



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

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**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE IRRECHA EVENTS AS DEPICTED  
BY MEDIA, SPEECHE, AND VIEWS OF ACTORS  
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**A critical Discourse Analysis of The Irrecha Events as Depicted by Media, Speche, and Views of Actors.**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Journalism and Communication**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication in Broadcast Journalism**

**Thesis advisor: - assistant prof. Tenaw Terefe**

CERTEFICATE

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Nuro Amano, entitled — **A critical Discourse Analysis of The Irrecha Events as Depicted by Media, Speeches, and Views of Stakeholders**” and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Broadcast Journalism complies with the regulations of the University and notes the accepted standards with respect to originality, credibility and quality.

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## **Declaration**

This thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all source of materials used for thesis have been duly acknowledged

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## Acronyms

CDA – Critical Discourse analysis.

DA- Discourse Analysis

OBN- Oromia broadcasting network

OCTB – Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau

OCB– Oromia Communication bureau

EBC- Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation.

UNESCO-United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The Irrecha festival holds immense cultural significance for the Oromo people in Ethiopia. It is a time of celebration, reflection, and communal bonding. However, the discourse surrounding Irrecha events has been multifaceted, influenced by various stakeholders, including media, political figures, and community members. This study aims to deconstruct and analyze the discourse related to Irrecha, focusing on how it is portrayed in different communication channels. By examining media coverage, speeches, and stakeholder perspectives, we seek to uncover underlying meanings, power dynamics, and cultural implications. The study employed a critical discourse analysis approach, examining both written and spoken language. The data sources included Media Reports: the researcher scrutinized news articles of EBC, OBN and Addis Standard to understand how Irrecha events were framed. Political Speeches during Irrecha gathering by Oromia regional State President Shimallis Abdisa Were analyzed. To understand the Stakeholder Views and provide diverse perspectives the researcher conducts Interviews with participants, organizers, and observers. The findings show Media Frame Irrecha was often portrayed as either a vibrant cultural celebration or a political statement. The choice of words, imagery, and tone significantly influenced public perception. And, most of the definition of Irrecha given by those media is the same. Political Discourse: Government speeches oscillated between endorsing Irrecha as a unifying force and cautioning against potential unrest.also politicized Irrecha. From the Community Perspectives: the Stakeholders expressed pride, nostalgia, and concerns about cultural appropriation. Some viewed Irrecha as a symbol of resistance. Some say that "Irrecha" is not associated with any specific religion, but rather reflects the Oromo worldview and cosmology. While the others express Irrecha as a Waaqeffannaa religion holiday*

*Understanding Irrecha discourse is crucial for fostering cultural understanding, promoting dialogue, and addressing tensions. By examining the interplay of language, power, and identity, we can contribute to a more nuanced appreciation of this significant festival.*

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Irreecha, the annual thanksgiving festival celebrated by the Oromo people in Ethiopia, is a significant cultural and religious event that has garnered increasing attention both within the country and internationally. As the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, the Oromo's cultural expressions and traditional practices offer a profound insight into the region's socio-political dynamics. The Irreecha festival, traditionally held to give thanks to Waaqa (God) for the blessings of the past year and to welcome the new year, has evolved into a platform for cultural assertion, political expression, and social cohesion among the Oromo people.

As Jalata (2005) eloquently observes, Irreecha serves as a pivotal ritual that reinforces Oromo identity and communal solidarity, reflecting deep-rooted traditions and beliefs of the Oromo society. Jalata notes that the festival has historically been a "symbol of peace, reconciliation, and gratitude to Waaqa (God)" and is central to the Oromo way of life.

In recent years, Irreecha has been depicted through various lenses by different actors, including the media, political figures, activists, and community leaders. These portrayals are not merely descriptive but are imbued with ideologies and discourses that reflect the broader power structures and contestations within Ethiopian society. As Feyissa (2011) argues, the festival has become a "platform for political expression and resistance" against marginalization and state oppression. The Ethiopian state's interaction with Irreecha, particularly its attempts to regulate or suppress the festival, has turned it into a site of political contestation, reflecting broader tensions between the Oromo people and the central government.

The role of media in shaping public perceptions of Irreecha is another critical area of study. According to Tesfaye (2017), media representations of Irreecha often reflect the ideological positions of the media outlets and their affiliations with different political entities. Tesfaye's analysis shows that state-controlled media tend to portray the festival in a manner that emphasizes national unity and downplays Oromo grievances, whereas independent and diaspora media highlight themes of resistance and cultural pride.

Additionally, speeches by political leaders during Irreecha have been subject to scholarly scrutiny. Bulcha (2013) observes that political speeches during the festival often employ a dual strategy of cultural celebration and political mobilization. These speeches can serve to both legitimize political claims and galvanize public support for various causes related to Oromo rights and autonomy.

The views of ordinary participants and community leaders also provide valuable insights into the contemporary significance of Irreecha. As Jaleta (2019) reveals, for many Oromo, Irreecha represents not just a cultural heritage but also a form of silent protest against cultural suppression and a call for greater recognition and rights within the Ethiopian state. Jaleta argues that the communal aspect of Irreecha fosters a sense of belonging and collective identity that is crucial for the socio-political empowerment of the Oromo people.

By examining these various perspectives, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Irreecha is depicted and interpreted across different discursive platforms. This multifaceted approach will shed light on the complex interplay between cultural practices, media representations, and political dynamics in Ethiopia. The critical discourse analysis framework will be employed to deconstruct these narratives and uncover the underlying ideologies and power relations that shape them.

## **1.1. Background of The Study**

Irreecha, also known as Irreessa, is one of the most important cultural and religious festivals for the Oromo people, who constitute the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. The festival traditionally marks the end of the rainy season and the beginning of the sunny season, symbolizing renewal and hope. Held primarily at Bishoftu's Lake Hora and other sacred locations, Irreecha has evolved beyond a mere thanksgiving celebration to encompass broader social, political, and cultural dimensions.

The historical and cultural significance of Irreecha is well-documented by scholars. Asafa Jalata (2005) highlights that Irreecha serves as a pivotal ritual that reinforces Oromo identity and communal solidarity, reflecting deep-rooted traditions and beliefs of the Oromo society. Jalata

notes that the festival has historically been a "symbol of peace, reconciliation, and gratitude to Waaqa (God)" and is central to the Oromo way of life .

In recent decades, Irreecha has taken on new meanings in the context of Ethiopia's socio-political landscape. Dereje Feyissa (2011) argues that the festival has become a "platform for political expression and resistance" against marginalization and state oppression . The Ethiopian state's interaction with Irreecha, particularly its attempts to regulate or suppress the festival, has turned it into a site of political contestation, reflecting broader tensions between the Oromo people and the central government.

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Additionally, speeches by political leaders during Irreecha have been subject to scholarly scrutiny. Mekuria Bulcha (2013) observes that political speeches during the festival often employ a dual strategy of cultural celebration and political mobilization. These speeches can serve to both legitimize political claims and galvanize public support for various causes related to Oromo rights and autonomy.

The views of ordinary participants and community leaders also provide valuable insights into the contemporary significance of Irreecha. A study by Tadesse Jaleta (2019) reveals that for many Oromo, Irreecha represents not just a cultural heritage but also a form of silent protest against cultural suppression and a call for greater recognition and rights within the Ethiopian state. Jaleta argues that the communal aspect of Irreecha fosters a sense of belonging and collective identity that is crucial for the socio-political empowerment of the Oromo people .

By examining these various perspectives, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Irreecha is depicted and interpreted across different discursive platforms. This multifaceted approach will shed light on the complex interplay between cultural practices,

media representations, and political dynamics in Ethiopia. The critical discourse analysis framework will be employed to deconstruct these narratives and uncover the underlying ideologies and power relations that shape them.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem.**

The annual Irreecha festival, a significant cultural and religious event for the Oromo people of Ethiopia, serves not only as a thanksgiving ceremony but also as a platform for expressing social and political sentiments. In recent years, particularly the 2019 Irreecha celebrations, the festival has been marked by heightened political tensions and media scrutiny. Different actors, including government officials, opposition parties, and media outlets, have depicted the events of Irreecha through varied and often conflicting narratives. These depictions are not merely neutral representations; they carry underlying discourses that influence public perception and policy.

The problem lies in the fragmented and polarized nature of these narratives. Media coverage, speeches by political leaders, and the views of stakeholders often reflect broader socio-political agendas, which can obscure the true significance of the event for the Oromo community. Moreover, these differing portrayals can exacerbate existing tensions and contribute to a cycle of misunderstanding and conflict.

Despite significant scholarly attention to the cultural and political dimensions of Irreecha, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding the comprehensive analysis of its discursive representations across various platforms. While existing studies, such as those by Jalata (2005) and Feyissa (2011), have provided valuable insights into the festival's cultural and political significance, they have primarily focused on specific aspects, leaving broader questions unanswered.

For instance, Tesfaye (2017) highlights the influence of media ideologies on Irreecha representations but does not delve deeply into the interplay between media narratives, political discourses, and community perspectives. Similarly, while Bulcha (2013) examines the political speeches delivered during Irreecha, there is limited exploration of how these speeches intersect with media portrayals and grassroots interpretations of the festival.

Furthermore, while Jaleta (2019) offers important insights into the grassroots perspectives of Irreecha participants and community leaders, there is a need for a more systematic analysis that situates these perspectives within the broader discursive landscape surrounding the festival. Understanding how media representations, political speeches, and community narratives intersect and diverge is essential for gaining a comprehensive understanding of the socio-political dynamics of Irreecha.

Existing literature on the Irreecha festival often focuses on its cultural and historical significance. However, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis on how contemporary media and political discourses shape and are shaped by the event. This thesis will fill this gap by examining the power dynamics and ideological constructs embedded in the narratives surrounding Irreecha.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap in the literature by providing a holistic analysis of the discursive representations of Irreecha across media, political, and community spheres. By examining how different actors portray and interpret the festival, this research seeks to shed light on the complexities of Irreecha's depiction and its implications for Oromo identity and empowerment. Through a critical discourse analysis approach, this study will uncover the underlying ideologies, power dynamics, and socio-political processes that shape the narratives surrounding Irreecha.

A critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the Irreecha events as depicted by various media, speeches, and the views of actors is necessary to uncover the underlying ideologies and power dynamics at play. Such an analysis will illuminate how language and discourse are used to shape perceptions of the Irreecha festival and the broader socio-political context in Ethiopia. By examining these discourses, this study aims to provide a clearer understanding of how cultural events like Irreecha are framed within the larger narrative of Ethiopian politics, and how these frames impact the Oromo people and their cultural expressions. This research will contribute to the broader discourse on media representation, political communication, and cultural identity in ethnically diverse societies.

### **1.3. Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1. General Objective of the Study**

The general objective of the study is to comprehensively analyze the discourse surrounding Irreecha, examining its portrayal in media, interpretations by stakeholders, and underlying factors influencing its representation.

#### **1.3.2. Specific objectives of the study**

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. Analyze media representations of Irreecha to identify contextual meanings and discursive strategies.
2. Investigate stakeholder interpretations of Irreecha to understand its diverse significance.
3. Explore the social, political, and historical factors driving the discourse on Irreecha across various platforms.

### **1.4. Research questions**

Based on the research objective the following are research questions

1. How do media outlets portray Irreecha, and what discursive strategies do they employ to construct its contextual meanings?
2. What interpretations of Irreecha are provided by various stakeholders, and how do these interpretations contribute to the overall understanding of the festival's significance?
3. What are the social, political, and historical factors that underpin the discourse surrounding Irreecha, and how do these factors influence its representation in media, political speeches, and grassroots perspectives?

### **1.5. Significance of the study**

The significance of this study is that it can contribute to the existing literature on discourse analysis, media studies, and Ethiopian politics. By analyzing how various sources of information represent and interpret the Irreecha events, the researcher examines how language is used to shape public opinion, influence policy decisions, and mobilize social movements.

This study can also benefit society by providing a deeper understanding of the complex and dynamic situation in Ethiopia. By highlighting the perspectives and experiences of different groups involved in the Irreecha events, the study can foster dialogue and empathy among them.

The media outlets can benefit from this study by improving their reporting standards and ethical practices. Finally, this study can also help future studies in the field by providing a rich and comprehensive data set on the discourse of the Irreecha events. This study may also propose new research questions or hypotheses based on your findings and analysis.

## **1.6. Scope of the study**

The scope of the study in terms of time, content, and other aspects can be defined as follows:

**Time:** The study primarily focused on 2016, 2019 and 2021 Irreecha to capture contemporary dynamics and relevance. A timeframe of the past decade, for example, could provide sufficient context while ensuring that the analysis remains relevant to current socio-political developments.

**Content:** The study analyzed the discourse surrounding Irreecha, including media representations, political speeches, and actors perspectives. It explored themes such as cultural significance, political implications, and identity dynamics within Ethiopian society. Additionally, the study examined the historical context of Irreecha and its evolution over time.

**Geographical Scope:** The focus of this study is on Irreecha events celebrated in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu. However, the study also considers diaspora communities and international perceptions of Irreecha to provide a more comprehensive analysis.

**Actors:** The study involved diverse actors, including Oromo community members, religious leaders, political leaders, and linguistics expert, scholars, and media representatives. Their perspectives examined to understand the various interpretations and representations of Irreecha.

**Methodology:** The study utilized a combination of qualitative methods, such as content analysis and discourse analysis, to analyze media coverage, speeches, and actor views. This approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of the discursive representations of Irreecha.

## **1.7. Limitations of the study**

Due to the researcher's busy schedule as a journalist and news anchor, he face the below limitation's:

**Time Constraints:** The researcher have limited time to dedicate to data collection, analysis, and writing due to their demanding professional commitments. These somehow affect the depth and breadth of the study.

**Access to Sources:** Limited availability of sources restrict the researcher's ability to access a wide range of media sources, speeches, and stakeholder perspectives, leading to potential gaps in the analysis.

**Potential Bias:** The researcher's professional background in journalism rarely inadvertently introduce biases in the interpretation of media content, speeches, and stakeholder views, affecting the objectivity of the analysis.

**Lack of Expertise:** the researcher expertise in journalism and media analysis, therefore he lack specialized knowledge in other relevant fields such as cultural studies, political science, or anthropology, this is impacted the depth and accuracy of the analysis.

By acknowledging these limitations, the researcher can be transparent about the constraints of the study and take steps to mitigate potential biases and limitations in the research process.

## **1.8. Ethical consideration of the study**

The study considers ethical considerations and delivers special credit to scholars' literature work, which is used as a citation and reference in this study. In this respect, the researcher delivers credit to those scholars who contributed to this study.

The researcher obtains the permission of the people whose texts are analyzed and obtains permission from sources to obtain the texts. The researcher also informs the sources of the text about the purpose, methods, and potential outcomes of the research and respects their right to withdraw or refuse participation at any time<sup>1</sup>.

On the other hand the researcher attempts to be transparent and rigorous on the analysis and interpretation of the texts, and provide sufficient evidence and justification for the claims. The limitations and uncertainties of the analysis are acknowledged.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Introduction

Irreecha, the annual thanksgiving festival celebrated by the Oromo people in Ethiopia, holds immense cultural, religious, and political significance within the country. As highlighted by Jalata (2005), Irreecha serves as a pivotal ritual that reinforces Oromo identity and communal solidarity, reflecting deep-rooted traditions and beliefs of the Oromo society. Over the years, Irreecha has evolved beyond its religious roots to become a platform for cultural assertion and political expression, particularly for the marginalized Oromo community.

To understand the complexities of Irreecha and its broader implications, it is crucial to analyze its representation across various discursive platforms. This chapter provides a comprehensive review of relevant literature and theoretical frameworks that inform the analysis of Irreecha discourse, drawing on insights from existing studies on media representations, political speeches, stakeholder perspectives, and theoretical perspectives such as critical discourse analysis (CDA), social constructionism, and representation theory.

The literature review begins by examining research on media representations of Irreecha. Studies such as Tesfaye (2017) have highlighted the influence of media ideologies on the portrayal of Irreecha, with state-controlled media often emphasizing themes of national unity while independent and diaspora media foreground issues of cultural pride and resistance. Additionally, analysis of political speeches during Irreecha events, as observed by Bulcha (2013), reveals the strategic use of language to legitimize political claims and mobilize public support for Oromo rights and autonomy.

Furthermore, insights from studies on stakeholder perspectives provide valuable context for understanding the diverse interpretations of Irreecha. Jaleta (2019) underscores the festival's significance as a form of silent protest against cultural suppression and a call for greater recognition and rights within the Ethiopian state. These perspectives, along with historical and socio-political contexts explored by Feyissa (2011) and others, contribute to a nuanced understanding of Irreecha and its socio-political dynamics.

By synthesizing findings from existing literature and theoretical perspectives, this chapter lays the foundation for the subsequent analysis of Irreecha discourse in Chapter Three. Through a critical examination of media representations, political speeches, and stakeholder perspectives, this study aims to uncover the underlying ideologies, power dynamics, and socio-political processes that shape the discourse surrounding Irreecha.

## **2.1. Historical overview of the oromo people**

The Oromo people are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, with a rich and complex history that spans centuries. According to Mohammed Hassen (1990), a prominent scholar of Ethiopian history, "The Oromo of Ethiopia inhabited a vast territory bounded by the Blue Nile River in the east, the White Nile in the south, the Abay (or Blue Nile) in the west, and the Ethiopian highlands in the north" (p. 1).

### **Pre-Imperial Era:**

Prior to the rise of centralized states in the region, the Oromo lived in decentralized clan-based societies, practicing pastoralism, agriculture, and trade. As noted by Hassen (1990), "The Oromo had an age-old tradition of decentralized political organization in which the gadaa system was central" (p. 32).

### **Encounters with Abyssinian Empires:**

The history of the Oromo became intertwined with that of the Abyssinian empires, particularly during the expansionist periods of the Solomonic dynasty and subsequent rulers. According to Jalata (2005), "The Oromo society began to interact intensively with the Abyssinian state during the Abyssinian conquest of their territory, which started in the late nineteenth century" (p. 29).

### **Colonial Period:**

The 19th century marked a significant turning point for the Oromo people with the onset of European colonialism in the region. Abyssinia, under Emperor Menelik II, engaged in territorial expansion and colonization, leading to the incorporation of Oromia into the Ethiopian Empire through military conquests and treaties. According to Jalata (2005), "The Abyssinian conquest,

which started in the 1880s, accelerated under Emperor Menelik II and reached its peak in the 1890s" (p. 43).

### **Resistance and Marginalization:**

The colonial period was characterized by resistance and marginalization for the Oromo people. Despite their significant demographic and cultural contributions to the Ethiopian Empire, they faced discrimination, forced assimilation, and land dispossession under Abyssinian rule. As noted by Bulcha (2013), "The colonization of the Oromo territories by the Abyssinian state involved the dismemberment of the Oromo society, culture, and political economy" (p. 14).

### **Emergence of Oromo Identity:**

The 20th century witnessed a resurgence of Oromo identity and cultural revival movements, fueled by efforts to reclaim Oromo language, heritage, and political autonomy. According to Jalata (2005), "The emergence of Oromo nationalism and the Oromo national movement in the 1960s and 1970s was a response to the centuries-old Abyssinian colonialism and domination of the Oromo people" (p. 63).

### **Contemporary Dynamics:**

In contemporary Ethiopia, the Oromo continue to assert their cultural identity and political aspirations. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and other political organizations have campaigned for greater autonomy and self-determination, while Oromo cultural festivals, such as Irreecha, serve as symbols of resilience and cultural pride. According to Bulcha (2013), "The Oromo struggle for national self-determination has continued for over a century and has taken various forms, including armed struggle, peaceful protest, and cultural revival" (p. 23).

## **2.2. Gada system**

### **2.2.1. Introduction to Oromo Culture and the Gada System**

The Oromo people, one of the largest ethnic groups in Ethiopia, have a rich cultural heritage deeply rooted in the Gada system. The Gada system is a traditional socio-political governance system that organizes the Oromo society into groups or sets (luba) that rotate leadership every

eight years. This system is not only a political structure but also a complex institution that encompasses aspects of social, economic, religious, and cultural life.

### **Historical Origins of the Gada System**

The origins of the Gada system date back centuries, serving as the cornerstone of Oromo civilization. According to Asmarom Legesse, an eminent scholar on Oromo studies, "The Gada system is an indigenous African democracy that has guided the Oromo people for over 500 years" (Legesse, 2000). The system operates through a cyclical transfer of power, ensuring a balanced and inclusive approach to leadership.

### **Structure and Functioning of the Gada System**

The Gada system divides the Oromo society into five grades, with each grade consisting of individuals of similar age. Each grade has specific roles and responsibilities:

- Daballee (0-8 years): This stage includes children who are under the guardianship of their families.
- Gaammee (8-16 years): Young individuals start learning about societal norms and responsibilities.
- Kuusa (16-24 years): A preparatory stage where young men engage in rigorous training for leadership.
- Raaba Doorii (24-32 years): Members take on minor leadership roles and further their training.
- Gadaa (32-40 years): The peak stage where individuals assume major leadership roles, including legislative, judicial, and executive functions.

At the end of the eight-year term, leadership is transferred to the next age set, ensuring continuity and adaptability. As Legesse (1973) notes, "The rotational system of Gada ensures that power does not concentrate in one group, thereby promoting egalitarian principles."

### **The Role of Gada Leaders**

Gada leaders, known as Abba Gadaa, play crucial roles in the administration of the Oromo society. They are responsible for making decisions on matters of governance, conflict resolution, and maintaining social order. The Abba Gadaa are elected based on their wisdom, bravery, and ability to lead. According to Baxter (1978), "The election of Gada leaders is a democratic process that involves the participation of the entire community, reflecting the values of inclusiveness and collective decision-making."

### **The Cultural and Religious Significance of the Gada System**

The Gada system is deeply intertwined with the cultural and religious life of the Oromo people. It dictates the timing of various ceremonies and rituals, including the Irrecha festival. Irrecha, a thanksgiving festival, is celebrated annually to mark the end of the rainy season and the beginning of the harvest. The festival is a reflection of the Oromo's connection to nature and their belief in Waaqa (the Oromo God).

As Tadesse Jaleta (2011) explains, "Irrecha is not only a religious event but also a manifestation of the Gada system's influence on Oromo spirituality and environmental stewardship." The Gada system thus provides a framework within which Irrecha and other cultural practices are conducted, highlighting the inseparable link between governance, religion, and culture.

### **The Gada System and Modern Discourse**

Understanding the Gada system is essential for interpreting modern discourse surrounding Irrecha. Media portrayals, speeches by political figures, and viewpoints of community leaders often reference the values and principles embedded in the Gada system. These references can be seen as efforts to either preserve traditional practices or adapt them to contemporary contexts.

As Jaleta (2011) states, "The discourse on Irrecha in modern media and politics often invokes the Gada system as a symbol of Oromo identity and resilience." This demonstrates the enduring relevance of the Gada system in shaping Oromo collective consciousness and its representation in various forms of communication.

The Gada system is one big institution of Oromo. Gada is an indigenous democratic socio-political system of governance. It was developed from knowledge gained through community

experience over generations. The system regulates the political, economic, social, and religious activities of the Oromo community (Alemayehu Haile 2014, Tiruneh 2019, and Ameyu ).

The Gada system is a very huge and complex social institution in which the traditional Oromo people manage their socio-political and religious practices. It is a well-developed age-based grouping upon which the religious, political, economic, and social life of the people were formed. ( Endale: 2005).

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization defines the Gada system as a traditional system of governance used by the Oromo people in Ethiopia developed from knowledge gained by community experience over generations. The system regulates the political, economic, social, and religious activities of the community dealing with issues such as conflict resolution, reparation, and protecting women's rights. It serves as a mechanism for enforcing moral conduct, building social cohesion, and expressing forms of community culture (UNESCO: 2015).

According to the article published by Oromia Regional State Culture and Tourism Bureau Gada is a political, economic, and social system that the Oromo people have been following in governing themselves.

### **2.3. Irrecha**

Irrecha, also known as the Oromo Thanksgiving, is an annual festival celebrated by the Oromo people of Ethiopia. This significant cultural and religious event marks the end of the rainy season and the beginning of the harvest, symbolizing gratitude and renewal. Irrecha is not only a religious observance but also a manifestation of Oromo cultural identity, community solidarity, and environmental stewardship.

One of the distinct thanksgiving celebrations in the Oromo tradition is called "Irreechaa" or "Irreechaa," which, by itself, means 'green and fresh grass' that symbolizes fertility and flourishing life due to the blessing and guidance of the Creator, Waaqaa. On this day (which normally falls at the end of September or beginning of October), many Oromos come to the river or mountains with an outlet that has since long been chosen to be the place for such a thanksgiving celebration.( Waqeffanna.com, 2020).

There are two major annual celebrations of Irreecha.

**Irreecha Tulu (of hilltop):** held during the dry season especially at the beginning of the spring season usually in March to plead with Waaqa (the creator) for, among other things, rain and good agricultural produce.

**Irreecha Malka (of lakeside):** Irreecha Malka is a transition to the sunlight and season of harvest, it is a time when the rivers and streams settle and communication among relatives and friends resumes. It is celebrated in mid-September (Fulbaana) when the darkness of the rainy season with its foggy days passes and leaves place for the bright season (Birraa). ( Serawit: 2018 and Tiruneh: 2019).

Irreecha the cultural and religious practice of the Oromo was systematically outlawed for more than a century following the fall of the Oromo nation under the tyrant and brutal rules of Menelik II (1889 to 1913) and the subsequent Regimes. Despite several odds and difficult circumstances, Irreecha has begun to revive in the last two decades. The festivity has been showing impressive development from year to year in terms of the number of people attending the occasion and cultural shows being demonstrated (Alemayehu Dior 2014:1).

### **Historical Background of Irreecha**

The origins of Irreecha are deeply rooted in the agrarian lifestyle of the Oromo people, who depend heavily on seasonal cycles for their livelihood. As noted by Gemechu Megerssa (1993), "Irreecha has been celebrated for centuries as a means of giving thanks to Waaqa, the Oromo supreme deity, for the blessings of rain and fertility." The festival traditionally involves communal prayers, songs, dances, and rituals performed at sacred sites, most notably near bodies of water, which are considered holy.

### **Cultural Significance of Irreecha**

Irreecha serves multiple functions within Oromo society:

*Religious Function:* The festival is primarily an expression of gratitude to Waaqa. As Bassi (2005) explains, "The Irrecha ritual reflects the deep spiritual connection the Oromo people have with their environment and their belief in Waaqa's providence."

*Social Function:* Irrecha fosters a sense of community and solidarity among the Oromo people. Jalata (2012) points out, "Irrecha is a unifying event that brings together Oromo from various regions, reinforcing social bonds and collective identity."

*Cultural Function:* The festival is a showcase of Oromo cultural heritage. Participants wear traditional attire, perform folk songs and dances, and engage in customary practices that highlight Oromo traditions. As Bartels (1983) notes, "Irrecha is a vibrant celebration of Oromo cultural identity, providing a platform for the transmission of cultural values and practices across generations."

### **The Role of Irrecha in the Gada System**

The Gada system, the traditional socio-political system of the Oromo, is closely linked with the celebration of Irrecha. The timing and organization of the festival are often guided by the principles of the Gada system. According to Asmarom Legesse (2000), "The Gada leaders, or Abba Gadaa, play an essential role in overseeing the Irrecha rituals, ensuring they are conducted in accordance with Oromo traditions and spiritual guidelines."

### **Contemporary Relevance of Irrecha**

In contemporary times, Irrecha has gained additional layers of significance, particularly in the context of Oromo nationalism and cultural revival. As Meki (2017) observes, "Irrecha has become a symbol of Oromo resistance and identity, especially in the face of political and cultural marginalization." The festival is now seen as a platform for asserting Oromo identity and advocating for socio-political rights.

### **Media Representation of Irrecha**

The portrayal of Irrecha in the media varies significantly, reflecting different perspectives and interests. Mainstream media often depict the festival in terms of its cultural and touristic appeal,

sometimes downplaying its political significance. On the other hand, Oromo-oriented media outlets emphasize the festival's role in cultural preservation and political mobilization. As Jalata (2019) notes, "The media narratives around Irrecha are contested, with different actors seeking to highlight aspects that align with their agendas, whether cultural, political, or touristic."

### **Speeches and Views of Actors**

The speeches delivered by Oromo leaders and other stakeholders during Irrecha celebrations often reflect broader socio-political discourses. These speeches can be analyzed to understand how the festival is used as a platform for political expression and cultural affirmation. As Gemechu (2016) explains, "The speeches at Irrecha are not just ceremonial; they are imbued with calls for unity, cultural pride, and sometimes, political demands, reflecting the aspirations and concerns of the Oromo people."

#### **2.3.1. Introduction to the Political Significance of Irrecha**

Irrecha, while primarily a cultural and religious festival, has increasingly taken on political dimensions, particularly in the context of Oromo nationalism and the struggle for rights and recognition within Ethiopia. This chapter explores the political aspects of Irrecha, examining how it has become a symbol of Oromo identity and resistance, and how its portrayal in media, speeches, and public discourse reflects broader political dynamics.

The historical marginalization of the Oromo people within the Ethiopian state has fueled a robust movement for cultural and political rights. As Asafa Jalata (1993) argues, "The Oromo have historically been subjected to political, economic, and cultural domination, which has led to a strong sense of collective identity and resistance." Irrecha, as a prominent cultural event, naturally became a focal point for expressing this collective identity and resistance.

Irrecha has emerged as a powerful symbol of Oromo nationalism. It is an occasion not only to celebrate cultural heritage but also to assert political demands. As described by Mohammed Hassen (1990), "Irrecha provides a platform for the Oromo to publicly assert their identity and resist cultural assimilation and political repression."

The festival has seen increased political overtones in recent years, especially with large gatherings in places like Bishoftu, where political speeches and demonstrations are common. These events often attract significant attention from both national and international media, highlighting the intersection of cultural celebration and political activism.

The Ethiopian government's response to Irrecha has varied over time, often reflecting the broader political climate. During periods of heightened political tension, the government has sometimes viewed large Irrecha gatherings with suspicion and has taken measures to control or restrict them. This was notably evident in the 2016 Irrecha tragedy in Bishoftu, where a government crackdown on protests during the festival led to a stampede and numerous deaths. As Smith (2017) notes, "The 2016 Irrecha incident underscored the volatile mix of cultural celebration and political protest, highlighting the government's uneasy relationship with Oromo nationalism."

Media portrayals of Irrecha reflect divergent perspectives, often influenced by political considerations. State-controlled media tend to emphasize the cultural and touristic aspects of Irrecha, portraying it as a harmonious and apolitical celebration. In contrast, Oromo-oriented and independent media highlight the festival's political significance, including speeches and protests that call for greater autonomy and rights for the Oromo people.

As Jalata (2019) observes, "The media narratives around Irrecha are contested, with state media downplaying its political aspects while Oromo media underscore its role in the struggle for justice and recognition." This dichotomy in media representation is a critical area for discourse analysis, revealing how different actors attempt to shape public perception of the event.

The speeches delivered during Irrecha are a vital source of political messaging. Oromo leaders and activists use the platform to address issues such as land rights, political representation, and cultural preservation. These speeches often resonate deeply with the attendees, reinforcing a collective sense of identity and purpose.

According to Megerssa (2016), "The oratory at Irrecha serves as a vehicle for political mobilization, with leaders invoking historical grievances and contemporary challenges to galvanize support for the Oromo cause." This underscores the festival's dual role as both a cultural celebration and a site of political expression.

In recent years, social media has played an increasingly important role in shaping the discourse around Irrecha. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter are used by Oromo activists to organize events, share information, and amplify political messages. As noted by Tufaa (2018), "Social media has democratized the dissemination of information about Irrecha, allowing for a more grassroots-driven narrative that challenges official accounts."

## **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

To analyze the discourse of Irrecha events, the researcher needs to have a theoretical framework that helps to understand how language is used to construct meaning, power, and identity in different social contexts. There are different approaches to discourse analysis, but one of the most widely used is critical discourse analysis (CDA).

### **2.4.1. Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a qualitative research approach that focuses on the way language, power, and ideology intersect within texts and discourses. It aims to uncover how social and political power relations are established, maintained, and enacted through language. According to Norman Fairclough, a pioneer of CDA, this method involves "the analysis of the dialectical relationships between discourse and other elements of social practices" (Fairclough, 1995).

CDA is not just concerned with the text itself but also with the broader social context in which the text is produced and received. It seeks to reveal hidden power dynamics, ideologies, and inequalities that are embedded in language use.

#### **Key Principles of CDA**

*Power and Ideology:* CDA examines how power relations and ideological processes are embedded and reproduced in discourse. As van Dijk (1993) states, "CDA primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context."

*Historical Context:* CDA considers the historical and social context of the discourse, acknowledging that texts are not created in a vacuum but are influenced by historical events and social structures.

*Interdisciplinary Approach:* CDA draws from various disciplines such as linguistics, sociology, anthropology, and political science to provide a comprehensive analysis of discourse.

*Social Change:* One of the goals of CDA is to contribute to social change by raising awareness about the ways in which language contributes to the perpetuation of social injustices.

### **Relevance of CDA to the Study**

In the context of a research topic, "A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Irrecha Events as Depicted by Media, Speeches, and Views of the Actors," CDA is highly relevant for several reasons:

#### **1. Analyzing Media Representations:**

*Media as a Site of Power:* Media representations of the Irrecha festival can reflect and shape public perceptions and political discourse. By using CDA, the researcher analyzed how different media outlets portray Irrecha, revealing underlying power dynamics and ideological biases.

*Framing and Narratives:* CDA allows the researcher to examine how media narratives are constructed, which aspects of Irrecha are emphasized or downplayed, and how these choices reflect broader social and political agendas.

#### **2. Examining Political Speeches:**

*Language of Leadership:* Political speeches during Irrecha are not just ceremonial but are loaded with political messages. CDA can help dissect the rhetoric used by political leaders to mobilize support, assert authority, or promote specific ideologies.

*Discourse and Identity:* Analyzing the language used in speeches can reveal how leaders construct and reinforce collective identities, such as the Oromo identity, and how they position themselves within broader political struggles.

### **3. Understanding Actors' Views:**

*Multiple Perspectives:* the researcher applied CDA to interviews, statements, and writings of various actors involved in Irrecha, including community leaders, activists, and government officials. This helps in understanding the diverse perspectives and power relations at play.

*Resistance and Agency:* By analyzing how different actors articulate their views, CDA can reveal strategies of resistance and agency, showing how marginalized groups use language to challenge dominant narratives and assert their own identities.

### **4. Interpreting Social and Political Context:**

*Contextual Analysis:* CDA emphasizes the importance of historical and social context in understanding discourse. In the context of this study, this means considering the historical marginalization of the Oromo people, the political significance of Irrecha, and the socio-political dynamics in Ethiopia.

*Social Change:* Ultimately, CDA aims to uncover and challenge social inequalities. By analyzing the discourses surrounding Irrecha, this research can contribute to a better understanding of the socio-political issues faced by the Oromo people and potentially inform efforts towards social justice.

## **2.5 Theories of Media Representation**

Media representation theory explores how media constructs meanings about the world and how these meanings influence public perception and social reality. Understanding media representation is crucial for the research topic, "A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Irrecha Events as Depicted by Media, Speeches, and Views of the Actors," because it helped the researcher to reveal how the Irrecha festival is portrayed across different media outlets and the implications of these portrayals.

Media representation involves the portrayal of events, people, and cultures in various media formats. This portrayal is not a mere reflection of reality but an active construction that is influenced by the media's internal dynamics and the broader socio-political context. According

to Stuart Hall (1997), one of the foremost scholars in media studies, "representation involves the use of language, signs, and images which stand for or represent things."

## **Key Theories and Concepts in Media Representation**

### 1. Encoding/Decoding Model (Stuart Hall)

**Encoding:** This process involves the creation of a media message by producers, who encode their intended meanings based on their own social and cultural contexts.

**Decoding:** Audiences interpret or decode these messages based on their individual social and cultural contexts, which can lead to different interpretations.

**Polysemy:** Hall argues that texts are polysemic, meaning they can be interpreted in multiple ways depending on the audience's cultural background, beliefs, and experiences (Hall, 1980).

### 2. Hegemony and Ideology (Antonio Gramsci)

**Hegemony:** Gramsci introduced the concept of cultural hegemony, which refers to the domination of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class, who manipulate the culture of that society to reflect their own values and norms.

**Ideology:** Media plays a crucial role in perpetuating ideological hegemony by presenting the values and norms of the dominant group as the natural or common sense perspective (Gramsci, 1971).

### 3. Framing Theory (Erving Goffman)

**Framing:** This theory suggests that how information is presented (the "frame") affects the perception and interpretation of that information. Media frames can shape public perception by highlighting certain aspects of an event while omitting others.

**Media Bias:** Different media outlets may frame the same event in different ways to align with their ideological stances or target audiences (Goffman, 1974).

### 4. Agenda-Setting Theory (Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw)

**Agenda-Setting:** This theory posits that the media doesn't tell people what to think, but it tells them what to think about. The prominence given to certain issues by the media influences the public's perception of the importance of those issues.

**Salience:** By selecting and emphasizing particular news stories, the media shapes the public agenda and directs attention to specific topics (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

#### 5. Cultivation Theory (George Gerbner)

**Cultivation:** Gerbner's theory suggests that long-term exposure to media content can shape individuals' perceptions of reality. Heavy viewers of television, for instance, may come to accept the media's portrayal of the world as an accurate reflection of reality.

**Mean World Syndrome:** One specific aspect of this theory is the "mean world syndrome," where people who consume a lot of violent media content believe the world is more dangerous than it actually is (Gerbner, 1976).

#### 6. Symbolic Interactionism (Herbert Blumer)

**Symbolic Interactionism:** This theory emphasizes the role of social interactions in the creation of meanings. Media representations are seen as part of the symbolic interactions that shape our understanding of the world.

**Meaning-Making:** Media texts provide symbols that audiences use to construct meaning through their interactions with others (Blumer, 1969).

**The researcher applied this Application to the Study of Irrecha Festival in the following way**

- Encoding/Decoding and Irrecha

**Producers' Intentions:** Media producers may encode specific narratives about Irrecha based on their perspectives and interests, such as portraying it as a cultural celebration or a political protest.

Audience Interpretations: Different audience groups, including the Oromo people, government officials, and international observers, may decode these messages in varied ways, influenced by their cultural and political backgrounds.

- Hegemony and Ideology in Media Coverage of Irrecha

Dominant Narratives: State-controlled media may promote a hegemonic view that aligns with government interests, possibly downplaying the political aspects of Irrecha.

Counter-Hegemonic Narratives: Independent and Oromo-oriented media may challenge these dominant narratives by emphasizing the festival's role in Oromo cultural identity and political resistance.

- Framing of Irrecha Events

Selective Emphasis: Different media outlets may frame Irrecha in ways that highlight particular aspects, such as its cultural significance, the scale of participation, or instances of political protest, thereby shaping public perception.

Contrast in Frames: For example, state media might frame Irrecha as a peaceful cultural event, while Oromo-oriented media might focus on the festival's role in highlighting socio-political grievances.

- Agenda-Setting and Public Perception

Media Focus: By choosing which aspects of Irrecha to report on and how prominently to feature them, media can set the public agenda regarding the festival's significance and implications.

Shifting Focus: During politically tense periods, media might give more attention to protests and political speeches at Irrecha, thereby influencing public discourse.

- Cultivation Effects

Long-Term Impact: Consistent media representations of Irrecha can cultivate public attitudes and beliefs about the festival and the Oromo people. For instance, repeated portrayals of Irrecha as a site of political protest might lead to a perception of it as inherently contentious.

- Symbolic Interactionism and Irrecha

Meaning-Making: The symbols and narratives presented in media coverage of Irrecha contribute to the social construction of its meaning. Through discussions and interactions, audiences negotiate and reinforce their understanding of Irrecha.

## **2.6. Political Communication Theory**

Political communication theory explores the ways in which information and messages are transmitted and received within political contexts. It examines the role of media, political institutions, and the public in shaping political discourse and influencing political behavior. This theoretical framework is particularly relevant for analyzing how the Irrecha festival is depicted by media, speeches, and various actors within your study.

Political communication theory seeks to understand how political information is created, disseminated, and interpreted. This field examines the interactions between political actors, media institutions, and the public, focusing on how these interactions influence political perceptions and actions.

### **Key Theories and Concepts in Political Communication**

#### **A. Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw)**

Agenda-Setting: This theory posits that the media has the power to shape what issues are considered important by the public. By highlighting certain topics, the media sets the agenda for public discourse (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Salience: The prominence and frequency of media coverage determine the salience of issues, directing public attention and political priorities.

#### **B. Framing Theory (Goffman)**

Framing: This theory focuses on how media and political actors construct a particular perspective or interpretation of an issue. Frames influence how events and issues are understood by emphasizing certain aspects over others (Goffman, 1974).

Strategic Framing: Politicians and media can use framing to guide public opinion and shape policy debates by presenting issues in a way that supports their objectives.

#### C. Priming Theory (Iyengar & Kinder)

Priming: This theory suggests that media exposure can influence the criteria by which the public evaluates political figures and issues. By frequently covering certain topics, the media primes the audience to consider these issues when making political judgments (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

#### D. Spiral of Silence Theory (Noelle-Neumann)

Spiral of Silence: This theory proposes that individuals are less likely to express their opinions if they perceive that they are in the minority. The media can reinforce this silence by predominantly presenting dominant viewpoints, creating a feedback loop that marginalizes dissenting voices (Noelle-Neumann, 1974).

#### E. Two-Step Flow Theory (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet)

Two-Step Flow: This model posits that media effects are indirectly mediated through opinion leaders. Information flows from the media to these influential individuals, who then interpret and transmit it to their social networks (Lazarsfeld et al., 1948).

Influence of Opinion Leaders: Opinion leaders play a crucial role in shaping political opinions within their communities.

#### F. Public Sphere Theory (Habermas)

Public Sphere: Jürgen Habermas introduced the concept of the public sphere as a space where individuals come together to discuss and deliberate on public issues. Media serves as a platform for public discourse, influencing democratic participation and civic engagement (Habermas, 1989).

Media and Democracy: The quality of media discourse impacts the functioning of democracy by either facilitating informed debate or perpetuating misinformation.

### HOW THE ABOVE THEORY APPLIED IN THIS STUDY

## **Agenda-Setting and Irrecha**

**Media Focus:** By prioritizing coverage of Irrecha, media outlets can elevate its significance in public discourse, influencing how the festival is perceived in terms of cultural importance and political relevance.

**Public Priorities:** The extent to which Irrecha is covered can affect public awareness and interest in related political issues, such as Oromo rights and identity.

## **Framing of Irrecha Events**

**Competing Frames:** Different media outlets and political actors may frame Irrecha differently—some may emphasize its cultural and religious aspects, while others highlight its political significance and instances of protest.

**Impact of Frames:** These frames can shape public understanding and attitudes towards the festival and the issues it represents. For example, framing Irrecha as a site of political resistance can mobilize support for Oromo causes.

## **Priming Effects in Media Coverage**

**Influence on Evaluations:** Frequent coverage of political speeches and protests during Irrecha can prime audiences to evaluate political leaders and policies based on their stance towards Oromo issues.

**Contextual Priming:** The context provided by media coverage (e.g., focusing on government responses to Irrecha) can influence how audiences interpret subsequent political developments.

## **Spiral of Silence and Public Opinion**

**Dominant Narratives:** If mainstream media predominantly presents a government-aligned view of Irrecha, dissenting opinions may be marginalized, leading to a spiral of silence among opposition voices.

**Counterpublics:** Alternative media outlets and social media platforms can provide spaces for marginalized voices to express their perspectives on Irrecha and related political issues.

## **Two-Step Flow and Community Leaders**

**Role of Opinion Leaders:** Community leaders and influential figures within the Oromo community can interpret and disseminate information about Irrecha, shaping local opinions and mobilizing political action.

**Mediation of Messages:** These opinion leaders can bridge the gap between media portrayals and grassroots perspectives, influencing how the festival is understood and acted upon.

## **Public Sphere and Democratic Participation**

**Deliberative Spaces:** Irrecha events themselves can be seen as public spheres where political discourse occurs. Media coverage of these events extends the public sphere, facilitating broader participation in political debates.

**Media's Role in Democracy:** The quality and nature of media coverage of Irrecha can impact democratic engagement, either by fostering informed discussion or by propagating divisive narratives.

# CHAPTER THREE

## 3. Research Methodology

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the research methodology employed to collect and analyze and interpret the data of this study.

### 1.1. Research design

This study employed a qualitative research approach, specifically employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the portrayal of Irrecha events in media, political speeches, and perspectives of various actors. The qualitative approach is chosen for its strength in providing in-depth understanding and interpretation of complex social phenomena, which aligns with the objectives of this study.

While quantitative research has its strengths in measuring and analyzing numerical data, it falls short in providing the depth and contextual understanding required for a Critical Discourse Analysis of the Irrecha events. Scholars like Fairclough, van Dijk, Wodak, and Gee underscore the importance of qualitative methods for exploring the intricate ways language and discourse shape and are shaped by social practices. Therefore, a qualitative approach is better suited to this research topic, allowing for a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of media depictions, speeches, and stakeholder views.

Here are some scholarly quotes about the advantages of qualitative methods, particularly relevant to the topic of analyzing representations of Irrecha events in media, speeches, and views of actors.

#### **In-depth Understanding and Contextual Analysis:**

"Qualitative research allows for an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural context. This is particularly beneficial for topics such as cultural events and political discourse, where the context is crucial for interpretation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

#### **Exploring Complex Social Dynamics:**

"Qualitative methods are particularly suited for exploring complex social dynamics and the meanings that individuals and groups attach to their experiences, which is essential when examining how cultural events like Irrecha are represented and interpreted" (Creswell, 2013).

#### **Flexibility and Richness of Data:**

"The flexibility inherent in qualitative research methods allows researchers to adapt their focus as new insights emerge, leading to a richer and more nuanced understanding of the phenomena under study" (Patton, 2002).

#### **Capturing Diverse Perspectives:**

"Qualitative research is invaluable for capturing the diverse perspectives of different stakeholders, which is critical for a comprehensive analysis of events such as Irrecha that involve various actors, including media, political leaders, and community members" (Mason, 2002).

#### **Critical Examination of Power Relations:**

"Qualitative methods, particularly those that employ critical discourse analysis, are powerful tools for examining the power relations embedded in media representations and political rhetoric, revealing how these discourses shape public perception and social realities" (Fairclough, 1995).

#### **Understanding Meaning and Symbolism:**

"Qualitative research is adept at uncovering the meanings and symbolism that people attribute to cultural practices and political events, which is essential for understanding the broader implications of how Irrecha is portrayed in different discourses" (Geertz, 1973).

These quotes emphasize the strengths of qualitative research methods in providing deep, contextualized, and nuanced insights, which are particularly advantageous for your study of the Irrecha festival as depicted by media, speeches, and various actors.

### **3.3. Data Collection Tools**

This study use, qualitative data collection tools such as textual discourse analysis/document analysis and in-depth interviews as primary data collection methods. These tools enabled the researcher to obtain rich data from media content and interviews with journalist and actors.

In-depth interviews allow for a deeper exploration of individual perspectives, experiences, and interpretations related to Irreecha celebrations. This method can provide rich, detailed insights that may not be captured through questionnaires or focus group discussions, which often prioritize breadth over depth.

Irreecha celebrations involved nuanced cultural, historical, and political dynamics that require a qualitative approach to fully understand. In-depth interviews allow participants to elaborate on their views, providing context and nuance that may be lost in quantitative data collection methods like questionnaires.

In-depth interviews allow targeting specific individuals who have direct knowledge or experience relevant to research objectives. This targeted sampling approach can be particularly beneficial when researching a topic as culturally and contextually specific as Irreecha celebrations.

Document analysis and in-depth interviews are both qualitative methods that emphasize understanding meaning, context, and interpretation. These methods are well-suited for exploring complex socio-cultural phenomena like Irreecha celebrations, where quantitative measures may not adequately capture the depth and richness of the data.

Conducting focus group discussions and administering questionnaires can be resource-intensive in terms of time, effort, and possibly financial costs. By focusing on document analysis and in-depth interviews, the researcher able to allocate your resources more efficiently and effectively, ensuring a thorough and rigorous analysis within your available means.

### **3.3.1. Document Analysis**

To gather necessary information for this study, the researcher collect Nine news articles and one speech text on Three selected Irrecha events from 2016, 2019, and 2021 from OBN, EBC, Borkena, Ethiopian Inshight and Addis Standard's YouTube channels, websites, and audiovisual libraries. These news texts, produced in different years, cover various aspects and are presented in different languages: Three in Amharic (the official working language of the federal government), three in Afaan Oromoo (including a speech by Shimallis Abdisa, president of the Oromia region), and Three in English.

After careful review, the news texts will be analyzed using Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to obtain the necessary insights for the research. Fairclough's model is chosen for its ability to provide multiple points of analytic entry. This approach posits that each discursive event has three dimensions (Fairclough, 1992; Janks, 1997):

- Discourse Fragment (Text Analysis): The object of analysis, including verbal, visual, or both verbal and visual texts.
- Aspects of Context (Interpretation): The situational context or the place where struggles over power relations in discourse occur.
- Discourse as Social Practice (Explanation): Analyzing the power behind discourse through social analysis.

By triangulating the analysis across these outlets, the researcher gained a comprehensive understanding of how Irrecha events are portrayed in Ethiopian media. This will help identify media bias, recurring themes, and the range of narratives surrounding the event. Document analysis involves examining and interpreting data to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007).

Relevant documents related to Irrecha events and actors interviews with various media also reviewed and analyzed. These documents are sourced from the library of the Oromo Cultural Centre and online resources. The researcher reviewed original documents related to Oromo indigenous practices and Irrecha such as a text by Asebe Regassa, PhD Candidate at Bayreuth

University, The story of Irrecha by (Poet Laureate) Tsegaye Gebremedhin Robba Qawessa, Oromia tourism Brue and communication Brue articles about irrecha.

These documents helped the researcher to understand scholarly controversies regarding the real definition of Irrecha and the significance of the event.

### **3.3.2 In-Depth Interviews**

In addition to discourse analysis, in-depth interviews also used as another primary data collection tool. According to Wiley (2006), interviews are among the most familiar strategies for collecting qualitative data. The goal of the in-depth interview is to explore a respondent's point of view, experiences, feelings, and perspectives in-depth.

The researcher use in-depth interviews to gain insights into how different stakeholders view and interpret the Irrecha events, what meanings and values they attach to them, how they communicate and express their views, and what factors influence their discourse. The advantages of using in-depth interviews include:

- Uncovering valuable insights and the “real story” from knowledgeable individuals.
- Encouraging respondents to open up on a one-on-one basis.
- Collecting data faster than other research methods, usually within a few weeks (The Wallace Foundation).

Participants for in-depth interviews selected through purposeful sampling to maximize the depth and richness of the data. The interview process aimed to be personal and intimate, using open, direct verbal questions to elicit detailed narratives and stories (Wiley, 2006).

Interview Participants:

#### **1. Experts:**

Linguists: To analyze the language used in speech about Irrecha, revealing underlying assumptions, ideologies, and power dynamics.

Irrecha Festival Experts: Scholars or researchers who have specifically studied Irrecha to provide detailed information about the traditions, rituals, and cultural significance of the event.

## 2. Actors:

Religious Leaders: To provide insights into the religious aspects of Irrecha and its role in the community. The researcher conduct interview with one Muslim religious leader and one Waaqefata religious leader.

Media Representatives: the researcher conduct interview with one News editor from EBC who cover Irrecha events to provide information about the media's role in shaping public discourse.

The interview participants selected based on their experiences and proximity to the issues. Considering the controversial nature of Irrecha, the researcher will ensure the diversity of participants in terms of religion, ethnicity, language, age, and gender.

The interviews included organizers and participants of Irrecha events to gain firsthand accounts of the traditions, significance, and perceptions of media portrayals. Interviews with experts provided historical and cultural context for the Irrecha event, helping understand its deeper meaning and its representation over time.

By employing these qualitative data collection tools, the researcher gathered comprehensive and nuanced insights into the portrayal of Irrecha events in Ethiopian media and the views of various stakeholders.

### **3.4. Sampling technique**

This study used Purposive non-probability sampling. According to Mack, purposive sampling is one of the most common sampling strategies that groups participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question, sample sizes, which may or may not be fixed before data collection, depending on the resources and time available, as well as the study's objectives. (Mack N. 2005)

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling, involves selecting samples based on specific characteristics or criteria that align with the research objectives. This technique

is used when the researcher wants to focus on particular contexts, perspectives, or elements that are most relevant to the research question.

### **Justification:**

**Relevance to Research Question:** Purposive sampling ensures that the selected news articles, speech, and scholars' views are directly relevant to the Irrecha events and provide a comprehensive understanding of the discourse surrounding these events.

**Diversity of Perspectives:** By deliberately choosing sources that offer varied perspectives, the researcher can ensure a balanced analysis that includes different viewpoints (e.g., supportive, critical, neutral).

**Depth of Analysis:** This method allows the researcher to select sources that provide in-depth information, which is crucial for critical discourse analysis.

#### **3.4.1. Sample Size**

Taking the time, access and financial constraints into account, the inquirer obliged to limit the sample size; of course, in such a way that does not affect the research's objectives.

The sample size for the critical discourse analysis of the Irrecha events, can be categorized based on their types and origins. The sample size for this study explain as follows.

For the News Articles the researcher selected a total of nine news articles from a variety of sources to ensure a comprehensive representation of the media discourse. These articles are from: Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC): 3 articles Rationale: EBC is a major national broadcaster in Ethiopia, providing official and widely consumed news coverage. From Oromia Broadcasting Network (OBN): 3 articles, Rationale: OBN is a regional broadcaster focused on the Oromia region, offering localized perspectives and coverage specific to the Oromo people. From Addis Standard: 1 article, Rationale: Addis Standard is an independent online news outlet known for its in-depth analysis and coverage of political and social issues in Ethiopia. From Ezega News: 1 article Rationale: Ezega News provides comprehensive coverage of Ethiopian news, with a focus on societal and cultural events. Borkena News: 1 article Rationale: Borkena

News is another independent news source that provides alternative perspectives on Ethiopian current events.

From the Speech the researcher selects President Shimallis' Speech at 2019 irrecha celebration: Rationale: This speech represents the official stance and narrative of a key government figure, providing insight into the political discourse surrounding the Irrecha events.

From the Scholarly Views the researcher selected three scholarly sources to provide academic perspectives on Irrecha. These include: Academic Articles and unpublished online articles. Rationale: Scholarly articles offer in-depth, peer-reviewed analysis and context on the cultural, sociological, and political aspects of Irrecha.

The researcher also used Additional Source Such as Oromia Tourism and Communication Bureau Article on Irrecha: Rationale: This article provides an official regional perspective on the cultural significance and tourism aspects of Irrecha, contributing to the understanding of how the event is promoted and perceived at a regional level.

The researcher had conducted interviews with six key informants who offer diverse insights into the Irrecha events:

EBC Journalist: Provides a media perspective, offering insights into the editorial choices and coverage strategies of a major national broadcaster. Abba Gada: As a traditional Oromo leader, the Abba Gada offers cultural and societal perspectives on Irrecha, reflecting the indigenous governance system and its role in the celebrations. Waqeeqata Religious Leader: This leader provides insights from the traditional Oromo religion, highlighting the spiritual significance of Irrecha. Muslim Religious Leader: Offers a perspective on how Irrecha is viewed and experienced by the Muslim community within the Oromo society. Linguistic Expert: Provides an analysis of the language used in the discourse surrounding Irrecha, examining how language shapes and reflects cultural and social meanings. Tourism Expert: Offers insights into the role of Irrecha in promoting tourism and its economic and cultural impact on the region.

### **3.4 Time frame**

This study covered OBN, EBC, Borkena , Ezega and Addis Standard Irreecha stories in 2016, 2021, and 2022. The time range fell into those dates because:

The 2016 Irreecha celebration in Bishoftu was marred by a tragic stampede, resulting in a significant loss of lives. This event had profound socio-political repercussions and sparked widespread debates and controversies surrounding the government's handling of the festivities.

The 2019 Irreecha celebration marked a period of political transition in Ethiopia, following the appointment of Abiy Ahmed as Prime Minister. The event presented an opportunity to observe changes in government policies, public discourse, and media representations of Irreecha under the new administration.

Analyzing media representations across these years can highlight changes in media ownership, editorial policies, and reporting practices, providing insights into how different media outlets frame and narrate Irreecha celebrations in response to evolving political and social dynamics.

Cross-Sectional Comparison: Examining media representations from different years provides a cross-sectional view of Irreecha discourse, capturing variations in coverage, framing, and emphasis across different historical contexts and political climates.

The selected periods are recent enough to reflect current debates, controversies, and socio-political dynamics surrounding Irreecha celebrations, ensuring that the analysis remains relevant and timely within the context of ongoing developments in Ethiopian society.

### **1.5. Subject of the study**

The subject of the study encompasses various actors and entities involved in the discourse surrounding Irreecha events. These include:

**Media:** Media outlets, journalists, and content producers responsible for creating and disseminating representations of Irreecha celebrations through news articles, broadcasts, online content, and other media platforms.

**Public Figures:** Individuals who deliver speeches or statements related to Irreecha events, such as political leaders, religious leaders, and cultural figures. These speeches provide insights into official narratives, political agendas, and cultural interpretations of Irreecha.

**Actors:** A broad range of individuals, groups, and communities who have a stake in Irreecha celebrations, including Oromo communities, organizations, and members of the public. Their views, perspectives, and experiences contribute to the diversity of discourse surrounding Irreecha.

### **3.5 Source of the data**

Primary and secondary sources are the main source of data for this research.

Primary data is collected through interviews with key informants, including an EBC journalist, an Abba Gada (traditional Oromo leader), a Waqeefata religious leader, a Muslim religious leader, a linguistic expert, and a tourism expert. These interviews provide firsthand insights and diverse perspectives on the cultural, religious, linguistic, and economic aspects of Irreecha.

Secondary data comprises nine news articles from various sources (EBC, OBN, Addis Standard, Ezega News, and Borkena News), offering a range of national, regional, and independent viewpoints. Additionally, an official speech by President Shimallis provides a governmental perspective, while three scholarly articles contribute academic analyses of the cultural, sociological, and political dimensions of Irreecha. Lastly, an article from the Oromia Tourism and Communication Bureau offers insights into the event's regional promotion and significance. This comprehensive mix of data sources enables a well-rounded and in-depth critical discourse analysis of the Irreecha events.

### **3.6. Method of data analysis**

The data gathered by the above discussed qualitative data collection techniques analyzed based on appropriate qualitative research methodologies and by linking them to the objectives and questions of the study. Hence, in this study Critical discourse analysis (CDA) method used to analyze the data.

This method focuses on how language is used to construct and challenge power relations, ideologies, and identities in society. CDA examines how language shapes and is shaped by social, political, and historical contexts. CDA can be applied to various types of texts, such as media reports, speeches, interviews.(Amy Luo,2019)

Among the different models of critical discourse analysis (CDA), depending on theoretical perspective and analytical focus of the study the researcher uses Fairclough two dimensional Critical Discourse analysis methods.

**Text:** the researcher analyzes the linguistic features of the news about Irreecha, such as the vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and structure used to report on the festival. Also look at how the news uses language to convey meanings about Irreecha, such as its significance, purpose, participants, activities, etc. For example, the researcher examines how the news uses positive or negative words, formal or informal registers, factual or opinionated statements, etc. to describe or evaluate Irreecha.

**Social practice:** in the social practice part the researcher explores the broader social and cultural context in which the broadcast news and the discursive practice about Irreecha are situated. In other hands the researcher analyzes the ideologies, power relations and social structures that shape and are shaped by the news. For example, the researcher investigates how the news reflect or challenge the dominant or alternative discourses about Irreecha, such as its religious, cultural, political or historical significance. You can also examine how the news affects or are affected by the social realities of the Oromo people and other Ethiopians, such as their rights, struggles, opportunities and challenges.

By applying this model to different types of news about Irreecha discourse, the researcher can reveal the hidden or implicit aspects of discourse that may influence people's beliefs, attitudes and actions. and also try to compare and contrast different news and discourses to identify similarities and differences in their perspectives and representations of Irreecha.

In this study, the data analysis will begin with the content analysis of the discourse of selected media about Irreecha by categorizing them into different themes based on the literature review parts.

The data gathered through the in-depth interviews will be thematically analyzed based on the transcripts of the recorded interviews and the notes taken by the researcher during interviews. The data collected from OBN, EBC and Addis Standard News Archive about the Irrecha event will transcribe word-by-word in order not to miss vital information. After that, the data was translated from Afaan Oromo and Amharic into English.

The data collected and analyzed in the above-mentioned manner will present in a descriptive form and quotations are used whenever necessary to further strengthen the major findings of the study

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. Data presentation and analysis

As already mentioned, this study targeted two state media OBN and EBC and Three private media (Addis Standard Newspaper, Ethiopian Insight and Borkena News and tried to analyze how their texts/frames defined Irreecha and entertain various discourses about Irreecha in three selected celebrations years of Irreecha (2016, 2019, and 2021). Generally, Seven News has been interpreted from the Fairclough's perspective of critical discourse analysis.

The approach of Critical Discourse Analysis has mainly been applied to answer the research questions raised in the study. The questions were:

1. How do media outlets portray Irreecha, and what discursive strategies do they employ to construct its contextual meanings?
2. What interpretations of Irreecha are provided by various stakeholders, and how do these interpretations contribute to the overall understanding of the festival's significance?
3. What are the social, political, and historical factors that underpin the discourse surrounding Irreecha, and how do these factors influence its representation in media, political speeches, and grassroots perspectives?

#### 4.1. The language used in media coverage of Irreecha

The focus of the study under this subtopic has been on the text analysis. It looked into how the Irreecha is constructed or interpreted in the selected news, speech and articles by scholars.

##### A. Print and online News

To analyze the language used in the news coverage of Irreecha, we can look at various aspects including framing, selection of quotes and sources, and the use of specific terms and metaphors. Let's break down the analysis based on the provided news excerpts:

### **1. Framing of the Event:**

The first news excerpt from October 5, 2019, portrays Irreecha as a traditional religious festival of the ethnic Oromo people, emphasizing its significance as a festival of thanksgiving to Waaqa, a monotheistic god in the Oromo traditional religion of Waaqeffannaa.

It frames the festival as having both cultural and religious significance, highlighting traditional rituals such as offering thanks for the end of the rainy season and throwing grass, slaughtered roosters, and buttering live trees into Lake Hora.

The second news excerpt from October 16, 2022, provides a more nuanced perspective, acknowledging the political dimension of Irreecha and its role as a platform for protest against historical marginalization and state repression of Oromo cultural practices.

### **2. Selection of Quotes and Sources:**

The first news excerpt quotes Shimeles Abdissa, the acting president of the Oromo regional state, who delivers a controversial political speech linking the festival to Oromo political struggles against historical oppression.

The second news excerpt includes quotes from attendees and organizers of the festival, providing insights into the sentiments and intentions of participants, as well as the efforts to maintain cultural traditions while navigating political sensitivities.

### **3. Use of Specific Terms and Metaphors:**

Both news excerpts use specific terms such as "Irreecha," "Waaqeffannaa," "Meskel Square," and "Hora Finfinee," which are key elements of the cultural and religious context of the festival. Metaphors such as "throwing grass to the lake as an offer of thanks to Waaqa" and "breaking the ankle of Neftegna" (referring to historical struggles against perceived oppressors) are employed to convey symbolic meanings and historical narratives associated with Irreecha.

### **4. Discursive Strategies:**

Legitimization: Both excerpts present Irreecha as a legitimate cultural and religious practice of the Oromo people, highlighting its historical and symbolic significance.

Persuasion: The first excerpt persuades the audience to consider the political implications of Irreecha and its role in contemporary Oromo identity and resistance movements.

Agenda-Setting: The second excerpt sets the agenda by focusing on the political dimension of Irreecha and the challenges faced by organizers and participants in navigating political sensitivities and state repression. Overall, the language used in the news coverage of Irreecha reflects a complex interplay of cultural, religious, and political dimensions, with discursive strategies aimed at legitimizing, persuading, and setting agendas related to the festival's representation and significance.

## **B. Broadcast News**

Let's analyze the language used in the EBC and OBN news coverage of Irreecha, focusing on the framing of the event, selection of quotes and sources, and discursive strategies employed:

### **1. Framing of the Event:**

EBC and OBN frame Irreecha as a significant cultural event celebrated by the Oromo people, emphasizing its historical and cultural importance. It is portrayed as a holiday of thanksgiving and unity, marking the transition from the rainy season to spring. The coverage highlights the participation of millions of people, the sharing of Oromo cultures and values, and the peaceful celebration of Irreecha, reinforcing its significance as a cultural practice.

### **2. Selection of Quotes and Sources:**

Quotes from cultural and political leaders, such as abbaa Gadas, government officials, and regional presidents, are prominently featured in the coverage. These sources provide insights into the cultural significance of Irreecha and convey messages of unity, peace, and cultural pride. Additionally, quotes expressing condolences for those affected by past tragedies during Irreecha are included, demonstrating empathy and sensitivity towards the community.

### **3. Use of Specific Terms and Metaphors:**

Terms like "thanksgiving," "unity," "peace," and "prayer" is frequently used to describe Irreecha, highlighting its cultural and spiritual dimensions. Metaphors such as "arms of Oromo" and "indication of Oromo victory" is employed to convey the symbolic importance of celebrating Irreecha in specific locations, such as Finfinnee (Addis Ababa), and to evoke feelings of pride and empowerment among the Oromo community.

### **4. Discursive Strategies:**

**Legitimization:** Both EBC and OBN portray Irreecha as a legitimate cultural practice deeply rooted in Oromo tradition and history. The coverage emphasizes its role in promoting unity, peace, and cultural identity among the Oromo people.

**Persuasion:** The language used in the coverage aims to persuade the audience of the cultural significance and positive impact of Irreecha, portraying it as a celebration of peace, unity, and diversity.

**Agenda-setting:** The coverage sets the agenda by focusing on specific themes and narratives, such as cultural pride, unity, and resilience, while also addressing past tragedies and challenges faced during Irreecha celebrations.

Overall, the language used in the EBC and OBN news coverage of Irreecha reflects an effort to frame the event in a positive light, emphasizing its cultural importance and promoting messages of unity, peace, and resilience within the Oromo community.

## **4.2. How media outlets engage with Irreecha as a social practice**

### **A. Print and Online News**

Let's focus on the Print and Online news coverage of Irreecha to analyze how media outlets engage with it as a social practice and the power dynamics at play:

#### **1. Shaping Public Perceptions:**

Media outlets like Addis Standard play a significant role in shaping public perceptions of Irreecha by providing coverage that highlights specific aspects of the festival. In this case, the coverage emphasizes the political dimensions of Irreecha, portraying it as a platform for protest and dissent against the current government. By focusing on protests, calls for political change, and the heavy presence of security forces, the coverage may lead the audience to perceive Irreecha primarily as a political event rather than a cultural or religious celebration.

## **2. Reinforcing Cultural Norms:**

While the coverage acknowledges Irreecha's cultural significance and traditional rituals, such as prayers and traditional dances, the emphasis on political protests and security measures may overshadow the cultural aspects of the festival. However, the inclusion of quotes from organizers and traditional leaders advocating for the preservation of cultural practices can help reinforce cultural norms associated with Irreecha, albeit within the context of political unrest.

## **3. Mediating Between Stakeholders:**

Addis Standard serves as a mediator between different stakeholders involved in Irreecha by providing a platform for diverse perspectives, including those of organizers, participants, and security forces. The coverage presents viewpoints from both sides of the political spectrum, with quotes from organizers urging attendees to refrain from political agendas and protestors calling for political change. This mediation facilitates dialogue and debate on the purpose and significance of Irreecha.

## **4. Power Dynamics:**

**Media ownership:** Addis Standard's independent status allows it to provide relatively unbiased coverage of Irreecha, although its editorial stance may still be influenced by its ownership and funding sources.

**Political affiliations:** While Addis Standard is known for its critical stance towards the government, its coverage of Irreecha reflects a balanced portrayal of the political dynamics surrounding the festival, including criticism of both protestors and security forces.

Audience demographics: Addis Standard's audience likely consists of individuals interested in Ethiopian politics and social issues, influencing the tone and content of its coverage to cater to their interests and preferences.

Overall, the analysis of Addis Standard's coverage of Irreecha highlights the complexities of media engagement with the festival as a social practice, including its role in shaping public perceptions, reinforcing cultural norms, mediating between stakeholders, and navigating power dynamics within the media landscape.

## **B. Social Practice of Broadcast News**

In analyzing the news excerpts from both EBC and OBN regarding Irreecha, several observations can be made regarding how media outlets engage with Irreecha as a social practice, as well as the power dynamics at play:

### **1. Shaping Public Perceptions and Reinforcing Cultural Norms:**

Both EBC and OBN portray Irreecha as a significant cultural event deeply rooted in Oromo tradition and spirituality. The coverage emphasizes themes of unity, peace, and gratitude, framing Irreecha as a holiday of thanksgiving and celebration.

Language used in the news excerpts reinforces cultural norms associated with Irreecha, such as unity, peace, and inclusivity. Terms like "peace," "unity," and "cultural values" are frequently employed to underscore the significance of the event.

### **2. Mediating Between Different Stakeholders:**

Media outlets act as mediators between various stakeholders involved in Irreecha celebrations, including cultural leaders, government officials, and participants. The coverage includes perspectives from different groups, providing a platform for diverse voices to be heard.

By presenting a range of viewpoints, the media facilitate dialogue and understanding among stakeholders, contributing to social cohesion and mutual respect within the community.

### **3. Power Dynamics:**

Influence of media ownership and political affiliations may shape the portrayal of Irreecha in the news. EBC, being a state-owned media outlet, align its coverage with the interests of the government. In contrast, OBN have more autonomy to represent the perspectives of the Oromo community.

Audience demographics also impact how Irreecha is depicted in the news. EBC cater to a broader national audience, while OBN have a predominantly Oromo audience. This influence the framing and tone of the coverage to appeal to their respective viewership.

### **4. Impact of Historical Context:**

Historical context, such as past incidents during Irreecha celebrations, influence the tone and focus of the coverage. References to previous tragedies or disruptions during Irreecha may shape public perceptions and expectations surrounding the event.

Media outlets may seek to address concerns about safety and security at Irreecha celebrations, especially in light of past incidents, by highlighting measures taken by authorities to ensure peaceful festivities.

Overall, while both EBC and OBN aim to portray Irreecha in a positive light and reinforce cultural norms, differences in media ownership, political affiliations, and audience demographics may influence the framing and emphasis of the coverage. However, both outlets play a crucial role in mediating between stakeholders and shaping public perceptions of Irreecha as a significant cultural practice.

### **4.3. The range of interpretations of Irreecha presented by different stakeholders Actors**

#### **4.3.1. Interpretations of Shimallis Abdisa Speech**

Shimallis Abdisa's speech presents a range of interpretations of Irreecha, each articulated through language and discourse that reflects divergent viewpoints, contested meanings, and symbolic representations. Here's an analysis:

##### **1. Irreecha as a Symbol of Victory and Freedom:**

Abdisa portrays Irreecha as a celebration of victory and freedom for the Oromo people, emphasizing the historical struggles and sacrifices made to reclaim their identity and rights. Language such as "victory," "freedom," and "ownership" are used to highlight the significance of Irreecha as a symbol of overcoming oppression and reclaiming cultural and political autonomy.

##### **2. Irreecha as a Unifying Event:**

The speech emphasizes Irreecha's role in fostering unity among different ethnic groups in Ethiopia, portraying it as a festival where all nations and nationalities come together to celebrate Oromo culture and values.

Terms like "unity," "equality," and "inclusiveness" are employed to underscore the inclusive nature of Irreecha and its potential to promote social cohesion and national unity.

##### **3. Irreecha as a Political Statement:**

Abdisa's speech frames Irreecha as a political statement asserting the Oromo people's rights and aspirations within the Ethiopian state. References to reclaiming Finfinne (Addis Ababa) and declaring Oromo freedom in front of enemies and friends signify a political agenda aimed at asserting Oromo political influence and sovereignty. The speech positions Irreecha as a platform for advancing Oromo nationalism and asserting the Oromo identity within the broader Ethiopian context.

#### **4. Irreecha as a Call to Action:**

Abdisa's speech calls for the protection and preservation of Irreecha's significance as a symbol of victory and freedom. It urges the Oromo people to work together to safeguard their achievements and continue striving for progress and development. Language like "protect," "safeguard," and "accomplish" underscores the importance of collective action and commitment to maintaining the gains made through Irreecha celebrations.

Overall, Abdisa's speech presents Irreecha as a multifaceted event with symbolic, cultural, political, and social significance. It articulates a narrative of triumph over adversity, unity in diversity, and the assertion of Oromo identity and rights within the Ethiopian state. The language and discourse used serve to reinforce these interpretations and mobilize support for the ongoing struggle for Oromo autonomy and recognition.

##### **4.3.1. 1. How Shimallis Abdisa engage with Irreecha as a cultural, political, and social phenomenon**

Shimallis Abdisa's engagement with Irreecha in the speech reflects its significance as a cultural, political, and social phenomenon, with interpretations that resonate within broader social dynamics and power relations:

##### **1. Cultural Significance:**

Abdisa acknowledges Irreecha as a deeply rooted cultural practice among the Oromo people, emphasizing its importance as a symbol of identity, heritage, and tradition. By celebrating Irreecha in Finfinne (Addis Ababa), historically significant to the Oromo people, Abdisa highlights the cultural reclaiming of spaces and traditions previously suppressed or marginalized.

The speech underscores the cultural resilience and pride of the Oromo people, framing Irreecha as a manifestation of cultural strength and continuity despite historical oppression.

##### **2. Political Implications:**

Abdisa's speech embeds Irreecha within broader political narratives, presenting it as a platform for asserting Oromo political aspirations and reclaiming political agency. References to reclaiming Finfinne and declaring Oromo freedom signify political assertions aimed at challenging historical injustices and asserting Oromo sovereignty within the Ethiopian state. By thanking the regional and federal governments, including Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Abdisa navigates the political landscape, acknowledging both support received and ongoing struggles for political recognition and rights.

### **3. Social Dynamics and Power Relations:**

Abdisa's speech reflects complex social dynamics and power relations within Ethiopian society, particularly regarding ethnic relations and historical grievances. The emphasis on unity and inclusiveness during Irreecha underscores efforts to bridge ethnic divides and foster social cohesion, albeit within a framework that centers Oromo cultural dominance and agency.

References to past humiliations, sacrifices, and victories highlight historical power imbalances and injustices faced by the Oromo people, framing Irreecha as a site of resistance and empowerment. The speech positions the Oromo people as central actors in shaping Ethiopia's political and social landscape, signaling shifts in power dynamics and asserting Oromo cultural and political influence.

Overall, Shimallis Abdisa's engagement with Irreecha in the speech reflects its multifaceted nature as a cultural, political, and social phenomenon. Interpretations presented in the speech resonate within broader social dynamics and power relations, highlighting struggles for cultural recognition, political representation, and social justice within the Ethiopian context.

### **4.3.3. Analysis of Scholars view On Irrecha**

#### **A. Tsegaye G/ Medhin**

The text follows a narrative structure, recounting the mythological story of ASRA, SETE, ORA, and ASIS, which serves as the foundation for the Irrecha festival. Its language is descriptive and evocative, employing metaphors and symbolic imagery to convey the cultural and religious significance of Irrecha.

Incorporating cultural references such as the Nile River, ancient Egypt, and the Axumite period, the narrative grounds itself in historical and geographical contexts. It explores themes of spirituality, worship, and reverence for nature, emphasizing the Oromo belief in one God (WAAQA) and the rituals performed to express gratitude and seek blessings. Highlighting deep-rooted cultural traditions, including religious practices like WAAQEFFANNAA, and the communal aspect of the festival, it underscores how communities come together to perform prayers and express gratitude, fostering unity and social cohesion.

Reflecting the Oromo connection to nature, the narrative reveres mountains, rivers, and seas as sacred spaces for worship, embodying a holistic worldview. Tracing the historical continuity of Irrecha from ancient times to the present, it underscores its enduring significance as a cornerstone of Oromo culture and identity. Overall, by analyzing both the linguistic features of the narrative and its broader social and cultural implications, we gain a deeper understanding of the significance of Irrecha within the context of Oromo tradition and spirituality.

#### **B. Asabe Regasa /PhD/**

The article by Asabe Regasa delves into linguistic features, employing terms like "thanksgiving celebration," "ritual," and "arena" to depict Irrecha, with metaphors like "Irrecha as a bridge" symbolizing its significance. Active voice is utilized to convey agency, particularly when discussing Irrecha's transformations and importance. Structured format guides the article, beginning with an introduction contextualizing Irrecha and proceeding to explore historical trajectories, pre-1991 periods, and the ritual's revitalization. In the social practice dimension, the article situates Irrecha within broader social contexts.

It illustrates how the ritual evolved beyond religious roots to symbolize Oromo identity and unity. Political suppression under past Ethiopian regimes, including imperial and military rule, is analyzed, alongside Irrecha's resurgence post-1991 amid rising Oromo nationalism. The article also underscores Irrecha's global significance, celebrated not just in Oromia but among the diaspora, embodying cultural resilience and identity even in exile.

Overall, it offers a comprehensive examination of Irrecha's cultural and political dimensions within the Oromo community, elucidating its transformative role in identity formation and resistance against cultural hegemony.

#### **4.3.4. How Oromia communication and Tourism bureau engage with Irrecha as a cultural, political, and social phenomenon.**

Oromia tourism commission and Oromia communication Bureau is among the major organizer of Irrecha celebration. Therefore it's useful for the researcher to look at the definition given by these stakeholders and then how the media report it.

##### **a. Oromia Tourism Brue**

The text by Oromia Tourism Brue paints a vivid picture of the Irrecha ceremony, using descriptive language to underscore its cultural and religious importance. Specific geographical references, such as mountain tops and river banks/lake shores, anchor the narrative in a tangible context. Timing is emphasized, highlighting the ceremony's occurrence at the transition between seasons, symbolizing change and renewal.

It discusses the ceremony's evolution to embrace participants from diverse religious backgrounds, signaling inclusivity within Oromo culture. In terms of social practice, the text underscores the communal nature of Irrecha, with people gathering from across Oromia and beyond to celebrate and express gratitude. Irrecha emerges as a platform for the assertion of Oromo identity, fostering unity and pride among participants.

Notably, the mention of diverse religious backgrounds participating in the ceremony reflects a shift towards inclusivity, making Irrecha a unifying cultural event. Specific ritual sites like Hora

Harsadi and Melka Atete are highlighted, emphasizing their significance and the widespread popularity of the ceremony.

Overall, the text provides valuable insights into Irreecha's cultural, religious, and social dimensions, illuminating its role as a communal celebration of thanksgiving and cultural identity.

#### **b. Oromia Communication Brue**

The text by Oromia Communication Brue presents a range of interpretations of Irreecha within the context of Oromia. It portrays Irreecha as a sacred and festive occasion that symbolizes the Oromo's gratitude, resilience, and diversity. The celebration is depicted as a symbol of hope and harmony, especially amid challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and political unrest.

The role of the Oromia government and security forces in ensuring safety and order during Irreecha is emphasized positively. Overall, the text aims to promote and celebrate Oromo culture, identity, and values, presenting Irreecha as a unifying cultural event.

However, interpretations of Irreecha may vary among different audiences. Some Oromo people may view it as a positive representation of their culture and identity, while others may see it as politically motivated. Non-Oromo people may perceive it as an opportunity to learn about Oromo culture, or they may view it with skepticism or concern regarding its potential impact on Ethiopian unity.

#### **4.4. Interview parts/RQ2 AND RQ3**

For the purpose of this study the researcher conducts interviews with the Muslim, Waqeffannaa religious fathers, Abada gada, tourism Expert , langugist and foklare expert from university and journalist to know the perspectives and views from every aspect.

##### **Definition of Irrecha**

Among the interviewee for this study a journalist working at Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation A/Oromo department called Abdo Teshita define Irrecha as follow:

"I define Irreecha as a thanksgiving holiday that celebrates the end of the winter and the beginning of the spring."

The other interviewee for the study Oromia Tourism Commission expert Abdi Rebuma explain Irreecha As a cultural expression of gratitude to Waaqa (God) for providing life necessities to human beings and other living things.

Aba Gad Kusa Deti in his side define Irrecha as a symbol of Oromo identity and unity, as it brings together Oromos from different parts of the country and the world.

Waqeffannaa religious fathers say that Irreecha is celebrated in places with symbolic meanings, such as lakes, rivers, hills, and trees. Irreecha is not only a religious ritual, but also a social and political forum where the Oromo people articulate, reconstruct, and practice their culture and values.

##### **Irrecha is shirk**

According to Abdurahman MS the term shirk in Islam is used to refer to idolatry or polytheism, which means deification, or worship of deity, gods, or anything other than Allāh. As opposed to polytheism, Islam preaches strict monotheism embedded in tawḥīd (oneness of God), i.e., God is one, unique, and absolute.(Abdul-Rahman MS (2009)

My islam religious father interviewees express Irrechaa as a Shirk

"Celebrating Irreecha is perishable according to Islam religion, as long as it involves shirk (associating partners with Allah) or bid'ah (innovation in religion). Irreecha is a cultural festival of waaqeffata religion Which they celebrate to expresses gratitude to Their Waqa/God for His bounties and blessings, but we as a Muslim we thank and praise Allah only going to the mosque, therefore this is contradict the teachings of Islam"

"In fact, many Muslim scholars and leaders have participated in Irreecha and encouraged others to do so, as a way of strengthening the bonds of brotherhood and unity among the Oromo people. Some examples are: Sheikh Muhammad Rashad Abdulle, a prominent Oromo Islamic scholar and translator of the Qur'an into Oromo language, who attended Irreecha in 2012 and delivered a speech praising Allah and His creation."

" Sheikh Muhammad Siraj, the president of the Ethiopian Islamic Affairs Supreme Council, who attended Irreecha in 2019 and 2020 and expressed his support for the festival as a symbol of peace and harmony"

"Sheikh Muhammad Dekebo, an Oromo Islamic scholar and activist, who wrote a book titled "Irreecha: The Oromo Thanksgiving Festival" in which he explained the historical, cultural, and religious aspects of Irreecha from an Islamic perspective"

Therefore, celebrating Irreecha is not only permissible but also commendable for Muslims, as it is a way of showing gratitude to Allah, respecti

### **Irreecha is both religious and cultural holiday**

For the purpose of this study the researcher conduct interview with Oromo Abbaa gada called Kusaa Deetti. he is well known abbaa gadaa of Arsii Oromo.

abbaa gadaa Kusaa Deetii express Irreecha as follow:

"Irreecha" is a festival that has both religious and cultural aspects. It is a way of expressing gratitude to Waaqa (God) for the blessings and mercies received throughout the year, as well as celebrating the arrival of spring after the rainy season. Irreecha is also a time of social gathering, entertainment, and cultural expression for the Oromo people."

According to him irreecha is not a religious festival and have not any connection with religion:

"Irreecha" is not associated with any specific religion, but rather reflects the Oromo worldview and cosmology. Irreecha is celebrated at sacred places such as lakes, rivers, and mountains, where the Oromo people believe that Waaqa manifests his power and presence."

Abba Gada added that "some Waaqeffataas may see Irreecha as a religious holiday that honors Waaqa and his Ayyaana, while others may see it as a cultural festival that celebrates their identity and heritage. Irreecha is a festival that can be enjoyed by all Oromo people regardless of their religious affiliation."

the other interviewee for this study Oromia tourism commission expert Abdi Rebuma sees Irreecha as its for every Oromo:

"Irreecha is not only for Waaqeffannaa, which is a monotheistic religion traditional to the Oromo people. Irreecha is a cultural and social event that is open to all Oromo people, regardless of their religious beliefs."

"Many Waaqeffata people celebrate Irreecha as a religious holiday. They see it as an opportunity to connect with Waaqa and to celebrate their faith. However, many Oromo people who do not practice Waaqeffata also celebrate Irreecha. They see it as a time to come together and celebrate their Oromo culture and identity."

The journalist at EBC also support the idea of Oromia tourism Commission expert:

"Irreecha is both a religious and cultural festival. It is a thanksgiving holiday that celebrates the end of the rainy season and the beginning of the spring season. Irreecha is also a time for Oromo people to come together and celebrate their shared culture and identity. Irreecha has its roots in the traditional Oromo religion, Waaqeffannaa. Waaqeffannaa is a monotheistic religion that worships a supreme being called Waaqa. Waaqa is believed to be the creator and sustainer of the universe."

### **Irreecha is Waaqeffannaa Religious Holiday**

To analysis the discourse of Irrecha from every aspect the researcher conducts interviews with waaqeffannaa religious leaders called Kenea Lemi (PhD).

According to him every waaqeffannaa religion followers sees irrechaas their religious holiday:

"We see Irreecha as a Waaqeffannaa religion holiday. The word Waaqeffannaa derives from the word Waaqa, The main religious belief of Waaqeffannaa is that Waaqa (the creator) is the father and creator of the universe. As followers of the Waaqeffannaa we believe in the supreme being Waaqa Tokkicha (the one God). " therefore we are going to the river in the month of September to gratitude to Waaqa (God) for the blessings and mercies received throughout the year."

He added that Waaqeffannaa religious followers are thank God during Irrecha:

"In Waaqeffannaa, Irrecha is a time to thank Waaqa for the blessings of the past year. It is also a time to pray for a good harvest in the coming year. Irrecha is celebrated at sacred lakes and rivers throughout Oromia, Ethiopia. In recent years, Irrecha has also become a symbol of Oromo nationalism and resistance. "

## **RQ2 social and political cause for the existence of irrecha discourse**

From the interviewee Waaqeffannaa religious leader Kenea (PhD) express the main reason for the existence of irrecha discourse as the follow:

"Irreechaa" is a way of preserving and promoting the Oromo identity, culture, and religion, which have been attacked and denigrated by successive Ethiopian regimes. It is a manifestation of Oromo national unity, as it draws together Oromo people from all walks of life, religious backgrounds, and political affiliations. Therefore the past regime create various negative narrative to attack Irrecha festival"

Abba gada Kusa Deti in his side says that the main reason for the existence of irrecha discourse is Ethiopian government:

"Irreechaa" is a way of expressing resistance and protest against the injustices and grievances faced by the Oromo people under the Ethiopian state. It has been used as a platform to deliver political statements, slogans, and demands for freedom, democracy, and self-determination. "It

was also a major stage for the Oromo protests from 2014 to 2017 that contributed to the end of the EPRDF coalition government."

“Oromo nationalism and resistance to Ethiopian government oppression is the other reason for the existence of irrecha discourse ,The Oromo people are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, but they have historically been marginalized and oppressed by the Ethiopian government. In recent years, there has been a growing movement among Oromo people to reclaim their culture and identity. Irrecha has become a focal point of this movement, and is seen as a symbol of Oromo resistance to Ethiopian government oppression.

Muslims Religious Leader Sheik Hasan Aman says that In recent years, the government has tried to promote Irrecha as a national festival that belongs to all Ethiopians. However, this has been met with resistance from some Oromo people who believe that the government is trying to co-opt their culture and religion.

Sheik hassan added that Irrecha is a religious festival for many Oromo people. The Oromo people predominantly practice traditional African religions, such as Waaqeffannaa.

According to Kenea (PhD) the Oromo people have historically been marginalized and oppressed in Ethiopian politics and economics. This has led to a sense of grievance and resentment among Oromo people, which have contributed to the politicization of Irrecha.

The discourse on Irrecha is complex and nuanced. It is important to consider the different perspectives on Irrecha, including the religious, cultural, and political dimensions. It is also important to be aware of the power relations that are at play in the discourse on Irrecha.

### **Why is Irrecha politicised?**

In recent years Irrecha is not only a religious and cultural festival, but also a political one. Irrecha has become more politicized due to several factors

According to Waaqeffata religious father Irrecha is politicized and controversial because of the following things.

" Irrecha discourse is controversial because it has been politicized by different actors who have different interests and agendas. Some see Irrecha as a way to promote Oromo nationalism and autonomy, while others see it as a threat to national unity and stability. Some want to preserve Irrecha as a traditional and religious ritual, while others want to modernize it and make it more inclusive and diverse. Some celebrate Irrecha peacefully and joyfully, while others use it as an opportunity to protest and express their grievances"

As Kenea lemi (PhD) Irrecha is more politicised after 2014 master plan:

" In 2014, the Ethiopian government announced a controversial plan to expand the capital city Addis Ababa into Oromia region, which sparked widespread protests by Oromo activists who feared land grabbing, displacement and cultural assimilation. The protests continued until 2016, when a state of emergency was declared by the government to quell the unrest. During this period, Irrecha became a site of confrontation between the security forces and the protesters, who chanted anti-government slogans and displayed symbols of resistance such as the "Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) flag."

According to Human Rights watch in 2016, Irrecha turned into a tragedy when a stampede broke out after security forces fired tear gas and live bullets at the crowd, killing at least 55 people and injuring hundreds more. The government blamed "anti-peace elements" for instigating the chaos, while the opposition accused the government of committing a massacre. The incident sparked more protests and violence across the Oromia region and other parts of Ethiopia, leading to hundreds of deaths, arrests and displacements."

Among the interviewee for this study Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation Journalist Abdo Teshita says that the celebration of Irrecha at Addis Ababa is politicized Irrecha after 2016 accidents:

"In 2018, Irrecha was celebrated in Addis Ababa for the first time in 150 years, following the political reforms initiated by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who came to power in April 2018 as the first Oromo leader in Ethiopia's modern history. Abiy promised to address the grievances of the Oromo people and other ethnic groups, release political prisoners, lift the state of emergency, open up the political space and initiate a national dialogue. The celebration in Addis Ababa was

seen as a sign of reconciliation and unity among Ethiopians of different backgrounds and beliefs. However, it also exposed the divisions and tensions within the Oromo community and between different political actors over issues such as federalism, identity, autonomy and justice."

Another interviewee for the study Kenea lemi (PhD) says that the assassination of Oromo Singer hachalu Hundessa is the other cause politicized irreecha:

"In 2020, Irreecha was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the political crisis that followed the assassination of Hachalu Hundessa, a popular Oromo singer and activist who was shot dead in Addis Ababa on June 29, 2020. His death triggered violent protests and clashes that killed more than 200 people and injured many more. The government accused some opposition leaders and groups such as the OLF and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) of being behind the unrest and arrested several prominent figures including Jawar Mohammed, Bekele Gerba and Eskinder Nega. The celebration in Addis Ababa was limited to around 5,000 people due to security concerns and health restrictions. The celebration in Bishoftu was also marred by violence when some protesters clashed with security forces over access to Lake Hora."

The other interviewee for this study is Oromia Tourism Commission Expert Abdi Rebuma. He explains the below factors as why Irreecha has become politicized in recent years:

"First, Irreecha is a symbol of Oromo culture and identity. The Oromo people are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, but they have historically been marginalized and oppressed by the Ethiopian government. In recent years, there has been a growing movement among Oromo people to reclaim their culture and identity. Irreecha has become a focal point of this movement"

"Second, Irreecha has become a rallying point for Oromo protests against the Ethiopian government. In 2016, a stampede at an Irreecha festival resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Oromo people. This tragedy sparked widespread protests and demonstrations against the Ethiopian government.

Since then, Irreecha has been a site of frequent protests and demonstrations by Oromo people. The Ethiopian government has responded to these protests with violence and repression. "This has only further politicized Irreecha."

Irrecha has become politicized because it is a symbol of Oromo culture, identity, and religion. It is also a rallying point for Oromo protests against the Ethiopian government. The Ethiopian government's attempts to co-opt Irrecha have only further politicized the festival.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## 1. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendation

The Irreecha festival, a significant cultural and spiritual event for the Oromo people, has been subject to various interpretations by media, political speeches, and stakeholders' views. This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the discourse surrounding the Irreecha events.

### 5.1. Summary.

This study was conducted with the purpose of analyzing the discourse of the Irreecha as depicted by media, speeches, and views of the stakeholders. In an attempt to meet the already set objective, the study raised three questions and sought answers for those questions. The questions were: What are the written and vocal Contextual meanings of the term “Irreecha” given by the media? What are the meanings given to Irreecha by stakeholders? What social, political, or historical reasons for the existence of the discourse irreecha? The news reports and the speeches are analyzed majorly by Fairclough's three-dimensional model analytic tools likely to strengthen the analysis.

This study ranges from the micro-level linguistic features, to the macro-level institutional and social setting. To this end, using purposive sampling techniques, three media outputs (i.e. from Broadcast and press) were chosen as extracts, which are from both state and privately run media institutions. Six broadcast news were selected, 3 of which produced by Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation and other three were by Oromia Broadcasting Corporation both of media are state run. Two newspapers, Addis standard and Ethiopian Insign of which are privately owned. And one Online news Borkena News which is privately owned. All these media outputs, interviews and selected speech are critically analyzed based on the outlined analytic techniques.

The study selected the Critical Discourse Analysis approach as a method to answer those research questions. It was primarily the Fairclough's approach of CDA which was found to be fit to answer the research questions. However, the approach was used flexibly to apply only the textual and the social practice part of the Two dimensional model. The discourse practice part of

the trio model was left out because of the practical difficulty to conduct the discourse practice analysis.

The media has often depicted the Irreecha festival as a peaceful celebration of cultural identity and thanksgiving. However, there have been instances where the festival's political undertones are highlighted, especially when it becomes a platform for political expression and resistance against oppression

The analysis of the study showed that the written and vocal Contextual meanings of the term "Irreecha " given by the media covered by this study is various depending on the ownership of the media. Most of them express Irreecha as a thanksgiving day celebrated by everyone. For example state owned Oromia Broadcasting Network/OBN express Irreecha as a secular festival that is attended by Oromo people from various religious backgrounds such as Waaqeffannaa, Christianity and islam.

Private owned Addis Standard also define Irreecha as a festival of welcoming the expected seeds and fruits of prosperity and peace, as well as a time to express the gratitude, culture and identity of the Oromo nation. The article published about Irreecha by addis standard state that Irreecha is a core component in the reconstruction of Oromo identity (Oromumma) and a platform for promoting and enhancing understanding and unity among the Oromo.

State owned national media Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation also express Irreecha as a thanksgiving festival that Oromos celebrate together with other people and its undertaken twice a year. EBC stated that Irreecha symbolizes the link between waaqaa and Oromos that shows the strongest links the human in the context of thanksgiving. EBC also reported that Irreecha is an event where social interaction takes place and the social capital that helps the society to interconnect one another and enhance belongings is strengthened.

Stakeholders, including Abba Gadaas, religious fathers, and various experts, offer diverse perspectives on the festival. While some view it as a purely cultural event, others recognize its potential as a unifying force for political mobilization.

For instance most of Muslim religion leaders see Irrecha as “Shirk ” which means deification, or worship of deity, gods, or anything other than Allāh. Celebrating Irreecha is perishable according to Islam religion, as long as it involves shirk (associating partners with Allah) or bid'ah (innovation in religion). According to Islam religious fathers participate in this study Irreecha is a cultural festival of waaqeffannaa religion Which they celebrate to expresses gratitude to Their Waqa/God for His bounties and blessings, but Muslim thank and praise Allah only going to the mosque, therefore this is contradict the teachings of Islam.

In fact, some Muslim schoolars and leaders have participated in Irreecha and encouraged others to do so, as a way of strengthening the bonds of brotherhood and unity among the Oromo people. as some interviewees, that's because of the political purpose or to strengthening the bonds of brotherhood among Oromos.

From the analysis of the interview the researcher understand that most of Oromo abbaa gadaas sees Irrecha as a festival that has both religious and cultural aspects. while others express Irreecha a its not associated with any specific religion, but rather reflects the Oromo worldview and cosmology.

Political figures have used the Irreecha platform to address issues of governance, cultural rights, and national identity. The speeches made during the festival reflect the ongoing struggle for recognition and autonomy within the Oromo community

The researcher finds that some scholars see irrecha as material of social and political movement while the others see it as a cultural and religious festival. For example, what happened at the 2016 Irreecha festival is the major example for the above statement.

The researcher finds that there are a lot of social, political, or historical reasons for the existence of the discourse irrecha.

Among them, the interviewee for this study state that the past regime created this type of discourse and controversies about Irrech because irrecha can preserve and promote the Oromo identity, culture, and religion, which have been attacked and denigrated by successive Ethiopian

regimes.as the participants of the study most of Ethiopian regimes think that if oromo unify it may be a major political problem for the government.

The recent years, political contestation and violence between the Oromo protesters and the Ethiopian security forces at Irrecha celebration is the other political reason for the existence of Irrecha discourse according to the interviewee participating in this study.

The other findings of the study is that the various parties including Oromoo political parties interest create a vacuum for the existence of the Irrecha discourse.

Many Waaqeffannaa religious followers celebrate Irrecha as a religious holiday. They see it as an opportunity to connect with Waaqa and to celebrate their faith. Waaqeffannaa may see Irreecha as a religious holiday that honors Waaqa and his Ayyaana. due to lack of proper communication and education about this culture of Waaqeffannaa, the other community members and religious followers sees this as a worshiping of the devils. therefore this create a various discourse on the real meaning of the Irecha.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The discourse surrounding the Irreecha festival, as depicted by media, speeches, and the views of stakeholders, paints a vivid picture of a cultural event deeply embedded in the socio-political fabric of the Oromo people. The festival, traditionally a non-political celebration of thanksgiving, has evolved into a potent symbol of Oromo identity and resistance against historical suppression. Media narratives often oscillate between portraying the festival as a peaceful cultural gathering and a site of political expression, reflecting the complex nature of the event.

Political speeches delivered during Irreecha have increasingly addressed broader issues of governance and cultural rights, signaling the festival's role as a platform for articulating Oromo aspirations. The diverse perspectives of stakeholders—ranging from community leaders to international observers—highlight the multifaceted significance of Irreecha, acknowledging its potential to unify and mobilize the Oromo people.

In conclusion, the Irreecha festival stands as a testament to the resilience and unity of the Oromo community. It is a celebration that transcends mere cultural festivity, embodying the collective struggle for recognition and autonomy. The discourse analysis of Irreecha events underscores the importance of cultural heritage in shaping a community's identity and the power of collective gatherings in influencing social and political landscapes. As such, Irreecha is not only a reflection of the Oromo's past but also a beacon for their future aspirations. It is a dynamic event that continues to adapt and respond to the changing tides of Oromo society, serving as a critical space for the expression of unity and national identity.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the finding of the study the researcher gave the following recommendations to reduce negative discourse on irreecha.

Oromo schoolers should play a crucial role in addressing and mitigating the various discourse surrounding Irreecha by promoting cultural awareness specially by Educating the broader public, both within and outside the Oromo community, about the true essence of Irreecha. Dispel misconceptions and stereotypes.

The stakeholders of Irreecha should Address Controversies and Challenges by Acknowledge and address any controversies or conflicting narratives related to Irreecha. Engage in open dialogues to find common ground.

Oromia regional state and Ethiopian Government must avoid executive control and allow Irreecha to be space for peaceful expression, prayer and celebrations.

on the other hands every Irreecha stakeholders should work on political neutrality of irreecha. while Irreecha has taken on political dimensions , strive to maintain its cultural essence. encourage participant to express their views peacefully. additionally they should highlight Irreecha's role in fostering national unity among Oromo, regardless of religious or political affiliations.

every Oromo and Ethiopians should Support traditional practices by Encourage the continuation of authentic Irreecha rituals. Pass down knowledge to younger generations.

media organization at every level must provide accurate and unbiased coverage of irrecha by avoiding sensationalism or misrepresentation

they should educate and inform about Irrecha by creating features documentary ,news that delve into history, meaning and regional variations of Irrecha.

the media Organization should promote unity and understating during Irrecha. They should bridge the gaps by fostering understanding between different communities. highlight Irrechas unifying aspects. and also must showcase how people from various backgrounds celebrate irrecha. emphasize commonalities.

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## Appendices

Appendix A: shimallis abdiisaa speech on the eve of 2019 irrecha celebration at meskel square.  
(duration 13:57) by obn

“Our beloved Oromo people, his Excellencies, Gada fathers, Siqqe mothers, the shield of our people Qerro and Qarre, Now we are at this level. We are grateful for this victory. Let’s celebrate.”

“Your Excellencies ministers, ambassadors, members of the nation and nationalities who are here on the eve of Hora Finfinnee irrecha celebration: Above all I want to thank regional government of southern nation, nationalities and peoples, Gambellaa , Affar, Benishangul, Amhara, Somali and other who come to here to celebrate this holiday with us.”

“Oromo people lost everything here. Humiliate here. Tufa Muna and other freedom fighters were broken by Neftagna here. Today we are here by broke the system broke us. Oromo people respected in a place were humiliated. Congratulation Oromo for your victory. The struggles held by Hayilamriyam Gameda, Wako Gutu, Taddasa Birru and other Oromo freedom fighters for 150 years to build Oromo nationalism on strong base were succeed today after huge sacrifice of Oromo intellectuals and Qeerro and qarres.”

“This victory is not a victory of single individual or some groups; it’s a victory of all Oromo people. The past regime builds other identities at the expense of Oromo identity, to break Oromo. They replaced early symbols of Oromo’s by the newest one. But they can’t bury Oromo identity, because Oromo truth speaks for itself. In this city (Addis Ababa) we were humiliated, prisoned, killed and tortured. But today thanks to freedom fighters we won. Congratulations for our victory. Today the soul of our ancestors who paid sacrifice for this victory will be very happy.”

“The Oromo people should not forget the scarifies it paid for its freedom, forever. We should protect our victories and fight for more. Today in our centers Finfinnee, the core of Oromo political struggles, our struggles shift from extremism to central politics and get heart of our country peoples. We are the owner of the country. So all of us should protect our victories and should work together to get more victories. Emotion and propaganda is among our struggles obstacles. For a long time our struggles’ is not succeed because of Lack of support and unity,

lack of good strategy and lack of common goals. Now all these obstacles are broken by the generation of Qeerroo and Qarre. It's never happen again.”

“Today we are declaring Oromo freedom in front of our enemies and friends. Now Oromo are the owners of the country. We broke our enemies in a place where he broke us and got our Finfinne back, Oromo enjoyed your victories. This freedom will be like morning sun by solving poverty Justice and equality issues. No one can take back the freedom of our peoples, never!”

“I would like to thank Oromia national regional administration, Addis Ababa City administration, and above all FDRE government, specially I would like to thank our prime minister Abiy Ahmed for enabling us to celebrate this festival in our center Finfinne. I say thank you to them because this victory is their victory. They fight for this. They make good decisions. Of course deciding this is their responsibility.”

“We won. If we protect this victory, we solve everything. But if we can't protect this victory, everything will be a problem. Therefore as Oromo nationalism survives again in this city and country, as our identity be Ethiopian identity and as it transforms the horn of Africa all of us should use this golden opportunity. If we do so Ethiopia will look like us. We do not do this by proclamation or not by feeling inferiority complex, but by being strong in every way. As our identity rises in politics, economy, technology and every corner we should work hard and properly. To accomplish this goal FDRE and Oromia national regional states work closely.”

“This year Irrecha is an Irrecha of victory, peace, freedom, equality and proof of our ownership of Ethiopia. Now Irrecha is back to his home land. The participants this year are around 8 up to 10 million. In the coming years we should increase the number of participants and make irrecha an international festival.”

“FDRE and Oromia regional states are cleaning Finfinne. In the next year all rivers in this city will be the place of irrecha. By doing so we stop drainage that harms our people. Therefore I would like to thank the entire participant for showing the strength and culture of Oromo for our friends and enemies. By surpassing many obstacles and challenges up to this time we celebrate our Irrecha peacefully. In the next day also I will hope we celebrate this festival peacefully by collaborating with other nation and nationalities.”

“On the other hand I would like to thank all nations and nationalities for participating in this colorful festival. Thank you!”

## **Appendix B: ADDIS STANDARD NEWS- OCTOBER 2 2021-EV-3**

Protests break out at Irreecha Hora Finfinne festival in Ethiopia's capital-LEAD

Protests calling for the release of political prisoners, PM Abiy Ahmed's downfall, and praising the Oromo Liberation Army commander widely known as Jaal Maroo broke out in Addis Abeba today in Irreecha (The Oromo Thanksgiving) 2021 celebrations.

In a heavy presence of federal police, people gathered in the early hours of the morning at Hora Finfinne in the center of the Capital Addis Ababa to perform rituals. Not long after, protesters started shouting slogans like "Jawar, Jawar, Jawar", "Down Down Abiy", and "Maroo".

Sources on the ground told Addis Standard that although the security apparatus response has been measured so far, injuries have occurred and those injured have been moved to Zewditu Hospital and the police made arrests at the premise of the festival at Meskel Square.

Despite the Irreecha festival evolving through the decades into a platform for the Oromo youth to express their concerns about the existing political and subsequent economic and social challenges their communities face.

The organizer of the festival and the Tulama Abba Gadaa Gobena Hola yesterday in a talk with BBC Amharic warned attendees to refrain from platforming any political agendas at the festival. "We come to the water carrying only grass, there's no need to exaggerate which flag to wave," he said referring to the flag of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) that symbolizes resistance and is often prohibited from entering the premises of the festival.

Today is the first day of a two-day celebration at Hora Finfinne in Addis Abeba and Hora Arsadi in Bishoftu city (47 km south of Addis Ababa), the celebration will move to Bishoftu to perform final rituals at Lake Hora tomorrow morning.

## **Appendix C : EBC 1ST NEWS/OCTOBER 5, 2016**

LEAD: The ministry of culture and tourism expresses that the crowd and chaos that happen during the celebration of the Irrecha holiday is not an obstacle to the processes of registering the Gada system at UNESCO.

The ministry expresses its condolence for the citizens who lost their lives and express his readiness to help the people affected by the crowd.

The FDRE ministry of tourism in collaboration with Oromia regional states doing various works to register the Oromo social, political and economic system gada as intangible heritage by UNESCO. The ministry established a special committee which helps the registration process. The ministries express his condolences for the loss of life and injury of people happening at Irrecha which is among the main part of the gada system.

UP 1

“We are feeling so sad about the loss of life and injury of our citizens at the irrecha celebration. We express our condolence to the family of the victim and all Ethiopian people.”

The ministry states that as some citizens worry the tragedy happening at Irrecha celebration will not affect the process of registering the gada system at UNESCO.

UP 2

“There is fear among some communities that may what happened at Irrecha celebration will affect the process of registering the gada system. we want to express that the tragedy happen at Irrecha celebration has no impact on the process. Because this event is happen after we finished the process and we waiting for the decision.”

The decision will be made by 24 selected countries at the general assembly of UNESCO held in Addis Ababa according to the ministry. Being Ethiopia the member of UNESCO and the selected committee will also be good for the registration process according to the brief of the ministry.

## **Appendix D: EBC 2ND NEWS OCT. 5 2019-EV 2**

The Oromo people's Thanksgiving Day for the God, for the blessings and mercies they have received throughout the previous year and for the transformation from the rainy winter season to Birraa (spring), Irrecha was held this year in Addis Ababa Meskel square.

The coloration which was attended by millions of people was the indication of peace and love of Oromo culture according to the abbaa Gada Haggaa Xargaanoo.

UP 1

We should learn love and unity from this holiday. On this holiday we pray for God as the peace of our country comes back. This is a special day.”

Returning to his former place for the first time was also making the participants.

UP 2

We are so happy by celebrating Irrecha after 150 years in Addis Ababa for the first time. As you can see all of the participants are very happy. Irrecha is not only the indication of Oromoo people but its peace and unity.”

The holiday is not only the property of the Oromo people but it's the property of all nations and nationalities according to the participant.”

UP 3

This culture guarantees the equality of nations and nationalities. Because the holiday is an indication of equality and unity. Oromo celebrate this holiday by going to the river to thank god, for the transformation from winter to spring season.”

UP 4

Everyone is very happy about the celebration. Not only Oromo, all nations and nationalities are very happy. This right we get from diverse federalism.”

UP 5

This culture is the indicator of our unity. My happiness has no boundary. We got an answer to the question we have been asking for a long time. Up next this every nation and nationalities celebrate Irrecha together.

The participants of the holiday thanked the residents of Addis Ababa for their cooperation as the holiday celebrated peacefully.

## **Appendix E : EBC 3<sup>RD</sup> NEWS 5 OCTOBER 2021-EV-3**

Among the cultural events celebrated in October, the holiday of thanksgiving and unity of the Oromo people, Irrecha is the one.

The Irrecha were celebrating to thank the god for the passing of the foggy winter season and the visiting of the family each other after the swelling rivers decrease and the growing of the harvest

This year Irrecha Hora Finfinnee holidays were also celebrated by many participants including abbaa gadaa, hadha Siqqee, Qerro, and Qarres.

UP 1

“Irrecha means Peace, unity, and the special symbol of the Oromo people. The culture of anyone who loves peace. We celebrate the Irrecha in Finfinnee after a long time. We thank God for this.

Irrecha is the place where participants pray for the peace and unity of the country and thank God for what he gave to the people.

UP 2

“We pray by saying “the god who created this hill, gave us peace prosperity, and development. E pray by saying that almighty gave us all that we want.”

UP 3

“I pray for the peace of my country. If there’s any threat to our country I pray as that enemy should disappear. And also we as everybody live peacefully without any security issues.”

The celebration of the Hora Finfinne Irrecha holiday was celebrated for the third time this year and is held peacefully according to participants of the holiday.

UP 4

“This year's Irrecha celebration is special. We arrive here peacefully. There are no obstacles. Everything was peaceful.”

## **Appendix F: OBN NEWS Sep 16, 2020-EV -2**

The celebration of Irrecha at Hora Finfinnee after more than 150 years is among the vital events happen 2012 Ethiopian Calendar.

In the colorful celebration of this cultural festival, various Ethiopian nations and nationalities participated and shared Oromo cultures and values.

The committee of Aba gadas discuss the way of celebration of 2013 Irrecha.

According to the aba gadas Hora Finfinnee Irrecha celebration were held at September 23 and Hora Arsedi Irrecha is celebrated at the next day.

The chair of Oromo abbaa gadasa and Guji abbaa gadas Jilo mandho and the Tulama abbaa Gadas Gobana Hala say that the celebration of this year irrecha were held at September 23 and 24, 2013 by brief given to OBN.

UP 1

In September 23 Hora Finfinnee Irrecha will held and in the next day Hora Arsedi Irrecha will celebrate

UP 2

We passed various decisions about the celebration of this year's Irrecha. As we all know Oromo are eagerly waiting for Irrecha and very happy about the Irrecha.”

The abba Gadas argued that due to COVID 19 this year Irrecha should celebrate only by the people represent from every zones.

UP 3

Only a small number of people will celebrate the Irrecha. The other one should be celebrated in their areas due to COVID 19 pandemic, according to the protocol of health braues.”

UP 4

As we all know, in the previous year we celebrated Irrecha by millions. However due to COVID 19 pandemic this year we must celebrate by a small number of people. Therefore by knowing this all of us should celebrate in our areas.

UP 5

“We express every information about the celebration of Irrecha to Oromo people frequently.

### **Appendix G: OBN 2021 SEP 30 NEWS-EV-3**

Irrecha the arms of Oromo, to be celebrated at Finfinnee after 150 years.

Oromia regional states deputy president, in the inauguration of Bishoftu Gimmbichu road project, pass many main messages.

Specially regarding to Irrecha holiday says that, celebrating the festival in the place we were humiliate and displaced Finfinnee is the indication of the place of Oromo victory.

UP 1

Whats found in Bishoftu before ten years and how Irrecha celebrate currently in Bishoftu. Now by passing many obstacles we gain our arms and we are going to celebrate Irrecha in the place where firstly displaced, broken and humiliated Finfinne. Therefore Oromo congratulation for your victory. This the indication of the place of Oromo victory. Some persons say that thers not reform.while the reform and change is around us. If we forget what we pass yesterday, we can't protect what we have tomorrow. What we face before two and three years in Bishoftu. We are here today by passing many obstacles. We are in a great reform. We should work together as this reform continue.

As president Shimmalis the good culture and values of Oromo are shared by many nations currently.

UP 2

The celebration of Irrecha took place this year in Bishoftu is not only Oromo Irrecha. Every Nation and nationalities and peoples of Ethiopia are prepared their cultural dress to participate in Irrecha. A people come from every region to Finfinnee to participate in Irrecha celebration. The Love, peace, forgiveness, and inclusiveness culture of Oromo become the culture of all Ethiopians. A culture and nationalism of Oromo should not show only in Oromia and Ethiopia. It should transform to the world and Africa. As this become true we should work hardly.

The people should participate in the celebration without any fear according to the president.

UP 3

Anyone who tries to destabilize the celebration of Irrecha is n't successful, because God is with us.

#### **Appendix H OBN NEWS NOVEMBER 2 OCTOBER 6 2016-EV1**

As The celebration of the Irrecha festival which the Oromo people celebrate widely and attract the attention of the world and people of our country held peacefully, the Oromo aba Gadas are prepared very well.

While all stakeholders are well prepared to celebrate the Irrecha colorfully and peacefully, however, the holiday are not succeed as expected.

Among participants of this holiday, Guji Abba gadaas Jilo Mandhoo says that they are very sad about what happened at the celebration and express condolence for the citizen's lost their lives and got injured.

UP 1

They are my citizens, my child, my blood hence I am very sad about what happened to them.

As Abba gadaa Jilo mandho Irrecha has a special place in the culture of Oromo, however, he says that Im very sad about what happened there.

UP 2

There is a culture of praying, a culture of performing Irrecha, however, they create a crowd by going to the wrong road. We tried to calm the crowd. However, they take the mike and create a crowd. I had never seen such a thing in the place of praying. We are not praying by the crowd. It's not necessary on that day.

The rumors that distribute by some media as Abbaa gada Jilo Mandho died were also false as Abba gadas speak by himself.

UP 3

I hear such a thing. But I am alive, I'm not dead. In a culture, if abba Gadas die, It was not told to somebody by saying abbaa Gad is dead. He has his own culture. The crowd which happens to be the cause of these rumors in Bule Hora and other towns was inappropriate.

The gada system has a solution for every problem as Abba gada Jilo Mandho. Therefore while we can solve our problem through this system, the crowd which causes loss of life and injury of citizens is not appropriate according to the abbaa Gadas.

We abbaa gadaa are working on the peace. We are not part of any politics. Therefore as abbaa Gadas, we say that discuss through Gada. If there's a problem in somebody he should tell to us.”

## **APPENDIX I: QUESTIONS PREPARED FOR INTERVIEW PART**

1. How do you describe the Irrecha events and their significance for you and your community?
2. What are the main messages or themes that you want to convey or receive through the Irrecha events?
3. How do you communicate or interact with other stakeholders during or about the Irrecha events?
4. What are the main challenges or opportunities that you face or create in relation to the Irrecha events?
5. How do you evaluate or critique the representations or interpretations of the Irrecha events by different media sources or discourses?
6. How do you think the Irrecha events affect or reflect the socio-cultural and political contexts of Ethiopia and Oromia?
7. How do you understand the meaning and significance of Irrecha as a cultural festival?
8. What are your sources of information about the Irrecha events that took place in 2016 and 2019?
9. How do you evaluate the accuracy and reliability of these sources?
10. How do you perceive the tone and attitude of these sources towards Irrecha and its participants?
11. How do you relate your own experiences and views of Irrecha to those of other stakeholders, such as the government, the media, the traditional leaders, and the protesters?
12. How do you think Irrecha affects the social and political situation in Ethiopia and Oromia?
13. What social, political, or historical reasons for the existence of the discourse irrecha?

**Table 1: List of Key Informants and Places of Contact**

NO	Name	Sex	Age	Job	Place of Contact
1	Kusa Detti	Male	65	Abbaa Gadaa and historian	Asella
2	Abdo Teshita	Male	42	Journalist	Addis Ababa
3	Kenea Lemmi	male	56	Waqefata religious father and historian	Addis Ababa
4	Abdi Rebuma	male	36	Tourism Expert	Addis Ababa
5	Hassen Aman		37	Islam Religion father	Adama
6	Milkessa Galatuu	male	25	Langustic and folkore experts	Jimmaa

**Table 2. Fairclough's Model Analysis of Media Portrayals of Irrecha**

This table summarizes how different media outlets portray Irrecha using Fairclough's three-dimensional model: Text (Description), Discourse Practice (Production and Interpretation), and Social Practice (Power and Struggle).

<b>Media outlet</b>	<b>Text (Description)</b>	<b>Discourse Practice (production and interpretation)</b>	<b>Social practice (power and struggle)</b>
EBC/News 1	Focuses on UNESCO registration, downplays Irrecha tragedy (Crowd and Chaos’')	Represents government perspectives  Avoids controversy	-Reinforces government control over cultural heritage (Gada System)  -Silences potential discussions about social struggles
EBC/ NEWS 2	- Emphasizes peace, love, unity, cultural significance - Highlights large attendance, return to Addis Ababa	- Represents government perspective - Constructs narrative of national unity	Promotes ideology of multiculturalism (Irrecha as national integration)  - Ignores specific cultural importance to Oromo people
EBC/ NEWS 3	- Focuses on peaceful celebration	- Represents government perspective - Constructs narrative of peaceful cultural	Promotes ideology of peaceful co-existence - Frames Irrecha as religious observance without political

		expression	undertones
OBN/ NEWS 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highlights cultural revival, shared values with other Ethiopians</li> <li>- Focuses on government and Abba Gada preparations for peaceful celebration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Represents Oromo perspective - Uses positive language to portray Irrecha</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oromo cultural revival and preservation - Shifts attention away from potential restrictions on participants</li> </ul>
OBN/ NEWS 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Frames Irrecha return to Addis Ababa as victory after oppression - Uses positive and emotive language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Represents Oromo perspective - Creates sense of pride and celebration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oromo self-determination and cultural expression - Positions Irrecha within context of historical marginalization</li> </ul>
OBN/ NEWS 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focuses on disappointment of Abba Gadas about violence, clarifies rumors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintains order and cultural respect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positions Abba Gadas as guardians of tradition - Silences discussions about reasons for unrest</li> </ul>
ADDIS STANDARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focuses on protests, slogans, security presence - Mentions traditional aspects but prioritizes protests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reports on newsworthy aspects within cultural celebration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Potential conflict between cultural purpose and political expression - Highlights government efforts to maintain order</li> </ul>

**Table 3. Media Definitions and Narratives of Irrecha**

Here's a breakdown of how different media outlets define Irrecha in their news and the narratives we can understand from their reports:

<b>MEDIA OUTLET</b>	<b>DEFINATION OF IRRECHA</b>	<b>NARRATIVE</b>
EBC ( News 1, 2 and 3)	Thanksgiving celebration, cultural expression (downplays religious aspects)	- Primarily a national cultural festival promoting unity and peace. - Focuses on government role in preserving cultural heritage (Gada System). - Avoids mentioning potential political undertones or social struggles.
OBN (News1, 2	Cultural revival, expression of Oromo identity and values	- A celebration of Oromo culture and history, reclaiming its rightful place in Addis Ababa. - Highlights historical marginalization and emphasizes the victory of celebrating in the capital. - Positions Irrecha within the context of Oromo self-determination.
OBN ( News 3)	Cultural celebration disrupted by unruly crowd	- A traditional cultural event disrupted by disrespectful behavior. - Focuses on maintaining order and respect

		for tradition through the authority of the Abba Gadas. - Avoids delving into potential reasons for the unrest.
ADDIS STANDARD	Platform for cultural expression, potentially evolving into political demonstration	- A traditional festival that has become a space for expressing political concerns, particularly among Oromo youth. - Highlights potential conflict between cultural purpose and political expression. - Focuses on the news value of the protests, potentially overshadowing the traditional aspects.

**TABLE 4. Actors Perspectives on Irrecha**

<b>STAKE HOLDERS</b>	<b>PRESPECTIVES ON IRRECHA</b>
Media ( State owned)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Thanksgiving day for everyone</li> <li>- Secular festival attended by Oromo’s of various faiths</li> <li>- Link between Waaqa and Oromos</li> <li>- Thanksgiving festival celebrated twice a year</li> <li>- Represents connection between Waaqa and Oromo’s</li> <li>- Strengthens social interaction and unity</li> </ul>
Media (private)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thanksgiving &amp; celebration of prosperity</li> <li>- Expression of Oromo culture &amp; identity</li> <li>- Core component of Oromo identity reconstruction</li> </ul>
Muslim religious leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Shirk" (deification)</li> <li>- contradicts Islamic teachings</li> <li>- Cultural festival for Waaqeffannaa followers, not Muslims</li> </ul>
Some Muslim Scholars/leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Way to strengthen Oromo brotherhood</li> <li>- Participation is not religious, but cultural</li> </ul>

Abba Gadaas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Festival with both religious &amp; cultural aspects</li> <li>- Reflection of the Oromo worldview</li> </ul>
Political Figures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Platform to address governance, cultural rights, and identity</li> <li>- Represents struggle for Oromo recognition and autonomy</li> </ul>
Schoolars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can be a social &amp; political movement (e.g., 2016 Irrecha)</li> <li>- Cultural &amp; religious festival</li> </ul>
Interviewees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Past regimes aimed to suppress Oromo identity - Irrecha seen as a threat to Ethiopian government's control</li> <li>- Political contestation &amp; violence contribute to Irrecha discourse</li> <li>- Oromo political parties' interests create a space for Irrecha discourse</li> </ul>
Waaqeffanna Foolowers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Religious holiday to connect with Waaqa</li> <li>- Honors Waaqa and his Ayyaana</li> </ul>
UNESCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Celebration where people get together and perform their prayers and thanksgiving to God</li> </ul>

This thesis has been submitted with my full approval as advisor.

Name: Assistant prof. Tenaw Terefe

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_