

**The Role of Social Media Use in Association With Youths’
Political Attitude and Ethnic-Based Narrations in Yeka Sub City,
Addis Ababa.**



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE STUDIES.**

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SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

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and Ethnic-Based Narration in Yeka Sub City, Addis Ababa.**

**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Psychology in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Social psychology.**

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June, 2026.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Declaration

I declare that the thesis entitled: **“The Role of Social Media Use in Association With Youths’ Political Attitude and Ethnic-Based Narrations in Yeka Sub City, Addis Ababa.”** is my original work and has not been presented for any academic purpose in any other university prior this time, and all sources of materials used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Declared by: **Mhreteab Dabi Bati.**

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Date: _____

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List of Abbreviations

ESAT - Ethiopian Satellite Television.

OMN - Oromia Media Network.

EPRDF - Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization.

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between social media use and youths' political attitudes, as well as ethnic-based narration/discourse, in Addis Ababa (Yeka Subcity). Guided by Political Socialization Theory and informed by perspectives on the digital public sphere and the political economy of communication, the study tested whether social media functions as a digital environment that shapes political meaning-making and identity-centered narratives among Ethiopian youth. A quantitative correlational design was employed using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire administered to 384 youths aged 18–30 selected through simple random sampling with eligibility screening for active social media users. Reliability of the measurement scales was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha (overall $\alpha = .944$). Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, Spearman's correlation, and group comparison tests (independent-samples t-test and one-way ANOVA). The results showed a strong positive association between social media use and political attitude ($\rho = 0.863$) as well as between social media use and ethnic-based narration ($\rho = 0.792$). However, gender, age group (18–24 vs. 25–30), and study field (Natural Science vs. Social Science) did not produce statistically significant differences in social media use, political attitude, or ethnic-based narration, while educational level significantly distinguished political attitude ($F = 5.333$, $p = 0.005$) but did not significantly differentiate ethnic-based narration ($F = 0.984$, $p = 0.375$). In addition, simple linear regression indicated that social media use (Zscore(SocialMediaTotal)) explained a substantial proportion of the variance in youths' outcomes; specifically, for ethnic-based narration the model produced $R = .868$ and $R^2 = .754$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .754$), accounting for about 75.4% of the variability in Z-score (Ethnic-Based Narration Total), and for political attitude it produced $R = .800$ and $R^2 = .639$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .638$), accounting for about 63.9% of the variability in Z-score (Political Attitude Total).

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Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Political attitudes among youths have increasingly been related with their digital interactions and exposure to political discourse across multiple platforms and contexts. Youth political behavior suggests that social media engagement can positively associate youths' involvement in politics such as participating in protest activities through online petitions, especially when youths follow politicians on social media. At the same time, the same body of evidence indicates that the effects of online behavior on offline political action are not uniform; they may vary across individuals and contexts.(Adamu, Meseret, 2020). The four key pathways through which social media can contribute for youth political behavior: interaction with politicians, freedom of expression online, online political communication, and access to information. Even so, differences in voter turnout between younger and older individuals continue to be observed (Siti, Wan, & Noorazmi, 2024).

From this broader discussion, it becomes important to consider how digital political engagement may be further complicated by identity-based narratives, particularly ethnic narration in multi-ethnic settings. Research on contemporary social media use in Ethiopia suggests that platforms associated with ethnic affiliation may serve political functions beyond simple discussion for instance, mobilizing publics and defining political norms. In addition, digital ethnography evidence indicates a controversial role in reconciliation efforts, where such social media can contribute to “the construction of rigid ethnic boundaries” and fuel hostilities that may hinder political reconciliation within the context of the Pretoria Agreement (Sebesebachew, 2025). These dynamics are usefully examined through ethnicity theory perspectives primordial, relativist, and instrumentalist to understand whether ethnic identity is reproduced as an inherent marker, interpreted through changing meanings, or used strategically within political processes.

Given these considerations, social media remains a central arena where youths form and debate political views and attitudes. Literature indicates that social media can support political learning (acquiring knowledge of politics), political expression, and political discussion. It can also facilitate participation in online petitions, protest activities, and campaign mobilization, which may translate into offline political action or remain as online activism only. (Ketemaw, 2019). Evidence further suggests that when youths follow politicians on social media, it is more likely that they will engage politically on these platforms, and some report that online activity has led them to undertake real-world political actions such as attending offline events or contacting representatives (Siti, Wan, & Noorazmi, 2024). However, gaps remain between youths' online political behavior and their offline involvement: some youths show low levels of participation in real-world politics and may express limited confidence in the credibility of political information circulated online (Zainab & Muhammad, 2024).

This relationship between social media and political behavior is particularly relevant because social media has become embedded in everyday life and supports diverse functions such as online marketing, recruitment, religious event coordination, education, and online social forums. Beyond individual communication, modern media has also enabled collective action. (Ketemaw, 2019). Activists have used social media to mobilize large audiences, contributing to widespread demonstrations and political change across many contexts. Examples include movements such as "Black Lives Matter" in the United States, the Arab Spring, and the "Me Too" campaign. Such cases demonstrate that social media can operate not only as an information channel but also as a tool for political organization and mass mobilization.

As information and communication technologies have advanced, the role of social media in politics has expanded significantly because it actively contributes to political processes. Platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok facilitate information flow and enable individuals to participate in political debates, shaping how political messages are produced, circulated, and interpreted. This makes social media an important setting for examining how youths develop political attitudes, how they evaluate political claims, and how they decide whether to translate online engagement into offline action.

Within the Ethiopian context, social media has grown rapidly even while government regulations and restrictions on freedom of expression continue to have role on online space. Following the arrival of internet services in Ethiopia in 1997, social media and mobile technologies expanded considerably. In particular, platforms such as Facebook became influential during the 2010s (Ethiopian Telecom & DataReportal). Over time, Ethiopia has experienced periods that expanded press freedom alongside phases of online surveillance and information control. Despite these tensions, social media has remained a major factor in shaping political views and enabling mass mobilization in recent years particularly during protests and periods of political reform, including Oromo and Amhara protest dynamics and diaspora involvement.

Therefore, Ethiopia provides a useful case for investigating how social media relates with youths' political beliefs and public debate, especially in a fragile or rapidly changing political environment. Considering both dimensions. (1) social media's role in shaping youth political attitude and (2) the way ethnic-based narration may frame political meaning and communication—this study is positioned to examine how ethnic narratives circulate online, how youths interpret them, and how such interpretations relate to political attitudes and engagement.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In the current Ethiopian context, politics and ethnic-based issues are not confined to formal political arenas; they are directly and indirectly linked with many aspects of everyday life. As a result, the way political messages circulate and are interpreted especially across ethnic lines has significant social and political consequences. At the same time, social media has become one of the most effective channels for reaching and influencing large numbers of people with comparatively less effort. Unlike traditional media, it enables rapid sharing, repetition, and amplification of political content, including reformist ideas, political claims, and emotionally charged narratives.

Youths are among the most active groups in Ethiopia's political space, not only in political participation but also across other sectors of social and civic life. (Adamu, Meseret, 2020). Their access to and use of social media mean that they are continuously exposed to political discussions, reform narratives, and competing interpretations of events.

When youths use social media to obtain political news, debate issues, join organized activities, and either support or challenge government and reform agendas, these interactions can increase their political consciousness and encourage active civic and political engagement.(Ketemaw, 2019). However, social media can also contribute to discrimination, the spread of false narratives, and the strengthening of ethnic discourses. Ethnic stories and rumors may shift political communication from rational, fact-based reasoning to skepticism and mistrust, with negative implications not only for social cohesion but also for democratic development.

Despite the importance of these observations, the combined effects and interactions among these elements, Ethiopia's politically and ethnically sensitive environment, social media's wide reach and persuasive association, and youths' role as key actors are not yet sufficiently studied or adequately understood. Without a clear understanding of how social media shapes youths' political attitudes under real Ethiopian conditions, and how it can either support democratization or intensify division, the consequences may become large-scale and multifaceted. This includes the possibility of increased conflict, weakened civil discourse, and reduced quality of political communication, which can further deepen ethnic tensions.

For these reasons, this thesis is dedicated to examining how young people's political attitudes are formed through social media in Ethiopia, and under what circumstances social media becomes a tool for democratization or a catalyst for ethnic-based division.

1.3. Objectives

General Objective.

- To examine the role of social media use in shaping youth political attitudes and ethnic-based narration in Yeka Subcity, Addis Ababa.

Specific Objectives

- To explore the association between social media, political opinion among young people and public discourse within Yeka Subcity, Addis Ababa.
- To assess the extent to which social media associates with youths' political attitude and ethnic-based narrations.

1.4. Research Questions

1. To what extent does social media associates with youths' political attitude as well as ethnic-based narration?
2. Is the influence of using social media in association with political attitude and ethnic-based narration different depending on user's gender, age, and educational background?

1.5. Operational Definition of Variables

Social Media Use - Frequency: how often the participant uses social media.

- Political and ethnic related content engagement and interacting (posting, commenting, liking, sharing).

Youth – People within 18 to 30 age band living in Yeka Sub City.

Political Attitude - Individuals position towards economic policy, public service, civil liberties.

Ethnic-based narrations – What individuals believe and speak about ethnic groups in terms of their contribution for the country and how the government is treating them. (as measured by Social Media–Mediated Politics and Ethnicization Scale)

1.6. Significance of the Study

It is vital to appreciate how young people formulate their political opinions on social media in the current information context of Ethiopia. Youths are not only consumers of political information but also producers and distributors of narratives in their social networks. In situations of violence, the connection between mass media and social media may generate narratives justifying actions against specific communities (Muna, Fabio. 2022). In analyzing youths' political opinion formation with an emphasis on ethnic narratives, the study explains how meaning is transmitted from media content to the youth population and public opinion through credibility.

Moreover, the study has practical implications for preventing hate-based escalation and preserving social cohesion. Narratives built on ethnic bases can serve as justification of discrimination, intimidation, and even violence if they demonize specific groups and portray them as threats. Literature reports the role of social media platforms in misinformation, hate speech broadcasting,

and violence incitement (Muna, Fabio. 2022). On the other hand, Ethiopia has its legislation (Hate Speech and Disinformation Proclamation No. 1185/2020) concerning limitation of any dangerous communication via social media. However, the process of implementing legislation is associated with different barriers like lack of definition, procedure, anonymity, limited jurisdiction, and others (Fikadu, 2021). Evidence on how those narratives are embraced by youths can help create more effective strategies for hate speech prevention, which will be consistent with standards.

Findings of the study may be helpful in terms of making evidence-based decisions regarding Ethiopian digital environment. Social media serves as an important platform for youths' civic activism, discourse transformation, and mobilization, especially if there is some problem with mass media. Social media plays an important role in providing political movements with several crucial features such as communication, coordination, mobilization, confirmation, and scope expansion (Abrham, 2019). On the other hand, virtual environments might exacerbate polarization and allow for the convergence of messages from the state and those that have been ethnosized (Muna, Fabio, 2022). The research can be useful for regulators, educators, and other relevant parties, especially by identifying the situations in which social media would encourage positive engagement instead of ethnosizing messages, thus offering important learnings for other cases involving multi-ethnic groups and misinformation.

Chapter Two

2. Related Literature Review

2.1. Youth and Social Media

Social Media, Youth Participation, and the “Social Forum” Context

Across the literature provided, social media is repeatedly described as an interactive online space where users create and share content, engage in discussion, and build communities. Within this environment, Facebook is treated not only as a social networking site but also as an online forum where social and political issues are discussed. The review of studies on Facebook as a social forum emphasizes that Facebook is used to debate a range of societal themes and that its platform characteristics enable public interaction around education, human rights, and related issues (Hailemariam, 2018).

For youth, this matters because social media often functions as a habitual space for communication and information seeking. Youth engagement is therefore not limited to political events; it spans education, peer interaction, and daily communication practices that later connect to political conversations. In university settings in Ethiopia, social media use is described as widespread and integrated into everyday life, with young people using platforms for both personal and academic purposes and spending substantial time online (Alemayehu, Kassie, 2024).

Statement taken from the articles: “Social media networks nowadays are the most important tools used by the society, politicians, activists and political parties to actively participate in political activities and impact the political journey” (Siti, Wan, Noorazmi, 2024).

Motivations for use: education, connection, and information access

The literature highlights that social media use among youth includes motivations beyond entertainment. Facebook and similar platforms support educational activities and peer learning through multimedia sharing, interaction, and community formation (Hailemariam, 2018). For Ethiopian university youth, social media is also described as supporting creativity, socialization, and opportunities for organized group activities, while providing quick and low-cost access to information (Alemayehu, Kassie, 2024).

Social Media as a Political Arena

A major contribution of the provided literature is its detailed account of how social media contributed to political change in Ethiopia. The study on Ethiopia's recent political transition argues that social media had both positive and negative effects. (Adamu, Meseret, 2020). On the positive side, social media is described as enabling mobilization, strengthening reform movements, exposing wrongdoing, and supporting rapid awareness creation among communities (Siti, Wan, Noorazmi, 2024).

How youth and activists used social media platforms to bypass restrictions, circulate evidence, and coordinate public participation. Facebook and other platforms are reported to have enabled timely sharing of information and supported youth involvement in political activities during the transition period (Sebesebachew, 2025).

How Political Attitudes are Related With Narrative Circulation

While the literature does not always frame attitude formation using psychological models, it consistently shows that youth political attitudes can be supported by repeated exposure to social interpretations of events. During Ethiopia's transition, social media content such as slogans, shared visuals, posts, and evidence-based claims circulated rapidly and encouraged alignment with particular reform narratives. The study describes widespread adoption of reformist concepts through social media profile pictures, banners, and online group discussions. (Siti, Wan, Noorazmi, 2024).

This suggests that youth political attitudes are influenced not only by what happens in politics, but also by how these events are narrated and circulated online through engagement practices such as liking, commenting, reposting, and joining pages and groups.

Ethnic-based narration: identity framing

The literature strongly connects social media to ethnic-based narration in the Ethiopian context. The study on political transition notes negative consequences such as spreading fake news, rumors, hate speech, misrepresentation, ethnic-based information, and content that incites ethnic violence . (Adamu, Meseret, 2020). It further describes how social media became a space where different activist categories unity-centered, ethno-nationalist, and religion-based could circulate narratives in local languages and shape group interpretation of political events.

In addition, the social media environment is often uncontrolled, enabling both relevant and destructive content to circulate and influence how citizens think and behave (Siti, Wan, Noorazmi, 2024). When combined with the speed of viral sharing, the outcome can be rapid movement from political disagreement into identity-focused conflict narratives.

This link is reinforced by the broader youth literature, which identifies that social media can contribute to problematic consequences among young users such as stress, misinformation-related harm, and negative behavioral patterns (Alemayehu, Kassie, 2024).

Risks for youth: Misuse, and Weakened Trust

The reviewed work on Facebook as a social forum identifies cybercrime and online harms as significant challenges faced by users, including identity theft, hacking, fake profiles, and privacy-related problems. The literature also presents weaknesses and threats related to low trust in anonymous accounts and rapid spread of false messages (Hailemariam, 2018).

Complementing this, the youth-focused study highlights that excessive social media engagement may lead to negative outcomes such as wasting time, harmful behavioral tendencies, circulation of false information. (Alemayehu, Kassie, 2024).

These risks matter for the thesis because they influence how youth interact with political and ethnic narratives: high exposure, emotional engagement, and misinformation vulnerability can strengthen acceptance of identity-based framing or reduce critical verification.

Youth are major participants in social media as everyday communication spaces and as political arenas during transitions. Political attitudes are influenced through narrative circulation, including slogans, shared evidence, public condemnation, and community participation (Alemayehu, Kassie, 2024). Ethnic-based narration can be amplified through identity-framed content, fake accounts, hate speech, and rapid spread of misinformation in a weakly controlled environment. (Wan, Noorazmi, 2024).

Digital Platforms for Political Activism and Dialogue

With the advancement of technology, especially during Ethiopia's recent change, digital platforms have emerged as one of the major methods of organizing, debating, and distributing political ideas. According to an article, social media provided a means for communication among

reformers, activists, and supporters and "played a vital role in the mobilization of the youth and realization of expected political reform" (Adamu, Meseret, 2020).

A related discussion brings out the rapidity with which large populations can get mobilized through Internet activism, where attitudes and content driven by diaspora influence action on the ground. Digital activism in Ethiopia is considered a site of contestation and at the same time a driver of reform. The case of the Zone9 (part of Kality prison, where many prominent political prisoners have been held.) The actions of bloggers have been a model to the world of the dangers involved in participating in Internet activism aimed at authoritarian regimes. Both before and during transitional phases, the diaspora-based media and online communities – OMN, ESAT, and EthioTube, among others – often take center stage in these processes. (Gagliardone, Matti, 2016).

In Ethiopia, Facebook kind of acts as the main spot for all this political talk and sharing ideas. People get news pretty fast there, which is different from waiting around for TV or newspapers to decide what to show. (Ketemaw, 2019). It lets folks chat directly with politicians or whoever is involved, without all those old media rules getting in the way. I think that makes discussions feel more open, even if its not always perfect. The part about skipping the gatekeepers stands out, because traditional media can filter things so much. (Gagliardone, Matti, 2016). Status updates, images, and videos are employed to craft posts, event announcements, and evidence of messages via likes, comments, and shares often anonymously to minimize personal risks. Online engagement has replaced other means of communication and created a forum in which Ethiopian citizens can interact with political problems, coordinate actions, and demand accountable governance, evident by the role played by social media in amplifying discussions about protests and policies.

The state and online activism: In addition to attempts at regulating online content through pronouncements and hate speech/disinformation legislation, the response of the government to internet activism has included surveillance, misinformation, and repression. Public discourse is a product of the interplay between governmental authority and online activism, which either enables or constrains digital expression, and which mobilizes or silences various actor groups. Case studies illustrate the ways in which online actors can influence offline events, like political alignments, protests, and mobilizations of crowds, but also how uncurbed online discourse can feed into ethnicized violence.

2.2. Polarization, Professionalism and State-society Relations.

There have been conflicts between opposition and civic activists' attempts to engage in digital space and government attempts to control and monitor online speech. Reflections on media freedom in pre and post political reforms in Ethiopia details a history of state media control and internet censorship, followed by a rollback and then fresh limitations. This background influences current online political debates, as internet platforms can both give voice and be suppressed.

Polarization: Digital platforms can reinforce identity-oriented discourses and entrench polarized environments, especially with limited moderation in non-English content (Muna, Fabio, 2022). Polarization is greatly aided by the examination of internet discourse: "Ethnic and mass political polarization" refers to how internet users, whether they support or oppose the government, influence discussions, frequently along ethnic lines (Adamu, Meseret, 2020).

State-society dynamics: Governments leverage social media for messaging and mobilization, while social media informs or challenges state narratives; Ethiopia exemplifies the bidirectional influence between state media and social platforms (Anwar, Abdurahman, Abadir, 2021).

Professionalism and ethics: Debates around hate speech, disinformation, and platform responsibilities highlight conflicts among journalism norms, regulation, and platform governance in fragile democracies (Fikadu, 2019).

Digital Publics and the Public Sphere

Habermas's definition of the public sphere continues to serve as an analytical framework through which one can evaluate the effects of digital space on private communication as well as the relations between the state and society. Pointing out that although the digital public sphere can facilitate inclusive debate, it is nevertheless associated with the power dynamics and competing interests as well as questions of legitimacy.

The theory of multiple publics by Fraser et al. proves particularly useful in understanding the digital realm, in which different communities seek space for debate. This provides insight into why online debate among young people may promote democratic involvement yet also contribute to polarization.

2.3. Social Media as a Contentious Platform for Ethnic-Based Narrations.

The rise of social media has transformed the formation, mobilization, and contestation of identities within contemporary politics. According to scholars, long-distance nationalism, identity-based activism, and emergent publics that function beyond the strictures of traditional media gatekeepers are facilitated through social media (Levine, 2011). The social media platforms become the crucial venues for the dissemination of political ideology and reinforcing in-group/out-group cleavages in unstable multiethnic settings (Gagliardone et al., 2015; Skjerdal & Moges, 2021). Empirical evidence on Ethiopia corresponds with the more general findings in that social media amplifies preexisting fault lines through the swift dissemination of ethnically charged content, yet simultaneously bridges gaps left by strictly regulated traditional media by providing alternative channels for regular political discourse (Moges, 2017; Workneh, 2021). In periods of crisis, when polarization and conflict narratives receive disproportionate attention, this potential of the platform for rapid escalation becomes most evident (Stray et al., 2023). During ethno-political tensions, social media works not only as a channel of information but also as a palpable force which shapes public opinion, identity formation, and pathways of conflict.

Social media easily enables rapid identity-laden framing among young Ethiopians, in the ways they see and interact with various ethnic groups and political players. (Adamu, Meseret, 2020). Such posts, memes and short videos often include clear in-group and out-group delineations, helping speed the formation of “us” versus “them” attitudes as young people are repeatedly exposed to emotionally charged depictions of themselves and others. But youths are not just being shaped by these messages; they’re shaping the online ecosystem, curating content and generating memes, micro-narratives and comment threads that sharpen our collective viewpoint and mobilize peers. And this kind of participation suggests that the online engagement could lead to offline action, affecting how young people respond to actual events, such as taking to the streets in demonstrations or engaging in informal local discussions or supporting particular political positions.

Ethnic politics and online narration in Ethiopia

One of the most important cases discussed in the literature is Ethiopia, where platforms related to ethnic social media sites can be used to mobilize and polarize people in terms of ethnicity, particularly during Pretoria Agreement-based reconciliation campaigns. The author states that

such social media sites can help to "mobilize people against the other" and also contribute to "failure of peaceful political recompilation" from the very beginning of Pretoria (Sebesebachew, 2025).

Ethiopia, a politically unstable country characterized by changes in its regions' politics, will play a significant role in these processes as people may become exposed to different networks with algorithms that promote engaging and sensational content, which can result either in conflicts or open-minded discussions between people representing different ethnic groups. While determining the nature of young people's social media networks through following other people, commenting on posts, and actively participating in conversations, it seems that two types of interactions can become possible, either polarization or contact.

Ethnicity Online

The literature highlights the debate on ethnicity from a historical standpoint, with primordial, relativist/constructivist, and instrumental schools of thought, and applies them to internet usage. Online ethnic narration is viewed as a socially constructed discourse that is not merely a mirror image of established identity structures but a weaponizable tool in politics (Sebesebachew, 2025). In Ethiopia, the online platform may either function as a digital public space or become a medium for ethnic nationalism and group rivalry depending on governance, media awareness, and the political landscape (Sebesebachew, 2025).

Ethnic-narrative promotion: Social and mass media converge in stigmatizing ethnic groups; "sleeper cell" narratives and dehumanizing discourses are disseminated on a wide scale, possibly through the involvement of government officials or sympathetic media organs. Rumors and conspiracy theories are prevalent following battle occurrences or political statements, which incite fear and even acts of violence (Muna, Fabio, 2022).

To conclude, the environmental factors and context affect whether internet interactions contribute to conflict escalation or discourse, while social media recruits adolescents using emotionally charged communication strategies with content generation capabilities.

Veracity, Verification, and Media Literacy

Evidence from empirical research conducted within universities as well as in public discussions demonstrates the rampant spread of fabricated and fake political news through social media networks, as well as the acknowledgment by participants about the necessity to verify news before spreading it (Zainab, Mahmmod, 2024).

There is a constant struggle between regulators and scholars on how to maintain the freedom of expression while curbing misinformation and hate speech (Muluken, Biset, Nigatu, Mulatu, 2022). Evidence from empirical research conducted within universities as well as in public discussions demonstrates the rampant spread of fabricated and fake political news through social media networks, as well as the acknowledgment by participants about the necessity to verify news before spreading it (Zainab, Mahmmod, 2024). There is a constant struggle between regulators and scholars on how to maintain the freedom of expression while curbing misinformation and hate speech (Muluken, Biset, Nigatu, Mulatu, 2022).

2.4. Social Media Penetration in Ethiopia

How social media has changed to a major vehicle for political outreach, like with the youth and through transnational networks. As was reported in this study, social media use surged from 2015 -2018 with social media being one of the major components of coordinating demonstrations and the political discussion around protests.(Gagliardone, Pohjonen 2016). Facebook is the leading social media platform in Ethiopia with YouTube, Telegram and Twitter as secondary but important players. The capacity to translate online conversation into physical acts has been proven by elite actors with large fan bases. These advantages have been augmented by diaspora online networks. An important number of limitations have to do with infrastructure and structure. for instance, low levels of internet penetration coupled with high prices in Ethiopia, poor rural connectivity, and a state-controlled telecom environment make access and much-needed privacy protections harder (Lloyd, Lindberg, Tronvoll, 2011).

These constraints affect the form political action takes and who can engage online. Regulation, surveillance, and platform dynamics The state has used cyber-capacity to shape online discourse, from the manipulation of online spaces and use of troll armies, paid commentators, and

spyware at various times. Significant surveillance capacities also exist. While laws on online speech and privacy are emerging, how they are applied and to what topic is still up for debate.

Access and social consequences

From the experience of Ethiopia, there is evidence of rapid penetration of the Internet and social media in times of political reform, leading to an increase in the importance of identity-related communication and hate speech online. This penetration has had two sides to its effect – on one hand, facilitating broader political discussions but causing conflict when it is not balanced by literacy and governance (Muluken, Biset, Nigatu, Mulatu, 2022).

Ethnic communication online becomes ethnic conflict offline, manifested in displacements, violence, and political tensions that demand effective governance (Muluken, Biset, Nigatu, Mulatu, 2022).

2.5. Youths' political participation in Ethiopia

Youth have played a major part in political mobilisation and reform over successive generations, from the Haileselassie era, the Derg regime, and most recently the 2015–2018 protests which led to reforms and changes in leadership (Getachew, 2020).

Low political awareness, apathy or skepticism of official politics, economic pressures, familial and social attitudes, and fear of political repercussions are among the structural and normative impediments to youth political engagement in formal channels identified by the literature. These elements lead to a propensity for unofficial political activity (protests, demonstrations) as opposed to official engagement (party membership, elections). "political knowledge and education are vital to democratization," and young involvement tends to remain episodic and informal in the absence of organized civic education (Ketemaw, 2019).

The sample of young people, predominantly university students, demonstrates how young individuals have become politically engaged through the observation of social media, responding and selective posting. Most young people participate by liking and commenting on the posts, following political activists, and at times, sharing influential content. Other young people prefer to share personal opinions regarding politics anonymously in order to avoid consequences. This trend suggests that even moderately engaged online behavior supports political discourse, with young

people staying informed, interacting with peers, and rallying support if that is their desire, while protecting the sense of safety and community across geographical spaces. Consequences for democratization when considered collectively, literatures contends that although Ethiopian youth have traditionally acted as catalysts for political change, their formal contribution has fluctuated due to party politics, ethno-federal institutions, and the state's ability to monitor and regulate them. The result raises the possibility of adolescent disempowerment even as reforms seek more expansive democratic opportunities.

Ethiopia's splits and post-protest routes following youth protests and political reforms in 2018 regarding youth capture by power systems and post-2018 dynamics. "The government used its economic and political leverage to capture the leaders and even a large number of youth by providing them with economic opportunities such as land and participation in employment schemes... all these will lead to the disempowerment of youth."(Asnake, Amanuel, 2022). Soon after the EPRDF, university students' self-motivated participation in national political affairs continued, but later, ethnicity-based federal system increased differences among ethnic groups in Ethiopia.

Regarding political attachment and fear of repercussions: In Ethiopia, partisanship describes the degree to which an individual is committed to a regime or coalition. A person's partisan affiliation affects how he interprets current events, processes information and makes decisions about whether to engage formally or informally in political activity. In the ethnic-political context of Ethiopia, partisanship often extends beyond ideology and is instead driven by both material and non-material rewards and sanctions. While this might allow for organized participation, it simultaneously fuels polarization and limits cross-cutting dialogue.

The fear of consequences after participation reflects perceived or real sanctions for taking political action. These include state surveillance, social sanctions, and economic risks deterring engagement. The effect of the chill might be to reduce turnout and to push actors towards online symbols rather than offline action. Interplay is particularly salient with youth and students because of risk sensitivity and transitional politics. Understanding these dynamics points to needs for protective rights, safe dialogue spaces, and nuanced research. (Getachew, Mijana, 2020).

The good and the bad regarding state capability, diaspora impact, and digital activation: "the government retains the capacity to implement shutdowns" and "digital activists in the diaspora have also increased the pressure." Using Jawar Mohammed as a case study and elite online influence: "Jawar Mohammed... developed a massive following online" and "Open the blocked roads, clean the towns of barricades" demonstrate online-to-offline power. Practitioners' perspectives on media freedom in Ethiopia before and after political reforms Regarding media freedom, pre-reform limitations, post-reform advancements, and continuing difficulties: "Post reform... the space has expanded but remains contested" contrasts with "pre-reform... media freedom limited". (Ketemaw, 2019).

Youth Online Activism and Shifting Participation

There has been an observed trend towards a move from the traditional forms of political participation to the online and issue activism amongst youth. According to Loader, Vromen, & Xenos (2014), online activism, internet petitioning, social movements, and protest have been cited as elements of the modern repertoire of youth. The authors say that these forms are a redefinition of political activism rather than replacement and are important in understanding how social media could be used by youth for political involvement without being party members (Zainab, Muhammod, 2024).

Concerning the results of the study, it was shown that social media prompts young people to become familiar with politics and engage in debates. A significant number of young people reported that they feel politically aware due to their engagement in social media, but there are controversies regarding whether such political activism translates into concrete actions offline (Zainab, Muhammod, 2024).

Participation in Divisive Society: Ethiopian Social Media and Political Discussions In relation to social media's paradox in a divisive society; specifically, by looking at the case of the Zone9 bloggers in Kality prison and discussing the background for digital activism and government reactions. The effect of ethnic federalism on the youth and students mobilization is among the broad themes.

2.6. Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) describes media use as an intentional rather than incidental phenomenon. It claims that young people consciously choose social media sites and political content that meet their demands and help them accomplish some objectives such as getting politically informed, eliminating uncertainty of events, voicing their views, and discussing them. Thus, not only the nature of political messages but also their gratification can affect youths' political attitudes. If social media content is in accordance with young people's expectations because of its immediacy, emotional quality, or relevancy, it can contribute to the evaluation of the actors and topics of the political discourse, stimulate participation in political discussions, and promote certain interpretations of political events.

Furthermore, UGT makes clearer why ethnic-based narrations might be related with youths' political attitudes. Indeed, ethnic narrations disseminated via social media can bring gratifications to young people like identity reinforcement, affiliation with in-group members, emotional relief (anger, pride, fear, solidarity), etc.

As the youths experience these kinds of narratives on ethnicity which fulfill their needs again and again, they will become more open to such narratives and less likely to believe other sorts of political communication. In this way, ethnic stories can create polarization and distrust among the groups by shaping what they think is true or by making them interpret things based on rumors instead of reasoning.

2.7. Political Socialization Theory

People build up their political beliefs, attitudes, and actions through lifelong social learning. It assumes that, by processes of modeling, instruction, reinforcement, and observation, people pick up orientations from a variety of agents, including family, peers, schools, religious and civic groups, media, and life events. These inputs, filtered continuously by age and life events and by larger social-historical settings such as culture, economy, and regime type, affect attitudes toward authority, political efficacy, ideology, and patterns of political engagement. A very important point of this theory is how political culture is passed down through generations as well as how people actively reinterpret information as they negotiate shifting political environments. Social networking acts as a fast and unofficial means through which young people in Ethiopia come into contact

with political concepts, identity cues, and conventions that had hitherto been disseminated largely through the traditional media. Attention is focused on how online exposures including peer discussions, influencer messages, and exposure to campaign-affect the ways in which young people in develop and change political attitudes, institutional trust, and conceptions of civic efficacy through various languages. Such a lens draws attention to multiple influences of online socialization agents-peers, online communities, celebrities. but also ways in which platforms alter or amplify the salience of messages that may accelerate attitude alignment on political events, protests, or policy debates.

2.8. Political Economy of Communication

Another important perspective for understanding how social media shapes Ethiopian adolescent discourses is the political economy of communication. This frame underlines ownership, platform governance, and economic interest as shaping the salience of political issues, voice amplification, and ways in which regulatory regimes impact public discourse. How platforms create revenue from users' attention, create an experience of feeds and moderate users has a significant effect on how young people in Ethiopia develop political opinions and the types of perspectives they will see.

This is particularly true because platform access is in a context where language support, data cost, state and society structure (interactions between platforms and users) changes the media environment.

Additionally, the frame identifies discrepancies between local content ecosystems (local languages, local youth culture, and political power) and the global structure of platforms (algorithm-based prioritization, advertising strategies and terms and conditions) for local content creators. Understanding how platform incentives work with local content creation, language access and transnational communications are important in understanding how platform-specific youth's political discourse is being created outside of the traditional plurality of media created in the Ethiopian context, in which language and regional, cultural and political differences are numerous.

This viewpoint, therefore, presents some serious research challenges regarding voice distribution equality, the susceptibility of marginalized groups to algorithmic bias or content regulation,

and overall resilience, diversity, and quality of online public conversation. Combining policy analysis, technical examination of platform architectures, and user-centered research will make it possible to determine the causal routes from ownership and governance to attitudes, participation, and the state of the digital public sphere for Ethiopian youth.

In Ethiopia, you see how different ethnic and political groups get really strategic with online platforms, pulling in the diaspora too and all that cross-border stuff with money and politics. It kind of highlights some big governance issues that probably need fixing, you know, and it makes you think about how important it is to have real representation and accountability in these digital spaces. Or at least, that is what stands out from the example (Sebesebachew, 2025).

The way power works on a global and local level, like with platform company rules, government regulations, and even how much people in civil society understand all this, it shapes the whole online political talk and what limits it puts on things.

2.9. Public Sphere Theory in the Digital Age

The theory of the public sphere constitutes a critical framework within which the quality and inclusiveness of online political discourse in digital Ethiopia among millennials can be determined. While digital platforms run the risks of fragmentation, performative rhetoric, and unequal access that undermine deliberative legitimacy, they have also opened up possibilities for greater participation, communication across communities, and collective action. Because of multilingual publics, regional differences, and regulatory constraints, the health of the online public sphere in Ethiopia rests on who can participate, how arguments are formulated and verified, and which intermediaries shape the discourse environment. This perspective invites investigation into whether online discussions replicate voice and influence inequalities that favor particular groups or whether they conform to an acceptable standard of rational-critical debate.

In addition to exploring how multilingualism, moderation practices, and algorithms help or hinder conversations across a variety of young people, additional studies must also look into: The quantity and quality of young people's online political debate; The extent to which individuals' ability to be civil to other participants; Levels of evidence provided in online discussions; The distribution of young people participating by language group, urban versus rural area, and gender; and therefore incorporating these two aspects along with the information on political socialization

and political economy to better discern the extent to which the Social Media is an area of discussion subject to polarization or structural impediment versus a healthy digital Public Sphere that upholds democratic legitimacy through encouraging informed young citizen engagement.

A tightly integrated approach one that traces the socialization processes through which social media shapes opinions among youth, the platform and market dynamics conditioning exposure and representation, and how the resulting discourse measures up to deliberative standards in a digital public sphere-therefore provides a coherent framework for researching the contribution of social media on Ethiopian youth political opinion and public discourse. This synthesis thus provides concrete, context-sensitive research questions, including: Which online socialization agents have most impact on youth attitudes and civic trust? How does ownership and algorithmic design affect topic visibility and voice for different youth groups? And does online deliberation across language and region promote meaningful political engagement or perpetuate fragmentation?

Habermas reinterpreted for the digital era

Digital platforms are reconceptualized as a new public sphere that enables rational-critical discourse but also puts users at risk of manipulation, deception, and power imbalances. Multiple publics and selective public norms are deemed necessary for effective online deliberations and legitimacy by the academic literature (Sebesebachew, 2025).

In Ethiopia, digital publics have the potential to build or undermine ethnic peace through their impact on governance, literacy, media, and the relevance of offline politics (Sebesebachew, 2025).

2.10 Summary of the Related Literature Review

According to the literature review above, it is evident that digital media have become vital spaces where political ideas are circulated, political identity is formed, and where youth engage in political debate and mobilization in Ethiopia. In all of the cases, social media is depicted as a space that facilitates the speedy formation of organizations and dialogue especially in the context of political transitions. However, this process also occurs in the context of conflict-ridden space, affected by factors like state control, platform rules, and political communication.

Another key takeaway from these articles is the fact that online activism is conducted in an environment where there is great political risk. The use of social media provides opportunities for low-risk mobilizations, instant conversations, and coordinated efforts; however, this is all underpinned by the risk of surveillance, propaganda, censorship, and retribution. The relationship between state and platforms determines both the type of discourse that can occur, and the manner through which youths engage on social media spaces.

The idea is also stressed that the usage of digital technologies could result in greater levels of polarization, especially with regard to narratives built around ethnicity and personal identity that could spread quickly owing to the emotional character of their content. Social interactions are also likely to be framed through group-based relations and algorithmic biases, which could lead to entrenchment and factionalism. On the other hand, the same media are also described as alternatives to gatekeeping mechanisms, providing an opportunity to build counter-narratives and foster cross-group communications in better governance conditions. In general, the relationship between social media and conflict seems to be quite situational.

Information harms, including the problem of misinformation, fake news, and manipulated media are also viewed as important mechanisms of how online political discussions can prove harmful to society. There are examples from the academic literature demonstrating that young people usually tend to use social media as sources of political information while having difficulties verifying information and assessing its authenticity. Such a situation increases the risks associated with spreading false information and promoting conflicts and hostile rhetoric. The role of Ethiopia's regulations aimed at curbing disinformation and hate speech is discussed as controversial. Although their intent is to minimize the harmful effects associated with the internet, detractors claim that vague wording and enforcement could potentially infringe on freedom of speech. For this reason, media literacy and verification have been continuously highlighted as vital components in ensuring the effectiveness of political discourse on the internet.

Not only were problems, as well as the extent of polarization, examined, but also the context under which youth participation takes place. While access to and usage of social media have increased, even surging during reform and protest waves, such access is far from equal, as a result of various infrastructural, cost, connectivity, and even state telecom-related limitations.

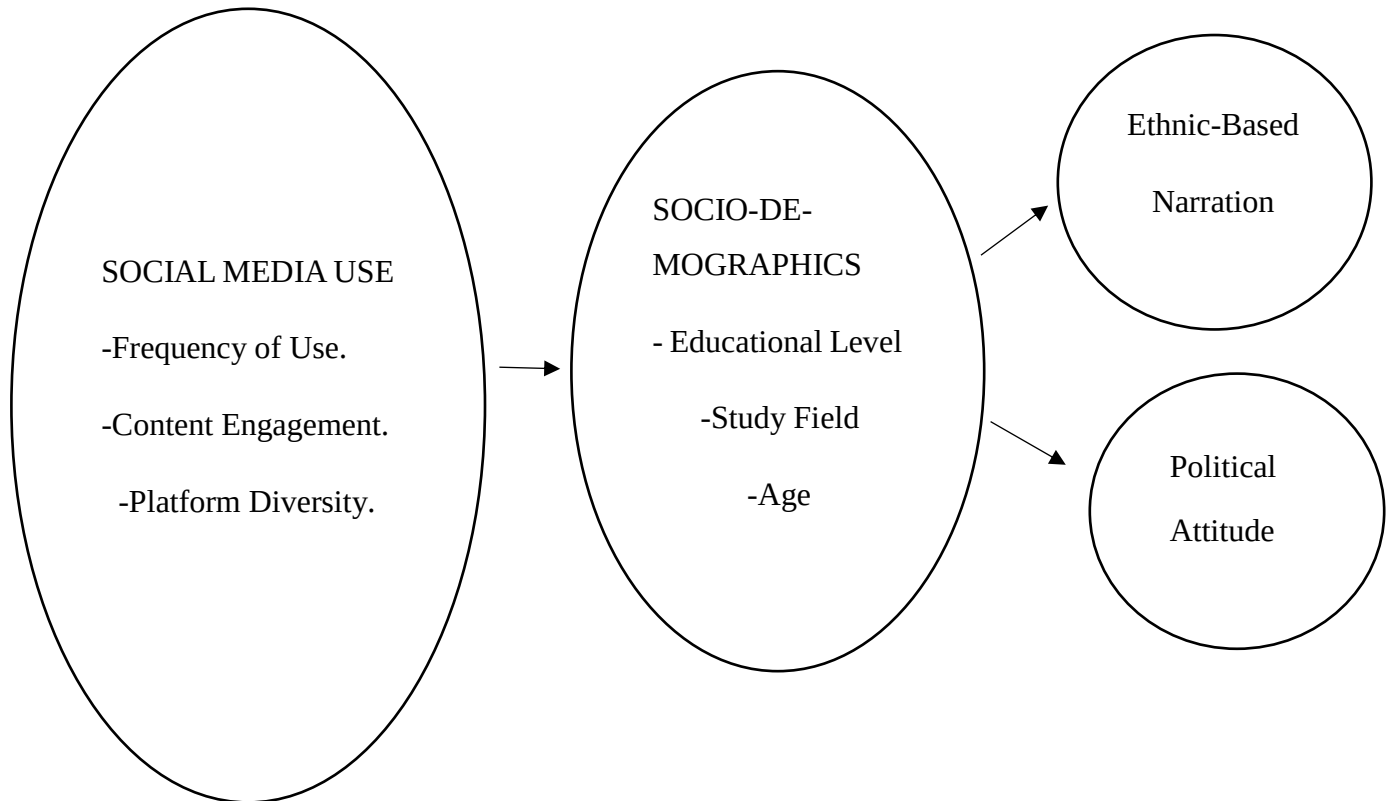
A number of perspectives analyzed this phenomenon. Political socialization theory helps explain how youths develop political attitudes through social media by coming across their peers, public figures, and politics-related content, with certain frames receiving more visibility due to platform amplification. The political economy of communication approach focuses on the effects of platform structure and management policies as well as incentives behind platform monetization and the implications for visibility and voice, as well as the existence of biases. The public sphere theory adjusted for the Internet era serves as an analytical lens through which to evaluate whether Ethiopia's political discourse on social media encourages inclusion or, on the contrary, exclusion and performative rhetoric.

Thus, from the above discussion, it can be seen that the existing literature on social media usage in Ethiopia has shown social media to have the potential not only to act as a venue for political activity but also as a tool that can be associated with youth political behavior through polarization, misinformation, and pressure from the state. The extent to which social media will be related with the process either positively or negatively will depend on how these factors interact.

Gaps and importance: Although there are many studies conducted regarding social media and politics, social media and public discourse, the majority of these findings, can be identified as running the risk of being dated because of the rapid and constant changes in the nature of social media, political contexts, and governance structures. Such a dynamic makes a space for current, context-specific analyses to illustrate how, and the extent to which young people's political beliefs and public speech change over time in relation with use of social media. Conversely, research that places social media use within current technological, socio-political, and regulatory settings certainly is needed to inform current knowledge and policy responses.

Figuer 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study



The Primary Predictor: Social Media Use (IV) The Independent Variable represents the "Digital Agent of Socialization." In the contemporary Ethiopian context, social media is no longer merely a communication tool but a psychological environment. This variable measures the intensity of a youth's exposure to political and public discourse. According to **Political Socialization Theory**, frequent exposure to specific digital narratives serves as the raw material from which political identities are constructed.

The Interpretive Filter: Socio-Demographic Variables While the research title focuses on the relationship between media and attitude, the framework includes socio-demographics as moderating variables. This is based on the psychological premise that individuals are not passive recipients of information. Factors such as Education Level and Age act as cognitive filters that "refract" digital content. Education, in particular, is hypothesized to provide the analytical tools necessary

to critique political information, potentially weakening or strengthening the influence of social media on the final outcome.

The Outcomes: Political Attitude and Ethnic-Based Narration (DVs) These two Dependent Variables represent the cognitive and discursive manifestations of social media's contribution:

- **Political Attitude:** This represents the internal, evaluative dimension. It captures how youth perceive governance, institutional trust, and state legitimacy after being socialized in a digital environment.
- **Ethnic-Based Narration:** This represents the external, discursive dimension. It captures the tendency of youth to adopt identity-based "frames" and group-centric storytelling when participating in public discourse.

Chapter Three

3.1. Research Methodology

A quantitative research approach was employed to analyze the relationship between social media use and youths' political views and ethnic-based discourses. A survey was conducted using structured questionnaires for youths between 18 and 30 years old in the Yeka sub-city area. This study employed simple random sampling technique after screening to identify eligible participants (active social media users).

The survey tool was constructed to cover aspects of social media usage and its effects in the areas of political attitude and ethnic discourses. Validated scales were used in collecting data about the youths' patterns of use in terms of frequency and the types of content that the respondents consumed (news with ethnic elements, political issues,...). Political orientations were captured by indicators such as political issue salience, polarization. The aspects of discourse engagement were measured through engagement measures like discussions on social media platforms, posting/sharing behaviors and the level of engagement with political information on the platforms.

3.2. Design

To determine the relationship between the use of social media and youths' political attitude and ethnicity-based narrations in Yeka sub-city, Addis Ababa, a correlational research design was used. The correlational research design was appropriate for this study as it seeks to establish the link between variations in social media use and youths' political attitude and ethnicity-based narrations. Unlike in an experiment, the researcher does not control the variable, rather, the variable is observed as they naturally occur, and the extent of their association is measured. Since political attitude and ethnicity-based narrations are already there and have many dimensions, the correlational research design was the most appropriate way of establishing the connection between high and low social media usage and youths' political attitude and narrations orienting ethnicity.

3.3. Study Area

The study's scope was confined to Addis Ababa, focusing on the Yeka Subcity. The rationale behind selecting Addis Ababa is that it is the political capital of Ethiopia, being home to an extremely diverse populace, with individuals representing the many different cultural background and demographics. Yeka Sub city, in turn, provides a microcosm of the entire youth population in Addis Ababa, ranging from university students to young professionals and even those who are unemployed.

3.4. Target Population and Sample Size

The target population of the study was youth aged between 18 and 30 years who reside in Yeka Sub-city, Addis Ababa. This age range has been selected due to the significant impact that youth have on politics during this particular stage, as indicated in the review of the literature chapter. It is at this age where youths are expected to actively participate in political debates, discussions, and mobilizations, both in and out of social media spaces. In turn, this means that they can effectively shape or be shaped by the political rhetoric that prevails in society. Hence, youth from the 18–30 age range constitute the population for this study.

In order to achieve precision and statistical reliability in the results derived from the analysis of data collected via surveys, a proper number of subjects to participate in the study will be determined based on the Cochran's formula for proportion estimation: This formula is used in proportion estimation when nothing is known about the true proportion of the characteristic of interest within the entire population under investigation. In the current research, the value of $p = 0.5$ will be used, which means the maximum required sample size, since this assumption implies maximum variability. Moreover, a z-value of 1.96 will be applied, as the level of confidence set at 95%, whereas $d = 0.05$ represents a margin of error or the amount of acceptable difference between the sample and the true population proportion. The application of the formula above yields an approximate result of $n = 384$ participants needed for the analysis of results.

3.5. Sampling Technique

This study employed a purposive sampling technique to select participants. Specifically, youths aged 18–30 years were first considered as the eligible population. From this age group, only individuals who were active social media users (based on the study's predetermined criteria

for social media activity) were included. Participants meeting the inclusion criteria were then selected to reach the required sample size.

Using purposive sampling was appropriate because the research focus depends on participants' relevance to the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, participants were selected based on eligibility criteria rather than probability sampling.

3.6. Instrument of Data Collection

A structured questionnaire (Social Media–Mediated Politics and Ethnicization Scale) was used to gather primary data in the form of quantitative data. This questionnaire aims not only to gauge levels of association among the constructs but also to examine the moderating variables and conditions of any relationship between social media and youth political orientation. This tool contains questions aimed at eliciting information from respondents regarding their attitudes towards the constructs being tested while considering moderating variables and demographic variables in order to conduct analyses by subgroup, as applicable.

Specifically, the measurement tool is comprised of separate scales which include those measuring exposure to and engagement with social media, where the first concerns frequency of use, use of multiple applications (for example TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube) and diversity in consumption (for example political/public content vs entertainment content). Another scale measures youth political attitudes, which are concerned with youths' views on issues like economic policy, quality of public service and civil rights, as operationalized in the thesis. Other scales involve the participation of youths in public discourses, gauging levels of posting, commenting and sharing of politically oriented or publically oriented content, along with the relation of such actions to their political expression.

In addition to capturing the second dependent construct, the questionnaire measures narratives related to ethnicity, involving beliefs and communication related to ethnicity as well as perceptions of the way government treats each group.

3.7. Tool Validation and Adaptation

To collect quantitative data, a structured, 5-point Likert-scale survey instrument was compiled. To establish content validity, the instrument was adapted with contextual modifications from recognized institutional and academic surveying frameworks.

- **Section A (Social Media Use and Exposure):** This 10-item section measures platform integration, digital engagement, and content frequency. General usage parameters were adapted from the *Social Media Intensity Scale* (Ellison et al., 2007), which has demonstrated strong psychometric reliability (Romero-Rodríguez et al., 2020). Items tracking information sharing, exposure, and verification behaviors were modeled on standardized tracking modules utilized by the Pew Research Center.
- **Section B (Political Attitude):** This 10-item section measures perceived systemic trust, corruption, transparency, and civil freedoms. To optimize geographic and cultural accuracy, the core metrics were adapted directly from the standardized public governance and state performance modules implemented in East African regional rounds of the *Afrobarometer Questionnaire*. Foundational institutional trust frameworks were further supported by tracking metrics derived from the *World Values Survey*.
- **Section C (Ethnic-Based Narration):** This 11-item section evaluates perspectives on ethnic diversity, federal parity, and minority group protections. The structural dimensions evaluating the dualism of national cohesion versus ethnic distinctiveness were adapted from the *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure* (MEIM) formulated by Phinney (1992), an index known for high cross-cultural measurement stability (Herrington et al., 2016). These universal items were supplemented with contextual indicators adapted from contemporary Ethiopian political sociology literature to accurately capture regional federal dynamics.

3.8. Data Collection Procedure

A pilot test was performed in order to test and refine the research instrument that then employed in the main data of the study. The objectives of the pilot test include the following: (i) to examine the comprehension of the questionnaire items, (ii) to measure the reliability and internal consistency of the parts of the questionnaires, and (iii) to enhance the instrument that was used in

the data collection process by determining the issues related to its language and sensitivity. Respondents participating in the pilot test come from the sub-city of Lemi Kura (different from the sub-city of interest) but have similar sociodemographic background to the study population in terms of being urban youths with high interaction in digital technology and mixed ethnicities and levels of education.

Thirty eight respondents participated in the pilot test, which is ten percent of the projected sample size in the data collection phase. The average age of the respondents is 24.6 years, where ages range from 18 to 30 years.

Simple random sampling was done in selecting social media users. Descriptive analysis and correlation analysis were used to analyze the data obtained from the test in order to investigate the relationship among the research variables before proceeding to the actual study.

Testing for reliability involved the use of consistency within the internal scale using Cronbach's alpha, which approximates consistency on grouped Likert scale items. The outcome was that Section A (Social Media Usage) was highly consistent with the reliability coefficient being .963. Section B (Political Attitudes) was also highly consistent with a reliability value of .968. On the other hand, Section C (Ethnic-Based Narrations) was moderately consistent with a reliability value of .862.

Overall, the pilot test revealed that the instrument was reliable and appropriate for measuring the constructs of interest in the main study. The questionnaire was improved after the pilot test through enhancing clarity, eliminating redundancy, rephrasing questions relating to ethnic narration, and emphasizing privacy and confidentiality in order to eliminate ethical issues.

3.9 Data Analysis

Following the collection process, the data were coded and analyzed to ensure consistency in variable coding and accurate scoring of the Likert scale questions. Composite scores were generated for the main constructs of the study which included use of social media, political attitude, and ethnic-based narration. An assessment of internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha to determine whether the items used in measuring the constructs were reliable.

In determining whether there exists any association between youths' social media use and their political attitudes, and also youths' social media use and ethnic-based narration, the correlation analysis was employed. The Spearman's correlation method was adopted for determining the relationship that exists between (a) social media use and political attitude, and (b) social media use and ethnic-based narration. The use of such statistical techniques determines whether those who use social media more will score higher on political attitude and ethnic-based narration, among others.

To find out if there is any difference in outcomes among the selected youth populations, independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were employed. An independent samples t-test was conducted for comparing the means of male and female, the two age groups (18-24 years and 25-30 years) and two study fields (Natural Science and Social Science). One-way ANOVA was employed for examining mean differences among the three groups having different educational backgrounds. The three groups consisted of secondary school education, bachelor's degree holders, and post-graduate degrees.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

The study was done following ethical principles and standards, paying particular attention to the possible risks involved in studying political attitude among the youth as well as ethnicity-centered stories in a highly sensitive political environment like that of Ethiopia. Ethical processes were strictly followed from the beginning to the end of the research process.

1) Informed Consent

Each participant was thoroughly briefed on the study prior to the collection of data. Particularly, each participant was provided with a consent form and a verbal briefing which comprised of information regarding the objective of the study, the requirements of participation, voluntariness of participation, as well as the right of participants to withdraw from participation without facing any repercussions. Moreover, participants were also aware that they had the freedom to decline answering any questions that made them uncomfortable.

2) Anonymity and Confidentiality

In order to provide anonymity and confidentiality to the respondents, no direct identifier like name, student ID number, cell phone number, etc., was used as part of the identification process in the study. This was done since no identification code or coding was done at all. It was made clear to the participants both before and during the data gathering process that the questionnaire needed to be filled up with non-identifying details alone and would not be used to identify the respondents.

To provide extra confidentiality, the filled-up questionnaires were treated as confidential research material and were stored in a location only accessible to the researcher. The report generated from the study was in the aggregate form.

3) Risk Mitigation and Protection from Harm

To avoid any potential ramifications associated with ethnic-based stories in Ethiopia's political situation, the researcher made some adjustments to ensure that there will be no negative repercussions for the participants. These included the following:

Participants were told that no one would be able to identify them through the answers they provided.

It was made clear that all reporting would be aggregated, meaning that nobody else will be able to trace individual responses.

Participants were informed several times during data collection that they can skip any questions if they feel uncomfortable.

4) Psychological Safety and Respectful Engagement

To prevent psychological harm, the researcher was respectful and non-judgmental during explaining process. There was no coercion for the respondents to disclose any sensitive information that they were unwilling to share. In case the respondent was feeling uncomfortable, they were able to take a break and had been offered an opportunity to either proceed with less-sensitive issues or terminate the process.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Results

This chapter presents and interprets the quantitative findings of the study. The study sought to determine how youths' use of social media is associated with their political attitude and their ethnic-based narration/discourse, and whether these relationships and outcomes differ by age, educational level, and study field.

Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, tests for reliability (Cronbach's Alpha), normality test, correlation analysis (Spearman), and test for comparing groups (Independent Sample T-test and One-Way ANOVA). This data analysis was conducted based on $N = 384$ respondents.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

A total of 384 respondents were enrolled. The respondents were categorized into youth group based on the age frequency distribution. The respondents were dominantly from the age of 22 (14.6%), 26 (11.7%), 27 (10.2%), and 21 (10.7%).

Table 4.1 *Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents ($N = 384$)*

Variable	Category	<i>n</i>	%
Sex	Male	187	48.7
	Female	197	51.3
Age	18-24	206	53.6
	25-30	178	46.4
Educational level	Secondary	143	37.2

	Bachelor	154	40.1
	Postgraduate	87	22.7
Study Field	Natural Science	185	48.2
	Social Science	199	51.8

Both areas were well-represented and balanced, increasing consistency for comparison between the two areas.

4.2 Reliability of the Measurement Scales

To test the reliability of the measurement scale, Cronbach's alpha was computed.

Table 4.2 *Cronbach's Alpha Results*

Scale	Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Social Media Use	10	.877	Good reliability
Political Attitude	10	.871	Good reliability
Ethnic-Based Narration	11	.820	Good reliability
Overall	31	.944	Excellent reliability

The reliability of all constructs is good to very good ($\alpha \geq .70$). Hence, the indices created in the analyses are reliable.

Table 4.3 *Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables*

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Minimum	Maximum
Social Media Use	384	3.01	0.53	1.50	4.70
Political Attitude	384	2.87	0.49	1.60	4.60
Ethnic-Based Narration	384	2.92	0.44	1.64	4.27

Since the items have been reverse coded while entering the data to ensure that all scales have the same directionality of positivity and negativity, the scores indicate the true construct directions. As per a 1 to 5 scale, a score of 3 means that the score is neutral; scores less than 3 mean that individuals display lesser amounts of positive constructs. Therefore, the individuals displayed lesser-than-average amounts of positive constructs, while their social media usage was neutral/above average.

4.3. Normality Test

Normality was assessed using Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests.

Table 4.4 *Tests of Normality*

Variables	<i>Shapiro–Wilk W</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>p</i>
Social Media Total	.995	384	.273
Political Attitude Total	.992	384	.049
Ethnic-based Narration Total	.992	384	.039

Some deviations from perfect normality occurred. As such, analysis was conducted for Spearman correlation.

4.4. Correlation Analysis: Social Media Use and Youth Political Attitude and Ethnic-based Narration

Correlations were computed to assess the strength and direction of association between the constructs.

Table 4.5 *Spearman's Correlation Matrix (N = 384)*

Variables	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
1. Social Media Use	1.00		
2. Political Attitude	.863	1.00	

3. Ethnic-Based Narration	.792	.781	1.00
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As evident from the Spearman correlation coefficients, there are high correlations between youths' use of social media and their political attitude and ethnicity-based narrative/ discourse respectively. To begin with, youths who were found to use more social media showed a high correlation between their usage and political attitude ($\rho = 0.863$). In other words, youths whose social media usage was higher also tended to have higher ratings on the political attitude construct. This implies that the frequency youths interact with political discussions, information, and mobilization through social media can be responsible for their political attitudes. Furthermore, youth who used more social media showed a high correlation coefficient between social media usage and ethnicity-based narration ($\rho = 0.792$), indicating that such youths also displayed high ratings in the ethnicity-based narratives. This shows that the research hypothesis that social media use contributes on youths' political attitudes and ethnic narratives holds true based on the presented data. However, since the data generated by Spearman correlation analysis do not prove causation but rather co-variations, youths who use social media more are likely to exhibit high scores in the two constructs of political attitudes and ethnic narrative.

Table 4.6 *Model Summary for Simple Linear Regression Analyses*

Dependent Variable	Model	R	R²	Adjusted R²	SEE
(1) Ethnic-Based Narration (Z-score)	1	.868	.754	.754	.496
(2) Political Attitude (Z-score)	1	.800	.639	.638	.601

The simple linear regression result show that social media use (Zscore(SocialMediaTotal)) explained a substantial proportion of the variance in youths' outcomes in both cases. For ethnic-based narration, the model produced $R = .868$ and $R^2 = .754$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .754$), indicating that about 75.4% of the variability in Z-score (Ethnic-Based Narration Total) is accounted for by social media use. For political attitude, the model produced $R = .800$ and $R^2 = .639$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .638$), indicating that about 63.9% of the variability in Z-score (Political Attitude Total) is explained by social media use.

Table 4.7 *Group Descriptive Statistics for Independent-Samples t-tests*

Variable	Group	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sex				
Social Media	Male	187	3.03	.522
	Female	197	2.99	.529
Political Attitude	Male	187	2.88	.464
	Female	197	2.85	.511
Ethnic-Based Narration	Male	187	.44	.032
	Female	197	.43	.031
Age Groups				

Social Media Use	18–24	205	3.01	0.53
	25–30	179	3.01	0.52
Political Attitude	18–24	205	2.87	0.49
	25–30	179	2.88	0.48
Ethnic-Based Narration	18–24	205	2.92	0.45
	25–30	179	2.91	0.43
Study Field				
Social Media Use	Natural Science	185	2.98	0.49
	Social Science	199	3.04	0.55
Political Attitude	Natural Science	185	2.82	0.46
	Social Science	199	2.92	0.51
Ethnic-Based Narration	Natural Science	185	2.88	0.44
	Social Science	199	2.95	0.44

Assumptions Testing

Prior to performing the Independent Samples T-tests for Age and Study Field, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was checked. In all cases, Levene's test yielded non-significant results ($p > .05$), confirming that the variances were equal. Consequently, the T-test results are reported based on the assumption of equal variances.

Table 4.8 *Independent-Samples t-test Results*

Variable	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>p</i>	Mean Difference	95% CI [Lower, Upper]
Sex: Male vs Female					
Social Media Use	.63	382	.527	.034	[-.072, .140]
Political Attitude	.58	382	.565	.029	[-.069, .127]
Ethnic-Based Narration	.70	382	.484	.031	[-.057, .121]
Age: 18-24 vs. 25-30					
Social Media Use	-.05	382	.958	-.003	[-0.11, 0.10]
Political Attitude	-.30	382	.763	-.015	[-0.11, 0.08]
Ethnic-Based Narration	.12	382	.901	.006	[-0.08, 0.09]

**Study Field: Natural
vs. Social Science**

Social Media Use	-1.07	382	.285	-.057	[-0.16, 0.05]
Political Attitude	-1.93	382	.055	-.096	[-0.19, 0.00]
Ethnic-Based Narration	-1.50	382	.134	-.068	[-0.16, 0.02]

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to examine whether there is statistically significant differences in social media use, political attitude, and ethnic-based narration across sex, age group, and study field of the respondents.

Differences by Sex (Male vs. Female)

There was no significant difference in social media use between the two genders, $t(382) = 0.63$, $p = .527$. The mean difference was 0.034, while the 95% confidence interval was (-0.072, 0.140), implying that there is no differences between both genders concerning social media use. Furthermore, there is no significant differences in the political attitude of both sexes, $t(382) = 0.58$, $p = .565$. The mean difference was 0.029, and the 95% confidence interval was (-0.069, 0.127). On the topic of ethnic-based narration, there is also no significant difference between both sexes, $t(382) = 0.70$, $p = .484$. The mean difference was 0.031, and the 95% confidence interval was (-0.057, 0.121).

In summary, the results reveal that gender did not significantly influence the three variables mentioned above.

Differences by Age Group (18–24 vs. 25–30)

An independent-samples t-test was employed to establish whether the respondents' characteristics varied based on their age brackets of 18–24 years and 25–30 years. It was established that no statistically significant variation existed between the two age brackets for all variables analyzed in the study.

In the analysis of social media use, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference between the two age brackets, $t(382) = -0.05$, $p = .958$. The mean difference was -0.003 , while the confidence interval at 95% confidence level was from -0.11 to 0.10 . In the case of political attitude, there is also no statistically significant difference between the two age groups, $t(382) = -0.30$, $p = .763$. The mean difference was -0.015 , while the confidence interval at 95% confidence level was from -0.11 to 0.08 . Finally, ethnic-based narration had no statistically significant difference between the two age groups, $t(382) = 0.12$, $p = .901$. The mean difference was 0.006 , while the confidence interval at 95% confidence level was from -0.08 to 0.09 .

Differences by Study Field (Natural Science vs. Social Science)

The study also compared respondents from natural science and social science backgrounds regarding their differences in the study variables. From the findings of the analysis, there is no statistically significant differences at the significance level of 0.05.

On the variable of social media usage, there is no statistically significant difference between natural science and social science students, $t(382) = -1.07$, $p = .285$. The mean difference was -0.057 , while the 95% confidence interval was $(-0.16, 0.05)$.

Regarding political attitude, the results showed some indication of statistical significance but failed to reach the significance level, $t(382) = -1.93$, $p = .055$. The mean difference was -0.096 , and the 95% confidence interval was $(-0.19, 0.00)$. This implies a minor indication of difference in political attitude among the two areas of study in this case.

Similarly, ethnic-based narration did not significantly differ between natural science and social science students, $t(382) = -1.50$, $p = .134$. The mean difference was -0.068 , with a confidence interval of $[-0.16, 0.02]$.

Overall, the findings indicate that respondents' academic study field did not produce statistically significant differences in social media use, political attitude, or ethnic-based narration.

Overall Interpretation

In general, the independent-samples t-test results demonstrated that respondents' demographic characteristics namely sex, age group, and study field did not significantly correlated with social media use, political attitude, or ethnic-based narration. Since all p-values were greater than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypotheses of no group difference were retained across all comparisons. Although political attitude by study field showed a marginal tendency toward significance ($p = .055$), it was still above the accepted threshold for statistical significance.

4.8 Differences by Educational Level (ANOVA)

Table 4.9 *Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables by Educational Level*

Variable	Secondary ($n=143$) M (SD)	Bachelor ($n=154$) M (SD)	Postgraduate ($n=87$) M (SD)
Social Media Use	2.94 (0.51)	3.04 (0.54)	3.08 (0.52)
Political Attitude	2.77 (0.44)	2.94 (0.53)	2.93 (0.47)
Ethnic-Based Narration	2.88 (0.41)	2.92 (0.47)	2.97 (0.44)

Table 4.10 *Tests of Homogeneity of Variances (Levene's Test) by Study Variables (N = 384)*

Variable	Levene Statistic (<i>F</i>)	<i>df</i> 1	<i>df</i> 2	<i>P</i>
Social Media Use	0.71	2	381	.494
Political Attitude	2.44	2	381	.089
Ethnic-Based Narration	1.25	2	381	.289

Before performing any of the inferential tests, the assumptions about the equality of variances was assessed by means of Levene's test. The output showed that the variances of scores were equal among all groups for social media usage, $F(2, 381) = 0.71$, $p = .494$, political attitude, $F(2, 381) = 2.44$, $p = .089$, and ethnic-based storytelling, $F(2, 381) = 1.25$, $p = .289$. Since all the p values obtained were greater than $\alpha = .05$, the null hypothesis that there is an inequality between variances was rejected.

Table 4.11 *One-Way ANOVA Results by Educational Level*

Outcome	<i>F</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>p</i>
Social Media Use	2.60	(2, 381)	.075
Political Attitude	5.33	(2, 381)	.005
Ethnic-Based Narration	0.98	(2, 381)	.375

In one-way ANOVA analyses, it was found out that educational level is a significant distinguishing factor among youths' political attitude ($F = 5.333, p = .005$), while it is not significant in differentiating youths' usage of social media ($F = 2.604, p = .075$) or ethnically-based narrations ($F = 0.984, p = .375$). Thus, while there seems to be no significance between the amount of social media used by youths who differ in terms of their secondary, bachelor, or postgraduate degrees, there are significant differences when it comes to their political attitudes based on the same factor of educational level. The significance difference in political attitudes may be seen in youths' ways of processing political information found online, including credibility, interpretation of political issues, reasoning, or value-based political orientation processes. In short, despite having similar amounts of social media exposure, youths' educational level may play an important role in determining their political attitudes. In addition to this, the insignificant effect on ethnic frame-based narration implies that the use of ethnicity as a frame within youths' stories does not depend much on the education level attained, but rather could be impacted by other factors such as salience of identity, community interactions, social networks, and political discourse within the environment. Overall, ANOVA results illustrate the significance of education as a factor that distinguishes political attitude amongst youths.

ANOVA Effect Sizes for Education Level

The effect size estimates for the one-way ANOVA conducted to examine differences across education levels in youths' (a) political attitude and (b) ethnic-based narration. Effect sizes are reported using eta-squared (η^2) and epsilon-squared (ϵ^2) (based on the fixed-effect model), and omega-squared (ω^2) estimates for both fixed and random effects.

For Z-score (Political Attitude Total), the point estimate for eta-squared (η^2) was .027 with a 95% confidence interval of [.003, .064]. The epsilon-squared estimate was .022 with a 95% confidence interval of [-.003, .059]. The omega-squared fixed-effect estimate was .022 with a 95% confidence interval of [-.003, .059], and the omega-squared random-effect estimate was .011 with a 95% confidence interval of [-.001, .030].

For Z-score (Ethnic-Based Narration Total), eta-squared (η^2) was .005 with a 95% confidence interval of [.000, .025]. The epsilon-squared estimate was .000 with a 95% confidence interval of [-

.005, .020]. The omega-squared fixed-effect estimate was .000 with a 95% confidence interval of [-.005, .020], and the omega-squared random-effect estimate was .000 with a 95% confidence interval of [-.003, .010].

Table 4.12 *Mean Z-Scores and Tukey HSD Subsets by Education Level*

Education Level	N	Political Attitude <i>M</i> (Z-score)	Ethnic-Based Narration <i>M</i> (Z-score)
Secondary	143	-0.2138	-0.0732
Bachelor's	154	0.1321	0.0016
Postgraduate	87	0.1176	0.1176

Tukey's HSD post hoc comparisons (at $\alpha = .05$) indicated that education level was not associated with statistically significant differences in youths' political attitude (Secondary vs. Bachelor's: $p = .993$; and comparisons involving Postgraduate: $p = 1.000$) and also not associated with statistically significant differences in ethnic-based narration ($p = .303$). Although the mean Z-scores varied slightly across Secondary, Bachelor's, and Postgraduate groups, the group differences were not significant, suggesting that education level does not meaningfully differentiate youths' political attitude or exposure to ethnic-based narratives in this study.

Chapter Five

5.1 Discussion

This chapter interprets the study's quantitative findings on the association between youth social media use and (1) political attitude and (2) ethnic-based narrations/discourse among youths aged 18–30 in Yeka Subcity, Addis Ababa. The discussion is grounded in the theoretical and empirical perspectives reviewed in Chapter Two, particularly Uses Gratifications Theory and Political Socialization Theory, as well as the literature on polarization, ethnicized narratives, associating with the role of social media.

5.1.1 Social Media Use for Political Attitude Formation and Ethnic-Based Narration

The Spearman correlation analysis demonstrated strong positive associations between:

Social media use and political attitude ($\rho = 0.863$), and

Social media use and ethnic-based narration ($\rho = 0.792$).

Based on the findings, youths who indicated more social media usage were found to also score more on the political attitude and ethnic-based narrative variables in the research. Simply put, social media can be used as an important setting where political socialization and political meanings are formed among the research respondents.

Using the perspective of Political Socialization Theory, political attitudes are formed as a result of political learning that is done throughout a lifetime. Examples of agents who facilitate political learning include peers, media, education institutions, and civil society organizations. Based on the results of the research conducted here, the high level of relationship between social media usage and political attitude reveals that social media is an important agent of political learning.

In addition, the simple linear regression results further support the correlation findings by showing that social media use explains a substantial proportion of variance in youths' outcomes. The simple linear regression result show that social media use explained a substantial proportion of the variance in youths' outcomes in both cases. For ethnic-based narration, the model produced $R = .868$ and $R^2 = .754$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .754$), indicating that about 75.4% of the variability in Z-score (Ethnic-Based Narration Total) is accounted for by social media use. For political attitude, the model

produced $R = .800$ and $R^2 = .639$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .638$), indicating that about 63.9% of the variability in Z-score (Political Attitude Total) is explained by social media use.

However, according to the descriptive statistics, the means of the constructs measured in the paper are not very high (for instance, political attitude mean is close to the neutral and low position on the 1–5 point scale). That means, despite being a tool for political consciousness, shaping the quality of political awareness might differ from one youth to another. Thus, the current research proves that social media serves as an agent promoting the development of political attitudes but not necessarily positive and democratic.

Additionally, the findings are supportive of the idea that platforms are not merely information distribution channels but tools that direct attention and repetitions via the mechanism of design and algorithms (such as the algorithm of feed, rankings, etc.). In that case, social media is likely to raise issues' salience and repetitions of interpretations by youths. (Bajomi-Lázár, 2018; Wilson et al., 2021; Zainab, Mahmmod, 2024; Muna & Fabio, 2022).

5.1.2 Ethnic-Based Narrations

Moreover, it should be mentioned that the research discovered a high-level positive correlation between the use of social media and the usage of ethnic-based narration ($p = 0.792$). According to the results of the analysis, youths who used social media more often had higher rates of framing ethnic groups by referring to their contribution to the country as well as the way they were treated by the government.

Consistent with this, the regression analysis indicates that social media use is a strong predictor of ethnic-based narration. Specifically, for the model with Ethnic-Based Narration (Z-score) as the dependent variable, the regression produced $R = .868$ and $R^2 = .754$ (Adjusted $R^2 = .754$), showing that approximately 75.4% of the variance in ethnic-based narration is explained by social media use.

From the literature analyzed in (Gagliardone et al., 2016; Skjerdal & Moges, 2021; Sebesebachew, 2025), it becomes clear that social media in multi-ethnic societies become a place for reinforcing ethnic identity either positively as a means of social integration or negatively through creating an "us vs. them" distinction. Although the current study is focused on the frequency of

using ethnic-based narratives as opposed to hate speech and/or violence, there is still an important implication which can be drawn from it.

In this light, it is important to consider social media as a space where ethnic identity is continuously being performed through memes, stories, and narratives that resonate with emotions. In situations where political legitimacy and reconciliation are at stake, such a narrative approach has the potential to fuel polarization processes through solidifying an in-group identity and fostering out-group skepticism.

That said, this finding does not imply that all ethnic storytelling on social media is “negative.” Ethnic storytelling can also be about cultural affirmation or collective memory. However, in light of what we have seen in literatures regarding the Ethiopian political climate where rumors, misinformation, and ethnicization are common practices that can exacerbate existing tensions, it becomes clear that higher platform engagement correlates with greater access to stories that rely on one’s identity.

5.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to academic understanding in three ways:

Digital political socialization in Ethiopia’s multi-ethnic settings: The high correlation between social media usage and political attitude makes the application of Political Socialization Theory in explaining the current setting of youth education justified.

The persistence of ethnic narration in digital form: The high correlation between social media usage and ethnic-based narration proves the claim that online participation has a significant link with identity-based narrating. This corroborates existing literature on the susceptibility of multi-ethnic digital communities to fragmented narration.

Education acts as a moderator for political reasoning but not identity narration: The disparity in educational attainment noted in relation to political attitudes but not in ethnic-based narrations proves that identity-based narrations and cognitive functions may have different mechanisms.

5.2.2 Practical Implications

In terms of implications, it becomes evident that policies should not see social media simply as a platform for information transmission. Social media is deeply intertwined with youth perception of politics and communication of ethnicity. Thus, programs and policy should integrate: empowerment of youth (through media literacy and civic education), and content moderation and platform governance (with particular emphasis on ethnic narratives).

Chapter Six

6.1 Summary of the Study

The study aimed at exploring how the use of social media by youths is related to the formation of political attitudes and the inclination towards ethnic related narration/discourse of ethnic nature among youths in Addis Ababa, specifically in the Yeka Subcity. Drawing from Political Socialization theory, the study attempted to understand whether social media serves as a platform for political socialization, and if not, what role it plays in fostering polarization and identification-based discourse in the multi-ethnic setting of Ethiopia.

The study employed quantitative correlational research design. Data collection methods included administration of a structured questionnaire targeting a sample of 384 youths, who were between ages 18-30, using stratified sampling technique together with an eligibility screening process to ensure that only active social media users are chosen as participants. Three primary constructs: social media use, political attitude, and ethnic-based narration, were measured using Likert scale items. Reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha revealed satisfactory to excellent reliability of all constructs involved. Correlation analysis was done using Spearman method while t-test and one-way ANOVA were performed to find difference between groups.

Key results showed:

A strong positive correlation between social media use and political attitude ($\rho = 0.863$).

A strong positive correlation between social media use and ethnic-based narration ($\rho = 0.792$).

Gender, age (18–30) and study field did not produce significant differences in social media use, political attitude, or ethnic narration.

Educational level significantly distinguished political attitude, but not ethnic-based narration.

Overall, the findings indicate that social media is closely linked with youths' political meaning-making and discourse, while also being associated with higher levels of ethnic-framing suggesting that digital political socialization in Ethiopia can be both empowering and divisive depending on narrative dynamics and interpretation.

6.2 Conclusion

From the results of the research, one may therefore state that there exists a high correlation of youth social media utilization in Yeka Sub-City with political views and ethnicity-based narrations. Such strong correlations confirm that social media is indeed a powerful agent of political socialization. However, such strong connections also mean that social media usage increases the risk of being exposed to ethnic identity focused and emotive rhetoric thus threatening to hinder a more deliberative and inclusive civic discourse.

Regarding differences between groups, the study concluded that:

Sex, age and study field does not meaningfully change the relationship between youths and the studied outcomes. while there is an indication that education acts as a cognitive filter influencing political attitude formation, this is done without doing away with identity-based framing of issues in the public domain. This indicates that ethnic narrative consumption may be motivated by community engagement and saliency rather than education.

Finally, since it is a correlational research design, causality will not be claimed in the findings of the study. Nonetheless, it is evident that youths who spend more time on social media will perform better when assessed on the political and ethnic narrative dimensions. Therefore, social media in Ethiopia should be viewed as the crucial site through which political consciousness and ethnic communication occur concurrently.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Recommendations for Government / Policymakers

Government officials and policymakers need to ensure that youth-oriented programs on digital literacy and civic education focus on teaching youth how to identify ethnic hate speech, conspiracy theories, and misinformation trends through their use of social media. Moreover, youth need to learn how to verify such information and avoid spreading the identified misinformation and hate speech despite being exposed to such material.

Second, programs on civic education should include lessons on “media literacy + constructive dialogue” in order to teach youth how to talk about political matters while avoiding othering and stereotyping ethnic groups, adopting techniques that suit the learning style of Ethiopian youth.

Lastly, hate speech and disinformation regulations need to clearly define hate speech and have well-established procedures, and penalties should be proportional in order to encourage civic participation without the risk of being intimidated by these issues.

6.3.2 Recommendations for Adjustments of Tech Platforms

Platforms must upgrade their moderation systems to be sensitive to local languages and contextual cues that may appear in ethnicized narrative framing, such as identity framing terms and culturally relevant markers that would not be picked up by traditional moderation tools. Additionally, platforms must work to mitigate the viral spread of unvented ethnic narratives through product-level measures such as frictions on reshaping, contextual warnings, and restrictions on repetitive narratives that spread rumors. In order to ensure high levels of trust and safe participation among users, platforms must provide transparency through reporting features and feedback, including community safety responses that will make sense to young users.

6.3.3 Recommendations for Civil Society and Peace-Building NGOs

Civil society and non-governmental organizations promoting peace-building should utilize social media strategically to engage youth and encourage inter-ethnic communication through campaigns and programs conducted through those online platforms where youth interact. Civic identity and messages of accountability should be propagated to ensure that political participation is not defined around the othering of ethnicities. At the same time, NGOs should develop strategies that focus not only on responding to othering discourses but also on creating alternative narratives around civic issues that will minimize their appeal to youth. This can be done in collaboration with youth influencers and moderators who can set an example of respectful discussion.

6.3.4 Recommendations for Further Research

Future research will need to replicate this study outside of a single Subcity by employing comparative studies in other multi-ethnic environments that would seek to ascertain if social media use is

similarly linked to youths' political perceptions and ethnic narration in differing governance and media conditions. Given the highly contextualized nature of political communication which could be heavily related with transnational linkages, future scholars will need to control for nationality/diaspora condition (e.g, whether youths are in Ethiopia and the diaspora). Moreover, the set of moderator variables used in future studies will need to be extended to include media literacy, perceived source trustworthiness, safety/fear of sanctions, and peer pressure.

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Appendix A: Data Collection Tool

My name is Mhreteab Dabi. I am a Master's student in Social Psychology at Addis Ababa University. I am currently conducting my thesis, which explores the role of social media on the political attitudes and ethnic-based narratives of youth. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

The information you provide on this matter will greatly help in understanding the role that social media plays in shaping the attitudes of young people toward political attitude and ethnic-based narration. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and all information you provide will be kept strictly confidential.

Demographics

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: Male _____ Female _____
3. Education level: High school or less _____ College(University) _____ Bachelor's _____ Postgraduate _____
4. Study Field : Social science _____ Natural science _____

Section A. Social Media Use and Exposure.

1. I spend a lot of time on social media on an average day.
Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____
2. I follow political news or discussions on social media.
Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____
3. I frequently encounter content about different ethnic groups on social media.
Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

4. I actively share political content related to national and ethnic issues on social media.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

5. I engage in online discussions about ethnicity and national identity.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

6. I verify political information I see on social media before believing it.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

7. I trust information from friends/influencers on social media more than from mainstream media.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

8. I get notifications from social media channels and pages that I mostly visit.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

9. I avoid political content on social media to reduce conflict.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

10. My social media use varies by the platform (e.g., Tik-Tok vs. Facebook).

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

Section B. Political Attitude

1. Government policies generally reflect the needs and interests of ordinary citizens.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

2. The government is transparent about its policy decisions and the rationale behind them.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

3. Public spending is allocated effectively to improve essential services (health, education, safety).

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

4. I trust that government agencies implement policies fairly and impartially.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

5. The rule of law is consistently applied in government decisions and actions.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

6. Corruption in government is a major barrier to effective do their job.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

7. There is no governmental interference in any non-governmental institutions in Ethiopia .

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

8. Bureaucratic processes are efficient and minimize unnecessary delay.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

9. Government provides all necessary, timely and reliable information that has to be public.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

10. Every right of people for peaceful political movement is respected.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

Section C. Ethnic-Based Narration

1. Ethnic groups contribute differently to the country's development, in your view.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

2. I believe all ethnic groups should have equal opportunities to take place in national matters.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

3. It is important to celebrate the contributions of all ethnic groups publicly.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

4. Some ethnic groups have more influence than others in politics.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

5. I believe that ethnic diversity is a source of conflict.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

6. The current government in Ethiopia is inclusive that respects the rights of all ethnic groups.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

7. All ethnic groups in Ethiopia should have equal representation in federal level administration.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

8. It is important to promote policies that protect minority ethnic rights in Ethiopia.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

9. Some ethnic groups have less opportunity in national development than others.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

10. I support national unity that acknowledges and values all ethnic groups' contributions.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

11. Ethnic diversity enhances Ethiopia's overall strength.

Strongly Agree_____ Agree _____ Undecided _____ Disagree_____ Strongly Disagree_____

Appendix B: Amharic Version of Data Collection Tool

መግቢያ

ስሜ ምህረተአብ ዳቢ ይባላል። በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የማህበራዊ ስነ ልቦና (Social Psychology) ማስተርሥ ተማሪ ነኝ። በወጣቶች ፖለቲካዊ አመለካከትና ብሄር ተኮር ትርክት ላይ የማህበራዊ ሚዲያ የሚኖረው ተጽእኖ ወይም ሚና ምን እንደሆነ የሚዳስስ የመመረቂያ ጽሁፍ እየሰራሁ ነው። በዚህ ጥናትና ምርምር ላይ ለመሳተፍ ፍቃደኛ ስለሆኑ አመሰግናለሁ።

እርሶ በዚህ ጉዳይ ላይ የሚሰጡት መረጃ ወጣቶች በፖለቲካዊና ብሄር ተኮር በሆኑ ጉዳዮች ላይ ያላቸውን አመለካከት በመቅረጽ ረገድ ማህበራዊ ሚዲያ የሚጫወተውን ሚና ለመረዳት በእጅጉ ያግዛል። የእርሶ ተሳትፎ ሙሉ በሙሉ በፈቃደኝነት ላይ የተመሰረተ ሲሆን በቃለመጠይቁ የሚሰጧቸው መረጃዎች በሙሉ ምስጢራዊነታቸው የተጠበቀ ነው።

እድሜ _____

ጾታ: ወንድ _____ ሴት _____

የትምህርት ደረጃ : ሁለተኛ ደረጃ ወይም በታች _____ ኮሌጅ(ዩኒቨርሲቲ) _____ የመጀመሪያ ዲግሪ _____ ድህረ

ምረቃ _____

ክፍል 1 : የማህበራዊ ሚዲያ አጠቃቀም የተመለከተ

1. ማህበራዊ ሚዲያ በመጠቀም ብዙ ጊዜ አሳልፋለሁ።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____

በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

2. ፖለቲካዊ ዜናዎችንና ውይይቶችን በማህበራዊ ሚዲያ እከታተላለሁ።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____

በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

3. በተደጋጋሚ ብሄር ተኮር ይዘት ያላቸው ጉዳዮች በማህበራዊ ሚዲያ ላይ ያጋጥሙኛል።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

4. ፖለቲካዊና ብሄራዊ ጉዳዮችን የተመለከቱ ይዘቶችን አጋራለሁ።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

5. ሃገራዊና ብሄራዊ(ዘውጋዊ) ጉዳዮች ላይ ባተኮሩ ውይይቶች እሳተፋለሁ።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

6. በማህበራዊ ሚዲያ ላይ የማያቸውን መረጃዎች ሳላረጋግጥ አልቀበልም።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

7. “ሜይንስትሪም”(ፋና, ኢቢሲ...) ሚዲያ ላይ ከማገኛቸው መረጃዎች ይልቅ ከማህበራዊ ሚዲያ የማገኛቸውን መረጃዎች አምናለሁ።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

8. በዋናነት ከምክታተላቸው ቻናሎች እና ገጾች የማሳወቂያ መልእክት ይደርስኛል።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

9. በሚታዩ የፖለቲካ ግጭቶች ላይ አስተዋጽኦ ላለማድረግ ስል የፖለቲካ ይዘቶችን ከማህበራዊ ሚዲያዎች አስወግዳለሁ።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____

በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

10. የማህበራዊ ሚዲያ አጠቃቀሜ እንደየ “ፕላትፎርም”(ቲክ ቶክ፣ ፌስቡክ፣ ዩቲዩብ...) ይለያያል።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____ በፍጹም

አልስማማም _____

ክፍል 2 : ፖለቲካዊ ሃሳብ በተመለከተ

1. መንግስታዊ ፖሊሲዎች የህዝብን ፍላጎት የሚያንጸባርቁ ናቸው ብዬ አምናለሁ።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____

በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

2. መንግስት ለሚያደርጋቸው ተግባራት ምክንያቶችን በግልጽ ያሳውቃል።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____

በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

3. ለህዝብ አገልግሎት (ለጤና፣ ትምህርት፣ ደህንነት....) መንግስት በቂ ትኩረት ሰጥቶታል።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____ በፍጹም

አልስማማም _____

4. መንግስታዊ ተቅዋማት ፖሊሲዎችን በእኩልነትና ፍትሃዊነትና ተግባራዊ ያደርጋሉ።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____

በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

5. መንግስት የሚወስደው እርምጃና የሚወስነው ውሳኔ የህግ የበላይነትን ባከበረ መልኩ ነው።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

6. ሙስና በመንግስት መስሪያ ቤቶች ከፍተኛ ችግር ነው።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

7. ገለልተኛ (መንግስታዊ ያልሆኑ) የሚባሉት አካላት ነጻና ጠንካራ ሆነው የሚሰሩበት ሁኔታ አለ።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

8. በመንግስት መስሪያ ቤቶች ያሉ ቢሮክራሲያዊ አሰራሮች ከሚገባቸው በላይ የተራዘሙ አይደሉም።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

9. መንግስት ህዝብ ማወቅ ያለበትን መረጃ ሁሉ በተገቢው ጊዜና በታማኝነት ያቀርባል።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

10. ዜጎች ሰላማዊ ትግል የማድረግ መብታቸው የተከበረ ነው።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____ በፍጹም
አልስማማም _____

ክፍል 3፡ የብሄር(ዘውግ) ጉዳይ የተመለከተ

1. ብሄሮች ለኢትዮጵያ እድገት ያላቸው ሚና እኩል አይደለም።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

2. ሁሉም ብሄሮች በሃገራዊ ጉዳይ የመሳተፍ እኩል መብት ሊኖራቸው ይገባል።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

3. ብሄሮች በሃገር ጉዳይ ላይ ያላቸውን አስተዋጽኦ ይፋዊ እውቅና መስጠት ይገባል።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

4. አንዳንድ ብሄር ከሌላው በበለጠ በኢትዮጵያ ፖለቲካዊ ጉዳዮች ላይ ይወስናል።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

5. ኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ ያለው የብሄር ብዝሃነት የችግር ምንጭ እንደሆነ ይሰማኛል።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____ በፍጹም
አልስማማም _____

6. አሁን ኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ ያለው የሁሉንም ብሄር መብት የሚያከብር አካታች መንግስታዊ ስርዐት ነው።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

7. በፌዴራል መንግስት የስልጣን ክፍፍል ሁሉም ብሄር እኩል እድል አለው ብየ አላምንም።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

8. በቁጥር አነስ የሚሉትን ብሄሮች የሚያከብር ፖሊሲን ማበረታታት ይገባል።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

9. አንዳንድ ብሄሮች በሃገራዊ የልማት ጉዳዮች ያላቸው ተጠቃሚነት ከሌላው ያነሰ ነው።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

10. የሁሉንም ብሄር ዋጋና አስተዋጽኦ እውቅና የሚሰጥ ብሄራዊ አንድነትን እደግፋለሁ።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____
በፍጹም አልስማማም _____

11. የብሄር ብዝሃነት ከትብብር ይልቅ የውድድር ምክንያት ነው እየሆነ ያለው።

በጣም እስማማለሁ _____ እስማማለሁ _____ አልወሰንኩም _____ አልስማማም _____ በፍጹም
አልስማማም _____