DIASPORA MEDIA, LOCAL POLITICS: JOURNALISM AND THE POLITICS OF HOMELAND AMONG THE ETHIOPIAN OPPOSITION IN THE UNITED STATES

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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The relentless political pressure the Ethiopian government put on Ethiopian journalists, political dissidents and opposition activists drove hundreds of them out of their country. However, after leaving their country, the journalists and the opposition activists remain engaged in the politics of their country of origin through the media outlets they establish in diaspora. Ethiopian Satellite Television (ESAT) and Oromia Media Network (OMN) are two media platforms that have emerged in the United States under such conditions. This dissertation chronicles the rise of ESAT and OMN and their far reaching political influence in Ethiopia. Using mixed method research, it provides their detailed profiles that range from their inception, to their impact on the Ethiopian public sphere and the Ethiopian government's response to them, to their reporting of political events in Ethiopia.

This research makes the case that ESAT and OMN, through the instrumentality of a transnational public sphere have altered the Ethiopian political dynamics during the last five years. Particularly, ESAT and OMN use Facebook and Twitter as a backbone to gather information and foster relationships with news sources inside Ethiopia; they also transmit uncensored information back to Ethiopia via satellite television. In response to

their communication activities, the Ethiopian government seeks to undermine the links that ESAT and OMN have in the country by routinely blocking the internet, requesting Facebook and Twitter to take down their content and jamming their satellite transmissions. The Ethiopian government also responds to the reporting of ESAT and OMN by changing its policy positions on domestic political issues. This illustrates that Ethiopian political exiles remain key players of Ethiopian political dynamics in ways that thoroughly exemplify trans-local reciprocity. It also shows that ESAT and OMN might very well be a prototype of a diaspora community media that keeps grievances alive and magnifies ideological differences they brought with them to the United States.

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For Hasset and Betty.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, a far-reaching change has been taking place across Ethiopian media landscape. Although the Ethiopian government has suppressed and monopolized the Ethiopian domestic press, the government's monopoly on media came to be challenged by transnational information flows derived from diaspora-based broadcasters. Since 2010, Ethiopian Satellite Television (ESAT) and Oromia Media Network (OMN) challenged, and occasionally supplanted, Ethiopian government's control over the flow of information. Although they operate outside Ethiopia, they have reversed the flow of information between diaspora and homeland and have played a significant role in Ethiopia's socio-political development during the last five years. Fostered by the proliferation of satellite dishes and the growth of internet, ESAT and OMN arose as pivotal part of the country's opposition political movements. They served as a foundation for the elevation and political prominence of protest movements that prompted the resignation of the country's top political leaders and the release of political prisoners. The Ethiopian government's censorship against ESAT and OMN is a response to the recognition of their role within in Ethiopian public sphere. Nevertheless, despite pervasive state-censorship, the thriving oppositional diaspora-based satellite television stations played a significant role in mobilizing and articulating public dissent during the last five years.

ESAT and OMN have gained popularity amid a state-saturated media environment in Ethiopia. They are guided by formal and/or informal ties with the Ethiopian diaspora community and the interests of exiled political groups. ESAT represents 'a Pan-Ethiopian' ideology that encourages and strengthens bonds of solidarity

between Ethiopian people, regardless of their ethnic or religious background. OMN is a broadcasting organ of the Oromo diaspora community and has been considered to be a representative of a political movement historically derived from Oromo nationalism, which seeks independence of the Oromo people within or out of the Ethiopian State. Nevertheless, the two institutions have been accused of political biases on a number of grounds, with the Ethiopian government alluding to their complex ties to exiled political parties such as Patriotic Ginbot 7 and Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).

ESAT and OMN work hand-in-hand with covert reporters within Ethiopia in an effort to facilitate a two-way flow of communication between their content and their target audience. They also include a relative diversity of 'voices' by incorporating content in two main Ethiopian languages, Amharic and Afan Oromo. By doing so, ESAT and OMN have achieved significant success in building a communicative space in a transnational setting that is outside the bounds of the Ethiopian State. The formal and informal connections that ESAT and OMN have with exiled opposition groups raises concerns about their journalism and their potential influence on Ethiopian politics. However, the unique nature of these media's journalistic production processes, their diasporic location, and their relationship with the Ethiopian population of whom they see themselves a part of, suggests that ESAT and OMN may fall into a distinct classification of media outlets that distinguishes them from other Ethiopian media outlets.

Since their inception, ESAT and OMN have been circumventing state communication barriers through clandestine networks of journalists. As a result, they have opened up new avenues for the identification and deliberation of matters of concern among Ethiopians throughout the country. Founded by exiled journalists and political

activists who have established sources of information and have hired covert reporters inside Ethiopia, the personnel of ESAT and OMN have both a personal and political interest in the issues and stories they report about Ethiopia. Nonetheless, the Ethiopian government's relentless effort to silence ESAT and OMN and their 'exile/diasporic' community has greatly inhibited their operation in the transnational communicative space.

The discourse of ESAT and OMN are potentially different from the traditional 'diasporic media' discourses because these media's journalistic practices appear to epitomize the interpretations of a '*transnational public sphere*'. Consequently, the unique challenges posed by ESAT and OMN and the technological infrastructure serve to define their political influence in Ethiopian domestic/local politics and their journalistic practices in distinct ways. Accordingly, any adequate understanding of the ways in which these institutions' journalistic practices contribute to Ethiopia's political and public sphere–or of the influence of their ideological rendition on their journalistic practices–necessitates a theoretically-grounded appreciation of the relationships between Ethiopia's socio-political and media landscape and the technological, economic, and political context in which ESAT and OMN are embedded. Consequently, an exploration of the relationship that ESAT and OMN have with both the Ethiopian State and the Ethiopian public sphere–as well as their counter-hegemonic stance–seemingly affords a unique insight into theorizations of *transnational public sphere* and its significance in Ethiopian politics.

Hence, this study is about these two media organizations' roles in the formation and shaping of Ethiopian public sphere. It seeks to put ESAT and OMN in the Ethiopian political context. In doing so, I will highlight the development and operations of ESAT

and OMN and their coverage of political events in Ethiopia. To put the research within relevant historical, social, cultural, and technological context, I will provide Ethiopia's socio-political history in a broad stroke as it relates to the rise and evolution of ESAT and OMN and their relationship to current media landscape. In the subsequent section, I will provide an overview of Ethiopia's political history, its ethnic composition, and its media. This will include a preliminary analysis of Ethiopian diaspora media.

Brief Political Background of Ethiopia

A contextual research on Ethiopian diaspora media requires reference to the complex historical events that led to the formation of Ethiopian diaspora in the United States. Ethiopians have had a long history of migration within their own homeland, but they have a relatively recent history of migration outside of Ethiopia. The earliest record of Ethiopian migration to the United States goes back to 1808, when a group of traders from Ethiopia arrived in New York (Dunlap, 2004). Next, Ethiopians participated in a mission to the United States in 1919, when the Ethiopian government sent delegations to seek assistance for developing national resources (Uhling, 2007). But the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 marked the beginning of the continuing migration of Ethiopians to the United States (Tassé, 2007, Kaplan, 2010). Thousands of Ethiopians who were on the losing side of the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution–which turned into a civil war–were driven either to remote parts of the country or out of Ethiopia (Berhanu & White, 2000). From 1974 to 1991, during the civil war, about 1.25 million people in Ethiopia abandoned their homes and sought temporary protection in Kenya and Sudan. Some were resettled in countries of the West, but others returned home when the civil war was over in 1991. (McSpadden, 1988). While most of the western countries such as the United Kingdom,

Germany, Canada, Sweden, Netherlands and Australia were generous in resettling Ethiopians, the United States accommodated the most (Singer & Wilson, 2007).

Currently, the Ethiopian diaspora amount to around two million throughout the world. The second generation–those born to Ethiopian parents in the host countries–should be added to this number, estimated to be at least half a million; although, the numbers are not reliable because census data collection in several countries follow widely variant protocols. A significant majority of the total Ethiopian diaspora population is domiciled in the United States (Lyons, 2007), with most residing in Washington DC, Dallas, Houston, Minneapolis, Los Angeles and Seattle. Other major hubs of the Ethiopian diaspora include, Las Vegas, Denver, Portland, Oakland, and Atlanta. The process by which Ethiopians first came to the United States and began to form a diaspora in the late 20th and early 21st centuries points to complex political, historical, and social forces (Kaplan, 2010). It is necessary that some reference be made, if only briefly, to these forces.

Ethnic Overview

Ethiopia is situated in the Horn of Africa, a strategic yet tumultuous peninsula in northeast Africa. The population of Ethiopia today stands at 105 million, second largest in Africa next to Nigeria (Central Intelligence Agency, 2018). The population is ethnically, culturally and religiously distinct; however, the ethnic distinctions are the most important. In the context of Ethiopian politics, ethnic classification involves contested notions such as culture, language, so called 'psychological make up', history, and territory. Ethnic classifications are defined as 'Nation, Nationality or People' (The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of

Ethiopia, 1995). The 2007 census identified 86 ethnic groups (CSA, 2007), but many believe the number of ethnic groups and the size of their populations are deeply miscalculated (Berhanu, 2015). Introduced in 1994, the current Ethiopian map shows nine exclusively ethnic, administrative regions along with two chartered cities, Addis Ababa (the capital city) and Dire Dawa. The Oromos, who constitute the single largest ethnic group, making up 34.49 % of the population, predominantly live in Oromia. The Amharas, the second largest ethnic group, account for 26.89 % of the population and reside in the Amhara region. The southern Region, which is awkwardly called 'The Southern Nations and Nationalities and Peoples Regional State,' or SNNPR, is home to diverse minority ethnic groups that represent 14.93 % of the population. The Tigrayans, who account for 6.07 % of the population, live in Tigray in the North. Somalis, with almost the same percentage of the Tigrayan population, inhabit the Somali region in the eastern part of the country. Afar, Harari, and Gambella each make up less than 2 % of the Ethiopian population and have their own exclusive regions. Benishangul-Gumuz make up 1.25% of the population as the remaining member of Ethiopia's federal government (Vaughan, 2003).

Ethiopian ethnic composition and statistics give a misleading appearance that except for the southern Region (a collective region for 56 distinct minority ethnic groups), all regions are unilingual regions with homogenous ethnic groups. However, there are a significant number of ethnic minority pockets in all the regions. For instance, the Agaw people in the Amhara region (CSA, 2007) and the Irob people in the Tigray region (CSA, 2007). There is a substantial percentage of Amhara population residing in Oromia and other regions. Conversely, there is a district known as the 'Oromia Zone' in the Amhara region for its sizable Oromo community. Several other ethnic groups dwell in

different regions as well; notably, the Amhara in the Somali Region, the Oromos, in Benishangul-Gumuz, and the Tigrayans, in Amhara and Oromia. Intermingled throughout different regions across the country are also the Gurage people, a minority ethnic group whose homeland is in one of the ethnic districts of the southern Region (CSA, 2007). There are also people with mixed ethnic background within many of these unilingual ethnic regions. However, the Ethiopian constitution neither defines the term 'mixed' nor delineates the criteria for determining a mixed population and there is no readily available data about their amount.

The two main elements of the Ethiopian population are people speaking Cushitic and Semitic languages. Amharic, a Semitic language and spoken as a mother tongue by the Amhara people, is the official working language of the federal government (Vaughan, 2003). Correspondingly, it has status as the official working language in Afar and in the southern Region. A substantial percentage of Ethiopians speak Amharic as their second language. Amharic is also the main language of advertising, newspapers, and of the budding national television networks (Gebre Yohannes, 2009). Afan Oromo is a Cushitic language spoken mainly by Oromo people. While Amharic, along with many other Ethiopian languages, use Ge'ez alphabet, Afan Oromo and few other languages adopted the Roman alphabet. Alphabets are occasionally a political flashpoint of ethnic relations in Ethiopian diaspora media (Gebre Yohannes, 2009).

In general, there is a cultural division between the North and the South. There are many pronounced highland-lowland dynamics and dichotomies: the highland core versus the lowland peripheries; the Coptic Christian of the North versus the eastern Muslim lowland; the southern people who are mostly Protestant Christian or follow more traditional religions, and so forth (Prunier, 2015, Clapham, 2017 and Trimingahm, 1952).

One thing that stands out on the Ethiopian political map is the accentuation of minority ethnic groups across a north-south divide. The southern part of Ethiopia has more minority ethnic groups than the northern part. The divide exists along the lines of the Rift Valley of Ethiopia that runs from northeast to southwest, dissecting the country into topographic regions of the Ethiopian plateau, the lowland, and the valley (Trimingahm, 1952). The northern and the central Ethiopian plateau along the lines of many westward flowing rivers such as the Blue Nile and Tikeze have been mainly inhabited by the Amhara and Tigrayan people. The South, the central highland, and the Southwest, which is more forested than the North, is populated by the Oromos, the Sidama, and numerous other ethnic groups. The sparsely populated eastern lowland is dominated by Oromos, Somalis and Afar. Population density is greatest in portions of the central highlands, where the capital Addis Ababa is located, and also in the southern part; it is lowest in the southeastern interior (Prunier, 2015, Clapham, 2017).

Historical Overview

The historical events discussed in the subsequent section are imperative for this research because they provide a historical background of the news events that are covered by ESAT and OMN. Ethiopia's history dates back almost 3,000 years (Marcus, 1994). The first major civilization in what is now Ethiopia was that of the Axumites, who might have settled in present-day northern Ethiopia (formerly Abyssinia) as early as 100 AD (Marcus, 1994). Christianity was introduced and quickly adopted as a religion of the kings of the empire in about 330AD (Crummey, 2000). In a short interval, followers of Islam arrived in Axum after they escaped persecution in Mecca in about 613AD. Over

time, Christianity and Islam have become the two major religions in Ethiopia (Trimingahm, 1952, Hussein 1994). In present-day Ethiopia, Christians, who represent about 62 percent of the Ethiopian population, have come to dominate northern and central Ethiopia. Muslims, who represent about 33 percent of the population, prevail in eastern Ethiopia (CSA, 2007). Also, a significant number of both the Christian and the Muslim population intermingled across the country's villages, towns, and cities (Owens, 2008).

The Axumite empire grew and stretched to vast areas in the Horn of Africa along the coast of the Red Sea in the East, stretching to present-day Sudan in the West (Henze, 2000). The city of Aksum, whose ruins still remain intact in present-day northern Ethiopia of the Tigray Region, was the heart of the empire (Dunlap, 2004). The rule of the Axumites weakened and fell into decline at the beginning of the 10th century when the Agaw people formed their own reign, known as the Zagwe dynasty to become rulers of the empire (Munro-Hay, 1991). The Zagwes lasted for about 370 years, allowing successive kings to exert influence and facilitated the spread of Christianity in the empire (Oliver, 1982, Negash, 2006). They moved the center of the Axumite empire southward to the land that is now called the Amhara region (Negash, 2006). Also, some historical documents refer to this empire as Abyssinia. At the height of their power, the Zagwes built monumental rock cut churches at their center, Yeha- Lalibela. These churches are now inscribed as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage sites (ICOMOS, 1978).

In about 1270 the Zagwe dynasty was overthrown by Emperor Yekuno Amlak (Munro-Hay, 2002). Yekuno Amlak claimed an ancestral lineage to the last king of the Axumite kingdom (Negash, 2006). The removal of the Zagwe dynasty by Yekuno Amlak is regarded as the beginning of an incredibly long imperial reign of what is now called the Solomonic dynasty (Tamrat, 1972). Yekuno Amlak's claim of recovering and reinstalling

the Axumite reign is reflected in “Kebra Negast” or “Glory of Kings,” a national epic, which was published at the beginning of the 14th century (Ullendorff, 1978). “Kebra Negast” stretched the history of the Solomonic dynasty as far back as the 10th century B.C. The story goes something like this: when an Ethiopian ruler, the biblical Queen of Sheba, also known as Saba, traveled to Jerusalem in search of the wisdom of King Solomon. Queen of Sheba and King Solomon met and spent the night together. When she returned home from Israel, she was pregnant with a son, Menelik, who would become Ethiopia’s first emperor. Queen of Sheba raised Menelik on her own. When he came of age, Menelik traveled back to Israel to meet his father, King Solomon. Solomon, wanted to name Menelik as his heir. But Menelik left Jerusalem for Ethiopia and established the Solomonic dynasty in Axum (Kebra Nagast, 1922).

This national epic of ‘Queen Sheba’ is at the heart of religio-political traditions of the Solomonic dynasty (Ullendorff, 1978). It linked Ethiopia with the Judeo-Christian tradition, and provided a basis for Ethiopian empire through Semitic culture *(*Zewde, 1991*).* However, it has always been a sore point with some Ethiopian ethnic and religious groups such as the Oromos and Somalis because they do have their own ancient myths, symbols or a specific historical narrative (Baxter, 1978). The beginning of the Solomonic dynasty resulted in the inception of the Ethiopian empire in the 13th century (Huntingford, 1965). At roughly the same time, its eastern neighbor, the sultanate of Ifat, was also being consolidated. The sultanate of Ifat unified the people in what is now eastern Ethiopia, Djibouti and northern Somalia. Later in 16th century, Ifat was succeeded by the Adal Sultanate (located in a present-day eastern Ethiopia), which largely inherited its foundation (Huntingford, 1989).

With few discontinuities, the Solomonic monarchs ruled the Ethiopian empire

from 1270 to 1974 AD, making the dynasty one of the longest and most influential dynasties in Africa (Abir, 1980). During their lengthy seven centuries of reign, the Solomonic monarchs had power struggles within themselves, against the sultanates of Ifat, and later against Adal in the East (Abir, 1980). The rivals involved in the struggles fall into three categories. The most obvious of these rivals were the Christian Solomonic monarchs and the Muslim sultanates of Ifat and Adal (Abir, 1980). The expansion of Ifat and Adal in the peripheries of the Christian territories, and the incursion of the Ethiopian empire into the lands of the sultanates, have fostered these rivalries. A second category were the rivalries within Solomonic rulers themselves. Solomonic rulers who hail from different ethnic lines of the dynasty looked to enforce their ethnic reign over the Ethiopian empire (Pankhurst, 1967). Particularly, the rivalries between the Amhara and Tigrayan monarchs of the dynasty were the most common of all. And finally, there were rivalries between those whom what mattered was not religious adherence or ethnic underpinning of the dynasty, but rather the incorporation of southern peoples into the empire and control the lands they inhabited **(**Zahorik, 2014).

The struggles that went on within the Solomonic monarchs or between the monarchs and sultanates lasted for hundreds of years and they have left deep marks on the long course of Ethiopian history (Abir, 1980). Though the sultanates particularly the Adal Sultanate have contrived to establish a brief measure of political control in 16th century over the significant part of the Ethiopian empire, the Solomonic monarchs had a lasting success. However, the Solomonic imperial power dealt with crushing defeat when emperor Haile Selassie I was overthrown in 1974 (Sorenson 1993, Zahorik, 2014). The repercussions from these historical rivalries continue to resound in the rhetoric of contemporary Ethiopian diaspora media.

The Oromo Expansion

Ethiopia's present-day ethnic picture was completed by migration of various groups to various parts of Ethiopia during its long history. In the 16th century, an event took place that determined the ethnic composition and geographic distribution of modern Ethiopia: the Oromo migration/expansion. Prior to their expansion to the central highland of Ethiopia, the Oromo people were settled in what is now the southern areas of Ethiopia. Most historians say waves of Oromo migration/expansion happened in the 16th century. Due to population pressures, the Oromos expanded throughout the length and breadth of Ethiopia during or before the beginning of the 16th century (Pankhurst, 1967). However, it is also possible that their movement gained impetus due to the Abyssinian–Adal war of the 16th century that debilitated both the Christian Abyssinian empire and the Adal Sultanate (Pankhurst, 1967).

The Oromos had an 'age-set' system known as Gada, in which all males born into an eight-year generation pass through all of the stages of life together (Legesse, 1973). They say that the Gada System was the cradle of their tradition that facilitated their expansion to the core of the Ethiopian empire. An analysis of their movement seems to indicate that they have moved far and wide to reside in the heartland of Ethiopia. After their expansion into the west, the Oromos founded small and separated feudal states known as the Gibe States. Consequently, their cultural system was largely absorbed into that of the aboriginal culture of the area, so they developed into feudal states with a character of their own. The kingdoms of Jimma and of Gumma attained special importance (Pankhurst, 1967). Their northward migration, however, brought them within the zone of the Abyssinian Amhara culture, by which they were strongly influenced. Thus, the Oromo culture lost more and more of its original character and increasingly

resembled the Abyssinian, predominantly Christian Amhara, culture. In the North, the Oromos were also brought into the political sphere of Abyssinia, as shown by the fact that marriages took place between the ruling classes of the Oromos and Amharas (Yates, 2009). In the east, the Oromos have largely become Muslims (Pankhurst, 1967).

The Formation of the Modern Ethiopian State

Following the expansion of the Oromos, the control of the Solomonic emperors weakened and the Ethiopian empire broke into a small number of regions under various rulers. From the mid-18th to mid-19th century, there was no effective central authority. The empire was divided into several regions with their own rulers: Tigray in the North in what is still the Tigray region, and Gonder, Wag and Lasta, Yejju, Wallo, Gojjam and some parts of Shoa, which were all in what is now called the Amhara region (Bekele, 2015). In the history of Ethiopia, this period has come to be called 'The Era of the Princes' (Abir, 1968). The 'Era of the Princes' came to an end after almost a century, when Tewodros II, an Emperor who hailed from Gonder, claimed Solomonic ancestry and put the groundwork for the modern Ethiopian State in 1855. When Tewodros II emerged on the horizon, he found that none of the feudal states were strong enough to exercise control over the others any longer (Zewede, 1991). Tewodros II forced his rivals into his monarchical rule. Thus, Ethiopian historians consider this period to be the beginning of the modern Ethiopian State. When Tewodros II died in 1868, his Tigrayan rival, Yohannes IV, who claimed Solomonic lineage, rose to power. After he gained control over several regions, he was crowned king and maintained rule of the Ethiopian empire (Zewede, 1991).

Meanwhile, further south in Shoa, the power of Menelik II steadily grew. At the

same time, the influence of Yohannes IV diminished more and more through the disloyalty of his feudatories and through wars with Sudan in the west (Zewede, 1991). In about 1889, Menelik II pushed into southern Ethiopia. His army was formed by an alliance between the Oromos from Shoa and the Amharas. Menelik II forced a passage across the Awash river in the east and annihilated any semblance of resistance (Zewede, 1991, Donham, 1992). He pursued the vestiges of the Adal sultanate in Harar and captured Amir Abdullahi, the last emperor of the Adal sultanate (Zewede, 1991). Thus, this founded the modern Ethiopian State in its current geographic form. Menelik II brought strong elements of Abyssinian Christian culture. While this created a new empire that was able to maintain itself as a political unit, there were no common linguistic or religious elements among all Ethiopians to create a cultural unit (Adejumobi, 2007, Sorenson 1993, Zahorik, 2014).

In 1896, an event took place that transformed the destiny of modern Ethiopia. Italy wanted to expand its territory in Africa and invaded Ethiopia. The Ethiopians inflicted a heavy defeat on Italy in March, 1896 at the Battle of Adwa, after which the two countries signed the treaty of Addis Ababa (Jonas, 2011). The agreement gave Italy the land (now Eretria) north of the Mereb river, which remains the boundary between Ethiopia and Eretria. The Italian colony of Eretria officially lasted until 1947. In 1947, Ethiopia federated Eritrea. Then, Ethiopia annexed Eritrea in 1962, leading to the Eritrean War of Independence (Araya, 1990, Cambell, 1971). The war lasted for thirty years and after a referendum in April 1993, resulted in Eritrean independence (Reid, 2014). Hostilities between Ethiopia and Eretria still exist, particularly after Eritrean–Ethiopian border War of 2000 (Negash & Tronvoll, 2000). The Ethiopian victory over Italy propelled Ethiopia as a sovereign state, founded on the refusal of

colonialism that dominated Africa during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Jonas, 2011). The victory at Adwa gave rise to numerous diplomatic exchanges between Ethiopia and foreign powers. It also gave Menelik II an opportunity to reinforce his rule all throughout Ethiopia. Menelik II, who is mostly regarded as the founder of the modern Ethiopian State, died in 1913 (Jonas, 2011).

Haile Selassie I 1930 -1974

Three years after the death of Menilek II, Ethiopia's longest serving emperor, Ras Tafari (later named Haile Selassie I, was appointed as a regent, or acting ruler, in 1916), eventually became emperor in 1930. In 1935, Italy recaptured Ethiopia for five years but with the help of the British, Italy was defeated and gave up all its claims to Ethiopia. Then, Haile Selassie I began the rebuilding and modernizing project of the Ethiopian State (Zewde, 2002). Under Haile Selassie I, Ethiopia entered the age of modernization, nation-building, and nationalism with the legacy of a longstanding historical awareness and cultural consciousness for pan-Ethiopian nationalism (Abbay, 2010). The modern ideas of nation, pan-Ethiopian nationalism, and Ethiopian identity–as a set of sentiments about the modern Ethiopian nation-state with Abyssinian cultural roots and with Amharan/ Tigrayan ethinic undertones–were laid as a foundation (Jalata, 2005, 2010). However, these ideas have not brought a transformation of peoples' lives from subjects to citizens across all regions and ethnicities, including the Amharas and Tigrayans.

Since 1960, increasing dissatisfaction with the incompetence and corruption of the monarchy, together with students' radical activism, found expression in a mass movement (Zewede, 2002). An attempted coup d'état against Hali Selassie I in 1960 was quashed by the monarchy, but the coup left behind a tradition of revolution that took the

shape of various movements, an important one being student movements (Clapham, 1968, Gobeze 2014). In the 1970s, a student movement erupted against the monarch's land tenure system that left ownership to the monarch or to provincial rulers who were empowered to make land grants (Bruce, Hoben & Rahmato, 1994). Additionally, the demand to recognize the cultural, linguistic, and ethnic identity of various groups who were incorporated to the Ethiopian State during Menilek II's southward expansion was one of their central concerns (Gobeze, 2014, Hassen 2002, Alemayehu, 1993). The students' resentment turned into a widespread movement and insurgencies flared up in different places. The outcome of this movement was ultimately the demand for removal of the monarch, which were implemented in 1974 (Gobeze, 2014).

Military Rule 1974 -1991

Taking advantage of political instability, Colonel Mengestu Haile Mariam, leader of the armed forces (also known as the Derg), overthrew Haile Selassie I in a military coup in 1974 (Kebede, 2011). Following his ascension to power, Mengestu consolidated military power over all realms of society. From 1974 to 1991, the country was ruled by a military government that completely inhibited all forms of dissenting expression (Kebede, 2011). The Derg regime realized one of the most important demands of the student movement: land reform (Gobeze, 2014, Gudina, 2007). The land reform led to the collapse of a social and political order that had prevailed throughout monarchical rule. Although this ended the exploitative land tenure system, other demands such as recognition for ethnic and cultural identity were not realized (Gobeze, 2014, Gudina, 2003). At first the regime looked progressive in terms of recognizing ethnic and cultural identities of various peoples, but it reverted to pan-Ethiopian nationalist ideology with

Amharic as a common language for all Ethiopian cultural and linguistic groups (Alemayehu,1993).

During this period, Ethiopia's political environment was characterized by social division and political instability. In part, the military regime fostered a legacy of Haile Selassie I's hierarchical imperial rule. This is also a period that is characterized by forced migration. Following the violent removal of Emperor Haile Selassie I, an escalating revolutionary movement–spearheaded largely by university students–coupled with polarized political environment, triggered a civil war between the Derg regime and several political groups rooted in university student movements. After the political instability and the revolutionary movements of the 1970s, it morphed into a full-blown civil war, structured along ethnic lines. Movements became rebel groups, such as the Tigrayan Liberation Front (TPLF) and Oromo Liberation Front (OLF).

The EPRDF Regime 1991- Present

In May 1991, the rebel groups who were transformed into political parties–mainly the TPLF and OLF–entered the capital, Addis Ababa, after having spent the previous seventeen years in the bush fighting against the Derg regime (Young, 1996). It was a watershed moment that ended Ethiopia's prolonged political repression in which tens of thousands of Ethiopians disappeared, perished, fled, or were imprisoned. It was also the start of the period when Ethiopia forged its current political settlement by the current Ethiopian governing coalition known as the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Also, Eritrea passed a referendum declaring its independence and seceded from Ethiopia in 1993.

The EPRDF was founded by TPLF in 1989. After overcoming its main rivals in

the bush in early 1980s, TPLF became the main rebel group in the struggle against the Derg . They (the TPLF) had fought first for independence of Tigray,–or at least autonomy–but later framed their war in the wider context of Ethiopia and formed EPRDF as an umbrella political organization (Hagmann & Abbink, 2012). TPLF also drove out OLF from Ethiopia and started consolidating their grip on EPRDF (Jalata, 2007). The EPRDF is a coalition of four other ethnic-based parties: the Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM), the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM). All four purport to represent Ethiopia's major ethnic groups, but are closely aligned in ideology, political association, and policy preferences. This effectively raised the 'ethnic profile' of previously marginalized ethnic groups. The 'profile of ethnicity' was further reinforced by the 1995 Constitution, which explicitly turned Ethiopia into a federation of nine ethnic states; but, as some have argued, it was still without a corresponding devolution of authority or resources in real terms (McCracken, 2004). Some argue the TPLF is the core of the EPRDF coalition, holding absolute power over the last quarter of a century. "Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front" is a misleading term because among the four parties, it is the TPLF–not the other three parties–that determines whether to bestow power to other members of the coalition, or to take it away. Criticism claims that TPLF uses the coalition to confirm its own ability to keep both the center of the country and the regions under control while the remaining three ethnic parties participate as a "patronage network," trading the needs of their people for political influence (McCracken, 2004). Some argue that the resulting discontent serves as a driver for identity-based mobilization, disregarding the 'shared' sense of pan- Ethiopian nationalism (Kebede, 2011).

The current regime has held regular parliamentary elections every five years since 1995. But its use of state resources and repression, coupled with boycotts by marginalized opposition parties, left most Ethiopians without any meaningful choice during the first decade of multiparty elections. In 2005 however, EPRDF gave voters meaningful political options for the first time in the country's history (Arriola, 2005). Two large opposition coalitions competed against the EPRDF and actively campaigned across the main regions of the country. According to official results, the combined opposition increased their number of seats. But the short-lived optimism culminated in post-election violence when some opposition leaders refused to accept the results, claiming voter fraud and intimidation had denied them victory. They announced a boycott on parliament and called for protests (Arriola, 2005). The EPRDF government responded to the protests with brutal force that left hundreds of people dead, hundreds imprisoned, and many more exiled.

Given the widespread post-election turmoil in 2005, the 2010 election did not attract enthusiasm (Tronvoll, 2011). The regime made the political environment uninhabitable for opposition groups. Instantly after the 2005 election, the regime kept top opposition leaders in court for treason. People identified as opposition supporters lost access to government services and jobs. Then, in the run-up to the 2010 election the regime muzzled its critics by adopting laws aimed at eliminating independent media and civil society (Tronvoll, 2011). For example, the 2009 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation broadly defines terrorism, establishes sentences of up to twenty years for published statements judged to encourage acts of terrorism, and authorizes intelligence services to conduct surveillance over the Internet (HRW, 2010). The law has been used to arrest many independent journalists and to make public discussion of major public-policy issues

a dangerous activity. The law's key provisions are vague, and Ethiopia's judicial system lacks both the capacity and the independence to serve as a check on government's abuse of the law (HRW, 2010).

In the latest parliamentary elections in 2015, the EPRDF won 100 percent of parliamentary seats without conceding a single seat for either an opposition or an independent candidate (Arriola & Lyons, 2016). However, only months after the 2015 election, students in Ethiopia's largest regional state, Oromia, started protesting the EPRDF regime. Initially, the protesters revolted against the EPRDF's plan of expanding the area of the capital, Addis Ababa, into Oromia. The protestors argue that the controversial plan, known as the "Addis Ababa Master Plan", to expand Addis Ababa into Oromia state would result in mass evictions of farmers who mostly belong to the Oromo ethnic group. The protesters also have other demands such as making Oromo language a federal language. Oromo, the language of the Oromo people, is the most widely spoken language in Ethiopia and the fourth largest African language. The government response has been brutal: hundreds have been killed, thousands have been arrested, and critical voices–both on and offline–have been systematically silenced (HRW, 2016). Although the government has scrapped the plan to expand Addis Ababa, it has still fallen far short of addressing the demands of the protesters, which include greater questions of self-rule, freedom, and identity.

The protest that started in the Oromia region spread in other part of the country, mainly to the Amhara region. In Amhara, the country's second largest region, protests started in Gonder on July 31, 2016. In just four months, the protests rapidly devolved from addressing local identity questions of the Welkait community, into a region-wide movement that has spread into numerous other provinces. The large-scale July 31st

incident in Gonder marked the first major confrontation between Amhara protest leaders and the Ethiopian government. However, the dispute between the Amharas and the regime can be traced back as far as the early 1990s, when the TPLF-dominated EPRDF redrew the district boundaries of the Welkait community into the Tigray region, which belonged to ethnic Amharas. Some Amhara activists have described the ongoing Amhara protest as '25 years of anger unleashed' (Chala, 2016)

The protesters in Gonder have also expressed slogans of solidarity with the protests in Oromia. Although the protests in Oromia and Amhara started for different reasons, they both stem from Ethiopia's complex identity politics. In both regions, demonstrators were challenging the dominance of elites from the same group–the Tigray. The Tigray make up 6% of the population, but dominate the ranks of the military and the government; while the Oromo represent 34% and the Amhara 27% of the country's population. Since November 2015, hundreds of protesters have been killed and thousands have been arrested. The protests spreading from Oromia to Amhara seemed to represent an important turning point in challenging the 27-year rule of the EPRDF (Chala, 2016).

A Snapshot on the History and Current State of Ethiopian Media

The three successive Ethiopian governments set up a system of control that penetrated all spheres of life in Ethiopia. The media were strictly supervised, regulated, and controlled by the government. The control over media is so pervasive that it includes not only political expressions, but all kinds of information, including artistic expressions through theatre performances, literature, and music. During the imperial regime of Haile Selassie I, nothing could be published without prior approval by authorities. Within this

context, any work of art, a newspaper, or a radio program was scrutinized before it could be released to the public (Reta, 2013). There were only a few state-owned publishers, and they were often required to delete paragraphs or entire articles before publication (Reta, 2013). In some instances, a book was outright banned, mandating that the entirety of a print run be discarded (Reta, 2013). As a result, publishers have long engaged in heavy self-censorship in order to keep their work or avoid imprisonment. However, these writers have been faced with the inherent challenge of balancing the risks of invoking censorship, making them use metaphors with symbolism too vague for the audience to make the desired connection (Kebede, 2014).

Following his ascension to power in 1974, Mengistu Haile Mariam institutionalized censorship and turned all forms of media into an ideological apparatus of the state (Reta, 2013). Due to high illiteracy rates and poverty under the three successive regimes, radio was the "primary media of mass communication" in the country (Skjerdal, 2012). Radio was first introduced to Ethiopia in 1935. To date, domestic radio consists of one state-run station along with a few joint semi-private-semi-public FM stations. Ethiopia did not obtain television until 1963, and it was not until 1995 that most parts of the country could receive TV broadcasts. There are still areas where television signals do not reach. From 1963 until 2014, Ethiopia carried only one government-run television station. Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) operated under its parent division, Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency, –formerly Ethiopian Television–which was commonly viewed as a propaganda tool used by the successive Ethiopian governments. From the beginning, the Ethiopian television channel has contained government edited news reports and images of lush vegetation, skyscraping buildings, and new roads, intended to evoke a sense of economic development. Since 2015, the Ethiopian

government has issued two licenses for state-affiliated broadcasters to operate as private television stations.

Although the Internet was officially introduced in Ethiopia in 1998, with the establishment of the country's first data communication link, it was not until 2000 that individual citizens were able to access the network (Freedom House, 2013). To date, there is only one state-owned Internet service provider operating in the country, Ethio-Telecom. Most Ethiopian Internet users access the Internet through mobile phones and cyber cafes (Freedom House, 2013). However, government restrictions, prohibiting costs, and slow connection speeds have kept penetration rates significantly low (OpenNet Initiative, 2007; 2012; Freedom House, 2013). When Ethio-Telecom launched its dial-up service in 1999, it charged approximately $300 (USD) for annual service (Freedom House, 2013). At the time of its inception, service was restricted to business groups, travel agencies, and government ministries (Freedom House, 2013). When Internet service subscriptions were ultimately afforded to private citizens, it made negligible progress in the way of facilitating access (CIA World Factbook, 2010; ITU, 2014). While the current influx of state investment has led to a dramatic expansion of telecommunications access, both Internet and mobile phone penetration in Ethiopia still remain among the lowest in the world (ITU, 2014). Moreover, in addition to barriers in the form of infrastructure and cost for other forms of media, Internet access in Ethiopia has been further precluded by a legacy of government censorship (Freedom House, 2013).

However, over the years, the heavily censored and ideologically saturated state-controlled media system has driven many Ethiopians to turn to external media outlets. Transmitting via shortwaves and satellites from the United States and Europe, the most

notable of these international broadcasters have included the Voice of America (VOA) and Deutsche Welle (DW). While VOA and DW are valued for their provision of uncensored local political news, their popularity also extends from their facilitation of political information and cultural programing in three major Ethiopian languages: Amharic, Afan Oromo, and Tigergna. VOA has Amharic, Afan Oromo, and Tigregna language services, but DW only broadcasts in Amharic. The BBC announced that it will also begin radio broadcasting in these languages in 2018. The BBC already launched three websites in Amharic, Afan Oromo, and Tigergna in 2017. Similarly, political organizations such as OLF and Ginbot 7 broadcast radio contents from externally-operated radio programs into the country. During the Ethiopian civil war in the 1980s, the rebel groups such as TPLF had a history of transmitting radio contents into Ethiopia from areas outside of the control of the Derg regime. They transmitted daily broadcasts that featured news from the civil war, party propaganda, and revolutionary music in Amharic, Tigeregna, and Afan Oromo languages. Moreover, diaspora-based opposition groups, exiled journalists, and individuals have often employed the Internet to achieve their objectives; notably, documenting government human rights violations inside Ethiopia and subsequently distributing the reports through websites, blogs, and social media.

While both the Derg and the EPRDF regimes jammed international and opposition groups' broadcasts, the primary method used to control the spread of information among the population has been the use of threat by arresting journalists (CPJ, 2005). The EPRDF briefly relaxed the state's strong grip on media in 1990s, but a campaign against the free press started as soon as the EPRDF passed the free press law in 1992 (CPJ, 1995). Scores of journalists were imprisoned in successive waves of arrests. In 1994, the regime arrested 31 prominent journalists in an apparent attempt to stunt the

growth of the private press at an early stage (CPJ, 1995). However, to build a façade of democracy, the Ethiopian government allowed some space for political expression without jeopardizing its grip on power. The EPRDF regime tolerated the emergence of private newspapers that were limited to the capital city and select urban areas, while retaining tight control over television and radio. The EPRDF mostly allowed free press to operate in Ethiopia until 2005, albeit the opening of Ethiopia's public sphere was an uneven process where journalists regularly faced threats of arrest and exile. But following the contentious election of the 2005, the EPRDF assaulted the private press. For some, the 2005 crackdown on private press represents an abrupt departure from the grudging toleration that was accorded to the private press during the first fifteen years of EPRDF's tenure. Following the electoral success of opposition groups in 2005–and against the backdrop of the private press in the public sphere playing an increased role–the regime denounced the private press as 'mouthpieces' of the opposition that are 'playing a key role in implementing' the post-election 'violence' (Ross, 2008). A glance at the treason charges that were brought against 13 journalists whose names were on the government's watch list, suggests however, that the regime found them threatening, not because they committed 'treasonous crimes,' but because they reported on the unfolding political crisis (Ross, 2010). Indeed, I would contend that it was the development of the private press–and its growing influence as an alternative source of information and as a platform for opposition in Ethiopia–that prompted the regime to move against it.

Since 2005, hundreds of newspapers and magazines were shut down. These left hundreds of journalists arrested, exiled, or sentenced to long-term prison rulings (CPJ, 2016). As the government's clampdown on private, independent, and free media widened, the number of journalists, bloggers, and media executives in exile have been

increasing since 2005. The Committee to Protect Journalists lists Ethiopia among the worst countries in the world for exiling journalists. According to the CPJ, from 1991 to 2016, at least 163 journalists were forced into exile. Even though many of these journalists are resettled in the United States, Canada, and Europe, they continue to be involved in some kind of diaspora media initiatives. At the same time, the upsurge in connectivity of the internet and in access to television and satellite dishes–which was initiated by the regime for its own purposes–broadened the resources and institutional space available for opposition and aggrieved groups to reach each other. This resulted in the locus of political expression from Ethiopia to shift outside of Ethiopia, particularly to the United States and Europe. Much to the regime's frustration, however, the diaspora community based in the United States and in Europe provided financial support for journalists who took initiatives to launch media outlets.

Consequently, Ethiopia's contemporary media landscape is built on a number of political and economic factors discussed above. It encompasses a system of interdependent media actors that are simultaneously local, national, and transnational. Particularly media in the diaspora and the media inside Ethiopia are two distinct but influential elements of the Ethiopian media landscape. The diaspora media represent independent elements within the broader Ethiopian media system, in which they are connected to the Ethiopian public, albeit physically located in different countries. Not one of these two (the media in diaspora or the media inside Ethiopia) can be ignored and they both are determinative to understand the Ethiopian media system. These two are so closely related that there is a communicative linkage between the media inside Ethiopia and the media in the diaspora. This communicative linkage encompasses a wide range of phenomena such as news reporting, political campaigns, and cultural exchanges through

different communicative infrastructures. In particular, Ethiopia's satellite dish penetration grew hand-in hand with the internet penetration. Various independent and private media organizations that were exiled from Ethiopia over the years get access to the news and events through media–private, public, blogs, online journals, social media platforms, friends, readers and communities–and broadcast them back to Ethiopia. This makes the offline and the online media overlap and converge in a distinctly different manner with different socio-political implications. In this context, I evoked Tufekci and Wilson's (2012) concept of 'connectivity infrastructures' that suggests media systems 'should be analyzed as a complex ecology rather than in terms of any specific platform or device.' For this research, this includes diaspora-based satellite TV, short wave and internet-based radio stations, social media platforms, mobile phones, and interactions with offline social networks. Diaspora-based websites, satellite radio, and television broadcasts reach equivalent–if not more–number of audiences than the official media controlled by the Ethiopian government.

ESAT and OMN: A Preliminary Analysis

As shown above, the Ethiopian media landscape took shape in the specific historical circumstances of political conflict and resulting migration. At the time of the 2005 national election, the diaspora media comes into the fold of the Ethiopian media landscape as a major alternative source of information in the form of blogs and websites. At least twenty websites and blogs were active during the contentious 2005 national election, and about half of the major newspapers were taking contents from the diaspora-based websites and blogs (Jon Abbink, Tobias Hagmann, 2012). Subsequently, the

regime blocked the blogs and the websites, and the newspapers were shut down after the election. These hostile government measures have led to the following: the proliferation of massive numbers of diaspora media platforms; and the pattern of censorship that perpetuates the longstanding distrust between different diaspora-based community members and the Ethiopian government. The flourishing of the Ethiopian diaspora media gained new impetus in 2010, after journalists and opposition leaders fled the country in a pre and post-election crackdown. After the crackdown on journalists intensified between 2010 and 2015, many journalists and opposition politicians came to the United States through asylum. Washington D.C. and the Twin Cities area in Minnesota have been headquarters to Ethiopia's diasporic media scene. Between 2010 and 2015, at least four satellite diaspora television stations were formed. Among the four television stations, ESAT and OMN are the most prominent, with their growing influence as agents for the flow of uncensored information into Ethiopia. ESAT was established in 2010 with the help of Ethiopian immigrant communities in the United States, while OMN was created in 2014 by Oromo diaspora groups. The introduction of satellite diaspora television stations into Ethiopia's public sphere as an example of "feedback loop," in which news reports are gathered covertly by sources in Ethiopia, produced in ESAT and OMN studios in Washington D.C. and Minneapolis, and then broadcasted back into Ethiopia via satellite.

Since the emergence of ESAT and OMN, the Ethiopian media scene has undergone momentous changes. One of the outcomes of these changes was the emergence of a media coverage of political events that is free from Ethiopia's government control. The autonomy of these two media narratives vis-à-vis government-controlled media narratives created a standard against which the truthfulness of

government's version of the news inside Ethiopia is measured. Executives and journalists of ESAT and OMN believe that they are countering the government's misinformation and propaganda. But the Ethiopian government frequently targets these two channels with allegations of them working to bring about regime change by supporting political movements in Ethiopia.

Simultaneously, there is an ideological rivalry between ESAT and OMN themselves. The rivalry between ESAT and OMN emanates from the interpretation of the history and historicity of the Ethiopian State. ESAT's point of reference for the origins of the current political problems of Ethiopia are the institutionalization of ethnic based political mobilizations and the withering of the transcendental identity called 'Ethiopian identity'. According to ESAT, until 1991, the emphasis of the Ethiopian State was on constructing the sense of collective 'Ethiopian identity' so that ethnic identities were less important than 'Ethiopian identity'. For ESAT, the current regime institutionalized ethnicity when it reorganized the Ethiopian State into a federation of nine administrative regions along ethnic lines. Journalists of ESAT usually reproach the Ethiopian government for using linguistic differences as the only means of internal political administration, which they claim becomes a fundamental strategy of divide-and-rule to legitimatize the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF). ESAT emphasizes the historicity of the Ethiopian State. Generally, it traces the formation of the Ethiopian State beyond the 19th century. They view Emperor Menelik's 19th century southward expansion as merely a re-incorporation of the lands that belonged to the Ethiopian State long before the south-north expansion of the Oromos in 16th Century.

On the other hand, OMN views the current Ethiopian political malaise as a condition shaped during Emperor Menelik's 19th century southward expansion. Some

Oromo scholars who have an ideological association with OMN deployed Veracini's conceptualization of settler colonialism to characterize Emperor Menelik's 19th century southward expansion. Veracini defines settler colonialism 'a distinct type of colonialism that functions through the replacement of indigenous populations with an invasive settler society that, over time, develops a distinctive identity and sovereignty' (2015). For OMN, the Amhara/Tigrayan-dominated Ethiopian State is settler colonialism and it developed the distinctive 'Ethiopian Identity' which is not inclusive and hence, does not represent the Oromos. For them, the current regime is the modern-day extension of Emperor Menelik's Ethiopia, albeit with the Tigrayan domination and a false recognition of the rights of the Oromos and other ethnic groups.

Therefore, I argue that this complex nature of loyalties to ethno-national identities provides an important framework for understanding the operations and reporting of ESAT and OMN. Although the proponents of Ethiopian identity who migrated to the United States during the military government of socialist Ethiopia dominate diaspora groups, the ethno-nationalists that have come to the United States over the past twenty-five years have all drawn on the ethno-nationalistic rhetoric of the current regime. This pattern persists in the setup of ESAT and OMN. The supporters of the collective 'Ethiopian identity' mostly coalesce around ESAT, while ethno-nationalists–mainly the Oromo nationalists–support OMN. ESAT frames Ethiopia's violent ethnic relations as nonlinear and complex historical actualities that occurred throughout the formation of the Ethiopian State. ESAT's interpretation of Ethiopia's violent past signifies a mission of shielding the collective 'Ethiopian identity' that has been constructed over hundreds of years, and repairing the damage of 'Ethiopianess' caused by the current regime. OMN on the other hand, has a mission of asserting their Oromo identity.

Significance of the Study

The arrival of ESAT and OMN on the Ethiopian media landscape has not only broadened the breadth and diversity of informational resources for Ethiopians both at home and in the diaspora, but it has also continued their hostile relationship with the Ethiopian government on a transnational communicative space. In this context, it is important to mention that during the Ethiopian election cycles, opposition candidates usually travel to the United States to hold fundraising events and appear on ESAT and OMN. However, this is not limited to opposition political leaders. The Ethiopian government also regularly sends delegations to meet with its supporters and solicit political and financial support from the Ethiopian diaspora community (Lyons, 2006). A panel discussion organized by pro-government groups in Washington D.C. in December 2016 alluded to the possibility of launching a pro-government diaspora media in the United States. This would open a new site of conflict between ESAT, OMN, and the Ethiopian government. It represents the concept of the "de-territorialized nation-state," in which boundaries are defined socially rather than geographically (Basch et al., 1994; Glick Schiller and Fouron, 1998). It also shows that in the Ethiopian political context, ESAT and OMN are a pervasive phenomenon that puts Ethiopia on the map for millions of Ethiopians throughout world. Additionally, it shows that Ethiopian media is being re-produced throughout a transnational public sphere. If Nancy Fraser is correct that a transnational public sphere is defined by its capacity 'to be a vehicle for mobilizing public opinion as a political force to empower the citizenry vis-à-vis private powers and permit it to exercise influence over the state' (1992), then ESAT and OMN, although located outside Ethiopia, are politically and socially consequential and qualify as a

veritable transnational diasporic public sphere that are worthy of a careful scholarly study. Furthermore, in a post-globalization era and ongoing struggle to frame immigration and diaspora communities, Ethiopian diaspora and their media activities offer an interesting site for the study of the impact of diaspora on their country of origin, attempting to shape political discourse and force a regime change from a distance.

The fact that little has been written on the influence of ESAT and OMN provides another impetus for this study. No scholarly work has captured the rise, the burgeoning influence, and the ideological rivalry of ESAT and OMN. In a related but slightly different context, a study on Ethiopian web-based diaspora media and their journalistic practices suggest that their reporting tends to be influenced by their political positions (Skjerdal, 2009). While the journalistic practices of Ethiopian diaspora media tend to be "conflict-oriented and politicized" (Skjerdal, 2009), the study left us largely ignorant of what historical, social, political, and institutional factors drive the diaspora media to politicize their reporting. In a sense, the study conflates the cause and effect of events. Skjerdal's study would have been benefited from exploring the history of the conditions under which the diaspora media arose, how Ethiopian journalists moved out of Ethiopia, and why they continue their journalistic enterprises from a distance. Hence, this research will make empirical contributions on the rise of ESAT and OMN, their journalistic practices, and their ideological rivalry that are embedded in their interpretations of Ethiopian history. Therefore, this study will have a significant contribution because it captures the journalistic practices and the ideological rivalry of ESAT and OMN on a transnational scale.

This study will be the first to systematically chronicle and explore the rising

power of ESAT and OMN through the instrumentality of a transnational public sphere. Different diaspora communities have frequently been described as politically inconsequential groups in the local/domestic politics of their country of origin because of their 'hybrid identities'(Brinkerhof, 2009). Most diaspora communities often use their media outlets to negotiate their identities in the host countries, promote solidarity, and nurture collective, national, nostalgic memories. There is a desire to go back 'home' and the fight the sense of uprootedness that comes along with geographic displacement to new socio-cultural habitats. Arif Dirlik describes these types of diasporic media as a 'mournful discourses of marginalized diasporics'(2004). These types of diasporic media are never used as instruments to influence the local/domestic politics of their country of origin. However, ESAT and OMN have changed this hallmark of diaspora media. This study, therefore, makes important contributions to the existing literature on critical diaspora discourse in that it demonstrates how through ESAT and OMN, the Ethiopian diaspora community are interlinked with their country of origin.

This study makes original contributions to the scholarship of transnational public sphere, diaspora study, and frame analysis by doing the following: by tracing the rise of ESAT and OMN within Ethiopian diaspora media; by exploring their variegated ideological rivalry; by capturing the relational and political tensions they have with Ethiopian government and between themselves; and by showing how all this has altered the Ethiopian politics over the last five years. It therefore joins and advances disciplinary conversations in media studies and transnational public sphere theory.

Research Questions

With a purpose to explore the links between the Ethiopian diaspora media and

their impact in Ethiopian local political dynamics, the following three research questions have been formulated to guide this study. A methodology based on these questions will follow.

1. What is the historical, social and political context in which the Ethiopian diaspora in the United States sets up media outlets? When and why were ESAT and OMN developed? Here, I am interested in probing the contextual factors that have fostered the development of Ethiopian diaspora media.

2. What is the influence of ESAT and OMN over the diaspora in the United States and in Ethiopia? How might the influence of these two major outlets differ from others? Here, I will be analyzing the transnational aspects of diaspora media, their power (or lack of) to influence political discourse, and their leverage with different audiences.

3. What are the differences and similarities between ESAT and OMN in using frames in reporting political events related to Ethiopia? Here I will be looking at what major frames ESAT and OMN have used when they report political events from inside Ethiopia.

Methods

I have adopted mixed method research methodology to provide a contextual narrative of the rise, the development, and the struggle of ESAT and OMN within the Ethiopian public sphere. My methodology is divided into two sections. In the section that deals with the rise of ESAT and OMN, I will provide the justification and specification of the research procedures I have used for studying the two media organizations. In the section that deals with the reporting of ESAT and OMN, I have given detailed methodological justification for content, discourse, and frame analysis separately in chapter three.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter I provides a contextual background for the study. It includes an overview of

Ethiopian history, as well as an account of Ethiopia's media landscape and the role and significance of ESAT and OMN. It also provides the significance and justification for the study by identifying the gaps in the existing research on Ethiopian diaspora media and pointing out the contributions that this study makes to the disciplinary conversation. Last, it presents research questions that guide the investigation and a note on methodology that is deployed to provide answers to these research questions.

Chapter II reviews relevant literature on diaspora and transnational public sphere framing theory. It unites them with the various conceptions of Ethiopian diaspora media. In addition, it highlights two broad theoretical frameworks: transnational public sphere theory and the framing that undergirds this study.

Chapter III discusses the combination of research methods this study employs and how they are applied in its empirical work. In total, there are three methods of data collection and analysis. It provides a brief description and analysis of selected political events that were covered by ESAT and OMN. It also provides a wide-ranging literature review, quantitative content analysis, and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It also presents description of frame analysis and interview as a method.

Chapter IV is and empirical part of the study and one of the sections that discusses results. It traces the history of ESAT and locates the evolution and influence of ESAT in the Ethiopian media landscape in the context of broader discussions about the factors that contribute to the the rise of ESAT. It then provides a detailed account of the fundraising, community engagement, and news and programming content of ESAT. It also points out the following: ESAT's organizational identity; its reach on its various online platforms; its potential audience and its most important stories; the tone of its journalism; its limitations; and the Ethiopian government reactions to ESAT's reporting.

Chapter V provides basic background information about OMN. It presents background to the factors that led to the rise of OMN in the United States. It answers the key questions that pertain to OMN's identity, its history, how is it funded, where its journalists are, where it is watched/available, and what its notable moments since its establishment are. OMN's coverage of the Oromo protest garnered significant attention. It had the highest viewership and accolades of any other episode in the channel's history. With extensive access, resources, and connections in Ethiopia's largest region, Oromia, the channel became a primary source for the Ethiopian public and other media outlets, trying to make sense of historic protest in Ethiopia. This chapter reviews its news and programming and how OMN covered the Oromo protest.

Chapter VI builds on the theoretical discussion of a transnational public sphere and starts the analysis of the empirical data. It explains how ESAT and OMN contribute to the formation of transnational communicative space in the Ethiopian context. As we learn from chapter four and six, ESAT and OMN's role in restructuring public discourse and publicizing political debates beyond their traditional enclaves is undisputed. The practical manifestation of the roles of ESAT and OMN is what this chapter is trying to demonstrate. The political impacts listed in this chapter are the practical manifestations of ESAT and OMN and they respond to the research questions this project set out to answer.

Chapter VII presents the third results chapter of the research. It presents the analysis and discussion of the news reporting and feature programming of ESAT and OMN on the protest that rocked Ethiopia for more than three years. News items (n=238), are analyzed in three parts according to three separate reporting periods. Within each section, the analyses of quantitative and qualitative results demonstrate the two frames–pan-Ethiopian nationalism, and Oromo nationalism embedded in the news items–in order to answer the

following question: what frames did ESAT and OMN choose to report on the protest that was started in Oromia and later progressed to other part of the country? Furthermore, comparisons between ESAT and OMN are made to explore not only the difference between themselves in relation to the frames they choose, but also the differences between the three selected periods.

Chapter VIII is the last chapter. It juxtaposes the research questions presented in Chapter one against the data presented in the last three chapters. It also highlights the implications and draws conclusions from the findings of this study. The findings, where applicable, are compared to existing theoretical formulations in order to discover patterns, themes, key issues, nuanced divergences, and new insights. Since this dissertation is ultimately about the nature and consequences of ESAT and OMN, I draw connections between my finings and the theory of transnational public spheres. I also show the limitations of the study and recommend areas for future research.

A Note on Translation

For data collected through interviews with the journalists and employees of ESAT and OMN, I have translated the statements of my informants and represented them as a direct speech in English, even though the statements were made in Amharic or Afan Oromo. For the data I have used for discourse analysis of the news coverage of the ESAT and OMN, I have translated their news coverage after I have transcribed them in the sources language in a summarized version. The reader should keep in mind that the quotations I have used for discourse analysis are not a word to word translation of the news coverage.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The preceding chapter provided a contextual background for the study. It included the synopsis of Ethiopian history, a brief account of Ethiopia's media landscape, and a preliminary analysis of the role and significance of the Ethiopian diaspora media within broader Ethiopian media landscape. In order to situate my research in pertinent literature, I will outline the main scholarships about diaspora, transnationalism, and framing theory in the following chapter. While diaspora and transnationalism will build on what I have laid out in the first chapter as a foundation for the preliminary analysis of ESAT and OMN, the theoretical concept of framing will lay the foundation for a discussion of the study's research question that inquires about ESAT's and OMN's framing of political events in Ethiopia.

Diaspora and Transnationalism

Faist (2010) discusses how the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism have served as theoretical frameworks through which migration and shifting of state borders across populations are researched. According to Faist, those researches have focused on delineating the origin and reproduction of transnational social formations and macro-societal contexts in which these cross-border social formations have operated, such as 'globalization' and 'multiculturalism' (2010). As he contends, both terms refer to cross-border processes, while *diaspora* refers to migrant groups living outside of their homeland, and *transnationalism* denotes the ties that both migrants and organizations such as NGOs have across countries. Although *diaspora* and

transnationalism are occasionally used interchangeably, the two terms reflect different intellectual genealogies.

Relative to *diaspora*, *transnationalism* has historically attracted little scholarly attention from researchers. While diaspora has been used widely in numerous academic studies over the last few years, there is a growing profusion of scholarly interest in *transnationalism*. This is partly a consequence of both popularity and the expansion of transnational communicative spaces that it enables, evidenced in the flourishing of several internet and satellite communications technologies. Although many scholars have robustly and carefully captured the emergence, constraints, motives, practices, prospects, singularities, and dominant thematic preoccupations of *diaspora* and *transnationalism* there are no universally agreed conceptions of what these terms mean. As Faist has noted, striving for exact definitions of terms such as 'diaspora' and 'transnationalism' may seem a futile exercise. But Faist, quoting Wittgenstein (2009), suggested that the essence of concepts can be inferred from how they are used. Hence, in the following section I will give a brief overview of the two concepts.

Diaspora

Rooted in migration studies, the uses and meanings of the term *diaspora* have undergone dramatic changes. Initially, the concept denoted the historic experience of Jews. However, since the 1970s, 'diaspora' has been used with diverse applications and interpretations. For instance, in the early 1990s, the African Union extended the use of the term to refer to people of African origin living outside the continent. Most application of the term can be characterized by three main features, each feature with its own meta meaning. The first characteristic feature relates to the causes of

migration or dispersal. Older notions of forced dispersal refers to the experience of Jews and the experience of people of African origin through slave trade. Newer notions of diaspora often refer to both forced and voluntary forms of dispersal such as trade (Cohen 1997). The second feature of the term links cross-border experiences of homeland with destination. Older notions clearly imply a return to an (imagined) homeland (Safran 1991). An example is homeland-oriented projects meant to shape a country's future by influencing it from abroad or by encouraging return (Fiast, 2010). A great number of studies about Ethiopian diaspora (Lyons 2006, Levine, 2008, Solomon, 2007) apply this notion of diaspora. However, of late, scholars have replaced the idea of 'returning to an imagined homeland' with ideas of dense and continuous linkages across borders (Faist, 2008). The addition of the continuous linkages emphasizes lateral ties of the diasporic community with their 'imagined homeland'. Such broader uses of the term can speak of a diasporic experience of all mobile persons as 'trans-nation' (Appadurai 1996). In this context, the application of the notion of diaspora demonstrates the fact that the older uses of the term refers to both ethnic and religious groups or communities. The final characteristic feature of the notion of diaspora concerns the integration of migrants and/or minorities into host countries. Older notions of diaspora suggest that its members do not fully integrate with the society of the host countries–that is, they are at the political, economic, cultural margins of the host countries. This notion of diaspora is also often associated with boundary maintenance by a dominant majority through discrimination against diaspora groups. Assimilation would mean the end of diaspora, whether ethnically or religiously defined (Fiast, 2010). Newer notions of diaspora emphasize cultural hybridity in the wake of 'dissemination' (Bhabha, 1994). In line with older notions, it

seems that diaspora implies some sort of cultural distinctiveness of the diaspora vis-à-vis other groups.

As I have shown above, the older and newer notions of diaspora are not always well-matched. Yet, this tension may also constitute an opportunity to raise questions for further analysis. First, newer notions of the diaspora denote any form of migrations or dispersal, which blurs the distinctions between various kinds of international migrations. Fiast (2010) mentions the differences between voluntary and forced forms of migration as an example. Next, the importance placed on return to one´s 'homeland' is substituted by dense and continuous transnational ties. The addition of dense and continuous transnational ties to the notion of diaspora raises important questions about changing forms of diaspora membership in the countries of origin and destination. In this dissertation, I have adopted this concept of diaspora, emphasizing that the Ethiopian diaspora have a deep, continuous, and dynamic tie with their country of origin.

Transnational

While the term 'diaspora' denotes a community, –and has been frequently used in migration research, history, and media studies–concepts such as transnationalism–and transnational spaces, fields, and formations–refer to *processes* that transcend borders and therefore appear to describe more abstract phenomena (Faist, 2012). The term transnational spaces implies a constant, lasting, and dense sets of ties between at least two reaching sovereign states (Fiast, 2012). Transnational spaces comprise combinations of ties and their substance, positions within networks and organizations, and their networks of organizations that cut across the borders of

at least two national states (Faist, 2000b). When the term was first coined by migration researchers, the emphasis was on the grassroots activities of immigrants across borders as being something distinct from the dense and continuous relations of macro-agents, such as multinational or transnational companies. In this sense, the term 'transnationalism' builds upon–yet is distinct from–transnational relations in the political science sub-discipline of international relations as it differs from that usage in its focus on non-state actors (Portes, 1996). Transnational, non-state agents–prominently but not exclusively migrants–are defined as crucial agents (Faist, 2012). The country of origin, country of destination and the migrants themselves thus create a triangular social structure, which can be expanded through the inclusion of countries of onward migration. In this multi-angular structure, the element of migrant formations covers a host of organizations and groups. It includes migrant associations such as hometown associations, religious communities, and employer organizations (Fiast, 2012). In this sense, diaspora and transnationalism have similarities. In sum, the two notions and their studies overlap and intersect. Tölölyan (1991: 5) describes the intersection of diaspora and transnationalism eloquently, saying they are, 'the exemplary communities of the transnational moment'.

As I have shown in the first chapter, the Ethiopian diaspora media have significant presence in the Ethiopian public sphere. Since diaspora and transnationalism–which are the core constructs of this dissertation–have varied and are sometimes hotly contested significations in the Ethiopian media context, it is appropriate to give a brief historical context in which these are used in academic and political debates. The next section therefore discusses the meaning and application of these two terms in the context of media studies.

The Ethiopian Diaspora Media Context

Media that is produced outside the boundary of Ethiopia (homeland) by people of Ethiopian origin are variously called: 'diaspora', 'exiled' 'ethnic', 'immigrant', 'transnational,' and 'opposition' media. The most common of all these terminologies is diaspora media, a broad tent term that is generally understood to refer to media that is produced outside the bounds of Ethiopia(homeland). Often times, the term 'diaspora media' is used interchangeably with the other terminologies (exiled, ethnic, immigrant, transnational, and opposition), but there is a crucial difference among them in the Ethiopian context. These terms reflect different premises, interests, and political agendas. Since clarification of these elusive terms is vital for theoretical purposes, I will briefly explore noteworthy distinctive terminologies that merit mention.

The distinguished sociologist, Donald Levine, who researched Ethiopian diaspora, characterized Ethiopian media produced abroad as 'diaspora media,' while maintaining the expansive sense of the term that denotes media that is produced by Ethiopian nationals living outside of their homeland (2011). According to Donald Levine, primarily digital Ethiopian diaspora media 'deterritorialized' Ethiopian politics, culture, and economics. They were used to maintain strong sentimental or material links with the homeland. Other key works on the subject have attempted to build upon Donald Levine's characterization of Ethiopian diaspora media. Worth mentioning are the study of Terje Skjerdal (2009) on Ethiopian diaspora digital media and the research of Nancy J. Hafkin (2011) on how Ethiopian diaspora use digital technologies to maintain strong links with the homeland. Both researchers have deployed diaspora media as a site for 'deterritorialised' politics and culture. Skjerdal in particular has pointed out the contestatory nature of Ethiopian diaspora media with regard to their journalism practice

(2009).

Meanwhile, Getahun (2007), considered Ethiopian diaspora media as an ‘exiled media’ that has transformed the participants from being purveyors of ‘long distance nationalism’ into ‘ethnic minority’ press in United States. He argues that as Ethiopian immigrants settled in the United States or as the homecoming was no longer feasible, the diaspora media focused on the needs of Ethiopian immigrants in the United States. In fact, Getahun’s characterization of Ethiopian diaspora media generally coincides with Robert Park’s definitive characterization of ‘immigrant press’ of the 1920s. Robert Park, a renowned American sociologist, concluded in his seminal research that immigrants ‘maintain contact and understanding between the home countries and their scatted members in every part of the United States of America’ (p. 55) through their press. There are few Ethiopian diaspora media that can be markedly included in this vein. For instance, Amharic language newsletters, magazines, and community radios that are ‘focused on the concerns and interest of immigrant populations’ of Ethiopian origin can be considered an immigrant media or an ethnic press. Most of these periodicals and radio programs are lifestyle, education and business oriented, and they focus on the needs of immigrants and/or naturalized citizens in the United States. The distribution and circulation of this press tends to follow the settlement pattern of Ethiopian community in the United States. Historically, Ethiopian immigrants are highly concentrated in Washington D.C., Los Angeles, Seattle, Atlanta, Oakland, Minneapolis, and Dallas metropolitan areas. Within each of these metropolitan regions, Ethiopian immigrants run newspapers and rent radio air time from local radio stations to broadcast information pertinent to the Ethiopian immigrant communities of varying sizes. While these media organizations can be considered as an ethnic or immigrant press of Ethiopian diaspora

community, they are not the subjects of my research, as their focus is confined in the needs and interest of the Ethiopian immigrant community in United States.

Tellingly, Getahun also specified the exilic character of the Ethiopian diaspora media as a transient feature that morphed in to an ethnic minority press as Ethiopian immigrants settled into life in the United States. However, many of the newspapers that sprung up in the early 1990s, such as the Ethiopian Review, Ethiopian Tribune, and Ethiopian Register, remained as exiled media until their interruptions and or replacement with online publications. Largely, the purpose of these publications was to provide information and opinion about Ethiopia, to change or solidify opinions about politics, and to assist in raising funds for political groups–although mostly their distribution is limited within the confines of Ethiopian diaspora communities in the United States. Quite strikingly, over the last few years, the term 'exiled media' has become popular among Ethiopian journalists. The term is usually invoked to mobilize support for journalists that are forced out of Ethiopia or for press freedom projects in Ethiopia. However, classifying the Ethiopian diaspora media as 'exiled media' solely on the basis of their reach and purpose may function for supporting Ethiopian exiled journalists, but does not function well for studying the Ethiopian diaspora media that have become a primary vehicle for Ethiopian immigrant community in the United States to influence politics from afar.

Yet again, there is a shift in meaning of diaspora media when one speaks of opposition politics in Ethiopia. Given many journalists and opposition politicians were forced into exile after the contentious 2005 parliamentary elections, the new twist in the meaning of diaspora media is not necessarily surprising. However, it is also important to mention that the antipathy to diaspora media is one of the hallmarks of Ethiopian government. ESAT and OMN are chief among the various Ethiopia diaspora media that

are ostensibly labeled as ‘opposition media’ by the government and its supporters. Apparently, Ethiopia’s diasporic media is oppositional in character in a sense that it competes against the government in Ethiopia. Although the leading diaspora media organizations such as ESAT and OMN do not have an overt allegiance to a particular political party, they are sympathetic towards some political parties and movements that the government considers hostile.

These characterizations of Ethiopian diaspora media are not without merit, but they fail to take full account of the influence of diaspora media in Ethiopia. Much of the research on Ethiopian diaspora media centers on ‘deterritorialisations’ of Ethiopian politics, modes of communication, and their assimilation or anti-assimilationist functions. The studies make little or no attempt to link Ethiopian diaspora media with the influence on Ethiopians back home. I consider this significant, given the intimate relation the Ethiopian diaspora have with Ethiopian politics. Furthermore, the use of these terms often overlaps and are sometimes even interchangeable. Therefore, it may be imperative to qualify its uses for the context of this research.

My research essentially concentrates on the influence of the diaspora media on Ethiopia’s political process. This demarcation is necessary to provide a clear focus for the study. As a result, I propose to use diasporic *transnational* media to show the dense and continuous linkages the Ethiopian diaspora has created through their media organizations. The addition of the term *transnational* is paramount here. While the term ‘diaspora’ refers to the Ethiopian migrant communities that are settled in the United States, transnationality captures the dynamics and the strong interconnectedness that the diaspora community in the United States have created through their media that links to the politics in their country of origin. Indeed, one of the most striking features of Ethiopia’s diaspora

media is that its natural target is toward political engagement is their country of origin. *Transnationaity* also attributes some form of neutrality better than terms such as opposition or exiled media. Hence, I have adopted the term for my study.

The term 'transnational public sphere', another core construct for my research, emerged out of *transnationality* and has also varied, having sometimes hotly contested significations; hence, it is appropriate to precede with the contextualization of transnational public sphere. The next section, therefore, discusses the meaning, history, application, critiques, and limitations of the concept of transnational public sphere that undergirds this research.

Theoretical Framework

Definition and Application of Transnational Public Sphere

I have adapted the theory of transnational public sphere to examine the emergence of ESAT and OMN, two main diaspora media organizations, as a means of practicing journalism, seeking 'liberty,' and (re)constructing identity from afar. I use the term transnational public sphere both as a descriptive and analytical category.

First, transnational public sphere is used as a descriptive category to refer to an arena where several transnational entities such as NGOs, diaspora groups, terrorist groups etc. communicate with each other. Scholars have designated different terminologies to this kind of 'discursive arenas that overflow the bounds of both nations and states' (Frazer, 2007). For example, Crack (2007) listed 'global,' 'cosmopolitan,' 'international,' and 'virtual' sphere/s before she characterized them as 'extraterritorial public spheres'. Anthropologist Michel S. Laguerre deployed it as a 'diasporic public sphere,' in which a diasporic community 'discusses its project for the homeland and the diaspora, interacts

with host land and the homeland government officials and politicians, and reflects on its contribution to society' (2005). Similarly, Mehta calls it the site where 'political visions of homeland are articulated, celebrated, and actively realized' (2014). This certainly is the loose sense of the term that refers to transnational public sphere as an arena where a wide range of people, including immigrants, refugees, and exiled communities, participate in a discursive practice that goes from their host land to their homeland.

The second use of the term is as a conceptual apparatus that invokes Habermas' work on the 'public sphere.' The 'public sphere' was outlined in his detailed account of the development of European bourgeois public culture, from the early literary salons and periodicals of the eighteenth century, through to the advent of the capital-driven mass media of the twentieth century (Habermas, 1962). It refers to the expanding of the Habermasian classical notion of public sphere to explain the discursive practice that goes beyond national borders with the discourse that participants belong to different nations, states and political communities. In this context the classical notion of public sphere is scaled up to encompass 'residents of distinct places (states or localities) and members of transnational entities' (Guidry et al., 2000: 7–8). In this sense, the transnational public sphere is used as a type of public sphere that implies the inclusion of the interlocutors as members of a political community, with equal rights to participate in political life with the purpose of reaching a solution (Frazer, 2005). While this sense of the term could be a pertinent analytical construct to aid in explaining diasporic media, it cannot be taken without qualification because "it will not be sufficient merely to refer to such public spheres in a relatively casual commonsense way" (Frazer, 2005). Rendering those qualifications, Frazer argues that when classical public sphere is linked to the nation-state structure, they are rendered unusable to study transnational political arenas. Fraser

identifies six elements that are taken for granted in the Habermasian public sphere: modern state structure, territorially bounded political community, national economy, national media, and linguistic and cultural homogeneity. However, current mobilizations of public opinion go beyond national borders, they are not necessarily covered by national media, the interlocutors do not belong to a bounded political community, and targets of protest are often trans-territorial.

In classical theory of public sphere, public opinion is considered legitimate when it is inclusive of all citizens, and efficacious when citizens can *translate* their communicative power into binding laws (Frazer, 2009). That is, public sphere must be a platform that allows all citizens of a country to publicly debate through media and other institutions to identify social problems and suggest possible solutions that would end up as a binding laws. However, the transnational public sphere is regarded as a sphere that does not contain these two elements of Habermasian public sphere: legitimate public opinion, and the ability to *translate* their communicative power into binding laws.

To avoid the conceptual flaws of transnational public sphere, I have supplemented the framework with empirical analysis that is firmly grounded in a concrete political, social, and historical context. It examines the roles that Ethiopian diaspora media play in the transnational public sphere. Rather than adopting transnational public sphere as a mere discursive arena, I argue that it is necessary to examine the Ethiopian diaspora media in the framework of the transnational public sphere. It attends to the 'legitimacy' and 'efficacy' critiques of the transnational public sphere because the focus of Ethiopian diaspora media is still on 'local'/domestic issues, such as corruption, political repression, and human rights abuse within Ethiopia. Another running parallel to this is the 'intrusion' of the Ethiopian State into the realm of Ethiopian diaspora media, thus blurring the

boundary between Ethiopia and the diaspora. Here it is important to mention that in December 2016, a panel discussion organized by pro-government groups in Washington D.C. alluded to the possibility of launching a pro-government diaspora media in the United States.

Therefore, a transnational public sphere in the Ethiopian context must be seen as a sphere that is inter permeable to a degree that displays the characteristic features of the Habarmasian public sphere. However, it is also important to mention that regardless of the significant presence of ESAT and OMN on the Ethiopian public sphere, they do not possess 'legitimate public opinion' and 'efficacious communicative power' in order to directly influence life and politics in their homeland. Furthermore, their presence in the Ethiopian public sphere is largely dependent on global information infrastructure such as satellites and the internet, enabling their capacity to circumvent Ethiopia's government restrictions. Nevertheless, the influence of ESAT and OMN are evinced in Ethiopia in terms of government reactions to their discursive practices. For example, the Ethiopian government frequently accuses ESAT and OMN for instigating political instabilities and spreading false rumors during the political protest that lasted for about four years from 2014-2018. It went even further by passing a law preventing people from watching these two TV channels. It also tried to fend off the reception of ESAT and OMN by jamming their airwaves and confiscating satellite dishes from citizens in Ethiopia. Transnationally, Ethiopian government uses its economic and diplomatic power to prevent ESAT and OMN from broadcasting. The administrative personnel of ESAT and OMN accuse the government of Ethiopia of pressuring satellite service providers– such as the French company, Eutelsat, and the Egyptian company, NileSat–to remove ESAT and OMN from their satellite systems. Here it is useful to employ Nick Couldry's

flexible and functional characterization of the Habermasian public sphere (2007). Couldry argues that rather than focusing on the definition of transnational public sphere, it is better to study how transnational processes affect public spheres at different levels of locality, leading to a trans-territorial network of discursive practices. It is also necessary to consider the discursive practices, particularly the journalistic engagement and identity (re)construction, of ESAT and OMN, as well as the responses of the Ethiopian government. The tensions, struggles and interplay between ESAT and OMN and the Ethiopian government contribute to the realizations of Ethiopian diaspora media in the context of the transnational public sphere. Thus, this study uses transnational public sphere as a basis for the exploration and understanding of Ethiopian diaspora media. In doing so, it contributes to the theoretical understanding of the structures and functions of the transnational public sphere through empirical analysis of the Ethiopian diaspora media.

Along with the exploration of the emergence of ESAT and OMN in the transnational public sphere and their adversarial relationship with Ethiopian government, this inquiry seeks to gain insight into the nature of news frame construction by ESAT and OMN. As this pursuit necessitates an overview of framing and frame analysis, I will highlight them as a theoretical framework for the analysis of ESAT's and OMN's representation of political events in Ethiopia. In the following section, I will give a comprehensive review of pertinent framing scholarship, emophasizing theoretical and contextual literature.

Framing Theory

The concept of framing is generally considered vague and muddled with several conceptualizations. Some scholars suggest that because framing has been applied to a wide variety of fields of study–such as management and organizational studies, social movement research, and media studies–there is no 'general statement of framing theory' (Entman, 1993:51). It was introduced to media studies by Erving Goffman (1974) as 'principles of organization which govern events […] and our subjective involvement in them' (Goffman, p.10). In other words, frames are embedded in the process of communications. They are not consciously created but they are instinctively adopted during a communications process (Koenig, 2009).

Deviating from Goffman's (1974) conceptualizations of framing, Entman is largely regarded as the originator of framing in media and communication research. He defined it as a thought that is deliberately adopted and manufactured to highlight specific aspects of a reality during a course of communications. He wrote,

> To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation. (1993:52)

In addition to conceptualizing framing, Entman suggested that in framing theory, salience is 'achieved by highlighting bits of information through placement, repetition, and associating them with culturally familiar symbols' (p.53). This infers a question that enquires about the process of selecting and highlighting the 'aspects of a perceived reality', whose answer determines the outcome or effect of the framing. Therefore,

framing in journalism is a conscious and deliberate selection of 'aspects of a perceived reality'. Wolfsfeld, (1997) another scholar who has written widely on framing and journalism, took Entman's line of thinking even further. He argues that journalists routinely pursue a narrative that fits between incoming information and existing frames in an interactive process. Strengthening Entman's framing theory, Reese (2001) systematized framing into two types: cognitive and cultural framing. In cognitive framing, media outlets persuade their audiences to think of a certain phenomenon in a certain way by highlighting certain aspects of the event. Cultural framings are deeper in their significance and they have a longer-term effect in audiences' understanding and values. Both 'cognitive and cultural frames' are consciously constructed. This contrasts with Goffman, whose frames enhance rather than limit audiences' reception and understanding of information.

Elements that construct a frame and frame analysis

For Entman (1993), frames are 'manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgements (p.52). Correspondingly, Gitlin (1980) described frames as 'persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse' (p.7). For Stuart Hall (1996), a frame is composed of 'mental frameworks–the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation–which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, figure out and render intelligible the way society works' (p.26). How these bits and

pieces of information are assembled in a narrative manner within a specific media gives power to framing and decides how audience understand the information.

Research approaches that analyze media use of "stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences" to ascertain "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation" of certain topics is generally referred to as frame analyses. In order to answer the third question posed in chapter one I, will adopt Entman's conceptualizations of framing as a theoretical framework. It suits ESAT's and OMN's characteristics of journalism practice, which involves active and deliberate selection of certain frames in order to meet their organizational principles of news coverage that is strongly affected by Ethiopia's political and social context, as discussed in the first chapter.

Frames, Ideology and Journalism

Frames are entrenched in existing ideologies, albeit to varying degrees. Framing requires tapping and exploiting the ideologies that they are grounded in. Hackett (1984) says that media researchers should study ideology in the news instead of objectivity and bias. He also suggests that frame analysis is a useful approach to media studies by going beneath the surface of news coverage and disclosing the underlying implications and assumptions. Explaining the difference between framing and bias, Hackett contends that framing is more complex and sophisticated than the cognitive psychological perspective. According to Hackett, framing goes beyond dual representation of a reality. It defines a situation or an event and creates a discourse or a conversation around it. Furthermore, framing often operates in a concealed manner, with powerful effects in influencing audiences' points of view without their knowledge. 'Much of the power of framing

comes from its ability to define the terms of a debate without the audience realizing it is taking place'. (Tankard, et al. (2001:97)

Van Dijk (1998) introduced a new concept of ideology as 'the interface between social structure and social cognition … ideologies may be very succinctly defined as the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group' (p.8). That is to say, ideology provides some resources for framing activities in order to serve the interests of certain groups. Explaining the relationship between ideology and framing, Snow and Benford (1992) wrote that the 'framing process involves, among other things, the articulation and accenting or amplification of elements of events, experiences, and existing beliefs and values, most of which are associated with existing ideologies' (p.9)

Journalism is based in ideological social practices. It is also crucial in the formulation and sustaining of ideologies. Journalists constantly decide which "events, experiences, existing beliefs, and values" to include or emphasize when reporting a story. These decisions create a frame that both supports the story (like the frame of a house) and defines what belongs inside (like a picture frame), and thereby signals what news consumers should find important (Tiegreen, and Newman, 2012). This makes journalism an exercise of filling 'frames' with 'a pattern or set of ideas, assumptions, beliefs, values, or interpretations of the world by which a culture or group operates' (Foss, 1996:291). These all are products of ideologies. In other words, framing is the approach of constructing elements with a certain logic to make sense of the dominant ideology (Bhaskar, 1989). Eder, (1996) in his book, *The Social Construction of Nature: A Sociology of Ecological Enlightenment*, suggested that 'Discourse analysis looks at the medium in and through which frames are constructed and reconstructed', thus 'frames are the micro-units of a discourse analysis' (p.166).

Taxonomy of Frames

Over the last two decades, scholars have expounded on a variety of frames, or how frames can be categorized. Neuman et al. (1992) contend that the news media draw upon four main frames in their coverage of issues: *conflict, human interest, morality* and *economics*. Such generic frames serve to organize the presentation of a story in terms of deciding which dimensions of an issue to emphasize. According to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), conflict frame looks at a conflict between individuals, groups or institutions. Human life stories are the main focus of the human-interest frame. Economic consequences frame the concerns with issues regarding benefits or costs related to individuals, groups, institutions, regions, or countries (p.95). Frames can also be divided as 'episodic' or 'thematic,' (Iyengar, 1993, p. 369) based on the focus of their content. However, more potent classifications of frames can be found among social movement scholars. According to social movement scholars, frames can be categorized as 'master frames' and 'sub frames'. A master frame refers to a generic frame that has a resounding effect on collective actions. A master frame has a broader scope and influences social movements more than a specific collective action frame (Snow & Benford, 1992). That is to say, while most collective action frames are context specific (e.g., pro-life frame, pro-choice frame, environmental justice frame, etc.), a master frame's articulations and attributions are sufficiently elastic, flexible, and inclusive enough so that any number of other social movements can successfully adopt and deploy it in their campaigns. It was originally introduced to understand 'resonant framing techniques' of protests that emerge in authoritarian political environments. Since the concept of framing was widely adopted in the study of media discourses, master frames have emerged in empirical media studies research as well. Hence, I have employed the concept of master frames to reveal the

similarities and differences of framing (frame analysis) by ESAT and OMN in their reporting on political protest in Ethiopia.

Master frames

As I described above, master frames can achieve what other types of collective action frames can achieve, but on broader scale. For the master frames, their punctuations, attributions, and articulations "may color and constrain those of any number of movement organizations" (Snow and Benford, 1992:138). Hence, specific collective action frames derivate from master frames, which are generic. Specifically, "master frames can be construed as functioning in a manner analogous to linguistic codes in that they provide a grammar that punctuates and syntactically connects patterns or happenings in the world" (p.138). In relation to flexibility of the master frame, the first step is the attributional function. As the first step of framing process, collective action frames serve as an accenting device to identify an unjust, immoral, existing condition that deserves corrective action (Snow and Benford, 1992). Subsequent diagnostic attributions by identifying the problems and prognostic attributions are made "by suggesting both a general line of action for ameliorating the problem and the assignment of responsibility for carrying out that action" (p.:137). Master frames perform this function in a similar way, but on a macro scale. They "provide the interpretive medium through which collective actors associated with different movements within a cycle assign blame for the problem they are attempting to ameliorate" (p.139).

Principal Master frames of Ethiopian Media Discourses

The set of master frames I have deployed in my frame analysis are frequently used in media discourses. They appear in the forms of *ethno-nationalism* and *civic/political nationalism (*Billing, 1995; Eder, 1995; McAdam, 1996; Gamson, 1992). They are based in the discourses of nations and nationalism. Anthony Smith conceptualized these two concepts of nations as *Western/civic nation* and *non-Western/ethnic nation*. The civic nation points to a territorial nation. In other words, 'nations must possess compact, well-defined territories…People and territory must, as it were, belong to each other' (Spencer and Wollman, 2005:178). The civic nation is also "a community of laws and institutions with a single political will" (Spencer and Wollman, 2005:178). The laws and institutions are centralized within the community. Finally, it claims that the nation is made up of various races, colors, creeds, genders, languages, etc. It is "civic" because it emphasizes the equal rights of citizens as well as democratic political practices and values. In the context of the Ethiopian media discourse, civic nationalism is articulated in terms of Pan-Ethiopian nationalism, although it has Amhara and Tigrayan roots, as I have described in Chapter one. By contrast, ethnic nationalism historically considers nationhood as homorganic and it defines the individual by their inherited roots, rather than the laws that are made in the nation to which they belong (Lecours, 2000). In Ethiopian political context, Oromo nationalism, among other nationalisms, is a good example. I will expound on how these two master frames are employed in the journalism practices of ESAT and OMN in the analysis section.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the methodology that I have adopted for my empirical work. First, I will begin with describing my sampling technique, followed by a detailed description of the research design. Then, I will briefly lay out the theoretical underpinnings of quantitative content analysis, critical discourse analysis, and frame analysis as well as discuss how these three methods work together as a whole. In real practice, the data are analyzed in three steps. First, quantitative content analysis gives general answers to questions regarding the differences and similarities between ESAT and OMN in framing political events related to Ethiopia. Particularly, what are the differences between ESAT and OMN reporting on several rounds of political protests that shook the country for more than three years (May 2014 to October 2017). In the second step, I analyze transcripts of video packages from ESAT and OMN on a textual level, from journalistic context to political context, in order to explore the different ideologies behind news reporting. The last step is frame analysis. Based on the results from the other two methods, frame analysis is used to explore how the two struggling forces–Oromo Nationalism and pan-Ethiopian Nationalism presented as two contrasting frames in media discourses within a broader socio-political context–are adopted in news reporting. The last section of the chapter shows the procedure of how the three research methods are practiced in the empirical work.

Chronology of Events

In April 2014, students in Ambo–a town located 80 miles west of the capital city, Addis Abab–began to march, protesting the Ethiopian government's plan to expand Addis Ababa into the territories of Oromia, the largest of nine ethnically federated Ethiopian states (HRW, 2014). In May and June of the same year, they were joined by students from other towns in Oromia. Ethiopian authorities clamped down on student protests with force, killing at least 30 students and arresting hundreds before they were able to put a break on the spiraling protest (Amnesty International, 2014). The crackdown succeeded in dampening the protest, but not for long. After just a year of hiatus, in November 2015, the protest resumed in Ginchi, another town located 70 miles west of Addis Ababa (Chala, 2015). In Ginchi, students had more localized demands, asking local authorities to halt leasing out a protected forest and land owned by their school for private individuals. For the second time within a year, security forces opened fire and killed several demonstrators. Since then, the protests spilled over into greater parts of Oromia. The cause of the protests came full circle, returning to the demands that students made in their first protest in Ambo in April 2014. Following these two successive protests in Ambo and in Ginichi, the country lived on a knife's edge for a year. Particularly, the protest that broke out in Ginchi had greater political significance. It ushered in an unprecedented eleven months of political uprising and unrest that engulfed Oromia and transcended into the Amhara region, the second biggest regional state in Ethiopia.

Sampling

I have analyzed sample story items and punditry analysis (packages) of television

programs containing any reference to the protest. They are usually described as #OromoProtest on social media and appear between November 12th, 2015–the day the protest started–and August 31st, 2016, which marks the day that the Ethiopian government started to take drastic measures against the protesters. It then declared a state of emergency on October 9, 2016. The protest that was started in Ginichi on November 12th, 2015 is generally considered to be a follow-up to the protest that was started in Ambo in May 2014. This indicates that the two protests have a common cause. As such, it is logical to focus on the incidents that have happened after November 2015.

Since the protest occurred during specific stretches of time, I have divided the protest period into three protest waves. The first wave of the protest from November 12th, 2015 to February 28th, 2016, includes the beginning of the protest in Ginichi and a series of protest incidents that happened in western Oromia throughout the next four months. The second wave of the protest, March 1st, 2016 to May 30th, 2016, is when the protest started to engulf Oromia. The third wave of the protest is from June 1st, 2016 to August 30th, 2016. This is when the protest started to occur in the Amhara region with messages of solidarity voiced in Oromia. Activists in Oromia declared a national day of protest called the Grand Oromo Rally. It took place in more than 50 towns across Oromia on August 6th, 2016 (Opride, 2016). Although these waves of protest are unequal in duration, they are designated to represent the major events that occurred throughout the protest. To have a wide-ranging representation of events, at least one critical event from each wave is included in the sample. The first event was the initial protest demonstrations that started in Ginichi on November 12th, 2015, which ushered in an insistent period of protest for almost a year. The second is the widely-publicized 'Grand Oromo Rally,' a national day of protest that took place in more than 50 towns across Oromia on August 6th, 2016. The

third event is the protest done by prominent Ethiopian Olympian marathon runner, Feyisa Lilesa, who won the silver medal and showed a protest sign by crossing his wrists over his head at the finish line during the Rio Olympics (Iaccino, 2016).

The choice of the events is not arbitrary. These were events identified as critical junctures in the entire duration of the protest. Contrary to the daily violence, daily demonstrations, and repeated slogans–to which ESAT and OMN found repeated answers, interpretations, and analyses–singular events 'distinguished for selective inclusion in an analysis' (Krippendorff, 2004, p.98) highlight the protest. The events provide practically on-the-spot readings that tend to be more revealing in terms of lexicon, sources of information, and rationale employed to explain the out of the ordinary occurrences. Furthermore, I picked these events because each lent itself to different and opposing interpretations, pushing to the surface the distinctive elements that portray bias. Besides being critical junctures of the protest, these events have certain characteristics in common. First, compared to other Ethiopia-related news, these three events are popular in terms of coverage in ESAT and OMN, as well as in international media in the same period (Lefort, 2016). Secondly, horizontally speaking, the four events cover economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions of the protest. Vertically speaking, the events will reveal how the frames of ESAT and OMN changed over time. Last, by selecting the three big events of the protest, this research fills a gap in the current research on diaspora media representation of political events in Ethiopia.

The population of the sample is the whole range of the protest archives from YouTube and Vimeo channels by ESAT and OMN. As I have explained in the previous chapters, ESAT and OMN are primarily free over satellite television channels. Most of their broadcasts are also readily available on their YouTube and Vimeo channels, helping

them to complement their satellite broadcasting program. ESAT, created its channel on April 8th, 2010, and now boasts having more than 100,000 subscribers and more than ninety-six million views of its channel. OMN launched its YouTube channel on January 19th, 2014 and has more than 20,000 subscribers with more than eleven million views. Together, ESAT and OMN roughly define the borders of the present space for political discussion in Ethiopian online media.

Mostly, ESAT and OMN put the same program items on their YouTube channels that appear on their satellite television channels. The videos they store on their YouTube channels include news anchors reading reports, breaking news stories, daily news programs, programs that feature exiled academics, their editorial staff, and frequent guests. These videos represent the main news broadcasts of the most widely watched programs. Of late, both ESAT and OMN also started to upload videos of interviews and punditry analysis from their Facebook Live videos. They have been uploading their videos since they have launched their satellite broadcasting. ESAT and OMN provide more extensive content archives making it easy for researchers to access their materials on their YouTube channels.

Both ESAT and OMN have large archives of videos devoted to covering the protest as they were recorded by citizen eyewitnesses and participants. These videos were either exclusively sent to ESAT and OMN, or they were posted by the citizens themselves on social media. ESAT and OMN broadcast these videos through their satellites, incorporating them into their news broadcasts. I have selected 238 videos to be used in my research. In the following table, I have detailed the selected videos.

Table 3.1. Sample of Videos Selected

Duration of Protest	**Selected Incidents Critical Discourse**	**ESAT Videos**	**OMN Videos**	**Number of Selected Videos**
1st Wave Protest 11/12/15 – 02/28/16	**Incident 1:** The Master Plan Protest	30	35	65
2nd Wave Protest 03/01/16 – 05/30/16	**Incident 2:** The Small Rallies of Spring	35	28	63
3rd Wave Protest 06/01/16 – 09/01/16	**Incident 3:** Feyisa Lelisa Protest at Rio Olympics	50	60	110
	Total No.	ESAT Total =115	OMN Total = 123	Total Selected =238

Content Analysis

Definitions and Procedures

In the following section, I will highlight some general points about the definitions of quantitative content analysis with emphasis on the purpose and procedure of content analysis. Berelson (1952) wrote a definition of content analysis as a research method for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the evident content of communication. It is credited by some as familiarizing content analysis as a research method. However, other scholars have defined quantitative content analysis both before and after Berelson's renowned definition of content analysis. For instance, Holsti (1968) stated that it is any technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages. More recently, describing the method in terms of its basic function, Krippendorff (2004) defined it as 'a research technique for making replicative and valid inferences from data to their context' (p.21). Based on the

three definitions with different emphases, a more comprehensive definition can be made as follows:

> Quantitative content analysis is the systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurement rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, in order to describe the communication, draw inferences about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context, both of production and consumption (Riffe et al., 1998, p20).

For all of these definitions, the focus has been exclusively on quantitative description of communications content. Indeed, the very name 'quantitative,' implies the statistical nature of the method. The name carries a sense of epistemological underpinning within communications research that makes use of statistics for broader inferences about the processes and politics of representation' (Deacon et al., 2007:119). However, quantitative content analysis is the first stage of textual analysis, as it sketches out a general picture of main features of selected media texts. It only counts what is in the coverage, rather than the implicit meaning of the content. It does not explore the internal meanings and relationships between texts, but only provides general answers to certain research questions and functions as a filter to justify the sample and selected dataset for further in-depth analysis, such as discourse and semiotic analysis. Similarly, Gerbner (2002) argued that content analysis aims to produce 'a big picture' (delineating trends, patterns and absences over large aggregates of texts). So, it is a method which suits the analysis of general meanings rather than deep inferences. With the sole purpose of quantifying the salient and manifest features of ESAT's and OMN's coverage of the protest, I deployed quantitative content analysis at the start of my empirical study. This

sets the stage for critical discourse and framing analysis. The following steps will show how the content analysis as a method will be carried out in my empirical work.

Producing a Coding Book: Step 1

First, I have produced a coding book which is composed of two research instruments: a coding form, and a coding manual. As I have specified earlier, my sampling period encompasses four protest waves, with each wave comprising at least one critical episode of the protest. All protest waves share the same coding form. For the four critical protest incidents selected as critical junctures of the protest, I have prepared a coding manual. The coding form is a sheet covering all the variables designed for the study. In a typical content analysis study, at least four textual dimensions–who appears, how they appear, evaluative features, and interpretive dimensions–are coded (Deacon et al.,2007). All protest waves share the same coding form and the same variables. They are included as follows:

Story Date
Story ID
News outlet: ESAT vs OMN
Duration in minutes
Headline
Prominence
Type of Story
Broad Story Topics/ Themes
Actors
How the actor appears

The second research instrument–the coding manual–includes detailed categories

for each protest incident selected as critical junctures of the protest. For example, regarding the protest in Ginichi: Addis Ababa Master Plan was the main focus of the protest. The emphasis of the Grand Oromo Rally was demanding the release of political prisoners who were arrested during the first wave of the protest. The remaining protest incidents, although thematically related, have their own exclusive demands. Hence, specific categories are designed for each protest incident and assigned to the different characteristics of each protest incident.

Collecting Data: Step 2

After setting up my coding instrument, I set out to download news packages, programs, and features from the online platforms of ESAT and OMN. As I have explained earlier, both ESAT and OMN have developed YouTube and Vimeo channels as alternative platforms to their satellite broadcasting services. Based on my sampling frame I have downloaded 238 videos from their respective YouTube and Vimeo channels. Since the greatest number of the packages are available on their online platforms, downloading the videos is a straight forward process albeit, time consuming. However, it is not always simple and easy when filling the categories with data.

Coding Procedure: Step 3

With regard to story selection for coding, all stories pertaining information on the protest in Oromia, or #OromoProtest, as it is commonly referred to in social media, have been coded. In order to be classified as an #OromoProtest story, the words ‘Oromo’ or ‘Oromia’ had to be mentioned explicitly at least once in the story. As I have explained in

this chapter, all stories have been coded on the same sub-set of variables. If the story was an OromoProtest story, coding continued for another #OromoProtest-specific subset of variables. In order to be selected as critical junctures of #OromoProtest, names such as 'Addis Ababa Master Plan', 'Grand Oromo Rally', or 'Feyisa Lelisa's protest at Rio Olympics' had to be mentioned at least once in the story. In total, 238 stories have been coded. While downloading the videos, I have watched and re-watched a significant number of the videos, which helped me get acquainted with the data. This, in turn, facilitated the coding process. All Amharic stories are coded by two coders in close cooperation with myself, the principal investigator. Both coders of Amharic stories are native speakers, but I have coded all of the Afan Oromo stories by myself, since the other coder does not understand this language. Afan Oromo stories were coded with only one coder due to a lack of resources. However, given that the primary focus of my quantitative content analysis–producing a big picture–does not require advanced statistical interpretation, one-person coding is reasonable. An inter-coder reliability test based on a subset of Amharic packages was conducted and yielded satisfactory results. The unit of analysis and the coding unit was each distinct story. Coding was conducted electronically on excel spreadsheets in which coders entered their codes, storing all data automatically.

Analyzing Results: Step 3

For data analysis, I used Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software. The first step is putting individual variables with data from the general and specific OromoProtest case studies under their appropriate columns. Then, I run the spreadsheet software with three basic purposes: generating frequency tables, cross-tabulations, and providing descriptive

statistical measures.

For generating frequency tables, the results are presented with names like ‘overall frequencies of reporting by media sources: ESAT and OMN’, ‘overall frequencies of themes by ESAT and OMN’’, etc. Cross-tabulations provide more complex findings by analyzing more specific aspects of the data or comparing different datasets. Both generating frequency tables and cross-tabulations are used in the content analysis part of my research. They are used in general measures of tendency and in the comparison between ESAT and OMN in order to answer the initial research question of the differences between ESAT and OMN in relation to their effort in covering political events in Ethiopia.

Problems with Content Analysis

Content analysis as a research method consistently encounters several problems. Key among them is what I call ‘conjectural problems’. In his seminal book, Berelson (1952) wrote “content analysis is ordinarily limited to the manifest content of the communication and is not normally done directly in terms of the latent intentions which the content may express nor the latent responses which it may elicit” (Berelson, p.262). By using the term ‘manifest,’ Berelson emphasizes that content analysis does not discern the basic assumptions that underlie and define a content. Instead, content analysis assumes that “the relationship between intent and content or between content and effect can validly be made, or the actual relationships established [...]” (Berelson, p.264). Another assumption that is essential to content analysis is the study of the manifest content. Berelson further comments, “content be accepted as a ‘common meeting-ground’

for the communicator, the audience and the analyst" (Berelson, p.264).

Almost all discussions of content analysis emphasize the method's application of statistical application. Statistical methods are applicable to any area of communications research and are, therefore, useful. What this indicates is that meaning is universally present. This possibility, as one of Berelson's main concerns, that content analysis assumes that the "quantitative description of communication content", is meaningful. This is to say, frequency of occurrence of various characteristics of the content is itself an important factor in the communication process (Berelson, p.265).

Berelson's argument about the 'conjectural problems' of content analysis provides a solid foundation for the integration of quantitative content analysis with other methods. More practically, quantitative content analysis as a standalone method cannot answer why ESAT and OMN adopt different frames to report on political events in Ethiopia. The fact that some specific key words appear more frequently on ESAT over OMN does not mean ESAT is more concerned about the protest in Oromia than OMN or vice versa. Deciding if the event is significant for certain media also depends on how it is reported, such as what perspectives and descriptions are used. This is why quantitative content analysis is also used as a filter to identify 'valuable' items for further analysis. But content analysis is unable to answer questions such as why ESAT and OMN have different ways of reporting political events in Ethiopia. So, linguistic analysis and analysis of larger outside influences is important. In order to answer why ESAT and OMN have different ways of reporting political events in Ethiopia, I have adopted discourse analysis and framing analysis to complement the content analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

As noted above quantitative content analysis has limitations. The question of why ESAT and OMN have different ways of reporting political events in Ethiopia will be answered by applying the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). I shall begin by defining 'discourse' and 'discourse analysis,' followed by a discussion of theories and practice of discourse analysis. Then I will briefly show how I will do the actual practice of discourse analysis in the empirical section of my research.

By its nature, discourse spans a multitude of disciplines, philosophies, and methodologies. This, of course, allows for a variety of definitions, be they philosophical or methodological. The definitions I present here reflect some of those wide viewpoints. Schiffrin (1994) classified the definitions of discourse into two broad categories: *structuralist* and *functionalist*. According to structuralists, discourse is generally defined as a unit of language, specifically, as a unit of language that is bigger than a sentence. Given, this definition of 'discourse,' it is now possible to discuss discourse analysis itself. The first of these is the emphasis on a unit of language bigger than a sentence. Structuralist discourse analysis is an analytical research that primarily studies cohesion, narrative, causality, and motivation within a text. In this context, a text is everything (may be a magazine article, a television interview, or a conversation) that is meaningful in a particular situation. Richardson says, "Theorists who adopt this first definition of discourse tend to look at the features which link sentences together; the formal features which make two sentences 'a discourse' rather than just two unconnected phrases" (Richardson, 2007, p.22).

From the perspective of functionalists, discourse is viewed broadly as a social phenomenon. Van Dijk (1997) defines 'discourse' as "a practical, social and cultural

phenomenon," and though there are various elaborate functionalist definitions of 'discourse' available, Van Dijk's conceptualization of discourse has the most important concepts for discourse analysis. By using the terms such as 'practical', 'social' and 'cultural,' Van Dijk emphasizes that 'discourses' are not just structures. For example, "language users engaging in discourse accomplish *social acts* and participate in *social interaction*, typically so in *conversation* and other forms of *dialogue*" (p.2). In a similar vein, Brown and Yule (1983) argued that discourse analysis is "the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs" (p.1). The preceding discussion of functionalist view of discourse analysis has shown that functionalists attempt to understand how people use language. Therefore, if a researcher adopts this definition of discourse, they tend to understand how language is used.

Both structuralists and functionalists focus on texts, although they differ in their approach towards discourse analysis. Structuralists see discourse as a form, while functionalists see it in terms of its use. Some scholars call structuralists and functionalists as textual linguists. For instance, Halliday said that 'text' is everything that is meaningful in a particular situation: "By text, then, we understand a continuous process of semantic choice" (1978, p.137). In the 'purely' textual linguistic approaches, –such as the cognitive theories of text–texts are viewed as "more or less explicit epi-phenomena of cognitive processes" (Tischer et al., 2000,p.29) while 'context' plays a secondary role. However, text and context must be viewed as two kinds of information that contribute to any kind of communicative act. Schiffrin wrote:

> I will use the term "text" to differentiate linguistic material (e.g. what is said, assuming a verbal channel) from the environment in which "sayings" (or other linguistic productions) occur (context). In terms of utterances, then, "text" is the

> linguistic content: the stable semantic meanings of words, expressions, and sentences, but not the inferences available to hearers depending upon the contexts in which words, expressions, and sentences are used. […] Context is thus a world filled with people producing utterances: people who have social, cultural, and personal identities, knowledge, beliefs, goals and wants, and who interact with one another in various socially and culturally defined situations (1994,p.363).

According to Schiffrin, to do a discourse analysis, one must study both text and context. Every text encapsulates a context in which the text is produced that is not simple and linear, but complex and multi-layered. One field of discourse analysis that involves the study of both text and context is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Critical Discourse Analysis, a research method from a critical perspective, pays equal or more attention to language use in relation to social conditions, political ideologies, and cultural aspects. Critical Discourse Analysis considers discourse as a practical, social and cultural phenomenon but it "links linguistic analysis to social analysis" (Woods and Kroger, 2000, p.206). What this means is that Critical Discourse Analysis offers interpretation of meanings of texts and situates what is said in the context in which it occurs. Hence, for my research, I adopt Norman Fairclough's work on Critical Discourse Analysis. Unlike other critical discourse theorists who treat all social practice as discourse, Fairclough confines the term 'discourse' to language and images. Fairclough starts with the texts and gradually builds towards understanding how societal power relations are established and reinforced through language use. This has significant differences from van Dijk's (1993,1997a,b) social psychological model of discourse analysis, which focuses on how mental structure of preconceived ideas shape news production. Comparatively, Fairclough's discourse analysis makes reference to historical, social, and ideological contexts in which texts are produced.

Norman Fairclough's Theories of Critical Discourse Analysis

For Fairclough,

> to fully understand what discourse is and how it works, analysis needs to draw out the form and function of the text, the way that this text relates to the way it is produced and consumed, and the relation of this to the wider society in which it takes place (Richardson, 2007, p.37).

He defines critical discourse analysis as a systematic approach which seeks to explicate:

> Often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts and (b) broader social and cultural structures, relations and processes […] how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power […] how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (Fairclough 1993, p.135; reprinted in Fairclough 1995a, p.132f).

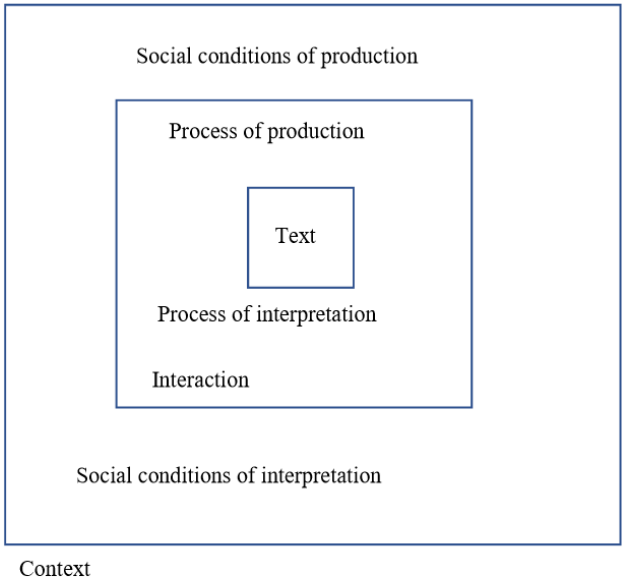
Hence, the aim of discourse analysis is to shed light on the relations between the actual language used, and the wider social and cultural contexts (Titscher et al., 2000). In order to put discourse analysis into practice, Fairclough has constructed an important analytical framework. In the past, this analytical framework has been used for empirical communications research. According to this model, every instance of language use is a communicative event consisting of three dimensions: *text, discourse practice* and *socio-cultural practice*. Fairclough, also identified three basic procedures of critical discourse analysis. It starts with textual analysis and then uses analysis that sheds light on the links between texts and societal structures (power, political, and cultural). Fairclough suggested a critical discourse analysis should condense:

1. *description* of text (in my case ESAT's and OMN's coverage of #OromoProtests),
2. *interpretation* of the relationship between text and interaction, and
3. *the wider social practice* to which the communicative event belongs (2001).

For Fairclough, text analysis alone is not sufficient for discourse analysis, as it does not shed light on the links between texts and societal and cultural processes and

structures. An interdisciplinary perspective is needed that combines textual and social analysis. Fairclough's three-dimensional model reproduced in Figure 3.1 represents an interdisciplinary perspective on analytical framework for my empirical research.

Figure 3.1. The Analytical Framework of Critical Discourse Analysis



(Fairclough, 2001, p.21)

From the picture above, we can see that the first analytical focus of Fairclough's three-part model is a text. In Fairclough's sense of the term, analyzing a text means a deeper linguistic analysis that involves a study on vocabulary, grammar, semantics, the sound system, and cohesion-organization of a unit of text (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 57). Fairclough also views text from a multifunctional perspective in the sense that any sentence in a text can be analyzed in terms of the articulation of these functions, which he calls *representations*, *relations,* and *identities* (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 58). To avoid the impossible task of translating complex linguistic features of Amharic and Afan Oromo

texts into the English language, I have adopted the multifunctional perspective for my analysis. Hence, my analysis aims at

1. Representations and recontextualizations of OromoProtests in ESAT and OMN
2. Constructions of identities on ESAT and OMN (for example, in terms of what is highlighted during the protest–whether status and role aspects of identity, or individual and communal aspects of identity)
3. A construction of the relationship between ESAT and OMN and the protesters in Ethiopia (for instance, formal or informal, close or distant) (Fairclough, 1995b, p. 58)

Second, the process of text production (example editorial procedures of ESAT and OMN) and interpretation is not only cognitive as suggested by van Dijk. It is also determined by social 'context': "they are socially generated, and their nature is dependent on the social relations and struggles out of which they were generated" (Fairclough, 200, p.20). This social context is made up of three levels of social conditions: the level of the social environment in which the discourse occurs; the level of social institution which constitutes the discourse; and the level of the society (Fairclough, 200). Hence, my aim in applying Fairclough's three-part model of analytical framework is to show the social, historical, and political contexts in which the Ethiopian diaspora media report on events in Ethiopia. This approach "justifies the use of CDA rather than purely descriptive, data-driven approaches which are epistemologically inadequate in accounting for the complex linguistic choices made during the processes of text production" (Baker et al., 2008, p.281).

Discourse as Social Practices

As I have explained in the previous paragraphs, Fairclough (1995a) suggested that for a broader understanding of discourse as a social practice, textual analysis is not sufficient because discourse works in combination with other forces (often these forces are called non-discursive elements)–e.g. historical, political, and ideological–to constitute a social practice (p.57). Analyzing the non-discursive elements of social practice might require "different levels of abstraction from the particular event: it may involve its more immediate situational context, the wider context of institutional practices the event is embedded within, or the yet wider frame of the society and the culture" (Fairclough, p.62). Luke (2002) argued that,

> [...] what texts 'do' in the world cannot be explained solely through text analysis or text analytic language. To reiterate, the actual power of the text, its material and discourse consequences, can only be described by reference to broader social theoretic models of the world (p. 102).

Hence in order to set up the broader social context for the textual analysis of ESAT's and OMN's coverage of #OromoProtests, I have briefly introduced the historical, social, and political contexts in which the Ethiopian diaspora media operates. The non-discursive elements represent moments of every social practice, which are in a dialectical relationship with each other. For instance, the social context cannot exist on its own, but is constituted by discursive elements such as journalism. The work of journalism is also influenced by the social context. Hence, the social context is deeply produced and structured within the non-discursive elements and each element has its own logic and is influenced by discourse practices such as journalism. As suggested by

Richardson, “society and the social formation–that is, the historic, economic, political and ideological features of society–forms a backdrop that both structures and enables the work of journalists” (Richardson, 2000, p.43). The dialectical relationship between society and journalism is to say that society influences journalism in various ways, “from the constitutive effects of ideology, social structures, social power, other agencies and institutions to the values and preferences of the target audience” (Richardson,2000). Journalism, on the other hand, uses its power to enforce or resist social movements. Therefore, “social practices surround and shape the work of journalists, meaning that an analysis of the social practices of newspaper discourse requires the analyst to look outside the text and examine the relationships between journalism and the social formation as a whole” (Richardson, 2000).

Discursive Practice

The discursive practice dimension of a communicative event consists of both the processes of text production and text consumption. Since my research aims to answer how ESAT and OMN cover political events in Ethiopia, my research involves only the first part of discursive practice dimension: text production. This stage of critical discourse analysis focuses on how the two media outlets covered #OromoProtests under a wider journalistic and social condition. Hence, the texts about #OromoProtests, shaped by their producers, represent the ideology, identity, and their relationship with the event–#OromoProtests. According to Fairclough (2001), since “the values of textual features only become real, socially operative, if they are embedded in social interaction, where texts are produced and interpreted against a background of common-sense assumptions

which give textual features their values", the texts and social structures together are coherent (p.117).

As a central claim of Fairclough's CDA model, intertextuality is understood as an interpretive analysis that draws from earlier events. It refers to the influence of history on a text and to a text's influence on history, in that the text draws on earlier texts and thereby contributes to historical development and change (Kristeva, 1986 p.39; quoted in Fairclough 1992b, p.102). For Fairclough, the notion of intertextuality has two constructs: external and internal intertextualities. External intertextualities are variables that are related to other broader issues. As Blommaert (1999) stated: "Every text incorporates, reformulates, reinterprets or re-reads previous texts, every act of communication is grounded in semantic and pragmatic histories which are not simple and linear, but complex, multi-layered and fragmented" (p.5). The internal intertextuality shows variables that are limited within the text presented in the media report. In my analysis I will highlight both kinds of intertextualities.

Material Selection and Analytical Procedure

Selected Materials

Having given the theoretical underpinning of CDA, I will now proceed to outline the selection and application of specific CDA analytical tools, research procedures, and selection of materials for my critical discourse analysis. From the four protest incidents selected as critical junctures of the protest, I chose headlines and news contents that would provide context for the descriptive content analysis. Hence, headlines, news contents and punditry analysis of OromoProtests are the three major parts of the story

items selected for analysis. My objective is to show how exactly I have applied such analysis to the empirical work.

Headlines

Both in Amharic and in Afan Oromo television, news headlines take similar forms. They both have a similar tradition of using one or two independent sentences. Some may involve a visual accompaniment or news presenters reading headlines straight on camera. They always come at the beginning of news bulletins and indicate the essential information about the news of the day. In other words, they define the situation and evaluate it. Hence, the headlines not only sum up the information of the event, but also give ideological implications. In Ethiopian tradition of television news reporting, journalists usually tell stories by injecting their opinions. They use various strategies such as identity description to insert their opinions in the news bulletins. ESAT and OMN usually use specific identities to describe political groups or a person. When used in headlines, these kinds of strategies lead to ideological implications, which might bias the perception of their audience. "They summarize what, according to the journalists, is the most important aspect, and such summary necessarily implies an opinion or a specific perspective on the events" (van Dijk, 1991, p.51).

News content

The textual analysis of news contents in this thesis is composed of two major sections. First, I will analyze the selection of words, metaphors, and the referring of social actors. I will examine how they cooperate with each other in the news in order to

establish the relations between the social actors who are referred to and the social context they are associated with. The 'ideological square' is a popular strategy often used by the journalists. It was developed by Teun van Dijk, who suggested that it is "characterized by a Positive Self-Presentation and a simultaneous Negative Other-Presentation," which emphasizes the positive characteristics of 'Us' and de-emphasizes negative characteristics of the 'Other'. Through this framework, the world is perceived and represented based on where the reporter stands.

The second section is presupposition. Beside analyzing what is 'there' in the texts, it is also important to "be sensitive to absences from the text, to things which might have been 'there', but aren't" (Fairclough, 1995a, p.106). Presupposition is between the absence and presence of what is in the texts and taking for granted that the information which is 'unsaid' exists and is given to readers, or that the readers have established certain knowledge on a specific subject.

Transcription

I transcribed the videos before I translated them into English. All the videos I have selected for CDA are in Amharic, while the news contents are in both Amharic and Afan Oromo. As Ochs (1979) shows, the process of transcription contains interpretation of the spoken language (Fairclough, 1992b, p.229), thus I have attempted to minimize my subjectivity by presenting the headlines and the content of the news and the analysis as they are. As I stated earlier, my aim is not to do a detailed analysis on the linguistic features of the headlines and the news content, thus I have adopted Gail Jefferson's simple transcription system. Gail Jefferson's simple transcription system shows a

sentence for both the headlines and the content of the news. It also shows pauses, silent periods, and overlaps between speakers in the punditry analysis videos selected for critical discourse analysis (see, for example, Potter and Wetherell 1987; Wetherell and Potter 1992).

Analysis

Fairclough proposes a number of tools for analyzing text as text, and for analyzing text as discursive practice. In his book, *Doing discourse analysis: methods of studying action in talk and text,* he suggested:

1) "Play with the text. Ask how it would read if a particular item (word, phrase, etc.) were omitted, phrased differently (i.e., consider substitutions), or combined with some other item…consider syntax: How would the text read if the sequence of two items were reversed (e.g., a compliment comes after rather than before a request)?" (p.93).

2) "Look carefully at how the text is structured, shaped, and ordered in both individual segments and overall, because structures are ways of achieving both content and function" (p.93).

3) "Part of the analyst's task is to describe and analyze the ways in which participants treat categories. Similarly, comparison is not only an essential activity of the analyst (e.g., comparing a participant's formulations of an event in different contexts); it is also a device used by participants (e.g., a participant employs a comparison as justification for a particular judgment)" (p.94).

4) "It is important (although often difficult) to consider what is *not* there (in terms of both 'content' and form)" (p.92).

5) “Assume that a focus on the literal meaning of an utterance or text may be the least helpful analytic strategy; concentrate on what the speaker or writer is doing, how that segment is related to other segments, and so on; consider also the possibilities of irony. This does not mean the complete neglect of literal meaning; rather, we need to ask how the literal meaning is used to do something, how it is related to what is done, and so on” (p.92),

6) “You do not need to be a linguist or grammarian, and your goal is not to identify linguistic or grammatical features. However, grammar is important to the social workings of discourse, and attention to grammatical features can help to identify those workings…the emphasis is on the social implications of grammatical features” (p.94-95).

7) “In a sense, all of the ideas that you can muster will constitute your analytical resources. It is important to remember that you come to discourse analysis as a member of the culture, as a speaker-hearer and writer-reader of the language. This raises some dangers, but it also means that you can draw on your own knowledge. Discourse analysis is not like studying rocks. Rocks do not change under the gaze of the investigator in the way that people do under the scrutiny of a social scientist. As elsewhere, the critical feature is not how you come up with patterns, interpretations, and so forth, but how you justify your identification of patterns, how you ground your interpretations” (p.95).

Additionally, due to the intertextual characteristic of news reporting, a news article always involves either quotations in the form of information and comments, or background information (Fairclough, 2003). Therefore, it is more important to investigate how the previous messages occur in the current news reporting rather than just simply stating its existence.

Frame Analysis

As I discussed in the second chapter, the frames of ESAT and OMN are

analyzed based on Entman's theory, which involves an active and intended selection of frames. ESAT and OMN choose their frames to meet their organizational principles. Since frames have social and political origins, frame analysis might require broader research that is not limited to textual analysis. According to D'Angelo, (2002) two of the main purposes of frame analysis are identifying thematic units knows as frames and investigating the precursor conditions that produce frames (p.873). This suggests that frame analysis goes beyond linguistic textual analysis and provides broader social relations and structures that are included within media texts. However, textual analysis is still the fundamental foundation upon which all other wider analysis is built. This explains why frame analysis works hand in hand with other methods; it is often integrated with other quantitative and qualitative textual analysis methods (Downey and Koenig, 2006). But in practice, it is usually difficult to explicate the underlying social relations and structures, as they are usually subtle. To achieve this, there are two questions frame analysis needs to answer:

1) With particular passages operating within these stages of the narrative as well as contributing to the sense of a sequenced development of the story as a whole, what makes the text hang together as a narrative with a beginning, middle and end?
2) What assigns each part of the news text– the events described, the quotations used, the outcome forecast, and so on– its position within the hierarchically ordered progression of the narrative? (Deacon et al. 2007:183)

These questions imply that frame analysis is an advanced stage of thematic analysis, but it should not be distinct from the discourse analysis. Discourse analysis

and frame analysis should work together to explain how the news text is constructed. In my analysis, I use the "spotlighted facts and sources" strategy to investigate how ESAT and OMN use frames to report on political events in Ethiopia.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Entman's work suggests that media producers deliberately select information to highlight or ignore from a news item. Similarly, this strategy is applied to sources. It can be analyzed from two aspects. One is the *quantitative* aspect. For van Dijk (1983), the construction of news is "most of all a reconstruction of available discourses" (p.28). Journalists often use other sources when they cannot witness news events. It is important to explore if there is any preferred other source adopted and the frequency of its appearance. The other is the *qualitative aspect*. The emotional reference attached to a certain fact needs to be investigated through concrete analysis.

1. Prioritized value

This can be analyzed in two steps. The first step is to "identify the stance taken and the values advanced by each source, and then plot out the relative position each is given in the overall sequence as this is arranged in the explanatory order, from the 'who did it' initiating summary, downwards through the representation of the main events, circumstances, possible consequences and comments" (Deacon et al. 2007:184).

Interviews

In this section I provide a description of interview as a data collection method. The 20 interviews I conducted with journalists and employees of both ESAT and OMN are entirely based on qualitative interviewing techniques that are semi-structured and

open-ended. They were individual and in-depth, often taking between 30 minutes and an hour. My interview with ESAT took place at ESAT offices in Washington D.C. I was initially able to access the organization through my contacts in the organization. In the summer of 2017, I spent about seven days there to interview employees and journalists who work at ESAT. Since I had developed personal connections with the staff, it was easy for me to set up my own appointments with personnel based in Washington D.C.. The interviews in Washington D.C. started in July 2017, and I was able to conduct a follow up interview in October 2017. I conduced my interviews with the staff of OMN through Skype. The OMN interviews were conducted largely in the Fall and Winter of 2017.

While conducting the interviews, I documented the process. I always identified myself as a researcher, informed interviewees that they can stop at any moment, and that they could access the transcripts and manuscripts later on if they had any concerns. My research was described to them as emphasizing the institutional operations of ESAT and OMN in general, and that I was interested in writing about these two media outlets as an essential part of the story. I have audio recordings, or notes of the interviews when participants preferred they not be recorded. I prepared basic questions and topics, but treated the list as more of a flexible "interview guide," rather than a rigid "schedule" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 194-5). I modified the questions and approach for particular media outlets and different employees to find out more about the work they engaged with. My questions for both ESAT and OMN staff tended to focus on their mission, organization structure and culture, their performance, their assessment of their distribution, and who they imagine the audience to be. I also took a flexible approach to determine what was important to them. The staff of both ESAT and OMN represented

several departments and specializations, but most were journalists or editorial staff. Others worked in programs for fundraising and website design.

Two issues inherent to the use of interviews as a method concerned me: trustworthiness, and determining that the number and sample of interviews are sufficient. Trustworthiness is a fundamental issue, especially given that my participants are strategic actors whose work could possibly be impacted by my study. I use this term to refer to the accuracy of information conveyed in interviews. I tried to address this problem by triangulating–or cross-checking–facts with other sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While certain facts were very difficult to triangulate–given the sensitivities required by competition and the necessity of organizational secrecy–the few that were not are noted in this study. As for knowing if the number of interviews were sufficient, one test proposed by Means Coleman explains that once the point of "redundancy is reached" in responses, (2000, 269) continued, focused interviewing will unlikely produce more information.

Consistent with research ethics standards, I also provided interview subjects with a consent form, which stated their rights and my obligations as a researcher in order to ensure that no harm comes on any of my participants as a result of this research. Although most of my participants stated that they do not mind being directly quoted, a few expressed security and privacy issues and will not be given personal attribution for their quotes.

CHAPTER IV

ESAT'S ORIGINS, IDENTITY AND POLITICS

Introduction

The most prominent political phenomena in the Ethiopian political scene during the last ten years is arguable the creation of a diaspora based Ethiopian Satellite Television channel–ESAT. ESAT beams news and political discussions from Washington D.C. and Amsterdam to Ethiopia 24 hours a day. Since its formation in 2010, ESAT has gathered significant contribution from the Ethiopian diaspora community and has altered the Ethiopian political scene. Priding itself as 'an eye and ear of Ethiopians' for diverse views, focusing on issues with broader political implications, ESAT has grown its prominence since it was created. Since its creation, the channel has been at the center of Ethiopia's media scene. (HRW 2016). It has left a permanent mark on Ethiopia's media scene and developed potential to influence public opinion in Ethiopian politics. At the same time, it is highly controversial. Both pro-government and some opposition groups are critical of ESAT's coverage and programming. Because of its critical stance on Ethiopian government, pro-government activists always regard ESAT's coverage with skepticism. However, among Ethiopian diaspora community, ESAT has acquired an image as a channel for the 'voiceless' Ethiopians. Away from the enthusiasm of those who champion it and the bitterness of those who criticize it, ESAT remains not only a phenomenon of Ethiopian politics that is worthy of exploration, but also one which begs for a better understanding.

ESAT has sources on the ground to capture some of the most important political events in Ethiopia, even before they were reported by Ethiopian State media. This coverage helped create an audience in Ethiopia and abroad. ESAT's first big scoop came in 2012 when it reported about the disappearance and finally the declaration of the death of Ethiopia's longtime leader Meles Zenawi. The channel has sparked a much-publicized controversy, garnered much loathing from Ethiopian government, and attracted considerable praise from opposition forces. ESAT's vigorous reporting on the protest that started in Oromia in 2014 has further garnered its image as a news leader in Ethiopia. Capturing videos and stories of the violence attracted the attention of Ethiopian viewers. The channel vastly outpaced the Ethiopian state TV channel Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) that previously dominated the domestic news environments. However, the Ethiopian government has always accused ESAT of arousing popular passions through over-dramatic coverage and glorification of political protests in Ethiopia. However, evidence suggests that ESAT is enormously popular among Ethiopian audiences and has severely undercut Ethiopian government's narratives. To better understand ESAT's influence on Ethiopia's politics, it is useful to put its political economy, identity, its content, and its framing of political events in Ethiopia's political and historical context. In this chapter, I evaluate ESAT's maxim: "An Eye and the Ear of Ethiopians"; and its journalism, asking how objectively ESAT reports on Ethiopian political events as opposed to oppositional events. In the later part of this chapter, I will show how Ethiopian government's antagonism to ESAT made its operations in a transnational setting difficult. The Ethiopian political context and the brief history of the Ethiopian private press presented in the first chapter are crucial in understanding ESAT's beginning.

ESAT'S Beginnings

ESAT's history is intimately tied to the development of the Ethiopian diaspora community, a community that has grown in the United States and around the world since the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution. As described in the first chapter, following the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution that brought the Derg military regime to power, thousands of Ethiopian political dissidents fled to Western countries. Although the Derg was defeated in 1991, exile has not stopped. Recent political conflicts and mobilizations have also produced yet another wave of migration of political elites. Particularly, the crackdown on members of the private press following the 2005 Ethiopian parliamentary election led to the exodus of hundreds of journalists and opposition supporters. Ethiopian exiles dispersed around the globe, but they most are primarily settled in Europe and North America. One result of such migration has been the emergence of news organizations founded and run by Ethiopian exiles. ESAT then came about as the result of two related political developments. The first was waves of migration of political dissidents that resulted from political conflict rooted in the causes of Ethiopia's 1974 Revolution. ESAT is used, therefore, to give Ethiopians, who were on the losing side of the political conflict, some leverage in the formation of greater influence over public opinion. A second reason is a complete shutdown of independent and or opposition media inside Ethiopia. In fact, ESAT's origin can be traced back to 2005. Prior 2005 the Ethiopian private press had thrived and journalists had developed an oppositional tone in reporting political events. However, most of the journalists were exiled following Ethiopia's only democratic, yet controversial parliamentary election in 2005. According to CPJ, of hundreds of journalists who were exiled to the United States and Europe after the 2005 parliamentary

election, most were involved in intensive reporting on the process of the 2005 election that threatened the political power of the EPRDF.

As for planning ESAT, the idea began in 2009. It found its first manifestation in different online publications, and then resulted in a satellite TV channel in April, 2010, after many months of working out its editorial policies, financial sources, and journalistic endeavors. The basic logic behind ESAT's launch, according to its executive director, Abebe Gelaw, is the complete shutdown of free press in the country (Personal communication, 2017). He said ESAT was "supposed to operate in Ethiopia, but arrest and torture drove hundreds of journalists out of their country" (Personal communication, 2017). In 2010, ESAT was launched after a series of fundraising events held across cities in the United States and Europe. A significant number of Ethiopian immigrant communities, exiled journalists, and opposition political groups donated an unspecified amount of money (ESAT, 2010). ESAT has risen immediately as a vibrant, critical, diaspora media organization that has entered into the Ethiopian public sphere via a transnational communicative space, thanks to exiled journalists–especially those who were exiled to England, Netherlands and the United Sates. Why did ESAT take off so quickly as a leading Ethiopian diaspora media? There are three key factors, which I provide as follows.

First, it was able to exist because of the continuous financial support of Ethiopian diaspora community throughout the world. The strong support base of ESAT are opposition affiliated exiled politicians, journalists, and members of Ethiopian diaspora community (more on this on political economy section of ESAT). Second, ESAT's commitment to hiring journalists who are exiled from Ethiopia–many of whom are in turn attracted to the first diaspora satellite outlet that have significant presence in

Ethiopia–was important in the channel's take-off. In fact, what made this venture possible was the initiative of exiled journalists. ESAT's earliest planners and its top officials who worked to form its operations were uniformly journalists who had either their own newspapers or worked in private newspapers in Ethiopia. Fasil Yenealem, who fled to Netherlands after he was persecuted for treason in Ethiopia, is ESAT's key driver in Europe. He began working with ESAT in 2010. Similarly, Dereje Habtewold was a journalist with a private newspaper before he was forced out of Ethiopia during the post-election crackdown in 2005. Sisay Agena, who has grown to be one of the most respected Ethiopian television journalist, came directly to ESAT after his newspaper business was refused to resume when he was released from prison in 2010. The domination of journalists who were forced out of Ethiopia in its earliest stage seemingly reflected ESAT's journalistic identity. Seen from this vantage point, the key to ESAT's success is having journalists who are chased away from Ethiopia and who have the freedom to work at ESAT. As such, ESAT enjoys unprecedented access to Ethiopia's exiled journalist community with an unprecedented margin of freedom of speech. ESAT's journalists interviewed for this research underline how ESAT has created an opportunity for them to remain in touch with developments in Ethiopia. Reeyot Alemu, an award-winning journalist who was forced into exile in 2015 after she served a five-year term on terrorism charges said: "ESAT has given me a chance to report about Ethiopia's political development from afar. It is an important media for my work for distributing information to Ethiopia" (Personal communication, 2017). Also, a key impetus in ESAT's rise was the collapse of its predecessor known as Ethiopian Television Network (ETN) in 2008. The ETN initiative broke down due to its lack of a sustainable business model to operate as a non-political, entrainment diaspora television. This left many experienced Ethiopian

journalists, producers, and technicians in a position to re-think their model. Seizing the opportunity to staff their new endeavor, the more political and oppositional journalists corralled them to launch ESAT.

Third, technology is the most important factor to ESAT's origins. ESAT's access to international communications infrastructure, such as satellite services and social media platforms, has proved crucial. The recent journalists and opposition exiles are better connected to their homeland than any of the exiles from the 1974 Ethiopian Revolution. In fact, ESAT's success can be singularly traced to the flourishing of satellite dish distribution and increasing access to social media platforms in Ethiopia. The proliferation of satellite dish and social media platforms in Ethiopia seem to contribute to the rapid and prominent rise of ESAT in the Ethiopian public sphere. The combined effect of satellite and social media platforms, especially Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, is profound and multidimensional in the sense that it has given even more capacity for ESAT to easily seek audiences.

Who Watches ESAT and Why: A Statistical Snapshot

Over the last ten years, a sea of satellite TV dishes sprinkled the rooftops of most big cities of Ethiopia (The Economist, 2016). ESAT is considered one of the most popular channels, but actual audience figures for ESAT inside Ethiopia do not exist. According to Abebe, Ethiopians who have access to satellite tuned in to ESAT immediately after it was launched (Personal Communication, 2017). There are also evidences that show several diaspora satellite televisions are frequently used as a source of information in urban areas. Since conducting a cross national audience survey for this

research is difficult, I rely on surveys that are done for other purposes. In 2015, a survey commissioned by Kana TV, an Ethiopia based satellite entertainment television, has revealed that there are up to 18.5 million people watching satellite televisions every day. The survey was conducted by Ipsos Kenya, an affiliate of the Ipsos International market research group, and about 3,500 people took part across 12 major Ethiopian cities. Even though the survey seems most interested in measuring the ownership of satellite receivers and television sets, it can be inferred that satellite televisions are widely watched–albeit with interesting nuances between rural and urban areas. In urban areas satellite dish receiver ownership is about 77%. This means nearly four-in-five urban households in Ethiopia watch satellite televisions regularity. Meanwhile, 11 million people who live in remote parts of Ethiopia are satellite viewers (SmartMonkeyTV, 2016, The Reporter, 2016). From the data, one can have a single overarching conclusion that satellite televisions are now an important sources of information in Ethiopia. Although the data have not revealed which satellite channels viewers watch in their household, the officials of ESAT reported that the content of the channel is watched like a soccer match in TV rooms that hold up to 150 people (Personal communication, 2017). They also claim that ESAT's contents spread throughout Ethiopia using CDs and USB drives, even to tiny villages (Personal Communication, 2017). This reveals the potential for much larger audiences.

There is a long and interesting history surrounding Ethiopians tuning in to foreign based satellite broadcasters for their information diet. National surveys have documented that Ethiopians tuning in to foreign based satellite broadcasters have increasingly become an integral part of their everyday life. For instance, in 2003, only 8% of young adults tuned in to foreign based satellite broadcasters, and that figure has steadily grown to 77%

by 2015. The shortwave radio Amharic service of the Voice of America and Deutsche Welle have been mentioned consistently as a source of information for millions of Ethiopians throughout the surveys. The new key element of this history is the emergence of satellite television service as a source of information, which first came into the Ethiopian media scene in 2007.

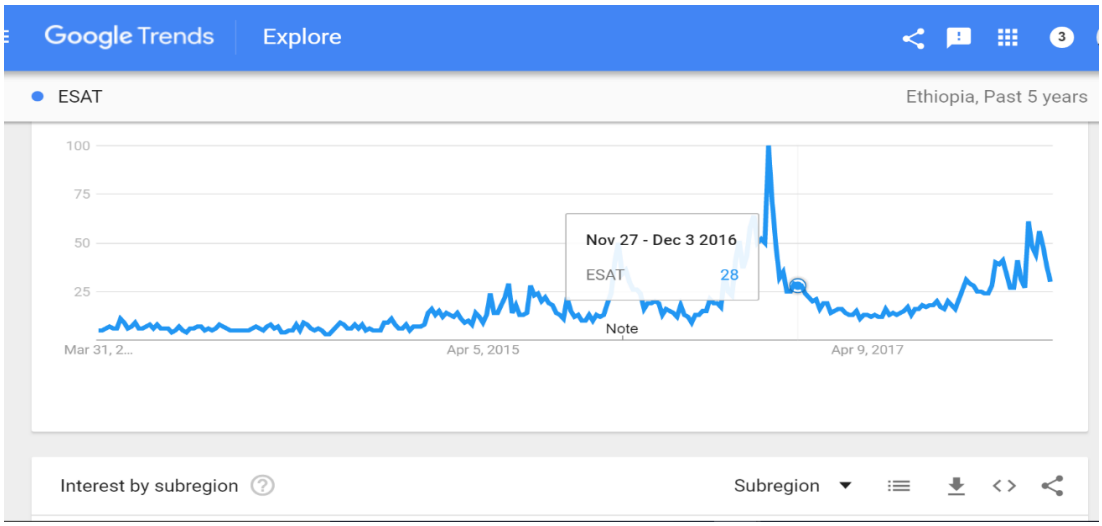
ESAT's reach to Ethiopia's growing online communities is also a necessary part of its audience. ESAT has already made strides developing multiple online access points in pursuit of its stated aim to make its content available to as many people and as many platforms as possible. Hence, when it comes to online distribution, ESAT's availability amongst Ethiopians with internet access is 100%. Over the last two years, access to the internet in Ethiopia doubled from 2.2 million to 4.5 million (Freedom House, 2016). For those without satellite receivers, ESAT's online outlets such as its website, YouTube Channel, Facebook, and Twitter pages are the primary face of the organization.

Website

ESAT developed its website immediately after they began their satellite broadcasting. It is administered by ESAT's information technology team and it features unique articles and opinion pieces, as well as blogs written by ESAT's journalists in Amharic, Afan Oromo, and English. ESAT's website carries news, program videos, and a livestream media player that lets web users watch ESAT videos and listen to ESAT Radio programs on their computers. I was not able to get a reliable audience data about ESAT's website statistics, but ESAT occasionally revealed that its website is one of the top websites that Ethiopian people visit to access information. For example, in September 2016, ESAT's executive director, Abebe Gelaw, wrote on his Facebook page that

ESAT's website traffic has increased during ESAT's continuous reports on the ongoing protest in Ethiopia in 2016, with the majority of the traffic coming from Ethiopia. Using Google Trends data, we can see a significant rise in the search for ESAT during the protests in Ethiopia. Google trend data also indicates that much of the traffic was from Ethiopia. Moreover, ESAT was one of the top Ethiopian search terms on Google in Ethiopia during the protest.

Figure 4.1. ESAT's Google Search Trends of the Last Five Years



Social Media Platforms

ESAT launched a YouTube channel on April 6th, 2010, a few days before it began its Satellite broadcasting. For Ethiopian media outlets, ESAT was an early adapter of YouTube. It is one of the first Ethiopian media outlets to adopt YouTube as a platform and it relied heavily on YouTube to reach new audiences. It uses YouTube to post news packages, short bulletins, some of the shorter programs, and other supplementary content that is not broadcasted, such as user generated contents, photo slideshows, or video shot by citizen journalists. It is Ethiopia's most popular channel, with over 1.5 million views

since its beginning. It has more than 135,000 subscribers that get notifications when videos are posted.

During the protests in April 2016, ESAT tapped into a pool of readymade sources in Ethiopia. Its journalists have established contacts with hundreds of activists on the ground who are ready to send in videos and tips. ESAT uses social media sites not just for news-gathering, but for distribution and advertising. Its Facebook and Twitter accounts are managed by journalists (Personal Communications, 2017), who approach their tasks as a combination of developing content designed to promote ESAT's videos and website, and also to engage in the conversations as they happen in the platforms. ESAT has a Facebook and a Twitter account, but its primary social media account is Facebook. ESAT's Facebook page has 884 528 'fans,' and it is quite active on a daily basis. It is one of Ethiopia's top growing Facebook pages. It is only fourth behind KANA TV in terms of the number of followers. ESAT's journalists frequently provide news updates with ESAT's videos and content, driving traffic back to ESAT's YouTube channel and website. ESAT's Facebook page also initiates discussion among its 'fans.' A typical Facebook post collects several hundred "likes" and generate hundreds of comments.

The dynamics of social media has given ESAT an extra opportunity because they let the media outlet engage with audiences on a very different basis. Rather than a one-way communication as with broadcasting, their social media allows them to interact with their audience. Almost all ESAT journalists listen in on social media conversations and react to some of the inquiries and comments they receive (Personal Communications, 2017). They also systematically track how social media users are talking about ESAT, which lets them respond, an important public relations function. ESAT is attentive to

non-social media online opportunities as well. It developed applications for different operating systems, such as the Apple's iOS and Google's Android series. It launched both unique apps for live streaming as well as mobile phone-optimized website apps for text and still images, as well as audio. These special website apps make accessing the web content and information about ESAT easy.

As I have shown above, there is no exact data on ESAT's viewership, but its popularity on online platforms and the public reactions to its programs on Facebook and YouTube can be a measure of ESAT's popularity. ESAT used social media platforms–mainly Facebook, YouTubem, and Twitter–to achieve two things. It gave the political opposition a voice by subjecting viewers to unedited pictures of violence on ESAT, and it exposed the Ethiopian regime to the world as a police state (Personal Communications, 2017). In fact, ESAT is popular in Ethiopia because it openly discusses sensitive topics and tackles controversial issues. It ventures into a realm of open discussion rarely attempted by budding television broadcasters in Ethiopia. Its talk shows unabashedly tackle such unmentionables as government corruption, poor human rights record of the Ethiopian government, the persecution of political dissenters, journalists, and the dominance of one ethinic group over the others.For Ermias Legesse, a former deputy communication minister of Ethiopian who turned to be an ESAT journalist after he defected from the Ethiopian government in 2010, one of the major reasons why ESAT is popular among Ethiopians is "because people feel ESAT always reports on political events and it gives them an instant access to information in the form of breaking news" (Personal Communications, 2017). Not only does ESAT pursue aggressive political reporting, but it also has come to claim a unique access to information–information which may not otherwise be available. For

instance, when Ethiopia's prime minster, the late Meles Zenawi, disappeared from the public view for about two months and eventually died in July 2012, ESAT has been a vital source of information, providing news and reports about the whereabouts of the ailing leader while others remained somewhat silence or misinformed. Similarly, in 2015 several covertly recoded audio tapes of meetings of the regime officials have found their way to ESAT. The tapes have featured government senior political figures such as Abay Tsehaye, Bereket Simon, and others discussing political conflicts in the inner circle of the regime. Although publishing this kind of material might raise questions about ESAT's ethical issues in journalism, they have unceasingly provided comprehensive coverage of news based on such kinds of materials. In fact, according to Ermias, ESAT's commitment to broadcast government secrets is part of their appeal to the public (Personal Communications, 2017). Likewise, ESAT's Amharic daily news talk show programs such as the 'Weekly Guest', 'Focus' and 'Afflation' aired with regular sharp critiques of the regime in Ethiopia. Besides, ESAT made a significant human rights activism by spreading statements and reports of human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Committee to Protect Journalists.

ESAT's Identity as Pan-Ethiopian Ethiopian Channel

ESAT claims to be a voice of all Ethiopians. By declaring to be "An Eye and Ear of Ethiopians", ESAT aimed to be a unique television station among Ethiopian diaspora media outlets. For ESAT, being "An Eye and Ear" of Ethiopians is both a marketing strategy and an ideological expression. It positions itself as a watchdog channel representing all Ethiopians irrespective of their ethnicity, unlike other diaspora media

organizations. Also, it is claiming to be a television channel broadcasting in three major Ethiopian languages Amharic, Afan Oromo, Tigeregna, as well as the English language, a reflection of their vison of united yet diverse Ethiopia. ESAT played up its diverse peculiarity as Ethiopia's first trilingual satellite television news channel to have its headquarters in Washington D.C., Amsterdam, and London and it also stresses its "global" outlook with its English language service. ESAT's focus on united yet diverse Ethiopia is equated with all shades of Ethiopians, meaning Ethiopians whose views are suppressed by Ethiopian government or not well-represented by opposition media, are welcome at ESAT, regardless of their ethnic allegiance or ideological predispositions. Tamagn Beyene, who served as ESAT's executive director, said that ESAT is a media outlet that makes Ethiopians feel represented and that works to truly represent their voice (Personal Communications, 2017). This framework can be observed in different aspects of their work. For example, Befeqadu Moroda, a long time journalist who worked for Oromia Media Network before he joined ESAT in 2016, interviewed Assefa Jalata, an ethnonationalist Oromo intellectual who is recognized for his secessionist views. Whether this is a sign for their commitment to diverse views or a marketing angle, it is novel for a major Ethiopian diaspora media to engage people from different points of view.

ESAT distinguished itself by its attempt to reach out to a large Ethiopian audience, discussing issues that are pressing in Ethiopia. Dealing with a wide range of issues that touch Ethiopia–such as human rights violations, corruptions, political protests, ethnic conflict, and political repressions–ESAT has managed to carve a niche for itself. Not only are the issues that are relevant to Ethiopia also prominent on ESAT's news and discussion programs, but the very issue of 'Ethiopian-ness' is paramount. According to

Tamagn Beyene, ESAT plays off and even feeds Ethiopian nationalist trend in its viewers (Personal Communications, 2017). Through some of its programs and talk shows, the channel promotes a pan- Ethiopian nationalism wrapped in a democratic style which makes it easy for viewers to appreciate Ethiopian civic nationhood. But ESAT is not nostalgic of Ethiopia's past nationalism that was endorsed at the expense of cultural and ethnic variety of people of Ethiopia. It may be vaguely reminiscent of Ethiopian nationalism of the Derg regime but Tamagn points out, it is very different than the nationalism of the long-gone era of emperor Haile Selassie I (Personal Communications, 2017) but some regard it as its closest successor. The Ethiopian nationalism overtones are not only subtle, but different and less contrived. ESAT also has come to play an important role in broadening interaction among different Ethiopian people in diaspora. As such, it projects an inclusive identity which crosses ethnic boundaries. The ESAT notion of pan-Ethiopian identity manifests itself in the very image the channel projects of itself through its staff, its language, and its name.

Pan-Ethiopian nationalism is very prominent as a unifying sentiment on the channel. This is evident not only in the terminology that is used and the issues that are discussed, but also in the tendency of ESAT journalists to identify themselves first and foremost as Ethiopians. Pan-Ethiopian nationalism has in some ways become the basis of a sharp critique of the politics of the Ethiopian regime and ethnonationalitists at the same time. ESAT has employed exiled Ethiopian journalists who describe themselves as multiethnic or post-ethnic. Two of its staff who came out of the Oromia Media Network are Oromos, but most ESAT journalists identify themselves as just Ethiopians with no apparent expression of their ethnic identity. Although there is no deliberate policy of diversification when it comes to personnel decisions, ESAT has

relatively diverse personnel compared to the Oromia Media Network. Naturally, the lack of a single dominant ethinic group in its workforce gives ESAT a pan-Ethiopian ring. This pan-Ethiopian nationalist rhetoric is prominent in the weekly entertainment program of ESAT's widely recognized figure Tamagn Beyene, who leads his own show. Advocates of pan-Ethiopian nationalism are regularly invited; slogans, songs and poems referring to pan-Ethiopian nationalism or Ethiopian unity are often invoked; and images which suggest the historicity of the Ethiopian State are frequently broadcasted. Equally important is that the name Ethiopian Satellite Television has pan-Ethiopian overtones. The location of ESAT in Washington D.C. is also not without significance. It is located in a place where the largest presence of Ethiopian community outside Ethiopia lives. In so doing, it is closer to its core of supporters.

In a way, ESAT is a channel that appeals to the masses that have an overt pan-Ethiopian nationalist orientation. In many ways, it has reinvigorated a sense of pan-Ethiopian nationalism and is even encouraging Ethiopian unity, so much so that pan-Ethiopian nationalism and unity is being reinvented on this channel. As a pan- Ethiopian satellite television, ESAT caters to the Ethiopian audience that may be heterogeneous in some ways, but is nonetheless bound by a common political fate. If anything, ESAT has been at the forefront of Ethiopian diaspora media which has brought about "Pan Ethiopian consciousness" and "imagined community"–to borrow Benedict Anderson's term–comprised of individuals who have a sense of belonging to and affinity with other people that they have never met and who actually share a similar homeland. ESAT also helps nurture a sense of community among Ethiopian diaspora. It does so in two ways: by tapping into exiled figures outside Ethiopia, and by appealing to Ethiopian viewers outside their homeland. In a number of its programs, ESAT has invited exiled intellectual

figures and journalists who live in the United States and Europe. In doing so, it has enhanced the cultural connection between its viewers in Ethiopia and overseas. Tapping into the Ethiopian nationalism during a time marked by the predicament in Ethiopian nationalism, ESAT has emerged as a key opinion maker. Hence, ESAT is leading a growing change in Ethiopian politics and is influencing power relations.

The Politics of ESAT

Presenting ESAT's origins, identity, and fan base attends to the element of ESAT's role in Ethiopian politics. Faced with a set of difficult balances in its identity, mandate, and operations, ESAT's earliest planners made decisions about ESAT that would come to define it and thus, bear on its reputation to be a platform for all Ethiopians regardless of their ethnic or religious background. These decisions were not straightforward but involved resolving difficult foundational questions, which provoked internal debate: founders within the channel debated on what ESAT should be. Looking at its mission, organizational model, and its programming, this section investigates what ESAT actually is. Is it an opposition mouthpiece or non-profit communal media? Is it transnational or local? I will highlight where ESAT lands on these binaries,and how it stands out from the fast-growing Ethiopia television channels.

Political Economy of ESAT

Tightly connected with the huge Ethiopian diaspora community across the world, so is ESAT's political economy. ESAT was started after its founders got seed money from the Ethiopian diaspora community across the world. Seen from a transnational diasporic community perspective, there is nothing out of the ordinary about the initiative

of ESAT. If anything, the initiative of the Ethiopian diaspora community corresponds with an interesting trend of other diaspora communities across the globe. For example, Iranian opposition groups and exiled journalists in the diaspora commonly fund satellite television stations whose purpose are to challenge Iranian government from afar. Likewise, the Burmese diaspora community have had a pioneer of diaspora satellite channel in Europe. ESAT epitomizes a transnational trend which is characterized by the politicization of diasporic media.

At the same time, ESAT fits in with Ethiopian media ownership tradition. In Ethiopia, the media generally operate under a group who are usually either pro-government businesses or independents, who in many cases are allied with opposition groups. Currently, Ethiopian television networks such as Fana Broadcasting Corporate and Ethiopian News Network are subsidized by businesses associated with the ruling party, the EPRDF. Historically, the last two successive Ethiopian governments maintain a strong grip, particularly on broadcast media including television. Both the imperial and the Derg regimes controlled and preserved centralized radio and television stations. They used radio and television as an extension of state power and a mouthpiece for different state agencies making sure that dissident voices did not have access to the public. The incumbent regime also has direct control over the state broadcaster, Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC). However, as the effect and popularity of Ethiopian state television EBC has declined, EPRDF have sought to maintain its influence in terms of "behind the scenes" relationships with emerging 'private' channels (as in the case of Fana Broadcasting Corporate, and Ethiopian News Network) or allowing private entertainment television networks to flourish (as is the case of EBS and Kana Television).

The strong support base of ESAT is opposition affiliated exiled politicians,

journalists, and members of the Ethiopian diaspora community. The ownership structure reveals the peculiarities of Ethiopian diaspora media and is a subject of inquiry on its own. But the patterns of media ownership in Ethiopian diaspora point to some contradictions. While ESAT is inclined to operate as a non-profit, community funded, public service media, diaspora-based opposition political groups conceive of ESAT as the extension of opposition groups. The outcome is an interesting marriage of the two models: opposition mouthpiece and non-profit communal media. As it is, ESAT is both a non-profit community–and although some people may have leanings towards certain ideologies–the network is not necessarily affiliated with a particular opposition party.

To overlook the interconnectedness of these two aspects is to ignore the specificity and complexity of the unique forms of ownership and financing of ESAT. For instance, ESAT gives substantial coverage to several Ethiopian opposition groups; however, the freedom of expression that ESAT enjoys in the United States is not without constraints. ESAT is suspiciously silent on Eretria, Ethiopia's northern neighbor that accommodates Ethiopia's main opposition groups. It offers careful coverage of Eretria and is cautious not to criticize it. Apart from a few instances when it covered the Eritrean relationship with the Ethiopian government, it generally stays away from reporting about Eritrea. Eritrean issues, such as human rights violations, do not find an outlet on ESAT, nor do critiques of Eritrean alleged confrontational foreign policy in the Horn of Africa. Most pro-government activists allege that ESAT has a financial backing from the Eritrean government. Furthermore, in spite of its political impact in Ethiopia, ESAT strangely does not have enough impact on Ethiopia's inter-party-political dialogue among opposition groups in diaspora. For some critics, ESAT's relentless probes into Ethiopia's government affairs distracted viewers from the profound differences that Ethiopian

opposition groups have. There is a perception that ESAT disregards the grievances of select opposition groups because it is affiliated with a prominent opposition groups known as Ginbot 7, a political party established in 2008. Indeed, the prominence of ESAT has been at the expense of its reputations on its neutrality in partisan opposition politics. Talk shows and even newscasts are slanted to Ginbot 7. Ginbot 7 works for regime change, including the use of military means. According to a report prepared by a Norwegian non-governmental organization called Lnadinfo, ESAT and Ginbot 7 are partially financed by the same sources, but are otherwise separate entities (Landinfo, 2012). Critics acknowledge that ESAT has made a breakthrough in the Ethiopian political scene, but remain wary of its agenda and its politicized journalism. Although the channel claims that its reporting is mostly factual and denies any link with Ginbot 7, it does acknowledge that it is a platform for various Ethiopian opposition groups. Abebe Gelaw said that ESAT has an editorial independence and it is empowered to report independently. For him, ESAT is an autonomous entity that does reporting based on decentralized news gathering techniques that privilege views from the opposition groups:

> ESAT's reporting indicates that we have given a substantial interest in bringing political change in Ethiopia. Our journalists prioritize stories according to their newsworthiness and our news values may well reflect our interest in bringing about a political change in Ethiopia (Personal Communications, 2017).

Of course, autonomy and independence are relative terms. After all, one of ESAT's longtime executive director, Naemin Zeleke, that lead the media outlet for over four years, is a member of Ginbot 7. Still, the idea of a media organization that has some ties with an opposition political party and is yet independent is altogether new to Ethiopia. This independence and autonomy lend ESAT a great deal of

credibility that made it serve as an alternative source of news. Nonetheless, some find the link between Ginbot 7 and ESAT somewhat uncomfortable. ESAT may claim independence, but to what extent its link with Ginbot 7 affects the independence and editorial decision-making of ESAT remains a pressing issue.

Advertising is the lifeline for other satellite television stations such as EBS and Kana TV. This is not the case with ESAT, as advertising is tied with political considerations and advertisers succumb to the pressure from the Ethiopian government. Potential advertisers in the diaspora have been wary of advertising on ESAT partly because of the political nature of ESAT. Advertisers avoided ESAT for fear that dealing with the channel may trigger a backlash for their business in Ethiopia. Rather, ESAT raises "big money in little sums" from the broader Ethiopian diaspora community across the world (Personal Communications, 2017). It reaches at least hundred thousand Ethiopian immigrants all over the world for regular fundraising events in countries as diverse as the United States, the Netherlands, South Africa, Norway, Australia, and Israel. Globally there are about forty-seven regular ESAT fundraising committees over forty cities. The one glaring exception to its financial contribution is Ethiopia, the target of ESAT broadcasting. This is an exception worth studying because while Ethiopia is the main target of ESAT's broadcasting, Ethiopians who live inside Ethiopia do not contribute financially. ESAT's commitment to broadcast to Ethiopia without any apparent financial contribution from inside Ethiopia is as an important backdrop to the formation and prominence of ESAT in Ethiopia's political context.

However, ESAT seems to have benefited from digital advertising that it gets from its website and YouTube channel. Some operational expenses are covered by its income from digital advertising. Yet, the ESAT has to rely on donations from the diaspora

community to cover the cost incurred by capital investment, namely funding new services, such as Afan Oromo and Tigergna language programs. Deprived of commercial autonomy–as the Ethiopian government put pressures on advertisers–and dependent on the handouts of Ethiopian diaspora community, ESAT illustrates the fragility of Ethiopian diaspora media. Furthermore, the willingness of the diaspora community to provide funding for the media is tightly connected with political movements in Ethiopia. In times of heightened political movement inside Ethiopia or when the community perceives that there is an imminent political change in Ethiopia, funding for ESAT will surge. An employee in ESAT's finance department said, "The amount of money ESAT gets ebbs and flows with political movements in Ethiopia" (Personal Communications, 2017).

ESAT's Transnational-Local Dimension

ESAT employs over 40 staff members who are working in three studio centers located in Washington D.C, London, and Amsterdam–a novel attempt at de-centralized production processes. The journalists and employees in the three centers all work to get information out of Ethiopia in their own ways. The journalists that are based in the three centers were connected to their sources in Ethiopia, but their broadcasting emanates only from the two centers–Washington D.C. and Amsterdam. The London studio only produces documentaries and interviews. This de-centralization among the three centers makes ESAT transnational (D.C., Amsterdam, and London) in its operation, and local/domestic in its reporting of Ethiopian politics. Ermias pointed to the centers as what ensure ESAT as an independent media entity, suggesting, 'All journalists in the centers operate on their own' (Personal Communications, 2017). The structure then seemed to

suggest a transnational operation as each center was given some degree of editorial autonomy. With the two broadcasting centers, ESAT has expanded its options to broadcast to Ethiopia's two national prime-time audiences. It must be noted that the two centers each broadcast via ESAT's single satellite. While their reporting functions were meant to center on different issues, they use the same signal. The prime time for television in Ethiopia is 8:00 PM to 11:00 PM and 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM, meaning ESAT's broadcasts will go on landing thoroughly in Ethiopia's prime time viewing hours. This confirms about the ESAT's target audience, according to Abebe Gelaw, that ESAT is primarily an Ethiopian media outlet: "ESAT's primary audience are in Ethiopia, we always broadcast for Ethiopians based in Ethiopia… we are a local media organization based outside Ethiopia' (Personal Communications, 2017).

As the political crisis in Ethiopia has unraveled over the last three years, ESAT has continued its wall to wall coverage. Since the protest begun in 2014, (more on this in chapter five) ESAT has become an outspoken advocate of the protesters in Oromia. In addition to documenting the unraveling political protest, ESAT has participated in fundraising for humanitarian aid, advocated an anti-government stance among the diaspora community, and strengthening its undercover network of journalists in Ethiopia that continuously sent reports from the frontline. In the following section, I will highlight some of the changes ESAT has brought to Ethiopian politics.

Programming Content

While the history, identity, and ideology of ESAT is important, a dissection of a one of its most watched programs also yields great insight into ESAT's role in Ethiopian politics. ESAT is credited with the introduction of punditry television journalism into the

Ethiopian broadcasting scene through the airing of a series of talk shows characterized by intensive discussions and extensive viewer participation. Multiple feature programs are offered throughout the twenty-four-hour broadcast, all laden with political information. Even ESAT's entrainment programs regularly highlight Ethiopian artists who have issues with the Ethiopian government. The most famous of such programs are *The Afflation, The Daily, Weekly Guest, Focus, The Writers Voice* and *Tamagn Show*. These programs share one common feature: they seek to break away from dull television talk shows by hosting dissenting Ethiopian political figures and adopting an uncompromising approach to Ethiopian political issues. They seem to be generally held in high esteem by Ethiopian audiences because of their confrontational spirit and their airing of oppositional points of view.

The most outstanding of these programs is probably *The Afflation*. *The Afflation* is a regular news analysis fixture in the station's schedule that has been running since the inception of ESAT, featuring usually four male cohosts. The hosts have held no pretenses for objectivity, they openly referring to themselves as pro-change forces. The format of the show involves two of the cohosts confronting each other head to head about a major news event. Typically, after the end of the daily news broadcast, a tune of prominent Ethiopian string instrument music is broadcasted to indicate the beginning of *The Afflation*. The news analysis program usually takes into account 'domestic events,' beginning with major news event in Ethiopia. Even though discussion topics are prompted by events–as in the protest in Oromia, corruption in Ethiopian regime, human rights violations, the regime's internal power struggle, and similar issues–program makers have chosen subjects of perennial interest that have to do with pan-Ethiopian nationalism. Some of the topics chosen for the program are likely to relate to what has

traditionally been perceived as important public interest issues. The hosts usually engage in an aggressive defense of pan-Ethiopian nationalism while attacking ethno-nationalism and the Ethiopian regime. The program is concluded with a recap of the discussion points and then the cycle repeats again on the following day.

The Afflation's coverage of Ethiopian news events is a preview of how the rest of ESAT covers Ethiopian political events. In the following section, I specifically examine the language use of the hosts of *The Afflation* in describing news events in Ethiopia. My analysis is not centered around a single political event because language use is harder to pin down on a single political event and the hosts usually change roles. However, a review of several instances of language use might be enough to drive home that the show is leading ESAT's position.

The regular hosts–Mesay Mekonon, Ermias Legesse, Sisay Agena, and Minalkachew Semachew–all rotate their roles as the lead host of the show. They all view their roles as analysts with deeper understanding of the Ethiopian government. The show's hosts imply that they are on the side of Ethiopian change agents whenever there is a political incident, say like a protest in Ethiopia, they always ramp up their rhetoric condemning the government and offering support for the protesters. And it's all couched in language that makes it seem like they are on the side of the opposition. When they analyze a major news event, they do it with broader context by recollecting what the regime has been doing for the last quarter of a century. They also predict what the regime might do to contain Ethiopia's deepening political crisis. They use the word "regime" more frequently to describe the Ethiopian government and 'change agents' to describe political opponents of the Ethiopian government. Occasionally, they hint that their political goals and the goals of the political opponents of the Ethiopian government are

somehow tied. For instance, when the protest in Oromia in the summer of 2017 triggered a power struggle within the country's governing coalition, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front's (EPRDF), the hosts implied offering help to some sections of the coalition that have emerged as advocates for political reform within EPRDF on several occasions.

News Broadcasting

In addition to ESAT's punditry analysis, its news programs are informative of ESAT's role in Ethiopia politics. ESAT news programs are heavily focused, first to the events within Ethiopia, then to those stories that demonstrate the failure of the Ethiopian regime throughout the world, and finally on events in the diaspora that might show solidarity among Ethiopians. For example, the newscast of October 2nd, 2016, which summarized the major events of the week, provides evidence as to how ESAT reports on political events in Ethiopia. Headlines lead with information about the regime's campaign to snatch rifles from farmers in Amhara region, followed by details of a request that a diplomatic community in Addis Ababa made to Ethiopia's government to explain the then political crisis. Next was a story about a stay home strike in the Amhara regional state. Subsequent stories touched upon another protest in the same region, an unfolding political crisis, followed by the government declaration of a state of emergency in Ethiopia. The major international stories that involve Ethiopia on that day concerned the German Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to Addis Ababa. On the news, it was stated that Merkel voiced her concern about the Ethiopian government's response to peaceful protesters. In this way, news briefings were strictly controlled to follow the anti-government and critical line.

ESAT's CNN Effect

As I have explained in the previous sections, ESAT has quickly grown to become Ethiopia's leading diaspora satellite televisions causing a change in Ethiopia's information flow and shaping power relations. In the founding document of ESAT, its founders emphasized that the existence of free and independent media is critical for the public to exercise their freedom of expression. Throughout the interview process and during data collection, ESAT's editorial staff also highlighted that free media is fundamental for citizens to exercises their fundamental human rights. Sisay Agena remarks, "independent media are key tools to bring political change in Ethiopia." As described in chapter one, prior the arrival of as ESAT as prominent alternative source of information, Ethiopian media environment was largely dominated by the ruling regime as part of its tightly controlled political and social environment. Television was only owned by the state; radio stations and print press were either owned, financed and run by the state or they belonged to individuals and agencies connected to the government directly or indirectly. In the words of Abebe, ESAT "has challenged the long-held Ethiopian tradition that television is only held by the state." This remarkable status enabled ESAT to be a pioneer in the realm of diaspora based Ethiopian satellite televisions by being an alternative source of information. Having its clandestine reporters close to the events in Ethiopia, ESAT has acquired substantial clout in Ethiopia by bringing political information right into the living rooms of Ethiopians. This is one of the reasons why ESAT has branded itself as "An Eye and Ear of the Ethiopians," which questions authority and exposes political conspiracies, human rights violations, and corruption

in Ethiopia. Projecting an ardent oppositional tone, ESAT covers mainly issues that have political significance and that the Ethiopian regime prefers to keep as secret. Over the last eight years since its foundation, ESAT forcefully criticized the Ethiopian regime and its prominent journalists often invite guests that are unapologetic about their critique of the Ethiopia regime. In the process, ESAT played a key role in bringing news from Ethiopia to audiences in the diaspora as well as in Ethiopia, as domestic private media are restricted.

One of the most profound changes that ESAT has brought into the Ethiopian media landscape is ending the government's control over information. Among the most apparent implications of the emergence of ESAT in the Ethiopian public sphere is its ability to contest the Ethiopian regime's narratives and reverse the influence that the regime exerts over the media by monopolizing the process and circulation of information. In addition to ending the regime's monopolistic control of information flow by filling a media void, ESAT also fills a political void. It serves as a de facto Ethiopian opposition and a platform for Ethiopian oppositions. It provides a voice for Ethiopia's opposing views and a platform for political dissidents, many of whom live in the diaspora. In the words of ESAT's news anchor and program presenter Mesay Mekonen, "ESAT is the choice for the voiceless" (Personal Communications, 2017). He said that one of ESAT's missions is to be a platform for all people who were denied their right to speak (Personal Communications, 2017). In this way, ESAT has re-instituted the right to have access to the media for representatives of Ethiopia's myriad opposition groups.

ESAT has also developed the potential to shape public opinion, both in the

diaspora and inside Ethiopia. For Ermias, it is the only institution that has the power to influence people: “Among all the major influences on Ethiopian public sphere–ESAT is the most influential institution.” Ethiopians all over the world can now have instant access to what is happening in Ethiopia (Personal Communications, 2017). Such exposure has helped develop a sense of political awareness for its ordinary viewers. Occasionally, this awareness translates into popular pressure on Ethiopian government to step up its efforts to act on certain issues and its policy. The ever-growing political influence that ESAT has over Ethiopians in certain circumstances translates into mobilizing the people to take their demands to the street for political demonstrations. For instance, the wall to wall coverage of the 2015-2017 political protests and the government’s violent response fueled further protests and inflamed public opinion. As a result, the regime was forced to respond to the demands of the protesters. The discontent of the Ethiopian public–which ESAT contributes to and is sometimes fueled by– is heard by opening up the lines of communication so that their viewers can call in and participate, thus venting some of their angers. The call-in segments of ESAT allow anonymous callers to openly criticize the Ethiopian government. Seen from this perspective, ESAT plays an interesting role in diffusing–and not just inciting–the public. ESAT can be said to have a cathartic effect, and some of its viewers have come to be content with the relief of expressing themselves. At times, ESAT acts as a window through which many muted Ethiopians can vent their anger, offering an opposition perspective that can be seen as a shock-buffer between reality and the viewers. To put this differently, ESAT plays the role of a preventative medium and an outlet for the disenfranchised public, thus providing a safety valve in what may be described as a repressed Ethiopian public sphere.

The Regime's Offensive

In response to the increased role of ESAT in Ethiopian politics, the Ethiopian government launched a range of attacks against ESAT and its journalists. The regime's offensive can take various forms: satellite jamming, hacking, blocking of contents, legal threats, physical harm to the journalists' families in Ethiopia, and smear campaigns. Of all the regime's offensive acts against ESAT, satellite jamming is the most frequent one. Satellite jamming is defined as 'intentional interference' of broadcasting and is considered a violation of Article 15 of the Radio Regulations of the International Telecommunications Union. As satellite dishes continue to proliferate across Ethiopian cities, urban areas, and villages, the Ethiopian government has been accused of ramping up of its effort to jam ESAT's satellite transmissions. The first jamming attacks on foreign-based Amharic language broadcasting occurred in 2010, when the late prime minister Meles Zenawi publicly admitted jamming the Voice of America's Amharic broadcast to Ethiopia (BBC,2010). Although the jamming of the Voice of America eventually ceased, satellite jamming against ESAT now takes place on a regular basis. Abebe said ESAT had been subjected to jamming numerous times since its inception. "We have been jammed at least 26 times since we began transmitting to Ethiopia (Personal Communications, 2017). I asked how ESAT knows if they are jammed in Ethiopia. Abebe said "viewers make them aware them through their social media." Abebe says the jamming of ESAT is part of a concerted campaign to get ESAT off of Ethiopian airwaves because:

> ESAT provides information that was mostly related to the crackdown on protesters, news and reports on human rights violations of peaceful Ethiopians and the corruption of the regime. The last three years were critical time for ESAT because we have provided vital information and media support for Ethiopians (Personal Communications, 2017)

During the protest in 2016, the regime blacklisted ESAT for stoking unrest in Ethiopia and increased its effort of jamming. The channel was forced to adopt strategies to bypass jamming, which has impacted ESAT's ability to operate. Abebe said "The jamming has an economic impact, we were forced to look for new satellite companies to relocate our broadcasting (Personal Communications, 2017). This means new frequencies, which in return means, a brief decrease in our audience size until our audience finda ESAT's new frequency position."

Over the last three years, ESAT was forced to change its frequencies over a dozen time. Satellite jamming frustrates viewers and journalists alike. Mesay said "whenever we know our programs do not reach our audience it really disheartens me" (Personal Communications, 2017).

In addition to targeting ESAT for jamming, the regime restricted the public from watching ESAT over satellite dishes (HRW, 2016). Through the media that the regime controls, it warned its citizens not to watch diaspora satellite broadcasts because they are "foreign agents" and their content is propaganda that smears "the image of Ethiopia" and "incites violence" in Ethiopia. At the height of the regime's animosity towards ESAT, the Ethiopian government passed a law preventing Ethiopians from watching any of ESAT programs (State of Emergency Command Post,2016). It made the grounds for arresting and prosecuting people who were caught watching ESAT in their private space clear (HRW, 2016). The regime also tried to establish greater control over international satellite companies, such as Nilesat and Eutelsat, by purchasing the frequencies they sell for ESAT (MessengerAfrica, 2017). After acquiring most of the frequencies from these two companies, the regime announced the creation of a single satellite television platform called Ethiosat that would require all broadcasters to use only government owned

platforms (INSA, 2017).

In addition to consistently jamming ESAT's broadcasting, the regime routinely blocked ESAT's website and YouTube channel (Freedom House, 2017). The regime also sought to curtail the activities of journalists working for ESAT by hacking their email and spying on them (Timberg, 2014). Since 2012, the regime has targeted journalists in the diaspora by spying, using malwares purchased from companies based in Europe and Israeli (EFF, 2015, (Bill Marczak, and Et al. 2017). The regime purchased a spying software called FinSpy and attempted to spy on email communications between journalists who works with ESAT (Timberg, 2014). Spying on email communications of journalists not only signals the monitoring of exile activities by state authorities, but also alerts to possible perils for contacts in Ethiopia. Since 2015, hundreds of people were charged with inciting violence after their email and chat communications with diaspora-based journalists had been compromised (Addis Standard, 2017). Given ESAT's heavy reliance on anonymous reporters from Ethiopia, the risk of being exposed is high. ESAT has reported that the regime's security agents sought to uncover the identities of such reporters in interrogations of political prisoners. In 2017, journalists, activists, and politicians were charged with inciting violence after they had given interviews to ESAT (ESAT, 2017). This adds to the general difficulty of ESAT to obtain relevant information from inside the country.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have broadly given an essential background of ESAT, what factors lead to the formation of ESAT, and what the channel is exactly. ESAT is

broadening its audience base and its content. As ESAT has purposefully used online communication platforms such as Facebook and Twitter along its satellite broadcasting services, the channel is able to reach more and more people living in Ethiopia. ESAT's 'pan-Ethiopian nationalist' agenda has driven its journalism and programming content. The various balances (communal media vs. opposition mouthpiece, local vs. transnational) it had to strike in its operation and allegiance are some of ESAT's challenges in its efforts to be a 'Voice of All Ethiopians'. In the next chapter I will, outline OMN's origins, politics, ideology, programming and its reporting of the Oromo protests.

CHAPTER V

OMN ORIGINS, IDENTITY AND CONTENT

OMN Beginning

In the summer of 2013, an acrimonious debate broke out on Facebook among the Ethiopian diaspora community when Jawar Mohamed, an Oromo activist, said "I am an Oromo first" and "Ethiopia is imposed on me" on Al Jazeera's English daily television program, The Stream. During the show, the British journalist, Femi Oki, who was co-hosting the show with Malika Bilal, asked Jawar whether he is 'Oromo first' or 'Ethiopian first.' He answered: "I am an Oromo first … because first Ethiopia is imposed on me, the second important point is that because we [the Oromos] were forced to denounce our identity, we [the Oromos] ended up reaffirming and reasserting our identity." Jawar's Oromo identity is common knowledge within the Ethiopian diaspora community. He is best known for advocating for the rights of the Oromo people in Ethiopia. he is often critical of both the current Ethiopian government and of earlier regimes for their treatment of the Oromo people in the past. Yet, the fact that Jawar had dared to say that 'Ethiopia is imposed on me' was considered an outright disavowal of his 'Ethiopianess' by pan-Ethiopian nationalists. Simultaneously, Jawar drew an enthusiastic support from ethnonationalists, particularly from the Oromos themselves because they think his response laid bare the central founding myths around which the pan-Ethiopian nationalism have been built since 19th century. Jawar's response generated wide debates, discussions, and threats among the Ethiopian online community on whether Jawar's characterization of the challenges of the Oromo community removed the nuanced role that the Oromos played during the formation of the Ethiopian State, whether Ethiopia is a political entity that obliterated the cultural identities of the Oromos, and whether the

severe restrictions on freedom of expression in Ethiopia concealed such kinds of opinions. While one can say that Al Jazeera helped to generate debate among Ethiopians, the content of these debates has revealed a deep division within the Ethiopian diaspora community on the issue of Ethiopian cultural and political identities. Beyond and behind these debates, however, there is a greater lacuna: a lack of independent and effective media platforms that can accommodate a diversity of opinions and tolerate such kinds of debates to happen inside Ethiopia.

After this debate, an opportunity presented itself for the Oromo community in the diaspora to launch their own media organization. Possibly unconnected to this incident, there was an ad hoc committee that comprised of prominent Oromo journalists and community leaders, including Jawar Mohamed, that was formed in 2012 (Personal Communication, 2017). The committee was established in response to calls from the diaspora Oromo community to have a media outlet of their own. However, quickly after the incident, Jawar Mohamed and the ad hoc committee used it to gain momentum in planting the seed for the foundation of the Oromia Media Network. The first step they took was appropriating the first line of Jawar's Al Jazeera response, "Oromo First," as a guiding catch phrase–spontaneously, it seemed–to embark on a series of fundraising campaigns in cities where there are substantial Oromo immigrants throughout the world. Jawar's ad lib remark, "Oromo First," turned into slogans and worked its way into campaign speeches and onto poster signs. "Oromo First" was a serviceable slogan with layered meaning.

Following the startling exuberance that "Oromo First" created among the Oromo diaspora community, the ad hoc committee continued to operate and hold meetings and fundraising campaigns throughout the second half of 2013, which was widely covered in

Ethiopian diaspora media. The committee became a structure attached to the founding members of the Oromia Media Network that was dedicated to creating a dialogue with Oromo journalists, academics, and public figures, thus allowing the voice of diaspora Oromo to reach broader Ethiopian society both at home and abroad. With the funds that the ad hoc committee raised during the 'Oromo First' campaign, they established OMN, the first Oromo satellite television channel, in March 2014. OMN is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota where there is the large Oromo diaspora population. Since its establishment, OMN has been giving a wall to wall coverage on all things Oromo. As the protests in Ethiopia have unraveled over the last three years, OMN has earned a reputation as an oppositional bulwark. It has become an outspoken advocate of the protests in Oromia.

In a similar manner with ESAT, migration of Ethiopians and exile of journalists have contributed to the rise of OMN. Although there is no official data that show the ethnic identity of Ethiopian immigrants who entered the United States, Oromos are among largest groups. By the 1980s, Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, aka the Twin cities, have become the hub for Oromo immigrants. Current estimates suggest that there are about 50,000 Oromos living in the Twin cities, most of whom immigrated to the United States in the aftermath of the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 (Opride, 2013). A clear majority of migrant Oromo singers, intellectuals, politicians, and media personalities settled in the Twin cities as well. Since the 1990s, these groups had been setting up local community radio programs to cater to the growing number of Oromos in Minnesota. These were community radios, newspapers, and websites, and they were conceived of as the first wave of diaspora-based Oromo media outlets. However,

with the launching of OMN in 2014 came the realization of the first Oromo diaspora satellite television channel, something they had never had before. With the establishment of the first ever Oromo satellite television in 2014, it became possible for the Oromo community in the United States to broadcast directly into Ethiopia and bring the Oromo community in Ethiopia and elsewhere in the diaspora to the same live coverage of unfolding political events by Oromo news anchors and commentators.

OMN's Reaches

Since its establishment, OMN has become the default channel for the majority of the Oromo community in Ethiopia with a considerable reach and power, albeit there is no public opinion poll that shows who watches OMN. Among the Oromos, both in diaspora and in Ethiopia, OMN is quite popular. In Oromia, OMN is a local channel. Since the Ethiopian state-controlled media either do not report–or report it in their own political bias if they report it at all–many people watch OMN to see what is happening and to follow what the diaspora-based analysts have to say. For these people, OMN is a convenient and reliable means to find out what is going on in Oromia. Jawar claims that for the majority of the Oromos, OMN is their preferred channel. According to Jawar the viewership of OMN is at least 20 million (Personal Communications, 2017). By the standard of Ethiopian media audience, this figure is large. The survey results that Kana TV commissioned in 2015 from the polling firm Ipsos showed that at least six out of ten Ethiopians watch satellite televisions programs, increasing the odds of OMN to be among the top diaspora channels in Ethiopia. But the ratings are almost beside the point and OMN might not be among the top television

channels that remotely rivals the likes of Kana TV and EBS; but in the new, Ethiopia's 'networked' public sphere, it doesn't need to. Since its establishment, OMN has come to form the hub of a new kind of diaspora media operation: one that travels through online channels, collecting news from Ethiopia through Twitter-and-Facebook, and broadcasting them back to Ethiopia through satellite. In the process, OMN has built the most effective media operation that has descended on the Ethiopian public sphere. OMN's content is disseminated to viewers across the world, mainly through satellite television and social media, making OMN amongst the largest Ethiopian TV station on social media platforms. Particularly, Facebook is not only a platform for free expression, but it is also a medium for exchange of materials between OMN reporters in Ethiopian and the studio journalists in Minneapolis.

Using their social media accounts, the journalists of OMN encourage their audience to actively participate and enrich OMN's news content. For instance, the executive director Jawar Mohammed has a massively popular Facebook page, with over 1.2 million followers. He receives pictures and video clips from eyewitnesses and clandestine reporters from Ethiopia then, OMN re-broadcasts them back to Ethiopia using satellite. This has allowed people with limited resources and modest technical experience to share their stories and discuss their ideas with a widening network of viewers and interconnected audiences around the world. Jawar's Facebook page allows OMN to have field reporters in every single district of Oromia. It has introduced a truly citizen driven newsgathering and strengthened OMN's relationship with ordinary people on the ground. By using this service, the audiences are no longer just recipients of the story that television stations broadcast to them. They have become part of the story themselves. They have even become a sort of broadcasters themselves who do not need to wait for the regular TV news bulletin to bring

them stories they already know about. As Jawar says, social media plays an increasing role in enriching the content of the OMN news channel as well as speeding up the process of opening up Ethiopia's closed political environment. Jawar constantly receives tips about incidents and clashes and statements from various Oromo political factions and viewers in Ethiopia. Some feel that if OMN does not cover it, it simply did not happen; while others find in OMN, a platform to expose the practices of the Ethiopian government. Describing the role of his own Facebook page, Jawar Mohammed says:

> I receive every political development essentially from every corner of the country. Anybody who has an internet connection sends tips, pictures and videos to me then, we will check the materials in our newsroom. A lot of times people send me something like a video by a mobile, an audio file, an image or some text if they want to share. Then together with my team, we will make sure the materials go through a filtration and verification process, then we will broadcast them back to Ethiopia (Personal Communications, 2017).

With the recent political developments in Ethiopia, OMN seems to have gained more relevance to both the Oromo community and the broader Ethiopian community. Traditionally, media whose focus is the political and cultural aspects of the Oromo people has been either heavily censored by the Ethiopian government or marginalized by opposition media outlets (Jalata, 2007). However, the dynamics of Oromo protests reshaped many aspects of the Ethiopian media landscape, including that of the opposition media. It changed the way opposition media outlets interact with the members of Oromo community, who uses social media as sources of information. Since the outbreak of the

protest in Oromia, the diaspora media and the social media platforms have become close partners. OMN played a defining role in making this partnership and benefiting from it at the same time. The amount of information flowing out of Ethiopia that gets onto OMN through the Facebook page of Jawar Mohammed demonstrates that not only the Ethiopian diaspora media found a broader access to Ethiopian public, but also that the diaspora media heavily relies on the content generated by members of the Oromo community in Ethiopia.

This mutually beneficial relationship between OMN and the Oromo community in Ethiopia empowers both sides, says Jawar Mohammed (Personal Communications, 2017). On the one hand, the Oromo community in Ethiopia use social media platforms to send information that cannot be shared in Ethiopia to OMN then OMN will rebroadcast the information back to Ethiopia so that broader Ethiopian public can watch it on traditional television. As I have described previously, since most Ethiopians who live in urban areas own televisions, they watch OMN in their homes through satellite dishes at their house, in cafeterias, or on their computer screens through internet. On the other hand, OMN receives up-to-date information on Ethiopia's political development without having professional reporters on the ground. Making use of these pools of readymade sources was manifest during the Oromo protest.

OMN's Content and Programming

Most of the production work is undertaken in OMN's Minneapolis studio, but they also have news centers in London and Cairo. The channel is licensed in the United States to the founding ad hoc committee. Broadcasting began with Afaan Oromo, Amharic, and English languages, which gradually expanded to four languages, adding a 30-minute news bulletin in Arabic in January 2017. Programming is varied and diverse,

including two newscasts a day in Afan Oromo and Amharic. The newscasts and programs of OMN changed the of Ethiopian media landscape and reshaped the media-politics relationship in Ethiopia. Immediately after its launch in March 2014, it turned into the leading diaspora media outlet that reported the political protests in Oromia and dominated the Ethiopian media discourse. It brought to the Ethiopian media landscape citizen driven media reports aimed at creating an ethnic, vibrant, and engaged community. Having access to on ground activists and political operatives in the Oromia region enabled Oromia Media Network to stand alongside and compete with diaspora media organizations like ESAT and international broadcasters like the Amharic and Afan Oromo services of VOA.

OMN runs a non-stop news flow throughout the week with one newscast every day and two punditry analyses of two hours long both in Afan Oromo and Amharic languages. A 'Day in Oromia', a newscast of the day and a follow up analysis of the day's top news stories are its flagship programs. OMN also broadcasts several live- discussion talk shows on its Facebook live sessions and rebroadcasts it to Ethiopia via satellite. A news analysis program known as 'Gadisa Raba Dori, and 'A News Analysis' are broadcasted regularly, each lasting about two hours. Audience members also participate in these programs. The producers of the show often ask audience members to ask questions about the political situation in Ethiopia. Reflecting on the impact of these talk shows, Abdi says: "Discussion programs are watched by millions of Oromos and other Ethiopians and are contributing a great deal to the formation of unified Oromo centric public opinion over many issues" (Personal Communications, 2017). Abdi's view is shared by the executive director Jawar Mohammed, who said OMN's talk shows are a key factor in raising the

political awareness of the Oromo community in Ethiopia. He said, “we launched OMN in March 2014, the first round of Oromo protest in Ethiopia broke out in April of the same year” (Personal Communications, 2017).

Besides OMN’s leading position in Ethiopian media landscape in terms of news coverage of Oromia, its talk shows often set the agenda for government and other opposition media outlets, as well as reflecting the issues considered important among Oromo intellectual elite. Critics on the contrary, believe that OMN’s talk shows such as Gadisa Raba Dori are ‘a feel-good discussion among acquaintance who have the same ideological predisposition rather than a true rational debate between opposing ideological camps’ (Tedla, 2016).

The critics add when such kinds of television talk shows dominate the schedules, they indicate tendencies towards politicization, polarization, ethnicization of public debates. Critics of OMN tend to generalize this picture and extend it over the channel's coverage of news stories. OMN’s executive director responds to such claims saying: “OMN is unabashedly and proudly offering a uniquely Oromo perspective. We are siding with the people of Oromo, who we are denied not to have their own independent media in their own homeland” (Personal Communications, 2017).

In addition to the talk shows, OMN airs a program called public opinion shows. In this program, the hosts read letters from viewers over selected hot issues or members of the public call in to give their opinions about the programs of OMN or the Ethiopian government. As Suleman Hussien one of the main hosts of the show says, “This program lets us know who our viewers are, what they feel about our programs. It allows our viewers to have free access to our channel and will give a chance for them to express their opinion about Ethiopian

government" (Personal Communications, 2017). Before OMN, the Oromo community had only government owned Oromo language television to watch, let alone to participate in or to give political opinion about the Ethiopian government. As Usman underlines, the Oromo community has had enough of being "treated as a threat and tired of being accused by Ethiopian government as a threat for a unity of Ethiopia" (Personal Communications, 2017).

OMN's Identity

In asking if OMN is well-positioned to compete with other diaspora media outlets such as ESAT, we must first get a grasp of what it is exactly. Since OMN has been interested in differentiating itself as a voice of the Oromos, its programming and content can be defined in terms of its focus on the cause of the Oromo people. This is true, even if there is plurality and diversity in its language and content. For example, it has Amharic programs and interview politicians from other Ethiopian ethnic groups. OMN's newsroom is operated by ethnically homogenous staff, but they bring their own journalistic, political backgrounds and ways of working to the space. Like ESAT, it is not of one mind and can show signs of change and contradiction, while its editorial management has some measure of consistency. In a similar fashion with ESAT, there are certain balances that OMN wrestles with consistently: Is it partisan or community media? Its identity is the function of the balances struck between these two poles.

OMN as the Voice of Oromo Community

Oromia Media Network distinguished itself by its attempt to reach out to a large Oromo audience, discussing issues that are both timely and pressing in Oromia, Ethiopia's largest regional state. Covering political events, such as protests, drought, or arrests of political figures in the region has created milestones in the short history

of OMN. Although seen from a perspective of wider Ethiopian politics, such a focus on Oromo issuea is a shortcoming as it dwarfs other Ethiopian non-Oromo issues in Ethiopia. In a series of interviews given by the founders of Oromia Media Network around the time of the launch, a clear message was propagated that OMN would advance 'the Oromo Question' and offer an 'Oromo perspective' on the news. Although different individuals have given diverse aspects of what 'the Oromo question' and 'an Oromo perspective' would consist of, in summary it could be described as follows: The 'Oromo question' is a term widely used to refer to the fact that the Oromo people want self-rule in their own homeland, Oromia. It is part of a broader socio-political consciousness of the Oromo people, and it is the single most important political question for the Oromo people since the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974.

Advancing the 'Oromo question' and bringing an 'Oromo perspective' to the news was underpinned by the deployment of Oromo journalists and analysts who offer an Oromo perspective on the top news stories of the country. However, critics point out that focusing on Oromo perspective ran the risk of fanning ethnic divisions and waning the unity of Ethiopia. But as OMN executive director Jawar Mohammed says it, the overall aim was to 'enable Oromos to tell their own stories' (Personal Communications). It is clear, then, that every second of OMN's broadcasting is an echo of the Oromo question, as inscribed in OMN's mission statement. OMN asserts that its news content and analysis emanate from a unique Oromo perspective (OMN, 2014). As the first ever satellite television that focused on Oromo, OMN is a phenomenon for the Oromo people, as labelled by a former member of OMN's editorial committee (Personal Communications, 2017). Jawar Mohammed expressed how OMN satisfied the needs of Oromos. "Before we started OMN, I have been going to other diaspora media outlets to do political analysis.

Now we can report political events and do analysis on our own television" (Personal Communications, 2017).

Afan Oromo is the main language in which OMN fulfills and conveys the information, intended for its community in the diaspora and in Ethiopia. Although Afan Oromo was not officially banned in Ethiopia, it was not a language of publishing or broadcasting until at least until 1974 (Teferi, 2015). Scholars of the language allege that during the imperial era, the language was a target of symbolic violence. The Oromo people were made to be ashamed of their language, culture, and origins or were considered as retrogressive tribal groups who resisted the civilizing mission of the Ethiopian State. Personal and geographic names were replaced by Amharic names (Mollenhauer, 2011, Teferi, 2015, Baxter, 1991). As recently as the 2000s, Afan Oromo student literature clubs are banned. In this sense, every second of OMN's broadcasting is both a cultural and political fight against the Ethiopian State (Aliyi, 2014). Therefore, for OMN to be broadcasting in Afan Oromo is not only a matter of communicative purpose, but also it is a matter of affirming and asserting its Oromo identity.

When news stories about events of significance to Oromos in different parts of the world are communicated to them in Afan Oromo and from the perspective of Oromos, it brings them together, across the difference of their geographical locations. What unites the Oromos across the world is their shared identity, the common language, and the common news agenda. In other words, what OMN does is unite the Oromo public that is actually composed of multiple, overlapping publics that should be defined not territorially, but by reference to a shared identity and a common set of political arguments and concerns. What OMN has offered to the Oromo community is a platform to express their views without fear of being persecuted or harassed by the Ethiopian government. It

encourages the Oromo community to expresses their views without fear of repercussion.

The logo of OMN, always present in the lower right corner of the screen, is an assertion of the Oromo identity. The colors of OMN's logo–black, red, and white–are the colors of the Oromo flag. These colors appeared frequently in the programming, ranging from news and information, to entertainment and culture. The daily broadcast begins with the OMN logo, decorated with the Oromo flag, being played at the beginning of every broadcast. The presence of the Oromo flag meant that OMN considers itself not only as a media organization, but as a genuine representative of the Oromo people.

Is OMN exclusively an Oromo community media? While it formally functions as an Oromo community media with an exclusive mission to advance the interests of the Oromo community in Ethiopia, it does also report on other Ethiopian related issues, making it something similar with ESAT. This question is difficult as well because treating the Oromo community and other non-Oromo issue of Ethiopia as binaries is somewhat of a politically loaded assumption. As I have described in previous section, the interest of the Oromo community is articulated as a question of self-rule, defined in terms of the right of the Oromo people to determine their political, economic, and cultural status within or outside the Ethiopian state. OMN's mission to advance the interest of the Oromo people was the result of a historical, political and cultural distinctiveness of the Oromo people and it would prosper best as such. Also, OMN came out of the 'Oromo First' campaign and drew on talents from exiled Oromo journalists. The focus on Oromo issues arguably makes OMN's independence to report on other Ethiopian issue tenuous and conditional. While it should be added that reporting on other Ethiopian issues would not be a guarantee for its independence, its absence makes OMN one-sided. Therefore, in

similar manner with ESAT, OMN struggles for independence as a media outlet and has the mission and reliance on community finance, typifying it as a community media. This makes OMN similar with ESAT in that ESAT's pan-Ethiopian outlook on political events of Ethiopia does not prevent it from generating a massive audience in Ethiopia. This is hardly contentious. OMN reflects the same sort of bias on issues of close proximity to the interests of the Oromo people. Some critics suggest Afan Oromo service of OMN is more opinion-driven and is highly politicized, which could be a function of its editorial tone and style. To what degree is it partisan, or more specifically, does it reflect the interests of diaspora-based Oromo opposition political parties? Being headquartered in Minneapolis with the huge number of Oromo community and funded by the diaspora Oromo community, it seems somewhat obvious. And whenever there is convergence between OMN's reporting and Oromo opposition parties, such as in OMN's aggressive reporting of the Oromo Protest in Ethiopia, pro-government commenters claim it is a mouthpiece for Oromo oppositional political parties, such as the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). However, it cannot be just that. As I have described earlier, of late, so much of its content go beyond the interest of the Oromo people.

OMN's marketed identity as an 'Oromo' news channel that brings the Oromo perspective in Ethiopian political discourse was a function of its own agency, planned by design, and carried out consciously by its journalists, editors and producers. Its goal was to be both credible news sources and to represent the interesta of the Oromo people. However, the debate and discourses during its formation were intertwined with political factors, such as the on-going adversarial relations with ESAT and a sense among many that Oromos needed a venue for speaking back to other Ethiopians. It started as an outlet for expression of Oromo priorities. By 2017, we can see that OMN is not only what one

would expect of an Oromo news channel per se,–an implied Oromo and perspectival focus–and that it does give coverage to other Ethiopian related issues. At the same time, it reports on Oromia disproportionately suggested that it tends to lean toward Oromia and covers other Ethiopian issues as well. While striving to be an all-inclusive Ethiopian diaspora media, it is undeniable that it originated as an Oromo news channel that started broadcasting in Afan Oromo.

The question of OMN's identity as an Oromo only media outlet is incomplete, and like every organization, it is subject to contestation and flux, reflecting editorial changes and organizational structure, among other factors. In April 2017, one of the founding members and the leading Afan Oromo and Amharic anchor, Abdi Fite, resigned, mentioning his disagreement with the executive director as a reason for his resignation. Abdi's resignation was not the only one, numerous others have left OMN, leaving its staff in a constant flux. Abdi's resignation raised many questions, such as whether the executive director is controlling and shaping OMN in his own 'Oromo First' ideology. Instantly after OMN was formally started, there were journalists who broke ways from OMN, alluding administrative and ideological issues as their reasons. The narrative was that the executive director is there to enforce his ideology and set his own editorial agenda. The degree to which individual influence and institutional regulation represent a new balance for OMN is shown in the media.

OMN's Political Economy

OMN's financial support initially came from members of Oromo diaspora community within the broader Ethiopian diaspora community. Members of the Oromo

community in the diaspora have provided financial support for the setting up and running of OMN. Particularly, the Minnesota Oromo community provided a space and sponsored large numbers of fundraising events before OMN was launched in 2014. The financial support OMN is receiving from the Oromo community is substantial and growing, and a significant share of its programming on social and political issues is paid for one way or another by the diaspora donors. Since its establishment, OMN did not run commercials from private companies, but they tried to pursue advertisers without success. Jawar said 'Companies would not be willing to run commercial on our network for fear of repercussion in their operation in Ethiopia' (Personal Communications, 2017). OMN's dependence on community coffers resembles ESAT, and is welcomed by many at OMN, as this is a model in many of other diaspora media outlets. However, OMN staff implied relying on funds raised from the Oromo community might not be sustainable.

Ethiopian Government's Pushback Against OMN

The Ethiopian government put pressure on the Ethiopian public, particularly the residents of the Oromia region, not to watch OMN. According to Jawar, many people have individually resisted the pressure by secretly watching the network (Personal Communications, 2017). Reported cases include jamming, taking down of satellite dishes, the intimidation of viewers and dish installers, and passing legislations criminalizing watching OMN (HRW, 2016). On its Facebook page, OMN frequently provides information about satellite receiver specifications such as symbol rate and angle and instructions to its viewers. New forms of censorship were used against OMN in Oromia. The regime's power to censor OMN also extends

beyond its territorial base. Members of the Ethiopian embassy in the United States are habitually ordered to collect information on the personnel, financial, and organizational structure of OMN. The regime also outbid OMN to deny its use of the services of satellite companies such as Eutelsat. Bowing to pressure from the Ethiopian government, satellite companies such as the Egyptian Nilesat and the European Eutelsat took down OMN from their transponders or refused to renew OMN's lease when it expires in 2015. Thailand and Canadian companies followed suit throughout the time of the state of emergency (Personal Communications, 2017). In direct contacts between diplomats, Ethiopian authorities asked the United States government to take action against OMN. On a number of occasions, Ethiopian government demanded the expelling of OMN. Ethiopian government also accused OMN of 'terrorism' and 'hate propaganda' and called for the revocation of its license. The Ethiopian embassy in the United States mobilized pro-government immigrants in the United States to petition to the United States government to extradite OMN's executive director, Jawar Mohammed. He also received a threatening email. In 2016 he claimed that the Ethiopian government wanted him dead (Personal Communications, 2017). During the height of Oromo protest in 2016, OMN's broadcasting was jammed on numerous occasions (Chala, 2016). On October 6th, 2016, after the Ethiopian government declared a state of emergency, Ethiopian government raided households who hoisted satellite dishes on the rooftops of their houses (Chala, 2016). After hundreds of people were detained during the State of Emergency, they were charged with passing information to OMN by using their Facebook pages (Addis Standard, 2016). When people were arrested, they were frequently asked to reveal their passwords, and then their communication with OMN

journalists is presented in court as an evidence of a crime (Ethiopian Human Rights Project, 2016). However, OMN resumed its transmissions after signing a contract with other satellite companies. The regime also mobilized spyware companies against OMN's journalists (Citizen Lab, 2017). According to a report, Ethiopian government sent malicious spying software to Ethiopian journalists working for OMN. The Ethiopian government was involved in the hiring of a Israeli spyware company that was contracted to produce a spyware targeting OMN journalists (Citizen Lab, 2017). Since its establishment, the Ethiopian State Television has run a series of documentary programs on Ethiopia's prime time television programs condemning OMN and Jawar Mohammed.

The Reporting of Oromo Protest: Context and Process

Less than a year after Oromia Media Network started broadcasting, its reporting of the political protests in Oromia changed the channel's standing in the diaspora as well as in Ethiopia. The series of popular protests in Oromia that began in April 2014 proved to be the first opportunity for OMN to attract wide attention in the broader Ethiopian diaspora community. OMN's coverage of these protests sheds light on which factors matter most for Ethiopian diaspora media. In its coverage of Ethiopia's biggest news story, –the Oromo Protest–OMN capitalized on its cultural and ethnic proximity and most importantly, citizen journalists at its disposal. OMN's reporting was some of the most fascinating, clearly surpassing ESAT in terms of focus, consistency, and timeliness.

At the height of the protest in late August 2016, foreign journalists and other diaspora media organizations turned to OMN in record numbers for what would be one

the biggest developments of the protest. Political pundits and activists regarded OMN's coverage as superior, especially in relation to ESAT which was a little behind in terms of getting the story out first. In 2017, during a scholastic conference of Oromo Studies Association (OSA), a scholar recognized OMN's reporting as innovative.

OMN's coverage of the protest has made a great impact on news-hungry viewers in Ethiopia. With OMN, most people follow events in Oromia at close range. The impact of images and footage with brut forces of the Ethiopian government in Oromia is profound. Images of the brutality, which had never been seen before in any significant way, directly influences the residents in Oromia and shapes the public opinion. As Jawar put it,

> OMN's role in propelling the Oromo protest and keeping it there is considerable. The coverage of the Oromo protest under the weight of Ethiopian government's security forces, intensified the feeling of solidarity among the Oromo people (Personal Communications, 2017).

For Kebede Lenjiso*, OMN has "helped revitalize the fight for the emancipation of the Oromo people." The protest against the expansion of Addis Ababa is a case in point of the transnational public sphere at work. OMN's repeated broadcasting of the pictures of the death and beatings of students protesting the expansion of Addis Ababa has inflamed passions, it has even become a rallying point of the Oromo protest; and it has intensified the protest. The pictures depicting death and brutal beatings of protesters have even become part of OMN's regular coverage of the protest. Such media attention is not without consequences. For instance, partly because of the relentless coverage of the protest against the expansion of Addis

Ababa, Ethiopian authorities were forced to cancel their plan to expand Addis Ababa. Government affiliates of the Human Rights Commission instituted an inquiry into the alleged human rights abuses. More importantly, the case suggests that OMN has the potential to shape public opinion from afar. Overall, OMN's coverage of Oromo protest has fueled the spirit of discontent in Oromia. OMN continues to broadcast images of the protest and mobilize support for the Oromo cause, public support for the Oromo protest is becoming more pronounced.

The effect of the pictures and rhetoric of OMN can be observed by the Ethiopian public, who actively participate by sending thousands of messages to OMN journalists. OMN's intense coverage of Oromo protest has not only fed the Oromo public's fury, but also forced other media outlets to cover the protest, making other diaspora media outlets vulnerable to charges and open to criticism that they have not sufficiently covered the political crisis in Ethiopia. In this sense, OMN places itself as a counter-force to the indifference towards the plight of the Oromo people. Seen from this perspective, OMN's success is a symptom of the failure of other media outlets when it comes to Oromo politics. It forced ESAT to start its Afan Oromo program in December 2015 five years after its formation. ESAT launched its Afan Oromo program during the first wave of the Oromo protest in time to report the developing political crisis and counterbalance OMN's coverage of the protest. The initiative to persuade other media outlets, particularly in the diaspora, shows that OMN leads the way in reporting in Oromia. It also signals to the fact that OMN has a greater number of informants in Oromia. Being at the forefront of diaspora media outlets, OMN has nonetheless helped shape the public context for diaspora media outlets. In the words of Kebede Lenjiso, "Other diaspora media outlets are convinced

that OMN's influence on Oromo public was a factor prompting other media outlets, who have only rarely report on Oromo issue start to give a wall to wall coverage about Oromo issue" (Personal Communications, 2017). Other media outlets in the diaspora have also become more vocal in their effort to highlight the Oromo protests, calling to the residents in Oromia and showing their suffering, which reflects the public outrage at the suffering in Oromia. The effect of OMN's Oromo protest coverage became unavoidable, or was no longer ignored; if anything, they are taking note of the changes brought about by OMN. The coverage of the Oromo protest has gathered momentum and fueled passions in Oromia to an extent the party governing the regional state has permitted demonstrations and authorized fundraising campaigns in Oromia.

However, even those who admire what OMN is doing have reservations about its coverage. Some believe that the effect of the coverage of Oromo protest is sometimes lost in the very act of reporting, as OMN does not have on the record information sources, and their reporting is based on virtual reporters with no means of verifications. Viewers are fed up with a constant raw stream of information that have gone through a minimal verification process. The reality is reported in a fragmented way. It is true that OMN covers the Oromo protest extensively, but the resultant coverage is for the most part, caught in events and developments at the expense of a more profound treatment. The images of suffering and victimization, of blood and death become a daily staple for viewers who in turn, become entangled with details of the conflict and are hardly able to interact with the conflict as a whole. The coverage of Oromo protest often comes down to material; to be consumed by the frustrated masses to the point of being saturated with images. In some instances, and

during periods of height of Oromo protest in the whole of Oromia, the same pictures are repeated over and over on news broadcasts as analysis comments on the events on Facebook live videos. Half of the screen has the picture of the commentator and the second half shows a rerun of footage. At the beginning, the viewer is affected by the scenes and responds to them in varying degrees, but as these same images keep recurring, the viewer risks becoming numb as a result of experiencing–'compassion fatigue'– which leaves them exhausted by the spectacle of violent events and reports about misery and suffering. He or she becomes accustomed to seeing graphic pictures and dreadful events to the point that the event loses its eventfulness in the daily routine screenings of violence. More than that, the images that are being fed are for the most part tragic and in that sense, tend to sap the energies and hopes of the viewers. The continuous or repeated airing of images of victims and victimization, of expulsion and demolition may incite the masses in Ethiopia, but it also tends to affect them negatively. Furthermore, long distance journalism that OMN reporters and anchors engage in often leads them to paint a black and white picture, which pits two irreconcilables against each other–the Ethiopian government vs. the opposition; Oromo Nationalists vs. pan-Ethiopian nationalists, weakened opposition vs. a strong Ethiopian State, and so on. This black and white picture may leave out the 'gray' in the Ethiopian political crisis.

For some, OMN's coverage of the Oromo protest gives it a strong and a vibrant role in Ethiopian politics in general and in Oromo politics in particular. Some even go as far as claiming that the channel coverage lends support to 'opposition party' within the governing coalition of the EPRDF that administers the Oromia regional state. For other others, OMN's coverage of Oromo protests is dubious to say the least.

According to a pro-government commentator, OMN is manipulative and the young people in Oromia have been fed with highly ethnicized report of the protest. Government authorities even dismiss OMN's coverage as sheer propaganda and irresponsible journalism intended to bring about a regime change from afar. OMN is further criticized for portraying the Oromo people as helpless victims.

As I have shown earlier, OMN is explicit that its coverage of the protests is unabashedly pro-Oromo. It insists that it is because the 'facts on the ground are there for everyone to see' (OMN, 2016). According to Human Rights Watch, at the end of its fourth year, the Oromo protests left at least 1000 people dead, thousands injured, and a million people were internally displaced almost all of whom were civilians. To take the position of the detached observer or to claim objective neutrality when it comes to the protests in Oromia, is something that is hard to do for many Ethiopian journalists in the diaspora since they themselves were victims of the Ethiopian government.

OMN's coverage of Oromo protest has also shaped the coverage of the protests by foreign correspondents in Addis Ababa. In the diaspora, there is a deep resentment toward foreign media correspondents, and in fact, many report the protest as a conflict between two groups with equal capacity to means of violence. There is a feeling, common among Ethiopians, that many Western journalists tend to be partisan and that their coverage of the Oromo protest tends to be slanted toward a government narrative. For example, correspondents do not often recognize or give due attention to the Oromo perspective (Personal Communications, 2017). Most reporters tend to highlight the 'economic success' that Ethiopia has achieved in a 'troubled and unstable' Horn of Africa. For Ethiopians, this is suggesting that the

world cannot afford to have a failed state in the Horn of Africa that could trigger further migration to Europe. In their reporting, they give little attention to the plight of the Oromo people and provide little analysis about the roots of the problem. By and large, the perspective that one gets from some foreign correspondents in Addis Ababa tend to justify the violence of the Ethiopian government against peaceful protesters. Some even charge that for some foreign correspondents, 'property damages' are deemed more important than the death of civilians; much more extended coverage is devoted to property damages caused by the protesters than to incidents where greater numbers of peaceful protesters are killed. A Bloomberg correspondent wrote that one-hundred people have died because of a 'stampede', thus denoting the incident as something caused by the protesters themselves whereas OMN describes the incident as a massacre. Most foreign correspondents report the violent acts as work done to keep the law and order of the country, thus they are justified. Increasingly, the violence of the protesters has been labeled destructive–it has never been labeled as 'a liberation struggle' or 'a resistance,' as OMN refers to it. Although the term "terrorism" is often applied to Ethiopian opposition forces including OMN, the term "state terrorism" is never applied to the Ethiopian government's acts of violence. Similarly, OMN has been criticized for using the term "martyr" to describe Oromo protesters who were killed during the protesters.

Given that the regime controls much of the media coverage about Oromo protests, and given that foreign correspondents rely on the authorization they get from Ethiopian authorities, the Oromo protest has a tendency to be framed through government friendly news frames. This should come as no surprise; most if not all foreign correspondents are based in Addis Ababa–which also serves as a hub for

diplomats and media organizations. To write their reports, journalists heavily depend on the information relayed to the reporters through government sources based in Addis Ababa, but they do have not lived experience of the Oromo protesters. Adding to these shortcomings is the reality of the private press reporting in Ethiopia, as it faces censure, bans, and harassment from government authorities.

In Ethiopia there is always media repression, not only during times of political tension, but also in the day-to-day reporting on events. Journalists cannot always get to the site of events or verify happenings, as was the case during the Oromo protests in much of Oromia. From the beginning of the protests in 2014, OMN adopted a strategy to publicize the Oromo perspective of the protest and to combat the misrepresentation of the Oromo issue. OMN aims at counterbalancing foreign correspondents' depiction of the causes of the Oromo protest against the Ethiopian government. The often live, gruesome pictures that OMN has been airing on the Oromo protests–as in the case of the incident at Irecha where hundreds were killed during a cultural celebration–have provided a different perspective and even told a different story, written by foreign correspondents in Ethiopia. The images of the practices of Ethiopian security forces in Oromia that OMN is making instantly accessible by broadcasting on TV and uploading on its Facebook page are increasingly finding their way to the international human rights NGOs and media organizations, as OMN audience is expanding to the international community as well. This is not without effects. Suffice to mention, two developments which may not be direct consequences, but are nonetheless noteworthy indicators that can help gauge the impact of OMN.

The first pertains to the number and the extent of hearings held in the United

States congress and in the European Union parliament in support of the Oromo cause, not to mention the number of reports that human rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International produced about the protest over the last four years. The second pertains to ESAT's decision to launch an Afan Oromo program to influence the thinking of the Oromo public opinion inflamed by its practices. This was done in order to counter the effects of the plethora of diaspora Afan Oromo media outlets, which have sprung up recently; and more pointedly, to counter OMN, which given that its exceptional attention to the Oromo cause that it is perceived to adopt is popular among Oromos.

Conclusion

The establishment of OMN is preceded by ESAT, which reported on political events in Ethiopia. As I described in chapter three, from the death of Meles Zenawi and big corruption allegations, ESAT was the unique source of information that demonstrated the pan-Ethiopian domination of Ethiopian news and especially the supremacy of ESAT as an information provider. In similar manner with ESAT, the launch of OMN must be viewed in relation to the events of the early 2000s, particularly the 2005 and 2015 post-election crackdown on journalists and politicians. OMN was launched in the same context and with the same objective of changing the information flow in Ethiopia. After Oromo protests started in 2014, OMN exercised the same monopoly on information from Oromia, which ESAT had before the advent of OMN. Furthermore, the channel has become the sole source of information on the protests in Oromia. OMN's journalists, many of whom are ethnically Oromos, use their cultural and ethnic proximity to report on political development in Oromia.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRANSNATIONAL PUBLIC SPHERE IN ETHIOPIA POLITICAL

Introduction

This chapter builds on the discussions of the previous two chapters aiming to give empirical evidence of the transnational public sphere in the Ethiopian media context. As has been shown in the previous two chapters, ESAT and OMN have played a significant role in restructuring the flow of information into Ethiopia and publicizing political debates from the United States, where they are headquartered. In this chapter, I will highlight the practical manifestation of their roles. My discussion of ESAT's and OMN's contribution to the shaping of the Ethiopia's transnational public sphere is supported by the analysis of Ethiopia's government reaction to their reporting. First, I will be looking at the general context in which these two media outlets were able to play such a crucial role. Second, I will identify the key characteristics of the Ethiopian 'transnational' public sphere. Third, I will explore the political implications of this emerging public sphere with special emphasis on Ethiopian politics.

ESAT's and OMN's Operations: Summary

The continuous repression of Ethiopian journalists caused the unceasing waves of migration of Ethiopian journalists since the EPRDF regime came to power in 1991. This spurs the rise of vibrant diaspora media. With domestic media constrained by heavy state censorship, Ethiopian journalists working at diaspora media outlets such as ESAT and OMN and at international media outlets such as Voice of America (VOA), the BBC, and Deutsche Welle, have become key conduits of alternative news and information on

Ethiopian politics; and they have helped fuel the growth of a transnational information network connecting Ethiopians across the globe. This network has been largely driven by the rise of internet and satellite technologies, which are reshaping modes of communication and the flows of information, both inside and outside Ethiopia. Activists and journalists who have left Ethiopia often continue to work abroad as journalists, for a growing number of the Ethiopian diaspora Amharic and Afan Oromo satellite television chiefs among them are at ESAT and OMN, as well as other online news portals established by exiled opposition and independent journalists

ESAT's and OMN's essential aim is political. Exiled opposition groups, journalists, and members of Ethiopian diaspora consider ESAT and OMN as their outlet to counter the Ethiopian government's hegemonic control on the flow information in Ethiopia. ESAT's strategy is not dissimilar to the efforts of OMN to combine journalistic reporting with forceful anti-Ethiopian government rhetoric. It is no coincidence that both ESAT and OMN regularly raise funds from the Ethiopian diaspora to broadcast 24/7 news channels in order to counter what they see as the Ethiopian government's complete control of information flow. They are both established by members of the Ethiopian diaspora community. The following table summarizes ESAT's and OMN's operation.

Table 6.1. Comparing ESAT and OMN

	ESAT	OMN
Source of Funding	Diaspora Community	Diaspora Community
Main operations base	Washington DC,	Minneapolis, Minnesota
Main language	Amharic	Afan Oromo
Annual Budget (US$)	n.a	n.a.
Global Support Units	50 Cities	60 Cities
Number of employees	>40	>35
Main target audience	Ethiopians	Oromos,
Weekly online audience	500,000	250,000
Reach (Satellite TV households)	15 to 20m	10m

In an emerging Ethiopian transnational public sphere, ESAT and OMN are offering a voice and a perspective to Ethiopians who live across the globe. Ethiopians can see more coverage of political issues and dissenting voices from ESAT and OMN than what would be available on most Ethiopia based television stations such as Kana, EBS, Fana Television. They both show a high propensity to include perspectives from Ethiopia's banned opposition groups than Fana Television, for example, and much more about under-reported issues like corruption, human right violations, and protest prone regions such as Oromia and Amhara regional states. Meanwhile, the Ethiopian state television news reporting is characterized by long-winded speeches of EPRDF leaders with extreme deference to those leaders and an emphasis on government achievements. Negative news and critical voices are minimal with extensive coverage of an abundance of ordinary people being portrayed as benefiting from the policies of the Ethiopian

government. However, unlike Ethiopian state media outlets, ESAT and OMN have a different style of presenting their news. Although the styles and the program formats of ESAT and OMN are copied from the likes of Al-Jazeera and the BBC, ESAT and OMN have not taken the journalistic values. They are more oppositional in their tone, and in tradition of the diaspora community funded channels, they act as a platform for exiled political groups. Although they both show some pluralism in entertaining diverse exiled political groups, there is virtually no coverage about the issues that concern the Ethiopian immigrant communities in the United States. Over the last three years ESAT and OMN included more voices from protest leaders, rebel groups, parties, or social movements in Oromia and Amhara regions. As a result, the heavily censored domestic television stations have been forced to compete with ESAT and OMN.

Both ESAT and OMN operate in a transnational public sphere in virtually all of the senses discussed in the second chapter. In both cases the transnational public sphere links the Ethiopian diaspora community that is spread across the globe, to the whole range of greatly different locals in Ethiopia. As I have shown in the last two chapters, there is a general agreement among ESAT and OMN journalists that the political events such as the Oromo protests and the death of Melez Zenawi are sociopolitical events and must be understood in the context of Ethiopia's emerging media landscape, which has been changing since 2010. Reporting political events and bringing them into Ethiopia via transnational visual space was one of the building blocks of ESAT and OMN. Televising political news reports about issues and events close to the hearts and minds of Ethiopians and publicizing them from the United States meant that the Ethiopian government is no longer capable of monopolizing the public sphere. It is a new era where the Ethiopian diaspora media has become instrumental in the formation of public opinion in Ethiopia.

This has become visible during the political unrest that lasted over three years, in which ESAT and OMN played a pivotal role in channeling news and information between the domestic and international public.

The relative freedom that ESAT and OMN have in the United States, the regular financial contribution from the broader Ethiopian diaspora community throughout the world, and the emerging citizen journalists on the ground in Ethiopia, enabled them to cover most of the political events in Ethiopia faster than the Ethiopian state media outlets. This advantage gave them importance over their competitors in Ethiopia and made them the preferred channels. Specifically for ESAT, this became visible in 2012, when its unrelenting coverage of the death of Meles Zenawi forced the Ethiopian government to admit the death of the late prime minister a month after his death. For OMN, it happened in 2015, when its wall to wall coverage of the Oromo protests forced the Ethiopian government to cancel the proposed plan of expanding Addis Ababa into the Oromia Region. Following these major political events, Ethiopia witnessed a series of successive political events that consolidated ESAT's and OMN's position and gradually built a reputation as the leading Ethiopian diaspora media outlets.

For the Ethiopian government, the increasing supply of information through ESAT and OMN has posed significant challenges and threats to the State's internal monopoly over information and communications. The Ethiopian government has responded by intensifying its efforts to control the domestic public's access to global communication networks, using both legal and technological means–throttling internet speeds, filtering and blocking websites, and jamming the broadcasts of ESAT and OMN. However, the effort of the Ethiopian government to stave off the effect of ESAT and OMN inside Ethiopia is very much curtailed by the widespread global network of

communications infrastructure.

Back to the Theoretical Framework: Transnational Public Sphere

ESAT and OMN have played a leading role in the creation of a communicative space in the context of a transnational public sphere, giving it its defining characteristics. However, this rapidly expanding communicative space, which is actively being used by ESAT and OMN, is also used by other diaspora media outlets. Competing satellite television channels such as EBS, Kana TV, and other independently operated websites and blogs, have all contributed to the emergence of Ethiopian transnational communicative space to varying degrees. The unprecedented proliferation of social media platforms further extended the reach and influence of ESAT and OMN, adding new dimensions to this emerging communicative space in the transnational public sphere. The following are the key characteristics and defining features of the emerging Ethiopian communicative space in the context of the transnational public sphere.

1. As mentioned in chapter two, transnational public sphere could be considered as a Habermasian public sphere in that the emerging Ethiopian communicative space has some defining features that accommodate a free and critical discourse about the issues of interest to Ethiopian communities around the world. This communicative space, which is heavily being used by ESAT and OMN, is expanding and includes a number of other platforms for free and open discussion, which is creating a demonstrable political implication. Exposing a large segments of Ethiopians to daily news reports, talk shows, and debates–in which growing numbers of journalists, political elites, activists and ordinary people take part–resulted in the formation of protest movements sweeping Ethiopia over the last

three years. The political effects of these social movements are visible as the Ethiopian diaspora media institutionalizes and assumes clearer political functions.

2. Social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Twitter, offer alternative communicative space for ESAT and OMN to connect, communicate, generating their oppositional counter-discourse far away from their country of origin. With their growing capacity to use social media platforms, they get boundless amounts of information from Ethiopia and broadcast them back to Ethiopia, actively engaging in discussion of public affairs. ESAT and OMN should be understood as major agents of Ethiopia's new communicative space in the context of a transnational public sphere that allows discourse and participation that is not allowed inside Ethiopia. The recent political developments in Ethiopia clearly show how the divide between the so called 'diaspora' and 'the domestic' is superficial and has become completely obsolete in that the Ethiopian government is no longer capable of preventing the flow of critical information into Ethiopia from the diaspora. Access to these critical information is available to Ethiopians with a satellite dish and a TV set, a personal computer, internet access, and smart phones. The legal and technological barriers that the Ethiopian government put in place are not good enough to fend off the information flow. This is not to suggest that the Ethiopian government has stopped trying to put barriers against the flow of the information. However, the dedication of the staff of ESAT and OMN and the voluntary financial contribution they regularly receive from members of the Ethiopian diaspora has been a source of strength. It is remarkable that ESAT and OMN's broadcasting will always resume immediately after the Ethiopian

government jammed their broadcasting. Other than the Ethiopian diaspora, ESAT and OMN are supported by non-state actors, including human rights groups, anti-censorship organizations, and intellectuals from the Western world.

3. The Ethiopian diaspora community in the United States consists of more than a quarter-million and it is diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, and religion as one of the largest African immigrant groups in the United States. Looking at the community from a mass media perspective, the Ethiopian diaspora community has been brought together by ESAT and OMN as well as social media platforms with increased importance and significance in Ethiopia. What unites them all is the politics of their homeland, despite their stark ideological differences. The political dimension of ESAT and OMN is omnipresent in the minds of their executives who identify their people as their target audience.

The emergence of ESAT and OMN in Ethiopian communicative space in the context of the transnational public sphere has brought changes to the local political dynamics of Ethiopia and have manifested in the following cases.

1. ESAT and OMN have changed the Ethiopian media landscape, and in the process, they have changed the local political dynamics. As I have explained in the last two chapters, ESAT and OMN have quickly grown to become Ethiopia's leading satellite televisions, causing a change in Ethiopia's information flow and shaping power relations. Both represent alternative media channels, broadcasting critical voices into Ethiopia, but they have also played, to varying degrees, the role of political representatives. In some occasions, they not only act as media outlets, but

they also act as political actors. In the absence freedom of expression in Ethiopia, ESAT and OMN are some the de facto opposition outlets, despite their stark ideological dispositions. They both provide platforms with opposing views and political dissidents living both inside and outside Ethiopia. In playing this remarkably active role, they provide news report on daily political developments and they suggest solutions on a regular basis.

2. ESAT and OMN have shattered the information monopoly, despite the Ethiopian government's effort to remain in control of the information flow. Despite Ethiopian's government relentless effort to control the flow of information in Ethiopia, ESAT and OMN have caused a profound change in the Ethiopian media sphere by breaking the monopoly that the Ethiopian government has had on the flow of the information. In the previous two chapters, we have seen that partly because of the commitment and the financial backing that the Ethiopian diaspora community have given for ESAT and OMN, these two media outlets are playing a leading role in changing the Ethiopian media landscape and shaping Ethiopian opposition groups regarding politics in Ethiopia. Among the most apparent implications of ESAT and OMN is the reversal of influence that the Ethiopian government exerts over the media through monopolizing the flow of information inside Ethiopia.
3. Over the last few years, ESAT and OMN have become capable of setting their own agenda, away from Ethiopian governmental and with their own financial resources. With the creation of the communicative space in the transnational public sphere, ESAT and OMN have made it possible for exiled Ethiopian political parties and members of the Ethiopian diaspora to bring the Ethiopian government monopoly

of information to an end. In the process, ESAT and OMN profoundly change the dynamics of Ethiopian politics by exerting influence over the Ethiopian government, which quite often finds itself forced to adapt its actions, policies, and discourses in response to ESAT's and OMN's journalistic activities.

CHAPTER VII

ESAT AND OMN'S FRAMING OF POLITICAL EVENTS IN ETHIOPIA

Introduction

This Chapter discusses how ESAT and OMN reported on the protest incidents happened in Ethiopia. As I have suggested in the section that dealt with my sampling technique, all the news packages (n=238) are analyzed in three parts according to three separate reporting periods. The three periods also involve protest incidents (The Master Plan protest that started in Ginichi; the small rallies of Spring; and Feyisa Lilysa's Olympic protest) which took the bulk of ESAT's and OMN's coverage and constituted the economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions of the protest. The first part (n=65) explores ESAT's and OMN's coverage of the first wave of the protest within a period of five months, from November 15th, 2015, to February 28th, 2016. The second wave of the protest happened from March 1st, 2016, to May 30th, 2016, and is covered by (n=63) story items from ESAT and OMN. A period of three months, from June 1st, 2016, to August 30th, 2016, was covered by (n=110) story items from both ESAT and OMN. This coverage period was dominated by the stories of Feyisa Lilesa's protest at the Rio Summer Olympics. Feyisa showed a protest sign by crossing his wrists over his head at the finish line, which brought worldwide attention to the protests in Oromia. A significant majority of the story items were selected to explore how ESAT and OMN presented Feyisa's protest. In order to explore the shift (or a lack of it) in the framing of the protests through the contents of the story items across the three-coverage periods, the analysis in this chapter starts with the first wave of the protest with due emphasis on the protest against the expansion of Addis Ababa into Oromia.

Results and Discussion

I will present the frames and their supporting evidence in a way that follows the order in which the protests occurred. I have adopted the same structure of analysis for the remaining protest periods. I have begun my analysis with coding the story items that helped me discover the general descriptive statistics. Frequency of reporting and themes taken from the content are organized in order to explore the quantitative differences, not only between ESAT and OMN, but also between the three protest periods selected for analysis. Secondly, the master frames of Oromo nationalism and pan-Ethiopian nationalism that are discovered in the analysis by the defined periods of demonstrating composite relationships between Oromo nationalists, pan-Ethiopian nationalists, and the Ethiopian government throughout the protest period. The reasons behind the complexity of the relationship is explored throughout the analysis of the coverage. Headlines and excerpts from the contents of the story items are analyzed by the method of critical discourse analysis undertaken in the broad Ethiopian political context. In this case, while the frames of Oromo nationalism are represented in a form of ethnoterritorial identity, pan-Ethiopian nationalism is presented as a unionist ideology that encompass all ethnolinguistic groups under the Ethiopian nation-state, which condemns any real or perceived secessionist tendencies by any of ethnolinguistic groups.

The 1st Wave of the Protest: Quantitative Analysis Results and Discussion

In the second week of November 2015, OMN reported news that students in Ginchi held a political rally protesting the government decision to lease out a protected forest and land owned by their school to private individuals. ESAT and other diaspora

media also covered this protest, albeit later than OMN. While the Ethiopian government media reported nothing about the protest, both OMN and ESAT paid much more attention to the protest and produced a clear majority of news items.

Master Frames and Discussion of the 1st Wave of Protest

Masterframes: Oromo Nationalism vs. Pan-Ethiopian Nationalism

Among all story items in the first period, the protest was portrayed with contrasting narratives. On the one hand, the protest was a 'question of identity' and 'ethino-territorial claims' of the Oromo people, which were put forward by "courageous Oromo students who were willing to put their lives on line" (OMN, November 23rd, 2015). As the single largest ethnolinguistic group in Ethiopia, the Oromos have demands for the Ethiopian government to stop "wresting their land away" and "abolish the historical and sacred Oromo history" from the areas surrounding the capital city, Addis Ababa (OMN, Dec 10th, 2015).

In addition, the protest in the first period was not only presented as an ethino-territorial claim, it was also presented as an act of solidarity that conceals the intra-Oromo distinctions based on religion, gender, and social class, and that emphasizes a single community with common goals. When the protest grew into larger areas of Oromia in November 2015, "All Oromos across the world, regardless of their faith and political inclinations, must resist the wicked plan of Ethiopian government that will evict thousands of Oromo farmers from their sacred land" (OMN, December 19th). The planned expansion of Addis Ababa into Oromia was one of the biggest problems the Oromos face "since their incorporation into Ethiopian State" (OMN, December 19th). On

an OMN Town Hall hosted in Minneapolis, Minnesota and broadcasted as a special program, a panelist who repeatedly referred Ethiopia as an empire, said:

> We all are fighting for Oromo notwithstanding our differences. We have gotten into a fight with a formidable enemy that has dispossessed all of us of our land and our identity. Our enemy has strangled our necks and any other fighting move we can think of is poking our enemy in the eyes, and while our enemy is holding his eyes in pain, we will have our breathing space (*OMN*, November 19th).

On the other hand, the same protest and the causes of the protest in Oromia could be perceived and presented in different frames. For instance, demands of the protesters could be interpreted as a question of democracy, rule of law, and equality. "Students in Oromia region of Ethiopia are protesting the illegal expansion of Addis Ababa into surrounding area of Oromia region" (ESAT December 19th, 2015). "The Ethiopian Regime has committed a widespread human rights violation against peaceful student protesters in Oromia Region" (ESAT December 23rd, 2015). In other words, these reports highlight the human rights violations that student protesters suffered. Additionally, whilst the location of the protest and the human rights violations of the protesters are emphasized, it could also be perceived as a broader issue of authoritarianism in Ethiopia, because the "the regime had arrested, tortured and killed thousands of Ethiopians" (ESAT, December 6th, 2015). Meanwhile, OMN interpreted the protest as the latest chapter of the struggle for the emancipation of the Oromo people, and drew the conclusion that the cause of the protest is not only to "demand property ownership, but also to regain what the Oromos lost over hundreds of years" (December 18th, 2015).

Masterframe of Oromo Nationalism: Oromo Protests

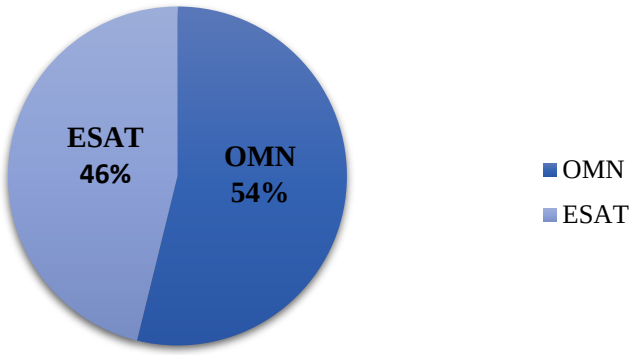
In ascribing responsibility for the loss of life, OMN blames the Ethiopian government for "killing, evicting and torturing" the Oromo people (November 25th, 2015). However, it accentuates that the root problem is not the ethnic federal system that is instituted by the regime, but rather that Oromos do not have power over their homeland and thus, do not get a fair share from the federation (OMN, December 12th, 2015). While ESAT similarly laid the blame on Ethiopian government, it defines the problem mainly in terms of the Ethiopian system of governance, calling it "ethnic federalism," suggesting that unless Ethiopians from all ethnic groups united against the authoritarian regime, the protest will not bear fruits (December 31st, 2015). Such contrasting selection of words used by ESAT and OMN to diagnose Ethiopia's political problems and to suggest solutions that promote the view that Ethiopian regime is 'authoritarian', whilst interpreting the root causes of the problem in diametrically opposite ideological underpinnings.

Quantitative Analysis, Results and Discussion

As I have explained in the sampling section, hundreds of story items were published during the first period of the protests, 65 of which were chosen for analysis. Story items that are not directly related to the protest are not selected for the analysis. In contrast with the three-coverage period of the protest, the first period is longer – five months, but only 27.3% of the total number of story items (n=65) were published in this period; whereas the vast majority of the story items, (n=173) 72.7% of the total number, were published in the succeeding two periods of protests. This is because as the protests

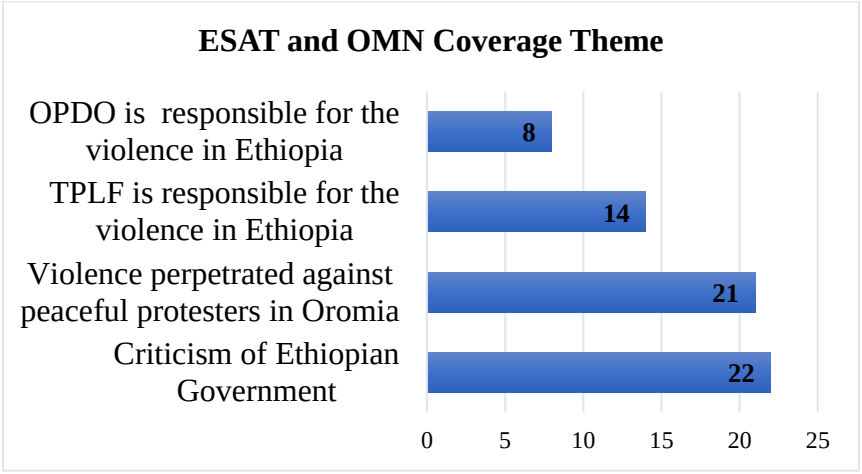
intensified in Ethiopia, both ESAT and OMN gave a great deal of attention to the protests and produced several videos.

Figure 7.1. ESAT's and OMN's Overall Reporting Frequencies of the 1st Wave Protest



Firstly, as shown in figure 7.1 an interesting finding is that OMN covered the protest in Oromia more than ESAT. OMN published the most videos covering the protests during this sample period.

Figure 7.2. ESAT's and OMN's Overall Frequencies of Themes During the 1st Wave of Protest



Secondly, Figure 7.2 gives the overall statistics of the different themes that were present in the content of news items. ‘Criticism of Ethiopian Government’ (n=22) in this period is the most frequent theme in the reporting on the protest, followed by (n=21) news packages covering the ‘Violence perpetrated against peaceful protesters in Oromia’. The theme of ‘TPLF is responsible for the violence in Ethiopia’ comes in the third period (n=14). By contrast, only eight news packages (n=8) put blame on regional party leaders as violence perpetrators. Therefore, during this period, there were 22 news items of the total 65 published that objected the violence against the peaceful protestors; while only 8 news packages attribute the violence to regional party officials. Themes attributing responsibility to the Ethiopian government were higher than the other themes during reporting. It can be said that criticism of the Ethiopian government was the focus of the reporting during this period. The criticism of the Ethiopian government shows the non-neutral position of ESAT and OMN in reporting on the protests.

Taking a look at each media outlets, the graphs below suggest that first of all, compared to OMN, ESAT relatively adopted a frame of democracy and rule of law in its reporting, simply highlighting the protest as a demand for democracy and rule of law, rather than a question of identity by the Oromos. Figure 6.4 illustrates that 50% of the news packages (n=15) were published to report how the Ethiopian government was brutal when quelling the protests. The rest of the reporting gives equal coverage to the unlawful expansion of Addis Ababa into Oromia as well as sympathy for the protester.

Figure 7.3. 1st Wave Protest Frequencies of Themes – ESAT

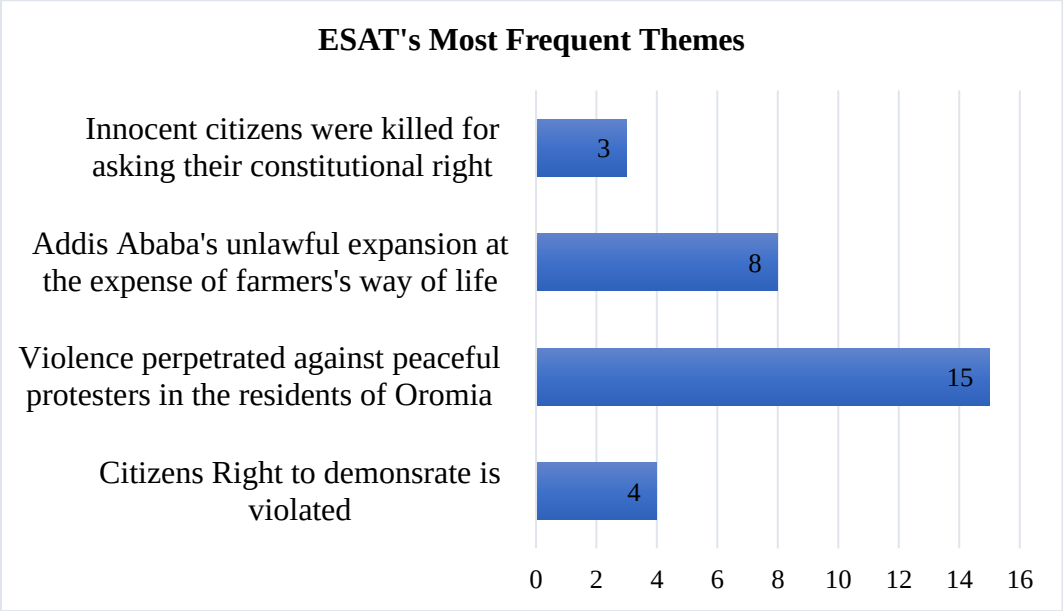
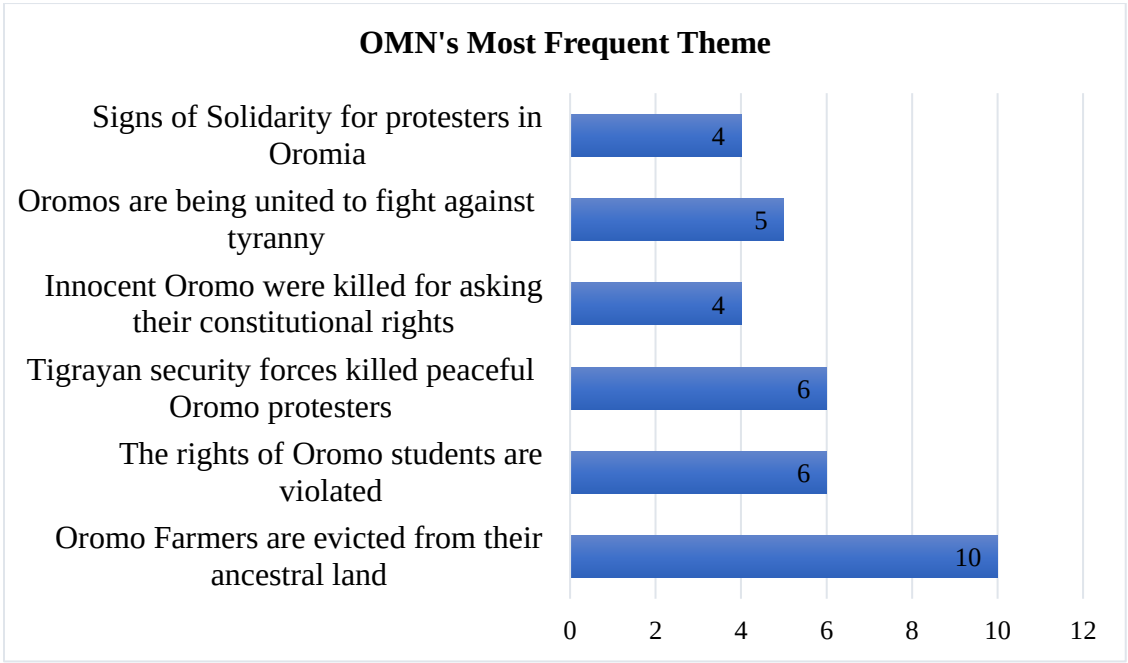


Figure 7.4. 1st Wave Protest Frequencies of Themes – OMN



OMN also adopted a variety of themes, according to Figure 7.5. The three most popular themes in general were similarly adopted by ESAT. It criticized the Ethiopian

government and described the perpetrators of the violence as Tigryan security forces. In addition, it reports from the perspectives of the Oromo community.

Masterframes and Discussion

Ethiopian Government Tigrayan Minority and Authoritarian Regime

Both ESAT and OMN use the word 'authoritarian' to refer to the Ethiopian government, and they use the Tigrayan minority forces to refer to the Ethiopian authorities in this sample period. It is important to examine how the Ethiopian government was discussed in the diaspora media in relation the protests, the consequences of its actions, and how the regime was described as a Tigrayan-dominated authoritarian government. The Ethiopian government's response to the protest was described by diaspora media in several ways. Phrases such as 'Ethiopian regime forces brutally murdered peaceful protesters in Oromia' were common. Transcripts of headlines, which contain labels such as 'shot dead' and 'killed' are listed below.

1. Government security forces killed a number of students in Oromia as students hold peaceful rally against proposed expansion of Addis Ababa (ESAT, Dec 7th, 2015)

2. Death toll rises in Oromia as Ethiopian government unleashes members of Ethiopian Defense Forces on peaceful citizens protesting land grab (ESAT, Dec 9th, 2015)

3. Oromo students shot dead in Ginchi town when they hold peaceful rally protesting Addis Ababa's master plan (OMN, November 19th, 2015)

4. Government troops opened fire when Oromo students protested Addis Ababa's Master Plan at Haramaya University and killed peaceful demonstrators OMN, Dec 8th, 2015)

5. An Oromo mother was heartlessly killed by TPLF troops while protecting her child from being shot (OMN, Dec 17th, 2015)

Television news headlines catch the attention of their audiences by summarizing the central element of the news. Their ideological implications also influence readers in their understanding of the following detailed news stories. The list of headlines above identifies the violent action of the Ethiopian government in various ways.

Phrases such as 'government forces shot killed peaceful protesters', 'Members of Ethiopian Defense Force masquerading as a police force opened fire on peaceful protesters', and 'death toll rises as regime forces attacked peaceful protesters', are the phrases chosen to define the violent action of the Ethiopian government. Both ESAT and OMN used these kinds of terms expansively. The words in the headlines have similar meaning: the Ethiopian government used violence against peaceful protesters. Thus, there are two messages conveyed by these words. Firstly, that students were protesting the expansion of Addis Ababa into surrounding Oromia Region. Secondly, that they were protesting peacefully, but the Ethiopian government forces were killing the peaceful protesters. In other words, the authoritarian Ethiopian government was quashing the peaceful protest using violence and force. Both ESAT and OMN presented protesting students in Oromia as the victim of the government's military action. In the details of their reporting, both ESAT and OMN used the Tigrayan People Liberation Front, or 'TPLF' troops, to refer to the regime security forces, portraying the federal government as a tool of TPLF. The term TPLF was used in a disparaging sense to show the federal government as a political structure manipulated by Tigryan minority political elites. Here, it emphasizes the nature of the regime as an authoritarian government, which is dominated by a minority ethnic group. Thirdly, the words 'the expansion of Addis Ababa' and 'Addis Ababa Master Plan' in the headlines provided by both ESAT and OMN, accepted the expansion of Addis Ababa not only as land grab, but also as an agenda

pushed by the TPLF in the name of urbanization. As a result, the Addis Ababa Master plan was a plan destroying "the poor farmers whose life is merely depended on their land."

More detailed descriptions about Addis Ababa's Master Plan and its mission have been made according to the following list of punditry analysis made on both ESAT and OMN. In common with the headlines of the news, the analysts appearing on both media outlets heavily used terms such as 'illegal expansion of Addis Ababa' and 'Land grab by TPLF elites.' However, Ethiopian government presented Addis Ababa's Master plan as a project that will integrate Addis Ababa's service with the adjacent rural towns of Oromia. The plan, in a town hall style public discussion and interviews, was also broadcasted both on ESAT and OMN. Terms such as 'dispossession', 'land grab', and 'displacement' were used by analysts to highlight Addis Ababa's Master Plan: "More than 150,000 Oromo farmers have been forcibly evicted from their lands since 2005 without compensation, as members of TPLF sells off the land of the Oromos for people who have become instantaneous millionaires" (Tsegaye Ararsa on OMN, Dec 26th, 2015).

1. Land of the Oromos is up for sell (November 14th, 2015)
2. The Oromos are refusing to be evicted from their fatherland (OMN, November 16th, 2015)
3. Protesters in Oromia Region are attacked by special operations security forces known as Agazi for protesting their forced removal (ESAT, November 11th, 2015)
4. TPLF armies attack civilians in Oromia for protesting the killings and arrest of their fellow citizens (ESAT, December 21st, 2015)
5. TPLF occupation of Oromia (ESAT, November 21st, 2015)

6. TPLF conquest of Oromia (OMN, November 29th, 2015)

Additionally, the phrase ‘eviction of Oromo farmers’ was used in a headline in OMN to demonstrate the forced removal of Oromo farmers from their homeland. The phrase ‘a right to the fatherland of Oromos’ implies the hereditary inheritance of land. The phrase ‘a right to the fatherland of Oromos’ also revealed OMN’s views on the Ethiopian government’s political and military power in Ethiopia.

Moreover, comparisons between government security forces and protesters have been made in both headlines and detailed news packages. The Ethiopian government was always described as a ‘regime,’ committing a ‘gross violation of human rights,’ and Oromos were always represented as ‘peaceful people’ who are just protesting being evicted from their ancestral lands. OMN accused the Ethiopian government of “mixing violent and legal means to depopulate the Oromos from their homeland in the name of expanding Addis Ababa into Oromia Region” (December 2015). The Ethiopian government’s plan to expand Addis Ababa was even likened to the Emperor Menelik II’s expansion toward southern Ethiopia in the late 19th century (OMN, December 30th, 2015).

In the meantime, among the news items, only 8 of them describe the protest in Oromia as ‘liberating’ and ‘reclaiming’ the country from ‘alien powers’. OMN also broadcasted a voice of a government official, changing the pitch of their voice to show that that even the rank and file remembers of the Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization (OPDO) consider the protest against the expansion of Addis Ababa into Oromia to be ‘liberating the Oromo people’ and would lead to completing the

emancipation of the 'Oromo nation' (December 2015). As suggested above, the protest against the expansion of Addis Ababa's Master plan was viewed as a defense of the land of the Oromos from TPLF's agents that are frequently described as 'aliens'. The Ethiopian government's characterization of Addis Ababa's Master Plan as a proposal that 'integrates the service of Addis Ababa with nearby Oromia districts' was only a veil cast over the 'blatant land grab,' which government officials announced was simply propaganda. As OMN suggested,

> there is every reason to expect that sooner or later Addis Ababa's Master Plan will in fact hand over the land of the Oromo farmers to few people who have connections with the regime and will turn Oromo farmers in to daily laborers and sentries (December 9th, 2015).

Oromos - the victim of TPLF's Security Forces

While the Ethiopian government was described as a regime controlled by 'TPLF', the Oromos on the other hand, were described not only 'a nation on their own' (OMN), but also a 'loving and welcoming people whose generosity was victimized by Ethiopian government (OMN).

Firstly, OMN included sound bites that show the protesters view of the regime's military two times. In the following two sound bites, protesters described the military as 'Agazi soldiers,' a term used that shows that the army is commanded exclusively by Tigrayans. OMN also played a sound bite of the wife of Bekele Gerba, an Oromo opposition leader who was denied a medical attention while in jail. She said, "I was fortunate enough to live during the previous regime, I have never seen such a brutal

regime. The solders tortured him and denied him a medical attention."

In this sound bite, the actions of the security forces of the Ethiopian government are described as brutal. They were described as much worse than the previous regime. The term 'Agazi' refers to a military unit that has been accused of killing and torturing protesters. In the excerpt, terms such as 'brutal' and 'torture' appeared in order to emphasize the victimization of the Oromos, as in the phrases. There is one clear reason that explains why OMN chose to run the sound bite of the wife of Ethiopian opposition leader. Firstly, the way that the woman had judged the action of Ethiopian security forces matched OMN's own description. Hence, the image of Ethiopian security forces as a violent and victimizing agent of the Oromos had been strengthened by running the sound bite. The voice of the wife of the prominent Oromo political leader constitutes a strong piece of evidence supporting OMN's arguments and emphasizes that the Oromos are victimized by the forces of the regime. Secondly, how the woman described her husband's situation matched how OMN's saw them. OMN considered the Oromos to be the victims of the Ethiopian State security forces.

In summary, of the two media outlets within the first wave of the protest, OMN most frequently reported on Oromia. Its news was written from the perspective of Oromo Nationalism: that the land of the Oromos and the way of life of the Oromos were threatened, invaded, and conquered by Ethiopian state, despite claims made by the Ethiopian government that Addis Ababa's master plan was one of integration and development.

The 2nd Wave of the Protest

In total, 63 packages were downloaded from the second part of the period, 35 of which were chosen from ESAT, while the remaining 28 were taken from OMN.

Unlike the previous period, ESAT provided the majority of the news coverage while OMN was not far behind *(*n=28), 44% of total the number. As the protests took place after the government canceled the proposed master plan, the majority of the reporting focused on the crackdown of the protesters, such as arrest, torture, and killings.

Figure 7.5. ESAT's and OMN's Overall Reporting Frequencies of the 2nd protest

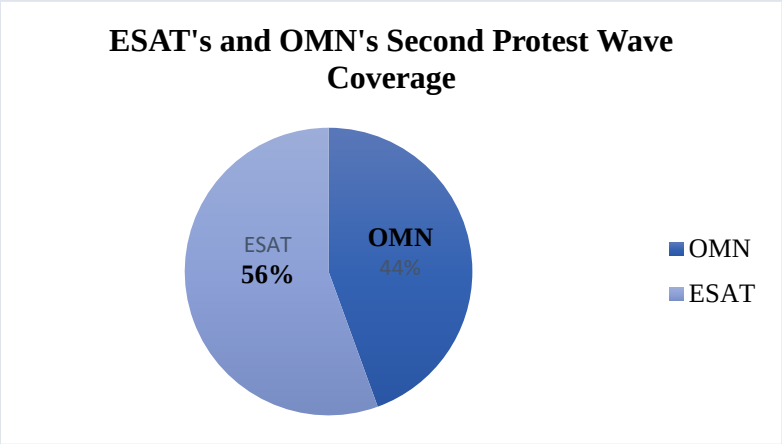


Figure 7.6. ESAT and OMN 2nd Wave of Protest Overall Frequency of Themes

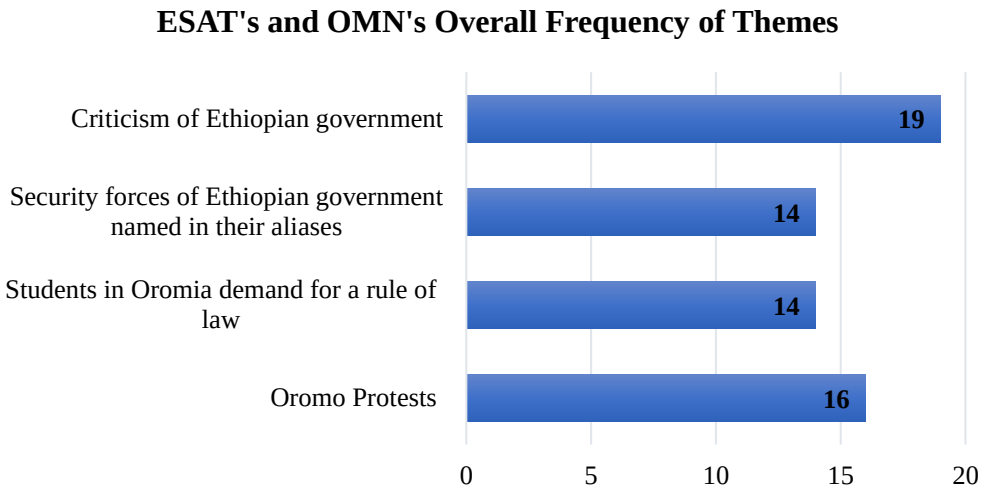


Figure 7.6 presents the most popular themes adopted by ESAT and OMN.

Terms such as 'Oromo Protest' have been adopted by most of the reporting (n=16), followed by the description of the regime's action in response to the protests in Oromia. It is also interesting to discover that during the second wave of the protests, after the government announced the withdrawal of the controversial Addis Ababa Master Plan, protesters' profiles and the brutal response of regime forces became the main foci of the reporting. The Master Plan was no longer paid much attention to, despite it being the instigator of the protest.

Figures 7.7 – 7.8 show the frequency of the different themes in the reporting of ESAT and OMN. As shown in Figure 7.7 below, it is very interesting to discover that ESAT dedicated nearly an equal number of videos to all four themes, all of which are news instead of punditry analysis, as was the case for the previous period. Similarly, as for the overall statistics of themes, OMN chose the same topics as the focus of their reporting

Figure 7.7. 2nd Wave Protest Frequencies of Themes – ESAT

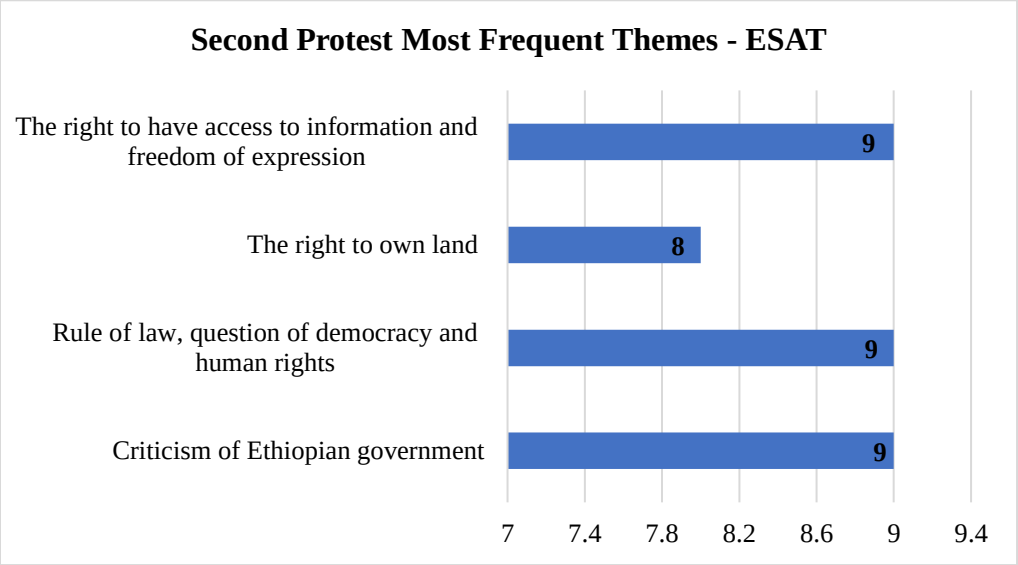
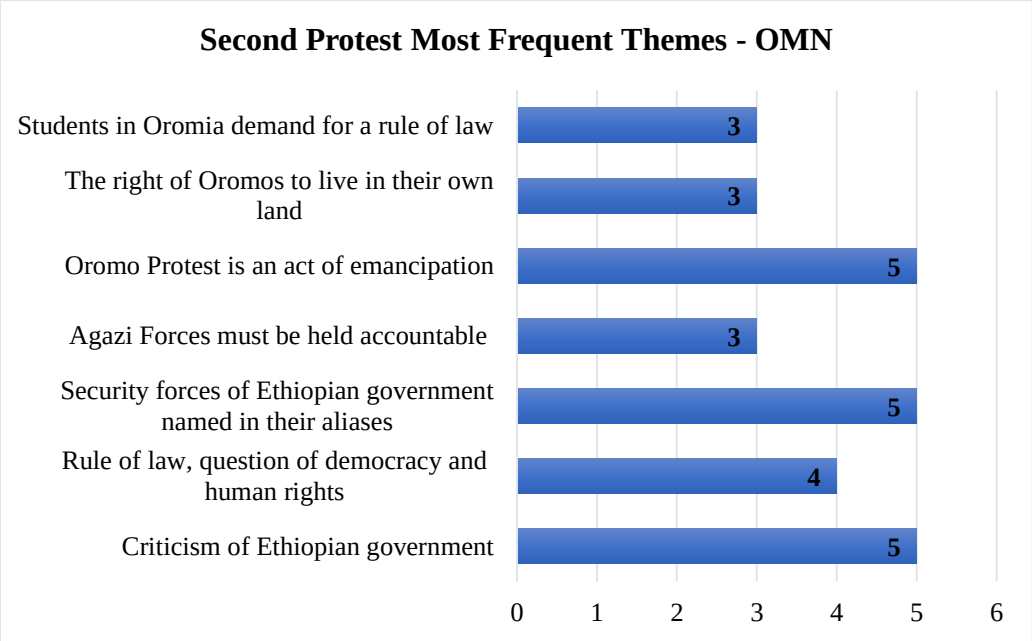


Figure 7.8. 2nd Wave Protest Frequencies Themes – OMN



Masterframes and Discussion of the 2nd Wave of Protest

The Actions of Ethiopian Security Forces in Oromia

During the first wave of the protests, the Ethiopian security forces were identified in different ways. As shown in the list of the news content below, the actions of the security forces were was criticized in various ways. Both ESAT and OMN decided to use the word 'Agazi,' which was often used to describe a military unit exclusively composed and commanded by ethnic Tigrayans.

OMN defined the actions of Ethiopian security forces as having 'aggression' and 'atrocities,' to emphasizes the human rights violations in Oromia; while ESAT on the other hand, adopted the same words, but they used them together with words such as 'citizens' and 'Ethiopians.' The lists of headlines from ESAT and OMN are shown below.

1. Agazi forces killed citizens in Ethiopia's Oromia Region
2. The peace-loving people of Oromos are being oppressed by Agazi forces
3. Security Forces are causing atrocitie on protesting citizens in Ethiopia
4. Agazi's forces aggression in Oromia
5. Members of Ethiopian diaspora demonstrated in DC against Ethiopian the "atrocities" in Ethiopia

Criticism of the Regime

In a similar fashion with the previous protest period, both ESAT and OMN continuously accused the Ethiopian government of crushing the protest in Oromia and defined it with extreme words and phrases, such as 'genocide' and 'mass killings,' which

refer to the act of murder, a crime under international law, as well as "the deliberate and systematic destruction, in whole or in part, of an ethnic, racial, religious, or national group" ("Genocide", 2010). In these terms, the actions of the Ethiopian regime were equated to criminals.

OMN tended to focus on the ethnic character of the regime and referred to it as 'Tigrayan.' The addition of 'Tigrayan' to describe the regime implied the domination of the Tigrayan elites in the country. Overall, the regime's behavior in Oromia was defined as 'terroristic,' which summarizes how the regime was perceived by the diaspora media during this period.

While ESAT described the regime in ethnic terms, it described the victims as 'citizens' or simply as 'Ethiopians'. Even when ESAT added the places where the protests were taking place in its headlines, it describes the place in geographic terms of Ethiopia, not in ethnic terms. Also, the regime was faulted for the violation of basic rights of its citizens who happen to be Oromos. The use of the term 'citizens' implies that the regime's action in Oromia was a violation citizen rights. ESAT and OMN both describe the regime in ethnic terms.

ESAT:

1. The Tigrayan dictatorial regime is killing innocent citizens
2. Protesters in Oromia Region were killed by Terroristic Tigrayan regime
3. The Human Rights Violation in Ethiopia exacerbated

OMN:

1. The "Genocidal" Tigrayan regime committing crime against humanity in Oromia
2. The Tigrayan regime arrested thousands of Oromos
3. Ethiopian jails speak Afan Oromo (the Oromo Language) said a former Tigrayan official

In terms of news contents, all criticisms are categorized in relation to the different perspectives from which OMN and ESAT chose to make them. This allows the examination of the differences between OMN and ESAT to be made in terms of their focuses and ideologies (see examples below).

Category 1:

> TPLF overlordship of restive Oromia Region (OMN) TPLF has always regarded themselves as overlords of Oromia and in fact it looked down on members of OPDO …. over the last few months TPLF have blatantly imposed themselves over Oromia… through members of OPDOs

Category 2:

> Unarmed peaceful Oromo protesters [vs.] Obviously the highly armed TPLF solders are bound to resort to strong measures to reassert their authority and the consequence must inevitably be a serious clash and bloodshed (OMN).
>
> Even though TPLF hate the Oromo people for who they are, it wanted to exploit their God given natural resources, their land through the delegate of TPLF known as OPDO (ESAT).

In the Category 1, the TPLF position in Oromia is represented as a 'lordship'. OMN directly played a sound bite of Jawar Mohammed, the executive director of OMN, to demonstrate TPLF's arrogance and political chicanery. The second category mainly accuses TPLF of possessing an unquenchable drive for resources and of exploiting the resources that belong to the Oromo people. Here, TPLF is accused of violating the rights of peaceful protesters. Protesters are painted as the 'victims' of the inevitable consequence of the regime's security policy in Oromia, turning into "a serious clash and bloodshed." The third quote also shows that the TPLF is trying to rule by using weak Oromos as their horses.

Ethiopian Government Censorship and Propaganda

During earlier reporting, ESAT had criticized the regime for its acts of human rights violations in Oromia. Here, it judged the way the regime censors the broadcasts of ESAT and OMN and promoted its political ideologies to Ethiopians. OMN interviewed the executive director of OMN, saying that the Ethiopian government is "jamming our broadcasting to Oromia to deny people from accessing information." In the same week, ESAT made its own similar comments on the same issue: "TPLF's jamming of ESAT is an attempt to impose information blackout on Ethiopians and brainwash them with TPLF propaganda" (ESAT, 2016). In this quote, ESAT made two statements. Firstly, that the regime had attempted to deny its own citizens access to information by jamming the broadcast of ESAT. Secondly, that the regime attempted to ideologically persuade Ethiopians with its information.

Solidarity with the Protesters

The 'victim' image of the Oromo protesters had been produced in three main ways in the news production. Firstly, OMN represented the Oromos as peace-loving people, struggling for their emancipation. Thus, OMN morally judged the regime's actions by reporting, "The violence perpetrated against the peace loving Oromos must be stopped. And the solidarity and sympathy expressed for the Oromos is one of the major objective why OMN was established as media organization" (OMN, 2016). Meanwhile, ESAT interviewed a diaspora-based Oromo intellectual who said that Oromo students who are peacefully protesting are being massacred. He appealed "to the other people of Ethiopia to show solidarity with the Oromos and join their cause" (ESAT, 2016). Such

sound bites of Oromo intellectuals are treated as strong evidence to support the ESAT view that the regime violated citizens of Ethiopia. Secondly, this 'victim' image of the Oromos has been promoted through criticism of the regime's security forces as soldiers solely composed of ethnic Tigrayans, as I discussed earlier, through a combination of the use of both methods described above. Comparisons were made between the vulnerable Oromos and the brutal regime security forces in order to emphasize that what the regime had done in Oromia should not be accepted.

The Regime's Response

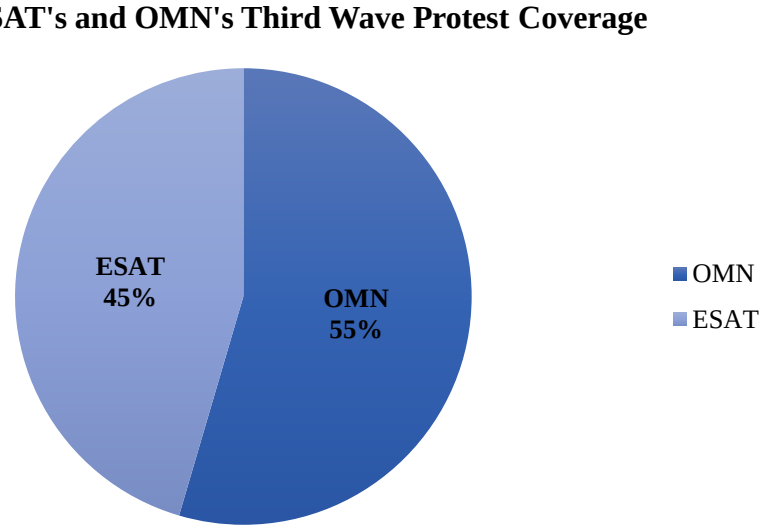
In opposition to the criticism from both ESAT and OMN, the regime justified its actions against the protesters as being taken in order to establish law and order in Ethiopia. However, when both ESAT and OMN cite statements from the regime's officials about the protest, they use them to either show the regime's contradictory policy or to ridicule the officials. For instance, on March 25th, 2016, ESAT used a sound bite of the regime's prime minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, in a context that showed the contradiction of his government policy. In the sound bite the prime minister said, "The overwhelming majority of the people in Oromia are protesting because they were not informed about the benefit of the master plan." In using this statement ESAT was very clear that what the prime minister was saying was a lie. In another instance from OMN, on March 24th, 2016, OMN ran a sound bite from an Ethiopian official that shows that what the government promised to implement in Oromia region was not implemented. Thus, when ESAT and OMN use statements from the officials, they used them to put the regime's reaction in the context of fact checking, exposing contradiction and or ridiculing the officials of the regime.

The 3rd Wave of the Protest

The most extensive and aggressive rallies took place during this period of the protest when residents of Oromia and Amhara regional states took to the streets in the first week of August 2016. Ethiopian security forces violently disbanded the demonstrators, killing about one hundred people over two days. In the same month, Ethiopian marathon runner, Feyisa Lilesa, made headlines at the 2016 Rio Olympics for an act of protest while crossing the finish line. Feyisa showed solidarity with the Ethiopian protesters. Political repression and the relentless protests in Oromia and in the Amhara regions played a huge part in Feyisa's decision in taking his protest to the Rio Olympics, the most watched global sports competition. In the three months of the protest period, ESAT and OMN have covered the protests, along with Feyisa's protest, with great enthusiasm, producing about 110 videos.

Quantitative Analysis Results and Discussion

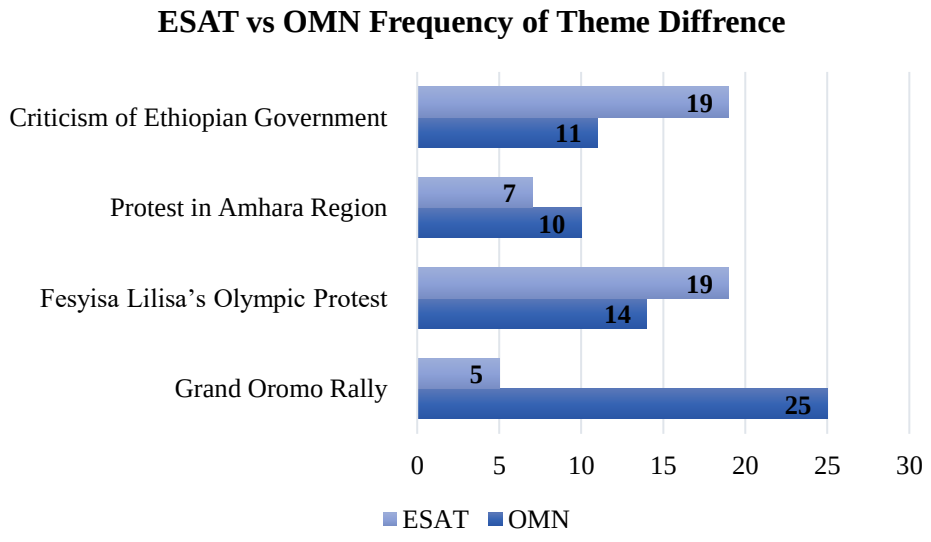
Figure 7.9. ESAT's and OMN's Overall Reporting Frequencies of the 3rd Wave of Protest



As shown above in Figure 7.9, OMN has covered the protest with more number of videos than ESAT. While most of the content (n=60) came from OMN, ESAT contributed the remaining contents of the sample period. ESAT leads in terms of reporting frequency and geographic coverage; OMN has covered the protests of Oromia intensively.

Firstly, I discuss the breakdown for all the videos from both ESAT and OMN. The theme–Feyisa Lelisa Olympic Protest–appeared the most (20.5% of the total number of videos), since it was the biggest incident amidst the persistent protests in the Amhara and Oromia regions. The Grand Oromo Rally was the second most important theme (18.5% of the total number of videos), followed by the protests in Gonder and Bahir Dar, two of the biggest cities in the Amhara region. Criticism of the Ethiopian government continues to make up a significant chunk of ESAT's and OMN's coverage.

Figure 7.10. ESAT vs OMN Theme Frequency Difference of the 3rd Wave of Protest



Secondly, Figure 7.10. above displays the differences in frequencies of themes adopted by ESAT and OMN. For both ESAT and OMN, the Grand Oromo Rally and Fesyisa Lilisa's Olympic protests are still the dominant themes in the figures. Taking a look at each of them individually, first in ESAT, 19 news items criticize the regime's 'brutal' actions against the Grand Oromo Rally protesters and protesters in Gonder and Bahir Dar cities. The same number of news items discuss Feyisa Lilisa's protest at the Rio's Summer Olympic. OMN's news items focus on the Grand Oromo Rally and Fesyisa Lelisa's protest and the news items report the protests in Amhara region. The criticism of the Ethiopian government is also the third most frequent theme in OMN.

To make a comparison between ESAT and OMN, ESAT discussed Feyisa Lelisa's Olympic protest more than OMN did. ESAT mainly discussed three issues– Feyisa Lelisa's Olympic protest, the Grand Oromo Rally, protests in Gonder and Bahir Dar cities of the Amhara Region–and ESAT news items (n=16) criticized the Ethiopian government in terms of its human rights record at a higher frequency than OMN did. To sum up, both ESAT and OMN take a more critical approach in their news items, but they adopt their own critical perspective when reporting on the issues.

Masterframes and Discussion

The summer of 2016 was packed with was one of the most reported political events in Ethiopian diaspora media. Both ESAT and OMN were beaming reports about Ethiopian political developments with a mixture of excitement, anticipation, anxiety, and apprehension. A series of political rallies, namely the Grand Oromo Rally, were the major form of protest against the Ethiopian regime across Oromia; as well as the protests

in the two big cities of the Amhara region in Gonder and Bahir Dar and Feyisa's Olypmic protest were the major political developments in Ethiopia.

The Grand Oromo Rally started with a series of demonstrations on August 5th, 2016. Protesters demanded the release of Ethiopian political prisoners. The government's reaction to the protest was deadly. Hundreds were killed while hundreds of others were arrested. With this context, on the 21st of August 2016, Feyisa Lelisa, a marathoner, accused the Ethiopian government of killing innocent Ethiopians after he showed a protest sign at the finish line of his race. The following analysis shows in greater detail and depth how the Feyisa's protest was represented by ESAT and OMN.

Masterframes of Oromo Nationalism

Feyesa Lelisa – Symbol of Oromo Defiance to Repression

The government broadcaster at EBC cut off Feyisa's picture from live transmission when he crossed his fists at the finish line. Immediately after he staged his protest, Feyisa was accused by the Ethiopian government of being used by 'extremist groups' in the diaspora to advance their political agenda. Both ESAT and OMN presented him not only as a hero in his own right, but as a hero who will have the most influence among Ethiopians. There were two ways of portraying him as the representative of the Oromos' defiance to the Ethiopian government repression that were adopted.

Firstly, in OMN's news reporting, Feyisa was not only symbolized as 'the courageous hero' of Oromos, but also his image equated to a defiant youth of the Oromos who are leading the Oromo protests in Ethiopia. He was seen to be the representative of Oromos leading peaceful protest: "He symbolize the Oromo youth, encourage every Oromo both home and abroad through his bravery, and becomes a hope for non-

Oromos." OMN spoke highly of his influence in Oromia and around the country, as his act of defiance will be a source of inspiration as a hero among Oromo youth. He made history by highlighting the repression the Oromos who have been suffering for centuries in Ethiopia (August 25th, 2016). OMN again praised him for being a man of athletic talent and political consciousness, which should make him the most politically significant personally in Ethiopian politics (August 27th, 2016).

Secondly, Feyisa's interviews and statements have been quoted in OMN as being the voice of Oromos. His claims about the human rights situation in Oromia sounded more 'convincing' to Ethiopians at home and abroad due to his economic status and influence. In Feyisa's appeals, two focuses are revealed. One is the 'suffering' Oromos, and the other is his criticisms against the Ethiopian government. For instance, OMN quoted,

> There are many people including my own friends who were killed for protesting injustices and asking for freedom. I am really worried that if government is not attending to peoples demands the worst might happen in the future. So I am appealing to people of Ethiopia to eliminate the unfair government of Ethiopia. (*OMN*, August 25th, 2016)

Fesyisa's speeches that are usually quoted in OMN describe the Oromos with the most sympathetic adjectives, such as 'peaceful,' 'unarmed,' and 'innocent.' In opposition to these vulnerable images, Feyisa's words such as 'brutal' and violent' are used to describe the Ethiopian government. This contrast in Feyisa's descriptions are often quoted in OMN programming contents and news reporting. They are used to gain sympathy and moral support among the diaspora. OMN chose to quote Feyisa to show evidence to support their view on Ethiopian issues.

Consequently, by emphasizing Feyisa's defiance and status in Oromia and in Ethiopia, OMN was trying to strengthen the image of innocent Oromos protesting agianst injustice, a practice that falls within Oromo nationalism. Meanwhile, by quoting Feyisa's criticisms of Ethiopian government, its image is further presented as authoritarian.

Master frame of pan-Ethiopian Nationalism: Feyisa as an Ethiopian patriot and anti-authoritarian sports icon

As soon as Feyisa protested at Rio, ESAT got ahold of him via telephone and conducted a phone interview. He was presented as a fearless Ethiopian patriot who used the Olympics as a pulpit to expose the Ethiopian dictatorship that has ruled Ethiopia for a quarter of a century. Feyisa briefly told ESAT that his decision to protest at the finish line of the marathon was motivated by a lack of freedom in Ethiopia. He referred to the oppression of the Ethiopian people, which Feyisa explained was ongoing in the Oromia and Amhara regions. Since then, Feyisa's protest along with the protests in Ethiopia draw more headlines on ESAT.

The courageous Ethiopian athlete Feyisa Lelisa exposed the human rights violations of the Ethiopian regime *(*August, 2016):

1. The brave son of Ethiopia won silver medal in Rio Olympics Marathon (August 2016)
2. Athlete Feyisa has done the Ethiopian people a favor (August, 2016)
3. Feyisa's silver medal is Ethiopia's gold (August, 2016)
4. More athletes join Feyisa in exposing the regime's barbarity (August, 2016)
5. Feyisa Lelisa is Ethiopian political wondrkid (September, 2016)
6. Feyisa will be remembered as a gallent Ethiopian athlete
7. Ethiopian State Televsion Forced to Cut Off Feyisa's Protest image in Rio De Janeiro (September 2016) Feyisa's protest draw the attention of global media to Ethiopia's brutal regime (August, 2016)

8. Ethiopian regime plays down Feyisa's protests in Rio Olympics (August, 2016)
9. With Olympic Over, Ethiopian team returned home without the courageous Feyisa (August, 2016)

If the list of headlines above is compared with the headlines of OMN, it can be seen that ESAT put forward headlines that highlight Feyisa's Ethiopian-ness, informing its audience of the symbolism and significance of Feyisa's protest in the Olympics. The focus of these opinionated headlines was the bravery of Feyisa and his effort to draw attention to the Ethiopian government's human rights violations. Firstly, Feyisa's protest draws praise from ESAT. The emphasis of each headline falls on the regime's brutality and Feyisa's Ethiopian-ness. For example, one of the first headline of the news said, "The courageous Ethiopian athlete Feyisa Lelisa exposed the human rights violations of Ethiopian regime," suggesting that the regime has concealed the human rights violations in Ethiopia until the 'brave' Feyisa exposed it on a global stage. It also illustrated that Feyisa stands up for all Ethiopians regardless of their ethnic background. Additionally, headlines that were used in ESAT's sports and entertainment programs specifically emphasized Feyisa's courage and Ethiopian-ness. For instance, the headline on September 5th, 2016, reads that "Feyisa's silver medal is Ethiopia's gold." The description suggests that Feyisa won not only an Olympic silver medal, but because he also earned the honor of being a hero, his role goes beyond his silver medal. Secondly, how Ethiopian government reacted to Feyisa's protest is another focus. The headline used to describe the regime's reaction to headlines such as "Ethiopian government plays down Feyisa's protest" and "State Television Cut Off live television of Feyisa's protest" indicates the regime's frustration with Feyisa's protest. Therefore, Feyisa was represented again as an 'Ethiopian hero' and the Ethiopian regime as a authoritarian regime that does

not tolerate dissent.

Compared to OMN, ESAT did not offer as much information about Feyisa's ethnic identity, instead it concentrated on Feyisa's Ethiopian-ness and the details about the regime's frustration. The headlines from ESAT are generally longer and contain more details about the regime's actions. To sum up, ESAT and OMN used various strategies in headlines, but they all seemed to portray the same picture about the Ethiopian government, in which the Ethiopian government was represented as an authoritarian and violent regime, while Feyisa was depicted as a courageous athlete.

Summary

Due to the different events in the three selected protest periods, the issues attached to each frame are different from one to the other. However, the judgments based on both frames have consistently remained the same, particularly those regarding the Ethiopian regime. The master frames of Oromo nationalism and pan-Ethiopian nationalism that first appeared in the first wave of the protest period remain constant in the following two protest periods. The protests in Oromia were portrayed as a fight for the emancipation of the Oromo people. During the three periods of the protest, the Oromos were mainly portrayed as the victims of the Tigrayan minority regime. Regarding the master frame of pan-Ethiopian nationalism, the protests were represented as protests against the rule of law and for democracy. Since the concept of pan-Ethiopian nationalism is a rival to Oromo nationalism, the protest in Oromia has been labelled as a protest for more freedom and basic human rights. A further interesting finding is that there is no contradiction between the two master frames in the labeling of the Ethiopian government. More often,

they use the same labels to describe the Ethiopian government. Thus, the Oromo nationalism and pan-Ethiopian nationalism frames cooperate with each other in describing the Ethiopian government.

Throughout the three periods, it is not difficult to discover the strategies that ESAT and OMN used in terms of frame choices. In the first period of protests, the Oromo nationalism frame was adopted by portraying the expansion of Addis Ababa as a land grab. Hence, the protest was started to stop the expansion of Addis Ababa into Oromia. The pan-Ethiopian nationalism master frame played the leading role, labelling the protests as a fighting against authoritarianism, a lack of freedom, and corruption. The pan-Ethiopian nationalism frame appeared again in the most recent period, emphasizing Feyisa Lelisa as a symbol of Ethiopians resisting repressions and dissent.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a bid to concisely answer the research questions posed in chapter one, I will critically discuss and evaluates the data that has been presented in this dissertation. In the following sections of this chapter, I will present a summary of the findings of the study, the conclusions, and the implications that can be presented from the study's data, as well as recommendations for future research.

Response to Research Question One

1. What is the historical, social and political context in which the Ethiopian diaspora in the United States sets up media outlets? When and why were ESAT and OMN developed? Here, I am interested in probing the contextual factors that have fostered the development of Ethiopian diaspora media.

The rise in prominence and the progressively rising impact of ESAT and OMN are examined in chapter four, five, and six. ESAT and OMN were started and propelled by the following underlying factors. The first is the death or death of the Ethiopian private press that is critical of Ethiopian government. Ethiopia went from having at least 367 weekly publications previous to the 2005 election, to having less than 20 weekly publications. This widespread assault on publications also resulted in exiles of journalists. In the 1990s, and in the first half of the 2000s, a critical Ethiopian press was reigning, but after the controversial 2005 elections, hundreds of journalists and opposition political activists were either forced out of Ethiopia or faced long prison sentences. More recently, top editors and reporters of influential newspapers and magazines were exiled after the Ethiopian government charged them with an anti-terrorism law that prohibits reporting in a way that is critical of government activities. At least 160 journalists were forced out of

Ethiopia over the last ten years (CPJ, 2015).

The slow death of the Ethiopian private press therefore created a void, which ESAT and OMN are filling. Although ESAT and OMN have their own ideological orientation and political bias, they expose human rights violations and corruption in more vigorous and effective ways than the fading private press in Ethiopia. ESAT and OMN have called attention to acts of human rights violations, corruption, and abuse of power in the domestic public sphere. For instance, in 2012, when Ethiopia was enveloped in a cloud of political uncertainty as a result of the sickness and eventually death of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, most Ethiopians turned to ESAT for updates. Similarly, in 2015, OMN provided wall to wall coverage of the Oromo protests that have rocked Ethiopia for over three years. The second reason for the ascendance in the popularity and acceptance of ESAT and OMN is the upsurge in communication infrastructure in Ethiopia, particularly the growth of satellite dishes and internet connectivity. As was demonstrated in chapter four and five, most Ethiopians who live in urban areas have access to satellite dishes and internet connections. The third reason for the emergence of ESAT and OMN is related to the second: the global information infrastructure such as satellite technology and the internet have given a chance for the exiled Ethiopian journalists to have access to the Ethiopian public. Another factor that has contributed to the strength and attractiveness of ESAT and OMN is the comparative richness of their sources of information, which has been made possible by the willingness of Ethiopia based sources to confide in ESAT and OMN. Both ESAT and OMN have built their credibility by publishing apparently clandestinely recorded stories, frightened in the corner of the ruling coalition, the EPRDF.

The diasporic location of ESAT and OMN confers many advantages on them.

First, it assures the identities of their sources would be concealed and protected since the diaspora-based reporters are unlikely to be under pressure to reveal their sources to Ethiopian authorities. Although the Ethiopian government tried to spy on the journalists of ESAT and OMN, there was no indication that they were hacked and that their sources were revealed. The diasporic location of ESAT and OMN also gives them the advantage of having access to a lot of information about Ethiopian political elites who have huge investments in the United States. Ethiopian government officials usually threaten to sue the journalists of ESAT and OMN in United States, but they have never materialized their threats into action; first, because it is almost impossible for the Ethiopian government to win a libel case against ESAT and OMN in the United States. Second, because many international media rights NGOs often provide free legal defense for ESAT and OMN journalists who have found themselves in legal and non-legal difficulties. However, the Ethiopian government engages ESAT and OMN in a non-stop legal fight in Ethiopia.

Response to Research Question Two

2. What is the influence of ESAT and OMN over the diaspora in the United States and in Ethiopia? How might the influence of these two major outlets differ from others? Here, I will be analyzing the transnational aspects of diaspora media, their power (or lack of) to influence political discourse, and their leverage with different audiences.

ESAT and OMN have become politically consequential, precisely because they provide a wall to wall coverage on every political development happening in Ethiopia. As we saw previously in chapter four, the reporting of ESAT and OMN caused the Ethiopian government to cancel the proposed master plan to expand the capital, Addis Ababa, into Oromia. ESAT's and OMN's sustained reportage on issues often inspired the formation

of episodic, informal, but nonetheless activist, online communities that organize to effect change in Ethiopia based on stories broadcasted on ESAT and OMN. For instance, ESAT and OMN have contributed to forcing the Ethiopian government to release political prisoners and the resignation of political leaders in 2017. This fact conforms that ESAT and OMN go beyond broadcasting news; they go beyond reporting the news and ask their audience to take action based on the information they provide in their reportage. They encourage their audience to initiate online petition drives, to be part of an offline, or participate in on-the-ground protests in order to cause governments to change unpopular policies and practices. In their influential book, *Activists Beyond Borders*, Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink (1998) point out that "voices that are suppressed in their own societies may find that networks can project and amplify their concerns into an international arena, which in turn can echo back into their own countries." In the Ethiopian case, as a result of a domestic media formation that has been suppressed and therefore unable to play a traditional media role, ESAT and OMN sprouted in the transnational public space and helped bring to light political problems in Ethiopia.

Response to Research Question Three

3. What are the differences and similarities between ESAT and OMN in using frames in reporting political events related to Ethiopia? Here I will be looking at what major frames ESAT and OMN have used when they report political events from inside Ethiopia.

Based on the discussion in chapter seven, it is not difficult to see that ESAT's and OMN's frames of Ethiopia consist of two major components. On the one hand, Ethiopia's political malaise emanates from the current Ethiopian ethnic federal government structure. That is to say, when the current regime came to power in 1991, it re-defined

'communities' based on their ethnic identities, attached political representation and solidified them as distinct members of the Ethiopian federation; thus, many Ethiopians began to change their allegiance from their 'Ethiopianess' to their ethnic identity. On the other hand, Ethiopia is an empire formed with the subjugation of the Oromo people and its remedy for this historical and current malady is either independence (the creation of a sovereign Oromia state), or the transformation of the Ethiopian State from an empire to a modern state. Based on what I have discovered in chapter seven, ESAT and OMN have always used this contrasting image of Ethiopia with a varying degree. The first master frame is generally called pan-Ethiopian nationalism, while the second is called ethnic-nationalism in the form of Oromo nationalism. Aiming at examining how the two master frames work together across all cases and which master frame dominates, as well as the differences between ESAT and OMN, I will provide answers to the research question set up in the introduction chapter.

First of all, the two master frames make their appearances in specific forms: pan-Ethiopian nationalism and Oromo nationalism in the reporting of ESAT and OMN. As specific forms of the two master frames, pan-Ethiopian nationalism and Oromo nationalism are separate systems of concepts and are different lenses through which the ESAT and OMN observe Ethiopia. The similarity between them is that both look at the current regime from the perspective that the current Ethiopian government is illegitimate and authoritarian. Where they differ is in the diagnosis and the solution for the current political difficulties. Pan-Ethiopian nationalists essentially want to revert identity-based politics into what they call citizenship politics or individual rights. On the contrary, Oromo nationalism is the yardstick that the OMN uses to judge whether the rights of the Oromos were respected in Ethiopia. Secondly, the relationships between the two master

frames are take place in three different forms: coexistence or intertwining, supporting each other, and struggling with each other. The evidence of all three types of relationships across all three reporting cases is summarized as first, *Coexistence or intertwining*. This means that both frames appear in the reporting of separate subjects, or that the same subject provides different but not opposing arguments. Second, *Supporting each other*. Although the two master frames are comprised of different concepts, ESAT and OMN often apply both in the same report and employ arguments for each that could support the other. Third, *Struggling with each other.* This means that two master frames are competing with each other on the same subject by providing contrasting arguments.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research has illustrated that satellite technology and internet technology have combined to create a transnational public sphere that can influence, challenge, and alter the politics of a homelands from afar. While the transformation of audiences into citizen journalists has been amply documented within the bounds of nation-states, this study has chronicled journalists who are forced out of their country and can combine with citizen journalists to raise the bar of domestic national discourse, media practice, and governmental policy formulations. This research is therefore significant in pointing out ways that authoritarian regimes can suppress and throttle their domestic media system; however, their citizens can turn to their diasporas in the United States–or any other technologically and politically advanced country–to challenge or improve homeland information flow and to influence government policies.

While instances of diasporic media systems challenging homeland state policies and even changing whole governments through the instrumentality of 'transnational public sphere' have been well-documented (e.g in the cases of Burma/Myanmar and

Iran), the kind of diasporic journalism examined in my study is unique in many respects. First, it is practiced by political exiles who are settled in the United States, but who always wanted to go home. Many of journalists and employees of ESAT and OMN are permanent legal residents in the United States, but they have a deep desire to return home if there is a regime change in Ethiopia. Second, over the years, ESAT and OMN have become mainstream political media outlets and are now seen as part of Ethiopia's media landscape. This fact has given ESAT and OMN institutional authenticity in ways that other diasporic media outlets studied in different studies have not. Third, a diasporic media that is a located far away from home but with preoccupations completely centered on the homeland, is unique. It is even more unusual that ESAT and OMN can influence government policies from a distance. Thus, ESAT and OMN provide some interesting instances of a transnational public sphere.

One of the limitations of this study is that I did not directly measure the impact of ESAT and OMN on public opinion in Ethiopia. Future research that interviews and surveys Ethiopians who live in Ethiopia to find out their views and concerns about ESAT and OMN would be an invaluable contribution. So would an ethnographic study on the news production and journalism of ESAT and OMN. This research is a descriptive study of an unfolding phenomenon and the insights presented in this study can become the basis for a far more ethnographic study.

APPENDIX A

OROMO PROTEST COVERAGE CODEBOOK

This codebook consists of two parts. The first part is applied to all relevant story items (i.e., all items that fall under the selection criteria listed below). For the second part, a filter is applied that selects all stories that deal specifically with the four protest incidents that were selected as critical: Protest in Ginchi; Grand Oromo Rally; Feyisa Lelisa's Protest at Rio Olympics, The Irreechaa Incident

This codebook includes variable names, definitions and applicable procedures, specifics on changes that were made to certain variables such as when certain variables were added and subtracted from the coding scheme.

The list of variables included is as follows: story date, story ID, source, duration in seconds, headline, placement/ prominence, story format, big story, sub-storyline and broad story topic.

Variables

1. **Story Date:**

This variable designates the date on which the news story was posted on YouTube/Vimeo Channel of ESAT or OMN

Procedure:
Write the year, then the month, and the date (year/month/date).

- **Example**: November 19, 2015= 20151119

2. **Story ID:**

This variable provides a unique ID number for each story item.

Procedure:
The number will automatically be assigned to each story manually

3. **News outlet:**

Designates the outlet (ESAT or OMN) in which the individual the story item appeared.

Codes

ESAT:	01
OMN:	0

4. **Duration in minutes:**

It is the amount of time in minutes for each story in the videos

5. **Headline:**

An important part of a story read at the beginning of regular news round-up segment –

Codes

Not a headline/round-up story = 0
Is a headline/round-up story = 1

6. **Prominence:**

Designates where stories are located within a broadcast. The location reflects the prominence given the stories by the journalists creating and editing the content.

Placement

Procedure: Decide what order in the broadcast the story appeared.

Codes

1st story = 601
2nd story = 602
3rd story = 603
4th story = 604
5th story or later = 605
Don't Know/Can't Tell = 699

7. **Type of Story:**

Measures the type of stories. It designates whether the story is just a factual news report or report of events etc. e.g., demonstrations, political rallies or an analysis or interview with both internal and or external analysts.

Codes:

News: Designates a story as factual story if is a factual story= 71

Interview with External Source: Interviews conducted with an analyst/ scholar/ journalist that is not part of the newsroom staff or not explicitly identified as being affiliated with ESAT or OMN. = 72

Interview with Staff or In-House Analyst: Interview with a source who is part of the staff of ESAT or OMN or explicitly identified as being affiliated with the ESAT or OMN = 73

Unedited audio or video: An unedited replay of a video from citizen journalists

(rally and protest videos) = 74

Host monologue/conversation clips: Host (or hosts) delivers a monologue or has a discussion with someone in the studio, but it is not conducting an interview. During the monologue or conversation, video clips are played and the host comments on them. = 75
DK/Can't Tell = 99

8. Big Story

Big stories are all stories that deal specifically with the four protest incidents that were selected as critical junctures of the protest during the time period under study. Protest in Ginchi; Grand Oromo Rally; Feyisa Lelisa's Protest at Rio Olympics, The Irreechaa Incident

Procedure: If 50% or more of a story is about one of these big stories, code appropriately. If a story contains mentions of more than one big story, code for the big story that is more prominently mentioned.

For the coverage of the four protest incidents all stories will have the big story code 81

9. Sub-Story line

The sub-storyline will apply only to the coverage of the four protest incident stories with big story code 81.

Procedure: Find the big story located on the list of Sub-storylines and determine if the majority of the relevant parts of the story fit into any of the protest in Ginchi; Grand Oromo Rally; Feyisa Lelisa's Protest at Rio Olympics, or The Irreechaa Incident

Codes:

08101	Protest in Ginchi;
08102	Grand Oromo Rally
08103	Feyisa Lelisa's Protest at Rio Olympics
08104	The Irreechaa Incident

10. Broad Story Topic

Determines the type of broad topic categories addressed by a story. The topic involves the **issue/event** being covered.

Codes:

Human Rights Violations: refers to news that deals with the arrest, torture and killing of protesting individuals. The package addresses the protest/problem/ issue in the context of democratic ideals or the prescription of policy in pursuit of those ideals. This code would include stories on the arrest of political leaders, journalists and ordinary citizens such as students in Oromia and Amhara Regions. =1

Land Rights: All stories primarily about the expansion of Addis Ababa's Master Plan into Oromia. **=2**

Oromo Protest: Refers to the protest that was triggered by the proposed expansion of Addis Ababa into Oromia. The package refers to the protest as Oromo Protest. Stories on rallies/demonstrations /Oromo politics in Oromia would be coded under here. **=3**
Ethiopian Nationalism: Refers to the historicity of the Ethiopian State and emphasis Ethiopians as citizens of Ethiopia facing the same set of challenge despite their ethnic differences. This code includes stories on the protests in Oromia against the expansion of Addis Ababa into Oromia and protests in other Ethiopian regions as well**= 4**
Oromo Nationalism: emphasizes the distinctive ethnic, linguistic, religious or cultural identity of the Oromo people. This code includes stories on the causes of protests in Oromia **=5**

Settler Colonialism: references to Ethiopian's State's exerting influence (political, military or commercial) over Oromos controlling their land as if they were part of an Ethiopian empire, mentions of de/colonization; references to self-government and independence for Oromos; references to Ethiopian's State's behavior of as imperialistic**=6**

Ethno-territorial Claims: Refers to stories about expansion of cities in to farmlands or commercial development of farmlands that are claimed as hereditary as the proposed Addis Ababa Master Plan. **=7**

Question of Identity: Refers to stories that invoke historical reasons and blame Ethiopia's past regimes for repressing the identity of the Oromo people. **=7**

Ethnic Federalism: Refers to stories concerning the government structure of Ethiopia issues such as lack of equal and or equitable representation one's ethnic group in the Federal government, excessive overreach of the Federal Government to Regional government and or even stories blame the ethnic federal government structure as source of ethnic conflict or weakening of the Ethiopian state **=8**

11. Actors

Refers to the major political and security organizations mentioned as perpetrators of violence and attribute some form of responsibility in the story.

Codes

1. Ethiopian Federal Government - **01**
2. Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) - **02**
3. Amhara National Democratic Movement(ANDM) - **03**
4. Oromo People Democratic Organization (OPDO) - **04**
5. Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) - **05**
6. The Derg, or Dergue a regime that ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991 - **06**
7. Emperor Haile Selassie, I – **07**
8. Opposition Parties – **08**

APPENDIX B

RECRUITMENT LETTER OR EMAIL

Introduction

As I mentioned in my email, the study I am conducting is about the diaspora media and their relationship with politics in Ethiopia I am conducting this research at the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication to complete my PhD in Media Studies.

You are selected as a possible participant because you have worked or working with ESAT and or OMN as a journalist or a staff. I would like to inform you more about the study before you agree to participate. Please read this form. Please ask any questions that you may have.

Purpose of Study:

The purpose of this study is to understand the influence of ESAT and OMN in Ethiopia's political process. This include an examination of news room operations, news collection strategies and communication strategies. Participants in this study are from ESAT and OMN. I expect to interview up to 25 staff members of from both ESAT and OMN.

Description of the Study Procedures

If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct an interview with you. The interview will include questions about your news collecting methods, communication strategies and the reasons why you decided to work as a journalist from United States. The interview will take about one hour to complete. The interview will be tape-recorded. I might also invite you to participate in a follow-up interview via Skype if I need any further clarification.

Risks/Discomforts of Being in the Study

When you were in Ethiopia you have been through a hostile political environment. You might have experienced personal threats like arrest, persecution and exile. During the interview, we might raise some of the issues related to your reporting experience in Ethiopia, there is the risk this might prompt some of your distressing experience. In addition, this study's results could affect your collegial relationship with your partners both at ESAT and OMN; however, I do not know what the possible effect might be.

Benefits of Being in the Study

This research will help to illustrate how the Ethiopian diaspora influence the political process in Ethiopia in an understudied context. It could ultimately raise awareness of how journalists report on sensitive political events from afar. There are no individual, direct research benefits.

Payment

There is no payment you receive for participating in this research.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report, I may publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you without your permission. Pseudonyms will be used for the interview transcripts, and a code sheet will be used that links a pseudonym to your real name for a potential follow-up Skype call to ask additional questions. This code sheet will be password protected, and the only copy, which will be electronic, will be stored on a password-protected file on an external hard drive, which will be stored in my locked office. Data gathered during the interview process will be accessible to me alone, the principal investigator, and it will be stored on a password-protected computer. Access to the records will be limited to the researcher; however, please note that U.S. regulatory agencies, and the Institutional Review Board and internal University of Oregon auditors may review the research records.

Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may refuse to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your interview data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Contact

If you have questions at any time about the study you may contact the researcher, Endalk Chala at 1275 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403 by phone at (541) 579-3522 and by email at endalkac@uoregon.edu . You may also contact the faculty adviser: Gabriela Martinez at 541-346-1997 and her email address is gmartine@uoregon.edu

If you feel you have not been treated per the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the office for the University of Oregon Research Compliance Services, 677 East 12th Ave, Suite 500, 5215 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, or by email at researchcompliance@uoregon.edu.

CONSENT

I have read this form and I have been offered a copy of it. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction. I agree to take part in this study.

Print Name_____

Signature_____ Date _____

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also agree to have my name appear in presentations, written reports or publications alongside my organizational title and affiliation. At the end of the study, I will receive an executive summary to the e-mail address I have provided.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Why do you need to establish ESAT/OMN?

2. Can you please tell me how and when you started working for ESAT/OMN?
    a. What motivates you to work as a journalist with ESAT/OMN
    b. What do you want to achieve by working as a journalist in ESAT/OMN?
    c. Who initiated your relationship with ESAT/OMN?
    d. Have you reached out to them or they approached you to work for them?
    e. Why do you decide to work with ESAT?
    f. What is particularly challenging to work for ESAT/OMN?
    g. Have you been a journalist before you immigrated to US?
    h. What did you feel about ESAT/OMN when you first started to work for them?
    i. What role do you have in ESAT/OMN?
    j. What was your expectation before you start to work for ESAT/OMN?
    k. Have your expectations met?
        a. If yes, how?
        b. If no, why?

3. How do ESAT/OMN work to be an alternative media platform in Ethiopia
        a. In what ways does ESAT/OMN expand the Ethiopian public sphere?

4. How do you collect news from distance?
        a. What kinds of issues do you focus on in your reporting?
        b. How do you confirm the veracity of your information?
        c. Why do you focus on the issues you focus on in your reporting?

The political environment in Ethiopia is hostile. If the government learned of the participation of your sources in collecting information for ESAT and OMN, the may be charged with treason and prosecuted for giving information for ESAT and or OMN. How do you protect your sources?

d. How do you develop a relationship with sources in Ethiopia?

5. What kind of relationship do you have with people working in ESAT/OMN?

    a. Do you have a professional or working relationship with journalists working in ESAT/OMN?
    b. Have you ever conflicted with journalists working with OMN/ESAT?
    c. If you have ever been in conflict tell me how was it like?

6. Do you discuss about ESAT with your colleagues at OMN?

    a. If so what do you talk?
    b. Do you talk about ESAT generally? How do your colleagues discuss about ESAT?
    c. How do they perceive ESAT? Do they discuss positively or generally about ESAT?

7. Do you discuss about OMN with your colleagues at ESAT?

    a. If so what do you talk?
    b. Do you talk about OMN generally? How do your colleagues discuss about OMN?
    c. How do they perceive OMN? Do they discuss positively or generally about ESAT?

8. This is for OMN journalists: Do you trust journalists working for ESAT?
9. This is for ESAT journalists: Do you trust journalists working for OMN?
10. Do you have anything you want say before we wrap up

APPENDIX D

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

	Interviewee	**Position/job**	**Date**	**Length**
1.	Abebe Gelaw	ESAT Executive Director	August, 2017	2:24 min
2.	Ermias Legesse	ESAT In House Commentator	August, 2017	1:01 min
3.	Mesay Mekonnen	ESAT News Presenter	August, 2017	1:03 min
4.	Minalachew Semachew	ESAT News Presenter	August, 2017	1:07 min
5.	Tamagn Beyene	ESAT Talk Show Host	February, 2018	1:24 min
6.	Tewelde Beyne	ESAT Talk Show Host	August, 2017	1:39 min
7.	Girma Degefa	ESAT Editor	August, 2017	1:40 min
8.	Fetelework Kebede*	ESAT Employee	August, 2017	1:56 min
9.	Alemayehu Dereje*	ESAT News Producer	August, 2017	1:12 min
10	Reyot Alemu	ESAT Journalist	August, 2017	2:01 min
11	Walteji Mulugeta*	ESAT Journalist	August, 2017	1:27 min
12	Jawar Mohammed	OMN Executive Director	August, 2017	2:45 min
13	Tesfaye Tolla*	OMN Journalist	March, 2018	30:33 min
14	Solomon Abdi*	OMN Journalist	March, 2018	50:20 min
15	Abdi Fite	OMN Journalist	March, 2018	53:47 min
16	Endashaw Berecha*	OMN Journalist	March	1:13 min
17	Girma Gutema	OMN Commentator	August, 2017	1:40 min
18	Kebede Lenjiso*	OMN Commentator	March, 2018	50:20 min
19	Alemu Tesfaye*	OMN Journalist	March, 2018	50:20 min
20	Temesegen Birri*	OMN Journalist	March, 2018	50:20 min

N.B All names in the asterisk are pseudonyms

APPENDIX E

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND INDIGENOUS WORDS

ANDM – Amhara National Democratic Movement

DERG – Provisional Military Administrative Council

EBC – Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation

BBS – The Ethiopian Broadcasting Service

EPRDF – Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary

ESAT – Ethiopian Satellite Television

ETN – Ethiopian Television Network

ETV – Ethiopian Television

INSA – Information Network Security Agency

OLF – Oromo Liberation Front

OMN – Oromia Media Network

OPDO – Oromo People's Democratic Organization

OSA – Oromo Studies Association

SEPDM – Southern Ethiopia Peoples' Liberation Front

TPLF – Tigray Peoples Liberation Front

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