THEORIZING *OROMUMMAA*[1]

The main purpose of this paper is to theorize *Oromummaa* by conceptualizing it on different levels and offering theoretical insights and critical analysis of the Oromo national movement in relations to the struggles of other colonized and oppressed peoples. [1] Theorizing and conceptualizing *Oromummaa* specifically in relation to the ideological problem[2] of the Oromo nation movement and that of the others require recognizing the need to transform thinking and scholarship in Oromo politics and studies in order to critically and thoroughly assess the prospects for Oromo politico-cultural transformation and liberation. Theoretically, critically, and practically comprehending *Oromummaa* as Oromo nationalism, national culture, and identity is essential because the Oromo nation is the fulcrum for bringing about a fundamental transformation in the Ethiopian Empire and the Horn of Africa in order to establish sustainable peace, development, security, and an egalitarian multinational democracy.

The primary reason for this assertion is that the Oromo are the largest national group in the empire and the region; Finfinnee, which the colonialists call Addis Ababa, is the heart of Oromia and the seat of the Ethiopian colonial state, the African Union, and many international organizations. In addition, Oromia is located in the heart of the empire state of Ethiopia, and the Oromo people have already created a cultural corridor with different peoples of the region. The foundation of this corridor is the *gadaa* system (Oromo democracy), which with other indigenous democratic traditions can be a starting point for building a genuine multinational democracy based on the principles of national self-determination. Although the starting point of this analysis is *Oromummaa,* the issues of other colonized and oppressed peoples are addressed.

---

[1] Paper presented at the 29th Oromo Studies Association Annual Conference, Howard University, Washington, DC, August 1-2, 2015.

As we shall see below, the theory and ideology of *Oromummaa* embrace the principles of human freedom, social justice, equality, equity, national self-determination, and egalitarian multinational democracy.

First, this paper briefly explains the major theoretical perspectives of regional and global social and national movements and social revolutions. Second, based on these theoretical insights and the principles of national self-determination and egalitarian multinational democracy, which emerges from the *gadaa/siqqee*[3] heritage and which also borrows from other democratic traditions that expand freedoms, this piece theorizes *Oromummaa* as an Oromo movement theory. Third, it specifically brings forth ideas about the need to develop Oromo liberation knowledge for advancing a greater understanding of Oromo liberation theory and practice. Fourth, the piece explains how the theory and practice of national *Oromummaa* facilitates the development of strategies and tactics for advancing the Oromo national struggle and the struggles of other colonized peoples to their final destinies. Fifth, it notes that the development of national *Oromummaa,* the intensification of the Oromo national movement, overcoming of the deficits of leadership and organizational capability and achieving liberty and the removal unfreedoms in the Oromo society are dialectically interrelated. Finally, the paper demonstrates that the theory and practice of *Oromummaa* cannot be fully understood and developed without liberation knowledge that emerges from critical Oromo studies and other subaltern knowledge and wisdom.

Theoretical Insights on Movements

While colonial states, nation-states, dominant classes, powerful racial/ethno-national groups, corporations, and patriarchal institutions have been engaged in producing false or biased knowledge, theories, and narratives in order to naturalize and justify all forms of inequality and

injustice, various progressive social movements—national movements, women's movements and labor unions—have struggled to expose and discredit such knowledge by producing alternative narratives, theories, knowledge, and worldviews. [4] Consequently, there are two forms of contradictory processes of theory and knowledge production, narratives, and modes of thought in the capitalist world system: one form is associated with a dominant narrative and knowledge for total control, exploitation and the maintenance of the status quo while the other is associated with subaltern narratives and knowledge for liberation, social justice, and egalitarian democracy. [5] Despite the fact that various social movements, including the Oromo national movement, have introduced some social reforms, they have yet to develop a necessary critical theory of human liberation that invigorates the struggle to overthrow the dominant worldview in order to produce a new politico-economic paradigm—one which will facilitate the emergence of a participatory and egalitarian democracy for all peoples.

Most often, subaltern movements and social revolutions have been about the capture of state power and subsequently have become an integral part of the capitalist world system. As a result, social movements and social revolutions have only been successful in introducing limited changes and reforms that are confined by the parameters of global capitalism. [6] Nevertheless, the increasing crises of the capitalist world-system—the possible depletion of the world's valuable resources, global financial and ecological crises, growing social inequality, the intensification of terrorism from above and below, and the declining availability of material resources for ordinary people—indicate possible paradigmatic shifts that could shape the prospects for advancing new and system-transformative modes of thought, knowledge, and action. [7] Learning from the past limitations of various social movements and social revolutions, critical scholars who engage in Oromo studies, progressive Oromo forces, and the Oromo national movement, need to develop

an alternative knowledge and a critical ideology that are encapsulated in national *Oromummaa.* This development can help in reimagining a new Oromo worldview beyond domination and exploitation. Similarly, the movements of other colonized and oppressed nations need to develop a critical knowledge and ideology based on their democratic and egalitarian traditions that promote horizontal relations within their societies and in relationship to other societies that struggle for freedom, self-determination, and egalitarian multinational democracy. As this occurs, it is critical that these progressive critical movements engage in dialogue with each other and coordinate their efforts to bring about a social order that respects the full humanity of each person without regard to ethno-national identity, class, gender, religion, or any other conceptual category that has been used to legitimate the domination of one person or group over another.

Mainstream classical scholars of collective behavior, such as Neil J. Smelser, and modernization theorists, such as W. W. Rostow, incorrectly considered social movements as abnormal and irrational or deviant.[8] These theorists believed that the collective behavior of social revolutions and movements are caused by factors such as social breakdown, strain, deprivation, discontent, cognitive dissonance, ambiguity, and psychological frustration.[9] Such theorists blamed the victims for struggling for their own emancipation. The mainstream theoretical approaches of social movements have failed to explain how the politicized collective grievances lead to collective action. In the 1960s, resource mobilization theory emerged, challenging the classical model of collective behavior and social movements.[10] National liberation movements such as that of the African American and Oromo flourished in the Rest and the West. The African American national struggle developed in the US in its reformist, revolutionary, and cultural phases.[11] Progressive movement scholars and activists started to use neo-Marxism and conflict theory as alternative theories to explain the relationship among political power, conflict,

and domination. Resource mobilization theory as a theoretical paradigm shift challenged the collective behavior approach. This theory primarily depended on political, sociological, and economic theories and paid less attention to political interests, social psychology, and other issues.[12]

Criticizing resource mobilization theory, political process theory emerged in the 1970s by explaining social movements in relation to capitalism, industrialization, urbanization, and state formation.[13] The political process model criticized resources mobilization for: (1) downplaying politics and political interests; (2) deemphasizing the role of grievances, ignoring ideology, and exaggerating rationalistic roles of movement actors; and (3) ignoring group solidarity as well as social psychology.[14] Combining the traditions of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and John Stuart Mill, Charles Tilly emphasized the importance of ideology, grievances, aspects of rationality, the importance of social solidarity and common interests, and the availability of political opportunities for social movements to emerge and develop.[15] Tilly integrated the Marxian tradition that recognizes conflicting interests, the existence of conflict, and the importance of organization with the Weberian tradition that stresses commitment to belief systems.[16]

Political process theory recognizes factors such as the availability of material, intellectual, and cultural resources, the capacity for mobilizing these resources for collective action, the importance of the existence of preexisting social networks, organizations, and institutions, and the rationality of participants in weighing costs and benefits for engaging in collective action of social movements.[17] Similarly, criticizing resource mobilization theory, Doug McAdam further developed political process theory.[18] He identified that mobilization theory blurs the difference between the oppressed classes and groups and the established polity members, over exaggerates elite's financial support for social movements, minimizes the role of

the masses in movements, lacks clarity on the concept of resources, and glosses over the issue of grievances. McAdam identified two necessary conditions for social movements to challenge the established political system. These two conditions are the structure of political opportunities such as political and economic crises and the strength of indigenous political organizations that are equipped by cognitive liberation. Cognitive liberation has three dimensions, namely the recognition of the illegitimacy of the established system, the capacity to overcome fatalism among the populace in order to believe in changing a social system, and the ability to believe that introducing social change is possible.[19]

Furthermore, another theory called framing and social construction emerged to criticize political process theory for giving a secondary role for collective grievances in the development of social movements.[20] This theory focuses on micro-level social dynamics and emphasizes framing, signification, media, and social psychology. It also pays attention to both symbolic interaction and cultural theories that help in the construction of meaning and understanding of grievances, motivations, recruitment process, and identity formation. Framing and construction theory identifies three categories and focuses on them. These three categories are: (1) the process through which social movements frame grievances as injustice and illegitimate and require a collective challenge; (2) the recognition of movements such as status and identity politics, religious movements, lifestyle interests, and environmental concerns; and (3) the necessity to understand the role of meaning and signification.[21] By focusing on micro-level analysis, framing and social construction theory emphasizes the importance of cognitive liberation for politicizing grievances. Cognitive liberation allows people to integrate individual interests, values, and beliefs with the activities, goals, and ideology of social movements.

When there is cognitive liberation or the transformation of consciousness and behavior, movements emerge. The process of the transformation of political consciousness indicates that when movement actors do not recognize the legitimacy of a given establishment, they may organize and engage in collective action. Most political process theorists focus on structural factors of political opportunity and organization and have paid less attention to subjective factors such as cognitive liberation.[22] William Gamson recognized the importance of micro-mobilization and cognitive liberation, and identified the role of ideas and political consciousness in shaping collective action.[23] In micro-mobilization, know-how is very important, and it includes "a repertoire of knowledge about how to engage in collective action along with the skills to apply that knowledge."[24] Micro-level analyzing and convincing people to mobilize and organize require building loyalty, managing the logistics of collective action, mediating internal conflict, and framing and politicizing grievances in relation to structural factors.[25]

Referring to the theoretical framework of Ervin Goffman, Steven M. Buechler defines framing as an "interpretive schemata that people use to identify, label, and render meaningful events in their lives. Frames allow people to organize experiences and guide actions, both in everyday life and in social movements."[26] The dominant classes and groups in the capitalist world system can control and exploit oppressed classes and other subaltern groups because they have the know-hows, skills, and knowledge as well as economic resources for developing central organizing ideologies that can be translated into organizational capacity.[27] Overall, the critical integration of the theories of resource mobilization, political process, and framing and social construction is necessary to understand how the Oromo national movement and other movements emerged in the Ethiopian Empire. These movements have also continued to develop political consciousness through developing the knowledge for liberation to expose the fallacy and

irrationality of Ethiopian knowledge for domination, control and exploitation. So *Oromummaa,* as a theory, emerges through such processes.

Oromummaa as an Oromo Movement Theory

Beginning in the early 1960s, a few Oromo nationalists transformed, to certain degree, the consciousness of the Oromo people who had been reduced to a collection of so-called "tribes" and "raw material" by the Ethiopian colonial state and its global supporters. In other words, these colonial and imperial forces intentionally separated the Oromo people from their history and culture and made them a collection of the so-called tribes and raw material from which they could form other nations. With the help of the European colonial powers, Abyssinia/Ethiopia defeated the Oromo nation eliminating its sovereignty, and separating its people from the democratic traditions they enjoyed under the *gadaa/siqqee* institution. Being colonized, the Oromo could no longer access the free social and economic arrangements and institutions they had as an independent people. Previously, they had political and civil rights including the freedoms of organization, expression, and participation in public discussion which they could use to remove major sources of unfreedoms.[28] Ethiopian colonialism brought unfreedoms to Oromo society in abundance. Amartya Sen identifies such unfreedoms as poverty, social deprivation, dictatorship, repression, social control, terror, ignorance, and disease.[29]

The Ethiopian colonial institutional arrangements have prevented the Oromo nation from exercising its own agency, denying it economic opportunity, political freedom, and social and political power. The colonial power has also not allowed the Oromo to develop a health and education infrastructure, build cultural capital, and make their motivation and creativity visible. As a result, *Oromummaa,* as Oromo nationalism, developed to remove these unfreedoms from

Oromo society. The regimes of Haile Selassie and Mengistu Haile Mariam tried their best to brutally suppress this flowering of Oromo nationalism by imprisoning and murdering Oromo nationalists. Despite the fact that the Macha-Tulama Self-Help Association, the Afran Qallo Cultural movement, and the Bale Oromo armed struggle were suppressed, Oromo nationalism survived in the form of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). Beginning in the early 1990s, Oromo political awareness and consciousness began to expand; this was one of the victories of the Oromo national movement led by the OLF.

As the consequence of the Oromo national struggle, *Oromummaa,* as a national identity, culture, and ideology, has been reshaped as the result of the heavy price paid by the lives of thousands of Oromo heroines and heroes at the hand of the Ethiopian state. In addition, *Afaan Oromoo* has become an official language in the Oromia Regional State, which is still a colony of Ethiopia; it has been written in *Qubee,* an adapted Latin alphabet rather than Ge'ez, the Amharic-Tigre alphabet. The Oromo national movement has forced the current Ethiopian regime to allow Oromo elementary and high school children to learn in their language although the content of the literature they learn is controlled and manipulated by the neo-nafxanya Tigrayans who distort Oromo history, culture, and politics. Although the colonial aggressors from of the Tigrayan minority nation control and exploit Oromia and some of its territories were given to other nations, it has been recognized as the regional state of the Oromo people. Despite the fact that a few scholars have begun to study the recent changes taking place in Oromo society, adequate studies are not available. Oromo intellectuals in Oromia still lack the political freedom to scientifically study and publish scholarly articles and books on the changes taking place in Oromo society.

In addition, Oromo intellectuals in the diaspora lack unfettered access to their society because of the restrictions on political freedom in Oromia and its surroundings. For almost three decades, the Oromo Studies Association (OSA) has functioned in the diaspora and is unable to hold its annual conferences in Oromia because of the lack of political freedom. Oromo intellectuals and activists do not have the political space in Oromia to collectively debate and decide the future of Oromo studies. Despite all of these problems, the Ethiopian colonial state has been unable to prevent the development of *Oromummaa* in the form of language, national culture, and ideology and identity in Oromia and beyond. Although there are numerous internal and external forces that are trying to abort the development of *Oromummaa*, it is slowly and surely becoming a reality. In this context, providing some theoretical insights on the issues of *Oromummaa* and the Oromo national movement in relation to broader social movement theories is necessary. By critically understanding and integrating the theories of resource mobilization, political process, and framing and social construction, we can better understand why there is still the deficit of leadership and organizational capacity in Oromo society. Without knowing the sources of this problem, it is impossible to seek ways of solving it.

Building Oromo national leadership and organizational capacity requires ideological clarity; resource mobilization in the form of money, human capital, and knowledge; critical understanding of objective and subjective conditions; and liberation knowledge in order to facilitate the development of cognitive liberation among the Oromo. The theory of *Oromummaa* as a backward- and forward-looking phenomenon combines all these processes for the purpose of facilitating the development of cognitive liberation for building Oromo national leadership and organizational capacity. Without cognitive liberation in Oromo political consciousness and behavior, it is impossible to fully develop a national *Oromummaa,* which is the ideological

foundation of the Oromo national movement. Ideology plays many roles in a society; its essential function is to define and promote the political, material, and cultural interests of a group, nation, social class, state, or other entity. It also "offers an explanation and an evaluation of political, economic, and social condition; provides its holders a compass that helps orient them and develop a sense of identity; and tenders a prescription for political, economic, or social action."[30] Therefore, it is a priority of the Oromo national movement to have the clarity in its ideology, which *Oromummaa* provides.

Theorizing *Oromummaa* in general and its different levels in particular is essential for increasing cognitive liberation and building consensus and the unity of purpose in the diverse leadership of the Oromo movement in order to consolidate its organizational capacity. Furthermore, the theory and practice of *Oromummaa* help in exposing the ideological fallacy of Ethiopianism,[31] universalism, progress, modernity, development, civilization, and humanity that mainstream theories and knowledge use as a legitimating discourse in order to hide the massive human rights violations of indigenous peoples such as the Oromo and other subaltern groups by contributing to the perpetuation of unfreedoms such as underdevelopment, poverty, and suffering. By refuting the false claims of Ethiopians, which supports and promotes colonialism, national *Oromummaa* advocates freedom, social justice, national self-determination, and egalitarian multinational democracy for all peoples who are suffering in the Ethiopian Empire and beyond.

The theorization of *Oromummaa* requires at least five levels of conceptualization: at the first level, having a basic form of *Oromummaa* means to manifest Oromoness by practicing some aspects of Oromo culture, language, belief systems, values, norms, customs, and traditions. Whether an Oromo is politically conscious or not, she or he automatically develops this form of

Oromummaa because of the influence of the Oromo family and community institutions. Hence, every Oromo, if not totally assimilated by another culture, has the basic form of *Oromummaa*. At this historical moment, most Oromo have this kind of *Oromummaa* even though their national political consciousness is limited. On the basic level, most Oromo speak the same language called *Afaan Oromoo,* claim a common historical and cultural background, and face similar challenges of Ethiopian colonial terrorism, repression, cultural domination, exploitation, and humiliation. To a greater or lesser extent, most Oromo manifest basic *Oromummaa* in their cultural values, norms, and belief systems that have been encoded in and expressed by *Afaan Oromoo,* which unites all Oromo branches as one people/one nation. Therefore, the Oromo language is the primary carrier of the essence and features of Oromo culture, tradition, history, and peoplehood. Since the Ethiopian colonizers have failed to destroy *Afaan Oromoo* and replace it by their own language, Amharic or Tigre, they have been unable to successfully suppress this most basic form of *Oromummaa.*

Oromummaa, as the total expression of Oromo peoplehood, has developed from the historical, cultural, religious, and philosophical experiences of Oromo society. As a self and collective schema, *Oromummaa* encapsulates a set of fundamental beliefs, values, moral codes, and guiding principles that shape the Oromo national identity and make Oromo society different from other societies. Consequently, basic *Oromummaa* is built on personal, interpersonal, and collective connections. It is "a historically shaped form of knowledge that emerged out of the Oromo experience of several centuries of life and living (*jiruf jireenya*)… [It has] served as a mechanism that built Oromo society in the past and left its unique mark upon the people, and their environment."[32] Similarly, other colonized peoples have basic essence and features that are the foundations of their cultures, histories and identities. Every national group in the Ethiopian

Empire must have its rights to national self-determination and to develop its identity and self-esteem without being subordinated to another national group or groups. The politics of liberation and democracy involves these fundamental rights that *Oromummaa* as both theory and practice promotes.

Currently, the Tigrayan-led Ethiopian minority government that claims that it has allowed cultural autonomy for the Oromo and others actually opposes the manifestation of basic and other forms of *Oromummaa.* According to the November 2014 report of Amnesty International entitled "Because I am Oromo,"

> Expression of Oromo culture and heritage have been interpreted as manifestations of dissent, and the government has also shown signs of fearing cultural expression as a potential catalyst for opposition to the government. Oromo singers, writers and poets have been arrested for allegedly criticizing the government and/or inciting people through their work. People wearing traditional Oromo clothing have been arrested at Oromo traditional festivals.[33]

The Ethiopian colonialists have attacked the individual psyche and biography of the Oromo, as well as their collective culture and history. These attacks have been carried out through various forms of violence, including colonial terrorism.[34] According to Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, "*Violence is any relation, process, or condition by which an individual or a group violates the physical, social, and/or psychological integrity of another person or group.* From this perspective, violence inhibits human growth, negates inherent potential, limits productive living, and causes death"[35] (emphasis in original). In order to make the Oromo and other peoples submissive and control and exploit their labor and economic resources, successive Ethiopian governments have used different forms of violence that have resulted in genocidal massacres as well as societal and cultural destruction. The current report of Amnesty International mentioned above attests to this reality.

Basic *Oromummaa* primarily remained at the personal and interpersonal levels because the Oromo were denied the opportunity to form and maintain national institutions. They have been also denied a formal education and free institutional spaces by successive Ethiopian governments that have not tolerated the existence of independent Oromo leadership, institutions and organizations. The Ethiopian colonialists have also expropriated Oromo economic resources and destroyed Oromo institutions, cultural experts, and leaders. Oppressors don't only want to control the oppressed economically, culturally, and politically; they also want to control their minds, thus ensuring the effectiveness of domination. The mental control of the oppressed causes personal and collective damage.[36] The passivity of the majority of the Oromo and the mental enslavement of most Oromo collaborative elites are the major reasons why the Oromo people who comprise almost the half of the population in the Ethiopian Empire are brutalized, murdered, and terrorized by the minority Tigrayan elites today. Most Oromo collaborators have repressed their Oromo norms and values through the process of Amharization/Ethiopianization and suffer from an inferiority complex. Without the emancipation of Oromo individuals and groups from this inferiority complex and without overcoming the ignorance and the worldviews that the enemies of the Oromo have imposed on them, the Oromo collaborative class and the Oromo masses lack the self-confidence necessary to facilitate individual liberation and Oromo emancipation.

The Oromo collaborative elites who are opportunists or lack a sense of Oromo nationalism have become raw material in the hands of successive Ethiopian regimes and have participated in the implementation of their terrorist and genocidal policies. As Frantz Fanon notes, "The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination…he [she] is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native."[37] Ethiopian Colonialism was

and is maintained by engaging in mental genocide, cultural destruction, and the assimilation of a sector of the Oromo population that has abandoned its basic sense of *Oromummaa.* However, Oromo cultural memory has survived to a certain degree despite the fact that the Ethiopian colonialists have denied the Oromo opportunities to develop the Oromo system of knowledge by preventing the full transmission of Oromo cultural experiences from generation to generation. Successive Ethiopian governments have designed policies and practices to uproot basic *Oromummaa* in order to produce individuals and groups who lack self-respect and are submissive and ready to serve the colonialists at the cost of their own people. Under these conditions, the Oromo basic needs and self-actualizing powers have not been fulfilled. "If failure to satisfy biological needs leads to disease and physical death," Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan notes, "then denial of human contact, communication, and affirmation…leads to a social and psychological 'starvation' or 'death.'"[38]

The Ethiopian colonialists have caused the physical death of millions, and further attempted to introduce social and cultural death to the Oromo by suppressing their basic *Oromummaa* and by preventing them from developing Oromo nationalism. Those who were born into Oromo families and lost their basic *Oromummaa* developed an inferiority complex and sense of self-hatred that Ethiopian colonialism had imposed on them; some of them have becomes the tools of the Ethiopian state. Since the colonization of the Oromo, one of the goals of the Ethiopian state has been the destruction of an independent Oromo leadership; the Amhara-Tigrayan state has used both violent and institutional mechanisms to ensure that the Oromo remain leaderless. In addition, to ensure its colonial domination, the Ethiopian state has destroyed or suppressed Oromo institutions while glorifying, establishing, and expanding the Amhara-Tigrayan institutions such as language, government, and Orthodox Christianity in

Oromia and beyond.[39] This state has also sought to suppress Oromo history, culture, and language while promoting that of the Abyssinians. The main reason for suppressing or destroying the major Oromo institutions was to prevent the transmission of the Oromo system of knowledge and wisdom, the Oromo belief systems and cultural norms from generation to generation, and to prevent "each new generation [from] engaging creatively with the circumstances in which they found themselves to find expression for the core values in the way they organized themselves."[40]

Oromummaa as a conceptual and theoretical framework is elastic and expands to the political arena. Therefore, an Oromo, who has an Oromummaa as a national ideology, is somewhat different on the level of political knowledge and consciousness from other Oromo who have yet to develop this ideology or Oromo nationalism. The combined process of developing the Oromo nationalist ideology and engaging in the struggle for national self-determination is the second level of Oromummaa. Between the first and the second levels of Oromummaa, however, there is the stage of achieving political awareness. Most Oromo began to develop national political awareness in 1991, when the OLF joined the Transition Government of Ethiopia dominated by the Tigrayan Liberation Front (TPLF) that was then supported by its Godfather, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, the governments of Sudan and the USA. The West supports the TPLF financially, militarily, and diplomatically.

At the second level, Oromummaa is seen as a nationalist ideology that attempts to mobilize the entire Oromo people to restore their national culture, history, identity, language, human dignity, and freedoms that Ethiopian colonialism has destroyed or suppressed for more than a century. At this level of Oromummaa, Oromo political awareness is transformed into Oromo nationalism and enables Oromo individuals, families, groups, and communities to comprehend

the illegitimacy, evilness, and criminality of Ethiopian colonialism and to struggle for their national liberation. In other words, *Oromummaa,* as the nationalist ideology, empowers Oromo to build and strengthen their ideological determination, solidarity, and capabilities to define, defend, and struggle for the Oromo national cause. In general, the ideology of national *Oromummaa* increases the determination of Oromo individuals, groups and communities to be ready to make a sacrifice of different forms and levels including sacrificing lives for the Oromo national cause. Basic sacrifices include joining Oromo associations, investing in Oromo material and intellectual products, and spending time, energy, and money to promote the Oromo national cause. Levels of sacrifice depend on the level of national *Oromummaa* consciousness as well as commitment.

Oromo nationalists have been killed or tortured and imprisoned while struggling to liberate their people and their country. We can list thousands of them from the very young to the very old and from women to men who have given their precious lives to further build national *Oromummaa*. Furthermore, there also have been thousands of Oromo who have suffered in Ethiopian concentration and military camps and secret prison cells because they manifested national *Oromummaa* or sympathized with or struggled for the Oromo cause. There are also thousands of Oromo who have escaped from the brutality of the Ethiopian government and who are suffering in refugee camps in different countries or have been re-settled in foreign countries. But, there are millions of Oromo who have yet to develop the national *Oromummaa* ideology and who are not involved in the Oromo national struggle even at the basic level. As already explained, there are also Oromo who have joined the enemy camp because of political opportunism or the lack of political consciousness or ignorance. The main reason for not being involved in the Oromo national struggle or for joining the enemy camp is the deficit of Oromo

leadership and organizational capacity, which is necessary to raise Oromo political consciousness, develop national *Oromummaa* and to stop those who are joining the enemy camp through various mechanisms.

Without developing the national *Orommummaa* ideology, it is impossible to raise Oromo political consciousness to the level needed to organize and build a formidable leadership and organizational capacity that can challenge and defeat the Ethiopian colonial state, which is supported by global powers and the imperial interstate system. *Oromummaa* as the Oromo nationalist ideology defines and promotes the Oromo political, material and cultural interests in order to develop an Oromo political community and transform it into a state through destroying all powers and ideologies, mainly Ethiopianism, which have kept Oromo society under political slavery. According to Antonio Gramsci, political domination is practiced through ideological hegemony.[41] Ethiopianism as an ideological hegemony has been imposed on the Oromo via physical coercion including terrorism and mental genocide and other political and cultural mechanisms. All forms of domination, including colonial domination, cannot be practiced without imposing "a structure of meaning that [reflects] its leading beliefs, values, and ideas;"[42] the process through which the dominated internalizes the ideology, worldview, culture, and mentality of the rulers as natural order is called ideological hegemony.

In order to consolidate the Oromo national movement, it is necessary to recognize its current ideological inadequacies and overcome them. The triple ideological problems of the Oromo national movement are Ethiopianism and the failed ideologies of the East and the West that have victimized the Oromo.[43] *Oromummaa* as a theory of liberation refutes false or biased knowledge and challenges reactionary narratives that naturalize and justify colonialism and all forms of social hierarchies, injustices, and exploitation because it is informed by the principles of

18

the egalitarian Oromo democracy of the *gadaa/siqqee* system. Furthermore, as a theoretical foundation of the Oromo national movement, *Oromummaa* with other critical theories enables the Oromo to engage in producing knowledge for critical thinking and liberation to promote egalitarian democracy. Despite the fact that the development of this theory is primarily based on the Oromo cultural foundation, it recognizes the importance of multicultural and critical knowledge and theories. Therefore, in developing the theory of *Oromummaa*, it is essential to use the critical aspects of the theories of resource mobilization, political process, and framing and social construction that are identified and explained above.

Resource mobilization theory informs the Oromo national movement that economic, political, ideological, and cultural resources are essential for developing leadership and organization capacity in Oromo society. The theory of political process helps in recognizing and explaining factors such as the availability of material, intellectual and cultural resources; the necessity of leadership and organizational capacity to mobilize resources for collective political action, the existence of pre-existing networks and institutions, and the rationality to participate in the collective action of social movements by weighing costs and benefits. The savagery of Ethiopian colonialism by brutally repressing and exploiting the largest national group, the Oromo, and other nations by limiting their educational opportunities has undermined the material, intellectual and cultural resources that are a prerequisite for building strong and capable leadership and organizational capacity. In addition, by killing or imprisoning or forcing people to live in exile, the Ethiopian colonial state has separated a few revolutionary educated Oromo intellectuals and activists from their society so that they cannot build their leadership and organizational capacity in their own society. The theory of *Oromummaa* attempts to make these criminal policies clearly understood by Oromo society and others who are truly interested in

promoting human rights and democracy.

Depending on the theory of framing and social construction, the *Oromummaa* theory focuses also on micro-level analysis of Oromo cultural studies that help in understanding Oromo social psychology to know how to increase micro-mobilization through developing skills and knowledge. At this moment, our understanding of Oromo psychology is limited, and we need psychologists and other social scientists to study and explain what the majority of Oromo think about their national struggle on individual, group or community levels in Oromia and beyond. By recognizing that collective actions are socially constructed and not naturally given, the theory of *Oromummaa* assists in studying and suggesting ways of constructing meaning and understanding the essence of collective and individual grievances, motivation, identity formation, and recruitment. The theory also helps in critically analyzing and understanding social structures and subjective factors such as cognitive liberation by clearly recognizing the role of ideas and political consciousness in minimizing political ignorance and fatalism for shaping collective action. It is only by cultivating Oromo political consciousness and building strong Oromo leadership and organizational capacity that the Oromo nation can survive the genocidal attacks it faces from its enemies and it also can liberate itself from the colonial and imperial savagery of the 21st century.

Scholars who are engaged in Oromo studies from all social science disciplines need to mobilize their intellectual resources to assist in building national *Oromummaa* both in theory and practice in order to enable the Oromo national movement to fully develop its leadership and organizational capacity through acquiring required know-how, skills, and knowledge thus overcoming the deficit of capabilities. As I have mentioned above, unfreedoms that the Ethiopian colonial state has imposed on Oromo society have underdeveloped Oromo human capabilities

that are required to build an effective and free democratic society. Presently the majority of Oromo are politically passive and controlled by the Tigrayan minority regime. In 2014, when this racist and murderous regime brutalized, tortured, and killed Oromo students and others who were resisting the colonial policies of the regime such as the so-called Addis Ababa Master Plan that the Oromo students called Master Genocide, the majority of Oromo were kept quiet in Oromia by the barrel of gun. This student protest movement, however, galvanized and united most of the Oromo in the diaspora for the first time by overcoming their divisions and political passivity to demonstrate and support the Oromo protest struggle at home. This clearly shows that national *Oromummaa* is developing in the Oromo diaspora although it has yet to result in the building up of the leadership and organizational capacities of the Oromo on the global level.

As has been suggested by a few activist Oromo scholars, there is the need for forming a global Oromo activist network that may be called a global *Gumii* Oromia, which will coordinate Oromo political, cultural, and social activities in different continents, countries, regions and communities to advance of the Oromo national struggle.[44] As we shall see below, attacking and dismantling the political ignorance, fatalism, and inferiority complex that have chained the minds of the majority of Oromo is the first step toward freedom because the Ethiopian state has no power to control the Oromo nation if significant numbers within the nation develop cognitive liberation by developing the nationalist ideology of *Oromummaa* that is replacing the false claim of Ethiopianism.

On the third level, *Oromummaa* encapsulates a repertoire of knowledge and values that are prerequisites for building Oromo national leadership and organizational capacity for mobilizing and organizing the nation to liberate itself from all forces of unfreedoms. The *Oromummaa*-based knowledge that can be called Oromo cultural capital reveals the importance of getting

access to the Oromo knowledge bank, which has accumulated over centuries of Oromo culture and traditions, in order to facilitate the development of knowledge for liberation and cognitive liberation among Oromo society. Without having the knowledge for liberation that develops cognitive liberation, Oromo society cannot effectively struggle against the forces of unfreedoms. Also, national *Oromummaa* as a revolutionary ideology promotes the Oromo struggle to build horizontal organizations—through dismantling gender and class hierarchies—instead of vertical organizations that buttress injustices and exploitation. This cannot happen without creating and building the third level of *Oromummaa* that promotes a revolutionary liberation knowledge and cognitive liberation.

On the fourth level, *Oromummaa*, as a national project, mobilizes the nation to build the national culture, history, political economy, sovereignty, and ethos that are the markers and emblem of the Oromo nation. Developing this kind of project requires the knowledge of Oromo history and culture, critically and thoroughly understanding Oromo and global politics, and predicting and assessing possible scenarios for the future of the Oromo nation. *Oromummaa,* as the national project, empowers the Oromo people to plan the future of their society. Oromo nationalists not only need to know about the Oromo past and the current conditions, they also need to develop policies that will help them in developing Oromo national culture, ideology and action. Based on the accumulated past traditions, knowledge, and wisdom, *Oromummaa* introduces an ideological and theoretical innovation and facilitates the emergence and development of new cultural elements. As Antonio Gramsci explains, "Creating a new culture does not only mean one's own individual 'original' discoveries. It also … means the diffusion in a critical form of truths already discovered … and even making them the basis of vital action, an element of coordination and intellectual and moral order."[45]

In reviving the best Oromo cultural elements, "a critical form of truths already discovered," Oromo nationalist intellectuals have a central role to play. Such scholars must unearth the Oromo past and provide critical theoretical guidance for the future of Oromo society. Again, Gramsci asserts that "one could only have cultural stability and an organic quality of thought if there had existed the same unity between the intellectuals and the simple as there should be between theory and practice. That is, if the intellectuals had been organically the intellectuals of those masses, and if they had worked out and made coherent the principles and the problems raised by the masses in their practical activity, thus constituting a cultural and social bloc."[46]

Without being limited by disciplinary boundaries, Oromo intellectuals and others in the Oromo Studies Association (OSA) and beyond need to form research working groups, study circles, policy advocacy groups and other bodies to critically and thoroughly study Oromo national problems and produce various white papers that can be disseminated among Oromo communities in Oromia and the Diaspora through various outlets. The Oromo people have been chained mentally and psychologically by Ethiopian ignorance, evilness, and darkness that must be smashed by the liberation knowledge of critical Oromo studies, which are based on Oromo indigenous knowledge and human-centric critical knowledge of the world. Oromo organic intellectuals need to develop white papers based on a series of research projects that can be presented to Oromo communities on various subjects such as cultural and social capital, *Oromummaa* and its various aspects*,* knowledge for liberation and cognitive liberation, sexism and gender equality, democracy and equity, regional and global politics, Habasha culture and politics, Oromo networks and national conventions, leadership and capacity building, Oromo national institutions such as *gadaa/siqqee, irrecha* or *ireessa*, religion and religious diversity,

and state building and sustainable development. Mechanisms should be developed to encourage the Oromo youth and women to participate on forums, workshops, discussion groups, and study circles.

A nation that excludes or oppresses its youth and women cannot achieve total liberation. In addition, programs of developing the talents of revolutionary Oromo artists must be implemented because Oromo artists can contribute immensely to the process of developing national *Oromummaa.* Buying their art products and attending their concerts in order to build their financial muscle are necessary. If we do not support Oromo artists, our enemies can buy a few of these artists and demoralize those committed nationalist ones. Furthermore, Oromo literature in *Afaan Oromoo* and English should be supported so that Oromo-centric knowledge and knowledge for liberation flourish and bring about a cultural and intellectual renaissance to Oromo society. Similarly, there is an urgent need to support Oromo radio and TV outlets and encourage them to spend more time in educating the Oromo people through developing their national *Oromummaa.* This will empower the Oromo people mentally and culturally. All Oromo, particularly nationalist ones, have a historical and national obligation to encourage and support all activities that build Oromo national identity, culture, and liberation ideology.

The fifth level of *Oromummaa,* which can be called global *Oromummaa,* expands the principles of freedom, justice for all, national self-determination and egalitarian multinational democracy beyond the Oromo nation. Using the philosophy of *safuu* (moral and ethical order), global *Oromummaa* promotes horizontal and democratic relations among all the various peoples who have been colonized and brutalized by the Ethiopian colonial state. Furthermore, since this *Oromummaa* is about uprooting unfreedoms and establishing a just, democratic, and peaceful society, the Oromo national movement is unequivocally against revenge and the hatred of any

peoples, including the colonizing nations of Ahmara and Tigray. Therefore, the Oromo national movement also struggles to demonstrate to these oppressing nations the importance of organizing societies horizontally and democratically rather than hierarchically and dictatorially in order to establish durable peace and justice. This movement recognizes the significance of restoring the best cultural and democratic elements, similar to *gadaa/siqqee* (Oromo democracy), by all the colonized peoples in the Ethiopian Empire because these elements form the foundation for building an inclusive egalitarian democracy. Overall, the theory of *Oromummaa* focuses on building strategies and tactics for overcoming unfreedoms and the deficits of leadership and organizational capability.

Overcoming Unfreedoms and Deficits of Capabilities

Unfreedoms are obstacles for the development of human capabilities.[47] Starting during the last decades of the 19th century, when the Oromo nation and others were colonized and incorporated into the Ethiopian Empire, they have been prevented from sufficiently developing their human capabilities. These peoples have been denied the free social arrangements and institutions that are necessary for creating and building a free and democratic society by successive Ethiopian colonial regimes. The denial of a formal education to these societies has underdeveloped their leadership and organizational capacities, which are the primary instruments needed to tackle the problem of unfreedoms such as ignorance, underdevelopment, and poverty. Underdevelopment involves the lack of independence/autonomy to determine one's destiny; it is characterized by poverty, illiteracy, powerlessness, lack of democracy, social crises, and disasters such as famines and wars.[48] Most members of these societies lack freedom of choice, skills and capacity, freedom of knowledge production and dissemination, and creativity, etc.

In addition to the lack of freedoms, the Oromo and other colonized peoples are still denied improved material wellbeing because they are prevented from having free social arrangements and institutions that help in developing the free cultural capital that is necessary for enjoying equality of opportunity and quality of life. As underdeveloped and impoverished societies, they still do not have the power to freely determine their national destinies because they lack adequate leadership and organizational capacities and the military technology needed to fight against their enemies. Colonial unfreedoms have denied the Oromo and others of educational and technological capacity. The Habasha tormentors and their collaborators have expropriated the economic resources of the colonized peoples and their economies including land and other natural resources and labor which have been owned or controlled by the Ethiopian colonial state. Ethiopian colonialism and its unfreedoms have destroyed the cultural capital and social capital of the Oromo and other nations within the Ethiopian Empire. Pierre Bourdieu expanded Karl Marx's use of capital from a narrowly conceived economic category of monetary exchange for profit to cultural capital[49] and social capital to demonstrate how these categories can be forms of money capital that can be invested in offspring to secure benefits and upward generational and intergeneration mobility.[50]

Bourdieu established the relationship among three forms of capital:

capital can present itself in three fundamental guises; as *economic capital,* which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of private property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of [position of power] and educational qualifications; and as *social capital,* made of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility." [51]

He notes that as unequal access to money capital perpetuates social inequalities, unequal access to cultural capital and social capital in their continual transmission or conversion into

accumulation from generation to generation reproduce social inequalities. As they have lost all their freedoms to Ethiopian colonialism, the Oromo and other colonized peoples have also lost all these forms of capital by the same system. In most cases, the successes of individuals, groups, and nations do not necessarily depend on their respective talent or intelligence, but primarily depend on having access to all forms of capital. An individual's achievements depend on cultural capital and social capital that are inherited from institutions such as families, schools, and others. Cultural capital and social capital are relational and they exist with other forms of capital since one form of capital can be converted into another form of capital.

All forms of capital are generated and transmitted through social processes from family to children and through other institutions and the larger society. Bourdieu explains that one form of capital can be converted into another form. Bourdieu's theories of cultural capital and social reproduction primarily focus on the roles of family and educational institutions in reproducing class inequalities. However, here the concept of cultural capital is broadly used to include all mental products, including informal education, of Oromo and other societies that have been accumulated from generation to generation to improve their ways life. As already demonstrated, Ethiopian colonialism has significantly weakened the cultural capital of the colonized societies to make them ignorant and passive in order to easily dominate and control them and exploit their labor and other economic resources. The Oromo national movement with other similar movements in the empire must realize this difficult problem and begin to unlock and solve it through new ideas and critical scientific thinking that are based on critical studies. Ethiopian colonialism has kept Oromo and other societies in a sea of ignorance and deep poverty by denying them all these forms of capital for more than a century. The Ethiopian colonial state maintains power by playing ethno-national groups off against one another, and by creating a form of ignorance that keeps the subjugated people from seeing that they are all suffering from the same social disease—oppression.

Ideology as an element of cultural capital plays a central role in convincing the dominant classes and groups and the dominated ones in a given social system by explaining that the social inequalities are naturally given and therefore survive from generation to generation. According to Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, "The oppressed is made a prisoner within a narrow circle of tamed

ideas, a wrecked ecology, and a social network strewn with prohibitions. His family and community life is infiltrated in order to limit his capacity for bonding and trust. His past is obliterated and his history falsified to render him without an origin or a future. A system of reward and punishment, based on loyalty to the oppressor, is instituted to foster competition and conflict among the oppressed."[52] Based on their hierarchical positions in societies, the dominant groups and classes establish the rules of engagement with the dominated groups and classes economically, culturally and socially. Consequently, the Habasha elites by depending on their colonial ideology of Ethiopianism have been able to use different forms of capital to keep the Oromo nation and others in the prison empire of Ethiopia.

Ethiopian colonialism has perpetuated economic expropriation, and also has stagnated the cultural capital and social capital of the colonized peoples in order to perpetuate unfreedoms. The destruction of the cultural and political institutions of these peoples and the denial of formal education to the majority members of these societies have undermined the cultural capital of these societies. In addition, the attack on their identities and the partitioning of these societies into colonial regions by giving them names that have no relevance to them have underdeveloped their social capital. Developing these societies politically and economically requires political freedoms, which involve critical thinking and improved organizational skills. These political freedoms include the philosophy of struggling for social equality in the form of gender and class equality within Oromo society and other similar societies. There is not any doubt that if Oromo nationalists fully develop national *Oromummaa* as their revolutionary ideology and build a united leadership, organizational capacity, effectively organize the Oromo masses, and ally with the other colonized peoples, they can defeat and eject Tigrayan colonial forces and their collaborators from Oromia and the other colonized regions within a short period of time.

The Oromo national movement not only needs to build its leadership and organizational capacity, but it also needs to develop a strategic vision and political plans for working with other colonized nations who are interested in implementing the principles of national self-determination and egalitarian multinational democracy. While Oromo nationalists engage in debates and dialogues for formulating policies that reflect their indigenous democracy, they must also develop political plans that they can share with other peoples who have similar interests for the purpose of discussion, debate, and consensus building. As mentioned above, the Oromo nation can play a central role in implementing the principles of national self-determination and multinational democracy provided that it effectively mobilizes its abundant human and economic resources and allies itself with others to build their human capabilities. In developing leadership and organizational capacity, emphasis should be given to building organizations and institutions rather than promoting the egos and leadership roles of individuals in order to avoid the pitfalls of many liberation fronts that won wars of liberation but failed to build healthy and effective democratic societies. The disasters of the Eritrean and Tigrayan liberation fronts are living examples. They simply won the war against the Ethiopian state and eventually became its photocopy.

Developing a united, skillful, knowledgeable, and determined leadership that truly believes in democratic principles and hard work is very crucial for the advancement and success of the Oromo and other national movements in the empire. For Oromo society, without building the kind of leadership and organization that reflect the Oromo democratic and consultative traditions, it is impossible to effectively and fully develop national *Oromummaa* and mobilize and organize the Oromo to liberate themselves. The same is true for the other colonized societies. Those Oromo leaders who created the Macha-Tulama Self-Help Association and the

OLF reflected some Oromo democratic and consultative traditions although such traditions were gradually undermined with external pressures and internal crises in the Oromo national movement. If the colonized societies such as the Oromo cannot develop the skills, knowledge and capabilities necessary to promote and exercise freedom and democracy while engaging in liberation struggles, they may not liberate themselves or they may inadvertently replace colonial dictatorships by national ones. Therefore, the Oromo liberation movement and other movements must begin to practice freedom and democracy while struggling to overthrow Ethiopian colonial dictatorship. For example, in order to totally mobilize Oromo girls and women to actively participate in the Oromo national struggle, the Oromo national movement must start dismantling the ideology of sexism and values of patriarchy.

Furthermore, the theory and practice of *Oromumma* must enable all Oromo nationalists to engage in a politico-economic paradigm shift prior to liberation in order to build a free and democratic society. Similarly, the movements of the other colonized societies need to promote and implement similar strategies and tactics in order to establish an egalitarian multinational democracy. Amartya Sen identifies five factors for developing capabilities and freedoms in a given society; they are (1) *political freedoms*, (2) *economic facilities*, (3) *social opportunities*, (4) *transparency guarantees* and (5) *protective security*.[53] All of these factors are combined to develop the general capacity of a person and a society. As Sen notes, "Public policy to foster human capabilities and substantive freedoms in general can work through the promotion of these distinct but interrelated instrumental freedoms."[54] *Political freedoms* involves political and civil rights, such as the right to determine who should govern and on what principles, the right to scrutinize and criticize authorities, the right of political expression and an uncensored press, and the freedom to choose among political leaders and organizations.

If the Oromo and other national movements cannot operate on these political freedoms now, it will be impossible to practice them after liberation. The experiences of liberation movements in the world including the Horn of Africa and their failure to build democratic societies demonstrate this reality. The principles of economic freedoms also should be articulated while engaging in liberation movements. The principles of *economic facilities* oppose the control of market through state dictatorship on the one hand and unregulated capitalism on the other because they are both undemocratic and corrupt. The Oromo people and others should struggle to form a state that balances public and private ownership of the means of production in order to protect the respective national economic resources from the robbery of private forces in the name of so-called free markets. The Oromo and other peoples should own their lands and natural resources. Balanced public and private economic agendas should involve the policies of freely participating in markets and generating wealth and public resources, the availability and access to finance, and utilizing economic resources for the purpose of consumption, or production, or exchange, and allowing all citizens to have access to basic economic security and entitlement.[55]

The principles of *social opportunities* deal with social arrangements such as education, employment, and health care; equal access to these services influences the individual's substantive freedom to live better and longer and increases more effective participation in socio-economic and political activities. The Oromo and other national movements must openly declare such policies to encourage their respective people to liberate themselves from the robbery of the Ethiopian colonial state and its regional and global supporters. In a truly democratic society there must also be *transparency guarantees* that allow individuals to have the freedom to openly and freely deal with one another, and the right to disclose and prevent corruption, financial irresponsibility, and underhanded dealings. Furthermore, having *protective security* enables a

society to enjoy access to a social safety net that protects people from abject misery, starvation, disasters, death, and disease. Theoretically speaking, the founders and members of the Macha-Tulama Association and the OLF envisioned to a certain degree the notion of developing national *Oromummaa* as a vision of Oromo liberation and sustainable development to enable the Oromo to have political freedom and to achieve economic facilities, social opportunities, transparence guarantees, and protective security.

Based on these and other factors, the Oromo and other national movements should begin to expand and develop such policies. Whenever they can, these movements must demonstrate that they are struggling to enable their respective people to regain all their freedoms and overcome their deficits in human capabilities. The struggle for empowering of the people is an endless process that goes beyond decolonization; these processes require constantly building institutional and instrumental freedom. Oromo nationalists and others must be sure that their country will be liberated if they are determined and work hard; they also need to develop policies that must be translated into action based on the five factors that Sen has identified above in order to convince the people that their future will be free, better, and democratic. Particularly organic intellectuals in the Oromo Studies Association (OSA) and others should continue to theorize and develop national *Oromummaa* through formulating policies that will bring about a paradigm shift in Oromo studies in particular and the Oromo national movement in general. These intellectuals should also study other colonized societies in order to establish the commonalities and differences of their interests with those of the Oromo.

Critical Oromo Studies and Knowledge for Liberation

One of the great successes of the Oromo national movement in the Diaspora is the creation and development of OSA and its publications. Annual proceedings of OSA and *the Journal of*

Oromo Studies are two important publications, which demonstrate the intellectual productivity of this organization. Furthermore, a few Oromo and other scholars who are members of this association have published numerous books and refereed articles in regional and international journals and refuted false or biased knowledge on the Oromo on regional and international levels. In this age of globalization, when knowledge and relevant information are becoming prerequisites for the successes of social and national movements such as the Oromo movement, do Oromo publications reach to the Oromo people to bring about cognitive liberation and social transformation? Does OSA facilitate the culture of reading, debating, thinking, and formulating serious policy issues?

Anybody who wants to advance the Oromo national cause must confront these difficult questions and seek correct answers. A society that does not have organic intellectuals who produce and disseminate knowledge for cognitive liberation cannot defend itself from the savagery of colonialism and imperialism. While the previous generations of informally educated Oromo leaders between the 16th and 19th centuries built Oromo democracy and the *gadaa/siqqee* government and defended Oromo society from their enemies, the current generation of formally educated Oromo nationalists have yet to fully construct a knowledge base for cognitive liberation that will build Oromo leadership and organizational capacity in order to mobilize and organize the Oromo masses to liberate themselves. This reality shows that there is still a huge gap between Oromo nationalists and the majority of the Oromo who are not actively participating in the Oromo national movement. Because of their small number, those few Oromo leaders who understood the complex problem of Oromo leadership were easily eliminated by the Ethiopian colonial state and surrounding states that have wanted to keep Oromo society in permanent servitude in order to control them and use their resources. Despite the fact that a large number of

Oromo intellectuals live in exile today, some of them are not actively participating in the Oromo national movement because of their low level of political development.

OSA has yet to develop mechanisms for increasing its membership and developing ways of packaging and disseminating the knowledge and information that it has been producing for almost three decades. It is the responsibility of OSA members and its leadership to find practical solutions through discussion, debate, and consensus building in Oromo society. Despite the fact that OSA was the product of the Oromo national struggle and has laid the intellectual foundation of the Oromo national movement, it has not built its capacity to disseminate liberation knowledge for developing cognitive liberation among Oromo society. Therefore, OSA needs to listen to Oromo society and make itself more relevant by developing critical Oromo studies that will be forward-looking in solving the current problems of Oromo society. Despite the fact that the Oromo recognize the values of competence, intelligence, hard work, moral authority, patriotism, bravery, self-sacrifice, respect for the rule of law, and achievements because of their *gadaa/siqqee* tradition, in the contemporary Oromo society these qualities are dwindling. History demonstrates that all *gadaa* members and leaders emerged based on these values and other criteria, and these values and other criteria are also very important now and in the future.

It is very clear that Oromo intellectuals and political leaders have been separated from their people by the colonization of their minds, and they lack knowledge, experience, wisdom, and expertise for organizing their people. OSA must be an important platform to address and solve these complex problems of Oromo society. In order to further develop their national *Oromummaa* and develop their knowledge and skills for establishing organic unity with their society, Oromo intellectuals and political leaders and other activists should overcome their internalization of victimization, alienation, arrogance, and individualism and appreciate and

promote the spirit of team or collective work by replacing the knowledge for domination and self-aggrandizement with the knowledge for liberation and emancipation, which is congruent with *gadaa/siqqee* values and principles. The restoration of such values and principles for liberation and emancipation in the Oromo movement is the product of "heroic courage and contributions of thousands of largely unsung heroes and heroines."[56] Organic intellectuals in OSA and beyond can play a central role in developing national *Oromummaa* as a national project to intensify the Oromo national struggle by increasing the participation of the Oromo people in their national struggle.

Discussion and Conclusion

Theorizing and conceptualizing *Oromummaa* on five levels help in knowing the differences among the social, cultural, political and ideological aspects of the Oromo national movement and in advancing the ideological and political clarity of the Oromo national struggle. Some Oromo confuse being Oromo with being Oromo nationalists and thus claim that they have *Oromummaa* by birth. This is partially true because such Oromo have basic *Oromummaa.* But having this kind of *Oromummaa* cannot automatically make one a nationalist. As the national ideology of the Oromo national movement, national *Oromummaa* develops through knowledge for liberation, which facilitates cognitive liberation and political consciousness. *Oromummaa* as both theory and practice looks backward at Oromo history and culture for many centuries and also looks forward by identifying mechanisms for building the kind of Oromo leadership and organizational capacity that emerges from the repertoire of liberation knowledge, skills, and wisdom. The purpose of doing this is to consolidate the struggles for national self-determination and egalitarian multinational democracy with other colonized peoples who have similar objectives.

There are collaborator Oromo and non-Oromo who claim wrongly that *Oromummaa* is necessarily an exclusive ideology. In contrary, the opposite is true.

These processes are not naturally given; they are products of constant effort and hard work. That is why the Oromo national struggle requires various levels of sacrifice including the ultimate sacrifice of dying for the Oromo national cause as other colonized peoples have been doing for their national causes. Consequently, the Oromo national movement has produced thousands of heroes and heroines who have sacrificed their lives to liberate their people and country despite the fact that there are millions of Oromo who are passive and neutral observers. Similar conditions exist in other colonized societies. The theory of *Oromummaa* informs us that although the Oromo national movement has achieved a lot, it will be a while before the majority of the Oromo develop Oromo nationalism by recognizing the illegitimacy of the Ethiopian colonial state and its Oromo collaborators and join their national struggle. This theory also explains that the primary reason why the minority Tigrayan-government rules the numerical majority Oromo nation and others by its iron fist, despite its weaknesses and ideological bankruptcy, is the deficit of Oromo leadership and organizational capacity. Other colonized societies also lack these important elements at this historical moment. Successive Ethiopian states have denied a formal education to the majority of Oromo and other societies as well as butchered thousands of real and potential leaders in order to create leadership crises in these societies and to make them leaderless. How can the Oromo nation and others overcome this dangerous national problem?

Of course, killing real and potential leaders has not stopped the Oromo and others from struggling for their national liberation. Although the leadership and organizational deficits in these societies was initially caused by the savagery of Ethiopian colonialism and global

imperialism that murdered leaders and educationally and economically impoverished these societies, this problem currently continues to exist primarily because the elites of the Oromo and others have yet to form a united and consultative democratic leadership that reflects the democratic traditions of these societies. Another reason is that these elites have yet to recognize the centrality of acquiring the liberation knowledge that is essential in developing cognitive liberation. As a result, their efforts have mostly been based on trial and error and common sense efforts that rarely lead to victory in the age of scientific revolutions and information technology. The theory of *Oromummaa* predicts that the Oromo nation and others can liberate themselves by uniting and mobilizing their human, cultural, intellectual, and material resources through democratic and consultative leadership and by building the organizational capacity of the Oromo and other national movements. It also suggests that while solving its internal political problems and struggling for the Oromo liberation, the Oromo movement should develop and forward political proposals for other colonized nations and others in the Ethiopian Empire that are interested in implementing the principles of national self-determination and egalitarian multinational democracy in order to bring about permanent peace, sustainable development, and security in the Horn region.

OSA's division of labor is to engage in social scientific research and other forms of research to expand the knowledge for liberation that is the foundation of the Oromo national struggle and liberation. In addition, the role of OSA is emphasizing in developing and disseminating the critical or liberation knowledge that is necessary for developing cognitive liberation in Oromo and other societies. This scholarly organization can produce a variety of white papers that can help in formulating profound policies. Finally, the theory of *Oromummaa* shows that the liberation of the Oromo nation and that of others is an inevitable fact that the

Oromo people and others and their enemies should recognize. Young Oromo nationalists in Oromia have manifested a level of determination that has emerged from the development of national *Oromummaa.* Particularly, Oromo students who are dubbed as the *Qubee* generation are leading the Oromo national protest struggle without any fear to take the Oromo national struggle to its final destiny through transforming national *Oromummaa* into a material force that unites all Oromo in their national movement.

The students of other colonized nations and others are invited to join the Oromo students protest movements rather than passively watching the crimes that are perpetrated on them by the Tigrayan minority regime and their collaborators. While the Oromo Liberation Army as lifeblood of the Oromo national struggle is focusing its work in rural Oromia, the Oromo student movement is intensifying its protest struggles in urban areas. Overall, the theory of *Oromummaa* has articulated the necessity of building leadership and organizational capacity to unite all Oromo forces for the Oromo liberation struggle and to build alliances with the movements of other colonized societies in the Ethiopian Empire. While the four levels of *Oromummaa* described above deal with the internal issues of Oromo society, the fifth level of *Oromummaa* illustrated how the Oromo national movement builds the needed unity, purpose, and alliance with other colonized societies who are struggling for national self-determination and egalitarian multinational democracy.

Endnotes

[1] These colonized and oppressed nations include the Sidama, Annuaks, Ogaden-Somali, Hadiya, Nuer, and others. The oppressed Amharas and Tigrayans who are not part of the Ethiopian colonizing structures can be part of the egalitarian multinational democratic project by rejecting the colonial ideology of Ethiopianism, which has perpetuated colonial terror, underdevelopment, poverty and famine in the Ethiopian Empire/

[2] For the better understanding the ideological problem of the Oromo national movement, see Asafa Jalata and Harwood Schaffer, "*Gadaa/Siqqee* as the Fountain of *Oromummaaa* and the Theoretical Base of Oromo Liberation," *Journal of Oromo Studies*.

[3] For further understanding, see Asafa Jalata and Harwood Schaffer, "The Oromo, *Gadaa/Siqqee* and the Liberation of Ethiopian Colonial Subjects," with Harwood Schaffer, *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples,* Vol. 9, Issue 4: 2013, 277-295.

[4] Critical thinking and studies, such as subaltern studies, assist to confront and expose the false claims of universalism, dominant ideology and worldviews that attempt to hide colonial history and imperialist practices in Africa and other places.

[5] For detailed discussion, see Asafa Jalata, "The Struggle for Knowledge: The Case of Emergent Oromo Studies," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 39, No. 2(Sep., 1996), pp. 95-123.

[6] See Giovanni Arrighi, Terence K. Hopkins, and Immanuel Wallertein, *Anti-systemic Movements,* (London: Verso, 1989).

[7] See for example, William I. Robinson, "The Crisis of Global Capitalism," in *The Great Credit Crash*, (London: Verso), pp.289-310; Jackie Smith, *Social Movements for Global Democracy,* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.)

[8] See for example, Neil J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior,* (New York: The Free Press, 1962); W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Development: A Non-Communist Manifesto,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), pp. 4-16

[9] Steven Buechler *Understanding Social Movements: Theories from the Classical Era to the Present.* Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2011, pp. 91-106

[10] See for example, John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "The Enduring Vitality of the Resource Mobilization Theory of Social Movements" in Jonathan H. Turner (ed.), *Handbook of Sociological Theory,* (New York: Springer Science and Business Media, LLC), pp. 553-566.

[11] See Asafa Jalata, *Fighting against the Injustice of the State and Globalization: Comparing the African American and Oromo Movements,* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

[12] See for example, Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution,* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1978); Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 42-43)

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] Steve Buechler, *Understanding Social Movements,* pp. 123-140).

[15] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution,* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1978).

[16] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution, ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, ibid.*

[19] Frances Piven and F. Richard Cloward. 1979. *Poor People's Movements*, (New York: Vintage).

[20] Steven Buechler, *Understanding Social Movements,* pp. 141-143.

[21] Steven Buechler, *ibid,* pp. 145-159.

[22] Charles Tilly, *ibid;* Doug McAdam, *ibid.*

[23] William Gamson in Bruce Fireman and Steven Buechler, *Encounters with Unjust Authority,* (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1982), pp. 6-9.

[24] Steven Buechler, *Understanding Social Movements,* p. 144.

[25] William Gamson, *Ibid.*

[26] *Ibid,* p. 146.

[27] Asafa Jalata, "The Struggle for Knowledge," *ibid.*

[28] Through imposing unfreedoms at gun point, Ethiopian colonialism tried to erase *Oromummaa* (Oromoness) from the minds of the Oromo by giving the Oromo derogatory names such as Galla, which they hated and tried to run away from it by taking the religious name of Christianity or Muslim or clan names or taking the identities of others.

[29] Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom,* (New York: Knopf, 1999).

[30] Alex Roberto Hybel, *The Power of Ideology,* (New York: Routledge), p. 1.

[31] see the artice: http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1050&context=asafa_jalata

[32] Bonnie K. Holcomb, "*Oromummaa* as a Construct or Peace Through Balance: *Oromummaa* in the Twenty-First Century," Presentation prepared for the Oromo Studies Association Conference Roundtable," Washington, DC, July 27-28, 2002, p.1.

[33] Amnesty International, "Because I am Oromo: Sweeping Repression in the Oromia Region of Ethiopia," November 2014, p. 8.

[34] For further discussion, see Asafa Jalata, "Terrorism from "Above" and "Below" in the Age of Globalization," *Sociology Mind,* 2011, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 1-15.

[35] Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression,* (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), p. 135.

[36] Na'im Akbar, *Breaking the Chains of Psychological Slavery,* (Tallahassee, FL: Mind Productions and Associates, 1996), pp. v-iv.

[36] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* translated by Constance Farrington, (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1963[1961]), p. 38.

[36] Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, *ibid,* p. 123.

[36] *Ibid.*

[36] Fanon, Frantz, *A Dying Colonialism,* translated by Haakon Chevalier, (New   York: Grove   Press,   Inc.,1967 [1965]), p. 65.

[36] Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, translated by Richard Philcox, (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 2008[1952]), pp. 2-3.

[36] Hussein Abdilahi Bulihan, *ibid.* pp. 125-126.

[36] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* p. 7.

[36] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth, ibid,* p. 38.

[36] Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, *ibid,* p. 123.

[37] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth, ibid*, p. 38.

[38] Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, *ibid,* 56.

[39] Ethiopian settler colonialism established five institutional arrangements in Oromia in order to tightly control Oromo society and intensify its exploitation: (1) garrison cities and towns, (2) slavery, (3) the colonial landholding system, (4) the *nafxanya-gabbar* system (semi-slavery), and (5) the Oromo collaborative class.

[40] Bonnie Holcomb, *ibid.*

[41] Antonio Gramsci. *Selections from the Prison Notebook,* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

[42] Alex Roberto Hybel, *ibid.* p. 8.

[43] The Oromo national struggle is taking place when the modern world system is at a crossroads, and when the modernization perspective of the West and the so-called socialist/communist model of the East have drastically failed in the peripheral part of the world such as Oromia, Ethiopia, and the Horn of Africa.

[44] For example, listen to Interview made by Abdujalil Abdalla on Voice of Oromia-KFAI Radio, Minneapolis, Minnesota, on 06/08/2014. The interviewee was Asafa Jalata on his paper titled "The Need for Forming of Oromo Global Activist Networks Known as Gumii Oromia."

[45] Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks,* editors Quinin Hoare and G. N. Smith, (New York: International Publishers, 1985), p. 325.

[46] *Ibid.* p. 330.

[47] Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom.*

[48] Walter Rodney, *Ibid.*

[49] Bourdieu (1986: 2) identifies three forms of cultural capital: "in the *embodies* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods … and in the in the *institutionalized* state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because … in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which is presumed to guarantee."

[50] *Ibid.* pp. 1-2

[51] *Ibid.* p. 2.

[52] Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, *ibid.* p. 123.

[53] Amarty Sen, *Development and Freedom.*

[54] *Ibid,* p. 10.

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] Quoted in Richard A. Couto, "Narrative, Free Space, Political Leadership in Social Movements," in *The Journal of Politics,* vol. 55, no. 1, February 1993, p. 58.