



Economic Factors Affecting Peace and Stability in Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Oromia Regional National state has experienced violent conflicts with alarmingly increased frequency and magnitude since 2018. However, there is a need for scientific and deep analysis of the economic factors that have been affecting the peace and stability of the region. Therefore, this study is aimed to assess the economic factors of peace and stability in the Oromia Regional State. Based on qualitative and quantitative approaches, data were collected from the various key informants, four group discussions via purposive techniques and 180 police officers from 23 woredas belonging to seven zones and one city administration based on stratified random sampling. Besides, the study was employed based on descriptive and explanatory designs. The data collected via the qualitative research approach were analyzed using thematic categorization procedures. While descriptive statistics were also used to describe, summarize, or explain a given set of data, particularly, inferential and correlation analysis was employed to look at the pattern of relationships between several variables simultaneously. The findings of the study indicated that the roles of the economy are significantly affecting peace and stability of the region. The result explained that 78.6% changes in the status of peace and stability of the region is as a result of independent variables. It is reasonable to infer that 78.5% of the current problem of peace and stability in the Oromia regional state is determined as a result of economic problems. Consequently, the government should strongly work to avoid and manage maladministration, unemployment, and economic conspiracy. This day requires unique economic packages that attracts the youth to the development and democratic path of the country. In addition to this, the avenues for raising political consciousness and political community should be taken place.

Key words: Economic, Instability Peace, Factors

1. Introduction

Africa is not only a continent of rich natural resources but also a continent of militarism, violence, a coup d'etat and proxy war. Particularly, the Horn of Africa is the most militarized and conflict-ridden region. For many decades, armed conflicts have raged within states, between states, and among proxies whether at the centers or the peripheries of the region (Kidist, 2014). The peoples of the continent have been hampered by political instability, recurrent armed conflict instigated by socioeconomic and political drivers (Maru, 2015). As a part of Africa in general and Horn of Africa in particular, the problems of peace and security have been a major feature of Ethiopia. Localized inter-communal violence continues to cause loss of life and livelihood, and further exacerbate the humanitarian situation in Ethiopia (Yideg, 2012).

Ethiopia surrounded by unstable neighbouring countries for instance it can be evidenced from Somalia and South Sudan states of peace. Several of them are still in civil war, with negative consequences on the peace and security situation of the country (African Center for Strategic Studies, 2018). Moreover, internally various ethnic conflicts have been occurred in various areas of the

country. Some of them are the Silte-Gurage conflict, the Sheko-Mezengir conflict, the Anuak- Nuer conflict, the Berta-Gumuz conflict, and the Gedeo- Guji conflict, the Oromo-Amhara conflict, the Borana-Gerri conflict, the Afar-Issa conflict, and the Oromo-Somali conflict. Consequently, according to the 10th round (March-April) of the Displacement Tracking Matrix report of OCHA, at least 1,073,764 people were displaced by conflict as of mid-April 2018 (Accord Report, 2017, ACLED, 2017). The conflict and violence by insurgent groups organized in the forms of armed rebels and ethnic militia in Oromia, Amhara, Gambella, Somale and other neighboring regions. Particularly, despite the reforms in the region and country, in 2022 and 2023 instability has been a common practice in Oromia regional and this in turn destroyed the very bases of development, economic infrastructure, and the social and civic ties. These violent conflicts are intensified by horrifying and exploiting Oromo peoples and residents of Oromia Regional State. However, to what extent economic gravities have been aggravating negative peace and instability of the region is unknown. Therefore, this paper aimed to assess the economic factors affecting instability in Oromia Regional State.

I. Materials and Methods

The study used both descriptive and explanatory research designs to acquire first-hand data from the respondents. According to Creswell (2007), the descriptive method of research is to gather information about the contribution of economic and political gravitations of for instability in Oromia Regional state. Besides, explanatory approach helps for establishing a relationship between dependent and independent variables. The study also used a mixed approach both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single study to understand a research problem and reality on the ground. The combinations of probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to select representative samples from various target populations while multistage cluster sampling was used to allow the researchers to apply cluster and sub-cluster until the researchers reach the Woredas of seven zones including from West Shoa, Burayu city, East Harerge zone, East Welega and H/Gu/Welega, North Shewa, East Guji and West Guji zones were sub-clustered to conduct study. In a descriptive research, a sample size of 10-50% is acceptable (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2013). Accordingly, 15% (180 police officers) from 23 woredas and one city

administration were involved in the study. The share of each study area was identified based on stratified random sampling on proportionate stratification by the following equation:

$$nh = (Nh / N) * n$$

Where nh is the sample size for stratum h , Nh is the population size for stratum h , N is total population size, and n is total sample size. To triangulate the data obtained through questionnaire, the key informants were purposively employed. Accordingly, the key informants selected from heads of Zonal peace and security sectors, *AbbaaGadaa*/Community leaders and religious leaders, regional level political parties were involved in the study. Besides, law and administrative standing committee of *Caffee*, general prosecutor, Supreme Court and peace and security office executive leaders and higher experts, Oromia police commission leaders and Prisoners from Oromia Correction Administration Commission were also involved in the study as Focused group discussion. The study was taken into account the content validity. Besides, a pilot study was conducted to establish which questions should be asked and structured in order to understand which questions are required to include in the questionnaire.

Besides, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in describing, explaining and inferring the results of the study. Based on the nature of the research data, Ordinal logistic regression analysis (model fitting information, goodness-of-fit (chi-square), test of parallel lines and parameter estimates) were used to analyses the data. For this purpose, statistical package for social sciences version 23 (SPSS) was employed. The data collected via qualitative research approach were analyzed thematically.

II. Economic Factors Affecting Peace and Instability in Oromia Regional State

The main focus of this section was to critically examine the economic factors affecting instability in Oromia Regional State. The data considered for this issue is likert scale data. Likert items are used to measure respondents' attitudes to a particular question or statement. To analyze the data it is usually coded as follows.

- 1 = Never believe
- 2 = Don't believe
- 3 = Don't know
- 4 = I believe
- 5 = I believe very much

Table 1: **Economic Factors**

No	Economy	Police officers (N=180)	
		Mean	SD
1	The situation in which the woreda's economy is managed is the main cause for the problems encountered in the woreda	2.90	1.11
2	The standard of living among the police lessen effectiveness of maintaining the peace and security in the woreda	3.02	1.08
3	Unemployment becomes the cause for lack of peace and security.	3.78	0.17
4	The long-lasting question for development in the community becomes a reason for lack of peace and security.	3.67	0.76
Cumulative mean average		3.34	3.79
Note: 1-1.44= Never believe, 1.45-2.44=Don't believe, 2.45-3.44=Moderate, 3.45-4.44= I believe, 4.45-5= I believe very much			

As can be seen from the above table, the items were presented to express economical gravitation on peace and stability of the Oromia region. The first item deal with how

the economy is managed in the woreda is the main cause for the problems encountered in the woreda. According to the respondents' responses from police officers, the mean

score value is (2.90), with the standard deviation indication that there is a moderately significant difference among respondents' scores (1.11) were obtained. The mean score value implies that the way economy managed in peace and stability is Moderate. The economic and political gravitations have been affecting the peace and stability of the country. The Ethiopian state has long been struggling with development failures, political violence and of course, poverty, ethnic rivalries have mutually reinforcing dynamics. Further, there have been the complicating links between economic underdevelopment and political instability (Ermias, Goitom and Biniam, 2022). This implies that socio-economic and political issues, actual living standards of the people and unequal treatment created dissatisfaction among the public particularly, the youth who are largely unemployed. This situation was further exacerbated by poor governance and corruption in the country in general and region in particular. In this regard, the key informants were unanimously agreed that there was absence of efficient and responsive state institutions at different levels, particularly, lack of transparency and accountability in managing public affairs

have been aggravating instability in the region.

Unemployment, inflation, poverty among others, have been worsening peace and security. This is also congruent with the findings of Ermias, Goitom and Biniam (2022), that unemployment is a major threat to the country's social, economic and political stability. This means that the current inflation and market instability are causing unemployment and highly contributed in aggravating chaos in the region. For instance: the price of cement is the major reason for unemployment in the country and our region or town is no exception. When the price of cement increases, construction works stop, this is the major crisis for thousands of laborers in the towns, and this in-turn becomes one cause for lack of peace in many towns. This implies that peace and stability is directly related to the stability of the political economy of the region which determines the public legitimacy and cooperation with the security issues. In addition to this, many key informants expressed that the political economy causes for lack of peace and security in the region. They further argued that for many thousands of individuals who engaged in daily work basis and cement

factory workers, the price of basic commodities increased as a result of inflation, individuals involved in theft and robbery and other illegal activities. They also further explained that youth unemployment and inflation is the major problem in securing peace and security not only in a single woreda or zone but also it is the problem of the region at large. As a result of this, the armed group has expanded its effects and violations in the region. Because people could not afford to buy what they want to buy, they stand against the government in different forms, and this is also initiated the people to discontent with the government, and may even go further to uprising.

In this regard, the sample respondents' from police officers' mean score value (3.78,) and with no significant standard deviation (0.17), respectively. This implies that on average, the sample respondents' reports "believe" as unemployment become the reason for lack of peace and security in the region. This data clearly indicated that unemployment is a region wide phenomenon and it is a serious problem that affects the political and security performances of the region in particular and the Ethiopia in general. In most developing countries, a widespread unemployment

among young is often a key reason for political and social movements; these economies are mostly characterized by continuing regional conflicts and difficult political transitions (Mengistu, 2015). IGAD countries are highly characterized by political, social, and economic instabilities, and unstable activities, civil wars, and coup d'état are their manifestation.

Thus, in Ethiopia in general and Oromia in particular, a widespread unemployment among the youth is often a key reason for political and social movements, which currently characterized by continuing local violence and difficult to political reforms. The other factor in the emergence and proliferation armed groups can be seen as an extraordinary youth crisis because of unemployment and disrespect for political and societal values and norms (Nganwa, Assefa&Mbaka, 2015). In congruent with the ideas mentioned by Skjerdal and Mulatu (2020) was that the causes of political instability were youth unemployment. The study found that the presence of youth unemployment increases the risk of conflict and large youth populations with youth unemployment are sometimes linked to outbreaks of violence (Yemareshet, 2022).

Unemployment in Ethiopia is a critical issue, especially youth unemployment is much more than Adult unemployment, Graduate youth unemployment is the big deal and the reason for much instability in Ethiopia (CIHRLA, 2018). For example, the data of 2009 indicated that the general unemployment rate stood at 20.5% in Ethiopia, which gives rise to private and social problems in the society such as increased crimes, suicides, poverty, alcoholism and prostitution. Coggins seeing poverty as prime nexus moving an individual into getting involved in an armed groups activities. In other words, unemployment creates resentment (towards the government and/or other groups in society), which, in turn, can fuel violence (Van, 2020). For example, the origin of the *The O'odua People's Congress (OPC)*, which is influential ethnic militant in Nigeria was made up of intellectuals and unemployed youth (Yideg, 2012). Thus, in Ethiopia in general and Oromia in particular, a widespread unemployment among young is often a key reason for joining insurgents, favoring political and social movements, easily manipulated by political entrepreneurs which currently characterized by continuing local violence in the region.

Qarree and Qeerroo together with community brought fundamental changes in the country in general and Oromia in particular. However, due to the structure of the economy, the majority of youth in Oromia as well as in many towns were unemployed. The issue of unemployment is not only the concern of the youth; it is the major issue of the general public, moreover, the ever-increasing inflation observed in the country is also the major cause for instability, and it needs attention by all the concerned authorities and the general public as well. Besides, illegal invasion of land, devious buying of land from farmers and many other forms of unfairness generated lawlessness. Such disorder paves ways to those factions and armed forces to use the youth to participate in chaos. These in turn pave ways to lack of peace in the region. FGDs discussants argued that economic grievances and long-lasting development questions have been leading to sustained protests around the country, led by youth groups, sometimes with support from factions of the ruling party.

The grievances theory of conflict indicates that economic deprivation could lead to political instability, particularly if groups or individuals perceive that they are not

receiving their fair share from economic growth (Yemareshet, 2022; Azeng and Yogo, 2013). In this regard, the FDG argues that „some job seeker of the youngsters may hold anti peace section“s messages and some want to use the town as the center of command for their hidden agenda“. They also further argue that youngsters come from different zones, for job seeking may spend their time standing on streets; they might be challenged in life. They might be hungry, and in this case just to survive, they start theft and group robbery. From this one can understand that peace can be realized when people have something to eat because of their survival. Furthermore, the participants from focused group discussion explained that there are some greedy individuals who aggressively working only for their surplus profit and hide basic goods and commodities at the extent to aggravate inflation. Consequently, if people cannot afford to buy their basic need commodity, it aggravates the likely to stand against the government in different forms, and this is also initiated people to uprising and become challenges of the peace.

Due to the recurrent conflict in the zone and neighboring, numerous peoples fled their home, and couldn“t plough their land and are unable to harvest the whole year. This leads

the people to severe economic problem such starvation; this intern leads to uncontrollable turbulences because, people have disappointed in their life. From this one understand that economy determines peace and also peace also determines economy. This has resulted the circle of conflict and insurgency in the region. The other problems which have been triggering the problem of peace and securities in the region were due to high migration of people from urban to rural parts of the region. These types of peoples can be easily manipulated using their needs (employment and money). This means that the economic driven migrants also easily creating chaos in the region.

The issues related to the good governance become a reason for lack of peace and security in the region. In this regard, the key informants argued that, the long lasting development questions of the community were believed as contributors of peace and stability. This implies that due to long-lasting questions of some sections of society failed to address it on time and appropriately, particularly youth have been joining the rebellion group, and start to challenge the government; this in turn harms peace and security of the region. Regarding the salary and the standard of living of

police officers to reducing effectiveness of maintaining the peace and security in the woreda, the sample respondents' mean score value (3.02) and the standard deviation (1.08) the standard deviation indicates that there is a moderate difference among respondents' scores. This implies that on average, the sample respondents' reports "Moderate". Large numbers of employees primarily influence any agreements made to improve salaries or working conditions (Van, 2020).

The key informants argued that poor salary and hardship in police organization has led the police officers and leaders to silent grievances and complaints. They also further argued that grievances have erupted into salient and systemic support of protests and rebels. In this regard, the other studies depicted that the police officers have been unable to take care of lives and property. Another factor in the emergence and proliferation of armed groups is the collapse of the state institutions established for the protection of life and property (Yideg, 2012). Fawehinmi identified the failure of security agencies as a major consequence for the rise of the armed group phenomenon. The failure of the security agencies of government has contributed to the strength

and social acceptability of the ethnic militia organizations in various parts of the country. The inability of the police to provide security has compelled the public to transfer the confidence that should have been reposed in the police to the armed groups who have proved, in some cases, to be more reliable and effective in checking the menace of armed robbers in local communities. The failure to satisfy the welfare needs of the masses and its failure to provide security of lives and property (Accord Report ,2017).

The key informants from the police officers argued that they categorized themselves underemployment community. This implies that poverty is closely related to underemployment, which occurs when households do not make enough money from their economic activities to survive (Afolaranmi and Amodu, 2022). One can understand from the data that the amount of salary cause poor motivation on their work, turnover of police officers, stress and anxiety created a sense of inadequacy. Thus, the amount of salary they earned and their working environment have contributed to negative synergy and team split, which can seriously been affecting the peace and security of the region. Poor governance,

weak institutions, inadequately trained security forces, and porous borders, all facilitate the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. One of the greatest security challenges in Eastern Africa is the promotion of democracy and good governance. Stronger democracy and good governance in Eastern Africa could open

political space and help to alleviate many of the tensions caused by ethnic and regional marginalization (Accord Report (2017). Statistical tests such as correlation and regression analyses were conducted in order to triangulate the data collected on economic factors that influence peace and stability of the region.

Model Fitting Information

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	Sig.
Intercept Only	399.510		
Final	369.835	78.601	.000

adjusts the scale of the statistic to cover the full range from 0 to 1. Nagelkerke value was 0.786 implies that 78.6% changes in the dependent variable that is current status of peace is a result of independent variables

Link function: Logit.

and the remaining 21.4% were accounted for error terms and unseen factors. Thus, the role of economy was identified as highly significant for peace and security.

The Pearson chi-square with p-value < 0.05 means there is significant association between peace and stability and the economy. The chi-square analysis result of police respondent's data inferred that; the independent variables affect dependent variables. This means economy can measure peace and stability of the region.

III. Conclusion and Recommendation

The objective of this study was examining economic factors for insecurity and instability in Oromia national Regional state (ONRS). The conflict dynamics in Oromia

Table Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	.772
Nagelkerke	0.786
McFadden	1.000

is complicated and varying its approach from time to time. Dynamic grievances have been common and increases over time even when structural conditions

Pseudo R-Square logistic are computed based on Police respondent's data observation interpreted using Nagelkerke is an adjusted version of the Cox and Snell that

remain the same. Besides, criminality, destruction, mob-justice, human rights violation, political, administration instability, and crimes become almost currently the hallmarks of some parts of the

region. The major factors for persistent conflicts in Oromia national Regional state were economic issues. Economic issues particularly recurrent questions of inter-regional territory and competition over natural resources, youth unemployment and economic triggered life disappointment and political discontent were provoked intolerance and conflict in the region. Therefore, economic deprivation for people particularly youths which at least unable to afford their daily sustenance brought dissatisfaction with the existing political status quo. Similarly, the refusal of community's long-lasting question for development in some parts of the region was one factor for political discontent for the community. This implies there have been the presences of politically and economically motivated forces behind the violence. Another issue of the salary even though not the cause of conflict and instability; it was witnessed that the security actors' amount of salary cause poor motivation on their work, particularly contributed to turnover of police officers, stress and anxiety which created a work place sense of inadequacy. Thus, insufficient amount of salary they earned has been contributed to negative synergy and team split, intolerance, which negatively affected

the effectiveness of security actors in ensuring peace and security of the region.

Based on the findings and conclusions reached, the recommendations were forwarded. Accordingly, the police, the militias, and other security forces should show their commitment to ensure peace and security of the region at all levels to advance public trust and legitimacy. The government should strongly work to avoid and manage unemployment and economic conspiracy that weaken community trust.

Well-functioning government through its public sectors and strong security institutions is the head and foremost to elicit public trust and legitimacy as state. As well having legitimacy and trust of civilian community is decisive to shape and empower the civilian to promote peace and security. The government officials at all level should listen to the questions raised by the people and try to respond accordingly and this in turn helps the security forces to get cooperation from the people. This days required unique economic packages that attracted the youth to the development and democratic path. Hence, the huge resources the country in general and Oromia in particular possessed were land and man power. Therefore highly mechanizing

agricultures and creating system based access to use agricultural technologies and packages for the farmers and youths, encouraging on agricultural production and agro processing will alleviate economic and unemployment caused challenges of security in one hand and sustains the developments of the region in other hand.

The agricultural mechanization system and packages should capable to attract and accessible to youth considering their skill and motives they had, and which can anchor regional economy and subsidies youths. Peace can be realized when people have something to eat. The government should work to avoid and manage maladministration, and economic conspiracy. The scholars should work on how to bring peace in the country. Besides, the government officials at all level should listen to the questions raised by the people and try to respond accordingly, and this helps the security forces to get cooperation from the people. Identifying the capacity of the public especially property owners and participating them in generating ideas, supporting financially, or in whatever way they can is very good to ensure peace and security. Such activity helps us to prevent upcoming problems.

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