



**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN POLITICAL REFORM IN  
AFRICAN; THE CASE OF ETHIOPIA**

**BY**

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**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE ONGOING  
POLITICAL REFORM PROCESS IN AFRICAN; THE CASE OF  
ETHIOPIA**

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## Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other universities and that all sources of information used for this thesis have been fully acknowledged.

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## **List of Acronyms**

<b>AAU</b>	<b>Addis Ababa University</b>
<b>ATP</b>	<b>Anti Terrorism Proclamation</b>
<b>ACHR</b>	<b>The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights</b>
<b>CPJ</b>	<b>Committee to Protect Journalists</b>
<b>EPRDF</b>	<b>Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front</b>
<b>FDRE</b>	<b>Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia</b>
<b>FGD</b>	<b>Focus Group Discussion</b>
<b>HPR</b>	<b>House of People Representative</b>
<b>ICT</b>	<b>Information Communication Technology</b>
<b>IDP</b>	<b>Internally Displaced Persons</b>
<b>NEBE</b>	<b>National Electoral Board of Ethiopia</b>
<b>SoE</b>	<b>State of Emergency</b>
<b>SMNs</b>	<b>Social Media Networks</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nation</b>
<b>UNDP</b>	<b>United Nation development program</b>

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Social media is a recent phenomenon to the world as well as in Ethiopia. In recent years social media served as an instrument to get rid of authoritarian régime North Africa countries could be the best examples. When we come to the Horn of Africa, particularly in Ethiopia, protest broke out against the Government since 2015, though this study investigates a role of Social Media on the Ongoing Political Reform in Ethiopia. The study employed qualitative methodology and used primary and secondary source. The primary sources were in-depth interview, focus group discussion, interview guide question, and secondary sources books, research thesis, Articles, journals, and research thesis were used. All in-depth interview and focus group dissections were semi-structured and selected purposively from Activist, communication consultants, social media expert, journalists, and Active social media users. The interview guide question were conducted by self-develop semi structured and open ended questions, and distributed for 60 study participants who work in government agencies. To conclude the finding of the study shows that social media played a crucial role to brought political reform in Ethiopia. The social media platform also served as a political space for activists, politician, and the people who denied using mainstream media and during the nationwide political protest against the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front administration's social media served as an alternative source of information, for mobilization and exposing the brutality of the government.*

***Key Words: Social Media, Role of Social Media, Political Reform***

# Chapter One

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Background of the study

After the emergence of computer or information communication technology, several types of communication system existed in the world and revolutionized the way we interact each other. Social media networks were also one of them that change the traditional system of communication. The first web-based recognizable social network named SixDegrees.com launched in 1997 (Danah and Nicole, 2008). Following that popular social media networks Facebook launched in 2004, Twitter and You tube existed in 2005. Nowadays they have used by billions of users across the world.

Social media is seen as a means of exchanging any information through the new media. In addition, the new media has a platform to converge the traditional media or mainstream media such as radio, television, newspaper, and others. Though, all traditional media has available in one medium or in social media. Besides, Auer (2011) noted that social media have become platforms from where ordinary people are able to influence public affairs. Social media are electronic communication platforms where contents have generated and exchanged by a network of users (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Further, social media is a platform to exchange information communication and among those, politics has its own share. Spasojevic (2017) reinforced this ideas, during 2011 Arab spring the protest was fuelled by the help of social media platform and helping the protester in terms of building a collective identity, mobilization and as an alternative information source.

When we come to the Ethiopia experience, the country connected to the Internet in January 1997 by state owned Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation, currently known as ethio telecom. Since then the internet infrastructure show progress in the country however, it is still low even contrast to sub-Saharan Africa. According to Internet World Statics of March 2019, African Average internet penetration rate has reached 35%. Ethiopia has accounted 15% of internet

penetration rate that is far less than from the African average. Kenya and Liberia internet penetration is the highest in Africa and accounted more than 80%, followed by Tunisia. In addition to that Ethiopian Data and internet users reached to 19.49 Million (ethio telecom, 2019) and social media users particularly Facebook users accounted nearly six million, Twitter and YouTube followed (napoleoncat, 2018).

In the country Protests broke out after the 2015 national elections, in which the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (hereafter: EPRDF) and its partners claimed 100 percent of the seats in Parliament. Then in October 2016, the government declared state of emergency (hereafter: SoE) for 10 months. However, after lifting of SoE the protest again continued and spread to other regions, particularly Amhara State and a number of localities in the southern region. Thought Protester from different parts of the country used social media to share information about the protest (Mohamed, 2018).

The social media-driven social movement political protest is a recent phenomenon in Ethiopia as elsewhere in Africa. For the last three years, there was a political struggle to change the government. The Social media became one of the instruments in used in the struggle to change the régime. This thesis is mainly concerned to investigate the role of social media on the ongoing political reform in Ethiopia.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

Social media existed more than 15 years ago, since then the traditional way of human communication changed into a new way. Social media became a part of our life, individual use it for economic reason, social affairs and political goal. However, for the last ten years the political activity in social media has been seen boldly. Particularly the North African countries such as in Tunisia and Egypt revolution aided by social media and the protester used social media communication for mobilization. As a result, the long serving authoritarian North African leaders threw from the age-old throne (Spasojevic, 2017).

In Ethiopia, popular social movement protest broke out since 2015. Moreover, during the protest, Social media became a better alternative media than public or state owned media for political

discussion (Araya, 2018). The reason was that after election dispute of 2005, the government stepped up repressive measures against journalists and begun filtering online political content. Moreover, the parliament passed different proclamations, jailed opposition leaders, and journalist. The prominent acts of Anti-Terrorism Proclamation No.652/2009 (Hereafter, ATP), Charities and Societies Proclamation No.612/2009, and Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation No.590/2008 were passed by House of People Representatives.

During the 2010 National Elections, EPRDF took 99 percent of the parliament seats then the régime joined Competitive Authoritarian or the Hybrid regimes camp (Yamane, 2010). A year later in 2011 Arab spring broke out. During the Arab Spring (CPJ, 2012), report explained that Ethiopian youth in the countryside and Diasporas tried to copy the movement through social media. However, it was not successful because the EPRDF already established repressive proclamation such as ATP. CPJ (2013) report noted that the prominent journalist Eskinder Nega who was engaged on the social media and was wrote about "Arab Spring", the Zone9 blogger and journalists jailed. CPJ (2013) reported that the Ethiopian government accused Eskinder by "articles that incited the public to bring the North African and Arab spring to Ethiopia". The researcher of this study was also a living witness of Non-violence Muslim Protest at the Awolia School that took the street every Friday in 2012. These protesters believed that the government interfered to religious affair. This protest movement used social media as a tool to protest the government interference for the first time in the country.

Then in May 2015, NBE held a national election and EPRDF took again 547 parliament seats. This showed that EPRDF confirmed being a well-established autocracy in power (Abbink, 2017). After a few month of 2015 election, Oromo protest broke out over Addis Ababa Master Plan case in November, the following year Amhara region joined the protest over Wolkaite issue, Konso as well protest to get administrative autonomy (Tesfagebrail, 2017). The protest continued in various place of the country until the "Reformist" Abiy Ahmed became a Prime Minister in March 2018. Throughout the popular protest movement against the regime for the last three years, state owned media remained silent, several private newspapers, magazines, and blogs were closed and blocked. As a result, the public find social media platforms to express their freedom of speech. Therefore, Social media became a better alternative media than public media for political discussion. (Araya, 2018).

The researcher found three research papers related to the study topic, first Tesfaye (2013) studied about "Social Media as an Alternative Political Forum in Ethiopia" the study revealed that how Facebook served as an alternative political forum. Secondly, Araya (2018) identified about "Motivators and Challenges of Social Media Use for Political Communication in Addis Ababa " the study showed that social media significant role for political communication. Third, Henok (2018) Assessed about Assessing the Perception of Online Media Users on the Debate of the Recent Violence in Ethiopia (2015-2018); the case of Facebook and its relation with violence. The finding revealed that Facebook was the main social media tool in the violence for communication. The existing studies on the area were made very good contribution. However, this study was specifically conducted to investigate the role of social media during the nationwide anti EPRDF popular protest and on the ongoing reform process.

### **1.3. Research Question**

The overall research question of this study was to examine The Role of Social Media in Political Reform in African; the Case of Ethiopia. Specifically, the study attempted to answer the following Questions.

1. What are the roles of social media in the ongoing political reform process in Ethiopia?
2. What are the positive and negative impacts of social media during the nationwide anti EPRDF protest movement?
3. What are the roles of the Ethiopian Diaspora in social media during the popular protest movement in homeland?

### **1.4. General Objective**

The general objective of the study is to investigate the role of Social Media on the Ongoing Political Reform in Ethiopia in the last three years.

**Specific objectives are the following:**

- To examine the role of social media in the in bringing political reform process in Ethiopia

- To identify the positive and negative impacts of social media during the nationwide anti EPRDF protest movement
- To examine the roles of the Ethiopian Diaspora in social media during the popular protest movement in homeland

### **1.5. The Scope of the study**

Nowadays, there are many studies being conducted on the roles of social media in political and regime change globally as well as regionally. This study attempts to investigate The Role of Social Media in Political Reform in African; the Case of Ethiopia. The study covers only Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube alone. The reason is that many Ethiopian social media user tends to use Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube respectively. However, the majority of social media users are Facebook contrast to other social media users even they are not contrastable, because of that the researcher included Twitter and YouTube.

Other social media platforms, messaging services applications such as Viber, Watsup, Telegram, and others are not included in the research and Traditional media or Mainstream media Such as Radio, Satellite Television such as (ESAT, OMN), state owned Television (EBC, OBN, AMM and others), state affiliated (FBC) are not included in the research.

### **1.6. Significance of the study**

The finding of this study helps and contributes for Policy Maker, for Social Media Service provider, politicians, Media, and stakeholders to contribute democratization using effective social media tools. In addition to that, this study gives a specific picture of how social media culture spread in Sub Saharan Africa particularly in Ethiopia.

This study also contributes to an academic understanding of the new cultural wave of the society. The finding is significant for mainstream media to learn that why social media has been taking their role during the last three years of protest and address the message how the society affect when users become dependent on social media rather than mainstream media. The study would

also be significant to the lawmaker to curb the negative impact of social media for the well-being of society. Finally, social media users understand a little bit about fake news and hate speech.

## **1.7. Working concept**

The following definitions of terms are used in this research:

**Social media:** social media is also known as new media. Kietzmann et al. (2011) defines the "social media" like mobile and web-based technologies that create highly interactive platforms, which users can share, discuss, modify, and co-create content.

**Protest Movement:** aim at opening the democratic space of civic participation and involve comprehensive reforms of the state institutions and the constitutional, legal and policy frameworks that shaped the relationship between citizens and the state.

**Political Reform:** political reform is as a transition from no-party or a one-party to a competitive party system or from a Military regime to a civilian government Robert (2005). However, the Ethiopia case was similar to one party system or EPRDF has been controlling all 547 seats of HPR. Since PM Abiy Ahmed took office, the régime released all political prisoners and preparing to hold a free and fair election as well as it has been reforming the previous repressive proclamation.

**Hate speech:** it is dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority, dissemination of ideas based on racial hatred, incitement to racial discrimination and incitement to acts of racially motivated violence. (Act of UN General Assembly in 1965)

**Fake News:** it is dissemination of fake and false news across social media. Further, fake news is "Manipulation, disinformation, falseness, rumors, conspiracy theories actions and behaviors that are frequently associated with the term has existed as long as humans have communicated" (Oxford 2018).

### **1.8. Limitation of the Study**

The study was investigated The Role of Social Media in Political Reform in African; the Case of Ethiopia. The researcher faced various challenges. The major problem that this study faced was the dynamism of the situation and domestic scholars and writings do not yet comprehensively cover the topic addressed in the study. Secondly, lack of access to meet prominent individual, and activists, officials, and postponing of appointment repeatedly and the availability of documents on the field was some of the difficulties.

### **1.9. Organization of the study**

The study titled The Role of Social Media in Political Reform in African; the Case of Ethiopia. This thesis consists of six chapters. The first chapter contains the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the objective of the study, and significance of the study, scope of the study, Working Definitions of Terms, Limitation of the Study and Organization of the study. The second chapter consists of the review of literature and theoretical framework of the study. The third chapter is about the research methodology while the fourth chapter is about presentation of study participant, the fifth chapter present discussion, and analysis and the last chapter contains the conclusion, Research Finding Implication for Policy Reform on Social Media and Recommendation for the Topic of the study.

## **Chapter Two**

### **2. Literature Review**

This chapter consists of reviewed literatures mainly about the roles of new media to change political landscape of the country. Nowadays we live in the information age social media is becoming one element of the human and economic developments of the modern age. All Traditional media sometimes known as Mainstream Media such as Radio, Television, and Newspaper become converge in new media. After the emergence of third generation computer in 1960s, networking of two computer, Email, and Internet emerged in 1970s, search engine, World Wide Web and Smartphone existed in 1990s. World Wide Web enabled users of internet to shares database (Mahoney, 1998). The new information communication technology like Internet, World Wide Web, Social Media, and others transmitted all traditional media in one medium.

#### **2.1. Internet**

According to Soanes and Stevenson (2001) Internet is "an international information network linking computers, accessible to the public via modem links". Though, the computer has played the central role for a new information communication technology. The US Department of Defense, which is Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPANET), created the Internet in 1970s. Michael Mahoney (1998). It is a military based networking architecture for experimental communication and it is the most sweeping revolution in the history of communications technology (Encyclopedia of E-Commerce, 2002).

Since then the Internet has revolutionized the computer and communications world like nothing before (Barry et al. 1997). The invention of the traditional media telegraph, telephone, radio, and computer set the stage for this unprecedented integration of capabilities. The Internet has influenced broader areas of life such as economics, culture, language, and social relations (Encyclopedia of E-Commerce, 2002). Internet connectivity is commonly established by using an Internet Service Provider (Hereafter, ISP), which is an organization that has a permanent presence on the Internet and provide a fixed line or dial-up service.

According to Internet World Statics of March 2019, more than 4 billion people have been using Internet. The Global internet average penetration rate has reached 56% and African internet average penetration rate is 35 %. Ethiopia has accounted 15% of internet penetration rate that is far less than from the African average. Kenya and Liberia internet penetration is the highest in Africa and accounted more than 80%, followed by Tunisia.

## 2.2. World Wide Web

In 1990s, Tim Berners-Lee developed the World Wide Web (Here after WWW). The Internet is the infrastructure required early on by the Web. WWW enabled users of internet to shares database Mahoney (1998). The World Wide Web (WWW) allows computer users to position and view multimedia-based documents (i.e., documents with text, graphics, animations, audios, and videos). There are different related terms with WWW; Oxford Brookes University (2002) briefly defines the word as follow;

- ✓ **CERN:** the organization that Berner-Lee worked for that provided the requirements
- ✓ **Internet:** the infrastructure required early on by the Web
- ✓ **SGML:** the basis for document markup on the Web
- ✓ **Hypertext:** the underlying linking structure for the Web
- ✓ **World Wide Web Consortium:** the organization whose members develop the specifications used on the Web
- ✓ **Early Web Evolution:** how the Web developed in its formative years

In General, the World Wide Web and Internet have changed the way people communicate, interact, doing business, and to deal with their daily lives. However, Malware (malicious code such as viruses, worms, Trojan horses, bots, backdoors, spyware, adware, etc.) put endanger the internet world. Particularity in recent years, threat to organization, threat to System, and threat to Administrators/Developers became increase and the attacking technique more and more sophisticated (IT Security Center, 2009).

### **2.3. Origins of social media**

Social media is a web-based technology that creates highly interactive platforms, which users can share, discuss, modify, and co-create content (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Kaplan and Haenlein (2011) noted that social media as Web 2.0 a new way and software developers and end-users collaborated. The first web-based recognizable social network named SixDegrees.com launched in 1997 (Danah and Nicole, 2008). Before the launching of SixDegrees.com some single features were running alone, some of them are dating sites, classmate.com, lists of friends and others. However, a year later SixDegrees.com started to allow users to create profiles, list their friends and surf the friends lists. After three years of service, SixDegrees.com could not stay on the web because it failed to become a sustainable business. However, during its time, it was able to attract millions of users and help people to connect with and send messages to others.

In the years between 1997 and 2000, a number of social networks have emerged some of them having a specific and other dual purpose. Danah and Ellison (2008) explained about the features and some of them allowed users to create personal, professional, and dating profiles with the new feature to help users to identify friends on their personal profiles without seeking approval for those connections. Among professional sites, such as LinkedIn, Visible Path, Xing and Blogging sites, such as Xanga, Live Journal, and Vox, has attracted broad audiences. Up until 2005, two social network sites had been largely used by users named Friendster and MySpace.

Danah and Nicole (2008) had personal communication with the co-founder of Friendster J. Abrams and he told them that Friendster was an online dating site and designed to help friends-of-friends meet, based on the assumption that friends-of-friends would make better romantic partners than would strangers. MySpace launched in 2003, to compete with sites such as Friendster, Xanga, and AsianAvenue. MySpace also added a new feature to social network sites. It allowed the user to add HTML and enabled users on the web to generate unique MySpace backgrounds and layouts. (*ibid*) As we have seen on the above, there are different types of Social networking sites and provide a platform to build social networks. Now let us see some popular social networking sites across Africa, which has accessed by Millions of users such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

### **2.3.1. Facebook**

John Cassidy wrote 'Me media' in 2006. By the time John asked Zuckerberg about Facebook in what ambition it was established and he replayed "I mean one way to look at the goal of the site is to increase people understandings of the world around them, to increase their information supply".

Facebook started its carrier with College students in 2004. John Cassidy (2006) explained that anybody with a Harvard e-mail address could join and create a profile, which consisted of a photograph and some personal information, such as the user's major, film, books, music, and favorite quotes. By the time, Facebook was unlike the other social media such as Friendster and MySpace that are open to anyone but its members had a physical location, professors, and class in common. After five months of launching, the site had expanded from Harvard to forty different schools and got a hundred and fifty thousand registered users. A year later high school students join Facebook then after two years of the specific oriented user, Facebook has become open for everyone.

In 2010, Facebook had a new feature that is a like button; anyone can click the button who wants to appreciate friends post in his Facebook's wall. In 2012, Facebook reached more than 1 billion active users and as of September 30, 2018, Facebook data had reached 2.27 billion monthly users and 1.49 daily active users. As Internet world stats (2017) there is more than 450 million internet user in Africa, and more than 177 million Facebook subscribers and among them more than five million of them are Ethiopian

### **2.3.2. Twitter**

Twitter is all about "what is happening in the world and what people are talking about right now." Twitter created by Jack Dorsey in San Francisco and launched in 2006, it is a micro-blogging service that allows users to tweet 140 characters. However, Eleven years later, Twitter added some features such as doubling the previous character and allowing users to upload a photo and a short video.

According to Wlller et al., (2014) before the existence of Tweeter, Instant Relay Chat (IRC) started nearly two decades ago before which was designed for group communication and the roots of the symbols such as, @, # and the limitation of the word are from IRC. The other point is that the mass production of 1990s mobile phone production had also an effect on the existence of Twitter. Twitter has its unique button such as a Retweet (RT) that can be re-posting others post (follower) (following), replay, mention (@), list, and hash flag (#) and a searchable database of what's happening now.

Sometimes friends on Facebook and followers on Twitter are a little bit different. Cunyet made an interview with the founder of twitter to know about the difference. Dorsey put it this way on twitter you are not watching the person but you are watching what they produce. According to Omnocore (2019) which is analyze the online data total number of the monthly active Twitter user has reached more than 326 million, 500 million tweet per day and 100 million daily active users. When we come to Ethiopia, Internet World stat of March 2019 showed more than 16 million people-using internets among them 2.2 percent of people have used Twitter.

### **2.3.3. YouTube**

"We believe that everyone deserves to have a voice and that the world is a better place when we listen, share and build community through our stories." YouTube (about us, accessed Dec.20)  
YouTube launched in 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim.

Burgess and Green (2009) reminded that until the first anniversary, YouTube Users were simply watching videos hosted on the site, without logging in than they are to upload videos. However, after being bought by Google in 2006 YouTube directly links with Gmail accounts, which increases the number of users, logged in. Kaitlin (2012) noted that YouTube allows viewers to rank videos with likes and dislikes and shows how many times a video has been watching.

"This attracts more viewers to watch the video Coming out in mid - 2005, it already entered the list of the hundred- most- visited sites by early 2006, and became the fifth - most - popular site on the Web by July 2007" (Anner and Jacques 2009)

According to YouTube 2017 data, 300 hours of video has uploaded in every minute, 5 billion videos watched on YouTube every single day and get 30 million visitors per day. In September 2018, data total number of active user had reached 1.9 billion, more than 30 million daily active users, more than 5 billion video shared and watched, average viewing session had reached 40 minutes and more than 500 million users watched the video by their phone.

#### **2.4. The roles of social media**

As we have seen in the above, prominent social networking sites have been 15 years old however, in this short period of time the new media have changed the worldview. The new media has been playing different roles in every profession such as in politic, in business, entertainment, tourism, education, and others. The researcher aim is seeing only that the roles of social media in politics and social movement not the business, entertainment, and others. In terms of politics and social movements, social media has provided many opportunities. Lopes (2014) explained that social media has provided five key aspects of the formation of social movements. Those are communication, organization, mobilization, validation, and scope enlargement.

Social media are able to reach millions of people to the whole world at the same time. Eltantawy and Wiest (2011) described the advantage of social media in terms of mobilization and others. Social media introduces speed and interactivity that were lacking in the traditional mobilization techniques and avoids the use of leaflets, posters, and faxes as well. Lopez (2014) noted that social media could connect individuals with a low cost; as a result, they can organize and mobilize. In addition to that, governments in developing nation mainly control traditional media. As a result, freedom of expression and other human right being violated. However, social media has become opportunities to exercise those rights. Tufekci and Wilson (2012) explained that after the emergence of social media, authoritarian could not easily control information.

When we come to see social media in political perspective, it had played a great contribution, from political reform to revolution, from political campaign to political instability. In terms of a political campaign, the first big social media political campaign era had begun during the 2008 US presidential election.

Obama's team revolutionized the use of social media in an election they felt was unwinnable using traditional techniques. The campaign was active on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The new media trends established in the 2008 campaign have carried over to the realm of government and politics more generally. Social media have become a pervasive force in politics, altering the communication dynamics between political leaders, journalists, and the public (Diana, 2017).

When you come to Africa's social media trend in terms of the political campaign many countries began to practice the new media. Madueke et al (2018) explained how the new media served in the 2011 Nigerian general election. By the time in 2010, President Goodluck Jonathan declared he was running for office on Facebook and his closest rivals Mohamedu Buhari and others also a heavy presence on Facebook as well. In 2011 the Arab spring fuelled by the help of social media platform. In Egyptian uprising, social media played a major role in terms of building a collective identity, mobilization and as an alternative information source (Spasojevic, 2017). Moreover, in 2013, Kenyan general election has played a role and by the time, there was a fear and uncertainties, however, with powerful social activism the election came to a peaceful end (Penplusbytes, 2015).

## **2.5. Internet and the Role of social media in Ethiopia**

According to Abdurahman who was working as Ethio-telecom public officer, Internet has begun in Ethiopia at UN Economic Commission for Africa for a very small user in 1993. After five years of waiting, in 1997 the Internet opened for the entire public. In 2009, ETC launched mobile internet services. Since then, the state-owned ethio-telecom has registered much progress and installed 3Gs and 4Gs. When we come to a recent report on February 3, 2019, Ethio-telecom released its Six-Month performance report and it shows that Ethiopian Data and internet users reached to 19.49 Million.

However, many international human Rights organization blamed the government and Human Rights Watch's (2014) report explained that the country was the first sub-Saharan African country to begin blocking Internet sites in 2006. Human Rights Watch study shows about the

Muslim protest, which has the researcher mentioned in chapter one that began in 2012 at Awolia school, how Ethiopia was handling the protest on social media.

"In May 2012, Aljazeera's website and YouTube channel were briefly blocked following a documentary that was critical of Ethiopia's handling of the Muslim protests. On August 2, 2012, Aljazeera's website was once again blocked the day an Aljazeera program appeared online that was critical of Ethiopia's handling of Muslim issues" (*ibid*)

As International ICT (2018) report, Cameroon had shut down the internet for 94 days from 2015 up to 2017, Ethiopia placed second and shut down for 36 days, and Democratic Republic Congo placed third by 20 days. In 2018, also ethio-telecom shut down social media to denounce the protest for several times.

Besides the shutdown, NISS conduct communications surveillance, hacking emails, blocking many blogs and others stuff under the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation No. 652/2009. April 2018, the new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office and the Premier decided to open up all sites.

For the last ten years, Ethiopian internet users are significantly increasing, as well as social media users. Yet, there is not enough academic paper on the roles of social media so far. However, after the Arab spring broke out there are some tensions in the government sides but Dann (2014), noted that despite one incident Bekka on the 28th of May 2011, there were no significant protests related to the Arab Spring in Ethiopia. Another protest was a Muslim protest it continued for over 18 months and it was not related to Arab spring as well. The Muslim community was protested the government over the interference of religious affairs (*ibid*). The protest was well organized and peaceful. Finally, the government has jailed all comities who struggle the interference and accused them as extremist. Mainstream media made a number of documentaries named Jehadawi Harakat and others about Muslim committees before they plead guilty. The protester was used social media to mobilize the protester and their motto *Dimitsachin Yisema* was well-known in social media. The Muslim protest was not a political protest but it was religious oriented against government interference.

Following that, in November 2015, Oromo protest was broke out in Ginchi related to misappropriation of school land for Official personal and the government response was brutal. Finally, the protest fuelled and raises other demands mainly Addis Ababa Master plan case (Yosef, 2016). A year later Amhara protest joined to the camp over Wolkaite issue. However, the two ethnic-based protests had raised different demand against the government. Several human right organization reports noted that The EPRDF-led government response was so brutal and the government declared three states of emergency (SoE) (Human Right watches, 2015/16/17/18). During years of protest #Oromoprotest and #Amharaprotest were used popular hashtags on social media to reach a mass audience. Many users including Ethiopian Diasporas use those hashtags to reach into the larger audiences and shared different stories about what happened during the protest. The protester used social media to raise their voice. The protest would continue until the régime came to its reform.

## **2.6. Political reform**

Political reform has various meaning with a different form of political thought, which can be lead, on every corner of the world. Let us see some of the meaning; Robert (2005), "define reform as the movement from a no-party or a one-party to a competitive party system or from a military regime to civilian government. By largely ignoring political liberties – freedom of association and expression, for example – and political rights – such as the right to vote and campaign for office". Moreover, Oxford (2019) dictionary defines reform as making a change in political or economical in order to improve it so that they no longer behave in an immoral.

Regard with this (Yourdictionary) defines politics as the method and the tactic used to run a government or an organization. Merriam Webster put reform as governing a country and to put an end (an evil) by enforcing or introducing a better method or course of action. In general, political reform is a practice that human being wants to change the previous thought that fails and replace the applicable one whether by force or democratic way. There are different types of reform and it depends on the reformer to name the reform and parties, which is worshiping by a specific ideology. When we mention about reform the division of socialism could be one of the classic examples. In the early nineteenth century, socialism divided between communist and other revolutionary organizations on the one side and social democracy on the other. "Reformists maintain both that the pursuit of socialist objectives requires radical social Change and that such

a change can and should be brought about by a process of reform, not by revolution." (Encyclopedia of Democratic Thought, NY)

### **2.6.1. Revolution**

As Encyclopedia of Democratic Thought(NY), revolutions are a special form of social and political change, sudden, some of it include violence, does not have an immediate democratic outcome, caused by the corruption and oppression of oligarchies, for Marxists it is structural and radical. The world has exposed to different types of revolution from the French Revolution of 1789 to the 1989 Velvet Revolution of Czechoslovakia and from Iranian 1979 revolution to the recent 2011 popular Arab uprising. It prevails that popular uprisings can play a part in democratic revolutions, although they do not always lead to democracy, and when they do, other important factors are usually at work.

### **2.6.2. Reform and Revolution**

Abiy Ahmed, who becomes the federal democratic republic of Ethiopian premier, addresses the members of parliament about reform and revolution when he presented his nomination of the new Head of National Electoral Board of Ethiopia to the HPRs on Nov 22, 2018.

The Prime Minister mentioned that Ethiopia has a long history of the state and government institution but the country does not have a smooth transition due to a bad culture of power transition. He reminded that when Lij Eyasu deprived of power in 1914 by Haile Selassie, who took power as a prince, send him to prison despite they were a royal family and raised together. Prime Minister Abiy explained about the royal family power transition and said to the MPs Ethiopia does not have a smooth transition so far because we have practiced revolution for so long.

Prime Minister Abiy also mentioned that from Emperor Haile Selassie transition to Derg and he reminded the MPs that Emperor Haile Selassie trained the soldiers but in the end, the soldiers killed him. The PM explained about the 1990s transition from Derg to Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to his party members, who took all the parliament

seats, he said, "when the DERG regime got removed from power EPRDF Immediately abandoned all DERG soldiers and workers even if they were not loyal to the regime."

When DERG was in power, the National military service was mandatory for seventeen years despite the fact that when EPRDF took power all soldiers removed from their post including junior soldiers. The Prime minister emphasized in his speech that the Reform is not an easy way, it is a difficult way but revolution is the very simple way anyone who has a weapon would secure the power by killing and jailing but History would make them accountable.

A revolution is an outrageous act for transition but Reform is a civilized manner for a transition to solve problems and dealing with a new way. The Premier concluded to the MPs about revolution and reform by saying this "Ethiopia has been exposed to many revolutions but all made it undemocratic". He added that not all outcomes were favorable in a revolution it has been enough to let us try reform because it will lead us to build an institution. Karl Kautsky (NY) also explained social reform can very well be in accord with the interests of the ruling class but revolution is incompatible with the interests of the ruling class because of the annihilation of their power. Besides what both have in common is that "A society with weak political institutions lacks the ability to curb the excesses of personal and parochial desires.

On the above, we have seen details of the government view on Ethiopian political reform. Recently, despite the PM explained about the government choice and the characters of the reform and revolution, questions are rising really is it reform or not. However, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Ethiopia (FES) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) organized a conference in September 2018 and published a journal Reflections on Expanding Ethiopia's Democratic Space Aspirations, Opportunities, Choices in November 2018. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (2018) noted, "Political reforms aim at opening the democratic space of civic participation and involve comprehensive reforms of the state institutions and the constitutional, legal and policy frameworks which shaped the relationship between citizens and the state". Further, the political transition needs régime change for instance, Ethiopia experienced a political transition from military Derg régime to EPRDF, and it was a total dismantling of the constitution (*ibid*). However, the current political reforms in Ethiopia distinguished from the 1991 transition

and the current government does not aim to dismantle the state institutions, but rather to reform these institutions within the confines of the current political developments. (*ibid*)

## **2.7. Social media and political reform in Africa**

As an Aljazeera news analysis, during the morning of December 17, 2010, the police had confiscated Tarek al-Tayeb Mohamed's scales because he refused to pay a bribe and then Police officers allegedly slapped him and insulted his deceased father. At noon Mohamed Bouazizi, Tunisian street vendor, set himself on fire. During that evening, the video posted on Facebook and protest broke out in the city. Mohamed Bouazizi made the North Africans and the Arab world to write a new history. "His self-immolation sparked a figurative fire in the entire Middle East and North Africa region; people started protesting and rebelling against their political regimes, with severe political consequences." (Spasojevic, 2017)

Spasojevic (2017) continued the relationship between social media and politics. He concludes that Social media did not cause the uprisings, nor can social media explain the underlying reasons for the uprisings. However, Spasojevic (2017) explained about the roles of social media during the Egyptian uprising, which was the direct domino effect of the Tunisian uprising, Social networking sites became the main platform from which Egyptians shared collective dissent and organized the uprising. During the uprising in 2011, 51.7% of Facebook users access their accounts via their mobile phone, many use twitter with popular Hashtag and many uploaded videos on YouTube. These new medium platforms help the people to remove the age-old throne of Hosni. "Social media in the modern era has the potential to liberate people from authoritarian regimes by facilitating mobilization against such rule." (Penplusbytes - 2015). Social media was not only a platform to the people against the authoritarian regimes but also fed conventional media to reach out to the public.

## **2.8. The positive outcome of social media In Kenyan 2013 election**

During the 2007/2008 post-election crisis and violence in Kenya, which was social media, had an infant stage, hate speech spread through traditional media and mobile. As a result, tribalism harnessed the scenario and ethnic-based clash claimed the lives of 1000 people and displaced

more than 300, 000 Kenyans as well. However, Penplusbytes (2015) described that in 2013 general election Kenyan had learned that they did not want to repeat again the previous crises and decided that the Social media platform became an avenue for political discussions and not a platform for spreading provocative messages. Besides, in 2013, the social media had already registered massive change than before and they understood many good and bad things happened in North Africa.

So as to that Kenyan social media users and stakeholders were ready to tackle hate speech, tribalism and hearsay. As Penplusbytes, the Kenyan Ministry of Information and Communication announced that if someone engaged in hate speech on social media could face fines up to \$11,000 and three years in prison. The government also established a team named UMATI to monitor social media for hate speech and assisted by the National Human Rights Commission. To sum up all this as Penplusbytes Kenyan 2013 general election held peacefully and the positive contributions of social media towards the Kenyan elections and the country's democracy, in general, were immense.

## **2.9. Negative outcomes of social media**

As we describing the above topic Social media can promote peace and at the same time inciting violence as well. There is a UNDP (2015) report that reinforces this idea and how social media used by terrorist group by Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and Iraq Syria Islamic Levant (ISIL) to contribute to radicalization in African countries. The study noted that all three terrorist groups use those three platforms named Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to share propaganda, publicize major attacks, recruit followers, denounce opponents, and coordinate their activities and secure access to funding. Besides, the continent technological advancement and the use of the internet have been growing simultaneously, the terrorist group usage also increase and the threat remains in Africa.

Apart from this, in Africa in a different part of the continent tribalism is becoming a threat. As Bruce (1998) in African political language 'tribalism' stigmatizes all social and political manifestations of ethnicity, despite scholars tried to denounce ethnicity or tribalism as retrogressive and shameful, an unwelcome interruption of the pursuit of modernity. Besides, UN

(2015) population report Africa occupies the list in world ten youngest nations. Therefore, the rise of social media in the continent would matter in tribalism, and it will create a chance of chaos.

In the above section, the researcher mentioned examples of and the good sides of social media usage in the 2013 Kenyan general election. Nevertheless, Corazon Mwendu Kisilu (2014) noted about the bad consequences of the election as well and social media users were actively mobilizing each other not to vote for political leaders based on their ethnic background. In addition to that, Penplusbytes (2015) noted that information revolving in social media. Most of the information could be based on hearsays and unverified gossip and they have the potential to create tension, fear, and panic among the public.

## **2.10. Theoretical Frameworks**

This research was attempts to investigate the roles of Social Media on the Ongoing Political Reform in Ethiopia. The study employed two theories to investigate the practice and the roles of social media for the last three years of political protests in the country. Therefore, theory of social movement and resource mobilization were used in theoretical framework section. The theories attempts to show social movement protest against the régime and what resources were using during the protest.

### ***2.10.1. Theory of Social Movement***

It is difficult to define Social movement in a specific frame, besides; there are different types of application in democratic and authoritarian state. However, (Bhonagiri, 2016) defined “social movement” as a ‘collective action’ to do something over a sustained period to achieve a shared purpose. In addition, the movements emerge when enough people feel excluded from the political institutions and for collective actions by resources, Nowadays internet particularly social media platform have opened a new space for people to those who have different interest and contribution with common agenda to struggle a repressive states. Moreover, “Social movement” in authoritarian régimes coordinating and orchestrating civil protest is harder; citizens could not use public media and it rare to see public protest under authoritarian régimes

(Anita et al., 2012). Further, “Social movement” transforms people from ‘state subjects’ to ‘active and engaged citizens’ (Bhonagiri, 2016).

Scholars classify social movements into two categories, the first type of movement seek to reform the existing system this ‘reformative’ system aims to change limited aspects of the system at focused aspects or norms with respect to rights, access or participation in the social system, such as the legal system to challenge unfair laws or public demonstrations to influence policy reforms The second type of social movement is ‘revolutionary’, aims at radical fundamental change of the existing social, and political system, institution of the state, and may redefine rights (Bhonagiri, 2016).

Further, social movements are helpful for democratization but Porta and Diani (1999) argued that some social movement such as fascist and neo-fascist are denied democracy. In another way "Identity politics those driving into ethnic conflicts often ended up in religious war and racial violence" (Porta and Diani, 1999). Regard with democratization process in social movement there are two approaches raised by scholars, the first approach is a “populist” approach and the other one is “elitist” approach. The “populist” approach believed that emphasizing that participation starts from below therefore there would be a public space and this lead to transfer of power over state. However, the “elitist” argued that democratization must be a top-down process, while an excess of mobilization leads to new forms of authoritarianism. (Porta and Diani, 1999).

To conclude there are different types of social movement theories such as resource mobilization theory, deprivation, political process theory, structural strain theory (value added theory) and new social movement theories. The researcher employed all theory of social movement theory but now concerned in resource mobilization theory.

### ***2.10.2. Resource Mobilization Theory of Social Movement***

“Resource mobilization” theory is commonly employed approach in the study of social movements. This theory was largely developed from studies of collective action during the 1960s, gaining increasing prominence throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Eltantawy and Wiest, 2011). It raises the importance of the availability of appropriate resources in protest (Anindya and Omer, 2016). Some individuals, who feel injustices, would attempts to mobilize by using

resources such as money, labor, social status, knowledge, support of the media and political elite (*ibid*). In addition to that, Social movement activists develop strategies of action that make best use of all necessary resources they have and which they do not have (Rootes, 1990).

The major criticism raised against this theory was that strongly materialist-oriented (Anindya and Omer, 2016). However, there were still social movements existing without available resources particularly financial resources. The other criticisms from other scholars are that the theory needs modifications. (Eltantawy and Wiest, 2011) noted that in terms of contemporary context of the increasing use of social media technologies in social movement needs to re-examining of the utility of resource mobilization. Further, they reaffirmed that social media technologies were an important resource to the 2011 Egyptian protest from birth to accomplishment (*ibid*).

Besides its criticism, the 1970s and 1980s social movements protest movements were organizational, formal, institutional, and structured. Nowadays the usage of ICT - internet web has change social movement participation outside of organizations (Earl et al, 2014). In addition, in the context of authoritarian régimes, social media oriented protest movement which organized outside of the formal organizations assist protester, because social media by its nature involves masses of user-generated content, it is difficult to censor like mainstream media and social movement organizations.

## **Chapter Three**

### **3. Methodology**

This chapter explains all about the methodological approach, data collection, and technique and data analysis. The research investigated the roles of Social Media on the Ongoing Political Reform in Ethiopia political change since the last three years of the protest movement against the EPRDF regime. The research employed qualitative approach. According to Dawson (2007), qualitative research explores attitudes, behavior, and experiences through such methods as interviews or focus groups. Dawson added that the most important thing of Qualitative research is also by its nature it attempts to get an in-depth opinion from participants. Creswell (2014) explained that qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. Under this up-close information gathered by actually, talking directly to people and seeing them behave and act within their context is a major characteristic of qualitative research. Creswell concludes that it also helps the researcher because of the time that the researchers have face-to-face interaction

#### **3.1. Research design**

As the researcher noted in the above section the study employed qualitative approach and this study was descriptive in its nature. It was descriptive since it attempts to evaluate the role of Social Media on the Ongoing Political Reform in Ethiopia. According to Creswell (2014) the data that emerge from a qualitative study are descriptive. Therefore this study employed a descriptive design to conduct the roles of social media on the ongoing political reform.

#### **3.2. Data collection**

To gather relevant data the researcher used primary and secondary sources. The primary sources were in-depth interview, focus group discussion, interview guide question, and secondary sources were books, research thesis, Articles, journals and research thesis used.

### **3.2.1. Interview**

The research gathered data from two key informants, three other informants, five Addis Ababa University students, and two focus group discussion in general 21-study participant take part on this study. To take the interviews semi-structured were used. Dawson (2007) explains that semi-structured is a common type of interview used in qualitative social research. Moreover, it helps the researcher to know specific information about the subject matter.

During the interview session, the researcher used audio recording equipment Dawson (2007) noted that Recording can concentrate on listening to what they say, able to maintain eye contact, have a complete record of interview for analysis, including what was raise and interaction between interviewer and interviewee, and have plenty of useful quotations for the report.

In the above paragraphs, the researcher mentioned the number of interviewee and key informants used for this research and it helped to generate available data.

### **3.2.2. Focus group**

For this study, the researcher has used two Focus group discussions. The first focus group discussion formed by five participants and the second group formed by six participants. In Focus group discussion researcher can receive a wide range of responses during a meeting of Participants interactions such as depth looking of the question, developing topics, share different ideas and covering the new ideas as well. Dawson (2007) explains that focus group discussions held with a number of people to obtain a group opinion.

Focus group discussion by its nature it involves more than five individual and raises different issues and a wide range of point of view during the discussion. In spite of that, FGD would answer the roles of social media in political reform in Ethiopia and the groups discuss face-to-face raised different issues regardless of the study. FGD avoided the limitation of the interview and the interview guide question because the group developed forgotten ideas through the discussion and the researcher thought FGDs were more memorable than the other participant was.

### **3.2.3. Interview Guide Question**

The Interview Guide Question is also one of the methods to gather the data. The Interview Guide question has 33 self-developed questions with four different parts. The first part has six questions to answer the socio-demographic part of the respondent. Out of six questions, two of them appeared in the form of dichotomous and the remains are multichotomous.

The second parts of the interview guide questions have 16 questions developed on Likert-scale. Shone (2013) noted that the meaning that the Likert scale is using ordered response levels labeled to ensure clear ordering. Each questions have used five scales ranging from 1 up to 5 and 1 which stands for strongly agree, 2 which stands for agreeing, 3 which stands for neutral, 4 which stands for disagree and 5 which stands for strongly disagree. This part would help to answer the roles of social media in political reform in Ethiopia. The Interview Guide Question mainly took to use as reinforcement to the interview and FGDs.

The third part of the Interview Guide Question appeared in the ranking method it contained eight questions. This part was developed to answer the major roles of social media in political reform in Ethiopia and it helps to answer positive and negative outcomes regardless of social media practice. The last part of the Interview Guide has two questions; it was used only an open-ended method and it comes from personal ambition.

Note: The researcher did subsequent informal question with online professionals and other expert before generated the Interview Guide Question or interview guide question. There is a space under each close-ended question to answer what they have in their mind. However, the Interview Guide Question seems close-ended question but it is actually an open-ended question.

### **3.3. Study Area**

The study area was in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. However, in the interview guide question the researcher attempted to get relevant and inclusive data from two Government agencies and Mercato. The students that interviewed in Addis Ababa University, was coming from different parts of the country such as Dembidollo kelem Wellega, Gambela and Amhara and Addis Ababa. They knew what happened in their hometown and told the researcher about their hometown their experiences. One of the key informants has been working abroad and Addis Ababa. The other key informant has been working in Addis Ababa University and he has a background of the

eastern region of Ethiopia. The other three informants were activists and journalists. Two of them were in Addis Ababa one of them has been working in Ethiopian human right commission, the other was from Non-governmental Organization with a background of Diredawa, the third informant from Ambo University. However, the researcher asked informants who were coming to Addis Ababa from different parts of the country. Therefore, the study area was actually in Addis Ababa but it covers the whole country.

### **3.4. Sampling Technique**

Sampling and selection are principles and procedures used to identify, choose, and gain access to relevant data sources from which you will generate data using your chosen method Maxwell (2005). As the researcher stated in the above sections, the sources of the data were primary and secondary sources. The data was gathered using purposive sampling or non-random sampling method for the reason that it allowed the researcher to select the study participants. For the Interview Guide Question part, the data gathered through purposive sampling method as well from two government agencies and Mercato. Purposive sampling helped the researcher to get relevant data from the right people.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

The data analyzed by thematic analysis method. The data that gathered from primary source and secondary sources sectioned into eight different themes. The aim of data analysis was to provide researchers and their audiences with a means to draw conclusion and inferences from a piece of research Marshal and Rossman (1999) and qualitative methods are more suited to looking at the meaning of particular events or circumstances Muijs (2011).

### **3.6. Ethical Considerations**

The researcher asked all participants to their consent. All interview and two focus group discussion recorded with their consent. However, for the second focus group discussion that held in Addis Ketema preparatory school, it needed letters from the universities because the students were 17 and 18 years of age. After they received the letter, the school director approved to hold FGD with the student.

In the analysis part for the anonymity of the informant, the researcher coded them by numbers and letters. The first key informant coded as (K1), the second key informant as a key (K2), for the other three activist journalists given (A1, A2, and A3)

In addition to the first focus group discussion used FGD#1 and under this if quote needed for analysis FGD#1#1, FGD#1#2, FGD#1#3, FGD#1#4 and FGD#1#5. for the second focus group discussion used FGD#2 and under this if quote needed for analysis FGD#2#1, FGD#2#2, FGD#2#3, FGD#2#4 FGD#2#5 and FGD#2#6. The researcher did all interviews in Amharic language and translated it into English and it was nearly 60 pages

## Chapter Four

### 4. Data Presentation

#### 4.1. Introduction

This study aims to present The Role of Social Media on the ongoing political reform in Ethiopia. The study employed qualitative methodology. This chapter has presented in five tables to explain socio demographic characteristics of the study participant. Table one present the background information of students, Table two present the background information of Activists, Table three present the background information of key informant, Table four present the background information of Activists and social media user focus group discussion, and Table five present the background information of high school student focus group discussion. The last section provided the background information of study participants of interview guide questions.

To keep the informants anonymity the researcher used codes and identified by it when analyzing the data. As stated above, table one presented Socio-demographic characteristics of the student and the researcher used code to identify them as S1, S2, S3, S4 and S6.

Table 2 presented the Socio-demographic characteristics of activists and active social media user and coded them as A1, A2, and A3. Table 3 presents socio demography of key informant and coded them as K1 and K2.

Table 4 presents the socio demography of the first focus group discussion. The researcher also stated in chapter three. The first focus group discussion coded as FGD#1 and the discussant coded as FGD #1#1, FGD#1#2, FGD#1#3, FGD#1#4 and FGD#1#5. For the second focus group discussion who involved preparatory students, the same rule apply as FGD#1 but here is change the number coded as FGD#2 and the discussant coded as FGD#2#1, FGD#2#2, FGD#2#3, FGD#2#4, FGD#2#5 and GD#2#6.

#### 4.1.1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the informants

##### 4.1.1.1. Background Information of Students

S.no	Participants code	Sex	Age	Educational status	Marital status	Status	Most used
1	S1	F	20	2nd year student	Single	Student	Facebook
2	S2	M	23	3rd year student	Single	Student	Facebook
3	S3	M	24	3rd year student	Single	Student	Facebook
4	S4	M	38	MA student	Married	Student/Public Servant	Facebook
5	S5	M	45	MA student	Married	Student/Public Servant	Face book

Source: compiled by the researcher; 2019

**Table 1 Background Information of Study participants**

As we have seen in table 1, they were five informants from Addis Ababa University between the ages 20 to 45 years that participated in in-depth interview on April 11 2019. Five of them coming from different region, S1 is coming from Addis Ababa, S2 coming from Gambela, S3 coming from kelem Wellega, S4 coming from Amhara region and S5 coming from Gelan Oromia special zone.

Out of five informant four of them was male the remaining one is female. Out of five informants three of them (S1, S2, and S3) were a regular student from different department, two of them were Masters of art students, S4 is self-pay and S5 is government sponsored. Out of five informant three of them were single the other two were married. The first choice of their social media platform was facebook.

#### 4.1.1.2. Background Information of Activists (Expert) for in-depth interview

S.no	Partici pants code	Sex	Age	Educational status	Marital status	Status	Most used
1	A1	F	40	MA	Married	Journalist communication officer	Twitter
2	A2	M	32	BA	Single	Public servant	Twitter
3	A3	M	33	MA	Single	Public servant Lecturer	Twitter

Source: compiled by the researcher; 2019

**Table 2 Background Information of study participant**

As we have seen in the above Table 2 has shown background information of activists for in-depth interview. They were seen as experts. As stated in the above for the sake of anonymity the researcher coded them as A1, A2, and A3. Out of three informants, two of them were Male and one Female. Four of the informant renege between 30 to 40 years of age.

The informants' educational status was three of them had Master of Art degree the remaining one was Bachelor of Art degree. All of them were used all social media covered in the research that was Facebook, Twitter and YouTube however, three of them preferred to use Twitter as their first choice.

The table shows that out of four informants thee of them single the remaining married. During the past three years of popular protest movement against the regime, they had played active role in social media. Some of them participated in print media as a journalist as well. One of them put behind bar for his content on facebook.

#### 4.1.1.3. Background Information of Key Informant

S.no	Informants code	Sex	Age	Educational status	Marital status	Status	Most used SM
1	K1	M	48	MA	Married	Public servant	Facebook
2	K2	F	32	MA	Married	International organization	Twitter

Source: compiled by the researcher; 2019

#### Table 3 participant of the study

Table 3 shows that the background information of key informant for in-depth interview. As we stated in the table the informants coded them, key informant one as K1 and key informant two as K2 to keep their anonymity. During and after the interview both key informants asked the researcher to keep their anonymity.

As stated in the above, for the sake of their anonymity, the age of K1 was 48 and K2, 32. Two of them had MA, K1 has been working public institution K2 has been working international organization and two of them used Facebook, Twitter and YouTube however their social media choice was different K1 preferred Facebook and K2 preferred Twitter as their first choice.

#### 4.1.1.4. Background Information of Activist's FGD

S.no	Participant s code	Sex	Age	Education al status	Marital status	status	Most used SM
1	FGD#1#1	M	38	MA	Married	Non Governm ent org.	Facebook
2	FGD#1#2	M	34	BA	Single	Self- employed	Twitter
3	FGD#1#3	M	32	BA	Single	Public servant	Twitter
4	FGD#1#4	M	29	BA	Single	Public servant	facebook
5	FGD#1#5	M	27	BA	Single	Public servant	facebook

Source: compiled by the researcher; 2019

#### Table 4 participant of the study

As shown in Table 4, the first focus group discussion of socio background information of activists and active user were coded as FGD#1 and the informants placed from FGD#1#1 to FGD#1#5.

Their age lies between 27 to 38, all five participants were male, for FGD#1 the researcher asked three female to join the FGD's but none of them showed up during a discussion without researcher knowledge.

Out of five participants four of them had BA and the other one had two MA one from AAU the other from one of Scandinavians university. They have been working in different sectors

FGD#1#1 from NGO, FGD#1#2 from his/her company, FGD#1#3, FGD#1#4 and FGD#1#5 were public servant.

All five participants use Facebook, Twitter and YouTube however their choice were different three of them were preferred facebook and two of them preferred twitter as their first choices.

#### 4.1.1.5. Background Information of Student's FGD

S.no	Participant code	Sex	Age	Educational status	Marital status	Status	Most used SM
1	FGD#2#1	M	17-19	Grade 12	Single	student	YouTube
2	FGD#2#2	M	17-19	Grade 12	Single	student	Facebook
3	FGD#2#3	M	17-19	Grade 12	Single	student	Facebook
4	FGD#2#4	F	17-19	Grade 12	Single	student	Facebook
5	FGD#2#5	F	17-19	Grade 12	Single	student	Facebook
6	FGD#2#6	F	17-19	Grade 12	Single	student	Facebook

Source: compiled by the researcher; 2019

#### Table 5 participant of the study

As we have seen in table 5 it shows that background information of Focus group discussant. To keep their anonymity the researcher avoid to mentioned their preparatory school and decided to name them as FGD#2 and name each of them as FGD#2#1, FGD#2#2, FGD#2#3, FGD#2#4, FGD#2#5 and FGD#2#6.

After the school director approved the discussion, then the school director assign the guidance head to choose the student from different classroom and the guidance select three female and three male students as his knowledge. However, the researcher asked the guidance if the students have a little knowhow about social media and if they have an account of social media, the discussion would be better.

As the researcher stated in the above the second focus group discussion held by student alone all of them from different classroom and their age lies between 17 to 19 years old. Out of six informants, three of them were female and the other three were male.

The group first choice from social media was facebook, they all tend to use facebook alone, but now they shifted to telegram when they got enough many in their pocket they watch YouTube. None of them had a twitter account.

#### **4.1.1.6. Background Information of the Interview Guide**

The Background information of Interview guide question presented here. The interview guide question was 60 however, for this research the researcher took only 52 of them the other was rejected because of irregularity. Out of 52, the majority of the informant used facebook as their first choice.

Out of 52 informants, 38 of them were Male and the rest 14 were Female. Out of 52, 16 of them were lies between the age of 18 up to 23, the other 16 were between the ages of 24 up to 29, 12 of them between the ages of 30 to 35; six of them between the age of 36 up to 40 and the remaining two were above 45 years of age.

Out of 52-study participant, 16 of them had Bachelor of Art degree students, 26 of them had Bachelor of Art degree holder and 10 of them were diploma and under diploma. The majority of the study participants were from government agencies and the rest from Addis ketema sub city, Mercato.

## Chapter Five

### **5. Analysis and Discussion**

The Analysis and Discussion presented in this chapter to answer the research questions mentioned in chapter one. The first question was that what are the roles of social media in the ongoing political reform process in Ethiopia? What are the positive and negative impacts of social media during the nationwide anti EPRDF protest movement? and what are the roles of the Ethiopian Diaspora in social media during the popular protest movement in homeland? As the researcher stated in chapter three, the qualitative data gathered through primary data by an in-depth interview from 21 informants, the interview guide, and secondary data from various documents. The analysis presented in eight themes and ten sub themes to answer the research questions.

#### **5.1. The Roles of Social Media in the Political Protest Movement**

The researcher asked the study participants about the roles of social media in political reform in Ethiopia the last three years. All informants unanimously agreed that social media had a role to brought political change in Ethiopia. However, some of the informant believed that it has a role but it had only an ignition effect. Besides, informants who believed social media had a significant role clearly put their thoughts. Social media has a big role in political reform. We are in the era of the digital age the world becomes more and more converged than any era. For instance, nowadays we hear something that happened from a remote area. At least we have such information whether it is good or bad. (Interview with K1, April 3, 2019, Addis Ababa).

The informant noted that during the popular anti EPRDF protest the social media helped the youth to mobilize. The social media also played a role in expose the government brutality, injustice, and the lack of democracy. In order to do that, Social media had clearly a big role in the political reform and it will have a role to help or damage for the ongoing reform as well (*ibid*).

Spasojević (2017) finding also proved that in Egyptian 2011 popular uprising and in Iranian 2009 failed attempts showed that the effects of the social media in both popular protests were undeniable.

During a discussion session held in organizing popular protest movement with activists and active users, the researcher asked the same question to the FGD#1s.

In many countries ruled by a dictator, authoritarian rulers monopolize outlets of public mass media, jailed opposition leaders and anyone who criticize them, they denied access of information, and they lied to the public using their government-monopolized media. The same thing happened in Ethiopia but the emergences of social media broke the old trend and gave the right to freedom of expression and freedom of press. By the time, any ordinary person logs in to social media they started to express their ideas. As a result, Social media had played crucial role to brought political reform in Ethiopia. (Discussion with FGD#1#2, February 23, 2019, Addis Ababa)

Besides, the researcher as stated in socio demography section the majority of the informants used Facebook. Before two years of Oromo and Amhara popular anti EPRDF protest took. Tesfaye Alemayehu (2013) findings noted that Facebook becomes an alternative platform for the public to discuss a political issue and the only place where people discuss political issues.

Henok (2018) also stated in his finding that the role of Facebook in the Ethiopian politics used as a main information-sharing tool to the protester. Despite the fact that most of the participant agreed in the social media role during a discussion but some of them opposed the The Role of Social Media was not big.

Social media had an ignition effect and limited because as we know more than 80% of Ethiopian populations are living in a rural area. Though this agrarian society does not have accesses to the internet, even most of them they do not have access of Radio and television. Specifically, Facebook doses not assist the reform perhaps; there was an elite-oriented movement. (Discussion with FGD #1#1, February 23, 2019, Addis Ababa)

Besides the demography, Freedom on the net (2015/2016) report showed that the flow of online traffic into, within, and out of Ethiopia registered a significant decline because of network throttling, repeated internet shutdowns, and increased blocking. In addition, the government announced a countrywide six-month state of emergency On October 9, 2016, later extended to ten months. Because of that Human Right Watch (2017) report also described, the Ethiopian government regularly restricts access to social media apps. However, FGD#1#3 stated his

counter-argument about social media restrictions mentioned in the above report, the penetration rate and demography raised by FGD#1#1.

Social media were the main instrument that helped the current political change in Ethiopia. FGD#1#1 mentioned about demography and penetration rate of the internet, he was right but what I observed in the ground was that disproved his idea. Mothers who did not have social media account talked about boycotts and strikes ahead of 15 days because of someone who used social media. (Discussion with FGD#1#2, February 23, 2019, Addis Ababa)

Regard with FGD#1#2, Spasojević (2017) finding on Egyptian popular protest movement showed that similar scenario happened. During the popular Egyptian uprising, Protesters were mobilized the wider population by using traditional methods of communication and face-to-face interaction with the help of social media which is they put the online organization into an offline organization (*ibid*). Beside its crucial role, social media In Ethiopia as well was not the only method of struggle.

According to Discussion with FGD#2 (April 5, 2019) the social media had even a role in forcing mainstream media to covers stories as well. Nowadays mainstream media begun to covers stories because of social media. Without the presence of social media, mainstream media would be silent. It had undeniable to reject its role for all of us even the Government accepted it. For me, it had a significant role and it had definitely a role. (K2, April 11, Addis Ababa: Interview)

During last three years the of popular protest against the EPRDF regime social media served as a place to struggle political gain, activists mobilize youth to attain their political ambition, and using to call the protester through social media by putting endangered their life. According to the participant who filled the interview guide or interview guide question, 62% of them believed that social media was a place to communicate politics and 27% of them disagreed. All informants in the interview and focus group discussion agreed anonymously social media was a place to communicate political affairs.

## **5.2. Major Roles of Social Media the Last Three Years in Ethiopia**

On the above theme, we have seen the roles of social media in political change alone, in this theme analyzed the social media major roles played in the popular protest movement. The majority of the informant agreed on social media roles that brought political change in Ethiopia yet some of the informants was the view that the roles were very limited, put as ignition effect alone and the findings of interview guide questions showed that 65 % of them believed that social media had a major role and 23 % of them opposed. In addition to this, during the interview all informants identified the major roles of social media. (1) It had become an alternative source, (2) a place where to mobilize and (3) to expose government brutality. Madeline Storck (2011) as well noted that during Egyptian uprising the main roles of social media were in providing an organizational infrastructure, as a form of the alternative press, and as generating awareness.

### **5.2.1. Alternative Sources**

For the last ten years, mainstream media became a supporter of the government body, different voice oppressed by different proclamation despite the fact that social media become a platform to discuss political thoughts (Tesfaye, 2013). One of the informants who came from Kelem Wellega Dembidollo, West Region of Ethiopia also explained how the information flowed across the country during the popular protest movement. The social media has been used as an instrument to disseminate the information. For instance, S3 came from Kelem Wellega, Dembidollo and noted that whatever happened before the emergence of social media nobody could not hear any news. Nowadays life has changed in a new direction everybody whether someone lives in Ethiopia or in the USA could access to hear whatever happened in Kelem Wellega, and did that. Therefore, in terms of information sharing social media played a great contribution. (Interview S3, April 7, 2019, Addis Ababa)

The majority of the people who lived in Ethiopia social media become a better alternative source (Araya, 2018). One of key informant (Interview with K2, 2019) also noted that the social media became a source of information for the past three years and even someone wants to go to from Addis to Bahirdar, they checked social media what happened there and found the truth that is nobody heard it from state owned media.

In Egyptian popular protest Storck (2011) noted that SMNs used by the mainstream media as a source. The same thing happened here in Ethiopia, satellite media which is broadcasted from abroad such as ESAT, OMN and others used the social media as source of information (Discussion with FGD#1#5, February 23, 2019, Addis Ababa). However, this did not mean social media were free from government control and it was not easy to access in different part of the country. According to Freedom House (2017, 2018) the EPRDF led government criminalized the people from accessing the exile Media or using social media to share information and attempted to block.

### **5.2.2. Social Media Mobilization**

In Ethiopian context, political activists used social media to demonstrate and organize political movements to change the government. Especially Facebook and Twitter platforms call mass protest demonstrations against authoritarian rule (Interview with A3, March 9, 2019, Addis Ababa). Moreover, online tools including social media played significance role in the mobilization of popular antigovernment protests and social media enabled the activists to disseminate about the demonstrations and disseminate News of all kinds associated with nationwide antigovernment protest (Freedom on the net, 2017)

*Ethiopian government restricted access of social media along with banning the watching of Diasporas mainstream media across the country under the state of emergency. The state of emergency's implementing directive prescribed draconian and overly broad restrictions on freedom of expression, association, and assembly across the country, and signaled an increasingly militarized response to the situation (Human Right, 2018).*

Despite all the restriction and repression imposed by the EPRDF regime. (Interview with K2, 2019) noted that the social media played successful roles to change the political scenario For instance; they were great accomplishment by turning an online mobilization into the offline organization.

### **5.2.3. Exposing the Government Brutality**

Since the protest begun in 2015, EPRDF government, which is the four-coalition party, declared three States of Emergency during the nationwide protest. Many people were arrested and tortured; several International Human Right organizations reported the abuses of the government such as Human Rights watch (2018) noted that many of those arrested in 2015/2016 and 2017 State of Emergency were tortured in military camps and several women raped by security forces.

During the State of Emergency, the government action was more brutal than non-SoE time. In line with this, almost the majority of the study participant agreed unanimously that social media played a role especially in exposing the government brutal measures against the protester. During the three-year nationwide popular protest movement against EPRDF regime Twitter, Facebook and YouTube used to disseminate information regardless of their own platform. Twitter more helped to expose the government brutality to the international community, the Facebook platform also helped to mobilize the Mass protester and YouTube used by individuals to uploaded videos that show police brutality. (Interview with A3, March 9, 2019, Addis Ababa)

During the popular protest against the regime from different parts of the country, activists and social media users used social media as an instrument to expose the wrongdoings of the EPRDF government. The platforms helped social media users to publish contents. (Interview with K2, 2019) noted that the EPRDF government brutally attacked and killed the protesters. During the crackdown of the protester, the news in social media went viral. In addition, the transatlantic relationship among activist who lived in Minnesota, Washington and homeland was significance there was that network.

### **5.3. Mainstream Media to Social Media**

The reason shifting from mainstream media (traditional media such as Radio, Television, and Newspaper) into social media or new media was raised various thought. One of them is ATP NO.652/2009, which enacted after 2005 general election, inhibited political discussions on the mainstream media (Tesfaye, 2013). In spite of that social media took parts to political discussion and filled the gap that created by the repressive régime. In addition to this, the proclamation law such as the Charities, Societies Proclamation No. 612/2009, and ATP NO. 652/2009 limits the

work of the mainstream media, media associations, and media advocacy groups (IMS Assessment Report, 2018).

In spite of the fact that In the middle of the atrocious proclamation the social media platform had been emerged and took all roles of civil society, media, and politician. Because of these three new roles, social media become a source of information, civil society movements, and a place to mobilization (Interview with A3, 2019). According to Araya (2018) quantitative study, the majority of the respondent also preferred social media than mainstream media in Ethiopia and people chose because of its platform that could give freedom of expression.

One of the key informants of the study also agreed on that and mentioned Irrecha incident as an example during the celebration of 2016. On that day, state owned media broadcasted that 50 people died by stamped and social media user raised the number to 500. State owned Mainstream media misinformed the public and denied to reveal how many people were died. However, the only place the people had that would actually talk about reality was social media. (K2, Addis Ababa, April 6, 2019, Addis Ababa: Interview)

Tesfagebrail (2017) finding reinforced key informant experiences that during the protest mainstream media was becoming a mouthpiece of the Ethiopian government. Moreover, the state owned mainstream media labeled the popular anti EPRDF protest movement as an anti-peace movement planned by anti-peace and anti-development groups that create turmoil and terror in the country.

#### **5.4. Political Reform without the presence of social media**

For all informants, interview guide question, and focus group discussant asked if the reform was possible without social media presence. The Majority of the informant answered that the reform could happen without social media presence and 58 % of the informant said the political change could be delay. Focus group discussant (FGD#1#1 and 4), (FGD#2#4), (S3) and 23% informants were opposed the ideas that the reform would inevitable without social media presence. However, 19% the informant said the change would come without social media presence.

During the 2010-2011 popular Arab spring, social media played a crucial role; however, Spasojević (2017) noted that it was difficult to conclude whether the uprisings would have happened without Social media and the other thing was that by the time, Internet communication was faster in Egypt but people did not rely on social media alone. As the researcher stated in the above, majority of the informant agreed that the reform would have been delayed but the reform would exist by any form of struggle, fortunately, the social media would exist and played a catalyst role for the change. K2 (2019) noted that it was difficult to imagine the political change without social media presence. However, the country would be here without social media but the liberation would be delay; maybe the consequence would be horrific to the country.

Since the protest broke out in 2015, particularly in Oromo protest the way they mobilized the protester in social media was very organized. For instance, if some part of the Oromia region begun to protest, other parts of the region immediately joined the protest movement. Therefore, in this context, the social media played a decisive role and huge contribution to the political reform and it was impossible to think the reform without it. (Interview with A2, February 19, 2019, Addis Ababa). One of prominent Activist Jawar Mohammed, the founder of the Oromia Media Network, spoke to Aljazeera about the relationship between political reform and social media movement. Jawar said, "*You cannot imagine this revolution, this change without social media,*" (Aljazeera, August 11, 2018)

With regard to A2, the first FGD discussant explained that social media as the new instrument for political change. For instance, during the Derg régime, the only instrument to change the authoritarian government was fighting by arm struggle but for now is that social media is the main instrument to bring political change. (Discussion with FGD#1#4, February 19, 2019 Addis Ababa)

Besides, the new media used collective action to inhibit the naked exercise of brutal repression (Lynch, 2011). Though to avoid social media movement government put pressure in every corner of the country whether it is peaceful or not but sometimes, it failed to curb all the internet. During the protest, internet shut down for some part of the country but the shut downing could not stop the protest. Maybe if the internet access or social media would entirely be closed in this country the change would be different. One of high school student during focus group discussion

gave her surmise. Without social media, EPRDF would not change this way. The regime might continue to kill protester and did not take reform seriously. Perhaps, without social media presence, EPRDF would be able to change in the way it did in the Derg. (Discussion with FGD#2#4, April 5 2019, Addis Ababa)

The researcher referring in the literature part that Social media used in the Kenyan general election, in the US political campaign, and even used as an instrument for authoritarian government change in different parts of the World. Such as, 2011 Tunisian and Egyptian popular uprising might be the best examples. However, the Ethiopian case was different and the social media was pushed the EPRDE led government into political reform instead of revolution. (Discussion with FGD#1#2, February 23 2019, Addis Ababa)

Related to this, following the 2005 Ethiopian general election the political scenarios become different for opposition leader, journalists, and Activists. The proclamations that enacted by lawmakers were so tyrannical to the people and one-sided. Because of all the subjugation, the people searched available platforms and found social media as a result social media accelerated the reform. Lynch, (2011) noted, new media promoting mobilization, affecting state repression, affecting international support for the regime. This idea also strengthens by the prominent journalist Eskinder Nega, who spent six years in jail. Eskinder spoke to Aljazeera and he said, "*If Abiy Ahmed does not deliver the promise of democracy, then we'll be back to social media ... I'm prepared to go back to prison again. So whether there's a democracy or no democracy, it's back to work. There is no choice.*" (Aljazeera, August 11, 2018)

## **5.5. Impacts of Social Media during the political protest**

This section sees the positive and negative impacts of social media practice during the last three years of popular protest in Ethiopia. The researcher posed the same question whether it had positive or negative effects. Most of the participants mentioned that social media had positive and negative aspects. The positive aspects have mentioned in the above sections such as, facilitating mobilization, become an alternative source of information, and exposing the EPRDF government brutality and the negative aspects highlighted by the informants were hate speech and fake news.

Most of the study participant believed that both negative and positive situation happened for the last three years, some social media users were bad, others were good but the social media did not responsible for their behavior that appeared in text, video or photographs because there was negative and positive behavior before they start using social media. However, we can say that the social media platform amplified their goodies as well as negativities. (Discussion with FGD#1, February 23 2019, Addis Ababa)

### **5.5.1. Positive Aspects of Social Media**

Nowadays Social media became a part of necessities across the world. In addition different types of information flooded through social media. Social media users chose its platform because of different reasons some of them for political reason, some of them for economic reason and others for social purposes. Social media are easily accessible and portable because of that the mass population accustomed it. In this subsection, we were concerned on the political protest movement. "The first and foremost benefit of social media is connectivity. People from anywhere can connect with anyone, regardless of the location and religion. The prettiness of social media is that you can attach with anyone to learn and share your thoughts." Akram and Kumar (2018)

Recently in Ethiopia, because of Social media politicians could not lie the people what they did before. Before years back, the information was so centralized but now it is in the hand of everybody even someone who has a family of an official or a friend can leak the information. As well as the new prime minister office also understand the power of social media and disseminate information but years back this was unthinkable and No one who lived inside the country had any information about what was going on in the country. (Interview with A1, February 9, 2019, Addis Ababa)

As the researcher stated in the above sections, since the 2015 popular anti EPRDF protest social media used for mobilization, exposing government, served as alternative sources, and others. UNDP (2018) also noted that the growing use of social media had to change Africans by creating political awareness. In addition to that in Kenya in terms of violence and election campaign twitter user defend misrepresentation of international media and in Nigeria as well as social media covered stories that denied by mainstream media associated with government officials. When we come to Ethiopia social media user practice social media creating political awareness,

increased participation and drive the political fears, this might lead to democratization. (S2) (FGD#2) some of the major points mentioned by informants are as follow:

- It helped to get the freedom of thought;
- It helped to get the freedom of expression;
- Used less cost to mobilize people and used less production cost;
- They were risk-free than any medium;
- Exposed the brutality of the government;
- forced mainstream media into public agenda and
- forced EPRDF/TPLF into political changes

The findings of the literature showed that there are positive contributions of social media such as in the Kenyan elections. Social media greatly enhanced civic participation in the elections via voter education (Penplusbytes, 2015). The majority of the participant who fill the interview guide question as well believed that social media has a contribution to enhance the political participation of the public.

### **5.5.2. Negative Aspects of Social Media**

The majority of the informants agreed on that negative thought were involved in social media for the last three years. They noted that all the negatives things appeared in social media caused by political thought. Activists published hate speech and fake news that could create turmoil among ethnics, some of them published deliberately to seek attention and others published to get more protesters into their camp to accelerate the protest. The majority of the informant believed that the lawmaker should legislate to cut back such practices. However, four people strongly opposed the idea of enacting a law for hate speech and fake news. One from key informants, who is an expert in the field, the second was Activist, and the third as well Activist from FGD #1 and the fourth was from law background from AAU.

Besides hate speech and the spreading of fake news, internationally, in terms of data usage, social media is becoming more and more sophisticated. One of the key informants (K2) also emphasized and suggested that Ethiopia, as a country should have data protection law before enacting laws of hate speech and fake news because locally and internationally data protection is more threatening than ever. Regard with this New York Times (March 17, 2018) reported that

During 2016 US presidential election, Cambridge Analytica which was a political consulting firm misused 50 Million Facebook user of personal data in order to manipulate the outcome of the elections. The firm created a web that analyzed political messages to spread disinformation and exploit the mental vulnerabilities of people. Later on in May 2, 2018, Cambridge Analytica closed after Facebook data harvesting scandal News enclosed. (The Guardian, May 2, 2018)

The majority of the informant who participated in this research mentioned that they had seen such contents in their timeline for the last three years of usage. Some of the negative things mentioned by informants are as follow:

- The contents were poorly verified;
- SMNs are unregulated;
- No code of conduct to proof fake news;
- The past history was narrated or dealing with the past;
- Polarization became an ideology;
- Insulting was common;
- Developing an online personality against offline life and
- Fantasize ethnic narration

#### **5.5.2.1. Spreading of Fake News**

Fake news related to "Manipulation, disinformation, falseness, rumors, conspiracy theories actions and behaviors that are frequently associated with the term has existed as long as humans have communicated" (Oxford 2018). However, the word "fake news" popularly known after Brexit referendum took in the UK and in the US presidential election of 2016, which is widely believed to have played a significant role in shaping the outcome (Gelfert, 2018).

Globally, a country like Italy, Philippines, US, UK, Israel, and others pending the Fake News legislation (Gulizar et al. 2018). Countries such as German, India, Canada, Qatar, Indonesia, Czech Republic, and Finland approved and implemented Fake news legislation. The countries accounted for different parties for wrong actions such as Technology Company, Individual, Website Administrator, Internet Service Provider, and others. For instance, in German the

Technology Companies if they fail to remove illegal content within 24 hours they would fine 50 million Euros.

In Africa, Egypt has monitor the social media since 2018, if the content published by individual related to fake news, and hate speech, the council authorized to suspend or block any personal account. The Kenya government has adopted law of Computer and Cybercrimes Bill to curb fake news (AP, September 1, and May 24, 2018). So far, Ethiopia did not have specific anti-spreading fake news and hate speech act however, the draft legislation has been involving around experts since 2019. On the other hand, Ethiopia adopted Cybercrime Proclamation (CCP No.958/2016) in 2016 and the punishment could go up to 25 years of imprisonment. (Kinfе, 2016)

*Ethiopia does not have a full-fledged law that governs the regulation of problematic content on the Internet. Content regulation rules are scattered in various pieces of legislation including the cybercrime legislation, and these are hardly fit for purpose. There is, for instance, no known procedural law that governs the manner by which illegal, offensive and harmful content could be blocked, filtered, or taken down. Where the government believes that certain content is problematic, it normally instructs the state-owned sole telecom provider –Ethio-telecom– to block access to content or block the website altogether.*

The researcher interviewed one of Ethio-telecom officials off the record about the shutdown of the internet for the last three years but he denied that the organization were not responsible for such action because as a company when the internet closed the income will decrease. Therefore, any business companies do not want to get bankrupted. Though In April 2019 interview, the official emphasized that the EPRDF government was responsible for such actions.

When we come to the informants, they raised different issues about fake news. The focus group discussant (Discussion with FGD#2, 2019) noted that for the last three years, fake news was even coming from the government, not social media users alone and this led to empowered fake News in the country. The mainstream media lied about stories and fabricated news that supports the government political narrative. Nowadays the practice was turned upside down those who previously scrutinized the government fake news were tend to becoming fake news fabricator and the occurrence of fake news is becoming increase. Though to curb social media fake news and hate speech is that as a country, they should endorse the law and follow verified pages. Discussion with FGD#2 (2019) noted that It is difficult to think freedom of speech without the

right to live the discussant emphasized that stakeholders should think the right to live first and then follows the freedom of speech.

However, some of the informants argued that if the country enacts a law of hate speech and fake news. (k2), (A3), and (S3) noted that before enacting any law the government should create awareness first. because (1) the government fed misinformation for 27 years, (2) the internet penetration is very low even contrast to Sub Sahara Africa, (3) there is no national consensus (4) people did not aware how social media Algorithm work and (5) the government has bad human right violation record. Such comments as follows:

I do not agree if it would enact the law over hate or fake news. For instance, I have a chance to see the current draft. The first question is that what you would teach the people so far, you fed people misinformation for 27 years and now you came abruptly and say you should know what misinformation is. It is not a proper way. (Interview with K2, April 11, 2019, Addis Ababa)

### **5.5.2.2. Hate Speech in Social Media**

Globally, International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (Hereafter, CERD) adopted the first anti-hate speech related provision by the UN General Assembly in 1965 (Mendel, 2010). The assembly differentiates four different characteristic of the hate speech obligation in its Article 4(1) dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority, (2) dissemination of ideas based on racial hatred, (3) incitement to racial discrimination and (4) incitement to acts of racially motivated violence.

When we come to the regional organization, African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) Adopted in Nairobi June 27, 1981, entered into Force October 21, 1986 (ACHPR, 1986). Accordingly "Any propaganda for war and any advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitute incitements to lawless violence or to any other similar illegal action against any person or group of persons on any grounds including those of race, color, religion, language, or national origin shall be considered as offenses punishable by law."

So far, Ethiopia did not have a specific hate speech law that targeted the social media users. However, Zinabu Tunu, communications head of the Attorney General, spoke to Addis standard in 2018 and noted, “There are growing concerns about hate speeches and uncensored activism in the country. The need to have a legal ground in bringing upon accountability towards these is not to be left for time” (Addis Standard November 23, 2018). Since then the draft has been circulated to all stakeholders, experts and one of the key informants who participated in this research has been read the legislation.

There were conducted a study on the subject of the hate speech in Ethiopia for example in 2014. It was conducted jointly by the Addis Ababa University and Oxford University. However the context between now and then is very different the first thing is that the internet penetration is rising from 1.5% to 15% and the dynamics of the politics is very different as well. But the Iginio et al. (2014) study noted, "The debates on hate speech were often polarized with opposing sides accusing the other of promoting hate speech to serve their political aims". In this research as well, the majority of the informants gave the same thought with Iginio study, the informant emphasized that for the last three years the majority of hate speech was come from ethnic-based thought, and it becomes a new normal in social media. The other main point was that Social media users did not differentiate political parties and officials with the vast majority of people as well because of that user targeted and insulted individuals. This practice also continues after the reform as well. (Discussion with FGD#1#2, February 23, 2019, Addis Ababa)

As stated above, the majority of the informants agreed on the legislation of hate speech and fake news. However, some of them strongly argued and raised social media algorism as an argument. For instance, (K2, 2019) if someone has a fan of Arsenal football club and published news about Arsenal all the time, there is a high chance to see Arsenal related news. The same thing happens here if someone commented on extreme content, there is a high chance to see the same content back therefore, it depends on how someone's interaction. On the other hand, because of their interaction or their friend, some users do not see hateful things at all.

All in all, Regarding hate speech social media provider has different types of regulations in their platform, such as Facebook noted, “organizations and people dedicated to promoting hatred against these protected groups are not allowed a presence on Facebook” (Caitlin, 2017). In

addition to that, BBC (March 28, 2019) reported facebook has ban white nationalism and separatism after New Zealand Christchurch mosque shooting.

However, Myanmar military personnel used Facebook as a tool to commit ethnic cleansing in 2017/18. Later, (New York Times October 15, 2018) the military personnel who targeted Muslim Rohingya minority group were banned from Facebook and Facebook cyber security policy, Nathaniel Gleicher confirmed about the military-driven campaign in Myanmar. CNN (November 6, 2018) also reported that Facebook admitted it did not do enough to prevent Myanmar violence. Therefore, what we see on the above is that wherever in the world social media networks could be used as a tool to spread hate speech and commit a crime. Therefore, Carlson (2017) finding noted that the majority of the respondent in her study agreed on the prohibition and removal of some or all hate speech on SMNs.

## **5.6. The Political Aspects of Diaspora role in Social Media**

According to the UN (2018) report, the largest number of Indian (15.6 M) living outside of the country Mexican, Russian, China and Bangladeshi follow respectively. In Another UN (2018) Africa related report, intra-Africa migration reached 19.4 Million and 16.9 Million are living outside of the continent in 2017. Egypt alone contributes 3.4 million, Morocco 2.9 million and Somalia 1.9 million people living in and out of the continent in 2017. When we come to Ethiopia, there is no official figure about how many citizens living abroad however unofficial figure reached the number from two million up to four million citizens living outside of the country, most of them reside in USA, Middle East, and South Africa.

Ethiopian Diaspora has influenced both politically and economically in home and host countries to a much greater degree (Tariku, 2017). Ethiopian Diaspora is a major source of FDI, during 2014/15 Ethiopia received high remittance flow however for the last three years become shrinking, and accounted less than a billion dollar. Since 2016, the Diaspora community boycotted remittance flow into the country to made political pressures on the régime. However, IMF (2018) country report noted that the new normalization of the political environment with Diaspora could increase in foreign direct investment and remittance flow as well as contribute to the development of the country.

Ethiopian Diaspora community, especially who are living in the United States had played critical roles by those who are most actively engaged in the political struggles in the homeland. The Diaspora community and homeland politics relation started during the 2005 general election (Birhanu et al. 2009). The aftermath of the election crises, the Diasporas back off from support for election politics and begin a new approach, lobbying for international financial pressures or even strategies of armed struggle. Even they had access for international media to put pressure on the government and use international organizations to make an influence in every sector that they had. Finally, the EPRDF régime accused and called them as extremist.

Since last year, the government and the Diaspora did not have Good relationships with each other. The researcher asked participants about the Diasporas role in social media in bringing political change in Ethiopia. When we see the last three years of scenario, the majority of the participant in this study agreed on Diasporas contribution. However, some of the informants explained them as Conflict monger. In a different way, one of the activists from (FGD#1) and key informant (K2) clearly put that the Diaspora community had learned from homeland movements. The first lesson was from the previous non-violence and peaceful Muslim protest also known as let our voice heard (*Dimitsachin Yisema*) that was took the Addis Ababa Street in 2012. The second lesson was from zone9ner online campaign with their prominent motto that was "Respect the Constitution". During the campaign movement in social media, The Diasporas refused to accept the motto because the Diaspora already rejected the EPRDF constitution. They associated the campaigner with the régime. Nevertheless, through time, they understand the motives of the campaigner. The campaigners showed that the government did not respect its own constitution, which was already rejected by the Diasporas; as a result, the Diasporas understood the gap that revealed by campaigners and were becoming a follower of homeland social media campaigner. (Discussion with FGD#1, February 23 2019, Addis Ababa)

The other thing is that the Diasporas who lived in different host countries had much access than homeland activists. They were far from the epicenter. They have every infrastructure to pressure the government. (K2, key informant) noted, "If we have said, social media had a positive impact on political reform so does Diasporas because they have spread the news by using social media. They amplify what happened inside the country". Regard with this, Diasporas made a Trans-Atlantic relation with homeland activists since 2015 protest broke out (A1, 2019) the reform

might be very difficult without their union. They were one of the key players for 2018 homeland political change by disseminating news, creating diplomatic pressure, exposing government brutality and other efforts. One of the prominent Activist Jawar Mohamed had an interview with Aljazeera and explained what they did, "*People from all corners of the world will snap a picture, record a video and send it to us through WhatsApp or through Facebook. We take that, we verify it, we edit it and we air it back to them.*" (Aljazeera, August 11, 2018)

However, one of the key informants opposed Diasporas role in social media in bringing political change in the country. The participant noted that the Diasporas were published news without verifying it. During the interview, the key informant also mentioned that the experiences of his close family incident who lived from Djimma and born from two different ethnics. By the time the individual, who is a chief mechanic, give a ride to Garage owner relatives to pick them up outside of Djimma to celebrate the annual event. after a while, the car was crashed then social media users or activists who saw the incident immediately sent pictures to the Diasporas and the Diasporas published back even without verified it that the incident was premeditated by the driver. Finally, the Mechanic attacked by the group. K1 (2019) noted, "When I heard what happened to the chief mechanic, as a family member I was very shocked because I know everything about him. Besides, most of our family had born from a different ethnic background. In case of that, those kinds of thing made me worried"

The researcher mentioned that the Diaspora community and EPRDF had bad relationships after the 2005 election aftermath. Then the Diasporas were committed to removing the EPRDF régime in a different ways, however, during their struggle, they were so polarized Oromo Activists discussed with Oromo Activists alone, Amhara Activists discussed with Amhara Activists alone and the same thing happen for others. Even they transported their ethnical tension to the homeland. After the 2018 reform, the Diaspora pretended as if they were struggled together to remove the common enemy during the popular protest but what was happened was they fought ethnically not holistically. (Discussion with FGD#1#2, February 23 2019, Addis Ababa)

Another important issue is that the remoteness and nearness of the authors to the events is matter (Haftu, 2012). There was a gap between homeland politics and the thought coming from Diaspora. The Diaspora community had a limitation and did not know what has happened exactly on the ground. As a result, they turned into hasty generalization on some issues and one

thing is undeniable that they had a role in agenda setting but they were not masterminding (FGD#1#2, 2019). However, one of discussant FGD#1#4 (2019) opposed the idea and believed that they had a role in agenda setting as well as an architect of the protest. In line with this, one of key informant opposed both opinions raised by FGD#1, limits the roles of the Diaspora but they did not define issues they did not have agenda-setting roles. For instance, (Interview with K2, 2019) noted, *"If the case was Addis Ababa master plan, they took it shouting on that if the case was Wolkaite again they took it and they had been shouting about Wolkaite. (ሰራቸው ኳስ የማቀበል ነበር)"*

Besides, the Diasporas had a role in social media by creating a lobby in US Congress to create diplomatic pressure and they were also organized to pressurize officials who traveled outside of the country (Interview with A2, 2019). In addition to that, they disseminate information from one point to the other end, one of the activists noted, "I am a journalist as well because of its ethics; I did not follow Diasporas content, did not watch, and did not read them. Nevertheless, finally, we understood that they had more information than we did" (Interview with A1, 2019).

The protester did not protest because of the Diasporas information. However, a number of pushing factors reached to tipping point rather than Addis Ababa master plan case or Wolkite. All informant agreed that the Diaspora role was very little than homeland social media user and activists even it was not contrastable than those who fight in front of federal and defense force. Above all the significance role was goes to the people who live inside the country who jailed and killed by federal police. To those who lost their brother and sisters by defense force and the next day joined the protester. One of key informant emphasized, "They are faceless, the movement occupied by Jawar or Muluken and those who killed has forgotten". The movements run up by from the age of 15 up to 31 years old, "you know it was a faceless movement no one remembered them who killed by the régime". (Interview with K2, April 11, 2019, Addis Ababa)

## 5.7. The Challenge Faced on the Ongoing Political Reform

After years of nationwide political protest against the EPRDF government, the former Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn submitted his resignation letters to resign as Prime Minister and Chairman of Ethiopia's ruling party EPRDF in 14 February 2018. Following that, HPRs elected Abiy Ahmed as Prime Minister and was sworn in April 2, 2018. Since he became as a Prime Minister, Abiy administration agreed on with neighboring Eritrea, reshuffled his cabinet and half of the cabinets become women, lifted bans on websites, freed political prisoner and journalists, and ordered the partial privatization of massive state-owned companies and others (The Guardian, July 8, 2018).

Despite all these positive changes there were numerous of bad thing which took place to the country such as ethnic clash becomes a new normal 8.86 million people in need of humanitarian aid and border conflict in the Afar-Issa area, in the Oromo-Somali Region boundary area, in Beni Shangul-Gumuz Region, and in the Guji-Gedeo area are threatening the reform (IPI Global observatory, April 4, 2019).

*Communal clashes were even seen in cities, like in the usually peaceful Hawassa, in Moyale, and even in Addis Ababa, where dozens were killed in August 2018 in the Burayyu suburb, causing shockwaves throughout the country. Ethiopia also recently became the country with the most internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world Regard with this the researcher asked about the ongoing reform (IPI Global observatory, April 4, 2019).*

Abbink (2019) who is a professor of Politics and Governance in Africa at Leiden University's African Studies Centre put his critics in IPI global observatory. The professor raised this is a time for global researcher to start questioning the ongoing reform. In line with this, the researcher asked questions to the study participant about the reform whether is it going well or revert it. The informants provide four types of answer; (1) it is going well, (2), it is not going well (3) in doubt but continue to support and (4) it takes time to judge maybe after the election.

Depend on the above four answers the majority of the study participant were in doubt or in uncertainty but whatever it is/will, they will be continue to support the reform. (K1, 2019) noted, "I am so confused, did you know a confused person? Sometimes I believe the reform is going well and sometimes I doubt it. You know what sometimes it is not good to doubt because we do

not have any option. I think we should support the ongoing reform with all things". However, A1 opposed this idea of supporting because the reform would went well for the first six month alone since then it is revert. A1 noted, "I learned recently there was some uninteresting thing I have been a working relation with Government agencies and I have seen many Oromo Democratic Party leaders (ODPs) in front of higher management positions".

The second key informant was avoiding the question because (K2) thought that this is not a right time to judge, it will be good to judge after the election. However, K2 put its fear about the reform and how the PM office going change its ideology but ministerial or other subordinate level still continue their previous bureaucracy, the proclamations on the Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to information 590/2008, ATP NO.652/2009 and others still are waiting to be amended. Despite all this, "if you ask me the whole reform process it is boldly in a much better place than a year ago" (Interview with K2, April 11, 2019, Addis Ababa)

## **5.8. The Challenges of the Online Trained**

Since the analysis started, we have seen the new media has roles in bringing political change. For the last decay, particularly the last three years activists, journalists, politician, and the social media user met and discussed online. The researcher was asked all the study participant, what happened about the last three years and what will happen in the future if the online discussions would continue without turning into offline debates. All the study participants gave similar Answers to the questions and it has its own impacts not to turn the online discussion into offline. However, during the last ten years, it was difficult to turn the online discussion into an offline discussion in the homeland because of the EPRDF régime brutal responses. Besides, one of the key informants (Interview with K2, 2019) went further even there was not inclusive online discussions or intergroup discussion in online and offline in the country and they were not successful even who tried to do intergroup discussion.

You know what the bottom line is that Ethiopian politics is so polarized, the social media revealed that truth. For instance, if they are Oromo nationalist they only discuss with Oromo nationalist they do not care what others think if they are Amhara nationalist they follow the same rule as Oromo nationalist, liberals among liberals, Ethiopian nationalist among Ethiopian nationalist and so and so forth. To conclude this, it always becomes a problem and we should avoid this practice for the sake of the country. (Interview with K2, April 11, 2019, Addis Ababa)

Another research also addressed that in social media partisan polarization and negative nature of political discourses has become increased (Pew Research Center, 2016), (Carr, 2016). One of the key informants also agreed on the above point. (Interview with A1, 2019) noted that in social media, every group has its own political narratives. One of A1 friend who knew in person published news in social media against what A1 knew on the ground. Then (A1) asked his friend to meet up in person to discuss on the same issue that both had different information. Finally, they met up offline and discussed what was happening on the ground and reached into an agreement. These kinds of the trend are helping social media users and activists who shared information without verifying it and if they get chance to turn the online conversation into an offline conversation, they get chance to know what happens in the ground. One of the activists also agreed on such kind of practices people who disagree in online media perhaps they come up into common denominator when they meet up offline. If it would possible to turn online debates into offline, this will help to decide the political fate of the country (Interview with A2, February 19, 2019, Addis Ababa).

The second important issues raised by the study participants were that activists who tried to set agendas in social media were very different from the ground. For instance, (Interview with K2, 2019) noted that currently, farmers do not have fertilizers and Shiro and Berbere is becoming expensive. And added, "We should talk about service provision, at this time; we are moving in a speed of light with limited understanding of the actual consequences". The informants also point out the consequences of the online trend, (1)social media made us judgmental (2)made us label monger (ተሳዳቢ ጎውልድ አድርጎናል), (3)made us more polarized, (4) made us more hostile (5) People more tend to be individualistic, and (6) led us to divergence instead of convergence in terms of political thought toward the country. If the online-oriented political discussion does not turn into offline discussion the future of the country will at risk and one of the preparatory school discussant concluded "Our teacher educated us Ethiopia is so rich in resource if this kind of online trend would continue, we cannot manage our resource" (Discussion with FGD#1, February 23, 2019, Addis Ababa).

## Chapter Six

### 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 6.1. Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to investigate the Role of Social Media promoting or hampering the countrywide popular protest movement to bring on the ongoing political reform process in Ethiopia. To achieve this goal the research employed qualitative methodology and used primary sources by interviewing as well as using secondary sources from different document, thesis work, journals, and Articles and analyzed this data by using thematic analysis. The finding proves that the majority of the informant agreed on the social media had played a significance role to bring the ongoing political reform in Ethiopia. The social media platform also served as a political space for activists, politician, and the public. Regard this, during the three-year long popular social movement protest Social media played three major roles. The first one is that social media (Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) became an alternative information source in the country, second serving as an instrument for mass mobilization to protest against the EPRDF regime and third exposing the government brutal action to local and international community.

The Social media had accessible resource in favor of Homeland and Diaspora activists in prolonged the momentum or the movement until March 2018. They created a Trans-Atlantic communication through social media. The finding showed that the social movement protest was pushing the ruling party to made political reform and the literature as well prove that it was not a revolutionary movement, which needs a fundamental change. However, the thesis examine that the change would came without the existence of social media but it would be delayed or revolutionary social movement would be existed.

Besides the three major roles mentioned above, the social media made significance numbers of positive contribution such as the empowering users to exercise freedom of thought, practicing freedom of expression, pushing the state owned mainstream media to adopt its public agenda, and pushing the authoritarian EPRDF ruling party and elite to adopt political reform agenda. Furthermore, Hate speech and Fake news were two major challenges in the last three years others such as polarizing or fantasizing ethnic narrations, insulting each other's ethnic, dealing with the past, and others were common in the online sphere. Regarding with this the finding prove that

lawlessness in the online world harnessed activists to spread hate speech and to disseminate fake news and activists who tried to set agendas in social media were very different from what happened the very ground. Besides the Homeland and Diaspora Activists, State owned Mainstream Media misinformed the public and broadcasted fake news. This led to empowered social media activists to circulate their own version of truth. In general, the last three years Human Right Activists, Politician, and the Social Media User presented their content solely in online. Thus, the study participant emphasized that if the online room discussion does not turn into offline venue, the country will pay a lot of damage.

After the Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office in March 2018, the PM administration ending two decay No war No peace scenario with neighboring Eritrea, lifted bans on websites, freed all political prisoner and journalists, half of the cabinets become women and shifting to the partial privatization of state-owned companies and others. Despite this move, ethnic clash and border conflict becomes a new normal, more than three million people displaced from their home and in general 8.86 million people in need of humanitarian aid in Ethiopia. The finding proves that the majority of the study participants were in doubt of on the ongoing political reform however, they confirm their support for the new administration.

## **6.2. Research Finding Implication For Policy Reform On Social Media**

The general objective of the research work was an investigation of the role of the social media in the ongoing political reform in Ethiopia. The study of the result showed that social media had a crucial role for political change in the country. Hence, based on the study the researcher forwards some specific recommendations for different stakeholders as well as social media users.

In recent years, social media became a part of necessity across the world and an alternative source of information. In some part of the world particularly in-developed nation, social media have content moderator. However, in Africa particularly in Ethiopia there has no social media content moderator so far. As we have seen in the research study, ethnic polarization in social media user becomes a common thing. Therefore, social media service provider should be installed a center with impartial content moderator to prevent extremist posts. Especially, facebook users become increase year on year in the region and the company should give a better emphasis for it.

The current and the future Ethiopian governments also consider two major concepts. The first one is that the government ought to understand that the media power to change regime. Second, the government should stop refraining social media and state owned mainstream media. Further, the government should think to use social media for human and economic development and install an institution for it to advance the positive thing and to limit the negative side of it. Second, there will be an election in the country in 2020, therefore before the election takes place stakeholders should consider to enact regulation of hate speech and spreading of fake news to limit tribalism. However, the enacting law should not be a weapon for the government.

Activist and the social media users should consider their power that can create in their timeline. In social media, content that they published in their timeline should be with responsibility. To conclude, to create a better community in Ethiopia activists and social media users should develop a platform to turn online discussion into offline discussion.

### **6.3. Recommendation For The Topic**

This research conducted in qualitative analysis though if the area would quantify, other researcher who want to participate in this area can conduct quantitatively. Moreover this research is insufficient and we should do further research. The researcher attempted to cover such topics like Diaspora role in social media, hate speech and fake news and the positive and negative impacts of social media regard with politics. However, all sub topics included in this study can be stand as specific topic by themselves and as the researcher knowledge there is no enough academic paper yet in the area. Therefore, if anyone interested in the area can develop and turn those subtopics into a research.

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## **Appendix-I**

### **Interview Guide for the key Informants**

1. What were/are the roles of the social media in the ongoing political reform/change in Ethiopia?
2. What are the main roles of the social media in the political reform?
  - 2.1.1. If it was used as mobilization
  - 2.1.2. If it was used as information sharing
  - 2.1.3. If it was used as expose the brutality
3. What are the positive and negative impacts of the social media?
  - 3.1.1. “Hate Speech”
  - 3.1.2. “Fake News”
4. Do you think there was a hate speech and fake news for the last three years in social media?
  - 4.1.1. If yes, explain what kind of hate speech and fake news were there?
  - 4.1.2. Do you think we should enacting regulations to curb hate speech and fake news?
  - 4.1.3. Do you think that the enacting of laws and regulations would bring the desired changes?
  - 4.1.4. Some says the first thing is not regulation but creating awareness, do you agree on that?
5. What was the contribution of the Diasporas’ involvement in social media for bringing the current political change/reform that took place in the country?
6. For the last three years politicians, activists and intellectuals were communicating only on-line media, what problem did it create if it not continue in offline?
7. Do you think that the current political reform would happen in Ethiopia in the absence of the social media?
8. What can you say about the ongoing reform? Is it going well or is it reverting

## **APPENDIX - II**

### **Interview Guide for the Informants and FGD**

1. What were/are the roles of social media in the political reform in Ethiopia?
2. What are the main roles of social media in the political reform?
3. What are the positive and negative impacts of social media?
4. Do you think there was a hate speech and fake news for the last three years in social media?
5. What was the contribution of the Diasporas' involvement in the social media for the political reform that took place in the country?
6. For the last three years politicians, activists and intellectuals were communicating only on-line media, what problem did it create if it not continue in offline?
7. Do you think that the current political reform would happen in Ethiopia in the absence of the social media?
8. What can you say about the ongoing reform? Is it going well or is it reverting

### Appendix - III

ስሜ አብርሃም ፈቀደ ይባላል። በአሁኑ ወቅት በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ በአፍሪካና ኦሪይንታል ጥናት ማዕከል ውስጥ የሂደቱን ኤንድ ኢኮኖሚክ ዴቪሎፕመንት የድህረ ምረቃ ተማሪ ስሆን፣ 'The Role of social media in Political Reform in African; the Case of Ethiopia' በሚል ርዕስ ጥናት እያካሄድኩ እገኛለሁ። በጥቅሉ መጠይቁ በሦስት ተከፍሎ 32 ጥያቄዎችን የያዘ ሲሆን፣ ከ20 ደቂቃዎች ያነሰ ጊዜ ይወስዳል። በመጨረሻም ስለመልካም ፍቃድና ተሳትፎዎ እጅግ አድርጌ አመሰግናለሁ።

I. ጥያቄውን ሲመልሱ በሳጥኑ ውስጥ የራይት ምልክት (□) በማድረግ ያስቀምጡ

- 1. ጾታ →  ወንድ  ባለትዳር  ያላገባ
- ሴት  ባለትዳር  ያላገባ

- 2. ዕድሜ →  ከ18 - 23  ከ24 - 40  40 - 45
- ከ30 - 35  ከ35 - 45  45+

- 3. አሁን የሚገኙበት የትምህርት ደረጃ ምንድነው?
  - ዲፕሎማ(ቴክኒክና ሙያ 10+)
  - የመጀመሪያ ዲግሪ ተማሪ
  - ሁለተኛ ዲግሪ ተማሪ
  - የመጀመሪያ ዲግሪ
  - ሁለተኛ ዲግሪ(ኤምኤ)
  - ሦስተኛ ዲግሪ(ፒኤችዲ)

- 4. የማህበራዊ ሚዲያ ተጠቃሚ ናት? አዎ
- አይደለሁም (2)

- 5. የትኛውን ማህበራዊ ሚዲያ ይበልጥ ይጠቀማሉ በሳጥኑ ውስጥ አንደኛ የሚጠቀሙትን ቁጥር ብለው  1 ይጻፉበት
- ሁለተኛ የሚጠቀሙትን በተመሳሳይ ሳጥኑ ውስጥ 2፣ ሦስተኛ የሚጠቀሙትን በተመሳሳይ 3 ቁጥር ብለው ይጻፉበት?

- ፌስቡክ  ትዊተር  ዩቲዩብ  የትኛውንም አልጠቀምም

5.1. የመጀመሪያ ምርጫዎትን ለምን እንደመረጡ ያብራሩልኝ \_\_\_\_\_

- 6. በጥቅሉ በቀን ውስጥ በአማካይ ለምን ያህል ሰዓት ማህበራዊ ሚዲያ ይጠቀማሉ?

የሚጠቀሙ ከሆነ ሰዓቱን ያስቀምጡ \_\_\_\_\_

II. ከታች ለተዘረዘሩት ሁለም ጥያቄዎች አምስት ምርጫዎች ተዘርዝረዋል (በጣም እስማማለሁ=1)፣ (እስማማለሁ=2)፣ (ገለልተኛ=3)፣ (አልስማማም=4)፣ (በጣም አልስማማም=5)ን ይወክላሉ። እርሶ መልስ የሚሉትን ቁጥር ያክብቡ።

1	ፖለቲካዊ ሪፎርም እንዲመጣ ማህበራዊ ሚዲያው ሚና ነበረው በሚለው ይስማማሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
2	ማህበራዊው ሚዲያ ፖለቲካዊ ሪፎርም እውን እንዲሆን ጉልህ የሆነ ሚና ነበረው በሚለው ይስማማሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
3	ባለፉት ሦስት ዓመታት ማህበራዊው ሚዲያው በመንግስት ላይ ይደረግ የነበረውን ተቃውሞ ኃይል ሰጥቶታል በሚለው ይስማማሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
4	ባለፉት ሦስት ዓመታት ማህበራዊ ሚዲያው የፖለቲካ መታገያ ሜዳ ሆኖ ነበር በሚለው ይስማማሉ?		2	3	4	5
5	ባለፉት ባለፉት ሦስት ዓመታት ማህበራዊው ሚዲያ ከሌሎች መገናኛ ብዙሃን አንጻር ከመንግስት ቁጥጥር ነጻ ነበረ በሚለው ይስማማሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
6	ማህበራዊ ሚዲያው ፖለቲካዊ ሪፎርም እንዲመጣ ከሌሎች መገናኛ ብዙሃን አንጻር ሚናው ላቅ ያለ ነበር በሚለው ይስማማሉ	1	2	3	4	5
7	ባለፉት ሦስት ዓመታት ዲያስፖራው ፖለቲካዊ ሪፎርም እንዲመጣ በማህበራዊ ሚዲያ አማካኝነት ሚና ነበረው በሚለው ይስማማሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
8	ባለፉት ሦስት ዓመታት በሀገር ውስጥ ያለው አክቲቪስት ፖለቲካዊ ሪፎርም እንዲመጣ ሚና ነበረው በሚለው ይስማማሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
9	ባለፉት ሦስት ዓመታት ተቃውሞ ባያለበት ወቅት የጥላቻ ንግግሮች ነበሩ በሚለው ይስማማሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
10	ባለፉት ሦስት ዓመታት ሐሰተኛ ዜናዎች ነበሩ በሚለው ይስማማሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
11	ወደፊት የጥላቻ ንግግሮች እና ሐሰተኛ ዜናዎችን ለመቆጣጠር ህግ ቢወጣላቸው ይስማማሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
12	ፖለቲከኞች፣ የማህበራዊ ሚዲያ ተጠቃሚዎች እና አክቲቪስቶች በማህበራዊ ሚዲያ በኩል ብቻ በመገናኘታቸው የሚያጡት ነገር አለ ብለው ያስባሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
13	ባለፉት ሶስት ዓመታት በነበረው ፖለቲካዊ ትግል ከማህበራዊ ሚዲያው ታማኝነት ያለው መረጃ አግኝተዋል?	1	2	3	4	5
14	በፖለቲካዊ ሪፎርም ወቅት በማህበራዊ ሚዲያው የሚለቀቁ መረጃዎች ከጉዳታቸው ይልቅ ጥቅማቸው ያመዘነ ነበር ይላሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
15	በመጨረሻም ፖለቲካዊ ሪፎርም በትክክል እየሄደ ነው በሚለው ይስማማሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
16	በ15ኛ ጥያቄን በማስመልከት የመረጡትን ምርጫ ለምን እንደመረጡት ያብራሩ ለምሳሌ አልስማማም ከሆነ ለምን እንዳልተስማሙ እስማማለሁ ከሆነ ለምን እንደተስማሙ በአጭሩ እዚሁ በሳጥኑ ውስጥ ሆነው ያብራሩ፡-					

III. ከ1 - 6 የተዘረዘሩት ጥያቄዎች እያንዳንዳቸው አራት ምርጫዎች ይዘዋል። በጣም የሚስማሙበትን 1፣ የሚስማሙበትን 2፣ መካከለኛ የሚስማሙበትን 3፣ አነስተኛ የሚስማሙበትን 4 እያሉ ደረጃ ያውጡላቸው።

1. ማህበራዊው ሚዲያ ባለፉት ሦስት ዓመታት ፖለቲካዊ ሪፎርም እንዲመጣ ሚና ነበረው ሲሉ በምን መልኩ ነው ይላሉ

- የመንግስትን ጭቆና በማጋለጥ ነው ሰልፎ  አድማዎችን በማደራጀት ነው
- የመንግስት ኃላፊዎችን በማጋለጥ ነው  የህዝቡ ፖለቲካ ተሳታፊ እንዲጨምር በማድረግ

1) ሌላ ካለ ይጥቀሱልን \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. ባለፉት ሦስት ዓመታት የማህበራዊው ሚዲያ አወንታዊ ተጽዕኖ ምን ነበር?

- ፖለቲካዊ ሪፎርም በማምጣቱ  ፖለቲካው ተሳትፎ በመጨመሩ
- ዲሞክራሲን በማጎልበቱ  የመረጃ ምንጭ በመሆኑ

1) ሌላ ካለ ይጥቀሱልን \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3. ባለፉት ሦስት ዓመታት ማህበራዊው ሚዲያ አሉታዊ ተጽዕኖ ምንነበር?

- የጥላቻ ንግግሮች  ሐሰተኛ ዜናዎች
- የብሄር ግጭቶች  የኢንፎርሜሽን ቴክኖሎጂው ውድመት

1) ሌላ ካለ ይጥቀሱልን \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4. ወደፊት የጥላቻ ንግግሮች እና ሐሰተኛ ዜናዎችን ለመቆጣጠር ህግ ቢወጣላቸው የሚስማሙት ለምንድነው?

- ስርጭታቸውን ስለሚከላከል  መንግስትን ስለሚጠቅም
- በህግ መተዳደር ስለሚገባው  የህዝብን ሰላም ስለሚጠብቅ

1) ሌላ ካለ ይጥቀሱልን \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. ባለፉት ሦስት ዓመታት ሀሰተኛ ዜናዎች ስርጭት ምን ላይ ያተኮሩ ነበሩ

- ብሄር ከብሄር የሚያጋጩ  የፖለቲካ አመለካከት ያላቸው ግለሰቦችን የተመለከቱ
- የፖለቲካ አላማን ለማስፈጸም የሚነዙ  መንግስትን ለመጉዳት

1) ሌላ ካለ ይጥቀሱልን \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. ህግ እንዳይወጣላቸው የሚፈልጉ ከሆነ ምክንያቱ ምንድነው ይላሉ?

- የጥላቻ ንግግሮች እና ሐሰተኛ ዜናዎችን እንዲኖሩ ስለሚፈልጉ ነው
- መጀመሪያ ግንዛቤ መፍጠር ስለሚያስፈልግ ነው
- መንግስት መጨቆኛ መሳሪያ ያደርጋቸዋል ብለው ስለሚሰጉ ነው
- የስጋት ደረጃ ላይ አልደረሱም ስለሚሉ ነው

1) ሌላ ካለ ይጥቀሱልን \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. ባለፉት ዓመታት ፖለቲከኞች፣ የማህበራዊ ሚዲያ ተጠቃሚዎች እና አክቲቪስቶች በማህበራዊ ሚዲያ በኩል ብቻ በመገናኘታቸው የሚያጡት ነገር አለ ብለው የሚያስቡ ከሆነ ምን ሊሆን ይችላል ይላሉ?

- በአካል ተገናኝተው ባለመወያየታቸው ተነጋግረው መፍታት ያለባቸውን እንዳይፈቱ ሆነዋል
- በመካከላቸው የተራራቁ ሐሳቦች እንዳይቀራረቡ ወይም ፖላራይዥ እንዲሆኑ አድርጓል
- የተዋቀረና ስርዓት ያለው ሐሳብ ይዞ ለመነጋጋር የሚያስችለውን የውይይት ባህል አጥፍቷል
- የማህበራዊ ሚዲያ ግንኙነት ህብረተሰቡ ውስጥ ያለውን ጉዳይ በትክክል ለማንሳት በቂ አይደለም

1) ሌላ ካለ ይጥቀሱልን \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. ባለፈው ዓመት የተጀመረው ፖለቲካዊ ሪፎርም ማህበራዊ ሚዲያዎች ባይኖሩ ይመጣ ነበር ብለው ያስባሉ? (አንዱን ብቻ ይምረጡ)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> አዎ፣ ባይኖሩም ለውጡ ይመጣል      | <input type="checkbox"/> አይ፣ እነሱ ባይኖሩ ለውጡ አይመጣም   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ባይኖሩም ይመጣል ግን በጣም ይዘገያል | <input type="checkbox"/> መኖራቸው ለውጡን እንዲፈጥን አድርጎታል |

1) ሌላ ካለ ይጥቀሱልን \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

IV. ማህበራዊ ሚዲያውን በተመለከተ የሚሉት የተለየ ነገር ካለ በአጭሩ ይዘርዝሩልን? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

V. ማህበራዊ ሚዲያው ወደፊት በፖለቲካ ጉዳይ ላይ በምን መልኩ መቀጠል አለበት ይላሉ? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix- IV (A)

### Primary sources of the study

Informant name	Profession	Place of Interview	Date of Interview
Key Informant one (K1)	Lecturer at AAU	Addis Ababa university, 6killo campus	April 3, 2019
Key Informant two (k2)	Communications consultant	Addis Ababa, Bole sub city, Bole Medehanialem	April 11, 2019
Activist one (A1)	Communications Consultant	Addis Ababa, bole sub city, Mega	February 9, 2019
Activist two (A2)	Lecturer at Ambo university/lawyer	Addis Ababa, bole sub city, Dembel bulding	February 19, 2019
Activist three (A3)	Blogger, Activist & Zone9	Addis Ababa, Arada sub city, Arat killo	March 9, 2019

## Appendix –IV (B)

### Primary sources of Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Discussant (FGD#1)	Profession of the Discussant	Place of the Discussion	Date of the Discussion
FGD#1#1	Social worker	Addis Ababa, Lideta subcity, Fana Broadcasting (FBC) venue	February 23, 2019
FGD#1#2	Blogger and Activist		
FGD#1#3	Peace and security		
FGD#1#4	Journalist		
FGD#1#5	Video editor		

#### Focus Group discussion - one

Focus Group Discussant (FGD#2)	Profession of the Discussant	Place of the Discussion	Date of the Discussion
FGD#2#1	Grade 12 Social science student	Addis Ababa, Addis Ketema subcity, Addis Ketam Preparatory School	April 5, 2019
FGD#2#2			
FGD#2#3			
FGD#2#4			
FGD#2#5			
FGD#2#6			

#### Focus Group discussion - two

