

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

**STATE AND PRIVATE BROADCAST MEDIA
OWNERSHIP AND ITS EFFECT ON MEDIA
FREEDOM IN ETHIOPIA**

BY

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ABSTRACT

The growth of broadcast media industry in Ethiopia over the past decade has presumably had a significant impact on public interest to seek and receive information through media. In this connection, this study examines the role of broadcast media in promoting freedom of expression and how media space and discourses are shaped by the types of media ownership in practice.

Diversity of idea forms the foundation for democratic participation, control, and the shaping of public opinion in modern societies. The media is a major vehicle for the expression of diverse views, passions and ideas in a given society. This research compares the way private and State owned broadcast media in Ethiopia carryout information acquisition, storage, retrieval, interpretation and dissemination in order to entertain diverse idea and practice media freedom.

Media freedom assists people to make informed decisions and facilitate democracy. In this context, media freedom becomes an issue without which it is impossible to advance and protect other human rights. Therefore, professionalism among journalists and editors and quality in sources of information are vital to the defense of human rights for all. Otherwise, media owners including the government, advertises and gatekeepers would be engaged in self-promotion and institutionalizing propaganda by having only a single source of information against journalistic ethics. This thesis explores the extent to which the State and privately owned media in Ethiopia comply with conventional ethical standards of journalism.

The findings of study demonstrate that the private press in Ethiopia strives to make profit, and State owned media fundamentally serves government's interest. Thus multiplicity of ideas will not flow from diversity of ownership since all the ownerships are captives of their own interest. This study contends that freedom of the media will have little meaning if citizens cannot make use of it and be part of the agenda setting process regardless of its ownership. Therefore, the responsibility of facilitating forum for the society to enjoy media freedom belongs to the governmentally and privately owned media that serves as a means for dialogue and acquisition of knowledge.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

Media can contribute to building confidence of the public by promoting open debate, providing reliable information, exposing wrongdoing and corruption, and explaining the impact of events (Woodring J. W., 2009). And hence, both journalists and human rights activists have a reason to defend freedom of expression in a way fight for media freedom and independent journalism.

Media freedom has been considered crucial to democracy because the news media provide a fundamental informational linkage between mass public, leaders, and governments (Woodring J. W., 2009). A main justification for press freedom is that free media influences government performance to respect fundamental human rights including freedom of expression, information and the press (Woodring J. W., 2009). It is widely believed that democratic governments could guarantee independent and impartial public media. In some cases however, new democratically elected governments will be challenged to transform media into public service due to journalistic culture in media organizations, historical procurement and appointment procedures and funding model (Berger G., 2007).

There is much debate on values of free media and as to what makes media free from government control (Woodring J. W., 2009). Media is not just targeted only by governments, but private companies, nongovernmental organizations, political parties and other lobbyist groups are also targeting media to spin information with greater skill to influence the audience (Blankson I.A., 2002).

Freedom House states in its 2007 index of press freedom that political and economic environments in which media organizations are operating will also determine whether they are free and independent. Professional environment that encourages journalists to monitor and report on governments and that discourages self – censorship is also vital for the media to be free (Gurevitch, M. and Blumler J. G. 1990).

It is legitimate for the government to communicate directly to its constituencies to advocate specific viewpoints and highlight its performance (Murphy N., 2009). It is also in nature of governments to seek positive public perception and dominate debate through the media (Murphy N., 2009). Coming to Ethiopian context, the FDRE Constitution Article 29(5) gives the government a mandate to finance or control media in a manner ensuring diversity in the expression of opinion. So long as there is no specific article that defines government as a protected speaker, the control and finance mandate given to government in this provision can be used to argue that the government has a right to speak along with its duty to ensure diverse idea is entertained in State owned media organizations. However, Nathan Murphy argues that legitimate speech by the government can cross the line and become propaganda. Although, press freedom is defined as an absence of state intervention in media activities, it does not imply that the media should be free from interference and regulation. On the other hand, any restrictions on freedom of expression must be in accordance with the principle of the rule of law.

Looking into the FDRE Constitution, the privately owned media in Ethiopia do not have legal responsibility to ensure diversity of opinion. However, Broadcasting Service Proclamation No. 533/2007 clearly defines the rights and obligations of persons who undertake broadcasting service. Hence, commercial broadcasting service shall provide equal treatment to any community in their license area and they shall include regional as well as national news in their programs. It is acceptable for privately-owned media to support and criticize any opinion, but the freedom to express opinions does not exempt independent journalists from the duty to respect professional ethics and codes of conduct. This means that they are not free to use hateful language or publish defamatory reports against individuals and the public at large since these are conditions that lead

to restricting freedom of expression (Article 29 (6)). It is also expected from private media to provide their audience with balanced and responsible reporting and thereby contributing in a positive manner to the plurality of opinion in the country.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The FDRE Constitution Article 29 (5) declares that any media financed by or under the control of the State shall be operated in a manner ensuring its capacity to entertain diversity in the expression of opinion. However, it is said to be implicit that the government will continue to own and control media outlets and the indirect legitimatization of the State's control over the media is contrary to the principle 6 of the African Commission Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa (Article 19, Global Campaign for Free Expression., 2000). Hence, how the Ethiopian government incorporated or failed to incorporate diversity in the expression of opinion and what the government's approach to dialogue with those who hold different perspective should be researched.

Discussion with media practitioners in Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency indicates that self censorship and political ideology of individuals particularly those in decision making position is prevailing in collecting as well as disseminating information for the general public. Professionalizing propaganda can be compared with media ethics, which is a process of decision making choices that draw on norms and principles about the 'right' thing to do, as the choices are usually guided by professional codes (Berger G., 2007). Berger Guy in his book "*Media Legislation in Africa A comparative Legal Survey*" argues that "media ethics may inform the design of some media laws, but also sometimes conflict with legal provisions that violate or ignore specific claims around media as having special rights and privileges". For this reason, this study paper will examine to what extent professionalizing propaganda in State media organizations is taking place.

The concept of media freedom is based on the principle that public bodies hold information not for themselves but as custodians of the public good and hence everyone should have the right to access this information, subject only to clearly defined exceptions to be determined by law (ICCPR Article 19 (3)). Therefore, State and privately owned media should be free from any interference from anybody and be able to secure information from all concerned state actors and be able to empower the public to be involved in social, economic and political decision making process. The research will go through available legal documents, editorial policies to examine, if media ownership shapes the way media organizations treat diverse idea. How State and privately owned media organizations in Ethiopia acquire, retrieve, store, interpret and disseminate information will also be studied to measure the extent of media freedom in practice.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study will attempt to answer:

1. Is media freedom in Ethiopia affected by State and private media ownership?
2. Is institutionalizing and professionalizing propaganda taking place in State owned Ethiopia Radio and Television Agency?
3. Is interference of private media owners, editors and advertisers observed in news making process of private broadcasters in Ethiopia?
4. Is the information acquisition, storage, retrieval, interpretation and dissemination behaviour of State and private owned electronic media influence its role to entertain diverse idea and opinion?

1.4. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study is to examine whether institutionalizing and professionalizing propaganda is taking place in State media organizations and whether it is becoming a threat to media freedom. The study will also try to compare the way private and State owned media organizations carry out information acquisition, storage, retrieval, interpretation and dissemination, as well as the role of media to entertain diverse idea and opinion. Specific objectives are:

- To explore if media freedom is affected by State and private media ownerships.
- To investigate if the government controls media activities in a way that hinder State owned broadcast media to entertain diverse idea and opinion.
- To examine how State and private owned media journalists and management bodies understand and practice media freedom.

1.5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is to choose, develop and test with applicable research methods to freedom of expression capable of examining whether broadcast media ownership is affecting media freedom in Ethiopia. Therefore, State owned broadcast media organization, Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency is taken as study subject. Since it is believed that radio and television comprise the most important components in the national opinion process (Barron J. A., 1973), it would also be necessary to consider samples from the private press for the purpose of comparative analysis. As a result, the three private radio stations, Sheger FM 102.1, Zami FM 90.7 as well as Radio Fana is considered as balancing subjects given that Ethiopia does not have private television station.

1.6. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Various institutions as well as individuals have different perception regarding media freedom and the role government plays for its promotion. Therefore, it was difficult for people who participated in focus group discussions and key informant interviews to address media ownership and its effect on media freedom without politicizing the issue.

It is not quite common in Ethiopia to question government's media use and hold it as a duty bearer to make sure peoples right for accessing and receiving information through any media. Hence, it was difficult to get well documented reference materials to supplement this study.

It was a challenge for the researcher to access all policy related documents and transmitted primetime news pieces from broadcast stations selected (apart from Radio Fana that has digital news archive and well stipulated editorial policy) as a result of poor documentation. The interview with its Programs Head and personal observation of the researcher has been compiled to give a picture of how Zami FM 90.7 treats primetime news. However, the researcher was unsuccessful to access primetime news pieces documented as it was difficult to get consent from the owner. This may lead to oversimplification of findings about privately owned stations.

1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research tries to analyze the impact of media ownership on freedom of expression in Ethiopia. This primarily helps media organizations to revisit their policy in order to address public concerns.

Although much has been written about private media and freedom of the press in Ethiopia, study on government-owned media is under-researched. This study will perhaps stimulate more academic research on the issue of State owned and financed media and media freedom.

The role media ownership play in information gathering and dissemination process may envisage the extent of media freedom practice in Ethiopia. Subsequently, the study presents the existing trends of State and private owned media organizations in information acquisition, storage, retrieval, interpretation and dissemination. Understanding this trend may serve as an initial stage for other researchers who need to study more on the issue.

1.8. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study comprises five chapters. Background and objectives of the research are outlined in the first Chapter, which describe significance of the study and questions to be addressed in this research. Chapter Two consists of related literature review, where the impact of media ownership on freedom of expression and of the media is discussed from other scholars' point of view. Research methods are dealt extensively in Chapter Three; whereas data analysis and research findings are presented in Chapter Four. Chapter five illustrates the study conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

2.1. MEDIA FREEDOM AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Media freedom is all about freedom of expression. The guarantee of freedom of expression applies with particular force to the media, as peoples' right to seek and receive information cannot have a meaningful application without the media. Freedom of expression is protected by international and regional human rights instruments. Article 19 of the UDHR, Article 19 of the ICCPR, Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights and Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union guarantee the right to freedom of expression.

Article 19 of the UDHR states that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression without interference, including the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media, regardless of frontiers. The UDHR further stipulates that the freedom and rights granted under Article 19 shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law exclusively for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. Although the UDHR is not legally binding on states, many of its provision including Article 19 are widely accepted as customary international laws.

The ICCPR aimed to transform the UDHR on communication rights into a legally binding obligation through Article 19(1) and (2):

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.

2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of choice.

The ICCPR which Ethiopia ratified on 11 June 1993, imposes formal legal obligations on State parties to respect its provisions, and permits no restrictions whatsoever on the "right to hold opinions without interference". It does, however, allow restrictions on freedom of information or expression. However, such restrictions are permissible on certain conditions and for limited purposes (ICCPR Article 19(3)). The conditions lay down restriction on freedom of expression under the ICCPR are: *for respect of the rights or reputation of others, and for the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals*. More specifically, Article 19(3) requires that restrictions on the freedom granted must be in keeping with the principles of legality and necessity and as prescribed by law. However, there must be adequate protection and effective control in domestic law against arbitrary interference by public authorities with freedom of expression.

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which came into force in 1986, is one of the instruments applying to Ethiopia which guarantee the right of freedom of expression, as the country ratified this document on 15 June 1998. However, the African Charter has not operated as a useful source of standards and criteria to influence national approaches to legislation and policies regarding human rights in general and media freedom in particular (Peter N. T., 1995).

Article 9 of the Charter provides as follows:

1. Every individual shall have the right to receive information.
2. Every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinion within the law.

Looking into the charter, while paragraph one places no limitation on the right to receive information, the right to express and disseminate one's opinion is restricted under paragraph 2 and freedom of expression is to be exercised within the law. Some scholars like Osterdahl I.

argue that the effect of such a provision is "to give the government authority to enact any legislation it wants including very restrictive clauses" (Osterdahl I., 1992). Thus gives no extra protection outside the protection offered by the respective governments in their respective domestic laws.

Freedom of expression is restricted by all governments worldwide, as it is observed that most international and regional instruments that are signed and ratified by many governments, have stipulated limitations on freedom of expression and of the media. Freedom of expression without restrictions could also violate the idea of State sovereignty. However, because of the fundamental status of free expression, international jurisprudence holds that any restrictions on free speech must be precise and clearly predetermined in accordance with the principle of the rule of law (Berger G., 2007).

The conditions on restricting freedom of expression provide a basis for gauging balances between the rights around freedom of expression on the one hand, and the rights to dignity, reputation, and to privacy, on the other. In this regard, sedition, defamation, hate speech and pornography are common conditions that lead to restricting freedom of expression and of the media. State sovereignty, which is one of the most basic foundations of international system, is also a critical issue to be considered in addressing the issue of media freedom.

For instance, in the case of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the media played an instrumental role in laying the groundwork for genocide and actively participated in the extermination campaign (Adelman and Suhrke, 1996). Rwanda authorities relied on the national station Radio Rwanda and privately owned Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines (RTML) to incite killings of Tutsi and members of the Hutu opposition and to give specific directions for carrying out the killings (Thompson A., 2007). Rwandan government officials claimed that the radio station RTLM was a private enterprise, merely exercising its right to free speech (Prunier G., 1995). Thompson Allan argues in his book *the Media and the Rwanda Genocide* that there must be a

way to respond to abuses of power by media organizations and journalists without violating the principles of freedom of expression, which are cornerstones of democracy.

The role of hate media in the Rwanda genocide is an example how media can be used to transmit propaganda of hatred for the purpose of genocide, and also the need to control and regulate media content. Therefore, one could argue that the government can have authority to enact legislation that restricts freedom of expression and of the media for the protection of national security or public order.

2.2. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, MEDIA FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY

Human rights instruments and international judicial bodies affirm the fundamental importance of freedom of expression as a key human right foundation to democracy. In a democratic society, power rests with the citizen, who is entitled to freedom of speech, freedom of information and freedom of the press each of which has found its way into the UDHR. Freedom of speech and of information serves functions which are essential for democratic self-governance, as people have a right to receive information from diverse sources (Smolla A., 1992).

Freedom of expression that will be fully applicable with the existence of free and strong media promotes the free flow of information and ideas (Peter N. T., 1995). This also assists people to make informed decisions and facilitate democracy (Gibbs A., 2004). Freedom of speech is a means of participation whereby individuals debate an issue and actively join in the process of decision making (Economic Commission for Africa, 2007). Freedom of speech also serves the pursuit of political truth and it facilitates majority rule. At the same time, freedom of speech provides a means to restrain the government accountable and ensures stability by allowing for minority voices to be heard (Smolla A., 1992).

Some scholars in the media development field like Kasoma, argues that independent media plays a role in building democracy than of government owned or financed (Kasoma F., 2000). However, who does the independent media actually represents in a given society and on what democratic basis it can claim to represent public opinion have been a point of discussion. It is evident that the private press that strives to survive the cruelty of the media market represents its own interest of profit making. It is also the owners who have the power to have much say in establishing the goals of the media house, in preparing editorial guidelines and in who becomes editor in order to make sure their interest is kept (Ansah P., 1991). Therefore, journalists who are actually tied with the interest of the owners of private press and of the editors cannot claim to be working for the public, and to represent public opinion.

The case of Rupert Murdoch's dominance in western media provides a good example. Rupert Murdoch has grown his media company "*The News Corporation*" into one of the largest and most influential media groups in the world from a small town newspaper in Australia. Murdoch exercises considerable power with his global media company and is often used by politicians to persuade him to favourably cover their campaigns (Wolff M., 2008). His empire covers television, filmed entertainment, cable network programming, book publishing, direct broadcast satellite television, magazines and newspapers operating in the United States, Australia, Continental Europe, the United Kingdom, Asia and the Pacific Basin (Wolff M., 2008). Wolff Michael described Rupert Murdoch as a person 'who owns the News and whose power is unchallenged'.

According to Bill Rosenberg, Murdoch uses his newspapers to further his business interests, for example he took the BBC off his Asian Star satellite service because of its critical documentaries about China (Rosenberg B., 2002). Because Murdoch continues to push his News Corporation Company forward to get into the lucrative Chinese market that has up until now been out of reach for Western media companies (Rosenberg B., 2002).

Murdoch is frequently criticized for the influence he has on editorial policy and news content of his corporation. He strongly defends his right to interfere in editorial matters saying “It’s my responsibility sometimes to interfere” (Rosenberg B., 2002). News that would hurt the financial interests of a news organization often goes unreported. News suppression is also to protect the news organization itself advertisers and the owners (Rosenberg B., 2002). Based on the Rupert Murdoch example presented here, it would be easy to see how both ownership and commercialism of the media must be carefully monitored and regulated.

2.3. DIVERSITY OF IDEAS AND MEDIA FREEDOM

John Stuart Mill in his essay “Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion” marks an enormous concern to maintain the integrity of debate and of ideas. He says, “Complete liberty of contradicting and disposing of opinion is the very condition which justifies us in assuming its truth for purpose of action.” Diversity of opinion, Mill says, is useful for at least two reasons. One is that the received opinion may be false and some other opinion true. The other is that if the received opinion is true, a conflict with its opposite will give greater clarity to its truth (Mill, 1947). Mill emphasize on debate and interchange of opinion in order to promote political discussion. Although, constitutional freedoms such as freedom of the press go into operation only against authoritarian state action, so much power over opinion is technically in private hands. These private hands consequently prevent us from complete liberty of interchanging opinion.

The media agenda presented to the public usually results from decisions by journalists and their supervisors about the news of the moment. In other words, the news media can set the agenda for the public’s attention around which public opinion forms (McCombs, 1989). But, as the dynamics of media is changing, the people usually called as “the audience” should take the centre stage of the media. For this reason, access to diverse sources of information has to be regarded as basic democratic right (Mwangi C., 2010).

However, the right of participation of the audience makes sense only if the members of the public choose to participate (Barron J. A., 1973). If the public cannot choose to participate, the right to communicate becomes merely the right to propagandize for those who are able to air their voice. Therefore the right of access is, and must be, an act of choice. Choice is about actively seeking out and comparing media on important issues, rather than passively waiting for contents to be delivered by the media. This action of the public places pressure on news makers and reporters to design their content in a way that can be accessible through media and also properly formatted in order to be chosen by the public.

The thought of diverse ideas on the air cannot leave the government behind as there is actual interdependence between government and State owned or financed media organizations (Robert D., 1979). The capacity of the government to have the means to communicate with all territory it governs is basically important to both state effectiveness and nation building (World Bank, 2002). Therefore State media play a crucial role in creating that sense of community.

Diversity of idea forms the foundation for democratic participation, control, and the shaping of public opinion in modern societies (Ghai Y.,1990). Diversity in the media should be achieved through a regulatory environment encouraging a wide range of media ownership, outlets, contents, interests, and political perspectives (World Bank, 2001). Despite the fact that amplifying diverse idea can be achieved through encouraging a wide range of media ownership and outlets, there must be a way to diversify contents, interests, and political perspectives in State financed media organizations.

Making the media representative and giving expression to the differing voices among the public cannot be fully accomplished by substituting government control of the media for private control (Ansha P., 1991). In other words, multiplicity of ideas will not flow from diversity of ownership if all the ownerships are captives of their own interest (Barron J. A., 1973). The responsibility for providing opportunity for freedom of expression however belongs to both the governmentally

and privately controlled media. Media freedom would, therefore, be a critical condition for sustaining the essence of representative government that is the citizens' power over the administration (Ansha P., 1991).

2.4. MEDIA FREEDOM AND PROPAGANDA

Herbert Marcuse, the Philosopher of the New Left calls for complete control of media so that it may persuade and propagandize to create revolutionary majority or to threaten the existing order and create new one. Media scholars on the other hand argue that if there is absolute control of media in a nation, access to the media can be finally a victory for propaganda.

There have been various definitions given to Propaganda by different scholars. The World Book Multimedia Encyclopaedia, 2001 defined propaganda as one-sided communication designed to influence people's thinking and actions. An article by Robert D. Kamenshine on government speech defines propaganda as "the use of facts, fiction, argument and suggestion, sometimes supported by an effort to suppress inconsistent material, with the calculated purpose of instilling in the recipient certain beliefs, prejudices, or convictions" designed to produce a certain course of action (Robert D., 1979). Nonetheless, Edward L. Bernays argued that there is no word in the English language, whose meaning has been distorted as the word 'propaganda'. He stated in his book titled 'Propaganda' that the change took place mainly during the late war when the term took on a decidedly sinister characteristic (Bernays L. E., 2005). Edward L. Bernays further asserted that propaganda is a perfectly legitimate form of human activity that any society, whether social, religious or political, which is possessed of certain beliefs, and sets out to make them known, either by the spoken or written words. He also defined 'modern propaganda' as a consistent, enduring effort to create or shape events to influence the relations of the public to an enterprise, idea or group.

There are two kinds of propaganda: *integration propaganda* and *agitation propaganda* (Jacques E., 1966). According to Jacques, integration propaganda is aimed at adjustment. It is also an effort to encourage trust and reconciliation among the public. In this case, the media should be accustomed the public to integration propaganda. Agitation propaganda on the other hand, aims to turn resentment to rebellion. Agitation propaganda involves different actors, using politics and power-play to convince the people of a nation that a certain threat is more real. Agitation propaganda, if successful, may lead to the public demanding or agreeing to take action against less-important concerns while real issues such as health and education get neglected. The general public will not profit from such actions, but people in politics and power-play.

2.5. INSTITUTIONALIZING AND PROFESSIONALIZING PROPAGANDA IN STATE MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS

Media freedom is a fundamental human right. However, it does not imply that the media should be free from interference and regulation (Berger G., 2007). Conventionally, press freedom is defined as an absence of state intervention in media activities (Czepek A., 2008). State intervention in media activities therefore makes the government to justify its regulation of the media. Media control is often associated with propaganda, as purpose of propaganda is to send out and attempt to link with institutional ideology in order to maintain a balance of power (Robert D., 1979). Therefore, the formation of autonomy public media is challenged by the intention of institutionalizing propaganda, which is about considering a single source particularly the government as reliable information source.

According to Kasoma, the confrontational relationship with governments is largely brought about by the press's own unprofessional behaviour (Kasoma, 2000). State and media relations could be significantly addressed by a coordinated approach to training that would include journalists, politicians, parliamentarians and judges. The result might be a dialogue between those who originate and execute the law and those who are more affected by it. The nurturing of

media freedom, in general, and a critical tradition, in particular, will require more investment. This would be geared to capacity building that focuses on training of journalists. The training delivered shall need to be sufficiently broad to bring about a high sense of professionalism among journalists (Mwape B., 1998). It is around truth telling that ethics of journalists are determined and constructed (Mwape B., 1998). Ethics of journalists therefore are very important component in advocating and sustaining a free, diverse and independent media. The media in Africa has remained largely untrained, unorganized and unprofessional. As a result, entertaining diverse idea has been neglected even to prove or disprove a certain fact as true or false. This can be considered as a result of lack of critical tradition from journalist's side on government's activities, and an attempt to send out institutional ideology from State parties in order to maintain a balance of power.

Professionalizing propaganda can be compared with media ethics, which is a process of decision making choices that draw on norms and principles about the 'right' thing to do, as the choices are usually guided by professional codes (Burger G., 2007). Thus, denial of access by media organizations can be considered as private action, even when it is owned by the government as gate keepers have a role to play. Self censorship and political ideology of individuals particularly those in decision making position is prevailing in collecting as well as disseminating information for the general public. When propaganda is professionalized, the dead weight of controls and censorship had reached a point whereby professionals had lost the very basic reflexes of journalism and this had the effect of crushing the will of journalists to react promptly or with the expected vigor when faced with an event or breaking news (Peter N. T., 1995).

2.6. MEDIA FREEDOM IN ETHIOPIA CONTEXT

The first written Ethiopian Constitution was framed in 1931 (Fasil Nahom, 1997) as a grant from his Majesty Emperor Haile Selassie to the people. The main reason for the Emperor to have this constitution was to make the country modernized and formed a continental legal tradition, which in turn categorizes Ethiopia as one of the countries with its legal practice (Fasil Nahom, 1997).

The constitution was revised in 1955, in order to accommodate the issue of Ethio- Eritrean federation. Both the first and the revised constitutions were autocratic and dictatorial concentrating the state power in the hands of the Emperor (Both P., 2004). Consequently, neither of the constitutions provided for orderly change of government, and democratic rights were not fully observed including freedom of expression and of the media.

The Derg established a socialist revolutionary regime in 1974 through the ratification of the Constitution in 1987 (Widner J., 2009). The media during the era of Mengistu Hailemariam were entirely state controlled with no private or public service media (African Media Development Initiative, 2005) Mass media institutions were also recognized as instruments of propaganda under the centralized control of Worker's Party and Ministry of Information (Article 19, Global Campaign for Free Expression, 2000).

By the early 1990s, faced with weak economies, a declining standard of living, and repressive regime that curtailed basic freedoms, Ethiopians demanded more democratic government. Following the fall of dictatorial leaderships, Ethiopian State controlled and independent media were sharply divided by the events (Bratton M. and de Walle N., 1997). The independent media in 1990s emerged in the forefront of the campaign for democracy and often acted as an opposition to the government (Bratton M. and de Walle N., 1997). At the same time, some free press publications made a choice of being involved in sensational reporting on fashion, crime and sex. The state controlled media on the other hand lashed out at independent press in general as agents of instability who were being used by opposition parties and insurgents to cause trouble in their own countries.

Terje S. Skjerdal and Hallelujah Lule argue on their article '*Uneven Performances by the Private Press in Ethiopia*' that neither the government nor the media are prepared to grant and assume the independent role of the media (Terje S. and Hallelujah Lule, 2009). They believe newborn independent press has failed to comply with conventional ethical standards of journalism, the

view which is also shared by government officials. They also assert that the private press has failed to represent and inform the citizens; and it has been generally politicized (Terje S. and Hallelujah Lule, 2009).

The independent press on the other hand has been complaining that the government intervened with their day to day activities by denying them access to government information. According to Terje S. Skjerdal and Hallelujah Lule, although the independent press has had more of a symbolic role than being a real cornerstone of democracy, its existence served as a caution for the government. Private press journalists try to gather information from primary sources such as government officials. However, the private media in Ethiopia is challenged by lack of resources and lack of access to government information in order to expose wrongdoings of the government (Ulrich Muller-Scholl, 2009).

Looking into the information acquisition behaviour of independent journalists in Ethiopia, they use a variety of information sources and most often they give high importance to their personal contacts of information sources (Terje S. Skjerdal and Hallelujah Lule, 2009). There is an enormous need to investigate and balance the information obtained through personal contacts, which are mostly described in private press stories as ‘anonymous sources’ and ‘experts’. Nevertheless, their capability of getting balancing information from the government is minimal, as independent media often find themselves locked out in the search of documents from ministries and government offices. Lack of professionalism and low institutional capacity are also obstacles for the private press to acquire information from all actors in story writing (Ulrich Muller-Scholl, 2009). Lack of professionalism seems to be a problem to State owned media organizations information acquisition process as well.

In most cases, journalists should write an application letter to public relations departments of government offices in order to retrieve information (Ulrich Muller-Scholl, 2009). This process to acquire and retrieve information hinders private press from meeting their transmission deadline.

It also has an impact on their quality of reporting since the information they obtain determines the analysis or interpretation they may give.

The public require complete, factual and dependable information channels, and these channels whether private or State owned should disseminate quality information that helps the public to make informed decision. However, the media in general has neither been important information channel for the public nor has it had a key role as a watchdog of government performance, despite the fact that there are some responsible and professional outlets within the industry (Ulrich Muller-Scholl, 2009 and Terje S. and Hallelujah Lule, 2009).

Freedom of the press is guaranteed under the 1995 Constitution of Ethiopia in order that the people may have sufficient information to participate wisely as self-governing members in a democratic order. Considering "pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness" as the benchmarks of a "democratic society", nearly two decades later, the media's role in the democratization process in Ethiopia is still evolving (Peter N. T., 1995). According to Kasoma, in order to facilitate a democratization process in a country, what is needed is public-service broadcasting, not merely the creation of private media organizations (Kasoma F., 2000). Such public service broadcasting appears to be taking shape in Namibia and South Africa, which offer the best examples in Africa of countries that have taken steps toward institutionalizing independent broadcasting (Davidson B., 2004). However, legal frame works of media freedom in Ethiopia and State ownership of media institutions should be examined to see if Ethiopia is also taking steps to institutionalizing public service broadcasting.

2.6.1. LEGAL FRAMEWORKS OF MEDIA FREEDOM IN ETHIOPIA

The introduction and enlargement of media freedom in Ethiopia would have to be preceded by fundamental changes in the political system to allow flow or diverse ideas. Article 29 of the 1995

Ethiopian Constitution provides citizens of Ethiopia the right to hold opinions, thoughts, and free expressions. Specifically, Article 29 protects freedom of expression without interference, including the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information. It also accommodates freedom of the press and mass media by ensuring the opportunity for access to information of interest to the public and prohibiting censorship.

Freedom of opinion is generally not subject to any restriction. Though freedom of expression is subject to restriction, such limitation must be in keeping with the strict principle of legality and necessity (Hannikainen L., 1992). Under Ethiopian Constitution “legal limitations can be laid down in order to protect the well-being of the youth, and the honor and reputation of individuals” (FDRE Constitution 1995 Article 29 (6)). Furthermore, it is stated in Article 29 (6) that any propaganda for war as well as the public expression of opinion intended to injure human dignity shall be prohibited by law.

Looking into the FDRE Constitution, Article 29 calls for media financed or controlled by the government to be organized in a manner that accommodates differences in opinion. The 1999 Broadcasting Proclamation, in Article 27, states that broadcasting should be based on the principles of plurality of viewpoints, balanced information, accuracy and impartiality. The principle of plurality of viewpoints, if applicable will serve as the foundation of democratic society. Although the primary objective of commercial broadcasting services is profit making, privately owned radio stations in Ethiopia are required to provide equal treatment of any community in their license area. They are also expected to include regional and national news in their programs (Proclamation Number 533/2007). This requirement will give the public a chance to demand participation in the process of news making.

Proclamation Number 590/2008 on Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information affirms that free, independent and diverse mass media with high ethical standards and professional competence plays an indispensable role in the national endeavour to build democratic order. And this can be achieved by preserving positive practices pertaining to freedom of expression while removing structural and institutional impediments that hinder the independent operation of the mass media and the free exchange of information and ideas (Proclamation Number 590/2008). The legal system also constitutes a constraint to press freedom in Ethiopia (Article 19, Global Campaign for Free Expression, 2000) with regard to interpretation and implementation, and thereby restrict the ability of media to monitor the work of government. On the other hand, other factors such as economic influences, historic, cultural and social conditions have a substantial impact on media independence and on the media's ability to fulfill their societal functions.

2.6.2. STATE MEDIA OWNERSHIP AND SUBSIDY: THE CASE OF ETHIOPIA

In countries lacking the experience of private press, the government's right to be involved in the operations of the mass media is taken for granted (Kasoma F., 2000). Most governments in Africa claim that their media ownership and subsidy can be justified by their task of nation-building and development activities in order to mobilize the public at large using the media. National unity and stability are also major reasons given by governments to restrict flow of information (Ansah P., 1988).

Government ownership of the media in Africa is not based completely on ideological beliefs, since economics plays an important role as well (Wilcox D. L., 1982). There is insufficient private capital and advertising revenue on most poor African countries to support private media, and it seems government will remain the major institution that can own or subsidize the kind of capital needed for media development.

No government in Ethiopia has attempted to separate itself from the control of the media as news plays strategic importance in keeping its image untarnished (Georgy E., Sergei G., and Konstantin S., 2007). The State continues to dominate mass communication through its control and operation of the media which constitute the main means of reaching the public at large (Leeson P. T., 2008). However other scholars like Jerome A. Barron argue that multiplicity of ideas will not inevitably flow from multiplicity of ownerships if all the ownerships are captives of the same socio political realities. Ownership does not always mean absolute dominion (Barron J. A., 1973). Consequently, State ownership and subsidy of the media will be controlled by the law of the land.

The Ethiopian State-owned media focus on broadcasting activities that promote government policies on development and poverty reduction (African Media Development Initiative, 2005). Although pro-government messages dominate, there are times where some diversity of viewpoints had been expressed by the contending parties during the coverage of May 2005 elections period (African Media Development Initiative, 2005). Similar to other African countries, the quality of journalism in Ethiopia is in question. Lack of professionalism and independence are observed in reporting of State owned media organizations (African Media Development Initiative, 2005).

Moreover, the national radio and television station including FM Addis 97.1, which is also government-owned, sells airtime to NGOs and private advertising agencies that are airing programs on development, health and entertainment issues (African Media Development Initiative, 2005) Despite the fact that there are privately owned and community radio stations in the country, Television in Ethiopia is fully controlled and owned by the government. According to the new Growth and Transformation Plan of the country, Television will be under the ownership of the government at least for the next five years (ERTA News, 14.09.2010).

2.7. MEASURING MEDIA FREEDOM

Freedom House uses three broad categories to assess the status of press freedom in each country: *legal environment*, *political influence*, and *economic pressures*. The legal environment encompasses an examination of the laws and regulations that could influence media content as well as the government's inclination to use these laws to restrict the ability of the press to operate. Political influence is attributed to the degree of political control over the content of news media. Economic pressures results from the structure of media ownership and the impact of corruption on content. Human Rights scholars like Holtz-Bacha asserts that indicators and principles used for measuring freedom of the press have a Western bias (Holtz-Bacha C., 2004). As a result, they tend to reject any kind of media policy and to evaluate any activity by the state negatively and leaves media ownership other than private regarded with suspicion.

The second survey that has been considered as credible regarding its measurements of media freedom is Reporters Without Borders. However some media and rights scholars emphasizes that its reports are more limited in its explanatory ability regarding general media freedom and particularly the plurality of the media, as the organization is concerned with the endangerment of journalists at work.

As with most of the surveys conducted by Freedom House, Reporters Without Boarders and other media development and freedom organizations, we could conclude that there are practical problems in implementing their results. But all these surveys provide valuable service. Holtz-Bacha argues that the cultural bias inherent in the scales used to measure freedom of the media continues with those who are actually evaluating the individual countries (Holtz-Bacha C., 2004).

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), meanwhile has devised new media development indicators that it calls culturally and politically neutral. The indicators

are applied only with the cooperation of the country's government and the participation of commercial and civil society groups (UNESCO, 2008). The five principal media development categories of indicators are:

- Existence of a legal, policy and regulatory framework which protects and promotes freedom of expression and information, based on international best practice standards and developed in participation with civil society.
- The state actively promotes the development of the media sector in a manner which prevents undue concentration and ensures plurality and transparency of ownership and content across public, private and community media.
- The media, within a prevailing climate of self regulation and respect for the journalistic profession, reflects and represents the diversity of views and interests in society, including those of marginalized groups. There is a high level of information and media literacy.
- Media workers have access to professional training and development, both vocational and academic, at all stages of their career, and the media sector as a whole is both monitored and supported by professional associations and civil society organizations.
- The media sector is characterized by high or rising levels of public access, including among marginalized groups, and efficient use of technology to gather and distribute news and information, appropriate to the local context.

These comprehensive set of indicators, analyzing all the main aspects of the media ecology, should enable to assess the state of the media within a given national context. However, to evaluate the extent of freedom of expression and of the media, the UNESCO media development indicators should be seen through the eyes of the general Human Right Indicators.

To this end, a multi-methods design seems appropriate: a combination of media and rights principles, expert interviews, data evaluations, group discussions and analyses of media content. Therefore, it would be necessary to combine scales used to measure media freedom by various recognized media development and rights organizations with selected principles of promotion and protection of human rights; *Accountability, Accessibility and Participation* (UNOHCHR, 2002). These elements are appropriate because they are mentioned by many media and rights scholars as principles, which serve the realization of media freedom (Barron J. A., 1973).

Access to the media is about media access for the public; media access for institutions such as civil society organizations, nongovernmental organizations and associations; and access for political opposition parties and opposing ideologies. It is believed that State media have to be *accountable* to the public, as citizens' power over the administration should be reflected including on the media ownership of the government as well. Therefore there must be institutional check on State media to make it accountable to its audience not to its owners. Editorial policies and other media guidelines can serve to evaluate the element of accountability in media freedom. *Participation* is valuable not just as a means to other ends but also as a fundamental human right that should be realized for its own sake. It is through participation that a person expresses and protects his or her identity and the survival and dignity of the group is ensured (Ghai Y. and Galli G., 2006). Participation as a concept in media freedom can be seen in light of fairness, equal time and opportunity to reply to personal attacks by media organizations as well as journalists.

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. DATA SOURCE

Human rights scholarship is regularly criticized for its lack of attention to methodology (Fons C., Fred G. and Menno T. K.). The problem with methods of human rights research is related to its broad range of topics and approaches and the lack of methodology rigor has also some undesirable consequences on findings (Fons C., Fred G. and Menno T. K.). However, it is advised that human rights research methodology addresses questions how to find relevant information, how to organize it, and how to interpret the results. Consequently, this research uses widely accepted human rights principles along with social science research method that can be appropriate to its research questions. The main research method therefore is qualitative. Qualitative data from key informant interviews, focus group discussions, audiovisual materials, primetime news scripts, documents and observation techniques is incorporated to enlighten the analysis.

The method used in this study is Case Study research method. “Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations , interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) and reports a case description and case-based themes” (Creswell J. W., 2007) .Case study method is chosen as it will help to determine whether media ownership affects freedom of expression in Ethiopia. Cases that show different perspectives on the issue of State and private ownership and media freedom, news collection and presentation process and other related events is selected to portray the objectives of this study.

Limitations inherent with this type of study would include a susceptibility to projecting subjectivity of the researcher onto media freedom and the existing operation of State and private media organizations in Ethiopia in the context of the research study. In order to minimize the risk of subjectivity of the researcher, this study is supported by quantitative method to provide certainty when qualitative method is unable to do so (Fons C., Fred G. and Menno T. K.). Hence, quantitative method is applied in order to provide descriptive measurement of general pictures, trends and relationships as to whether media ownership is affecting media freedom.

The discussion of this study revolves around selected principles of promotion and protection of human rights- Accountability, Accessibility and Participation that are necessary to measure the extent of media freedom in State and privately owned media organizations along with the five principal media development categories of indicators designed by UNESCO.

3.2. SAMPLING

The data collection in case study research is naturally extensive, drawing on multiple sources of information such as observations, interviews, documents, focus group discussions and audiovisual materials. Hence, purposive sampling is used in this study to select cases that show different perspectives on the issues of media freedom and media ownership. It is also evident that purposive sampling technique helps to maximize the probability of getting representative data that clearly shows the editorial content of media organizations.

Primary data is collected from primetime news aired as of February 22, 2010 to August 21, 2010 on Ethiopia Radio and Television Agency Sheger FM 102.1, Zami FM 90.7 and Radio Fana. This time is preferred because the May 2010 election was conducted in May 23, 2010, and political parties were given a chance in the first three months of the election to campaign their political agenda. The post-election coverage including election results and international election

observation bodies' reports may also influence the previous way of news coverage that should be studied.

Key informant interview particularly with Heads of various departments and Chief Editors in Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency, Sheger FM 102.1, Zami FM 90.7 and Radio Fana is conducted. Focus group discussions with producers and journalists from these stations are also incorporated as primary data. Questionnaires are distributed to journalists and editors in order to balance the information acquired through focus group discussions and interviews. Secondary sources such as books, feedback sheets, reports, editorial policies and production guidelines are also consulted.

The broadcast media is taken as study object because the traditional mass media, TV, and especially the radio, will remain of primary importance for the promotion of democracy (World Bank, 2002). Radio broadcast is very effective in reaching poor areas where illiteracy is high and can make public services more responsive to the poor, increase peoples' knowledge about their surroundings so that they can participate in the government processes (World Bank, 2001). In Ethiopia, radio remains the medium that has been most effective to reach a geographically dispersed and linguistically diverse population (World Bank, 2001). Therefore, this study examines how broadcast media in Ethiopia is entertaining diverse idea, and if ownership is affecting its information acquisition, storage, retrieval, interpretation and dissemination process.

Although, the Ethiopian Press Agency is also State owned and financed media organization it is excluded from this study as its accessibility to the general public and the space it gives for popular participation is affected by low adult literacy rate in the country as well as low reading habit (African Media Development Initiative, 2005). The other State owned and financed station FM Addis 97.1 is established before ten years in order to transmit edutainment programs in Addis Ababa and its surroundings (African Media Development Initiative, 2005). However, it will not be taken as study object since its programs are initially designed to entertain the public,

and it has limited geographical coverage comparing with Ethiopia Radio and Television. Another privately owned FM station Afro FM 105.3 is not taken as study object. The station aims to address the international community in Addis Ababa and transmits its programs in English and French, which makes it inaccessible to ordinary Ethiopians.

3.3. STUDY OBJECTS

3.3.1. RADIO ETHIOPIA

The history of Ethiopia Radio goes back to the year 1933 when the first provisional radio station was inaugurated in a contract signed with an Italian Company (Rosenfeld E. and Prouty C., 1994). The company handed over the installation in 1935 but retrieved it back following the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1936 (Mekuria Mekasha, 2005). Currently, The State owned Radio Ethiopia broadcasts its programs in nine local languages and three foreign languages (Mekuria Mekasha, 2005). It broadcasts news, and carries diverse programs on international issues, economic development, good governance, public health, and commerce (Mekuria Mekasha, 2005). Although there have been a rapid growth of Television broadcast since 1980's, Radio Ethiopia remains the principal medium of communication for the government (Rosenfeld E. and Prouty C., 1994).

3.3.2. ETHIOPIAN TELEVISION

For the first time ETV went on air on the 33rd Coronation anniversary of Emperor Haile Selasse, with the technical help of the British firm, Thomson. An educational broadcasting project was initiated in 1965. By 1971 there were five daily programs covering different topics for students up to grade eight (Rosenfeld E. and Prouty C., 1994). It gradually expanded to adult education and to cover current affairs and news. Color television was introduced in 1982 by the military government in order to commemorate the founding of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE).

Since its establishment, ETV has remained State financed and controlled, which in a way could affect its program operations and information content. According to Simon G., the common complaint about ETV is poor quality of its programs (African Media Development Initiative, 2005). As a result, viewers shift to subscribing to satellite services like Arab Sat. Ethiopia Television broadcast programs in six local languages (Amharic, Tigrigna, Orimifa, Somali, Afar and Harrari) and three international languages: English, Arabic and French. ETV recently began satellite broadcast to reach remote areas of the country and international viewers. The state-owned ETV also remains the only Ethiopian free-to-air TV broadcaster (African Media Development Initiative, 2005).

Recently, the State controlled Ethiopia Radio and Ethiopian Television Agencies merged together to form Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA). The new broadcasting structure may allow divers idea to be entertained and or to give more time only for government activities. In addition, merging radio and television broadcast into one stream could make the channels support each other in delivering information to many people at the same time. It may also diminish channel alternatives people have to obtain information.

3.3.3. PRIVATELY OWNED RADIO STATIONS

There are four privately owned radio stations in Ethiopia, Radio Fana, Zami FM 90.7, Sheger 102.1 and Afro FM 105.3. The two private radio stations selected as subjects of this research (Zami FM 90.7 and Sheger 102.1) are licensed by the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority following their selection among other twelve contenders on the basis of their financial status and program content ever since April 2006.

The root of Radio Fana is directly related with the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front, EPRDF. The formerly Voice of Ethiopian Peoples for Peace and Democracy (VOEPAD),

which is now Radio Fana was first an undercover anti-Derg voice for the revolutionaries (Mekuria Mekasha, 2005). In November 1992 however, EPRDF made a political decision to stop running party owned radio station. As a result, VOEPAD was transformed to operate like a business and obtained its new name Radio Fana (Mekuria Mekasha, 2005). Since the 1992 Press Proclamation left the allocation and utilization of radio waves to be determined by law, Radio Fana used the opportunity to obtain legal right to broadcast for about 16 years (Mekuria Mekasha, 2005). Radio Fana is a private share company registered under the Federal law of Ethiopia and licensed by the Broadcast Authority to transmit in Shortwave, Medium wave and FM since August 24, 2006. Radio Fana transmits in four languages, Somali, Afar, Oromifa and Amharic. Although it is claimed by its managers and journalists that the station is privately owned, there has been ongoing debate whether it is party affiliate.

All private radio stations are based in Addis Ababa except for Radio Fana that has seven regional relay stations for its FM transmission. All of the privately owned radio stations appear to be battling constantly to source sufficient income through advertisements and sponsorships. An exception is Radio Fana, which has a large advertiser base as well as side-income activities such as renting its newly constructed building to various institutions.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODS

3.4.1. AUDIO VISUALS

The total number of 728 primetime news castings has been taking place between February 22, 2010 and August 21, 2010 on ERTA, Sheger FM 102.1, Zami FM 90.7 and Radio Fana. Three primetime news pieces transmitted from Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday newscasts on these stations are taken as sample audiovisuals using purposive sampling method. Newscasts in these days are selected because there would be various events and happenings at the beginning of weekdays, which can affect the decision making process of newsgathering and transmission. For

that reason, about 312 representative news pieces from all stations are taken as audiovisual data to support this study. Despite the fact that the State owned radio and television agency and Radio Fana transmit programs in more than four languages, primetime news selected as audiovisual data for this research are those prepared and presented in Amharic. This is because Amharic is the national language of the country, and other language transmissions are mostly translations of the initial Amharic production.

So long as the time frame chosen is pre and post 2010 Ethiopian election, news coverage of issues related to public policy analysis, public opinion on the process of the election, national and international observation missions report and other development as well as democracy issues are taken as an input purposively.

3.4.2. KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW AND ITS STRUCTURE

The key informant's interview aims to systematically gather information from the people who are actually involved in decision making process of news collection and transmission. Key informants are expected to testify how the State and privately owned broadcast media is operating. They would also give information about the nature of media ownership in their organization and its implication on media freedom.

Editors and Department Heads who are assigned to run various departments at ERTA and gatekeepers in selected privately owned media organizations are interviewed about their understanding of media freedom and how they are conducting their day to day activities of deciding on information gathering and transmission process. Semi-structured questions that could explore possible practices and likely causes of professionalizing and institutionalizing propaganda as well as self- promotion in State and private media organizations are asked. All key informants are asked same questions regarding their organization, newsgathering and

reporting decision making process, challenges they face in news making and their personal view of media freedom.

3.4.3. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH JOURNALISTS

The major purpose of focus group discussions is to extract information from working journalists and producers on media ownership and freedom of expression. Participants generally were allowed to say anything they would like in focus group discussion sessions. Discussions therefore are considered to be naturalistic (Krueger R. A. and Casey M. A., 2000). The researcher listens not only for the content of focus group discussions, but for emotions, ironies, contradictions, and tensions. Hence, focus group discussions are conducted with journalists from different departments of all selected media organizations in order to gauge a groups' overall reaction to the research questions.

ERTA has four departments – Entertainment, Social and Economy, Good Governance, Current Affairs and News departments. Following the structure, each journalist and editor is responsible to act as broadcast journalist, since there is no specific assignment as radio or TV journalist. Thus, eight to ten journalists and producers from each department were invited randomly to take part in the discussion sessions. Since all departments have their own characteristics and objectives, journalists and producers who participated in the focus group discussion reflect representative idea regarding freedom of expression and of the media in State owned media organizations. In contrast, two focus group discussions were conducted with journalists from FM and Nationwide transmission branches of Radio Fana. Since the number of journalists at Sheger and Zami FMs is minimal, one discussion per station was held. Main questions prepared for the discussions are designed to generate reliable data on how freedom of expression and of the media is understood by State and privately owned media journalists and gatekeepers.

3.4.4. QUESTIONNAIRES

Professionalism and ethics of journalists are very important components in advocating and sustaining a free, diverse and independent media. Hence, data that reflects the understanding of professionalism and ethics among journalists is gathered by a self-administered survey questionnaire.

The study involves 70 questionnaires distributed to journalists working in the State and private owned media organizations identified as study objects. Twenty editors, journalists and producers from Sheger and Zami FMs, Thirty editors, journalists and producers from ERTA and twenty editors, journalists and producers from Radio Fana, who do not take part either in the interviews or focus group discussions were invited randomly to complete the questionnaire. Out of seventy questionnaires distributed, sixty four of it is filled and returned back. Each respondent received exactly the same set of questions in the same order producing results that are consistent and replicable. Self-administered questionnaires are intended to allow a comparison between private and State owned media organizations on their exercise of media freedom. Moreover, it helps to strengthen data that is obtained through key informant interviews and focus group discussions where there could be the effect of interviewer bias and the presence of the moderator may influence the answers that the respondent provides.

Questions for focus group discussions, key informant interviews and questionnaires are systematically designed to obtain data from State and privately owned media about their information acquisition, storage, interpretation, retrieval and dissemination behavior.

The study applied Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analyzing the data collected through questionnaires, discussions and interviews. Even though, the software performs much statistical analysis, it is used in this research for the purpose of descriptive analysis.

3.4.5. DOCUMENTS

Secondary data is collected from production guidelines, editorial policies, minutes and program description sheets of media organizations. Feedback registration sheets are used to acquire comprehensive information about participation of the public.

Data collected is analyzed based on literature review and in accordance with research questions stated. Human right principles that can be applicable to freedom of expression and of the media are applied to analyze data as well as to examine enjoyment and implementation of media freedom through State and privately owned media organizations. The use of human right principles and elements would help to reduce bias by emphasizing internationally accepted rules that have to be applied in studying media freedom.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the result of the analysis of the research. The analysis is broken down in order to answer research questions posed. A separate analysis of Private and State owned media organizations are given. Both are analyzed in terms of ownership, information acquisition, storage, retrieval, interpretation and dissemination behavior as well as their understanding and practice of media freedom along with principles of access, accountability and participation.

Type of ownership	Number of radio institutions	Number of institutions providing both radio and television services	Total
State/government	-	1	1
Private	3	-	3
Total			4

Table 1 Total Study Objects

State broadcast media organizations that are under the control of the Federal Government specifically Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency are main study objects. The study attempted to examine whether institutionalizing and professionalizing propaganda is taking place in State owned media organizations in Ethiopia. For this reason, information acquisition, storage, interpretation, retrieval and dissemination behavior of ERTA is analyzed. Since broadcast media plays the most important role in the national opinion process, the study considered samples from the private radio stations for the purpose of comparative analysis. Therefore, the three private radio stations, Radio Fana, Sheger FM 102.1 and Zami FM 90.1 are taken as balancing subjects, since Ethiopia does not have private television station. In this regard, the study examines the

interference of private media owners and advertisers in the information acquisition, storage, retrieval, interpretation, and dissemination behavior of private owned electronic media.

4.2. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.2.1. PRIVATELY OWNED RADIO STATIONS

4.2.1.1. ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION OF JOURNALISTS IN PRIVATE RADIO STATIONS

The standard of reporting in private radio stations has been examined through primetime news taken as samples in this study. There has been an attempt to make stories fairly accurate and balanced, but it is still not satisfactory. It can be said that journalists often fall short in exhausting all possible sources, often due to time pressure to meet deadlines, as particularly Sheger and Zami FM are having less than 10 reporters to cover 18hrs long transmission daily. This results in one-sided reports. However, more than 66% respondents of questionnaires distributed in private radio stations believe that they perform their task with professional integrity.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Degree	16	59.3	59.3	59.3
Diploma	11	40.7	40.7	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 Academic Qualification of Private Press Journalists

A high sense of professionalism among journalists is needed for the public to acquire quality information on government policies and activities. 59.3% of journalists who filled the questionnaire are BA degree holders in Journalism and Communications, Foreign Language and Literature and Theatre Arts. 40.7% journalists are diploma holders in other disciplines and in Journalism. Looking into their work experience, most of them have between 2 and 5 years of journalism practice whereas some have more than five years of experience.

4.2.1.2. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF INDEPENDENT JOURNALISTS

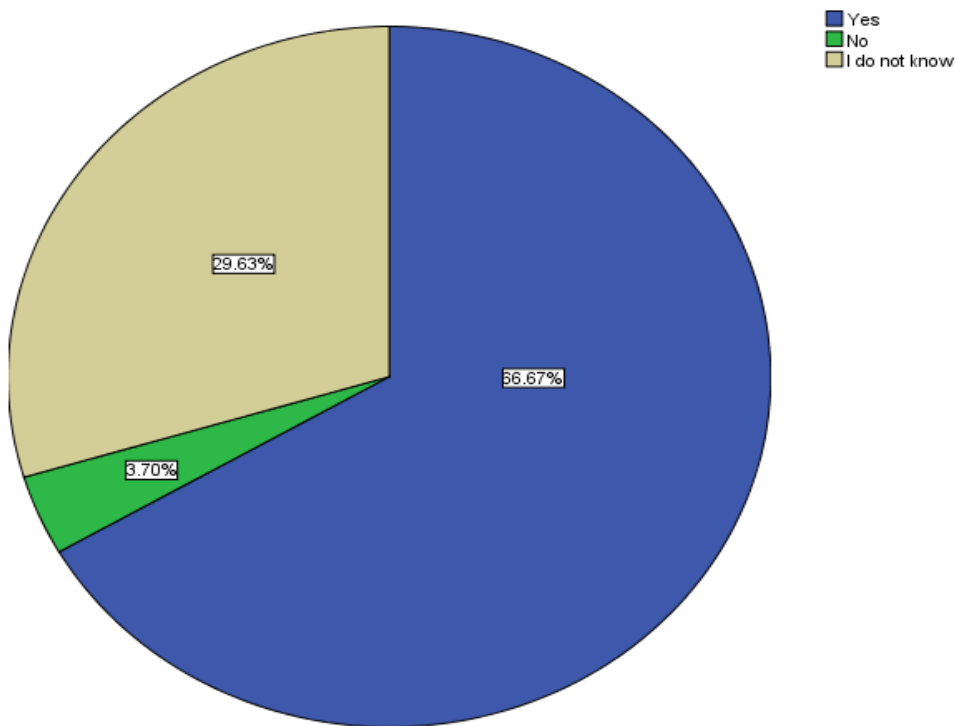


Figure 1 Professional Ability of Private Media Journalists

66.7% of respondents from the private press pronounce that they are professionally able to report on issues that are news worthy. On the other hand 29.6 % of respondents have no idea as to whether they are professionally able to report on issues that are newsworthy. However 66.7 % of them said that they always wait for them to be assigned for a reporting task by editors or station managers. 18.5 % of respondents do not wait for editors to give them assignments, 14.8% of them though sometimes wait for reporting assignments. The nurturing of media freedom requires more investment that can be geared to capacity building of journalists. Even though, academic qualifications of private radio station journalists seem desirable for the industry, there must be thorough and practical training given for working journalists.

37% of respondents say there are stories covered by them but not transmitted, and 66.7 of them did not ask their editors why stories were rejected. Among those 33.3% of respondents who have asked the reason, stories produced without prior consultation with editors and stories that are said to be dangerous for the survival of the radio station are mentioned as stories discarded. Journalists from Radio Fana national transmission department and Sheger FM emphasized that newsworthy stories are often or sometimes ignored because they conflict with a news organization's economic interests. Six-in-27 (22.2%) believe that editors exert at least a fair amount of influence on decisions about which stories to cover. Based on the questionnaire collected, one could see how editors and owners in private radio station are influencing the tone and content of the story. Therefore, private radio journalists who are actually tied with the interest of the owners and of the editors cannot be able to work for the public, and to represent public opinion.

4.2.1.3. PROBLEMS JOURNALISTS IN PRIVATELY OWNED MEDIA FACE WHILE NEWS REPORTING

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid no problems	1	3.7	3.7	3.7
interference of editors and owners	2	7.4	7.4	11.1
lack of resources	3	11.1	11.1	22.2
negative public perception of the role of the media	1	3.7	3.7	25.9
inability to access information from government officials	20	74.1	74.1	100.0
Total	27	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 Problems Journalists in Private Media Face

Inability to access information from government officials and institutions is mentioned by 74.1% of respondents as one of the problems faced by private media journalists while reporting news. Conversely, primetime news examined at Sheger FM and Radio Fana shows that government officials are well represented in amplifying governments view on various issues. According to

the discussion conducted with Sheger FM journalists, they collect information from government officials and institutions through public relations officers in order for them to balance stories. Journalists rely on information obtained from public relation officers to balance stories because of lack of critical tradition on government's activities. At the same time, state parties attempt to send out institutional ideology through public relation officers in order to maintain a balance of power.

3.7% of them also believe that negative public perception of the role of the media is hindering them from allowing the public voice to be heard on issues covered. In actual terms, the right of participation of the audience makes sense only if the members of the public choose to participate that grants the right of access to the media. Because there has been minimal public participation in private radio stations (this is often observed particularly in Zami FM), this action of the public places pressure on news makers and reporters to redesign their content in order to be chosen by the public. Lack of resources is also one of the problems encountered by 11.1% of journalists in their day to day work. Most of respondents mentioned that there is insufficient private capital and advertising revenue in order to have needed facilities for them to maintain quality reporting. In conclusion interference from government officials, media owners and editors, lack of resources and public perception of the role of the media could interfere with journalists' ability to perform their duties and presents a danger for freedom of expression in privately owned media organizations.

4.2.1.4. SELF- CENSORSHIP IN PRIVATELY OWNED RADIO STATIONS

The research attempted to examine if independent radio journalists often reshape the tone of stories which they think may have negative impact on the audience or their media originations. Article 29 of the FDRE Constitution protects freedom of expression and accommodates freedom of the press and mass media by ensuring the opportunity for access to information of interest to

the public and prohibiting censorship. Although, the law prohibits any form of censorship, there has been self imposed censorship practiced by privately owned media practitioners. The research result shows that 44.4% of respondents often practice self censorship in a way reshape the tone of stories. 40.7% of respondents however do practice self censorship occasionally, whereas only 14.8% of respondents said they have never reshaped the tone of stories or abandoned them.

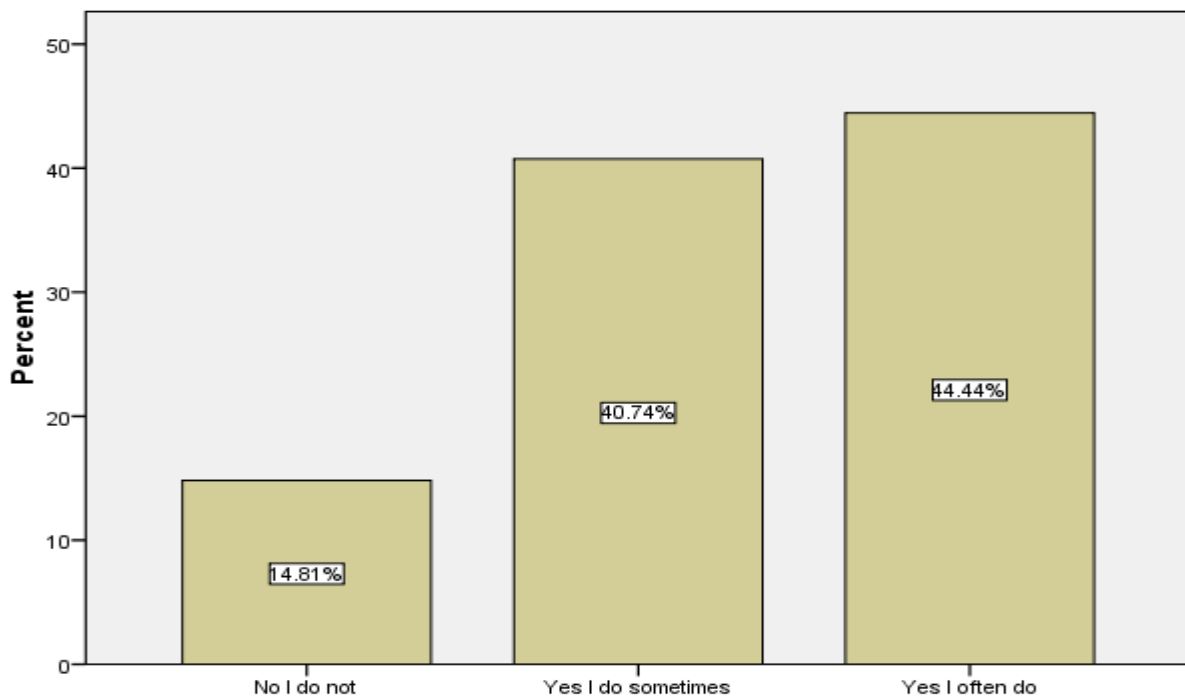


Figure 2 Reshaping the Tone of Stories in Private Media Organizations

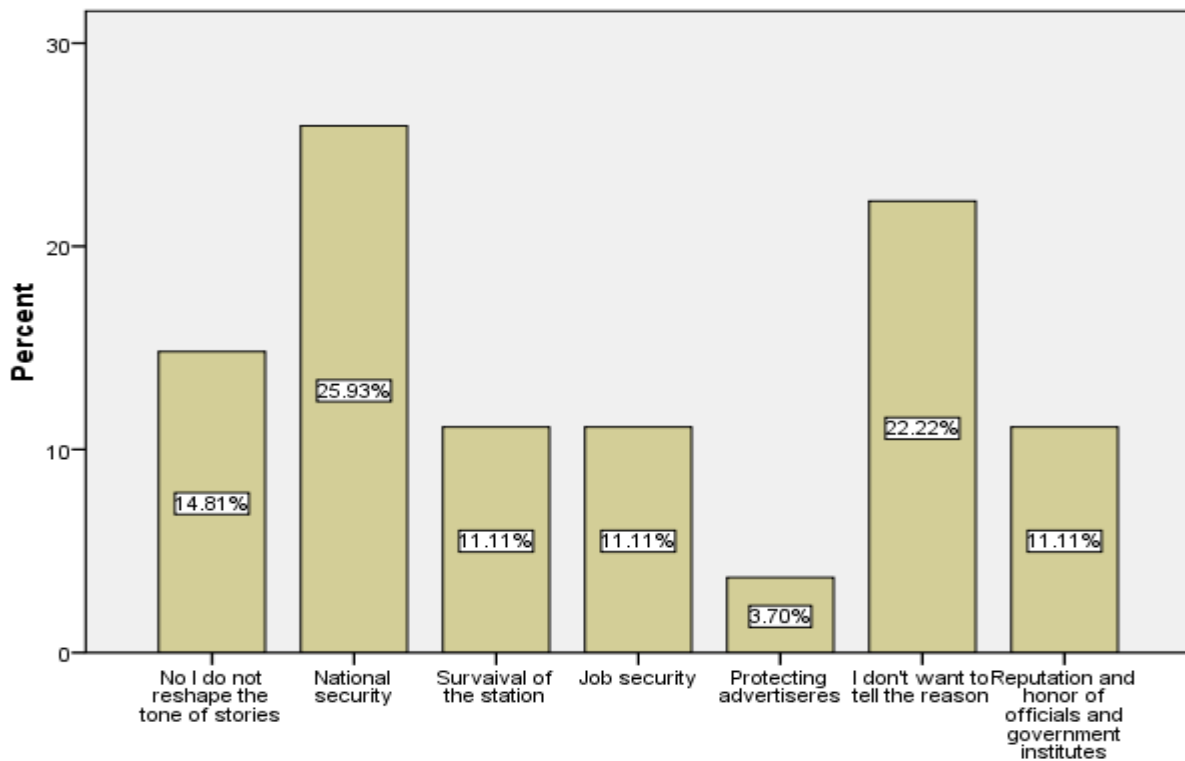


Figure 3 Reasons for Self-Censorship in Private Media Organizations

Protecting reputation and honour of government officials and institutions is given priority in reporting and writing news by 11% of respondents from private media. According to the Constitution, limitations on freedom of expression and of the media can be laid down in order to protect the well-being of the youth, and the honor and reputation of individuals. The law does not give special protection for government officials for not being exposed by the media. However, the private media in Ethiopia is challenged by lack of professionalism and low institutional capacity to expose wrongdoings of the government.

26% of private media journalists say they reshape the tone of stories to protect national security and interest. On the other hand, survival of the station and their own job security is the reason

why 11.1% of journalists reshape the tone of stories, whereas, about 4% of them are trying to protect advertisers image and activities. It can be concluded that the trend of protecting government officials reputation and the interest of advertisers can be an obstacle for the privately owned media to represent the differing voices among the public.

There have been various reasons mentioned by participants of group discussions for reshaping the tone of stories, such as denial of promotion and deliberate exclusion of journalists from being assigned to cover events. Conversely, 22.2% of respondents do not want to tell the reason why they revise the tone of stories.

Journalists most particularly from Zami FM are not willing to tell why they reshape the tone of their stories and what kinds of stories are subjected to the change of the tone. From stories that were subjected to revision by journalists at Sheger FM, a statement from Ministry of Health about the possible occurrence of Swine flu can be mentioned. Journalists from Sheger FM argued that telling this fact to the public may cause panic and they decided to change the tone. Some journalists from Sheger FM also said that business reports are subjected to revision, as they do not want to harm business firms' image and their activities. Journalists from Radio Fana national service and Sheger FM acknowledged that some of their programs are dependent on sponsor organizations, which makes them vulnerable to donor agendas. They stressed that leasing airtime is one of the ways to earn income, but the agreements with external producers to transmit programs takes away the motivation for private media to be economically independent. The interference of actual and potential advertisers is often observed in some primetime news pieces (Sheger News 22.02.2010, 17.03.2010).

Self-censorship around political issues does not appear to be a big problem at Radio Fana. According to Bruk Kebede, Programs Head, Radio Fana is an independent media that has the advantage of being able to be critical of the government (Fana News 29.03.2010). It is observed from primetime news aired from February 22, 2010 to August 23, 2010 that the station does not

have to go out of its way to make the government look good, but at the same time it does also publish positive stories on the work of the government (Fana News 03.03.2010). On the other hand, participants of focus group discussions from the FM and nationwide transmission departments agree that sometimes it is very difficult to be straightforward with politicians and authorities. Journalists tend to remain respectful, polite and friendly and this may make it difficult for them to get to the bottom of issues.

The time when the media control agenda becomes most notable is at election time. But in reality it is there all the time and is a challenge to the development of independent media. It is testified by respondents from private media organizations, particularly journalists from Sheger and Zami FM that news reports from 2010 general election were subjected to be reshaped in order to minimize the risk on the audience and the media organization. According to Bruk Kebede, of Radio Fana, such action would destroy the trust privately owned radio stations developed with their audience because the listener feels deceived. He emphasizes that *“building trust with the audience helps protect the station from abuse. It is harder to take a radio station off air if it has the ear of many trusting listeners, especially at election time when the votes are needed.”*

The Private broadcast media in general do attempt to cover a range of stories. Conversely, 74.1% of respondents have never conducted investigative reporting and thus they have no regret. Radio programming and message transmission in Radio Fana seem more flexible than other private media organizations regarding accommodating more information sources and ideas. Although there are efforts to expose wrongdoings of government officials and institutions by Radio Fana reporters (25.9%), none of respondents from Sheger 102.1 and Zami 90.7 have conducted investigative reporting throughout their professional engagement. Respondents state why they did not conduct investigative reporting on issues. Lack of resources, unwillingness of editors, lack of adequate information and documents on the issue to be investigated are among the reasons mentioned by most of journalists in private broadcast media organizations. However, Bruk Kebede of Radio Fana claims the trust his media won from government officials and the

public at large made his journalists able to conduct investigative reporting. Bruk's statement is amplified by his journalists that historical background of the station has influenced the way they acquire, retrieve, interpret, store and disseminate information. They stated that government officials consider Radio Fana as an ally. On the other hand, 7.4% of independent journalists asserted that they have failed to perform their professional duty of serving the public as a result of professional incapacity. In conclusion, there is a serious lack of investigative reporting and insufficient analysis on pertinent issues, and the private media need to invest more in acquiring these specialized skills.

According to Programs Head of Sheger Teferi Alemu, it is difficult for his station to undertake investigative journalism due to lack of resources, and the nature of investigative reporting that demands more time and effort from journalists. The primetime news from Sheger FM tends to be call-in reporting and mostly dependent of Public Relation and Communication Officers, possibly due to financial constraints as well as lack of man power.

Zami FM 90.7, however, produces much more local content than Sheger FM 102.1. Its news sources are basically sub-city officials and residents. An effort is being made at Zami FM 90.7 to develop local content further, but the station still has lack of resources and man power. The station is in fact understaffed, while the program packaging has also been weakened and the quality of contents deteriorated from time to time. Programs Head at Zami FM 90.7 Abebe Beyene believes that although the way his journalists are covering local news is giving voice for the society, it is not attracting advertisers to the station. Abebe Beyene says *“an example is that Zami is the only radio station that gives priority to local sports and related matters, and yet the concerned federations are advertizing on other station that have not been covering national sport particularly soccer. They even recognize the work of journalists who talks of western premier league and award them; hitherto a station that is contributing to the development of sports in the country is abandoned.”*

Journalists from Radio Fana on the other hand, displayed tremendous performance in investigating government institutions and authorities. According to the Programs Heads, Bruk Kebede, investigative journalism is “a flag of his station”. But he admits that there are challenges faced by his station in order to come up with investigative pieces against ‘development partners’ as he called them i.e. governmental, nongovernmental and public organizations as well as authorities. The first problem is lack of professionalism of journalists. He said most journalists regarded the western media as free; they tend to take its performance as appropriate model to Ethiopian media. As a result, journalists lose some sense of nationhood and lack self confidence to facilitate discussion of public issues. *“Ethiopian journalists operate on a different play-field to that of western journalists. Furthermore, Ethiopian journalists are constrained by a lack of resources and lack of training.”* The second point Bruk made is that *“Radio Fana can air anything, but at great risk from government authorities”*. He confesses there are situations to which journalists have been chased by authorities for airing investigative pieces that are critical towards them. The other challenge mentioned by Radio Fana’s news editor Abraham Hile is that the society seems happy to have media freedom but would not take action to expose corruption even when asked by journalists who are writing investigative pieces. One of the reasons for this Bruk adds is may be the submissive culture we have. *“Whatever happens to you or to others whom you know, you just leave it to God; you do not have to take that issue to the court or to the media. Many people are not aware of what the media is meant to do for society.”*

Bruk’s thought is shared by Abebe Beyene. Programs head at Zami FM 90.7, Abebe Beyene asserts that *“freedom of expression is dependent upon the way ideals, such as democracy, are exercised in society. I would say the political climate appeared to ease somewhat, and citizens seemed to feel more confident to speak out. However, with the recent emergence of competing political parties people do not appear to be so eager to express themselves anymore. This fear of speaking out is also partly related to traditional values of not criticizing people in position. The behavior of people shows that democracy is not deeply entrenched in our society. Even those who are supposed to guard freedom of expression try to silence people’s voice. Opposition party members are spoken of in derogatory terms. There is no tolerance, and such an environment is not good for freedom of expression.”*

48.1% of respondents from Radio Fana, Sheger 102.1 FM and Zami 90.1 FM are involved in covering more than two issues such as politics, economy, culture and entertainment. 33.3% of respondents are engaged in covering entertainment issues whether they are initially assigned to cover political, cultural or economy issues. 3.7% say they cover cultural issues whereas 14.8% of respondents deal with economic matters. Nonetheless, respondents mentioned the following problems they face while reporting and writing news on any subject:

- Lack of cooperation from the public in providing information to the media
- Lack of access to information from government officials and institutions
- Lack of well documented data on various issues
- Lack of professionalism from journalists side
- Lack of credibility of radio stations they work for
- Lack of resources, transportation, and other logistics
- Manipulation of the media by authorities particularly Public Relation Officers (they tend to provide information that serves their own interest not the public)
- Interference of media owners and gatekeepers

Ethics of journalists are constructed around making stories balance, accurate and fair in a professional manner. Ethics of journalists therefore are very important component in advocating and sustaining a free, diverse and independent media. Journalists from privately owned broadcast media were asked what journalistic ethics is for them. 33.3% of respondents gave priority to balancing their stories while 14.8% are to fairness. 37% believe professionalism is the driving ethics of journalism whereas 14.8% are striving for accuracy in their reports. Access, accountability and participation as a concept in media freedom can be seen in light of fairness, equal time and opportunity to reply to personal attacks by media organizations as well as

journalists. Therefore there must be a media platform for the public at large to access, participate and hold media organizations accountable to voice its concerns.

Based on the research findings, Radio Fana has diverse phone-in programs on its FM and nationwide transmission that allows members of the public to comment on all spheres of life. The shows are also a forum where the public forward questions that needs clarification from government institutions and authorities. News Editor in Chief at Radio Fana, Abrham Haile stresses that these chat shows play a crucial role in analyzing public policies and strategies. Abrham emphasizes that reporting to the nation's anguish over contested social, economic and political issues revives interest in the privately owned print media. On the other hand, State owned media organizations are reporting on only success stories of the government. He asserts that his station's objective is to stabilize the information coming from the two (Privately owned print media and State owned media) by promoting good deeds of the government, and also criticizing wrongdoings of government institutions and officials.

“Stay with Mimi Sebhatu” was a live radio talk show hosted by Zami FM. This show is suspended as authorities, experts and other responsible people have not been accessible to address public inquiries. According to Abebe Beyene some panelists felt that the show was clearly an attempt by the host to accuse people and institutions, and advocate pro-government thoughts. As a result of such bias, the show was forced to be limited to certain topics and at the end no phone-in at all. Therefore, the host decided to impede the show for a while and try to redesign its objectives and approaches.

Abebe Beyene admits that Zami FM 90.7 is not attracting the interest of the public as well as advertisers. *“Most private and government owned organizations have not been advertising with us. We do not know why this is happening. But we know that there is bias among the society, many believe the radio station is pro-government. To your surprise even the government has*

never trusted us. I do not know what the intentions actually are, whether to make us out of the business or simply to punish us for airing marginalized issues.”

On the other hand, Bruk Programs Head at Radio Fana asserts that advertisers do not exert commercial pressure on his station, the thought that is also shared by reporters and editors from Fana FM 98.1. However, focus group discussants from Radio Fana’s national transmission argues that at times “money will rule content” when Radio Fana enter into agreement with nongovernmental organizations and promotion agencies. The influence from marketing department of the station and direct involvement of donors in deciding content of funded broadcasts is a challenge for journalists to maintain their professional integrity. Unlike discussants though, Bruk said his programs department has a power to decide on content, and the marketing department have no power to interfere in program planning and production.

The line between advertising and editorial content can become blurred as the radio program that is funded by external bodies is often used to promote certain interests and economic agenda of sponsor organizations as well as promotion agencies. According to Bruk, consumers of broadcast news in Ethiopia have fewer opportunities to assess the information they consume. In fact, most of private media organizations survive on income from advertising and this causes journalists and external producers to adapt program content to appeal to the largest audiences. This process however reduces the supply of minority interest.

The discussion participants from Radio Fana stressed in their debates that the challenges faced by media in Ethiopia, clearly demonstrate that the chances for promoting media freedom are unrestricted upon the adoption and promulgation of serious reform programs. What is needed in promoting media freedom in the country is however, governments’ political will to achieve political, constitutional and legislative implementation.

4.2.1.5. EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE OF PRIVATELY OWNED RADIO STATIONS

The agenda in a newsroom is determined essentially by its reporting and editorial decision making processes, and by the organization's editorial culture, which in turn is influenced by various external and internal factors. The editorial process being itself a form of filtering, the question becomes which filters operate in a given media organization. The discussions with journalists and interviews with editors and managers of privately owned media organizations prevailed what processes drive the decisions reporters and editors make. The relationship between the journalist and the editor and how autonomous are of editors in relation to the wider environment and other actors in their institutions have been discussed. This decision process varies enormously according to the resources of the news organization concerned. For example in Radio Fana, prosperous news organization comparing with Sheger 102.1 and Zami 90.7, there will be information coming in constantly from Ethiopian News Agency, and Walta Information Center. Press releases arrive in a constant stream from private and public institutions as well as public relations offices and interest groups. Abraham Haile, News Editor of Radio Fana says *“we are fully in control of our editorial independence; we will always filter information coming from news agencies and other sources regardless of our busy schedule.”*

Apart from Radio Fana none of privately owned radio stations are subscribed by domestic news agencies i.e. Walta Information Center and Ethiopian News Agency. As a result, they tend to generate local news by themselves. It is observed from Sheger FM 102.1 primetime news documented that public relations and communications officers are sources of information on issues of development and economy (Sheger News 03.03.10, 22.03.10). It is believed that public relations officers in general give news organizations a different perspective of stories that only promotes their own interest. Sileshi Tessema, News Editor in Chief at Sheger FM 102.1 pronounces that, although his station uses multiple source structure to cover stories, it rely on government public relations in order to establish good relationship with government institutions.

The trend at Zami 90.7 is however different when it comes to using public relations. According to Abebe Beyene, the station does not accept any story from outside and air it as it is. He underlined, *“if a reporter within the station can triangulate different sources, and so check the reality on the ground, he or she can cover the story that is less subject to manipulation”*.

Both Sheger 102.1 and Zami 90.7 tend to avoid local political news because of possible controversy, and many of the issues they focus on are cheerful nature. According to Sileshi Tessema of Sheger, *“one of the station’s objectives is creating good mood among the public, and its relationship with the government is not confrontational rather it is based on mutual respect”*. Data gathered from privately owned media organizations through interviews and discussions reflects that the mere objective of each media organization determines the process private press follows to acquire and retrieve information. Editorial policies and marketing strategies also have an impact on the quality of reporting of privately owned broadcast media since the information acquired affect the analysis or interpretation they may give.

Essentially, election period is used by the government, opposition political parties, and civil society organizations to influence what the media says about them and their agenda. All used spin techniques to make themselves look good, and, where possible, make opposition look bad, avoiding opportunities for critical questioning. For this purpose, the kind of platforms the opposition and ruling party used are press conferences, press releases, debate forums that shows them in a positive and strong light (Sheger News 17. 03.10, Fana News, 22.03.10). In general, all privately owned media organizations provided opportunities for political parties to present their political programs. However, there are no primetime news bites, which entertain similarities and differences of party programs in order to assist the public to make informed decision.

It is observed in the primetime news coverage taken as an input for this research that issues of human right such as self-governance, popular participation and access to basic resources are more newsworthy for Radio Fana than of other private radio stations and ERTA (Fana News

15.03.10, News 01.03.10). Radio Fana have become interested not only in covering human right issues, but in the institutional set up that has been designed to promote and protect human rights. Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has been given a chance to comment on government's action to fulfill its duty of promoting and protecting rights granted by the law (Fana News 09.03.10).

Domestic coverage of issues such as democracy, development and human rights is more self-generated and less dependent on international sources in Radio Fana. However, Sheger FM 102.1 has been reporting on such issues quoting international news sources, such as BBC and Reuters (Sheger News 06.04.10, 01.03.10). Going through the news archive of the station, one could say there was no contextualized reporting on democracy and human rights. Such reporting was brief and it did not explain the existing situations.

4.2.2. STATE OWNED ETHIOPIA RADIO AND TELEVISION AGENCY /ERTA/

4.2.2.1. ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION OF JOURNALISTS IN STATE OWNED ERTA

The standard of reporting in State owned Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency is examined through primetime news taken as samples in this study. There has been an attempt to make findings representative and fairly accurate by conducting focus group discussions and personal interviews with journalists, producers and editors. The State owned broadcast agency seem to have more journalists than of the privately owned radio stations. Primetime news examined for the purpose of this research shows journalists often fall short in exhausting all possible sources, which results in one-sided reports. Nevertheless, 100% of respondents in State radio and TV agency say that they like their job as journalists and perform their task with professional integrity.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Degree	14	87.5	87.5	87.5
Diploma	1	6.2	6.2	93.8
12 complete	1	6.2	6.2	100.0
Total	16	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 Academic Qualification of Journalists in State Owned ERTA

87.5% of journalists who filled the questionnaire are BA degree holders in Journalism and Communications, Foreign Language and Literature and other disciplines. 6.2% journalists are diploma holders in Journalism and other disciplines. Looking into their work experience, 43.8% of them have 3 years of journalism practice whereas 31.2% of respondents have more than five years of experience. Having 6.2% of journalists in State owned broadcast media with two years of work experience and 18.8% with five years of experience, we could conclude that journalists in State owned Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency are more educated and experienced than of journalists in privately owned broadcast media organizations.

4.2.2.2. PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF STATE OWNED MEDIA JOURNALISTS

Journalists need to work in professional and social conditions where they are free to resolve ethical dilemmas alone and where they can make professional decisions on editorial content. Professional ethics is a prerequisite for good journalism. To this effect, Journalists from State owned broadcast media were asked what journalistic ethics is for them. 31.2% of respondents gave priority to balancing their stories while 18.8% are to fairness. 37.5% believe professionalism is the driving ethics of journalism whereas 12.5% are advocating for accuracy in their reports.

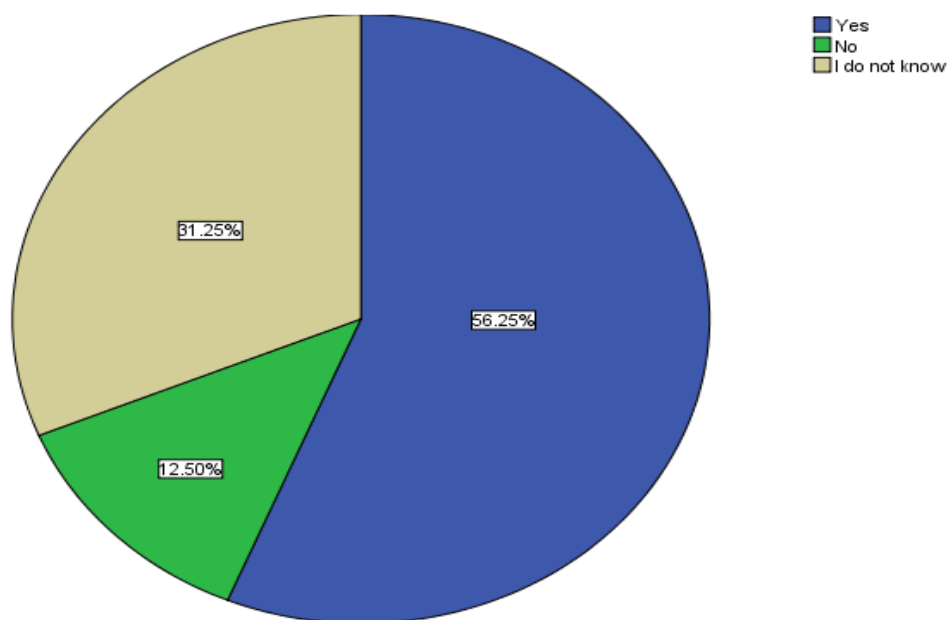


Figure 4 Professional Ability of State Owned Media Journalists

56.2% of respondents from the State owned radio and TV agency believe that they are professionally able to report on issues that are news worthy. 12.5 % of respondents though feel they are not competent, and 31.2 are not sure whether they are professionally able to report on

issues that are newsworthy. Comparing with the data obtained from privately owned media stations, the findings from State owned radio and TV agency assures that in spite of their better educational background and work experience journalists in State media organizations are not confident about their ability of reporting on issues.

Ayal Abebaw News Editor of ERTA says *“there are efforts to improve the standard of news reporting, a training centre has been established by the agency with a special focus on quality of production The ERTA is also committed to covering all contesting thoughts and ideas”*. According to Ayal, these developments show that *“the ERTA is gearing up to become a real public service broadcaster but its journalists are constrained by a genuine lack of adequate resources and lack of training”*.

The discussions with State owned media organization journalists stressed the significance of the role that could be played by their organization in the development of skills and expertise of journalists, the encouragement of employees to stick to professional principles and codes of ethics. The discussions also underpinned that training courses should be tailored so as to tackle the significant deficiency in legal awareness of the rights and duties of journalists and media professionals, with special reference to addressing issues that deal with public figures or civil servants and state officials, in order to draw the demarcation lines between allowable criticism on the one hand, and the crimes of defamation, libel, and slander on the other, as well as the limits of dealing with private life, in addition to issues related to hate crimes and mocking of religions and beliefs.

Discussants and key informants from the State owned ERTA affirms that their station is different from privately owned stations because it promotes the policies and objectives of the government. Conversely, misunderstanding of the concept of press freedom led State media organization journalists to label private press as enemy of the public. One of discussants argues that *“privately*

owned media organizations in general are sensational whereas it is only ERTA that gives priority to genuine public concerns.”

Most respondents from ERTA believe that they are trying to be independent. The problem comes from top management and sometimes the board, which are more susceptible to political pressure. This makes the reporter fearful of a warning from above. And therefore, 75% of them always wait to be assigned for a reporting task by their editors or station managers. 25 % of respondents do not wait for editors to give them assignments. Those who are waiting to be assigned for a given reporting task says that this is the way their station is working, and editors are there to control the plan and reporting of stories.

50% of respondents state that there are stories covered by them but not transmitted, out of which 62.5% of them did not ask editors why their stories were rejected. Among those 37.5% of respondents who have asked the reason why, stories that are not ‘primary’ issue, stories that are against the policy of government, and stories that are said to be against the policy of the station are mentioned as pieces discarded. 12.5% of respondents however believe that editors exert influence on decisions about which stories to cover and to be transmitted. Such a process of decision making which is usually guided by professional codes that gives editors’ authority to oversee stories end up with denial of access to the media. Discussions held at ERTA are evident that gatekeepers have a role to play in professionalizing propaganda.

**4.2.2.3. PROBLEMS JOURNALISTS IN STATE
OWNED MEDIA FACE WHILE NEWS
REPORTING**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid no problems	2	12.5	12.5	12.5
interference of editors and officials	1	6.2	6.2	18.8
lack of resources	3	18.8	18.8	37.5
inability to access information from government officials	4	25.0	25.0	62.5
negative public perception of the role of the media	6	37.5	37.5	100.0
Total	16	100.0	100.0	

Table 5 Problems Journalists in State Owned Media Face

Discussants also assert that ERTA has failed to represent and inform the citizens; and its activities have been generally politicized, which leads the station to lose public trust. Among other problems, inability to access information from government officials and institutions is mentioned by 25% of respondents as one of the obstacles faced by State media journalists in

reporting news. As mentioned in previous data presentation, only 3.7% of privately owned media organization journalists believe that negative perception of the role of the media is a problem they usually face in reporting stories. Whereas, 37.5% of journalists from State owned media think that negative public perception of the overall role of the media is hindering them from allowing the public voice to be heard on various issues. Lack of resources is also one of the problems encountered by 18.8% of State media journalists in their work.

4.2.2.4. SELF CENSORSHIP IN STATE OWNED RADIO AND TELEVISION AGENCY

The questionnaires filled by journalists ERTA shows that there is widespread self-censorship at the agency, with journalists being afraid to report on certain issues that contradict the position of the government. Most of respondents stated that they have lost interest to report on current affairs, as they are scared of ‘political interpretations’ issues may have.

On the other hand, News and Current Affairs Editor Debassu Baileyegn argues that many assume that content with negative view of the State is what the audience want, and when ERTA talks positively of the government, the ‘so called’ civil society cries lack of freedom of expression. Debassu stresses that his department is trying to equate what the audience look for with the democratization function of the media by amplifying good deeds of the government and its policy outcomes.

Based on data acquired through focus group discussion with news reporters at the agency, the reason for not being critical to the government is probably because the ERTA is funded by State money, so it won’t go against the government’s stance. Another reason has been mentioned by discussants that the lack of sufficient equipment such as cameras and vehicles, which makes it

difficult to cover simultaneous events, especially when one of them is an undisputed priority like a speech of the Prime Minister or other higher government official.

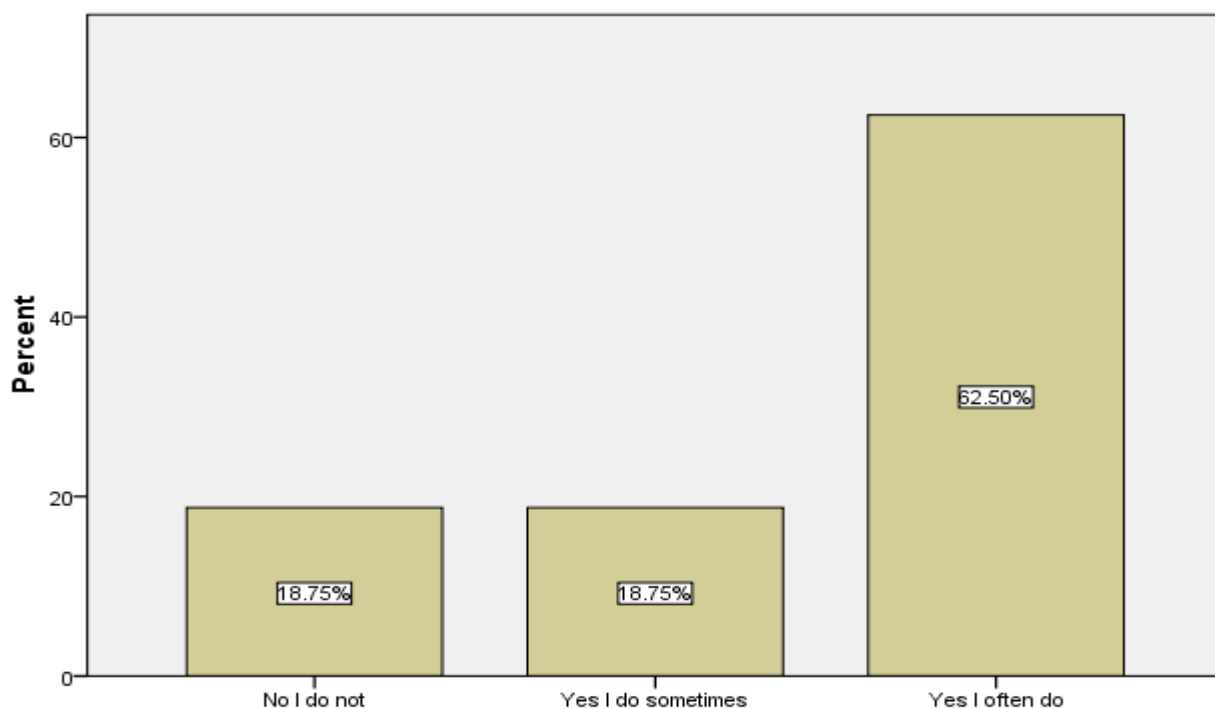


Figure 5 Reshaping the Tone of Stories in State Owned Media Organizations

62.5% of participants from the State owned ERTA often carry out self censorship in a way reshape the tone of stories. 18.7% of respondents on the other hand do practice self censorship occasionally, while 18.7% of respondents said they have never reshaped the tone of stories.

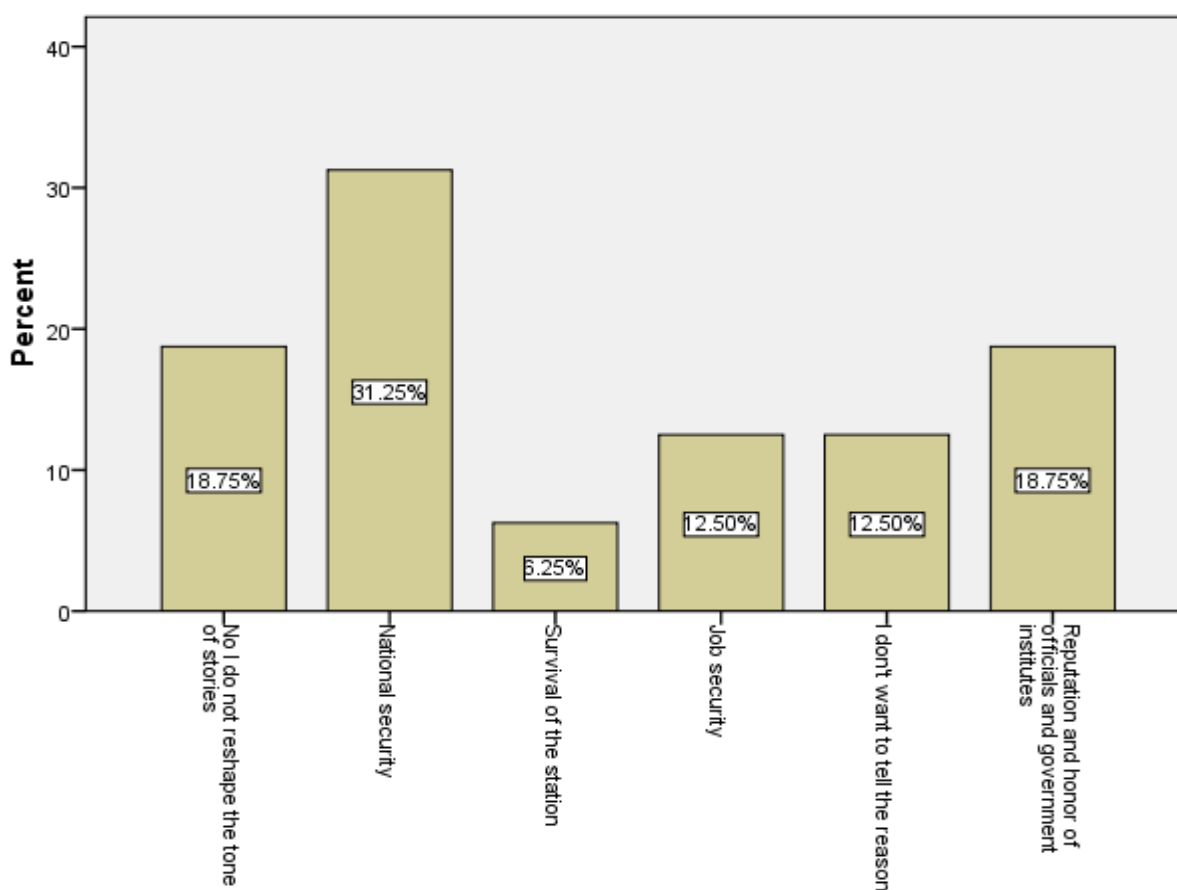


Figure 6: Reasons Why the Tone of Stories are Reshaped In State Owned ERTA

31.2 % of State media journalists say they reshape the tone of stories to protect national security and interest. Reputation and honour of government officials and institutes is given priority in reporting and writing news by 18.7% of respondents from ERTA. Survival of the station and their own job security is the reason why 6.2% of journalists reshape the tone of stories, whereas, 12.5% of them are trying to protect their job, and 12.5% of respondents do not want to tell the reason why they practice self censorship.

Participants in focus group discussions conducted at ERTA highlight that the government uses a wide range of economic coercive measures to limit media freedom. They gave examples of

discriminatory hiring and promotion of party affiliated journalists and firing of journalists who are critical of the government. As a result, the constant fear make journalists dependant on the government for their living, as they are less likely to jeopardize their job by uncovering stories potentially embarrassing to government officials.

Based on the interview with Chief Editor of Good governance and Democracy Programs at ERTA, HaileAmlak Kassaye, producing programs that are critical to government officials is difficult for his reporters, as the station does not provide protection to its employees. HaileAmlak believes in order for journalists to be critical to government officials and institutions, they need to understand the acquisition and interpretation of information relevant to their job. They also need civil bodies, such as professional associations and organizations that could provide legal assistance to journalists; and spreading knowledge of mechanisms concerned with the protection of freedom of the media.

Media can improve the climate of democratic debate and reduce corruption in public life when it is able to conduct investigative reporting against institutions and officials. At the same time, media sensitive to the importance of human rights provide reliable sources of information through which citizens, human rights groups, private organizations and public authorities can work together to promote development and to eliminate arbitrary abuse. Despite the fact that human rights issues have been stories in ERTA, these reports have been difficult to separate from propaganda. The way ERTA is covering the issue of human rights is simply amplifying what the government and other concerned bodies are saying regarding human rights, meaning, there has not been any investigative reporting on the issue (ERTA News 14.04.2010, 26.04.2010). Data obtained through examining primetime news shows journalists from State owned media are considered to be too polite when interviewing politicians, thus not asserting themselves sufficiently and failing to get real answers on pertinent issues. Most of discussants agree that this is born out of a fear (of losing one's job, perhaps) or out of a culture where authorities are respected.

50% of respondents from ERTA claim that they have conducted investigative reporting. However, most of them found it difficult to investigate wrongdoings of government institutions and officials. According to 31.2% of respondents, one of the reasons for not conducting investigative reporting is fear. Professional incapability to undertake investigative reporting is mentioned by 6.2% of journalists. In addition, 25% of respondents believe that editors are not willing to let them investigate on issues of corruption, and abuse of authority. Based on the data collected through focus group discussions, one could infer that although the government has been seen as a threat to freedom of the media, the private power gatekeepers of State media organizations, in this case editors and management bodies, control the flow of diverse ideas and predetermine contents as well as outputs of debates and discussions on issues that are public concern. One of the discussants from Good Governance and Democracy Department of ERTA is quoted saying *“Whenever the management is interfering in production work, even editors themselves are not able to defend stories produced in their supervision. I, as a reporter, therefore could not be able to challenge such circumstances and defend freedom of expression.”* Discussants point out that some of the problems emanate from the ambiguity and application of the editorial policy of the station and media laws. In this case, censorship conducted by editors and other media heads serves to suppress ideas as thoroughly and as rigidly as the worst governments censor.

What most journalists from ERTA accepted is that media freedom in Ethiopia have witnessed some relative tolerance as a natural outcome of the emergence of privately owned media organizations. A reflection of such tolerance has been witnessed when Sheger, Zami and Afro FMs went on air. Discussants from Social Programs Department asserted that both print and broadcast privately owned media organizations in the country changed State monopolization over the means of mass media which results in the expansion of media freedom.

Based on key informant interviews conducted with chief editors and department heads at ERTA, over the last year or so, the government has begun to recognize that it must communicate more effectively to win the public support over privately owned and international media outlets. This strategy is part of its developmental agenda, which aims to the renewed emphasis on communicating development projects rather than politics. Similarly, discussions with journalists emphasize their role in agenda setting on development matters.

Integration propaganda is accepted by many of journalists in State owned media as a logical extension of ERTA. ERTA offers the most important examples of the use of integration propaganda that encourage trust and understanding among the society. News reports from the agency shows the role society can play in the process of development (ERTA News 26.4.2010). However, primetime news assessment illustrates that the agency has been strongly propagandistic and has not even acknowledged alternative positions on key policies (27.04.2010, 28.4.2010). ERTA is seen as biased when covering political issues and current affairs such as the May 2010 election. Political parties that are considered to be anti-government have not received fair coverage. In some cases, opposition parties are being portrayed in a distorted way to indicate a lack of public support rather than of presenting alternative policies that opposition parties offered. (ERTA News 04.05.2010, 07.05.2010).

Focus group discussion participants from all departments of ERTA agree that in order to make sure that diverse idea is entertained in their media house, questions, comments and pre-recorded public opinion could play a role to provide valuable counterbalance to the government dominating voice. However, the audience feedback and public opinion chosen for transmission are often edited that in the end they may tell more about the editors' biases than about the opinions of the public. On the other hand, journalists accentuate feedback coming through the 'weak' audience research department of the station are not representative of both the social and political thought of the society. Therefore, there is no ground to say diverse idea is entirely entertained in ERTA and the station answer the question of public access to the press fully.

Both journalists and gatekeepers who have participated in this research agree that ERTA should look at how a decision affects its audience and finds space for their voices to be heard on the media. This also gives a platform for challenging decision makers by anchoring questions inside audience reaction. In essence, development journalism is about involving the audience, using their viewpoints to challenge decision makers. In the absence of a genuine public participation, serving media freedom is bound to be questionable as has been the case in ERTA.

43.8% of respondents from State owned ERTA are covering more than two issues. 12.5% of journalists cover politics whereas 18.8% of respondents deal with economic matters. 25% of them are engaged in covering entertainment. According to the director of entertainment programs at ERTA, Shibeshi Alemayehu, although world media standards differ, entertainment segments should contain messages. He asserts despite the fact that the western media is regarded as free, it is patriotic. Shibeshi says his department is committed to make programs that influence the public and promote the objectives of the government. *“We aspire to produce entertainment programs like those of Hollywood cinemas. I believe western media is systematically using entertainment to promote national interest. They do that successfully, and that is how we should design and produce our entertainment programs at ERTA.”*

Many of journalists who participated in the discussions as well as filled questionnaires are not interested in covering politics. Some say those who cover politics let their ego get in the way as they mingle with the leading names of the day and become drawn into the system. Others are considering covering politics only if they are ordered by their editors and the management body. As one of discussants say *“I am a soldier of the station, if I am ordered to cover politics, I will not refuse to do so.”*

4.2.2.5. EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE OF STATE OWNED ERTA

. For the media freedom to be realized, editorial independence should exist both in State owned and privately owned media, irrespective of ownership. The State media has to be considered by their responsibilities rather than by their privileges. The basic dilemma in ERTA editorial policy is that there is no public mechanism to make the station accountable to the community served. Having “very weak” audience survey system and lack of mechanisms to entertain public opinion, freedom of speech within the organization can be easily suppressed by the media class as by government.

During discussions and interviews direct censorship is not cited by journalists from State owned media as a problem in their work. At the same time compulsory daily and weekly editorial meetings are said to be used to give ‘suggestions’ on news and program contents from editors and the management. Although some participants agreed that these meetings are simply a discussion forum, some however said editorial meetings are used to remind journalists of news items forbidden under the objective of the station. Based on the discussion with journalists from all departments however, it can be concluded that interference in editorial content has fallen significantly in ERTA and continues to fall particularly for stories relating to development and government institutions. But a journalist stressed that while his job is getting easier, it is not yet easy. He is quoted saying “*a certain report is transmitted if a green light is given to editors when the story breaks.*” However an editor from News and Current Affairs Department said he believed limits are often set by the journalists themselves and it depends on how far they dare to go.

News Editor at ERTA Hanna Temuari articulates that freedom of the media is the center of just development, and her department need individual journalists who contribute to national development, not one who oversee the status quo. However, the news department is not covering reports that are critical to the government. In this case, Hanna says “*although we are claiming*

that our doctrine is development journalism, we are not fully following it; we lack concrete evidence to criticize the government. Even those journalists who are sometimes coming up with investigative reporting plan lose confidence to go forward.”

Along with station initiated programs, ERTA sells airtime to external promotional agencies and civil society organizations. An editor from entertainment department Zerihun Berhanu says this can be considered as commitment of his station to entertain diverse idea on social issues. Other discussants from his department however argue that access to airtime need not be granted on the basis only of an applicant’s capacity to purchase it. Otherwise, the scope of censorship will have been only narrowed and not removed. This situation is said to be a hindrance to secure editorial independence of ERTA.

No interviewees and focus group discussants from the State owned media saw private media ownership as a priority. If they are asked to choose, they said they would remain within the State media because being part of a large ERTA confers respect and increases access to information. Yet, most of them agreed media that is ideally owned by the people and democratically controlled can serve the interest of the public. One reporter from Social and Economic Programs Department says the media can be a hindrance upon democracy if left uncontrolled, and *“it may also require government intervention where necessary.”*

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1.SUMMARY

The question of whether the State and privately owned broadcast media in Ethiopia properly discharge their job of informing the public and facilitate democracy regardless of ownership is still debatable issue. However, this research illustrates access to diverse sources of information has to be regarded as basic democratic right, and media ownership must be carefully synchronized with freedom of expression.

This thesis used a qualitative case study research method, which employs detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information such as observations, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, audiovisual material, and primetime news scripts and other documents. Besides, quantitative method is applied in order to provide descriptive measurement of general pictures, trends and relationships as to whether broadcast media ownership is affecting media freedom in the country. The research incorporates widely accepted human rights principles along with social science research method in order to minimize subjectivity of the researcher.

The study examined academic qualification and professional ability of journalists in both State and private radio stations. The reason for this is the theory that lack of professionalism and low institutional capacity are obstacles for the media to acquire and interpret information from all actors in story writing. Based on data presented in this research, academic qualifications of private radio station journalists seem desirable for the industry, but there must be thorough and practical training given for working journalists. Even though, journalists in State owned ERTA are more educated and experienced than of journalists in privately owned broadcast media

organizations, Primetime news examined for the purpose of this research shows State media journalists often fall short in exhausting all possible sources, which results in one-sided reports.

Going through the news archive of both State and privately owned stations, there has been no significant and quality investigative reporting that contextualized coverage on democracy and human rights. Most journalists found it difficult to investigate wrongdoings of government institutions and officials as a result of fear, professional incapability to undertake investigative reporting and unwillingness of editors to investigate on issues of corruption and abuse of authority. Moreover, interference from government officials, media owners and editors, lack of resources and public perception of the role of the media could interfere with journalists' ability to perform their duties and presents a danger for freedom of expression in both State and privately owned media organizations. The argument is therefore, Ethiopian journalists who are actually tied with the interest of the owners and of the editors are not able to work for the public, and to represent public opinion.

The research signify the process of decision making which is usually guided by professional codes that gives editors' authority to oversee stories with denial of access to the media. It is evident that gatekeepers in State owned media have a role to play in professionalizing propaganda. Whereas, the interest of advertisers can be an obstacle for the privately owned media to represent the differing voices among the public. Many journalists in State owned media argued that ERTA used integration propaganda in order to encourage trust and understanding among the society. However, data obtained from primetime news assessment illustrates that the agency has been strongly propagandistic and has not even acknowledged alternative positions on key policies.

Direct censorship is not cited by journalists from State and privately owned media as a problem in their work. However, journalists from ERTA asserts that compulsory daily and weekly editorial meetings are said to be used to give 'suggestions' on news and program contents from

editors and the management. Media freedom is the centre for just development that requires participation of the general public. Participation as a concept in media freedom is about fairness, equal time and opportunity to decide on contents to be delivered by the media. The research highlights, although the government has been seen as a threat to freedom of the media, the private power gatekeepers of State media organizations, in this case editors and management bodies, as well as private broadcast media owners and advertisers control the flow of diverse ideas and predetermine contents as well as outputs of debates and discussions on issues that are public concern.

As a matter of fact, the emergence of privately owned broadcast media organizations in Ethiopia changed State monopolization over the means of mass media, which results in the expansion of media freedom. However, there is insufficient private capital and advertising revenue even for those already existing private broadcast organizations to support their activities. Since media ownership requires resources, government will remain an institution that can own or subsidize the kind of capital needed for media development in the country.

5.2. CONCLUSION

The diversification of media ownership has created broader outlooks for the expression of different opinions, and for the acceptance of political and cultural pluralism within Ethiopian society. It can be concluded that the importance of the role of the private press and the acceptance of private space in broadcasting initiatives has aided press freedom in Ethiopia. It is with this belief that private broadcasting services are given obligation to provide equal treatment to any community in their license area. Independent media in Ethiopia plays a role in building democracy, yet who does the independent media actually represents in a given society and on what democratic basis it can claim to represent public opinion have been a point of discussion. It is evident that the private press that strives to survive the cruelty of the media market represents its own interest of profit making. It is also the owners who have the power to have much say in

establishing the goals of the media, in preparing editorial guidelines and in who becomes editor in order to make sure their interest is kept.

Although development of an independent media is the key to the ultimate sustenance of democratic system, State-owned media is equally important for the public interest and of to maintain media pluralism in the country. The capacity of the government to have the means to communicate with all territory it governs is basically important to both state effectiveness and nation building. State media in Ethiopia therefore should play a crucial role to facilitate access to the media by allowing genuine participation of the public. It is also in its constitutional duty to serve the public in a manner that is accountable to ensure diverse idea is entertained.

In conclusion, multiplicity of ideas will not flow from diversity of ownership since all the ownerships are captives of their own interest. The responsibility for providing opportunity for freedom of expression however belongs to both the governmentally and privately controlled media. Media freedom would, therefore, be a critical condition for sustaining the essence of representative government whereby citizens can have power over the administration.

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APPENDIX A: KEY INFORMANTS

Abebe Beyene. Programs Head with Zami FM 90.7. Addis Ababa November 2, 2010.

Abiyu Tadesse. Social Programs Editor in Chief with ERTA. Addis Ababa November 15, 2010

Abraham Haile. News Senior Editor with Radio Fana. Addis Ababa November 24, 2010.

Aschalew Getachew. Good Governance Programs Editor with ERTA. Addis Ababa December 3, 2010

Ayal Abebaw. News and Current affairs Editor with ERTA. Addis Ababa November 26, 2010

Bruk Kebede. Programs Head with Radio Fana. Addis Ababa November 23, 2010.

Dareskedar Mebrhatu. Good Governance Programs Head with ERTA. Addis Ababa December 1, 2010

Debassu Bayleyegn. News and Current affairs Editor in Chief with ERTA. Addis Ababa November 2, 2010

Haileamlak Kassaye. Economy Programs Editor in Chief with ERTA. Addis Ababa November 15, 2010

Hanna Temuwari. News and Current affairs Editor in Chief with ERTA. Addis Ababa November 3, 2010

Shibeshi Alemayehu. Entertainment Programs Head with ERTA. Addis Ababa December 1, 2010

Sileshi Tesema. News and Current Affairs Editor in Chief with Sheger FM 102.1. Addis Ababa November 8, 2010.

Teferi Alemu. Programs Head with Sheger FM 102.1. Addis Ababa November 8, 2010.

Zeryihun Birihanu. Entertainment Programs Editor with ERTA. Addis Ababa December 3, 2010

APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Journalists from Radio Fana National Service. (8 participants, under supervision of Elsabet Samuel). December 02, 2010.

Journalists from Fana FM 98.1. (8 participants, under supervision of Elsabet Samuel). December 02, 2010.

Journalists from Radio ERTA, Good Governance Programs Department. (9 participants, under supervision of Mulat Anagaw and Frezer Abebe). November 12, 2010.

Journalists from Radio ERTA, News and Current Affairs Department. (10 participants, under supervision of Mulat Anagaw and Frezer Abebe). November 09, 2010.

Journalists from Radio ERTA, Social Programs Department. (11 participants, under supervision of Mulat Anagaw and Frezer Abebe). November 15, 2010.

Journalists from Radio ERTA, Economy Programs Department. (8 participants, under supervision of Mulat Anagaw and Frezer Abebe). November 10, 2010.

Journalists from Sheger FM102.1. (8 participants, under supervision of Elsabet Samuel). November 10, 2010.

Journalists from Zami FM 90.7. (6 participants, under supervision of Elsabet Samuel). November 10, 2010.

APPENDIX C: PRIMETIME NEWS

ERTA Primetime News transmitted on 13.04.10.

ERTA Primetime News transmitted on 22.03.10.

ERTA Primetime News transmitted on 04.05.10.

ERTA Primetime News transmitted on 07.05.10.

ERTA Primetime News transmitted on 30.06.10.

ERTA Primetime News transmitted on 07.07.10.

ERTA Primetime News transmitted on 04.08.10.

ERTA Primetime News transmitted on 26.04.10.

ERTA Primetime News transmitted on 14.04.10.

ERTA Primetime News transmitted on 27.04.10.

ERTA Primetime News transmitted on 28.04.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 01.03.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 03.03.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 29.03.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 22.03.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 15.03.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 09.03.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 21.08.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 13.07.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 07.07.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 22.06.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 12.06.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 28.04.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 19.04.10.

Radio Fana Primetime News transmitted on 13.04.10.

Sheger FM 102.1 Primetime News transmitted on 22.02.10.

Sheger FM 102.1 Primetime News transmitted on 24.03.10.

Sheger FM 102.1 Primetime News transmitted on 01.03.10.

Sheger FM 102.1 Primetime News transmitted on 17.03.10.

Sheger FM 102.1 Primetime News transmitted on 02.03.10.

Sheger FM 102.1 Primetime News transmitted on 03.03.10.

Sheger FM 102.1 Primetime News transmitted on 22.03.10.

Sheger FM 102.1 Primetime News transmitted on 06.04.10.

Sheger FM 102.1 Primetime News transmitted on 12.07.10.

APPENDIX D: QUESTIONS FOR KEY INFORMANTS

1. How do you select issues to cover?
2. What makes your station (Ethiopia radio and television) different than of other privately, community and/or party owned stations?
3. What kind of news gathering and presentation methods do your journalists follow to obtain and disseminate information from the government?
4. What kind of mechanism do you use to address audience interest and public request?
5. How do you evaluate news gathered and transmitted?
6. How do you cover and allocate time for issues from the public, civil society organisations and political parties?
7. What are challenges of editors in covering events that are critical to the government?
8. What do you say about freedom of expression and of the media particularly in State owned media organizations?
9. How do you entertain government press releases and conferences?
10. Have you ever conducted investigative reporting on government institutes and officials?
11. Do you carry out policy analysis in your reporting?

APPENDIX E: QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

1. Do you practice your journalistic work freely?
2. Who decide on issues to be covered primetime?
3. Has any of your story been rejected by the editor without you being informed?
4. Have you ever challenged the decision from your editor regarding stories you did?
5. How do you evaluate the fairness, time allocation and the right to reply issues in your department?
6. Are you willing to cover issues from opposition political parties?
7. Can you recall some of the issues that went on air which you think were really serving the objective of the government?
8. What is your opinion about the way your department is responding to letters from the audiences?
9. What do you think of the government officials who guest-speak on your program?
10. What do you think of your department's use of facts and figures?
11. Would you please tell specific areas where you think should be revised in order for you to entertain opinion of the public?

APPENDIX F: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

I am conducting a research on the effect of State and private broadcast media ownership on media freedom in Ethiopia. The research takes Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency, Radio Fana, Sheger FM 102.1 and Zami FM 90.7 as study subjects. You, as a journalist of one of these media organizations have been randomly selected as one of respondents to this questionnaire.

The data you provide is going to be used solely for this research. Therefore your responses to questions listed will be anonymously managed with discretion and ethical care. I believe that your genuine response can make this research meaningful and practical. Please take a few moments to complete the questionnaire and return them to my delegates in your organization.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

1. Please state your academic qualification

2. What is your position in the organization?

3. How many years have you served in the media industry?

A. Less than a year

B. A year

C. Two years

D. Three years

E. Four years

F. Five years and above

G. If other than these, specify _____

4. Do you like your job? Yes ☐ No ☐

Why? _____

5. Do you think you are working free of interference from your editors?

A. Yes, I do.

B. No, I don't

C. I don't know

If your answer is no, please state the situations where you are not free to do your work

6. What kind of problems do you usually face while reporting or writing news?

7. Have you ever regretted not having conducting investigative reporting on an issue?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes please identify the issue and why you regret

8. Do you think you are professionally able to report on issues that are news worthy?

Yes ☐ No ☐ I do not Know ☐

If your answer is No, what could be the reason?

9. What kind of stories do you usually cover?

A. Politics

B. Economy

C. Culture

D. Entertainment

10. Do you always wait for you to be assigned for a reporting task?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please state the reason why?

11. Are there stories covered by you but not transmitted?

Yes ☐ No ☐

12. If your answer is no, have you ever asked your editor or producer why your story was rejected?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If your answer is Yes, please state what your editor or producer told you

13. Do you often reshape the tone of your story which you think may bring negative impact or consequences on the audience or your media organization?

A. Yes, I often do.

B. Yes, I sometimes do

C. I never do

Please state the nature/type of the story you reshaped the tone

14. Do you believe journalists working in your organization perform their task with professional integrity?

A. Yes

B. No

C. I have no idea.

If your answer is No what do you think is the reason?

15. Could you please briefly state what you understand to be journalism ethics
