“Ethiopia’s Diaspora” and “Diaspora Opposition”: Myth or Reality?

Habtamu Alebachew (Lecturer)

Introductions

I was provoked to write this brief paper by an article posted on Aigaforum.com 25 October 2012. The article titled ‘Wary of the Diasposition Gone Awry’ was contributed by apparently an Ethiopian living in the United States by the name Entahabu Berhe. My interest is more with the term ‘diasposition’ than the message of the article. The writer reminds that he used ‘diasposition’ out of two background words: ‘Diaspora and opposition’ to refer to Ethiopians living outside and are opposed to the government. I do not know whether this writer created the new term himself (I guess he is male) or got it from others or not.

Reading the new term, I felt that the term ‘Diaspora’ has been undergoing a new semantic morphosis from how it is being currently used across the Ethiopian media and ordinary citizens. I also realized from a commentary titled ‘Kuasua Yalechew be EHADEG Meda Wust New. The comment was posted at aigaforum.com 20 October 2012 by Zelalem Amanueal. For adequate justifications of time and dynamism, I would prefer if Zelalem as an immigrant Ethiopian said: ‘Kuasa Yalechew Ethiopia Meda Wust New’. He writes as follows:

The people living inside Ethiopia could not live up to the burdens of inflation and expensive life. The people were asked to contribute 12% of their annual salaries. They paid; now, they are again asked to pay another round of 12% even though the tough burden of life never shows a decline. Despite poverty, the Renaissance dam has to be built. I have an alternative idea. The expense for the dam requires about 4 bn dollars…..only in America, there are about 1mn Ethiopian Diasporas. We can cover…..(Free translation from the Amharic is mine).

Compared against the overall popular spirit prevailing in Ethiopia at present, my impression about Zelalem’s suggestion is that it was forwarded half innocently and half naively. If my position is not taken as a conspiracy theory, the implicit tone of the message is: Ethiopia must need the wealthy ‘Diaspora’ more than the poor domestic people. I am not saying, in actual fact, that Ethiopians living here are rich and immigrant Ethiopians are poor. However, Zelalem said it probably subconsciously in a taste of some hypocrisy and impoliteness. He failed to see that there are many million Ethiopians who can pay and who are proud of paying, paying and paying more every day for the Dam.

Fundamentally speaking, foreign assistance from any source, leave alone Ethiopians, is very, very demanded and significant, but never as a replacement of the domestic social power. Technically speaking, therefore, Zelalem’s comparison between the inside and the outside is full of naivety. I could not help but understand him that way. Unfortunately, this innocent comment is a shared view among many Ethiopian elites and the media
people here in side, too. Let me go back to my theme: ‘Ethiopia’s Diaspora’ or ‘Diaspora Opposition’: is it a myth or an existent reality?

No body can precisely say when and how the term ‘Diaspora’ began to be used in Ethiopia with the purpose of identifying Ethiopians living outside. On my part, I remember having heard the term through the state media in 2006. I knew the concept ‘Diaspora’ however before two decades while I was an 11th grade history student. Since then, the word disappeared from my mental archive to come back at the said period above. With its new application, the conceptual essence of ‘Diaspora’ is heavily sapped out and being used only as a day to day public ‘word’.

From my frequent encounter with the term ‘Diaspora’ being used, it is simply, intuitively and haphazardly applied to serve geographic and sociological purposes of identifying between Ethiopians living within and without. Though I am not a linguist, I understand that words and terms never remain eternally unchanged and rigid. There is a strong dynamism of diverse sources that necessarily affect the meanings of terms to extend, contract, change or modify over time. It is not in this sense that I am challenging the new applications of the term ‘Diaspora’. My problem here is that some words go much the farthest distance in social sciences to have grown into scholarly defined concepts. With the many controversies aside, ‘Diaspora’, I argue, is one of these terms.

Thus, the apparent word or term ‘Diaspora’ is not a word or a term; it is a sociologically, historically, politically and philosophically most controversial concept or idea with a careful and seriously selected application across global scholarship. It has even ideological and racial overtones, which make it subjected to prejudicial disputes

It is amidst this global heated dialogue over redefining the concept to fit the existing international situations that it invaded the Ethiopian media language. Slowly, the word ‘Diaspora’ penetrated into official government vocabularies to the extent of naming some public departments as ‘Diaspora’ Affair Sections. The key questions here are: is there any historical, political, geographic, sociological and ideological background justification to call especially ‘Ethiopians’ living under any situation and at any place ‘Diaspora?”? After all, does ‘Diaspora’ have defined boundaries to serve for Ethiopian demands to identify those living outside from those of us living in side? What do we mean by “Diaspora opposition”? Let us go a little deeper.

1. ‘Diaspora’: Perceptions and Applications at Home

In my review for meanings and relevance of ‘Diaspora’ to fit Ethiopian realities, I tried to make sense out of the day to day use of the word. I found no such term in the literatures of the late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi. He described Ethiopians living out of their country simply as ‘Ethiopians living in foreign states.’ I observe that many high-ranking officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affaires officially use the term in formal communications. Oromia, Addis Ababa, Tigray and other regional states also use it widely. Official or unofficial I do not know, I saw taxi signpost in Addis Ababa named as “Diaspora Square.”
I also heard some Ethiopians living abroad using the term proudly to identify themselves as Ethiopians with foreign domicile. Following the death of PM Meles, I also heard radio news that a ‘Diaspora National Association’ was coming. In public discussion with high government officials, many Ethiopian returnees have been using the term ‘Diaspora’ as a recognizably identified social grouping with a separate interest and position. From this, as I implied above, the term now is in growing use to speak of who ever lives outside and is an opposition member. This is another new development.

So far, I remember one Ethiopian who returned from his long time domicile in the United States and working here as a business advisor who strongly and emotionally got opposed at being named a ‘Diaspora’ during an interview with Ethiopian Television. The man said: despite thirty years out of my country, my route has never been severed; I am linked in all aspects to my country. Why did call me a ‘Diaspora’? I was not surprised at the reporter’s failure to ask him why he refused the naming. It was clear that the journalist did not understand what the man was saying.

Even though the term has never been defined and refined in Ethiopia’s context, a critical examination of its use may suggest a set of socially agreed criteria underling the meaning. The most latent implications in the use of ‘Diaspora’ in Ethiopia tend to have the following mental patterns unconsciously shared among its users:

- ‘Diaspora’ refers to those Ethiopians who have been long outside specifically in Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and other developed states. Conversely, Ethiopians coming from Sudan, Uganda, South Africa, Kenya, and all those living and returning from Arab countries are not identified and understood as Diaspora;

- Ethiopians who left their country, soon returned very recently and did not apparently save money are not classified as ‘Diaspora’. Famous artists and other celebrities like singers and musicians are not also considered as ‘Diaspora’, if they are known among the present Ethiopian generation. It is common to say about them that he or she lives in America, France or so;

- An Ethiopian ‘Diaspora’ with less controversy over application is the one who comes back home for investment, visit relatives and tourist sites, marked by an Anglo-Saxon dressing styles and manner of life, potentially generous expenditure of money and unbounded magnanimity;

- As such, ‘Diaspora’ is a socio-economic status described by better income in dollars, and at times, forgetting the home culture including language and getting confused with manners of life here at home. New clusters of living apartments in major cities of Ethiopia are also winning recognition as ‘Diaspora Zone’ because of their distinct and usually expensive architecture.

The most common phraseologies widely used particularly by journalists at state and private media at describing a studio guest include the following: he/she lives in America or Europe for more than twenty something years, earned degrees in this and that profession, collected a lot of foreign currency, now deciding to abandon a life of comfort,
comes back to help Ethiopia grow. Almost all Ethiopians from outside who get the access to television screen are painted as most successful in any aspect, chanceful and wise. Most are from the developed north.

I am not saying these are not genuine stories. I am saying that all stories are selectively picked stories of success, which tend to mean for watchers that living outside amounts to making such successes. I sometimes wonder whether the television was telling us that we were foolish by preferring to live here at our soils. These events demonstrate that some kind of ‘Diaspora identity’ has been shaped across the mentalities and views of many urban Ethiopians.

2. ‘Diaspora’: Meanings of History, Politics, and Sociology

I again admit that dictionary meanings are conceptually limited. However, they adequately furnish, at least, etymological definitions by tracing the original root word of concepts. Before we test our final finding to Ethiopian realities, let us see the various meanings attached to the term ‘Diaspora’. The most famous Online Dictionary, Merriamwebsters so defines the root meaning ‘Diaspora’ starting with capital letter D:

Originally a Greek word, dispersion, from diaspetein to scatter, from dia- + speirein to sow. The word was first known and brought into use in 1881. Its initial meanings include the following two major definitions: 1. a: the settling of scattered colonies of Jews outside Palestine after the Babylonian exile; b: the area outside Palestine settled by Jews. c: the Jews living outside Palestine or modern Israel: 2 a: the movement, migration, or scattering of a people away from an established or ancestral homeland <the black Diaspora to northern cities> b: people settled far from their ancestral homelands <African Diaspora> c: the place where these people live.

These meanings are almost uniformly shared by historians and scholars as the original meaning of ‘Diaspora’, leaving the racist tones aside. These meanings basically signify a ‘mass movement of populations sharing the same culture and homeland away from their country or geography to other territories of no previous familiarity.’ Let us now see other literature sources how this generalized definition further got broadened and applied to identify target populations as ‘Diaspora’. The International Encyclopedia of Sociology in 2008 synthesizes the practical meaning of Diaspora as follows:

Diaspora is the dispersion of a big mass of people, for example, Jews among the Gentiles after the Babylonian Exile or the aggregate of Jews or Jewish communities scattered “in exile” outside Palestine or present-day Israel. Although the term refers to the physical dispersal of Jews throughout the world, it also carries religious, philosophical, political, and eschatological connotations, inasmuch as the Jews perceive a special relationship between the land of Israel and themselves. Interpretations of this relationship range from the messianic hope of traditional Judaism for the eventual “ingathering of the exiles” to the view of Reform Judaism that the dispersal of the Jews was providentially arranged by God to foster pure monotheism throughout the world…… According to the theory
of *shelilat ha-galut* ("denial of the exile"), espoused by many Israelis, Jewish life and culture are doomed in the Diaspora because of assimilation and acculturation, and only those Jews who migrate to Israel have hope for continued existence as Jews. It should be noted that neither this position nor any other favorable to Israel holds that Israel is the fulfillment of the biblical prophecy regarding the coming of the messianic era.

This definition as early as the second half of the 19th century led to wide scholarly debate that continued well to the first half of the 20th century. ‘Diaspora’ was almost consensually applied with the following refined definition so attached to it despite the emergence of diversified ideological and political interests across Europe and America:

A. Diaspora is a community cohesively cemented by common history, culture and identity both in geography and politics;
B. Diaspora is a community either forcibly by use of arms or treacherously pressured to leave its place of forefathers as captive, slave, or victim on the land of others;
C. Diaspora is a solidified community even though it lives on the land of foreign soil strangely eager to maintain and live up to its social norms, traditions and religious codes; on foreign soil, it lives together as different from others within a good degree of internal cohesion;
D. Diaspora is a community practically excluded or isolated from the host community as unique, odd, obstinate and parochial or, at least, heavily vulnerable to these outside oppressive relations;
E. Diaspora is a community scarcely interacting with other members of host communities so that having developed high level of political consciousness and subsequent action for better recognition and equality;
F. Diaspora for these reasons is therefore essentially a social movement to attain to simultaneous goals: equality with others and an organized and unorganized activity to return home.

Knowingly or unknowingly, this definition among intellectuals brought two communities into purview to qualify as Diaspora in the first half of the 20th century. The Jews everywhere as well as African blacks taken to America and the Caribbean as slaves and lost all routs of communications with their original homeland. These communities were dispersed across the globe not voluntarily but by force of arms and treachery with a victim social status; both were subjugated by other host communities and enslaved; both started a political movement for the respect of their rights and return to their land of ancestors.

3. Diaspora---The Era of Conceptual Convulsions

The Jewish-Black African Diaspora communities, in line with this, enjoyed an ever growing civil society and state support since the 1890s up to the 1940s by the coming to the scene of new progressive states: the former Soviet Union and the United States. The Black African, ‘Back to African Movement’ led to United States support of some black American being repatriated and resettled in what is now known as Liberia. Side by side, the struggle of African slaves continued for better life and equality. The Jewish
movement for return to Homeland added momentum by the Nazi Massacre in the 1940s. This gradually led to the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

When the civil rights movement of blacks in America culminated in the 1963s Federal Court decision that eliminated ‘separate but equal’ status at admission by schools, the black movement assumed a different course. This slowly undermined the spirit of the ‘Back to Africa Movement’ as blacks now became American legal citizens. On the Jewish side, the emergence of Israel changed the entire Jewish mentality that officially ended their ‘Diaspora’ status since then. With this, the concept ‘Diaspora’ lost significance and usage relegating only to historical literatures and textbooks.

‘Diaspora’ as a concept was called back, nonetheless, in the 1960s and 1970s with a modified application to newly emerging situations. This period saw the fast expansion of socialist euphoria particularly in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Marxist-Leninist arousals in Ghana, Guinea, Egypt, Ethiopia, Tanzania, etc, earned for themselves the nomenclature ‘African Socialist Movement’ while black African support outside the continent was dubbed as ‘Diaspora’ comrades. The intention was to expose the United States still as a worldly hell’ for black Africans. The escalation of the Cold War also heightened the ideological war between the two super powers. The emergence of Israel became a factor for the massive immigration of the Palestine Arab community where the status of Diaspora was shifted to the later. Millions of Palestine Arabs where turned both stateless and homeless, as well as forced to leave their homeland.

During this period, Diaspora took an identity of being oppressed by imperialism being attached controversially new meanings that divided scholars along ideological blocks. The difficult academic dialogues tried to pin down consensus with the following rough and generalized definition of Diaspora leveled on table: Francesco Ragazzi, a sociologist at International Sociology Association, tries to redefine ‘Diaspora’ that implies to the following six historical and political meanings:

How ontological politics relate to Diaspora politics is relatively easy to show. A systematic review of the international relations literature reveals at least six uses of the term “Diaspora.” The first and probably most common use refers to a section of the population living abroad, as in an “ethnic community divided by states”. A second meaning of the term relates to a specific social environment where the community constitutes usually a minority and excluded group. A third use of the term—probably the most common in the international relations discipline—treats a Diaspora as a discrete actor in international relations or as independent actors that actively influence homeland (ancestral or kin-state) foreign policies. A fourth meaning considers a Diaspora to be a social movement. that “the organizational form of ‘Diaspora’ is being adopted by both non-state political entrepreneurs and state elites… to use transnational practices of Diaspora mobilization as a means of generating material resources and political support” The fifth use of the term is as a broad signifier, as a form of consciousness, or as “a space of the imagination” that exceeds the mere fact of being an immigrant and presupposing a link to elsewhere. Finally, the sixth meaning is one of specific
political discourse aimed at constructing a community: ‘‘like nations, diasporas are constructed by political and cultural elites… now a cliché’ in writings on ethnicity and nationalism.’’

Despite these modifications in meaning, the concept ‘Diaspora’ remains stuck to its original and essential definitions. This definition again came short of serving socio-political realities of the 1980s and 1990 for obvious reasons: the decline of the global socialist movement that marked the end of the Cold War confrontation. Following the collapse of the Soviet communist block, globalization slipped into full swing widening and complicating a conceptual relativization. What western scholars said was a puzzle for former socialist pundits and vice versa. With this, the concept ‘Diaspora’ was swarmed into dimness and became mute, almost inapplicable.

The period in between 1990 and 1997 saw fundamental political developments of a new typology of international relations including the following:

A. The collapse of the Soviet Union left the West with a free field where the United States filled the vacuum as the new and sole value creator, supplier, and inspector world police. This brought America in conflict with what it used to call ‘rogue states’ which resisted capitalism like the former Iraq, North Korea, Iran, Libya, and others. The United States coordinated the first world coalition of states against Saddam Hussein in 1991;

B. The West as a whole also came into confrontation with Muslim fundamentalism and Terrorism that emerged as the new form of world conflicts. This led United States to open global campaign on terror after the two New York Twin towers were lowered and destroyed by a carefully organized international terrorism;

C. Following the Washington Consensus in 1993, almost all developing states were tied to IMF and World Bank newly crafted packages of neoliberal financing scheme. Many African states had to undergo shocks when they were forced to bear neoliberal political and economic arrangements. Some nationalist and developmental states stood in resistance to this world economic order;

D. This era also introduced increased decentralization of the global media and the massive import of information from the west to the rest. The escalated and aggressive mobility of multinational corporations around the world helped the western media industry to broaden its horizon and got tuned across all parts of the world. Information became privatized and commercialized in the spirit of liberalization and globalization.

It is against this background that we find the renewed application and usage of the word ‘Diaspora’ out of its intellectual minimum consensus lines. The beginning of the 2000s brought with itself internationalization of education which again brought the redefinition business of the concept ‘Diaspora’ back into critical purview in order to fit its use with the new global situation.

4. ‘Diaspora’: Renewed Quest for Intellectual Conceptualization
The difficulty associated with redefining ‘Diaspora’ since 1990s was by no means a problem of scholars only. It also has affected multinational organizations and agencies, states and Non-Government Organizations. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees, for example, made expert attempts at clarifying such concepts like ‘Immigration’, ‘Refugee’, ‘asylum’, etc., in 1993 ad 1997. The purpose was to develop universally agreed principles and standards that bind member states of both refugee sending and receiving categories to preserving the human rights and dignities of victims. None of these attempts succeeded in the project due to the political and ideological implications underneath of the terms. In all these projects, the concept ‘Diaspora’ was deliberately abandoned as it sounded even more ideological and seriously divisive.

One can also easily verify through web search that none of European states and America, even Israel, incorporated the term ‘Diaspora’ into their Immigration Acts and Rules. They all use ‘immigrants’ almost as a standard term as it bears much less ideological, racial and moral undertones. Legal experts make every care in the use of terms as they entail additional rights and duties in the relations between the state and citizens. ‘Diaspora’ as a concept does not qualify the need for outright usage so that one cannot find it across the day to day use of government parlance there. Apparently, the redefinition task is left to intellectuals.

Early this year, I had a chance to participate in an international conference of researchers with the specific topic of ‘reconceptualizing Diaspora’ in the context of the new global reality. There were big name scholars from around the world including Israelis and black Americans. I had to listen to a dozen of research papers before and after I presented my research paper that attempted to revise the concept ‘Diaspora’ against Ethiopia’s context. From the range of papers presented, I realized a pattern of conflicting interests including the following:

A. Scholars from Europe, America, Australia and Canada have entertained similar trends. Canada is the biggest sponsor of researches on the issue of immigration and Diaspora matters of reconceptualization. These scholars made maximum efforts where they theoretically underpinned that any possible revised concept of ‘Diaspora’ never include white colonial settlers in Africa, Australia, America, Canada and almost all white settlers by any means;

B. Israeli scholars, on the other hand, did not want to see any revised concept of Diaspora that would question and challenge the status of their legitimate statehood in any manner. They also do not want ‘Diaspora’ to be redefined in a way that one could apply to explain the status of Palestine refugees in other countries. These refugees for them are armed rebels fighting for destabilizing and dismembering the state of Israel. Thus, they argue that Palestine status has nothing in common with the historical and sociological implications of ‘Diaspora’ in any manner. Moreover, they challenge the proposal that Palestine refugees have now a territory of their own despite its shortage of sovereignty. Israelis chose the rather most conservative use of the former concept without any modification against their current status;

C. Black American researchers were divided in to two groups of views. One group argued for the neutral use of the concept ‘Diaspora’ from ideological and moral
corollaries depending on what the user wanted to say as it was difficult to refine its meanings in the present extremely complex social matrix. The other group argued the opposite that the concept should not be reviewed in the manner that pushed the plight of past American black slaves into oblivion and historical confusion. They chose selective use of the concept with a strong moral tone in favor of human dignity and equality;

D. What astonished me was the argument posed by scholars from Latin America. One researcher from Mexico strongly argued that the concept ‘Diaspora’ should be redefined to serve current demands of humanity. All forced displacements at community level, all colonial and imperialist forcible seizures that induced internal and external dislocation of communities in history, and all settlements that forced indigenous communities toward peripheral and disadvantaged social positions should be seen within the prism of the new definition of ‘Diaspora’. For Latin scholars, the Diaspora phenomenon at any stage of human history has always been a result of imperialism and imperial conquest.

At heart, this was the idea which I supported. Nonetheless, my paper was a focus on another theme.

5. Ethiopia has no any ‘Diaspora’ at all!

If all the above intricacies characterize the concept of ‘Diaspora’ up to the day of writing this article, it must mean something to Ethiopia’s context.

A. Diaspora in any of its forms, defined in the past or redefined at preset, has scarcely any historical, political and sociological relevance to the specific realities of Ethiopia. Historically, Ethiopians had never experienced an occasion where they were forced to disperse as populations to any part of the world. The invasion of Italy in 1936 itself was an event where Ethiopians turned into guerrilla resistance on their own land and it was the ruling core group that immigrated;

B. The worst era in the political history of Ethiopia where millions of citizens were forced to leave their homeland was that of Derg’s rule. However, these Ethiopians immigrated not as a community but as individuals for political reason and by their own government. Their immigration was moreover motivated by the state restriction on citizens’ mobility that stayed in force up to 1991. There are also Ethiopians who are security-induced refugees by crossing borders and settled out side but began slowly returning until recently;

C. Since 1991, Ethiopia has had three categories of immigrants who left the country on their own individual decision and personally: first are economic refugees in search of better income and life through, for example, the most notorious American Diversification Visa Program; second are followers to their blood relatives who availed themselves of the new liberalized immigration policy to join their formerly immigrated relatives but still individually by their own request and decisions; the third are escapees or run-away individuals who flew from justice as members of the Derg government or post-1991 run-away elements having used their opposition identity cards as a visa to acquire the Green Card to live outside.
D. The third group of immigrants constitutes not a political group but mostly a legal target group of individuals who probably could not return to Ethiopia in any capacity. Some tried their level best to access political office and succeeded in doing so during the 2005 general election. Among them, some made appearance at the parliament but vacated their official seats, protected by constitutional rule of immunity and immigrated to either America or Europe. Others were found suspects of illegal political involvements and accused but failed to appear at court. Most of these were sentenced to life imprisonments and capital punishment in absetencia. At discovering terms of punishment, they again refused to request for pardon so that they find themselves legally under hunt. While the majority of Ethiopians abroad have the right to individually decide and return home as many times as they want, these run-away refugees have been denied this right by themselves;

E. The run-away group of refugees has organized itself into political parties. However, their political programs state that they stand in opposition to the existing regime in Ethiopia, seek and work for its removal. They go on frequent demonstrations against foreign donors and assistants in demand of interrupting their support to development efforts in Ethiopia. They tried to publicly disrupt and humiliate the late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi while he was on a state mission in the United States. They continue to contribute money with the purpose of staging guerrilla warfare in Ethiopia against the national Defense Forces. All these activities have nothing to do with what scholars identify with ‘Diaspora’ as a social movement to return back home, insure equality of treatment with native populations and to oppose all obstacles to the establishment of ones homeland country;

F. Despite their refusal to be called a ‘Diaspora’ any more, Jewish communities in the United States and Europe have continued to exercise the established traditions of the past in struggling for all possible benefits of Israel to the extents of influencing campaign outcomes. Most American presidents habitually promise for increased diplomatic and financial support for Israel. They do so not because they personally sympathize with that country, but they find themselves under heavy pressures from Jewish Communities. Many other immigrant groups from other states (China, Thailand, Japan, India, Turkey, etc) are also known for doing everything in support of the security and well being of their home country and populations by pressuring the policies of developed states. They do so not because the governments in power were angels and perfect but they prioritize the state leaving the assignments of controlling government leaders to the domestic people. The opposition group of Ethiopian refugees goes contrary to these practices.

For these reasons of politics, sociology and history, ‘Diaspora’ does never apply to Ethiopia and Ethiopians as people as well as the Opposition. What Ethiopia has is an immigrant group of individuals who, unlike ‘Diaspora’, in any of its version, never share identical ethno-linguistic, political, traditional and social commonality for the key reasons that they immigrated individually and voluntarily. For me, the concept ‘Diaspora’ is a derogative naming in deliberate violence against the honor and pride of Ethiopians living outside. When I hear the word applied to Ethiopians, I personally feel that my identity was transgressed.

6. So, who started calling Ethiopians ‘Diaspora’?
I already said above, I have no any evidence as to who first started calling Ethiopian immigrants ‘Diaspora’. However, I tried to trace web literatures back to the early 1990s to have found out there are clues of established patterns. Firstly, the list of users includes the entire media (the Economist, Time, Newsweek, NNC, BBC, etc.) international organizations (the IMF and the World Bank, even in their official reports) and Non-Governmental establishments (Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Freedom House, etc.); secondly, I found out that the word is being applied regularly to Ethiopia, China, Russia, Nigeria, etc, more frequently than to other societies. I hardly found, for example, ‘Diaspora’ applied South Africa, Zimbabwe, Saudi Arabia, and so on; thirdly, these users apply ‘Diaspora’ to apparently tacitly explain political situations as the following examples show:

The Economist 2002 in its news coverage writes so:

The dominant Tigrian elite in the upper echelon of the Ethiopian government could not win the favor of the big Ethiopian ‘Diaspora’ no matter how successive attempts were made. The size of remittance from the Ethiopian ‘Diaspora’ is the least placing the country one of the poorly benefited states of Africa. Cameroon, for example, has a size of ‘Diaspora’ about one third of the Ethiopian one but earns a remittance 65% higher than that of Ethiopia.

The Economist 2006:

The big Ethiopian ‘Diaspora’ stands in opposition to the Addis Ababa government. The Meles Zenawi government is faced with an internationalized challenge mobilized by the Diaspora from London to Washington DC after its brutal crackdown against peaceful demonstrators following the controversial election last year.

Time 2006:

The Meles government, which is severely criticized by the large mass of Ethiopian Diaspora, could falter from shortages of foreign aid and loan. The ‘Diaspora’ opposition denied its support and drained its remittances extremely low.

Fourthly and lastly, from the above extracts, one can see that these and most other western media put the group of Ethiopians living outside as one politically unified community and most influential body, in direct parallel with the government in Addis Ababa. The most likely implication is to paint the domestic opposition and people as repressively constrained, silenced and weakened by the government where the ‘Diaspora’ outside is left as the only capable opposition community.

I presume therefore that these western actors must have used the term for the first time with understandable ideological goal. I scarcely believe that this could be a chance as seen against the profile of the states which were placed as the main targets. The states of China, Russia and Ethiopia particularly are internationally known for their firm stance to grow and develop as Chinese, Russian and Ethiopian respectively than as British, French
or American. These states were once fallen civilizations of their own and now fast reviving and rising. I am hopeful that future researches will deliver the truth.

**Conclusions**

The naming ‘Ethiopia’s Diaspora’ or ‘Diaspora Opposition’ of Ethiopia is a myth. Ethiopians who immigrated to foreign lands have never had one common reason that they equally shared in their decision and moment of going abroad. Ethiopians living outside are diversified by their political position and the by degrees of their loyalty to the motherland. This happens because fundamentally they were and are never a unified Diaspora. Ethiopia has no a single Diaspora because its independent existence had never been terminated. Independent status of a state and the social phenomena of Diaspora are therefore mutually exclusive.