



Social Media and Social Movements Leadership, Transnationalism and the Oromo Quest for Transformation

Date

April 1-2, 2017

Venue

Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences (HIOA)

Preliminary Program

Local Arrangements

Ellella Daba, Chair, Local Organizing Committee
Girma Gutama, Local Organizing Committee

Conference Program

Saturday April 1, 2017

Preliminaries 8:00-9:30

Registration

Local Volunteers

Opening Session 9:30-10:00

A River of Blessings, Oromo Elders
Ellella Daba, Local Organizing Committee
Girma Gutama, Oromo Community Association of Oslo
Ezekiel Gebissa, OSA President, Kettering University

Session I - 10:00-11:30

Social Media and Activism

Chair: Gizachew Soboksa, Georg-August University of Göttingen

Hactivism: The Oromo Resistance in the Information Age.

Mebratu Dugda Kelecha, University of Westminster

Clicktivism: State and Social Movement in Ethiopia: The Case of Oromia.

Zelalem T. Sirna, Universidade de Coimbra, Portugal

#Oromo Protests in the Social Media Frontier

Girma Gutema, University of Oslo

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

Gelana Belay, Addis Ababa University

Session II - 11:30-12:30

Keynote Address

Dr. Payal Arora

Introduced by Ezekiel Gebissa

Lunch 12:30-2:00

Session III – 2:00-3:30

Transnational Advocacy and Activism

Chair: Teferi Mergo, University of Waterloo, Canada

Oromo Transnational Civic Engagement in Support of the 2014-2017 Oromo Protest Movement: An Analysis and Review of Diaspora Advocacy

Zakia Posey, Baltimore County Community College

Moral Capital, Contested Truth and Social Media: The Emergence of a Transnational Oromo Public Sphere

Butta Dulo Defi, University of Oslo

Tracing a Resolution on Ethiopia through the United States Senate and House of Representatives in 2016

Bonnie Holcomb, George Washington University
Oromo Self-Reliant Transnationalism & Resistance against EPRDF
Daniel Ayana, Youngstown State University

Coffee 3:00-4:00 PM

Session IV- 4:00-5:30

Physical and Epistemic Violence

Chair: Mekuria Bulcha, Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala

The Oromo alphabet: is it a colonial script and new to Ethiopia?

Kebede Hordofa Janko, University of Oslo

Human Rights Violations Committed by the Ethiopian Government against the Oromo People: A Personal Account

Hussein Ahmed Osman, Independent Scholar, Oslo

Land Grabbing by Law: 7 Ways Ethiopia's Law Legalises Dispossession and the Oromo Resistance

Husen Tura, University of Eastern Finland

Sunday April 2, 2017

Session V - 9:30-11:00

Oromo Nationalism and the Battle of Narratives

Chair: Gutu Wayessa, University of Helsinki

Oromo Nationalism, Social Movement and the Development of Conscious Activism: The Case the Oromo Protest (2014-16)

Tesfu Refera Challa, James Cook University

Reshaping Narratives from the Margins: Countering the Narrative of Othering on Social Media

Tsegaye R. Ararssa, University of Melbourne

Shifting the Oromo Narrative from the Margin to the Core

Jawar Mohammed, Oromia Media Network

Coffee 11:00-11:30

Session VI - 11:30-12:30

Guest Speaker

Artist Yadesa Bojia

Introduced by Elella Daba

Lunch 12:30-2:00

Session VII - 2:00-3:30

Social Movement Leadership in the Age of Social Media

Chair: Bonnie Holcomb, George Washington University

The Challenges and Opportunities of Solidarity Movement Against the Dictatorship in Ethiopia: Social Media as a Tool of Political Construction or Deconstruction

Hunde Dhugassa, Investment Analyst, London, UK

Investigating the Leadership of Social Movement in the Age of Social Media: The Case of Oromo.

Lammi Begna Qajela, Naqamtee Teacher Training College

The Oromo Protests: Leadership and Reaction of the Deep State

Ezekiel Gebissa, Kettering University

Coffee 3:30-4:00

Session VIII - 4:00-5:30

Building Institutions in the Diaspora

Chair: Dereje Hawaz, University of Idaho

Building Oromo Institutions in the Diaspora in the context of an Inferior Political Equilibrium

Terferi Mergo, University of Waterloo, Canada

Oromia Media Network's Journey through the Early Years: An Insider's Account, with emphasis on the Challenges Faced.

Jawar Mohammed, Oromia Media Network

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Oromia Media Network: A Board Member's View.

Mohammed Hassen, University of Georgia

Lessons for the Future: The Way Forward

Asfaw Beyene, San Diego State University

Session IX - 5:30-6:00

Recognition and Closing

Program Theme

The theme of this extraordinary session of the Oromo Studies Association is **Social Media**

and Social Movements: Leadership, Transnationalism and the Oromo Quest for Transformation.

Since the civil unrest in Arab countries at the start of 2011, the use of social media tools – text messaging, e-mail, photo sharing, social networking, and the like – and its effects on political action have become the subject of academic debate. Some acknowledge the importance of digital media in the success of the civil uprising in Tunisia and Egypt. Others suggest the same media have not been so successful in Yemen, Syria and Bahrain. All agree that digital media can be used by threatened regimes to suppress civil unrest. Fearing a contagion effect, for instance, China has taken firmer control of its internet as a result of events in Arab countries.

The Oromo resistance which commenced in 2014 has been described as a movement in which social media played a role in mobilizing the youth, coordinating resistance actions and organizing support efforts. There is considerable disagreement about the impact of digital media in determining the nature and course of the Oromo protests. Questions have been raised about the leadership of the Oromo movement, its transnational connections and the extent of social media involvement in advancing the Oromo quest for transformation. Because the social media information tools are new, empirical data on the subject is hard to come by. It is nevertheless clear that the extent to which social media and the traditional media played a role in the Oromo Protests needs to be studied.

We invite papers that explore the influence of social media on the Oromo movement focusing on the issue of the movement's leadership, the role of the diaspora and the objectives of the Oromo protests. Interested individuals or groups are requested to submit abstracts of no more than 200 words proposing papers or panels. If organizing a panel, please prepare one abstract and list the names of panel participants and their paper titles.