to include social, environmental and economic aspects. These are known as the three circles or three pillars of sustainable development (Thatcher, 2014). Then, in 1992 the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) affirmed that the three dimensions of sustainable development are the way forward for sustainable development. In the Earth Summit and Agenda 21 section, the Rio declaration argues that "we can no longer think of the environment and economic and social development as isolated fields" (United Nations, 1992, p. 1).

Today, led by the UN, there is a level of consensus among the world economists and institutions that when the effort of development keeps the three pillars intact, there is a high level of opportunity for achieving sustainable development (Thatcher, 2014). Combined and applied in real-world situations, they can create a steady ground for sustainable development from which everybody can benefit.

Here are the two figures showing the pillars and the three circles that are pro-sustainability as well as the interconnectedness of the constructs of the three sustainabilities. For the sake of this study, the focus has been on the three constructs:

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(1). Social Sustainability

Social Sustainability refers to the social aspect of sustainable development, which supports the concept of inter-generational justice. It means that future generations are entitled to the same or even higher quality of life than current.
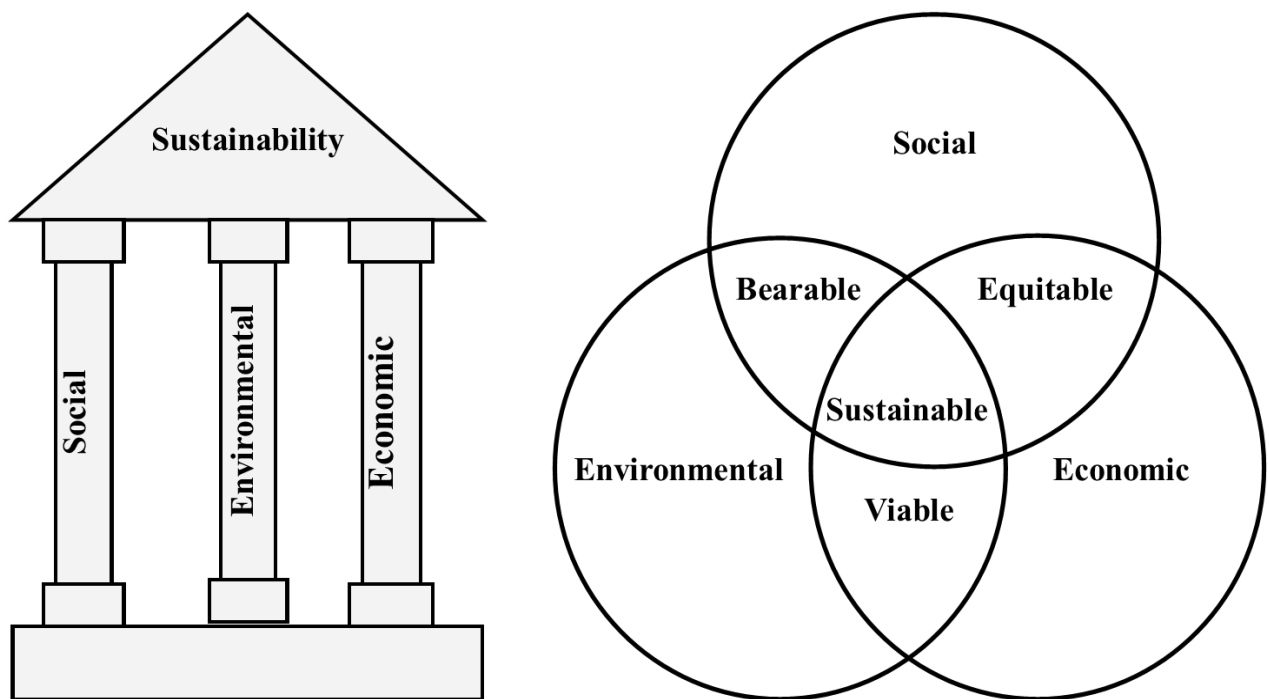
Figure 1. *Three Pillars or Three Circles Model of Sustainable Development*

Source: (Thatcher, 2014, p. 749, 2015)

This concept involves many other socially related issues such as environmental law, human and labour rights, health equity, good governance, political will, availability of wealth, power and domination (Clune & Zehnder, 2018). Healthy ways of going about it entail building participatory community development, encouraging public involvement and making the best use of social capital, promoting the sense of justice and responsibility, cultural competence, community resilience, and human adaptation.

Also, social inclusion is crucial in the social aspect of sustainable development (Clune & Zehnder, 2018). It provides the elements of accelerating development without having anyone left behind. Today, many nations have shown their readiness to implement the SDGs based mainly on the three pillars of Sustainable development. As a result, most world leaders have integrated SDGs into their national short-term and long-term development plans.

(2). Environmental Sustainability

A natural environment should retain its complete functionality and utility without interruption to achieve environmental sustainability in development. Any action towards sustainable development should be aware of the responsibility not to damage the natural environment. Any activity should avoid disrupting the balance of the environment. Because human beings are the dominant change-makers, either positively or negatively, they are responsible for the change of most of the composition of the earth's atmosphere. Human beings also constantly modify the terrestrial or marine ecosystem (Norström et al., 2014). If human beings collectively remain ethical, the ecosystem will be friendly to itself and human beings.

In the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the environmental aspect is explained more extensively in the text of SDGs (Rosa, 2017). For instance, six out of 17 SDGs directly tackle ecological awareness: Number six (Clean Weather and Sanitation), seven (Affordable and Clean Energy), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life below Water) and 15 (Life on Land).

In 2015, a remarkable and the most critical global public environmental and health agreement of the century was signed in Paris. The unprecedented unions of doctors, nurses, and other representatives of more than 1,700 health organizations, 8,200 hospitals, and 13 million health professionals came together to call on governments to reach a strong agreement protecting public health (Karliner, 2015). The outcome of the appeal was the Paris Climate

Change Agreement. In other words, the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreements of the world's leading nations complemented each other.

Regionally, Africa is affected by climate change undeservedly. A few years ago, there was empirical research concerning environmental pollution in Africa. The author argued that Africa is only responsible for a minimal contribution to the total carbon dioxide emission (Bartniczak & Raszkowski, 2018). In Africa, some activists like Kwame Nkrumah and especially Wangari Maathai of Kenya have been actively explaining and promoting the importance of environmental sustainability for sustainable development and sustainable existence (Ofoego et al., 2015).

(3). Economic Sustainability

Economic sustainability refers to the decisions of development respecting sustainability's aspects. For better results, people need to practice business, considering the social and environmental sustainability issues. Then the result is significantly different and positive. Economic growth should always be careful not to exceed the planet's ecological capacity (Clune & Zehnder, 2018). The human thirst for development could lead to the temptation to use whatever means to get more profit. However, in the long run, those aiming at temporary success exclusively are procuring future troubles for the developed and developing countries. It was noticed that "too many of these environmental costs are not being fully accounted for by social and economic institutions and actors while being fully accounted for by the planet's ecosystem" (Clune & Zehnder, 2018, p. 217).

2.1.3.2. Genesis of Christian-Muslim dialogue

Globally, the genesis of Christian-Muslim dialogue started with encounters, and then conflict, dialogue and collaboration for world peace and development continued. Despite the

historical obstacles to Christian-Muslim dialogue, several studies regarding proactive actions for sustainable peace and development of Christians and Muslims are noted (Baatsen, 2017; Hafner, 2018). The study also realizes that Christians and Muslims often engage in dialogue with other religions as part of general interreligious or interfaith dialogue. Hence, the research recognises that there is Christian-Muslim dialogue within the bigger frame of interreligious dialogue. In 2017, according to Pew Research Centre statistics (Pew Research Centre, 2017), globally, Muslims were at 1.8 and Christians at 2.3 billion from 7.3 total population. Together, they are more than half of the world's population.

The following main events are worth mentioning: the beginning of the official dialogue between Christians and Muslims started in the 1890s (Magonet, 2015), a special conference of the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago (WPR) in 1893; the World Congress of Faiths (WCF) in 1936; religions for Peace (Muslims and Christians) in 1961 (Religions for Peace International Secretariat, 2011). Consequently, in 1970, the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP) in Kyoto, Japan (Mani, 2012) aimed to study and act upon global problems affecting peace, justice, and human survival led by representatives of the World Major Religions.

Also, the World leaders at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, initiated the dialogue forum for Muslims and the West to heal the negative effect of September 11, 2001 (Magonet, 2015). The initiative has since developed into the present World Dialogue Council (WDC), which aims to support, promote, propagate, and preserve peace, harmony, and friendship between the West and the Islamic world. The council set its means on the two commandments shared equally by Muslims and Christians: to love God and fellow neighbours (Magonet, 2015).

Another European and Middle East-related important dialogue event was during the 1967 Israeli-Egyptian war. The leaders of both Christians and Jews, who had a dialogue forum

already, felt that all the Abrahamic religions, such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam, had a common ancestor and needed a common union. Therefore, they felt the need to add Muslims to membership in the dialogue. The three religions are united in their belief in One God/ Tawhid Allah. They are known as Monotheistic Religions (Vitkovic et al., 2018). They share values that can help them decrease violence and increase peace and reconciliation. Therefore, soon after the famous Six-Day War between Israeli and the Arabs in 1967, the leaders of the three religions came together to address their common problem of war in the Middle East and religion-related issues in Europe. They lay a special foundation for the Conference of Jews, Christians and Muslims (Magonet, 2015). This event was one of the first concrete historical Interfaith Dialogues where Muslims were considered equal partners with Christians and Jews.

With this background, in the 21st century, the importance of Interfaith Dialogue for peace and development is more and more profound within the discussion of global political and non-political organizations. For instance, in 2008, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, called a high-level international meeting on Interfaith Dialogue (Magonet, 2015).

Also, the significant event of the Interfaith World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi on the 29th of October, 1986, convoked by Pope Paul II, was another founding moment (Allen, 2016). Most of the world religions have attended the dialogue. The pope confirmed that the Catholic Church is committed to this end in its dialogue with the world religions.

Pope Francis, building on the legacy of the Vatican Council II and his predecessors, proactively engaged in Christian-Muslim dialogue. On the 5th of February 2019, after signing a historical declaration of the Christian-Muslim Fraternity with the Grand Imam of Al Azhari, he said that the world would either build the future together "or there will be no future." He added, "The time has come for religions to more actively exert themselves, with courage and

audacity and without pretence, to help the human family deepen the capacity for reconciliation, the vision of hope and the concrete paths of peace" (Cookman, 2019, p. 1).

From the side of Muslim initiatives for Christian-Muslim dialogue, the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies (RIIFS) is one of the first and most influential organizations. It was founded in Amman in Jordan by Prince El Hassan ibn Talal in 1994.   In 2007, this institute initiated a wonderful gesture of dialogue between Christians and Muslims (Smith, 2015). The institute took the initiative to bring together 138 Muslim Sunni and Shi'a leaders and some Christian leaders from different continents to write and sign a letter called "A Common Word between you and us." The important word is taken from Qur'an 3:64: "Say, O People of the Book (Christians and Jews)! Come to a common word between you and us." This letter was a positive response to the unsuccessful dialogue speech by Pope Benedict the 16 in 2006 when it produced deep anxiety and violence among Muslims and Christians. The letter invited Muslims and Christians, using their scriptures, to agree to love God and the neighbours as the basis for further dialogue. It was a commendable step taken by the Muslim Institute for dialogue during the fuelling of violence due to the misunderstanding created in Germany (Gibson, 2014).

After September 11, 2001, the reaction against Muslims was obviously extremely strong. As a result, many Christians and Muslims started interfaith groups to counteract those hostilities against innocent Muslims. Some of them are The Islamic Society of North America, the National Christian-Muslims initiative and the Children of Abraham: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Conversation organizations (Cole, 2019).

In May 2008, Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue was inaugurated with the aim of "spread[ing] the culture of dialogue, the peaceful coexistence of humanity and the acceptance of others" (Magonet, 2015, p. 41). After three years, In Saud Arabia, King Abdullah, supported by the Austrian and Spanish governments, founded the King Abdullah ibn

Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) in 2011. The mission of the Institute is that, together with peaceful coexistence, the promotion of human rights, justice, peace and reconciliation may be facilitated by the successful dialogue of Muslims and Christians.

In Africa, Christian-Muslim first contact has sometimes been violent and conflictual, whereas other times, it has been amicable, leading to peace, reconciliation, and development. Religion has been the cause or part of the causes of conflict in Egypt, Sudan, the Central African Republic and the West African region, particularly Mali and Nigeria. However, Christian-Muslim religions also have been part of the solution, bringing peoples of different religions together to work for peace, emancipation and integral development.

According to Ludovic (2021), today in Africa, religion remains an important voice in society despite the rapid processes of secularisation. Religion has never been relegated from the people's political and other socio-cultural lives (Agbiji & Swart, 2015). Regarding the contribution of religions, particularly Christianity and Islam in Africa, when the national or international state actors failed to bring peace between different warring parties, religious diplomacy proved to be an effective tool for bringing about peace in different regions of Africa.

In the 1990s, religious leaders were chosen to preside over the national political conferences, which had serious socio-political issues threatening the disintegration of nations. For instance, the religious leaders facilitated effective political facilitation in Benin, the Republic of Congo, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a result, through their continuous efforts, those countries passed peacefully from one-party to multi-party systems (Ludovic, 2021).

Other contributions of the religious leaders are noted in Zambia and South Africa. In 1980 and 1990, the religious leaders convinced the former Zambian President to embark on the

multi-party democratic ruling. This changed Zambia's political systems. Similarly, the religious leaders played a crucial role in abolishing Apartheid, the racial segregationist rule. Later on, they proceeded to steer the country to peace and reconciliation under the leadership of Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Ludovic, 2021).

Catholic religious leaders have played a crucial role in leading to self-rule and abolition of colonial domination. They have improved the democratic and justice systems, sharing power among the warring parties and even changing the rule or stepping down from authority altogether. Malawi is one such country. In early 1960, the Catholic bishops wrote a letter requesting Malawi's self-rule, and they succeeded. Then, in 1992, the Catholic bishops wrote a strong letter requesting a change in the political system, putting pressure on President Kamuzu Banda. Eventually, he was removed from power (Jere, 2018).

Christians and Muslims have also been instruments of relief, health, education and development in Africa. Two separate contributions of Muslim peacebuilding organizations are worth mentioning (Ludovic, 2021). The Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC) of Kenya and Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace (SWVP) are two of the known peacebuilding actors in Africa. WPDC are agents of peace based in the north-eastern part of Kenya. They have established concrete and successful conflict prevention and local resolution system based on the ethnoreligious Muslim traditional mechanism. The second Muslim peace and democratic system-building organization are called the Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace (SWVP). It was founded in 1994 and is still continuing to advocate for peace and stability in the country.

Organizations carry the theme of peace and development together. In Africa, a joint and experienced Christian-Muslim dialogue organization is called Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA). The Churches were founded in Africa, Ghana, in 1959. The basic principles of PROCMURA are Christian-Muslim dialogue to promote peaceful

co-existence to build a holistic development of the human person. It is the oldest and pioneer interfaith organization in the continent of Africa (Global Ministries, 2019). Its central office is in Nairobi, Kenya. The foundation has centres in 20 countries of work also in 10 additional countries without stable offices. It has worked in peacebuilding and development projects, mostly locally initiated or led by the local people, to guarantee its sustainability (PROCMURA, 2022).

Nationally, there is an Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia (IRCE) which was founded in 2010 with the consensus and collaboration of various religions of the country and the national government. The history of Muslims-Christian collaborations goes back to the time of the first Muslim refugees coming from Mecca to Ethiopia, sent by the Prophet Muhammad himself in the seventh century (Ostebo, 2014). These collaborations and tolerance have become the cornerstone of establishing IRCE. The present IRCE members consist of seven different denominations: the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC), Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC), the Ethiopian Catholic Church (ECC), the communion of The Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia (ECFE), the Ethiopian Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDAC), the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) and Ethiopian Kale Hiwot Churches (EKHC) (IRCE, 2019).

The IRCE promotes peace and peaceful coexistence by enhancing collaboration among religious institutions. It endeavours to preserve the long-standing moral values, religious ethics, interfaith understanding and tolerance among communities in Ethiopia. Accordingly, the IRCE envisions that the religious communities and their institutions in Ethiopia stand together for peace, justice, human dignity, mutual respect, tolerance and development (Karbo, 2013).

It organizes several national and regional training for various groups such as religious leaders, women and youth, and government officials. It does so in collaboration with the

government on good governance, religious freedom, and fundamentalism. In addition, IRCE continues its engagement through dialogue and advocacy, anti-radicalization efforts and interventions in partnership with other governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations; it seeks to empower further the local IRCs in the skills of Peaceful Co-existence throughout the country (IRCE, 2019).

According to the workshop report on religions and development in Ethiopia, the country has shown its commitment to the MDGs and SDG process. It became one of the 50 countries worldwide to provide data to the UN to prepare the SDG and one of the ten most active African countries that joined in preparing the "Common African Position." The Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia (IRCE) is one of the stakeholders in the success of executing both the MDGs and SDGs (Tomalin et al., 2019).

From 2018 to 2020, the IRCE and other interreligious groups had effective peacebuilding negotiations. Notable is when ethnic conflict ignited in Southern Ethiopia, mostly in the Oromia region between Oromo and Amhara, Gedeo and Gujji Oromo. In 1019 the IRCE and the Catholic Relief Service (CRS) worked for hand in hand in feeding the displaced Ethnic Gedeio and Oromos. The two worked hard to reconcile. In this task, the CRS Ethiopia implemented a peacebuilding project by facilitating comprehensive conversation for peacebuilding among the Abba Gada religious leaders. This also works for peace among the members of the Interreligious Council, the local government leaders, the youth, law enforcement authorities, and the elders of the community, both women and men. Thus, they succeeded in quelling the dangerous ethnic conflict between Gedoes and Gujis (Catholic Relief Services, 2019).

However, in the current Tigray-Ethiopia conflict, the IRCE has been criticized for allegedly not being able to detach itself from the current political tensions so that the IRCE remains a moral compass that guides the ethnopolitical conflict to peace (Girma, 2021).

Religion is not providing a theologically informed political ground that can hold together the different regions and ethnic groups as offered in the 18th and 19th centuries. The reasons are that the religious institutions are showing symptoms of moral decay and cannot be sources of peaceful cohesion. Furthermore, there is a lack of one unified religious body that offers a unifying narrative authoritatively in the religion. Lastly, it appears that different warring parties might be using religion and the pulpits it provides to demonise each other instead of calling for the common needs of the nation through their unifying and reconciling approaches (Girma, 2021).

In addition to the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia, different faith-based groups have contributed to peace and development. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOCDICAC) is one of them. The commission was established to empower youth by training in vocational education and promoting the spirit of education. It does so by participating in the national campaign for socio-economic and cultural development (Kassa, 2014).

The commission also contributed extensively to bringing peace when the interreligious conflict broke out in Jimma, Western Ethiopia. In March 2007, many churches were burnt, and the Christian faithful were massacred in different regions. However, after a long period of effort for peace by bringing together various denominations, mainly Muslims, Orthodox, Protestants, Catholics, and government agents, EOCDICAC eventually achieved a considerable level of peace and harmony (Kassa, 2014).

When we look at the role of dialogue in enhancing peace and development in the Oromia region, religion has been both a decisive and unifying element. At the backdrop of the Christian-Muslim relationship, Christianity has been identified as an effective tool for providing ideology for the Amhara and Tigrayan ruling parties. These have oppressed most of

the other ethnic groups and religious denominations. This is the same case with the Oromos, whose large number follow Islam religion (Ostebo, 2014).

Following the situation of Oromia, Christianity is considered the instrument of oppression for the Amhara and Tigrayans. Therefore, Islam is taken as the religion for those who resist oppression. *Salafi* Muslim groups come in as groups of resistance using their Islam religion. *Salafism's* rapid growth in Eastern Oromia was because they felt that their open struggle was "the only alternative available" (Ostebo, 2008, p. 428). This hardened relationship among the socio-political and ethnic relationships fuelled the violence in the Oromia region for several years. There were burning of churches, expulsions and sometimes killings in churches and mosques (Abbink, 2011).

At the same time, there is the presence of faith-based groups in the same region. Both local and mixed groups work hard towards sustainable peace, relief, and development. For example, during the waves of conflict since 2015 between the federal government and Qerro, the Oromo youth movement, the people of Afar and Eastern Oromos, Amharas and Southern Oromos, Gedeos and Gujis had waves of violence and conflicts. During these times, different interfaith groups managed to solve the conflict.

The Lutheran World Federation (LMF) is one of the other faith-based actors in Oromia. The federation works with the local community leaders and the local Interfaith Council of Ethiopia members in the area. As a faith-based organization, they have been reaching out to communities from Oromo and other sides who were in conflict. For instance, in 2016, when the Somalis and the Oromos clashed on the territorial dispute, LWF played a crucial role in bringing peace to the communities (The Lutheran World Federation, 2020). A faith-based organization dug deep into the underlying issues of the conflict and involved the local political, traditional and religious leaders towards solving the problem from within. Eventually, with the

help of other stakeholders such as IRCE and the local government, they reconciled the warring parties and restored peace.

Among mixed concerned faith-based organizations that have been working hard in conflict management and conflict resolution in Oromia were the Ethiopian Catholic Church, Catholic Relief Service and World Vision. For example, during the ethnic conflict of Guji Oromo and Gedeo, they organized an important forum where they brought the Gedio and Guji Oromo leaders known as Aba Gadas, local religious leaders, the youth, the Elders, both men and women and the government officials (Catholic Relief Services & World Vision, 2018).

The leaders of the three organizations included the head of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia, Hawasa Diocese's bishop and World Vision's national director. The forum entitled 'Collaborative Action for Sustainable Peace' has succeeded in bringing together the hearts of the Gedeo and Guji Oromos for positive peace. Positive peace is the peace that dares to address the root causes of the conflict (Tilahun, 2015).

Eventually, the three faith-based organizations, still working closely with the local religious, civil and government, succeeded in bringing the conflict to its end. Since then, the organizations have followed the situation on the ground to ensure that the violence ceased for good. With these attempts, they restore trust and address the root causes of the conflict through the grassroots community religious and peace actors.

In Oromia, despite the successful engagements of the religious leaders in enhancing peace and development, religious groups have also contributed towards obstructing the Christian-Muslim dialogue. This has stopped the dialogue from going forward, thus hindering peace and development. It is with this the current study sheds more light on the matter.

2.2. Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1. Objective one: history of Christian-Muslim dialogue and its narratives

Stewart (2009) argues that most conflicts are neither religious nor ethnic but nationalistic and political. Others are due to vested interests and access to resources. However, Silvestri and Mayall (2015) observe that religion being fluid; to understand how much it affects peace and development, it is important to study religion's context and history. Similarly, Baatsen (2017) argues that understanding the Christian-Muslim conflict by studying the history of Christian-Muslim relations is paramount in his qualitative empirical study. The ideas of Silvestri and Mayall, as well as Baatsen, support the argument of objective one. Considering the context and the history of conflict makes it easier to solve it.

In the context and history of Ethiopia, particularly Oromia, the current study agrees with the three authors mentioned. The conflicts between Christians and Muslims have been anchored for centuries on nationalistic, political and access to resources (Ahmed, 2006). In the history of Ethiopia, we realise how the colonial powers in search of access to the resources have tried to divide Muslims and Christians. When the Christian kings resisted the colonial rule, the colonial power (the Italian Government of the time) supported the Muslims by building Mosques and subsidising the pilgrimage to Mecca so that they weakened the nation by dividing it. The Ethiopian Muslims, seeking scarce financial resources and protection from Christian Kings, aligned with the Fascist Government (Abbink, 2011). Christians with a nationalistic and patriotic attitude hated the Muslims and took punitive measures against them, accusing them of treason. The Christian kings forbade the Muslims to own land since it was exclusively for the citizens and prohibited them from being registered in the national army, for the fear that one day, they may join the enemy and turn their guns on to the Christian soldiers. This was the alleged thinking. These became some of Ethiopia's root causes of the Christian-Muslim conflict.

Concerning ethnicity, in Ethiopia's history, most Amhara and Tigray people adhere to Christianity, while the Oromo, especially the Eastern Oromo, tend to be Islam oriented. At the same time, Christians have ruled the nation for centuries, whereas the Oromos remained oppressed by the ruling Christians. This has left strong ethnoreligious identities charged with political affiliations (Ostebo, 2014).

As Stewart (2009) alluded to, ethnicity has affected the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia in addition to religion. Although Stewart (2009) and Silvestri with Mayall (2015) agree with Moller (2006) that religion is not the primary factor for peace or violence, they differ from his argument that religion has no significant correlation with peace and violence. Stewart and Silvestri, with Mayall, argue that although religion might not be the primary factor in conflict, there is no doubt it significantly affects the process of violence and peace. Out of experience in Sudan and Ethiopia, the researcher agrees with Stewart, Silvestri and Mayall. The position of the study goes with the last argument. However, the research agrees that to comprehend to what extent religion, and ethnicity influence peace and conflict, the context and historical background should be thoroughly studied. In particular, the narrative about it by the present people is instrumental for future peace and development.

Though it must be said that the findings of Moller (2006) appear to contradict themselves, in the beginning, the research brings its conclusions showing no significant correlation between conflicts. Then, in the end, it adds another statement that Islam, Christianity, and traditional religions decrease or exacerbate conflicts. In this concept, Moller agrees with the other writers (and with objective one of the study) who state that even if religion might not be the primary cause of conflict, it is certainly an influential factor both in exacerbating and solving disputes. In addition to the historical utilisation of religion by the governments in Ethiopia, recently, when the government got into troubles of ethnoreligious conflicts, it nominated the head of the Catholic Church as the chairman of the national peace

commission. This nomination agrees with the argument of Stewart (2009), who said that religious and ethnic identities are always present during conflicts in unifying, motivating and creating trust among people.

The gap is that although the authors explain the importance of ethnoreligious historical background, they do not analyse how important its narratives among the people are. Except for Moller (2006), who discusses Ethiopia's context slightly as part of East Africa, other authors do not concentrate on the context of Ethiopia. The current study has analysed the specific context of Ethiopia, where the Oromo tend Muslims and the Amhara and Tigrians tend Christians. Concerning the methodology, the authors do not deal with the qualitative research method. Particularly Moller, Silvestri, and Mayall utilise the quantitative research method. The current study instead uses a qualitative approach in its quest to get in-depth participants' experiences on the study question. This understanding of narratives (obj. one) and the literature gap that the study addresses opens the way to the section on values (obj. two)

2.2.2. Objective two: Christian-Muslim values for enhancing dialogue

The religious values enshrined in Islam and Christianity enhance dialogue that leads to sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia. There is a common element in the findings of three empirical studies by several authors: (Barro & McCleary, 2003; Bouta et al., 2005; Schmidt et al., 2016). All religions play a crucial role in fostering the beliefs that influence individual and communitarian behaviours: carefulness, work ethics, honesty, and openness, in the adherents. These arguments support the claim of objective two in the current study, where the researcher argues that Muslims and Christians, through the values enshrined in them, enhance sustainable peace and development.

As we focus on Neufeldt (2011), it is worth noting how she connects interreligious dialogue and the theory of change using the religious values enshrined in different religions,

including Islam and Christianity. This author argues that three approaches to dialogue enhance change through religion: theological, political, and peacebuilding. The author wants to critically examine how interfaith communities using their theological political and peacebuilding approaches strengthen their dialogue, and the dialogue, in turn, brings sustainable peace. However, the current study analyses the theological and peacebuilding approach because the two are directly relevant to the subject under consideration.

According to Neufeldt (2011), the purpose of the theological dialogue by the interfaith groups is to increase each other's understanding of the in-depth spiritual and religious perspectives. In this case, understanding occurs at three levels. The first is the introductory gathering and sifting through each other's information and on each other's religious practices, belief systems, doctrines, feasts, fasting and religious and traditional (hadith) books. The second level is that of understandings that take place in the theological dialogue. This is "a sensitive awareness of how the other sees her or his own religious beliefs, practices, and community" (Neufeldt, 2011, p. 349). The third meaning of understanding is where persons go even deeper than in the first two instances; though not all the participants agree with it. This third level involves acquiring new or additional theological convictions through intensive communication in the dialogue. For example, the writer brings the example of the birth of an "Active theology" where the participants are transformed or embrace a changed understanding of their theology on some parts of their faith through a sincere common journey towards the absolute reality called God or Allah (Neufeldt, 2011).

About the theories of change, the study argues that the verbal and non-verbal dialogue on theology, religious scriptures and practices should bring about the perceived goals or changes in society. Positive and sincere listening, in-depth knowledge of each other, positive perception of each other, and positive relationship among the dialogue stakeholders are also

core. They are supported by their deeper theological mutual understanding, enhancing concrete fruits in the interreligious dialogue.

Therefore, according to Neufeldt, any established religion, including Muslims and Christians, creates a pleasant dialogue atmosphere. This is done by transforming individuals and communities by creating a safe space where the participants share deep convictions with empathy, honesty, and mutual openness. This leads to further understanding of each other through their enshrined religious values in their respective religions. This notion is founded on the belief that most conflicts occur due to unnecessary misunderstandings between people. Based on this literature, a logical chain appears; religious values enhance dialogue, and dialogue enhances peace. In addition, it can also be stated that good interfaith dialogue can directly lead to sustainable development.

The study identifies the knowledge gap in the literature's inability to address the religious values enshrined in different religions directly. For example, Neufeldt does not mention the Holy Scriptures and the traditions of different religions that tune or shape the lives of the individuals and the communities as they act differently among themselves in dialogue or they excel in their commitment to lasting peace.

Also, the literature in this section does not explicitly deal with Muslim and Christian roles in dialogue and in works of peace. The current study specifies Islam and Christianity to highlight their specific contributions toward the needed change in society in the fields of dialogue and peace. Again the author does not deal with the context of Ethiopia using the qualitative research design. The current study specifies the place and the qualitative method for the respect of the unique people with the unique experience of faith, fear, hopes, and aspirations. These uniquely affect the research outcome. The understanding of the literature on

narratives and on values sheds light on dialogue based on empirical studies. The subsequent section addresses Christian-Muslim dialogue for peace and development.

2.2.3. Objective three: Christian-Muslim dialogue for peace and development

2.2.3.1. Christian-Muslim dialogue in relation to sustainable peace

Several Authors, in their empirical studies, have argued that religion plays an important role in providing the values that influence commitments and behaviours, like resilience and giving a sense of purpose, positively seeking to make a difference in the lives of others (Barro & McCleary, 2003; Bouta et al., 2005; Schmidt et al., 2016). Faith within religion enhances the faithful's carefulness, work ethics, honesty, and openness. These arguments support the claim of objectives two and three. The researcher claims that Christians and Muslims enhance sustainable peace through their values in both objectives. Hence, the authors argue that faith-based actors positively contribute to the peace-building process in the following manners: they enhance emotional and spiritual resilience in war-affected communities; they easily mobilise their communities and other stakeholders on the ground for peace; they mediate between conflicting parties and promote reconciliation, dialogue, disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (Bouta et al., 2005). Finally, faith helps identify formation, and ideals, and offers organisational capacity that can add value to peacebuilding (Schmidt et al., 2016).

In other words, religion provides the adherents with emotional resonances, motivation and ideas that help them commit themselves to peacebuilding. Moreover, the divine influence and unique transformational role of their religious experiences certainly impact the lives and actions of their adherents (Schmidt et al., 2016). Thus, religion provides conducive structures for peacebuilding endeavours. In relation to objective three, which precisely sought to

investigate further how much religion, particularly Islam and Christianity, could bring resilience and further motivation for dialogue that leads to sustainable peace and development.

Also, in his empirical study, Janse van Rensburg (2017) found out that not all religions are always ready to collaborate. Sometimes, they do not believe in other religions' faith and traditions enshrined. According to his findings, those with an exclusivist approach believe that only their religion contains absolute truth; all other religions are empty of truth and salvation and have nothing to offer. With this, then, there is no need to dialogue with them. In Ethiopia, some Christians and Muslims do not believe that the other religions have truth and can lead to God. They say, if one wants to be saved, one should only be a follower of their religion (Hedges, 2014). Therefore, they are not interested in working together for humanitarian actions such as the concrete engagements and collaborative actions of Christians and Muslims to enhance sustainable security and peace.

Concerning the gap in analysed literature, although several types of research are positive about the role of religions in enhancing sustainable peace, they are silent about the details of adherents getting values that help them. Moreover, they do not address the content of the elements that help them. The current study investigates how and why they are resilient in the process of sustainable peace.

The resulting knowledge gap is the different contexts. Though these identified researches were conducted globally, they were not carried out in Ethiopia. The current study, instead, was carried out exclusively in Ethiopia's socio-political and religious context, which gives different content and shape to the results.

The additional gap is methodological. Except for Janse van Rensburg's, the above-analysed studies utilised the quantitative research design; due to its phenomenological approach, the current study used a qualitative research method.

2.2.3.2. Christian-Muslim dialogue and sustainable development

Bouta and Abu-Nimer (2005) and Schmidt and colleagues (2016) argue that religion plays a crucial role in enhancing sustainable development. Previously, we saw the importance of religion in fostering the faithful beliefs that influence people's behaviour by adding moral values of carefulness, work ethic, honesty, and openness (Barro & McCleary, 2003). In addition, this shows that religion is an empowering element in the process of economic development. Furthermore, religious beliefs stimulate economic growth by supporting the sustenance of individual behaviours that enhance productivity. These arguments support the second part of objective three in the current study, where it argues that the sustainable peace created by the positive interaction of Christians and Muslims supports the creation of sustainable economic development and integral development.

In their research, the primary objective of Barro and McCleary was to fill the gap that researchers had ignored before: the researchers rarely queried whether religion was a determining factor of economic growth in a country (Barro & McCleary, 2003). Barro and McClear confirm that although there are only limited empirical studies on religion's role in sustainable development, religion certainly is one of the determinant factors. Thus, the current research investigates how faith and the deep cultural values of both Muslims and Christians, through dialogue, can enhance sustainable peace. The same peace brings about development directly or indirectly in the context of Ethiopia.

Concerning the research gaps, in the context of Ethiopia, Christians and Muslims have lived together peacefully because of the values of their respective religions (Ahmed, 2006). However, some people argue that the peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims in the history of Ethiopia was based on fear and unmatched numbers. Therefore, the current study set out to find the nature of the peaceful coexistence of Ethiopia, particularly Oromia, that

continues when the Christians and Muslims become equal in number or when Muslims become the majority.

The knowledge gaps in the empirical studies related to objective three: the researchers seem not to bother or understand the causal chain or collinearity of Christian-Muslim dialogue, sustainable peace and development. The current research fills the gap by focusing on the very subject. Building sustainable development in a nation is difficult without dialogue and peace among the religions. Consequently, this study bridges the gap by bringing together dialogue, peace and sustainable development. In the literature, very little has been elaborated about how the Christians and Muslims in dialogue could build together the sustainable peace and security that leads to sustainable development. Therefore, the current research investigated how the two religious adherents enhance development through dialogue. The methodological gap is that all the researchers that have been considered used quantitative design. Therefore, the present study instead utilizes the qualitative research method.

2.3. Main Theoretical Framework: Intergroup Threat Theory

2.3.1. The meaning and its relevance to the study

Intergroup Threat Theory entails the reactions and behaviours of a group against the perceived threat or the threat actually posed to the group. The threat could be realistic or symbolic (W. G. Stephan et al., 2016). Realistic threat refers to physical harm or a loss of resources posing a danger to some or the whole group's power, resources and general welfare. The symbolic threat is the risk that negatively affects one's identity, values or integrity, religion, or even beliefs. Intergroup or the members of a group that feel mutually belonging to each other and guarantor of each other's security, respond to the threats could be cognitive, emotional or behavioural. These reactions may affect, the group's withdrawal, intolerance and

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deep feelings of hatred. These feelings cause the physical and psychological mutual distancing of the in-group and out-group.

In the context of the current research, mutual exclusions and withdrawals threaten the collaboration and mutual support of Christians and Muslims depending on the places and situations as well as their number and power. Honest and equity-based dialogue between Christians and Muslims is perceived as having the ability to decrease the intergroup mutual distancing and be replaced by its mutual closeness and cooperation needed for sustainable peace and development. Hence, the study focuses on addressing the dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia for sustainable peace and development; therefore, it uses the Intergroup Threat Theory as its main theoretical framework.

Since Stephan and Stephan (2000) coined the Intergroup Threat Theory in the late 1990s, the theory became very instrumental in ethnoreligious studies. In our pluralistic world, people are in various social, religious, race, ideology, economic and cultural groups, each group forming its social groups with their group identities (Janse van Rensburg, 2017). Those groups have specific criteria for belonging. With this understanding, it is evident that one particular membership includes some and excludes others according to the requirements of a group membership. The current study shows that the intergroup threat theory helps to identify and explain the interconnectedness and exclusivist approaches of the diverse groups of Muslims and Christians.

Riek (2006, p. 336) defines the intergroup threat as "when one group's actions, beliefs, or characteristics challenge the goal attainment or well-being of another group." According to Janse van Rensburg (2017), those who coined the theory observed the existence of four types of threats which were later reduced to two kinds: realistic and symbolic threats, which are explained in the introduction of the theory (W. G. Stephan et al., 2016). The Intergroup Threat Theory in its first part deals with sustainable peace and development, whereas its second part

deals with Christian-Muslim dialogue that focuses on religious identities and values. Therefore, the theory substantially informs most of the aspects of the research. Also, the choice of the theory comes from the experience of Riek (2006), Nelson (2009), McCormck (2012) and Janse van Rensburg (2017), who have already applied the theory successfully in the Ethnoreligious fields.

Like any socio-cultural group, Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia, particularly Oromia, have specific criteria for belonging to Islam and Christians. They have their specific rules of belonging to the Christian or Muslim families. Both groups make hard decisions, including some and excluding others according to their culture and religion. Eventually, those who follow Islam become members of one group and those who follow Christianity make another group. According to the intergroup theory, members of a group share the benefits exclusively available to them. The group members have specific rules, values and norms that define them differently from others.

Nelson (2009) adds an important aspect of Intergroup Threat Theory: the reaction occurs according to the threat felt in that circumstance, both as a group or as an individual. Depending on the authority or power that one group or individuals possess, the reaction defines their perceived threats. People react to the felt threats according to their position and power in society or in a particular group. In the case of the current study, Muslims were an insignificant minority and possessed very little power leverage in the country. Consequently, they reacted mildly or withdrew into their ghettoes until a favourable situation presented. In this light, the authenticity of the so-called Ethiopian Christian-Muslim peaceful coexistence could be questioned. Some people may argue that there was peace because there was a power and a number imbalance between Muslims and Christians.

However, today in the Oromia Region, Muslims are the majority, and Christians are the minority. A dilemma is noted when it is accepted that true dialogue can only occur between

equals in economic, political and numerical senses. Eventually, the study recognises that intergroup threat provokes different responses or reactions towards those who pose a threat. As Jansen van Rensburg (2017) and Nelson (2009) recognise, there are three types of responses: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural.

1. The cognitive response indicates the threatened group responding with stereotypical reactions such as ethnocentrism, intolerance and hatred, criticism, biases, and suspicions.

2. Emotional responses of the intergroup comprise fear, anxiety, anger and resentment, which develops deep empathy and solidarity within the group, and apathy as well as deep feelings of hatred towards the threatening group

3. The behavioural response includes a range of withdrawals to discrimination, lying, stealing, intimidation, shaming and harassment. This reaction could result in full-blown hostility towards the out-group. The in-group can serve the relationship by adding more boundaries and measures of exclusions. Fundamentalist attitudes could be born from extreme reactions of this kind (Nelson, 2009).

The question is, how can the realistic and symbolic Intergroup threat be reduced? Janse van Rensburg (2017), borrowing the concepts of Stephen and Mealy, argues that some declarations of peace, paying compensation and prosecuting those who commit crimes against humanity would help reduce the intergroup threat. In the case of reducing intergroup symbolic threats, removing and outlawing the offensive symbols should be helpful. Also, the in-group and out-group members would sign the internal memorandum and go out on media to promote the new shared understandings of peace and reconciliation.

For all these, being engaged in a continuous dialogue is key to reducing threats and maintaining peace. With this, the present study seeks to explore sustainable peace and development and how this could be enhanced through inter-religious dialogue, as shown in the

next section. Therefore, in this study, it is presumed that the Intergroup Threat Theory applies to the Christian-Muslim dialogue and sustainable peace and development under real threats and symbolic threats. The study argues that the theory explains the three objectives of the research substantially.

2.3.2. Application of the theory to the objectives of the research

2.3.2.1. Objective one: historical Christian-Muslim Relationship

Although Christians and Muslims have lived together in Ethiopia since the 7th century (Baatsen, 2017), Muslims have been the minority while Christians have been the majority. Christians have oppressed Muslims (Ahmed, 2006). According to the intergroup threat theory, Muslims felt and acted as the in-group against the threat of the Christian out-group in Ethiopia for centuries. At times the threat was realistic provoking fear for their lives and their precious scanty resources. Other times the Muslims experienced the symbolic intergroup threat as explained in the subsequent paragraph.

As the realistic threat theory indicates, Muslims have lived under threat and felt the threat of physical harm and loss of resources as individuals and as the Muslim community. They reacted with stereotype semi-segregation attitudes. They reflected ethnocentrism and Islam centrism, intolerance, hatred, criticism, biases, prejudice and suspicions towards Christians.

Other times Muslim reactions to the threat of Christians were emotional. This is where the victim feels a threat to their very lives and to their property. When they feel symbolically threatened, their identity, values, religion, beliefs and cultures are in danger. Their emotional reactions are realised in fear, anxiety, anger and resentment to a point where they develop a self-protective group with deep empathy and solidarity with their group. They also express

deep hatred and apathy, which goes to the extremes of enjoying the suffering of the Christians in some areas of the country (Janse van Rensburg, 2017).

Similar to a narrative approach, emotions and grudges are inherited from one generation to another and transferred from one place to another. The Muslims who have experienced the various threats on the broader Ethiopia regarding Oromia reveal themselves with a sense of revenge. Particularly, the oppressors and the majority on the level of the whole country now are a vulnerable minority in Oromia. They are in-group at the mercy of the majority, the Muslims. In objective one, the current study seeks to evaluate the feelings of revenge and fear. The study also intends to weigh the risks of resurfacing violence and the chances of dialogue and peace between Christians and Muslims in Oromia.

In the light of the intergroup threat theory, the question becomes, what is the nature of the new relationship between Christians and Muslims today in Oromia particularly and in Ethiopia generally? And what is the role of interfaith dialogue between Muslims and Christians?

From the Intergroup Threat Theory, the study wants to find out the root causes of Christian-Muslim conflict through the critical analysis of the narratives of Christians and Muslims in Addis Ababa about the Oromia region. How do those individuals perceive the chronological events among the Christians and Muslims in Oromia? What is their experience when Muslims were the in-group and when they became out-group now? What is the experience of the Christians who became the minority in-group now? What is the prospect of future Christian-Muslim dialogue in the Oromia Region?

2.3.2.2. Objective two: the importance of the religious values

Christians and Muslims have the Holy Scriptures that the respective adherents believe to be the word of God given to guide them on how to relate with Allah/God and with each

other. For instance, Muslims fast for the whole month, the month of *Ramadan,* in which they believe that God gave his word to Prophet Muhammad. This fasting is in gratitude to God, who gave them the Qur'an *Al Karim*. In the holy book, the Qur'an, Muslims find direct and indirect guidelines on relating with Christians and Jews. Also, Christians in the Bible have several quotations both in the Old Testament and New Testament that guide them on how to relate with their neighbours, including Muslims.

Christians and Muslims have strong and concrete bases for engaging in dialogue in their Holy Scriptures. One of the purposes of dialogue is to establish mutual respect and trust. On the line of Intergroup Threat Theory, the dialogue that has a strong scriptural foundation reduces fear and each other's suspicion by establishing reciprocal respect and trust. When this attitudinal change becomes the new norm for the Christian-Muslim relationship, dialogue becomes sustainable, leading to sustainable dialogue and peace between the two religions. In the case of Oromia, in Ethiopia, revisiting the positive scriptural bases of the dialogue in the Qur'an and the Bible gives a good prospect for sustainable peace, opening doors to sustainable development. When the dialogue of the most prominent religions of the country stands solid, sustainable peace and development are likely to be realized.

2.3.2.3. Objective three: the dialogue for peace and development

In both Islam and Christianity, there is a common understanding that it is God's will to eradicate wars and contradictions, creating peace as the sign of the kingdom of God, which is "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom.: 14: 17) on earth. Muslims argue that God/Allah wants the whole person's well-being through the perfect obedience to God by the perfect law of God – Sharia (Mohamed & Baqutayan, 2011).

In countries with reciprocal respect and collaboration through dialogue, all the concentration and budget allocations are directed towards addressing the sustainability of peace

and development. Through the established channels of dialogue, both Christians and Muslims prioritise the matters that could interrupt the journey of peace. Long-lived grievances that effect the reciprocal exclusions and self-protections are addressed. Religious, socio-cultural injustices and biases are slowly minimised. This is realised because when Christians and Muslims unite in an in-depth dialogue, they are able to identify the root causes of the problems and know what to do. According to the Intergroup Threat Theory, when genuine dialogue creates sustainable peace, the in-group and out-group feel secure.

In the history of Ethiopia, Muslims reacted to the Christian majority and leadership as follows: withdrawing into secluded ghettos, aligning with external powers such as the Italian colonial forces (Ahmed, 2006), or asking for assistance from Egypt, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and Saud Arabia (Ostebo, 2014). One of the main reasons for this was that there was no dialogue and peace on equal footing. They felt threatened by the Christians, who were the majority and had political and economic power. Today, In the Oromia region, the same has started to happen to Christians.

The Intergroup Threat Theory is instrumental in the field of interreligious dialogue. Although the theory explains the importance of the interreligious dialogue for peace, this study realises that the theory does not explain fully how the peace created by the fruitful Christian-Muslim dialogue can positively influence sustainable development. It does it only indirectly. The section talks about reducing suspicion and enhancing communication; consequently, those whose suspicion and mutual exclusions are minimised by the sincere dialogue will collaborate for peace and development. It is envisaged that although the theory is weak in addressing the issue of oppression and inequalities, which are the major factors for the conflict between Christians and Muslims in Oromia, Ethiopian, the study intends to complete the weaker side of the theory by another supplementary theory and by carrying out an empirical inquiry guided by the three research objectives.

2.4. Supplementary Theory: Critical Social Theory

2.4.1. The meaning and relevance of the theory

Although the Intergroup Threeat Theory explains the importance of the interreligious dialogue for peace and development, it was noticed that the theory does not explain well enough how the peace created by the Christian-Muslim dialogue can enhance sustainable development. The theory explains what happens when there is a threat to the minority or less powerful group, but it does not go to its root causes, providing the solutions to the problem by tackling the issues of injustice and exclusions. Hence, the research adds the Critical Social Theory (CST).

The Critical Social Theory was propagated by the Frankfurt School while renewing the Marxist theory. The reflection of Marxism on the line of Critical Social Theory was started by Horkheimer and Adorno and finally elaborated by Marcuse and Habermas in the 1960s (Agger, 2006).

CST deals with justice, emancipation, free will, self-determination and human potentialities to create a new future inconsistent with the past history. CST highlights the potentiality of human beings endowed with the power to create a totally different future by consciously addressing the present injustices with creativity and self-determination as well as deliberately delivering a fresh, unexpected future. In particular, the CST aims at initiating human emancipation based on the endowed resilience of the people. CST is the proponent of the concept that the present situation may put pressure on individuals or communities but cannot determine their future. Instead, suppose people are properly made conscious of the situation and properly empowered. In that case, they can create a new future by addressing the root cause of the problem and taking responsibility for altering it. Thus, human beings can write their history anew by redefining their present and future structures. They can renew their economic, social, religious, ethnic, and political systems within equity and inclusivity.

2.4.2. Application of the theory

The Critical Social Theory is mainly applied to objective three: to assess the impact of the Christian-Muslim dialogue on sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia. In order to enhance sustainable peace and development, Christians and Muslims have to address the root causes of the conflicts and poverty. Muslims, mainly the Oromo ethnic groups, were excluded from power and were oppressed on various levels. The theory addresses the issues of injustice and inequalities and is the guarantor of a fresh future not affected by past grievances.

2.5. Conceptual Framework and Its Integration with the Theoretical Framework

Figure 2 highlights the main logical flow of factors culminating in sustainable peace and development. However, the study is well aware of the intertwined nature of all the elements affecting each other positively and negatively, back and fro. It could even be said that the movement is multi-directional.

The "Narrative about the history of Muslim and Christian relationship" to "Christian-Muslim Dialogue" signifies that the proper understanding of the history of the Christian-Muslim relationship contributes substantially to the successful Christian-Muslim dialogue. When one understands concrete historical factors, they correct their narrative about the event because they widen the scope within which they look at it.

The arrow from "The religious values enshrined in Islam and Christianity" leading to "Christian-Muslim Dialogue" signifies how the Muslim and Christian religious values add value and enhance the Christian-Muslim dialogue that creates sustainable peace and development. When Christians and Muslims rediscover and utilise the religious values in their respective religions, their dialogue is strengthened and concretised.

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┌─────────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Independent Variable│  │ Intervening Variable│  │ Dependent Variables │
└─────────────────────┘  └─────────────────────┘  └─────────────────────┘
```
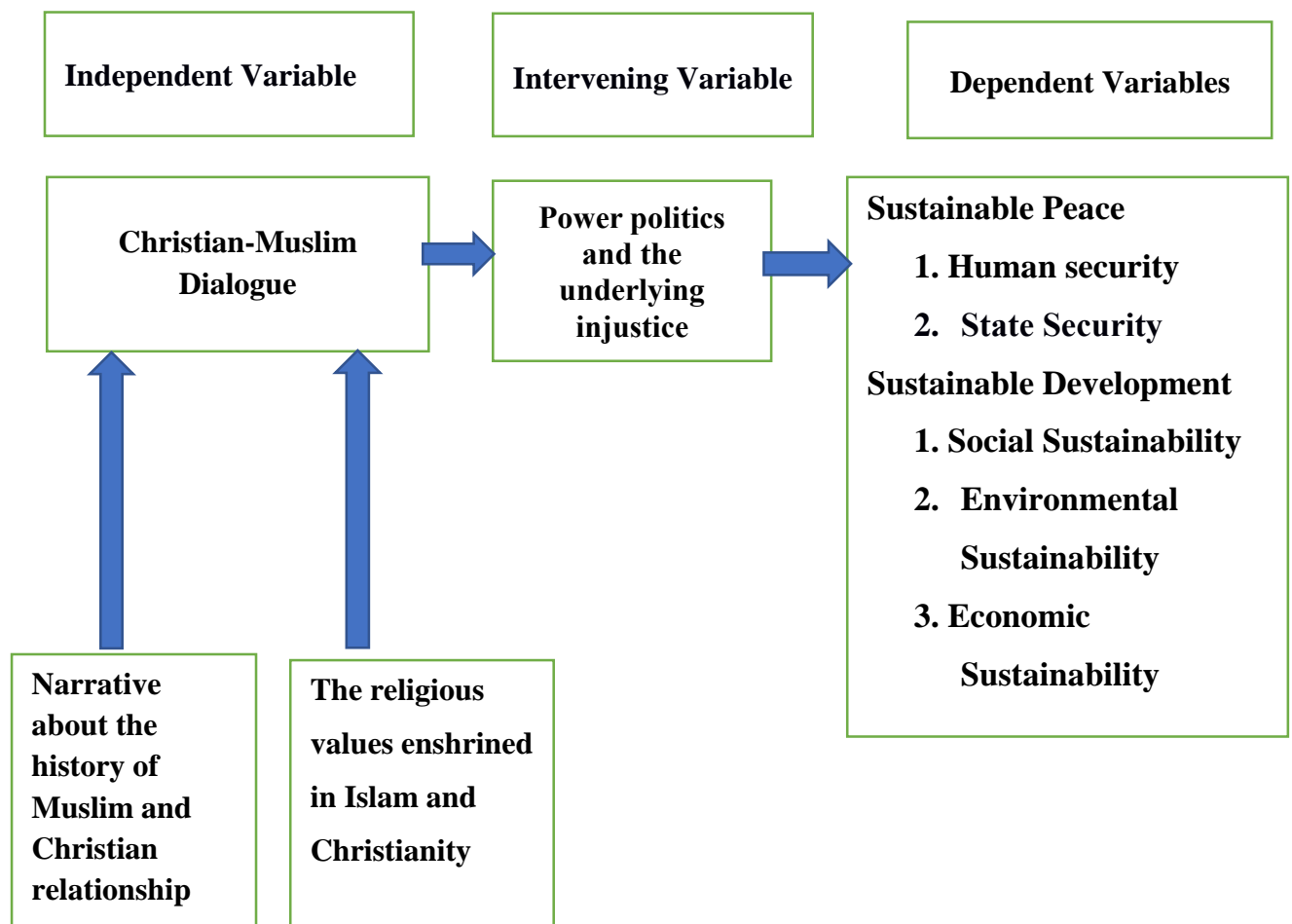
Figure 2. *Original Conceptual Framework*

Source: Author

They have clearer religious motives to be engaged in a true dialogue. The tension subsides when Christians and Muslims investigate and deliberately employ their religious values to the threats they pose to each other about the intergroup threat theory. The opportunity of collaborating to address the root causes of ethnoreligious and political injustices grows stronger. Dialogue grows, and conflict gives way to sustainable peace as well as development.

It must also be admitted that it is not automatic that Christian-Muslim dialogue enhances sustainable development and peace. Many intervening factors can hamper success or accelerate it. For instance, state power politics and the historical and present injustices could

derail the Christian-Muslim dialogue. In the history of Ethiopia, religion was used, abused and even put aside altogether. In the history of Ethiopia, during the Amhara and Tigrian Christian kings, religion was a strong instrument for ruling. During the reign of the Christian kings, Christian religion being the state religion, all other religions were at times considered irrelevant or even a threat to the ruling monarchs (Ahmed, 2006). Like in the period of The *Derg* Regime (1974-1991), religion was considered the opium of the people. Today, although the national government officially follows a secular constitution, some regional governments might incline toward one religion more than others and use religion as an instrument for their vested political interests. This could be another obstacle to successful dialogue between Muslims and Christians.

The issues of injustice and socio-religious grievances can negatively influence the Christian-Muslim dialogue. When there is gross human rights violence against one religious or ethnic group, smooth dialogue is hindered. For better sustainable peace and development through dialogue, the governments, Muslims, Christians, and civil society have to address those intervening grievances. A particular failure of the government to act and react appropriately against religious affairs not only limits the positive result of Christian-Muslim dialogue in enhancing peace and development but also paralyses the whole system. Therefore, although the current study is aware of the present delicate and transitional nature of the political atmosphere, the Christian-Muslim dialogue's success in enhancing sustainable peace and development is heavily conditioned by the goodwill and the ability of political efficiency of the government to handle wisely the political power. Only then can they address the socio-religious grievances in Oromia but also in the whole country.

When power politics and the underlying injustice issues are addressed through the dialogue and collaboration of the country's two major religions with the government, sustainable peace and development have better chances of thriving. If there is no positive

dialogue and peace among the prominent religions of the country (Magonet, 2015), there cannot be sustainable peace and development. The intervening variables highlight that the Christian-Muslim dialogue in the Oromia region does not automatically enhance sustainable peace and development. These are ethnoreligious political questions and the underlying injustice issues. Muslims, Christians, and government organs need to collaborate to achieve sustainable peace and development.

In conclusion, the research draws its conceptual framework from the links between dialogue, peace, and sustainable development assisted by the intervening variables of ethnoreligious power politics and the underlying injustices in the Oromia region. It argues that for sustainable peace and development in Oromia, there must be a real understanding of Ethiopia's Christian-Muslim history, which addresses the social and religious injustices.

Summary

In empirical research, chapter two, which focuses on the theoretical literature review, is the key to the entire work. The review flows from the objectives of the inquiry, both conceptual and empirical. It has looked at each variable and the objectives of the study. The reviewed literature informs the gap that the current study addressed.

As for the theoretical literature review section, the chapter elucidates the Intergroup Threat Theory as its theoretical framework for most of the investigation. The theory's contribution and link to the research objectives are given. The research also observes the limitation of the theory. Hence, it shows how to address them with the help of the Critical Social Theory. It envisages filling the weakness of the theoretical framework of its empirical research in the Oromia region in Ethiopia. To realise the objectives, the study intends to make the best use of the profound experiences of the participants. Finally, the chapter has outlined

the conceptual framework. The directions of the arrows indicate the main causality of the effects on the appropriate variables.

The following chapter highlights the methodology the researcher used to collect and analyse the data, keeping a thorough scientific and ethical approach.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

      This chapter explains the methodology of the study. It starts with the research design and the approach used to guide the study. Following that, it presents the location of the study. This is followed by the target population, the sampling technique and sample size. Next, the research validity and reliability are discussed. The last section addresses the data collection instruments followed by the data analysis procedures used. In the end, ethical considerations are presented.

3.1. Research Design

      The study employs a qualitative research method. This method accounts for a unique situation of the place, the participants, and the target population in their natural context (Creswell, 2013). Hence, the current qualitative research has listened to the experiences and the voices of Christians and Muslims in Oromia, particularly the research participants in Addis Ababa. Moreover, during the data collection and analysis, the researcher was aware of the peculiar and sensitive relationship between Christians and Muslims in Oromia. Therefore, the qualitative research was tuned to these unique settings and went deep into the history of the Christian-Muslim relationship in Oromia.

      Because many scholars on qualitative research argue that qualitative research goes deep to explore, understand and interpret the meaning of social phenomena (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In the context of Oromia, the qualitative research method, going to the details about the relationship helped figure out the real

problem and spotted the possible solutions to the problem of Christian-Muslim dialogue and the subsequent conflicts and poverty. It did so by carefully listening to the historical and present emotional aspects. The qualitative research method helped the researcher to dig deep into the historical discriminations and injustices in the Oromia region to address the current feelings and grievances of the Oromos, particularly Muslim-Oromos. Similarly, the method helped to understand the preoccupations, worries, and fear of the Amharas and Tigrians, the physical and psychological wounds of both sides, the hopes for true dialogue and the subsequent direction of the Christian-Muslim relationship.

In the context of the Oromia Region and Ethiopia, many Muslims have deep feelings of anger for the past years of oppression under the Christian kings. Also, Christians who are a minority in the Oromia region fear being targeted as objects of revenge. Qualitative research gave heed to those real threats and historical injustices in the context. Therefore, in the current study, the qualitative research approach helped understand the complex and multi-layered relationships between Ethiopia's Muslims and Christians, particularly of Oromia.

There are five qualitative research approaches in the qualitative research method: narrative research, case studies, grounded theory, phenomenology, and participatory action research (Butina, 2015; Creswell, 2007). The current research takes two of the above approaches: phenomenological and narrative.

3.1.1. Phenomenological approach

In the qualitative research frame, the phenomenological approach deals with understanding and describing or giving meaning to the experience of individuals or groups of people about a common phenomenon. The phenomenological approach "describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007, p. 76). This approach asks what phenomenon was experienced and how the phenomenon was experienced to come to new knowledge on the perspective. In the current research, in objectives two and three, the phenomenon experienced by the individuals and groups of individuals was in two: the role of religious values in enhancing dialogue and the importance of Christian-Muslim dialogue in enhancing sustainable peace and development.

In its objectives two and three, this research utilised the phenomenological approach, banking on the lived experience of Christians and Muslims to enhance dialogue that leads to sustainable peace and development. In the country's history, their dialogue was instrumental in making Ethiopia one of the fast-growing African countries for more than a decade before the current socio-political upheaval.

3.1.2. Narrative Approach

Narrative inquiry is primarily interested in the coherent stories that human beings make from their everyday scattered and often conflicting experiences (Murray, 2018). Also, Creswell (2007), in his definition of the narrative approach, brings the importance of spoken or written texts which give an account of events or actions chronologically connected. The narrative approach was used to help focus on the experience stories by individuals or a small number of individuals. Both Constant

(2017) and Murray (2018) identify several methods of narrative evaluation: narrative interviews, research diaries, photo essays, letters, dramas and documentary films. This approach is significant in collecting and analysing historical studies. Therefore, the study used the narrative approach under the general qualitative research method, particularly for objective one. The study used the most popular source of narrative data for its data collection method - the interviews (Murray, 2018).

3.2. Location of the Study

The research location is Addis Ababa, the major city of Oromo and the capital city of Ethiopia. Before explaining the reason for choosing Addis Ababa as the research location, it is worth highlighting the rationale for choosing the Oromia region. Oromia has interesting religious demographics where the Christian-Muslim element is crucial. The Oromia region indicates the country's future direction – from the Christian majority to the Muslim majority. Allegedly, the Oromia region has been excluded from high executive power positions in the governments for centuries, hence grievances that can derail the peace and development of the Oromia region and Ethiopia. Besides, the Oromia region has been the insertion place for the researcher from 2013-to 2017. He worked in education, peace, development, and interfaith dialogue.

As concerns the choice of Addis Ababa, for the exact location of the research, although the capital of Oromia had moved from Addis to Adama for five years (2000-2005), now Addis Ababa is both the capital of Oromia and the nation's capital simultaneously. Ethiopia is divided into nine Ethnic Federal Regions. The Oromia region is the biggest of them, both in size and population. As a result, the city of Addis Ababa has been a hotspot of Oromo-Amhara/Tigray controversies showing the country's real situation.

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Since Addis Ababa became the nation's capital city in 1887 under Emperor Menelek II, the Oromo Ethnic group, the original inhabitants, and the ruling classes Amhara and Tigrians have been at loggerheads with each other. Moreover, Addis Ababa is a metropolitan city where many religious, governmental, and NGOs reside in. Hence the researcher saw the opportunity to connect with religious leaders such as Bishops, Sheikhs, and experts in the field of dialogue, peace, and development who understand, and analyse the challenges of Christian-Muslim coexistence and perceive the opportunities that exist in the future.

 Figure 3. *Ethiopian: Regions and Zones*
Source: ReliefWeb (2003)

Figure 3 shows the position of Addis Ababa. The source of the map is the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (ReliefWeb, 2003). The map shows how the country is divided into nine regions, how Addis Ababa is located at the centre of the Oromia region, and how Addis Ababa is the contested capital of the nation simultaneously.

The ruling authority of the time (Minelek II) turned a simple town into the nation's capital. This was done as the name of the city changed from *Finfinne* to Addis Ababa without the consent of the inhabitants (Ahmed, 2006). Even today, one of the hottest confrontations between the Oromo Ethnic group and the ruling party is hinged on the question of the land in Addis Ababa.

Also, there have been confrontations between the government and the allegedly Muslim extremists in Addis Ababa for quite a long period (Abbink, 2014). The question has been; to whom does Addis Ababa belong? The present residents are mixtures of the Oromos and other ethnic groups from all over the country. In addition, there is another contested issue regarding the city expansion plan of the previous and partially the present ruling party. Therefore, the current study recognises Addis Ababa as capable of demonstrating sufficiently the Oromia region's historical and current Ethno-political nature. Let it be noted that most of the Amhara and Tigray who reside in Addis adhere to Christianity, especially to the Orthodox Church, while many of the Oromo adhere to Islam (Ostebo, 2008).

Another reason for choosing Addis Ababa as the location of the study was that it is the residence of the different religious and non-religious relevant organisations for Christian-Muslim dialogue. Therefore, the study utilised participants in this region because of their unique experiences, expertise, and interest in the importance of

Christian-Muslim dialogue for sustainable peace and development. For instance, there are national offices for the Interreligious Council of Ethiopia, the African Union offices, the government religious affairs offices, and an academic Institute for Peace and Security under the Addis Ababa University.

3.3. Target Population

Addis Ababa has 527 square kilometres of area. Approximately the population density is 5165 individuals per square. The target population, therefore, included the whole residents of Addis Ababa. Addis Ababa is in the Oromia region. According to the World Population Review, in 2021, the population of Addis Ababa was 5,005,524 (World Population Review, 2022). There are many ethnic groups and religious denominations. With these inclusions, it is worth putting the statistics into context

According to the latest census, which took place in 2007, the population of Ethiopia was 73.7 million (Abbink, 2011). It is worth mentioning that Oromia is the biggest and most populated region in the entire country. The census found out that by then, it had a population of 27,158,818, the next most populated region was Amhara, and it had 17,214,056. Although the Amhara region is not the next biggest region, it is relevant mentioning the population of Tigray: 431,456. The country's religious demography showed that 62% were Christians, 34% were Muslims, and the remaining traditional religious followers (Abbink, 2011; Ostebo, 2008).

During the same census, the religious demography of Oromia showed that the Christians were 48.1%, and Muslims were 47.6%. The number of Muslims was 990,109 during the census taken in 2007. Christianity in Amhara region was 81.6% in the previous census, which took place in 1994. However, there is no clear identification

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in the last census in 2007. Christianity in Tigray was 96%, whereas Muslims were only 4%.

According to the recent statistics by World Population Review, the religious demographics of Addis Ababa, both Orthodox and Protestants counted at 85.9%, Muslims 12.7%, and the followers of other Christians, including Catholics, were less than 1% of the city's population (World Population Review, 2020). Although it is difficult to find the exact number of ethnic segregations level, almost half of the population are Amharas. The next biggest groups are Oromos, Gurage, and Tigrians, followed by other minority groups (World Population Review, 2022).

3.4. Sampling Technique and Sample Size

3.4.1. Sampling technique

Qualitative research utilises several types of nonprobability samples. They are purposive, snowball, quota, and convenience sampling techniques (DeCarlo, 2018). The current research utilised the snowball sampling technique to locate the needed population of the participants. The reason for using this technique was to minimise any bias on the part of the researcher while guaranteeing the security of the participants and of the researcher's assistant. Dealing with peace and security, particularly Christian-Muslim dialogue, involves security challenges. Therefore, the security of the participants and the researchers needed to be guaranteed (Etikan, 2016). Hence, the researcher used snowball sampling techniques.

3.4.2. Sample size

There are several opinions concerning the number of participants in the qualitative research. Creswell suggests that between five and 25 are enough for qualitative research. However, Mason (2010) brings two criteria. First, instead of looking at the number of participants, the researcher needs to focus on the saturation point of the information needed for the research. A group of researchers supported the importance of watching the saturation point (Vasileiou et al., 2018).   Second, after analysing 560 PhD types of research that utilised qualitative research methods, Mason concludes that between 15 and 50 participants are accepted. The average is 20 participants. For these reasons, the current research utilised 43 participants. Furthermore, the research enhanced this. For the FGDs, the allotted time was about one hour and a half, whereas the average time for the single informants was between 45 minutes and one hour. Hence the information gathered was deep and enormous.

There were seven Key Interview Informants (KII) and one Focus Group Discussion (FGD3) for the data collection of objective one. There were five members in the FGD. The total sample size for objective one was 12 participants. There were eight KIIs and one FGD (FGD4) for Objective two. There were five participants in the FGD. The total number was 13 participants. For objectives one and two, the participants were religious leaders and ordinary people. Objective three used eight KIIs and two FGDs (FGD1 and FGD2). In each FGD, there were five participants. The total was 18 participants: experts, religious leaders, and ordinary people.   Hence, the total sample size was 43 participants. Therefore, for clarification, there were four categories of participants only: Christian leaders, Muslim leaders, experts, and ordinary people. All the participants had their faith, which they adhered to. Except for the religious

leaders, the others stood not for their religious identity but for their professional knowledge and expertise.

The reasons for opting to include seven KIIs for objectives one, and eight KIIs for objectives two and three, were the importance the researcher gave to answering the main research questions. Particularly, the third research question was the main research question of the entire research, and that is reflected in the main research objective. Objectives two and three were crucial in addressing the main research objective: to explore the Christian-Muslim dialogue for sustainable peace and development in the Oromia Region in Ethiopia.

The data collection technique used triangulation to draw the necessary information from different sources. It utilised interviews and FGDs and used secondary data from the literature. The religious leaders were a Cardinal from the Catholic Church, a Mufti or a head Sheikh of Muslims who is the religious legal highest authority in the country; there were two leading nationally recognised pastors of different Protestant Churches; there were ordinary sheikhs and priests among them. The political elites, artists, and professional leaders were also interviewed. In addition, people from critically important organisations such as the AU and IRCE were also interviewed. Unfortunately, there were no participants from Abba Gadas because their residences were mostly outside Addis Ababa. However, we had other participants who knew the importance of Abba Gada. Pseudo names following the APA system represent the participants' real names.

Table 1. *Sample Size of Participants*

Objectives	Christian Leaders	Muslim leaders	Experts	Ordinary people	Total
1	5	4		3	**12**
2	6	5		2	**13**
3	4	2	7	5	**18**
Total	**15**	**11**	**7**	**10**	**43**

Source: Author

3.5. Research Instruments

The research employed interview guides for the interviews and focus group guides for focus group discussion to collect data (Kothari, 2011). Both instruments had open-ended and semi-structured questions (Creswell, 2013).

3.6. Pilot Study

A pilot study "is important for improving the quality and efficiency of the main study" (In, 2017, p. 601). The current research pilot study was carried out in Hawasa town to guarantee the quality and efficiency of the main study in Addis Ababa. Hawasa Town is 278.9 Km South of Addis Ababa. The town is located outside the Oromia region in the Southern Nations and Nationalities. The interview took place between the researcher and a religious leader online with the help of the research assistant in the location. However, the data from the pilot study was not included in the main study.

3.7. Validity and Reliability

Validity in qualitative research design significantly differs from validity in quantitative research design. This qualitative research aimed to strike a balance between rigour and subjectivity and creativity in the scientific process (Whittemore et al., 2001). As an empirical study, the research took account of reflexivity, factoring in the participants' unique experiences and the context. As a result, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability replaced reliability, validity and generalisability, preferred in quantitative research (Creswell, 2007). This study, therefore, sought to minimise bias and enhance objectivity and rigour without denying the importance of subjectivity in qualitative research.

Due to the coronavirus restrictions, the researcher carried out a partial member-checking of the data collected with the participants after recording and transcribing. The process and the result of data collection were shared with peers and other relevant groups to guarantee credibility and reliability. The researcher hired a research assistant to minimise bias and subjectivity. Triangulation was an additional means of checking the validity. Various participants asked similar questions, and similarities and differences in their responses were observed to achieve this.

The study fully involved both Muslim and Christian participants. The findings were shared among different interested and concerned people who evaluated the process as well as the outcomes before the final presentation. The researcher was aware of the balance needed between self-bracketing to minimise bias and courage to understand the context and the meaning, helped by his profound experiences in the field (Kothari, 2011).

3.8. Data Collection Procedure

All three objectives used key informants and focus group discussions. However, physical meeting with the participant was impossible due to the set international and national protocols resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the researcher personally collected the data online, particularly utilising Zoom, Facebook, and ordinary telephone calls.

3.9. Data Analysis

The study was aware that the qualitative research method collects textual data. Therefore, the analysis started with transcribing the recorded data into textual data. This was done verbatim to ensure that nothing was lost. Since the language used by the participants was either English or Amharic, two assistants were contacted, one for each language. Table 2 gives a summary of the data collection and analysis procedures.

Constant (2017) and Murry (2018) identify several methods of narrative evaluation: narrative interviews, research diaries, photo essays, letters, dramas and documentary films. Among those, a narrative interview approach is most common. The interviewers are asked open-ended questions designed to receive an answer in a narrative form, avoiding 'how' and 'why' questions as they concentrate on 'what' and 'when' questions that invite the stories that are specific and rich in detail (Constant & Roberts, 2017).

Narrative research appears to be appropriate in the context of the Oromia region and Ethiopia, with a history marred by socio-political and ethnoreligious conflicts. Therefore, objective one of the current research was to examine the narratives prevalent among the population. The objective sought to analyse the current "narrative" among

Christian-Muslim leaders and ordinary people in Addis Ababa about the historical

Christian-Muslim relationship in Oromia.

Table 2. *Data Collection and Analysis Matrix*

Objectives	Sample size	Method	Instrument	Method of Analysis
Objective one	12 participants &1 FGD (5)	Interviews Interviews	Interview Guide FGD Guide	Narrative data analysis Narrative data analysis
Objective two	13 participants &1 FGD (5)	Interviews Interview	Interview Guide FGD Guide	Thematic data analysis Thematic data analysis
Objective three	18 participants & 2 FGDs (10)	Interviews Interviews	Interview Guide. FGD Guide	Thematic data analysis Thematic data analysis

Source: Author

There are four types of data analysis in qualitative research: thematic, content

analysis, discourse analysis, and narrative analysis. The current study used narrative

data analysis for objective one and thematic data analysis for objectives two and three.

The narrative data analysis technique is appropriate for analysing and evaluating

qualitative data, providing information on what the participants say about themselves

and about the subject under study (Hammond, 2019). And finally, a few prominent

stories or narratives that emerged were picked up to get to the findings of the research.

The thematic data analysis allowed the coding and generating themes and sub-

themes. This was done with the help of Nvivo 12. The themes were corroborated and

legitimised as per the study objectives (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Between the

two objectives, there were 11 themes, and more than 50 sub-themes were identified. These fell within the average given by Saldana (Saldana, 2016), that codes denoting themes and sub-themes need to be between 50 and 300, and advises a later reduction to between 15 and 29.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

Before collecting the data, the study obtained an authorisation letter from Tangaza University College Research and Ethics Committee (TUCREC) written on the 8[th] of April, 2020. This was followed by authorisation from the Ethiopian Embassy in Nairobi and the National Ministry of Peace in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. These three authorisations allowed the participants to interact (cf. the Appendices).

The study implemented security and privacy laws prescribed by the country's constitution to ensure that the participants were not harmed. As soon as contact was established with individuals and FGD participants by the snowball data collection technique, it was explained that they were free to join, refuse to join, and withdraw at any time of the data collection process. Eventually, one opted not to join the process and was freely allowed to do so. It was also explained to them that the participation was a voluntary activity to contribute to the peace and development of the Oromia region and Ethiopia.

Due to the danger the coronavirus posed to the people by then, the process of data collection was carried out online. The role of the assistant researcher was crucial in facilitating the snowballing and fixing the meetings with the individual and group participants. For the sake of the researcher taking full responsibility for data, the interviews were always by the researcher. However, the one who organised most of

the encounters for the interview and focused group discussions was the assistant researcher. Sometimes he was present on the site. Other times he contacted other gatekeepers to collaborate on the interviews. However, during the interviews, he could not be present physically due to the participants' coronavirus protocols and privacy.

Before everything started, each participant was informed of the research requirements and the role they were meant to play. After getting full information, the participants were asked to consent to the recordings due to the corona lockdowns. That was in the place of signing the consent indicating that they are willing to participate in the research voluntarily.

The study ensured that the participants were respected by adhering to the privacy rules and by showing courtesy and other norms that helped create a secure atmosphere during the contact and the interviews. Similarly, anonymity and confidentiality were well adhered to for the sake of the security of the participants, the researcher, and his assistant. In addition, the study also ensured that it followed all the set procedures and steps.

To guarantee the interview's depth and quality, we always took our time to find the visual interview. For instance, to find an appropriate network and clarity of visual call, the involved had to postpone the interview five times with a participant. As a result, only three KII were without visual contact. All the FGD participants were visually contacted. Most of the time, we prepared double recordings: the visual using zoom and other external recording machines. A third party always transcribed the data into English. This was another way of ensuring the quality of the data.

All these procedures helped to guarantee that there was no misrepresentation of information (Bhattacherjee, 2012) and that the study remained honest with the

scientific research procedures. All information gathered during the data collection was used only for the purposes of the study.

In conclusion, the researcher followed the following principles strictly: principles of confidentiality, principles of the right to privacy, principles of voluntary participation, principles of anonymity of data providers, principles of non-bias during data collection and analysis, and principles of non-plagiarism.

In addition to fieldwork, there were four years of physical and online library engagement. This was done together with the intense readings of relevant books, articles, and websites from home to support the arguments with the insights of different authors. With a critical approach, the researcher borrowed varied concepts and came up with the Synthesis, making his own line of understanding of the subject matter. Since the researcher was a full-time student, the average time dedicated to studying was seven hours per day. Sometimes it extended to nine and ten hours per day for four years.

Summary

This chapter has provided the entire methodological frame of the research. The chapter has specified the research design employed in the operation of data collection and analysis in its essential parts. It has also informed the readers about the instruments used. The place and the target population have been indicated, explaining the main reasons for using each. The chapter has provided information on the importance of the study and the sensitive nature of the study necessitating the researcher to strike a balance between striving to achieve objectivity by carrying out the research rigorously

and being aware of the importance of one's experiences regarding the issues of religious and ethnic identities of the participants.

The study's primary purpose was to find effective ways to engage in dialogue and collaboration among Christians and Muslims to enhance sustainable peace, security, and development in the Oromia region and eventually in Ethiopia and Eastern Africa.

Utilising the appropriate methodology addressed, the next chapter focuses on analysing the data gathered from the participants and comes up with findings summarised at the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the data collected. The analysis focused on Christian-Muslim dialogue for sustainable peace and development in the Oromia region of Ethiopia from 1991-2022. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first part gives the demographic information of those who participated in the study. The second part concentrates on the findings of the research questions based on the three objectives: (i) to analyse the historical Christian-Muslim relationship in the Oromia region of Ethiopia; (ii) to examine the importance of the religious values enshrined in Christianity and Islam for enhancing constructive dialogue in Oromia, Ethiopia; and (iii) to assess the impact of the Christian-Muslim dialogue on sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia.

4.1. Demographics Details

In this section, five components denoting information on the participants are given. The first two components are the age and gender of the participants. The following components are the participants' religious affiliation and identity category. In the end, there is the participants' ethnic distribution.

4.1.1. Age of the participants

Figure 4 presents the participants' age range. Of the 43 participants, 16 (37%) were between 50 and 59 years old. The group between 40-49 had nine participants (21%). In position three, there were those aged between 30-39; thus, there were seven participants (16%). The

other groups were 60-69 at 5 (12%); finally, the two ends of 20-29 and 70-79, at three and a half each, representing approximately 7% each (i.e., 14%).
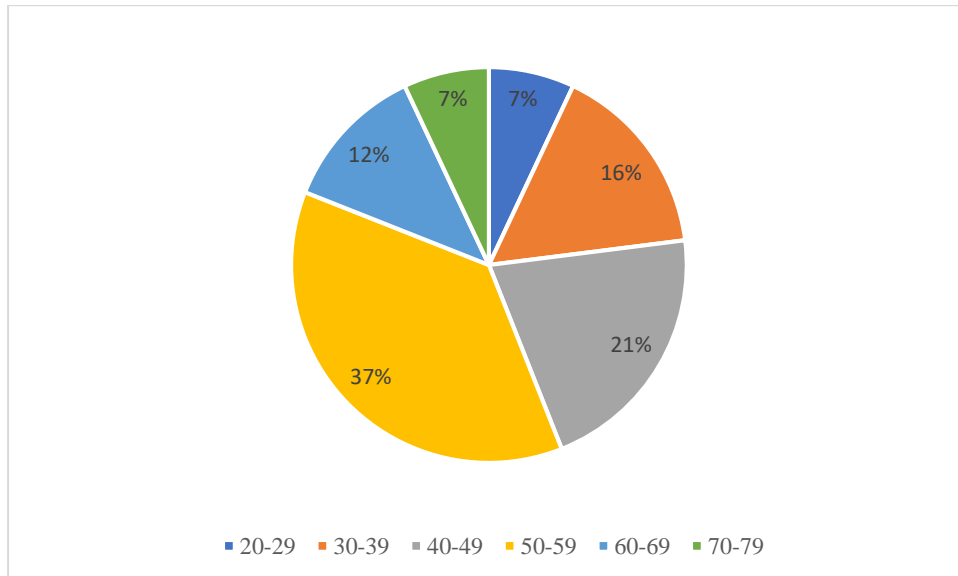
Figure 4. *Age of the Participants*

Source: Author

From this information, the participants represent a broad range in terms of age; 20-79. Out of this, the concentration of the age was those between 30-and 69. These individuals have extensive experience in matters of Christian-Muslim interactions in Ethiopia.

4.1.2. Gender of the participants

Christian-Muslim dialogue and its relation to sustainable peace is a concern in Ethiopia. Based on this, information from both men and women is essential to allow all persons to participate. Of the 43 participants, 30 (70%) were men, and 13 (30%) were women. While this may suggest that men are more involved in matters of sustainable peace within the Christian-Muslim circles, it also shows the notable contribution from women.
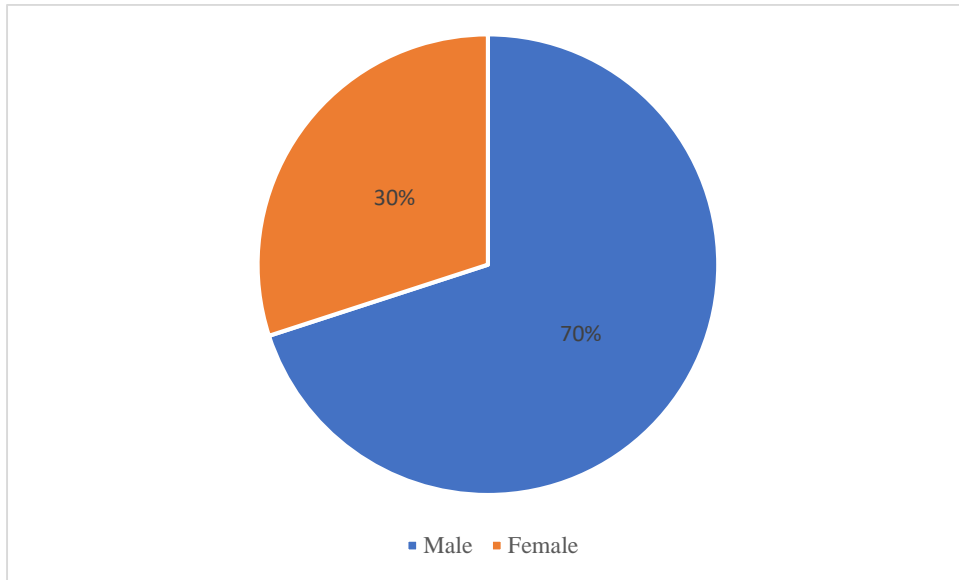
Figure 5. *Category of the Gender of Participants*

Source: Author

4.1.3. Religious affiliations

Table 3. *Religious Affiliation of the Participants*

Muslims	Christians			
	Catholics	Protestant	Orthodox	General Christians
19 (44%)	9 (21%)	6 (14%)	7 (16%)	2 (5%)

Source: Author

While there were two religions, Christians 24 (56%), and Muslims 19 (44%) involved.

Some Christians did not specify their denomination. They just generally indicated that they are

Christians. Hence, nine (21%) responded that they were Catholics, six (14%) Protestants, seven (16%) Orthodox, and two (5%) generally Christians. Thus, the religious distribution among Christian and Muslim participants remained relatively proportionate. However, suppose slightly Christian participants were more than Muslims. In that case, it is worth noting that the religious demography of Addis Ababa puts Christians higher (about 78%) than Muslims (about 16.2%) (Population Stat, 2022).

4.1.4. Identity of the participants
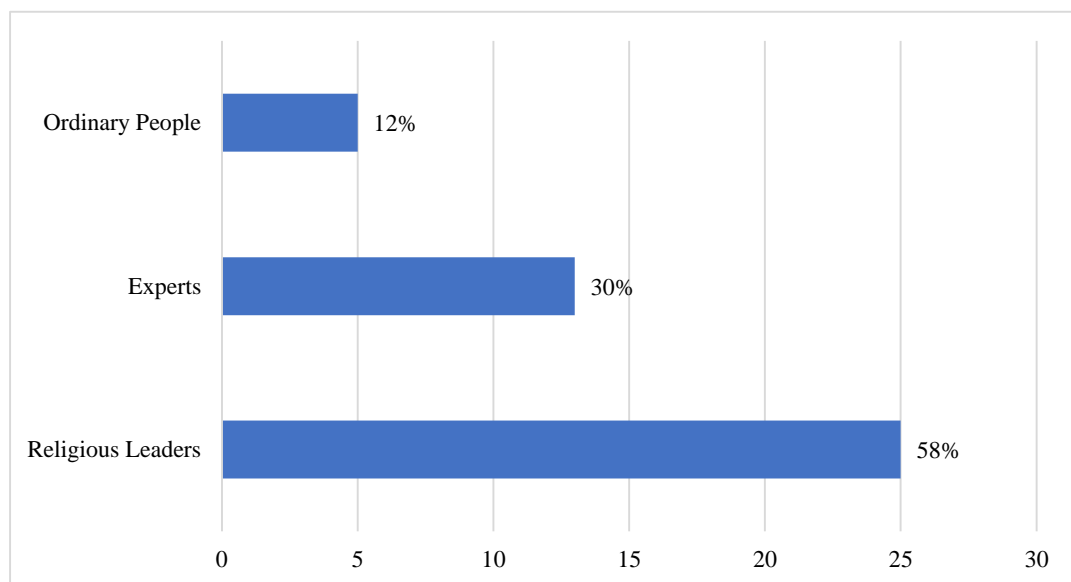
Figure 6.*The Identity Category of the Participants*

Source: Author

As chapter three (3.4) noted, the researcher intended to have participants with lived experiences on Christian-Muslim dialogue, sustainable peace, and development. These would have the capacity to inform the research. First, some participants were involved in religious leadership (25; 58%). Then some had specific expertise but were also closely linked to issues of Christian-Muslim dialogue for sustainable peace and development. These were 13 (30%).

Finally, some ordinary people did not find themselves befitting the title of religious leader or expert, yet had information relevant to the study. These were 5 (12%) of the respondents.

4.1.5. Ethnic distribution of the participants

With over 90 ethnic communities and over 80 languages spoken in Ethiopia (World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, 2018), the issue of ethnicity in the region cannot be overlooked. Based on this, the study sought out the ethnicity of the respondents. The Amharas were the leading at 24 (55%), followed by the Oromo at 11 (26%) and finally the Tigray at 8 (19%); of the Addis Ababa residents, the target population of the current research, Amharas were the biggest group (47%), followed by the Oromo (19%) again followed by Gurage, and Tigrians (Population Stat, 2022). Hence, the ethnic distribution was relatively proportionate, to have Amhara as the leading group, then Oromos coming next, followed by Tigrians.
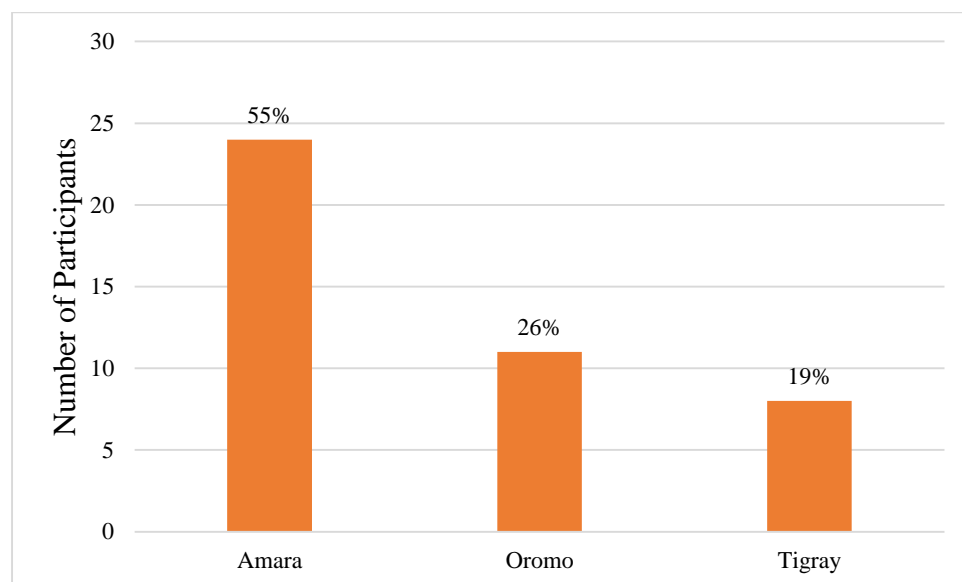
Figure 7. *Ethnic Group Distribution*
Source: Author

Figure 7 shows the distribution of the three ethnic communities. Oromos are linked to Islam, whereas the Amharas and the Tigrians mostly practice Christianity. In Addis Ababa, Amharas and Tigrians are more than the Oromos. Therefore, with this distribution, the communities were well represented in terms of ethnicity and their association with Christianity and Islam's two dominant religions. Religious affiliation and participants' ethnicity are significant factors in understanding the findings. The following section focuses on the study objectives.

4.2. Findings of Objective One: Narratives of Christian-Muslim History

In relation to objective one, the research question asked: what is the historical Christian-Muslim Relationship in Oromia, Ethiopia? The current narratives among Christian-Muslim leaders in Addis Ababa among the religious leaders, experts, and ordinary people were analysed. The historical Christian-Muslim relationship positively and negatively influences the Christian-Muslim dialogue that leads to sustainable peace and development. It begins by looking into the history of the first Christian king welcoming the Muslim refugees, the Muslim Oromo's oppression, and Ethiopia's historical Christian-Muslim conflict in the 16th, 19th and 20th centuries (Abbink, 2011). Lastly, the section looks at Ethiopia's Christians and Muslims' solidarity against external colonial powers.

4.2.1. Christian king welcomed Muslim refugees

As per the research findings, the most famous narrative based on the Christians-Muslim relationship in Ethiopia is the story about the Muslim refugees sent by Prophet Muhammad (PUH) from Saud Arabia to Habesha, Ethiopia, to a Christian King known as Al Negashi. Several participants highlighted different aspects of the narrative. According to a participant,

the prophet told the refugees that they would find a leader who respects human rights when they go to Ethiopia and is a righteous man with whom everybody is warmly welcomed Ali expressed the narrative as follows (Cf. the style of quoting the words of the participants in APA citation is introduced in Chap. 3, 3.4.2. Hence, Ali, Susan, Husein… are the pseudo names of the participants):

> History witnessed that peace be upon him Prophet Muhammad told them while sending Muslims to Ethiopia 'go to Ethiopia where there is a leader who respects human rights, righteousness and accepts with grace whoever comes and stays with him whether refugees or others' and accordingly the refugees came to Ethiopia and found a warm welcome. (Ali, April 7, 2020)

According to a Christian participant, the way the Muslim refugees were warmly welcomed and accepted by the Christian king is considered one of the most remarkable historical facts: The participant said:

> Muslim followers and leaders have historically been welcomed by Ethiopia … It is said that Muslim followers have been received by the Christian king with great respect and hospitality. This is a great example of a symbol of love. It means without any difference in religion. Christianity and Islam religion followers are still living in peace and which is a great ground and goal for dialogue. (Susan, May 2, 2020)

> Husein also explained that the neighbourly love shown to the Muslim refugees was not only by welcoming but also when their countrymen followed them to punish and retake them to SA, the king protected them. Hence mutual protection has been the sign of genuine love at the root of the Christian-Muslim relationship (Husein, May 21, 2020).

> In the story, Prophet Muhammad trusted that King Negashi was a just man who did not treat anybody unjustly in his kingdom, whether Christians or Muslims, so he dared to send his

followers (Safieddine, 2016). To the point, Farah said: "this was said by Prophet Muhammed himself who said these words, 'go to Habesha land.' There is a King who is very … just and … kind'" (Farah, April 25, 2020). A mutual appreciation of the values of different religions allows us to engage in dialogue more proactively:

> To respect your neighbours whether it's Muslim or non-Muslim. So, when we see those eh... Qur'an sayings and what have been there in time of Negashi, our religion appreciate that our togetherness, our social life eh... whether it is with Muslims or non-Muslim community. I think those help much... to live together. (Fadil, June 8, 2020)

When this kind of positive encouragement and guideline comes from the prophet himself, Stephen recommended that all the followers of Islam have to obey for the sake of their faith and for the needed peace in the Oromia region. "The thing which comes from the prophet, for instance, is, it makes it values because he's an authentic person...And anyone listens to him, and he is the first who established the religion...So, that by itself creates something important" (Stephen, April 15, 2020). This narrative has been the foundational story for Christian-Muslim dialogue. John shared about the narrative:

> Christians and Muslims…are equally proud of that history because it is the first eh…collaboration or dialogue inaction or action dialogue. Because when Muslims were persecuted from their part, by their own people, the Ethiopian king received them and gave them protection even when they attacked them. So, the king protected them until the end. (John, April 10, 2020)

A Muslim participant from Oromia argued that peaceful coexistence became part of Oromia's culture and the rest of Ethiopia. This helps them for sustainable peace and day today peaceful interactions. A female participant from Oromia explained how the peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims is beneficial:

Christians and Muslims in the same neighbourhood, living in the same compound. Just

we follow our religions, but we live as a community...We run our social life together.

Our children play together. We, along with our children, we have Christian friends. As

you said, we used to fast with each other; we do that...for example, I have a friend who

is a Christian friend. They fast with me for the month of Ramadan. I fast with them.

(Amira, May 21, 2020)

A Christian participant reiterated how the same story of the welcoming of the exiled

Muslim from Saud Arabia became instrumental for IRCE with the following words:

I am learning a lot from them (IRCE). So, everywhere, whether in Oromia region or

everywhere …You know the story of … the first Hijira to Ethiopia eh... which has been

very, very positive … and constructive a model for Christian-Muslim ... dialogue and

Christian-Muslim relations... from the beginning. (Moses, May 10, 2020)

4.2.2. Christian kings oppress Muslims and Oromos

Starting from the 4[th] Century up to the end of the Christian emperors and kings' period

in 1974, Christianity was the state religion officially or non-officially. Christianity provided

the political ideology for the system. Muslims who arrived two centuries after Christianity

attempted to offer an alternative religious background to the system, but the Christian kings

and religious leaders did not trust them, so they did not accept them. The Muslims were not

considered nationals by the Christian kings but expatriates and refugees who were granted a

favour of being welcomed. They were considered guests and Christians as hosts.

The Muslims were not Ethiopians but Muslims from Arab or Muslim countries in

Ethiopia. This bias cost Muslims a lot of discrimination and unequal share in socio-political

power. Even when the Muslims became a significant number, they were not recognized as

defining members with the right to participate in the government's executive power. Although Muslims were a considerable number in the country, their existence was not consistently recognized. Richard expressed the grievance of Muslims in this regard as follows:

> I think the grievance is that Ethiopia has been considered the land of Christians for quite a long time. Without even recognising the existence of the Muslim community. That was a bad history that has to be corrected. That's... what I feel as a citizen. In the presence of a large number of Muslim communities, we used to say 'land of Christians'. (Richard, April 27, 2020)

Similarly, Muslim female participant Fatima shared: "I hope our elites in the future will call this history (a bad history), and we will learn from the bad side, and we will call it bad side and take the good side for the future Ethiopia" (Fatima, April 21, 2020). As a participant said: "The Christian Kings were saying to us Muslims are Arabs, so they have to go to Mecca" (Amira, May 21, 2020). These discriminative were linked to religion and to ethnicity:

> the imperial regime of Ethiopia also used particularly, the Orthodox Church or Orthodox Christianity as the main ideological force to ... conquer the minds of the conquered people and eh... to be Christian was almost to be an Amhara, at the time. So, you are to change your names, and you're to... eh.... have eh... a Christian name, you have to … [listen to] whatever the Church orders, the regime orders ... And, you have to act like Amhara- that is considered, to act as a civilized. (Gutama, April 27, 2020)

Historically, Muslims think Christianity has exploited them; they have been seen as second citizens (Frank, April 29, 2020). Therefore, many Muslims in Oromia look at the Christian religion as the religion of oppression and dominance. Fatima, a Muslim participant, said, "so Muslims in Oromia sometimes looked at the [Christian] religion as the religion of the oppressor; the religion of the dominant" (Fatima, April 21, 2020).

Husein also argued that due to the religion-based inequalities, the (former) governments discriminated against Islam; they did not give equal place to Islam and Christianity. He shared his experience, saying, "So, due to that, they all do not give equal place for all religions. That point, by the way, is discrimination and injustice is harsh in Oromia and another Southern region which lately joined the Ethiopian Empire lately" (Husein, May 21, 2020). The aspect of discrimination went deep into the minds of the ordinary people, especially the ruling classes, that a Muslim cannot rule the country.

> So, there is such even eh... seed cultivated due to that in the community which has sensed as values and norms that means the Muslims cannot be a leader of this country because, as I've already said, this country belongs to Christians, … Ethiopia is the Island of Christians. (Husein, May 21, 2020)

In contribution, Gutama noted that even if the Oromo ethnic leaders aspire to share local administrative powers, they needed to be Christian Oromos; "So during the imperial regime, particularly eh... the imperial administrative forces in Oromia were Christians... And the Church also used to be an instrument of power… therefore, people, particularly the Oromo, referred to religion as a colonial instrument" (Gutama, April 27, 2020).

Another injustice committed against them was that they could not be registered in the national army for fear of switching sides during battles. As a result, up to recently, even if they got registered, they could not become generals and other ranking officers.

However, Farah said that today something is being done to solve the problem on the Interreligious Council of Ethiopia level. Although they faced some confrontations from the representatives of the Churches, the council has acknowledged the existing disparity between Muslim and Christian history in the present historical books. Therefore, they agreed to introduce the narrative about Prophet Muhammad, peace upon him, and his followers coming

from Saud Arabia as a refugee to Ethiopia in the country's history. The words of this expert were as follows:

> So, these I think in recent times… not more than ten years, history is becoming known and known by the different historians trying to write about Negashi and Islamic history. Eh... So now it is to some extend become known, and even the Church by itself try to recognize. (Farah, April 25, 2020)

These narratives continue to present the tensions between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia. The findings are thus pointing toward the need for Christian-Muslim dialogue. Both sides need to be on good terms so that they can collaborate for sustainable peace and development.

4.2.3. Battle between Imam Ibrahim and Christian kings

The narrative about Imam Ibrahim, traditionally known as Ahmed Gragn, and Christian kings is another episode that started in the 16th century and still haunts many Muslims, particularly Christians (Abbink, 2011). It was a bitter ethnoreligious battle starting in Oromia, raging for more than ten years throughout the country. The Christians and Muslims killed each other. A Muslim leader, Fatima, narrated how the people still remember the many atrocities committed by Muslims and Christians. She stated that there is still "*Ye Ahmed Dingay*" which means the 'stone of Ahmed' where Ahmed Gragn (Imam Ibrahim) was killing Christians and others who refused to convert to Islam, and Christians were also retaliating. She said:

> Because I have been several times in Harar; they even recite things in [by] their memorise how the oppressor Christian forces at that time that they killed from them so many people and everyone every child feel that thing and every generation wants to know that 16th century was a bad time for a Muslim and Christians even in the Amharic

history, there is a called this "*Ye Ahmed Dingay*" (the stone of Ahmed), … they say here is where that Mohammed Gragn killed our ancestor and our grandfather. (Fatima, April 21, 2020)

Many educated people and some ordinary Christians and Muslims vividly remember the event and narrate it, explaining when Imam Ibrahim was getting the upper hand and the Christians were losing ground; there was the maximum suffering of Christians in the history of Ethiopia at the hands of Muslims.   Jason stated:

> Churches were burnt down, Monks were killed, and Christians were persecuted, and all the bad things were done there at that time. All the churches were burnt down, Christians were converted by force, and then the Kings were running from one mountain to the other mountain. And then almost for the 15 years, all the disasters of we have witnessed that time. And then, that was the darkest spot between Christian and Muslim relationships. (Jason, April 26, 2020)

This participant calls this period the darkest spot between Christians and Muslims in the country's history. David, another expert on the consequences of ethnoreligious conflicts, described how Ahamed Gragn in the Name of Islam and Oromo committed atrocities, though contested by the Oromo historians today:

> although there are many Oromos who dispute that history, if you go back into history and following the Grang Ahamed's demise, the Oromo movement from the south to the North and destruction and atrocities the Oromos did to all other people; beginning from Southern Ethiopia all the way to Tigray and even... to this day in some of those areas people talk about the Oromo Brutality that happened during that time? (David, May 23, 2020)

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This was an ethnoreligious war. Oromos used Islam and vice versa, Christians used Amhara, and Amharas used Christianity to fight a bitter and long war. Indeed, it was the darkest period of the Christian-Muslim relationship in Ethiopia. This period has had a negative influence on the Christian-Muslim to date. During Imam Ibrahim and the Christian Kings' battle, both Muslim and Christian leaders used religion and the ethnic divide to expand their power. And they have required conversions to their religions forcefully. John described the situation as follows:

> you know in Ethiopia, political leaders, kings or chiefs, always used religion to expand their political powers. Ahmed Gargn used Muslims, and king Yohanis also pushed Muslims and attacked and mobilised Christians and other Christian kings also used Christianity as the source of power. (John, April 10, 2020)

Today, Christian alienation is intense in Oromia due to the above historical narratives. The participants also narrated how the local government in Oromia fails to protect the Christians from the Muslim extremists, but they also add pressure and harassment. Some Muslims condemn Christians' attacks, but generally, enough is not being done by the religious leaders and the government. The suffering of Christians in the hands of Muslims has its roots in the period of Imam Ibrahim and Christian kings. Therefore, the participants reiterated that the importance of honest Christian-Muslim dialogue is urgent more than ever in the Oromia region.

4.2.4. Christian-Muslim solidarity against external enemies

In most of Ethiopian history, Christians and Muslims worked for the common good. Although some elements worked contrary, they fought together against their enemies, particularly those who wanted to colonise Ethiopia, such as Italy and England and Muslim countries, Turkey, Egypt, Yemen, and Somalia.

> During the time of eh... Turkish eh... I mean during the time of [the] British invasion, … they were all fighting against it together... I mean in the... when it comes to national issues, there is no difference between the Muslim and Christians understanding... when it comes to the national issues. (Jason, April 26, 2020)

They sometimes disagreed with each other, but they fought as one regarding external powers attacking or jeopardizing the country's unity. Several participants have repeated the same understanding as follows: Farah describes said:

> Even when we come to the Eastern part, when Somalia invaded Ethiopia, all Christians and Muslims come together and fight that the invaders. So eh... where there is a need for peace and freedom, all Ethiopians, Christians and Muslims always stand together. (Farah, April 25, 2020)

It does not surprise us to see them fighting among each other sometimes, but Ethiopians always fought the external enemy shoulder to shoulder (John, April 10, 2020).

4.3. Findings of Objective Two: Role of Christian-Muslim Values in Dialogue

In relation to objective two, the second research question asked: What is the importance of the religious values enshrined in Christianity and Islam for enhancing dialogue in Oromia,

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Ethiopia? Findings linked to this objective generated four themes and a total of 654 entries (Cf. Table 4).

4.3.1. Emerging themes of the objective

Table 4. *Emerging Themes of Objective Two*

Sub-themes	KII	FGD	No. Entries
Ethiopia; Land of the Religious	123	122	**245**
Qur'anic and Hadith Sources and Concepts	102	54	**156**
Biblical and Traditional Sources and Concepts	102	44	**146**
Typical Ethiopian Religious Christian-Muslim Traditions	75	32	**107**
Total No of Entries Per Instrument	**402**	**252**	**654**

Source: Author

In the second round of the analysis, the following sub-themes were chosen: Christian-Muslim values enhancing dialogue, Christian-Muslim values enhancing dialogue for sustainable peace, and Christian-Muslim dialogue enhancing sustainable development. These are analysed in direct relationship with the religious values.

4.3.2. Christian-Muslim values enhancing dialogue

Concerning the Scriptural foundations of dialogue, Christians and Muslims believe in one divine God, and they all agree that the source and destiny of human beings is one God/Allah. This is where their common faith starts. Suleman shares the faith of the Muslim religion with the following words: "Yes, many things unite Christians and Muslims concerning human creation and destiny. In Islam, we say from the beginning human life and future is the same" (Suleman, May 21, 2020). The Muslims believe that he created them, and they will go

back to him. It clearly states in the Qur'an that Christians and Muslims believe in one divine God. Another participant added the importance of having similar history, similar scriptures and similar faith in God with the following words:

> Having the same name, similar narrations, having the same history and agreement on the Old Testament, both religions believe in a single God. Very few differences only have Islam and Christianity. This has made a great contribution to our unity. We all believe in the divine God/Allah. And this is very important for our unity. (Ali, April 7, 2020)

A Christian participant brought an explanation about the close relationship between the Old Testament and the Qur'an. They are related from the beginning. He said: "And as you know, the book of ... the Quran is based on the Old Testament, and … [the] Old Testament you also find in the Quran (Peter, May 6, 2020).

Also, Christians and Muslims believe that they have a common father on earth, Abraham, the father of Ishmael and Isaac, the grandfathers of Islam, Jews, and Christians consecutively. Hanan said that the Qur'an supports Christian-Muslim dialogue as both religious followers have a common ancestor on earth, Abraham/Ibrahim (Hanan, June 8, 2020). Abraham is the father of the three religions: Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Hence the three religions have Abraham as the common root and are known as Abrahamic Religions. Having a common father in heaven, God/Allah, and a common father on earth, Abraham encourages their dialogue.

Islam has commendable expression and respect for the three Abrahamic religion followers: *Ahl Al Kitab* people of the Book. It is because the Muslims believe that the same divine God or Allah has given the Muslims, Jews, and Christians his divine word. Hanan added:

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If we take for example Muslims believe in Torah of Musa also that of David or Dawud - Zabur also we believe in Ingil or Gospel of Jesus; all these show that our Qur' anic foundation shows us how much the dialogue is important, … We give the name of similar, the same history in both the Bible and the Qur'an. And it says in the Qur'an also Ahl Al Kitab (the people of the book) - the people who have the revealed Books from God, appreciate the Christians. (Hanan, June 8, 2020)

That means Jews, Christians, and Muslims own the books inspired by God. Therefore, the people with the revealed books from God have several scriptural foundations for their dialogue.

A participant contributing to the discourse added that Christians and Muslims do not only believe that they have the same origin but also believe in many other things in common about Jesus Christ. For example, Christians accept Jesus as the son of God; Muslims accept him in their scripture as a dignified prophet. Ali, a Muslim participant, said: "It is very useful, that means our origin is the same. Christianity accepts Jesus, while Islam (we) accept [him] as a prophet. No difference" (Ali, April 7, 2020). Muslims also believe in Jesus and that he will come again to Judge humanity in the resurrection.

Another Christian participant recognized the idea of the shared faith of Christians and Muslims in Jesus Christ when she said, "I hear some Muslims saying that the Lord Jesus Christ will come back to judge. And that is what the Bible says. 'Amen, I will be coming soon, hear who have an ear.' It is clear in the Holy Bible that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will come back" (Helen, May 3, 2020).

Similarly, a participant brought the subject of God's love for all humanity. She shared her understanding of the Bible, which includes Christians, Muslims, and all human beings. Helen calls the Bible a letter written by God to all his creations:

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Any person can use the Bible to guide life without following any religion. He/she does not have to be Christian. Because the Bible is a letter written by God to his creatures, for me, it is a love letter. Because the Bible says I love you. As God says "I love you" to the world until he gives his only begotten son. There is no greater love than this. He says that I died not for Islam or Christianity, but I died for human beings. (Helen, May 3, 2020)

Another foundational text of the Qur'an about the dialogue is the Prophet Muhammed demonstrating how he has his religion and that other people have their own religion. A Christian participant referring to *Surat Al-Kafirun* 109:6 said the following:

The same way in the Muslim religion, Mohammed says, "you have your own religion, and I have my own religion." When he was still living on earth, he was allowing Christians to express their religion without any intervention …. Islam recognises and respects the God-given religious diversity which is concrete grounds for dialogue. (Teresa, April 23, 2

It is noted that Islam recognises and respects the God-given religious diversity, which is concrete grounds for dialogue. This is no less than mutual recognition and appreciation, which are crucial values for dialogue. Similarly, in Islam, forced conversion is not allowed. Fadil explained, saying:

Yeah... it is not ... allowed for any Muslim to bring non-believers to Muslim forcefully. Allah shows us the way through his messengers …. But by forcing them to become Muslims is forcing them to support our view [and that] is forbidden in Islam. (Fadil, June 8, 2020)

A participant who was a national figure explained how the Qur'an lays a foundation for dialogue not only with Christians but with all human beings. He said:

Yes, there are. In the Holy Qur'an, it says, "We have honoured all human beings." This means, "we have blessed all human beings created on earth, whether they are Muslims or Christians, whether he is a man or she is a woman, we have endowed with dignity and blessed. Therefore, this shows that all human beings are blessed and exalted by God. (Suleman, May 21, 2020)

From a Christian perspective, also the words of Jesus and his actions are witnesses to his openness. They carry concrete values of inclusivity and love for Jews, Christians, and all human beings. Hence those who believe in Christ believe that God has shown ultimate love for all humanity in his death and resurrection in his coming to this world. A participant argued that from the NT, we see that Jesus Christ came for Christians, Jews, and the gentiles; hence, for all human beings (Teresa, April 23, 2020). That is why it is important to engage Christians in dialogue with Muslims and with followers of other religions. Looking at the words and actions of Jesus Christ reveals how he related to everybody and how he healed men and women of different backgrounds, Jews, Samaritans, politicians, and people without any religious affiliation (Teresa, April 23, 2020).

Concerning the values enshrined in Christianity and Islam, Teresa also added: "so there are a lot of values which encourage genuine dialogue between Christian and Muslims. For instance, among the values being faithful" (Teresa, April 23, 2020).

4.3.3. Christian-Muslim values enhancing dialogue for sustainable peace

When people look at the Middle East, Palestinian versus Jews centuries-old violence and Christian-Muslim fundamentalist groups in the world wonder if religion is the source of violence instead of peace. A participant shares the bewilderment of the people about religion as follows:

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So, for most of us he... when we discuss religion, many people think religion is a cause

of many conflicts…Some people even say that religion poisons everything. One can

say that religion is the source of conflict, but on the contrary, eh... from what we observe

in Ethiopia and many other countries eh... religion indeed can be eh.... a source of peace,

reconciliation and trust between eh… groups. Eh... this is because religion eh... affects

politics, it affects ethnicity. (Frank, April 29)

Religion is a unifying agent in contexts where people are divided on religion, language, and ethnic divide. Supporting the idea, a participant said:

So, religion is helping us in all these. Religious institution by itself called mobilising

agent factors…The[re is] goodness due to the religions. Race, ethnicity, colour

divisions are controlled by religion. It is controlled by the government and by religion.

Religion is powerful than these all things. That is in both in Muslim and in Christian.

(Joseph, May 18, 2020)

It is worth observing that a participant showed his worries about the government controlling the religious institutions, which weakens them from making proactive decisions about peace and other development activities. He noted: "nowadays the religious institutions are not stood by their own selves...but under peace and security Minister. We have no authority" (Joseph, May 18, 2020). However, most of the participants confirmed religion's ability to enhance peace due to the values enshrined in them. Martine argued that love, which is the highest form of unity and peace, is included in the common values of Muslims and Christians. Martine said: "Love and peace are our common values for Muslims and Christians" (Martine, May 9, 2020).

Another participant brought a point about how religion creates closeness, unity and peace among different peoples of a country. Faiza further explains the values that enhance

peace in both religions with the following words: "peaceful coexistence comes from religion. Peace by itself, love by itself, mercy, forgiveness, helping... all these good words come from religion" (Faiza, June 8, 2020).

In a similar context, a participant shared how the goal of Islam and Christianity is peace. Saba said: "when we come to peace, eh... Bible is teaching us peace; I mean, God is the peace. And even the other name of Allah is peace. Both religions are pro-peace" (Saba, April 15, 2020) In Islam, one of the 99 beautiful names of God is peace. Also, for Christians, Christ is peace (Joseph, May 18, 2020).

Unity is another important value that religion enhances. Ali explained, "Unity is the first. Religion creates a great opportunity for closeness. For example, let me tell you; Islam and Christianity in Ethiopia have been living together for one thousand four hundred years" (Ali, April 7, 2020). Ethiopia has been religiously, culturally, and traditionally the land of deep belief. Many people believe in the Golden Rule, such as 'do not do to others that you do not want to be done to you.' When Prophet Muhammad sent his followers for refuge, they were welcomed. There is a tradition that the Prophet told the Muslims not to harm or fight the Christians or the Ethiopians as they did not fight you when you went for refuge. This is part of the Golden Rule shared by Jason:

> He said, please do not fight Christians [of Ethiopia], the Muslims and in the Book, it was said... now they were referring to the... the Book also... to their religious books and then they were referring to Golden Rule, 'Do not hurt... do not treat others that you would not like to be treated'. That is the Golden Rule. It was the same reading in the Book of the Qur'an. (Jason, April 26, 2020)

Another participant brought the same concept of the 'Golden Rule' as something that exists in many religions as a binding tie of the people together: In the Christian religion, he

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said: according to the Gospel of Matthew in chapter 7: 12. "Therefore all things whatsoever you would like men should do to you. Do you even so to them for this is the Law and the Prophet" (Joseph, May 18, 2020).

Hence, working for peace and unity is adhering to the Golden Rule. Therefore, if Muslims want people to work for their peace, they must do the same. Gerald added that sustainable peace and development are part and parcel of the Golden Rule contents of religious values. "I can see clearly both sustainable peace and development are part and parcel of religion because, you know, the basic teaching of religion are peace and harmony, compassion, forgiveness...These are all tenets of peace and the Golden Rule" (Gerald, May 14, 2020).

Christian-Muslim dialogue based on their religious values includes working to make our world more peaceful and prosperous. Therefore, according to the analysis, objective two evaluate how the Christian-Muslim religious value helps them be actively engaged in the process of dialogue to work for security and sustainable peace. This responsibility is cemented by the Islamic position that condemns ethnic segregation. Where there is an ethnic and racist approach in the relationship among the nations, it goes worse by day. Peace is absent whenever one uses racial divisions for political or religious advantages. Dialogue is paralysed. "In the Holy Qur'an, peace be upon him. Prophet Muhammad says racism is a carcass. This means as more you touch, more smells like if you are too much attached to the tribalism and racism, it bothers and divides people more and more" (Ali, April 7, 2020).

On the one hand, the Qur'an accepts ethnic differences as part of God's plan; it also recognizes the danger if the politics and the social system are built on the ethnic divide. Teresa shares from the Qur'an as follows: "Let me read a verse from Qur'an... 'We created you from man and woman, and we give you race so that you can know each other'" (Sura Hijra, No. 13). This text, alludes to another understanding that ethnic differences are not outside the plan of

God, for he says God/Allah indicated to have created only one ethnic group, but he allowed many tribes to exist and to know each other: to belong to each ethnic group. However, as we have seen, he warns them not to make those differences as marks of division but rather as references to belonging to and knowing each other.

The purpose of peace is to make our world inhabitable by all the people providing and accepting the inalienable human rights and freedoms. Respect for life and livelihood is the key element for that very purpose. The Qur'an asserts that by saying the one who kills one person is considered to have killed all humanity. Jason borrowing a concept from Qur'an, reiterated that: "And then it was written in the Book of Qur'an if one person kills if one Muslim kill one person, he kills everybody. So, [during training for dialogue] we make them conscious of what they are doing" (Jason, April 26, 2020).

A participant brought a practical example to show how dialogue helped in Adama, one of the Oromia towns. When the violence by misunderstanding broke out, the followers of the two religions came together and solved their problems. They agreed upon the Christians to watch and keep the Mosques and Muslims to protect churches.

> there was a conflict, and they burnt [mosques] and also a Church. And when they come together to see and discuss, the reason was false information, and they were fighting each other with, baseless information. So, they just reconciled each other and built a nice relationship, and they agreed on the Christian to protect the mosque and the Muslims to protect the Churches. So, whenever there's a conflict, especially religion affiliated conflict, the dialogue is a very nice solution to resolve the conflict and to bring sustainable peace. (Saba, April 15, 2020)

This incident also shows how the dialogue gives the fruits of peace and collaboration.

The study, therefore, found out that the Qur'an and the Bible give a profound foundation, for working individually or as Muslims and Christian religions in dialogue, for lasting peace in Oromia and Ethiopia.

4.3.4. Christian-Muslim dialogue enhancing sustainable development

The Bible and the Qur'an encourage people to work so that they obtain prosperity. In both scriptures, work is considered sacred, and those who do not want to work should not eat food. In Christianity, St. Paul says to the one who does not want to work, let him not eat. Also, Muslims have a similar text where the Prophet warns the people that if anyone among them does not want to work, he should not eat. "Here's what the Islam religion says 'the one who doesn't work should not eat'" (Ali, April 7, 2020). Islam even requires everyone to go to work on the holy day, *Juma* (Friday). After their prayer, they should not sit at home.

Both in the Bible and Qur'an, God puts the first human being in the garden to cultivate. Works of cultivation are works of development. About the Bible, a participant said this: "When you see Genesis 2:15: 'And the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it or cultivate it'" (Joseph, May 18, 2020). Also, Joseph added the text in Qur'an as follows: "Allah/ God put the person in place of Jannat. God put the person to cultivate the place or Jannat" (Joseph, May 18, 2020).

The findings indicate that both religions are steadfast in working for peace and that peace will develop. Saba supports the concept with the following words: "And both religions [are] pro-development. Nobody is fighting against development. They're fighting poverty. If they do fight for poverty, and if they do play the role, what's written in the Holy Books, there will be peace… that peace will lead us to sustainable development!"

In Christianity, the love of the neighbours is another value from the scriptures that enhances both sustainable peace and development. In the New Testament, Jesus taught the Christians how to love their neighbour through his actions and his words. He ordered his followers even to love their enemies. Love is above all. Helen borrowing the understanding of the letter of St Paul to the Romans chapter 8, said that there is nothing greater than love, and it is the best powerful instrument of peace and mutual respect (Helen, May 3, 2020).

The loving of the neighbour as part of Ethiopian religiosity comes from the values of faith enshrined mainly in Christian and Muslim scriptures and traditions. They are concrete bases for dialogue that lead to sustainable peace and development. Jastin argued that religion should be relevant for the people's public life, which included decisive roles in enhancing development. He shares his expectation about religion "The Christian and Muslim leaders and institutions must devise projects and solve social problems there ... Religion must be active in public life, in daily life, and it must be intentionally planned for state-building" (Jastin, May 10, 2020).

In the tradition of the Church, the works of dialogue, peace, and development are not categorically separated; they overlap. Many people encouraged by their religious values engage themselves in the promotion of peace and development simultaneously because one enhances the other. When there is peace, there is development, and when there is development, there is peace. Stephen supporting the point, said as follows:

> So, if the development follows the rules of this dialogue, it will be a real development that is mentioned in the Catholic teaching that development is a new name for peace. So much development will bring peace. So, dialogue is a key tool for sustainable development and peace (Stephen, April 15, 2020).

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4.4. Findings of Objective Three: The Dialogue for Peace and Development

From the social analysis perspective, factoring in objective three, the research question asked: What is the impact of Christian-Muslim dialogue on sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia? The findings consider the relationship between dialogue, sustainable peace, and development. The three constructs are addressed as the participants perceive them. As a result, seven sub-themes emerge, as presented in Table 5.

4.4.1. Emerging themes of the objective

Table 5. Emerging Themes of Objective Three

Themes in objective three			
Theme	KII	FGD	Entries
Urgent Need for Sustainable Peace & Development	233	192	**425**
Christian-Muslim Peaceful Co-Existence	187	137	**324**
Giving a Platform for the Interfaith Communities	135	86	**221**
Avoiding political and Ethno-Religious Manipulation	44	75	**119**
Keeping the Constitution Secular	43	37	**80**
Good Governance and Power Sharing	39	36	**75**
Addressing Economic, Ethnic & Language Discriminations	33	38	**71**
No. of Entries Per Instrument	**714**	**601**	**1315**

Source: Author

4.4.2. Findings of the objective

Concerning objective three, four findings emerged: Christian-Muslim dialogue enhancing sustainable peace, Christian-Muslim dialogue enhancing sustainable development,

Christian-Muslim peaceful coexistence as an asset for peace and development, and key stakeholders of dialogue for peace and development. It is worth mentioning that unlike objective two, which deals with dialogue that leads to peace and development from the religious perspective, objective three deals with the subject from a general socio-religious analysis.

4.4.2.1. Christian-Muslim dialogue enhancing sustainable peace

When we analyse how Christian-Muslim dialogue enhances sustainable peace and development, we find out that the dialogue banishes fear, bridges the relationship, and encourages dialogue to attract investment. Dialogue guarantees peace and stability. Without it, one cannot imagine movement. In the context of Ethiopia, particularly Oromia, without movement, there is no farming; without farming, there is no economic development in Ethiopia. A participant explained the following: "Without peace and stability, you can't eh... imagine development, you can't imagine economic growth, you cannot imagine movement, you can't imagine farming without peace and stability" (Gutama, April 27, 2020).

Frank supported that the quality of the future of the country both in peace and development depends much on the Christian-Muslim dialogue:

> Ethiopia has the potential eh... for bringing peace eh... and stability and this because people learn to tolerate each other, eh... respect for one another; so, in my view, the relationship between Muslim and Christian dialogue to bring about sustainable peace in Oromia and Ethiopia is one of the key factors that has a potential to make eh... to lead us eh... to better future. (Frank, April 29, 2020)

The key factors for leading the country into a better future are the stability and mutual tolerance created, specially by the good relationship between Christians and Muslims; because they are

the majority in the country. Therefore, the finding identifies that the dialogue between Christians and Muslims results in peace because it brings about more understanding, reconciliation, unity, and cooperation. Stephen shared his analysis about the relationship between collaboration created by dialogue and sustainable peace that can be enhanced.

> So, when there is dialogue, the relationship will be improved. This improved relationship will eh... good collaboration or cooperation. That cooperation contributes to sustainable peace. So, the relationship will bring dialogue and sustainable peace is really needed for sustainable peace. (Stephen, April 15, 2020)

Misunderstanding each other in a Christian-Muslim relationship will obstruct dialogue, and that obstruction blocks sustainable peace. Misunderstanding also creates conflict, and the conflict blocks sustainable peace.

> In my opinion, the first obstacle for peace is a misunderstanding, in as sense if they don't understand each other, they could create obstacles not to make a dialogue.… Unless they do have understanding each of other, it will obstruct the sustainable peace and it will create conflict. Conflict by itself will block the sustainable peace. (Saba, April 15, 2020)

Similarly, Suleman highlighted that not only Christians and Muslims but different religious groups need to be included in dialogue for the common understanding of common objectives, common values, and common goals will grow. And these are crucial factors for achieving sustainable peace. He said:

> So, I believe that it has a direct relationship between these not only Christian-Muslim even among different religious groups. When they have the dialogue, there will be understanding; there will be a common understanding of their common objective, common goals, a common value which is very crucial for their sustainable peace; which I also believe is also important for sustainable development. (Suleman, May 21, 2020)

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The extended dialogue between Christians and Muslims brings about new ways of thinking and perceiving each other. They start understanding each other according to their religious values. This approach ensures peace. A participant shared his understandings as follows: "So, very genuine engaging prolonged dialogue can bring lasting peace because it brings a new way of thinking, a new way of perceiving the others, a new way of understanding others, not my religious values but others' religious values. By doing these, we can ensure peace" (Mustafa, April 21, 2020).

Dialogue brings reconciliation and rebuilds relationships. A participant shared an experience in Oromia, where Christians and Muslims got into conflict because some unidentified person had burned worship centres. Through their dialogue, Christians and Muslims who were in a good relationship decided to forgive each other and protect each other and each other's Churches and Mosques (Saba, April 15, 2020; Daniel, April 15, 2020).

Helen highlighted that although there are many disputes between Christians and Muslims in the Oromia region and even in Ethiopia when they come for dialogue, they need to focus on what unites them than what divides them. For instance, honouring all the creations of God, including the followers of other religions, is good for unity. And unity promotes peace. "There are many disputed things between Islam and Christians. Instead, it would be much more helpful to focus consciously on what unites us. And I think to honour God is to honour what he has created. I think this is good for our unity" (Helen, May 3, 2020).

Adrian brought Hanse Kung's concept and shared his experience about how dialogue and subsequent peace among the religions are powerful instruments of sustainable peace and development, particularly in Oromia and Ethiopia. However, they must first be engaged in honest and practical dialogue.

Where there is no peace between religions, then you can't expect any peace in the world. And so in the Oromia region, where we have mentioned before, Christians and Muslims and other religions for that matter...living in a peaceful dialogue, would be a very powerful instrument for any kind of development that we would think about. (Adrian, May 10, 2020)

When the Muslims and Christians, who are the majority in the region, live in peace, even the government and other institutions will enjoy the peace. If there is no dialogue and peace among the followers of the different religions in the region, it is inconceivable to have sustainable peace in the region. In this case, in Oromia, if Christians and Muslims fight, the region is destabilised. Even the government and other institutions will enjoy peace when the Christians and Muslims live in peace.

When Christians and Muslims are engaged in dialogue, they make a big difference. An example the same participant brought was a peacebuilding action in Jima, the western part of Oromia. In the 1990s, the conflict had already started between Christians and Muslims. As a result, there was an urgent need, so "the interreligious Council has conducted a three-year project at Jima, and around Jima" (Adrian, May 10, 2020). In the process, they discovered that the problem was sparked by a fundamentalist or a religious group with a political agenda. A participant shared how they managed to find out the culprit after studious consultations and interfaith collaborations. He said when the interreligious peacebuilding initiative group,

"went there and worked in a project there, the project assisting the women and youth in supporting the peace and the reconciliation in livelihood, so after several meetings and after several workshops, the community said that we understand each other and there is no any teaching that aggravates to conflict or to create something that is uncommon. So, finally, they suggested that please go to prison and teach the people who are found in prison. Now, we tried and understood each other; the problem is not being Islam or

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being Christian. But the problem was initiated by the interest groups. (Adrian, May 10, 2020)

After spotting the root cause of the conflict through the dialogue organized by the interfaith groups, the community reconciled and has lived peacefully for a long time since then.

In the early 1990s, before the formal beginning of IRCE, there was the first Interfaith group in Ethiopia. The founder was one of our participants. He shared extensively his experience about how dialogue enhances peace. It was known as Interfaith Peacebuilding Initiative (IPBI).

The Interfaith Peacebuilding Initiative established a tradition of calling religious leaders to pray for peace and give national blessing to all the citizens. A participant explained like this: "So, what we did we start to celebrate the International Day of Peace on September 21st" (Gerald, May 14, 2020). And September is the binging of the year in Ethiopia, where the country's religious and governmental function begins. He said:

> it was such good news to see the religious leaders in the country coming together, the top religious leaders. You know, praying together for peace, Honouring each other... and that was broadcast by TV, both Air and Addis News Paper published it. (Gerald, May 14, 2020)

Later they started giving Peace Awards every year to those religious or lay community leaders who were doing exemplary work in peace and reconciliation. That had a very strong positive impact on peacebuilding activities all over the country. He explains like this: "So, I will say for about ten years...We managed to establish a local chapter of the Interfaith Peace-building Initiative … [in] Ethiopia" (Gerald, May 14, 2020). A local chapter meant a local peacebuilding body with its own written bylaws (chapter) on how to live peacefully in their region and solve the interfaith conflicts locally. They also started publishing the *Voice of Peace*

Magazine. They also created the National Peace Commission to look after the national peace and cohesion in the country.

Through those channels, the Interfaith Peacebuilding Initiative held many conferences to raise awareness about the importance of peace. As a result, it prevented conflicts about to explode into full-blown fighting. They also reconciled inter-group and intragroup conflicts for more than ten years.

4.4.2.2. Christian-Muslim dialogue enhancing sustainable development

Findings from participants indicate that dialogue brings peace and sustainable development. The trend is dialogue-peace-development, "peace is a fundamental eh... issue, while we discuss development, there will be no development unless there is peace" (Robert, April 29, 2020). The same is supported by Frank, who said: "religious dialogue, inter-faith dialogue between Christians and Muslims contribute to peace … peace is directly related to development" (Frank, April 29, 2020).

A participant also said that "development is based on peace, and without peace, there's no development" (Erik, April 15, 2020). Another participant supported the idea saying: "If there's peace in the relationship between Muslims and Christian, the development will be the continuous thing that we're acting on" (Daniel, April 15, 2020). Finally, Justin wraps up this core position:

> Christian-Muslim relationship builds peace, and that helps in preventing conflicts....
> [When] conflict builds up the development gets interrupted eh... investors are faced
> away, the schools are interrupted, the university is interrupted, businesses are

interrupted, the transport is affected, the government development works... everything is affected. So, poverty eh... gets entrenched. (Jastin, May 10, 2020)

In the line of the thinking of Huns Kung, a participant explained how there is a need for continued focus on peace between Christians and Muslims in the Oromia region, "Where there is no peace between religions, then you can't expect any peace in the world. And so in the Oromia region ... Christians and Muslims and other religions for that matter ... living in a peaceful dialogue, would be a very powerful instrument for any kind of development" (Adrian, May 10, 2020). This peace is linked to a justice that incorporates inclusivity, "So, the way forward should be very inclusive, the way for sustainable peace and development should be equal treatment of people irrespective of their religious background, fairness, justice or economic justice, social justice, political justice, cultural justice... justice in all aspects. (Mustafa, April 21, 2020)

Peace, development, and justice are also linked to integral development, which carries with it human dignity and equal opportunities for all. With a commitment to human dignity, there is a guarantee of human well-being. That brings meaningful and integral development. Justin said:

So, in terms of human dignity eh... for Muslims and Christians. So that... if the understanding helps in the promotion of human dignity, so the development becomes meaningful and integrated. People respect other human beings, and economic development continues to leverage the old development of the human condition in that area. (Jastin, May 10, 2020)

Particularly, Gerald highlighted explained that sustainable development focuses on human dignity and equal opportunity for growth for all seriously:

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Maybe this the time the change the prosperity, that renaissance needs to start from

individual to family to community and at a country level. Because the issue of peace

is Aba, the issue of human dignity, the issue of social justice, the issue of equal

opportunity, the issue of equal rights for both men and women, these should be a

concern of each and every one of us (Gerald, May 14, 2020).

The participant added an important comment that borrows the formula of sustainable

development by the UN, sharing how sustainable development considers the present and future,

To me, sustainable development cuts across any commitment of creating a better

future for present generation and generation yet to come. And in this endeavour, the

first role to play these, are the religious leaders and the rest can follow, and we

support them (Gerald, May 14, 2020).

Sustainable development must ensure that there is a commitment to creating a better

future for the present generation without impoverishing the development of the next

generations.   John brought in an important insight that people must come together and render

socio-economically relevant services to achieve sustainable development. He said:

the religious leaders, intellectuals, development workers, social researchers, they

should come together, they should study, they should teach the people the real

knowledge, people fight each other because of religion, due to ignorance, because they

do not know their own religion very well, and religion of the other person very well, so

there must be honest dialogue at leaders level, honest joint development,

transformational social intervention. (John, April 10, 2020)

Stephen argued that the development created by dialogue would bring peace. According to the

Catholic Church, all should culminate in reducing violence and increasing peace.   In the

Catholic Teaching, the new name peace is development. Where there is development, people have no reason to fight; therefore, there is peace.

> So, if the development follows the rules of this dialogue it will be a real development that is mentioned in the Catholic teaching that development is a new name for peace. So much development will bring peace. So, the dialogue is really a key tool for sustainable development and sustainable peace. (Stephen, April 15, 2020)

> Similarly, another participant explained how peace and development affect each other: He said:

> By the way, if there is conflict, definitely development will be stagnated. Because mobility will be limited, they cannot freely develop assets wherever they want, so that is why I said inter-group feelings of lack of trust is all things in these religious group that prohibit or lag behind in development. So, whenever there are conflicts, there will be a lack of development. Because lack of development can also lead to conflict, but in our context, it is a lack of human development, not only economic development that is triggering conflict. Lack of development and conflict reinforce one another. (Mustafa, April 21, 2020)

That is why many development projects and religion-based development organizations are running different initiatives to raise people from the poverty line so that they reduce violence and full-blown civil wars or intra-state wars. Moses shared his understanding as follows: "the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is doing in our development work. Not only evangelism but development work" (Moses, May 10, 2020).

The Catholic Church and Muslim organizations alleviate poverty so that peace reigns. A participant argues that the development activities are in line with Muslim and Christian values. Through those development projects, human beings provided basic human needs such

as water, food, and shelter regardless of their religion. These achievements contribute positively by strengthening the relationship and creating further peace. In addition, these common development projects bring people together. Saleh explained this, stating:

> Therefore, there are working to satisfy that basic need of society. Provide water, clean water... Therefore, this by itself contributes to have a good relationship and to strengthen the relationship and this by itself brings sustainable peace … these things bring the people togetherness, develop or strengthen their togetherness their mutual benefit. (Saleh, May 10, 2020)

A Christian participant commented on how the development projects they run contributed to the development and peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. The Muslim community started seeing the Christian religion as their own. He said:

> also in West Hareregie, this is in Oromia region... where we also used to have water project with the Muslim community, I went to visit them and then the woman were saying we're the most victim ones; there no water because we have to collect water with all the problem and so the Christians who built for us we consider them, it's like our own religion. (Adrian, May 10, 2020)

This section has addressed dialogue, sustainability, peace, and development. It has shown the inescapable link that exists between the three. Further, it has widened the understanding of peace to include justice and human rights. Only then can this peace be sustainable.

4.4.2.3. Peaceful coexistence as an asset for peace and development

The findings confirm patterns of shared commonality on the grass-root level and a degree of mutual respect, which goes as far as intermarriages without needing to change the religion. It was a common phenomenon that Christians and Muslims used to get married. Only very rarely request a change of religion as a condition to marry each other. They either change for the respect and love of the other willingly, or they keep their own religion without any pressure on each other. Usually, children are left to choose when they grow. Saleh explains how in one family, there Christians and Muslims have intermarried. He said: "Even we found in a house religious difference, they have... for example, maybe married they have a Muslim husband and Christian wife is living together and they are bringing the children."

In Ethiopia, particularly in Oromia, the flexibility up to intermarriage is self-evident mutual respect and peaceful coexistence among Muslims and Christians. The people transgress the religious barriers quite easily. It is worth remembering the summary of the findings of objective one, the section of the narrative (4.2.) about the Christian-Muslim relationship that highlighted, that although there were some moments of turbulence in history, they mostly lived together peacefully. Tolerance and mutual respect led to a mutual love for each other. Anna supports the concept:

> Yeah. Alright. Because of a good relationship, good dialogue and continued dialogue between the Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia, there was tolerance, there was respecting each other, and there was also loving each other. That was the history that we can say about Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia. (Anna, May 16, 2020)

Also, a participant argued that the Muslim dialogue should protect and cherish the existing peace among the families, ethnic groups, and religious groups within a family when there are different religious followers. Most of the time, there is no strict ethnic dichotomy in specific

regions. There is peace among them. According to a participant, the dialogue must preserve those existing signs of peaceful coexistence among Muslims and Christians. Kevin shared:

> to my understanding, there is no Christian-Muslim dichotomy in Oromia or in Ethiopia. Sometimes we families share religions; even within a family, there can be two or three or even four different religions followers living together. Maybe, parent and children, they may differ in religious denominations. So, there is no kind of a bold line between ethnic groups, or I'm thinking like that. Oromos are partly Christian, and they are also Muslims. (Kevin, April 15, 2020)

Justin shared similar lived experiences in different parts of the country, particularly in the Oromia region, about how Christians and Muslims lived together without distinction and supported each other in various circumstances. Justin explained how Christians and Muslims built Mosques and churches together. He said that:

> I think eh... in Oromia region in particular, in the past like in other parts of the country the Christian-Muslim relationship has been very positive. In many parts of Oromia Christians and Muslims lived together, building mosques and churches together and solving many other social and developmental problems jointly and there is a strong collaborative culture among them. (Jastin, May 10, 2020)

Justin also added that in Arsi, in the Oromia region, in very life-threatening situations as well, they collaborated in unique ways:

> For example, when we went to Arsi region, there was a village where the Christian mother died, I think. And then the Muslim mother was breastfeeding the Christian child to grow in their family and so on... So, that has been a culture in Arsi and in and in other parts ... like in other parts of the country. (Jastin, May 10, 2020)

It is worth remembering the narrative section how in the history of Ethiopia, there was mutual protection; for example, when Muslims were threatened to be exterminated in their country in Saudi Arabia, they were welcomed and protected by the Christian kings and communities. That tradition of mutual support of each other continues. They build and protect each other's worship centres. These events are the pillars of peaceful coexistence in Ethiopia.

> History witnessed that peace be upon him Prophet Muhammad told them while sending Muslims to Ethiopia 'go to Ethiopia where there is a leader who respects human rights, righteousness and accepts with grace whoever comes and stays with him whether refugees or others' and accordingly the refugees came to Ethiopia and found a warm welcome. (Ali, April 7, 2020)

When we take *Iddir* and *Iqqub,* the formal and semi-formal financial sectors of the people in the villages and even in the towns in most parts of Ethiopia, people gather the money for various purposes together. It appears to have come from the word "*Adera*", which means to temporarily leave or collect some important properties in somebody trustworthy's hands. Usually, the members gather the money for investment and for times of joy and sorrow. Sometimes the money gathered from those traditional inclusive self-help associations is also used for health insurance. Usually, they have a shared organisation of Christians and Muslims. There is no separate *Iddir* or *Iqqub* for different religious followers or ethnic groups. These are vivid examples of peaceful coexistence among the civil society in Ethiopia.

Iddir and other traditional or cultural associations depend on the regions they reside in the country. For example, if Christians and Muslims live together, they establish a welfare group together without religious biases. There are also other mixed associations known as *DEBO* in the Oromia region, helping the communities live together peacefully and collaborate. Teresa said:

So I am referring as if I am part of that Ethnic group. The Oromia or the Ethiopian lifestyle itself encourages the Christians and Muslims to live peacefully, …. Another example they have together, *IDDIR, IQQUB* or *DEBO*, like these they are doing their work together... so when they are discussing together, they are dialoguing. (Teresa, April 23, 2020)

The participant recommended that much work be done to encourage these kinds of social value-carrying structures to enhance peace and growth for all. In addition, deliberate positive actions should empower the neighbourhood population, whether Muslims or Christians, to grow in community dialogue for security and prosperity.

Christians and Muslims also share joyful and sorrowful moments together. For example, they celebrate the annual feasts together and bury their dead, contributing to the occasion. Sometimes they dance together with the same dances, or they offer their own different dances for the same ceremonies of marriage or annual feasts. Suleiman explains this: "Christians and Muslims have shared joys and sorrows during the weddings or funerals or common family events. They eat, drink and celebrate together. Our people are not the people of division" (Suleman, April 11, 2020).

There are many celebrations in the country where Christians and Muslims strengthen their relationship. They celebrate and share the preparatory steps of the celebration, even Muslims fasting with Christians during Lent and Christians fasting with Muslims during Ramadan. Amira, a Muslim participant, gave her example:

So, now we follow that footstep we are living in peace since then for the centuries. Christians and Muslims in the same neighbourhood, living in the same compound. Just we follow our religions, but we live as a community...We run our social life together …. As you said, we used to fast with each other; we do that...for example, I have a friend who is a Christian friend. They fast with me for the month of Ramadan.

I fast with them, eh... those days I don't eat meat, I don't drink milk... So, I fast with them. (Amira, May 21, 2020)

Susan, a Christian participant, supported this position highlighting the rewards of those traditional celebrations and solidarity events bringing and keeping the peace between Christians and Muslims in the country:

Ethiopia is a country where Christians and Muslims lived together for many years in mutual respect, celebrating each other's holidays as well as in unity and love. In fact, generally, Ethiopia is known as a country of peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims living together in love. This is her special identity. (Susan, May 2, 2020)

Another Christian leader, Peter, concluded the nature of the traditional forms of dialogue on various levels. He reiterates this mutual sharing of joy on the occasions of annual feasts, or other events is not excluded from that of the religious leaders; it is extended and lived by so many ordinary people.

Not just dialogue among religious leaders of high level; now just the dialogue starts with the ordinary people... the ordinary family who live next to each other... they share religious values... they share the cultures... they respect each other... they visit each other in sadness and in joy. So, it has been built on this as a traditional relationship or the dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia. Even nowadays, Ramadhan some Muslims invite Christians to their house. (Peter, May 6, 2020)

In other words, in Ethiopia's history, the peaceful coexistence and cooperation rooted in the Holy Scriptures and traditions of both Islam and Christian religions are more profound and longer than the sporadic fighting, which is mainly initiated by external powers that want to divide and conquer Ethiopia.

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Hence, we can conclude this section on peaceful coexistence with the powerful comment of a participant who was an expert on religion-based conflict. He said:

> When you see Christians and Muslims despite what the leadership is telling them to do, they have stood firm on their deep faith and also... their neighbourliness, their cooperation with each other. I think the history of that country to a very large extent is about how people lived together rather than how people fought against each other. (David, May 23, 2020)

4.4.2.4. Key stakeholders of dialogue for peace and development

Despite the hypothesis that Christian-Muslim dialogue can bring peace and development due to their overwhelming majority in the country, several participants shared their reservations about the capability of Christians and Muslims alone to enhance sustainable peace and development in Oromia, where there are other various actors. A participant highlighted the preoccupation by saying:

> In the context of Oromia or call it Ethiopia [Christian-Muslim dialogue] has the potential eh... for bringing peace eh... and stability and this because people learn to tolerate each other, eh... respect for one another; so, in my view, the relationship between Muslim and Christian dialogue to bring about sustainable peace in Oromia and Ethiopia is one of the key factors that has a potential to … to lead us … to better future. But we must remember that this relationship [of] Christian and Islam are not the only variables that affect peace in the region. (Frank, April 29, 2020)

The traditional and political leaders are the additional important variables that affect the region's peace. Therefore, the religious leaders, Abba Gada and the government with good governance are the key stakeholders or main actors of sustainable peace and development.

(1). Christian-Muslim Religious Leaders

Religious leaders are the main actors in bringing peace and development. This is because they mobilise their people easily. Ethiopia is a traditional society where people greatly respect religious leaders. Due to its nature of tradition and religion-abiding characteristics, society has more trust and respect for religious leaders than any other governmental or non-governmental authority. Moses shared as follows:

> I said that it is well understood that all the religious teachers and religious leaders, I mean ... especially Mosques or Churches, Pastors and Imams are very respected revered by the people and are authoritative and they teach the Qur'an or the Bible or Scripture, people trust them, people respect them, they listen to them, they have power... it's obvious. (Moses, May 10, 2020)

Mahira described the responsibility of the religious leaders in teaching the faithful from the Holy books and their faith covered with love and respect that lead to tolerance and peace (Mahira, May 10, 2020). Saba mentioned that religious leaders should be inclusive leaders for all believers of different religions. So, the religious leaders of one religion are not only the leaders of their faithful. God chooses them to lead all people. And they have to teach not only the followers of their religion but all people of God. Saba explained, saying:

> the religious leaders are not for Muslims; they are not for Christians. Yeah. I mean, if one priest or one pastor, he's not for a particular religion, he's for all human beings. So, he has to preach for all human beings. He has stood, he has to be a voice for all human beings, rather than being a... I mean like for instance, if a protestant pastor if he's a voice for a protestant (alone), he's not obeying the law of God. He has to be the voice for the

voiceless, for all human beings …. They have to work for peace, and that will lead us to sustainable peace[development]. (Saba, April 15, 2020)

The position was supported by Frank, who commented on the opportunity of the trust enjoyed and the religious authority exercised in their preaching and in the teaching of the Qur'an and the Bible. In addition, religious, religious leaders are known agents of social transformation. "If you look into Qur'an or the Bible, this is the foundation of religions. So, they can mobilise the religion for peace. So, religious leaders are key community actors who can resolve conflict" (Frank, April 29, 2020).

In the context of Ethiopia, particularly Oromia, more than 99% of the people are religious, and the population's religiosity is considered a powerful asset and social capital for effective national prosperity. A participant said:

So, what we are using as best social capital is that the religiosity; first of all the religiosity of our population. More than 99% of our people have their own religion, so this is the best asset to bring a harmonised way of life, peace and stability in our country. So, we are in this as one in social capital. And we are also using eh the kindness of people to live together. (Fadil, June 8, 2020)

Quite often, this social capital or religious capital for peace and development is recognized by the government and religious leaders. And they recognize it as one of the best instruments of transformation in the country: "the peaceful relationship which has existed in the Muslim and Christian communities really helped the Church, the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus is doing [great] in our development work. Not only evangelism but development work," (Moses, May 10, 2020).

In Ethiopia, particularly in Oromia, the Biblical and Traditional values are precious assets for the dialogue of Muslims, Christians, and other ethnoreligious groups. They soften

the relationship and motivate collaboration for further religious and traditional values, which have sustained the country's peace and steady journey towards sustainable and integral development. However, when the religious leaders collaborate with the politicians by interfering in politics and entering party politics, they risk losing their distinctive positive role. Those leaders are not trusted and heeded in the community. They are rejected by their own religious followers and the faithful of other religions.

As Aman argued, when religious leaders, especially Christians and Muslims, stop interfering in politics, they can calm down even the political conflicts by themselves. "So, if we bring this, actually non-political religious leaders, they could help us to... calm down the political tension between different regions" (Aman, June 8, 2020). Hence, the idea of the success of religious leaders depends much on whether they free themselves or not. Gutama expresses his conviction on the matter: "So, if we want genuine dialogue eh... religion, maybe, I mean, may be required to eh... save itself free from any political eh... interests." (Gutama, April 27, 2020).

Suleman agreed that a good Christian-Muslim dialogue helps religious leaders to transcend the political domain. "This dialogue will open understanding in these communities so at least they can avoid some kind of ultra-political agendas…so they can focus on their sustainable peace the development, which could be possible when they have this dialogue" (Suleman, April 11, 2020). The dialogue among Christians and Muslims is the way forward. If the process of dialogue is not interrupted, the fundamentalists will not have the opportunity to strike.

Another research finding is the danger of politicising religion for personal or group benefits. The participants have argued that when religious leaders use politics to climb the authority ladder in the church, the church is weekend, and the people's trust is slowly withdrawn. Saba highlighted why they should stop being pro-politics and stick to being pro-

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creator. Their adherents believe religious leaders that they act according to religious values. Also, they understand that the leaders are just obeying God, not the politicians or their desires. One of the Christian faithful, a participant, shared how they perceive their leaders: being pro-God and not pro-politics. Saba recommended as follows:

> So, my recommendation is, I mean, the religious leaders should have to stop being pro-politics and pro-government. Rather they have to be pro Creator, God the Father. God is the one who's holding all the human beings. You see, when God created heaven and earth, He did not create it for Muslims or Christians. (Saba, April 15, 2020)

The findings highlighted that the adherents of different religions believe that religious leaders have to be careful not to meddle in politics or party divisions. If they do so, they will not be neutral and commit themselves to sustainable peace and development.

(2). Abba Gada without party politics

The participant added the reasons why Abba Gadas remains important in Oromia as follows:

> Christian-Muslim dialogue must include Abba Gada and other religious denominations and other traditional leaders to achieve its goals. Mainly, in the Oromia region, without Abba Gada, the people's traditional leadership, there cannot be sustainable peace or development. They are the key agents to facilitate peace and development. (Robert, April 29, 2020)

People in different parts of the country adhere to different religious or cultural groups. For example, in Oromia, one cannot solve any problem or plan and succeed on any project without including Abba Gada, the traditional and spiritual structure of the Oromo people. They have to be included if development schemes are successful. They enjoy the respect and

obedience of the Oromo and non-Oromo people. Without Abba Gada, there cannot be sustainable peace or development. "And both are equally respectful to Abba Gadas. And so, my thinking is eh... participation of these Abba Gadas those traditional leaders can really make things very easy and eh... it can also address the issues of peace and development sustainably" (Robert, April 29, 2020).

Their peaceful leadership knows Abba Gada among their society without having conflict interests with Muslims or Christians: Robert explained further as follows:

So, every Oromo believes the Gada system as fundamentally very unique and very helpful, and as a kind of system that can solve all the problems of this Oromo society. ... to sustain the dialogue will be through these Abba Gadas, I think. Because they are in the middle and eh... they don't disagree with Muslims nor with Christians, so that is one area, one opportunity. (Robert, April 29, 2020)

Abba Gada also represents the ethnic collaboration aspect of sustainable development. Including ethnic leaders in the context of traditional Ethiopia plays an important role.

(3). Good governance

There is a need to have dialogue focussing on good governance, sustainable peace and development in this relationship. This is because "development could correspond to good governance. So, through democratisation and good governance, many questions can be answered … [including] youth, about employment" (Anna, May 16, 2020). All these efforts must focus on minimising poverty and maximising development. Ways to deal with poverty must go beyond ethnic and religious constraints while addressing youth matters: unemployment. The government is the main actor in drawing the plan and ensuring its inclusion. Highlighting the point, a participant said:

So, the country has to change in the level of development. Poverty has to be eliminated

… Therefore, the government has to be committed so that development and peace will

be the core agenda and the religious groups, the religious leaders are aligned along with

that very agenda. So that we create peace then we change the livelihood of the citizen.

(Kevin, April 15, 2020)

The following quote shows the need to include the government as a way to keep aside

fundamentalist movements, "there should be good relationship between the government and

the people. Otherwise, people may opt to have … fundamentalist movement … religious or

political" (Gutama, April 27, 2020).

Particularly, a good government does not mix politics with religion. The danger of

mixing religion and politics remains a threat to the quality of dialogue both for religious leaders

and the government. The finding in the research highlights that mixing religion with politics

and vice versa has become the core problem in the dialogue process. Mixing them could go to

abuse/ misuse of both religion and politics. Gerald argued:

you know when people have other agenda, and when you bring it to religion, it will

easily manipulate people. So that's why I said, misuse of religion...Because religion as

such is not a source for conflict, but misuse of religion and politicisation of religion is

dangerous. (Gerald, May 14, 2020)

In particular, in the research area, the Oromia region, Christian or Muslim politicians

use religion for their territorial expansion or political power. With this position, there is a need

on the part of religious leaders not to meddle in the politics of party divisions. When they do

so, they become partial and fail to pursue sustainable peace and development for all. Religion

is not a problem in itself. Even having religious differences is not a key concern. David shared

that the challenge is using religion to stay in power and control the people through religion,

amounting to an abuse of governance. Using religion for territorial expansion or political power is hence a concern of the participants. This negatively influences the Oromia Region.

Another finding is that a compassionate, inclusive, and well-informed government plays a crucial role in achieving peace and creating wealth for the next generation. The Christian-Muslim dialogue alone is not enough. Good government solves many underlying problems leading to peace and development. David, who worked for decades in governance and conflict resolution, said that:

> Leadership is extremely important...I think what we missed in Ethiopia for so long is the absence of leadership; an inclusive leadership, and imaginative leadership, a compassionate leader, leadership that has best interests of its people or its country, leadership that is humane, leadership that is informed not just by the lust for power or control of money or reputation, or self-aggrandisement...But really service for its people. (David, May 23, 2020)

As part of becoming inclusive and well-informed, the government should be able to address the issues of identity. Among the citizens, there are essential identities but also superseding identities. The participant highlighted that after recognising the equality of the ethnic groups in the country, the nation needs to pass on to accept a superseding identity of belonging to a single country for the sake of sustainable peace and development. Therefore, although they are encouraged to celebrate their cultural heritage, such as ethnic-based celebrations, they must let their differences rest on their citizenship identity. And the government is the facilitator. David explains as follows:

> So, you have to find a different way of organising society, … If the next constitution is going to be founded over citizenship, nobody can say you shouldn't celebrate your ethnicity, you shouldn't have your ethnic identity. Of course, you do whatever you want

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to do with that identity. However, there is a superseding identity which is citizenship. That becomes the foundation for our rights and duties for being patriotic...All over Ethiopia equally. (David, May 23, 2020)

The reason why common citizenship should be an overarching value is that it is a naturally unifying element. When a country goes on the ethnicity line, it must prepare for ethnic genocide. The participant brings the example of Somalia. Although Somalia is almost 100% per cent Muslim country, it is divided into ethnic lines. Due to the lack of superseding, priority appears to worsen by the day (David, May 23, 2020).

Therefore, he insists on the importance of the new party, the Prosperity Party, introducing a constitution based on citizenship identity. Instead of on various ethnicities and religions, the government needs to establish a constitution based on being Ethiopian citizens.

Another finding is the need for a strong and secular government. When the governments were changing in 1991/2 and 2018, the governments were still significantly weak; in Oromia, several religious and ethnic violence was exacerbated. Particularly, in 2018 up to date the government still appears weak. Hence ethnoreligious conflicts are on the rise. Both in 1992 and recently in 2018, the violence erupted, and the minority groups were harassed and even killed because different extremist groups took the opportunity to enhance their exclusivist agendas. For instance, Jason shared how, even today, the fear of Christians who are a minority in Oromia is real; because there is the mixing of politics into religion. They are afraid of being killed, expelled, and their properties and churches being burned down by some Muslim extremists who do not separate religion and politics: He said:

the threat is always there. Feel of being one day eh... killed or being taken away as refugees; … And then the Christians are there really frightened … because one day they feel that maybe they will burn our church, one day they feel that they will kill all of us,

one day maybe they will send away from this area, and they will live somewhere taken as refugees. (Jason, April 26, 2020)

Jason, therefore, confirmed the fear. Many Christians, especially Amhara Christians, were killed and expelled from some towns in the Oromia region even just before this data collection. It is found out that both Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia, particularly in Oromia, still carry some degree of grievances, venom for revenge, and ethnoreligious heavy feelings in their hearts against each other. Jason reiterated that the worse can still happen unless it is addressed by Christian-Muslim dialogue and good governance. Violence can explode at any time.

Eventually, in 2020 when there was a political upheaval in the country in several Oromia towns, Christians were mistreated, especially Amharas: their property was burned, some were sent out, and some were killed brutally. In one of the towns, among those slaughtered were Christian Amhara mothers. She was pregnant. As they were killing her, they shouted at her, saying, "here we do not need another Amhara Christian to be born". With those words, they slit the throat of a pregnant mother in her 8th month of pregnancy. Her husband and children ran for their lives and survived.

The reason for this was the weakness of the new government by then. They were busy changing the ruling party and fighting a civil war in the Tigray. Therefore, this need to collaborate with the entire stakeholders is a substantial new finding. Before the research, it was understood that if there is enough honest Christian-Muslim dialogue, that would be enough to enhance sustainable peace and development because they embrace the majority population, but this research found otherwise. Therefore, though Christian-Muslim dialogue remains critically important, they are not enough. Abba Gadas, a good government, all other religious denominations, and the traditional leaders should be part of the stakeholders' comprehensive

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membership. Otherwise, there is no peace and development; they are short-lived even if it happens to be peace and development.

In the end, David brought in the concept that religion is not a problem in the dialogue process. Still, the misuse of religion, especially the politicisation of religion, is a challenge. He stated that religious differences are not an issue but using religion to grab political power and clinging to it is insane.

So I think, rather than the religious differences by themselves, because of the conflicts, I think the manipulation of the religion for political purposes, particularly by politicians, for the purpose of grabbing power, for the purpose of staying in power, eh... for purposes of controlling people eh... divide and rule and so on [are the real problem]. (David, May 23, 2020)

According to the participants, good government is characterized by not religionising politics, mitigating poverty and ability to address various discriminations and injustice in society and keeping the constitution secular.

Concerning prioritising poverty reduction, several participants argued that Muslims, Christians, and other stakeholders have no time to waste in conflicts. The need for sustainable peace and development is more urgent and vital so that they trivialise other grievances. A participant argued that there is no time to waste in ethnic or religious disputes—people living in poverty primarily to be helped. The works of eradicating poverty and creating wealth for the future should come first.

There is an urgent need for the government and other religious leaders to prioritise tackling poverty. Without them creating a unified force to eradicate poverty and enhance sustainable development, the people will always have excuses for ethnic, religious and political differences that will challenge their ability to build development. In particular, the government

must commit itself to build development, and all other stakeholders must align themselves with it. Kevin explained:

> we can't eliminate or forget the ethnic question that has already been on the table, but still, the level of poverty that we are living in is far beyond ethnic classification or religious denominations. So, the country has to change in the level of development. Poverty has to be eliminated. (Kevin, April 15, 2020)

Another participant reiterated that there is no time for disputes about ethnic differences unless we want to remain poor. She said: "we have to discuss for the future for the sustainable development, we do not have time for this, because we are under-developing, we're backward, and the developed countries are observing that we have a lot of challenges in the future" (Fatima, April 21, 2020).

Supporting the argument, Kevin added a point explaining how the government and religious community should be united for sustainable peace and development:

> but still, the level of poverty that we are living in is far beyond ethnic classification or religious denominations. So, the country has to change in the level of development. Poverty has to be eliminated…. Therefore, the government has to be committed so that development and peace will be the core agenda and the religious groups, the religious leaders are aligned along with that very agenda. So that we create peace then we change the livelihood of the citizen. (Kevin, April 15, 2020)

The prime purpose of the dialogue should be to change the country's poverty level and guarantee peace and the entire livelihood of the citizens. Therefore, the government is required to take the lead and other societal agents to follow. In this way, the government and the religious community should be united for sustainable peace and development (Kevin). In

addition to mitigating poverty, there is a need to address injustice as a root cause of poverty. Anna brings out this point as she discusses Galtung's negative and positive peace:

> Also, it is good to explain positive peace and negative peace. Positive peace is about development. It is about reconciliation. It is also about the rule of law also. About positive peace where people being more tolerable to each other... tolerating each other, listening to each other, respecting each other. (Anna, May 16, 2020)

While negative peace contends with the mere absence of violence, positive peace moves forward towards addressing the root causes of violence, particularly injustices. Mustafa sheds light on this perspective when he says:

> So, the way forward should be very inclusive, the way for sustainable peace and development should be equal treatment of people irrespective of their religious background, fairness, justice or economic justice, social justice, political justice, cultural justice... justice in all aspects. (Mustafa, April 21, 2020)

Therefore, key stakeholders mentioned are expected to incorporate a Christian-Muslim dialogue addressing the root causes of poverty and violence, particularly injustices. Only then will sustainable peace and development be realised.

4.5. The Summary of the Chapter

4.5.1. Objective one: the current narrative of Christian-Muslim history

In its first objective, the research sought to know, on the line of dialogue that leads to sustainable peace and development, the influence of the historical Christian-Muslim relationship, particularly the narratives about their history in Oromia, Ethiopia. The summary of the current narratives of Christian-Muslim history addressing objective one presents the following points:

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According to the participants, today in Ethiopia, particularly the Oromia region, the narratives of Christian-Muslim peaceful coexistence are stronger than the narratives of grievances and feelings of revenge. Amira said: that Christians and Muslims in the same neighbourhood, living in the same compound, fast with each other in Ramadan and Lent (Amira, May 21, 2020). In some parts of Oromia, Christians and Muslims are building churches and mosques together. A Muslim mother breastfeeds the child of a Christian mother with her child, and the other way round when one of them gets sick or dies (Jastin, May 10, 2020).

However, the participants did not hide the presence of deep-seated grievances among Christians and Muslims over the atrocities and alienations committed by Christian kings and by Imam Ibrahim's soldiers exhibiting brutality. They pointed out all those to be addressed by a proactive dialogue of the key stakeholders such as Christians, Muslims, Abba Gada and a strong and secular government ensuring justice, inclusivity and equality of all religions and ethnic groups of the country.

The narratives also found that most of the time, the conflicts between Christians and Muslims have been attributed to the interference of external powers who wanted to divide the people into religious and ethnic lines to conquer the country easily. So, the Christians and Muslims of the country are not to be blamed alone for it.

Therefore, although there are some deficits of justice and deep-seated grievances in Christian-Muslim relationships, provided the stakeholders' dialogue addresses the historical injustices and discriminations, the current narratives of Christian-Muslim history are not at the level of danger. Those grievances are not to the degree of jeopardising the future Christian-Muslim dialogue and collaboration. Hence, they cannot obstruct the works of sustainable peace and development in Oromia.

4.5.2. Objective two: Christian-Muslim values enhancing dialogue

The research, in objective two, wanted to know the importance of the religious values enshrined in Christianity and Islam for enhancing dialogue in Oromia, Ethiopia. The objective-generated values are summarised in the following five categories:

Common scriptural roots: The Bible and the Qur'an have common values that enhance the dialogue between Christians and Muslims. Both religions believe in God/Allah, the supernatural mystery, the creator of heaven and earth. He is the source and destiny of Human beings. Furthermore, they believe that Abraham is their grandfather. Therefore, Christians and Muslims believe that they have a common creator in heaven – God; and a common Father on earth - Abraham (Hanan, June 8, 202). This concept is one of the most important elements at the basis of Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Christians and Muslims have the value of mutual respect: In particular, Islam has respect for the three Abrahamic religions calling them the people of *the Book*. That means Muslims believe that those three religions own the books that God inspires (Faiza, June 8, 2020). Also, Prophet Muhammed gave a dialogue model saying that he has his religion and that other people have their own religion (Teresa).

Christians and Muslims have the following common religious values: faithfulness, peace, love, mercy, forgiveness, and mutual support, which enhance genuine dialogue between Christians and Muslims (Faiza, June 8, 2020). Hence, when these values are embraced and implemented by all the key stakeholders, particularly Christian and Muslims, they are strong instruments of sustainable peace and development.

The faith of Christians emphasises that Jesus is for all. Christians believe that in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has shown ultimate love for Christians and all humanity. Jesus also understood his mission on the same line; he related with everybody and healed men and women of different backgrounds: Jews, Samaritans, politicians, and people

without any religious affiliation (Teresa, April 23, 2020). These common values thrust genuine Christian-Muslim dialogue forward to promote peace and development.

4.5.3. Objective three: Dialogue for sustainable peace and development

Objective three sought to know the impact of Christian-Muslim dialogue on sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia. The findings of the objective are summarised in the following eight points:

1. Christian-Muslim dialogue enhances sustainable peace and development. Christians and Muslims engage in works of peace and development because they believe that works of peace and development are part and parcel of religion. The basic teaching of religions is works of peace, harmony, compassion, and forgiveness (Gerald, May 14, 2020).

2. Genuine Christian-Muslim dialogue avoids the spirit of revenge and heals the trauma caused by the previous conflicts. It clears fear and mutual suspicion. Dialogue helps to restore a good relationship among the groups in conflict (Stephen, April 15, 2020). Thus, dialogue enhances peace in society.   It boosts mutual trust and minimises misunderstanding that creates conflict and blocks sustainable peace. Dialogue instead excludes misunderstandings, stereotype prejudices, fear, suspicion, and hatred that destabilise the region's peace and block development (Saba, April 15, 2020).

3. Dialogue guarantees peace and stability. Without peace, one cannot imagine movement. Without movement, there is no farming; there is no economic development in Oromia and Ethiopia, where more than 70% of the population are farmers (Gutama, April 27, 2020).

4. There is a strong relationship between peace and development: "development is based on peace, and without peace, there's no development" (Erik, April 15, 2020). "If there's

peace in the relationship between Muslim and Christian, the development will be the continuous thing that we're acting on" (Daniel, April 15, 2020). The Christian-Muslim relationship builds peace and helps prevent conflicts from interrupting development and entrenching poverty (Jastin, May 10, 2020).

5. To obtain sustainable peace and development, the way forward should be very inclusive, with genuine collective inclusivity in all aspects. Inclusivity in leadership, inclusivity in decision making, inclusivity in all aspects: cultural inclusivity, political inclusivity, educational inclusivity is crucial; equal treatment of people irrespective of their religious background, fairness, justice, particularly economic justice, social justice, political justice, cultural justice, justice in all aspects of life (Mustafa, April 21, 2020). Similarly, Gerald reiterates that to guarantee peace and development, the issues of human dignity, social justice, equal rights and equal opportunities should be the concern of everyone in the dialogue.

6. In the country, over 90% of the population are deeply religious; it should be known and acted upon that without peace among the followers of those religions of the country, there cannot be peace. Therefore, if the dialogue is successful, those religions are powerful instruments for sustainable peace and development (Adrian, May 10, 2020).

7. The religious leaders and institutions should be instrumentalised to bring about inclusive development and eventually social transformation (Franc). However, religious leaders should keep off from politics to continue enjoying their people's trust (Saba, April 15, 2020). The population's religiosity is considered a powerful asset and social capital for effective national prosperity (Fadil, June 8, 2020).

8. The dialogue that can guarantee sustainable peace and development is inclusive. Christian-Muslim dialogue alone cannot bring lasting transformation. A participant said: "But we must remember that this relationship between Christian and Islam are not

the only variables that affect peace in the region" (Frank, April 29, 2020). Hence, the dialogue of key stakeholders should be considered important. In the context of Oromia, Ethiopia, the key stakeholders of dialogue for peace and development are Muslims, Christians, Abba Gada and the government. The government need to be characterised by a strong, inclusive servant of inclusive justice, coordinator of the stakeholders, secular and instead of ethnic or religious identities oriented, it needs to be citizenship oriented.

In conclusion, after the data collection and analysis, chapter four has identified the main findings of the field research. It began by presenting the demographic details, followed by the analysis of the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the data collection and analysis based on the three research objectives separately. Then the process proceeded with focusing on the main findings in a coherent manner. Finally, the summary of the chapter was presented. The model proposes that for better results of sustainable peace and development leading to social transformation, there should be an inclusive dialogue where the key stakeholders of sustainable peace and development: Muslims, Christians, Traditional leaders, particularly Abba Gada and the government are to stand shoulder to shoulder with mutual recognition and collaboration at an equal footing.

The following chapter reconsiders the findings in this chapter to discuss the literature review in chapter two and other secondary data comparing the existing knowledge and the new contribution of the current research.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings arrived at in chapter four. It starts by restating the research questions set at the start of the study. Next, the conceptual framework is presented according to the findings. Following this, the main results of the research are discussed with the theoretical and empirical literature in chapter two and other secondary data. Then theological reflection and its implementation in social transformation are considered.

5.1. The Research Questions and Hypothesis

The first research question sought to know the historical Christian-Muslim relationship and their narratives on the line of Christian-Muslim dialogue in Oromia, Ethiopia. In the second research question, the researcher wanted to know the importance of the religious values enshrined in Christianity and Islam for enhancing dialogue in Oromia, Ethiopia. Finally, the last research question sought to know the impact of Christian-Muslim dialogue on sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia.

5.2. Conceptual Framework

As stated in Figure 2, the conceptual framework was conceptualised that in a country where Christians and Muslims are the majority, their dialogue would be a determinant factor for enhancing sustainable peace and development. However, at the end of the data analysis, the findings revealed that Abba Gada and the government are legitimate components of the dialogue in Ethiopia, particularly in the Oromia region. Therefore, there is a need for inclusion in the dialogue of the key stakeholders, Christians and Muslims, Abba Gada, and the

government. All of them are necessary members of the dialogue that leads to sustainable peace and development in the context of Oromia. This is shown in Figure 8.

The conceptual framework process presents the main flow of factors of the narratives and religious values propelling the Christian-Muslim dialogue coupled with the Abba Gada and the government to establish the stakeholders' dialogue for better sustainable peace and development results in the Oromia region. However, it must be noted that the movement is multi-directional. The arrow extending towards "Christian-Muslim Dialogue" from "Narrative about the history of Christian & Muslim relationship" signifies that the proper understanding of the history of the Christian-Muslim relationship and their narratives contribute to the success of the Christian-Muslim dialogue substantially. When one understands concrete historical factors, they correct their narrative about the event because they widen the scope of looking at the events. Therefore, the narrative identifies the socio-political and ethnoreligious struggles affecting the Christian-Muslim relationship.

According to the research findings, Muslims were not considered part of Ethiopian society. Some Christian kings told the Muslims they were Arabs and should return to Mecca. (Ahmed, 2006). The research findings in the narrative section confirm the strong reaction of Muslims to Christianity and consider it as an instrument of oppression, particularly in the Oromia region. The research indicates another narrative, the revolution or the battle of Imam Ibrahim with Christian kings in the 16[th]century. For instance, an Ethiopian Muslim recognizes the fear of the Christian kings with the following words:

> Christian-Muslim relations in Ethiopia came under strain, especially in times of foreign threats against, or attempted conquest of, the country: Turkish, Egyptian/Mahdist and Italian (in the sixteenth/seventeenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, respectively) which aggravated the suspicion of the Ethiopian state, church and Christian population

that there was a link between indigenous Muslims and external Islam or foreign aggression (Ahmed, 2006).

Independent Variables	Intervening Variable	Dependent Variables

Christian-Muslim Dialogue ↔ Aba Gada ↔ Government ⇒ Power Politics, Underlying injustices Politicization of Religion and Religionization of Politics ⇒ Sustainable Peace
1. Human security
2. State Security
Sustainable Development
1. Social Sustainability
2. Environmental Sustainability
3. Economic Sustainability

Narrative about the history of Christian & Muslim relationship

Religious values Enshrined in Christianity and Islam

Collaborative, unifying, and neutral position

Inclusive, just, strong, pro-citizenship & secular Constitution

Figure 8. *Updated Conceptual Framework After Data Analysis*

Source: Author

Eventually, a participant in the data collection of the research confirmed that Imam Ahmed was getting material and personnel support from Turks and other Muslim countries with the following words:

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during the 16th century, the Christians and Muslims were fighting against each other, and that fighting was a serious fighting, and it was backed by the Turkish force. So that is the darkest part of the history between two religious communities. (Jason, April 26, 2020)

Later in history, it emerged that Christian kings oppressed Muslims because they were already getting some material support, from the Italian colonial government, including

the construction of 50 new mosques… the restoration of 16 old ones, the financing of the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina (in 1939 alone, 3585 persons from Ethiopia and Eritrea left on the pilgrimage), and allowed the teaching of Arabic in Islamic schools. (Ahmed, 2006, p. 9)

These were in exchange for support during those colonial occupation periods of the 19th and 20th centuries. For this, it could be said that the kings had logical fear and suspicion of Muslims (Abbink, 2011). This confirms the negative effect of the mutual assumption of Intergroup Threat Theory. According to the conceptual framework, such fear ought to be ironed out through dialogue and mutual understanding rather than prejudice and exclusion.

During the dialogue, it was realised that not all Muslims embraced colonial powers. Some leaders questioned the honesty of the Italians in supporting the Muslims. For instance, Sheikh Sayid Muhammad Sadiq questioned the sincerity of the Italian government when they supported the Muslim community during their brief colonial period. He refused to recognize the Italian rule and would not cooperate with them (Ahmed, 2006). Some participants confirmed this fact, and additionally, they brought how during the fight against the colonialists, both Muslim and Christian soldiers died fighting to defend the freedom and unity of the country. A participant said:

Ethiopian[s] always stood together during the invasions, be… Muslims, Christians, Catholics, Orthodox… they always marshalled their unity against invaders and they

tried to defend their sovereign country… and that happened during all events or during

the battles to defend Ethiopia. (John, April 10, 2020)

Therefore, the details of the Christian-Muslim narratives found that there are narratives that encourage mutual suspicion and positive narratives that encourage Christian-Muslim dialogue. However, the findings identify that the positive stories of Christian-Muslim peaceful coexistence are stronger than the narrative of grievances and feelings of revenge. Moreover, there are other narratives that Christians and Muslims are equally proud of during their dialogue. For instance, the coming of Muslim refugees sent by Prophet Muhammad. Their welcome and protection by the Christian kings have cherished memories of both Muslims and Christians. The literature review confirmed the following sharing from a participant:

So, Ethiopians are very proud of it [the story of Muslim refugees welcomed by the Christian king] … Christians and Muslims, and also it inspires us for dialogue and for collaboration, even today as we talk about Muslims-Christians relationship in Ethiopia, it helps us as a source of inspiration. (John, April 10, 2020)

The arrow extending from "Religious values Enshrined in Christianity and Islam" to "Christian-Muslim Dialogue" signifies how the Muslim and Christian religious values add importance to the Christian-Muslim dialogue for sustainable peace and development. When Christians and Muslims rediscover the shared faith in God/Allah, the reciprocal recognitions and mutual support they owe to each other, and common religious values of faithfulness, peace, love, mercy, forgiveness, and mutual support, which emanate from their respective religions (Faiza, June 8, 2020), their dialogue goes deep and authentic. The findings of the research support this concept.

The research findings summarised that the rediscovering of the values that Christianity and Islam enjoy leads to dialogue and the subsequent commitment to the works of peace and

development. The content of the Christian-Muslim scriptures is rich with messages of dialogue and peaceful coexistence.

Knowing and owning those basic tenets of Christianity and Islam about the importance of dialogue based on religious values strengthens the relationship among Ethiopians of both divides. It increases the opportunity of collaborating to address the root causes of ethnoreligious and political injustices. When the dialogue among Christians and Muslims grows, conflict and poverty give way to sustainable peace and development. The research findings upheld this position.

In the conceptual framework, additional independent variables that enhance sustainable peace and sustainable development emerged. Before the data collection and analysis, the independent variables were the present narratives of the history of the Christian-Muslim relationship and the Christian-Muslim religious values that enhance their dialogue. The findings added two necessary independent variables owing to the Ethiopian, particularly the Oromia context. They are the Abba Gada, the Oromo cultural and spiritual authority, and the government. Thus, the key dialogue stakeholders for sustainable peace and development include Muslims, Christians, Abba Gadas, and the government, independent variables.

In the data collection and analysis, Abba Gadas are critically important in Oromia in making a concrete transformation in society. A participant said:

> And both [Christians and Muslims] are equally respectful to Abba Gadas. And so, my thinking is eh... participation of these Abba Gadas those traditional leaders can really make things very easy and eh... it can also address the issues of peace and development sustainably. (Robert, April 29, 2020)

Notably, the Abba Gadas are known for holding together and unifying their people. They are also known for their wisdom in detaining the direct political alliance. All these give them acceptance and respect from their people and even from the government. As a result, in the

research findings, it is noted that concrete and sustainable actions in Oromia cannot be achieved without involving the Abba Gada. Therefore, including Abba Gadas in the dialogue is crucial for sustainable peace and development success.

According to the research findings, the government is considered another independent variable. Without the membership of the government among the key stakeholders, dialogue remains incomplete. As an independent variable, it should have the following elements of good governance: strong, inclusive, secular, capable of addressing injustice issues, facilitator of and partner in dialogue, and non-ethnic or religion-based but citizenship oriented. Promoting the citizenship identity is the characteristic of a good government. A participant argued confirming how the citizenship identity is a bigger unifying concept crucial for making sustainable peace in a country or region. He said:

> Unless you say there is a bigger identity that unifies us, that puts all the smaller identities in their respective place if you have destroyed that premise then you not only create conflict between the groups, but you also encourage further divisions. (David, May 23, 2020)

Therefore, the government should be strong, inclusive, secular, capable of addressing injustice issues, facilitator of and partner in dialogue, and non-ethnic or religion-based but citizenship oriented. These are qualities of good governance. Dependent on the motives, the government can either promote or serve as an obstacle to the interreligious dialogue. The government is an independent variable, for it holds several functions. It is responsible for holding the nation together, keeping the people's internal and external peace and security, drawing common policy, and motivating the people to fight against the common enemies: poverty, racism, and ethnoreligious extremism. It is also supposed to give the religious leaders and other stakeholders a platform for peace and growth.

The history of Ethiopia witnessed that since the 1960s, the Marxist governments have side-lined the traditional leaders and religious leaders from playing their proper role in the transformation process. Although lately, the present government started well, even calling the religions 'important assets and crucial social capital', it is not clear whether it is side-lining them again or instrumentalising them for its benefits. This doubt is arising because religious leaders are not raising their neutral but strong voices to stop the current raging war genocide-like atrocities in different parts of the country.

The government is also required to promulgate the citizenship-based and secular constitution and enforce the rule of law. The government is the main actor in identifying the people's most urgent needs and committing to its planning and implementation. Where the government plays its role properly, it has a significant place to promote peace and dialogue. On the contrary, some government officials and religious leaders can obstruct the sustainability of the stakeholders' dialogue, altering the result significantly. The dishonest religious and government leaders may allow the government's involvement in religion (religionisation of politics) and hence, grab or cling to power, making the government unacceptable to the people in the long run. In addition to such negative involvement, when the government employs bad governance, such as authoritarianism and exclusions, domination, and suppression, it negatively affects the aspects of dialogue, peace, and development (Nyanchoga et al., 2010). The results of such vice are the reduction of citizen collaboration with the government.

When the government is interested in religions and the Abba Gadas in relation to obtaining acceptance and votes from the people, it conditions stakeholders' success in the entire dialogue, enhancing peace and development. Unfortunately, some religious leaders also can politicise religion and hold extremist positions, thus becoming an obstacle to interreligious dialogue. A participant confirms that with the following words:

They [religious leaders] should have to take out their hands from the government; they

have to take out their hands from political parties. You see these days they are the

activists, the religious father, and religious leaders are the ones activating the conflict...

the Bible says, we have to forgive, we have to be compassionate, and if they're going

back to the original plan of the Creator, there will be peace and that peace will lead us

to develop, and we'll finish poverty. (Saba, April 15, 2020)

When religious leaders meddle in politics, they lose the trust of their faithful. Consequently, they spoil the name of their religion and no longer enjoy the respect and collaboration of their people. Eventually, this brings intra-religion division and strife. These affect the success of dialogue, peace, and irradiation of poverty, hence development negatively.

As concerns the government, the constitution of the nation, in Article 11, declares that mutual exclusions of politics and religion are mandatory for successful dialogue that leads to sustainable peace and development (The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1995).

Hence, the research findings highlight the importance of stakeholder collaboration for sustainable peace and development. Notably, the government needs to develop a clear and rigorous plan of action to address security and poverty challenges, creating hubs of human security and economic sustainability. The findings clearly show that the country has to change in the level of development. However, this realisation occurs principally through a complete elimination or radical reduction of poverty and the creation of sustainable peace and development system through inclusive dialogue.

5.3. Objective One: Discussion on the Narratives of Christian-Muslim History

The first research question sought to know the narratives of historical Christian-Muslim relationships in Oromia, Ethiopia, and how they positively or negatively affect the Christian-Muslim dialogue. In other words, the purpose of this objective was to consider the importance

of narratives in enhancing dialogue that leads to sustainable peace and development. The research proposes that if there is an effective dialogue among the Christians and Muslims, who constitute more than 90% of the population of Ethiopia, there will be sustainable peace and development in Oromia as well as the entire of Ethiopia. Narrative data deals with the long-lived experience of the people expressed in storytelling (Constant & Roberts, 2017; Murray, 2018). Hence, narrative data was collected and analysed on the Christian-Muslim relationship in Oromia of Ethiopia.

The summary of the finding of the first research question presents the following points: today, in Ethiopia, particularly in the Oromia region, the narratives of Christian-Muslim peaceful coexistence are stronger than the narratives of grievances and feelings of revenge. Hence, the data suggested that although there are some deficits of justice and deep-seated grievances in Muslim and Christian relationships, the narrative study concludes that the deficits of justice and deep-seated grievances are not at the level of endangering the dialogue. They are not to the degree of jeopardising the future Christian-Muslim dialogue and collaboration.

However, on the one side, there was the presence of deep-seated grievances among Christians and Muslims over the atrocities and alienations committed by Christian kings against Muslim and Oromo communities. On the other, Imam Ibrahim's soldiers were brutal in the 16th century and the recent feelings of fear, expulsion, and burning of the churches and other Christian properties. These two issues should be tackled effectively by the key stakeholders of sustainable peace and development: Christians, Muslims, Abba Gada, and the government. This second part will be discussed in the key stakeholders' section.

5.3.1. Discussion on the long-lived experience of peaceful coexistence

The research sought to know how the narratives of historical Christian-Muslim relationships in Oromia and Ethiopia positively or negatively affect the Christian-Muslim

dialogue. It found out that the narratives are mainly positive. There are not necessarily to obstruct dialogue. Moreover, they are instrumental in enhancing the Christian-Muslim dialogue that leads toward peace and development.

Among the narratives, one of the milestones for the peaceful Christian coexistence is the narrative of Prophet Muhammad sending his followers from Mecca to Abyssinia. There is also the narrative of the Christian king welcoming and protecting them warmly. As it was analysed in chapter four, the story is known and proudly shared by most Christians and Muslim participants regarding dialogue. Ali, a Muslim participant, said: "the refugees came to Ethiopia and found a warm welcome" (Ali, April 7, 2020); a Catholic participant explained in the story how both Christians and Muslims "are equally proud of" the narrative (John, April 10, 2020); a protestant pastor reiterating the same sentiment about the story calling it "very, very positive … and constructive [,] a model for Christian-Muslim ... dialogue and Christian-Muslim relations... from the beginning" (Moses, May 10, 2020); and a Christian female participant adds "This is a great example of a symbol of love. It means without any difference in religion. Christianity and Islam followers are still living in peace, which is a great ground and goal for dialogue" (Susan, May 2, 2020).

Several direct relationships are found when comparing and contrasting the findings of objective one with the literature review in chapters two and outside. For instance, the story of Prophet Muhammed sending his followers for refuge in Ethiopia and being welcomed by the Christian king has been at the roots of peaceful coexistence in the Christian-Muslim relationship in Ethiopia (Abbink, 2014; Ahmed, 2006). Hence, the literature review confirms the claim of the finding in the current section. For additional discussion, the findings of the research are looked at and confirmed by the profound narratives in the literature review. This gives a strong foundation to the Ethiopian Christian-Muslim peaceful coexistence.

The literature review also confirms the claim of the research findings, which argued that Christians and Muslims demonstrate solidarity during both joys and calamities. It is customary for Christians and Muslims to show solidarity with each other as individuals or groups. For instance, when Christians or Muslims in specific areas face natural or manmade calamities or hold a festive of any kind, they share without religious discrimination. In the literature review, Ostebo (2008) explains that the tradition of the long-standing peaceful coexistence among Christians and Muslims is well established. He adds that in the country, the narratives of the longstanding and accepted religious plurality and the tradition of peaceful coexistence must have contributed to avoiding religion-based conflict among Christians and Muslims of Ethiopia. Temporary tensions and competition among Christians and Muslims cannot remove the tradition of tolerance and shared sentiments of peace and collaboration.

This argument by Ostebo is on the line of the experience of a Muslim participant who said that although they follow their own religion, they live peacefully with Christians as a community and are good neighbours and friends, fasting and feasting together (Amira, May 21, 2020). The argument of one of the participants speaking on the line of Amira brings a similar concept of peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia, including Oromia. Regardless of the various governments' attempts to divide them and the undeniable ethnoreligious differences, he argued:

> They [Christians and Muslims] have stood firm on their deep faith and also... their neighbourliness, their cooperation with each other. I think the history of that country to a very large extent is about how people lived together rather than how people fought against each other. (David, May 23, 2020)

This has been confirmed by the literature review in chapter two of the research. For instance, the following theoretical literature review has further confirmed the tradition of solidarity between Christians and Muslims explained by Amira (May 21, 2020) and David (May 23,

2020). Furthermore, Ahmed (2006) explained that history's occasional tensions, competitions, and misunderstandings between Christians and Muslims could not remove the tradition of tolerance and shared sentiments of peace and collaboration in Ethiopia. We have also seen Abbink (2011) arguing about the Ethiopian accommodative interreligious relationship as an asset for Christian-Muslim dialogue. These concepts of mutual tolerance and collaboration that the literature review has confirmed were stated by two Christians and one Muslim participant in the sections of the findings as follows: A Christian said:

> During the time of eh... Turkish eh... I mean during the time of [the] British invasion, … they were all fighting against it together... I mean in the... when it comes to national issues, there is no difference between the Muslim and Christians understanding... when it comes to the national issues. (Jason, April 26, 2020)

Another Christian participant added that it does not surprise him to see some fighting among each other, but Ethiopians always fought the external enemy shoulder to shoulder (John, April 10, 2020). Farah, a Muslim participant, added a similar concept that most Ethiopians share: "Even when we come to the Eastern part when Somalia invaded Ethiopia, all Christians and Muslims come together and fight that the invaders. So eh... where there is a need for peace and freedom, all Ethiopians, Christians and Muslims always stand together" (Farah, April 25, 2020). This general understanding of peaceful coexistence found in the findings of the research has been supported by the literature review chapter (Ch. Two).

Additional secondary data support the same concept in the findings. A scholar and expert on the Ethiopian context confirm that both Christians and Muslims in the Horn of Africa are characterized by their tolerance and long-standing tradition of interaction. He wrote:

> Muslim life in the Horn of Africa has shown remarkable and rich variety and is not by definition 'politicized'; it is more of a communal, social identity. The same goes for

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Christianity, in its (Ethiopian-) Orthodox and other forms. Many Muslim communities have long-standing traditions of interaction and toleration vs non-Muslims. (Abbink, 2020, p. 197)

As we found in the findings regarding the unifying events in history, an Ethiopian scholar first confirms that in Ethiopia, for both Christians and Muslims, their history has offered many chances of unifying formulas, particularly centuries-old peaceful coexistence (Girma, 2021). However, he brings a nuance to the claims. The writer said that in the present (2020-2022) upheaval in Ethiopia, regrettably, the religious and political leaders seem not to use those unifying historical formulas and keep the unity of the citizens.

This understanding goes with the opinion of the researcher. Although in history, most of the time, the Ethiopian Christians and Muslims had utilized their peaceful coexistence and solidarity when the enemy came, there were exceptions to that when Ethiopians collaborated with external powers and stood against their nation directly or indirectly. That is why whenever the external powers interfere in the socio-political situation of Ethiopia, there are conflicts, heated controversies, and forced conversions, particularly among Christians and Muslims of Ethiopia.

The implication is that the peaceful coexistence of Ethiopia needs intentional follow-up with the stakeholders' dialogue. It should be the deliberate choice of Christians and Muslims to make the best use of the traditions and stick to them for the sake of present and future generations, not to waste time and energy fighting, instead of eliminating poverty and creating wealth and opportunities for the citizens.

That is where Critical Social Theory (CST), the supplementary theory of the current research, comes in. It suggests that human beings using their experience, freedom, knowledge, and particular need, can decide to act in new ways that suit their future, even if it goes against

the logic of history. Hence it can be discussed that Christians and Muslims should deliberately decide to drop those exceptionally negative aspirations that led to the historical conflicts and deliberately reclaim the traditional peaceful coexistence and collaboration of the Ethiopians.

When we analyse the Christian-Muslim dialogue in Ethiopia, mostly the youth are not part of the dialogue in a strict sense. Therefore, the researcher observes this absence of the youth poses a challenge for the stakeholders of the dialogue. They need to find ways of including these groups. Although very few of the participants have considered it, the researcher argues the importance of finding ways to leave no group, particularly to include youth, students and women as part of the stakeholders of peace and development, particularly in Oromia Amhara and Tigray.

5.3.2. Discussion on the injustices and grievances in Oromia, Ethiopia

The main findings of the objective one in this section argued that that though they are less critical than Ethiopia's much-celebrated peaceful coexistence, plenty of injustices and grievances exist in Oromia and the entire country. Unless the reality is accepted and addressed by the inclusive dialogue of the stakeholders, they might rise to the level of obstructing dialogue that leads to sustainable peace and development. There are already some signs indicating to that.

The discussion starts by restating the research findings briefly about the existence of injustices and deep-seated grievances. Then we discuss how dialogue must prioritize addressing those threats to future sustainable peace and development.

In the research findings, the grievances were brought by the participants. For example, a participant explains the grievances at length are from Christian kings. Although they welcomed the Muslim refugees, they always considered them as expatriates given the favour

of welcome. Even when the Muslims became Ethiopians, they were still considered guests and Christians as hosts. He shared that Muslims felt that they were welcomed as Muslims but not their Islamic religion (Richard, April 27, 2020). The participant expressed his anger with the following words as a citizen: "I think the grievance is that Ethiopia has been considered the land of Christians for quite a long time. Without even recognising the existence of the Muslim community. That was a bad history that has to be corrected" (Richard, April 27, 2020). Another two female Muslim participants added the following words: "I hope our elites in the future will call this history (a bad history), and we will learn from the bad side" (Fatima, April 21, 2020). Up to date, in some areas in Ethiopia where Muslims are a minority, they are harassed by being told, 'go to your countries; you do not belong here; you are Arabs. These words echo the words of the Christian kings, who, according to the second participant, added saying, "The Christian Kings were saying to us Muslims are Arabs, so they have to go to Mecca" (Amira, May 21, 2020).

The literature review in chapters two and outside has confirmed the above findings. Particularly, in the 19[th]-century Emperors, Tewodros the II and Yohanis the IV carried out mass conversions allegedly for fear of the native Muslims having a relationship with the external threatening Muslim nations. Those who refused would be killed or sent to exile (Abbink, 2011). Also, Emperor Tewodros carried out oppressive measures against the Wallo Oromo for the fear that one day they would cease power and convert the entire empire to Islam (Balcha, 2005).

The additional secondary data confirm the discrimination against Muslims. They were not allowed to become members of the national military for years; particularly, they were forbidden to take higher offices in the military until the early 1990s. They were forbidden to own land; because they were considered non-patriates. They were seen as 'Muslims in Ethiopia' instead of 'Ethiopian Muslims' (Abbink, 2014). Muslims were allegedly accused of

collaborating with the Muslim and Christian colonial powers. Hence, it appears the Christian kings had an excuse to forbid Muslims from owning the land and taking higher ranks in the army. A scholar confirmed Muslims' painful exclusion and bitter experiences in the Christian-dominated country. He said:

> Centuries with Christian dominance, a politico-cultural ideology in which Christianity constituted an important part of Ethiopianness, resulted in the positioning of the Muslim as second rate. Excluded from participating in political life, denied any representation in the form of organisations and stigmatised, the Muslims consequently withdrew from the public sphere and were left protective of their limited space. (Ostebo, 2008)

Oromia is one of the first regions where the *Salafis* took root, probably because of the reaction to these injustices. The traditional Muslim group also preferred to be silent and work in a hidden situation for fear of the possible Christian punitive measures on them. However, as we have observed in the section on the study's background, some sectors of Muslims opted to respond violently by relating to extremist *Salafi* groups in and around the country (Antigegn, 2019). Saudi Arabia also supported those groups willingly, for it had a strong aim of establishing a Salafi regime in Ethiopia (Erlich, 2007).

When we discuss the land narratives in the context of Ethiopia, it was considered a sign of economic and social power, especially during the feudal system, which lasted in 1974 after more than two centuries. When the Mengistu Hailemariam regime overthrew Haile Selassie, a new land reform took place. Till then, the land was in the hands of Christian landlords. Muslims were not allowed to own land; because they were not considered Ethiopians. Consequently, Muslims lived in small, rented houses in the towns. They used half of their house for running a small business; however, when the new law of the land (1975) to be for its tillers, the

Christians lost the land, their pride of richness. In Other words, Muslims lost nothing and grew faster because they gained some land as they retained their wealth in the towns.

For example, research in the area shows that they are controlling the biggest and most luxurious shops in most of the country. Small shops in every village in most of the eastern towns of Oromia are owned by Muslims. When a Christian starts a business Muslims in the area make sure that man runs bankrupt or cells the shop to a Muslim and goes back to the villages. The Muslims pay double rent to the shop owner, making it impossible to survive with that rent and revenue. Today even some Muslims started considering the towns their special places, and Christians only restricted the rights of owning businesses in the cities. These frictions are already causing unrest and conflict in some areas of Oromia. For instance, in 2020, some Christian properties were burned down. And Christians were killed or chased from the towns. As a result, there are some economic differences and the country's consequent deep-seated grievances between Muslims and Christians.

The implementation is that it is not difficult to imagine in the future, if some civil war or conflict sparks, the shops of Christians and Muslims can be burned overnight. This tense relationship threatens peace among Christians and Muslims in the towns. Hence the Christian-Muslim dialogue is paramount. Therefore, Christian-Muslim dialogue is urgently needed to include businessmen and women as well as young and modernist Muslims and Christians. Unfortunately, dealing alone with religious leaders falls short of hitting the target. Above all, the dialogue between religious leaders and the youth should tackle the injustice and historical grievances. Otherwise, the grievances surfacing at the wrong time and place are dangerous. That threatens the sustainability of peace and development in Oromia and the entire country.

According to the findings, religion easily manipulates people's sentiments. Religion and politics should be separated because mixing them causes serious damage to dialogue,

peace, and development. Hence, the implication of persistent grievances, injustices, and mixing of religion, politics, and ethnicity in the history of Ethiopia remains the challenge of dialogue. Sharing his experience in light of the findings and the discussion, the researcher has realized today that Muslims are taking different opportunities to let their voices be heard. Significantly, as the religious demographics change, many things are already changing. Dialogue is becoming a real challenge in areas where Muslims are the majority. A decade ago, the current researcher visited Eastern Oromia, where Muslims comprise more than 80% of the population. He witnessed two alarming scenarios.

The first one was as a coordinator for interfaith peace; when he consulted the Christians to meet the Christian and Muslim leaders, the answer was, please "go back home peacefully. We do not want to provoke any conflict." The reason was that the Christians in the area lived in a rather subdued and a low key. They added that some Muslim youth had prohibited us from even repairing our church compound because they built a small sign of a Mosque in the compound during the night. In some Muslim's understanding, where a Mosque was built, or Muslim prayer was held, that place becomes the property of Islam.

The second story was in the same Eastern Oromia region. There was a small town where Christians were harassed quite often. Once around 2008, Muslim leaders decided to convert all the Christians of the village to Islam. They started by storming a house of a Catechist compelling all the family members to become Muslims. When they refused to convert, they beat them, took them to a Mosque, and compelled them to recite the *Shahada*, a formula to become a Muslim. To ensure that all the family members became Muslims, they gave them the meat of a goat slaughtered by Muslims. In Ethiopia, Christians and Muslims do not share meat. Also, they brought a Muslim second wife to the former catechist to assure that he no more abided by the Christian marriage laws of one wife. The researcher physically met the family

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and the three Muslim leaders in the prison, who carried out the forced conversion of the family from Christianity to Islam.

Hence, the researcher argues the need for a robust, inclusive dialogue to address historical grievances and injustices with government approval, support, and recognition. Further discussion on the responsibilities of the key stakeholders of sustainable peace and development are addressed in the discussion on objective three.

5.4. Objective Two: Discussion on the Christian-Muslim Religious Values

The research sought to know how the religious values enshrined in Christianity and Islam enhanced dialogue in Oromia, Ethiopia. The general purpose of the research was to analyse the role of Christian-Muslim dialogue for sustainable peace and development in the Oromia region of Ethiopia.

The analysis identified that religious values enshrined in Christian-Muslim religions are strong instruments of Christian-Muslim dialogue that enhance sustainable peace and development because the key findings of the second objective are summarized in the words of two Christian and Muslim participants. A Christian participant said: "so there are a lot of values which encourage genuine dialogue between Christian and Muslims. For instance, among the values being faithful" (Teresa, April 23, 2020). A Muslim participant reiterated: "peaceful coexistence comes from religion. Peace by itself, love by itself, mercy, forgiveness, helping... all these good words come from religion" (Faiza, June 8, 2020).

The principal points of how Christian-Muslim religious values enhance dialogue that leads to sustainable peace and development have been presented and discussed in the following categories. Christian-Muslims shared scriptural values, specific religious values that enhance dialogue directly, and Christian-Muslim values that enhance and obstruct peace and development.

5.4.1. Christian-Muslim shared scriptural values for dialogue

The key findings suggest that the Bible and the Qur'an have common values that enhance the dialogue of Christians and Muslims.

5.4.1.1. The values of common faith

Both Christianity and Islam believe in God/Allah, the supernatural mystery, the creator of heaven and earth. He is the source and destiny of human beings. Christians and Muslims also believe that Abraham is their common grandfather through Ishmael and Isaac. Therefore, Christians and Muslims believe that they have a common creator in heaven – God; and an ordinary Father on earth – Abraham (Hanan, June 8, 2020). This is one of the strongest assets of faith for dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

The concept of the importance of having a common creator God/Allah, in heaven and a common ancestor, Abraham/Ibrahim, on earth for dialogue has been the opinion of several participants. An expert on Christian-Muslim dialogue added the following words: "Yes, many things unite Christians and Muslims concerning human creation and destiny. In Islam, we say from the beginning human life and future is the same" (Suleman, May 21, 2020). Also, another participant explained how dialogue is not difficult for Christians and Muslims because he said: "We all believe in the divine God/Allah. And this is very important for our unity" (Ali, April 7, 2020). Finally, a Christian participant observed the closeness of the Old Testament and the Qur'an with the following words: "And as you know, the book of ... the Quran is based on the Old Testament, and … [the] Old Testament you also find in the Quran (Peter, May 6, 2020).

The researcher's interpretation is that the Christian and Muslim Holy Scriptures are the foundations of their religions for Christians and Muslims. Therefore, when the followers of the respective religions in Ethiopia find something profoundly scriptural, they do not hesitate; they take it word by word. In Ethiopian society, people are not very speculative. Because it is

understood that society stands traditional and literal, they take the claims of the Scriptures literally. Hence, the scriptural commonality is one of the foundations of the Christian-Muslim dialogue that leads to sustainable peace and development. For instance, it appears that one of the reasons why the IRCE has been rather successful in mobilizing mostly the Christian and Muslim population for peaceful coexistence and cohesion must have been that they have a shared faith based on both Scriptures.

The concept of the positive role that Christian-Muslim scriptures play in enhancing dialogue is supported by the secondary data in chapter two in the theoretical and empirical literature review sections. The literature confirms the benefit of having basically the same faith in God for dialogue. For example, a Christian writer highlights the importance of Christians and Muslims having common faith in the same divine God, creator of heaven and earth, and the judge of all human beings on the day of the resurrection, laying a strong foundation for the dialogue (Kiboi, 2017). Similarly, two Muslim authors recognize the similarity of the revealed content of Christian-Muslim religions and their relevance for dialogue. They argue that those shared faiths in several matters of divinity and Holy Books are stepping stones for their dialogue (Nadvi & Abdullah, 2014).

In the section of the empirical literature review, we visit the claim of Neufeldt (2011); she brings the process of the Theories of Change in relation to interfaith dialogue for sustainable peace and development. Neufeldt argues that the shared study of theology, religious scriptures and practices bring about the perceived goals or changes in society. Hence, positive and sincere listening to each other's scriptures and in-depth knowledge of each other leads to mutual understanding and collaboration of the stakeholders of interreligious dialogue for the change of society. Hence she indirectly confirms that the in-depth knowledge of the similarities

that exist in the respective religions strengthens their dialogue and produces positive results on the ground for the people in the forms of peace and development.

Additional secondary data confirmed the relevance of having common scriptural roots for Christians and Muslims for their dialogue. For instance, the Catholic Church theology recognizes "the fact that the whole humankind forms one family, due to the common origin of all men and women, created by God in his own image. Correspondingly, all are called to common destiny, the fullness of life in God" (Burrows, 1993, p. 101). Hence the Catholic Church engages in dialogue with all human beings, particularly those united in the faith of one God as the common source and destiny of the whole of humankind. The three Abrahamic religions are also known for their faith in a single God.

For this reason, they are called Monotheists. God granted them his laws, *Torah*, for the Jews, Qur'an for the Muslims, and the Bible for the Christians (Niaz, 2014). Many of the revealed content of the Bible and Qur'an have similarities. Thus, the subjects of this study, Muslims and Christians, shared values enshrined in their religions, enhancing dialogue and peace.

5.4.1.2. *The values of mutual respect and recognition*

The current finding of objective two in this section deals with Christians and Muslims having solid scriptural foundations for their mutual acceptance, respect, recognition, and protection. In particular, Islam respects the three Abrahamic religions calling them '*the people of the Book*'. That means Muslims believe that those three religions own the books that God inspires (Faiza, June 8, 2020). Also, Prophet Muhammed gave a dialogue model saying that he has his religion and that other people have their religion (Teresa, April 23).

Another participant brought the concept of the 'Golden Rule' as something that exists in many religions as a binding tie of the people together. For example, in the Christian religion,

he said: according to the Gospel of Matthew in chapter 7: 12. "Therefore all things whatsoever you would like men should do to you. Do you even so to them for this is the Law and the Prophet" (Joseph, May 18, 2020).

The openness and inclusive attitude of Jesus are instrumental for Christian-Muslim dialogue. Christians believe that in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has shown ultimate love for all humanity. Hence, he had compassion for the hungry, sick, rejected, and people in prison. Moreover, Jesus associated with everybody and healed men and women of different backgrounds: Jews, Samaritans, politicians, and people without any religious affiliation (Teresa, April 23). All these common values thrust genuine Christian-Muslim dialogue forward.

In short, both Christian and Muslim participants have underlined that several verses indicate their mutual acceptance, respect, and reciprocal recognition of the scriptures of Christians and Muslims. Also, in the tradition of Islam, there are sayings about Prophet Muhammad showing attitudes and words that encourage dialogue.

The discussion starts with a Christian perspective where the participants bring the Golden Rule and Jesus' inclusive attitudes and actions as some of the assets for Christians to be engaged in dialogue with Muslims. Regarding the Golden Rule, dialogue is simplified when Christians do for Muslims what they want the Muslims to do for them. In Ethiopian Christian-Muslim history, Christians did what they would love the Muslims to do for them, that is, welcoming them and protecting them when the neighbours threatened them in Saudi Arabia in the seventh century. Muslims, particularly the Prophet, reciprocated the good works the Christian king did for them. The tradition says that the prophet told the coming Muslims that they should not fight against the Ethiopians, for they did not fight you when you went there for refuge. In this incident, the Christian king and Prophet Muhammad reciprocated the Golden Rule. During the interviews, the participants shared how they utilized this episode of the mutual

support of Christians and Muslims based on the Golden Rule during their training for Christian-Muslim dialogue.

Discussing the openness and inclusivity of Jesus and Prophet Muhammed, there are two encouraging convergences shared by Jesus and Prophet Muhammed. The first is the openness and inclusivity of Jesus when he healed and fed people from different walks of life. The second was the openness of the prophet Muhammad when he expressed the rights of people to have their own religion as he had his own. Similarly, when Muslims call Christians and Jews *Ahl Al Kitab,* that means the people of the book; they inspire and encourage dialogue between Christians and Muslims without a doubt. For instance, during the interview, the participants shared how much the above concepts have helped them train people for dialogue in the communities.

5.4.1.3. The values of peace and peaceful coexistence for dialogue

The principal findings of this section arise from where a participant recognizes that peace, peaceful coexistence and other values arise from religion. A participant explained, saying: "peaceful coexistence comes from religion. Peace by itself, love by itself, mercy, forgiveness, helping... all these good words come from religion" (Faiza, June 8, 2020). Therefore, when Christians and Muslims come together and share their religious experiences, those values are strong instruments of dialogue. Their conversation is strengthened through common values, and conflicts are easily addressed and solved.

A participant brings Jesus, who is considered peace and the prince of peace in Christianity, about the religious value of peace. This peace is loved and agreed upon by both Christians and Muslims.

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Christ in Christianity is peace...Our peace is Christ... A Muslim person is also for peace. If you teach peace to all these all religions we will agree, we will be peaceful... we will make a peaceful country, peaceful relationship between us. (Joseph, May 18, 2020)

When we discuss peace and peaceful coexistence, in Christianity, peace in the Hebrew Language carries the meaning of *Shalom,* which brings the meaning of the concordance of more than one person or agreement of people on something. In other words, peace is created when people agree. In our context, peace is created in Oromia when Christians and Muslims have concordance or agree with each other. The discord between the two religions should be turned to concord- understanding each other. Similarly, in Greek, peace is called *Eirene*, which carries the significance of tying something together into a whole and restoring the broken relationship. Discussing the importance of peace, the concept is repeated more than 340 times in the Bible (Rashid et al., 2020). According to the context, it is applicable that for achieving peace and peaceful coexistence in Oromia, the ideas and values of Christians and Muslims must be tied together.

The value of peace is also understood in the Bible as peace between God and man on one side and interpersonal peace on the other side. Particularly for the relevance of dialogue, if we take the interpersonal peace, the prophet Isaiah said, when God grants peace among peoples, people beat their swords of war into ploughshares for ploughing fields to bear harvest.

He shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Is. 2:4-16).

These confirm that peace and peaceful coexistence are some of the profound Biblical value that enhances Christian-Muslim dialogue for peace and development.

In Islam, peace as a religious value often comes in the Qur'anic and Hadith texts. In some texts of the Qur'an, peace is a God-given value that unites the enemies and reconciles them by putting affection in their hearts: "Perhaps Allah will put, between you and those to whom you have been enemies among them, affection. And Allah is competent, and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" (Quran, 60:7).

Another important concept in Islam that came up in the findings was that practising peace among people is better than charity and prayer because a lack of peace destroys humankind. Regarding an interpersonal relationship, there is a Hadith (without number), where the Prophet said: *"Do you know what is better than charity and fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind"* (Muslims & Bukhari).

From the above discussion, both Christian and Muslim scriptures and Hadith confirm the claim of the finding of the field research on the importance of peace: the claim was that peace and peaceful coexistence are part and parcel of the Christian-Muslim religious values that enhance the dialogue leading to sustainable peace and development.

5.4.1.4. The value of love for dialogue

The findings show that love is a scriptural value promoting Christian-Muslim dialogue. The theoretical literature review confirms how love is part of the values of the two religions. In Christianity, love is considered the most important value upon which both the Old Testament and the New Testament hung. In the Old Testament, the writer of Deuteronomy brings the people of Israel saying, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6:4-5). In the New Testament, Jesus upgrades the commandments of love that

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were given in the OT. It adds the love of the neighbours with the following words: "And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Mat. 22: 39-40). Hence, both in the OT and NT, God has given them the commandment of love as one of the most important values in their life.

In Islam, normally, love is kept for Allah and his Messenger Prophet Muhammad. For them, love is above everything. Therefore, the claim of the findings, which argues that Muslims have love as one of the names of Allah, is confirmed. Because in the literature, two of the names of Allah are directly related to love. *Al Wadud*, the loved, and Al *Muhib,* the lover. According to the Qur'an, Allah himself said that if one holds to someone or something dearer to him than God, let him wait for punishment from Allah:

> Say: If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates, or your kindred; the wealth that you have gained; the commerce in which you fear a decline: or the dwellings in which you (seek) delight – are dearer to you than Allah, or His Messenger, or the striving in His cause: then wait until Allah brings about His decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious. (9:24)

Confirming the importance of peaceful coexistence and love for sustainable development, several authors analyse the reasons why they are necessary. For instance, two scholars explained that peaceful coexistence, promoting the culture of tolerance, and the spirit of love and peace serve as a safety valve for all countries; because those safety valves create a sound environment for comprehensive human development (Albaqara & Buheji, 2018). The writers added that the religious values of tolerance, love, and peace/peaceful coexistence serve the society in solving social, educational, economic, and even political problems.

In the discussion of objective two, we have seen the participants recognise several religious values in Christianity and Islam. Then we can summarise that those values are instrumental for Christian-Muslim dialogue that thrusts Christians and Muslims to collaborate for sustainable peace and development.

5.4.2. The values enhancing or obstructing peace and development

The key findings of the research highlight that Christian-Muslim dialogue thrusts the process of sustainable peace and development. The findings clearly show that religious values sometimes get misunderstood and abused, obstructing or slowing down the peace and development process. However, Christian-Muslim values are significant in building sustainable peace and development.

Concerning religions' apparent obstruction of peace and development, a participant brought the ambivalent role of religion in Palestine. Looking at the centuries-old religious violence and the world extremist groups, he commented as follows: even if many people are puzzled by religion's positive and negative influence, if religions are handled with care and wisdom, they remain instruments of peace, development, and transformation. He said:

> So, for most of us he... when we discuss religion, many people think religion is a cause
> of many conflicts…Some people even say that religion poisons everything. One can
> say that religion is the source of conflict, but on the contrary, eh... from what we observe
> in Ethiopia and many other countries eh... religion indeed can be eh.... a source of peace,
> reconciliation and trust between eh… groups. Eh... this is because religion eh... affects
> politics, it affects ethnicity. (Frank, April 29)

In the context of Ethiopia, where over 90% of the population are deeply religious, it affects politics, ethnicity, and culture sometimes negatively but primarily positively. Another participant supporting the idea said:

> So, religion is helping us in all these. Religious institution by itself called mobilising agent factors…The[re is] goodness due to the religions. Race, ethnicity, colour divisions are controlled by religion. It is controlled by the government and by religion. Religion is [the most] powerful than [in] these all things. That is in both in Muslim and in Christian. (Joseph, May 18, 2020)

In other words, religion is a powerful, unifying, motivating force for dialogue, peace, and development. So Joseph appears to say in the country where more than 80 ethnic groups with their own distinctive languages and cultures and religions have managed to keep them together. One of the reasons Ethiopia has never been fully colonised is the unity that religions create among the citizens and the tradition of fighting external enemies together.

A participant in the data collection supports the idea of religion being a unifying force with the following words: "Unity is the first. Religion creates a great opportunity for closeness. For example, let me tell you; Islam and Christianity in Ethiopia have been living together for one thousand four hundred years" (Ali, April 7, 2020).

There is unity among the citizens and collaboration for common pressing agendas. The pressing agendas in Ethiopia, particularly Oromia, are peace and development. A participant shared how peace is one of the main contents of Islam and Christianity. Saba said: "when we come to peace, eh... Bible is teaching us peace; I mean, God is the peace. And even the other name of Allah is peace. Both religions are pro-peace" (Saba, April 15, 2020). One religious leader added that peace and development are the basic teachings of Christian and Muslim religions. He said: "I can see clearly both sustainable peace and development are part and parcel

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of religion because, you know, the basic teaching of religion are peace and harmony, compassion, forgiveness...These are all tenets of peace and the Golden Rule" (Gerald, May 14, 2020).

A participant brings a practical example to show how dialogue helped in Adama, one of the Oromia towns, when violence broke out. The followers of the two religions came together and solved their problems. They agreed upon the Christians to watch and keep the Mosques and for Muslims to protect churches (Saba, April 15, 2020).

From this finding claiming that religion promotes peace and causes and exacerbates conflict, we understand religion plays an instrumental role. In Africa, since religion permeates all levels of society, it has to be studied and held with wisdom so that the positive values of religions are maximised and the negative elements are controlled and transformed.

Discussion of the findings starts by analysing whether the claims are confirmed or differ in the literature review in chapter two. The literature supports the findings concerning why many people are puzzled by both religions' sources of violence and peace. For instance, Kiboi (2017) takes us back to the Medieval age religious and territorial wars in Europe and the Middle East. The author recognised how the text in the Bible (Galatians 4: 21-26) had contributed immensely to fuelling the Crusade. The symbolic expression of St. Paul to consider the children of Hagar, the slave mother, that having no right to inherit with the children of Sara, the legitimate wife of Abraham, wounded the relationship between Christians and Muslims. This was interpreted that the Christians who consider themselves the descendants of the Child born from the free Mother (Isaac) have the exclusive right to the Blessings of Abraham and the "Promised Land" (Palestine) to him. As a result, the Biblical text was abused and misunderstood, causing much violence and suffering for Christians and Muslims.

There are more similar texts in the Bible and Qur'an from which the Christian and Muslim fundamentalist groups rely on their inspiration. However, it should be said that those texts are exceptions and hardly represent the main scriptural line of the Bible and Qur'an.

The main scriptural line on the role of religion in relation to peace is that of religion propelling the actions of the adherents towards the works of peace and unity. Hence, the main line of the research finding was that religion is one of the resources for maintaining peace and solving conflicts. This concept has been upheld by the theoretical literature review where the prophet Isaiah writes that people living according to the law of God; he grants them peace, and "[They] shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Is. 2:4-16).

Similarly, in Islam, there are texts from the Qur'an and Hadith. A very straightforward Hadith regarding peace is about Prophet Muhammed, who explains the importance of keeping the peace. In a Hadith (without number), the Prophet said: *"Do you know what is better than charity and fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind"* (Muslims & Bukhari). These describe in the tradition of Islam that the value of keeping the peace is better than charity, fasting, and even prayer.

When we discuss the positive role of religious values in enhancing development, it is worth analysing how the participants tried to highlight the role of dialogue in enhancing development. This is despite the findings' position when they put the result of successful dialogue - peace and development as a single process of societal transformation.   In the key findings of the role of religious values in sustainable development, participants have argued that there are sources for hard work and development in both the Christian-Muslim scriptures. For instance, in the Bible and Qur'an, verses explain why God put the first persons, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Paradise. A Christian participant speaking about both religions said:

"When you see Genesis 2:15: 'And the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it or cultivate it'" (Joseph, May 18, 2020). The participant added the text in Qur'an as follows: "Allah/ God put the person in place of Jannat. God put the person to cultivate the place or Jannat" (Joseph, May 18, 2020).

5.5. Objective Three: Discussion of the Findings and the Literature Review

From the social analysis perspective, the research question for objective three asked: what is the impact of Christian-Muslim dialogue on sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia?

It is worth mentioning that unlike objective two, which deals with values within the dialogue that lead to peace and development from the religious perspective, objective three deals with the subject from a general socio-religious perspective. As a result, in the discussion, four findings emerged: Christian-Muslim dialogue enhancing sustainable peace, Christian-Muslim dialogue enhancing sustainable development, Christian-Muslim peaceful coexistence as an asset for peace and development, and the importance of key dialogue stakeholders for peace and development.

5.5.1. Discussion on Christian-Muslim dialogue enhancing sustainable peace

The core message of the findings is that genuine Christian-Muslim dialogue clears fear and mutual suspicion. It avoids the spirit of revenge and heals the trauma caused by the previous conflicts. Moreover, dialogue helps to restore a good relationship among the groups in conflict (Stephen). Thus, dialogue enhances peace in society. It boosts mutual trust and minimises misunderstanding that creates conflict and blocks sustainable peace. Instead,

dialogue excludes misunderstandings, stereotype prejudices, fear, suspicion, and hatred that destabilise the region's peace and block development (Saba).

Interpreting the above findings in this discussion could include that conflict is generated from human misunderstanding. Dialogue seeks and facilitates understanding among people. In particular, when Christians and Muslims are engaged in sincere dialogue, they have a deeper understanding of the matter. Sometimes they discover that they are talking about the same thing but from different cultures, traditions, and especially religious backgrounds. What triggers fear and mutual suspicion are lack of trust that comes from consistent faith-filled interaction of people.

In true dialogue, people, Christians and Muslims, in our case, gain trust and confidence in each other. That opens the ways to address the things that matter to their communities most. They easily address their religious identities and practices. In sincere dialogue, they own and act upon the values in their religions, such as peace, love, and mutual protection. They also, through dialogue, discover the most important thing that matters their community, education, and economic and social well-being. They identify the threats to their dear values. For instance, they know that if there is fear, mutual suspicion, and deep-rooted grievances, their peace is a short-lived venture. Therefore, through dialogue, they choose and enforce the kind of peace they consider the most sustainable.

The claim that true dialogue generates sustainable peace is the opinion of several participants. A Christian participant confirmed the above claim when he highlighted how Christian-Muslim dialogue remains one of the key factors for bringing sustainable peace; through dialogue, people learn to tolerate and respect each other. These values carry a powerful potential. He shared that through dialogue:

people learn to tolerate each other, eh... respect for one another; so, in my view, the

relationship between Muslim and Christian dialogue to bring about sustainable peace

in Oromia and Ethiopia is one of the key factors that has a potential to make eh... to

lead us eh... to better future. (Frank, April 29, 2020)

In the literature review in chapter two of the research and outside, several authors and leaders

confirm the importance of Christian-Muslim dialogue for world peace and cohesion.

The finding claims that dialogue restores the relationship boosts mutual trust, and

minimises misunderstandings, stereotype prejudice, fear, and suspicions that create conflict and

block peace.

Since the official beginning of Christian-Muslim dialogue as part of the international

interfaith dialogue in 1890, it has succeeded in participating in and holding global conferences

and on the agenda of peace (Magonet, 2015). The world political leaders and the UN have

organised special conferences on peace and security to confirm the importance of Christian-

Muslim dialogue. Proving that the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago (WPR) in 1893;

the World Congress of Faiths (WCF) in 1936; religions for Peace (Muslims and Christians) in

1961 were held (Religions for Peace International Secretariat, 2011). Consequently, in 1970,

the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP) took place in Kyoto, Japan, organized

by the UN (Mani, 2012) to study and act on global problems affecting peace, justice, and human

survival. This conference was led by representatives of the World's Major Religions.

From an African perspective, the literature confirms the importance of dialogue in the

1990s and how religious leaders in the context of mature dialogue carried out effective political

facilitation in Benin, the Republic of Congo, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a

result, through their continuous efforts, those countries passed peacefully from one-party to

multi-party systems (Ludovic, 2021).

Similarly, according to the latest statistics in Ethiopia (2007) on the religious demography, Christians were 48.1%, and Muslims, 47.6% in Oromia. It is obvious how their dialogue guarantees the peace of the region. Without the peace of the main religious groups in the region, there cannot be peace in the region. A scholar supporting Kung's idea said: "No peace among the nations without peace among the religions. No peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions. No dialogue between the religions without investigation of the foundations of the religions" (Magonet, 2015, p. 41). When different religions are in dialogue, a Muslim scholar said: "Despite the differences in worship and theology, all religions share a common teaching which is peace" (Andrabi, 2020, p. 267).

Hence, it appears that the dialogue of Christians and Muslims in the Oromia region and Ethiopia as a whole are well off in sustainable peace that leads to sustainable development. However, of course, it should be remembered that real peace and development is the joint venture of the key stakeholders. Hence, it is confirmed by the literature that dialogue between Christians and Muslims is proved to be important for sustainable peace once more.

5.5.2. Christian-Muslim dialogue enhancing sustainable development

The summary of the findings claims that there is no doubt the Christian-Muslim dialogue enhances sustainable development directly. To this end, the Christian and Muslim leaders and faith-based organizations run development projects, rightfully understanding that poverty is the cause of conflict. Peace is achieved when people are self-supporting, particularly regarding the economy. However, they are aware that many jobless youths are joining extremist groups and distractive social movements today. Hence they increase the conflict and tension in the region.

The claims of the findings are based on the following insights of the participants. A participant explained how peace and development reinforce each other. In the context of Oromia, where the majority of the people are farmers, if there is a conflict and there is no peace, the development is stagnated because of the limited mobility and lack of free flow of businesses. He said:

> By the way, if there is conflict, definitely development will be stagnated. Because mobility will be limited, they cannot freely develop assets wherever they want, so that is why I said inter-group feelings of lack of trust is all things in these religious group that prohibit or lag behind in development. So, there will be a lack of development whenever there are conflicts. Because lack of development can also lead to conflict, but in our context, it is a lack of human development, not only economic development, that is triggering conflict. Lack of development and conflict reinforce one another. (Mustafa, April 21, 2020)

Hence, one of the reasons why the development projects are carried out by Christians and Muslims jointly or individually is that providing basic human needs such as water, food, and shelter regardless of their religion enhances peace. Therefore, these achievements positively contribute to society by strengthening the relationship and creating peace. In addition, these joint development projects bring people together. A participant explained this, stating:

> Therefore, there are working to satisfy that basic need of society. Provide water, clean water... Therefore, this by itself contributes to have a good relationship and to strengthen the relationship and this by itself brings sustainable peace … these things bring the people togetherness, develop or strengthen their togetherness their mutual benefit. (Saleh, May 10, 2020)

These show that basic development initiatives are taken as dialogue partners to enhance peace. Hence, in the context of Ethiopia, particularly Oromia, the participants are of the opinion that most of the time, dialogue enhances peace and the same peace-creates sustainable development. The participants reiterated that there is a strong relationship between peace and development, precisely peace propelling development: "development is based on peace, and without peace, there's no development" (Erik). "If there's peace in the relationship between Muslim and Christian, the development will be the continuous thing that we're acting on" (Daniel). The Christian-Muslim relationship builds peace and helps prevent conflicts that interrupt development and entrenches poverty (Justin).

The normal logical sequence follows dialogue-peace-development. An expert highlighted that with the following words: "peace is a fundamental eh... issue, while we discuss development, there will be no development unless there is peace" (Robert, April 29, 2020). Another participant supported the idea and said: "religious dialogue, inter-faith dialogue between Christians and Muslims contribute to peace … peace is directly related to development" (Frank, April 29, 2020). A participant also said that "development is based on peace, and without peace, there's no development" (Erik, April 15, 2020).

In this discussion, it is worth noting that social sustainability and economic sustainability, that was discussed in Chapter two, are closely linked with each other. Hence they are analysed together. The literature review about social and economic sustainability argues that the social relationship should be equitable to achieve sustainable development. In particular, sustainable development stakeholders should adjust the law, human rights, labour rights, health rights, good governance, political will, wealth availability, equitable power-sharing, questions of domination, and social inclusion (Clune & Zehnder, 2018). These are the foundational elements of sustainable development. Without addressing all these challenges properly, one cannot think of guaranteeing development. Therefore, the participants were

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consistent in their reasoning about the aim of the Christian-Muslim dialogue. It was to minimise poverty by creating enough wealth (economic development) for the current citizens and a better future, more prosperous, and sustainable relationship among Christians and Muslims so that conflicts do not obstruct the development of the future generation due to the lack of dialogue.

Indirectly, this argument of the literature confirms the claim of the findings. We have seen that in the findings, there is a strong concept where it said: when there is "peace in the relationship" (authentic dialogue) among the Christians and Muslims, the development will not be derailed. So a good Christian-Muslim relationship builds peace and prevents conflict that could interrupt development.

Therefore, both the findings and the literature review claims insist on the importance of a good equitable relationship resulting from the inclusive dialogue. Furthermore, the literature on a broader level and the findings on a specific level (on the level of Christians and Muslims) argue that the key to sustainable development is peace among the groups. This dialogue continually corrects the difficulties encountered in creating enough wealth or sustainable development for the nation and the region. Hence, it could confidently be said that the literature review on this aspect supports the claim of the research finding concerning sustainable development.

Concerning the sustainability of peace and development, their process must be strictly endogenous. That is why the findings argued that Christian-Muslim involvement is crucial in succeeding in achieving the sustainability of peace and development because they are the part of indigenous people who know the situation on the ground, especially the grievances hidden in the society that could chock the progress, hence the result.

Another claim confirms the importance of Christian dialogue in enhancing sustainable development in Africa. In the theoretical literature review, there is the oldest faith-based organization in Africa in the context that deals with the role of religion in the process of peace

and development. It is a joint organization of Christians and Muslims known as the Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA). This organization confirms the finding of the current research in its principal goals. It aspires to drive home a human's holistic development through Christian-Muslim dialogue to promote peaceful co-existence (Global Ministries, 2019). The organization has proven how Christian-Muslim religions enhance sustainable peace, peaceful coexistence, and sustainable development, especially during dialogue (PROCMURA, 2022). Therefore, it could confidently be said that the claim of PROCMURA confirms the claim of the findings on the role of Christian-Muslim dialogue in promoting lasting peace and development.

In the context of Ethiopia, literature also confirms the important role of Christian-Muslim dialogue for a sustainable peace that leads to sustainable development. In its vision, the IRCE aims to unite the religious communities and their institutions in Ethiopia to stand together for peace, justice, human dignity, mutual respect, tolerance, and development (Karbo, 2013). It is true when the national interreligious commission was initiated, there were plenty of religion-related conflicts and violent protests against each other and the government, mainly in 2008. Hence IRCE was founded. It managed to control or subside those religious controversies and conflicts. So the claim is upheld by the literature review.

However, in the current conflict in Ethiopia, it must be said that religion is losing its positive influence in bringing peace and development. Particularly the IRCE appears manipulated and weakened by the political statuesque. Participants had warned in the finding of the research that to keep their distinctive role in promoting peace and development; religious leaders should keep their hands from interfering in politics. Also, the politicians should not interfere in matters of religion as the constitution of Ethiopia claims in Article 11, where it says: "The state shall not interfere in religious matters and religion shall not interfere in state affairs" (The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1995).

Before we compare the findings with the claim of the empirical researchers in chapter two, let us restate the share of the current research. The findings argued that religion, Christian and Islam religions, in this case, are crucial elements in enhancing sustainable peace because dialogue excludes misunderstandings, stereotype prejudices, fear, suspicion, and hatred that destabilise the stability of the region and blocks development (Saba, April 15, 2020).

The result of the empirical study confirms the finding of the current research where the two researchers tackled whether religion is a determining factor of economic growth or not in a country. The findings of the role of religion in the process of sustainable development concluded that religion certainly is one of the determinant factors. The reason for that is religion is instrumental in fostering in the lives of the faithful the beliefs that influence the people's behaviour by adding moral values of carefulness, work ethic, honesty, and openness (Barro & McCleary, 2003). The findings of the two research agree that religion is important for peace and development because religion enhances the moral values that support work for peace and development. Religion positively influences behaviours that add value to their commitment to work, honesty, hard work and work ethics. The current research also brings similar reasons for enabling sustainable peace and development: religion excludes misunderstandings, stereotype prejudices, fear, suspicion, and hatred obstructing peace and development. Hence, the finding of the empirical research confirms the findings of the current research.

It is worth remembering a case in Ethiopia in 2018, where we saw a similar courageous joint action in Oromia. Christians and Muslims were united to feed the displaced people during the ethnic conflict between Gujji Oromos and Gedeos. For instance, (IRCE) where Christians and Muslims were crucial members, carried out a successful operation of reconciliation, relief work and various development programs for those who lost everything in the civil war (Catholic Relief Services & World Vision, 2018). This is another confirmation of the findings

that Christian-Muslim communities in dialogue contribute greatly to the saving and development of the people.

5.5.3. Key stakeholders of dialogue for peace and development

The summary of the finding on this specific subject argues that although Christian-Muslim dialogue plays a key role in enhancing sustainable peace and development in the context of Ethiopia, particularly Oromia. However, other peace and development agents play a crucial role in completing the process. These are the Abba Gada and the government. Therefore, according to the findings of this section, Christians, Muslims, Abba Gadas and the government are taken as the key stakeholders of sustainable peace and development in Oromia.

Although the researcher was aware of the importance of traditional leadership and the government for sustainable peace and development, the involvement of these two agents as determinant factors in the process was not known before the data analysis. According to the latest census (2007), more than 96% of the population are followers of Christianity and Islam. Hence, if Christians and Muslims are engaged in effective dialogue and are committed to the traditional peaceful coexistence, sustainable peace and development would be easily enhanced. The finding added that Abba Gada and the government are as significant determining factors as Christians and Muslims. Subsequently, several participants shared their reservations about the ability of Christian-Muslim dialogue alone to enhance sustainable peace and development in Oromia, where there are various variables or actors. A participant highlighted the preoccupation with the following words:

> In the context of Oromia or call it Ethiopia (Christian-Muslim dialogue] has the potential eh... for bringing peace eh... and stability and this because people learn to tolerate each other, eh... respect for one another; so, in my view, the relationship between Muslim and Christian dialogue to bring about sustainable peace in Oromia and

Ethiopia is one of the key factors that has a potential to … to lead us … to better future. But we must remember that this relationship Christian and Islam are not the only variables that affect peace in the region. (Frank, April 29, 2020)

The religious leaders and institutions should be instrumentalised to bring about inclusive development and eventually social transformation (Frank, April 29, 2020). However, religious leaders should keep off politics in order to enjoy their people's trust. A participant said: "the religious leaders should have to stop being pro-politics and pro-government. Rather they have to be pro Creator, God the Father (Saba, April 15, 2020).

Also, the population's religiosity is considered a powerful asset and social capital for effective national prosperity. A participant said:

So, what we are using as best social capital is that religiosity; first of all the religiosity of our population. More than 99% of our people have their own religion, so this is the best asset to bring a harmonised way of life, peace and stability in our country. So, we are in this as one in social capital. And we are also using eh the kindness of people to live together. (Fadil, June 8, 2020)

In the case of Oromia region may be the most important variable or stakeholder for sustainable peace and development in the case of Oromia is the Abba Gadas. Confirming the argument a participator shared the reasons as follows:

So, every Oromo believes the Gada system as fundamentally very unique and very helpful, and as a kind of system that can solve all the problems of this Oromo society. ... to sustain the dialogue will be through these Abba Gadas, I think. Because they are in the middle and eh... they don't disagree with Muslims nor with Christians, so that is one area, one opportunity. (Robert, April 29, 2020)

As Frank (April 29, 2020) proposed, also Robert explained the need for multiple variables or several key stakeholders. He said:

> Christian-Muslim dialogue must include Abba Gada and other religious denominations and other traditional leaders to achieve its goals. Mainly, in the Oromia region, without Abba Gada, the people's traditional leadership, there cannot be sustainable peace or development. They are the key agents to facilitate peace and development. (Robert, April 29, 2020)

Another participant highlighted how important the coming together of the religious leaders, the government, and civil society members for the success of building lasting peace and development. He suggested this:

> the religious leaders, intellectuals, development workers, and social researchers, should come together; they should study, they should teach the people the real knowledge, people fight each other because of religion, due to ignorance, because they do not know their own religion very well, and religion of the other person very well, so there must be honest dialogue at leaders level, honest joint development, transformational social intervention. (John, April 10, 2020)

Finally, the participants concentrate on how to go forward in the situation of Ethiopia today by explaining the urgency of the key stakeholders, such as religious leaders and Abba Gada, with the leadership of the government to create a joint front to eliminate poverty by creating wealth (economic development) and sustainable peace. She said:

> But in the way forward, we can't eliminate or forget the ethnic question that has already been on the table, but still, the level of poverty that we are living in is far beyond ethnic classification or religious denominations. So, the country has to change in the level of development. Poverty has to be eliminated … Therefore, the government has to be

committed so that development and peace will be the core agenda and the religious groups, the religious leaders are aligned along with that very agenda. So that we create peace then we change the livelihood of the citizen. (Kevin, April 15, 2020)

A good, compassionate, inclusive and well-informed government solves many underlying problems that obstruct peace and development. David, who worked for decades in governance and conflict resolution, said that:

Leadership is extremely important...I think what we missed in Ethiopia for so long is the absence of leadership; an inclusive leadership, and imaginative leadership, a compassionate leader, leadership that has best interests of its people or its country, leadership that is humane, leadership that is informed not just by the lust for power or control of money or reputation, or self-aggrandisement...But really service for its people. (David, May 23, 2020)

In the context of Ethiopia, religious, ethnic, and citizenship identities are crucial in guaranteeing peace that leads to development. The participants highlight that the government is responsible for concentrating on the superseding identity, which is citizenship identity, as the guarantor of unity in diversity. This is done without undermining the religious and ethnic identities. This goes with the responsibility of the government to focus on positive peace. That is always to watch and correct the root causes of conflicts and poverty. The literature review shows the importance of positive peace, which seeks to create a human society without structural and cultural violence and the prevalence of justice, harmony, and equality (Galtung, 1967). This concept confirms the argument of the findings that the government is crucial in promulgating the constitution, which guarantees the inalienable rights of human beings to belong to a nation without discrimination of gender, ethnicity, or religious differences. It appears that the present conflict in Ethiopia has its root in the political system of the EPRDF – Ethnic Federalism. The participants have insisted on changing the constitution from ethnicity-

oriented to a citizen-based identity for the citizens as the solution to the present conflict in Ethiopia. In other words, when the government is part of the key stakeholders of peace and development, it listens to other stakeholders' voices and acts with its constitutional duty to guarantee peace, harmony, and security for the lives and livelihoods of the people.

Although the government initiated the IRCE recognizing the role of religious leaders in creating peace and cohesion, the government has not been a member of the stakeholders of peace and development. However, a ministry has been responsible for watching and controlling the religions. At the moment, allegedly, the government is utilizing the existing religious dialogue forum for its political needs. This has not been helpful, and at least one of the participants has complained that too much control of the government is an obstacle to the stakeholders' dialogue (Joseph, May 18, 2020). The government's allegedly excessive control of the religious leaders is leading to the leaders' manipulation, resulting in the religious leaders' inability to play their neutral and reconciliatory role in society for the sake of lasting peace and development. As a result, the Orthodox, the Muslim, and the Protestant Churches of Tigray have announced their official separation from the national bodies accusing them of aligning with the government and not officially condemning the atrocities committed in Tigray.

In the additional literature review, it is argued that in the current world system, no sustainable peace or development can be achieved sustainably without the active participation of multiple agents on multiple levels. It is because our world is characterised by interconnectedness. One can only win together with others or loses the battle. Therefore, particularly the active participation of the people on the ground with their faith and culture coupled with the legitimate government is crucial in enhancing sustainable peace and development. It appears that this is the reason why the findings of the research focussed on the necessity of key stakeholders or multiple agents are needed for guaranteeing peace and development.

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Discussing the sustainable peace and development the findings argued that the way forward for sustainable peace and development is endeavouring to create a very inclusive economic system, equal treatment of the people, there should be economic justice, social justice, political justice, cultural justice; there should be Justice in all aspects of life (Mustafa, April 21, 2020).

If one of the key stakeholders is left out, the process hangs in the balance. Inclusivity and socio-economic justice demand the active and responsible participation of the society, starting from the grass-root level to the high government authorities. The government involves society in consultation and needs assessment. A participant mentioned some characteristics of a good government that succeeds in building peace and development. He said that we need: "inclusive leadership, … a compassionate leader[s], leadership that has best interests of its people or its country…. leadership that is humane…[acts] not just by the lust for power or control of money or reputation...But really service for its people" (David, May 23, 2020). The government that seeks to provide service to its people without lust for power and reputation is the government that guarantees state security and human security.

In line with the current conflict in Ethiopia (2020-2022), the government appears to have jeopardised the state security where it allowed several governments of the neighbouring countries to come, plunder and fight against one of its regions Tigray. Also, for more than a year and a half, human security of the same region, such as all the basic facilities for survival and livelihood, including food, medicine, education, banking, electricity, telephone, and transport out and in the region, has been forbidden. The result is a lack of security and a full-blown civil war. Hence the claim of the findings that argued for sustainable peace and development, including a government with a policy of inclusivity and justice, remains crucial. This has been confirmed with the above argument.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals have recognized the need to involve the local people characterised by the religious and traditional leaders to guarantee real changes on the ground. When we look at the history of the sustainable development process by the UN under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals, faith-based actors have been steadily involved from policy-making to implementing the resolutions. The policy of implementing SDGs is anchored on ensuring

> a more grassroots and locally owned type of development based on the recognition that "local people" are better placed to both understand and respond to development challenges… the engagement and role played by them becomes even more critical to the discussion on sustainable development. (Tomalin et al., 2019)

The UN establishes UN Interagency Task Force (UNIATF) on Engaging Religion for Sustainable Development so that the active participation of religious leaders is officially recognized. They carried out an important role in organizing events and conferences by bringing faith actors into the Sustainable Development Goal process, from planning to implementing them on the ground (Tomalin et al., 2019). Therefore, the literature review confirms the research finding that the religious leaders, in our case, Christians, Muslims, and Abba Gadas, the Traditional Religion leaders, are important stakeholders in sustainable development.

In the context of Ethiopia, the government and religious leaders have been closely involved in the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. The government, particularly the EPDRF, had a development plan that was renewed every five years. It also included the grass-root communities, particularly traditional and religious leaders. In addition, the government has involved the IRCE in every planning and implementation process.

For the EPRDF, The core agendas of its famous Transformation and Development programs were taken from the MDGs and SDGs. Hence, Ethiopia has succeeded quite well and has been recognised as one of the most prosperous countries in achieving its goals. The government adopted a relatively inclusive growth approach. It was said:

As one of the 189 countries that ratified the Millennium Declaration, Ethiopia has made commendable progress towards reaching most of the MDGs. Apart from the overall decline in poverty, positive gains have been made in terms of education, health indicators including HIV and AIDS. These advances are owed largely to the Government's efforts, with substantial support from the UN. (Haileamlak, 2015, p. 109)

Here there are two important points to notice; the text confirms that the government's commitment, including the development goals to the national development plans, counts a lot. Also, development is an activity that has multi-agents; the planning and funding of the united nations contributed to the commendable success of Ethiopia. As a result, "Over the past 15 years, Ethiopia's economy has been among the fastest growing in the world (at an average of 9.5 per cent per year)" (The World Bank in Ethiopia, 2022, p. 1).

5.6. Suggestions for Improving the Intergroup Threat Theory

The Intergroup Threat Theory explained and utilized by scholars (Janse van Rensburg, 2017; Riek et al., 2006; C. W. Stephan et al., 2000) remains instrumental in interreligious dialogue. However, although the theory explains the importance of the interreligious dialogue for peace and development, in the data collection process, it was noticed that the theory does not explain well enough the aspect of how the fruitful Christian-Muslim dialogue created peace can enhance sustainable development. Also, the theory does not properly address the root causes of intergroup self-exclusion and inclusion.

The theory explains what happens when a minority or less powerful group is threatened. Nevertheless, it does not go to its root causes and propose the solutions to the problem – tackling the issues of injustice and exclusions. There are richer comments for solving the problem in the research findings than in theory. The research findings argue that economic justice, social justice, and fair political inclusion are brought out by addressing contextual issues through inclusive dialogue where traditional and religious leaders negotiate the way forward with the government. Then mutual suspicion, exclusion, misunderstandings, stereotype, and prejudice ceases, and mutual trust and collaboration reign.

The research findings recognise that the theory has a weakness in addressing the issue of oppression and inequalities, which are major factors for the conflict between Christians and Muslims in Oromia, Ethiopia. Therefore, the study recommended borrowing from the agenda of Critical Social Theory (CST) (Agger, 2006). The CST aims at initiating human emancipation based on the endowed resilience of the people. CST is the proponent of the concept that the present situation may put pressure on individuals or communities but cannot determine their future. Instead, if people are conscientious and empowered properly, they can create a new future by addressing the root cause of the problem and taking responsibility for altering it. Thus, human beings can write their history anew by making the present and the future structures and systems with economic, social, religious, ethnic, and political equity and inclusivity.

In the context of Ethiopia, if Christians and Muslims wait for the situation to unfold itself, most probably, the reverse of the past oppressive history will be repeated. The theory admits that minority or powerless groups include their people and exclude others because they do not want any further threats from anybody. They perceive no justice and react openly; they may be crushed. Therefore, they prefer to coil back into their groups until they gather enough power to enforce their rights or even take revenge. This scenario is very similar to the Christian-Muslim relationship in most parts of Oromia.

In the history of Ethiopia, Muslims were few and much oppressed; Christians were the majority and in power. Muslims appear to be moving towards becoming a majority and Christians a minority in the near future. What if the worse conflicts follow due to the grievances that existed? If the Ethiopians follow that trend, there might be a difficult future. However, Christians and Muslims can follow CST by borrowing the principles of critical self-awareness, human freedom, and choices to bring about an entirely new future for their children. The spirit of revenge and grievances gives way to cooperation, cohesion, peace, and development.

Therefore, the research recommends that the Intergroup Threat Theory include the section where it proposes solving economic, social, political, and religious inequalities and injustice by empowering the discriminated and the minority group by claiming their rights peacefully. The theory should raise awareness among the powerful or the majority of society that things can reverse unless they deliberately alter it in good time. The oppressor can be worse oppressed, and the majority can be a minority.

Hence, according to the research findings, the threatening group must consider treating the religious minorities and ethnic minorities with fairness and justice. With this, the research recommends improving the theory by including the section that empowers the minority or the threatened groups and a section that deals with different groups treating each other with fairness, economic, social, and political justice.

To conclude the section, the researcher recommends the inclusion of the justice question into the Intergroup Threat Theory. As one of the recent functioning theories, it is admirable to see articulating how the minority and the oppressed groups behave to survive and accumulate the various powers; however, its recommendation is to solve the problem by addressing the injustice and the human self-emancipatory power.

5.7. Theological Reflection

In line with the research objectives, the theological reflection begins with taping the reasons that enhance dialogue and the subsequent collaboration for sustainable peace and development. This reflection addresses the literature and the findings of the research objectives particularly dealing with the theological background for the Christian-Muslim urgency for inclusive dialogue, sustainable and holistic peace, and integral development.

5.7.1. Objective one: Theological reflection on Christian-Muslim narratives

The theological concepts of the narratives that are discussed under objective one are mainly the welcome of Muslim refugees by the Christian king.

Regarding the theology of welcoming and the love of neighbours, in Christianity and Islam scriptures, the love of God and love of neighbours are their religions' foundational concepts. Helen, borrowing from the understanding of St Paul in Rom. 8, says that there is nothing greater than love, and it is the most powerful instrument of peace and mutual respect:

> I am nothing and futile if I have no love. And God's love is for everyone. Therefore, I believe that it is important and good for any person to love anyone. There is no greater power on earth than love. Love is very powerful; correcting human life creates peace, a source for respecting each other. (Helen, May 3, 2020)

In the context of Ethiopia, there is an important narrative about the Christian king welcoming the Muslim refugees as a clear sign of the love of his neighbour. In the Gospel of Mark 12:31, Jesus commands the disciples to love God and to love their neighbours: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." In the narrative, the Christian king gave a model of love for the neighbour. Immediately after the text, Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan who sympathises with the broken and wounded neighbour. In the end, Jesus asked the man who has

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proved to be a true neighbour to this man. The obvious answer was the Good Samaritan who took care of him.

In the New Testament, Jesus taught the Christians how to go beyond the love of the neighbour through his actions and his words. "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5: 43-44). He ordered his followers to love their enemies. Love is above all. Helen has also shared a similar concept of the presence of the love of the neighbours in Islam. Suleman explains how in Islam, until someone does for the neighbour what he would like the neighbour to do to him, he is not a true believer. Love in action for a neighbour is a condition for a Muslim to become truly Muslim. He uses the following words: "Our Prophet said that if anybody does not do for his neighbour what he would like the neighbours to do for him, he is not yet a true believer" (Suleman, May 21, 2020).

Love of the neighbour is demonstrated by showing respect and freedom for others. In the Qur'an, Muslims respect the freedom of their neighbours. Prophet Muhammad, peace upon him, accepted and respected the neighbours' religion as a participant shared: "The same way in the Muslim religion, Mohammed says "you have your own religion, and I have my own religion" Teresa, April 23, 2020). Therefore, on these grounds of love for the neighbours, Christians and Muslims of Ethiopia have lived together peacefully and established a tradition of collaboration for so many years. Fadil specified by saying:

> To respect your neighbours whether it's Muslim or non-Muslim. So, when we see those eh... Qur'an sayings and what have been there in time of Negashi, our religion appreciate that our togetherness, our social life eh... whether it is with Muslims or non-Muslim community. I think those help much... to live together. (Fadil, June 8, 2020).

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From the perspective of mutual defence, there is not only welcoming but also defending the other with their religions and cultures. This concept introduces a peculiar Ethiopian Christian-Muslim relationship. In this event, we observe a very rare theological event whereby a religion defends another religion: When the Christian kings welcomed the Muslim refugees and protected them, we observe Christianity defending Islam from extinction. In the context of Ethiopia, Christian-Muslim mutual protection is one of the highest theological values of religions that motivates and transforms it into practical dialogue.

Husein explained that the neighbourly love shown to the Muslim refugees was not only by welcoming them but also by protecting them when their compatriots followed them to punish and retake them to Saudi Arabia. He states:

they tried to punish them here accused of them incorporating to...Christians and Negus Al Negashi; so they wanted to take them back by force. Surprisingly at that time, Al Nagashi did not allow them; he did not give them back their country even if they had brought precious gifts. (Husein, May 21, 2020)

Hence, mutual protection has been the sign of genuine love at the roots of the Christian-Muslims dialogue in Ethiopia.

From the Muslim perspective, they also have an important narrative in the context of mutual defence and the interfaith Golden Rule: when Prophet Muhammad sent his followers for refuge, they were welcomed. There is a tradition that because of this welcome and hospitality, the Prophet told the Muslims not to harm or fight the Christians or the Ethiopians as they did not fight you when you went to Ethiopia for refuge. This is part of the Golden Rule Jason shared: "He said, please do not fight Christians [of Ethiopia], … then they referred to the Golden Rule, 'Do not hurt... do not treat others that you would not like to be treated. That is the

Golden Rule" (Jason, April 26, 2020). This indicates that as the Christian king protected them, Muslims protected the Christians of Ethiopia.

Even today, Christians and Muslims protect each other. Jastin expressed his observation by saying: "In many parts of Oromia, Christians and Muslims lived together, building mosques and churches together and solving many other social and developmental problems jointly, and there is a strong collaborative culture among them" (Jastin, May 10, 2020). The narrative of Muslim refugees coming to Ethiopia and being welcomed by a Christian king has been the foundational story that both Christians and Muslims are proud of. It was dialogue in praxis. John shared about the narrative:

> Well…eh…from Ethiopian perspective, Christians and Muslims are eh…are equally proud of that history because it is the first eh…collaboration or dialogue inaction or action dialogue. Because when Muslims were persecuted from their part, by their own people, the Ethiopian king received them and gave them protection even when they attacked them. So, the king protected them until the end. (John, April 10, 2020)

5.7.2. Objective two: Christian-Muslim religious values for dialogue

5.7.2.1. Theology of compassion and empathy in dialogue

The findings of the research claim that the works of dialogue for sustainable peace and development are part of practising acts of compassion which are achieved by dialogue: A participant said: "I can see clearly both sustainable peace and development are part and parcel of religion because, you know, the basic teaching of religion is peace and harmony, compassion, forgiveness...These are all tenets of peace" (Gerald, May 14, 2020).

The literature review confirms the claim of the findings. According to Neufeldt (2011), compassion and empathy form the apex of dialogue. The author of the Theory of Change

explains how in-depth theological reflection of interfaith dialogue helps deepen mutual knowledge and enhance collaboration. Mutual understanding, in turn, brings about change in society. The author explains the nature of the theological dialogue approach: "sharing based on one's deepest beliefs and spirituality is qualitatively different from other types of sharing and reaches a transcendent level" (Neufeldt, 2011, p. 350).

5.7.2.2. Common source and destiny of Christians and Muslims

Christians and Muslims are united when we analyse the Biblical concept of God as a common source and destiny. Martin highlighted how Christians and Muslims believe in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth. God has created all human beings, and they return to him when they die to receive their judgment. Martine states, "We, all of us, are from the same origin or the same... also. We believe in one God... So, this Bible or Qur'an told us that we are originated from the same source that is God" (Martine, May 9, 2020) Similarly, as explained by Helen, Christians and Muslims believe all human beings go back to God for eternity: "By Christian, the Bible says that a person goes [to] the kingdom of God, to heaven for eternal life" (Helen, May 3, 2020). In the context of the theological dialogue, Christians and Muslims share their faith openly.

From a Christian perspective, Jesus Christ came from God and became a human being for Christians and all human beings. Because God wants to save all human beings, so sent his son for all human beings. Teresa said: "for instance, in Christianity, there is theology, from the Gospel by itself; Jesus Christ came not only for Christians, or gentiles or for Jews; but for all human beings" (Teresa, April 23, 2020). This perspective encourages the dialogue of all those for whom Jesus came, particularly Christians and Muslims. The words, actions, and attitude of Jesus are the foundations of the theology of Christianity. Jesus had inclusive words and attitudes towards every person. Teresa added: "when we see the life of Jesus, when he was

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living on earth, he was having a relationship with different people... in spite of the background. While he was preaching, he was healing people he was not asking them" (Teresa, April 23, 2020).

When considering the theology of values and purposes in religions, the empirical literature review said that faith-based actors contribute positively to the peace-building process by enhancing emotional and spiritual resilience in war-affected communities. In addition, they mediate between conflicting parties and promote reconciliation, dialogue, disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (Bouta et al., 2005).

Martine supported the claim of Bouta and his colleagues. The faith-based actors are filled with the theological values of love, peace, and the search for unity. These are what enhance their emotional and spiritual resilience. Martine said: "Love and peace are our common values for Muslims and Christians" (Martin, May 9, 2020).

5.7.3. Objective three: Christian-Muslim dialogue for peace and development

The research sought to explore the relationship between Christian-Muslim dialogue and sustainable peace and development in the Oromia region in Ethiopia. The subject, in brief, explains how the Christian-Muslim dialogue fosters the behaviours of the adherents to work for sustainable peace and development more effectively. In the empirical literature review, there is a common element in the findings of the three authors (Barro & McCleary, 2003; Bouta et al., 2005; Schmidt et al., 2016). Religion is crucial in fostering beliefs that influence individual and communitarian behaviours, such as carefulness, work ethics, honesty, and openness, in the faithful.

These arguments support the claim of objective three in the current study, where the researcher argues that Christians and Muslims, through the theological values enshrined in their religions, enhance the works of sustainable peace and development. The reason is that

their religions enrich their actions by exerting quality values on their works. The particular theological values that add moral and ethical value to the efforts of the believers are carefulness, work ethics, honesty, and openness, to the faithful.

The following research findings support these. Ali explained the work ethics of Islam: "Here's what the Islam religion says: 'the one who doesn't work should not eat.' Islam even preaches everyone has to go to work on the holy day Juma (Friday). After their prayer, they should not sit at home" (Ali, April 7, 2020). The theology of work ethics here is that the one who deserves to eat is the one who is ready to sweat for the bread that they eat. In the Bible and in the Qur'an, God puts the first human being in the garden to cultivate (Gen. 2:15).

The findings indicate that both religions are steadfast in working for peace and development. Work is sacred for them. Saba supported the concept with the following words:

And both religions [are] pro-development. Nobody is fighting against development. They're fighting poverty. If they do fight for poverty, and if they do play the role, what's written in the Holy Books, there will be peace… that peace will lead us to sustainable development! (Saba, April 15, 2020)

5.8. Implications for Social Transformation

5.8.1. Objective one: implication of welcome and mutual defence

An important theological concept that could motivate social transformation was chosen in objective one: the spirit of welcome and mutual defence of Muslims and Christians. In the history of the Christian-Muslim relationship, Christian kings' welcoming and protecting of Muslim refugees remains a unique gesture of love in action. No other recorded event of such importance goes back to the seventh century in Christian-Christian dialogue. It goes beyond

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normal human comprehension to think that one religion could welcome and protect another religion in the situation of life and total extinction.

The narratives add that, remembering the kindness offered to his followers, Prophet Muhammad, peace upon him reminded Muslims that as the Ethiopians welcomed you and protected you, never forget that and harm Ethiopia. The tradition says that it was the reason Muslims did not attack Ethiopia militarily when they conquered several other regions of Africa. In other words, Islam also protected the Christians.

The favour is mutual and continuous. Even today, the Muslims protect Christians, and Christians protect the Muslims. For example, in 2019, when Afar and Harar Muslims fought against each other, Christians hid and protected some Muslims fleeing for their lives in their homes. In another area, Christians protect the Mosques, and Muslims protect churches for Christians. These are unique rock foundations and models for Christian-Muslim dialogue globally, regionally, and nationally.

The narrative of the Christian king welcoming and protecting Muslim refugees is a unique event. It helped the peaceful coexistence of Christians and Muslims in Ethiopia. It should be registered internationally in human history as a model of dialogue in the world. The Ethiopian Christians and Muslims could raise the torch of model dialogue and assume the opportunity to create further cohesion and unity for transformational actions in the country and in the world. A Christian-Muslim Museum should be built to pass on the golden tradition of the Christian-Muslim common roots for peaceful coexistence and mutual defence to the next generations.

5.8.2. Objective two: implications for social transformation

Objective two, in its findings, begins with the deliberation of concrete common scriptural roots that unite Muslims and Christians having so many common theological and

spiritual roots make the two religions naturally connected. Ali expressed his conviction that these facts make Christian-Muslim unity a reality. The theological concepts that come from religions could be summarised as faithfulness, peace, love, mercy, forgiveness, and helping people (Teresa, April 23, 2020). These values motivate and sustain the people of religion to work for the transformation of people on a larger scale.

In the history of the beginning of education, it is recorded that education was started in the religious institutions by the religious leaders, including Islam and Christianity(Moore, 2018). For instance, the world's first and still functioning university was started by an academic and religious Muslim lady in Morocco in 859. Hence, it is known as the University of Karueein. Likewise, the first European universities starting with Bologna in Italy, founded in 1088, were started by Christina religious institutions (Michael, 2019).

There are many schools, from kindergarten to university, as well as charity organizations, founded on the aforementioned theological values. These values from scriptures empower religious leaders. Religious leaders want to help profoundly empower society by transforming them into the spiritual, intellectual, and economic aspects of life. Religious values are a foundation in those education facilities and institutions working for love, mercy, and integral development of all humanity. The research findings highlighted that we need educated people if the transformation is needed to continue (Frank, April 29, 2020). In Ethiopia, we intend to continue the works of transformation through education. There is an action plan for the current research to incorporate interfaith dialogue and peaceful coexistence into the academy's curriculum. This can be done at various levels of education where peace and harmony are promoted.

Another important insight into social transformation is from the literature review. The researcher presents that the transformational vision should also be driven by a vision born out of the statistics carried out by a scientific study centre (Pew Research Centre, 2017). The

research centre presented the outcome of its studies in 2017, indicating that globally Christians were at 2.3 billion and Muslims were at 1.8 from 7.3 total population the date. Together, they are more than half of the world's population. Similarly, in the latest census in 2007, the country's religious demography showed that 62% were Christians, 34% were Muslims, and the remaining traditional religious followers (Abbink, 2011; Ostebo, 2008).

The vision for the transformation from the Christian-Muslim dialogue perspective is that when Christians and Muslims of Ethiopia and the world, who are majority religions, collaborate for sustainable peace and development, Oromia particularly and Ethiopia and the world will be a better place to live. This is because followers of the two religions count for more than half of the world's population. Hence the researcher considers this an important mission to accomplish together with other stakeholders of peace and development.

5.8.3. Objective three: implications of dialogue for peace and development

In Africa, John Mbiti observed that people are notoriously religious; the religions, especially the majority religions of the continent, Islam and Christianity, have been uniting peoples of the mainland (Agbiji & Swart, 2015). In the continent, religion is inextricably interwoven into the socio-political situation of the people. It constitutes the fabric of society. Therefore, religious values make sense of the past, the present, and the future of the whole life of the people.

These show that religion is vital in promoting community spirit and values such as honesty, integrity, openness, and tolerance. Religion creates hope and courage in frustrating situations of life. The deep faith and the scriptural texts lift the life of the people in the midst of civil wars, sicknesses, and poverty. African Christianity, in particular, Pentecostal Christianity, raises the hopes and optimism of the people through the power of the Word of God in resisting the evil forces and being empowered by the spiritual life (Agbiji & Swart,

2015). In particular, Islam and Christianity make the basis of their common life. The concrete elements that unite and hold together the African society have a lot to do with the values of those prominent religions.

The Catholic Church's effort in Christian-Muslim dialogue is encouraging among the world religions. The Catholic Church, in her official document of the Second Vatican Council, the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christians (Second Vatican Council, 1965), highlights that other religions should be held with respect, and they should be approached with great care because they contain many religious (spiritual) and human values (Marie, 2005).

The Council adds that those traditions (religions) deserve the respect of the members of the Catholic Church. This is because they give meaning to the mystery of the human condition and suffering. Soon after the Council, Pope Paul VI called for the establishment of a Pontifical Council of Interreligious Dialogue to continue guiding the Catholic Church in its theological reflection and the practical process of dialogue involving different religious communities. This led to a significant Interfaith event in 1986 in Italy. In addition, Pope John Paul II convoked the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi on the 29th of October 1986 (Allen, 2016).

Building on the legacy of Vatican II and his predecessors, Pope Francis proactively engages in Christian-Muslim Dialogue. On the 5th of February 2019, after signing a historic declaration of Muslims and Christianson *Human Fraternity* (*Fratelli Tutti*) with Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of Al Azhar Mosque, he said that the world would either build the future together "or there will be no future." The Pope and the Grand Imam added: "The time has come for religions to more actively exert themselves, with courage and audacity and without pretence, to help the human family deepen the capacity for reconciliation, the vision of hope, and the concrete paths of peace" (Cookman, 2019, p. 1). Hence, Christians and

Muslims are united in the works of compassion. In the Vatican II documents, the Catholic Church resolves to work with all those who transform lives and livelihoods through the works of compassion (Henriot et al., 1985).

The religious leaders do not only reflect peace and development theologically but are motivated by the values in their religions as they act to make this world a better place. They commit themselves to it and mobilize the community using the privilege of trust they enjoy from the people. Frank put it as follows: "If you look into Qur'an or the Bible, this is the foundation of religions. So, they can mobilise the religion for peace. So, religious leaders are key community actors who can resolve conflict" (Frank, April 29, 2020).

Therefore, the social transformational implication of the research, particularly objective three, are the following: the key stakeholders of sustainable peace and development, in particular, the IRCE, together with the Government and Traditional Religious leaders and civil society leaders, should initiate the following actions of social transformation:

I. In commemorating the welcome and Mutual protection of Christians and Muslims, a big multi-purpose centre needs to be built in Addis Ababa side by side with the AU institution. This shall help highlight the significance of the Ethiopian model of Interfaith Dialogue for Africa and the world.

II. The multi-purpose building is to be divided into three sectors:

1. The centre's worship sector is where common religious prayers and cultural celebrations occur. Although many common religious and cultural occasions are celebrated among Christians and Muslims, very limited actions are taken. The research recommends holding three common feasts annually: the feasts of the welcome of the followers of the Prophet by the Christian King (Negasi), the feast of Abraham the patriarch, the father of the Jews, the Christians and Muslims. On the feast of Eid Al Adha, when we remember Abraham attempting to offer his son

a sacrifice to God, and the feast of Mary, the mother of Jesus, both Christians and Muslims greatly respect Mary, mother of Jesus Christ. These common feasts will transform the Christian-Muslim dialogue and guarantee the two major religions' common actions for the integral social transformation.

2. The Social Transformation sector of the centre, where sustainable peace and integral development to be enhanced by the stakeholders working shoulder to shoulder for better inclusivity and multiple justices, united to address the root causes of poverty and conflict in Ethiopia on equal footing united.

3. The interfaith research sector is to facilitate further research and initiatives on sustainable, inclusive dialogue for peace, integral human development, and the Ethiopian traditional peaceful coexistence. In this sector, there will be studying, planning action, and evaluation following the principles of the Pastoral Cycle: Experience – Analysis – Reflection – Decision – and new planning taking the original model of See, Reflect and Act (Wijsen et al., 2005).

These are some of the identified social transformation implications of the research. The researcher is committed to sharing with others and initiating most of the above action points for social transformation. The researcher plans to take these as his action model for social transformation.

Summary

Chapter five has presented the discussion on the findings as generated from chapter four. It started by restating the research questions and revising the conceptual framework. Then the chapter analysed the new conceptual framework. The chapter has concentrated mainly on relating research findings to the theoretical and empirical literature. It also brought secondary data from outside chapter two so that the discussion was broad and up to date. In addition,

Inter Group Threat Theory was updated by bringing Critical Social Theory and the model of Paradigm Shift by Thomas Kuhn. Finally, the chapter also dealt with the theological reflection of the research and its social transformation implication.

The discussion we carried out by comparing the findings and the literature review has enabled us to draw comprehensive facts-based conclusions and practical recommendations for social transformation in the following chapter of the conclusion.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Introduction

Chapter six offers a comprehensive conclusion to the study. It gives the recommendations emanating from the study findings and discussions. It also looks at the study's limitations and suggestions for future orientations.

6.1. Conclusions

6.1.1. Objective one: the current narrative of Christian-Muslim history

In its first objective, the research sought to understand the narratives of the historical Christian-Muslim relationship for the sake of dialogue that leads to sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia.

The novelty of the objective concludes that today, in Ethiopia, particularly in the Oromia region, the positive narratives of Christian-Muslim peaceful coexistence are stronger than the negative narratives of grievances and feelings of revenge. Hence, although the stakeholders need to address the existing injustice and the deep-seated grievances in Muslim and Christian relationships, the narrative study concludes that those deficits of justice and grievances are not at the level of danger. Hence, they are not to the degree of jeopardising the present and future Christian-Muslim dialogue and collaboration. In other words, apparently, they do not obstruct the works of sustainable peace and development in Oromia.

6.1.2. Objective two: Christian-Muslim values enhancing dialogue

The research, in objective two, sought to know the importance of the religious values enshrined in Christianity and Islam for enhancing` dialogue in Oromia, Ethiopia.

The values enshrined in Christianity and Islam religions that enhance Christian-Muslim dialogue in the findings are summarised in the following three concepts:

1. Important Christian-Muslim common scriptural values of faith are that the two religions have a common creator in heaven, God, and a common Father on earth – Abraham. Hence, they are known as Abrahamic Religions. Thus dialogue among them has a strong foundation.

2. Christians and Muslims share the value of mutual respect and recognition:

   From a Christian perspective, the faith of Christians is that God sent Jesus for all. The Christians believe that in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God revealed his ultimate love for all humanity. Jesus also understood his mission on the same line. Hence, he related with everybody and healed men and women of different backgrounds; Jews, Samaritans, politicians, and people without religious affiliations. Subsequently, Christians feel they have a moral duty to respect all human beings and engage in dialogue with them. From the Muslim perspective, Islam respects the followers of the three Abrahamic religions such as the Jews, Christians and Muslims. Muslims call the three religions the *'people of the book'*. This means that Muslims believe that those three religions own the books that God inspires. Also, Prophet Muhammed, who said he has his religion and that other people have their own religion, gave an encouraging dialogue model for Christian-Muslim dialogue as he recognised the rights of different people to belong to the religion of preference. Keeping in mind the Christian inclusivity and Muslim openness, dialogue among them appears not a difficult undertaking.

3. Christians and Muslims have the following common religious values in their scriptures that particularly thrust their dialogue: faithfulness, peace, love, mercy, forgiveness, and mutual support. When these values are embraced and implemented by all the adherents of the two religions joined by other members of the key stakeholders, these values are

strong instruments of dialogue that enhance sustainable peace and development, hence social transformation.

6.1.3. Objective three: dialogue for sustainable peace and development

Objective three sought to know the relationship between the Christian-Muslim dialogue and sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia. The findings of the objective are summarised in the following five points that point toward Christian-Muslim dialogue as having a strong impact on the process of building sustainable peace and development. These points are as follows:

1. Genuine Christian-Muslim dialogue avoids the spirit of revenge and heals the trauma caused by previous conflicts. It clears fear and mutual suspicion. Dialogue helps to restore good relationships among conflicting groups. Dialogue excludes misunderstandings, stereotypes, prejudices and hatred that destabilise the region's peace and block development. Particularly, in the country, where over 90% of the population are Christians and Muslims with deep religiosity, their dialogue and peaceful coexistence immensely impact the peace and development of the Oromia region and the entire country.

2. Christian-Muslim dialogue guarantees peace and stability. Without peace, one cannot imagine movement. Without movement, there is no farming; there is no economic development in Oromia and Ethiopia, where more than 70% of the population are farmers. There is a strong relationship between peace and development; without peace, there is no development. The Christian-Muslim relationship builds peace and helps prevent conflicts from interrupting development and thus entrenching poverty.

3. The novelty in this objective comes when the researcher concludes that the dialogue between Christian and Muslims is crucial in enhancing peace and development.

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However, the researcher found out that the Christian-Muslim relationship is not the only variable impacting the region's peace and development. There are many actors in Oromia, Ethiopia, involving all the key stakeholders of dialogue for peace and development: Muslims, Christians, Abba Gada and the government. Hence, the dialogue that guarantees sustainable peace and development has to be inclusive.

4. Genuine inclusivity in everything, especially in leadership and decision-making, is the best way to obtain sustainable peace and development. Inclusivity in all aspects: cultural inclusivity, political inclusivity, and educational inclusivity are essential pre-conditions for achieving peace and development. Also, the dialogue should address the need for equal treatment of people irrespective of their religious background. It should foster equal rights and equal opportunities in human dignity, fairness, social justice, economic justice, political justice, cultural justice and justice in all other aspects of life. The dialogue that does not address underlying issues of conflict, particularly injustices and poverty, cannot create sustainable peace and development.

5. For the sake of social transformation, the religiosity of the people, the respect the religious leaders enjoy, and the existing religious institutions should be taken as valuable assets. These are the core social capital of the stakeholders for social transformation. The key stakeholders have a deliberate common responsibility to instrumentalise the valuable assets and the social capital in order to bring about social transformation, realised through a positive peace process and inclusive development. To that end, religious leaders must avoid the politicisation of religion and the government avoiding the religionisation of politics for personal or party benefits. Furthermore, after recognising the ethnic and religious identities, there is a common need to cherish a superseding identity of citizenship, giving all citizens an equal sense of belonging, duty and responsibility for better social transformation.

6.2. Recommendations

6.2.1. Objective one: the role of narrative/historical background in dialogue

Recommendations to the IRCE and Abba Gada

Social Transformation Action

1. The IRCE and Abba Gada need to make a collective and courageous decision to focus on the positive narratives of the centuries-old peaceful coexistence of the Ethiopians.

2. There is a need for a symbolic gesture of their commitment by signing a memorandum of understanding to concentrate on peace and development that unites them rather than disagreements and conflicts that divide them in their dialogue.

6.2.2. Objective two: Religious values enshrined in Christianity and Islam

A. Recommendation to the government

Social Transformation Action

1. The government must consider the people's religiosity and trust that religious leaders currently enjoy crucial social capital and relevant assets to enhance the prosperity it aspires.

2. The government is to turn the religious institutions, churches, and mosques into hubs of social transformation.

3. The government has to recognise their important role and give a platform for the religious leaders and avoid religionisation of politics.

4. The government needs to accept membership in the key stakeholders for sustainable peace and development on equal footing, except for the legal responsibilities derived from the constitutional office.

5. The government is to guard and guarantee the continuity of the secular Constitution in the country; however, it needs to move towards replacing the religious and ethnic identities with the superseding identity- citizenship identity.

B. Recommendations to the IRCE, especially Christian-Muslim religious leaders

Social Transformation Action

1. They are to instrumentalise the common scriptural values enshrined in their religions, particularly faith, love, faithfulness, peace, mercy, forgiveness, mutual support and protection during the process of reconciliation and conflict resolution in the precarious situation of Ethiopia, particularly in Oromia, Amhara and Tigray today. These efforts are to counter conflict and build better sustainable peace and development outcomes.

2. IRCE, particularly Christian and Muslim leaders, need to keep off politics and remain neutral and effective moral compass for society, avoiding the politicisation of religion for personal or group benefits.

6.2.3. Objective three: dialogue for sustainable peace and development

Recommendations to the stakeholders and the Academia

Social Transformation Action

The stakeholders and the academia are to mobilise and lobby the concerned agents towards raising funds for constructing a building with three sectors to highlight the Ethiopian dialogue model in the coming ten years. The Ethiopian dialogue model is to incorporate peaceful coexistence, Christians protecting Islam and vice versa, Christians and Muslims building churches and mosques together, utilising religious institutions, churches and mosques as hubs of social transformation.

1. ***Common worship sector:*** Although Ethiopians celebrate many religious and secular feasts together, they do not have common religious feasts. The study recommends that the stakeholders, particularly the government legalise the following three common feasts nationally.

   a. *Feast of hospitality and solidarity:* The stakeholder needs to have a feast of Christians, Muslims, Abba Gada and the government where they celebrate the welcome of the Muslim refugees by the Christian king and the Christian-Muslim solidarity whenever the external enemy attempts to conquer the country.

   b. *Feast of Abraham the Ancestor* – The stakeholders to hold a common feast of Christians, Muslims and Abba Gada to commemorate all the ancestors, particularly Abba Gadas and the Covenant of God with Abraham signifying the covenant with Christians and Muslims together.

   c. ***Feast of Mary, Mother of Jesus*** – There be a feast to commemorate the common faith of Christians and Muslims in Mary as the Mother of Jesus, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit without a husband.

2. ***Social Transformation sector:*** in its sustainable peace and integral development, activities are to be planned and executed according to the SDG, Agenda 63 and the national development plans by the government.

3. ***Research Sector:*** This is where a commission led by academia is to carry out rigorous research to enhance indigenous, ethically viable and sustainable solutions for the country by studying the underlying factors of poverty and conflict. They to generate best practices in dealing with the challenges focusing on inclusivity, justice and human security following the Pastoral Cycle of the principles of See, Decide and Act in the form of Experiencing – Analysing – Reflecting – Deciding (Wijsen et al., 2005).

6.3. Limitation of the Study

The limitation of the research focuses on the aspects of the objectives that could not be covered due to limited time and space in the research.

6.3.1. Objective one:

In the area of the historical relationship between Christians and Muslims in Oromia and Ethiopia, although the peaceful coexistence was and remains a strong element, there are two critical arguments:

The first argument stipulates that the Christian-Muslim peaceful coexistence was based on fear on the part of Muslims. They were an insignificant minority compared to the overwhelming Christian majority who dominated most of Ethiopian history. So, the Muslims were afraid of being crushed by the Christian majority.

The second argument is that Ethiopian Christian-Muslims' peaceful coexistence is genuine and based on the historical events of Christian-Muslim positive encounters. It is also based on the typical Ethiopian people's religiosity, openness, hospitality, and collaborative spirit contributed immensely to the peaceful coexistence. Unfortunately, the research could not cover this aspect due to the situation in Ethiopia today.

Hence, future studies could concentrate on analysing the true reasons for the peaceful coexistence of Christian-Muslim relationships. This is to be carried out in light of the current demographic change.

6.3.2. Objective two:

The research was unable to comprehensively analyse the contrast between the rich scriptural values in Christianity and Islam and the current ethnoreligious and political

upheavals where the voices of Christians and Muslims are ambivalent. Hence, future research could focus on identifying the factors for the inability of religious leadership, particularly the IRCE, to reconcile warring parties or at least remain neutral so that they become a moral compass of the society in this testing period in Ethiopia.

6.3.3. Objective three:

In this objective, where the impact of Christian-Muslim dialogue on sustainable peace and development was assessed, the researcher observed the crucial relevance of the collaboration of the stakeholders in the dialogue. However, the study did not engage a sufficient analysis on the details and the modalities of the cooperation due to the limited time offered to the research.

Therefore, future research could be centred on analysing the relationship modalities among the stakeholders. This could help in finding the best ways forward for a better and lasting positive impact on the peace and development of the Oromia region and Ethiopia as a nation.

Conclusion

Chapter six has given the conclusions of the entire study focusing on each objective. It has also looked at the study's limitations, pointing out the limited time and space in the research. Finally, it has suggested concrete recommendations and future research orientations for better inclusive dialogue, leading to better sustainable peace and development, hence, social transformation in Oromia particularly and Ethiopia generally.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEES

a. KII Participants' Details

KII PARTICIPANTS									
N o	Particip ant code	A ge	Gende r	Religio n	Religious Category	Educat ion	Profession	Ethnic Group	Interv. time
1	Ali P-1-RA-1-EG-4	53	Male	Muslim	Religious Leader	Bachel or Degree	A ranking officer in the National Muslim Council	Amhar a	40:00
2	John P-2-RA-4-EG-3	43	Male	Catholi c	Religious Leader	Masters	The former head of IRCE and now executive director another NGO	Tigrian	45:00
3	Suleman P-3-EP-5-EG-2	55	Male,	Muslim	Expert	Masters	A head of foreign relation bureau in the Prosperity Party	Amhar a	50:00
4	Mustafa P-4- EP-5 -EG-2	55	Male	Muslim	Expert	Masters	The head of communication department in the IRCE	Amhar a	52:00
5	Fatima P-5- RA-1 -EG-1	29	Female	Muslim	Religious Leader	Masters	A Trainer in the Islamic Council of Ethiopia	Oromo	45:00

6	Teresa P-6- RA-3 -EG-2	37	Female	Protest ant	Religious Leader	Masters	A ranking member in the IRCE	Amhar a	40:00
7	Farah P-7- EP-5 -EG-2	55	Male	Muslim	Expert	Masters	The head of Communication department in IRCE	Amhar a	49:00
8	Jason P-8- RA-4-EG-3	48	Male	Christia n	Religious Leader	Masters	The head of National Peace and Justice office in the Catholic Chruch	Tigray	28:00
9	Richard P-9-EP-5-EG-1	50	Male	Orthod ox Christia n	Expert	Masters	A programme manager in the national Peace and Development Centre	Oromo	39:00
10	Gutama P-10-EP-5-EG-1	54	Male	Orthod ox	Expert	PhD	Governmetn Executive Director of Land Issues in Oromia	Oromo	84:00
11	Robert P-11- EP-5-EG-2	55	Male	Christia n Orthod ox	Expert	PhD	Consultant and Researcher on Social-religious Factors in economy	Amhar a	43:00

12	Frank P-12-EP-5-EG-3	52	Male;	Catholic	Expert	PhD	Consultant, Economist, Researcher, and expert on Land ownership	Tigrian	50:00
13	Lucas P-13-RA-4-EG-3	58	Male;	Catholic	Religious Leader	Masters	Former Secretary-General of the Catholic Bishops Conference	Tigray	48:58
14	Susan P-14-RA-4-EG-2	45	Female;	Catholic	Common People	High School and Diploma	An artist, writer, teacher and director of an Art Gallery specially for the disabled children	Amhara	38:50
15	Helen P-15-RA-4-EG-2	39	Female;	Protestant	Common People	Bachelor Degree	A musician, singer and a writer on ecumenisim	Amhara	45:50
16	Daud P-16-RA-1-EG-1	41	Male;	Muslim	Common People	Masters	A Journalist and Prosperity Party activist	Oromo	50:00
17	Peter P-17-RA-4-EG-2	70	Male,	Catholic	Religious Leader	Masters	The head of the Catholic Church in Ethiopia and National Peace Ambassador	Amhara (Also Oromo)	45:09
18	Martine	37	Male;	Protestant	Religious Leader	Masters	A leading member the Bible Society	Oromo	45:09

	P-18-RA-3-EG-1								
19	Gerald P-19-EP-5-EG-2	65	Male;	Orthodox	Expert	Masters	The regional director of the United Religions Initiative for Africa	Amhara	90:09
20	Anna P-20-EP-5-EG-3	56	Female;	Orthodox	Expert	Masters	A minister in the Ministry of Peace-Minister Data and responsible for Religious Affairs	Tigrian	70:05
21	Joseph P-21-RA-2-EG-2	43	Male;	Orthodox	Religious Leader	PhD	Biblical scholar and translator of the Bible into many langauges	Amhara	60:00
22	Suleman P-22-RA-1-EG-3	77	Male;	Muslim	Religious Leader	Masters	The president of the National Muslim Council	Amhara	44:00
23	David P-23-EP-5-EG-2	72	Male;	Christian	Expert	PhD (Professor)	A international peace mediator and conflict and conflict Transformer	Amhara	110:06

b. FGD Participants' Details

N o	Participant code	Age	Gender	Religion	Education	Category	Profession	Ethnic Group	Duration
FGD PARTICIPANTS									
1	Saba FGD-1-P-1-RA-3-EG-2	37	Female	Protestant	Masters	R.I	A leading member of IRCE	Amhara	90:00
2	Daniel FGD-1-P-2-RA-3 EG-1	60	Male	Protestant	Masters	R.L	A Protestant Pastor	Oromo	90:00
3	Kevin FGD-1-P-3-RA-2 EG-2	55	Male	Christian Orthodox	PhD	Expert	Consultant and Researcher on Economy and Social-religious Factors	Amhara	90:00
4	Stephen FGD-1-P-4-RA-4 EG-1	56	Male	Catholic	Masters	R.L	Assistant director of Peace and Justice in the Catholci national office	Oromo	90:00
5	Erik FGD-1-P-5-RA-4 EG-3	48	Male	Catholic	Masters	R.L	Chairman of Peace and Justice Department in Ethiopia in the National Catholic Secretariat	Tigrian	90:00

6	Adrian FGD-2-P-1- RA-4 EG-3	58	Male	Catholic	Masters	R.L	Former Secretary-General of the Catholic Bishops and the present coordinator of Peace and Development Commission for the Lazarist Congregation	Tigrian	90:00
7	Saleh FGD-2-P-2- RA-1 EG-2	55	Male	Muslim	Masters	Expert	Communication department head in the Interreligious Council of Ethiopia	Amhara	90:00
8	Justin FGD-2-P-3- RA-4 EG-3	43	Male	Catholic	Masters	R.L	Former head of IRCE and now executive director of Sustainable peace and development in the local NGO	Tigrian	90:00
9	Moses FGD-2-P-4- RA-3- EG-2	65	Male	Protestant	PhD	R.L	A leading Protestant Pastor and director of an Institute on peace and religion	Amhara	90:00
10	Mahira FGD-2-P-5- RA-1 EG-2	31	Female	Muslim	Masters	R.L	a teacher in a college	Amhara	90:00
11	Husein	41	Male	Muslim	Masters	Common	A Journalist and Prosperity Party activist	Oromo	90:00

	FGD-3-P-1- RA-1 EG-1								
12	Amira FGD-3-P-2- RA-1 EG-2	62	Female	Muslim	Bachelor Degree	R.L	the former national chairperson of Women of Faith movement regarding peace and reconciliation.	Amhara	90:00
13	Zakiyya FGD-3-P-3- RA-1 EG-1	29	Female	Muslim	Masters	R.L	Trainer and Organizing member in the Islamic Council of Ethiopia	Oromo	90:00
14	Majda FGD-3-P-4- RA-1 EG-2	31	Female	Muslim	Masters	R.L	a teacher in a college	Amhara	90:00
15	Amir FGD-3-P-5- RA-1 EG-2	55	Male	Muslim	Masters	Expert	Communication department head in the Interreligious Council of Ethiopia	Amhara	90:00
16	Fadil FGD-4-P-1- RA-1 EG-1	41	Male	Muslim	Masters	Common	A Journalist and Prosperity Party activist	Oromo	90:00
17	Nura FGD-4-P-2- RA-1 EG-2	62	Female	Muslim	Bachelor Degree	R.L	She is the former national chairperson of Women of Faith Movement	Amhara	90:00

							regarding peace and reconciliation.		
18	Hanan FGD-4-P- 3- RA-1 EG-1	29	Female	Muslim	Masters	R.L	Trainer and Organizing member in the Islamic Council of Ethiopia	Oromo	90:00
19	Faiza FGD-4-P- 4- RA-1 EG-2	31	Female	Muslim	Masters	R.L	a teacher in a college	Amhar a	90:00
20	Aman FGD-4-P- 5- RA-1 EG-2	55	Male	Muslim	Masters	R.L	Communication department head in the Interreligious Council of Ethiopia	Amhar a	90:00

NARRATIVE AND FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Objective One: To analyse the historical Christian-Muslim relationship in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia.

No.	Muslim Participants:	Christian participant
1	As a Muslim leader, what is the story about the Muslim refugees coming to Ethiopia sent by the Prophet and welcomed by the Christian King?	As a Christian leader, what is the story about the Muslim refugees coming to Ethiopia sent by the Prophet and welcomed by the Christian King?
2	What do the Muslims say about the Muslims in the hands of Christians in Oromia?	What do the Christians say about the Christians in the hands of Muslims in Oromia?
3	As a Muslim leader, what do you say about the Christians and Muslims of the country during the many attempts of occupying Ethiopia by the neighbouring Muslim nations and Italian colonial powers in history?	As a Christian leader, what do you say about the Christians and Muslims during the many attempts of occupying Ethiopia by the neighbouring Muslim nations and Italian colonial powers in history?
4	As a Muslim leader, what are the grievances of Muslims in the Oromia region up-to-date?	As a Christian leader, what are the grievances of Christian in the Oromia region up-to-date?

5	As a Muslims leader, what happened during the 16th century Christian-Muslim conflict in Oromia and Ethiopia?	As a Christian leader, what happened during the 16th-century Christian-Muslim conflict in Oromia and Ethiopia?
6	As a Muslim leader based on the present stories about the Christian-Muslim relationship, how can Christians and Muslims live and work united for sustainable peace and development?	As a Christian leader based on the present stories about the Christian-Muslim relationship, how can Christians and Muslims live and work united for sustainable peace and development?

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Objective Two: To examine the importance of the religious values enshrined in Christianity and Islam for enhancing constructive dialogue in Oromia, Ethiopia.

No.	Main Questions	Probing questions
1	Which texts or sayings in the Muslim/ Christian Holy Scriptures support the spirit of active dialogue b/n Muslims and Christians?	1/ Can you mention some of the most important texts about Prophet Muhammed/Jesus Christ regarding Christian-Muslim dialogue? 2/ How can the scriptural texts help the Muslims-Christian dialogue? 3/ An open-ended question according to the situation.
2	Which Muslim/Christian Traditions support the spirit of active dialogue b/n Christians and Muslims in Oromia Ethiopia?	1/ Generally, which Christian-Muslim tradition supports Christian-Muslim dialogue in Oromia? 2/ Specifically, which traditional concepts in Ethiopia help the Christian-Muslim dialogue in Oromia? 3/ An open-ended question according to the situation.

3	Which Muslim/Christian theological values support the spirit of genuine dialogue b/n Muslims and Christians?	1/ What are the main theological values or concepts about common origin and destiny that support Christian-Muslim dialogue in Oromia? 2/ Which theological discourse highlights the Christian-Muslim peaceful coexistence? 3/ An open-ended question according to the situation.
4	How can the Ethno-religious conflicts be addressed using the faith enshrined in Islam and Christianity in the Oromia region?	1/ What does the Qur'an/ Bible say about the unity in diversity that helps the Christian-Muslim dialogue in Oromia? 2/ Which religious values are there that unite Christians and Muslims regarding love for the neighbour? 3/ An open-ended question according to the situation.
5	What are the urgent spiritual motives for the Christian-Muslim dialogue	1/ What is your personal spiritual motive for being involved in the dialogue of Christians and Muslims in Oromia in particular and Ethiopia in general? 2/ Why do you think that Christian-Muslim faith will help in establishing a

| | | true dialogue between Muslims and Christians? |
| | | 3/ An open-ended question according to the situation. |

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP GUIDES

Objective 3: To assess the impact of the Christian-Muslim dialogue on sustainable peace and development in Oromia, Ethiopia.

No.	Main Questions	Probing questions
1	Is there a relationship between Christian-Muslim dialogue and sustainable peace in the context of the Oromia Region?	1/ How can you relate Christian-Muslim dialogue to sustainable peace? 2/ What purpose should drive Muslims-Christians dialogue? 3/ An open-ended question according to the situation.
2	Is there a relationship between Christian-Muslim dialogue and sustainable development in the context of the Oromia Region?	1/ How can you relate Christian-Muslim dialogue to sustainable development? 2/ how does the Christian-Muslim dialogue play a key role in enhancing sustainable development? 3/ An open-ended question according to the situation.
3	What role can the Christian-Muslim dialogue play in enhancing sustainable peace?	1/ How can the dialogue enhance sustainable peace? 2/ What are the possible obstacles of dialogue that lead to a sustainable peace?

		3/ An open-ended question according to the situation.
4	What role can the Christian-Muslim dialogue play in enhancing sustainable development?	1/ How can the dialogue enhance sustainable development? 2/ In which ways dialogue can lead to sustainable development? 3/ An open-ended question according to the situation.
5	In spite of the historical conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Oromia and Ethiopia, what is the way for word for sustainable peace and development in the country	1/ Is ethnic democracy the best way forward? Why? 2/ Can the Development Party a way forward in Oromia and Ethiopia? Why? 3/ Is there any other way forward?

APPENDIX E

BUDGET AND TIME FRAME

Research Agents	Activity	Time limit	Decisive Events	Cost
Researcher, Assistance researcher, Participants, Editors and Instruments	Data collection, Data transcribing Data Analysis Discussion Conclusion	From 4/04/2020 to 15/7/2022	1. Thesis defence: August 2022 2. Graduation: October 2022	5000 Dollars

APPENDIX F

RESEARCH AUTHORISATION LETTER FROM TUC

TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
The Catholic University of Eastern Africa

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH & POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

E-mail: dir.pgsr@tangaza.ac.ke   Website: www.tangaza.ac.ke

OUR Ref: DPGSR/ERC/4/2020   **Date:** 8th April 2020

Weldu Abraham Hailu
Institute for Social Transformation
School of Arts and Social Sciences
Tangaza University College

Dear Hailu,

<u>RE: RESEARCH AUTHORISATION FOR WELDU ABRAHAM HAILU, REG. NO. 17/00482</u>

Reference is made to your letter dated 8th April 2020 requesting for ethical review of your research tool to carry out a research on "*The role of narratives and religious values in enhancing Muslim-Christian dialogue and its relationship to sustainable peace and development in the Oromia region in Ethiopia*".

I am pleased to inform you that, on behalf of the ethics review committee I authorize your request to proceed to the next stage of data collection. However, I advise that before you proceed to collect data, you get a research permit from the Ethiopia Commission for Science and Technology or any other relevant research body in Ethiopia.

This approval is valid for one year from 8th April 2020.

Please, ensure that after the data analysis and final write up, you submit a hard bound copy of the thesis to the Director of Research – Tangaza University College for records purposes.

Yours sincerely,

DANIEL M. KITONGA (Ph.D.)
Director, Postgraduate Studies & Research
Tangaza University College

CC: Dr. Jacob Jeketule Soko – Assistant Programme Leader, PhD in Social Transformation (IST)

P.O. Box 15055 - 00509 Langata, Nairobi Kenya
Tel: +254 20 8097667 / 0732 897000 / 0733 685059 / 0722 204724 / 0714 610777

Email: inquiries@tangaza.ac.ke
Website: www.tangaza.ac.ke

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APPENDIX G

SUPPORT LETTER FROM ETHIOPIAN EMBASSY

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REF: pchQdî

DATE: 06/08/2012

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APPENDIX H

DATA COLLECTION PERMISSION FROM ETHIOPIA

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የሰላም ሚኒስቴር
The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Ministry of Peace

ቁጥር 21(i) 861-ሚ1-21-147
Ref. No.

ቀን 3 0 JUN 2021
Date

To Whom it may Concern

Subject: Assisting Mr. Abraham Hailu with Data Collection

According to an official letters by the university, Ethiopian Embassy in Kenya and his request letter dated in May 18, 2020, Mr. Abraham Hailu Weldu, a student at Tangaza University College requested us a support letter in his data collection. He is an Ethiopian by National with Ethiopian Passport number EP4513300. He is studying PhD degree in Social Transformation in Kenya and his research area is Investigating the role of Muslim-Christian Dialogue for Enhancing Sustainable Peace and Development in Oromia – Ethiopia.

In his letter indicated, due to the COVID -19, he could not physically attend to collect data; hence, he assigned Mr. Eyasu Weldesilasie resident in Addis Ababa to collect him data on behalf. Therefore, for his research is related to our Peace Ministry, we have given him our consent letter to collect the data as per his request. Here, with all due respect we request the concerned bodies involved in it in one way or another to help him in his data collaboration. In this regard, we urge everybody to be involved in this research to strictly adhere with all the COVID-19 protocols of the land.

Cc

➢ Office of the Chief of staff
Ministry of Peace,

Ahmed Seid Ali.
Head Minister's Office

ስልክ 51 00 00
Tel

ፋክስ 51 12 00
Fax 51 26 39

ፖ.ሣ.ቁ. 5608
P O Box

Website www.mop.gov.et

አዲስ አበባ
Addis Ababa

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