

## **The Potential of Local Institutions for Conflict Transformation in Pastoral Areas of Ethiopia**

*Case study among the pastorals of the Upper-Middle Awash valley.*

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Resource based conflicts are common phenomena in pastoral areas of Sub-Saharan Africa. Pastoral regions have undergone through multi faceted historical, political and economical changes that continuously shape the forms of conflict they have and subsequent mitigation efforts. This PhD project aims to gain understanding of violent pastoral conflicts, with a special view to assessing the potential of locally based institutions for transforming them. The research focuses on questions of how resource conflicts in pastoral areas are understood by different social actors, how do these social actors communicate and value conflicts at varying time and space and what mitigation efforts are ensued by them? The study of local institutions is central to the research since the penetration of the state and outsider influence in many pastoral areas particularly of Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon. These institutions also have shown dynamism that is interesting to further investigation. In order to meet the research objective, mapping of social actors and institutions will be made; the value and understanding of these various social actors to pastoral conflict and conflict mitigation with in changes will be studied. Possibly, mitigation mechanisms for the ongoing conflict will be drawn from perspective of these social actors. Specific methods such as participant observation and recording of day-to-day activity related to resource based conflict with in the community and the neighboring pastoral groups, informal and formal interviews with various social actors (State officials, peace committee members, cattle keepers, women of the households, students, militia men and neighboring groups, agricultural enterprises) will be applied. Secondary materials (reports, proceedings, ethnographic books and theoretical books) also will be reviewed.