

**A Study on Social Media Use of Oromo Activists’:
Facebook in Focus**

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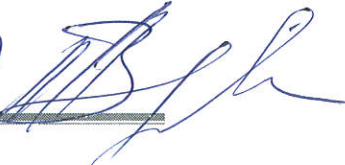
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ABSTRACT

A Study on Social Media Use of Oromo Activists': Facebook in Focus

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Addis Ababa University, 2015

The general objective of this study is investigating the characteristics of facebook activism of the Oromo. The study investigated how Oromo online activists practice activism, what ideals often make up the Oromo activists' facebook agenda, and what challenges Oromo activists' at home and in the Diaspora are facing in carrying out activism. Manuel castells network society theory and SPIN model of Luther P. Gerlach, have been used to comprehend and analyze this study. The study has employed both qualitative and quantitative methods at data gathering and analysis levels.

Lack of free media brought the belief among the activists that facebook is a gift from God to the Oromo. The Oromo activists often back their idea with images, links and graphics run activism on politics, culture, identity, art and literature mostly with the objective of calling for some kind of action. The activists have managed to succeed a campaign called Boycott Bedele and are running a number of other big movements like 'Say No to the Master Plan' on facebook right now. Lack of professionalism, problem of consistency, absence of coordination, planning, organization and leadership from the side of the activists, unresponsiveness from the side of the general users and surveillance, detention and intimidation from the government's side have been identified as bottlenecks for the Oromo social media activism.

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List of Acronyms

AGCC	Afaan Oromoo Global Coordinating Committee
BART	Bay Area Rapid Transit)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CD	Compact Disk
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
EASS	East African Submarine Cable System
EPRDF	Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
HE	Higher Education
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INSA	Information Network Security Agency
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
MTSHA	Macca and Tuuluma Self-Help Association
NDR	National Democratic Revolution
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
OPDO	Oromo people's Democratic Organization
OWS	Occupy Wall Street
SPIN	Segmented, Polycentric, Integrated and Networked
SMS	Short Message Service
SNS	Social Networking Site
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VOA	Voice of America

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Politics in any country or society today can largely be meaningfully made sense of in relation to the past, i.e., the past has significant bearings on the present. The American politics surrounding racial discrimination, for instance, reminds us of the history of slavery and slave trade in the past. The 2014 Ferguson unrest sparked by the shooting of black teenager, Michael Brown, and the 2015 Charleston massacre at the black church and other similar incidents remind us of their connection to the past. In the same token, most of the political struggles we observe in Ethiopia today have their roots in the past. According to Kjetil and Oryvind (1995), virtually all observers of Ethiopian History and politics agree that current political events cannot be isolated from past history.

Ethiopia, according to recorded history, has never been colonized by European powers. According to Kjetil and Oryvind (1995), however, evidences point to an internal colonization imposed by the Semitic-dominated states upon the southern regions of present day Ethiopia. The current multi-ethnic nation-state founded on empire-state, according to Keller (1995), is not successful in creating national identity, especially in the post-imperial period. Here below, the political past of the Oromo, a single largest ethnic group that constituted the Ethiopia today, will be assessed.

1.2 Historical Overview of the Oromos

According to oral history, the Oromos are a native African ethnic group found in Ethiopia and to smaller extent in some parts of Kenya, Somalia and Rwanda. Although there are variations and debates on the population of the Oromos in Ethiopia, according to Gadaa.com, it is estimated to be 35- 40% of the total population of what has constituted the Ethiopia today. There is information that points to the long existence of the Oromo as a community in East Africa. According to Bates (1997), the Oromo were a very ancient race, the indigenous stock, possibly, on which most other peoples in this part of eastern Africa have been grafted. Perham (1948) also wrote that the Oromo were in the north-eastern part of the continent before the arrival of the Habasha.

Although there are scholarly and oral debates about the original homeland of the Oromo, Ethnologists, historians and oral traditions agree that the fertile valley of Madda Walabu, what is now one of the districts in Bale zone in south eastern part of Oromia, is where the Oromo is believed to originate. The Oromo, on the bases of this and other oral traditions, reject the fairytale that they are migrants from somewhere else.

The Oromo throughout their long history are credited for developing an indigenous democratic socio-political system called the *Gadaa* system. Asafa (2012) making reference to Asmarom Leggese argues, *Gadaa* has three interrelated meanings: it is the grade during which a class of people assumes politico-ritual leadership, a period of eight years during which elected officials take power from the previous ones, and the institution of Oromo society. UNESCO included this arguably egalitarian system to its urgent safeguarding list or representative list as one of the intangible cultural heritages in 2015.

As the Oromo are comprised of a large number of clan families which basically descended from two major families (the Borana and the Barento/Barentuma), it has a social, economic, and religious differences among itself. Yet, they are united by a common language, Afan Oromo and strong sense of ethnic identity. Afan Oromo, a Cushitic language in the subgroup of the Afro-Asiatic languages, is spoken in Ethiopia, northern Kenya, and parts of Somalia (advocates for Human right, 2009). This makes it the third widely spoken language in Africa (ibid).

The Oromo, as a result of mass movement during the 16th century, was able to stretch over larger area of Ethiopia, which gave it comparative advantage over ecology and natural resources.

According to literatures and oral tradition , however, the last one and so centuries have marked a dark age for the Oromo. What some historians described as Menelik II's holy war in the formation of modern Ethiopia and what other historians prefer to call it ethnocide and colonialism, marks the beginning of Oromo's Dark age. According to Mahammed (2009), the attack on Oromo political, cultural institutions and national

identity began with the conquest and incorporation of the Oromo into the Ethiopian empire created by Emperor Menelik II (1889-1913).

Earl Lytton (1967, p.160) author of the *Stolen Desert*, (as cited in Hamdesa, 1986) stated,

Menelik seems to have operated with French technicians, French mapmakers, French advice on the management of a standing army and more French advice as holding captured provinces with permanent garrisons of the conscripted colonial firearms and did much else to organize his campaigns...The (Oromos) were thus conquered by the Habash for the first time in recorded history. Without massive European help the (Oromos) would not have been conquered at all.

Under the reign of Haile Selassie as well, the policies of Menelik II continued until the regime was overthrown in the 1974 revolt. The Haile Selassie government, according to Asafa (2010), terrorized the Oromo of Raya-Azabo, Wallo, Hararghe, Bale and other regions because of their political and cultural resistance. It also imprisoned, tortured or hanged prominent Oromo leaders, such as Mamo Mazamir and Haile Mariam Gamada who organized and led the Macca-Tuulama self-help association in the early 1960s. Referring to the Oromo oral story, Asafa (2010) notes that Ethiopians/Abyssinians destroyed and looted the resources of Oromia, and committed genocide on the Oromo people through massacre, slavery, depopulation, cutting hands, famine, and diseases during and after the colonization of Oromia.

What Asafa (2010) referred to as ‘colonial terrorism’ started during the reign of Menelik II has continued under successive Ethiopian governments. Until the fall of the dictatorial regime of Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam in 1991, let alone running Oromo nationalist movement and strong adherence to ones identity, speaking Afan Oromo and having an Oromo name had been a source of ridicule and marginalization. The 1974 revolution, however, was considered as a turning point for Oromos as it was for various nations and nationalities. According to Mahammed (2009), the 1974 revolution offered Ethiopia an opportunity not only to democratize itself, heal the old wounds, redress old injustices, right old wrongs, but also to decentralize power in the country. Most Oromos had

assumed that the revolution of 1974 would lead to decolonization and equality of all peoples in Ethiopia.

Quickly after the departure of the former president, the charter signed by 31 political movements in July 1991 conference brought about the news of the formation of Transitional Government of Ethiopia. According to Keller (1995), the OLF (Oromo Liberation Front) which was established in 1973 to liberate Oromia was given 12 seats, the second largest seat in the 87-seat council of representatives, next to the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which took 32 seats. The struggle over power resulted in political dissatisfaction and the division of the Oromos into two political wings (The Oromo People Democratic Organization- OPDO- and the Oromo Liberation Front- OLF). The OLF then continued armed struggle while the OPDO, as a member in an umbrella organization of EPRDF, has since been administering Oromia. There have been a number of attempts to reconcile the OLF and EPRDF over the past years. Noting one of such efforts, Shinn (2009) notes:

In 1992 and 1993 ambassadors from Europe and the United States created an Ambassadorial Contact Group that attempted to bring the OLF and the EPRDF together in Asmara. It failed. The EPRDF did not attend the Conference of Peace in Paris in March 1993 or the Peace and Reconciliation Conference in Addis Ababa in December 1993. Former American President Jimmy Carter failed to resolve differences between the EPRDF and OLF in 1994. An American Congressional Task Force headed by Representative Harry Johnston assembled EPRDF and opposition party representatives in Washington in 1995. I represented the State Department at that conference and regret to say it also failed. A former German ambassador initiated a dialog between the OLF and EPRDF in 1997. The talks ended before there was any serious progress...The last attempt to bring together the EPRDF and OLF in Oslo occurred in 2003 with the assistance of Norway. Again, there was a failure.(pp,23)

That being the case, however, today the Oromo have their own regional state- Oromia, *Finfinne* as its administrative city, and is administered by an Oromo party, the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO). The official working language is Afan Oromo and most schools teach in *Qubee* script instead of in Amharic script (which is

employed in most parts of the country). Afan Oromo has become a language studied at a post-graduate level. It has a 24-hour broadcasting service (Oromia Radio and Television Organization) overseen by the regional government. Some of the cultural heritages peculiar to this ethnic group are preserved alongside the new monuments and statues built to remember the past injustices. Yet, there are complaints among the Oromo that violations of human and democratic rights of the Oromo are still going on.

Amnesty International (2014) stated that the Government of Ethiopia is hostile to dissent, wherever and however it manifests, and also shows hostility to influential individuals or groups not affiliated to the ruling Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) political party. According to the report (2014, p. 8) entitled 'Because I am Oromo,' government has used arbitrary arrest and detention, often without charge, to suppress suggestions of dissent in many parts of the country. But this hostility, and the resulting acts of suppression, have manifested often and at scale in Oromia.

According to Mahammed (2002, pp. 31) (as cited by Asafa (2010),

The attack on the free press has literally killed the few publications in the Oromo language in the Latin alphabet. The death of Oromo publications . . . has been a fatal blow to the flowering of Oromo literature and the standardization of the Oromo language itself. The Oromo magazines that have disappeared include Gada, Biftu, Madda Walaabuu, Odaa, and the Urjii magazine . . . Since 2002, there has not been a single newspaper or magazine that has expressed the legitimate political opinions of the Oromo in Ethiopia.

As is the case with many other communities in the world, the Oromo both at home and abroad are utilizing various online media platforms which are made possible today as a result of World Wide Web. Despite lack of free press in general and on the issue of Oromo in particular, now voices are being loudly heard on social networking sites and websites operating in the Diaspora and at home.

There are plenty of websites established by individuals and groups, most importantly by those in the Diaspora, which often focus on stories of violations of the rights of the Oromo. But at home there are only a very few websites, owing to various reasons ranging

from lack of individual or group initiatives to the challenging political landscape in Ethiopia.

When it comes to social networking sites (SNSs), it seems that there is a growing trend by Ethiopians in general to say one's mind regardless of frontiers. The Oromo as a community that architected its own democratic governance and suffered from its absence over time, is also using social networking sites such as *facebook*, *twitter* and *youtube* above all. There are different reasons and purposes that social media users in the world utilize the various platforms for, and the same thing is supposed to hold true for the Oromo.

From observation, there are individuals among the Oromo who with greater optimism use social media, especially facebook, to promote the Oromo heritage, culture and aspiration from their own point of view. There are many of these users (activists) who are now followed by hundreds and thousands of friends and are able to influence their followers with the idea they raise.

The social networking sites might have also brought about undesirable effects on issues of importance to the Oromo. Given such political trajectory of the Oromo (past and present) in modern day Ethiopia and the advent of the new media, the study aims at examining the characteristic feature of online Activism among the Oromo.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Various researches have shown that communication is the most popular activity on social networking sites. The Office of communication's research summary (2008) notes:

Social networking sites offer people new and varied ways to communicate via the internet. They allow people to easily and simply create their own online page or profile and to construct and display an online network of contacts, often called 'friends'. Users of these sites can communicate via their profile both with their 'friends' and with people outside their list of contacts. This can be on a one-to-one basis (much like an email), or in a more public way such as a comment posted for all to see.(pp, 1)

Nowadays, social media have become a conducive tool for more or less all of the world's political movements. The 2011 Arab uprisings and the political changes that have come as a result of the uprisings, and movements which have not been successful in bringing about significant changes, such as the one in Iran and the occupy wall street campaign in the U.S., all boils down to Social Networking Sites. Terms like Egyptian Facebook revolution and Iranian Twitter Uprising help to comprehend the role of social media in today's political movements. (Shirky, 2011) attest that activists also use social media and the internet to motivate people to get involved in their causes as most of the world's authoritarian governments are trying to limit access to it.

According to Castells, (2009: 431) as cited by Jones (2013,p 84) social media in the case of the uprising in Bahrain allows activists to 'overcome the powerlessness of their solitary despair ... and fight the powers by identifying the networks that are', it also allows hegemonic forces to resist change. Many people claim that some Arab countries like Syria didn't bring in the desired change by their revolution because they have not used social media. But researches elucidate that in almost all Arab uprisings social media has been utilized in different ways. According to Ghreer (2013,p.116) in Egyptian revolution social media were used to spread the idea of protesting against the inhumane practices of the Egyptian security forces and encouraging activists to come down to the streets in addition to broadcasting news of the protests.

As for the Tunisian revolution, social media were used mainly as a tool to convey details of the protests and in helping the people to interact as a response to suppression of protests by the Tunisian regime. However, the Syrian revolution is considered to be unique in that it was innovative in its use of social media.

Coming to the case of Ethiopia, there are no studies with focus on social media activism, at least so long as the researcher's review of literature is concerned. But there are studies which shaded light on the use of facebook in Ethiopia. Facebook users in Ethiopia are in a rapid surge though in specific demographic groups. As Mebratu (2014) notes, Facebook has become the most popular and preferred social media among higher education students in Ethiopia. While there are various purposes that users in Ethiopia may need facebook for, political deliberation is one. According to Tesfaye (2012), Facebook has become an

alternative political forum. He identified two types of challenges in using Facebook for political deliberations. These were participant related and government related. He added that fear, intimidation and surveillance issues were the major ones.

According to Eaton (2013,p. 6) analysis of internet activism is a relatively new and fast-moving field due to the rapid development of the technologies in use on the ground by activists. Large gaps in our understanding inevitably remain unfilled. Taking online activism into the epicenter of academic discourse is also not common in Ethiopia . There are questions that need to be answered and understood concerning online activism. Boldly enough it can be said that little or none is known with regard to the existence, role and practice of activist movements with respect to advancing the social, economic and political aspiration of different groups in Ethiopia.

Moussa (2013,p.60) noted that it is impossible to study the linkages between social movements and social media without looking into ‘alternative media’ scholarship (Atton, 2001, 2004; Carroll and Hackett, 2006; Couldry and Curran, 2003; Downey and Fenton, 2003; Downing, 2001). Based on the argument of Moussa, it couldn't be prediction to say that Ethiopians' in general and the Oromo in particular do not have alternative media. This study also takes that in to account in studying the social media use of Oromo activists.

Today, the Oromo, as any community living in a globalizing and digital world, use several social networking sites for various purposes. However, given the unflattering political past of the Oromo under a quasi democratic culture, there is no doubt that the Oromo are making use of the new technology for political deliberation or activism. However, there is a paucity of academic research that systematically examines the trend of Oromo Activism on the social media.

Facebook, hashtag, twitter and youtube are some of the new media platforms that the Oromo activists at home and in the Diaspora are using. They may use these platforms for different purposes. From these options, it can be predicted that vast video sharing activity takes place on youtube. Videos of diverse content are being uploaded and downloaded by the Oromos every day. Though not in huge number, twitter is also in use. Facebook,

however, seems to be the most preferable platform, for it is the one with higher penetration rate and with ease of use. The potential to reach a higher number of people makes facebook imperative.

However, the condition under which activists employ new digital tools may vary depending on the variation of the political environment, the chosen cause of the activists, the strategy of the activists and the background of the activists who employ the platform. The boldness of the activists, their perception of self in a group and what it means for them to be an activist may also vary depending on various factors. Reports of organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch blame the Ethiopian government for using the anti-terrorism law enacted in 2009 to hunt voices opposing the government. The influence of anti- terrorism law on Oromo's online activism has to be examined.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 General objective

Generally, this study aims at investigating the characteristics of facebook activism of the Oromo.

1.4.2 Specific Objective

The following are the specific objectives the study has intended to achieve:

- Look into the practice of Oromo online activism in the context of the existing national political system
- Examine the nature of issues the Oromo activists advance online
- Indentify the major challenges that Oromo online activists encounter in articulating concerns of the Oromo.

1.5 Research Questions

The study has set out to address the following research questions:

- What does the practice of Oromo online activism look like?
- What issues of the Oromo are often raised by Oromo online activists?

- What are the major challenges the Oromo online activists often face in carrying out online activism in Ethiopia?

1.6 Significance of the study

As people get motivated to use social media and the alternative platforms in the world increased, their roles and complexity of their impacts also increase. As history shows, the advent of Television precipitated the need for academic research on the impact of Television on society. Today, the upcoming of Internet is having an important impact on how people live and behave in their social environment. The role of academic studies in generating more knowledge and better understanding on fastly changing trends of the Internet would have a far reaching implication in the economic, social, political and cultural life of a society.

Although the introduction of this medium is a decade or so years in the west, the phenomenon is new to Ethiopia. Albeit, facebook use among the educated is spreading rapidly. Owing to its newness, however, there is paucity of academic research on social media use in Ethiopia.

This study is important in the sense that it generates a body of knowledge on social media. Most importantly, unearthing facebook's role in terms of serving as a platform for activism that centers on advancing the collective interest of groups and the challenges online activists face in political environments that constrain free and open deliberations is of greater significance. The study would also serve as a springboard for those who might be interested in conducting similar studies in the area.

1.7 Scope of the study

This study has exclusively focused on facebook and attempts at looking into online political activism of the Oromo, and does not deal with other online and offline platforms. What is more, while there are a number of facebook pages and groups that engage in activism, only individual activists are targeted in this study. Accordingly, the study has focused only on the activists and their status update on facebook for a given period of time.

1.8 Limitation of the study

Since this study pays particular attention to facebook, it does not allow examining the pattern of activism by the Oromo in other social media as well as offline platforms. Hence, the finding of this study cannot be generalized to other media platforms. Furthermore, its exclusive focus on the Oromo activism makes it difficult to see how it is similar to or different from other activisms conducted by other groups.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

2.1 Introduction

As this study embarked on exploring how social media activism is functioning in Ethiopia by the Oromo activists, this chapter delve into elaborating the very concepts in researches of this kind, findings of related studies, the theoretical base of the study, the media history of the Oromo, emergence and development of Oromo nationalism and other concepts related to the Oromo. The Advent of the Internet, its use and level of freedom and the third world Internet dilemma are going to be elaborated corroborated by some research findings under this chapter.

2.2 Social Media

Social media is becoming one of the buzz words the globalized world is using. Their types are many and the purpose they serve are diverse. But what does social media mean or how could scholars define it? like many concepts, there are plenty of definitions for social media but scholars in the area of new media studies agree on its major features. Joseph(2012) defined social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user Generated Content.” “Web 2.0”, according to Sara, refers to internet platforms that allow for interactive participation by users while “User generated content” is the name for all of the ways in which people may use social media.

Some scholars think that social network sites or social networking sites(SNS) and social media are one and the same and hence use them interchangeably. Some others put SNS in the social media folder. Sarah (2012) on her article, Social Media, Political Change, and Human Rights, put social network sites as one types of social media. She listed the different types as; collaborative projects, virtual worlds, blogs, content communities, and social networking.

Collaborative projects involve people working together to create content. Wikipedia is the most famous example of these. Wikipedia is an influential source of global information, partly because a Wikipedia entry will often be among the first retrieved by

an internet search. Online collaboration platforms can also allow people in different locations to share and edit documents together. These can be particularly useful for persons with similar political goals to collaborate on strategy documents. For example, Google Docs were used to convey protest tactics and demands during the Egyptian uprising in early 2011.

Blogs, the most rudimentary form of social media, involve the creation, by a person or group, of web-based content on any topic of the author's choice. Individuals may interact with a blog by commenting on its content. Originally, blogs were mainly text-based; now, many incorporate

pictures and videos. Video blogs (vlogs) are also becoming more common; Mohammad "Mo" Nabbous ran a "television station" in Benghazi, the rebel stronghold in Libya in early 2011, that could classify as a vlog through which Nabbous reported events in his city to the world via a live video stream. Blogs are key tools for dissident activity in States that control mainstream media.

Content communities are sites where users can share content with other members of their online community. Well-known examples of these communities include Flickr, for photos, and YouTube, for video. Sites like these are invaluable resources for exposing government brutality to the world. The video of the killing of Neda Agha-Soltan during the Iranian protests of 2009 is a particularly poignant example. The video "went viral" and drew widespread condemnation of the Iranian government's tactics.

Finally, people share information on social networking sites, of which Facebook and Twitter are among the most popular. These sites are very versatile, enabling the sharing of text, pictures, videos, audio files, and applications. Facebook enable users to create a profile page and share information with an unlimited number of virtual "friends." These "friends" are usually known to the user in real life, but this connection is not essential.

Coming to what SNSs Ellison(2007) defined SNSs, as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and

traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of

these connections may vary from site to site.

According to Nicole, SNSs have implemented a wide variety of technical features, to their backbone, however, exists visible profiles that display an articulated list of friends who are also users of the system. Profiles, according to Sundén, (2003, p. 3) as cited by Ellison, are unique pages where one can "type oneself into being". Beyond profiles, friends, comments, and private messaging, SNSs vary greatly in their features and user base. Some have photo-sharing or video-sharing capabilities, others have built-in blogging and instant messaging technology.

2.3 History and Types of Social Network Sites

Technology began to change very rapidly in the 20th century. Following the creation of super computers in the 1940s, there were wide spread efforts to create networks between those computers. That effort is believed to cause the birth of the Internet.

Drew Hendricks (2013) says the earliest forms of the internet, such as CompuServe, were developed in the 1960s. Primitive forms of email were also developed during this time. However, according to Ellison (2007) the first recognizable social network site is SixDegrees.com.

SixDegrees.com

It is launched in 1997. It allowed users to create profiles, list their friends and beginning in 1998, surf the friends lists. SixDegrees promoted itself as a tool to help people connect with and send messages to others. While SixDegrees attracted millions of users, it failed to become a sustainable business and, in 2000, the service closed.

Friendster

Friendster launched in 2002 as a social complement to Ryze.com which was launched in 2001 to help people leverage their business networks. It was designed to compete with Match.com, a profitable online dating site (Cohen, 2003). While most dating sites

focused on introducing people to strangers with similar interests, Friendster was designed to help friends-of-friends meet, based on the assumption that friends-of-friends would make better romantic partners than would strangers.

The initial design of Friendster restricted users from viewing profiles of people who were more than four degrees away (friends-of-friends-of-friends-of-friends). In order to view additional profiles, users began adding acquaintances and interesting-looking strangers to expand their reach.

LinkedIn

In May 2003, LinkedIn launched as business related social networking site. LinkedIn's founders are Reid Hoffman, Allen Blue, Konstantin Guericke, Eric Ly and Jean-luc Vaillant. According to the official website of LinkedIn.com, it has now offices in more than 30 cities in the world and available in 24 languages. It is the largest and dominant social network in the professional arena. Totally different from the likes of Facebook, it is used to for maintaining a professional persona. It is also used to find jobs, networking, recruiting new employees and getting business news.

Wordpress

The same year ushered Wordpress, a publishing platform that hosts blogs. It is an open source project, which means there are hundreds of people all over the world working on it is completely customizable and can be used for almost anything. It started as just a blogging system but has evolved to be used as full content management system.

MySpace

The end of 2003 and the beginning of 2004 are the most phenomenal years in the course of SNSs. A number of SNSs dominant today have got their birth during this period. MySpace is one of them. It was launched in Santa Monica, California, hundreds of miles from Silicon Valley. MySpace is now a popular social networking website offering

interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profile, blogs, groups, photos, music and videos internationally.

Flickr, the other creation, is an image and video hosting website. Flickr has grown into one of the premier photo hosting and sharing sites on the internet, boasting an upload rate of more than 70, 000 photos according to the about us page of the site. One can sign up for a free Flickr account, which allows to upload 1,000GB of free storage for photos and videos.

Facebook.com

Then comes facebook, an invention of 2004 by Mark Zockerberg exclusively for Harvard University students. Now it is world's largest networking site. Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them according to the company's info site.

Facebook users interact with other users, or "Facebook friends" by updating their "status", writing on other members "walls" or sending direct personal messages. Users are able to "create and join interest groups, 'like' pages, import and search for contacts, and upload photos and videos.

Youtube.com

After the advent of facebook, youtube become the other ground shaking creation in the social media world. Dave(2006) writes as YouTube was founded by three former PayPal employees, who, witnessing the boom of online grassroots video, realized the need for a decent service that made the process of uploading, watching and sharing videos hassle-free.

The signup process for YouTube hasn't changed much since its launch and is fairly easy. According to their use of the site page, users can join as different accounts. For general use and those who will use YouTube just to watch videos and perhaps submit the odd one, a traditional account is the way to go. YouTube clearly states in the terms that the

uploader grants YouTube a non-exclusive access to the video to be watched on the Internet, and warns you not to infringe copyrights. Just like registering for YouTube, they've made the process of uploading a video very simple. After giving it a title, description, tags, category, and language, one simply go selecting video file. YouTube accepts almost every type there is.

Twitter (www.twitter.com)

Twitter is a US-based micro-blogging platform founded in 2006. As of June 2014, it had 271 million monthly active users who send 500 million messages (called 'Tweets') a day. Seventy-seven per cent of Twitter's users live outside of the United States. According to MacKinnon, Elonnai Hickok, Allon Bar and Hae-in Lim (2014), Twitter allows registered users to exchange messages of 140 (or fewer) characters through the Twitter website, mobile application(s) or SMS. Users can forward such messages by 'retweeting' them. Users can also search for and 'follow' other users, and even unregistered people can read users' Tweets, as long as the users have kept their profile public (the default setting). Twitter is accessible on the world wide web and via multiple mobile applications. Tweets can be organized via hashtags (the hash sign # followed by a word or phrase), allowing users to group related posts together. If a hashtag receives high volumes of 'retweets' it is termed to be 'trending'. Twitter does not 'require real name use, email verification, or identity authentication'.

2.4 Social Media and Society

Social media now is affecting peoples' life in a different fashion. According to Grubmüller, Götsch and Krieger (2013), The emergence of the World Wide Web in the 1990s and the appearance of social networks changed our societies' communication patterns as well as the relations among citizens, between citizens and governments, consumers and companies. Santioanni (2013) explains how public perception, science communication , media coverage and politics are shaped by social media. According to Santioanni (2013), social media has brought change in the following five aspects particularly in business communications landscape.

- Communication have evolved from mass distribution of a one way message(one-to-many)in to constant flow of conversation and messages, from many to many.
- The evolution to participatory journalism, where news and analysis that is shared via social media influences what is reported in mainstream media.
- Social media represents an uncensored outlet for those who feel aggrieved, want to spread rumors, or strengthen biases. There is often no practical legal source against such smear campaigns.
- Online interaction provides the ability to reach beyond community borders to influence opinion and quickly mobilize support, which has been to gain political influence and shape the public policy.
- The structure of social media communications lends itself to sound bites and hyperbole, presenting challenges for communicating science and technology to the public.

The power of social media to affect society is based exclusively on its social aspects. This According to Suomen Toivo (not specified) means interaction and participation. Underlining the fact that engaging with social media is a communal activity, Toivo, listed eight changes social media has produced.

1. **Anonymity**

The anonymity of its agents means that those who write and comment often use nicknames or aliases. Even though anonymity provides an opportunity to comment on delicate issues, it can also sometimes lead to “flame wars” and avoiding responsibility. Use of the writer’s real name makes the message stand out (for example, in the “Letters to the Editor” in newspapers), since the author wants to be identified as owning that comment. Those who communicate need to be able to appear with their own names.

2. **Diversity of information**

The richness and diversity of information social media provides is the second one. Users are no longer dependent on a single source for their news and other data any more, but

of equality and pluralism. One case observed across different social media platforms has been the rumors that the current president of the United States, Barack Obama, is a Muslim. Over 20% of Americans still believe that Obama is a Muslim, even though this false information has been repeatedly refuted.

7. Flexibility

The new ability to combine different kinds of recorded information in very flexible ways is change observed with regard to social media . Social media isn't just text, pictures, audio, video, and animation, but all of these combined. With today's compact video cameras, sound recorders, laptop computers and other mobile devices, combined with affordable soft ware, one can easily create and edit impressive presentations.

8. Regulation

The eighth change is the near absence of traditional methods of regulation. A government can attempt to restrict the content of social media, but traditional censorship cannot keep up with ever-changing web pages. China and Saudi Arabia, for example, tightly control their citizens use of the Internet and social media. On the other hand, it is technically difficult to interfere even in the most radical web-distributed propaganda.

2.5 Social Media and Politics

The introduction of the Internet and social media brought far reaching influence on how people communicate which in turn revolutionized the political landscape of the world. Bennett (2003) says in areas in which new patterns of human association are emerging in response to new issues and new forms of political action are developing as well, new communication options have the potential to transform both political organization and political power relations.

Demonstration in city streets in the Philippines in 2001, the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States in 2008, revocation of the results of the fraudulent elections in Moldavia in 2009, the M-15 movement with their camps and demonstrations in Spain in 2011, the so-called "Arab Spring" in the Middle East in early 2011, and the "Occupy Wall Street" movement that started in New York, also in 2011, all according to

can flexibly use several different media side by side. The *modus operandi* can be thought of as remediation, where media use, modify and reorganize contents gathered from other media. Also connected to this changed information environment is the fact that it is not possible to participate in every conversation.

3. Omnipresence

There are no longer any isolated places or hiding holes. The private and public lives of society's most influential figures have merged and become public space. A politician has had to face the fact that a phrase taken out of context or a joke they told during a private conversation has been recorded by outsiders and quickly made public on the Internet.

4. Speed

News and information spread more quickly than ever before, and the demand for speed can also lead to reports without any confirmation. William Davidow, an engineer and technology investor, as cited by Toivo, describes the current era using the term "over connected" meaning we are too often and too quickly in contact and can't process new information adequately due to haste. He cites the example of the modern stock exchange that has become a particularly fickle monster due to computerization and automation.

5. Lack of hierarchy

The fifth change is the multitude of roles that users assume, and their relationships to each other. The lack of a clear hierarchy is characteristic of social media. A good example is the online encyclopedia, Wikipedia, which doesn't really have a main editor, but an army of tens of thousands of writers, inspectors, and editors. So, if inaccuracies are found, to whom at Wikipedia should complaints be directed? The answer to this: don't complain! Instead, supplement the article in question and correct perceived mistakes alone.

6. Subjectivity

The other change is the move from objectivity to subjectivity. For example, in the United States, some of the so-called traditional mainstream media have abandoned the promotion

Toivo(unspecified) exemplify the influence social media has on world political movements.

New York University media professor Clay Shirky believes that social media is an important new tool for promoting social and political change. In a January 2011 article in *Foreign Affairs*, written before the Arab Spring, he explicitly explained how social media become a vehicle for significant political change. He pointed at the role social media played in coordinating protests that ultimately forced out Moldova's communist government after 2009 election. Shirky (2011) argues that "political freedom has to be accompanied by a civil society literate enough and densely connected enough to discuss the issues presented to the public.

He endorses two step flow communication theory of sociologists Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld that the formation of well-considered political opinions is a two-step process. The first step requires access to information, the second, use of that information in conversation and debate. Under this framework, Shirky (2001) argues that social media has revolutionized how people form political opinions and has made information so widely accessible that more people than ever are able to develop considered points of view.

Grubmüller, Götsch, and Krieger (2013) also, appreciate the role of social media in politics, making their reference President Obama's election campaign in 2008. That, according to them, has often been described as the first electoral campaign in which the use of social media had a decisive impact and has set a precedent for the use of social media applications as election tools.

For them, Social media strongly supports network communications and enables governments to communicate better within the multiple networks outside of government and the informal organization (networks) within government. Leveraging these networks offers enhanced opportunities to achieve public goals.

Not everyone is in fact protagonist when it comes to the role of social media in politics. while some applaud the role, there are also groups who ask if social media really deserve the plaudits it has been given. Nawawya and kahims (2012) quoted Himelfarb (2011) on

the debate about social media power. Himelfarb (2011) quoted as saying there has been a debate between the polar opposite of cyber-utopian and cyber-skeptic where one side hailed social media and the internet as liberator and the other as tools increasingly used by authoritarian regimes to attack and intimidate dissent voices. Morozov (2011) as used by Nawawya and Kahims (2012) calls protagonists tendency of attaching too much authority to social media ‘cyber-utopianism’ or ‘Google Doctrine’.

According to Nawawya and Kahims, (2012) cyber-Utopians down play the governments’ role in censoring social media or even utilizing them to serve their purpose. Morosov (2012), however, argued that it should not be a given or an automatic assumption that social media, in and by themselves, will eventually push for political change, introduce transformation to societies and liberate them from repressive regimes.

Malcolm Gladwell as described by Sarah Joseph (2012,p. 150) is a prominent skeptic of the importance of social media in progressive social and political change. Gladwell argues that social media connections promote weak ties and low-risk activism, or “slacktivism.” He argues that “liking” something on Facebook, or retweeting a story, requires little effort, yet those actions might lull the protagonists into thinking they are doing something meaningful. Gladwell caustically notes that “Facebook activism succeeds not by motivating people to make a real sacrifice but by motivating them to do the things people do when they’re not motivated enough to make a real sacrifice. Gladwell also argues that successful activism requires strategic hierarchies, with a careful and precise allocation of tasks.

Having said this much about the use of social media in politics, let us now take this discussion a little forward and relate it with activism being under the shadow of politics.

2.6 Social Media Activism

The term social media activism is in fact ambiguous as its application and purposes various. Movements like Occupy Wall Street and the Arab spring most often exemplify social media activism. However, what activities exactly resemble to Activism is so contentious that its definition extends from peaceful political, social, environmental and economic campaigning to violent anti-peace movements.

Howard (2011) as cited by Nawawy and Khamis (2012) defines Cyber-activism as "the act of using the internet to advance a political cause that is difficult to advance offline". According to Denning (2000), activism refers to normal, non disruptive use of the Internet in support of an agenda or cause. Operations in this area includes browsing the web for information, constructing web sites and posting materials on them, transmitting electronic publications and letters through email, and using the Net to discuss issues, form coalitions, and plan and coordinate activities. Therefore, cyber-activism, digital-activism or social media activism would be used to mean consistent online political campaigning in the form of posting images, videos and writing articles.

Eaton(2013) divide internet activism into three categories. The first is awareness and advocacy – also known as participatory journalism which refers to the use of the internet as an alternative news source to counter the control of information channels opposed to the interests of the activists.

The second category, organization and mobilization also known as ‘mediated mobilization’, is also pivotal to understanding the significance of internet activism in the Egyptian 25 January movement. This form of internet activism is used in a number of ways, but of most interest here are calls for ‘offline’ action, such as demonstrations, as was witnessed in Egypt. Finally, action/reaction activism, often dubbed ‘Hacktivism’, is used to describe malicious attacks by activists to bring down or paralyze websites (Lievrouw, 2011).

Zoe Fox(2011), says digital tools like youtube, twitter and facebook have defined a 2011social movements by giving rise to a new generation of activism. The year 2011 is a memorable moment when it comes to the power of social media in general and social media activism in particular. Zoe Fox, takes a look at nine biggest stories of activism and uprisings organized using social media in 2011. Below are the nine stories as Zoe narrated.

1. Tunisian Revolution

The Suicide of a 26 years old Tunisian, Mohammed Bouazizi, a college graduate unable to find job with in his field of study on dec.17, 2010 triggered a revolution in his home country and across the Arab world.

Young Tunisians who were protesting before Bouazizi set himself on fire began organizing on facebook and twitter with Bouazizi as their model. Activists start sharing videos, images and different writings on twitter, youtube and facebook which Ben Ali's government already knew they are extensively used for the protest against his government.

Amira Chebli a young Tunisian Actress and singer has also been a cyber Activist who, with hundreds of other young Tunisians, turned to social media to broadcast information on Tunisia's popular revolt. On Jan. 14, 2011, president Zen El Abidine Ben Ali fled seeking refuge in Saudi Arabia.

Amira Chebli as an activist, says social media didn't cause the end of Ben Ali's reign nor it is right, on political level, to say the revolution was made by a bunch of young people sitting in front of their computers. She, rather, says, social media played a vital role in accelerating the course of events and enhancing the citizens' capacity to impact political events.

2. Egyptian Revolution

The movement that ousted president Hosni Mubarak in Feb. 11, 2011, was another uprising fueled by social media. In an attempt to quell organizing, Mubarak's Government attempted blocking of twitter and then the Internet and SMS. However, facebook activism and the network

Vergas (2012) writes how an Egyptian revolution began on facebook. whom Vergas described as accidental activist, Wael Ghonim, made facebook activism a contributing factor for the revolution. Ghonim while browsing facebook found a startling image showing who is later identified as Khaled mohammed said from Alexaderia beaten to death by the Egyptian police.

The Egyptian-born living in Dubai, Ghonim, went online and created a facebook page called “we are all Khaled said” and write “Today they killed Khaled”. It only took him two minutes to get 300 people join the group and three months to reach 250,000. Vergas (2012), therefore, said what bubbled up online inevitably spilled onto the street, starting with a series of ‘silent stands’ that culminated in massive and historic rally at Tahrir square. ‘We Are All Khaled Said’ helped ignite an uprising that led to the resignation of president Hosni Mubarak.

3. Bahraini uprising

Protest against Bahraini King Hamad began Feb.14, 2011. Four days later and no doubt in response to the web’s power as a mobilizer, authorities restricted the internet. Citizens filmed the funeral of a protester, uploading the footage to YouTube immediately. Despite efforts to overthrow the sunni king in the mostly shia country, the regime remain intact.

4. Libyan revolution

Protest in Libya began around Feb. 17, 2011. Authorities shutdown the internet few days later, hoping to stop rebel forces from organized use of social media. violence escalated as former leader Moammer Al Gadafi launched a war against what he called rebel forces. Following months of brutality, twitter rumors said Gaddafi had left Libya. Two months later, however, photos of the dead leader circulated on twitter . Ultimately, the end to the war was announced on facebook by NATO commander Admiral James Stavridis in late October.

5. Syrian Uprising

Before protests began in Syria on March 15, 2011, facebook and twitter had been blocked for several years. Three months after protesters started bloody clashes with security forces, authorities’ shutdown the internet to prevent organization and communication. The situation now in Syria is beyond war.

6. Vigilante Hackers

2011 has seen fair share of noteworthy ‘vigilante’ hacks, from groups such as anonymous and lulzsec. Often hacking on behalf of freedom of information, these groups take down corporations and organizations that have provoked them or whose practice conflict with their ideas of justice and social responsibility.

Some notable examples include Lulzsec taking down CIA’s website in June, taking down Sony play station in April, taking down Murdoch’s Sun newspaper in July, anonymous posting names and addresses of BART policemen in August, and anonymous taking down Syria’s Government website in August, among others.

7. London Riots

In the wake of the European economic crisis in 2011 summer, protesters clashed with police from Athens to Lisbon. Interestingly, London rioters did not use the same social tools for demonstration mobilization in August as their counterparts in the Middle East. London's protesters used BlackBerry Messenger to communicate, rather than Twitter or Facebook.

8. San Francisco BART Riots

Residents of San Francisco took to the BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) to protest the killing of a BART passenger who was shot by a police officer after allegedly pulling out a knife. San Francisco blocked cell service to prevent protesters from organizing at four BART stations. This attracted much negative attention, including that of anonymous hacker groups.

9. Occupy Wall Street

The latest in American activism, targeting bankers more than governments, began with a blog posted in July. Protesters marched in Lower Manhattan's Zuccotti Park, beginning Sep. 17. While the #OccupyWallStreet (or #OWS) movement has spurred Occupy protests across the U.S., they all take issue with the growing inequity between the very wealthy (the 1%) and the working and middle classes (the 99%). In keeping with their

tech roots, some Occupy demonstrators attempted to create their own Internet to ensure constant connectivity.

Evgeny Morozov as quoted by Madline Storck (2011,p.9), hence, points out:

The challenge of anyone analyzing how the Internet may affect the overall effectiveness of political activism, is first, to determine the kind of qualities and activities that are essential to the success of the democratic struggle in a particular country or context and second, to understand how a particular medium of campaigning or facilitating collective action affects those qualities and activities.

2.7 Freedom of expression and the media

Freedom of expression is established under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 19 of the UDHR reads:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Whenever issues related to freedom of expression arise, freedom of the press and media come along it. The European Court of Human Rights emphasizes the pre-eminent role of the press in a State governed by the rule of law". It stated:

Freedom of the press affords the public one of the best means of discovering and forming an opinion of the ideas and attitudes of their political leaders. In particular, it gives politicians the opportunity to reflect and comment on the preoccupations of public opinion; it thus enables everyone to participate in the free political debate which is at the very core of the concept of a democratic society.

This right according to Kinnon, Hickok, Bar and Lim (2014) covers the freedom to express and publish content as well as to have access to such content. As such, it provides for the right to press freedom and the right to information, and these apply across media platforms and national frontiers. International standards require that any limitations of these rights should be exceptions to the norm, and be based on legitimate purposes as set

out in the UDHR and ICCPR. Likewise, limitations of any right need further to be made in terms of law, and be necessary and proportionate.

The most basic component of freedom of expression is freedom of speech. The right to freedom of speech allows individuals to express themselves without interference or constraint by the government. For instance, in the case of United State, the Supreme Court requires the government to provide substantial justification for the interference. The Supreme Court at the same time recognizes that the government may prohibit some speech that may cause a breach of the peace and security or cause violence.

According to article 19 (2005), In order to protect the right to freedom of expression, it is imperative that the media be permitted to operate independently from government control. This ensures the media's role as public watchdog, and that the public has access to a wide range of opinions, especially on matters of public interest.

2.8 Freedom of media and Expression in Ethiopia

Ethiopia had a proclamation declaring right to freedom of expression and the media regardless of frontier if not prohibited by law. The proclamation known by the name 'Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information' was proclaimed in 2008. According to the proclamation, the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, guarantee freedom of expression and of the mass media.

According to the proclamation, by prohibiting censorship, the Constitution promotes a free mass media. Reaffirming the constitutional principle that restrictions on freedom of expression and of the mass media shall only be based on laws which secure and preserve the wellbeing of the youth, honor and reputation of persons, national security, public order and other overriding rights, the media shall enjoy freedom.

The proclamation in its preamble notes that the freedom of media is decreed being aware that a free, independent and diverse mass media with high ethical standards and professional competence plays an indispensable role in the national Endeavour to build democratic order in Ethiopia. However, in reality there are situations that points to the fact that the freedom is not as decreed in the proclamation. We often see pre-mature death

of a number of Newspapers and Magazines mostly due to influence from the government. The blocking of websites and interception of international broadcastings is persistent.

According to Mekuanint (2013), who examined the freedom of media and information proclamation visa- a-vis its practice, there is lack of commitment on the part of the government in paying attention to the implementation of the press law. Apart from making the law, he found out that the government has been reluctant on the implementation of the press law. Despite the fact that the press law permits the media to express opinion or criticism on various issues, the government is very critical of the views and criticisms of the media. This indicates that the government disregards other views different from its own. Both the broadcast and the print media have suffered the problem. This seems to pave the way for social media to be a stage where people exercise freedom of expression. Yet that too is not immune of the problem.

2.8.1 Freedom of expression on the net

The explosion of news and information on the World Wide Web in recent years has tempted many governments to consider placing restrictions on Internet content (Sussman, 2000). The restriction of the free flow of news on the Internet infringes the fundamental right of free access to information, and attention has, therefore, been drawn to press freedom on the Internet. The Coordinating Committee of Press Freedom Organizations (2002) issued the following statement at a meeting in November 2002 in Vienna that stresses the importance of preserving and extending press freedom on the Internet:

News media in cyberspace and via international satellite broadcast should be afforded the same freedom of expression rights as traditional news media. Any text adopted by the World Summit of the Information Society should affirm this. A free press means a free people. Press freedom on the Internet must be a fundamental characteristic of this and of any new communication system.

Freedom House's Freedom on the Net 2014 report covers 65 countries in 6 regions around the

world. The countries were chosen to illustrate internet freedom improvements and declines in a variety of political systems. According to the report, world's second biggest

economy, China, is the least free and Japan is the freest from Asia. From middle east and north Africa, Iran is the least and Tunisia is the free. Argentina is most free and Cuba is the least from Latin America. Georgia is the most free and Uzbekistan is the least from the Eurasia. From the category that made Australia, Canada, European Union, Iceland and United States one region, no country fall in the least free zone but Iceland makes it the most free in the world. finally from sub Saharan Africa, which included South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Angola, Malawi, Zambia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Sudan, The Gambia and Ethiopia, South Africa is free and Ethiopia is the least.

The report points to government control and regulation for the low status of freedom on the net in Ethiopia. According to Freedom House(2014, p.286- 299), Government surveillance of online and mobile phone communications is pervasive in Ethiopia, and evidence has emerged in recent years that reveal the scale of such practices. According to Human Rights Watch(2014) there are strong indications that the government has deployed a centralized monitoring system from the Chinese telecommunications firm ZTE, known as ZXMT, to monitor phone lines and various types of communications, including mobile phone networks and the internet.

In November 2013, According to the report, a new Cyber Security Law expanded the surveillance powers of the Information Network Security Agency (INSA), the government body established in 2011 to preside over the security of the country's critical communications infrastructure. According to reports, the law states that social media outlets, blogs and other internet related media have great capabilities to instigate war, to damage the country's image and create havoc in the economic atmosphere of the country setting the logic for expanding INSA's duties to include developing offensive cyber capabilities and ICT tools. The proclamation also empowers INSA to investigate computers, networks, internet, radio, television, and social media platforms for any possible damage to the country's social, economic, political and psychological well being.

INSA reportedly uses sophisticated spyware, such as the commercial toolkit FinFisher, a device that can secretly monitor computers by turning on webcams, record everything a user types with a key logger, and intercept Skype calls, to target dissidents and supposed

threats. A leaked document confirmed that the UK-based company, Gamma International, had provided Ethio Telecom with the FinFisher surveillance toolkit at some point between April and July 2012.

2.9 Surveillance on the net

Many governments do want to limit the information its citizens can reach. In some cases, the motivations are understandable and even laudable. Because, according to Bender, Dondonis and Verri (2014), information is key to the well being of states, not only strategically, but also from a human rights perspective. The fluid and democratic character of Internet, however, is not only responsible for unprecedented possibilities for sharing and networking, but also creates an environment of vulnerability for information flowing online. Thus, with the advent of the Internet, privacy protection dialogues and initiatives became even more crucial for human rights promotion as a whole.

They say, Surveillance, as means of obtaining information, is in no way an illegitimate policy per se and as any power the democratic state legitimately holds, surveillance ultimately exists to preserve human rights and social values. Surveillance is an act which has greater connection to issues of Privacy. Bender, Dondonis and Verri (2014), therefore, believed that proper understanding of what it means to be under surveillance demands clear understanding of what the term 'privacy' actually entails.

Most dictionaries define privacy as "the state or condition of being free from being observed or disturbed by other people". During the early age of the Internet, there is a conceptualization that it is a world out of reach of government regulation. With the increasing number of users and technical capabilities, however, digital media gradually became the focus of national intelligence agencies, giving rise to cyber surveillance practices used to date.

The internet's potential for processing speed, storage capacity, miniaturization, affordability, availability, portability, spatial reach, and scope of application, enabled states attain means to keep themselves well-informed at the same pace that civilians' fundamental rights, which had already been secured in the eras of telephony and mail, are put in jeopardy (Benett, Clement & Milberry 2012).

According to Richards (2012,) Until pioneer author Michel Foucault studied and described the phenomenon, surveillance was commonly associated with autocratic and totalitarian states and

their control over their populations. He says today, the use of surveillance technology has not only found overall acceptable justification in democratic societies, but has completely crossed the public-private border and expanded to the corporative sphere.

David Lyon as cited by Bender, Dondonis and Verri (2014) describes governmental and corporative surveillance as the focused, systematic, and routine attention to personal details for purposes of influence, management, protection, or direction. According to Stanley and Steinhard (2003)The most common form of this practice takes in the context of information and communication technologies is the so-called data surveillance, which implies the collection and retention of information about an “identifiable individual”, often from multiple sources, which help recognize multiple activities and establish a pattern of behavior in both the virtual and material realms.

Christian Fuchs (2010) says there are different approaches to the definition of surveillance. Surveillance can be comprehended very well not in a just concise definition but by taking it from neutral and negative points of view. He therefore, outlined assumptions for the two perspectives.

2.9.1 Neutral Concepts of Surveillance

Neutral concepts of surveillance make one or more of the following assumptions

- There are positive aspects of surveillance.
- Surveillance has two faces, it is enabling and constraining
- Surveillance is a fundamental aspect of all societies.
- Surveillance is necessary for organization.

Any kind of systematic information gathering is surveillance. Neutral surveillance concepts see surveillance as ontological category; it is seen as being universally valid and characteristic either for all societies or all modern societies.

Anthony Giddens as cited by Fuchs (2010), provided a very influential neutral concept of surveillance. By surveillance, Giddens refers to the accumulation of information defined as symbolic materials that can be stored by an agency of collectivity as well as to the supervision of the activities of subordinates by their superiors within any collectivity (Giddens 1981). It is the coding of information relevant to the administration of subject populations, plus their direct supervision by officials and administrators of all sorts. According to Giddens, the modern state would make use of surveillance in the sense of gathering information about the subject population in order to allow overall organization and control.

One claim of neutral surveillance concepts is that there is a positive side of surveillance or that there is a negative as well as a positive side of surveillance. David Lyon says that surveillance has two faces, an enabling and a constraining one or disabling and enabling as Zureik (2003) puts it. Fuchs however, quoted (Marx 2007, 535) who elaborated how surveillance can be both enabling and disabling:

Surveillance can serve goals of protection, administration, rule compliance, documentation, and strategy, as well as goals involving inappropriate manipulation, restricted life opportunities, social control, and spying. [...] To varying degrees, surveillance is a property of any social system – from two friends to a workplace to a government.

Another claim of neutral surveillance concepts, according to Fuchs, is that surveillance is a universal phenomenon that can be found in all societies. He cites Rule (2007, 14) who says “In one form or another, it (surveillance) is a basic and ubiquitous social process, occurring in settings ranging from the family to state bureaucracies whenever one party seeks to shape its treatment of the other on the basis of the latter’s past performance, to solidify this claim.

2.9.2 Negative Concepts of Surveillance

Fuchs says surveillance is also a negative concept that is inherently linked to information gathering for the purposes of domination, violence, and coercion. Whom Fuchs described as thinker of negative theory of surveillance, Michel Foucault, says surveillance is a form

of disciplinary power which is a general formula of domination. For him, surveillance is inherently coercive and dominative.

Fuchs quoted John Fiske, as saying surveillance is always a totalitarian power:

Surveillance is the power to know without being known, to see without being seen. [...] all surveillance is totalitarian, for it allows its victims no say in the way it operates, and we must not allow the general benignity of its uses to mask the fact (Fiske 1996).

Generally Fuchs concluded that negative approaches tend to define surveillance as the collection of data on individuals or groups that are used so that control and discipline of behavior can be exercised by the threat of being targeted by violence. Surveillance by nation states and corporations also aims at controlling the behavior of individuals and groups, i.e. they should be forced to behave or not behave in certain ways because they know that their appearance, movements, location, or ideas are or could be watched by surveillance systems.

2.10 Social Media in Ethiopia

There is no agreeable frame of time for when Internet is imported in to Ethiopia. But there are documents pointing to 1997 and 1999 for the introduction of internet and mobile phone respectively.

Since then, progresses were registered with regard to speed, penetration rate, subscription and related issues. While Africa in general has the lowest internet status in the world, Ethiopia is ranked among the least even from Africa according to Freedom House (2014).

According to Ethio-telecom, the sole internet provider in Ethiopia, internet subscribers reached 4.6 million by the end of 2013/14 which is 123% targeted by the government in the Growth & Transformation Plan. The number of licenses issued by the company for internet cafes since the year 2010 has also reached 2,363 nationwide. Although due to the fact that over 80 % of the Ethiopian population lives in rural areas and mostly are illiterate, according to Ethio-telecom, there are 1.27 million users of facebook with active accounts in Ethiopia where 28 % of whom are women.

The country is connected to the international internet via satellite, a fiber-optic cable that passes through Sudan and connects to its international gateway, and the SEACOM cable that connects through Djibouti to an international undersea cable. In an effort to expand connectivity, the government has reportedly installed several thousand of kilometers of fiber-optic cable throughout the country over the past few years. 18 Construction of the East African Submarine Cable System (EASS) was completed and launched in July 2010, but its effects on Ethiopia have yet to be seen as of mid-2014(Freedom House, 2014) .

Before smart phones flooded in to Ethiopia seemingly as fashion of the day a couple of years ago, Internet café's were the only places where internet has been served. Owing to meager infrastructure, government monopoly over the telecommunications sector, and obstructive telecom policies, Ethiopia continues to have one of the lowest rates of internet and mobile phone connectivity in the world (Freedom House, 2014).

In 2013 and 2014, access to ICTs in Ethiopia remained extremely limited, hampered by slow speeds and the state's tight grip on the telecom sector. According to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), internet penetration stood at a mere 1.9 percent in 2013, up from 1.5 percent in 2012. Only 0.25 percent of the population had access to fixed-broadband internet, increasing from 0.01 percent in 2012.

Ethiopians had more access to mobile phone services, with mobile phone penetration rates increasing from 22 percent in 2012 to 27 percent in 2013, though such access rates still lag behind a regional average of 80 percent. Meanwhile, less than 5 percent of the population has a mobile-broadband subscription. With this penetration amount, the number of Ethiopians using social media seems to increase. While it is economically impermeable for majority of Ethiopians to use computer, mobile phones are becoming a driving force for the increasing internet use.

Given the above facts about internet status, little can also be said about social media in Ethiopia. Since the introduction of the Internet in to Ethiopia, the few fortunates were engaged in social media. When talking about Internet in Ethiopia, what mostly comes to peoples mind is social networking sites and most dominantly facebook. It is evident on daily bases that most people are not acquainted to other social networking sites except

facebook. This never means that twitter, linkedin, blogs and other SNS are totally absent. Selected group of people in the academic, political, economic and media circle make use of these tools as well. But facebook is popular.

While people elsewhere in the world use facebook for various purposes, here too people use it for different causes ranging from the simplest need for networking of friends to complex form of political engagements. Some make it an alternative forum for political deliberation as Tesfaye (2012) stated and others for academic and entertainment purposes as Mebratu (2014) explored. Still for some group it is place where they look for their soul-met or create and strengthen friendship.

Including facebook, different SNNs are now being utilized to also express dissent voices. The story of zone nine bloggers and the trend that followed their imprisonment is an example of the raising use of social media as relatively free political forum. This takes us to what different organizations and news outlets often criticize the government for, online censorship.

According to Freedom House (2014), internet freedom in Ethiopia worsened due to increasing restrictions on access to social media and communications tools, such as Storify, and the temporary blocking of Facebook and Twitter in July 2013. A new law passed in November 2013 gave the Information Network Security Agency (INSA) carte blanche to track private online communications and investigate electronic devices without oversight.

The regulation of the internet in general under any given pretext is believed to have a chilling effect on internet freedom and freedom of expression in the country, leading to increasing levels of self-censorship.

2.11 Oromo Nationalism and the Media

There are different arguments on how and when the Oromo nationalist movement emerged, its challenges and achievements. But before directly diving in to the topic, it is important to look at the term nationalism. The free dictionary defined Nationalism as:

1. Devotion, especially excessive or indiscriminating one to the interest or culture of a particular nation-state.
2. The belief that a particular culture or ethnic group constitutes a distinct people deserving of political self-determination.

Admasu (1992) defined Nationalism as generally articulated view of a people defining themselves as a distinct nation, separate from, equal to, and independent of, any other cultural and social groups within a political boundary. According to him, a nation could demand self-determination or aspire for independence either asserting a difference of superiority or as the result of oppression and victimization at the hand of another nation or nationality.

There are also debates on the pros and cons of nationalism and nationalist movements among scholars. Asafa (2010) citing (Tiryakian, 1995) says Most scholars over the years have viewed nationalism as progressive when it helped the formation of nation-states, and regressive when it challenged and changed nation-states from within by ethnonational movements. Some Marxist and liberal scholars do converge in their negative evaluation of nationalism as anti-democratic, anti-progressive, and ultimately a fundamental threat to interstate relations.

Given this definition, agreeably the political past of the Oromo which had been tied to colonialism and de-ethnicization since the 2nd half of the 19th century, put the foundation for the injection of the concept in to the Oromo's political discourse. Long before the incorporation of parts of what constituted today's Oromia regional state in to Minilik II's Empire, there were independent kingdoms and confederates with their own ruler and defined territory.

According to Makuria (1993), the Oromo ancestors have lived in their homeland making and obeying their own laws. They were ruled by leaders they elected periodically. The yoke of colonialism which manifested itself through political marginalization, de-ethnicization via assimilation and Ethiopianization, as imposed identity along with confiscation of Oromo resources are reasons for the emergence of the idea of nationalism among the Oromo.

Under the Ethiopian colonial system, the Oromo have lost their autonomous historical and cultural development and they have been denied institutional power. Therefore, the Oromo national movement aims to re-create an Oromo political power that will enable the Oromo to have institutional power in the cultural, educational, and economic arenas (Asafa, 2014).

While the emergence of Oromo nationalism has to do with answering question of survival as a ethnic group, there were progresses over time. Merera (2008) and Okbazghi (2001) argue that the idea of Oromo nationalism began among the Oromo elite as they became increasingly aware of their secondary status in the imperial regime's military and civilian bureaucracy in the 1950s. by then, the elites ultimately seek cultural recognition and respect, social justice and equal citizenship.

According to Merera (2008), the ethno-national struggle was expressed in the first Oromo-wide movement, the Macca and Tuuluma Self-Help Association (MTSHA). This organization is considered by many Oromos to be the pioneer of modern Oromo nationalism, for it played an irreplaceable role in raising self-awareness among the Oromo youth.

Colonel Alemu Kitessa and Hailamariam Gammada, were credited for establishing the Association, together with Baqala Nadhi and colonel Qadida Gurmessa from 1963-1964 to organize the people for educational, health and economic development. General Tadesse Birru later joined the Association. According to Asafa (2014), MTSHA is an amalgam of Jibat-Macha, Meta-Robbi, and Tulama Shawa Self-Help Associations.

The Oromo consciousness born out of anguish started getting momentum as MTSHA managed to obtain more and more members. The flow of the Oromos from rural areas to the towns in search of education and better opportunity is believed to have contributed to enlighten larger number of Oromos. One of the greatest successes during the early years of MTSHA's establishment, according to Asafa (2014), has been the use of Afaan Oromo among the urbanites. Within months, the association transformed in to pan-Oromo movement. The success of the association in taking the Oromo concerns in to higher

level, injecting the idea of political and cultural resistance and strengthening sense of Oromoness (Oromomma) brought fear in to the imperial circle.

Merera (2008) explained that the response of the imperial regime to the emerging Oromo nationalism was both quick and brutal. The leaders of the MTSHA were herded to prison, where some died and others served long prison terms, while the guerrilla fighters of Bale were forced to disband and their leaders negotiated for minor government posts. However, the suppression of both movements did not succeed in obviating the impending political problem since the seeds of modern Oromo nationalism had already been sown.

Although, MTSHA was banned in 1976, According to Opride.com it (1) marshaled the Oromo human, material and spiritual resources(2) harmonized the Oromo's activities (3) channeled the Oromo's creative energy (4)improved their economic ,educational ,health, cultural development and spiritual wellbeing and(5) established political equality of the Oromo with other peoples in Ethiopia.

Asafa (2014), pointing to the fact that the Oromo nationalism has had a cultural front, explained that Oromo workers, students, traders, and musicians created the Arffan Qallo and Biftu Ganamo musical groups in Dire Dawa. In particular, the Arffan Qallo Musical troupe gained national fame and traveled to different cities to perform dramas and cultural shows. The troupe was frequently invited to Finfinne during the meetings of the Macha-Tulama Self-Help Association. This, according to Asafa, registered a new chapter in the development of Oromo cultural nationalism.

The Bale peasant's movement had also been instrumental in advancing Oromo nationalism. Merera (2008) making (Gebbru, 1977 & 1996) his reference, notes that after the MTSHA, the Bale Oromo resistance against land alienation and unbearable taxation served as an additional catalyst for the growth of modern Oromo nationalism. In fact, the Bale uprising was a more sustained struggle and had a reverberating effect among the radical Ethiopian students in general and the Oromo intelligentsia in particular (Kiflu, 1993).

According to Okbazgi (2001), the 1950s and 1960s numerous peasant uprisings throughout Oromia punctuated the Oromo determination to recapture their land and to

rediscover their cultural and political heritage. It was in response to the widespread peasant uprisings and the urban social movement that the Oromo liberation Front (OLF) was created in 1974 to supply unified and secular leadership to the national resistance movement between 1974 and 1991. The Oromo nationalism that had been mostly peaceful and predominantly cultural is believed to transform in to a pure political and armed resistance with the birth of OLF. According to Asafa (2014), there were two ideas on their table.

1. to create an independent republic of Oromia, or
2. to build a multicultural democracy by joining other peoples in a federal or confederal arrangement

As time, grievances and struggle continued, clearing the path for self determination has been the priority of OLF. According to Asafa (2014), the OLF leaders argue that the right of self-determination is an inalienable right of our people to the fulfillment of which their front is committed as a matter of priority and it holds that it is the Oromo people and only the Oromo people who should determine its own political future.

The declaration of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) of Derg and Article 39 of the current Ethiopian constitution both consisted self determination to respond to ethnic nationalism.

The OLF which took the Oromo nationalism in to armed resistance had gone through bitter struggle to topple the military junta together with organizations as Tigrayan People's Liberation Front. According to Merera (2008), the fall of the military regime in 1991 and the reordering of the Ethiopian state that followed initially appeared to accommodate the Oromo people's demand for self-rule. The hopes, as he puts it, were raised and dashed, following the OLF's forced withdrawal from the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE).

The post 1991 Oromo nationalism has been manifesting itself through what Merera (2014) referred to as the need for self rule and shared rule. Although the Oromo People's Democratic Organization is leading Oromia with the objective of insuring the benefit of the Oromo with the principle of shared rule, there are still demands for self

determination. According to him, the forcing out of the OLF from the legal political process in 1992 and the continued foundering of the process of democratization, have led the Oromo to a new type of political and economic marginalization.

Throughout the long standing Oromo nationalist movement there has been driving and unifying substance called Gadaa and Oromoness or Oromumma. The following sub topic deals with these concepts one after another.

2.11.1 Oromoness/ Oromumma

Oromoness or what the Oromos call Oromumma is what rouse anti-domination sentiment both at ideal or practical level in the history of the Oromo. It is a concept that goes beyond tangible elements to metaphysical Oromo undertakings.

According to Getahun (2002), Oromuma is the totality of Oromo personality. It is an amalgam of Oromo culture, social religion, language, history, territory, and social and psychological attributes that make the people different from others. In addition to Getahun's definition, for Asafa (2014) *Oromummaa* encapsulates a set of fundamental beliefs, values, moral codes, and guiding principles that make Oromo society different from other societies. While the concept seems quite vague for many Oromos, Jalata attempted to make it clear through explaining that it is an historically shaped form of knowledge that emerged out of the Oromo experience of several centuries of life and living (*jiruf jireenya*).

While the historical past of the Oromo, especially since a century ago, posed a death threat to Oromumma, its basic tenets have survived up to now. One of the elements of Oromumma is Afaan Oromo (the language spoken by Oromos).

Afaan Oromo

For Getahun, Afaan Oromo, is the most crucial part of Oromuma while Asafa described it as the main carrier of the essence and features of Oromo culture, tradition, and people hood. The legendary Oromo artist Honorable Dr. Ali Bira singing about Afaan Oromo said 'Afaan Oromo Hundee Oromummaa' meaning Afaan Oromo the foundation of Oromumma.

What has been affected very significantly over the past 100+ years had been Oromumma which as literatures note earlier include almost everything that makes the Oromo distinct from its neighbors. Vast majority of Oromo elites agree that the Oromos were represented wrongly in Ethiopian Historiography and it was not written for its larger part. Basing on some available materials from Oromo scholars and oral tradition, it is evident that the political, cultural, economic and social marginalization of the past was targeting Oromumma which in fact is the Oromo identity.

Afaan Oromo as an element, carrier and the foundation of Oromumma suffered immensely under the past three successive regimes. According to Getahun (2002) Suppressing Afaan Oromo was an utmost priority and the process began simultaneously with the conquest of 1880s. After Oromia was forcefully incorporated in to emperor Minelik II's government, Amharic was imposed on the Oromo, claiming it be the language of the kings, (yenigus quwanquw). Minelik II appointed officials neither speak Afaan Oromo nor understand it. This necessitated the use of simabelew (interpreter).

Sooner Amharic was made school language and that, according to Getahun, completed the official suppression of Afaan Oromo and other languages. Consequently, while speaking Afaan Oromo was punishable, Oromo students who spoke Amharic fluently were also demoralized and ridiculed because of their accents. They were pressured to change their Oromo names into Amharic when competing for jobs. That had been more than enough to encumber the growth of Afaan Oromo.

Not only people with an Oromo name undergo change but towns and places also. Addis Abeba instead of Finfinne, Hagere Hiywot instead of Ambo, Debrezeyit instead of Bishoftu, Nazret instead of Adama, Zuway instead of Batu to mention few. However, Getahun (2002), notes where they did not change or could not twist, they corrupted them into meaningless words and forced the Oromo to adopt those corrupted names. For instance, the province of Ilu Abba Bora is corrupted into a meaningless Ilubabor, Haro Maya into Alamaya, and River Hawas into Awash. Place names in the capital Finfinne /Addis Ababa/ were altered the same way.

The discrimination and marginalization the Oromo has been facing for speaking Afaan Oromo and having an Oromo name while having multi-faceted consequences, it had also driven the Oromo to high degree of adherence to Oromumma and self pride which can be termed as *Sabonumma*.

Regardless of wide range of discriminatory techniques imposed on Afaan Oromo and Oromummaa, efforts made by heroes and heroines like Shake Bakri Saphalo and Aster Genno contributed to the birth of *qubee* generation now. *Qubee* generation can be understood as a new Oromo generation whose mother tongue is Afaan Oromo. The qubee generation speak Afaan Oromo and learn qubee(the Oromo Alphabet) from grade one. They also use *qubee* instead of Fidel (the Amhara Alphabet) in Amharic writing. Yet, there are efforts to make Afaan Oromo the other working language of the federal government. Therefore, according to Asafa (2014), the Oromo language as the gold mine of Oromo history and culture has remained the main pillar and marker of *Oromummaa*.

2.11.2 The Gadaa

Gadaa is a system that guides the life and living and world view of the Oromo. According to Admasu (1995), the basis of Oromo cultural nationalism is the claim on the once fully lived experience of the Gadaa society. While nationalism has a lot to do with identity, Gadaa defines Oromummaa and the Oromo identity. Therefore, in the study of Oromo politics looking at Gadaa is important.

Asafa (2014), making reference to (Baissa, 1971, 1993; Legesse, 1973) notes the indigenous Gadaa system is a system that organized and ordered society around political, economic, social, cultural, and religious institutions. He also remarked that Gadaa is the central source of Oromo Politics, philosophy, wisdom, worldview, moral values, ethics, laws and costumes from which Oromummaa emerges and develops as the intellectual, ideological and theoretical powerhouse of the Oromo.

Gadaa which some call it the Oromo Democracy, as a political system is democratic for power shifts every eight years. According to Asafa, the Gadaa system has the principles

of checks and balances (through periodic succession of every eight years), and division of power (among executive, legislative, and judicial branches), balanced opposition (among five parties), and power sharing between higher and lower administrative organs to prevent power from falling into the hands of despots.

There are two concepts under the Gadaa as Legesse, (1973: 81) is cited by Asafa (2014)

1. Gadaa-sets (age-sets) and All newly born males would enter a gadaa-set at birth, which they would belong to along with other boys of the same age, and for the next forty years they would go through five eight-year initiation periods;
2. The Gadaa-grade would be entered on the basis of generation, and boys would enter their luba forty years after their fathers.

Gadaa has been a complex, yet a clear system. According to Admasu (1995), the Oromo tradition of democracy, permitted the selection of leaders through popular participation. Merit of proven deeds and observed talents were the essential requirements of leadership in Gadaa society. The assemblies of rule making were held in a gathering and place known as "Chaafee." The deliberative process was equal, free, and opens to all. Among the principal and prominent offices and officials of the Gadaa society was the Abaa Gadaa (father of Gadaa), Abaa Seeraa (father of law) and Abaa Duulaa (father of war). In modern political states, the traditional functions of these Oromo officials would correspond with those of head of state, minister of law or justice, and minister of defense.

Discussing Gadaa in its totality here in this study is difficult but taking Oromo nationalism in to account, a little can be said. Asafa (2014) says since it is an emblem of an Oromo cultural totality, with its democratic traditions, Gadaa has also become an ideological expression of the Oromo national movement. Holcomb (1993: 4) as cited by Asafa notes that:

Gadaa represented an ideological basis for the expression of Oromo nationalism. This expression empowered the Oromo to resist oppression, become self-conscious as a nation in the twentieth century in the face of intense subjugation.... Gadaa represents a repository, a storehouse of concepts, values, beliefs, and practices that are accessible to all Oromo. The challenge the Oromo face now is the serious one of fashioning

elements of the heritage into an ideology which empowers the nation to achieve the self-determination that the people aspire to.

Asafa further advocate that without retrieving and developing the best elements of the Gadaa civilization, the Oromo cannot fully develop Oromummaa as their organizing and central ideology and their theoretical model of liberation.

In the Case of the Oromo Politics in general and Nationalism in particular, concepts like Oromummaa, Afaan Oromo and Gadaa have a far reaching implication. The three concepts interrelated to one another give a clear and big picture of the everything of the Oromo the way discussed above.

2.11.3 The media

Throughout the 20th century history of Oromo struggle for freedom, justice and independence, albeit the fact that media had been a new advent, Radio and Later Newspapers have been used but fairly no single printed material is available to prove this. People in the media circle and then nationalists who are alive today speak of how media have been utilized.

I interviewed Journalist Ibrahim HajiAli who co-founded the first Oromo news paper in 1968. He listed radio Mokadisho and Harar and Bariisaa the Newspaper he cofounded as the most renowned media which were using Afan Oromo and were instrumental in promoting the Oromo struggle for emancipation.

Radio Mokadisho

Radio mokadisho the Afan Oromo service started transmission towards the end of 1950's by three Oromos who fled to Somalia during the Haile Sellasie regime. Yunus Abdullahi, Ayub Abubakar, and shehk Mohammed Rashad were credited for motivating the Oromo to stand against injustice and subjugation against the Oromo. While it is ridiculous to see professionalism in media carrier then, Ibrahim, however, recall how journalistic these people were in producing edutainment programs. During the early times of the radio station, programs had been broadcasted live from the studio.

According Ibrahim, Songs, poem and letters apart from news were the main contents of the program ultimately designed to inspire the Oromo for emancipation. Resistance songs that preach thirst for freedom were the very features of the radio station. A lyric of a song that amplifies the values of freedom reads:

Bilisummaan Aannanii Kan beekutu dhugaa

Kan hin beekne bira ta' eet mugaa

Yunus Abdulahi who had been singing live was also singing about courage, hope and solidarity that need to be among the Oromo. The lyric of one of his songs read:

Obsi mee itti dhiisii

Guyyat fidaa bar isisii

Jaalallee Hamilchiisii

Dardarummaa yaadachisii

Hiriyyumman dubbachisii

Diddus garaa abdachisii

The impact of the Mokadisho Radio had been so immense that the need for freedom, equality and justice had been triggering large number of Oromos to flee the regime via Hargesa to carry out armed struggle. That According to Ibrahim, was not welcomed by the Hailesillasié Regime. The Oromo under Hailesillasié were taken to jail while others were brutally killed for tuning to the radio. There is a claim that the regime hired European assassins to murder the star of Mokadisho Radio who was a defected chief spy of the emperor, Ayub Abubeker, in the red sea.

That too neither stops the struggle of the Oromo nor the opening of Oromo media.

Radio Harar

The emperor then initiated Radio Harar in 1965 to counter the ideology propagated by radio Mokadisho. Kuma Idea, Husen Adam and Tamasgen Gammada were the pioneers of Radio Harar. As the motive had been to make the Oromo of the region listen not to

radio Mokadisho, the transmission of radio Harar was at the same time with radio Mokadisho. But by far radio mokadisho remained number one choice of the audience.

Ibrahim recalled the myth that Afan Oromo break radio had been reversed by the oppressors themselves for their own sake. Although the establishment of Radio Harar is not to answer the question of the Oromo, it played an important role to promote Oromumma and the Oromo art. Quite a number of musical works and other artistic undertakings had been advanced to a higher standard as a result. The radio famed Afran qallo, the group that produced musicians like Dr. Artist Ali Birra, and Ali shabo.

Two years after radio Harar and just a year after the fall of the imperial system, in 1967 radio Ethiopia the Afan Oromo service started with political mission of controlling the Oromo again. Though the motive is to capture the heart bite of the people, the freedom to broadcast the basic Oromo concerns has been at water tide.

Bariisaa

Not only radio played significant role in keeping the Oromo nationalism on move but Newspapers too. The first Oromo and Afaan Oromo News paper written in saba was published in 1968 by the name Bariisaa. Bariisaa was co-founded by Ibrahim HajiAli, Madi Ahmed Mude, Lammessa Boru, Immiru, and Angose as public financed Newspaper. The Oromo were contributing everything for this newspaper to go forward. The founders were not just journalists but sellers of the paper too. The co-founder, Ibrahim Haji Ali speaking of the paper told me that he and his family were selling the paper on the streets of Finfinne.

The tabloid paper (Bariisaa), was addressing the economic, political and social Oromo issues of the day in the form of letters, poem and articles. The contents were produced in such a way that everyone expresses its grievances and concerns. That according to Ibrahim, made the news paper popular among the Oromo. The circulation of this monthly newspaper was 25,000-30,000. This testifies how moving the paper was.

Like the case in the Mokadisho radio, Bariisaa was publishing the lyrics of some of the songs of Dr.Artist Ali Birra and other singers and lyricist Dr.Zelalem Benti. As injustice

continued most of the letters and Poems published, concentrated on emancipation with special emphasis paid to suppression on qubee, Afaan Oromo, the Oromo culture.

In 1969, there was a big fund raising event hosted at National Theater to support the newspaper which draws multitude of Oromos from wallaggaa, shawaa, Arsii, Balee, Hararge and Jimma. Then he said, a number of resistance songs that show case the fields of repression were produced. One of the songs reads:

As the paper continued to take ground, there was an effort to introduce the audience with qubee but that ushered word of warning from the military regime and sooner the demise of the paper came as the government nationalized it couple of months after the National theater event. Since the nationalization of Bariisaa, there were and are both broadcast and print media working in Afaan Oromo mostly under the control of the government. Though their existence alone sends a positive message to the Oromo who were denied their right to use and promote their language and culture, it has been problematic when it comes to freedom of expression

This portion of related literature addressed the particulars and most prominent ones but there might be other media outlets which moved the Oromo nationalism forward.

2.12. Internet and Democracy

As far as Internet and Democracy is concerned, there are arguments over the role Internet is playing in promoting democracy. Under the topic social media and politics in this chapter we have seen the polar opposite views on the power of the internet and social media. Best and Wade (2005) here, argue that in terms of a rigorous establishment of the democratizing effects of the Internet, the jury is still out and there are a number of reasons why this is so. For one, the sheer quantity of potential variables involved complicates everything. Government regime type, degree of Internet diffusion, and social roles of the Internet are just a few of the variables that may play a role in how the Internet affects democracy. Furthermore, the definition and measurement of many of these variables can be contentious.

There are theories that describe how the Internet promotes democracy and hinders democracy. Here below theories that explain the positive effects the Internet brought to the world of democracy are discussed as Best and Wade (2010) puts it.

➤ The “dictator’s dilemma”

This theory is founded on the idea that globalization and globalized markets largely facilitated and accelerated by the Internet force governments to keep their countries’ communication borders open. The consequent free flow of information not only allows for the efficient passage of commercial information but also for more “democratic” information. The obvious example being that citizens gain the potential to expose government abuse of power, which can have a negative effect on governments in the world community if they are cast as illegitimate, violent, dishonest, or untrustworthy.

The Internet can also enlighten citizens of less democratic nations of the comparatively high-income lifestyles associated with democracies and, as a result, they may begin to wish for democratic change.

➤ The Internet amplifies trends in international affairs.

Steele and Stein (2002) argue that the Internet amplifies trends in international affairs by acting as a politically neutral “constant,” whose main effect is to amplify political situations to new heights.

This theory determines how much of an effect the Internet has on democracy merely by evaluating a given political situation and multiplying by some Internet factor. Taking into account the role international organizations and the United States are playing to promote democracy over the past couple of decades, amplification theory of the Internet and world affairs would prescribe that the Internet has helped buttress peaceful and democratic relations around the world.

➤ The Internet’s democratic role in “post-international” change.

Rosenau and Johnson (2002) posit that the Internet has been a key variable in change itself. By change, they mean “post-international” change; post-international simply refers

to the present day international scene as characterized by increased dynamics in world affairs. At the international level, the Internet has contributed to the rise of a more multi-centric world structure in which nation-states have seen their preeminence lessen and nongovernment actors take the stage. These new abilities and skills enable citizens to choose their identity more freely, which may be putting more of a strain on nation-states to look attractive relative to one another and other actors. There are obvious democratic elements to this, including the need for nation-states to provide democratic rights to their citizens so as to build legitimacy on the global stage.

While these are some of the theories or models that tried to explain the symbiotic relationship between Internet and democracy, there are also scholars who theorized to define the ill effects of the Internet. Below are some of them as elaborated by Best and Wade (2010).

- The Marxist conception of the Internet as an extension of the ruling class.

Several scholars (e.g., Barney, 2000; Kalathil & Boas, 2003; Mazrui & Ostergard, 2002; Murdock & Golding, 2004; Strienstra, 2002; Webster, 2002) have voiced concerns that the Internet is acting as an extension of the ruling class and, as such, is not promoting democratic change in political systems. Unlike the democracy causing theories, The Internet do not do anything to help the poor and unrepresented.

- The Internet does not necessarily engage people in politics.

Several studies have attempted to determine whether the Internet engages the common American in politics (Scheufele & Nisbet, 2002). The results have not been very promising. The Internet might not politically engage users who were not engaged prior to their migration onto the Internet. As Scheufele & Nisbet (2002) explain, people are cognitive misers (Downs, 1957; Popkin, 1991) and do not typically seek out (political) information unless they feel they have to. This reflects the Huxlian idea that new communication technologies such as the Internet tend to distract more than empower citizens.

Best and Wade (2010) in their study identified that depending on some variables Internet may and may not promote democracy. They for instance found out that the Internet has not made a significant impact in Western European nations. In Asia and the Middle East, self-censorship probably accounts for a great deal of the Internet's inability to help effect positive democratic change. The Egyptian reality exemplifies this. We in the other hand witnessed political changes fueled by the internet in 2011 and ended with positive democratic effect like the case in Tunisia. Therefore, the Internet can have both democratic and antidemocratic impacts, depending on the context (Best & Wade, 2007).

2.13 Theoretical framework of the study

While there are a number of theories and models that inform media studies, as long as the researcher's reading is concerned, enough is not available when it comes to new media studies. Internet marking the beginning of new form of communication and giving raise to different platforms complicated the communication sphere. Yet public sphere theory of Habermas and network society theory of Castells are among the most utilized in new media studies. In this study as well Network society theory and the SPIN model of Luther P. Gerlach are chosen to comprehend the meaning of the finding.

SPIN Model

In the late 1960s Virginia H. Hine and Luther P. Gerlach examined the structure of several social movements and found that the most common type of organization was neither centralized and bureaucratic nor amorphous, but one that was a segmentary, polycentric, and integrated network (acronym SPIN). Then in 2001 Gerlach updated it.

Mohammed El-Nawawy and Sahar Khamis used SPIN as their theoretical model calling it the best that explains the political movements' ability to organize and initiate change on the ground when studying the Role of Social Media in Egypt's "Facebook Revolution" and Iran's "Twitter Uprising".

Gerlach(2001) discussed the characteristics of social movements in what he described as SPIN(Segementary, Polycentric, Integrated and Networked). The idea of each are elaborated here one after another.

Segementary

Social movements have many organizationally distinct components that change through fission, fusion, and new creation. A typical SPIN is composed of semiautonomous segments. New segments are created by splitting old ones, by appending new segments, or by splitting and adding new functions. Segments overlap and intertwine complexly, so that many people are members of several segments at the same time. A person may be a leader in one segment and a follower in another.

According to Gerlach (2001) Some groups divide when their participants differ over ideology and tactics. Some deliberately spin off new cells. Others are created by new people inspired by movement ideology or provoked by similar conditions. However Gerlach and Hine identified four factors that contribute to this process of segmentation.

1. Personal power: - this is when individuals and small or local groups each feel the need to take the initiative in achieving those movement goals the person or group considers important.
2. Preexisting Cleavages: - derived from socioeconomic differences, factionalism, and personal conflicts are often brought into a group and increase its fissiparous tendencies.
3. Competition:-among movement members, especially leaders, for economic, political, social, and psychological rewards.
4. Ideological differences: - are major sources of new groups.

Polycentric

By polycentric Gelach and Hine (1968) mean that these movements have many leaders or centers of leadership, and that these many leaders are not ultimately directed or commanded through a chain of command under a central leader. The leaders, like the segments, are not organized in a hierarchy; they are “heterarchic.” They do not have a

commander in chief. There is no one person who can claim to speak for the movement as a whole, any more than there is one group that represents the movement.

There is no one person or group able to make decisions that are binding upon all or even most of the participants in a movement. This makes negotiation and settlement difficult, if not impossible.

Integrating

The segments in social movement networks are also integrated by what they share or hold in common. The integrating factor would be shared opposition and ideology. These factors complement each other and help constitute the culture of the movement.

➤ Shared Opposition

The recognition or perception of an external opposition helps diverse movement groups to unite and to expand. A movement grows with the strength of its opposition, much as a kite flies against the wind. Opposition creates a sense of solidarity, an “us” against “them.” In many instances, movement participants see their cause as a small and heroic David against the Goliath of the establishment. As “underdogs,” they must put aside their differences and work together.

➤ Shared Ideology

Movement ideology operates on two levels. All participants share basic beliefs or core themes, which are sometimes articulated as slogans or aphorisms. Activists search for common interests and seek to express these through an encompassing ideology.

Networked

The Fourth major characteristics of social movements are network. According to Gerlach and Hine (1968) the diverse groups of a movement are not isolated from each other. Instead, they form an integrated network or reticulate structure through nonhierarchical

social linkages among their participants and through the understandings, identities, and opponents these participants share.

Networking enables movement participants to exchange information and ideas and to coordinate participation in joint action. Movement participants use these personal relationships, traveling evangelists, gatherings, and multimedia communication technologies to share the information that enables them to act in concert.

Network society Theory

According to Castells and Gustavo (2005) the network society, in the simplest terms, is a social structure based on networks operated by information and communication technologies based in microelectronics and digital computer networks that generate, process, and distribute information on the basis of the knowledge accumulated in the nodes of the networks. Networks are open structures that evolve by adding or removing nodes according to the changing requirements of the programs that assign performance goals to the networks.

Castells (2000) says Networks throughout history had a major advantage and a major problem vis-a-vis other forms of social organization. On the one hand, they are the most adaptable and flexible organizational forms, so following very efficiently the evolutionary path of human social arrangements. On the other hand, in the past they could not master and coordinate the resources needed to accomplish a given task or fulfill a project beyond a certain size and complexity of the organization required to perform the task. But Digital networking technologies enable networks to overcome their historical limits. They can, at the same time, be flexible and adaptive thanks to their capacity to decentralize performance along a network of autonomous components. They are still being able to coordinate all this decentralized activity on a shared purpose of decision making. Digital communication networks are the backbone of the network society, as power networks (meaning energy networks) were the infrastructure on which the industrial society was built.

Talking about the digital network, Castells (2000) says because the network society is based on networks, and communication networks transcend boundaries, the network

society is global. For Castells the network society is not something that is coming in the future or that manifests itself in the form neither of uninformed journalism nor as something imposed by the digital technology without society having power over it. It is rather what is happening right now all over the world, globalization of people at ideal level.

The Network society manifests in different contexts such as economy, politics and media. For the purpose of this study we will look at the role of the internet in identity formation in the network society as Castells (2000) puts it. In the Network society a struggle exists between the collective identity of the network and the personal identity of the self which has become particularly pertinent in society where people find meaning in who they perceive themselves to be rather than what they do. Bromberg (2013) however feel that it is important to take a clear look at what identity really means. Locke (1959) as cited by Bromberg (2013) asserts that our identity is consistent through our transition of space and time from tabula ras (blank page or knowing nothing)at birth conversely, what Erikson (1968) termed the identity does not persist over time and is actually influenced by our social interactions and so becomes what he calls social self.

There are two types of identity building which are relevant here: individual identity understood as the sense of oneself as an individual endowed with certain characteristics and potentialities, and collective identity, understood as a sense of oneself as a member of a social group. It is a sense of belonging, a sense of being part of a collectivity castells (2000).

Tubella (2000) posits while traditional media, in special television, play an enormous role in the construction of collective identity, Internet influences the construction of individual identity, as individuals increasingly rely on their own resources to construct a coherent identity for themselves in an open process of self formation as a symbolic project through the utilization of symbolic materials available to them.

The difference between television and Internet on identity formation according to Tubella (2000), resides in the fact that the use of television in the construction of identity is vertical, from one to many and opposite, the use of Internet in this process of self

formation depends of the will of each individual. It is a horizontal use, from many to many. The source of the information helpful in identity construction is also important.

Researches indicate that network society is not just the result of the impact of information technologies on social structures, but a new social form using communication as one of the central factors defining it, and becoming the emblematic figure of our current society.

The network society is also manifested in **the transformation of sociability**. Pointing to studies in different societies, Castells (2000) says that in most instances Internet users are more social, have more friends and contacts, and are more socially and politically active than non users. New forms of wireless communication, from mobile phone voice communication to SMSs, WiFi and WiMax, substantially increase sociability, particularly for the younger groups of the population. The network society is a hypersocial society, not a society of isolation. However, there is a major change in sociability, not a consequence of Internet or new communication technologies, but a change that is fully supported by the logic embedded in the communication networks. This he termed it the emergence of **networked individualism**, as social structure and historical evolution induce the emergence of individualism as the dominant culture of our societies, and the new communication technologies perfectly fit into the mode of building sociability along self-selected communication networks, on or off depending on the needs and moods of each individual.

Politics is yet another manifestation of the network society. Castells (2000), assuming that not whatever is said in the media space determines what people think or do, there are believes that Political opinions, and political behavior, are formed in the space of communication. He went on explaining about the existence of an even deeper transformation of political institutions in the network society: **the rise of a new form of state** that gradually replaces the nation-states of the industrial era. This is related to globalization that is the formation of a network of global networks than link selectively across the planet all functional dimensions of societies.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter as a path way to a definite destiny gives an insight of how the conclusion to be made in later part of this study is reached. Having a general objective of looking at the major concerns of online Oromo Activists', their practice and challenges and to answer those research questions listed in chapter one, a hybrid of both qualitative and quantitative methods has been employed.

When it comes to methodology, according to Dawson (2002), neither quantitative nor qualitative is better than the other for the reason that both have strengths and weaknesses. Creswell (2007) noted that the central premises of mixed design is the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination to provide a better understanding of research problems than either approaches can do alone. In mixed design it is not enough to analyze qualitative and quantitative data. The data need to be mixed in some way so that together they form a more complete picture of the problem than they do when they are implemented alone.

The idea of using both qualitative and quantitative methods together can also be referred to as triangulation. It is the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings. There are different types of triangulation that Denzin (1970) distinguished:

1. *Data triangulation*, which entails gathering data through several sampling strategies, so that slices of data at different times and social situations, as well as on a variety of people, are gathered.
2. *Investigator triangulation*, which refers to the use of more than one researcher in the field to gather and interpret data.
3. *Theoretical triangulation*, which refers to the use of more than one theoretical Position in interpreting data.
4. *Methodological triangulation*, which refers to the use of more than one method

for gathering data.

As long as Denzen's classification is concerned methodological and theoretical triangulation is what can be observed throughout this study. More than one data gathering tool, means of date presentation and theoretical frame work has been used.

3.2 Research Design

In social research the two most fundamental questions attempted are what (descriptive research) and Why (Exploratory research). Research design therefore, has a purpose of selecting and defining the overall structure and method of intended research that will enable us to answer the initial research question. From the two most dominant types of research designs, descriptive research design is the one that leads the pathway of this study.

Descriptive research is a study designed to depict subject of the study in an accurate way. There are different types of descriptive designs among which case study is one. According to Gerring (2007), A case study can be understood as the intensive study of a single case where the purpose of that study is, at least in part, to shed light on a larger class of cases (a population). Although there are arguments that presents case study as a qualitative research, Gerring (2007) and other scholars went on saying that it may employ a great variety of techniques, both quantitative and qualitative, for the gathering and analysis of evidence. This debate seems to have been reconciled taking the classification of case as cross –case research and single case research where the first is highly quantitative and the later qualitative.

Case study research has different types. In addition to their disciplinary orientation, According to Stake (2000), case study research designs may be classified as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective. Researchers engage in intrinsic case study research when they want to know more about a particular individual, group, event, or organization. Using an intrinsic case study, researchers are not necessarily interested in examining or creating general theories or in generalizing their findings to broader populations.

This study therefore can be taken as intrinsic case study as it shades light on the characteristics of social media use of Oromo activists'. It studies Oromo activists' use of social media, what it means to be an activist and challenges they are facing.

There are wide range of arguments on criterion of selection and justification provided for the selection of a case. Denscombe (2007) noted that in the practical world of research, with its limits to time and resources, the selection of cases is quite likely to include a consideration of convenience. Stake as cited by Denscombe (2007), posits that there are even some experts in the field who would go as far as to argue that selection on the basis of being intrinsically interesting is a sufficient justification in its own right (Stake, 1995). According to Denscombe (2007), the vast majority of social researchers would not see it as a justification for selection in its own right. However, Ragin as quoted by Denscombe (2007) underscored that it might work for journalism, but social research by most definitions calls for more than just this (Ragin, 1994). When it comes to selection criterion of the case of this study, intrinsic interest is what moved the researcher to select the case taken for this study.

3.3 Subject of the study

Subject of this study are Oromo activists' who make use of facebook as a stage to advance their cause. Taking for granted the fact that they are taking the Oromo concern viral on social media, activists are chosen regardless of where they are located.

These activists are chosen taking in to account the influence they have on their facebook friends which among others can be measured by the friends and followers they have and the likes and comments their post acquire. Accordingly, facebook activists who manage to gate more than 100 likes and above 30 comments on average in their status update were incorporated in this study. Therefore, the study was not interested to the demographic characteristics of the activists.

3.4 Research Instrument

The research instrument is a tool by which the researcher collects data. As methods employed in this study are both qualitative and quantitative, the tools utilized include

less-structured observation, in-depth interview and qualitative and quantitative content analysis.

3.3.1 Less-structured observation

Less structured observation is a handy tool to understand human behaviour, to explore the social meanings that underpin it and look at the perspectives of social actors (their ideas, attitudes, motives and intentions).

According to Jupp and Sapsford (2006), Less-structured observation aims to produce detailed, qualitative descriptions of human behavior that illuminate social meanings and shared culture. These data are combined with information from conversations and interviews to produce an in-depth and rounded picture of the culture of subject of the study. By so doing, it is possible to place the perspectives of activists at its heart and reflect the complexity of their social world.

Less-structured observation is characterized by flexibility and a minimum of restructuring. This, according to Jupp and Sapsford (2006), does not mean that the observer begins data collection with no aims and no idea of what to observe, but there is a commitment to approach observation with a relatively open mind, to minimize the influence of the observer's preconceptions and to avoid imposing existing preconceived categories.

Less structured observation was employed as one of the data collecting tool in this study with the aim of examining the ideas, attitudes and motives of the activists. Less structured observation can be conducted for more than six months in participant form, with the objective of focusing the study on selected facebook activists and explaining their practice. Jupp and Sapsford (2006) noted that as one of the key aims of this type of observation is to see the social world as far as possible from the actor's point of view, the main technique used is *participant observation*. Accordingly, by making the potential activists my facebook friends or by being their follower and sometimes by tagging them on posts what can be termed as online participant observation was used.

Although alone it cannot produce detailed data, it gives qualitative data which, in combination with data of online conversation and Interview, can explicate the trends of Oromo activists on line with specification on facebook.

One advantage the researcher sees in using less structured observation which allow participant observation to take place is that it helps to build trust with the respondents. According to Jupp and Sapsford (2006), less-structured observation frequently involves the researcher spending long periods of time in the field, building relationships and participating in social interaction with subjects. The aim is that subjects come to trust the researcher and become accustomed to his or her presence. The field in the context of this study is facebook.

3.3.2 Content Analysis

Content analysis is typically called a quantitative method because it involves counting and summing phenomenon. According to Jane (2003), content analysis is considered by one of its leading exponent, Klaus Krippendorff (1980), to be primarily a symbolic method for it is used to investigate symbolic materials(media texts). In conducting content analysis there is much interpretive work to do, relying on a good knowledge of the text under examination. According to Terje (2012) however, over the years, various qualitative approaches have become popular in the study of media texts, and Klaus Krippendorff (2004) in his seminal handbook on content analysis treats qualitative approaches side by side with quantitative (cf. Krippendorff and Bock, 2009). This study also took that turn.

Content analysis is appropriate for studies of how much of a given phenomenon there is in a chosen set of text. According to Jane (2003) it enables counting of the number of stories, the number of images or the occurrences of mentions of a particular subject.

Jane (2003) notes that, one of the advantages of content analysis is enabling the researcher to conduct his/ her primary research and come up with facts and figures to use as evidence in his/ her arguments. Because content analysis is basically descriptive, it is often used in combination with other research techniques (Campbell, Richard, Martin, Fabos, Bettine (2005) used in this study.

Content analysis has been an important tool in this study to be able to understand the trends of the online activism of the Oromo. In the process, what sort of issues activists often discuss on facebook, whether they use images or not and what purpose most of the posts serve has been investigated. Two months status update of the activists from August 10 to October 10, 2015 was studied. The time has been selected with the aim of getting a fresh perspective of the situation under study.

The study counted among political, cultural and identity related personal and other issues under issue category. Under other issue everything excluding political, cultural, economic and cultural issue focusing on the Oromo has been included. Personal issues are issues related to private life of the activist, his/her professional or business carrier. Again the posts with image only, image and words and words only were counted. To shed light on the purpose Oromo activists use social media in general and Facebook in particular for, the researcher counted among informative, elaborative, critic, calling for action and promoting Oromumma purposes. Apart from these, the researcher payed a look at about what the activists often discusses. In the two months period, the total number of the status updates of each activist was also counted.

There are a number of ways the research can use to insure the reliability of the data encoded. In this study, for the fact that all the codings have been done by the researcher himself, percentage agreement has been used to verify avoid overlap in coding categories.

The quantitative and qualitative data collected this way can be used for further study which brings online conversation and interview into play to depict relatively a bigger picture of the characteristics of online activism of the Oromo.

3.3.3 Interview

This method has been used through personal interviews and in technology mediated fashion through facebook conversation. This study utilized both techniques of interview because there is no other way the important data could be acquired.

Personal interview, according to Kuthari (1990), requires a person known as the interviewer asking questions generally in a face-to-face contact to the other person or persons. The method of collecting information through personal interviews is usually

carried out in a structured way. As such we call the interviews as *structured interviews*. Such interviews involve the use of a set of predetermined questions and of highly standardized techniques of recording. Thus, the interviewer in a structured interview follows a rigid procedure laid down, asking questions in a form and order prescribed.

As against it, the *unstructured interviews* are characterized by a flexibility of approach to questioning. Kuthari (1990) says unstructured interviews do not follow a system of predetermined questions and standardized techniques of recording information. In a non-structured interview, the interviewer is allowed much greater freedom to ask, in case of need, supplementary questions or at times he may omit certain questions if the situation so requires. He may even change the sequence of question. But this sort of flexibility results in lack of comparability of one interview with another and the analysis of unstructured responses becomes much more difficult and time-consuming than that of the structured responses obtained in case of structured interviews.

However there is a golden mean between the two which is referred to as semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews share some qualities and features from the two. The interviewer while conducting semi-structured interview, has a clear list of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered. However, according to Deniscombe (2007) with the semi-structured interview, the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered and perhaps more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher.

Yet online interviewing is emerging as an alternative data gathering tool where face-on face- communication is unlikely or the respondent does it better from his/ her environment. According to Daymon and Holloway (2002) it is a computer mediated communication which has two divisions, synchronous or asynchronous interviews. Synchronous interviewing occurs in real-time, and consists of 'chatting'. Usually, but not always, synchronous interviewing is conducted with a number of people at once.

Asynchronous communication is conversation which happens in non-real-time. In this type of communication messages are written and read at different times which may be

minutes, hours or days apart. This as to Daymon and Holloway (2002) is beneficial if the interviewer and the interviewee are across worldwide time-zones.

This study hence used semi- structured interview which with relative flexibility allowed the researcher to obtain primary information. Where face-to-face interview is not possible the researcher also used asynchronous interview. The online interviewing with activists in exile was conducted in the form of facebook conversation. Most dominantly Asynchronous. Experience, feeling and knowledge questions are the three major areas of questions asked.

3.4 Unit of Analysis

Knowing whom to research is also an integral part of a research design. Unit of analysis, hence, is about identifying whom to research. From review of literature and Objective of the study, it becomes instantly recognizable that this study looked at the characteristics of online activism of the Oromo. However, in the course of this study, 16 prominent Oromo social media activists make the unit of analysis. By prominence, the researcher refers to activists who manage to acquire more than one hundred likes in a single status update and initiate further debate with what they bring in to the online community. Not only the activists are taken as unit of analysis but the status update of the activists' also. The status updates are the unit of analysis for content analysis.

3.5 Time frame

The time frame for examining the status update of the selected activists runs from August 10, 2015- October 10, 2015. This time span is deliberately chosen to get a fresh perspective of the Oromo activists in the facebook world. The participant observation lasted 6 month running from March to August 2015. This however, doesn't mean that the past experiences of the activists are not incorporated in this study. The finding of content analysis is largely meant to generate ideas that interview deal in detail.

3.6 Selection of Activists

Selection of the activists was preceded by semi-structured observation of about six months. The observation took issue, concern and influence as criterion. What the activists often converse on facebook and the influence they have on their friends and their followers is what is taken into consideration during selection. By issue the researcher delve in to examining whether or not what the activist converse on facebook has to do with the Oromo. The other criterion is the concern of the activists. By looking at the frequency of Oromo related posts in a given period of time, the researcher identified how much concerned the activists are. Influence can be understood in terms of the number of people liking, commenting and sharing their status updates. Accordingly, 16 activists eight each from home and abroad who manage to acquire more than one hundred likes and more than 30 comments per post were chosen. Some of the activists also have facebook pages, but most of them are not up to date. As a result of which only facebook accounts are studied.

3.7 Sampling Technique

Defining the population of the study is the primary task in this sub title. Accordingly, Oromo activists who make use of facebook and necessarily other social networking sites and live both in Ethiopia and out of Ethiopia's boundary are the population of the study.

A *sample* is a set of elements selected in some way from a population. The aim of sampling according to Jupp and Sapsford (2006), is to save time and effort, but also to obtain consistent and unbiased estimates of the population status in terms of whatever is being researched. There are two basic methods of sampling: *probability sampling* and *non-probability sampling*. The former includes simple random sampling, stratified random sampling and some forms of cluster sampling. The latter, sometimes called *purposive*, includes convenience sampling, theoretical sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling among others.

From the two basic types, non-probability sampling is employed in this study. Non-probability sampling, according to Denscombe (2003) is chosen when the researcher feel it is not feasible to include a sufficiently large number of examples in the study. This

reason works in the case of this study. Hence, a mixture of purposive and snowball sampling was used.

3.7.1 Purposive sampling

According to Denscombe (2003) purposive sampling is used in a situation where the researcher already knows something about the specific people or events and deliberately selects particular ones because they are seen as instances that are likely to produce the most valuable data. He says, they are selected with a specific purpose in mind, and that purpose reflects the particular qualities of the people or events chosen and their relevance to the topic of the investigation. In the case of this study, the subjects of the study are chosen purposively after their potential of influence is examined by looking at their online activeness and the people who engage in the idea they raise.

3.4.2 Snowball Sampling

With snowballing, the sample emerges through a process of reference from one person to the next. At the start, the research might involve, for example, just a few people. Each can be asked to nominate two other people who would be relevant for the purposes of the research. Denscombe (2003) notes that Snowballing is an effective technique for building up a reasonable-sized sample, especially when used as part of a small-scale research project. It is also instrumental in studies like this one that require building trust with the respondents which otherwise may yield unreliable and invalid data.

Through this technique, A total of 16 Oromo activists, 8 each from home and abroad, who make effective use of facebook to advance the Oromo concerns are considered in this study as sample size.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

As clearly indicated in the introduction of this chapter and discussion of the data gathering techniques, this study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. The data collected via both methods (observation, content analysis, semi-structured interview and online interviewing) were interpreted through triangulation. Numbers and words were used to take away certain meaning out of the raw data gained from primary sources.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter of the thesis gets on to presenting and analyzing the data gathered through less structured observation, qualitative and quantitative content analysis and less structured interview.

As put in chapter one of this paper, while the general objective is to shade light on social media use of Oromo activists at home and in the Diaspora, it was also engaged in unearthing the practices and challenges of being an Oromo and an Oromo activist.

Here below appears the data gathered from 16 facebook activists. The information collected from the status update of these activists and the interview conducted face-to-face and in computer mediated fashion are going to be presented one after another.

4.1 Social media and the Oromo

Social networking sites are now abundant in the world of World Wide Web. While the westerners started making use of the platform of their choice towards the end of 1980s and the beginning of 1990s, it took a much longer time to reach developing counties like Ethiopia. As long as the history of social media use of the Oromo is concerned, what comes in to play is the Oromo Diaspora. According to one pioneer social media activist in the diaspora, the Oromo diaspora created its own space on social media in the early 1990s. Oromos from around the world used to network and exchange information using an email list called Oromo Network (ONet) that had a membership of about 3000 by the mid 1990s. Onet served as a primary source of Oromo and Oromia related information at that time. Members discussed a host of Oromo issues including human rights violations in Ethiopia. They mobilized Oromo diaspora communities to organize public demonstrations in cities around the world addressing human rights abuses in Ethiopia. ONet had been used to organize online fundraising campaigns to support Oromo organizations such as Oromia Support Group. Even though limited in scope, Onet as the first Oromo social media left behind its own legacy. The legacy of ONet has been

continued by other countable websites established by Oromo diaspora to keep the Oromo diaspora in touch and know what the Oromo at home are up to.

The milestone in Oromo's use of social media, however, is marked by the 2004 invention of Facebook. Although due to absence of the necessary infrastructure for internet, facebook reached about two years after the western world make use of it. The high time for the Oromo's at home use of facebook can fairly be said is after 2010. Because: the facebook history of many of Ethiopians doesn't go back more than 6 and 7 years.

Since 2010, the number of Oromo youth creating a facebook account has dramatically increased and so does friend requests among the Oromo and of course other Ethiopians. Facebook, ever since its invention and popularity in Ethiopia, contributed immensely for the Oromo in particular. Given the fact that the Oromo doesn't have mainstream media like television, radio newspaper and magazine that speaks the people's concern freely, facebook took the place of these missing medium. Oromo activists, hence, considered facebook as a gift from God so the people speak its mind.

In unprecedented manner, the Oromo has come together, know each other and discuss on matters of politics, culture, economy, identity, social values, art, religion, philosophy and every other topic of the Oromo freely using facebook as platform of no other choice. It has made the Oromo know who he is, what other Oromo is up to, what its history is. It has also become a platform where the Oromo build on its images which for centuries have been portrayed wrongly. It has also become a driving wheel for the creation and promotion of more and more Oromo activists and played a major role in the emergence of independent Oromo media abroad.

Facebook helped to develop Oromo conciseness and upgraded many Oromos confidence to proudly say, I am born Oromo. The movement like "I am Oromo first" which had been initiated by activist Jawar Mohammed and shared among the Oromo regardless of frontier can be an example of the role of facebook in the identity regaining process of the Oromo. Its free size nature allowed the Oromo to use pseudo name and location to speak freely what he/she cannot say otherwise.

Facebook in general has revolutionized how the Oromo view itself, the world and how the outside world view the Oromo. It bridged the gap of information and network which caused a far reaching consequence in all spheres of Oromo's life and living. It is difficult, now, to imagine the Oromo without the use of social media in general and facebook in particular. Having known this fact, some Oromo activists are attempting to organize committee that can, on behalf of the Oromo, honor the founder of facebook, Mark Zokerburge that his gift to the world served the Oromo best.

4.2 Speaking the mind of over 40 million Oromos

The social media-Oromo dichotomy can be very much lucid from the expression that facebook is God's gift for the Oromo. Although there are arguments that downplay the role of facebook taking in to account the number of facebook using Oromo, the opinion leaders who communicate facebook ideas on the ground via interpersonal communication makes the claim justifiable. This idea is what many of the activists share. However, what it means to be an Oromo activist has been explicated very broadly and differently by the activists.

According to Denning (2000), activism refers to normal, non disruptive use of the Internet in support of an agenda or cause. In a way that adheres to Denning's definition, the Oromo Activism has been convoluted as a more complex task. Activism in the context of the Oromo is complex because what the Oromo has gone through is full of hurdle. While there are arguments that every Oromo has to be considered as an activist, there are common understandings among the activists that an Oromo activist is one who make out all the Oromo concerns. According to activist 08, almost all Oromo physically exiled or not have the same stand on these issues although they may differ on the scale at which they express themselves.

For Activists 08, being an Oromo activist hence is a complex role of brining the ever deteriorating social, political, economic, religious and cultural life of the Oromo into a global attention. The political past of the Oromo which almost ruined most of the things that made the Oromo unique and paralyzed its political, cultural, economic and social heritages is what makes Oromo activism complex. It is not a focused role and a clear role

to explain. The activists have the responsibility of reversing the legacy of the past regimes in all aspects. This takes different roles and directions every day. Activism in the Oromo context is also speaking the century old injustice now and speaking the mind of over 40 million Oromos worldwide.

Yet, the current Ethiopian political system makes this complex concept even more multifarious. Activist 01 says, let alone running activism in different channels, saying 'I am Oromo' results in undesirable outcomes. The system follows every single step taken by every single activist. This gives another definition to what an Oromo activist means. Activist (10) says, in the context of Ethiopia, to be an activist is to take risk and go to jail or die on the streets speaking for the oppressed and calling for justice, freedom of speech and expression, equality and good governance.

4.3 Features of Oromo's Activism on Facebook

There are six different areas which potentially define the features of activism of the Oromo on facebook. The number of posts in a month, topic of posts, the about of the posts, the purposes of the posts, choice of language of status updates and the use of graphics and links are believed to define the major features of the Oromo activists use of facebook. From August 10- October 10, 2015, the 16 activists all together have updated their status 1,554 times. While there are discrepancy from activist to activist on the number of their status update in a given period of time, each one of them have a status update of 97.12% on average in 60 days which means, 1.6% per day. This implies that the activists have something to write every single day or update their status at least once in a day. But from observation, it has become evident that some activists post up to 10 times in a day and remain silent for two or so days.

After observation of over six months, the researcher found that politics, culture, identity and art of the Oromo are the most dominant issues addressed by the activists. Yet, for the fact that social media are also meant to create, maintain and strengthen relationship, their private issues have been studied. Hence, six categories of issues were made. The researcher counted among politics, culture and identity, art, personal (private) and other

issues. Other issues include different international and local subject which is not related to the Oromo in particular.

Accordingly, out of 1,554 posts, 392 or 25.22% of them are issues of politics. Culture and identity hold 378 or 24.3% of the issues. 79 or 5.08 % are issues of art and literature of the Oromo. Private, family, or friend issues are 144 or 9.2 %. The remaining 561 posts or 36.1 % are different issues.

From the raw data it can be understood that the Oromo activists both at home and in the Diaspora discuss various issues both related and unrelated to the Oromo. The quantitative data revealed that the lion's share of the posts, 849 of the total status updates counted or 54.6 % are issues of Oromo in terms of politics, culture, art, literature and identity.

The advantage of facebook among many other social networking sites is that it is easy to upload video and image that backs an idea presented in word or communicates all alone. The researcher, taking this advantage in to account, assessed whether or not videos and images are used by the activists. Accordingly, from 849 status updates (personal and other issues excluded), 468 or 55.12 % of them are words backed by images, videos and links. Status updates without any image, video and link backing the idea of the word are 329 or 38.75%. The remaining 52 posts or 6.12% are images and videos appeared without a word used.

The observation made prior to content analysis discovered that raising awareness (informative), elaborating issues, calling for both online and offline action, critics and promoting Oromumma are the most common missions behind the posts identified as related to the Oromo.

Accordingly, 306 or 36.04% of posts are targeted at calling for some kind of action. The observation unearthed that most of the actions are online petition signing and callings to make requests offline via peaceful demonstration, public discussion and strengthening unity. From 849 Oromo issues posted, 208 or 24.49% have rationale of promoting Oromumma. Promotion of Oromumma, as observed in unstructured manner, includes promotion of Oromo culture, art, literature, identity, costume and Afaan Oromo among others. Posts of critic are 128 or 15.07%. The critics are mostly directed to regional and

federal governments and seldom at Oromos in general and different groups in particular. Posts with informative purpose are 113 or 13.30% and elaborative or explanatory posts are 94 or 11.07 %.

As long as purpose of status updates of the activists is concerned, it is important to mention the fact that an overlap has been observed among the rationales. There was a reality that a single status update happens to be informative and promote Oromumma, elaborative and critic and combination of some of them. The research however, decided to count posts of this kind in to where it weighs most.

The other subject the researcher discovered is the popular medium of communication among the Oromo activists in their online activism endeavor. From 849 posts made with focus on Oromo, 329 or 38.75% were written in Afan Oromo, 425 or 50.05% English and 95 or 11.18% Amharic. The use of language has variation between the diaspora activists and the home activists. Those in exile dominantly use English and somehow Amharic but those at home use Afaan Oromo. When seen from the perspective of the cause they advocate, the use of English is less important.

While the number of activists selected as a subject from abroad and home are equal, there is a wider difference on the number of posts registered. Out of the total 1,554 posts made from August 10 – October 10, 2015, activists at home posted 566 or 36.42% while those in the Diaspora had 988 or 63.57%. Problems related to internet connection and online freedom is some of the reasons for the disparity. Nonetheless, the numerical majority of the posts made by activists abroad have an implication on the language used. As presented earlier, English status updates both from home and abroad is 425 out of 849 posts on matters of Oromo. From this 348 or 81.88% is made by activists abroad.

Alongside quantifying issues, number of status updates, languages used and purposes of the status updates, what specific ideas went viral on facebook over the period of the study is the other interest of this thesis. Hence, it was comprehended that diversified ideas were raised over the two months, with say no to the Addis Ababa Integrated Development plan(what the Oromo call it master plan and master killer) , calling the BBC to consider Afaan Oromo for its new broadcasting service, book burning campaign(professor Mesfin

Woldemariam's Adafne) and making Afaan Oromo the other working language of the federal government have been shared by many of the activists. The table below illustrates ideas posted and the number of activists sharing that same idea.

Ideas	Number of activists
About calling people to sign the BBC petition	16
About the celebration of irrecha 2015 at home and abroad	16
About hunger in Hararge(Ethiopia)	8
About cafe Oromia endorsing towns' reform bill	8
About the narrow nationalism of Ethiopia's political elites	3
About the hate speech of Prof. Mesfin and the response of the Oromo	8
About the meaning of land for the Oromo	4
About lack of political strength within OPDO	3
About online freedom to argue ideas	1
About the historical identity of the Oromo	5
About taking forward the Oromo struggle for freedom	14
About making Afaan Oromo the second federal language in Ethiopia	15
About the identity quest of the Raya Oromo	12
About proper spelling of qube on advertising boards and other places	2
About the need to strengthen unity among the Oromo	12
About ensuring the economic benefit of the Oromo	2
About the demolish of houses in Oromia	7
About government crack down on warra jarso Oromo	3
About the role of music in talking the grievance of the Oromo	10
About calling to stop victimizing the Oromo in all aspects	10
About the way molla Agedom is treated and lenco lata was forced out	2
About the naming of one metro station after Menelik II	1
About the good of Oromia diaspora week celebration	2
About the naming of a street in Minneapolis after Oromo	3
About ODA's success in education	4
About Oromo prisoners of conscience	4
About the ethnic division by EPRDF	2
About lack of democracy and good governance in Ethiopia	4
About developing of Afaan Oromo and Oromumma	9
About book signing, music, poem, drama and film inauguration	9
About saying no to the master plan and its consequence if implemented	16

This table depicts that most of the ideas often become the idea of at least 4 activists. Issues of master plan, the need to say no to it, its ill effects for Oromo, the campaign launched to make Afaan Oromo the second working language of the federal government, the essence

and celebration of irrecha and the BBC afaan Oromo petition exclusively were on top of the activists agenda. The topic below will assess the most dominant social media movements over the period of the study in a more detail.

4.4 Dominant Oromo Online Campaigns

From less structured observation of six months and the researcher's social media exposure, campaigns like boycott Bedele, say no to the master plan, BBC Afaan Oromo petition and making Afaan Oromo the second working federal language in Ethiopia are the most recognizable campaigns ignited by the Oromo activists. Here below, how these campaigns and movements began what challenges were there and the achievements registered would be presented one after another based on the data collected from interview and unstructured observation. While all the activist movements identified above have been under way for over the past 6 months (the period of observation) now, the boycott Bedelle campaign dates back to about two years. But it was phenomenal in the history of the Oromo and entails something in the activist's social media usage. Hence, the study is motivated to explore that movement in a more detail using first hand information from the activist who instigated and lead the movement.

4.4.1 Boycott Bedele Campaign

Boycott Bedele as described by the activists is a campaign that points to the greatest potential of social media for the struggle of the Oromo in the fields of politics, economics, culture, art and literature. This campaign was launched in December of 2013 to counter the million birr sponsorship Heineken signed with the controversial song writer and singer, Tedros Kasahun better known by the stage name Teddy Afaro for his 'love' concert in major towns in Oromia and other towns. While it is apparent from his songs that he admire the 19th century Ethiopian rulers like emperor Menilik II and king Hailselassie, the idea quoted on Inku magazine was what sparked the boycott campaign online.

On the magazine the artist was quoted as saying: for me , "Menilik's unification campaign was a holy war". Although the magazine circulated on its website that it is an error, the artist's love for the past regimes become widely understood when he dedicated

his latest CD to emperor Menelik II, whom the Oromo described as the “Ethiopian Hitler” for the reason that he and his system bloodbath millions of Oromos, cutting the hands of men and the breast of women.

The Oromo activists at home and abroad took the issue online the same day the Heineken company gave a press conference about the agreement with Teddy Afro on 20th of December, 2013. The campaign according to the activists, was targeted at forcing the company to cancel the agreement with a hashtag #BoycottBedele most importantly on facebook and twitter. But for some activists, the purpose of the campaign was and still is to stop collaborative attempt to historical injustice done against nations, nationalities and peoples of the south by Emperor Menelik II at the end of 19th and early 20th century’s imperial expansion.

The first stage of the movement, according to the activists, was establishing a committee who can coordinate and direct way forward. The second step was formulating the blue print of the campaign which gave way for spirited articulation of the message of the campaign that takes in to its heart hard facts on issue at hand. For the movement remain meaningless without specific objective and strategy, the activists set clear goals and devised appropriate strategies and tactics to realize success. Moreover, the campaign focused on gathering accurate information and tangible evidences, on the relevance or importance of the issue, on garnering and galvanizing supporters and allocating time, energy and resource.

The activists dispatched letters to Heineken shortly after the press conference on 20th of December, 2013 to call the company to reconsider sponsoring the concert taking into account the controversial speeches, songs and acts of the artist, fixing deadline for their response. The campaign was launched after four working days deadline which was on 26 December, 2013. The movement had undergo the employment of effective and efficient method of campaigns, created many special-purpose networks and coalitions, held numerous meetings, dispatched petitions, issued statements in public and social media, and pamphleteering. In a single day of the beginning of the campaign, 18,000 beer drinkers and non drinkers echoed the boycotting of Bedele.

The online campaign sooner backed by offline action of avoiding drinking Bedele. The activists termed the beer the “blood beer” and circulated graphics depicting it. The offline action took ground via unprecedented interpersonal communication. Beer drinking Oromos engaged in persuading some of their non Oromo beer costumers to avoid drinking Bedele under different pretexts. Organizers distributed brochures across Oromia with intensive campaigns in towns where the artist was expected to hold the concert. In Jimma, Dire Dawa and Adama the youth posted posters designed to portray the cruelty of Menelik II, with an image of him holding sword the way it reminds the hand and breast cutting. The artist was also portrayed as celebrating the atrocity of the past rulers.

The campaign then attracted the attention of international and national media including Aljazeera, BBC, Dutch media, VOA, Awuramba times, Tigray online and Ethio-tube. After six days of intensive campaigning to boycott bedele, the team received formal calls from Bedele brewery that sponsorship of the concert has been reversed and then the campaign changed in to celebration.

For many, Boycott Bedele campaign looks anti-teddy movement. The activists however say, the campaign was actually about tackling widely held attitude by certain collectives that proudly associate themselves with objectionable historical deeds. In terms of its campaigning method, Boycott Bedele was a peaceful protest. Talking about the digital network, Castells (2000), says because the network society is based on networks, and communication networks transcend boundaries, the network society is global. Hence boycott bedele was a global movement that brought all Oromos from around the world through what sociologists Paul Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katze(1955) theorized as two step flow of communication. The Opinion leaders, the activists, in this case were exposed to a specific media content then interpret it based on the existing reality. Then they began to infiltrate these opinions through the general public who they call opinion followers. A better infiltration resulted in a more number of opinion follower which in turn resulted strong influence.

The campaign was however not welcomed by everyone. It was challenged by supporters of the artist and other groups critical of Oromo. According to the activists, there was some kind of movement from other activists trying to defend the artist and demoralize the

campaign. They labeled it foolishness characterized by emotion and over ambitious. Some tried to epitomize it as a masked racist movement that is sparked to heal the past wound. However the organizers of the campaign disproved that it unmasked the 19th century mentality and aimed at ending lack of acknowledgment for past injustice.

The movement was so intense that the activists were working day and night to realize the objective of the campaign both online and offline. The Oromo youth across major cities of Oromia contributed immensely in taking the idea of the movement down to the streets and each Oromo family.

According to Manuel Castells's theory of Network society (2000), Digital networking technologies enable networks to overcome their historical limits. The Boycott Bedele campaign is one best example for the Oromo that it demonstrated the use of digital technology like facebook and twitter can help overcome historical limits. Castells say, in the past people could not master and coordinate the resources needed to accomplish a given task or fulfill a project beyond a certain size and complexity of the organization required to perform the task. The activists of this particular campaign mastered and coordinated the movement using the network they formed.

A goal in championing a cause is beyond launching a campaign. Boycotte Bedele, therefore, can be a model for Oromo movements due to the following major five reasons.

1. It focused on a specific issue

It is true that the Oromo has a lot of concerns and grievances related to past unjust rules. As history evidenced there is no single sector of the Oromo immune of the oppression. But this particular campaign targeted at one specific issue from the various. It called for the denouncing of the sponsorship of the concert and worked towards only that issue.

2. Defined the goal of the campaign

Boycott Bedele had set a clear and understandable objective of enforcing the Heineken Company to denounce the concert. Beyond that it gave the people a way they can respond to this call.

3. Clear justification

One of the underlying reasons for the success of the campaign was the justification for the movement. The facts which were circulating online answered why the Oromo should participate on this movement.

4. Correct medium of communication

Selection of the right medium of communication is as deceive as setting a realizable goal. From the various social media tool, activists of Boycott Bedele chose facebook. That is the right choice for it was a time many young Oromos accustomed to it. Furthermore they take the movement down to interpersonal level of communication.

5. Strong leadership

In most of the cases, the success of any movement depends on leadership. According to Gelach and Hine (1968) social movements have many leaders or centers of leadership, and that these many leaders must be directed or commanded through a chain of command under a central leader to achieve their goal. In the case of this campaign, there was guidance from one center.

4.4.2 The BBC Afaan Oromo Petition

From the various issues the Oromo activists are deliberating online, calling the BBC to consider Afaan Oromo in its new broadcasting service for Ethiopia and Eritrea is one. This campaign has been launched shortly after the BBC announced that it is proposing to introduce a news service for Ethiopia and Eritrea on medium and short-wave radio owing to reduce what it called 'democratic deficit in impartial news'. The petition campaign which has been overrun by two activists in the Diaspora manages to acquire the support of other activists at home very early.

The activists after understanding the potential of the Oromo to make the necessary pressure designed a strategy that best work for this particular cause. The first thing they did was to discuss the idea with other social media activists in the Daispora on how they can join efforts. Sooner comes the idea of collecting petition online via gopetition.com. The news of the beginning of signing the petition was shared among facebook users so rapidly that in matter of days thousands of the Oromo signed the petition. As the link to the petition site continued to be shared among the activists and other facebook users,

ideas about why the Oromo need to ask the BBC to start Afaan Oromo service has been propagating.

Among the justifications for the campaign is the numerical majority in terms of people speaking the language. According to the activist launching the campaign, Speakers of Afaan Oromo are greater than the number of people speaking Tigrigna and Amharic combined. The Other point of argument is the fact that it is the most disfavored as the activists wrote. Yet, the most influential one is related to the unpleasant political past of the Oromo which left Afaan Oromo dead at least structurally. After Oromia was forcefully incorporated in to emperor Minelik II's government, Amharic was imposed on the Oromo, claiming it be the language of the kings,(yenigus quwanquw). Minelik II appointed officials neither speak Afaan Oromo nor understand it. This necessitated the use of simabelew(interpretor). Specially: after Amharic was made school language, the official suppression of Afaan Oromo and other languages completed. Furthermore, Afaan Oromo was discriminated under the pretext that its use in the radio breaks the radio.

Other social media users were also considering this project as their major cause. They were promoting the signing of the petition through people who the Oromo regards as its model in all spheres of life. The image of these famous Oromos who signed the petition has been circulating with phrases like "I have signed, How about you?". In line with this, the progress of the petition has been posted very frequently. As of Sept. 13, 2015, four days after the campaign was launched Over 10,000 people in over 75 Countries around the world call upon the BBC to start Afaan Oromo Service.

Although facebook is the leading social media tool the activists strategically designed for the achievement of the goal, twitter has also been an important platform. On 23rd of September, the top officials are expected to visit twitter. On that day, massive campaign has been underway to send as many twits as possible from Oromos across the world. While 36% of the total twits are by people in the US, the second biggest number of twit is registered from Ethiopia. That sends a positive message. While poor internet access and unfamiliarity of the platform for many Oromos in Ethiopia can be the reality, the number of twit counted showcased the commitment of the Oromo to quench its thirst for a fair news source that speak its language and the alternative social media use to succeed a

cause. That success can also be attributed by large to messages of instruction and time to make twit shared on facebook.

The various Oromo events and Irrecha, the Oromo's biggest festival had been a contributing factor for the signing of the petition. The interpersonal communication took the cause further that school children lobby their family to sign. The Afaan Oromoo Global Coordinating Committee (AGCC) established to look after this movement, toward the end of October, announced that it is about to finalize its unprecedented and the most successful global campaign to petition the BBC to start BBC Afaan Oromo Radio service where more than 37,000 people participated, and the decision to transition to the next major task which is making Afaan Oromo additional federal working language in Ethiopia. The petition has been concluded on Nov. 1, 2015. The AGCC promised to update the public on the subsequent measures of submitting the petition to the BBC leadership and the United Kingdom Government, and follow-up strategies.

4.4.3 Making Afaan Oromo the second working Language of the Federal government

The second most important movement over the past six months and still going on facebook is calling the Oromo to take action online that the government should think about making Afaan Oromo the second working language of the federal government. The activist, who came up with this specific grand language project, listed ten reasons why Afaan Oromo should be the second working language of the federal government. The following are the reasons as he puts them:

1. Demographic reason: Afaan Oromo, the language spoken by the Oromo, is the single most widely spoken language in terms of the number and size of speakers. It is spoken in at least three countries outside of Ethiopia. Although statistical data's may vary, about 50% of Ethiopian population is estimated to speak the language. In comparison, only 29.1% of the entire population speaks Amharic, the legally imposed official language of the Federal government and the two largest cities of Dire Dawa and Addis Ababa. Given this demographic weight; it is just, democratic and fair to demand the making of Afaan Oromo a federal language.

2. Geographic reason: the federal government, the Addis Ababa City Administration, and the Dire Dawa City Administration are based and hosted in the Afaan Oromo speaking Oromia Regional State. Yet, due to the discriminatory and exclusionary Amharic only language policy, the federal government institutions and these two largest city administrations do not speak the language of the host people and the host state. These entities which feels like an occupying force cannot continue as Amharic speaking island in the middle of the sea of Afaan Oromo speaking population while fully relying on the resource of the Oromo people for their existence including food, water, electricity, ports, waste disposals and roads at a very high human, financial and environmental cost of the Oromo people and Oromia state.
3. Unity of the county as reason: The exclusionary Amharic only policy is the antithesis of the multilingual and multicultural nature of Ethiopia. The two segregationist cities under its administration have an urgent national duty, if they care, to abolish this divisive and dangerous policy that undermines the equality, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence of the Ethiopian people.
4. Economic and job opportunities: this segregationist and exclusionist Amharic only language policy of the federal government and the two largest cities of Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa have fully and completely excluded Afaan Oromo speakers from all federal, municipals, corporate and business opportunities including the right to do business and live in these jurisdiction unless one speaks Amharic. All employees of the federal government and these two cities are 100% Amharic speakers. Less than 10% of ethnic Oromos who were assimilated in to Amharic speaking are presently employed in the federal government institutions. Even worse, none of the federal offices and offices of these two cities including hospitals, businesses and all other service providers provides translation service for Afaan Oromo speaking customers and users. Yet, Afaan Oromo speakers and their state, Oromia, is the economic backbone and major source of export and tax revenue for the federal government and the two city administrations.
5. Representational reason: The Ethiopian federal government institution and its bureaucracies, and the two city administrations legally excluded Afaan Oromo

speakers by adopting Amharic as their only working language. Under this condition, it is very difficult to say Afaan Oromo speakers are represented in the federal government and the two city administrations. The percentage of assimilated, culturally and linguistically disconnected ethnic Oromo employees in the federal government institutions as a whole is less than 10%.

6. Legitimacy reason: the government that doesn't speak the language of the people it claim to govern neither do speak for that people nor do legitimately represents the interest of that people. For the Ethiopian government to be considered legitimate representative of the Afaan Oromo speaking population, it must speak Afaan Oromo and be the representative of the interest of the Afaan Oromo speakers at all levels of its institutions not just in nominal political appointee positions and portfolios.
7. Justice, Equality, and Equity and Fairness reasons: these reasons demand equal opportunity and treatment of Afaan Oromo speakers on equal basis as Amharic speaking segment of the population. The Amharic only policy in the federal government and city administrations have completely left the Afaan Oromo speaking population outside all economic, social, religious and educational institutional frameworks creating a country were close to half of the total population lives in subhuman situation. The Ethiopian federal government has to invest financial and human resources to create Afaan Oromo economic, cultural and educational institutions and adopt economic empowerment policies that will remedy and address the historical injustice Afaan Oromo speakers passed through and are passing through right now.
8. Multilingualism to create bond among various nations and nationality: the Amharic only policy that was intended to assimilate over 80% of the Ethiopian population in to Amharic speaking has created a very racist and hate group who don't accept and respect the equality of various nations, nationalities, languages and various ethnic identities.
9. One language and one ethnic hegemony policies will kill Ethiopia: diverse and pluralistic Ethiopia can only stand on the acceptance of the policy of unity through

diversity. The two most important challenges that work against this most important policy presumption to keep diverse and united Ethiopia are the effort to create one ethnic hegemonic country and the Amharic only language policy.

10. Language as a core factor in human development: The only means and avenue, through which any society could produce, develop exchange and disseminate knowledge and information for self actualization, economic and social development is language.

With the above ten reasons the activist demanded the government to seriously mull over its Amharic only language policy and the making of Afaan Oromo the other working language of the federal government and the two city administrations. Then the same point posted on facebook on March 1, 2015 with tagging most important friends in the Diaspora who can have equal concern for the Oromo issue.

While the movement has been on social media even before March, it has been a mere discussion and not organized and research based. These ten reasons, however, helped many to get out of the trap of emotion and made them rational in advocating the global demand of making Afaan Oromo the other working language in the federal government. International media like the VOA gave their attention to this movement. The topic which originally has been the agenda of few individuals in interpersonal communication jumped in to the social media and become the issue of many more via facebook. After the interview conducted with the initiators of the idea on VOA, vast majority of the Afaan Oromo speaking community heard about the campaign. Not only the Afaan Oromo speakers heard about it, but so does Amharic speakers.

The same status update that notified the finalization of the BBC Afaan Oromo petition announced the commitment of Afaan Oromo Global Coordinating Committee (AOGCC) to make the necessary preparation and organizational framework to start with earnest the campaign to make Afaan Oromoo the federal working language on equal footing with Amharic.

The Oromo activists, in one voice, are explaining that the demand doesn't mean to affect any group in any means but to make Ethiopia Newer, Better, Bigger, Prosperous and

more Inclusive country. But there are groups and activists who see this movement with doubt and inject different views in to facebook. The activist leading this movement mentioned that the biggest challenge with regard to taking any Oromo issue online and launching a movement is that it soon get hijacked and characterized wrongly by people who do not care about the Oromo. The good thing about this and other movements recently underway, however, is that the Oromo professionals have started to support the movements with their knowledge. The movement started taking in to account the fact that these challenges can be there with ways to handle them.

While the steps that needs to be taken, the ways to mobilize the public, its missions and other issues are yet to be clarified, the social media using Oromo has continued the discussion both online and offline.

4.4.4 Say 'No' to the Master Plan

The finding of content analysis and observation in the beginning of this chapter unearthed that Oromo social media activists work on different issues as the same time. Alongside the BBC Afaan Oromo petition and the making of Afaan Oromo the other working language of the federal government, saying no to the master plan is the other biggest campaign still online. The campaign with a graphics Say No has been launched after news broke out earlier on September 30, 2015 that the government is finalizing the implementation of the controversial Addis Ababa Integrated Development plan which in 2014 used to be known by the name the Addis Ababa master plan.

The Master Plan related social media movement has two phases which has been intensified with any move the government take as time pass on.

Phase One

The first phase of the master plan movement started after the April, 2014 announcement of the finalization of the three years undercover work of the master plan. The master plan was aimed at serving Addis Ababa and the special zone surrounding Finfinne for the coming 25 years.

The announcement of the plan sparked discussion on social media in general and facebook in particular with a greater magnitude. The facebook deliberation which was mainly focusing on what the master plan means to the Oromo, the ill effects of its implementation on the Oromos of special zone in terms of cultural, identity, economic, social and political development of the Oromo, light the need to immediately turn the online circulating grievances and anger to street protest. The University and high school students protest across Oromia lasted five months, from April- August of 2014. The protest which was peaceful for most of its parts was responded ruthlessly by government forces in Ambo. The government crackdown in Ambo further fueled the protest and the killings in other towns across Oromia raising the death toll to 70, According to opposition politically party leaders, though the government denounces the number of victims of the crackdown.

Facebook has been so instrumental in the course of the protest, most importantly in sharing updates on the protest and how it has to be continued. Political party leaders, political activists and concerned Oromos used the platform in an attempt to organize and direct the movement so that the death scale can be minimized and the ultimate goal of the protest which is calling the government to stop the implementation of the master plan succeeds.

Oromos and friends of Oromo who use facebook across the board changed their profile picture to show solidarity to the people killed protesting the master plan. The black color which traditionally symbolizes grief up on death and images of a person crying with tears has been used as profile picture on facebook and other social media tools. Following government's plan to target facebook activists, however, activists who have been expressing their stand against the master plan and the killing of dozens of protesters, forced to change their facebook name, avoid any picture of their own and their family and any information that points to their where about.

As government tracking continued, many social media activists were imprisoned. The government has been using the name and image of well known social media activists to hunt university students supposedly organizing peaceful demonstrations. The imprisoned activists had been interrogated and tortured so they can give the government their

facebook password and help in tracking others who are working on the master plan protest. This in some way limited the movement of the activists. The general Oromo facebook users also refrain from liking, commenting and sharing the posts of the activists owing to the paranoia that government spays may mark them. Facebook under this circumstances played a very important role both for the protesters and the government as Himelfarb(2011) posited. The concept of cyber- utopian and cyber-skeptic as polar opposite view on the use of social media has been comprehended in this particular moment. As Himelfarb said it has been used as a liberator and increasingly used by authoritarian regimes to attack and intimidate dissent voices at the same time.

After intensive protest and aggressive response from the government which lasted about five months, the issue of the master plan seems to be forgotten, though it practically has never been the case. Some also hoped that the plan has been terminated for the government sent its officials to solve what it called the misunderstanding. The government promised to terminate the plan if the stand of the people remains the same after the discussion aimed at clearing the misunderstanding. For most of its parts, that discussion only stabilized the public for the time being and never cleared the misunderstanding.

Phase Two

The second phase of social media movement on the say no to the master plan began after an information leaked that one of the EPRDF leader has reportedly said “whether liked or not the master plan will be implemented and any one standing against it would be punished” in a secretive meeting at Hawasa. Then global campaign has been launched condemning the speech of the official. To make thing worse, on September 30, 2015 the government announced that the integrated development plan is about to be implemented. That news revitalized fresh wave of activism on facebook and other social media.

Activists at home designed graphics with a phrase ‘Say No’ under the background of Oromia regional state map. That graphics has been shared among the Oromo in Ethiopia and across the world so in a matter of hours hundreds make it their profile picture on

facebook and twitter without any one calling for that action. More and more reasons for why the Oromo should say no to the master plan have been posted on facebook.

The role of facebook in this second phase of the campaign has been significant as it has been the case with the BBC Afaan Oromo petition. Activists out of the boundary of Ethiopia, launched an online petition campaign to say no to the master plan with a preamble that reads:

We, the Oromo people in Ethiopia, the Oromo diaspora across the globe, friends of the Oromo people in and outside of Ethiopia, all other progressive forces in Ethiopia and beyond, and all forces dedicated to the ideas and ideals of justice and democracy, and those of us committed to the principles of liberty and equality of all peoples everywhere, stand together in protest to the proposed Addis Ababa Integrated Regional Development Plan (otherwise known as the Master Plan).

In particular, we request the Federal Government of Ethiopia, that of the National Regional State of Oromia, and of the City of Addis Ababa to immediately stop the implementation of the Master Plan. As the Caffee Oromiyaa meets to adopt the Urban Development Bill of the Region (Wixnee Labsii Magaalota Motummaa Naannoo Oromiyaa Hundeessuf [dhiyaate]), a bill in which the matter of the Master Plan is to be passed in disguise... We urge them to vote the bill down and stop the implementation of the Master Plan.

...We demand the interruption of the implementation of the Master Plan and a reconsideration of its process, content, and consequence anew. We do so fully aware of the fact that, as it stands now, the proposed Master Plan lacks legitimacy in the process of its making, in its content, and in its consequence. We believe that the process was not consultative, transparent, and participatory. Its content violates the right of Oromia to self-governance, the rights of the inhabitants to socio-economic rights and the power of Oromia to co-equal administration of the city as its capital. Moreover, its content illegally excises the towns and Woredas of the Special Zone out of the jurisdiction of Oromia and unconstitutionally unites them with the city of Addis Ababa.

The petition drive, however, was not as successful as the activists expected and as it is the case with the BBC Afaan Oromo petition. This can only be attributed to fear of

government which in phase one claimed the life of many. The Say No to the master plan campaign, however, is still on progress on facebook. Efforts are underway by some activists abroad and very few in Ethiopia, to keep the spirit of the movement alive on facebook by posting how it affects the Oromo with phrases like ‘dhimmi lafaa dhimma lafeeti’, literary means ‘issue of land is issue of life’.

Since the time of Menelik II and Hailesillase through to Derg regime, music has been used to prop up the angers and sufferings of the Oromo. Now artists become activists in speaking the mind of the Oromo on master plan issue. When the social media activists keep quiet, single tracks of some prominent singers awaken every social media user and the flame come again.

Oromo activists are using this platform to take the Oromo concerns global the way presented above but not to the maximum of facebook’s potential. Only few moments can be mentioned as an example for intensive, efficient and effective use of facebook. The following are reasons why the Oromo fail to use the platform it describes as ‘gift from God for the Oromo’ to its maximum, as shared by most of the activists:

- ❖ Lack of Knowhow: most of the activists in the diaspora are using facebook for many different activities in many different ways but that doesn’t prevail among social media activists in Ethiopia. They mostly use it to post images and words and comment, like and share the status updates of others. But there are much more ways of exploiting it.
- ❖ persistent internet disconnection: while the activists in the diaspora are immune of this, domestic social media activists are challenged by this problem.
- ❖ Time: most of the activism of the Oromo is a leisure time task. Activists abroad lack time to utilize facebook and other social media. There are very few Oromos in Ethiopia who devote their time and do on the case of the Oromo using facebook as a tool.
- ❖ Personal Interest: most of the Oromo social media users waste their time dealing with very personal and insignificant issues and be short of interest when it comes to exploiting social media for the Oromo cause. They give more value to the socializing factor of facebook than revolutionizing power of it.

- ❖ Fear of government: facebook is open for everyone. Anyone can have access to the contents of everyone else on facebook and the government is also keen when it comes to the issue of the Oromo. As revealed above, Activism in the context of the Oromo is being the voice of about 40 million Oromo. That touches every corner which may have risk. Therefore, fear of being spied is why most activists are not using the potential of the platform to the maximum.

4.5 Professionalism in Oromo's Social Media Activism

Activism is not an act that one drives it with emotion. It is the most rational, knowledge based, strategic and organized act on the most complex part of human body, mind. So it is needless to mention that it has to be backed by professionals. Few years back, the Oromo activism has been run by politicians only. Other professionals were either not aware that they can contribute something to the Oromo in their profession or not ready to do that. The current trends of Oromo activism is changing with few professionals taking part in it.

The most prominent Oromo social media movements boycott Bedele, Say No to the master plan and the two Afaan Oromo movements all are witnesses for the changing trends in terms of professionalism. It has been learned from observation that lawyers, politicians, linguists, ethnologists, architects and engineers, poets, historians, artists, graphic designers and other professionals are now being involved in it.

We have seen two and three graphic designs that depict what the master plan is for the Oromo and helped others support the cause in simply changing the profile picture with these graphics. Interviewee 01

When an issue arises online, people in different profession are contributing their part and that is of a greater importance for the movement. For example I am video and audio editing professional when the issue of master plan came; I know that I cannot write in depth analysis on the issue. My profession doesn't allow me to do that. I read what others wrote and then think how I can use my skill to support the idea. ... (Interviewed, Nov. 6, 2015)

Poets have done their part with the skill they have at hand. Artists are singing about it. Politicians have tried to look at political implication of the issue. Ethnologists have explained why people need to support the idea from that point of view. With regard to the two language movements as well, efforts have been observed. Linguists at home and abroad were writing about Afaan Oromo. Scholars on federalism tried to take this language issue in to the discourse of federalism.

More importantly the fields of Oromo activism are diversifying. Now activists concerned on language issues are emerging. Art activists are flourishing among the Oromo. Facebook can take the credit for that. Activism on the Oromo culture is also growing. There is also political activism there for long. The Oromo fields of Activism are diversified, however, doesn't mean that the activists are professionals and all they do is professionally valid. Only few of them are professionally backed. It is under very limited circumstances that professionals are involved. Activist 06 shared his experience as an activist:

Only a tiny portion of Oromo professionals are using social media and many Oromos think doctors and engineers should not be writing on social media

4.6 Weakness of Oromos Online Activism

There are a number of problems on social media activism of the Oromo which can be presented as follows.

4.6.1 Collaboration among Oromo Online Activists

What is widely discussed among social media using Oromos in general and facebook users in particular is lack of unity among the Oromo in broad. There are two points of argument on this topic. There are activists who believe the Oromo are united and it is useless to preach unity and others believe the Oromo need to capitalize on its unity. Yet, on the cooperation among the social media activists, there is consensus that a lot need to be done. There are moments that points to good collaboration among the activists, among which Boycott Bedele is one. Activist 06 and 07 explain the situation.

There was collaboration during Boycott Bedele and the early phase of Oromo Protests but that collaboration ended due to disagreements that emerged during those campaigns...

In general, Oromo activists need to transform itself into some sort of planned activity. Everybody is doing what they do on their own now, but organizational activism needs to be in place.

One of the reason for lack of collaboration among the Oromo activists can be attributed internally to of activists' lack of wisdom. Activist 08

The Oromo divides itself on the basis of religion and place of birth which opens door for others to use it for whatever mission.

The other is external which can, by far, be attributed to the legacy of the past regimes and group of people who skeptically see the unity among the activists today. Activist 08 explained:

The habasha has been working too much using different mechanisms to cause disagreement and conflict among the Oromo. They were cheating and tricking some Oromos so they work on destruction.

4.6.2 Problem of Consistency

From my observation as a researcher, I have noticed that most Oromo activists on facebook are flow towards. Activists 03 says they go with every single and often irrelevant issue raised day after day and very few focus on one important matters and work on that for long. Interviewee 07 listed reasons for why the Oromo activism is time sensitive and inconsistent:

There are at least three reasons for lack of consistency.

1) All Oromo activists are part-time workers, mostly students. They do write when they have spare time and when they get busy they don't even tell their followers that they will be away.

2) Issues change quite frequently. Since Oromo questions are large in number and not yet prioritized, people jump here and there that really affects achievements.

3) Lack of Organization among activists. There is not any relation, hierarchy between activists. People start same issues/grouping at 100

different places at the same time and that divide people. They jeopardize consistency and achievement

In the case of most online movements and campaigns, absence of defined goal is what makes the movements inconsistent. Interviewee 07 and 10 sharing their experiences noted:

I believe lack of consistency is a symptom of (lack) defined goal. If you have a defined goal you can be consistent to reach that goal. During Boycott Bedele, we were consistent and persistent in advancing our goal. No defined goal was set for #OromoProtests in its early phase and that was a mistake. We should have stated our protests would continue till the Master Plan is reversed. If had that defined goal we could have been consistent in our actions.

Yet, other activists believe that lack of collaboration among the activists and absence of proper knowledge about the campaign or movements they launched, what it costs to succeed it and preparedness to pay the cost are reasons of the inconsistency. Interviewee 10 adds:

Most of the movements are overlooked and launched without any planning. no strategic plan of action(when to do what, by whom through what channel).(interviewed Nov. 10, 2015)

According to Interviewee 10, Most facebook activists are accidental. When one appear with an important idea, the general facebook user like, comment and share the post in number and when the number of likes and comments reduce then he/ she will be discouraged. That too is contributing to the problem of consistency. There are also views related to not believing in the power of facebook to bring about change. Activist 04:

We do not realize that people vow one idea and discard the other....the number of activists who believe that facebook can bring change are few.(interviewed Nov.15,2015)

This proves the idea of Morosov (2012), who argued that it should not be a given or an automatic assumption that social media, in and by themselves, will eventually push for political change, introduce transformation to societies and liberate them from repressive regimes.

4.6.3 Lack of succeeding online movements offline

Most Oromo concerns die before changed in to action on the ground. Even those issues which manage to get the attention of quite a lot of online community end up there online. Points raised above are, of course, some of the reasons for that. Yet, the political system in Ethiopia doesn't welcome any movement of that kind.

Calling people for offline action being online is much easier than taking the action on the ground. When one say 'Say No' on facebook it is okay but activists doesn't say what they said online for it is so risky in our context.... If you remember last year, the Oromo youth have tried to say no in peaceful demonstrations. But the response was harsh. About 70 civilian demonstrators were killed. Because it is a country where you get killed for peacefully voicing your opinion, online activists are not able to take that offline... let alone thinking of movements on the ground, many young Oromos are imprisoned for writing issues of this kind on facebook under different pretexts. So Oromos have tried this multiple times....the Ethiopian political system has imprisoned the Oromo both technically and psychologically. (Interviewee 01, interviewed Nov. 6, 2015)

The above idea strengthens the argument of Malcolm Gladwell as quoted by Sarah Joseph(2012). He argues that social media connections promote weak ties and low-risk activism, or "Slacktivism." According to him, "Facebook activism succeeds not by motivating people to make a real sacrifice but by motivating them to do the things people do when they're not motivated enough to make a real sacrifice

There are also problems related to planning, leadership and communication when it comes to not being able to changing online discussions in to offline action. Gladwell was cited as saying successful activism requires strategic hierarchies, with a careful and precise allocation of tasks.

Interviewee 08 mentioned as that element is missing in the case of the Oromo.

There are no organs that plan ahead how to change online campaign into offline action. There is also lack of communication between exiled and home activists for that.

4.7 Challenges of Activism on Matters of Oromo

From the interview conducted with the activists, it has been understood that being an Oromo activist means speaking the mind, the suffering and need of over 40 million Oromos worldwide. This is full of challenges which can be discussed in three categories. One is related to the activists themselves. Activist 07 explains the following problem among the activists as a challenge:

The major reason is mistrust among the activists. We don't know how to handle differences of opinion. You are given names when you have a different view from others and people run away from you. One disagreement distances one or two activists from others. The next issue does the same and before you know it, you reach a point where you have no group working together... it is impossible to work with people if they see you as an enemy whenever you have a different view on an issue.

The other challenge which is peculiar to the activists themselves is related to unity. Activist 05 shared his experience that the activists call the Oromo to be united without being united first. While there are other external factors posing threat to their activism on activists at home, some activists comment that there is something wrong with those in exile.

Activists at home may get anxious of government but what is unclear to me is why those in exile fail to work on the Oromo cause to the best of their capacity. I feel they lack commitment and the exile life has comforted them that they forgot what fellow Oromos at home are up to. Many of the activists in the diaspora show up and say a lot then disappear. They don't live up to their words and commitment.(interviewee 03, interviewed Nov.15, 2015)

The expectation from there, according to activists at home, is high because there is no government related problem they could be worrying. But, the activists in the diaspora, most of them, are students as a result of which time become a hold back. The fact that most Oromo activists are leisure time activists and absence of having many fulltime workers is the downside on Oromo's social media activism.

The second challenge of being an Oromo activist is related to the general social media using Oromo. The story of facebook activist Ghonim, Egyptian-born living in Dubai,

who created a facebook page called “we are all Khaled said” and write “Today they killed Khaled” in the 2011 Egyptian revolution can connote to the problem related to the Oromo social media user. It only took him two minutes to get 300 people join the group and three months to reach 250,000. The general social media using Oromo often do not like, comment and share the idea of the activists let alone joining facebook pages. The anti-terrorism law ratified in 2009 can be a reason for why the general social media using Oromo refrain from supporting activists. Most of the activists have been in jail for raising the concern of the Oromo while the government labels them terrorists. Other activists were detained under the allegation that they are collaborating with terrorists. Fear of being labeled a terrorist by government, according to activist 04 is the major reason.

What I can say is, when I post something, there are many who inbox me instead of commenting on the post. That is due to fear. I have tried to contact them in person and asked why they do it. It is all due to fear of government. (interviewed Nov.15, 2015)

Activist 03 mentioned what fortifies the above idea of activist 04 which is activists working on culture, identity, art and literature often got much more likes, comments and shares on their posts while that is not the case when the post is somehow related to politics or have political implication. Activist 01 commented that social media users frighten you with their comments.

After the general election, I did a graphics which says “Ummanni dhagaa miti dhugaa dhabee” literarily translated means ‘the people need truth not stones’. Then people who know me and do not know me in boxed saying ‘be take care of the officials’, ‘remove it from your post I have got information from officials’. Many told me the next step will be imprisonment and duress if I didn’t do that....to tell you the truth there were two weeks in my life that I believed that I would be imprisoned and prepared myself for jail simply from what people tell me on daily bases. (Interviewed No. 6, 2015)

The third category, which in fact has been reflected in the second category also, is government intimidation. The following is the experience of the activists:

The number of activists who didn't see jail is few. I have been imprisoned...there were rumors that I was died in jail. My families were receiving calls that I am admitted to hospital, died of car accident and many many. (Activist 04 interviewed Nov. 15, 2015)

There are moments when you receive calls from government bodies and people you don't know ordering you to shut down your account, threatening you not to write on issues of Oromo anymore and to take the responsibility yourself for whatever happens if you persist on it. You receive texts too. I personally have been through this. My facebook password has been forcefully taken away from me to track the people I contact. For about a month, I was blocked from my facebook account and email. (Activist 03 Nov. 15, 2015)

All the activists mentioned that the anti-terrorism law which is open for interpretation has been used and will continue to be used to criminalize activism on the net and on the ground and that appears at scale among the Oromo activists.

According to Fuchs (2010), the Surveillance by nation states and corporations also aims at controlling the behavior of individuals and groups, i.e. they should be forced to behave or not behave in certain ways because they know that their appearance, movements, location, or ideas are or could be watched by surveillance systems.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

As stated in chapter one, this study embarked on bringing to light the practice and challenges of social media activism of the Oromo. Among various social networking sites, this study focused on facebook because it was the one with better penetration in to Ethiopia. From prior studies, it has been comprehended that facebook is becoming the plat form where people speak their mind freely. When it comes to the Oromo in general and its activists in particular, facebook has become a stage to come together, know each other and discuss matters of politics, culture, economy, identity, social values, art, religion, philosophy and every other topic with relative freedom in unprecedented manner. It has also become a platform where the Oromo build on its image which for centuries has been portrayed wrongly. Absence of independent media speaking for the Oromo has contributed to the consideration of facebook as a gift from God to the Oromo. It has also become a driving wheel for the creation and promotion of more and more Oromo activists.

The Oromo activists mostly write and post on issues of Oromo on facebook. From the various Oromo issues, they run activism on politics, culture, identity, art and literature among others. They most often back their idea with images, links and graphics. The activists' post is targeted mostly at calling for some kind of action often online and rarely for peaceful demonstration and unity. Promotion of Oromumma, elaborating issues concerning Oromo, criticizing misdeeds, raising awareness and combination of some of them are the rationale of most activists' post. When it comes to language, more than 85% of the activists use Afaan Oromo and English.

The Oromo social media activists took diversified issues of Oromo over the six months of the study time, with Say No to the Addis Ababa Integrated Development Plan, calling the BBC to consider Afaan Oromo for its new broadcasting service, book burning campaign (professor Mesfin Woldemariam's Adafne) and making Afaan Oromo the other working language of the federal government on top of their agenda. These movements have their own unique features as some are political and others identity and language issue. The

move related to calling BBC to open Afaan Oromo service is progressing well but the Say No to the master plan campaign and making Afaan Oromo the other working language of the federal government have confronted cumbersome challenges.

Being an Oromo activist in Ethiopian context is complex because what the Oromo has gone through is full of complications. The political past of the Oromo which almost ruined most of the things that made the Oromo unique and paralyzed its political, cultural, economic and social heritages is what makes Oromo activism complex. The way the government see the Oromo issue now makes the complication even worse. There is an understanding among the activists that the Oromo Activism has to focus on speaking the century old and current injustice on behalf of more than 40 million Oromos worldwide. In the process of speaking on behalf of above 40 million Oromos on facebook, they are not using the potential of the platform to its maximum. There are problems of knowhow, persistent internet disconnection, time, Personal Interest and fear of government surveillance for not using it effectively.

For most of its parts, the Oromo's activism play ground has been controlled by politicians only. The Say No to the master plan and the BBC Afaan Oromo petition campaigns, however, brought Lawyers, linguists, ethnologists, architects and engineers, poets, historians, artists and graphic designers in to the play field. That is also giving rise to a number of new Oromo activism fields.

Nevertheless, the Oromo's social media activism in general is weak. Although there are moments that points to the collaboration among the activists, it is lower throughout. This can be attributed to lack of astuteness of the activists and other's mission of disintegrating Oromo activists. There is problem of consistency as well. The fact that Oromo activists are part-timers, issues change quite frequently and lack of planning, Organization and leadership are the contributing factors. Most of the online movements also die before changed in to offline action due to the above reasons.

Running activism on matters of Oromo in general is challenged by a number of problems mainly coming from three directions. The first is coming from the activists themselves. They do not have unity among each other, time to follow up developing issues and

commitment to succeed their objectives. They do not prioritize issues too. The second is from social media using Oromos who give a cold shoulder to the efforts of the activists. That can be ascribed to lack of knowhow on activism, suspecting if the activists really stand for the Oromo, skepticism on the power of facebook and fear of government. Finally measures taken by the ruling body to suppress any dissent views which make use of some constitutional laws like the anti-terrorism law are among the pitfalls.

5.2. Recommendations

This study focused on answering how the Oromo online activists' practice activism, what ideals often make up the Oromo activists' online agenda and the challenges of Oromo activists' in carrying out online activism. Using the methodology convenient to answer the questions, the above findings have been originated. Based on the findings, the researcher recommends the following:

- The Oromo social media activists see social media in general and facebook in particular, as God's gift for the Oromo so they speak their mind but when the kinds of issues they are using it for and intensity of their usage is scrutinized, facebook is used under potential. There are reasons that this study tried to identify. Therefore, the activists and the social media using Oromo have to work jointly to solve the problems and use it for better change.
- Most of the Oromo concerns and campaigns lack defined goal, consistency, professional analysis, centralized and effective leadership, plan of action and follow-up. The intra-Oromo activist's unity and trust is stumpy. The communication between activists in exile and at home is also poor. Therefore, the activists need to establish Oromo social media activist's front to work towards these problems.
- The Oromo activists discuss diversified issues of Oromo on social media targeting some at the Oromo and some others at non-Oromos and government bodies. But the languages they mostly use are Afaan Oromo and English. They have to make sure that they have addressed their people's concern effectively to the concerned body through their medium of communication.
- The Oromo who use social media has to be able to evaluate the social, economic, political and cultural significance of each cause the activists advocate and support the good and reject the bad rationally.
- There are quite a lot of issues of the Oromo prop up on facebook. Sometimes the issues have nothing to do with the Oromo at large. The activists and the other social media user indulge in irrelevant and seldom violence inciting deliberations. While standing for about 40 million Oromo is one thing, it is important to note

who makes benefit out of it the deliberation. The activists therefore, have to make sure it benefits the Oromo.

- Although the government undertakes internet surveillance with the aim of keeping peace and security of its people, it has to also give room for free and peaceful activism on the net and on the ground. The anti-terrorism law has been used as a pretext to suppress dissent voices. The government therefore need to look at its ill effect on human development and democratization.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview questions for activists at home

1. How do you describe the role of facebook (social media) in conversing the Oromo concern ?
2. What does it mean to be an Oromo activist?
3. you think the Oromo activists are using social media to its maximum? if not what do you think is the reason?
4. Do you think the Oromo activism is backed by professionals? If not why
5. Is there collaboration among the Oromo activists? if not why?
6. Why are most online movements and campaigns lack consistency?
7. Most online movements die immaturely before changed in to offline action. Do you agree with this? If you agree Why did the Oromo activists fail to take online movements in to offline action?
8. What are the challenges of running activism on matters of Oromo?
9. What other weaknesses have you observed on activism of the Oromo?

Appendix B

Questions for facebook conversation

1. How do you describe the role of facebook (social media) in conversing the Oromo concern?
2. What does it mean to be an Oromo activist?
3. What are weakness of the Oromo activism on facebook
4. What are the challenges of running activism on matters of Oromo?

Appendix C

Questions for initiators of the movements and the campaigns

1. How the idea of each activist movements came(to those who launched the boycott bedelle, the say No, the BBC petition and making Afaan Oromo federal language)
2. What achievements were registered?
3. What are the challenges in advocating for the varithese ideas online and offline?

Appendix D

Observation checklist

Points of Observation

1. Activists facebook account
2. Activists status update
3. Facebook movements
4. Facebook users comment for posts of the activists