

Full Length Research Paper

Countering “Islamic fundamentalism” and out group hostility in North-East Ethiopia: Kemissie city administration Muslims

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Religious fundamentalism and inter/out group conflict have gained international concerns. Fundamentalism in relation to Islam is subject to debate and controversy, in particular because of the way in which Islam has been objectified as the fundamentalist by the West. Fundamentalism is understood as exclusive to religion. And the research intends to explore the responses, positions and views of Muslims in tackling the problem of fundamentalism and out group hostilities in Ethiopia, Kemisse City administration. Case study design was employed with qualitative research approach since it gives an understanding to the context or setting in which people behave. Primary data collection was undertaken mainly through Focus Group Discussion (FGD), key informant interview and observation. In line with the research objective and question, the major findings were the Muslims are starting to develop misperception and views towards Islamic fundamentalism and the US and their classifications with non-believers are gaining a huge momentum than ever before in Kemissie City administration. With the view to mitigate the above mentioned constraints, the following recommendations are forwarded. (1) Religious leaders must do a lot in sharing and teaching the principles of Islam. 2) The government should lift off its hand and gives freedom to religious matters by restricting its role to create a secure environment.

Key words: Muslims response and views, countering fundamentalism, Islamic fundamentalism, in/out-group, hostility.

INTRODUCTION

The world is undergoing a massive change (up/down) and religions are both affected by it. Spared of the jihad, either by design or by default, is one manifestation of this world and also Muslims. Religion is important in the lives of world's population. At an individual level, people's lives are guided by their religious values, beliefs and traditions

(Hussein, 2006). Religious fundamentalism has risen to worldwide prominence since the 1970s. The researcher reviews a lot of research on fundamentalist movements to learn what religious fundamentalism is, if and why they appear to be resurging, their characteristics, their possible links to violence, and their relation to Islam and

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Muslim. The term fundamentalism was first used to describe a conservative strain of Protestantism that developed in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During at least a portion of this period, the United States was arguably the world's leader in modernization (Emerson and Hartman, 2006).

Fundamentalism is understood as something that relates to the nucleus and center of debate of faith systems nowadays. Fundamentalism is understood as exclusive to religion. It is signified in relation to faith and the process of signification is powerfully negative rather than positive. In relation to Islam, it is important to recognize that the term fundamentalism (jahiliyyah) is not self-descriptive but has been applied by others in their attempts to describe and understand contemporary Islamic history and politics (Zeidan, 2012). Out group hostility is not a new concept or academics and has been practiced in Ethiopia, but what is new under this study is exploring the perception and positions of Muslims towards fundamentalism and out-group hostilities are included. Because peoples, especially non-Muslims, have the perception that Muslims are close and open to conflict. And still there is also misunderstanding of the Muslims towards out-group and fundamentalism (African Policy Institute, 2015).

Conflicts between members of the Christian and Muslim faiths and between adherents of Sufi understandings of Islam and revivalist Islam on the one hand and the governments on the other hand are more frequent than in the pre-1991 period. Hence government action and legal measures are usually not sufficient to either prevent or handle such incidents. And the peoples of Kemissie started protesting against government interference over their religion and for the elections (Majilis leaders' election) of September 2013. The Ethiopian Muslims in general and Kemissie in particular held massive demonstrations on Friday prayer against the planned election of Majilis leadership against the will of the Muslim population. The demonstration was held at Anwar Mosque in the capital Addis Ababa, Shewaber Mosque in Dessie (Amhara Region), Alkem Arada and Selam Mosques (East Shewa zone of Oromia Region); and in Kemissie town, Oromia Zone of Amhara Region. Several Muslims are attending the weekly demonstration at the capital Addis Ababa and from areas far from the center. Therefore, the Muslims of Kemissie are now in latent fear with the government and the government from the people, even though some of them are at manifest level (Johannes, 2012).

Scholars in Ethiopia have conducted a lot of research on the area of religion since religion was introduced peacefully in Ethiopia (Christianity in the 4th century and Islam in 7th century). Some researchers wrote on cooperation and tolerance, and the others on their occasional violence and strife. But attentions nowadays are to the sides of violence, that is scholars are writing and talking a lot about religious conflicts (inter and/or

intra-religious conflicts) rather than their long aged tolerance. And things are shifted and changed to a difficult situation and come up with different nomenclatures (shift to Muslim names, Mohamed, Ahmed...etc from Kebede, Alemu...etc) or concepts, like fundamentalist, terrorists and extremists. But still none of the previous researches were unable to address the response of Muslim towards new concepts of fundamentalism, terrorisms, extremism and out group hostilities, and this research intends to emphasize on the Muslims responsibilities to encounter fundamentalism and out group hostility. For example, Hussein (2006) wrote about the inter-faith relation on the historical town of Harar. Tekaelgn (2008) has focused on the inter-faith crises between Muslim and Christians in Jimma, Illubabor and West Wellega in Oromiya, especially between Ethiopian Orthodox Christians and Muslims. Afework (2009) attempted to explain religious tolerance in Addis Ababa. All of these studies have given emphasis either to the general inter-faith relations in Ethiopia or very few selected areas. Moreover, from the historical aspect of the inter-faith relations, scholars like Trimmingham (1952), Abdussamed (1990), and Marcus (1994) wrote about historical peaceful and conflict inter-faith relations in Gondar town. From a comparative perspective of Islam in the world cultures, Carmichael (2004) wrote about religion, language and nationalism, Harari Muslims in Christian Ethiopia. However, the works of these scholars were unable to identify the responses of Muslims communities towards having hostile relation to outsiders (non-Muslims) as well as an overblown perception of terrorism, fundamentalism, and extremism and out group hostility given by the some government officials. And also they said nothing over the nexus between fundamentalism, inter-group hostility and terrorism with Muslims response on the one hand and the responsibility of Muslims community and Islam on the other hand. Therefore, the general objective of the study is to explore the responses and views of Muslims towards "Islamic fundamentalism" and out group hostilities in Kemissie City administration, North-east Ethiopia.

Significance and justification of the study

The study is worth it because 21st century is the time that many towns are working hard to promote their economic development by avoiding different challenges. Generally, the study will have policy and academic significances at different levels: local, national, regional and global level. Locally the study shall provide the Muslim peoples of Kemissie and their surroundings the relevant information on how to counter religious fundamentalism and out group hostility, and protect their long aged unity and tolerance with other religious followers. The study intends to create awareness among the administration of the towns and Muslims about the problems and opportunity

of cooperation, and encourage other researchers to make their study on the problems in question from local to international citizens.

At the national level the study might serve as devising policy instrument and mechanism of integrating among the different religious and ethnic groups. Ethiopia as a state shall be the source of excellence in religious tolerance and the fight against fundamentalism, and it will be the safe site for international peoples around the world. Since Ethiopia is found on the turbulent region of East Africa this study will serve as a direction for protecting internal unity among religions and reference for those states in turmoil due to politicized faith. The study was important in that it initiated the world community to fight extremism together, that is it will encourage the sense of love and the planet will be safe for life. Therefore, the study may provide an input for authority and decision makers in Ethiopia in general and the study area in particular in their future actions on religious fundamentalism and out group religious hostility. And also the study may provide valuable academic information on the nexus between Ulamas and Islamic values on the one hand and religious fundamentalism on the other hand.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research employed different kinds of methods and techniques to study the views of Kemissie Muslims on Islamic fundamentalism and out group hostility as a hard insecurity issue of Ethiopia. Pragmatic knowledge claim fitted this research since scientific research is there to take note of the dynamic nature of reality and has to focus on its multiple dimensions. The study followed qualitative research approaches. The rationale behind this approach was that it gives an understanding of the context or setting in which people behave.

Description of the study area

Kemissie (also called Kascim) town is located in North East of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with a distance of 325 KM and served as the administrative center of the Oromia Zone of the Amhara Region.

It was part of former Chefe Golana Dewerahmedo woreda and is surrounded by Dawa Chefe woreda. Around Kemise are three villages with mosques, reachable only by footpaths: Dewe Rahmedo, about 20 kilometers from Kemise; Shonke, 23 km away; and about 12 kilometers south of Kemise there is a footpath to the east, after another 5 kilometers arrives at Tiru Sina.

There are allegedly Muslim monasteries for men and women around this town, with their members living in round huts distributed in the landscape, separated from each other in the same way as Christian monks and nuns.

Based on the 2007 national census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), Kemissie town has a total population of 19,420, of whom 9,782 are men and 9,638, women. The majority of the inhabitants are Muslim (76.29% Muslims and 21.24% Orthodox Christians). Kemissie is a place where Muslims

are resided dominantly and they are ethnically diverse (that is found in Amhara regional state in which most people are the speaker of Amharic language but the people of Kemissie are Oromifa speakers dominantly) (CSA, 2007) (Figure 1).

Data collection techniques

Focus group discussion

The groups were composed and arranged along their level of religious knowledge and the strata were identified based on using snow ball sampling. The peoples of Kemissie City administration Muslims are divided into Ulamas and ordinary Muslims. Therefore, the stratification was based on the level of religious knowledge differences (that is, those who read and interpret holy Quran and hadith, those who read but cannot interpret and understand the meaning by their own, and the other could be ignorant to read and interpret Quran and hadith); the discussion was prepared with 4 groups containing 14 participants each (2, 1 and 1 groups respectively).

Observation

It was done on the public transport, office, Da'was (held by Masjid Imams and Mua'zins after and before prayers), religious celebrations and market places. The researcher observed the Da'was of religious leaders by directly involving in the processes of religious teachings across Mesjids.

Interview

As Corbetta (2003) noted when conducting a semi-structured interview, the interviewer makes reference to an 'outline' of the topics to be covered during the course of conversation. To obtain the results 9 interviewee participants (5 interviewee participants are residents of Kemissie city administration, 2 from administration and security officials (1 official was a Christian) and 2 from religious leaders) and four focus groups (3 groups from residents and 1 from religious leaders) were consulted. Due to redundancy of responses across discussants the researcher stopped to conduct another discussion with more than these four groups. Data obtained from the respondents were therefore classified in terms of themes, and derived description was presented with their significant statements. Based on that, the data were arranged and coded in terms of major themes and sub themes.

Document review

Works which have been done before in the area under study and different statistics were important and subsumed under the study. Documents like magazines, brushers, and pamphlets were reviewed and organized in their types. The data were analyzed by arranging and portraying the data collected through interviews and FGD in a way that help to detect patterns or problems, explore associations that exist in the data in the form of themes and codes. In this analysis, reiteration and elaborations of key concepts and suggestions were made in the findings that fit with the existing literature under investigation. In doing so, the researcher identified dissimilarities while comparing the findings secured against literature reviews.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This part of the chapter deals with the operational definitions of key

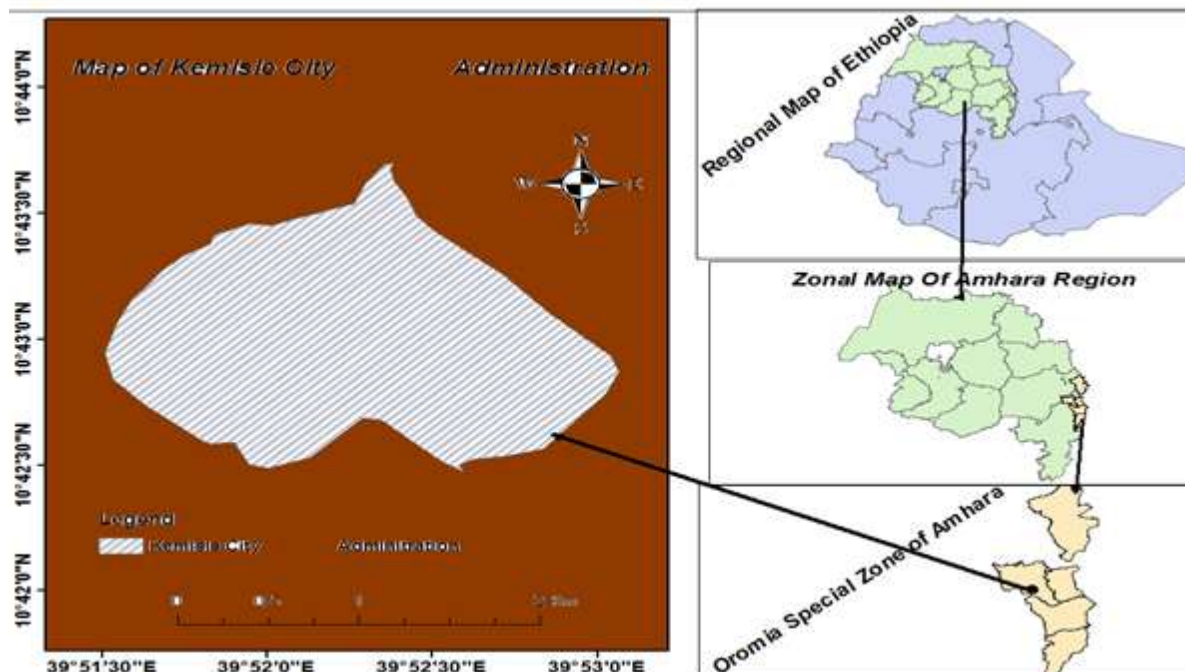


Figure 1: Map of Kemissie city administration.

words and phrases of this study, which at least guide the readers or audiences to understand the usage of words and theme of the study. The next part focuses on theoretical models and theories which are useful to internalize the case under study from different angles, and also employ in the analysis parts. The last part is reviewing of different literatures already conducted previously in the area (both geographically and conceptually) to be up-to-date; this further enables the researcher to justify that the problems have roots in the existing literatures that need further investigation.

Defining terms and concepts

Fundamentalism

According to Webster's dictionary fundamentalism was a movement in American Protestantism that arose in the earlier part of the 20th century. It was a reaction to modernism, and stressed the infallibility of the Bible, not only in matters of faith and morals but also as a literal historical record. It stressed on belief in the Bible as the literal word of God. Thus fundamentalism was a word initially used for a group of Christians who believed that the Bible was the verbatim word of God without any errors and mistakes. According to the Oxford dictionary fundamentalism means strict maintenance of ancient or fundamental doctrines of any religion, especially Islam.

Fundamentalism refers to a belief in a strict adherence to a set of basic principles (often religious in nature), sometimes as a reaction to perceived doctrinal compromises with modern social and political life (Naik, 2010).

Religious fundamentalism

Religious fundamentalism is common today to profess or practice a

religion in a way that is not Orthodox. It focuses on the differences in human kind, rather than what unites them. It does not connect a person's faith fully to the tenets of his/her religion. And for this paper religious fundamentalism does not indicate the sense of faithfulness, rather it uses religion as a mask to achieve different objectives in non-Orthodox way.

Islamic fundamentalism

Islam comes from the root word 'salaam', which means peace. It also means submitting one's will to Allah. Thus Islam is a religion of peace, which is acquired by submitting one's will to the will of the Supreme Creator, Allah (Naik, 2010). Islamic fundamentalism is a fairly modern phenomenon that started in the 1920s with the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the first Islamist mass movement.

There are now a wide variety of movements that offer Islam as a total way of life and as an alternative to Western secular ideologies. Adherents of Islamic Fundamentalism (also known as Islamism or political Islam) are parts of this wider reform movement, a reaction to the destructive effects of secular modernity and Western hegemony on Muslim societies.

Therefore, it is believed that Muslims are spreading Islamic based hatred towards others (particularly to the West and generally to non-believers). This is because Islamic fundamentalism has been defined variously as a movement of Muslims who are traced back to earlier times and seek to return to the fundamentals of the religion; who favor a literal interpretation of the primary sources of Islam (the Qur'an and Sunnah) and seek to eliminate (what they perceive to be) corrupting non-Islamic influences from every part of their lives; and as a pejorative term used by outsiders for Islamic revivalism and Islamic activism (Zeidan, 2012).

Out-Group Conflict/Hostility: Religion as an issue

Religion as a way life is not the problem in itself; it could even be a panacea for social problems by using religious leaders and institutions as an actor. The link between religion teachings and intolerance is via the well-established in-group/out-group bias. This is the tendency of individuals to esteem members of the in-group while exhibiting prejudiced attitudes toward members of out-groups, and to discriminate in favor of members of the former and against those of the latter. Much like ethnic and political groupings, religious affiliation can trigger intergroup psychological dynamics that generate stereotypes, negative effects, and anti-social attitudes and behaviors toward out-group members. Groups in general and religious groups in particular provide their members (to varying degrees) with shared norms, values, traditions, and metaphysics, which in turn helps to mobilize, coordinate and justify collective action. Generally, for this study out-group hostility refers to any types of relation (conflictual) between Muslims and other religious followers (Afewerk Hailu, 2009).

Theoretical and analytical model

Theories are important to explain religious fundamentalism and out group conflict. Theories, therefore, could address the issues of conflict from its historical, psychological, political and from other viewpoints.

Marxian theory of life construction, hostility and fundamentalism

In addition to the evolution of human beings proposed by Charles Darwin, his theory also has relation with the construction of conflicts, that is social Darwinism. The theory of evolution, which was believed to be firstly proposed by Charles Darwin and set on scientific observation and evidence, in fact not its originator, neither does the theory rest on scientific proof, is blindly supported by the name of materialist philosophy (Yahya, 2002). Therefore, terrorism, out group hostility and Islamic fundamentalism are nothing other than a statement employed by materialism. Individuals and groups who choose the way of conflict may never have heard of Darwinism and the principles of that ideology. But at the end of the day they agree with a view whose philosophical basis rests on Darwinism. Actually, when Darwinism is taken away, no philosophy of conflict remains. Darwinism sees and portrays conflict and violence as natural, justified and correct concepts that have to exist, and it explains that his philosophy earns a ground to be fundamental and developing hatred to survive and achieve any goals.

RESULTS

Islamic fundamentalism and out-group hostilities are gaining momentum in Kemissie city administration. Even though the Muslim communities are part of the problem, they are also part of the solution if they actively engage in their matter and the government lifts off unwanted intervention. As expected the Muslims are not responding to fundamentalism and out group hostilities and even some individuals believe that fundamentalists are freedom fighters for their religion in the city administration, especially the youths. This might be related to lack of religious knowledge and the hidden goals and political motives of some followers.

The study also depicted that generation differences accompanied with accessibility of technology played its role on fueling conflict between religions at the lowest and at the maximum against the government in power.

The relationship between globalization, particularly on cultural issues and Islam is not easily integrated. Muslims absolutely refuse to intermingle their cultural values with the west; they always stand against it. Culture does matter, and indeed matters a lot, so that religious legacies leave a distinct imprint on contemporary values.

In the new world, Huntington argued (1996), "...the most pervasive, important and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between people belonging to different cultural entities. Tribal wars and ethnic conflicts will occur within civilizations...And the most dangerous cultural conflicts are those along the fault lines between civilizations. On the other hand the government of Ethiopia fails to deal with its people's questions like equal political representation of Muslims on higher government agencies. As Johannes (2012) indicated the government lacks inclusiveness in political representation. In making an assessment of Islam in relation to politics, one crucial point must be taken into consideration: politics is only a relative and not the real part of Islam. Both scholars and ordinary (uneducated) people think politics causes every conflict that happens in Kemissie city administration, and identify religion as a mask and instrument.

DISCUSSION

Responses and views of Muslims to Islamic fundamentalism and hostilities in Kemissie

To open the discussion of this part it is better to see the causes of fundamentalism and out group hostilities even if this is not the burden of this study. And here one respondent's claim is important. This respondent stated the cause of Islamic fundamentalism and hostilities in Kemissie city administration by relating un-intentionally with the Darwin's theory of construction of life. Actors always use strategies which they benefit from. Simply, Darwin's concept of the survival of the fittest best explains the issue.

While viewing problems in this time, they are related to multiple directions. And lack of care between the rich and poor, western; the government and the people might really be the issues to describe the cause of fundamentalism and out group hatred. For example to stay in power the government uses whatever strategy which is not important and convincing to the people. The rich always suck the life bloods of the poor with low wage and salary which is not enough for their future life; and the westerns who become strong in their economies support and sponsor groups whose objectives and motives are really hidden but cost a lot of lives around the

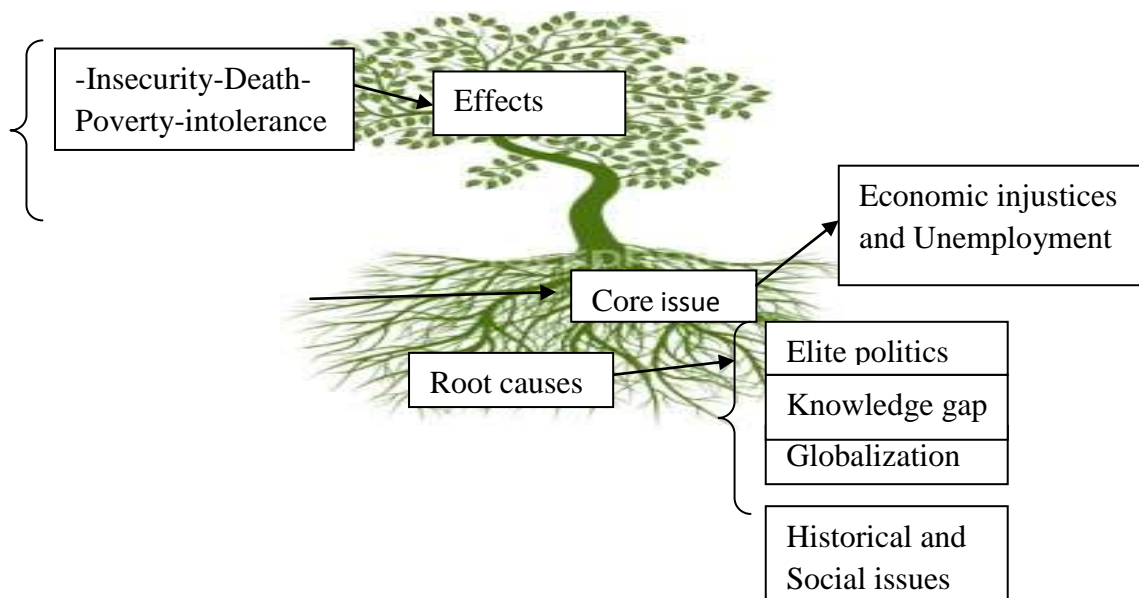


Figure 2. Conflict tree tool.
Source: Ramsbotham, 2011.

world. Generally, the mechanisms employed to achieve the objectives are the problems (interviewee, 8).

In fact causes of Islamic fundamentalism and intergroup hostilities are not clearly identified due to complexities of the issues and its area coverage; but according to the data obtained from the respondents the main causes are identified as follows. In doing so conflict tree model, to placed causes according to their place are used, to understand the root causes, core problems and their effects easily.

Based on the data obtained from the respondents, the causes of Islamic fundamentalism and hostilities are demonstrated by the analogy of tree. As one can observe from Figure 2, it is economic issues found at the centre which connects the effects with the structural problems. Economic problem is at the center because more than others it is at the manifest level, in fact fuelled by structural issues. The development of living things depends on the fight for survival raised by Darwin; it is important to explain the case here. The strong win the struggle. The weak are condemned to defeat and oblivion. According to that mythical claim, favoured religions and races were victorious in the struggle; this developed historical inferiority of the Muslims and triggered violent conflicts to out-group of their religion. From this, we can understand that the Darwinian construction of life caused Islamic fundamentalism and out group hatred that people are unconsciously guided and influenced by the will of power and mechanism of survival. The study indicated that fundamentalism and hostilities mount today in Kemissie city administratio. This might be drawn from different perspectives like their

social bonding is started to weak and the youths, particularly the students are changing their names to Arabic names (for example, Kebede, Muluken,... to Ahmed, Ali,...) actually seen such incidences in all religions, Christians to Christian names. Due to this reason friends from different religions are seen negatively and their social and cultural relationships are deteriorating.

... We Muslims and Christians have similar names in common. For example you can found a name like Solomon but he is Muslim. However, now this has changed and people change their names to Muslim names. In fact changing name is nothing but the relation might not continue with his/her non-Muslims like they previously had (discussant 3).

Islamic fundamentalism and inter-religious hostilities in Kemissie city administration are also associated with generation difference accompanied with accessibility of technology; it played its role on fueling conflict between religions to the minimum and at the maximum against the government in power that people sometimes cannot differentiate gossips from facts. Individuals are posted, hate speeches, false information or fake news, on Facebook and other social Media which make sharp division and hurt old age relationship between people. We feel this generation, especially the young and productive group, are very dangerous and sensitive to change. One among the discussant said that... by touching his mobile phone this generation is like this, for example if we switch on the mobile it will on and doing well but within a short period even within my pocket it will be disappear and not functioning well. And generation

difference and accessibility to technology will cause peoples to have a hostile relation with the government and out-groupers (discussant 1).

Secularism, diversity and Islam

According to Haque (2015), Islam is a universal belief system which has been presenting itself as a civilization alternative to western secularism. It is true that Islam constitutes a systematic and coherent ideology, just like liberalism and communism, with its own code of morality and doctrine of political and social justice. The appeal of Islam is potentially universal, reaching out to all men as men, and not just to members of a particular ethnic or national group. And Islam has indeed defeated liberal democracy in many parts of the Islamic world, posing a grave threat to liberal practices even in countries where it has not achieved political power directly.

While Fukuyama (1992) dismissed the relevance of Islam on the grounds that it has virtually no appeal outside those areas that were culturally Islamic to begin with, the fact remains that Islam is perceived by the author to pose a threat to western globalism, as it is capable of providing a coherent ideology and is potentially universal, reaching out to all men as men. Ethiopia is now a secular state after 1991; the affairs of the state and religion are separated. The function of the state is maintaining peace and stability of the people by protecting them from any form of threat whether internal or external. But religion is an affair of individuals and its principles are not guided and shaped by the state. And the present constitution under article 11(Sub1 and 2) approves this reality (FDRE constitution, 1995); in fact all forms of injustice are not resolved. As far as diversity is concerned it is related with the creation of human beings. Human beings are different in terms of race, color, identity, language, and etc but in front of God/Allah individuals are equal irrespective of their diversity. In fact Ethiopia, before claiming federalism in 1991, was not a state that acknowledges diversity as expected, for example, Orthodox Christianity was considered as state religion during Emperor Yohannis IV and Haile Sellasie regim hand in hand with Amharic language as official language of the state from more than 80 languages found in the state.

On plurality and diversity, Islam accepts and recognizes diversity not only in language, color and race, but also difference in thought. A great person in front of Allah is not a person who is from rich families, dominant in race, color or else but it is based on the level of Iman and their level of fearing Allah (interviewee 2). Kemissie is a place where diverse populations, language, identity and religion, live. In fact secularism exists within this diverse community. On the other hand interviewee participants and focus group discussants (interviewee 1 and discussant 2 respectively) commented that it is the

government who creates the environment of hostility taking as an example the September, 2013 Majlis leaders' election at Kebeles,

...This does not indicate and have no concept of secularism. To be secular it is not the government that takes the responsibility to select the place of election. The role of the government must be restricted to safeguard the security issues and establish an environment of peace from start to finish. But what happens during this election is so different and it is the government who facilitates and arranges even candidates. Due to this realities hatred are developed; both government and out group hatred. But this reality cannot denounce and indicate that Islam is not good for plural society. This is because hatred is not established from the nature, and principle of the religion. And this is recognized by the Holly Quran as follows;

Indeed, the Qur'an recognizes plurality in human societies, including religious plurality, as part of God's plan in creation (10:19; 11:118-119). This is why God calls for peaceful and respectful dialogue, not forced conversion whether through war or other forms of coercion (2:256; 3:64; 16:125; 29:46).

Extremists and detractors of Islam distort the meaning of jihad in propagating a false concept of jihad through expressions such as "jihadists", "Islamic terrorism", or references by terrorists to jihad. In fact Islam's divine source is the Qur'an, which is based on concepts of morality, love, compassion, humility, sacrifice, tolerance and peace. A Muslim who lives by those precepts in its true sense will be most polite, careful of thought, modest, just, trustworthy and easy to get on with. He will spread love, respect, harmony and the joy of living all around him. But it is unfortunate that these values are denied in religious teachings.

Islam and non-Muslims

The incident of September 11 changed the connotation of non- Muslims with Muslims. It is sometimes seen as a menace. People think of fanatic Islamists willing to bomb themselves in order to kill other human beings in favor of their god (Machado, 2004). And the respondents identified these stereotypes and generalizations as a great danger of miss -understanding and miss-interpreting this religion. The religion becomes the reason for all conflicts between Muslims and Christian cultures. Interviewee 3 claimed as follows:

In the Qur'an, Jews and Christians are called the people of the Book. This is because the members of these two religions abide by the Divine Books revealed by God. The outlook of Islam on the People of the Book is extremely just and compassionate. This attitude towards the People of the Book developed during the

years of the birth of Islam. At that time, Muslims were a minority, struggling to protect their faith and suffering oppression and torture from the pagans of the city of Mecca. Due to this persecution, some Muslims decided to flee Mecca and have shelter in a safe country with a just ruler. The Prophet Muhammad told them to take refuge in Christian king of Ethiopia.

The Muslims who went to Ethiopia found a very fair administration that embraced them with love and respect. The King refused the demands of the pagan messengers who had travelled to Ethiopia and asked him to surrender the Muslims to them, and announced that Muslims could live freely in his country. These Christian attitudes of compassion, mercy, and justice, are referred to in a verse of the Qur'an which states:

... You will find the people most affectionate to those who believe are those who say, we are Christians. That is because some of them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant. (Qur'an, 5:82)

To be clearer with the relationship between having all necessary knowledge and inter faith relation; having religious knowledge means crating a peace environment to out groupers while more hostiles are individuals who are ignorant of Islam. In fact the prophet Mohammed said that there will be groups in the future who will know the holy Quran and hadith very well but will use to manipulate people, who are ignorant, and for mere economic purposes. And therefore, knowledge is dependent on political, social and economic factors to create peace in the community.

Responding to fundamentalism and hostilities

After they have identified the causes, myth and realities about the issue under discussion they also depicted the mechanism to tackle these already constructed problems.

Motives

To fight against Islamic fundamentalism and out group hostilities we must understand the interests and desires of individuals very well. In this regard the respondents blamed the government for not to understanding why people engage in violent conducts rather than looking for solutions. This implies the government should have to intervene and devise a solution accordingly. Jailing people is non-sense and even increases the dynamics of violence. In this regard the discussant said:

...We believe that the action of the government is mistaken, throwing individuals to jail. Therefore, government must carefully study the motives behind those individuals or groups (discussant 3).

History

According to Nouri and Cappiello (2010) religious leaders have played a profound role in shaping history. From the pulpit of spirituality and moral authority, they have aroused consciousness and inspiration to fight against wrongs. They also added that there cannot be a better catalyst of change than dedicated and courageous people of faith. Nouri and Cappiello (2010) argued, If we, as leaders of faith and religious conviction, are unable to raise this powerful voice for peace and justice, a tiny minority of extremists has the potential to hijack the future of the entire Muslim world that is, one-fifth of humanity and to destroy the enormous possibilities for international diplomacy that exists before the Muslim world. Therefore, internalizing the past relationship between parties is significant. In this regard one interviewee participant stated that history must be interpreted positively since it is difficult to determine the direction of past histories.

...Once history has been passed and this is another day and time and we should forget the past injustice and take the good side of the old regimes. Because in the past most of the time there was Amhara ethnicity dominance and Christianity (orthodox) surpass other religions. And this is history; that we never order the direction to be and must be followed (interviewee 2). This respondent also added historian also wrote all histories, but it is not sufficient and at the end of their writing they should clearly put the good lessons and the problems that we never repeated.

Engaging the community

In fact as Hussein (2006) noted Ethiopian government is playing a significant role in tackling fundamentalism in different times but it is considered as clamping by a single hand without involving the Muslim communities. Communities are an engine that can be used to achieve the objectives designed by the government if we give them the chance and hear their voices. But in this regard many Muslims blamed Western models of political and economic development issued by the government for these failures to consider individuals as nucleus of influence unlike the community. This is because modernization led to a breakdown of traditional family, religious, and social values. Once enthusiastically pursued as symbols of modernity, these models increasingly came under criticism as sources of moral decline and spiritual malaise. However, according to Abu-Nimer (2001), Islam yields a set of peace building values that, if consistently and systematically applied, can transcend and govern all types and levels of conflict, values such as justice (adl), beneficence (ihsan), and wisdom (hikmah) which constitute core principles in peacemaking strategies and framework. The community

is the driving force and backbone of any fruitful project. So, absolute engagements of the people to heal historical and potential problems are important.

We should engage the community in the intervention and resolution processes. The people are the owner of solutions and understand very well the dynamic of conflicts between groups and individuals in the village that they live (interviewee 7).

Adjusting intervention techniques according to the conflict situation and stages

According to Abdalla et al. (2002) the dynamics of conflict vary according to the stage of the conflict, which does not necessarily go through a linear progression; more than likely it goes through ups and downs. In the Islamic concept, an intervention technique should best correspond to the stage of a conflict with the purpose of restoring justice and adhering to Islamic principles and values. One respondent stated that it is the government and related organizations (religious or nongovernmental organizations) working on peace and security that create suitable conditions and adjust different mechanisms which are participation of the local community.

To solve the problem the government and respected organs were advised to adjust intervention techniques according to the conflict situation and stages. When doing intervention between conflicting parties we should have to be careful of the process of selecting intervening parties. This is because sometimes problems might be intensified instead of turning into peace by third part intervention (interviewee 6). To enhance and maintain unity among the diverse population of Kemissie the above way out is forwarded by respondents. Though conflicts are is natural and some can be constructive, but are artificial; they change their mechanism, are destructive and deadliest if not well managed. This means conflict by itself is neither harmful nor important and it is dependent on the way the actors or conflicting parties employ it. If conflicts are transformed and reconciled they are no longer hostile and cultural peace buildings will be done. Therefore, it is avoidable and hence unity will prevail.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion under the previous part of the study findings are concluded. Based on the data obtained from respondents the causes of Islamic fundamentalism and hostilities are both lack of religious knowledge, and having knowledge (if politically motivated) caused political, social problems and hostility to out groupers.

Kemissie is a place where diverse populations are found; diverse in terms of language, identity and religions.

In fact secularism is there within this diverse community, but their long aged co-operations start to decline. For this, interviewee participants and focus group discussants commented that it is the government who creates the environment of hostility taking as an example the 2013 Majlis leaders' election at Kebeles since most of the coordinators of the election were the representatives of government.

Non-Muslims and government officials in Kemissie city administration have the perception that Muslims are close and open to conflict. They believe that Muslims are prone to conflict and instigators of violence because of their religious teaching and practices. This is not from nothing rather these days' religious based social organizations are established and even there is competition with that by avoiding the old social and cultural organizations like, Idirs and burial ceremonies locally called qires. However, despite some tensions and occasional violence, the relation between Muslims and non-Muslims has been characterized by compromise and tolerance, not strife and antagonism. The current climate of fear has strengthened Islamophobia in elsewhere and perpetuated fear-based myths among a number of ethnic groups. These myths, and the fear that underpins them, reinforce ethnic polarization and encourage the adoption of extremist views amongst all ethnic groups. The spread of extremism fuels mutual fear, suspicion and radicalization - perhaps contributing to eventual violence. As far as fighting against Islamic fundamentalism and out group hostilities is concerned the respondents identified different mechanisms. For example, understanding the interests and desires of individuals is necessary. The respondents already identified the major causes from structural to the manifest level and the government should have to intervene and devise a solution accordingly. Absolute engagement of the people to heal historical and potential problems is important.

IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The major objective of the study is to explore the responses and views of Muslims to "Islamic fundamentalism" and out group hostilities in Kemissie city administration, North-East Ethiopia. And therefore, by using the findings as a starting point the researcher indicated the following implications.

The study revealed that the main reason why people hate outside groupers is wrong religious teaching. And religious leaders must do a lot in sharing and teaching the principles of Islam. To create peace and avoid hatred between religions, religious leaders should jointly create special groups, that is, Da'iwa group (religious teaching organs). It is the people, on the other hand, at large who know every new thing in their political and social environment, and identify and give information to the respected organs of government. Therefore, the people

must be organized socially and politically with government to tackle fundamentalism and hatred.

As the respondents stated that it is the government that increases the dynamics of Islamic fundamentalism and out group hostilities in Kmissie city administration by its excessive interference on religious affairs even though their role in fighting against fundamentalism is considered. And therefore, the government should lift off its hand and gives freedom to religious matters by restricting its role to create a secure environment. The government should identify and institutionalize the groups involve and in doing so there must be special groups independent of the government. A key player in the fight against fundamentalist financing must expand like safe corridors through which funds can be more safely remitted.

In addition there must be organizations outside the government structure which facilitate unity between religions and fill the gaps that the government has. Greater co-operation between agencies is required, in the form of cross-border and inter-agency information sharing across the region and beyond. This is vital to collecting actionable intelligence and conducting credible investigations into transnational Non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Given the ongoing lack of trust, national governments and international organizations should focus on confidence-building initiatives both within and across borders.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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