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**Cross-Border Conflicts and Regional Stability: Examining Refugee-Host
Community Relations in Gambella, Ethiopia**

A Thesis By

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**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in
Peace Studies and International Relations**

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, except where stated by way of reference or acknowledgement, and has not been presented to any university for academic purposes.

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DEDICATION

I, dedicate this thesis to every individual who has been a part of my academic journey. In a special way to my brothers, Mr. Olura Obuyi and Mr.Ojulu Obuyi. To my sister-in-law, Mrs. Kimo Akway, my cousin Amane Owiti, my friends Mr. John Mehet, Mr. Sunday Othow, and all those I did not mention.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ARRA: Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs

AU: African Union

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

EAC: East Africa Community

EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

IGAD: Inter-Governmental Authority on Development

FGDs: Focus Group Discussions

GPLM: Gambella People's Liberation Movement

HIPSIR: Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and Internal Relations

KII: Key Informant Interview

MoE: Ministry of Education

NGOs: Non-Governmental Organizations

OAU: Organization of African Unity

OCP: Out-of-Camp Policy

RLOS: Refugee-Led Organizations

SIT: Social Identity Theory

SPLA: Sudan People's Liberation Army

SPLA- IO: Sudan People's Liberation Army-In Opposition

SPLM: Sudan People's Liberation Movement

UAP: Urban Assistance Program

UN: United Nations

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the cross-border conflicts and their impact on the regional stability of Gambella, Ethiopia. It focused on the driving factors of conflicts between refugees and the host community in Gambella. The findings made a significant contribution to the understanding and differentiation of the driving factors behind protracted conflicts between refugees and host communities in Gambella. This study used a qualitative approach and adopted a case study research design. This was chosen to obtain information concerning the past and current situation of refugee and host community conflicts in Gambella. In addition, to provide an in-depth understanding of the negative impacts of refugees on the host community and vice versa. This was achieved by examining economic, political, and other aspects. The researcher used a purposive sampling method. The study employed social identity theory (SIT). The theory was chosen to address the ethnic and social differences between the host community and refugees. The research findings were threefold. First, this study found that natural resources, politics, and cultural differences have greatly affected the relationship between refugees and the host community in Gambella. Secondly, the research showed that the Ethiopian Nuer influence their Nuer kinsfolk in the refugee camps by recruiting them in Ethiopian affairs. Because they shared the same culture and language. This has also contributed to disrupting the peace in Gambella. Thirdly, the research revealed that all stakeholders (Government, NGOs, and religious institutions) have made efforts to resolve the conflict between the host community and refugees. However, their approaches have not contributed to a fruitful end. Therefore, this study will benefit the government of Gambella, NGOs, and other humanitarian organizations in Gambella through the different perspectives the study possesses. Furthermore, it will also help to re-evaluate approaches employed in the cross-border conflict between refugees and the host community in Gambella. The study also recommends a critical evaluation of the causes of conflict between refugees and host communities in Gambella. Additionally, to embrace cooperation and harmony between refugees and hosts. Finally, by granting restorative justice to families who suffered cross-border violence and refugee-host conflicts in the region.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This research is generally divided into five chapters. The first chapter begins with a study background, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, its objectives, research questions, justification and significance, scope, limitations, ethical considerations, and theoretical framework. Chapter two is the literature review, and chapter three explains the research design and methodology. Chapter four is data analysis. The final chapter consists of a summary, conclusion, and recommendations.

The transnational challenges between Ethiopia and South Sudan primarily manifest in the Gambella regional state (variant spelling: Gambela). This research aimed to identify drivers perpetuating conflict between refugees and the host community in Gambella, Ethiopia. The ongoing insecurity in Gambella is certainly being perceived as a result of influxes of South Sudanese Nuer refugees. This is because most of the refugees in Gambella are from the Nuer ethnic community. The study looked briefly at the conflict between Anywaa and the Nuer, because both communities have been in a protracted and violent conflict for many decades in Gambella. To understand and differentiate between the Anywaa and the Nuer communities the study has correctly explained. The Anywaa in this study are understood as the host community. The Nuer, on the other hand, are perceived as refugees because most of the refugees in Gambella belong to the Nuer community, although there are Ethiopian Nuer in Gambella.

Consequently, the study examined the political dynamics between the refugee population and the host community in Gambella. Specially, on the two dominant ethnics in Gambella, the Anywaa and Nuer. The conflict between the Anywaa and Nuer can be traced back to the second half of the 19th century. This specifically when the Nuer of Jikany (a clan within the Nuer tribe)

migrated to Gambella. The primary motive for their migration was territorial expansion and control over natural resources, namely: water points, forests, and land rich with gold and other minerals inhabited by the Anywaa (Adeto, 2016). This study also examined the cross-border conflict between the host and refugees in Gambella. In Africa, border governance plays a crucial role in conflict management and economic integration.

However, despite increasing recognition of the need to effectively manage and govern borders, the efforts undertaken to date at the multilateral level have been undermined by factors (Aning & Pokoo, 2017). Because borders in Africa have become sources of income, on the other hand, they are sources of conflict. Borders have significant impacts on both state and human security (Ibid).

Borders' problem is that about 42 percent of the total length of land boundaries in Africa is drawn by parallels, meridians, and equidistant lines without considering social realities (Cited in Feyissa et al., 2010). This emphasized that most borders were demarcated without sufficient knowledge of the local community members living along the borders (Ibid). This indicates that tribes that are divided by borders often face challenges related to those recognized boundaries. Therefore, these issues need special attention to be resolved. For instance, the Nuer people, who live in both South Sudan and Ethiopia, frequently cross the border. This occurs, especially during conflicts involving the Nuer on either side of the country.

A similar issue confirms that border disputes are still challenging and a threat to security management. Such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda dispute over Rukwanzi Island in Lake Albert. Kenya and Uganda have a problem over Migingo Island in Lake Victoria (Msafiri, 2011). As it was mentioned earlier. The ethnic conflict between the Anywaa

(Anuak) and Nuer can be traced back to the eastward expansion of the Eastern Jikany Nuer groups. They were believed to be forced by the Shilluk (A tribe in Southern Sudan) to abandon the Sobat river before the 1840s. The Anywaa ethnic group had already occupied and settled along the banks of the rivers that drained into the Sobat, such as the Gilo and Openo (Tadesse, 2002).

However, in the case of Gambella, two significant points are to be looked at: the territorial expansion of the Nuer ethnic community. This territorial caused in part by the emergence of two competing powers in the region. The colonial Britain in the Sudan and imperial Ethiopia in Gambella. This, in turn, led to the subsequent demarcation of the international border. The 1902 Anglo-Ethiopian treaty established the 1,600-kilometer boundary between Ethiopia and the Sudan. Gambella region covered the western portion of this border. When the international border was drawn, the majority of the Anywaa people were placed within Gambella or Ethiopia. While most of the Nuer were situated in the Sudan, except the *Jikany* Nuer (Feyissa & Virgil, 2010). The study looked at the cultural meaning of the border for both ethnic groups in Gambella, the Anywaa and the Nuer.

The eruption of violent conflict in South Sudan in 2013 has displaced many South Sudanese. Thus, currently many conflicts in Gambella are being understood as the result of the large population of refugees who fled to Gambella, Ethiopia, at that time. The influx of refugees has intensified competition over resources. They also heightened ethnic divisions and contributed to the increased and worsening destabilization of the region. Traditional conflict resolution methods are proving insufficient to de-escalate the conflict. Therefore, local efforts in addressing the challenges posed by the intersection of refugee crises, ethnic tensions, and cross-border violence were not adequate (Tadesse, 2002).

Consequently, the refugee crisis in Gambella highlights the limitations of conventional peacebuilding strategies. These strategies often focus solely on high-level diplomacy and short-term humanitarian relief. These approaches fail to address the root causes of conflict, including ethnic enmities, resource scarcity, and the spillover effects of neighboring wars.

1.1 Background of the Study

Ethiopia is a country located in the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia is well known for being one of the countries that has not been colonized. Its long history and the large ethnic and linguistic diversity have contributed to the uniqueness of the cultures and customs of its people (Adugna, 2021). Ethiopia is one of the most populous countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a population of 83 million. Currently estimated to be around 135-137 million (Fransen & Kuschminder, 2009). Ethiopia is a destination as well as a transit country in Africa. Particularly for those fleeing displacement through cross-border movements. As a result of droughts, conflicts, political issues, or civil wars in their countries of origin, especially in East Africa (Adugna, 2021; Assefa, 2019). Ethiopia has a good record of receiving and protecting forced migrants. Currently, it hosts over one million refugees in various camps across the country (Adugna, 2021).

Gambella is one of the regional states of Ethiopia. It borders South Sudan in the southwestern part. Gambella is a remote regional state in Southwestern Ethiopia. It can be accessed through flights that take an hour or a 714-kilometer road journey (UNHCR, 2021). Gambella is one of the least populated areas in Ethiopia. It borders the Upper Nile (where many South Sudanese Nuer ethnic refugees come from) and *Jonglei* State of South Sudan (Tadesse, 2002).

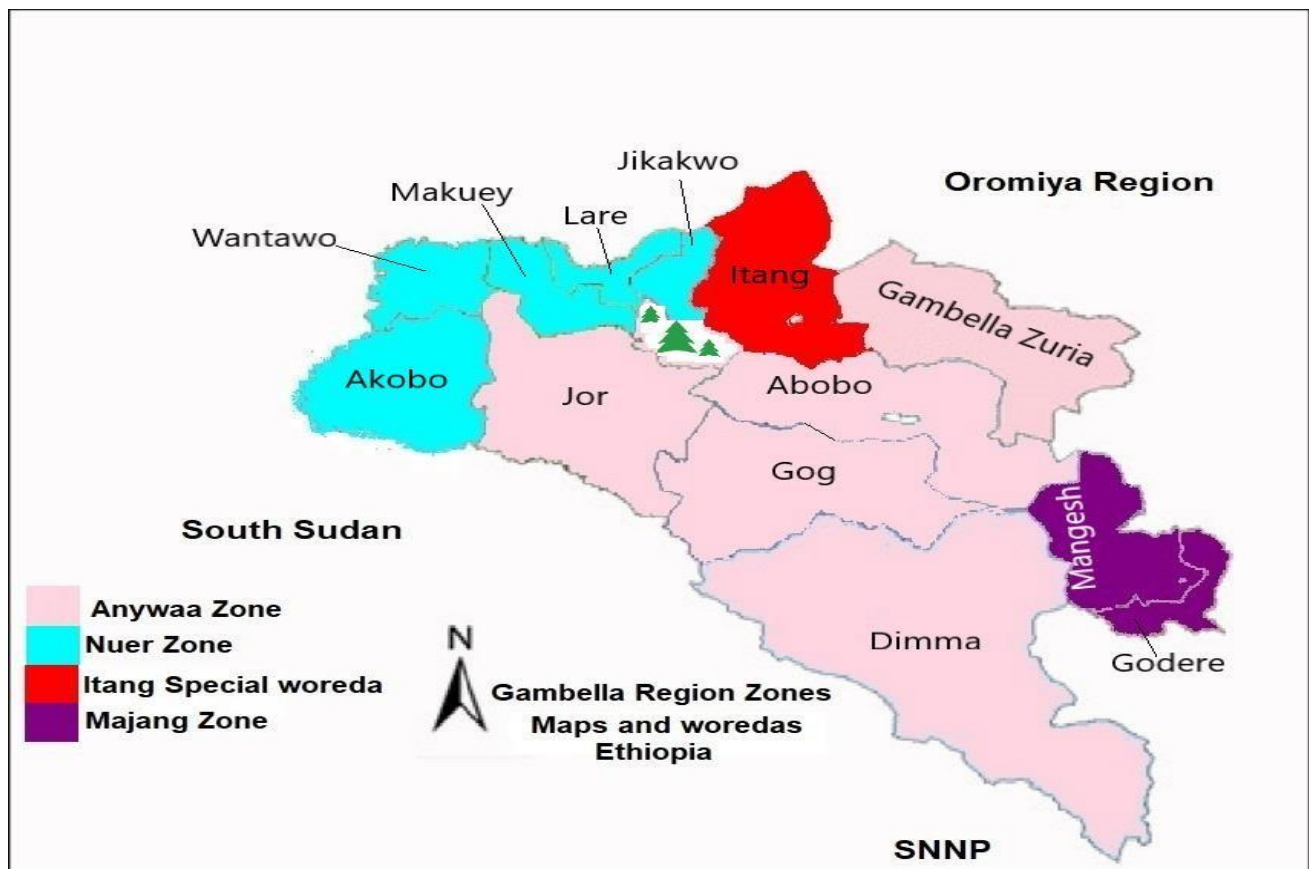
Gambella draws many communities from within Ethiopia and outside the Ethiopian national border. This is because of the richest natural resources the region contains. Mainly the large expanse of arable land, the huge surface and groundwater resources. Livestock, fish resources, and forest resources. These have made the region preferable for agricultural development. The oil reserves and other mineral resources add to the natural wealth of the region (Tadesse, 2002).

Hagos (2021) affirms that the total size of the Gambella region is estimated at 34,063 square kilometers. The population accounts for 307,096 inhabitants according to the 2007 census (Central Statistics Agency, 2007). With about 4.1 percent, the region exhibits the highest annual rate of population growth of all Ethiopian regions. However, Gambella is multi-ethnic. Among the people living in Gambella, the Anywaa (or Anuak) and the Nuer are dominant. Numerically, the two ethnicities make up two-thirds of Gambella's population. Other ethnicities include the Majang, the Opho, the Komo, and settlers from other regions in Ethiopia (Hagos, 2021).

The Anywaa and marginal Opoh are agriculturalists, while the Nuer are traditionally nomadic, transhumant pastoralists. The Nuer have turned towards agro-pastoralism not long ago. The marginal Majang combined hunting and gathering (Cited in Lie & Borchgrevink, 2012). Civil wars, inter-state conflicts, and conflicts caused by socio-economic changes in governments. The ethnic conflicts, terrorist and destabilizing activities, abuses of human and individual rights, and natural disasters have resulted in large-scale refugee movements. Disputes between tribes have sometimes led to outright civil war (Awuku, 1995).

Correspondingly, in many African countries where states are weak. Conflicts from one country tend to spill over into neighboring countries and become intertwined with conflicts (Lie et al, 2012). Gambella conflicts are perceived to be a spill-over conflict from the civil war of its neighboring country (South Sudan). This study generally, highlights conflicts in Gambella. The genesis of the protracted interethnic tensions between the Anywaa and Nuer. It also traces back to the refugee influx in Gambella, which exacerbated the existing conflict. The study also looked at the causes of conflict, especially between the refugee and host community. By examining the causes that have been perceived as the primary cause of conflict in Gambella. The case of social identity has been ignored for so long, however this study critically looked at by comparing it with other factors.

Figure 1: Map of Gambella, Districts and Zones



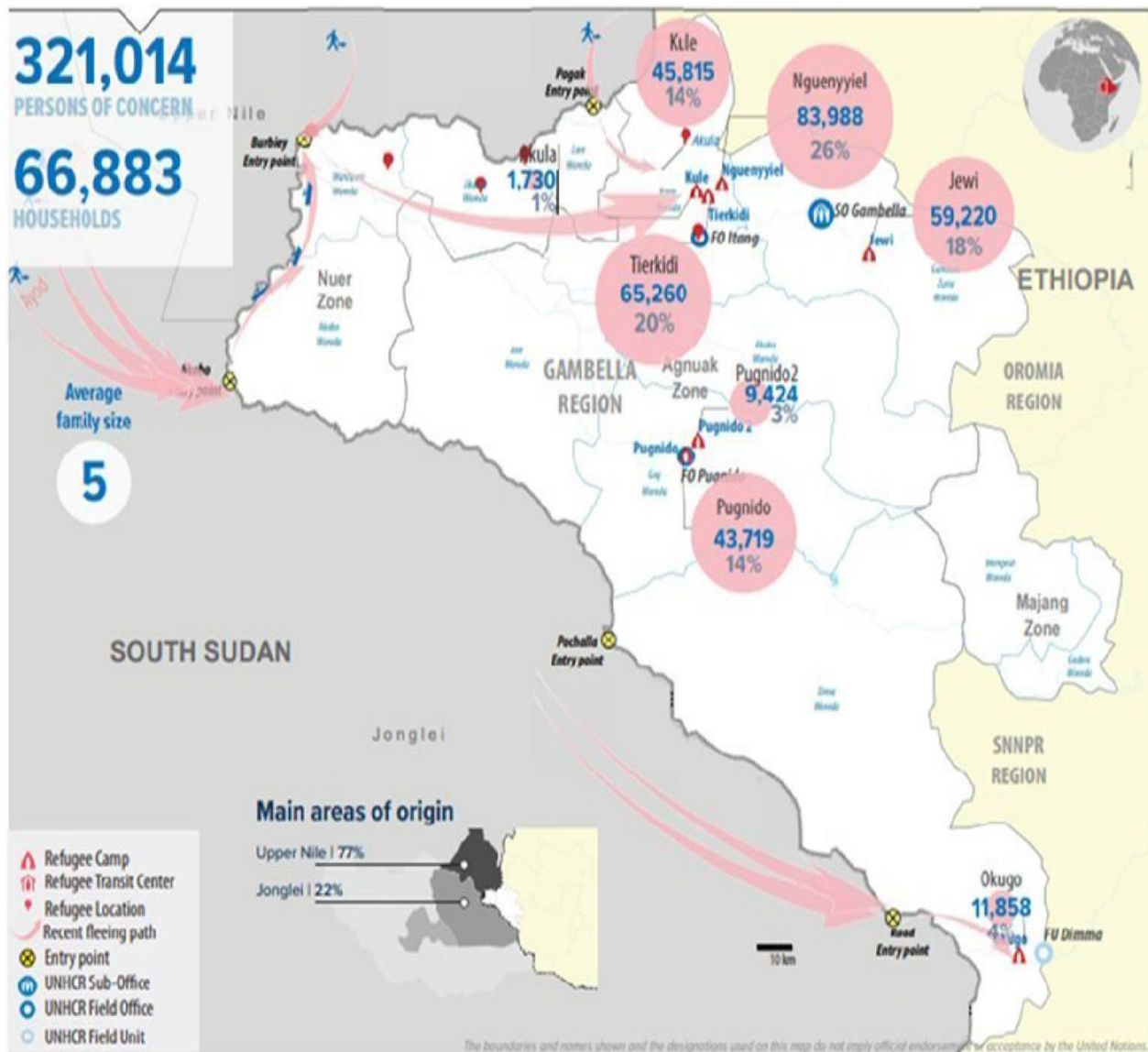
Sources: Gambella Community Development of Canada, 22 Aug 2016
(www.gambellacommunity.org/gambella-region/gambela-profile)

Figure 1, above, shows all the districts of Gambella and their zones. The Maps indicate that the Anywaa ethnic group zone has occupied the largest territories of Gambella. It has five districts, including the capital city of Gambella. The Nuer ethnic group is the second largest in territory. The Nuer have five districts, with two districts being shared administratively between the Anywaa and Nuer ethnic community; these are the Akobo and Lare districts.

However, in these two districts, the Nuer are the majority and a few minority Anywaa. Therefore, the Nuer are the primary in leadership and the Anywaa are the secondary. However, the third largest territory is the Itang Special District. ‘Special’ which means that this particular district is a mix of Anywaa, Nuer and Opoh. Therefore, it belongs to all three ethnic communities living there. The last one is the Majang ethnic group zone (Mangeshi zone), which is the smallest of all, located in the southeastern part of Gambella.

Administratively, the Gambella region of today is divided into three zones along the three major ethnic groups. The Anywaa zone, the Nuer zone, and the Majang zone. These three zones are further divided into 13 districts. Five districts are found under the Anywaa ethnic zone, two under the Majang zone, five under the Nuer zone, and Itang which is directly accountable to the regional state council of the Gambella region (Cited in Hagos, 2021).

Figure 2: Map of Refugee settlements in Gambella



Source: (Hagos, 2021).

In **Figure 2**, the map above shows the number of refugees in each of the seven refugee camps in Gambella. The first camp, which ranks as number one with a large population of refugees, is the *Nguenyiel* camps. This camp has 83,988, which is equivalent to 26 % of the total population. Next to that is *Tierkidi* camp with a total of 65,260, which is (20 %) of the total population of the refugees in Gambella. *Jewi* camp is the third most populated refugee camp in Gambella with a total number of 59,220 (18%).

The fourth *Kule* camp accommodates 45,815 (14%) of the total refugee population in Gambella. And the fifth, Pignudo I, camped with a total of 43,719 (14%), and Pignudo II, 9,424 (3%). *Okugo* camp, located in Dima district, has 11,858, which is (4 %) of the total population, and Akula, which counted about 1,730, which is equivalent to (1 %) of the total population of refugees in Gambella. The study showed that 321,014 persons are of concern and 66,883 households; furthermore, most families have an average of 5 members (Hagos, 2021)

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

Despite the efforts made by the Ethiopian government and international organizations to provide humanitarian assistance and maintain stability in Gambella, the conflict remains escalating. This conflict is especially between the refugee and the host community. The trend of conflict between refugees and hosts recently shifted to natural resources and political power. This is because most refugees in Gambella are from the Nuer ethnic group.

As it has been said previously, the eruption of civil war in South Sudan in 2013 and the re-eruption of conflicts in 2016 have strongly contributed to the conflict in Gambella. This conflict is mainly between the Anywaa and Nuer communities. Because all the newly arrived refugees were from the Nuer community. The number of refugees in Gambella has once again increased. By the end of 2017, the host population was estimated at 307,097. While the refugee population stood at 399,174, representing 57 percent of the total population in the Gambella (Hagos, 2021). Therefore, high numbers of refugees from the same ethnic community in Gambella have become problematic and implicit as the reason of instability in Gambella.

However, the problem of resource competition between refugees and host communities are being considered as the primary cause. The study found that there are other factors being not given attention. One of these problems is social identity between refugees and host community (the Nuer

and Anywaa communities). The competition for land and job opportunities becomes challenging. As a result, there is a perception. The Ethiopian Nuer might be encouraging their fellow Nuer refugees to join their struggle for political power and to secure influential positions in Gambella's politics.

Therefore, due to the recruitment of refugees by their Ethiopian Nuer into Gambella politics. The political landscape has shifted in another direction. Such that the Anywaa and Nuer ethnic identity. As a result, former refugees now have opportunities to engage in the political conflicts with local communities, receiving full support from their Ethiopian Nuer ethnic group. However, the 1969 Convention of the African Union (OAU) had prohibited subversive activities by or among refugees. This is understood as follows: Article III (1), repeating Article 2 of the UN Convention. Says a refugee should respect the country's laws and regulations in which he or she finds himself or herself. Furthermore, it cautions refugees to avoid those activities of rebellion against the host members (Cited in Awuku, 1995).

This inter-ethnic conflict, compounded by the refugee versus host community conflicts within the regional state of Gambella, must be resolved. The refugee-host communities' conflict in Gambella is mostly perceived to be intensifying due to the increase in the population of the refugees. Refugees have exceeded the local population, particularly in those areas near the refugee camps.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the driving factors of conflict between the refugee and host community in Gambella, Ethiopia.

1.4 Objective of the Study

1. To analyze the challenges of cross-border conflicts on the relations between refugee and host communities in Gambella.
2. To explore the causes of conflict between refugees and host communities in Gambella.
3. To examine the social identity and the impacts of high refugee populations on host communities in Gambella.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How do cross-border conflicts affect refugee-host relations in Gambella?
2. What factors are responsible for the frequent conflicts between refugees and host communities in Gambella?
3. What are the key social identities and impacts of high refugee populations on the host community in Gambella?

1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study

Gambella is one of Ethiopia's regional states, situated in the western part of Ethiopia. Due to its strategic borderland location. The Gambella region has historically served as an asylum and humanitarian reception for several refugees as well as internally displaced people from different countries, especially South Sudan. However, Gambella's peripheral position has exposed the region to consistent cross-border conflicts and refugee-host communities' conflicts. Consequently, the large-scale influx of South Sudanese refugees, partly or fully, has intensified the existing Socio-political conflict and natural resources tension between hosts and refugees.

The relationship between refugees and hosts in Gambella, is marked by severe violence. In this study, refugees are individuals forced to leave their country of origin as a result of push factors such as conflict and violence; these are the main areas of attention in international relations (Cited in Yang, 2024). For this study, refugees refer to South Sudanese Nuer registered by UNHCR residing in the refugee camps in Gambella, distinguishing them from Ethiopian Nuer living in the region. The Anywaa are the host (indigenous) community living in Gambella.

Therefore, the refugee-host relationship in this study can be understood in the context of the numerous challenges that refugees brought on the host communities. These are widespread human rights violations, structural violence, wars, internal conflicts, ethnic and religious tensions, political persecution, and economic or natural disasters (Yang, 2024).

The arrival of more refugees from South Sudan has largely created a very complex interaction and jeopardized the relations between the Anywaa and the Nuer ethnic groups. Regardless of any attempt that had been put in place to de-escalate the conflict in Gambella. The efforts have proved to be insufficient to solve the problem. Hence, there should be a need for a growing, substantial understanding of the conflict. Therefore, this study has bridged the gap and justified itself as it examined the roots of conflict between refugees and host communities in Gambella.

The study is admissible because it looked at the socio-political, economic, and humanitarian consequences of cross-border conflicts for both refugees and hosts in Gambella. The problems of interaction between refugees and hosts can be manifested in competition over resources. There are also challenges to social integration and potential security concerns. Thus, if two or more parties compete over possession or use of resources or ownership of part of it, the likelihood for conflict between them increases (Tadesse, 2022).

This situation seems to demand deeper insight to inform policy and humanitarian responses. Furthermore, even though regional instability arose from refugee crises, it might have been discussed more broadly in the field of migration studies. Yet there is ringing a gap in the study because Gambella has not been given much attention in the field of migration. But from a peace and conflict studies perspective, the attention has been greatly given. Therefore, this study attempts to explore, understand, and explain the complexity of conflict in Gambella. This is by examining the driving factors of conflict between refugees and hosts in Gambella. It substantiates its claims with theoretical evidence from previous studies and empirical data from the field (Adeto, 2016).

This research examined the persistent challenges faced by Ethiopian citizens in Gambella as a result of the presence of large South Sudanese refugees. It aimed to discover the difficulties of conflict and impacts on both refugees and host communities in Gambella, Ethiopia. By examining the relations between refugees and host communities in this region. This study contributed to a significant understanding of the impact of refugees. These impacts are in two ways, both stabilizing and destabilizing peace in the region. This research filled the gap in the literature on cross-border conflicts, refugee-host relations, and regional stability within the context of East Africa.

This study is significant because it contributed to the broader field of migration and conflict studies. For the fact that it examined the socio-economic impacts of cross-border conflicts and refugee influx on host communities. Focusing on Gambella, a relatively under-researched region. This had enhanced the understanding of how refugee-host relations influence regional stability.

The findings significantly helped policy-making by offering practical recommendations for both national governments and international organizations involved in peacebuilding efforts.

Perhaps to other countries and regions experiencing similar problems. Given that, the situation between refugees and hosts in Gambella, the study offered valuable insights in two ways. Firstly, by suggesting that local communities and regional actors can collaborate to create peace and stability despite ongoing cross-border challenges.

Additionally, the study took place during the time Ethiopia was about considering integration of refugees in Gambella. Therefore, this study will also contribute to the policies and responsibilities the Ethiopian government has for its citizens and refugees in the country. Furthermore, the study has offered a thoughtful reevaluation of the decision-making process surrounding the integration of refugees with local communities in Gambella.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The research centered on the Gambella region, specifically targeting areas most affected by the conflict between refugee and host communities. This included refugee camps and surrounding districts of host communities. The reason for choosing this particular geographical area of the study was the high conflicts between refugees and host communities in Gambella and the several cross-border conflicts between Ethiopia and South Sudan.

The study covered the period from 2013 to the present, aligning with the onset of the South Sudanese civil war and the subsequent refugee crisis. The South Sudanese civil war, in 2013, is generally perceived to have spilled over to the existing conflicts in Gambella, especially, between the Anywaa and Nuer communities. It was also in 2013 that the conflict between the refugees and host community extended. Therefore, 2013 has become a crucial stand in the conflict between refugee and host community in Gambella. Especially, the conflicts related to the resource competitions between refugees and hosts in Gambella.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Due to the unstable security situation in Gambella, access to certain areas, particularly refugee camps, was restricted. This had limited the diversity of the perspectives gathered during interviews and surveys. Because in Gambella, once conflict occurs between the Anywaa and Nuer, an Anywaa person cannot feasibly visit Nuer refugee camps safely. Because of his ethnic affiliation, the researcher as an Ethiopian by nationality, from the Anywaa community. It was not possible for him to all make it all mentioned villages (refugee camps). Therefore, the researcher had not possibly reached all refugee camps belonging to the Nuer ethnic group. However, this problem was managed through an assistant researcher with easier access to the camps.

Language Barrier: Some of the respondents failed to understand both Amharic and English in Gambella. The researcher used local translators, especially with the South Sudanese Nuer refugees. Another limitation was the case of biases; relying on qualitative methods introduced bias based on personal experiences and expectations of participants. The problem of being biased was solved by providing a broader spectrum of interviewees. This helped to identify different biases that could be compared against other evidence.

Participants were also introduced to the purpose of the study and provided with a research permit from HIPSIR and letters from every institute visited in Ethiopia. They were assured that whatever was shared during the discussion remained confidential and anonymous. The findings would be used explicitly for academic purposes.

Different stakeholders (refugees, hosts, government officials, and NGOs personnel) had different motivations. However, they did not fully represent the broader community's views. Additionally, the researcher also faced challenges with the Nuer language, since he was not perfect

in the Nuer language. But the problem was mitigated by employing a translator who fully understood the Nuer language and culture.

1.9 Ethical Issues

This research adhered to ethical standards to ensure the safety and well-being of the participants as well as the researcher himself. Participants were sufficiently informed with clear information about the study's purpose, method, and their rights. Informed consent was obtained before any interview occurred or a questionnaire was presented. Any interview or focus group discussion included separate consent for recording. The anonymity and confidentiality of participants, identity, and personal details were guaranteed by the researcher. But in the case of focus groups, absolute confidentiality rested upon the willingness of all participants to maintain it. This was communicated to the participants in advance. Data remained anonymous to protect individual identities and to ensure sensitive information was not disclosed.

Voluntary participation: The researcher explained to respondents that they were free to respond or not, without being obliged to answer questions or demonstrate. They were informed that any information given during the process was confidentially managed. Participation was free and voluntary. Participants could withdraw at any time for whatever personal reason. The researcher approached with maximum cultural sensitivity concerning local cultures, customs, and practices (particularly among women). Especially when engaged with diverse ethnic groups.

Furthermore, the researcher provided the contact details of his supervisor; therefore, any respondent who wished to file a complaint on ethical grounds might reach out to him. Lastly, the research permit from the Gambella government was presented. The research permit from also from Hekima University College Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR), were

provided. The researcher assured that all the primary and secondary sources were clearly acknowledged to show academic honesty and to avoid any kind of plagiarism.

1.10 Theoretical Framework

This study is inspired by the social identity theory (SIT), developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979. Social identity theory is a classic social psychological theory that attempts to explain intergroup conflict as a function of group-based self-definitions (Gazi, 2014). Social identity theory (SIT). It can be defined as an individual self-concept that derives from knowledge of membership in a social group or groups, together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Tajfel, 1981).

Consequently, the theory emphasizes the crucial role of categorization, which divides the world into understandable units (Abrams & Hogg, 1990). This theory explains how people view themselves and others by categorizing them. Their sense of belonging to social groups influences intergroup behavior. The theory suggests that people usually derive part of their self-concept from their memberships. This often leads them to in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination. The social psychologist Henri Tajfel has put forward the idea that intergroup conflict could occur even without competition from two sides. Thus, only identification with a group is enough to create conflict as long as comparison with another group exists (Webber, 2010).

Social identity theory maintains that all individuals are motivated to achieve and preserve a positive self-concept. A person's self-concept derives from two principal sources: personal identity and social identity. Personal identity includes one's traits, achievements, and qualities. Social identity consists of the group affiliations recognized as part of the self, such as one's image of oneself as, for example, a Protestant, a blue-collar worker, or a conservative. A self-conception can be understood as a collection of self-images that differ in their establishment duration,

complexity, and richness of content, among other factors. Notably, these self-images can be viewed along a continuum, where individual characteristics reside at one end and social categorical traits at the other (Jaclyn, 2024; Abrams & Hogg, 1990).

1.11 Definition of Terms

In this study, the following terms are key to providing the operational definitions for one of them:

Anywaa (Anuak, Anyuak, and Anywaae)

In this study, the researcher uses the term *Anywaa* instead of *Anuak* or *Anyuak*. The *Anywaa* are one of the indigenous communities residing in Gambella, Ethiopia, and they are recognized by the local population as the rightful owners of the land. The *Anywaa* are part of the Nilotic Luo group living in the western part of Ethiopia in the Gambella region. In various studies, the term “*Anywaa*” may also be written as *Anyuak*, *Anuak*, or *Anua*. Therefore, when you encounter any of these terms in this research, kindly understand that they refer to the same group as the Anywaa tribe.

Cross-Border Conflicts

In this research, cross-border conflicts mean conflicts that occurred with populations from other countries crossing into Ethiopia's international borders. In this case, this is between South Sudan and Ethiopia.

Ethiopian Nuer

Ethiopian Nuer are the Nuer who have been in Ethiopia for a long time. Those who have been incorporated into Ethiopians. As Ethiopians, they have the right to be and own their own territory under the government of Ethiopia.

Habesha/Habasha

Historically, it was intended for only a few ethnic groups in the northern part of Ethiopia. These are the Amhara, Tigray, or Tigrinya. Ethiopians and Eritreans from the Amhara and Tigrinya ethnic groups maintained their Habesha identity backgrounds as a unique ethnic group. They are distinct from other categories that are not black and emphasize their Semitic origins (Habecker, 2012). Habesha is a general name for the light-skinned Ethiopians. The Ethiopian people sometimes refer to themselves as Habesha. To some extent, this implies that he or she is Ethiopian (Habesha). However, there is a degree of ambiguity in how Ethiopians perceive or conceptualize other African people as well as dark-skinned, more broadly in Ethiopia. For those dark-skinned individuals are labeled simply as African. Practically, this manifests socially constructed distinction between Ethiopian, especially those who are identified as Habesha and other African origin people.

Influx of South Sudanese Refugees

In this study means a mass arrival of refugees from South Sudan to Gambella, Ethiopia. The mass influx of refugees into Gambella can be traced back to the first civil war in Sudan from 1955 to 1972. This period led to a mass influx of Sudanese into many countries, as well as into Ethiopia. There are eleven years between the first civil war (1955-1972) and the second civil war (1983-2005). Sudan has been embroiled in internal conflicts since gaining independence from British colonial rule (Lie & Borchgrevink, 2012, p. 146).

Refugees

In this study, a refugee is defined primarily as a person who has left his or her country of origin due to challenges such as government oppression, ethnic conflict, civil war, or persecution. These individuals seek safety in a foreign land, where they hope to achieve full human development and

security. Consequently, due to these circumstances, they feel it is unsafe to return to their homeland. Technically, refugee here means persons of South Sudanese nationality who are being hosted in Gambella, Ethiopia. This research also employs the definition of the United Nations Convention of 1951 concerning the status of a refugee. According to Article 1 A (2) of the 1951 Convention, the term ‘refugee’ is any person.

As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UNHCR, 2019).

The Refugee Act of 1980 defines ‘refugee’ under the Act, as a person who is outside of his or her country of nationality (or last habitual residence for a stateless person) who has been persecuted in the past (Carliner et al, 1990).

Refugee-Host Relations

In this research, the term refugee-host relations refers to the interactions and connections between refugees and the communities that host them. This concept includes how refugees perceive host communities as potentially limiting their freedom. This also how host communities view refugees as a possible threat to their natural resources and human security.

South Sudanese Refugees

The majority of the refugees arriving from South Sudan are currently being hosted in Gambella, Ethiopia.

Stability

The concept of the term stability may allow a variety of understandings in the range of its settings. “Stability, like many other terms, such as peace, is a desirable goal, but countries differ on what constitutes stability. Stability refers to a system's tendency to reach equilibrium, including adapting to new conditions. However, a system can be said to be stable when it can obtain and maintain an equilibrium position. This whether that be some sort of balance, bargain, resting place, pattern of behavior, or organizational arrangement” (Ayson, 2005).

Therefore, stability in this study may have variations in perception. It can be the way South Sudanese Nuer refugees are perceived as the cause of the conflict in Gambella. And can also be the way that exacerbated ethnic tension between the Anywaa and the Nuer, in Gambella, Ethiopia.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of the existing literature on cross-border conflict and regional stability in Gambella. By focusing on refugee-host community conflicts, resource competition, and regional peace-building initiatives. It examined the key theory, ‘Social Identity Theory’, which formed the study’s theoretical foundation. These frameworks were used to analyze drivers of conflict and dynamics of cross-border conflicts as a result of ethnic differentiations between refugees and host communities in the region. It established the theoretical and conceptual foundations for the study by exploring relevant frameworks and case studies.

Additionally, this chapter evaluated gaps in current approaches to address cross-border conflicts, particularly in the context of Gambella, Ethiopia. Ethiopia has been a welcoming country for thousands of refugees from different countries. Therefore, this study is significant for the fact that it has brought to light, by bridging the gap between refugees and host communities in Gambella, Ethiopia. The primary approach of this study looked at the ‘social identity theory’ that assisted in giving an insight into what is on the ground between refugee and host communities in Gambella.

2.1 Social Identity Theory

In this research, the researcher has chosen to utilize the social identity theory (SIT). Because it provides insight into the past, specifically how local communities used to perceive refugees and how refugees viewed the host communities. It is an individual self-concept that derives from knowledge of membership in a social group or groups. This comes together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership. The theory of ‘social identity’ was developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979 (Tajfel, 1981; Gazi, 2014). Social identity theory was

initially developed at Bristol University in the United Kingdom in the 1970s by Henri Tajfel. He essentially integrated his early classic scientific work on categorization and social perception. Tajfel developed the theory out of his passion to understand prejudice, discrimination, and intergroup conflict in society (Hogg, 2016).

Henri Tajfel and John Turner began with the premise that individuals define their own identities with regard to social groups. That such identifications work to protect and bolster self-identity (Gazi, 2014). This theory is essential for this study and also for the relations between refugees and host communities. Particularly, for ethnically diverse people and conflict regions like Gambella, Ethiopia. The reason behind the employment of the theory; it was because of significant in understanding the real or potential differences of the subjects the researcher intends to study. Gambella is a multi-ethnic region. A home to many different ethnic groups, including the Anywaa, Komo Majang, Nuer, and Opoh, as well as South Sudanese refugees, predominantly the Nuer.

In Gambella, host communities (primarily the Anywaa and Ethiopian Nuer) and South Sudanese refugees (predominantly the Nuer) have complex ethnic and political identities. Therefore, this theory of ‘social identity’ was selected for the reason that it helps to explain the relationships between refugees and host communities. Furthermore, social identity theory is important to analyze ethnic conflict in Gambella, especially between the Anywaa and Nuer. In addition, it has the advantage of explaining in-group favoritism, stereotyping, and intergroup tensions. Particularly how ethnic identity influences perceptions of competition over resources and political presentations.

Social identity theory was conceived as a theory of intergroup relations, focusing on conflict and cooperation between groups. As it advanced, the theory became a much broader social psychological theory of the role of self and identity in group and intergroup phenomena in general.

However, intergroup relations have always remained a core feature of the theory (Hogg, 2016). It emphasizes that a significant aspect of a person's self-concept comes from their affiliations. Understanding this concept can foster awareness of in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination. It encourages individuals to strive for more inclusive and equitable social relationships. Thus, the problems of an individual's self-definition in a social context can be restated in terms of the notion of social identity. So, in all kinds of societies, an individual strives to achieve a satisfactory concept or image of himself (Tajfel, 1981).

In social identity, there are some elements to follow that define a cultural syndrome as collectivistic. These are: Self-interdependence, these are people who conceive themselves in terms of a group or belonging (family, relatives, and geographical areas). There is coherence between individual aims and collective aims (if there is incoherence, it is considered that collective aims prevail). Again, there is a collectivistic culture, on this one behavior is guided by norms, obligations and duties. The final one, that the relationships are maintained independently of personal advantages (Capozza et al, 2000). On the other hand, pro-individualistic defines a cultural syndrome as follows:

First, as self-independence; second, prevalence of personal over communal aims; third, that behavior is guided more by rights than by duties. Finally, that the relationships are maintained as a result of rational considerations on the consequent benefits and costs (Ibid, 2000). This illustrates how individuals view their own groups as superior to others, often striving to avoid any interaction with different communities. The belief that one group is better than another has contributed to the violent conflicts in Gambella, Ethiopia. This is particularly between refugees and host communities. As a result, the local communities perceive refugees as the root of the insecurity in Gambella.

2.1.1 Refugee Settlement Patterns and Challenges on the Host Community

Most refugee settlement patterns frequently pose challenges to host communities worldwide. The refugee settlements in Gambella have primarily contributed to much environmental destruction and violent conflict between refugees and host communities in Gambella, Ethiopia. Although the key focus is not on South Sudan, the study traced back to the first civil war in Sudan, which began in 1955 and lasted over a decade. The war caused thousands of people to flee the country and seek safety in Ethiopia.

During this time, the refugees, most of whom belong to the Nuer-speaking group, succeeded in one of the first refugee settlement sites in Gambella (Hagos, 2021). The hosts perceived the refugee settlement patterns as problematic for the people of Gambella. In particular, the Anywaa assume most of the refugee settlement camps in Gambella are intentionally planned by the Ethiopian Nuer politicians to take over the inhabited land of the Anywaa.

The refugee issue is critical to the ongoing conflict in Gambella (particularly between the Anywaa and Nuer) because it has undermined the historical balance in inter-group relations. To host the refugees from South Sudan, over the years, the UNHCR and local authorities have constructed refugee camps in the Gambella region (Tadesse, 2002). Saying that, the issue of refugees has become challenging over the years. This is because many of the refugee camps have been located in the Anywaa territories or the Anywaa zone in Gambella.

Therefore, the settlement patterns of South Sudanese Nuer refugees are perceived as one of the causes of many conflicts between the Anywaa and Nuer in Gambella, Ethiopia. The problem is complicated because the three large refugee camps (*Bonga, Dimma, and Pinyudo*) were all located in the traditional Anywaa territory. One camp is being constructed in *Itang* (is a district

shared by Anywaa, Nuer and Opoh). Consequently, the movement of Nuer refugees into the Anywaa villages led to violent encounters. As the Anywaa assumed the Nuer as their enemies, they often clash with the refugees when they leave their camps and cross through the Anywaa villages (Cited in Tadesse, 2002).

However, the Anywaa assumed that the motive behind the settlement patterns of the Nuer refugees into Anywaa territory is to exploit and take over control of the local natural resources. Currently, many more refugees have been added to the existing population of refugees. This has brought so much tension between the Anywaa and Nuer in the region. Even though there were some positive perceptions that the hosts could be beneficial. The coming of refugees to the Ethiopian side has changed the demography of Gambella. It has also intensified the issue of power and wealth sharing in Gambella. There is evidence that some Nuer refugees have already integrated themselves with the Ethiopian Nuer and are serving to shift the population balance in their favour (Tadesse, 2002). This brings critical competition in the politics of the region.

The arrival of South Sudanese refugees has brought the demographic balance toward the Nuer. The Nuer have been the largest refugee group since the 1980s, and more importantly, since the start of the 2013 civil war in South Sudan. Therefore, between 1984 and 2007, the number of Nuer speakers increased more than twice as quickly as the Anywaa (Vemuru et al, 2020). Consequently, issues with refugees led the Anywaa to assume that the Nuer refugees are a threat to the Anywaa's existence.

Currently, the Anywaa still perceive all refugee camps in Gambella to remain sources of conflict and territorial expansion for the Ethiopian Nuer. At present, there are new refugee camps that have been constructed during the 2013 and 2016 civil war in South Sudan. Out of the newest

camps, two are located in the Anywaa territory. These are Jebi and Pinyudo II; this made the first one to be called Pinyudo I. “Kule and Nguenyiel camps in Itang district host 44,745 and 82,758 refugees, respectively. While movement between the camps was possible in peaceful times, it has been restricted since 2016 due to insecurity. Pinyudo I (1st) is the oldest camp in Gambella, was established in 1993, and currently hosts 42,297 refugees” (Vemuru et al, 2020).

One of the most challenging situations for the hosts is seeing refugees benefiting from both the hosting country and international organizations. Sometimes it causes problems between hosts and refugees. One of the reports states that what some organizations do will cause problems between refugees and hosts. Because if the service the refugees are receiving is not being provided to hosts. While refugees are destroying forests, farms, and stealing our things still keep silent, but these organizations are not helping the hosts. As a human, you can feel like. ‘Should I bother myself or suffer because of refugees, while their people do not want to support me?’ So this sometimes causes problems and hatred between refugees and hosts (Cited in Vemuru et al, 2020).

Therefore, the Anywaa perceived the refugee settlement patterns as a threat to their life. And it is one of the most challenging things in Gambella, host community have ever experienced for decades, without enough solutions. More importantly, the existence of refugees in Gambella has restricted the freedom of movement from one village to another village of Anywaa closer to the refugee camps in Gambella.

2.1.2 Role of the Local Community in Averting Conflicts

In the early 1960s, the Anywaa local leaders had played a key role in managing the case of refugees and movement within their territory. Hagos (2021) asserts that “the way Anywaa communities manage refugee movements. This was based on long-standing traditional structures and the

centralized administrations of each political entity. That is in line with their political organization structure. Nevertheless, the role the Anywaa community had played for a long time had come to an end. Ideally, most Anywaa believe that it was intentionally planned to weaken the local leadership of the Anywaa so that the refugees could claim Ethiopian citizenship. After the weakening of the Anywaa's leadership, the population was shifted. The refugees began to challenge the traditional peaceful co-existence, evicting many Anywaa villagers from their ancestral lands with support from South Sudanese rebel groups in Ethiopia (Hagos, 2021).

However, the role the Anywaa played during the 1960s may not be fully applicable in contemporary conflict resolution in Gambella. Yet, it is more effective to recognize and learn from their positive outcomes at the time. But it could be a huge mistake to overlook the effort and commitment towards peaceful coexistence that they have carried out for decades. This idea, shared by Mengistu (2014), even though the indigenous conflict resolution methods seem strong. There still lack some characteristics of modern conflict resolution. It could not address the challenges in the nature and magnitude of the local conflicts. Therefore, this makes it less possible to advance post-conflict reconstruction. Again, this could be naïveté to conclude that the indigenous methods are the best way of resolving. However, the concept here is that there are many ways to solve conflicts.

This contributed to the acknowledgment of a dualistic way of looking at the conflict, both historically and contemporarily, without relying heavily on one method and ignoring the others. In the case of Gambella today. It seems like the stakeholders have forgotten and ignored the effort as well as the vital role local leaders had played in the past. Furthermore, Mengistu (2014) asserts the importance of customary procedures for local ethnic groups that help to provide a moral basis

for maintaining order. Thus, the state should actively incorporate them into judicial procedures (Cited in Mengistu, 2014).

2.1.3 Role of International Actors in Averting Conflict

The contributions of international actors to alleviating the conflict in Gambella can be viewed as both adequate and inadequate. On one hand, their efforts are commendable as they strive to prevent conflict. They are providing necessary resources to facilitate dialogue among the conflicting communities. On the other hand, their actions fall short in terms of long-term effectiveness. Their primary focus seems to be on bringing the parties together for discussion after each incident. Rather than establishing a comprehensive agenda aimed at resolving the underlying issues of the conflict.

Borchgrevink et al (2009) note that the international actors' activities in Gambella are limited. However, several NGOs are active in the region with various peace programs. These range from resolving conflicts over resource competition to organizing mediation with local elders and church leaders. Additionally, they promote peaceful interactions among groups through sports competitions and cultural events. Even though it is not right to judge the quality and results of these programs, it can be seen that their response to this turbulent region is limited (p. 26). Another shortcoming of international actors in the conflicts between refugees and host communities in Gambella.

The international involvement in the conflict formation in Gambella has focused heavily on one issue, especially the situation of refugees. Despite attempts to improve relations between the Anywaa and Nuer, to settle intra-Nuer conflicts. The relations between the two remain deteriorated. The limited attention of the international actors toward the host community can be observed in several ways. Firstly, the international actors failed to play a role in the security

situation of Gambella in 2003. In December 2003, the Anywaa's massacre took place in Gambella, by the government of Ethiopia in collaboration with civilian Habesha. Where 400 Anywaa elites were killed in two days (Lie & Borchgrevink, 2012).

However, the incident took place as an alleged Anywaa ambush of an Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) vehicle. As a result, the UN pulled out all staff from Gambella due to security concerns. Almost all foreigners and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) left Gambella (Lie & Borchgrevink, 2012). It is essential to acknowledge that Gambella is a peripheral region where many international actors may not have a significant presence. However, if these international actors were dedicated to engaging in efforts aimed at reducing conflict within the region. They could have played a significant role in the 2003 massacre of the Anywaa, especially considering the substantial population of refugees in the area. Thus, one of the reasons might be that this region is at the periphery, where the number of international actors is limited.

Therefore, their capacity for dealing with issues is overextended simply through handling local matters. Nevertheless, there are some international actors whose work is appreciated in this region. For example, the repatriation program of refugees in the Gambella camps, which is organized by the UNHCR and PACT, has operated a cross-border peace program for some years (Borchgrevink & Lie, 2009).

2.2 Cross-border Conflict in East Africa

Cross-border conflicts are not something new to modern and contemporary societies, including Africa in general, and Eastern Africa in particular. A significant number of Africans are facing cross-border ethnic conflicts that impose substantial social and economic burdens. These conflicts are not the result of a single factor but rather stem from a variety of interrelated issues occurring simultaneously. Factors include dwindling livestock, restricted access to pasture and water, the

compounded effects of drought throughout East Africa, and the increased movement of pastoralists seeking pasture and water, which often incites cross-border tensions. (Cited in Jal, 2014).

One of the most challenging disputes in Africa is border conflict management. This is because many, if not all, international borders in Africa were delineated by the colonial masters without the consent of Africans at the time. “Border disputes on the African continent remain a trigger factor for many interstate disputes. Following waves of independence across Africa, the borders poorly and selfishly established by colonialists were accepted by African leaders without changes that would facilitate the aspirations of their respective communities” (Mulindwa, 2020).

Pastoralists along the borders of Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda are facing deadly resource-based conflicts. For example, 60 Turkana herders were killed in the Koten area at the Kenya-Uganda border in 2005. The Ugandan army bombed over 5,000 Turkana pastoralists in 2007 and 2008 to drive them from the region. In successive raids, Pokots in Kenya killed over 70 people and stole more than 2,800 cattle in South Turkana. Additionally, the police clash with cattle rustlers in August 2008 resulted in 15 pastoralist deaths. Overall, at least 500 pastoralists have died due to conflicts at the Kenya-Sudan border (Jal, 2014).

Therefore, this problem is witnessed within Eastern Africa, where there are more than seventeen major boundaries, most of which were colonial products. Stretching from Sudan to Tanzania. The Anglo-Italian protocol of 1891 delimited British and Italian territories in East Africa; the British Somaliland-Ethiopia 1894; the Kenya-Ethiopia 1907, and others (Khadiagala, 2010). However, the disadvantages of these borders within African nations have never matched the advantages. The subsequent negative effects have been conflicts and political instability due to poor border management, leading to contestations and discourses as to whether national borders are necessary and can contribute to the development and cohesion of the African continent

(Mulindwa, 2020). Consequently, the complications of borders within Africa are difficult to control. It has become a problem within Africa (North, South, West, and East).

The conflicts and disputes within the East African Community over borders have challenged the effort of members to solve interstate relations problems for more than five decades. The concept of border management itself reflects different patterns, specifically, socioeconomic characteristics of the community members. People failed to see borders as bridges to make cooperation easier between states. Therefore, borders have become obstacles for interstate relations (Mulindwa, 2020).

Cross-border conflicts in Eastern Africa have happened in several ways. Some of the conflicts are spreading due to resource competition and refugee influxes. There are heightened tensions and increasing potential for interstate conflicts in Eastern Africa. This is a result of growing discoveries, or the belief that there exist natural resources in borderlands. However, the price of commodities had grown between 2001 and 2008. This has brought rapid industrial development of Asian countries, especially China. And their effort to access African minerals, which has also led to a new scramble for African natural resources (Okumu, 2010).

Therefore, cross-border conflict within East Africa needs much attention from both state and non-state actors. For example, the cross-border conflict between Kenya and Ethiopia occurs among communities living on the borders of both countries. The Dassanech and the Nyangtom people in Ethiopia and the Turkana in Kenya. They have been engaged in interethnic cross-border conflicts, which have increased in recent decades. As a result of cross-border conflict, people were killed, injured, and thousands of livestock were raided (Yntiso, 2016).

The same border conflict also happens frequently in the Western part of Ethiopia (Gambella). This mostly occurs between the Anywaa and Nuer in Ethiopia and the Murle in South

Sudan (the *Murle* are a small ethnic community living in South Sudan). The Murle in South Sudan do not have a common border being shared with either the Anywaa or Nuer. However, they cross borders in search of child abduction and livestock raiding in Ethiopia.

Despite the numerous cross-border conflicts observed in Eastern Africa. The researcher argues that these issues largely stem from poor leadership and a prevailing sense of individualism within many communities. By individualism, the researcher refers to the mindset of some leaders who focus solely on their own countries. By neglecting the harm caused by their citizens to those in neighboring nations. Leaders have the potential to mitigate conflicts in these areas. Leaders can mitigate conflicts by implementing principles that regulate cross-border movements.

Especially when such movements contribute to tensions. However, it is important to understand that the researcher is not suggesting that movement between countries should be completely restricted. Rather, he is advocating for a more regulated approach that considers the underlying causes of conflict.

2.3 Impact of Cross-border Conflicts on Regional Stability

The Anywaa have a different understanding of the territory from that of their counterpart (the Nuer). The Anywaa territoriality is clearly illustrated through two interrelated concepts: *Jobur* (people of settlement) and *Welo* (guests). In Anywaa traditional society, the dominant sub-clan of a village (Known as *tung*) consists of both *Jobur* and *Welo* individuals, who have arrived recently. While contemporary or permanent guests are highly respected, they can be fully integrated into the community like the *Jobur*. Although *Welo* can contribute to the economic or military strength. They maintain the freedom to leave the village at any time, whether on their own or at the villagers' request (Feyissa, 2005).

Nevertheless, the Anywaa can welcome people from outside their borders, but they cannot be fully integrated into the community. Consequently, this indicates that the Anywaa emphasize the principle. Thus, those who enter into Anywaa's territory must abide by the rules and laws instituted by the legitimate leadership entrusted to govern the land. Gambella, being at the periphery, is more vulnerable to any attack from outsiders. Therefore, cross-border conflict has several negative impacts on the regional stability of Gambella. These can be manifest in many ways, for instance, the Nuer who are pastoralists and those who cross the border without being controlled by the Ethiopian government. They have a maximum possibility of getting into Gambella with their arms.

The South Sudan civil war in 2013, some defined it as “a competition over political leadership fought out along ethnic lines. Particularly framing the violence as ethnic or tribal war, because it was driven by two competing groups of Dinka and Nuer people. This served as a ready-made. Seemingly familiar explanation for the new violence in a young country that commentators, politicians, donors, and other actors could easily deploy” (de Vries & Schomerus, 2017). Therefore, the conflict in South Sudan has spilled over to Gambella, because the Nuer fighting in South Sudan have happened to have kinfolk also in Gambella, Ethiopia. Gambella, where the majority of Nuer refugees from South Sudan are residing.

Consequently, the more Nuer coming to Gambella as refugees, the more they exacerbate the existing conflict in Gambella. A refugee can be a person who crosses an international border due to human rights abuses, as well as fleeing conflict in his or her own country of origin. Therefore, anyone who is denied, persecuted, and deprived of his or her own country or community, who is forced to flee, whether by crossing other borders or internal displacement, for safety, falls under the category (Betts & Loescher, 2011).

Gambella, as one of the peripheral regional states of Ethiopia, borders South Sudan; people living there have easy access to acquiring arms through refugees and cross-border trade. This is perceived to be one of the reasons that the conflict has been intensified in the region, with so many casualties compared to conflicts fought with traditional arms. One of the sources of arms was the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which were present on the other side of the border, adjacent to the Gambella region. Another source of arms was the Derg military period or the socialist regime in Ethiopia (Sewonet, 2002).

Despite the attempt made by the Ethiopian government to disarm illegal arms owners, the Nuer were not able to disarm due to their constant movement and access to firearms from South Sudan (Sewonet, 2002). Gambella shared a border with the turbulent country of Sudan. This makes the conflict situation politically sensitive and vulnerable to the influence of events occurring in Sudan. Sudan has been embroiled in internal conflicts since gaining independence from British colonial rule (Lie & Borchgrevink, 2012).

Therefore, the impact of cross-border conflict on the regional stability in Gambella today can be traced back to many conflicts. Especially, wars in Sudan and later on, in the new nation (South Sudan). Cross-border conflicts mostly occur in two ways in this particular area. First and foremost, it involves cattle raiding. Cattle rustling can be for wealth and payment for marriage (dowry), and second, for child abduction. Most of the time, cross-border conflicts in Gambella occur for the two reasons mentioned above. Frequently, it happens between people living on the border of both Ethiopia and South Sudan. Both cattle rustling and child abduction can have positive and negative motivations for those who are involved in such activities.

Factors that led to cattle rustling between ethnic groups in Gambella are driven by the pursuit of additional livestock, which is the most motivating factor behind cattle raiders. Positive

aspects of cattle rustling: It is for obtaining more cattle, economic benefit, and payment for the marriage or dowry. Child abduction: To exchange the child for cattle to people who need a child, and to increase the population. Negative impact of both cattle raiding and child abduction: Loss of life and cattle, and displacement of the communities (Jal, 2014). In contemporary times, cross-border conflicts have negatively impacted regional stability and hindered the development of the Gambella region.

2.3.1 The Gambella Region: Historical and Political Context

We have already introduced the current state of the Gambella region in the first chapter. Here we set it in its broader historical, political (geographical) context. Gambella is one of the hottest lowlands in the country, with an average temperature of 37 degrees Celsius. At an altitude of only 500 meters above sea level. Gambella is located in the Western part of Ethiopia, about 780 kilometers from the capital city, Addis Ababa. The region is believed to cover about 34,063 square kilometers (Cited in Feyissa, 2011). Does the regional state of Gambella resemble other regional states of Ethiopia at the peripheries? What makes Gambella so unique among other regional states in Ethiopia? To begin with, the first question. It is, yes; it resembles other states in many ways.

First and foremost is emerging regions, and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Affiliated political parties, respectively, these labels Gambella with other lowland areas at the peripheries. The post-1991 Ethiopian political landscape shaped their political organizations. Gambella also resembles other regions at the peripheries in being a conflict-prone region, marginalized politically, with low infrastructure. And environmentally, it is one of the hottest areas with high malaria, compared to South Omo and Beishangul Gumuz (Adeto, 2014).

Then, the uniqueness of Gambella can also be as many as its similarities. Gambella is unique in many ways. In the first place, Gambella's history is more or less comparable to that of many African nations, even though Ethiopia was not colonized. Therefore, Gambella resembles many regional states in Ethiopia. The division of the Anywaa and Nuer ethnic groups between South Sudan and Ethiopia. This is the same to that of the Somali being divided between Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti by the colonial masters. Gambella is predominantly protestant Christians (at 70%). While in other lowland peripheries in Ethiopia, the religions being practiced were Islam, indigenous beliefs, and Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity. These make Gambella unique from other Ethiopian regions (Adeto, 2014).

The firearms, the first time Anywaa came into contact with firearms was in the 1980s, when a king by the name Odiel of Abobo met with an Oromo man while hunting game animals. Their meeting had surprised the Oromo man. Because the Oromo observed that the Anywaa killed leopards, elephants, and buffaloes with spears, while the Oromo used firearms to kill game animals (Opap, 2020). The encounter had changed the political system of the Anywaa and military capability efficiently. This built a positive relationship between the Anywaa and Oromo. The Oromo, on their part, acquired ivory, leopard, and buffalo skins in exchange for firearms. The Anywaa also used to buy clothes, salt, and sugar from Oromo in village called Gore (Opap, 2020).

Another important turning point in the history of Gambella was the overthrow of the socialist regime in the 1990s by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). This marked the beginning of political change in the Gambella region. Accordingly, Gambella was reorganized from being a district to the Gambella People's National Regional State (GPNRS). The EPRDF adopted ethnicity as the official state ideology and institutionalized it in the 1994 constitution (Feyissa, 2005). Therefore, according to the constitution, every ethnic group (nation

and nationality in Ethiopia) is granted the right to self-determination up to secession (Art. 39/1) and to develop culture and language (Art. 39/2) (Ibid).

According to the rights given to every ethnic group in Ethiopia during the new federal government. The Nuer, who were also considered to be foreigners by their counterparts (the Anywaa), gained the right to compete for political positions in Gambella. “In the early 1990s, in what is locally known as *girgir* (conflict). An Anywaa military faction of the ‘Gambella People's Liberation Movement’ (GPML) committed atrocities against the civilian Nuer populations. In what seemed to be retaliation over political dominance. Nuer refugees residing in Gambella fled, and armed Nuer groups mounted counterattacks on Anyuak villages” (Lie & Borchgrevink, 2012).

2.3.2 Causes and Dynamics of Cross-border Conflicts in Gambella, Ethiopia

Causes of border conflict in Gambella occur in various ways. Primarily, the natural resources are considered to be one of the main causes of cross-border conflict in Gambella. Gambella, being a fertile land with many natural resources it attracts outsiders for many reasons. Inter-group conflict between the Anywaa and Nuer can be traced back to the early 20th century. Although its causes may seem irrelevant. The differing livelihoods of these two groups are a primary source of conflict. The Anywaa are primarily cultivators, while the Nuer are predominantly pastoralists.

Traditionally, the two groups have established reciprocal arrangements; the Nuers gain access to grazing lands, while the Anywaa receive milk and some cattle provisions. In instances of minor disputes, elders from both groups convene to arrange blood compensation. Typically, this is a form of a specified number of cattle for lost lives. As a gesture to signify the end of hostilities. Furthermore, elders may break weapons such as spears, symbolizing a commitment to avoid further fighting and revenge (Sewonet, 2002).

There are other causes apart from the fertility of Gambella for grazing. There are economic and social security factors that led numerous populations of the Nuer to come to Gambella, Ethiopia. Especially, the civil wars in South Sudan. The conflict between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Has driven many Nuer to migrate to the Gambella region of Ethiopia. The appeal of better social services, such as education and healthcare in Gambella town, attracts even more Nuer from the Jikawo and Akobo districts. This influx has led the Anywaa community to feel overwhelmed by the increasing Nuer population (Sewonet, 2002).

Causes and dynamics of cross-border conflict in many parts of Africa are related in many cases. For example, conflicts caused by nomadic pastoralist activities can escalate into border conflicts between nations in Africa. Like the 1970s, the conflict between Afar-Ethiopia and Issa-Somalia pastoralists resulted in war between Ethiopia and Somalia in 1977/78 (Cited in Jal, 2014).

The cause of cross-border conflicts stems from both sides, Ethiopia and South Sudan. On the Ethiopian side, there are two communities, hardly affected by the conflict, especially those at the border with South the Anywaa and the Nuer. Cross-border conflict has several negative impacts, and displacement is one of them. For instance, the conflict between the Nuer and Murle from South Sudan. Has caused displacement from both sides. From the Nuer side, there was displacement to the Jikany-Nuer and Lou-Nuer (these are sub-clans within the Nuer tribe). The Murle were displaced as well from their home and moved somewhere to escape from the attack of the Nuer (Jal, 2014).

Therefore, the pastoralists' setting can be operated in a way that could create increasingly co-existence with other forms of land use. This system requires institutional and tenure arrangements that can accommodate various needs among them. As a result, agriculture cannot be

simply the physical transformation of the land. Actually, a privileging of private property regimes over those that are more open (Herbert & Birch, 2022). To some extent, cross-border conflicts in Gambella are thought to have begun with the migration of the Nuer from Sudan to Ethiopia.

The migration of the Nuer to Gambella attracts many outsiders for cattle rustling in Gambella, Ethiopia. Because the Anywaa and other indigenous communities in Gambella are dominantly agriculturalists. Hagos (2021) notes that the Nuer were confined to a small area in Southern Sudan near the Bahr el Jebel River. Thus, by the early 20th century, the Nuer had expanded in large part peacefully to the *Laajak* hills near *Akedo* on the *Baro* (Openo) River (Hagos, 2021). Some scholars believe that cross-border conflict stems from migration, a vital element of the Nuer livelihood. This situation was further intensified by two critical factors.

First, increasing population density and lack of access to land and water resources have mandated the Nuer to expand their grazing territories. The expansion has placed significant pressure on sedentary settlements and established agricultural systems. Second, the Nuer's experiences of conflict in the west have decisively pushed them to migrate eastward. Historically, the Nuer in both Ethiopia and Sudan have maintained a contentious relationship with the Dinka to the west in Sudan. Despite sharing numerous similarities in livelihood and modes of production, these groups have frequently found themselves in conflict (Lie & Borchgrevink, 2012).

The cross-border conflict in Gambella is continually evolving, particularly regarding the tensions between the Anywaa and the Nuer. Historically, the roots of the conflict can be traced back to the migration of the Nuer into the Anywaa territory. Which is now part of Gambella in the Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Presently, the causes and dynamics of these cross-border conflicts have shifted significantly. The Nuer have gained easier access to both the Ethiopian and South Sudanese borders. There is a prevailing belief that the Nuer are considering the

establishment of their own state. This is in response to the ongoing civil wars in South Sudan and the ethnic strife between the Nuer and Dinka.

As a result, the Nuer see the creation of their own state, potentially encompassing parts of Gambella, as a vital means of ensuring their survival. To sum up, the Nuer historical movement into Anywaa land has been driven by increased population density. The low access to pastureland, colonial taxation, flee the Dinka conflict and the security concerns during the civil war in Sudan (Lie & Borchgrevink, 2012). Consequently, all contributed to the notion of creating the *Naath* (Nuer) nation.

2.3.3 Refugee Movements and Host Community Relations in Gambella

Freedom of movement is the primary and most important of man's liberties. The freedom to leave one's own country for another country or escaping from corruption and abusive political systems that deny them their rights and freedoms. All these legitimated the reason for freedom of movement to be considered a right or a last resort (Cited in Slobe, 2011).

The idea of refugees' movement and freedom can be dated back to efforts made after World War I. This when the number of Russian refugees from the new post-1917 Bolshevik regime (and subsequent Russian Civil War) increased, resulting in public and private efforts at their assistance. Initially, they had no formal right of residence, work, or even valid travel documents. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) appealed to the League of Nations to take action at the request of the private relief agencies (Refugee Studies Centre, 2005).

So, the League of Nations appointed Norwegian scientist and former explorer Fridtjof Nansen as a High Commissioner to organize protection and international assistance. One of the outstanding performances by Nansen was his creativity in getting travel documents (Nansen passports) for refugees. This was a document indicating a person under the High Commissioner's

protection that was accepted as valid travel paper (Refugee Studies Centre, 2005). However, “the right to freedom of movement is an individual right. This has to be faced with a state-based international community whose concern is regarding human migration as well as sovereignty. A right to leave does not automatically confer the right to enter another state. This is the problem of any type of migration” (Cited in Slobe, 2011). Refugees’ freedom of movement in Africa has become possible in two ways:

The conflict, the result of the struggle for independence and the end of the colonial era in Africa, caused a succession of massive refugee movements. Later, political events derived from the transformation of the economic and social system in the newly independent nations. It has opened the way to further refugee movement in Africa (Awuku, 1995). Many refugees worldwide live in low and middle-income countries. In those countries, refugees usually live in camps or cities, mostly living near the host communities. Their view of integration and socio-economic outcomes is likely to be influenced by the way refugees and hosts interact. Therefore, from this perspective. There is a possibility of growing policy concern to improve social cohesion between refugees and the nearest host communities (Betts et al, 2023). It is difficult to estimate the number of refugees in Africa.

Due to many sources of inaccuracy, some government estimates exaggerate numbers through double-counting. This actually to obtain additional relief supplies, or to score political points off a neighboring state from which refugees originate. Other estimates undercount. This especially where refugees try to remain unidentified or where host countries do not wish to annoy their neighbors by admitting that there are any refugees at all (Nindi, 1986).

Ethiopia, being one of the major refugee-hosting countries in Africa, is also both a destination and a transit point in East Africa. It has similarities to Kenya in terms of encampment policy towards refugees. But Ethiopia has legal exceptions for refugees to live or move to Addis Ababa. The Out-of-Camp Policy (OCP) and the Urban Assistance Program (UAP). However, there are exemptions for refugees. Such as medical issues, protection, or humanitarian concerns who cannot be adequately served by living in the camp (Betts et al, 2023). Therefore, services can be provided to them in urban areas.

The case of refugees in Gambella is usually connected with clashes between refugees and hosts. This makes it difficult for the government to avert the conflict between the Anywaa and Nuer. Most of the refugees residing in Gambella are from the Nuer ethnic group. Nevertheless, refugee movement in Gambella was peaceful. This was the time that refugee cases were managed by the local people with local solutions. The approaches differed from the current refugees and hosts conflict management policy applied by the Ethiopian government.

2.3.4 Summary and Research Gaps

Cross-border conflict is one of the most challenging issues in the world, particularly in Africa. All countries have boundaries and international borders, whether they are visible or invisible. Borders help define the landmarks of a country. It allows people to understand where their nation ends and another begins. Ethiopia is one of the great horn of Africa with so many national borders to its neighboring African countries.

Numerous scholarly reviews have indicated that cross-border conflict issues are particularly difficult to manage in Africa. This because many regions have endured civil wars, insecurity, and violence. To effectively control these borders, long-term planning and commitment are essential. It is important to focus on the communities living near the borders, as they often face

the greatest suffering due to these conflicts. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges of cross-border conflict in Africa.

This is achieved by promoting regional cooperation and integration among its member states. IGAD prioritizes peace, security, and sustainable development as core objectives. In addressing cross-border conflict resolution, the researcher highlights the importance of involving the people of Gambella in border security efforts. This contributes to the local community's awareness. Thus, proposes peace-building training based on national policies related to cross-border movement. This involvement is essential to alleviate the frequent suffering of those living along the borders.

Furthermore, the citizens of Gambella, as well as refugees living in Gambella, must take accountability for the security and well-being of their region. Any attempts by outsiders to disrupt peace should be reported to the appropriate authorities. This initiative can be more effective if the local population within Gambella speaks a common language. By building good relationships with refugees. The features outlined in this research point to a significant gap that needs to be addressed. “Cross-Border Conflicts and Regional Stability: Examining Refugee-Host Community’s Relations in Gambella, Ethiopia.”

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter explained the data collection process. The research design, research methods and instruments, target population and sampling, and data collection process. The research methodology adopted a qualitative approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of the conflict dynamics in Gambella. The chapter described data collection methods. This included interviews with stakeholders such as refugees, host community members, local leaders, and representatives of regional organizations, as well as perceptions of cross-border conflict and regional stability.

3.1 Research Design, Methods and Instruments

The researcher used a case study research design to obtain information concerning the past and current situation of the cross-border and refugee-host community conflict in Gambella, Ethiopia. The study employed a qualitative method to capture the subjective experiences, perceptions, and narratives of refugees and host community members involved in cross-border conflict resolution. Relevance: This approach allows for investigating the phenomenon within its real-life context.

Additionally, it explores multiple perspectives from refugees, host communities, government officials, NGOs, and community leaders. It is allowed for a rich and nuanced understanding of the social, cultural, and political factors shaping cross-border conflicts and regional stability. The design used several sources of evidence. These are: questionnaire, focus group discussions, observations and official documents.

Furthermore, the study used a qualitative research method approach. This to provide an in-depth understanding factors exacerbating cross-border and refugee-host community conflicts in Gambella. Qualitative research offers a richer and better understanding of the society under

investigation. However, the study demanded a specific, organized, structured method to discover more effective outcomes (Akyildiz & Ahmed, 2021).

Research Method: Our qualitative research method used open-ended questionnaire, which emphasize in-depth, detailed information and provide the researcher with comprehensive insight into the study phenomenon. Qualitative research is related to the nature, and the researcher typically investigates the interpretations and perspectives of a particular environment. It is also a type of study. It emphasizes how people interpret and create meaning from their perceptions within a social context (Herndon & Kreps, 1993; Akyildiz & Ahmed, 2021). This timeframe enabled an examination of the evolving dynamics of conflict and cooperation over the years. It explored several interrelated themes. These include the socio-political and ethnic dynamics influencing conflict between refugees and host communities in Gambella.

The researcher used primary data. For example, interviews with local leaders and refugees. This helped the researcher to understand the underlying causes of tensions and evaluate the effectiveness of existing cross-border conflict strategies. This addressed complex issues like the role of regional collaboration and uncovering context-specific challenges. Key Informant Interview Data, gleaned from interviews with stakeholders. Such as government officials, NGOs, and community leaders, provides expert insights into policy and implementation gaps. The relevance of this data supported the evaluation of the effectiveness of current cross-border conflict frameworks and identified areas for improvement.

Research Instrument: The data for this study were collected through questionnaires, which were distributed to respondents and through Key Informants Interviews (KIIs). The questionnaires were in a different structure, since the researcher decided to use a qualitative method. There were

open-ended questions for the qualitative data. The questions for KIIs were arranged in a way that could provoke some debate among respondents.

The researcher also used an interview to make sure that important questions had not been left out during the 'Key Informants' completion of the questionnaire. The significance of the KIIs was to provide details of the data that would not have been possible to get through the questionnaire. Because the interview provided the researcher with the opportunity to ask for clarifications from respondents and probe for more explanations.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The target populations of this study were refugees and the host communities of Gambella. This also includes administrative units, the refugee camps and districts at the border periphery. As it was mentioned earlier, the host population was at 307,097, while the refugee population stood at 399,174 (Cited in Hagos, 2021). This study targeted some specific group members from the refugee and host communities.

This included district administrators and NGOs representatives based in Gambella. The government representatives from both the Anywaa and Nuer, chairpersons within the refugee camps, peace and justice officials. Finally, Gambella's police commissioners. The sampling method was non-probability. The researcher used this method because he selected respondents who were readily available, nearby, or willing to participate. This defined the characteristic of non-probability sampling. Therefore, participants were selected based on easy access and time constraints rather than a random procedure.

Why was this method selected? It was selected because it involves any technique in which samples were selected in some way, not suggested by a probability theory. The study also used this technique because it does not entail complications in its approach (Cited in Gerald, 2019).

Given the high level of illiteracy in many districts of Gambella, the researcher used purposive sampling. Specifically targeting individuals believed to be reliable for the provision of data to the research. The study employed purposive sampling due to the complexity and sensitivity of the research topic to the people of Gambella. Because the research addressed politically and socially sensitive matters. Therefore, the study needed participants who could respond knowledgeably and responsibly, rather than a random selection of respondents or individuals.

The sample size was initially 60 participants. The interview was with 35 participants, and FGDs were mostly people above the age of 18, a mix of genders. This included both refugees and hosts. Participants per group were 4 to 8 persons, with one-on-one, out of the group, for sensitive opinion sharing. KIIs, 15 participants.

Therefore, the reason for choosing this sampling method was the availability of participants and the sensitivity of the topic for the administrators of Gambella, as well as the refugees. Another reason for this sampling method was due to the security, financial and time constraints of the research. In addition, the reason for adopting this sampling size was to enable the researcher to fulfill his specific choices of the place and people involved in the study. After considering the circumstances under which the study was undertaken. The researcher felt that the sample size of respondents in the study was best determined by selecting from both refugees and hosts.

3.3 Field Data Collection Process

The data collection process began immediately after receiving the research authorization from Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR). The researcher used the authorization letter from HIPSIR. He presented it to the Ethiopian ‘Ministry of Education’ (MoE) in Addis Ababa to obtain a local research permit. The researcher, after receiving permit went to Gambella, where he collected the data.

The data was collected from primary sources. Primary data was collected through interviews, FGDs, and KIIs. However, the telephone was used for clarifications on issues shared by respondents who had not been reached in person for some reasons. Even though the case of confidentiality was challenging to manage through telephone interview. It was solved by using anonymous names and not disclosed what have been discussed with participants. Furthermore, the researcher looked for deep insight and clarification on issues discussed.

Some people served as research assistants, these included district administrators, host community leaders and refugee leaders. They played key role, by introducing the researcher to the study participants in their particular areas. These people also have enriched the researcher with evidences related to cross-border conflicts and refugee-host conflicts. The researcher managed to collect the data in August and September, 2025. Even though the conflict situation was not at its best between refugees and host communities in Gambella.

3.4 Research Site and Time Frame

Generally, the field research was conducted in Gambella. Specifically, refugee camps, and district hosting refugee camps. Those were considered to be more affected by the influx of refugees. It was from these places that the researcher explored areas of research. He reached out to local and refugee leaders to gather some information and materials for the work to be carried out; these locations facilitated the researcher's data collection process.

The time frame for the data collection was after two months, necessary after all academic clearances were done actually July and August, 2025. Why Gambella? Gambella was prepared for the high number of cross-border conflicts and the many refugee populations residing in the area. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and approached with sufficient awareness and

cultural sensitivity concerning people with unforgettable memories. Such as killing or persecution of their fellow families or communities.

The researcher asked questions with respect to seek clarification and honesty from all respondents of the data. The problem of honesty was best managed by comparing participants answers and opinions with other respondents in the study. The problem of language was solved by using translating instruments and trained translators. This was mainly with Nuer refugees from South Sudan; questions related to refugees were translated into the Nuer language.

3.5 Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

The instrument used was qualitative method. Therefore, for the case of the reliability of the instrument. The researcher used a pilot study to ensure the instruments' consistency, credibility, dependability, and refinement. The researcher repeated reading transcripts or questionnaires to the respondents. This was done to make sure that the data were reliable. The researcher essentially compared responses from different participants (refugees and hosts). This process helped to obtain the reliability of the study. Additionally, the researcher made sure that questions were formed clearly and concisely to produce a consistent response.

For the validity of the instrument, the researcher used content validation, where the instruments were reviewed by the supervisors and a research expert in peace studies and international relations. This was to confirm relevance and clarity (alignment) with study objectives and research questions. Furthermore, the researcher confirmed that the instruments and respondents' data were representative of the subgroups (strata) in the sample population.

Finally, for the case of an interview guide to be reliable, the researcher demonstrated transparency and forthrightness. Because not only the biases of the respondents but also the

researcher can influence the research. Therefore, transparency was important in this study since the researcher's interest was not the primary focus of the case study.

3.6 Data Analysis

The researcher used thematic analysis in analyzing the data collected. Thematic analysis explains the underlying meanings, similarities, and differences in the experiences and perceptions of participants without just summarizing them. After collecting the qualitative data through key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), observations and document reviews. The researcher organized the data by transcribing all interviews and reviewed field data notes for completeness and accuracy. The transcripts were read repeatedly to gain familiarity with participants' experiences and perspectives regarding the study theme. The researcher then coded the data by assigning the labels of similar opinions and experiences shared by participants.

He also assessed the fieldwork process by presenting both positive and negative experiences he had encountered during data collection. Challenges the researcher faced were language barriers, restrictions in some refugee camps, reluctance to discuss sensitive security issues and some other cultural issues were recorded. The challenges were addressed by the use of trained interpreters or translators, assuring participants of confidentiality and adjusting schedule to meet participants' availability. These contributed to the transparent account of the research process and dependability of the study.

Finally, the themes were interpreted in relation to the study objectives and relevant literature to explain how the cross-border conflict affects refugee-host community relations and how these interactions affect regional stability in Gambella, Ethiopia.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter analyzed and interpreted the data collected, in line with the themes “Cross-border Conflicts and Regional Stability: Examining Refugee-Host Community Relations in Gambella, Ethiopia.” Guided by the research questions, literature review, theoretical framework, and research observation. The collective responses are presented in several ways. These are tables, charts, narratives, and verbatim. The data was collected through a qualitative method.

4.1 Demographics

The demographics characteristics were presented in descriptive form to contextualize participant perspectives on the cross-border conflicts and refugee-host community relations in Gambella, Ethiopia. The demographic profile of respondents included: Gender, age group, level of education, place of birth, ethnic affiliation, nationality, and length of stay in Gambella. The organizations they work for, their role or leadership in the community they belong to.

Participants were drawn from both refugees and host communities in Gambella, as well as Key Informants such as district administrators, community leaders, refugee leaders, and non-governmental officials. This diversity was important in understanding participants’ experiences and interpretations of cross-border conflicts and the implications of refugee-host relations in Gambella, Ethiopia.

4.1.1 Gender

The study included both gender participants. Despite the attempt made to maintain gender balance, there still existed a gender disparity. The disparity was observed at the end of the research. The disparity could be too large because gender balance was difficult to realize at the initial stage.

Additionally, the fact that in both Anywaa and Nuer cultures, women were disregarded to talk about politics and conflicts.

Yet, women were and are affected by the conflicts through rape, loss of their husbands as a result of violence or war. For these reasons, many women were not well assimilated into these matters, in both the Anywaa (host community) and South Sudanese Nuer refugees. Therefore, men were more willing to participate in the study.

4.1.2 Age Group

The age groups (respondents' ages) are important in understanding their views on cross-border conflicts and refugee-host relations in Gambella, Ethiopia.

The age group of participants ranged broadly from the youth (18 years old) to the elderly (65 years old and above). This process allowed the researcher to explore the generational experiences between different age groups. Their experiences and explanations about cross-border conflicts, insecurity, and conflict between refugees and the host community in Gambella have shaped the target of this study.

The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 26 and 34 years, and 18 and 25 years was the second largest group of participants. Those aged 35 and 45, and those aged 46 to 55, were third and fourth. The 56 and above age respectively were the lowest number of respondents. This representation proved valuable for this research. As those within the 18-25 and 26-34 age groups are the highest population in the region. At the same time, they are the largest unemployed population. Another important point on why the age groups from 26-34 was significant in the study. Was because many people in these age groups are educated with formal education system.

The age distribution of the participants was therefore deemed balanced enough to ensure that the information gathered was not biased.

Table 1: Age Group of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-25	10	16.7
26-34	20	33.3
35-45	15	25
46-55	10	16.7
56-above	5	8.3
Total	60	100

Source: Research findings

4.1.3 Level of Education

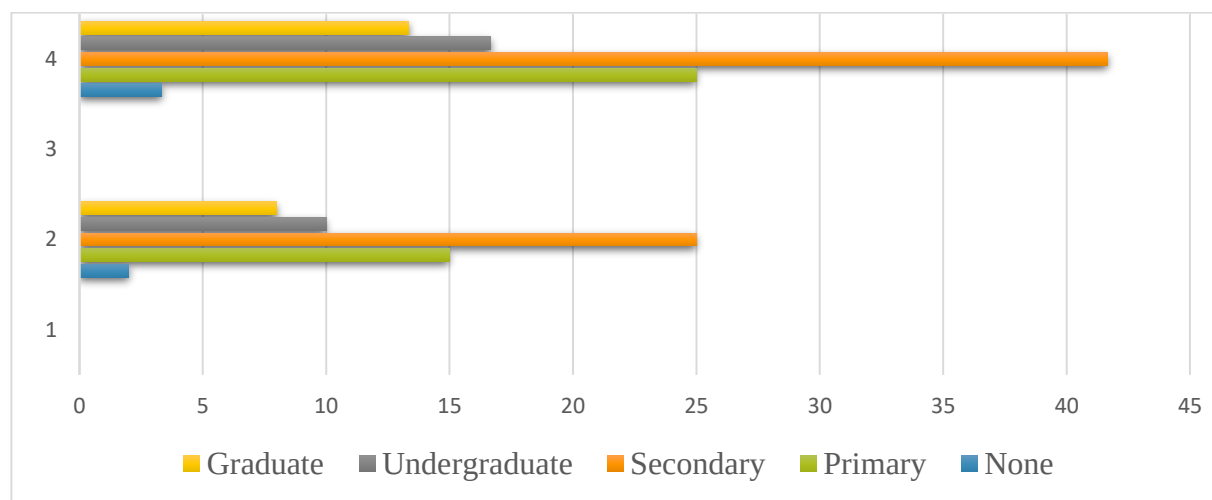
The respondents of this study were drawn from different demographic groups (sex and age groups), as indicated in **Figure 3** below.

The educational backgrounds varied from place to place in Gambella as well as between refugees and host communities. Some refugees had opportunities to gain formal education. However, those 56 years old and above did not have the same opportunities as those of younger ages. This was due to the civil war in their country of origin. Within the host communities, there were also many people without formal education due to some reasons that were not directly indicated to the researcher. Some participants have limited or no formal education at all, especially in the rural districts. These differences informed the choice of the qualitative research method.

One of the respondents from the Nuer community, who was interviewed, said that the problem of not having formal education was not a choice one could make. However, it was the

lack of schools in our earlier ages. Because there were no schools by then for the people of Gambella. The only schools in the Anywaa districts were in Akado, founded by the American missionaries. These schools were very far from Gambella town and were not accessible for a Nuer to go there and study because of the security reasons between the Nuer and the Anywaa (KII, #7). Another reason was that people of old age felt comfortable with their culture based on agriculture and pastoralist life. Therefore, they did not need to go to school as they depended on agriculture and pastoralism.

Figure 3: Highest Level of Education



Source: Research findings

The results showed that, in terms of highest education, the majority have attended secondary school. The finding showed that many people currently are attending school comparing to many years ago. Because at the contemporary time there are many school and government is supporting school programs. Those who have attended primary school were the second large populations. However, those were undergraduates, and graduates were the least people. The result found that there are many changes in the education sector of Gambella. This revealed that despite, the cultural perception that schools are not important. There is a great change that has been made

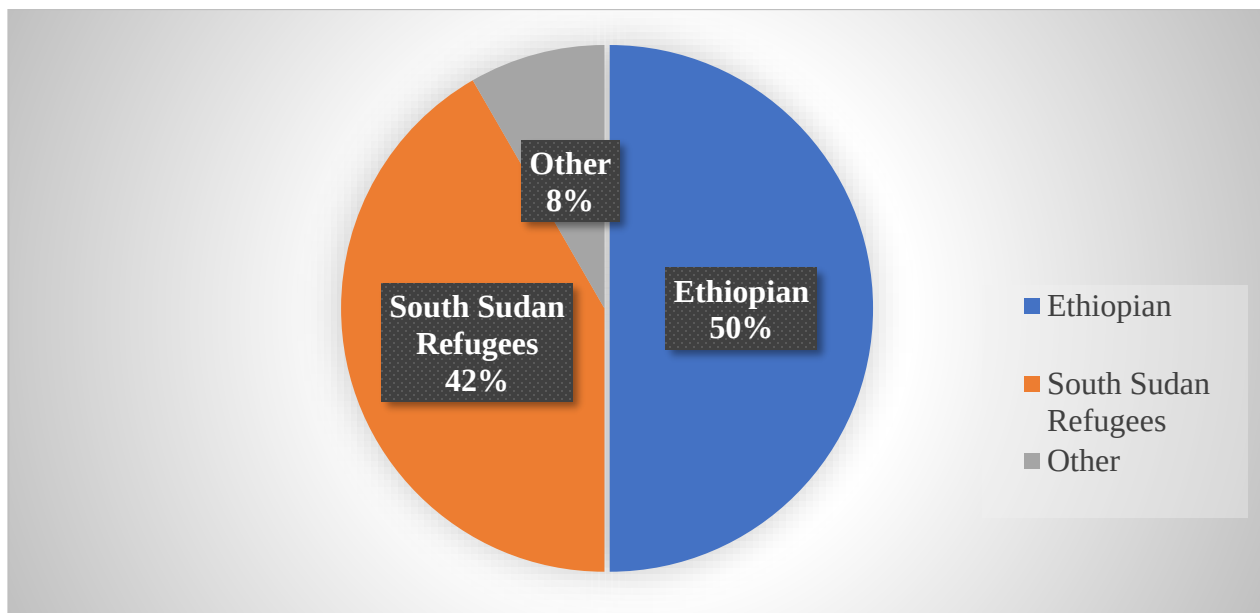
in education. However, there were a good number of people who had not attended any school. But they sounded reasonable on the matters discussed.

These percentages of people who did not attend school were mostly local leaders and the most respected people in their particular villages. From the results above, the respondents were found capable of providing reliable data for the study.

4.1.4 Nationality

The researcher sought to find out the nationality of respondents, as shown in **Figure 4** below. Another important demographic was the ethnic affiliation, which was significant due to the multi-ethnic composition, cross-border conflicts, and refugee-host problems in Gambella. Participants were from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and nationalities. This as shown that respondents were not biased. Having selected participants from different nationalities with different perspectives and experiences. This confirmed the validity of the instrument and the data collection process.

Figure 4: Nationality of Respondents (Ethiopian, South Sudanese Refugees, and Other)



Source: Research findings

The majority of the respondents were Ethiopian citizens. The research found that the majority of participants were people of Ethiopian nationality. The reason for having many Ethiopian people in the study was because they have enough experiences of cross-border and refugee-host conflicts in Gambella. The researcher intended to explore the driving factors of cross-border conflicts. This system allowed the study to contextualize the relations between refugees and host communities in Gambella. Therefore, the Ethiopian nationalities have provided the researcher with rich and genuine historical background of the genesis of the conflict between refugees and hosts in Gambella.

The South Sudanese refugees were the second large demographic people in the study residing in Gambella, Ethiopia. The reason for such a percentage was that these people are the ones having problems with host communities in Gambella. These groups of people also have different observations and experiences on both cross-border conflicts and regional stability. As a result of unpredictable relationships between refugees and hosts. Therefore, South Sudanese refugees have played key roles in shaping the balance in this study. Because the study would not have been realistic and honest based on one side's claim. People from different nationalities have played a huge role in balancing what Ethiopian and the South Sudanese refugee said. Because both Ethiopian and South Sudanese refugees have their responses influenced by their national affiliations and other reasons not really revealed to the researcher.

4.1.5 Length of Stay in the Region

Even though not all respondents were born in the region (Gambella), all have lived in the region for at least one year, as **Table 2** indicates.

This has helped the researcher to grasp the perceptions of respondents of the study in the interview guide. The longer you live in one country, the more you learn about its politics and understand the areas.

Table 2: Length of Stay in the Region

	Frequency	Percent
1-9 years	10	16.7
10-21 years	20	33.3
22-above	30	50
Total	60	100

Source: Research findings

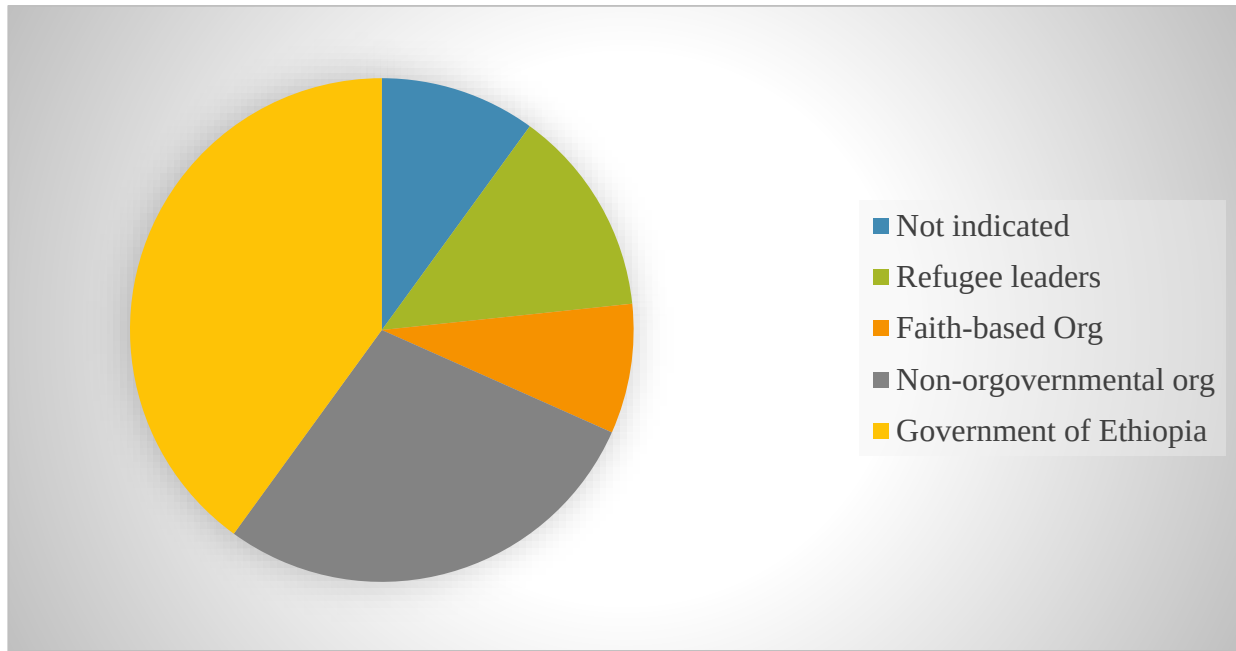
Length of stay in the region as indicated in the table above. Participants who have been in the region for 22 years and above were the highest number of people. The reason that they were selected was that those who have lived in this country the longest were mostly Ethiopian. The second group of participants who have lived longer was 10-21 years. They were sufficient to provide the researcher with genuine and sounded reason of what they experienced. Last, but not least, those participants who have been in the country for quite sometimes. This group of people also offered valuable insights concerning the research's theme.

4.1.6 Affiliate Organization

The researcher sought to know which organization the respondents work for. **Figure 5** below shows the affiliations of respondents' organizations. However, some participants preferred their

affiliated organizations not to be known. As a matter of confidentiality, the researcher respected their choices and protected their identities.

Figure 5: Respondents' Affiliate Institution



Source: Research findings

As indicated in **Figure 5** above, most of the respondents were from within the Ethiopian government. Most of these people were directors or leaders within different government institutions. Some of them have been involved in the conflict management between refugees and host communities in Gambella. The result found that these people were rightly selected and addressed sufficient reasons and solutions for the conflict in Gambella.

Next were the religious institutes or religious leaders and a few laity officials who worked in the faith-based organizations. As religious leaders, they played a great role to de-escalate conflicts between refugees and hosts in Gambella. While those from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) were not many. These groups of people, many of whom were refugees,

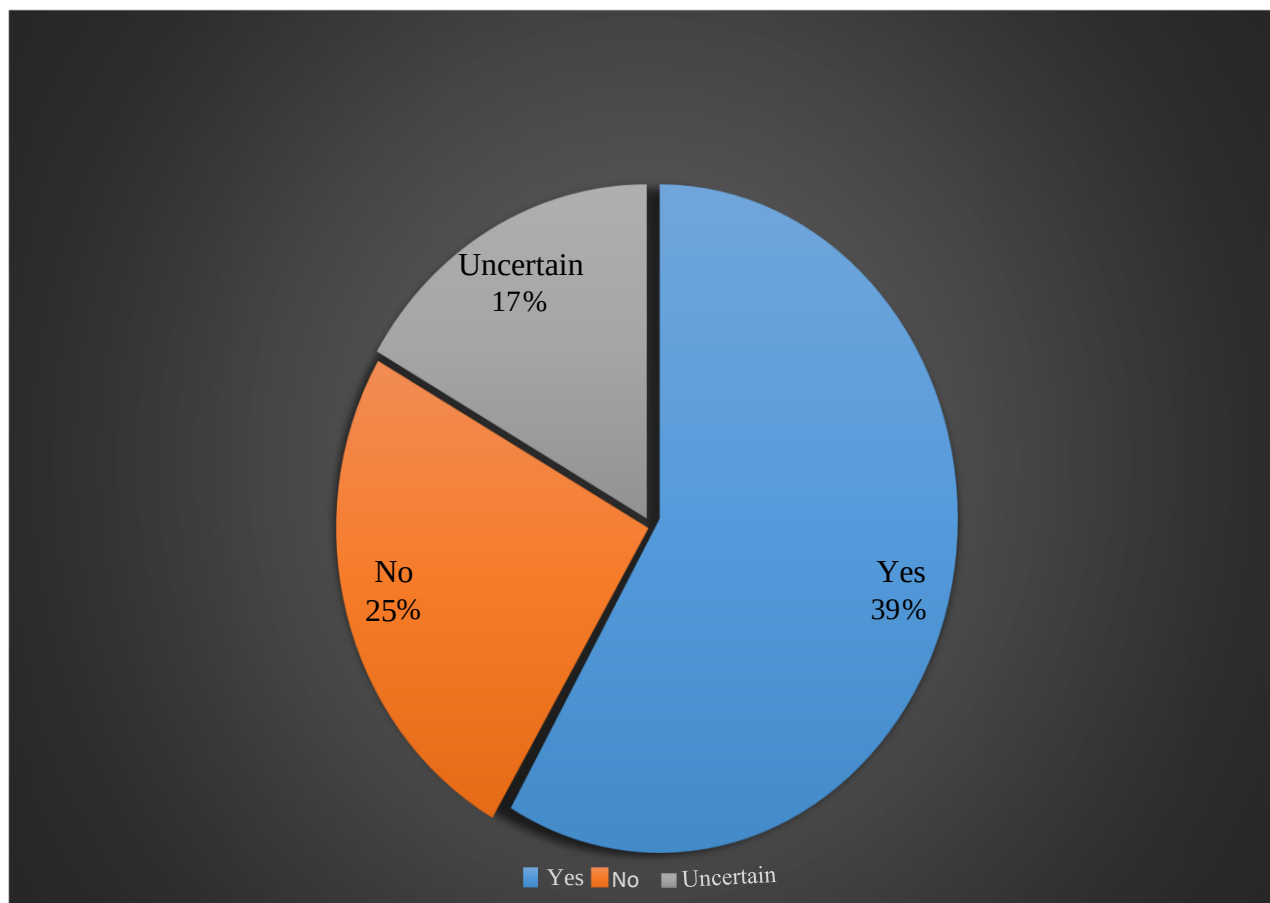
related organizations' personnel. They also contributed massively to this study. They contributed by providing essential evidence on the conflict between refugees and hosts in Gambella.

Furthermore, refugee leaders within their respective camps, they contributed by offering information. However, their responses were influenced by their experiences and emotions from several incidents they had encountered. But their responses were compared with those of other participants in the study to avoid any bias. Finally, some have not indicated the organization they are affiliated with. The participants of this study were drawn from civil society, government, and refugees. This is an important approach in understanding the different views of both host communities and refugees in the elicitation of the primary cause of conflict between the refugees and hosts.

4.2 Cross-Border Conflicts' Challenges on Refugee-Host Relations in Gambella

The researcher sought to know what influence the relations between refugees and host communities in Gambella. Respondents' views were observed, and their opinions were analyzed in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6: Whether Cross-Border Conflicts Affect Refugee-Host Relations in Gambella



Source: Research findings

More than half of the respondents agreed that cross-border conflicts influence the relations between refugee-hosts in Gambella. To justify the claim, one of the respondents maintained that politics as well as politicians play a key role in the cross-border conflicts. That they influence the relations between refugee-hosts in Gambella. He adds that the relations between refugees and hosts are unfriendly. This is due to cross-border conflicts (SAQ, #1).

Another respondent observed that relations between refugees and host communities turn worse, especially during the election period, because of the political rivalries between the Anywaa and the Nuer concerning cross-border conflicts. The Anywaa often need an Anywaa to be elected and the Nuer also need their fellow Nuer to be elected. Therefore, some Nuer politicians in the

government manipulated refugees by involving them in the election to gain more votes (SAQ, #5; SAQ, #6).

Furthermore, another respondent maintained that the Anywaa community are aware of the politics the Ethiopian Nuer play by using refugees during elections to destabilize peace in Gambella, especially in villages near the border with South Sudan (SAQ, #4). The view was advanced by many participants who responded “Yes” to the question under consideration (refugee-host relations), indicating a strong positive correlation between the two variables. This was further stated by one district administrator, when he opined:

The Nuer, both refugees and the Ethiopian Nuer, have a common goal, which is to take over the power and land grabbing, especially from the Anywaa community. He adds by saying that the Nuer play refugees as a scapegoat to create conflicts between the Anywaa and the Nuer in general and refugees in particular. Therefore, cross-border plays an important role in the conflict between the refugee and the host in Gambella (SAQ, #3).

Another respondent from the Anywaa ethnic community made a link between two variables: cross-border conflict and social identity. When he demonstrated that the South Sudanese rebel group (SPLA-IO), in collaboration with refugees residing in Gambella, attacked the Anywaa in two districts (Jor and Itang). They (Nuer) burnt villages, killed people, and took cattle in two villages of both Jor and Itang districts (SAQ, #11). Additionally, to solidify the claim, another respondent stated that the Nuer also conduct fundraising from abroad to destabilize the peace in Gambella. They create conflict intentionally to keep recruiting refugees into Gambella politics. A respondent from the Nuer refugees’ leader claims that:

The relationship between the Anywaa and the Nuer is a fragile one. Because the Anywaa have a fear of the Nuer population, which could assimilate them in the very near future. Therefore, having a high number of refugees from the Nuer ethnic group discourages the Anywaa and strains the relations between the host and refugees (SAQ, #11).

Some minority respondents responded “No” to the question above. Cross-border conflicts do not play an important role in the relations between refugees and the host community in Gambella. One of the respondents, from the Anywaa community, said, “Cross-border conflicts have never been the issue of conflicts between refugees and hosts. Rather, the conflict that jeopardizes the relationship between refugees and hosts is the historical antagonism between the Anywaa and the Nuer” (SAQ, #15). Another two respondents from the Nuer refugee community shared the opinion that the conflicts between refugees and the hosts. Especially between the Anywaa and Nuer, it is not about cross-border conflicts anymore. Actually, it is a competition over land and who should own the entire regional state of Gambella (SAQ, #14).

Even though the refugee and host communities have some difficulties. There are still resources being shared and a collaboration between the two. Resources are shared between refugees and hosts, such as rivers and forests. However, some respondents were uncertain about the impact of cross-border conflicts on refugee-host relations in Gambella. One participant from the Anywaa ethnic group said, “The conflict between the Anywaa and Nuer can only be political to the Nuer, not the Anywaa. She went further by saying that, personally, the Nuer community does not support the Anywaa’s leadership.

Because the Nuer have a conviction that most of the Anywaa leaders considered the majority of Nuer to be South Sudanese rather than Ethiopian. As a result, the Nuer elites oppose the leadership of the Anywaa and manipulate Nuer refugees to fight with the Anywaa community

(SAQ, #20). Therefore, the relationship between the hosts and refugees has not deteriorated due to cross-border conflicts, but rather due to the political struggle in Gambella.

4.3 Factors Responsible for the Conflicts between Refugees and Host Communities in Gambella, Ethiopia

The literature linking politics to the factors contributing to refugees and the host community's conflicts is controversial. Based on the researcher's observation in Gambella. Many participants of the study from the Anywaa community have different perspectives. They view refugee crises in Gambella not only as humanitarian problems but also as serious implications of cross-border conflicts and refugee-host problems. Therefore, this has given an opportunity to the study to view refugees not only as a humanitarian problem in Gambella. Because they can also be a political problem, particularly in terms of security. This was one of the reasons the researcher employed participants from different nationalities.

One of the respondents argued that, mostly, refugees are considered a matter for international charity organizations, while disregarding that refugees are potentially a political and security problem, especially in Gambella (KII, #6). Thus, the conflicts in Gambella and brutal killings between refugees and the host community can be viewed as a result of ignorance towards the damages and suffering of the hosts, in the hands of organizations related to refugee funds in Gambella. Therefore, refugees are the cause of conflicts in Gambella (SAQ, #2).

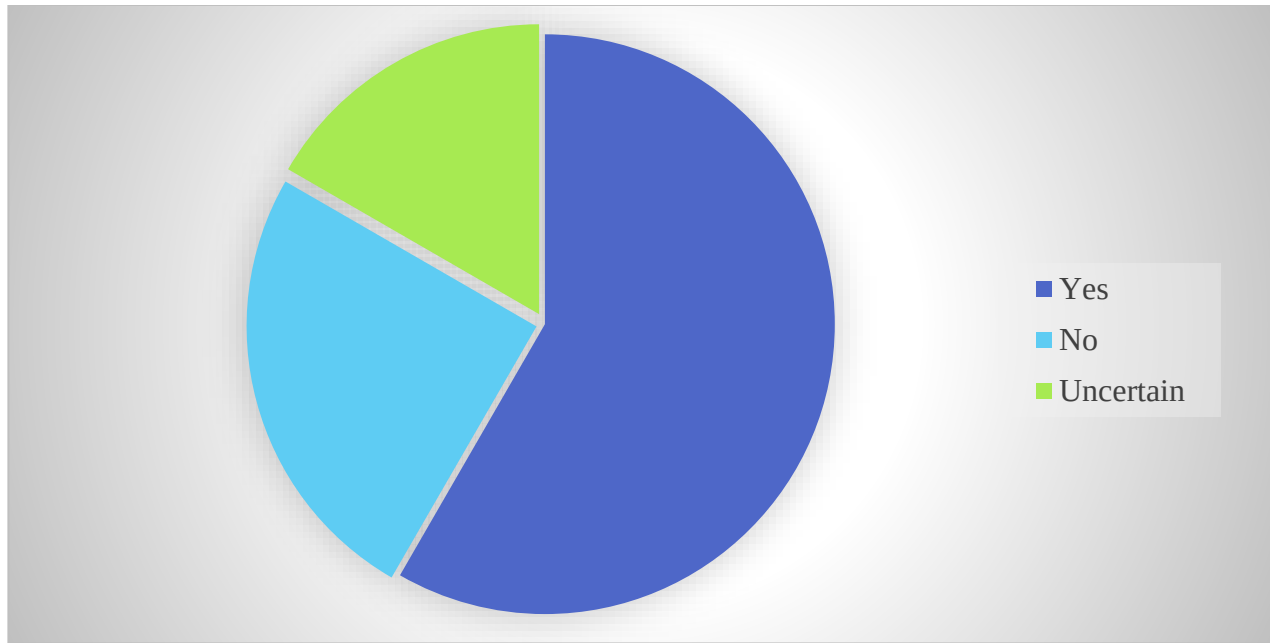
Another respondent from the Nuer ethnic group disagreed and said, "The refugees have not been the cause of conflict between the Anywaa and Nuer ethnic groups. The Anywaa claimed that refugees are the source of conflict in Gambella. Is not true; it is a mere generalization. They claim this because most of the refugees in Gambella are from the Nuer ethnic community. The Anywaa have generalized all Nuer, including South Sudanese Nuer refugees" (SAQ, #2).

Yet refugees' problems remain intensely political. The UNHCR (2015) reported that the eruption of the South Sudan conflict in December 2013. Has brought an immense burden on the existing volatile region of eastern Africa, which continues to suffer from conflict and displacement. Therefore, according to this report, the influx of refugees from South Sudan had brought many challenges to the people of Gambella, particularly the Anywaa (UNHCR, 2015). Refugees have also intensified the ethnic conflict between the Anywaa and the Nuer that existed for a long time.

The conflict that took place between December 2013 and October 2014, almost half a million South Sudanese crossed borders. Many are living in neighboring countries as refugees until today. These countries hosting refugees are Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Sudan (Cited in Girma, 2018). Hence, this has brought many more refugees to the existing number of refugees in Gambella, Ethiopia.

Against this background, and given the scant research available, the first research question explores the factors responsible for the conflicts between refugees and the host community in Gambella. To achieve this, the researcher sought to know the views of respondents before going to discuss factors of conflicts between refugees and the host community. The researcher then went on to deepen his information on whether political rivals have influenced respondents' perceptions of other ethnic groups.

Figure 7: Influence of Political Rivalry on How the Anywaa and the Nuer Ethnic Groups View Each Other



Source: Research findings

In **Figure 7** above, majority of the respondents testified that their perception of the other ethnic group is influenced by political rivalry within their own ethnic group toward the other. One of the respondents said, “political differences between the Anywaa and Nuer have made the two ethnic groups perceive each other as enemies” (SAQ, #4).

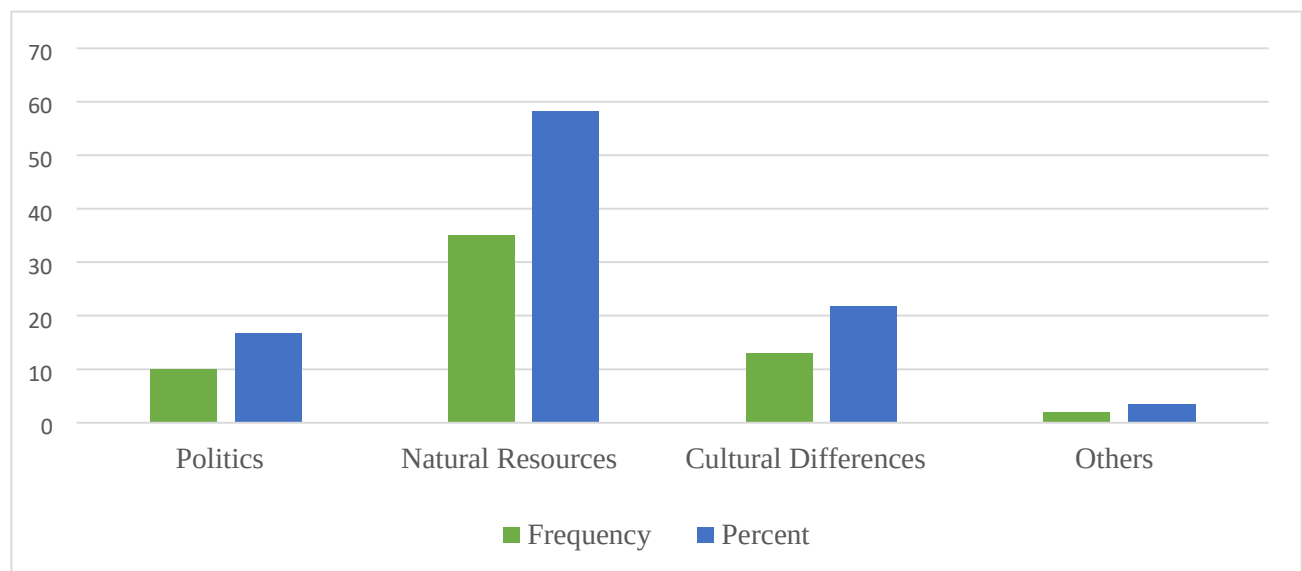
Another respondent from the Anywaa said that most of the Nuer refugees are associated with the politics of their Ethiopian Nuer leaders. Therefore, their views are being influenced by their Ethiopian Nuer. As a result, there is no trust and cooperation between refugees and the host in Gambella (SAQ, #5). Why there was so much gap on the percentage? The reason was that the researcher wanted to figure out what really influenced the two (Anywaa and Nuer). Many participants were honest in explaining their views against others.

Meanwhile, some participants said that their perceptions have not been influenced by political rivalry between the Anywaa and the Nuer. But influenced by the system of federalism, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia applied. Because, according to the 1995 Ethiopian constitution, all Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal state recognitions. While other participants

have not indicated whether their views have been influenced or not. These people, for one reason or another, have chosen not to indicate what influenced their thinking.

The results in **Figure 7** showed that the relationship between refugees and hosts has been problematic. This is due to the many factors dragging individuals back to their own ethnic group views. Given the political views of respondents against another ethnic group. The researcher once again sought to understand respondents' opinions on what key factors are responsible for conflicts between refugees and hosts in Gambella, Ethiopia.

Figure 8: Key Factors Driving Conflict Between Refugees and Hosts in Gambella



Source: Research findings

From the existing literature and observation of the researcher the conflict between refugees and hosts points to several causes. These are politics, natural resources, cultural differences, and others. To determine the extent to which the conflict is being triggered by these factors, the percentages of the frequencies were evidently showed.

From **Figure 8** above, it is evident that natural resources are the main drivers for the conflict between refugees and hosts in Gambella, Ethiopia. By natural resources, the researcher includes, especially land, forests and water. One of the chiefs of the Anywaa zone said, “The main driving factor of conflicts in Gambella between Anywaa and Nuer or refugees and the host community is mainly natural resources. Politically, the refugees have been involved in the politics of Gambella because they need to possess natural resources like the host communities” (KII, #3).

In the context of natural resources, several factors triggered conflicts between refugees and hosts. Competition over land grazing areas is one of the driving conflict factors. Gambella is largely rural. Therefore, the incoming refugees increase the demand for arable land and pasture. This case has intensified disputes with host farmers and pastoralist refugees over access and ownership. The Anywaa and the Nuer frequently have disputes over land and rivers.

Since the Anywaa are agriculturalists and the Nuer are nomadic pastoralists, they consistently fight over land and water. When the Nuer refugees bring their cattle for grazing and water, where the host farmers have cultivated, the refugees’ cattle eat their crops, and mostly such actions result in conflict between the two. One of the Nuer refugee leaders said, “for us Nuer, as pastoralists, we need land and water where we can feed our cattle” (KII, #2). The Anywaa, being agrarians, mostly occupied the river banks. Thus, natural resources are the leading factor in conflicts between refugees and host communities in Gambella.

This leads us to cultural differences as the second main factors of conflict. The survey suggested that cultural differences are secondary factors that cause conflict between refugees and host communities in Gambella. The Anywaa and the Nuer, even though they are both from the Nilotic they do not share the cultural practices, but a few similarities. Culturally, the Anywaa count

in dialogue, especially when it comes to traditional leadership and political leadership. The leadership they embrace is kingship and chiefdoms. While for the Nuer, it is only chiefdoms.

Politics ranked as the third factor causing conflict between the two communities. One of the participants said, “the Anywaa and the Nuer, are political rivals. Therefore, whatsoever seems to be a success from the other side cannot be appreciated from the other” (KII, #4). Even though the participant has not mention other factors. This did not mainly mean that the other factors have not contributed to the conflict between refugees and host community in Gambella. These other factors could be linked to the other three factors, leading to the cause of conflict between refugees and the host community in Gambella. Like, natural resources, cultural differences, and politics.

4.4 Key Social and Economic Impacts of Refugees on Host Communities in Gambella

As it was mentioned earlier, most of the Anywaa participants in the study have different convictions. One of the participants narrated that not only the Anywaa, but all host communities in Gambella have a belief that the presence of large refugee populations in different places of Gambella. Such as in the towns and the rural districts, it has caused many challenges to security management. This is not only insecurity, but also economic (KII, #8).

The presence of Nuer refugees itself has a negative political impact on host communities. Particularly, those are not from the Nuer ethnic group. Because whatever happens in politics, the refugees often seem to be supporting their fellows, the Nuer. Therefore, looking at the coming of South Sudanese refugees and their populations. One can simply observe and predict that there are more negatives than positives of refugees coming into Gambella.

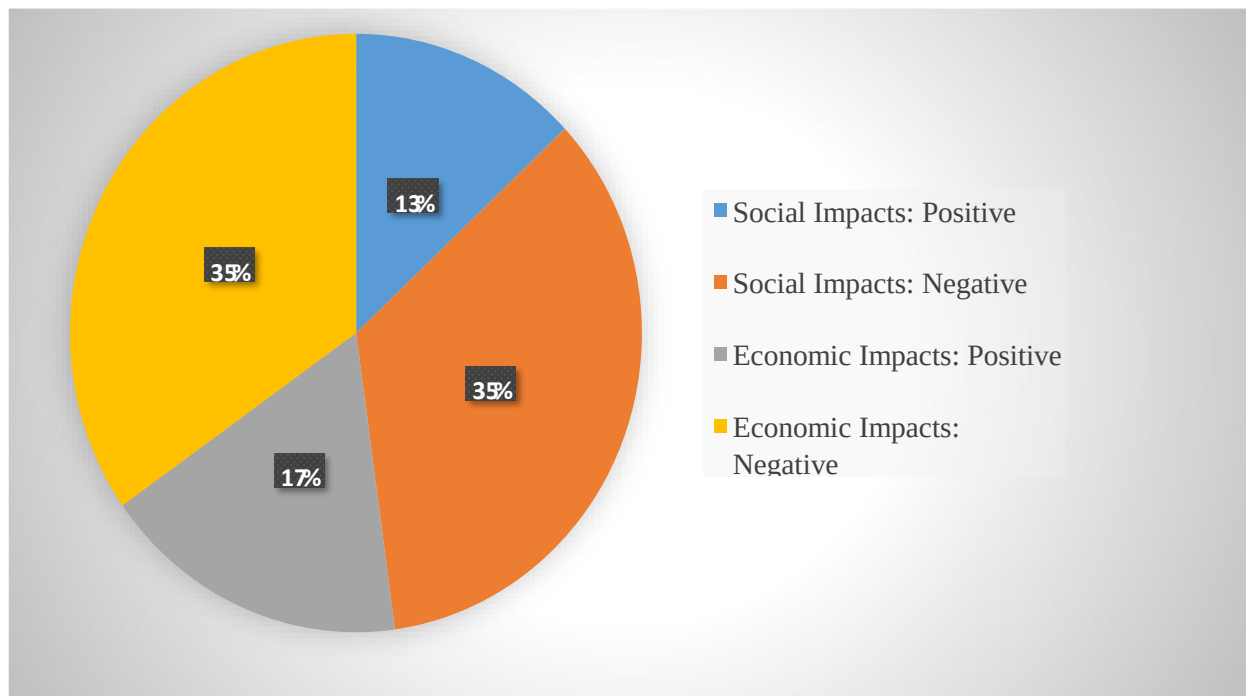
A respondent from the Habesha (it is defined in the definition of terms; Habesha or Habesa is a general name for the light-skinned Ethiopians). This individual said that “the key social and

economic impacts of refugees on host communities are greater than the benefits. Because the host communities are gaining nothing but very little. As a result, whenever violence arises between the host Anywaa and the South Sudanese Nuer refugees. The Habesa also suffer indirectly. Frequently, many Habesa who are in Nuer districts have been killed or robbed off their commodities by the Nuer refugees in the towns as well as in the villages” (SAQ, #9).

This was affirmed by another participant who said, “as late as January 2016. The dispute arose over land rights between the Anywaa and Nuer ethnic groups. The dispute claimed many people's lives. The clash between the two was the result of the influx of thousands of Nuer ethnic refugees from South Sudan. The South Sudanese Nuer have been involved in the conflict between the Anywaa and the Nuer of Ethiopia” (SAQ, #8). Therefore, the negative impacts of refugees on host communities are greater than their positive impacts.

Given the background of refugees’ impact on host communities in Gambella. The researcher sought to know whether the presence of refugees affects the social and economic status of the local people. Positive and negative impacts of refugees on hosts are shown in **Figure 9** below.

Figure 9:Positives and Negatives of Key Social and Economic Impacts of Refugees on Hosts in Gambella



Source: Research findings

Figure 9 above indicates that the presence of refugees has more negative impacts in Gambella than its positive impacts on the host communities of Gambella. Participants reported that there are negative impacts of refugees on host communities in Gambella, both social and economic. The results suggested that there is a high negative impact of refugees' presence in Gambella on host communities. This is due to the huge population of refugees living in Gambella. Many respondents shared the opinion expressed.

Thus, the influx of refugees increased competition over jobs, land, and natural resources. This high competition often leads to an increase in price and reduce local access of goods. Infrastructure and public services and water are in short supply because of the refugee population (KII, #10).

However, some participants supported the opinion that there are some positive impacts of refugees on host community both socially and economically. This indicated that even though there are high perceived negative effects of refugees' presence in Gambella. Yet there are also positive

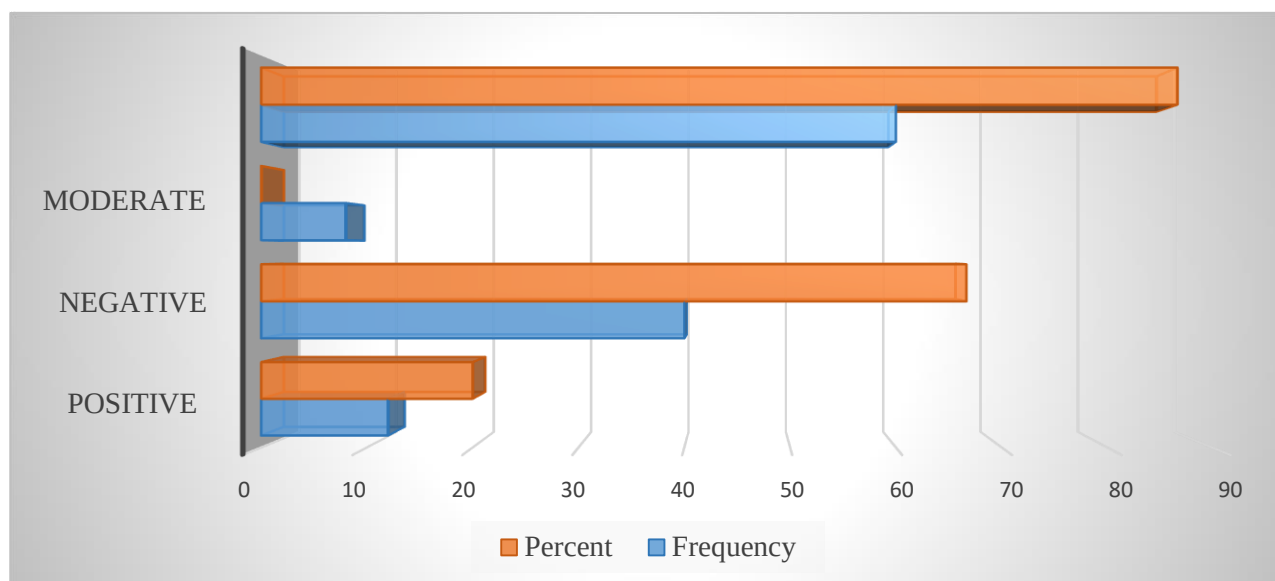
impacts that refugees have brought to Gambella. Again, one of the participants said that “refugees have positive effects on the local. They (refugees) have developed the economy and created job opportunities for the host in several sectors. Supporting small business activities and expanding market for farmers and traders in Gambella” (SAQ, #10).

There has been a chance of acquiring humanitarian assistance, and refugee-related spending has injected huge funds into the region. Therefore, the presence of refugees in Gambella have positive effects on hosts (Girma, 2018). One of the participants from the refugee said, “The host communities are benefiting from refugees’ presence here in Gambella. He added by saying that sometimes the refugee related organizations support them in many ways socially and economically. They build schools and health centers for the host community” (SAQ, #9). Therefore, these are some of the positives impacts of refugees’ presence in Gambella.

The results suggested that many countries are hosting a high number of refugees today, especially in third countries, mostly in Africa is hosting many refugees (Olay, 2017). The rapid increases in refugee populations have worried the social services in many countries and regions. Social services in Gambella, Ethiopia, have been strained by the large number of refugees. Increased pressure on health, education, and sanitation services, has most of the time resulted in reducing the quality or access for the local communities (Girma, 2018; Olay, 2017).

The researcher sought to know how both refugees and hosts respond differently to cross-border threats in Gambella. Despite the important to campaign against violence and advocating for peace and cooperation. The study participants had different views and interpretations of cross-border threats in Gambella. Their views and interpretations are indicated in **Figure 10** below.

Figure 10: Refugees and Hosts Respond to Cross-Border Threats in Gambella



Source: Research findings

There was clear evidence that refugees and host communities respond differently to cross-border threats in Gambella. Respondents' opinions revealed that more than half have a negative reaction to the cross-border conflict or threat. This indicated that refugees and hosts react contrarily to cross-border conflicts. One refugee respondent said, "There is cooperation, on the thread of cross-border conflicts between refugees and hosts. But the cooperation is weak and inconsistent, often undermined by ethnic tensions, especially between Anywaa and Nuer" (SAQ, #5).

However, there were participants who responded to the study by sharing the idea of having a threat on cross-border conflict. Thus, people are aware of the cross-border conflict in Gambella. Refugees and host communities increasingly see cross-border threats as a shared concern, encouraging cooperation. But the way they respond to threats lacks collective action. Another respondent from the Nuer refugee said, "cross-border threats sometimes create practical alliances between refugees and host communities" (SAQ, #4: SAQ, #5). One NGOs staff supported the opinion by proving that there are NGOs strengthening conflict-sensitive training, which helps to

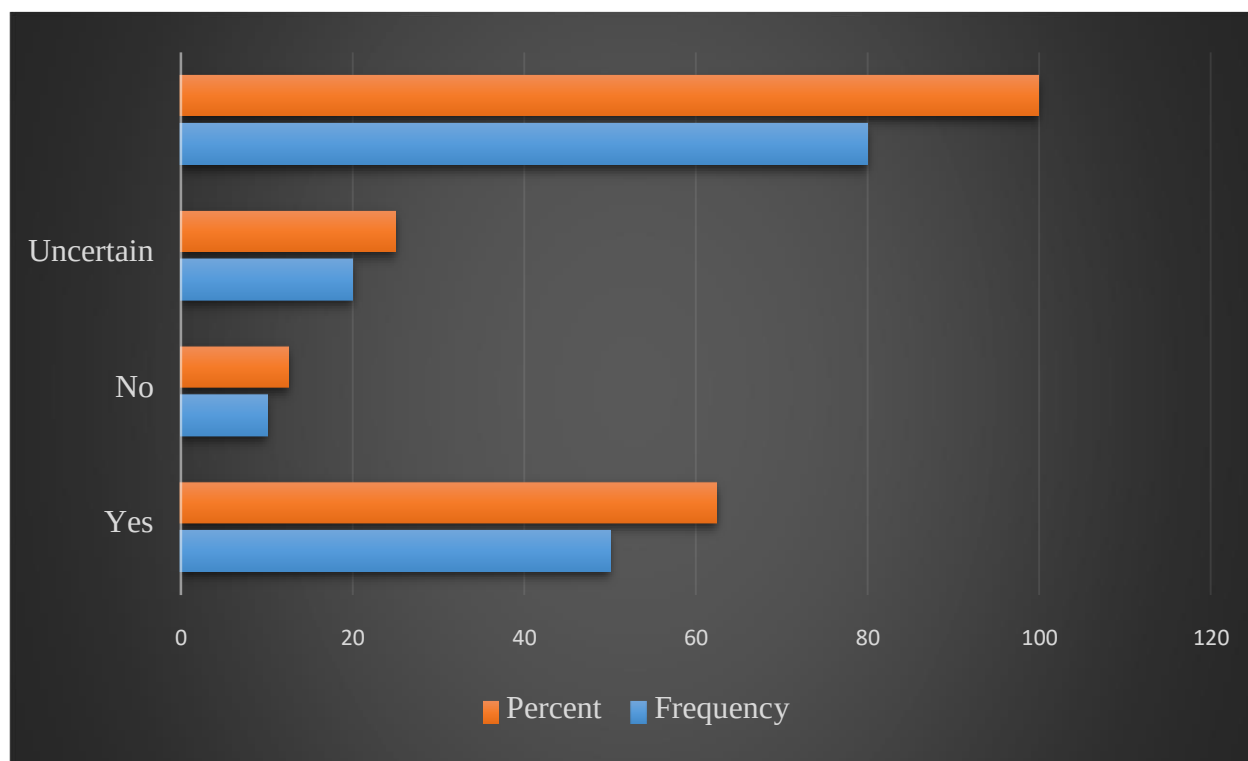
reduce uncertainty between refugees and the hosts in Gambella (SAQ, #4). An Anywaa participant said,

“The issue of cross-border threat is an advantage to the Nuer rather than the Anywaa. Because the South Sudanese Nuer cross the border from any part of Gambella and kill people. Consequently, there have not been mutual responses or reactions on the thread of cross-border (SAQ, #5).

A respondent from the Nuer refugees has disagreed with the claim made by the above Anywaa respondent, he said, “the Nuer are more disadvantaged to the threat of cross-border conflict in terms of killing and abducting children in Gambella. For instance, many children have been abducted and people were killed in the Nuer zone as well as Nuer refugee camps, compared to the killings and abductions in the Anywaa ethnic zone” (SAQ, #21).

Furthermore, the research attempted to determine whether there are conflicts that directly stem from border tensions in Gambella. As a result, Gambella being at the peripheries of Ethiopia and South Sudan, it has experienced extensive violence directly stemming from border tensions. Respondents’ opinions about tensions arising from the cross-border conflict were sampled. Their opinion could be key to resolving the conflict and peace-building training in Gambella. However, many respondents, perhaps most respondents believed that many disputes in Gambella began within rather than at the border.

Figure 11: Conflicts Directly Stem from Border Tensions Between Refugees and Hosts



Source: Research findings

Perhaps, the study founded that beyond half of the respondents have agreed that there is plenty of violence directly arising from the cross-border tensions. One respondent said, “there were many conflicts directly arose from border tensions. For instance, the cross-border tensions between the Anywaa and Murle (a tribe from South Sudan). Murle or Ajiibe are a small ethnic group living in South Sudan’s Jonglei State (Jekap, 2024). The tension was about geographical location (plot of land) where gold had been discovered. The place is located between the south-eastern part of Gambella, Dima district and Pibor county (South Sudan). The tension has escalated and resulted in killings people in many districts of the Anywaa in Ethiopia” (SAQ, #1).

Meanwhile, some participants believed that no conflict directly stems from the border tension. They responded by saying “No”. One of the respondents from the Nuer said, “There has been a misperception about whether there are direct conflicts arising from cross-border tensions or

not. Because many conflicts in Gambella often began within the central government or among political elites and then spread to civil society (SAQ, #1). However, some were uncertain about whether conflicts absolutely stem from cross-border issues or not. One of the respondents neither from Anywaa nor from the Nuer said:

Some conflicts directly arise from border tensions. But most of the conflicts in Gambella are complicated to trace back to the causes. Because often, if a fight occurs between one Anywaa and one Nuer, it does not end with two individuals. It mostly turns into an ethnic fight between the two” (SAQ, #19).

Another respondent from the South Sudanese Nuer refugee showed that “not the hosts are being killed by unknown or unidentified individuals. The refugees are also being killed many times without understanding the killers. However, the Ethiopian government has to take responsibility for law enforcement and control of the border. Therefore, every citizen can recognize the shared responsibility of both host communities and refugees regarding border tensions. Nevertheless, there is a lot of tension at the border. For us (Nuer) as a pastoralist community, we have many enemies, mostly with whom we share some of the same cultural and customary practices (SAQ, #20).

But the conflicts between the host community and refugees have nothing to do with border tensions, but rather with historical grievances. The violence and misunderstanding between refugees and host is only a struggle over power and natural resources between Anywaa and Ethiopian Nuer. This contesting between them spilled over to the South Sudan Nuer refugees because we shared the same ethnic community with the Ethiopian Nuer (SAQ, #18).

Even though, it is challenging to conclusively declare conflicts in Gambella as a result of cross-border or non-cross-border tensions. There are some situations that cross-border conflict turns into the conflict between refugees and hosts. For instance, the Nuer refugees from South

Sudan are predominantly pastoralists. Therefore, whenever cattle raids occur, the host community, especially the Anywaa, targets the refugee Nuer in such an action.

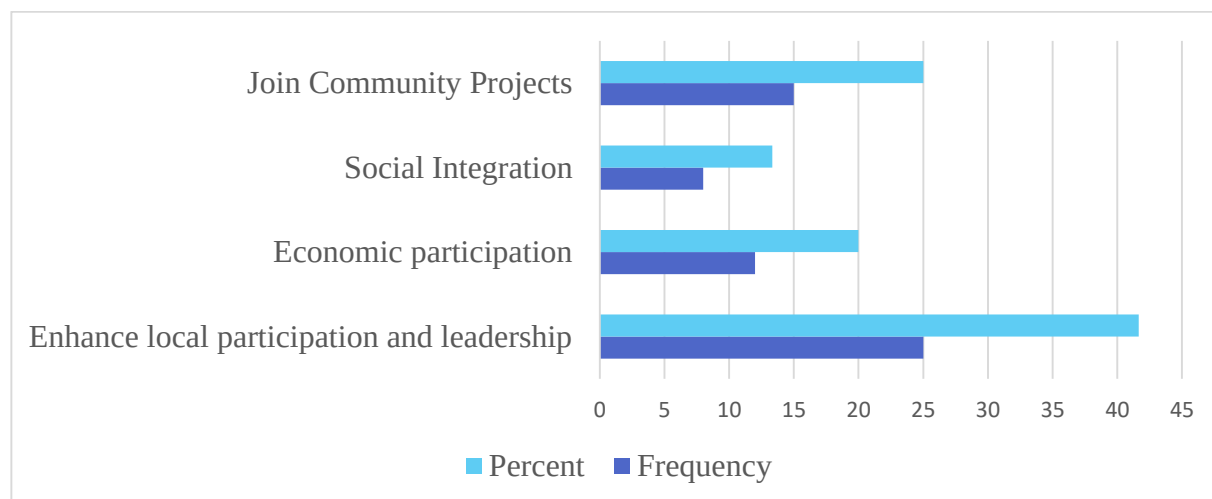
Furthermore, the researcher sought to know whether there are shared cultural practices or religious activities between refugees and hosts. The Anywaa and Nuer, both being Nilotic, shared some cultures and customs, though there can be some differences in practice.

4.5 Approaches Employed in the Conflict Resolution Between Refugees and Host

Community: Suggested by the Participants

Possibly, the researcher sought to know the procedures and approaches in place from every respondent's particular environmental area. The strengths and weaknesses of the approaches that have been implemented or employed in the conflict resolution between refugees and the host community. Participants' observations, thoughts and suggestions are key to reforming the approaches and to de-escalate conflicts. Their perceptions have perhaps formed a peace-building process and harmony between refugees and the host community in Gambella.

Figure 12: Approaches Employed for the Resolution of Refugee-Host Relations in Gambella



Source: Research findings

Figure 12 above suggested the opinion of enhancing local participation and leadership was supported by many participants. This affirmed that the government has to embrace and enhance the traditional leadership of both refugees and host communities. Therefore, there could be a possibility of living in harmony with refugees. One of the respondents from Gog district (Pignudo town) said, “The enhancement of local participation and leadership could play an important role in the process of peace-building. This approach has to be inclusive of all communities in Gambella. Thus, involves both refugees and host community members in the planning, decision-making and distribution of services” (SAQ, #22).

For instance, despite the existence of conflicts between the refugee and the host community in Pignudo, there are notable examples of intergroup collaboration. One such example is cooperation between refugee leaders and host community leaders in responding to cross-border cattle raids. Leaders from both sides coordinate efforts by sharing information and liaising with local security authorities to recover stolen cattle and enhance community security.

Therefore, reformed approaches need to be supported by increasing the role of NGOs, faith-based actors, and refugee-led organizations. This can bridge the gaps between humanitarian actors and local populations, thus fostering mutual understanding and ownership. However, the second rank ‘join community projects’. This is new approach aims to create joint projects between refugees and hosts. It is to create a project that serves both refugees and host members. On the other hand, this is to show that whatever belongs to refugees can also support the host community members.

One participant among refugee leaders, supported this opinion by saying, “the government in collaboration with refugee related organizations can create impacts that actually reduces

conflicts. This can be possible by founding centers where both refugees and hosts can discuss their problem freely (KII, #23).

The third rank was ‘economic participation, which was selected as the third best option, which could be important for reducing conflict between refugees and the host community in Gambella. Economic participation is a share economy growth between both refugees and host communities. Another study’s participant said, participation of intergroup within refugee and host community is important for common good, that allows refugees and hosts to mobilize their commodities freely within Gambella. This could probably bring positive impact and development in the economic sector of the region” (KII, #11).

The last option, which is indeed not least among others, was the ‘social integration. This was suggested by the respondent from the refugees. One of the refugee participants said, “if a social integration is practiced, refugee people might collaborate by joining the host members in peace-building movement and development of the Gambella region together” (SAQ, #23). However, one of the participants opposed the idea, by saying that “social integration with refugees would not solve anything in Gambella. Thus, the only option that can bring peace to Gambella is the repatriation or relocation the refugees into another region outside Gambella” (SAQ, #26)

4.6 Examining Approach Employed in the Resolution of Refugee-Host Relations in Gambella: As a Way Forward

Besides, the researcher examined the approaches employed and proposed. The researcher focused on some questions. Such as what should be done about the frequent conflict between refugees and the host community in Gambella. As a way forward, the researcher attempted to determine what approaches would be beneficial for both refugees and host communities in Gambella. The three research questions

had already narrated the experiences and opinions of participants. Their observations of the state of conflict in Gambella. Therefore, the research examined the existing approaches and mechanisms employed to resolve refugee-host relations in Gambella, Ethiopia. This was through looking at their effectiveness and shortcomings.

Having seen the origin and causes of conflicts between refugees and the host community by reading many scholars' views and participants' perspectives. The researcher has realized that there was a shortage of inclusive dialogue between refugees and the host community. This is especially, between the Anywaa and Nuer ethnic groups. Therefore, the government, in collaboration with humanitarian organizations, could create inclusive joint peaceful forums. Forums that involve both the Anywaa and Nuer elders, refugee leaders and youths from both communities. The forums need to be planned well with a long-term vision of creating a peaceful co-existence.

The government and NGOs have to work on reconsidering the traditional conflict resolution mechanism. By revising (elders' councils, religious leaders, mediation, and ritual) with guidance from the Ethiopian government. This study suggested that the conflicts between refugees and the host community should be managed through joint effort. This joint effort should be through development activities.

4.7 Relevance of Social Identity Theory in the Study

Social identity theory (SIT) refers to an individual self-concept that is perceived from membership. In a social group or groups, together with the emotional and value significance attached to that membership (Tajfel, 1981). The social identity theory is relevant to this study. Because the theory emphasizes on how individuals derive an important sense of identity and belonging from group

membership. This conception is manifested in various ways such as ethnicity, religious groups and nationality.

SIT is greatly applicable to the conflict between refugees and the host community in Gambella, where ethnic identity plays a central role in shaping the social and political relations. The theory explains conflict through three important processes. These are social categorization, social identification, and social comparison. In the case of Gambella, where there is multi-ethnicity, the theory is evident in the territorial and political rivalry between the Anywaa and Nuer ethnic groups. For instance, during election where members of each group (the Anywaa and Nuer). They tend to prioritize and support their own group candidates, reinforcing in-group loyalty and out-group exclusion.

Generally, ethnic identity strongly influences the distribution of political and administrative positions in Gambella. This is evidently witnessed in many public offices. That responsibilities and leadership are being distributed or allocated based on ethnic affiliation. Instead of professionalism or competence, between the Anywaa and Nuer communities. The institutionalization of the ethnic identity has limited the cooperation and relationship beyond ethnic lines and deepened intergroup conflict in Gambella.

The conflict and rivalry between the Anywaa and Nuer have further extended to refugee-host relations. This is because majority of refugees in Gambella are from the Nuer ethnic group. The cross-border conflicts and the repeated civil war in South Sudan. Especially the conflicts of 1983, 2013 and 2016, all have contributed to a large influx of Nuer refugees into Gambella. These civil wars have caused unprecedented damage to the Anywaa and their lands in Gambella (Jekap, 2024). As a result, the Nuer group, once a minority, has become the demographic majority. Hence,

the larger the Nuer population gets, the more social identity becomes an unbearable problem. This especially, between the Anywaa and Nuer communities.

Therefore, social identity theory offers an important framework. To understand how ethnic identity, influx of refugees and cross-border conflict strongly contributed to instability in the Gambella region. The SIT has played a key role in this study, Cross-border conflicts and regional stability: Examining refugee-host relations in Gambella, Ethiopia.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is a recapitulation of the findings of the research, presents the conclusions, and proposes recommendations as well as areas for further study. The study used Tajfel's social identity theory to analyze and interpret the findings of the study.

The main objective of this study was to understand whether cross-border conflicts influence regional stability and refugee-hosts relations. The causes of conflicts between refugee and host communities and the impacts of refugees on host communities in Gambella, Ethiopia. This was done by examining specific measurements of conflicts drivers. Such that cross-border conflicts, natural resources competition, cultural differences, and politics. The study's centrality is refugee-host community conflicts, as it examined the human security conditions in Gambella that affected both refugees and host community members.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The first research question attempted to understand the challenges cross-border conflicts on refugee-host community relations in Gambella. The research findings suggested that cross-border conflicts play a key role in influencing the relationship between refugees and hosts in Gambella. Because most of the cross-border violence happened in Gambella, is either Nuer or Murle from South Sudan. Therefore, the host communities, especially the Anywaa agreed that cross-border conflicts have challenged and negatively influenced the relations between refugees and host members in Gambella. They have the conviction because of fighting from both; across the border and within Ethiopia.

The second research question sought to identify the driving factors of conflicts between refugees and the host community in Gambella, Ethiopia. The study found that the two most

contentious disputes between refugees and host communities in Gambella are natural resources and cultural differences. Natural resources mainly include land, forests and water. However, the issue of land is the most disputed between the two (refugees and host communities), because both communities want to possess it. The Anywaa being agriculturalists they mostly occupied part of the land near water bodies. However, the Nuer, being nomadic pastoralists, feel aggrieved because they have difficulties with the Anywaa when they need water and a place to graze their cattle.

Historically, the Nuer have been resisted by the Anywaa in accessing the river banks, which were essential for themselves and their cattle. This history still plays a key role in the current political conflicts between Nuer refugees and the host community, especially the Anywaa. This is evidenced by the fact that many places and towns retain Anywaa names. However, cultural differences are also one of the core driving factors leading to tensions between the refugee and the host community. Although natural resources and cultural differences are key factors in conflicts between the refugee and the host community. There is still a combination of politics and other issues.

The third research question sought to find out the key social identity and economic impacts of refugees on host communities in Gambella. Findings of the research showed that the instability of the region occurred because of the high refugee's population. The refugees have contributed to deteriorating the peace of Gambella in both social and economic aspects. There is a high negative impact of refugees in Gambella on host communities. This is due to the huge population of refugees living in Gambella. The social and economic impacts are the core challenges of refugees on host communities, due to the subsequent of refugees from South Sudan.

As a result of the high refugee population compare to host communities, there comes a huge competition for job opportunities. Additionally, public services (education and health)

equality has also been reduced. Host communities' access to public services has become problematic as the number of refugees has surpassed the host population. The study has discovered that beside all those contributed to conflict between refugees and the host community in Gambella. The study came up with a new factor that has been ignored as a less driving factor of conflict between refugees and the host community, such as social identity conflict.

This reflects the ethnic-based social identity conflict that has contributed to demographic and social-political imbalances between refugees and host communities in Gambella. For instance, many Ethiopian Nuer identify closely with their fellow Nuer refugees due to shared ethnic identity, while many Anywaa prefer that Nuer refugees maintain their refugee status to preserve Gambella's demographic and political balance.

5.2 Conclusion

The social psychologist Henri Tajfel's first step in 1979 was to point out that inter-group conflict does not often occur because of competition over resources. But it could even happen more often without competition; Thus, identification with a group is sufficient to create conflict as long as comparison exists with another group (Webber, 2010). Individuals mostly define their identities by linking themselves to social groups, and such identifications help protect and bolster self-identity (Gazi, 2014).

Given that, in this study, cross-border conflicts and regional stability: Examining refugee-host community relations in Gambella, Ethiopia. There are some factors. Such as that, the combination of natural resources, cultural differences, politics, and cross-border conflicts. These measurements were perceived as the primary cause of conflicts between refugees and hosts in Gambella, Ethiopia.

This provoked and exacerbated the conflict between refugees and host communities in Gambella. The conflict in Gambella between refugees and the hosts has taken several forms. Thus, it can be described as a protracted social identity conflict (Azar, 1990). This is because of the longest period the conflict has endured. According to this research's findings, the key driving factor of conflicts between refugees and the host community in Gambella is natural resources.

However, natural resources remind us of the experiment of Tajfel, which was rightly affirmed by Craig Webber (2010), that social group conflicts do not always stem from resource competition. He insists on proving that the social group must positively distinguish itself from what they know as the outgroup. Because people like to create and maintain a positive identity. This implies that the Anywaa wants to be positively distinguished from the Nuer and vice versa. In addition, ethnic conflicts can emerge when a group feels that they are experiencing some form of structural violence against their ethnic identity (Bercovitch, 2003).

Consequently, the influx of mass refugees in Gambella has intensified the competition over natural resources, cultural differences, and heightened political tensions. Even though Tajfel justified his argument about social identity as the main cause of conflict in the social communities. The study's findings showed that there are many evidences that inter-group conflict between refugees and the host community in Gambella arises from different factors rather than ethnic identity alone. The research asserted that there is an influence of the Ethiopian Nuer on the Nuer-speaking refugees. That political tensions between refugees and hosts are currently predominantly turning over to natural resources.

However, conflict and competition may not be coincident with every violent occurrence in Gambella. According to Wright (1951), conflict is opposition among social entities directed against others. Therefore, conflict is distinguished from competition. Competition is defined as

opposition among social entities independently striving for a thing that the supply of is insufficient to satisfy all. Nevertheless, the statement does not deny that, although they are different in nature, they cannot overlap at some points. Hence, the competition over natural resources between the Anywaa and the Nuer has led to the ethnic conflict. As a result, this causes mistrust and destructive conflict between indigenous Anywaa and Nuer-speaking refugees in Gambella.

Although the two communities lived and shared the same geographical areas for decades, especially the same origin as Nilotic. The social interaction is still problematic due to the impacts of the refugees' population from the Nuer speakers. The situation remains the Anywaa versus the Nuer and vice versa. The conclusion shows that there is a need to understand the nature of conflicts and what influences the relationship between refugees and hosts in Gambella. Therefore, failure to understand social identity and its influences on the relations among communities has kept conflict persisting in Gambella.

The exclusion of local leaders' participation in the peace process and peace-building has evidently shown the weakness of the Gambella regional state political system. Consequently, involvement of local leaders of both refugees and hosts in the peace process and peace-building is highly needed. More problem-solving approaches to motivate cooperation between refugees and host communities are strongly suggested. And so, the conclusion suggested that violent conflicts in Gambella, between refugees and hosts, can be de-escalated only by the joining together of stakeholders. Such as the Ethiopian federal government, humanitarian organizations, and local institutions.

Support the development programs in Gambella. The data findings in this study could be applied to a country with refugee populations from a neighboring country to another country with the same ethnic citizens living in that country.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 To the Church and Civil Society

- I. Partnership of the Ethiopian government with humanitarian organizations, by participating refugee leaders and host leaders, in the conflict management process, is needed.
- II. The government should recognize customary boundaries and the shared resources agreement between refugees and the host community.
- III. Religious leaders and civil society leaders should create awareness on issues of unity in diversity between refugees and host community.

5.3.2 To the Gambella Stakeholders

- I. The Gambella government must control the usage of natural resources between refugees and host communities in Gambella.
- II. The Gambella government, working in collaboration with the South Sudan government, should coordinate cross-border management.
- III. Creating equal job opportunities for all citizens in Gambella is necessary.

5.3.3 To the Government of Ethiopia

- I. Resolving cross-border issues and refugee-host relations by inviting representatives from the government of South Sudan.
- II. Embracing cooperation and harmony between refugees and host communities by participating in the common goal of the region.

- III. Guarantee restorative justice to those who were affected by the cross-border conflict between refugees and host communities in Gambella, Ethiopia.

5.3.4 Recommendations for Further Research

- I. To differentiate the actions and procedures needed to de-escalate the conflict between refugees and the host community in Gambella, Ethiopia.
- II. Governance and power relations between the Anywaa and Nuer communities in Gambella, Ethiopia.
- III. Ethnic-based conflict between refugees and the host communities: A comparative case study of Gambella and other refugee- hosting border regions in Ethiopia.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Greetings, I am Jwokber Obuyi Olura, a student at Hekima University College studying for the Master's Arts in Peace Studies and International Relations. As a part of the studies, all students are required for the award of the MA-Peace Studies and International Relations to do a research study. I am exploring Cross-Border Conflicts and Regional Stability: Examining Refugee-Host Community Relations in Gambella, Ethiopia. This is a research study on both refugees' and citizens' participation in Gambella, Ethiopia. This includes those districts hosting refugees and villages at the border periphery of Ethiopia and South Sudan.

Section A: Demographic Information

Kindly provide the following information by filling in the required data or by putting a check or tick against the statement that corresponds to your answer. Thank you!

Name (Optional):

.....

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age: ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-34 ☐ 35-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56 and above
3. Education: ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Undergraduate ☐ Graduate ☐ None
4. Nationality: ☐ Ethiopian ☐ South Sudanese Refugees ☐ Other (please specify):

.....

5. What type of organization do you belong to? Please, tick the answer.

☐ Refugee leader ☐ Government official ☐ Faith Based Org ☐ NGO/humanitarian staff

☐ Not indicated

6. Duration of residence in Gambella: years

Section B: Research Questions

I. To examine factors responsible for the conflict between refugees and hosts in Gambella, Ethiopia

7. Have you ever witnessed or experienced conflict between refugees and hosts in Gambella?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. In your opinion, what is the cause of conflicts between refugee and host communities?

☐ Natural resources ☐ Cultural differences ☐ Politics

☐ Ethnic based violence ☐ Other.....

9. When did the conflict begin between refugees and hosts in Gambella? Please explain your answer

.....
.....
.....

10. Does the political rivalry between the Anywaa and Nuer ethnic groups influence your view of one another?

☐ Yes ☐ No

11. If you think that there is influence, would you please clarify your answer?

.....
.....

.....
.....

12. Is there the involvement of actors and non-actors in the conflict between refugees and host communities in Gambella? Yes, or No.

13. If yes, please can you mention them and explain what their involvement is in this conflict?

If not, why?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Section C: Research Question

II. Key social identity and economic impacts of refugees on hosts in Gambella

14. In what way do the refugees in Gambella impact the local economy?

☐ Job competition ☐ Market expansion ☐ Increase in prices ☐ Strain on public services

☐ Other:

15. In your opinion, do you think there are more negative impacts of refugees than positive impacts in Gambella?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain, and if no, why?

.....
.....
.....
.....

16. How does the presence of refugees affect your cultural and ethnic identity?

☐ Very negative ☐ Negative ☐ Positive ☐ Moderate ☐ None

17. Do refugees have a positive effect on the local economy and create job opportunities for the local community in Gambella?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, explain how:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

18. Would you rate the level of job opportunities refugees have created for the local community?

☐ Very high ☐ High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low ☐ Very low

19. Rate the level of trust between refugees and host communities

☐ Very high ☐ High ☐ Moderate ☐ Low ☐ Very low

20. Are there shared cultural or religious beliefs between the Anywaa and Nuer?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please can you give some examples:

.....

.....
.....
21. What types of commodities do refugees and the host community have in common in the market?

☐ Food crops ☐ Livestock: Animals' products ☐ Natural resources (firewood)

22. In your opinion, will the economy of Gambella decrease if refugees return to their countries of origin?

☐ Yes ☐ No

23. Have you ever witnessed the tension between refugees and hosts over social services?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what type of social services?

.....
.....
.....

Section D: Research Question

III. Cross-border conflicts' challenges on refugee-host relations in Gambella

24. What do you think is the main cause of cross-border conflicts in Gambella?

☐ Much influx of refugees ☐ Large border uncontrolled

☐ Historical dispute over the border ☐ Historical grievances ☐ Other.....

Would you please expand on this?

.....
.....

.....
.....

25. Have you ever observed any tension directly stemming from border conflict between refugees and hosts in Gambella? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If your answer is yes, would you please explain:

.....
.....
.....

26. How have cross-border conflicts affected the relations between refugees and hosts in Gambella?

☐ Very negative ☐ Somehow negative ☐ No effect ☐ Somewhat positive ☐ Positive

27. In your opinion, do refugees and hosts respond to cross-border tensions equally or differently?

☐ Yes, they respond equally ☐ No, they respond differently

If yes, kindly explain your opinion:

.....
.....
.....
.....

28. What type of tension has ever occurred between hosts and refugees in Gambella as a result of cross-border conflict?

☐ Political dispute ☐ Conflict ☐ Ethnic-based violence ☐ Other:

.....

29. Please would you describe any example on how cross-border conflicts have influence the interactions between refugees and host in Gambella, based on what you selected above?

.....

.....

.....

Section E: Suggestions on Managing Frequent Conflicts Between Refugees and Hosts

VI: Some roles played by different humanitarian aid and local governance

30. How often does local governance promote peace between hosts and refugees in Gambella?

☐ Very often ☐ Somehow often ☐ Never

31. Have local religious institutions and local governance joined together to promote peacebuilding programs between refugees and hosts?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please provide your experience:

.....

.....

.....

32. How do you rate the presence of NGOs in this region based on the frequency of conflict between the refugees and the host?

☐ Negative ☐ Positive ☐ Moderate ☐ Not effective ☐ Effective

33. What do you think could be done to improve refugee-host relations in Gambella?

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.....

34. Which Humanitarian organizations are more concerned about refugees and host community conflicts in Gambella?

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35. Which strategies do these organizations apply to reduce the conflict between Anywaa and Nuer or host and refugee in Gambella?

.....
.....
.....

36. Are there any policies you would suggest to benefit both refugees and hosts in Gambella?

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.....
.....

37. Which NGOs would you recommend to persist in peace-building programs in Gambella?

.....
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.....
.....

Thank you for your participation and cooperation in this study!

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Thank you for accepting my invitation for the interview we are holding today. My name is Jwokber Obuyi Olura. I am a student at Hekima University College in Nairobi, Kenya. Currently, I am conducting research on **Cross-border Conflict and Regional Stability: Examining Refugee-Host Relations in Gambella, Ethiopia**. This interview aims to collect information and your observations on the cross-border conflicts and their influence on refugee-host relations in Gambella. I, the researcher, encourage you to share your thoughts, opinions and observations freely on the key areas of this study. The information you share will be handled confidentially and will only be used for the study's purpose.

Contacts: jwokber.olura@hekima.ac.ke (my personal email: jwokberobuyi@gmail.com)

Phone numbers: Kenya +254795878389/ Ethiopia +251991823139.

Section A: Demographic Information

Kindly provide the following by filling in the required data or by putting a check to the statement that corresponds to your answer. Thank you!

Interview

1. Place
2. Date
3. Time

Respondent's profile

Name

(Optional):

Signature.....

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Age Group (optional).....

Nationality: ☐Ethiopian ☐South Sudanese refugee ☐Other (specify):

.....

Education: ☐Primary ☐Secondary ☐Undergraduate ☐Graduate ☐Other ☐None

Occupation:

.....

Section B: Personal insights on the conflict between refugee-hosts in Gambella

I. Host Community

1. Among the five ethnic groups in Gambella, which one do you belong to?
2. Are there refugee camps in your area (district or town) of residence?
3. In your opinion, what factors are responsible for the conflict between refugees and hosts in Gambella?

(Prompt: Natural resources, politics, cultural differences, cross-border issues, ethnicbased conflict, and other).

4. In what way has your sense of community or cultural identity changed, or has been affected as a result of refugees' arrival?
5. Why does violence happen between hosts and refugees in your area?
6. How do refugees and hosts view one another in your area?

(prompt: friendly, enemies, or uncertain).

7. When was the last time refugees and hosts had a conflict in your area of living?
8. Have there been tensions or misunderstandings between refugees and hosts in your areas due to cross-border issues?

9. Are there differences in relationships among different age groups, genders, or ethnic groups between refugees and hosts?
10. Are there challenges related to employment, resources, or market competition because of refugees?
11. As an individual, what do you think is the main negative impact of refugees' presence in your area of residence? (*Example: politics, economy and many others*).
12. What are the positive impacts, since the arrival of the South Sudanese refugees in Gambella generally?
13. In your opinion, do you think that there is a connection between politics and the current conflict between the Anywaa and the Nuer in Gambella?
14. How does local governance prevent refugee-hosts conflict in your area?

II. South Sudanese Refugees

15. When did you become a refugee in Gambella?
16. How do you see the relationship between refugees and the host, especially the Anywaa?
17. As a refugee, what do you think is the key driving factor of conflict between the Anywaa and refugees in Gambella?
18. How can South Sudanese Nuer refugees be identified and registered in Ethiopia?
19. Are there difficulties in maintaining refugee status in Gambella? If not, why do many refugees aspire to become Ethiopian citizens?
20. In your opinion, is there a connection between politics and the present conflicts between the Anywaa and the Nuer?
21. Are there specific incidents that you think caused violence or tension between refugees and hosts in Gambella?

APPENDIX III: RESEARCH PERMITS



HEKIMA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
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HEKIMA INSTITUTE OF PEACE STUDIES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Administrator: Dorro Kari,
Peace and Security Office,
Address: Pignudo.
Phone +251954616110.

Date: August 1, 2025

Our ref: 1/099/Dean/HIPSIR

RE: RESEARCH PERMIT

This is to confirm that **Jwokber Obuy Olura** is a student at Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR). Hekima University College is a constituent college of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). Jwokber is pursuing an MA degree in Peace Studies and International Relations and is required to undertake field research.

His research is Entitled: **Cross-Border Conflicts and Regional Stability: Examining Refugee-Host Relations in Gambella, Ethiopia**. The Ethics Committee at Hekima University College has found no serious ethical issues that undermine this research and has granted approval.

We would greatly appreciate your support in approving Jwokber's research with your organization.

Yours Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Elisee Rutagambwa, SJ
Dean
Institute of Peace and International Relations

JESUIT SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY (JST) AND HEKIMA INSTITUTE OF PEACE STUDIES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (HIPSIR)
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY OF THE JESUITS IN AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR (FTJAM) AND JESUIT HISTORICAL INSTITUTE IN AFRICA (JHIA)
CENTRE FOR RESEARCH, TRAINING AND PUBLICATION (CRTIP) AND JESUIT CENTRE FOR SAFEGUARDING IN AFRICA (JCSA)



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Date: August 1, 2025

Our ref: 1/000/Dean/IPSIR

RE: RESEARCH PERMIT

This is to confirm that Jwoker Obuy Oluais is a student at Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR), Hekima University College is a constituent college of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). Jwoker is pursuing an MA degree in Peace Studies and International Relations and is required to undertake field research.

His research is entitled: **Cross-Border Conflicts and Regional Stability: Examining Refugee-Host Relations in Gambella, Ethiopia**. The Ethics Committee at Hekima University College has found no serious ethical issues that undermine this research and has granted approval.

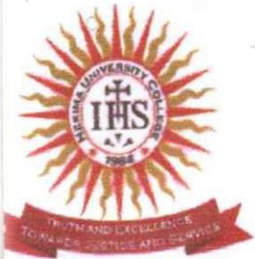
We would greatly appreciate your support in approving Jwoker's research with your organization.

Yours Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Elisee Rutagamiwa, SJ
Dean
Institute of Peace and International Relations



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FACULTY OF THEOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA AND MATTHEW A. RUTAGAMIWA AND JESUIT HISTORICAL INSTITUTE IN AFRICA (JHIA)
CENTRE FOR RESEARCH, TEACHING AND PUBLICATION (CRTP) AND JESUIT CENTRE FOR RAPEL (JCR) IN AFRICA (JCR)



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Date: August 1, 2025

Our ref: 1/099/Dean/HIPSIR

RE: RESEARCH PERMIT

This is to confirm that **JwokberObuyOlurais** a student at Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR). Hekima University College is a constituent college of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). **Jwokberis** pursuing an MA degree in Peace Studies and International Relations and is required to undertake field research.

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