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INFLUENCES ON MEDIA CONTENTS: AN INVESTIGATION
ON EBC AND SHEGER FM 102.1 RADIO

ADONAY SEIFU

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SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION**

**INFLUENCES ON MEDIA CONTENTS: AN INVESTIGATION
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**BY
ADONAY SEIFU**

APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Adviser

Signature

Examiner

Signature

Examiner

Signature

Examiner

Signature

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Abstract

This study seeks to identify the sources, causes, and also outcomes of the improper influences on media contents by outlining three broader levels: extra-media; organizational, and within media influences. It is carried out on two broadcasting media organizations in Ethiopia-the EBC and Sheger 102.1 FM radio station. A quantitative methodology is applied for the study. Hence, questionnaires were distributed to sixty journalists working in the two stations. Accordingly, the finding demonstrates that the media contents of these two stations are very much succumbed to the influences emanating from various sources and in various degree and outcomes. Still worse, it is also found out that the stations have no as such viable mechanisms that shield their media contents from the influences. The study has further attempted to illuminate the typically serious and damaging sources of the improper influences along with their underlying causes and gruesome consequences on the media contents of the two broadcasting stations. Besides, it has shown the utmost need for media organizations themselves, the media professionals and their associations, the government, and other stakeholders to protect what's known as freedom of the press particularly editorial and journalistic independences from the improper influences.

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List of Acronyms

EBC- Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation

EPRDF- Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front

ERTA- Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency

FDRE- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

ETV- Ethiopian Television

VNR- Video News Releases

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Media content, in its own right, has usually been studied from the perspective of its impact on audiences. Media effects researches have typically, as a first step, determined what messages are available to an audience and, therefore, what messages are available to have an effect on that audience.

However, media content is also an indicator of numerous other underlying forces: the people and organizations that produce the content. It is also worth noting, as Shoemaker & Reese (1996: 25) maintained, that social reformers and special interest groups often assume that media content equals direct effect.

The day to day work of journalists and the content they produce is influenced by a range of structural factors, such as legal constraints, regulatory regimes, the system of media ownership, organizational routines, shortage of time, market forces, advertising considerations, cultural bias, patriotism, professional ethos, and a gender, racial or class imbalance in the workforce (McQuail, 2000:249).

The most common assumption is that the owners of the media influence the content and form of a certain media production through their decisions to employ certain personnel, by funding special projects, and by providing a media platform for ideological interest groups. In addition, as Williams (2003:73) argues, ‘media owners have not only the opportunity to influence content and choice, but also have a crucial role to play in shaping social consciousnesses.’ This typically shows how the influences of media owners on the media’s content have far-reaching repercussions.

What’s more, within the media sphere, it is, ultimately, the owners who, through their wealth and the fact of ownership, determine the style of journalism we get (Foley, 2000:51). Media owners set the broad lines of policy for their organizations, which of course include the recipe the journalists are to follow. They exert their influence not just by exercising direct intervention or by demarcating the “impassable” lines. They set the

tone, they decide which markets to target, they control the editorial budget, and they also hire and fire the editors.

Media researchers also argued that media contents, be these news items, entertainments, feature programs and so on, are most likely to be directly linked to or correlated with the interests of those who finance them or the owners of the media. For instance, J.H. Altschull (1984), who developed the theory of media ownership, and also Shoemaker and Reese, who in 1987 came up with the media ownership and news content theory (and later “hierarchy of influences on media content model”), strongly contended that the owners and financiers of media organizations have ultimate power over the news content of their media outlets. These theorists seem to buy the long-standing adage that “he who pays the piper calls the tune”.

The non-existence of binding legislations in most countries, as Puddephatt (2011:12) argues, that guarantee editorial independence, i.e., the right of journalists to decide what to cover, how to cover it, and where to place the story in a newspaper, magazine or broadcast, regardless of the views of the owner and other “stakeholders”, has the effect of debilitating journalists in terms of operating in an atmosphere that is free from the direct control of the commercial or ideological interests of the owner and other third parties who feel, in one or the other way, that they have a stake in a certain media content. In fact, studies related to the media in Eastern Europe regularly identify violations of editorial independence because of the ability of politicians or political parties to influence media content (Metyková, Waschková and Císarová, 2009). What’s worse is that,

Although editorial independence is an inviolable component of media policy and is of unquestionable importance, the fact is that editorial independence is not absolute in any country or any segment of the media world. Because of this approximate situation, a critical evaluation of the real manifestations of media practices leads to a situation in which the concept of editorial independence is seen as old-fashioned, or as one which is not realistic and is more of a myth (Hoey, 2008; Grattan, 1998; McLellan, 2008, cited in Rožukalne, 2013:83).

The lack of editorial independence, along with Code of Conduct and a binding legislation which would have been instrumental in rectifying or abating, at least, the influences and pressures of internal and external factors on media content, has also numerous negative ramifications. Journalists and editors working under such influences may be forced to compromise their professional integrity and present to the audience distorted facts and information for fear of losing their jobs, “socializing” themselves with the unwritten “rules” within the media organization, and so on. Besides, there will be a strong possibility for these media personnel to frustrate and lack interest in their very profession.

Journalistic independence, i.e., professional autonomy, is a major journalistic ethical foundation that should be given emphasis but at the same time becomes the victim of those internal and external pressures. This is due to the fact that credibility is very crucial for building the image of a given media organization in the eyes of the public. Kruger (2004:13), in fact, maintained that journalists will be unable to work if audiences discount their reporting because they see it as influenced by considerations outside of journalism, such as any personal, commercial or political motives.

All the aforementioned scenarios reveal one crucial point: in so far as journalists’ and media organizations’ works are tampered with internal as well as external pressures, the possibility of getting objective journalism will be a mere dream.

When we come to the Ethiopian situation, the fact that there are only finger-counted broadcast media outlets and that the private FM radios are yet at their budding stage may not enable us to solidly and authoritatively assert on the actual influences and pressures on media content that emanate from the media organizations themselves, their owners, and other extra-media factors.

However, there seems a consensus to exist within the public, as observation dictates, that media organizations owned by the government are often accused of serving as the government’s mouthpiece instead of serving the public interest. In a very similar tone, media organizations owned by private individuals are also said to show a strong proclivity to the interest, whatever that may be, of the owners and other external factors

like advertisers, program sponsors, public relations information, and so on, that have a stake with the media in one way or other.

A study conducted on the ETV (now EBC) revealed that ETV's editorial policy specifically emphasizes the public commitment of the broadcaster. The ethical code for journalists in the agency [then ERTA] reads: 'State media journalists' primary professional obligation is to stand for and respect people's common benefit and interest' (Skejerdal, 2011:211). This principle, as Skejerdal argues, only comes second in actual reporting practice, where the government emerges as the main beneficiary.

Personal observation and also informal discussions made with journalists working in both the public and private media enable this student researcher to understand the multi-faceted influences that are being exerted on the media contents they produce. Though this may need a further research, the point is that not only the government-owned media station but also the private media themselves are not immune from the undue influences posed in such a way as to compromise the media content as well as their professional autonomy.

Therefore, this thesis tries to explore on the significant sources of undue influences exerted on media contents of EBC and Sheger 102.1 FM radio station; the real cause and effects of such influences, and also the mechanisms, if any, that these broadcasting media organizations employ to minimize the negative outcomes on their media contents.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

People's freedom of information, especially in countries like ours wherein access to the Internet and other forms of new media is very much limited is a function of broadcast media. Most of us do not pass a day without turning on our TV or radio so as to keep ourselves up-to-date on what is going on in-country as well as abroad. We bank our trust on the media to garner information that may or may not be of significant to our lives. This trust comes from our assumption that the media and the journalists working within it are ethically, professionally, and even legally bound to tell us the truth or the undistorted facts and information.

However, relevant literatures have proven time and again that this trust is full of deficit. Journalists working in a particular media outlet are vulnerable to the plethora of pressures and influences coming from as many angles as imaginable. It is these improper influences that are at the root of the trust deficit that we observe in the media.

These being the case, the studies conducted here in Ethiopia mostly focus on governmental/political influences and pressures, these being in legal forms, censorship and other administrative hurdles, that coerce journalists and the media organizations themselves to be self-censoring. Their focus, in addition, is circumscribed for the most part analyzing how factors like a commitment to a non-professional community, vague government control and personal opportunism (Skjerdal's 'Competing Loyalties: Journalism culture in the Ethiopian state media', a dissertation, 2012) ; "freebies" and "brown envelope" – media bribes – dominate the Ethiopian broadcast media ('Berhanu Lodamo's 'Freebies' and 'Brown envelopes' in Ethiopian broadcast media', a Master's Thesis, 2008) ; the significant influence of public relations' information on the news-making process of Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) (Biniyam Wubishet 'A critical study of the treatment of public relations information in Ethiopian News Agency', a Master's Thesis, 2006), and also how the fact of not upholding journalistic ethical considerations are all negatively impacting the contents of the broadcasting media as well as newspapers in Ethiopia (Asgedom G/selassie's, 'Comparative Content Analysis of State and privately-owned Amharic Newspapers Based on Journalistic Ethical Issues', a Master's Thesis, 2006) .

These studies seem to be satisfactorily unable, in most part, to bring into the limelight the underlying multiple causes and also the manifestations of influential factors that are simultaneously or in isolation affecting the broadcasting media contents. Besides, no attempt is made to investigate these diverse influential factors interrelate and thereby affect media contents.

Thus, this study has tried to reckon with the various kinds, along with their effects, of external and internal influences and pressures factors that are negatively impacting the media contents of EBC and Sheger 102.1 FM radio station. By doing so, it is tried not only to, at least, bridge the gap in this specific research area and thereby serve

as a spring board for future comprehensive studies but also demonstrated the need for a somewhat all-inclusive studies that will address various influential perspectives on media contents.

1.3. Objective of the study

This study will have the following general and specific objectives.

1.3.1. General Objective

The study generally aims to investigate the significant sources and outcomes of influences that are negatively impacting the media contents of the broadcasting media in Ethiopia.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- To identify the kinds and the possible reasons of influences that emanate from external and internal factors;
- To find out the outcomes ensued from such internal and external influences exerted on broadcasting media content, and
- To explore the mechanisms, if any, which are in place to at least minimize the improper influences exerted on the broadcasting media contents by external and internal factors are available.

1.4. Research questions

This study poses the following research questions:

- What forces exactly are most likely to influence and impinge on contents of the broadcasting media?
- What are the outcomes of the influences exerted by external and internal to the media organization forces on broadcasting media content?
- What mechanisms, if any, are in place to at least minimize the improper influences exerted on the broadcasting media contents by external and internal factors are available?

1.5. Significance of the Study

While numerous studies have focused on how the media set the audience agenda, fewer have taken a step back to get to the root of matter: how and why the media's agenda is influenced in the first place. Although some research has examined these different forces and their potential consequences separately (e.g., public relations or advertising pressures effects on building the media's agenda or frames), no research to date in Ethiopia, to the best knowledge of this researcher, has studied how various influences are impinging on media contents in general.

In fact, the relevant literatures have made it clear that such all-inclusive studies started to be launched even in the Western world after the publication of Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese's 1991 book titled "*Mediating the Message*". This research work attempts to explain the complexity of today's media through what they call "the hierarchy of influences on media content model"—a simplified map showing how levels of social organization influence media and also affect one another. Hence, the study at hand may hopefully serve as a spring-board for further studies.

This type of research is pertinent in the current media landscape where journalists are faced with multiple competing loyalties to the call of their profession, the interest of their media organization, the public at large, and also the various stakeholders to the media.

Understanding why and how the multi-faceted sources of influences and pressures work is also advantageous to all those who are directly or indirectly connected to the processes of media organizations, especially media owners, executives, editors, producers, and even governmental and non-governmental agencies that are legally invested with the responsibility to protect media contents from undue or unethical influences and pressures and thereby by uphold the principles and practices of the constitutionally recognized freedom of the press.

Moreover, it is useful to study influences on media contents "through the eyes" of the journalists since the way these forces are perceived constitutes an important aspect of practice. Even more importantly, it renders observable social structures otherwise invisible to the researcher.

All these are presumably explain the significance of this research project, and as already mentioned, future research works may be benefitting from it.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

This study, because of lack of resources, will cover only one government broadcast medium, i.e. EBC, and one private FM radio-Sheger FM 102.1 radio. Another limitation is that the study will be conducted on media organizations based and broadcasting from the city of Addis Ababa only. Moreover, the study could have been conducted on a larger sample size by widening the scope to include the print media and also those media organizations established at a regional level.

What's more, time and resource constraints compelled this student researcher not to use other research techniques like interview in addition to the questionnaire.

On the other hand, the virtual non-existence of relevant literatures herein Ethiopia regarding influences on Ethiopian broadcast media contents and also the fact that the relevant literatures are solely oriented towards the Western media realities both remain as a tremendous challenge in conducting this specific study.

This study, apart from the specific research questions it will try to answer, is very much drawn on the broad/general assumption that the Ethiopian media arena, especially the media contents, are vulnerable to various influences that may emanate from ranges of internal and external factors. These, in turn, will result in the media organizations to compromise, in one way or the other, not only their media contents but also their civic roles and journalistic ethics.

1.7. Definition of Terms

Broadcasting Media Organizations are entities legally authorized to provide at least one radio and/or television channel specifically edited for the domestic population of a given country and transmitted through the use of electrical impulse. (UNESCO, Pilot Survey 2011 Data Collection on Media Statistics, Montreal, Canada 2011.)

Influence is the process by which a social actor frames others' choices in the sense of its [own] interests, while not being able to impose these interests by sheer force. (Manuel Castells, 1998:474). For our present purpose, influence over certain media may be defined as the ability to promote or veto certain appointments, policies, and news stories, thereby giving the person enjoying such influence a say in the coverage and content of the media outlet.

Journalist refers to the media worker who researches and writes stories for electronic distribution, often with the guidance of editors or producers.

Levels of Analysis refers to the multiple levels of influences that impinge on media simultaneously and suggests how influence at one level may interact with that at another (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996:7).

Media Content refers to the complete quantitative and qualitative range of verbal and visual information distributed by the mass media. (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996:4)

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW of LITERATURE

The kernel issues that will be dealt with in this section focus on briefly exploring and elaborating the very need to study influences on media content (IOMC); the multi-faceted sources of influences on media content, and also the theoretical perspectives that are underpinning the studies concerning IOMC.

Brief background notes will also be forwarded on the history of Ethiopian broadcasting media and the legally restrictive clauses that are impacting broadcasting media contents in Ethiopia in the past and the present.

2.1. Studying the Influences on Media Contents

Although researches describing this specific area have been available since the early part of the 20th century, scientific investigation into the influences on content wasn't extensive until after World War II. The bulk of mass communication researches rather used to focus on understanding the processes by which the message is received and grasped by audiences, and also investigating the effects of the media on the audience.

Efforts to discover what variables affect media content have taken many approaches during the past six or seven decades. These approaches have emphasized psychological, sociological, cultural, and economic factors and social forces. All these forces have a role in determining what becomes news and what contents media should reflect. However, how these factors interrelate to affect content is not fully understood.

As the historical overview of approaches to journalism studies indicate, modern studies on influences and pressures on media content began with David Manning White's (1950) suggestion that journalists act as *gatekeepers* of media messages—that they select from among the day's events those that will become “news”—and with Warren Breed's (1955) description of how journalists become socialized to their jobs.

The gatekeeper theory, in fact, was first introduced by Kurt Lewin, who first used the word “gatekeeper” to describe housewives that decide which foods will be served to the family for a dinner (1951:25). Then he applied the concept to journalism. The gatekeeper study of journalism, as it is already mentioned, has examined the situation

where the gatekeepers are opening and closing the “gates” of complicated communication channels which are thus permeable only to certain information. The theory has “appeal and plausibility” and applications wider than news decisions (McQuail, 2000: 277); but, like many theories of mass communication, as Roberts (2005:3) argued, it has weaknesses as the theory is fundamentally a descriptive one, with a normative bent that offers little if any predictive power. Its chief value comes in summarizing the various forces that come into play as news people make decisions about what messages will be selected to present to their audiences.

Since then, particularly after the works of White and Breed came to the scholarly scene, an increasing number of studies have focused on the ways in which media workers and their employers, as well as organizational structures and society itself, affect media content. In other words, a number of researchers who previously studied media effects now find themselves asking why such effect-producing content exists to begin with.

With these studies of gatekeeping and the “control” of news flow in mind, Shoemaker and Reese (1991; 1996; 2001) developed the hierarchical model of influences on media content. Such a research paradigm shift, as they argued, seems to be a function of the conviction that the media content does not reflect the objective reality, i.e., the world around us. Rather, media content is shaped by a variety of factors that result in different versions of reality. (1996:64) This model, which serves as the basis for the book *Mediating the Message: theories of influences on mass media content* (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996), links the individual, structural and normative factors to describe the production of media content and also the forces that shape the media message. It’s worth noting that these forces of influence may also attempt to affect how a story, topic, issue, or event is covered.

The model put forward by Shoemaker and Reese is certainly not the only one. Donsbach, for instance, distinguishes between the individual, professional, institutional and the societal “spheres” of influences (2004: 131-157). McQuail (2000: 248), on the other hand, suggested a model consisting of five levels, including the levels of the individual/role, organization and medium/industry/institution, as well as societal and international levels.

Amongst these five levels, McQuail appears to be convinced that media content is systematically more influenced by organizational routines, practices and goals than by personal or ideological factors (2010: 243). This assertion, however, should not be taken as belittling the significance of the individual mass communicator but rather as an indication that the mass communicator's media works are subject to the requirements of the media organization. Any endeavor, as he further asserted, for studying the influences on media content should take account of the relations across the boundary between the media organization and other agents and agencies of the wider media institution and society.

Preston (2009:7) proposed a typology of five levels, referring to the domains of individual influences and professional values; organizational influences; media routines (institutional practices and norms); political-economic factors and influences, as well as cultural and ideological or symbolic power. Preston's "clusters of influences on news" are distinct but complementary sets of concepts and ways of understanding the influences on journalism and news culture.

Gans (1979:13), on his part, identified the source of influence within the media organization, and the incentives journalists have to conform to group norms and follow practical considerations. Hence, he emphasizes the role of neither the "gatekeeper" nor publisher but the very process by which all parts, routines and arrangements of the media organization in terms of creating the content of the media. Thus, this approach was a valuable corrective to the notion that news is what gatekeepers or publishers say it is.

Though Gans' work provides a valuable insight into the power of sources, influences originating outside of the organizations, and emphasizes the relationships that play the most important roles in the newsmaking process, Reese (2011: 290) criticized and questioned Gans' view in that,

[To] say that the news produced is that which best allows the organization to be efficient does not explain the objectives on which that efficiency is based, nor what shape news necessarily takes as a result. If journalists seek stories that meet organizations' needs, how did those needs get structured to begin with?

Taken from a very different perspective, Altschull's (1984; 1997) economic model or theory of media ownership asserts that the overriding determiner of media content is the ideology of those who finance the media. To put in other words, his model precisely contends that the content of the media is directly or positively correlated with the interests of those who finance the media. "Those who finance the media" could refer to an individual or group.

Altschull further outlines four conditions whose combinations determine news content: official structures (rules, regulations, and decrees); commercial interests (reflecting the views of advertisers and their commercial allies); informal influences (mirroring the goals of relatives, friends, or acquaintances, who supply money directly or who exercise their influence to ensure that the tunes of the piper are heard) and interest group pressures (echoing the concerns of the financing enterprise, a political party or a religious organization or any other body pursuing specific ends). Altschull (1997: 260) claims that, 'no newspaper, magazine, or broadcasting outlet exceeds the boundaries of autonomy acceptable to those who meet the costs that enable them to survive'.

The propaganda model (PM) of Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988), both of whom argue from the perspective of critical political economy, focuses on the propaganda dimension of information by identifying five filters (ownership, advertising, information sourcing, flak, and anti-communism) through which information must pass before seeing the light. According to the authors, these filters constitute the most decisive elements that influence what appears as "news," pointing to the fact that one of the essential features of the information is its character as propaganda to serve elite interests.

By propaganda, it is meant that most of the news content is oriented toward social reproduction, i.e., the continuation of the capitalist class system, especially in its neoliberal form. This means that information is usually framed within the parameters of elite interests, and that certain topics and ideas tend to be excluded. In Chomsky and Herman's (1988:303) terminology, the role of the media is to try to manufacture consent, and to mobilize bias in favor of the corporate and political elite. The PM assumes that news discourses are bound to power and predicts that the primary sources of news will be agents of power.

The PM has been criticized as an almost conspiratorial view of the media. (Klaehn, 2002: 151) Critics also charge that the PM's overall view of media behaviour is in general deterministic and can be seen to be plagued by sociological reductionism. It is also criticized very much for viewing the media as completely subservient to the power holders and shakers.

Interestingly enough, on the other hand, a model suited to the realities of the Arab world has been advocated by Hamada whose approach is based on six levels of analysis, including the global level (notably the dependence on Western media), national level, legal level, economic and managerial level, human rights level and the professional level (Hanitzsch et al. ,6:2010).

Although these models contain, by and large, similar sources of influence, they often place them on different levels to which McQuail's prioritization of organizational routines, practices and goals can be one instance. The only exception is the individual level on which all level of influence analysis models agree.

It should be noted that the multilevel nature of influences on media content, especially news production, reflects an epistemological distinction between what's called objective influences and perceived influences. Hence, Hanitzsch and Hoxha (ibid: 9) have underscored their differences in that, 'objective limits have empirical correlates in the "real world". Perceived influences, on the other hand, reside solely in the perceptions of the individual journalist, i.e, they depend on the mental faculties of the journalists and the way objective influences play out on the ground.'

To wrap up this section, relations between media and society are often mediated through a wide range of more or less informal, but often organized, pressure groups which seek to influence directly what the media do – especially by trying to set limits to what they publish or broadcast. Journalism and mass communication researches appear to show a growing awareness of the importance of systemic and economic influences and pressures that impinge on media content.

2.2. Levels of Analysis

The levels of analysis in communications research can be thought of as forming a continuum ranging from micro— examining communication as an activity engaged in and affecting individual people— to macro— examining social structures beyond the control of any one individual, What happens at the lower levels is affected by, even to a large extent determined by, what happens at higher levels. (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996: 9)

With the studies of gatekeeping and the “control” of news flow and also, basically, Altschull’s theory of media ownership or the economic model in mind, Shoemaker and Reese developed the hierarchical model of influences on media content, as briefly outlined earlier. They argue that media choice of the presentation of news items operate on different levels, ranging from macro to micro, to influence the content that is eventually received by the audience. The levels of influence they outlined are ideological, extra-media, organizational, media routines, and individual.

This study draws from particular levels of Shoemaker and Reese’s study, along with aspects from political economy and theory of social control in newsroom. The sources of influences included in this study are extra-media, organizational, and within-media influences. At this particular juncture it is worth noting that,

[Media] organizations in their relations with the wider society are formally or informally regulated or influenced by normative expectations on either side. Such matters as the essential freedoms of publication and the ethical guidelines for many professional activities are laid down by the ‘rules of the game’ of the particular society. This implies, for instance, that the relations between media organizations and their operating environments are governed not solely by law, market forces or political power, but also by unwritten social and cultural guidelines and obligations. (McQuail, 2010:246)

Researches, in the sub-field of media production and content, draw boundaries around a large and diverse body of research efforts, predominantly social science, but also including more interpretive cultural analysis. Such researches treated the media map of the world itself as problematic, something to be understood and predicted through an awareness of underlying forces. And this understanding calls for the classification of

forces that are at work, which in turn, help to appreciate how the media's symbolic environment is shaped.

In describing the usefulness of categorizing the diverse IOMC, McQuail (ibid: 245) argues that,

[It] makes sense to try to place questions of media organization within a common framework. One useful step is to think in terms of levels of analysis, so that the different phases of media work and the significant relations between units of organizational activity and between media and the "outside world" can be identified for study.

The following sections expound the forces that influence and shape media content- the messages that constitute the symbolic environment.

2.2.1. Extra-media Influences

At the extra-media level the focus is on those influences originating primarily from outside the media organization. This perspective considers that the power to shape content is not the media's alone, but is shared with a variety of institutions in society, including the government, advertisers, public relations, influential news sources (such as special interest groups, public relations campaigns, and so on), interest groups, and even other media organizations. Shoemaker and Reese (1996: 7)

At this level, as Reese (2001:182) argues, there are at least two assumptions. One is that the media operate in structured relationships with other institutions that function to shape media content. The other is that these relationships can be coercive but more often are voluntary and collusive. Normative concerns at this level are for press autonomy, assuming often that it is not desirable for the media to be so dependent on other social institutions as such institutions may exert their own pressures in a manner that compromise the media's autonomy.

Journalists rarely witness by themselves the actual happening of a certain incident; say a car or an air plane accident. They learn about an accident from other journalists (via news services or media), from people who were on the scene, from government officials and the traffic police, and so on; and each individual has a unique point of view about what happened. Each source provides journalists with different

information. It is the journalists' job to sift through all the information they are given—which can often be conflicting—and to come up with news reports that are accurate and complete.

Gans (1979: 80) defines sources as “the actors whom journalists observe or interview, including interviewees who appear on the air or who are quoted in ... articles, and those who only supply background information or story suggestions.” The term “sources” may also include organization-based information, such as press releases, press conferences, VNRs, and official proceedings. Gandy (1982:28) referred to these latter sources as “information subsidies” and stressed their importance in shaping and even impacting the media content for which they serve as sources.

Studies have relied on this level of analysis in an attempt to get to the first step in the gatekeeping and agenda-building processes (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Here, besides the above mentioned emphasis of Reese, it's advantageous to bear in mind that,

[To] understand the production of the news, one must first understand the power relationships involved between various institutions or social forces outside of the news organizations. The news is shaped by technological, economic, and cultural forces, as well as by the audience, advertisers, and news sources. News comes to journalists primarily from institutional sources that exert pressures of various kinds on journalists and the news process. (Gans, 1979: 81)

Because journalists can't include in their news reports what they don't know, the most obvious influence occurs when sources withhold information or lie; but they may also influence the news in more subtle ways, by providing the context within which all other information is evaluated, by providing usable information that is easier and cheaper to use than that from other sources and by monopolizing the journalists' time so that they don't have an opportunity to seek out sources with alternative views (Shoemaker & Reese:169).

The media may use the sources verbatim or incorporate them into their own coverage. Without proper fact checking and other journalistic measures to ensure accuracy and balance, the media may be helping, inadvertently or intentionally, these sources build and set their own agendas with the public.

Thus, the relationship between journalists and different extra-media organizational sources is important to examine and thereby able to determine whether or not the media organization and the sources are simply affiliated to build one another's agenda. To further examine extra-media influences herein below, three specific sources of pressure are considered: advertiser/sponsor, public relations, and political/government.

Advertiser/Sponsor

The proper functioning of an independent media organization, particularly in free-market economic systems, is directly dependent on advertising income. The advertiser uses a certain broadcasting media outlet so as to introduce its products or services to consumers or target audience. For this, the former normally pays the latter for the air-time depending on the duration of the advertising period and also the timing of the broadcasting of the advertisement. Fortunato (2005:173) simply put that advertisers constantly make decisions about where to put their monetary resources and sponsor media content perhaps not necessarily because of the content but because of the audience who watches, reads, or listens to that content.

Because advertising income is crucial to the survival of commercial mass media, as Shoemaker & Reese contended, 'the bigger the advertiser, the more muscle it has: Modern multinational manufacturers and advertising agencies, for instance, have considerable power to suppress public messages they do not like.'(ibid: 186) Advertisers' influence, in extreme cases, may even stretch to personnel as well as editorial decisions in the media organization. To add to this,

[Most] free-market media are finely tuned to jointly maximizing the needs of advertisers and their own interests as a normal condition of operation. The "normal" influence extends to the matching of media content patterns according to the consumption patterns of targeted audiences. Media design, layout, planning and scheduling often reflect advertiser interests. (McQuail, 2010:257)

In the current media market, at least in more capitalistic countries, as Colistra (2008:15) stresses, managers are faced with multiple loyalties, such as to viewers, stockholders, and advertisers. In line with this, Baker (2002:65), on the other hand, asserted that influence or favor tends to go toward (1) the larger purchaser; (2) the

purchaser with the most knowledge as to how the media can serve its needs; and (3) the purchaser most sensitive to how the media can affect its interests. This trend, in other words, shows that the crucial player is the advertiser-not the audience.

Writing about political-economic factors that are shaping the news culture, Guyot (2009:140) also argued that, ‘the increasing role of advertisers and other economic actors is leading [the media] to more commercial, profit-making and entertainment-oriented content and fixtures. The main concern for editors, publishers, broadcasters and media owners is to avoid losing advertisers or displeasing owners.’

Some researchers argue that the civic role of journalism has been built upon certain traditional values: newsroom’s independence, news as a social good, journalistic thoroughness and clear distinction between editorial and advertising content (Underwood, 1993; McManus, 1994; Arant and Meyer, 1997; Beam, 1998, cited in Rossi et al, 2015: 2). Though these researchers’ study is conducted on newspapers, one can see that the same, *mutatis mutandis*, may hold true for broadcasting media organizations. Hence, these researchers’ concern is that as newspaper corporations become more market-oriented, these values are jeopardized, mainly because: 1) basing the editorial content on market research could increase the amount of irrelevant or special interest stories; 2) focusing on profits and market share could lead to a loss of editorial quality, as well as reduce the autonomy of newsrooms; and 3) in the attempt to please advertisers, the ethical barrier between commercial and editorial issues could be compromised. It goes without saying that all these will definitely have negative impacts on the media content.

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) raised another issue in that mass media organizations only produce content that is “safe” in drawing a large audience or that will not offend a large number of viewers and therefore scare off advertisers who would not want to be associated with the controversial content. They stated, ‘television networks react to their perceptions of what advertisers will tolerate’ (p. 197).

A major advantage of advertising is that revenue generated empowers the media, consequently providing funding for better facilities for the practice of journalism. While the benefits of advertising seem laudable, studies have shown that this advantage seems

to be minimal as the drive for profit often leads to downsizing of newsrooms, overworking of journalists, lack of adequate training and poor remuneration. Critics like Leiss, Khline and Jhally, (1986) have also pointed to what seems to be the impact of advertising on overall media content. The negative impact of advertising includes the avoidance of controversial subjects, banal programme formats, stereotyping of audience segments and ownership concentration in media industries. The concentration of media ownership with its links to advertising has a profound impact on media content. Hoskins, McFadyen, and Finn (2004), note that reliance on advertising, whether as a partial or total revenue source, could affect its content, first as the advertisement being a substantial part of the content could affect its value and secondly as content is often aligned to promote or create a suitable environment for the advertiser.

Advertiser influence is, generally speaking, ethically disapproved, especially when it affects news (Meyer, 1987, as cited in McQuail), and it may not even be in the interests either of media (especially news media) or of advertisers to be seen to be too close to each other. Both can lose credibility and effectiveness if a form of conspiracy against the media public is suspected.

In general, it seems that economically strong and “elite” media are best in a position to resist undue pressure (Gans, 1979: 75). It’s also worthwhile to note that ‘media organizations most likely to be influenced by advertiser pressure are those whose sole or overwhelming source of revenue is advertising, especially where the competition is heavy’ (Picard, 2004, as cited in McQuail). Besides, as Levi (2007:1325) argues, the media organizations’, especially the commercial ones, focus on profitability creates incentives to attract advertisers by airing programming geared to the audience demographics most desired by advertisers, and not to alienate advertisers by overly controversial or less popular programming choices.

Many countries, including Ethiopia (for instance, Broadcasting Service Proclamation No. 533/2007 and Advertisement Proclamation No. 759/2012-which, in clear terms decreed that the content or timetable of a sponsored program may not fall under the influence of the sponsor), attempt to protect the public, the media personnel and

also the media organizations from improper pressure of advertisers by enacting laws and regulations. Unlike the private broadcasters, the very nature of public broadcasting services also makes them less susceptible to the influence or pressure of advertisers.

Advertising, as reality dictates, should be seen as a necessary evil that has its merits. The media industry is in a constantly evolving environment; as the economics of running a media entity become more defined, especially with threats of competition for media revenue, the relationship between the media and advertisers might only blossom.

Public Relation (PR) Influences

Another potential source of external influence on the media is public relation's pressures. The term "public relation" encompasses an enormous range of activities, from 'the simple mailing of press releases plugging orchestra and activist groups to giant companies that generate ink and air time for celebrities, products, and political positions.' (Bleifuss, 1994:72, cited in Shoemaker & Reese, 1996:175)

One of the main goals of public relations practitioners is to create and maintain a positive image in the eyes of the public over time. To accomplish this goal, those in the field proactively use the media to communicate their messages to the masses. 'If they are successful in getting their messages placed in the media, they will influence the media agenda, which can, in turn, influence public opinion and the public agenda.' (Curtin, 1999:54, cited in Colistra, P.19) Public relations, as Fortunato (2005:136) contends, is thus essentially about developing and implementing a series of proactive strategic initiatives designed to obtain and frame media coverage on behalf of clients. By presenting the perspective of the client in the news story, public relations professionals hope the audience will learn from that perspective and will be influenced by it.

The messages may take the form of what is called "information subsidies" and consist of communication pieces such as press releases, public service announcements (PSAs), VNRs, press conferences, and official proceedings, and so on. Information subsidies from public relations practitioners are provided at no cost to the media. Typical news stories produced by news organizations involve expenses, including equipment costs and worker salaries. Thus, as Colistra argues, 'media entities facing budget cuts and

bottom-line pressures, or simply those with a small number of staff, may be more willing to use these subsidies to fill their news holes at a low cost.’ (ibid: 20)

Despite this symbiotic relationship between the media and PR, journalists or media workers are suspicious of using the piece of information they garnered from PR. This is because of the assumption that ‘all PR’s efforts involve solely persuasive communication.’(Shoemaker & Reese: ibid)

Even though journalists may acknowledge the possibility that PRs messages may too have cognitive goals, they still fail to be comfortable to use the piece of information believing that since the PR controls the source of a piece of information, facts may be distorted. In addition, journalists cite their occupational demand for “objectivity and verification” and thereby reluctant to use PRs information. Journalists may also view PRs as simply trying to promote their own agendas by only presenting their client in a positive light while withholding other pertinent information.

It’s true that journalists and media organizations may not afford to lose PRs as the latter do have indispensable role in terms of providing news-worthy items to the formers. In fact,

the relationship between journalists and PRs, which has typically been characterized as essentially in conflict, has recently been recast as a “trading” or “exchange” relationship in which under-resourced journalists, working in under-staffed newsrooms, increasingly rely on PR sources for editorial copy while offering access to editorial columns for PR messages in return (Gans 1978, Jones 2006, cited in Justin et al. 2015: 12).

Hence, however turbulent their relations may be, they may come up with a compromise that may, more or less, abate the potential influence on media content. But, this compromising between the source of information and the media organization should in no way be reached by surrendering the ethics of journalism and also the public’s right to get undistorted facts and information from the media.

Political/Government Influences

Apart from advertising and PR influences, the media field is vulnerable to pressures emanating from political/government actors. There is little doubt that

governments of all countries exert controls over the mass media in one way or the other. In countries where ‘the media are largely privately owned, controls are exerted through laws, regulations, licenses, and taxes. In countries where the media are primarily government-owned, government control is exerted through media financing.’ (Janus, 1984, cited in Shoemaker & Reese, 1996:190). This control, which takes the form of laws (such as those designed to punish libel) and regulations, may determine both who can own a broadcast medium as well as what kinds of content will be permitted.

Among other things, for instance, the Ethiopian mass media and freedom of information law/ Proclamation No. 590/2008 not only ‘allow the government to criminally prosecute journalists and members of the media for expressing their views and thereby establishes a stronger foothold for government regulation of information but also impinges on the ability to receive and impart information and ideas through the media and regardless of frontiers.’(Ross, 2010: 1066)

Political/government influence and the degree of their pervasiveness, in fact, depend on the kind of political system. The more suppressive/undemocratic the political system is, the more influences it exerts on the media. In addition,

[Political] influence on the [media] organizational level becomes manifest as several news media subscribe to a specific editorial policy by showing their political/ideological inclination in their reporting and editorials. It’s also true that journalists themselves may have a political stance that may or may not play out in the news production. (Hanitzsch & Hoxha: 10)

Although it may seem that the media actively seek out official government views, the government and politicians both seek to influence the press coverage as well. Gandy noted that ‘at every level of government, in every agency, there are information specialists whose responsibility it is to ensure that the nation’s public media carry the desired message forward.’ (ibid: 74) Shoemaker & Reese, on the other hand, stressed that, ‘the government can influence media content through interviews that are off the record, backgrounders, or news leaks (ibid: 205). They also stressed that the government provides a convenient and regular flow of authoritative information, which reporters find efficient compared with more labor-intensive research. These sources are also considered as information subsidies and can very much used to set the agenda for the news media.

So far, in this sub-section, it is tried, based on research works that are carried out in the area, to show the crucial extra-media factors, how they exert their influences and pressures on the media organizations and the media contents, and so on. As these factors are only bits of the web of influential factors that impinge on the media content, we now move to the media organizational influences under which we will try to look at the two basic types: economic and owner/executive pressures.

2.2.2. Organizational Influences

In addition to external forces, improper influences on the media can also stem from people and factors at the organizational level. The central issue which arises under this heading is the extent to which ‘media organizations can claim to exercise autonomy in relation first to their owners, and secondly to other direct economic agencies in their environment, especially those which provide operating funds: investors, advertisers, sponsors.’(McQuail: 256) This category also concerns those newsmaking, or, for that matter, media content producing processes, and influencing factors operating at the level of specific media organizations. Here, ‘explanatory perspectives focused on the organizational influences on newsmaking tend to emphasize how the immediate working environment operates as a “crucial” conditioning context shaping the production of news or other media content.’ (Preston and Mtetykova, 2009:37)

The organizational level considers the imperatives that give rise to the routines, which are the most immediate environment within which a journalist functions, and how individuals are obliged to relate to others within that larger formal structure. Influences at the organizational level seem to largely depend on the structure, size, and ownership of the media entity. The major questions addressed at this level are suggested by an organizational chart. The organizational chart not only maps the key roles of their occupants and how these roles are related to each other in formal lines of authority but also suggests that ‘the organization must have ways to enforce and legitimize the authority of its hierarchy and calls our attention to the organization’s main goals (economic in relation to journalistic), how it is structured to pursue them, and how policy is enforced.’ (Reese, 2001:179)

Economic influences can also derive from this level. These economic concerns ‘can constrain work in the media organization and may, in turn, influence decisions about content.’ (Shoemaker and Reese: 145) This more of a macro level factor also reminds us that ‘news is an organizational product, produced by increasingly complex economic entities, which seek ever more far-reaching relationships in their ownership patterns and connections to non-media industries.’(Reese: ibid)

It is also worthwhile to note that ‘organizational power is often not easily observed and functions in ways not directly indicated by the formal lines of authority described in accessible documents.’(ibid) This power is exercised periodically, implicitly, and not overtly, and, as a result, is not so readily available to direct observation. One consequence of this oblique power is that journalists will be accustomed to self-censorship. This self-policing is ‘more effective than direct censorship, however, because outsiders are often not even aware that anything has taken place.’(ibid)

The highly sophisticated and complex constraints at the organizational level are largely communicated by owners and top executives of a particular media organization. Hence, looking at them more elaborately seems an imperative for this study.

Owners (Proprietors’)/Executive’s Influences

Media ownership is a critical factor for the content of any medium. This implies that there is a connection between the contents and the nature of a medium. The nature of ownership itself is determined by the character (i.e., whether the ownership is private or public, private-oriented or non-private-oriented) of the owner, his interests (i.e., the owner’s economic/business concerns and political persuasion) and the vision (i.e., the owner’s idea as to what the medium should be or do and his understanding of the practices and goals of journalism) the owner has for the medium.

The belief that ownership ultimately determines the nature and content of the media is not just a Marxist and/or neo-Marxist theory but ‘virtually a common sense axiom summed up in Altschull’s “second law of journalism”-the content of the media always reflects in interests of those who finance them’(McQuail:201). Hence, it goes without saying that owners, particularly in market-based media, have the ultimate power

over content and can ask for what they want to be included or left out-something quite against the ethics of journalism. Besides, ‘there is an inevitable tendency for owners of news media to set broad lines of policy, which are likely to be followed by the editorial staff they employ. There may also be informal and indirect pressure on particular issues that matter to owners (for instance, relating to their other business interests)’. (Turow, 1994, as cited by McQuail: *ibid*)

The owners or the head executives, according to Shoemaker and Reese (1996), are the ultimate authority figures in determining the goals and policies of the media organization. As a result, all people working in the organization must answer to them and follow their guidelines if they expect to keep their jobs. Shoemaker and Reese argue that ‘media owners have an unmistakable impact on media content because they establish policy for the entire organization.’(p.137). It’s also clear that as management has a legal and occupational responsibility to serve the economic interest of owners, top-level executives may exert demands on journalists to uphold these economic interests, as well as others.

Media owners and executives have not only the opportunity to influence choice, but also have a crucial role to play in shaping social consciousness. Thus, the ownership and control (the latter is mostly exercised by media organization’s executives) of the media is ‘identified as an important factor in determining the structure, working and output of the mass media but also in the production of meaning in society at large.’(Williams, 2003:73)

In their studies of factors influencing media content, Shoemaker & Reese (1996) have tried to examine the issue at hand from another angle. Hence, they contended, news organizations funded primarily by commercial sources, like advertisers and sponsors, are far more likely to use the objectivity and newsworthiness, both of which are the pillars of journalism, as their principal standards in making news judgments. This is so because a commercial media outlet is more responsive to its audience/viewers and advertisers, both of whom desire these qualities.

Economic Influences

The reality of the market place makes the media increasingly dependent on sources of revenue that compromises its independence. This is because the media has increasingly had to depend on other sources of revenue generation other than the provision of news items and other infotainment programs. The media organization has rather become a business entity. Its public service role, a primary one being the provision of information only increases its ratings for audiences, while the major aim seems to be selling the audience to the advertisers for profit. According to Herman and Chomsky (1988:7), ‘the drive for profit has, encouraged the entry of speculators and increased the pressure and temptation to focus more intensely on profitability’.

In economies whose driving force is free-market, the competition, amongst media organizations for the attention of audience and advertisers is quite high. McQuail (2010) in this regard maintained that, ‘most free-market media are finely tuned to jointly maximizing the needs of advertisers and their own interests as a normal condition of operation. The “normal” influence extends to the matching of media content patterns according to the consumption patterns of targeted audiences.’ (p.257)

McManus (1994) seems to agree with McQuail’s assertion in that media organizations are a part of a market-based economy, and they compete in four different markets: investors, these being owners and/or stockholders in a particular media organization; advertisers; sources of news, and consumers. He further argued that these investors are ‘the most influential in the production of news because they are a part of the corporate structure while the other three markets—advertisers, consumers, and sources—must exert their influence from outside the corporation.’(p.32)

Since the investors, or owners, appear to have the strongest influence in media organizations, news workers may feel economic and bottom-line pressures from them or from top level executives who are likely relaying the messages. Thus, bottom-line pressures to maintain and increase profit margins can take away the journalistic autonomy and independence that journalistic ethics and the journalists themselves are

supposed to value most. This, in turn, greatly limits journalists' freedom to make decisions based on their own ethical and professional frameworks.

Economic influences at the organizational level will not end up only with shaping news agendas. As journalists will be forced to be closer to the so-called audience demands, 'information becomes fragmented, with more consumer issues, entertainment and lifestyle news. This situation, in turn, can lead to short-term thinking within media organizations as well as bad editorial decisions.' (Guyot: 141). Hence, at this particular level and also in the face of the ever-escalating media's commercialization trends, the most pressing challenges journalists have to cope with concern the security of their jobs, professional autonomy as well as the protection of press freedom.

As matter of occupational ethics, Journalists have a responsibility to report the news, not sell products. In fact, one typical common element in all the normative press, that's to mean a press which recognizes certain unwritten obligations that for various reasons are often respected in practice, is that the media should meet the needs and interests of their audience in the first instance and the interests of clients and the state only secondarily. Therefore, 'since media depend on the continuous voluntary choices of their audiences if they are to be either effective or profitable, this principle has a common-sense basis, and it accords with the media's own view.' (McQuail: 252) In practice the satisfaction of advertisers and the acquisition of revenue from sales both ultimately depend on pleasing the audience.

There is an absolute need to balance journalistic work of the news department with the commercial needs of the media organization. Hence the crucial questions researchers and journalists themselves usually raise in this regard, but for the most part no exhaustive solution is provided, are: Can a balance be struck between what news should be covered and the potential impact on advertisers or the media organization itself? Do business decisions preclude certain news stories from being covered at all, and how can newsroom decisions impact the "bottom line" for a station or group? The answers, if any, to be provided affirmatively or negatively for these crucial questions are likely to have huge bearings on the media contents of media organization.

So far in this sub-section, it was attempted to examine the influences from organizational perspective. These influences on media content basically arise from the goals, policies, hierarchies of status and power structures, conflicts and practices of the formal organization in which the work of most journalists is situated. In the next sub-section, an attempt will be made to examine those influences that emanate from within the media organization itself.

2.2.3. Within the Media Organization Influences

Along with external forces and broader organizational ones, influences on media content may also derive from the very place in which it is created: the media organization itself. While Shoemaker and Reese (1996), upon whose work this study drawn heavily did not specifically name this “within-media organization” level of influence in their onion diagram, they did refer to two other related sources, individual and media routines, which include (1) pressures from possible traits within the journalists themselves or (2) other constraints such as time, staff, and resources.

As it is conceptualized and explained here, within-media influences incorporate facets from the two levels from the hierarchical model that were just mentioned. What is different, however, is that the “within-media organization” factor ‘it centers on possible pressure from management, such as assignment editors or other superiors, working within the news organization, along with smaller-scale organizational types of restraints, such as staff size.’ (Colistra: 45)

Hence, so as to have a broader picture of the sources of potential and actual influences within the media organization in this study, herein below it is tried go through: individual pressures; routine pressures; staff size pressures and direct and indirect management pressures.

Individual Influences

Influences on the individual level originate from the journalists’ personal and professional backgrounds and orientations, as well as from their specific roles and occupational characteristics within the news organization. This particular level of influence, as Preston & Metykova (2009: 32) contended, also considers the role of

professional values and codes of ethics, including journalists' own definitions and self-understandings of their professional roles and norms as influences on newsmaking practices.

These individual factors matter because journalists constantly have to make perceptual decisions and also of the pervasive assumption that the personal characteristics of those most directly responsible for media production will influence content. (Donsbach, 2004, cited in Hanitzsch & Hoxha: 3; McQuail: 262) This latter assumption seems paradoxical because the concept of objectivity implies that individual characteristics of journalists should have little, if any, influence on the output of their work.

The hypothesis, McQuail maintains, that the personal backgrounds, characters and professional attitudes of journalists impinge on the media content 'accords well with the ideology or mythology of the media themselves and stands opposed to the notion of organizational or technological determinism.' (ibid)

Shoemaker and Reese (1991:29) outlined two alternative paths for this individual level of influence—one in which organizational role subordinates or conceals personal characteristics, and another in which having power or status in an organization permits an individual communicator to express their personal beliefs and values in public communication. McQuail warns us that,

[These] views need to be modified to allow for the influence of organizational goals and settings. Most media products are the work not of a single author but of teams, and ideas of personal authorship are not very relevant, despite the tendency of media to promote individual stars and celebrities. (ibid)

Preston and Metykova (2009: 33), however, listed three reasons for why individual level explanatory models are so popular: first, such perspectives match journalists' self-understanding of their professional roles and autonomy which, in turn, is linked to a continuing tendency to frame journalism as aligned to the literary domains of knowledge work; second, the marketing and promotional campaigns of news and other media organizations have a growing propensity to emphasize the role of individual journalists, especially celebrity or "star" reporters, and third, such perspectives are

readily accepted because they are pervasive features of the wider institutional, discursive and cultural setting in contemporary [Western] societies.

Media Routine Practices Influences

This level of influence focuses on the typical and taken-for-granted organizational practices and norms that frame and shape daily media content production. Within a media organization, “routine” comprises concepts and insights on newsmaking and professional journalistic practices. These forces or influences become manifest, for instance, ‘in the form of routinized investigation, news gathering and presentation of content.’ (Preston: 53) In a procedural sense, these sources of influence often appear as concrete constraints to the journalists’ work, mostly in the form of limited resources.

Media routines, being dictated by the policy of the management, tend to emphasize the conditioning influences of prevailing procedures, norms and practices in media organizations. Hence, journalists do not possess complete freedom to act on their beliefs and attitudes. Rather, ‘they must operate within specific configurations of material, normative, social and technological resources to perform their roles in the media content production processes.’ (ibid) All these can be perceived both as constraining and enabling factors.

McQuail (2000) argued that media routines are more of an influential factor in the content decision-making process than any individual or ideological factor involved in the process. He claimed that ‘in general all phases of media production involve a large volume of work that becomes routinized as a matter of necessity. Even the starting point—a news event or “creative idea”—is strongly (perhaps most strongly) influenced by convention and prior experience that defines the event as “newsworthy” ’ (p. 276).

Staff Size Influences

The size of a media organization’s staff has been linked to studies regarding ownership, competition, news quality, and overall industry performance, to name a few. (Colistra, 2008; Whitney, Sumpter, McQuail, cited in Hanitzsch & Hoxha, 2010) Although the research focuses on different media outlets and areas, findings typically indicate that a larger staff size is most desirable.

In their study of newsroom management policies of 12 Newspapers in the West Coast, Underwood and Stamm examined staff size, among other factors. Their findings showed that ‘journalists [i.e. interviewed respondents] commonly associated a decline in quality with changes in coverage and cutbacks. Thus, a reduction in staff size was viewed as a negative change while increases in staff size were viewed positively by the staff members.’ (Colistra: 46) On the other hand, there may occur what is called “agenda cutting” (which simply refers as keeping an item off the agenda) because of the shortage of a reporting journalist in a media organization. Here, it goes without saying that news organizations can only report on a certain number of topics at a time, which results in the elimination of others.

Direct & Indirect Management Influences

Influences within a media entity may also derive from management pressures. Demands from superiors who work in the news organization on a day-to-day basis can be either direct or indirect.

Warren Breed (1955), in the classic study “Social Control in the Newsroom”, noted that ‘pressure from superiors is usually relayed in a more subtle, indirect manner. News routines and policies about what to cover (or not cover) and how to cover it are learned “by osmosis.”’ (p.328). This shows management direction is not only typically overt or directly stated but journalists are also socialized over time by methods such as reprimand or editing to learn what type of stories are acceptable. If this is repeated over time, journalists learn, or become socialized, to avoid these stories on their own if they want to get rewarded by their superiors.

While these hidden norms and routines appear to be powerful in the newsroom culture, they are not afforded as much attention as more direct means of communicating policy. The possible reason for this inattention may be ‘they are more difficult to define, measure, and analyze.’ (Colistra: 51) Besides, ‘these rules become so deeply embedded in the newsroom culture that they need never be made explicit to be enforced, but can exist simply as a set of reflexes.’ (Philip Meyer, 1987, cited in *ibid*) These “reflexes” are the equivalent of the “socialization” process in the newsroom to which Breed referred.

In this sub-section of the study, it is tried to look at the main kinds of influence that are brought to bear during the production and processing phase of mass communication. These include external influences from society and the media market as well as from owners, advertisers and the audience. Attention is also paid to relations internal to the media organization and to the conflict, tensions and problems encountered. The main tensions, as McQuail (2010: 233) underlines, arise from recurring dilemmas that lie at the heart of media-making. These include the potential clash between profit on the one hand, and art or social purpose on the other, and the problem of reconciling creative and editorial freedom with the demands of routine and large-scale production. Hence, this student researcher believes that sufficient endeavors are exerted to identify and assess the sources and the realization of the actual and potential influences of various organizational and communicator factors on what is actually produced- the media content.

These multi-faceted influences and pressures have been, through time, studied from different theoretical perspectives depending on the particular researcher's study emphasis. Here in the next section, an attempt is made to go through these perspectives.

2.3. Influences on Media Contents: Different Theoretical Approaches

As discussed throughout this chapter, extra-media, organizational, and within-media forces may attempt to influence media content, and they aim to do so through different means for various reasons-like agenda setting, agenda building, etc. These sources of influences may generally shape content by mere fact of ownership/financing, buying air-time for advertising and also sponsoring a specific program; individual journalists reflecting their personal and professional values and attitudes in the media content they produce, and also through socializing journalists within the media organization working milieu in one way or another.

Various theoretical perspectives may be appropriate to address the potential sources of influence or pressures on the media content. However, this study identified three perspectives that will comfortably treat the issues at hand. And these are: the political economy perspective; the theory of social control in newsroom, and the theory

of hierarchy of influences on media content. The research works and theories discussed herein below predominantly focus on both “media-centric”, i.e. taking the views from within the media, and also “society-centric” point of view , i.e. much of what media organizations do is determined by external social forces.

2.3.1. The Political Economy Perspective

The focus of ownership and control in trying to understand the process of mass communication is usually associated with the “political economy” approach. Such an assertion is pinned by researches, though not exactly in a manner tied to mass media, at the outset that aimed at analyzing the workings of capitalist systems.

Williams (2003) claims that the political economy approach to understand society and polity was formally established at the end of eighteenth century-associated with, among others, the works of Adam Smith and David Ricardo who are known for their stress on the importance of the economic organization of society, and the ways in which it shaped and determined social, cultural and political relations.

However, it was Karl Marx that is designated by many researchers and writers as the key figure, at least in terms of providing conceptual frameworks, in the history of the study of political economy. For Marx, as he stated in the *German Ideology*, ‘the class that has the means of material production has control at the same time over the means of mental production so that the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.’ (Cited in McQuail, 2010:96)

In manipulating the output of the cultural and media industries, Marxist media theorists argue, ‘the bourgeoisie seeks to have its view of the world endorsed as well as its position in it.’ (Williams, 2003:76) By doing this, its ideas prevail in social discourse and dominate the mental horizon of the subordinate group-the mass. In such situations, the mass is powerless to control or have a say in what is communicated to it.

Critics of Marxist political economy contended that property as a basis for the exercise of social power was becoming less significant because of ‘the emergence of new professional managerial class and the development of new kind of capitalist enterprise

whose guiding principles are expertise, knowledge and organizational competence.’ (Williams, *ibid*)

McQuail (2010) posed his own critical points against those critics of mass media who embraced the neo-Marxist tradition or the critical political economy theorists, amongst whom Herman and Chomsky hold the center stage. Hence, he asks, ‘how might the power of the media be countered or resisted, what is the position of forms of media that are not clearly in capitalist ownership or in the power of the state (such as independent newspapers or public broadcasting)?’ (*ibid*) This critical point seems to imply that if the power of the media could be encountered, then the mass’s voice would have the opportunity to be incorporated in the message of the media.

Even though the long history of the political economy approach to the study of media and communication processes to the nineteenth century, modern academic agendas within this approach started flourishing in the 1970s. This paradigmic shift, as Guyot (2009) contended, were necessary because, the media and journalism studies that were predominantly carried out in the United States in the mid-20th Century were ‘marked by paradigms based in functionalist sociology or political sciences which pay little attention to the structural effects of economic perspectives and the neglect of political constraints hanging over the means of communication.’ (p.137)

At this juncture McQuail’s (2010) definition and description of the political economy theory appeared worth noting because a clear nexus is made with media. Hence,

[Political] economy theory is a socially critical approach that focuses primarily on the relation between the economic structure and dynamics of media industries and the ideological content of the media. From this point of view, the media institution has to be considered as part of the economic system, with close links to the political system. (*ibid*)

McQuail (2010) further explained that the political economy approach to study the media is relevant for various reasons. To name few: it has the capacity to make empirically testable propositions about market determinism in the working of the media; it lends a theoretical perspective to in the face of the current enormous global media concentration and the more and more concentration of media ownership in fewer hands, and also provides political and economic reasons for the decline of the public sector of

the mass media. Here, it is also worth noting that, especially as the critical political economy literatures posit, commercial pressures have the effect of narrowing down the range of voices represented in the news. (McChesney, 1999; Baker, 1994)

The political economy approach, as Preston (2009) contends, is also valuable to address the influences on newsmaking and other media productions vis-à-vis conflicts of interests between the freedom of the press and economic pressures (be these from media proprietors or advertisers) as well as more traditional forms of direct political intervention. It is also very instrumental to examine the workings of media organizations in the face of the growing roles of public relations, sponsorship and other information subsidies. Its insistence on revealing political and economic dynamics beyond the public and private domains also helps us to look the larger picture instead of restricting ourselves within limited variables.

These valuable inputs of the political economy approach to study the media industry and its operation should not mean that it has no limitations. Hence, as Periera (2009: 328) contends, it has at least three limitations emanating from its assumptions: first, ideology is regarded as embedded into a process of rationalization and control over [media content] production, distribution and consumption; second, it draws attention towards centralized nodes of authority held through historical processes of enforcement and acceptance; third, culture-media being one of the defining component- is reduced to economic accounts of reality.

In addition to these, as Fortunato (2005:97) contends, it is a big assumption that media ownership controls every content decision being made. The scenario becomes difficult, as media owners, or their top management employees, cannot be at every location where a critical decision needs to make. Corporations are too big for that level of strict control, and for that control to be implemented everyone in the mass media organization must think in alignment with management and ownership.

To wrap up this section, the political economy perspective sheds light on the systemic and highly patterned ways in which media organizations and media productions, including newsmaking, may be influenced by their relationships to the key institutions

and seats of power (political, economic, discursive or other forms) in the wider society- which of course is getting global dimension. Thus, the issues of media ownership and control, their relations to the definition and making of news agenda, the role and influence of advertising and other economic interests have all been part of political economy media research agenda.

2.3.2. Theory of Social Control in Newsroom

Warren Breed's research "Social Control in the Newsroom" (1955) is a classic and pioneering example of the scientific study of the news making process. It follows what's called a "functionalist or sociology of news" approach, which, by definition emphasizes 'harmony, with threats to equilibrium-tensions-originating from outside the system.' (Reese and Ballinger, 2001: 650)

Breed, a former journalist himself, addresses the question of how publishers, the chief executive officer of a newspaper, gets the journalists to follow "policy," even though that policy is very seldom written down. Breed knows, based on his own experience as a journalist and from observation, that the news making process does not take place in a vacuum. Journalists are not sent out into the world to do some detached observing and then come back to report the news. The problem Breed addresses is: How do publishers enforce policy? (Breed, 1955:326)

Ideally, as Breed maintains, there should be no need for a "policy" other than the famous "all the news that's fit to print." Journalists are professionals who cover the news as it happens. What becomes news is a function of what happens, not of policy. But there is a difference between the news that happens and the accounts of that news that gets published or broadcasted. News policies do exist and influence the relationship between the news that happens and the accounts thereof. Most of the time journalists do comply with those policies.

But these policies exist in a context of '(a) journalism ethics or ideas about the journalistic "good", (b) the fact that journalists tend to be more liberal in their ideas than the owners/publishers/broadcasters, and (c) the fact that it is generally unacceptable if not unethical for publishers to dictate what their journalists shall write, because that is

constrained by considerations of truth.’ (ibid) As Reese and Ballinger (ibid) put it, Breed’s argument is well-reflected in what is called the “unending conflict between Truth and Getting along”.

Breed begins by showing how the policy is learned through the “socialization” of the newsroom. New journalists are never told what the policy is, or what slant to put on a story. Journalists learn policy as they learn the job and discover how the newsroom works and what its values are. Basically, as Breed underscored,

[The] learning of policy is a process by which the recruit discovers and internalizes the rights and obligations of his status and its norms and values. He learns to anticipate what is expected of him so as to win rewards and avoid punishments. Policy is an important element of the newsroom norms, and he learns it in much by following the way of other staffers, editors, and so on. (p. 328)

Enforcement of policy must be done indirectly and light-handedly lest there may occur violations of journalistic autonomy and ethics. These techniques, as Breed illustrates, include editorial blue-penciling-teaching reporters which objectionable phrases to omit in the future, occasional reprimands, in-house organ papers, and rare explicit policy decisions. (ibid)

Having explained how journalists come to learn the policy, the next question Breed explores is how they come to comply with those policies. He found the following reasons that, though he does not explicitly stated, constitute “social control in newsroom”: institutional authority and sanctions; feelings of obligation and esteem for superiors; ambition; absence of conflicting group allegiance; pleasant nature of the work; and, getting the news becomes a value in its own right.

Breed identifies publishers as the true source of the power to shape news. By locating the locus of the influence or pressure, he implies that, ‘were it not for their policies, journalistic norms would be sufficient to produce objective reporting.’ (Reese and Ballinger: 651)

Countervailing the publishers’ influence, Breed maintained, were journalistic codes, the professional leadership, and sincere criticism. On balance, however, he argued that the cultural pattern of the newsroom produce results insufficient for wider

democratic needs, because the newsman fail to conform to societal and professional ideals, but rather chooses a more pragmatic allegiance to the newsroom group.

Although operating within the functionalist paradigm, Breed's work has critical moments that mirror later academic concern with the operation of ideological hegemony. In gatekeeping language, he feared that 'news may be slanted or buried so that some important information is denied the citizenry' (p. 334). He finds societal consequences for newsroom behaviors beyond simply allowing the paper to be published: 'For the society as a whole, the existing system of power relationships is maintained. Policy usually protects property and class interests, and thus the strata and groups holding these interests are better able to retain them.' (ibid) Interestingly enough, this assertion of Breed seems to coincide with what's discussed in the above sub-section-the political economy perspective.

2.3.3. Hierarchy of Influences on Media Content Model

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) proposed their hierarchical model of influences depicting how the media's content may be influenced on different levels, ranging from micro to macro, from forces both within and outside of news organizations. Although some research has examined these different forces and their potential effects separately (e.g., public relations or advertising pressures effects on building the media's agenda or frames), 'seemingly no research has studied how various influences may simultaneously affect news coverage or content decisions.' (Colistra: 157)

In outlining their conceptual framework, Shoemaker and Reese attempted to refocus mass communication research in several important ways. First, they sought to nudge it away from a tendency to view the individual media practitioner as the sole arbiter of media content. Second, the authors sought to alter the longstanding media effects tradition in mass communication research, which views media messages as independent variables that can influence some dependent variable, such as audience knowledge, attitude, or behavior. Instead, the hierarchy of influences model portrayed media content itself as a dependent variable influenced by multiple other factors. Third, Shoemaker and Reese attempted to make clear through their framework the problems

with ‘studies that make observations at one level of analysis and interpret those findings at a higher level,’ (p.5) such as research that examines the behavior or attitudes of selected individuals and then draws conclusions from that data about media organizations as a whole.

Reese and Shoemaker’s solution to explaining the complexity of today’s media is to discuss what they call “the hierarchy of influences on media content model”. This model, according to Shoemaker and Reese (1996: 8),

[Takes] into account the multiple forces that simultaneously impinge on media and suggests how influence at one level may interact with that at another. The personal bias of an individual journalist, for example, may be relevant to reporting, but journalists of a particular leaning often self-select into organizations because of their preexisting policies, history, and organizational culture. The media organizations and their employees, in turn, must function within the ideological boundaries set by the larger society.

At the center of their Hierarchical Model is the micro *individual* level, which includes the characteristics of the individual communicator. The *routines* level includes the most immediate constraining and enabling structures, larger patterns, or routines within which the individual operates. The *organization* level is distinguished from routines in describing the influences of the larger organized entity within which the individual operates, the larger context of the routinized activities, which includes occupational roles, organizational policy, and how the enterprise itself is structured. The *social institution* level describes the influences arising from the larger trans-organizational media field, how media organizations combine into larger institutions that become part of larger structured relationships as they depend on and compete with other powerful social institutions. The macro *social system* level is the outer-most ring of the model, including influences on content from the system as a whole.

Although not explicitly stated, that idea of different levels having stronger or weaker influences on media content is inherent in the word “hierarchy” in the title of the Shoemaker and Reese’s book, in the name of their conceptual framework.

Shoemaker and Reese suggest that, in most cases, the power of media routines to influence media content is inherently greater than the power of individuals to influence

media content. Similarly, when discussing the ideological level of analysis, the authors note that it is more powerful than any of the other levels of influence, writing that it ‘subsumes all the others we have been talking about and, therefore, is the most macro of the levels in our hierarchy of influences model.’ (ibid)

The notion that some factors influencing media content are more powerful than others is further reinforced by the visual model [the onion diagram] that Shoemaker and Reese use to illustrate their theoretical framework. It displays the five levels of influence on media content as concentric circles, with the individual content producer occupying the center core, media routines occupying the layer just beyond the core, organizational influences making up the layer beyond that, extra-media influences filling the next layer, and ideological influences occupying the outermost layer.

The visual implication is that individual communicators generally will not be able to consistently exert idiosyncratic influence on a particular type of media content unless there is no established media routine governing production of that type of content, organizational and extra-media constraints do not apply, and production of the content somehow escapes ideological constraints. Otherwise, as Reese (2001: 7) has put it, ‘the individual is progressively hemmed in by more and more layers of constraint.’

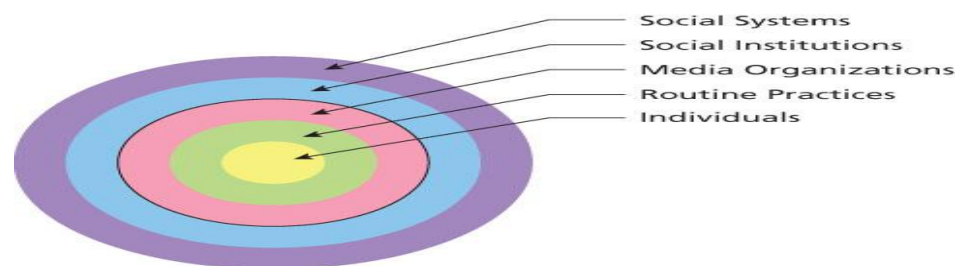


Figure 1 The Hierarchy of Influences Model uses five levels of analysis (Shoemaker & Reese)/ the onion diagram

Shoemaker and Reese have illustrated this visual representation of their theoretical framework in that progressing from darker to lighter shadings suggests that different emphases are possible depending on one’s research focus. As a further refinement, the stronger border in the figure between the media organizations and social institutions levels simply reflects an intuitive media sociology distinction—between those

things that reside within media organizations and the forces that lie beyond their boundaries. (ibid) One crucial thing to be underscored is that despite the fact that Shoemaker and Reese's diagram provides a good basis on which to guide this type of scholarship, it is not a "testable" model.

Shoemaker and Reese ((1996:21) summarized the relationship between the levels of analysis as follows: why is the news gathered transmitted in ways which may at times result in distortion? Because media employees make decisions about how the job should be done. Why do they make such decisions? Because of economic, cultural and technological imperatives. Why are these imperatives effective in controlling the media? Because the media are part of the status quo and have been influenced by the ideology of those in power to conform.

One gloomy fact about all these researches and theoretical perspectives that this study tried to go through so far is that they are all virtually drawn from the Western media perspective. One can hardly find a thorough research conducted in the non-Western world especially where the media sphere is highly monopolized by governments, and also the media, particularly the broadcast media, are at their budding stages. However, this unenviable situation will not deter a researcher living in the non-Western world from employing *mutatis mutandis* their theoretical approaches and methodologies and thereby undertake a study on a similar theme on its own setting and context.

This student researcher, predicating on his readings and personal observations, is of the assumption that Ethiopian broadcasting media organizations are not immune from the various influences and pressures whose sources and manners of manifestations are illustrated in this chapter. Perhaps, for one or other reason, there may be variations in the magnitude of the pressures and manners of their manifestations in the broadcasting media organizations selected for this particular study. But before that it will be a must to have a brief look at the past and present Ethiopian broadcasting media landscape along with its constraints.

2.4. The Context of Broadcasting Media in Ethiopia

2.4.1. Brief Background

The first provisional radio station in Ethiopia was inaugurated in 1933 in a contract signed with an Italian company. The Italians handed over the installation in 1935 but retrieved it soon thereafter following the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1936. Short-wave broadcasting was resumed in 1953 and by 1970 *Radio Ethiopia* operated from three locations and broadcast in six languages. The World Federation of Lutheran Churches broadcaster, *Radio Voice of the Gospel*, began in 1963.

The new era for the Ethiopian media was simultaneously a new era for censorship. After liberation in 1941, a censorship board was established under the Press and Information Office in the Ministry of the Pen. The board had seven members and was responsible for pre-censoring all news for radio and newspapers. There were detailed guidelines to go by. For instance, any event which could damage the reputation of the empire, such as famine, drought, unemployment and inflation, would not be covered. (Skjerdal, 2012: 11-12)

One important exception for independent broadcasting was granted for Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG). On air in 1963, RVOG produced religious and current affairs programmes in numerous African languages and transmitted its content throughout the continent and to the Middle East and Asia (Lundgren, 1983; Tamrat, 2008, cited in Skejrdal: 12).

The first television signals in Ethiopia, on the other hand, were distributed on a closed circuit in Africa Hall in Addis Ababa in May 1963 on occasion of the first meeting of the Organization of African Unity. ETV began permanent broadcasting on 2 November 1964.

During the Imperial era mass media in general and television in particular, were under the hands of the government. The legislation stated that ministry of information would check whether the public is really informed, entertained or educated by programs aired by the station though checking mechanisms are not stated (MOI, 1966, 1973).

In short, media governance during the Ethiopian Empire served to manifest imperial immunity and also circumscribe the perimeter out of which the media were legally bounded not to encroach.

The years of the Dergue regime (1974-91), on the other hand, have unequivocally been portrayed as a dark chapter in the history of Ethiopian media and journalism. The regime turned all media outlets into propaganda channels and effectively forbade any opening for professional independence. The newsroom environment was marked by fear and anxiety. (Skejrdal: 14)

The Ethiopian official media were reclothed in socialist attire. Soon thereafter, in March 1976, the Dergue reintroduced censorship, far more severe than during the Empire. The media were ‘nationalized’ and put directly under the new Ministry of Information and National Guidance. (ibid)

One significant progress concerning the Ethiopian media during the Dergue regime was the introduction of colour television in 1984 along with the capacity to broadcasting in the main cities of Ethiopia. However, again, during this period of Dergue, there were virtually no media that allowed stating or reporting anything rather than the Workers’ Party of Ethiopia (WPE) and its “sisterly” socialist countries.

The media situation during EPRDF, or in the post-1991 Ethiopia, is significantly different from that of the two previous regimes, especially with regard to formal media policy and openings for independent journalism. However, there are also signs of lasting constraints, particularly on the informal level. (Skejrdal: 17)

The 1992 press law marked a significant step forward in Ethiopian media policy at the time. It guaranteed, perhaps unprecedentedly, a number of rights associated with a free media society. Two principles were deemed particularly important: the abolishment of pre-publication censorship, and the right for any Ethiopian citizen to open a media outlet, and thereby scrapping severest restrictions for media activity in the previous regimes. (See Article 3(2) and article 5(1) of Proclamation No.34/1992)

The FDRE Constitution of 1995 contains important rights for the press and free speech under article 29. Freedom of expression without interference is guaranteed; prohibition of any form of censorship is affirmed; access to information is promised; and the independent media are granted legal protection. A few limitations are nonetheless maintained, involving proscription of content which could damage minors, harm the reputation of individuals, or provoke armed conflict. (See article 29(6) of the FDRE Constitution of 1995 and article 47 of the 1987 Constitution) Here, it is worth noting that the previous Ethiopian Constitutions incorporate citizens' right to freedom of expression. (See article 41 of the 1955 Revised Constitution)

When we come to the private broadcasting media realm, Fana Broadcasting Corporate S. Co. stands as the Nation's first commercial National Broadcaster and Multilingual Radio Station. It used to be a clandestine anti-Dergue Voice of Liberation (Voice of EPRDF) before its establishment as "Radio Fana S. Co." in 1994. (See www.fanabc.com/HomePage)

Improvements occurred in broadcasting regulation as well. The broadcasting proclamation of 1999, which is criticized for its restrictive clauses, was replaced by Broadcasting Service Proclamation No.533/2007. Consequently, the first two licences for private radio stations were awarded for Sheger FM and Zami FM, alongside formal registration of Radio Fana which had operated semi-officially since November 1994. The licences meant that for the first time, the Ethiopian public had an alternative to state radio on the local radio network.

In the case of Sheger FM in particular, this involves a political reporting approach which challenges the servile style of the state media (Engdawork, 2011; IREX, 2010:134, cited in Skejrdal: 27).

Sheger FM radio, formed as a private limited company, started its transmission in early October 2007 with a broadcasting range covering the area within 250 KM radius of Addis Ababa. Its objectives are: impartiality; trustworthiness; accuracy, and providing infotainment programs to the public by abiding itself with ethical principles of journalism. However, its limited broadcasting capacity has forced it to be accessed only

by the residents of the capital. The station has also only 22 (15 males and 7 females) journalists working in news and entertainment sections. (See www.shegerfm.com Homepage)

Comparing with the previous two regimes, the post-1991 Ethiopia media space has witnessed what Skejrdal calls “selective liberalization”. Liberalization is evident in formal regulation, where it is easily observed by outsiders, and in areas where the risk of losing control with the flow of information for the government is less. (ibid: 32)

In the post-1991 Ethiopian broadcasting media history, and apart from the partial liberalization processes, one vividly noticeable issue is the frequent structural adjustment of the sole national/State television. Hence, in 2009 ETV has merged with Radio Ethiopia and dubbed as ERTA. This new structure introduced an organizational chart where journalistic work is shared between three program sections: news and current affairs, education, and entertainment.

Another major step introduced by ERTA is the relocation of different language sections to regional mass media agencies whereby the production of television programmes in major local languages will no longer be the responsibility of the central ERTA organization. (ibid: 107)

Again, ERTA was restructured and renamed EBC, with a motto *Voice of Diversity and Renaissance*, in 2014 by Proclamation No. 858/2014. This time the reasons forwarded, as mentioned in the preamble of the Proclamation, for restructuring ERTA were: to cope-up with the growth and renovation from time to time of the broadcasting service technology; to provide Ethiopia Radio and Television its own institutional and procedural freedom and thereby ensure civic participation and common benefit of the society and promote free expression of ideologies and view among the society, and also to enable EBC to provide its service in a more efficient, quality and competent way.

EBC’s basic objectives, are: first, broadcasting main and current issues happening in Ethiopia and abroad as well as educational and entertainment events on the radio, television and website, and secondly, creating national consensus; supporting all national efforts made to protect and promote national identity and dignity, diversity, tolerance and democratic unity. (See article 5 of Proclamation No. 858/2014)

EBC has now a total of 725 staff amongst of which 193 (108 males and 85 females) journalists are assigned in news and entertainment section. It has also 3 channels named EBC1, 2 and 3, 2 FMs-Fm Addis 97.1 and FM 104.7, which can also be accessed by satellite transmission. Its online streaming can be accessed at www.ebc.et .

EBC's Editorial Policy Document outlined its working principles and values as: fairness; diversity; populism; transparency and accountability; accuracy; equitability; reliability; competitiveness; editorial independence; secularism, and team spirit. (See EBC's Editorial Policy, Part 3, July 2014)

EBC has a management Board. Amongst the powers and duties of the Board is that of evaluating the contents of the program broadcasted on the radio, television, internet and other electronic devices, and thereby forward recommendations on the ways to improvement [of content]. The chief officer of EBC has also the power and duty to plan, follow-up and supervise the contents of the programs direction. (See article 7 Proc. No.858/2014 and See article 9 (5) respectively)

In a manner that seems prescribing that the population rather than the state retains a sense of control over the media channels through payment of licence fees, EBC's Board is made to be assigned by, of course with the recommendation of the Prime Minister, and be accountable to the House of Peoples' Representatives. (See Art. 8/3of Proc. No.858/2014)

2.4.2. Broadcast Media Content Restrictions

Though the FDRE Constitution and the Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation No. 590/2008 strictly prohibited censorship, the broadcast media in Ethiopia is chained in a number of restrictive clauses.

The Broadcasting Service Proclamation No. 533/2007 sets out a number of very wide-ranging restrictions on the content of what may be broadcasted. These include restrictions prohibiting programs which: do not reflect varying viewpoints; fail to verify the accuracy of their sources; violate the dignity and liberty of mankind or the rules of good behavior, or undermine the beliefs of others; instigate dissension among nationalities or promote dissension among people of mankind or the rules of good

behavior, or undermine the beliefs of others and so on. The harsh effect of these prohibitions is exacerbated by the fact that they apply to every program broadcast, rather than to the overall programming of a particular broadcaster. (See article 30 of Proclamation No. 533/2007)

Still other provisions place excessive obligations on broadcasters, taking into account freedom of expression and the need to promote the free flow of information and ideas. While it may be legitimate to require a broadcaster to reflect various viewpoints in its overall programming, it is unreasonable to apply this obligation to each individual program. This might, for example, lead to the prohibition of a program focusing on a certain religion or theme, which is perfectly legitimate. Similarly, it is excessive to require programs to verify the accuracy of each source. A requirement of due care in relation to accuracy would be sufficient.

The Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation No. 590/2008 has also enumerated a number of restrictive clauses that bar broadcast media from accessing information. (See articles 15-25)

To sum up, though Ethiopia's broadcast media sphere has shown some laudable progress in the post-1991 period, the media is still languishing in both in-built and external restrictions that, in one way or the other, impinge on the media content. As Skejrdal's (2012: 32) study reveals, journalists in both the private media industry and the state media sense a strong undercurrent of unofficial policy delimiting their professional space. The situation calls for an application of in-depth research that goes beyond analyses of legislative reforms alone.

So far in this sub-section, it has been tried to give a bird's eye view of Ethiopian broadcasting media realities in the three successive regimes. Herein afterwards, the research, after having elaborated the study design, will focus on dealing the core theme of the study based on the general hypothesis and the specific research questions posed earlier.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The core purpose of this study lies in identifying the sources and effects of undue influences that emanate from external and internal to the broadcasting media organization and thereby impinge of the media contents.

To this end, a survey of broadcasting journalists was conducted. The current chapter provides an explanation of the data-gathering process, followed by the procedures used to implement the survey. The survey instrument itself is then discussed, along with a description of the respondents.

The research methodological approach basically used in this study is quantitative. The quantitative methodology is suggested to be relatively better in survey studies, which assess attributes like attitude, behavioral and other characteristics of a defined group of population. It also helps the researcher to be more objective, to have a higher sample size, to minimize possible costs (material as well as time). The outcomes of the quantitative research can also be used for the general public better than those of qualitative research.

Quantitative methodology is also opted for this study because the actual or potential influences/pressures, apart these being a reality *per se*, are for the most part coming from external factors that can constrain the works of journalists or the media content. Knowledge of this reality can be obtained by establishing a bridge to it by the use of concepts, or theoretical frameworks, and their measurement. In such a study, the relevant data are mostly collected through questionnaires.

It is also tried to use a mixture of descriptive statistics and tables and some nonparametric inferential statistics while analyzing the subjects' responses for the open-ended questions as it is found reasonable to apply nonparametric methods since the data collected can be described as scores rather than true measurements. (See SPSS Inc. (2004). *SPSS Survey Tips* [online], SPSS Inc. Last accessed on 05/04/2016 at: <http://www.spss.com/PDFs/STIPlr.pdf>)

To further explain, this study has used what is called “data reduction procedures” so as to prepare the data for analysis by reorganizing or combining response categories

,i.e., by transforming metric variables or scores into categories and, more particularly, by reducing a number of items of data, or responses to a number of questions, to one or more new variables. (Blaikie, 2003:246) Then after, data in categories are reordered, or the number of categories are reduced, to meet the requirements of appropriate analysis, and to simplify the analysis and the presentation of results. One thing that has to be underlined here is that this study has concerned only with the category sets which emerge from the exploration of data.

Though it would have been helpful to consider media content within a variable analytic framework, i.e., treating it as a dependent variable with which a number of independent variables were related and could be said to produce an effect, the media sociology domain is much more diverse, messy, and ranges across many levels of analysis and research traditions as a result of which this study has not tried to carry out the analysis within the limited and experimental sphere of independent versus dependent variable approaches.

3.2. Subjects

The subjects of the research were news and entertainment (movies, TV shows, radio shows, music, drama, sport programs, and so on) journalists working in two broadcasting media organizations namely, EBC and Sheger FM 102.1.

These stations are selected for various reasons. The EBC, as a pioneer public broadcaster, has been on air for more than fifty years. Its broadcasting capacity is expanded to almost every corner of the country. It is also reaching worldwide largely through the Internet and Satellite. The other reason to select EBC, especially its TV station-as a visual medium-, is also that it may have its own unique features different from that of the other FM radio station opted for this particular study.

The other station selected for this study, as already noted, is Sheger 102.1 FM radio. It is the first privately owned FM radio station in Addis Ababa. It is selected for this study because of the following reasons:

- It is, as a privately owned station, a pioneer FM radio in the city of Addis Ababa. By being so, it has broken the long-standing media monopoly of the past and present Ethiopian governments.
- Though the station's coverage is limited to the capital city and its environs, facts on the ground reveal that it has a very huge number of audiences that are captivated by its unique news and program formats. Its broadcasting all reaches millions through the Internet.
- The researcher is of the assumption that because of its private ownership, the influences and pressures on media contents of Sheger radio may have peculiar features that will differentiate it from the other broadcasting media organization selected for this study.

3.3. Samples

The sample size, i.e., the sixty (60) journalists, to be taken from the two media organizations is predicated on the number of journalists working therein. That is to say, EBC has more journalists in the news and entertainment sections than Sheger FM 102.1. Hence, the number of journalists selected for this study from EBC will be higher than the Sheger FM 102.1.

3.4. Sampling Technique

To select the required sample, the researcher used purposive sampling technique. This technique was employed with consideration to accommodate gender differences, journalists' working experience and other work/program sections in their respective media stations. Besides, it is used to select only those journalists working in the news and entertainment sections of the two stations.

After selecting the population using purposive sampling, a random sampling technique, which is done by inserting the lists of journalists by specifying their sexes to the random number generator software, was used to select samples from subjects to be respondents. This, in fact, was done after acquiring the list of the journalists working in the news and entertainment sections of the respective media organizations.

A total of 60 questionnaires, 46 to EBC and 14 to Sheger FM 102.1 radio journalists, were distributed to be filled in by the respondents in the two media organizations. All the questionnaires were properly filled, with of course some left out or unanswered questions, and returned, i.e. there is no missing response.

3.5. Data Collection Instrument

Data for this study is obtained from questionnaires distributed to journalists. The researcher has tried his level best to pose clear, succinct and specific questions in the questionnaires.

A quantitative methodology, a questionnaire method to be specific, is opted, as it was tried to mention earlier, because it is reasonably ideal tool to collect data from a somewhat larger number of broadcasting journalists working in the two selected media organizations- thus the results can be made more repeatable and reliable. Besides, the respondents will have adequate time to give a well thought answers. In the last part of the questionnaire, on the other hand, a qualitative method is used for the open-ended questions and data are interpreted accordingly.

The questionnaire is made to be based on Likert's scale type of measurement, i.e. the most frequently used perception, opinion, and attitude measure in social sciences. Likert scale, as Johns stated, ' not only allows us to cover the various facets of what are often complex and multidimensional attitudes or values but also dilutes the impact of the "random" error to which any individual item is inevitably subject.'(2005:3) Respondents were requested to state their level of agreement with a series of opinion/attitude statements. Each degree of agreement or disagreement will be given a value of a predetermined scale. A set of Likert items would be summed to provide a total score.

So as to avoid ambiguity and the persuasiveness of statements, which in fact are taken by many as an "Achilles heel" of this scale, to be measured by Likert scale, the researcher has come up with some even-handed questions in the end part of the questionnaire. This will also help to get more or less accurate responses.

The questionnaire has three parts. The first part covers demographic information about the respondents and the section they are working in. The second part, which has two sets, provided those close-ended questions in a statement form and also outright questions per se that aim at gauging the respondents' level of agreement and opinion/attitude therein. Lastly, i.e., the third part, open-ended and probing questions were posed so that the respondents will not only have an opportunity to add their opinions which otherwise were not clearly or adequately provided in the second part of the questionnaire but also help the researcher to check the consistency of the respondents in their views. They can also make the analysis somewhat easier for the researcher.

Options given for respondents range from strongly agree to strongly disagree, and from never to very often. Each option has got its own numerical representative. In the questionnaire, strongly agree was represented by 1, agree by 2, neither agree nor disagree (Undecided) by 3, disagree by 4, and strongly disagree by 5. The purpose of the middle option 'Neither agree nor disagree' is evidently to avoid forcing respondents into expressing agreement or disagreement when they may lack such a clear opinion.

Likewise, in the second set of questions, and based on the nature the questions, options are represented with 1 being Very Often, 2 Fairly Often, 3 sometimes, 4, Almost Never and 5 Never. So as to minimize language constraints, Amharic version, which is cautiously translated from the English version, of the questionnaire is used for data collection.

The crucial subjects of this study, as already mentioned, are those journalists working in the news and entertainment sections of the two broadcasting media organizations. These two sections are deliberately chosen because first, as foreign relevant literatures and local experiences reveal, the brunt of influences and pressures particularly rest on those journalists working in the two specific sections; secondly, larger number of the journalists in the media organizations are assigned in these same sections, and thirdly, as observations dictate, larger number of audiences are attracted, for one or the other reason, to news and entertainment programs.

3.6. Pilot Test

A pilot test was conducted before the actual distribution of questionnaires to the sample respondents. This was believed to help the student researcher to recognize some ambiguous or unclear and redundant questions existed. Based on the feedback collected from the pilot test, the researcher improved the questions and tried to avoid or at least to minimize the ambiguity of the questions.

3.7. Procedures

The student researcher has visited the stations in person first to garner the lists of the numbers and work sections of journalists, and also, then after, distribute the questionnaires to the randomly selected respondents. The selected journalists have been given 3-5 days to fill their responses. Though the questionnaire is not that bulky, this reasonable period of time hopefully provided the respondents with ample time to give well-thought responses.

Having collected the questionnaires, the responses were put into computer using SPSS package. Then after, the results were examined against the overall hypothesis and the specific research questions.

3.8. Presentation and Data Analysis Techniques

The data collected through questionnaires were quantified and presented in tables. The data collected through questionnaires were coded and tabulated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 20). Analysis and interpretation of the data were also presented using SPSS tools using mainly the frequency distribution, percentage and cross tabulation as these were believed to serve the statistical purposes of the study. Finally, conclusions were drawn based on the findings. Recommendations for protecting media contents from improper influences/pressures emanating from internal as well as external factors were also presented.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION of FINDINGS and DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and discussion of results. As it has been indicated earlier, the main goals of this study was to examine and identify the kinds of, the possible reasons for, and ways of influences and pressures that broadcast media owners, the media organizations and other external factors exert on media content, to find out the effects ensued from such influences or pressures on broadcasting media content and coverage decisions, and also explore the mechanisms, if any, which are in place to protect media contents from such influences and pressures exerted by internal and external factors.

The study was conducted on one government and one private broadcasting media organizations-EBC and Sheger 102.1 FM radio respectively. The required data are obtained from questionnaires distributed to journalists, and also through interviews conducted with editors and owners/executives of the two broadcasting media organizations.

The questionnaire, as already mentioned earlier, has three parts. The first part covers demographic information about the respondents and the section they are working in. The second part, which has two sets, provided those questions in a statement form and also outright questions per se that aim at gauging the respondents' level of agreement and opinion/attitude therein. In the third part, open as well as close-ended questions are posed so that the respondents will have an opportunity to add their opinions which otherwise are not clearly or adequately provided in the second part.

Herein below follows the findings and analysis of the study starting with some general information.

4.2. Analysis of Journalists' Responses

To begin with, the general information about the respondents (the journalists) working in EBC and Sheger FM 102.1 radio reveal the following:

Table 1 AGE THE RESPONDENTS

AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
18-24	5	8.3	8.3
25-34	32	53.3	53.3
35-44	15	25.0	25.0
45-54	8	13.3	13.3
Total	60	100.0	100.0

Table 2: Sex of the Respondents * Media Station the Respondents work

Cross tabulation

Sex of the Respondents	Name of Media Stations		TOTAL
	EBC	Sheger FM	
Female	14	7	21
Male	32	7	39
Total	46	14	60

Table 3 Age of the Respondents * Media Station the Respondents Work Cross-tabulation

Age of the Respondents	Name of Media Station the Respondents Work		TOTAL
	EBC	Sheger FM	
18-24	4	1	5
25-34	21	11	32
35-44	14	1	15
45-54	7	1	8
TOTAL	46	14	60

A total of 60 questionnaires were distributed to respondents and all (100 %) were filled and returned back. Out of the 60 respondents, as illustrated in table 2, 32 (53.3%) males and 14 (23.3%) females were from EBC, and 14 (23.3%) 7 (11.6%) males and 7

(11.6%) females were from Sheger FM 102.1 radio, i.e., 39 (65%) males and 21 (35%) females all in all in both stations.

When we see the age composition, as presented under Table 1, more than half of the respondents 32 (53.3 %) were between 25-34 years of age and thereby constitute the majority of the respondents; 15 (25%) respondents fall in the age group of 35-44. Again from the rest of 13 respondents, 8 (13.3%) and 5 (8.3%) fall within the age group of 45-54 and 18-24 respectively. These demographic facts testify that there is a fair representation of sexes and age groups in the study.

With regard to the respective sections the respondents are assigned and work, 33 (55%), 20 (33.3%), and 7 (11.6) serve in news section, entertainment section, and in both sections respectively. As Table 3 shows, on the other hand, none of the respondents in Sheger 102.1 FM radio works only in the entertainment section. The reasons for this, as the editor of the radio station informed this writer during an informal discussion, are that most of the entertainment programs in the station are outsourced, and again because of the low staff size in the station, some of the journalists working in the news section are assigned to work in the entertainment section too. This fact, as we will see later on in this study, enabled most of the journalists in Sheger 102.1 FM radio to conclude that low staff size in their station is negatively affecting the quality of the media contents they work on.

Table 4 Media Station*Work Experience

MEDIA STATION	Years	JOURNALIST WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE BROADCASTING INDUSTRY				Total
		1-5	6-10	11-15	>16	
	EBC Count	9 (19.6%)	23 (50%)	8 (17.4%)	6 (13%)	46
	SHEGER FM Count	7 (50%)	5 (35.7%)	1 (7.1%)	1 (7.1%)	14
Total		16 (26.7%)	28 (46.7%)	9 (15%)	7 (11.6%)	60

Table 4 demonstrates the work experience of the journalists in broadcasting media. The overall figure tells that the majority of the journalists, i.e. 28 or 46.7%, have worked in the broadcasting media from 6 to 10 years. Sixteen journalists (26.7%) have served from 1 to 5 years. Nine journalists (15%) worked from 11 to 15 years, and 7 journalists did the same for more than 16 years.

While 50% of the respondents from EBC have a broadcasting media experience from 6 to 10 years, another 50% from Sheger radio serve between 1 to 5 years.

One can conclude some facts from this table's demonstration: first, more than 80% of the respondents from EBC have a working experience for more than six solid years, and second, half of the respondents from Sheger radio have a relatively lower work experience, i.e. only from 1 to 5 years. This latter fact may be explained by the few years of Sheger's experience as broadcasting station *per se*. Another inference that can be made is that the study has predicated its investigation on journalists who are well accustomed to the working experience of broadcasting media organizations.

4.2.2. Extra-media Influences/Pressures

The extra-media level analysis's focus is on those influences originating primarily from outside the media organization. Hence, the sources of influences to be analysed in light of the journalists' responses are: advertiser/sponsor; public relations (PRs), government/political.

Each of these influence and pressure factors are represented by numbered tables with, of course, indicative titles.

a) Advertisers/Sponsors Influences/Pressures

TABLE 5 MEDIA STATION*ADVERTISOR/SPONSOR PRESSURE

NAME OF MEDIA STATION		ADVERTISERS OR SPONSORS INFLUENCE/PRESSURE FOR FAVORABLE COVERAGE				Total
		NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	5	19	17	5	46
		10.90%	41.30%	37.00%	10.90%	100.00%
		8.30%	31.70%	28.30%	8.30%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	0	4	5	5	14
		0.00%	28.60%	35.70%	35.70%	100.00%
	Total	0.00%	6.70%	8.30%	8.30%	23.30%
	Count	5	23	22	10	60
	Total	8.30%	38.30%	36.70%	16.70%	100.00%

As Table 5 illustrates, 32 journalists (53.4%), from both EBC and Sheger radio, responded that their stations are influenced/pressured by advertiser/sponsors for favorable coverage fairly often (36.7%) and very often (16.7). Twenty-eight journalists (38.3%) responded that such an influence has happened only sometimes. Only 5 journalists (8.3%) responded that such influence never happened.

Twenty two respondents (47.9%) and from EBC responded that their station is requested, in one way or the other, for favorable coverage by advertisers/sponsors fairly often (37%) and very often (10.9%). The number of respondents who responded “sometimes” is 19 (41.3%).

When we come to Sheger radio’s journalists, not a single one of them responded “never” or “almost never”. In fact, 10 of them (71.4%) responded that their station is requested for favorable coverage fairly often (35.7%) and very often (35.7%). The station’s 4 journalists (28.6%) responded “sometimes”.

Table 5 makes it clear that the influence of the advertisers/sponsors is more visible on Sheger radio, a private media station, than EBC. The reason for this seems to be that the former, as a privately-owned broadcaster, is highly dependent on the finances coming from advertisers/sponsors. Such a conclusion concurs with the statement that ‘media organizations most likely to be influenced by advertiser and sponsor pressure are

those whose sole or overwhelming source of revenue is advertising and sponsoring.’(Picard, 2004, cited in McQuail, 2000: 271) Though the figure for EBC is not low, the fact that its budget is ear-marked by the government may make it less vulnerable to the influences/pressures of advertisers/sponsors.

b) Public Relation/PRs Influence/Pressure

TABLE 6 MEDIA STATION* PUBLIC RELATION PRESSURE

TABLE 6.1 USING PR MATERIALS AS THE BASIS FOR A NEWS STORY

MEDIA STATION	USE OF PR MATERIALS (E.G., BROADCAST NEWS RELEASES, VIDEO NEWS RELEASES) AS THE BASIS FOR A NEWS STORY						
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	TOTAL
EBC	Count	1	3	8	25	9	46
		2.2%	6.5%	17.4%	54.3%	19.6%	100.0%
	Total	1.7%	5.0%	13.3%	41.7%	15.0%	76.7%
SHEGER FM	Count	0	0	1	12	1	14
		0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	85.7%	7.1%	100.0%
	Total	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	20.0%	1.7%	23.3%
	Count	1	3	9	37	10	60
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Total	1.7%	5.0%	15.0%	61.7%	16.7%	100.0%

The journalists in the two media stations, as shown in Table 6.1, were asked how often they use PRs materials as a news story basis in their stations. The overall picture depicts that 37 journalists (61.7%) make use of PRs materials as fairly often and 10 journalists (16.7) do the same very often. Those who responded “sometimes” constitute 15% (nine in number).

Looking at the issue separately, EBC’s 25 journalists (54.3%) responded as using the PRs material fairly often, and 9 journalists (19.6%) very often. Eight (17.4%) journalists responded using the materials “sometimes”. Only 4 (8.7%) of EBC’s journalists responded using the materials as “never” (2.2%) and “almost never” (6.5%).

For the same query, Sheger radio journalists responded that 13 (92.8%) of them use PRs materials as a news story basis fairly often (85.7%) and very often (7.1%). Only one (7.1%) journalist responded as using the materials “sometimes”. None of the station’s journalist responded as “never” or “almost never”.

What one can conclude from the above is that the bulk of the journalists, i.e., 34 journalists or 73.9% in EBC and 13 journalists or 92.8% in Sheger radio, often times use PRs materials as basis for their stations' news stories.

One may ask the reason for this significant use of PRs materials. PR practitioners are only successful in so far as they succeed in placing their agendas in the media platform because influencing the media agenda amounts to influencing the public opinion and the public agenda.

As Colistra maintains, 'typical news stories produced by media organizations involve expenses and certain media entities face budget cuts and bottom-line pressures or simply have inadequate number of news staff, they are more likely and also willing to use these information subsidies to fill their news holes at low cost. '(p.20) Thus, the reasons for EBC and Sheger radio's heavy use of the PRs materials may most likely consist in one or all of the above mentioned considerations.

Table 6. 2 PR TO INFLUENCE CERTAIN STORIES BE OR NOT BE COVERED OR EMPHASIZED

NAME OF MEDIA STATION		PR TRYING TO INFLUENCE THE MEDIA STATION THAT CERTAIN STORIES BE OR NOT BE COVERED OR EMPHASIZED					TOTAL
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	5	5	17	14	5	46
		10.90%	10.90%	37.00%	30.40%	10.90%	100.00%
	Total	8.30%	8.30%	28.30%	23.30%	8.30%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	0	0	6	3	5	14
		0.00%	0.00%	42.90%	21.40%	35.70%	100.00%
	Total	0.00%	0.00%	10.00%	5.00%	8.30%	23.30%
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
Total		8.30%	8.30%	38.30%	28.30%	16.70%	100.00%

Another query posed to the journalists in relation to PR influence/pressure, as shown in Table 6.2, is the latter's tendency to stress the media to cover, or not to cover or emphasize certain topics.

The overall picture illustrates that 27 journalists (45%) responded that PRs try to influence their stations to cover, or not to cover or emphasize certain topics fairly often (28.3%) and very often (16.7%). Twenty three journalists (38.3%) also responded that

such attempt occurred “sometimes”. Those who responded as “never” (10.9%) and “almost never” (10.9%) are ten in number, i.e., 21.8%- and all of them are from EBC.

Table 5.2 also reveals that no journalist from Sheger radio responded as “never” or “almost never”. Rather 8 of them (57.1%) responded fairly often (21.4%) and very often (35.7%). Those who said “sometimes” are 6 in number, i.e., 42.9%.

Again, the finding shows that PR attempt to exert influence in terms of covering, not covering or emphasizing certain topics is visible in both stations. The figure, again, appears quite significant in the case of Sheger radio.

a) Government/Political Influence/Pressure

Table 7 MEDIA STATION*GOVERNMENT/POLITICAL PRESSURE

TABLE 7.1 GOVERNMENT/ POLITICIANS OFFICIALS TRYING FAVORABLE COVERAGE

NAME OF MEDIA STATION		GOVERNMENT/ POLITICIANS OFFICIALS TRY TO PRESSURE YOUR BROADCASTING STATION FOR FAVORABLE COVERAGE					Total
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	5	0	9	17	15	46
		10.90%	0.00%	19.60%	37.00%	32.60%	100.00%
	Total	8.30%	0.00%	15.00%	28.30%	25.00%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	1	1	1	4	7	14
		7.10%	7.10%	7.10%	28.60%	50.00%	100.00%
	Total	1.70%	1.70%	1.70%	6.70%	11.70%	23.30%
	Count	6	1	10	21	22	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	10.00%	1.70%	16.70%	35.00%	36.70%	100.00%

Three queries were posed for the journalists regarding government/political influences. The first query concerns government’s/politicians’ attempt to get favorable coverage in the two media stations so that it will be able to influence a particular media content.

The overall picture, as stated in Table 7.1, shows that 21 journalists (35%) responded as experiencing such influence/pressure fairly often, and 22 journalists (36.7%) as very often. Some 10 journalists (16.7%) responded that they experienced it “sometimes”. Six journalists (10%) responded “never”. This figure, hence, reveals that

88.4% of the journalists are of the opinion that the influence/pressure coming from government/politicians is quite noticeable in their stations at various degrees.

When the degree of influence/pressure is trisected (“sometimes”, “fairly often”, and “very often”) in the two stations, EBC’s 41 journalists (89.2%) and Sheger radio’s 12 journalists (85.7%) have felt the influence/pressure.

Though one may not be amazed by the higher figure witnessed in EBC, as it is a governmentally-owned medium, the higher figure observed in Sheger radio undoubtedly strikes a chord, particularly assuming that, the station is owned privately, government/politicians influence may be far lesser than that of EBC. This fact may throw some light, among other things, regarding the gloomy picture of the government regarding the free press.

TABLE 7.2 GOVERNMENT/ POLITICIANS OFFICIALS PROVIDING LEAKS OR OFF-THE-RECORD

NAME OF MEDIA STATION		GOVERNMENT/ POLITICIANS OFFICIALS PROVIDING LEAKS OR OFF-THE-RECORD INTERVIEWS TO YOUR BROADCASTING STATION					Total
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	22	7	13	1	3	46
		47.80%	15.20%	28.30%	2.20%	6.50%	100.00%
	Total	36.70%	11.70%	21.70%	1.70%	5.00%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	3	3	4	3	1	14
		21.40%	21.40%	28.60%	21.40%	7.10%	100.00%
	Total	5.00%	5.00%	6.70%	5.00%	1.70%	23.30%
	Count	25	10	17	4	4	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	41.70%	16.70%	28.30%	6.70%	6.70%	100.00%

Table 7.2 attempts to explore government’s/politicians’ proclivity to provide leaks or off-the record interviews to the two stations. Hence, the result shows that 4 journalists (6.7%) are of the opinion that their stations receive these leaks or off-the-record interviews fairly often, and also 4 journalists (6.7%) responded as “very often”. The majority of the journalists, i.e., 58.4 (35 journalists in number) responded as “never”

(41%), and “almost never” (16.7%). Those who said “sometimes” are 17 (28.3%) from the overall.

The finding in this regard seems to contradict some relevant literature written on such kind of governmental/politicians’ influence/pressure. For instance, Shoemaker and Reese (1996:205) argue that the government/politicians can influence media content through interviews that are off-the-record, backgrounds, or news leaks. As these sources are considered as information subsidies, governments/politicians most of the time use them to set the agenda for the news media and of course by extension to the larger public. This researcher, though further research is needed, is of the opinion that our government/politicians are not yet accustomed to such culture.

Table 7.3 RECEIVING VNRS/PREPACKAGED NEWS THROUGH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

NAME OF MEDIA STATION		RECEIVING VNRS/PREPACKAGED NEWS PRODUCED BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES OR OTHER INFORMATION ON BEHALF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS/ POLITICIANS					Total
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	9	1	13	15	8	46
		19.60%	2.20%	28.30%	32.60%	17.40%	100.00%
	Total	15.00%	1.70%	21.70%	25.00%	13.30%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	1	4	1	8	0	14
		7.10%	28.60%	7.10%	57.10%	0.00%	100.00%
	Total	1.70%	6.70%	1.70%	13.30%	0.00%	23.30%
	Count	10	5	14	23	8	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	16.70%	8.30%	23.30%	38.30%	13.30%	100.00%

The third query forwarded to the journalists revolves around the government/politicians’ influence/pressure realized by dispatching VNRS/Pre-packaged news through their communication offices or agencies.

As Table 7.3 illustrates, 23 journalists (38.3%) responded fairly often, and 8 journalists (13.3%), which is only from EBC, responded that their station receive the pre-packaged news very often. Fourteen journalists (23.3%) responded “sometimes”. Ten journalists (16.7%) responded “never”, 5 journalists (8.3%) and “almost never”.

The trisection, again, reveals that 45 of the journalists, i.e., 74.9%, responded that their stations receive government/politicians' VNRs/Pre-packaged news dispatched through their communication offices or agencies.

This figure makes one thing clear. Ethiopian government officials/politicians prefer the channel of their communication offices, instead of giving leaks or off-the-record interviews to media organizations by themselves, to set their agenda on the media. Nevertheless, in so far as their agenda is set on the media and the media, in turn, uses it as information subsidy, they will be able to influence the media content.

4.2.3. Organizational Influences/Pressures

In this sub-section, the analysis focuses on those sources of influences dubbed as “organizational”, viz. Media Owners/top executives' influences and Economic pressures.

a) Owners/Top executives' influences/pressures

TABLE 8 MEDIA STATION*OWNER/EXECUTIVE PRESSURE

NAME OF MEDIA STATION		OWNERS OR TOP-LEVEL EXECUTIVES TRYING TO INFLUENCE WHICH STORIES AND/OR PROGRAMS ARE OR ARE NOT TO BE COVERED OR EMPHASIZED?					TOTAL
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	7	2	13	18	6	46
		15.20%	4.30%	28.30%	39.10%	13.00%	100.00%
	Total	11.70%	3.30%	21.70%	30.00%	10.00%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	1	1	6	3	3	14
		7.10%	7.10%	42.90%	21.40%	21.40%	100.00%
	Total	1.70%	1.70%	10.00%	5.00%	5.00%	23.30%
	Count	8	3	19	21	9	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	13.30%	5.00%	31.70%	35.00%	15.00%	100.00%

As Table 8 shows, the journalists of the two media organizations were asked how often their respective media owners/top executives try to influence which news stories and/or programs are to be covered, not to be covered, or emphasized in their stations.

Taking both stations together, 30 journalists (50%) responded fairly often (35%) and very often (15%). Nineteen journalists (31.7%) responded “sometimes”. Eleven journalists (18.3%) also responded either “never” (13.3%) or “almost never” (5%). Hence, one can see that 49 journalists (81.7%) their media owners/top executives try to influence which news stories and/or programs are to be covered, not to be covered, or emphasized in their stations at various degrees.

The finding also shows that such influence/pressure is still substantial in each media station-80.4% in EBC, and 85.7% in Sheger radio. This conclusion is well supported by the argument of Shoemaker and Reese (1996:137) in that the owners or top executives are the ultimate authority figures in determining the goals and policies of the media organization as a result of which journalists follow their guidelines if they expect to keep their jobs.

b) Economic Pressures

In this particular time of mankind’s technological history, particularly with regard to mass communication technologies, the mainstream media is facing an epic challenge especially coming from what’s called the new media. The speedy, efficient, and the all-inclusive nature of the new media are eroding the economic backbone of the mainstream particularly in terms of taking away the deep-pocketed advertisers and sponsors.

In this study, considering the paramount role economic issues play in the broadcasting media, an attempt is made to explore it more broadly by framing five different questions.

Table 9 MEDIA STATION*ECONOMIC PRESSURE**TABLE 9.1 STRESSING PROFITS OVER QUALITY**

NAME OF MEDIA STATION		BROADCASTING STATION STRESS PROFITS OVER QUALITY OF PROGRAM COVERAGE					TOTAL
		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	
EBC	Count	8	14	9	13	2	46
		17.40%	30.40%	19.60%	28.30%	4.30%	100.00%
	Total	13.30%	23.30%	15.00%	21.70%	3.30%	76.70%
SHEGER FM		0	4	3	4	3	14
		0.00%	28.60%	21.40%	28.60%	21.40%	100.00%
	Total	0.00%	6.70%	5.00%	6.70%	5.00%	23.30%
	Count	8	18	12	17	5	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	13.30%	30.00%	20.00%	28.30%	8.30%	100.00%

As Table 8.1 illustrates, the journalists were requested to answer their opinion regarding the prioritization of financial profit over media content quality in their stations. Hence, the overall figure shows that 5 journalists (8.3%) responded “strongly agree”, and 17 journalists (28.3%) responded “agree”. Twelve journalists (20%) said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Twenty-six of the respondents, i.e., 43.3% of the overall, reveal answered “strongly disagree” (13.3%) and “disagree” (30%).

Though the overall picture in the two stations seems to down-play their stations’ prioritization of profit, 50% of the respondents from Sheger radio makes it clear that they either agree or strongly agree with the statement. This is another instance that privately-owned media organizations are more likely to succumb to economic pressures than the government-owned media organization. This fact may not be surprising as the reality of the market place makes the media increasingly dependent on sources of revenue that compromises its independence. This is because the media has increasingly had to depend on other sources of revenue generation other than the provision of news items and other infotainment programs.

The other query posed for the journalists focus on the negative repercussion of bottom-line pressures on the quality of media contents in their stations.

Table 9.2 BOTTOM-LINE PRESSURES ARE HURTING THE QUALITY OF NEWS AND/OR ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS

NAME OF MEDIA STATION		BOTTOM-LINE PRESSURES ARE HURTING THE QUALITY OF NEWS AND/OR ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMS COVERAGE					TOTAL
		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	
EBC	Count	3	11	14	13	5	46
		6.50%	23.90%	30.40%	28.30%	10.90%	100.00%
		5.00%	18.30%	23.30%	21.70%	8.30%	76.70%
SHEGER FM		0	4	2	3	5	14
		0.00%	28.60%	14.30%	21.40%	35.70%	100.00%
	Total	0.00%	6.70%	3.30%	5.00%	8.30%	23.30%
	Count	3	15	16	16	10	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	5.00%	25.00%	26.70%	26.70%	16.70%	100.00%

As Table 9.2 in the above demonstrates, from the total respondents, 26 (43.4%) of them are of the opinion that they strongly agree (16.7%) or agree (26.7%) that their respective stations' media content qualities are influenced by bottom-line pressures. More than a quarter of the respondents, i.e., (26.7%) seem to take a neutral position. Eighteen journalists (30%) responded that they either strongly disagree (3%) or disagree (25%) with the statement.

However, from the two stations, 8 (57.1%) of those working in Sheger radio responded that they either strongly agree (35.7%) or agree (21.4%) with the statement that their station's media contents are adversely affected by bottom-line pressures. On the other hand, half of the respondents, i.e., 18 journalists (39.2%) are of the opinion that they either strongly agree (28.3%) or strongly agree (10.9%) that bottom-line pressures are damaging the quality of the media contents. Fourteen journalists (30.4%) again from EBC either strongly disagree (23.9%) or disagree (6.5%) with the statement. Not an insignificant number of journalists (14 of them) or 30.4% responded that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

Hence, what one can conclude from this is that it is again in the private media organization-Sheger radio- that bottom-line pressures are, relatively speaking, adversely affecting the qualities of the media contents. This conclusion concurs with Shoemaker and Reese's argument that 'bottom-line pressures can constrain the work of the media organization and may, in turn, influence decisions about contents.'(1996:145)

Another generalized query that concerns economic pressure is posed for the respondents. This specific question is designed in a very general form because of the fact that there may be other numerous economic considerations and causes that are not incorporated in this specific study though these may be consequential. Their responses for the question how often the media contents in their respective stations would be compromised because of economic pressures on their media organization are tabularized here in below.

Table 9.3 COMPROMISING MEDIA (NEWS/ PROGRAM) CONTENT BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC PRESSURES

NAME OF MEDIA STATION		MEDIA CONTENTS COMPROMISED BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC PRESSURES					TOTAL
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	1	4	18	19	4	46
		2.20%	8.70%	39.10%	41.30%	8.70%	100.00%
	Total	1.70%	6.70%	30.00%	31.70%	6.70%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	1	4	2	4	3	14
		7.10%	28.60%	14.30%	28.60%	21.40%	100.00%
	Total	1.70%	6.70%	3.30%	6.70%	5.00%	23.30%
	Count	2	8	20	23	7	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	3.30%	13.30%	33.30%	38.30%	11.70%	100.00%

As Table 9.3 indicates, from the total sixty respondents, 30 journalists (50%) responded that their media contents are compromised because of economic pressure either fairly often (38.3% or 23 journalists in number) or very often (11.7% or 7 in number). Those who responded “sometimes” constitute 33.3% (20 journalists). 13.3% and 3.3% (10 journalists) responded “almost never” and “never” respectively.

If we trisect the figures (those who responded “sometimes”, “fairly often” or “very often”) predicated on each of the station and puts the summation, 89.1% (or 41 journalists) from EBC responded that their station’s media contents are compromised because of economic pressures at various degrees.

Surprisingly enough, this figure is low, compared to EBC, as 64.3% (or 9 journalists) from Sheger radio responded the same thing occurred in their station at these various degrees. Five of this station's journalist (35.6%) responded either never (7.1%) or almost never (28.6%).

For this glaring difference between a public broadcaster-EBC- and the private one- Sheger radio- the possible factor may be the televised aspect of the former. Its monopolization of the TV broadcast, at least until recently, may make it vulnerable for the various economic pressures emanating from plethora of sources. However, this result may warrant further research to give a very cogent explanation.

Table 9.4 below tabularizes what's usually called "agenda cutting"- a situation where by journalists may be pressured to *not* cover, or avoid covering, a particular story or issue. Here, the cause is economic interests of their media organization.

TABLE 9.4 AVOIDING COVERING CERTAIN STORIES AS DAMAGING TO THE ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF THE STATION

NAME OF MEDIA STATION		PRESSURE TO AVOID COVERING CERTAIN STORIES (NOT COVER THEM) BECAUSE THEY MIGHT BE DAMAGING TO THE ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF THE STATION					TOTAL
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	6	3	23	5	9	46
		13.00%	6.50%	50.00%	10.90%	19.60%	100.00%
	Total	10.00%	5.00%	38.30%	8.30%	15.00%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	1	2	3	6	2	14
		7.10%	14.30%	21.40%	42.90%	14.30%	100.00%
	Total	1.70%	3.30%	5.00%	10.00%	3.30%	23.30%
	Count	7	5	26	11	11	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	11.70%	8.30%	43.30%	18.30%	18.30%	100.00%

For this specific query, 22 journalists (36%), from both stations responded that they have been pressured fairly often (18.3%) and very often (18.3%) not to cover certain stories just because these might be damaging the economic interests of their stations. Twenty-six journalists (43.3%) responded "sometimes". Those respondents who said "never" and "almost never" constitute 11.7% and 8.3% respectively.

Looking at the responses separately, 23 journalists (50%) from EBC responded that there were sometimes wherein they were pressured not to cover certain

stories because of their station's economic considerations. This figure appears to be low in Sheger radio as only 3 journalists (21.4%) responded so. However, the radio station's 8 journalists (57.2%) responded for the question either "fairly often" (42.9%) or "very often" (14.3%). For this same category, EBC's journalists response constitutes 10.9% and 19.6%.

These figures revealed that the practice of "agenda cutting" for the sake of the organization's economic interest is practiced in Sheger radio than EBC.

As relevant literatures make it clear, in such situations journalists will be forced to be closer to the so-called audience demands with a consequence that 'information becomes fragmented, with more consumer issues, entertainment and lifestyle news. This situation, in turn, can lead to short-term thinking within media organizations as well as bad editorial decisions.' (Guyot, 2011: 141).

The last query that this study aimed at dealing with in this sub-section lies in the pressures exerted on journalists to specially handle stories involving, in one way or the other, commercial entities that have economic clouts over their respective stations.

This specific query posed to explore the issue of agenda building in the two stations. As Sweetser and Brown (2008) maintains, the concept of agenda building refers to the 'relationship between the practitioner-defined attributes (i.e., organizational message, talking points) and those successfully transferred to media coverage'. (p.359) In our case the "practitioners" are the commercial entities that aspire to relay their defined attributes to the public through the media.

Table 9.5 JOURNALISTS PRESSURED TO HANDLE STORIES INVOLVING COMPANIES OR ORGANIZATIONS WITH SOME ECONOMIC CLOUT

NAME OF MEDIA STATION		PRESSURES TO SPECIALLY HANDLE STORIES INVOLVING COMPANIES OR ORGANIZATIONS WITH SOME ECONOMIC CLOUT OVER THE BROADCASTING STATION					TOTAL
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	13	5	19	7	2	46
		28.30%	10.90%	41.30%	15.20%	4.30%	100.00%
	Total	21.70%	8.30%	31.70%	11.70%	3.30%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	5	0	5	3	1	14
		35.70%	0.00%	35.70%	21.40%	7.10%	100.00%
	Total	8.30%	0.00%	8.30%	5.00%	1.70%	23.30%
	Count	18	5	24	10	3	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	30.00%	8.30%	40.00%	16.70%	5.00%	100.00%

From the responses tabularized in the above, one can see that 13 journalists (21.7%) responded that they indeed were pressured fairly often (16.7%) and very often (5%) to specially handle stories involving, in one way or the other, commercial entities that have economic clouts over their respective stations. Those respondents who said “sometimes” constitute 40% of the overall (24 in number). Those who answered “never” and “almost never” are 30% (18 journalists) and 8.3% (5 journalists) respectively.

Considering the responses in each of the stations, 9 journalists (19.5%) of EBC responded either fairly often (15.2%) or very often (4.3%). EBC’s journalists who said “sometimes” are 19 in number, i.e., 41.3% out of the 46 (100%) journalists of EBC. Again those responded “never” and “almost never” constitute 13% and 10.9% respectively.

The respondents from Sheger radio heavily inclined, relatively speaking, to “never” (35.7%) and “sometimes” (35.7%) respectively. Only one respondent (7.1%) said “very often”, and 3 respondents (21.4%) answered “fairly often”.

Taking the trisection into consideration, 28 journalists (60.8%) from EBC and 9 journalists (64.2%) from Sheger radio responded that they were pressured, at various

degree, to specially handle stories involving, in one way or the other, commercial entities that have economic clouts over their respective stations.

This finding seems to agree with the long-standing assertion that media organizations are part of a market-based economy. In this regard, McManus (1994) argued that ‘commercial entities that have economic clouts over media organization are the most influential in the production of news and other media contents because they are a part of the corporate structure as a result of which they must exert their influence from outside the corporation.’(p.32)

To wrap up this section, it is more than obvious that the brunt of the economic pressure on the media organization will end up adversely influencing the media content in one way or the other and also at different degrees.

4.2.4. Within Media Organization Influences/Pressures

As we have seen in the early part of this study, influences on media content may also derive from the very person and place in which it is created: the journalist himself and the media organization itself.

Here, these sources of influences/pressures are categorized as individual influences/pressures, media routine practices, staff size pressures (smaller-scale organizational types of restraints), and direct and indirect management influences/pressures (such as assignment editors or other superiors, working within the news organization).

a) Individual influences/pressures

Table 10 MEDIA STATION* INDIVIDUAL/PERSONAL PRESSURE

NAME OF MEDIA STATION		COMPROMISING MEDIA CONTENT BECAUSE OF PERSONAL AND/OR PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUNDS (E.G. RELIGIOUS BELIEF, POLITICAL ORIENTATION, GENDER PERSPECTIVE, ACTUAL OR PROMISED FINANCIAL BENEFIT)					TOTAL
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	17	7	16	5	1	46
		37.00%	15.20%	34.80%	10.90%	2.20%	100.00%
	Total	28.30%	11.70%	26.70%	8.30%	1.70%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	5	0	5	3	1	14
		35.70%	0.00%	35.70%	21.40%	7.10%	100.00%
	Total	8.30%	0.00%	8.30%	5.00%	1.70%	23.30%
	Count	22	7	21	8	2	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	36.70%	11.70%	35.00%	13.30%	3.30%	100.00%

The above Table 10 demonstrates the responses of the journalists regarding their opinion on the influence/pressure of their personal and professional backgrounds on the media contents they are working on.

Hence, the result indicates that from the overall journalists only 10 journalists (16.6%) responded either fairly often (13.3%) and very often (3.3%). The majority of them responded either “never” (36.7% or 22 journalists in number) or “sometimes” (35% or 21 in number). Seven journalists (11.7%) responded “almost never”.

Studying the responses of the journalists separately, the table displays that EBC’s 24 journalists (52.2%) responded either “never” (37%) or “almost never” (15.2%). EBC’s 16 journalists (34.8%) responded that their personal or professional backgrounds factor on the media content only “sometimes”. Again, only 6 journalists (13.1%) from EBC responded either fairly often (10.9% or 5 in number) or very often (2.2% or a single journalist).

The picture regarding journalists from Sheger radio reveals more or less similar responses. Five journalists (35.7%) from Sheger said that their personal or professional backgrounds have never been a factor in the media content they are working on. A

similar figure represents their response as “sometimes”. Four journalists (28.5%) from Sheger responded either fairly often (21.4% or 4 in number) or very often (7.1% or a single journalist). No one from this radio station responded “almost never”.

From these figures what one can conclude is that the bulk of the journalists believe that they are personally practicing what’s called objective journalism. Moreover, though this may not warrant an out-right conclusion without further studies, it appears that the majority of the journalists convinced that they are carrying out their journalistic duties professionally.

However, it is worth nothing that many researchers on this area of influence and pressure argued that individual factors matter because ‘journalists constantly have to make perceptual decisions and also of the pervasive assumption that the personal characteristics of those most directly responsible for media production will influence content.’ (Donsbach, 2004, cited in Hanitzsch & Hoxha: 3; McQuail: 262) It is also wise to suspect that people, especially those who believe strongly about their professionalism, exhibit the highest conviction that their personal backgrounds would not interfere in their works.

Herein below the study will look at those media routine practices that are mostly stressed in terms of influencing/pressuring journalists in their day-to-day production of media contents.

b) Media Routine Practices Influences/Pressures

As it was tried to describe earlier in the study, this level of influence focuses on the typical and taken-for-granted organizational practices and norms that frame and shape daily media content production.

Table 11 MEDIA STATION* MEDIA ROUTINE PRACTICES PRESSURE

NAME OF MEDIA STATION		MEDIA CONTENT INFLUENCED BY PATTERNED, ROUTINIZED AND REPEATED PRACTICES					TOTAL
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	4	6	12	13	11	46
		8.70%	13.00%	26.10%	28.30%	23.90%	100.00%
	Total	6.70%	10.00%	20.00%	21.70%	18.30%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	0	0	5	5	4	14
		0.00%	0.00%	35.70%	35.70%	28.60%	100.00%
		0.00%	0.00%	8.30%	8.30%	6.70%	23.30%
	Count	4	6	17	18	15	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	6.70%	10.00%	28.30%	30.00%	25.00%	100.00%

Table 11 demonstrates that from the total respondents in this study, 33 journalists (55%) revealed that the media contents in their stations are either fairly often (30% or 18 journalists) or very often (25% or 15 journalists) influenced/pressured by routine practices. Seventeen respondents (28.3%) answered as “sometimes”. Only 10 journalists (16.7%), all of them from EBC responded either “never” (6.7% or 4 journalists) or “almost never” (10% or 6 journalists).

Looking at the figure station by station, 24 respondents (52.2%) from EBC said that the media contents in their stations are influenced by media routine practices fairly often (28.3%) or very often (23.9%). Those who responded “sometimes” constitute 26.1%. The rest 10 respondents (21.7%) said either never or almost never.

Nine respondents (64.3%) from Sheger radio, which is significant, said that their station too is influenced by media routine practices either fairly often (35.7%) or very often (28.6%). Five journalists (35.7%) responded “sometimes”.

The figures glaringly make it clear that this specific source of influence works strongly in both broadcasting stations.

Media routine practices tend to emphasize the conditioning influences of prevailing procedures, norms and practices in media organizations and as a result of which journalists do not possess complete freedom to act on their beliefs and attitudes. Moreover, in a procedural sense, these sources of influence often appear as concrete constraints to the journalists’ work, mostly in the form of limited resources.

In a similar manner, McQuail (2000:276), regarding media routine practices, stresses that such influences are more powerful factors in the content decision-making process than any individual or ideological factor involved in the process. He also added that all phases of media production involve a large volume of work that becomes routinized as a matter of necessity.

Instead of the written formal ethics codes that are found (or should have been found) in newsrooms, as routine practices are an equivalent of unwritten codes, they are more often involved in ethical decision making in the newsroom. They are also more difficult to define, measure, and analyze because they become so ‘deeply embedded in the newsroom culture that they need never be made explicit to be enforced, but can exist simply as a set of reflexes.’ (Meyer, cited in Colistra, 2008:50)

Here, it is worth noting that journalists, as Preston (2009: 53) maintains, must operate within specific configurations of material, normative, social and technological resources to perform their roles in the media content production processes these media routine practices can be perceived both as constraining and enabling factors.

c) Staff Size Influences/Pressures

The respondents were also asked about the impact of staff size on media contents. Their responses accordingly tabularized here in below.

TABLE 12 MEDIA STATION*STAFF SIZE1 CROSSTABULATION

Table 12.1 LOW STAFF SIZE INFLUENCING QUALITY OF MEDIA CONTENTS

MEDIA STATION		AN INADEQUATE MEDIA STAFF SIZE HURTS THE QUALITY OF MEDIA CONTENTS				TOTAL
		DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	
	Count	7	4	20	15	46
EBC		15.20%	8.70%	43.50%	32.60%	100.00%
	Total	11.70%	6.70%	33.30%	25.00%	76.70%
		0	0	8	6	14
SHEGER FM		0.00%	0.00%	57.10%	42.90%	100.00%
	Total	0.00%	0.00%	13.30%	10.00%	23.30%
		7	4	28	21	60
	Count	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	11.70%	6.70%	46.70%	35.00%	100.00%

Statement from queries under Table 12.1 in the above, and the other tables in this sub-section too, are designed to gauge the respondents' level of agreement/disagreement regarding the multi-faceted impact of staff size on their respective media stations' media contents.

As Table 12.1 indicates, from the overall respondents, 49 journalists (81.7%) either "strongly agree" (35% or 21 journalists) or "disagree" (46.7% or 28 journalists) with the statement that inadequate media staff size hurts qualities of media contents. Eleven journalists (18.4%), all of whom from EBC responded either "disagree" (15.2%) or "neither agree nor disagree" (8.7%) with the statement. None of the respondents from both stations responded "strongly disagree".

The response for this specific statement from journalists of Sheger radio indicates that they either strongly agree (42.9%) or agree (57.1%)- this in fact makes 100%. On the other hand, from EBC's respondents, 76.1% of them either strongly agree (32.6%) or agree (43.5%).

Thus, the finding reveals that the significant majority of the respondents are of the conviction that inadequate media staff size hurts qualities of media contents. The highest figure in Sheger radio may not be surprising as this researcher witnessed that staff members of the news section are sometimes made to work in the entertainment section of the station.

Table 12.2 PR AND ADVERTISING MATERIALS FILLING NEWS HOLES CAUSED BY LOW NO. STAFF

MEDIA STATION		PUBLIC RELATIONS AND/OR ADVERTISING MATERIALS FILL HOLES IN NEWS PROGRAMS CAUSED BY LACK OF STAFF					TOTAL
		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	
EBC	Count	9	18	6	11	2	46
		19.60%	39.10%	13.00%	23.90%	4.30%	100.00%
	Total	15.00%	30.00%	10.00%	18.30%	3.30%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	0	2	3	8	1	14
		0.00%	14.30%	21.40%	57.10%	7.10%	100.00%
	Total	0.00%	3.30%	5.00%	13.30%	1.70%	23.30%
	Count	9	20	9	19	3	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	15.00%	33.30%	15.00%	31.70%	5.00%	100.00%

The statement tabularized in the above (Table 11.2) was forwarded to the respondents with a view to get their level of agreement/disagreement regarding the use of PRs and/or advertising materials to fill holes, which is supposedly caused by low staff size, in news/programs in the two broadcasting media stations.

The findings indicate that, taking the responses of the two stations as a whole, only 22 journalists (36.7%) either strongly agree (5% or 3 journalists) or agree (31.7% or 19 journalists) with the statement that media organizations use PRs and/or advertising materials to fill holes, which is supposedly caused by low staff size, in news/programs. Twenty-nine journalists (48.3%) responded that they strongly disagree (15% or 9 journalists) or disagree (33.3% or 20 journalists) with the statement. Nine of them, i.e., 15 responded “neither agree nor disagree” with the statement.

When we see the responses separately, there is a clear difference between the journalists of the two stations. Hence, 58.7% or 27 journalists from EBC responded that they either strongly disagree (19.6 %) or disagree (39.1%) with the statement. Those who responded either strongly agree or disagree constitutes 4.3% and 23.9% respectively. Only 6 journalists (13%) from EBC responded “neither agree nor disagree”.

On the other hand, only 2 journalists (14.3%) from Sheger radio disagree with the statement while 8 journalists (57.1%) agree and a single journalist (7.1%) strongly agree. Three respondents (21.4%) said they neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

From the overall response one can infer that there seems a resistance in EBC to make use of PRs and/or advertising materials to fill holes in news/programs. On the contrary, there is a somewhat strong tendency in Sheger radio to use these materials to fill news/programs holes apparently caused by low staff size I the station.

The possible explanation for EBC’s resistance may be that, borrowing Shoemaker & Reese (1996:175) argument, journalists or media workers are suspicious of using the piece of information garnered from PR because of their assumption that all PR’s efforts involve solely persuasive communication.

However, despite the fact that previous experiences regarding the relationship between PRs and journalists are tainted with conflicts and suspicions, this same relationship has recently been recast as a “trading” or “exchange” in which under-resourced journalists, working in under-staffed newsrooms, increasingly rely on PR sources for editorial copy while offering access to editorial columns for PR messages in return (Gans 1978, Jones 2006, cited in Justin et al. 2015: 12).

Table 12.3 REDUCED STAFF SIZE RESULTING IN NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON NEWS/ PROGRAMS

MEDIA STATION		REDUCED SIZE OF STAFF AT A STATION NEGATIVELY IMPACTINGS ON NEWS/ PROGRAMS COVERAGE				TOTAL
		STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	
EBC	Count	2	4	26	14	46
		4.30%	8.70%	56.50%	30.40%	100.00%
	Total	3.30%	6.70%	43.30%	23.30%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	0	1	7	6	14
		0.00%	7.10%	50.00%	42.90%	100.00%
	Total	0.00%	1.70%	11.70%	10.00%	23.30%
	Count	2	5	33	20	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	3.30%	8.30%	55.00%	33.30%	100.00%

The last query posed regarding the impact of staff size, as illustrated in Table 12.3, vis-à-vis the impact of reduced staff size on news/programs coverage of a media station.

The findings demonstrate that from the respondents of the two stations under investigation, 88.3% (53 journalists) are of the opinion that they either strongly agree (33.3% or 33 journalists) or agree (55% or 20 journalists) with the statement that reduced staff size negatively impacts news/program coverage in their respective stations. Those who responded either disagree or strongly disagree constitutes 8.3% and 3.3% respectively. No journalist responded “neither agree nor disagree” with the statement.

Looking at the responses station by station, 89.9% (or 40 journalists) of the respondents from EBC said that they either agree (56.5%) or strongly agree (30.4%) with the statement. Those who responded either disagree or strongly disagree constitute 8.7% and 4.3% respectively.

This figure is still high in Sheger radio because 92.9% (13 journalists) responded that they either agree (42.9%) or strongly agree (50%) with the statement that reduced staff size negatively impacts news/program coverage in their station. And only one respondent (7.1%) from Sheger answered as “disagree”.

It’s interesting to see the negative impact of low staff size as responded by the journalists of the two broadcasting stations because the significant majority of them, as indicated in Table 12.1 and 12.3, air-out their agreement with the statements there in. However, their responses, as stated in Table 12.2, seem to buttress the argument that journalists are very much suspicious (or reluctant to use) of PRs materials even though their stations are under-staffed.

d) Direct and Indirect Management Influences/Pressures

Influences within a media entity may also derive from management pressures. The demands from superiors working in the media organization on a day-to-day basis can either be direct or indirect, and also in the form of suggestion or outright instruction.

These suggestions include a superior directly instructing a journalist to take the action or providing overt instructions about what kinds of stories to cover/avoid and perhaps how to cover them.

TABLE 13 MEDIA STATION* DIRECT AND INDIRECT MANAGEMENT PRESSURE

Table 13.1 MANAGERS/SUPERIORS DIRECTLY SUGGESTING COVERAGE OF A STORY THAT WOULD NORMALLY NOT BE COVERED

MEDIA STATION		MANAGERS/SUPERIORS (E.G., ASSIGNMENT EDITORS, PRODUCERS, NEWS DIRECTORS) DIRECTLY SUGGEST TO JOURNALISTS TO COVER A STORY THAT WOULD NORMALLY NOT BE COVERED					TOTAL
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	9	5	14	14	4	46
		19.60%	10.90%	30.40%	30.40%	8.70%	100.00%
	Total	15.00%	8.30%	23.30%	23.30%	6.70%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	2	1	5	2	4	14
		14.30%	7.10%	35.70%	14.30%	28.60%	100.00%
	Total	3.30%	1.70%	8.30%	3.30%	6.70%	23.30%
	Count	11	6	19	16	8	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	18.30%	10.00%	31.70%	26.70%	13.30%	100.00%

To begin with, direct pressures are more obvious and may consist of a manager specifically telling a journalist not to cover a story. Or, they may provide clear instructions about what topics to cover (or not cover) and how to cover them. Based on this, the respondents were asked to opine their experiences in their respective stations in three differently designed queries.

As Table 13.1 depicts, the journalists were requested how often their managers/superiors directly suggest to them to cover a story that shouldn't deserve, as per journalistic profession ethics, coverage.

From the overall respondents, 24 journalists (40%) responded either fairly often (26.7% or 16 in number) or very often (13.3% or 8 in number). Nineteen journalists (31.7%) responded "sometimes". Seventeen (28.3%) of them responded either "never" (18.3%) or "almost never (10%)".

Eighteen respondents (39.1%) from EBC said that such suggestions were made to them either fairly often (30.4%) or very often (8.7%). Another 30.4% or 14 journalist responded "sometimes". Fourteen journalists (30.5%) responded either never (19.6%) or almost never (10.9%).

The respondents from Sheger radio, on the other hand, have experienced the direct suggestion either fairly often (14.3% or 2 journalists in number) or very often (28.6% or 4 in number). Five journalists (35.7%) responded "sometimes". Only 3 journalists (21.4%) from Sheger responded either never (14.3%) or almost never (7.1%).

Both the overall and the station-wise findings testify that managers/superiors in the two broadcasting stations are influencing the journalists by giving direct suggestion at various degrees. This conclusion may not be something to wonder about because, as McManus (1994:32) argues, management has a legal responsibility to serve the economic interest of the owners as a result of which newsroom managers may exert pressure on journalists to uphold these interests. To add to this, as the responses given to the open-ended questions, particularly by the EBC journalists, make it clear political pressures are also well in play in terms of the direct suggestions.

Table 13.2 MANAGERS/SUPERIORS DIRECTLY TELLING AVOIDANCE OF CERTAIN STORIES, TOPICS OR ISSUES

MEDIA STATION		MANAGERS/SUPERIORS DIRECTLY TELL JOURNALISTS TO AVOID (NOT COVER) CERTAIN STORIES/TOPICS/ISSUES					TOTAL
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	1	5	26	6	8	46
		2.20%	10.90%	56.50%	13.00%	17.40%	100.00%
	Total	1.70%	8.30%	43.30%	10.00%	13.30%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count		2	5	4	1	14
		14.30%	14.30%	35.70%	28.60%	7.10%	100.00%
	Count	3.30%	3.30%	8.30%	6.70%	1.70%	23.30%
	Total	3	7	31	10	9	60
		5.00%	11.70%	51.70%	16.70%	15.00%	100.00%

This question is concerned with what's called "agenda cutting"-a situation wherein journalists be pressured to *not* cover, or avoid covering, a particular story or issue.

The overall response indicates that nineteen journalists (31.7%) have been directly told by managers/superiors either fairly often (16.7%) or very often (15%) to avoid the covering certain stories or topics. More than half of the respondents (51.7% or 31 of them) answered "sometimes". Ten journalists (16.7%) responded either never (5%) or almost never 11.7% respectively.

Fourteen (30.4%) of EBC's journalists responded fairly often (13%) and very often (17.4%). The majority of them, i.e., 56.5% or 26 in number, said that they have been "sometimes" directly suggested not to cover a certain story or topic. Only 6 journalists (13.1%) responded either never (2%) or almost never (10.9%).

The result from Sheger radio's respondents reveals that 5 of them (35.7%) have been pressured either fairly often (28.6%) or very often (7.1%). Those who said "sometimes" constitute 35.7%. And four (28.6%) journalists responded either never (14.3%) or almost never (14.3%).

The overall outcome indicates that such direct suggestion to avoid the covering of certain stories or topics is more practiced in EBC than that of Sheger radio.

Table 13.3 MANAGERS/SUPERIORS GIVING INDIRECT SIGNALS/SUGGESTIONS TO COVER A STORY THAT NORMALLY WOULD NOT BE COVERED

MEDIA STATION		MANAGERS/SUPERIORS GIVING INDIRECT SIGNALS/SUGGESTIONS TO JOURNALISTS TO COVER A STORY THAT NORMALLY WOULD NOT BE COVERED					TOTAL
		NEVER	ALMOST NEVER	SOMETIMES	FAIRLY OFTEN	VERY OFTEN	
EBC	Count	8	1	17	18	2	46
		17.40%	2.20%	37.00%	39.10%	4.30%	100.00%
	Total	13.30%	1.70%	28.30%	30.00%	3.30%	76.70%
SHEGER FM	Count	1	2	2	9	0	14
		7.10%	14.30%	14.30%	64.30%	0.00%	100.00%
	Total	11.10%	66.70%	10.50%	33.30%	0.00%	23.30%
	Count	9	3	19	27	2	60
		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
	Total	15.00%	5.00%	31.70%	45.00%	3.30%	100.00%

Table 13.3 inquires about those indirect signals/suggestions of managers/superiors to journalists with a view to cover a story that normally would not be covered. This is a typical instance of what's called "agenda setting"- a sort of Mass Media theory purportedly suggesting that the media sets the public agenda by telling people what to think about, although not exactly what to think.

Hence from the total subject of this study, 29 journalists (48.3%) responded that they have been pressured in such a way either fairly often (45%) or very often (3.3%). Nineteen of them (31.7%) responded "sometimes". And 12 journalists (20%) said either never (15%) or almost never (5%).

Table 13.3 also indicates EBC's 20 journalists (43.4%) responded that they experienced the indirect suggestion of managers/superiors either fairly often (39.1%) or very often (4.3%). Those who said "sometimes" constitute 37% or 17 journalists in number. Nine respondents (19.6%) said that they either never (17.4%) or almost never (2.2%) experienced such indirect pressure.

This same query shows a significant difference in terms of the response gathered from Sheger radio's journalists. Hence, nine journalists (64.3%) responded that they have been fairly often indirectly suggested to avoid covering certain stories or topics. Those who said "sometimes" constitute only 14.3%. A single journalist (7.1%) responded never and other two journalists (14.3%) as "almost never".

This finding indicates that the indirect signal or suggestion by managers/superiors is more prevalent in Sheger radio than that of EBC. It also shows that management direction is not only typically overt or directly stated but journalists are also socialized over time by methods such as reprimand or editing to learn what type of stories are acceptable.

If this is repeated over time, as Breed (1955:328) claimed in his “theory of social control in newsroom”, journalists learn, or become socialized, to avoid these stories on their own if they want to get rewarded by their superiors. Another consequential effect of this sort of pressure is that ‘the newsman will fail to conform to societal and professional ideals as he has chosen a more pragmatic allegiance to the newsroom group.’(ibid: 331) Hence, as Breed maintains, the task of countervailing this influence/pressure lies in journalistic codes, the professional leadership, and sincere criticism.

In the next sub-section, the study will focus on presenting and analyzing the journalists’ responses for the open-ended questions.

4.3. Analysis of Journalists’ Responses for Open-ended Questions

The subjects of this study were also presented with 5 open-ended questions that run as follows:

- Which Source of pressures or influences mostly affects your work?
- What exactly results in from the pressure or influence exerted on your work or the media content you are assigned to work on?
- What effects on your broadcasting station are caused because of the influences and/or pressures exerted by one or more internal or external factors?
- Availability of media level mechanism/policy/law that protects the media content you are working on from being influenced/pressurized
- Mechanism/s to better protect media contents from external or internal pressures

Herein below are the tables and summaries of the responses of the journalists from the two broadcasting stations.

Most affecting source of influences

Table 14 Most affecting source of influences/pressure

Media Station	WHICH SOURCE OF INFLUENCES MOSTLY AFFECTS YOUR WORK						Total
	Government officials and Political pressure	Media Owners or Executive pressure	Advertisers pressure	Editors pressure	PRs pressure	Others	
EBC	14	11	3	7	2	9	46
SHEGER FM	2	2	1	2	0	7	14
Total	16 (26.7%)	13(21.6%)	4(6.7%)	9(15%)	2(4.3%)	16(26.7%)	60(100%)

The respondents from the two stations have forwarded numbers of factors that hugely affect the media contents they are working on.

The condensed responses, as demonstrated on Table 14, revealed that more than a quarter of the respondents (26.7% or 16 journalists-14 from EBC and 2 from Sheger radio) believed that the most affecting influences and pressures emanate from government and politicians. Next to this come the influences and pressures that come from the media owners and executives with 21.6%. The third most influential source of influences and pressures, as 15% of the respondents (nine in number) indicate, are the editors. Advertisers’/sponsors’ and PRs influences and pressures are rated by the respondents as constituting 6.7% and 4.3% respectively. The rest 26.7% or 16 journalists mentioned “others”, like media work procedures, unprofessional media personnel, unstable work conditions in media stations, harassment in newsrooms, lack of transparency and team spirit, the outside public, and so on, as the most affecting sources of influences and pressures that are damaging media contents of the media organizations. These “others” constitute 50% of the responses of Sheger radio’s journalists while they claimed 19.6% of journalists’ response from EBC.

EBC’s 14 journalists (30.4%) mentioned government/politicians influences as the most detrimental to the media contents in their station. Apart from what’s stated herein

the above, EBC's journalists also enumerated other factors that are negatively impacting the media contents. To mention few: unwritten rules; "hobnobism" between EBC's executives and some media personnel including some journalists; forced self-censorship; financial benefits and promises to journalists by external bodies who pressured the media to cover or avoid covering certain stories or issues to which they seem to have a stake; providing merit and dedication a lesser place in EBC; lack of proper and regular capacity building trainings, and so on.

Hence, from the overall responses of the journalists, one can understand that quite a number internal and external (to the media organizations) factors that are not forecasted, thus addressed, by this study played a significant role in negatively impacting media contents.

Outcomes of the Influences on the Journalists

Table 15 Outcomes of the Influences on the Journalists

Media Station	WHAT EXACTLY RESULTS IN FROM THE INFLUENCE EXERTED ON THE MEDIA CONTENT YOU WORK ON							Total
	Lack of work motivation and/or self confidence	Hiding the truth and producing what the government wants	Working and broadcasting media contents that should not get coverage	Forced self-censorship	Avoiding coverage of certain topics of public interest	Broadcasting unbalanced content	Others	
EBC	11	8	4	1	12	2	8	46
SHEGER FM	1	1	1	0	5	0	6	14
Total	12(20%)	9(15%)	5	1	17 (28.3%)	2	14	60

The other open-ended question posed for the respondents focuses on describing the actual or felt effects resulting on the journalists because of the influences and pressures mentioned so far.

Thus, the findings, as seen on Table 15, demonstrated that 28.3% or 17 journalists were influenced to avoid the covering of certain topics, stories or issues. This is a typical

case of agenda cutting in the media stations. This figure is far higher in Sheger radio (78.6 % or 11 journalists in number) than that of EBC (26.1% or 12 journalists).

Again, 20% of the respondents i.e. 12 journalists-11 from EBC and one from Sheger radio- indicated that because of the influences and pressures they start lacking self-confidence and motivation for their work. This figure is higher in EBC (23.9%) than that of Sheger, which is only 7.1%.

Nine respondents (15%) said that because of the influences and pressures they were forced to distort facts and broadcast those contents dictated by certain government officials and media executives. Again, this figure is higher in EBC (17.4%) than that of Sheger radio (7.1%).

The rest 22 journalists (around 36.6%) mentioned numerous effects. To mention a few: broadcasting contents that, by the journalistic code of conduct standards, do warrant coverage; broadcasting unbalanced contents (transgressing objective journalism)- this takes 0% in Sheger radio- forced self-censorship, and so on.

Hence, we can conclude that the sum of all these influences and pressures, despite the differences in degrees, are negatively damaging media contents, which are also more likely to deny the larger public (the audience) its right to get the undistorted facts-be these news items or programs of various genres.

Outcomes of the Influences on the Broadcasting Media Organizations

Table 16 Outcomes of the Influences on the Broadcasting Media Organizations

Media Station	OUTCOMES ON YOUR BROADCASTING STATION THAT ARE CAUSED BY THE INFLUENCES						Total
	Broadcasting of Distorted Information	Lack of Reliability by the Audience	Banning the Broadcasting of Media Content because of Influence/Pressure Exerted by Media Managers	Denying Information to the Station	Allotting more time to Advertisements and Sponsored Entertainment Programs	Others	
EBC	8	13	11	3	5	6	46
SHEGER FM	0	0	6	1	1	6	14
Total	8 (13.3%)	13(21.7%)	17(28.3%)	4	6	12	60

Cognizant of the fact that that internal and external factors influencing the media organization will also undoubtedly impinge the media contents, in one way or the other, the respondents were requested to air-out what they think is the effects on their broadcasting stations to which the responses are tabularized on Table 16.

Accordingly, seventeen journalists (28.3%) responded that because of the various influences, particularly emanating from extra-media factors, there were times that their stations forced to ban the broadcasting of ready-made media contents. Another 13 journalists (21.7%), all of whom are from EBC, underlined that the damaging effect on their station is lack of reliability or trustworthiness in the eyes of the public (the audience). Again, 8 journalists (13.3%) - all from EBC- responded that the influences and pressures forced their media station to broadcast contents that are tainted with distorted facts.

The rest 22 respondents (36.7%) enumerated various effects that their media station sustained as a result of the influences and pressures, viz., denying or withholding of information by external institutions whenever the media station looks for one; allotting more time for unnecessary entertainment programs and advertisements, especially during public holidays (this seems to occur because of economic and/or financial pressures); prohibiting a certain journalist of the station from producing a certain topic or story, and so on.

All these demonstrate that the media organizations are working under tremendous influences emanating from multiple factors. The kernel point here is that because of these influences and pressures the broadcasting stations are compelled to compromise not only their contents but also- by extension- their professional integrity. Hence, one can easily grasp how consequential these influences can be.

Media level mechanism/policy/law that protects the media contents from Influences

Having looked at the effects of the multi-faceted influences on journalists and their media stations-and by extension the media contents- the issue to be dealt with here is exploring the availability or otherwise of media level mechanisms (safety valves) to protect the contents from these influences.

Table 17 Media level mechanism/policy/law that protects the media contents from Influences

MEDIA STATION	ANY MECHANISM/POLICY/LAW THAT PROTECTS THE MEDIA CONTENTS FROM BEING INFLUENCED						Total
	There is no Guiding Written Editorial Policy	There is Guiding Editorial Policy	There is Guiding Editorial Policy But not Implemented Properly	Working in Line with Work Procedures	There is Code of Conduct for Journalists and Editors	Not Sure	
EBC	0	23	10	5	0	8	46
SHEGER FM	6	0	0	2	1	5	14
Total	6	23 (38.3%)	10(16.7%)	7	1	13 (21.7%)	60

Hence, as indicated on Table 17, twenty-three journalists (38.3% from the overall, i.e. 60 journalists and 50% from the sample size taken from EBC)-all from EBC-responded that EBC's editorial policy is capable of shielding media contents from internally or externally emanated influences. Again, 10 journalists (16.7%), all from EBC, declared that there is editorial policy but not implemented properly and hence unable to protect media contents from influences and pressures. On the other hand 7 journalists (11.7%-5 journalists or 10.95 from EBC and 2 or 14.3% from Sheger radio) responded that working in line with their respective station's working procedure is enough to protect media contents from influences and pressures. Interestingly enough, 13 journalists (21.7%), i.e. 8 (17.4%) from EBC and 5 (35.7%) from Sheger radio, are not sure whether or not there exists any mechanism in their respective stations that protect contents from influences. Only a single respondent (1.7%) who belongs to Sheger radio responded that the code of conduct in the station is suffice to protect media contents while 6 (10% from the overall and 42.9% from the sample size taken from Sheger) said that there is no editorial policy in their station that lends protection to media contents.

The findings make it clear that there are not as such concrete protective mechanisms in both stations. Though 50% of respondents from EBC believe that EBC's editorial policy is capable of serving as a protective mechanism, 21.7% (10 journalists)

and 17.4% (8 journalists) of the station's journalists responded respectively that the editorial policy is not properly implemented, and consequently incapable of protecting media contents, or they are not even sure whether there is any protective mechanism in their station-EBC.

All these revealed that there is a blurred image on the part of the journalists regarding the knowledge and practice of the protective mechanisms that may at least abate the effects of the influences on the media contents.

Respondents Recommended Mechanisms for Protecting Media Contents from Internal and External Influences

The last open-ended question forwarded to the respondents of the two broadcasting stations aims at probing their opinion regarding their preferred mechanism/s to watch over their station's media contents from the various and consequential influences. Table 18 illustrates their responses.

Table 18 Respondents Recommended Mechanisms for Protecting Media Contents from Internal and External

Influences

Media Station	PROPOSED MECHANISM/S THAT WILL BETTER PROTECT MEDIA CONTENTS FROM EXTERNAL OR INTERNAL INFLUENCES?					Total
	Enacting Binding Editorial Policy	there must be clear code of ethics and laws to protect journalists and their work	commitment from the government	Professionalism of journalists/ managers must be maintained and media	freedom of the press and independence must be respected editorial	
EBC	0	3	3	24	16	46
SHEGER FM	2	8	0	2	2	14
TOTAL	2	11(18.3%)	3	26 (43%)	18(30%)	60

Thus, the overall picture depicts that 26 respondents (43%) are of the opinion that professionalism of journalists as well as the media management personnel are the ideal mechanisms that lend effective protection for media contents. Eighteen journalists (30%) believe that the best protection comes from the upholding of freedom of the press and the

respect for editorial independence. Eleven journalists (18.3%) stress that the viable protective mechanisms lie in having and implementing clear code of ethics and laws that are appropriate in the media arena. The rest 5 respondents (8.3%) prefer the commitment from the government-3 (5%) of them from Sheger radio- and binding editorial policy- 2 journalists (3.3%) from EBC.

Looking at their recommendations separately, more than half (52.2%) of EBC's journalists believe that the best protective mechanism for media content is the running of media organization by professional journalists and management staff. Again 34.8% of EBC's respondents are convinced that respecting the principles and practices freedom of the press and editorial independence are suffice to extend effective protection to media contents.

The most preferred recommended mechanism by journalists (57.1% or 8 journalists) from Sheger radio is the availability of clear in-house code of ethics and a binding legislation that is relevant for media content protection from undue influences and pressures. The rest of the respondents from this radio station opt for binding editorial policy- 2 journalists (14.3%), professionalism of journalists as well as the media management personnel-2 journalists (14.3%), and freedom of the press and the respect for editorial independence- 2 journalists (14.3%).

From the findings stated herein the above, it seems clear that the significant majority of journalists of a government-owned and privately-owned media organizations believe that the effective protective mechanisms for media contents are media professionalism, in terms of trained and skilled journalists as well as management staff, and upholding press freedom and editorial independence practically.

4.4. Implications of the Influences on Media Contents in Brief

In this study so far, it was tried to describe how the IOMC works, based on the relevant literatures and theoretical perspectives, and also how external and internal factors try to build, frame, and cut items on the media contents of broadcasting media organizations, based on the findings and analysis. In fact, it will be necessary in the future to conduct exhaustive studies in the area by taking account of the relations across the

boundary between the media organizations and other agents of the wider media institutions and society.

Influence on media contents has wider implications on the media operations, the principles and practices of freedom of the press including what's called editorial independence, and also on the journalists themselves. As a matter of fact, as Reese (2001:182) maintains, it is not desirable for media organizations to be so dependent on other social institutions as such institutions may exert their own pressures in a manner that compromises the media's autonomy.

To forward some instances, the current media reality is indicating the ever-increasing roles of advertisers and sponsors on media organizations. The influences and pressures from these sources are compelling the media to focus and broadcast more commercial, profit-making and entertainment-oriented contents and fixtures. This trend, as Guyot (2009: 140) succinctly put, results in avoidance of controversial subjects, banal program formats, stereotyping of audience segments, and so on. Besides, it is more likely that the media organization will end up compromising its civic roles and ethics of journalism.

Other economic considerations, say of investors, commercial entities, and so on that have a financial stake with a certain media organization in one way or the other, will also force the media to broadcast fragmented information, consumer issues, and entertainment and life-style news and programs. This, in turn, can lead the media organization to think only for the short-term and also render poor editorial decisions.

However, it must also be noted that there must be a restrictive obligation on the journalists themselves not to accept any financial and/or any kind of gifts from news sources as such illicit practices will coerce them to do certain unethical deeds and thereby tampering on the media contents they are assigned to work upon. (See, for instance Chapter 7/7.1.4 of EBC's Editorial Policy, P.40, July 2014) Hence, journalists are expected to abide by their professional integrity so as to make the profession prestigious and get the relevant esteem from the society.

Media routine practices, though they may sometimes be enabling factors in the working of the media organization, and as most of the time dictated by the policy of the

management, they do also have unenviable consequences in terms of denying journalists the appropriate freedom and space to act on their reasonable belief and the dictates of the profession.

Inadequate staff size, the direct and indirect influences of the media management staff are also quite constraining in producing quality media contents. Moreover, implications from this portion of the IOMC could provide a basis on which to facilitate newsroom dialogue about issues as journalists are continually faced with competing loyalties (e.g., to readers/viewers, managers, advertisers, and stockholders, to name a few), with which they deal with on a regular basis.

The sum total of all these multi-faceted and dimensional influences has three distinct outcomes in relation to media contents- agenda setting, agenda building and agenda cutting- each of which definitely warranting a separate study. Hence, media organizations and other stakeholders with the media arena, including the wider public, should seriously consider what the ideals of normative press dictates. In particular, as newsroom managers have a direct influence on news content and coverage decisions, they should exercise this influence with the public interest in mind and the expectation of freedom of the press.

It's also a long-held belief that the credibility of the media is linked to its commitment to truth, to the pursuit of accuracy, fairness and objectivity and to the clear distinction between news and advertising. The attainment of these goals and the respect for ethical and professional values may not be imposed. These are the exclusive responsibility of journalists and the media. In a free society, it is public opinion that rewards or punishes. (See Inter-American Press Association (1994). *Chapultepec Declaration*. Retrieved May 12, 2016 from <http://www.declarationofchapultepec.org/>)

Moreover, this study has strong theoretical implications for academics, as it provides information to advance theory with regard to agenda-and frame-building research, social control of the newsroom studies, as well as the development of agenda cutting. The advancement of these areas should also be useful to professionals, especially

those in public relations and advertising, because the theories apply to strategic communication.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATION

This last chapter of the study deals with a brief summary of the works, conclusions of findings and some recommendatory remarks. The first part is about summary and conclusions of the research while the second part focus on forwarding some possible recommendations that, the researcher believes, may minimize, if not get rid of, the various, multi-faceted and multi-consequential effects of the undue influences and pressures exerted by internal and external factors on media contents.

5.1. Summary

As the overviews of approaches to journalism studies indicate, modern studies on influences and pressures on media content began with David Manning White's (1950) suggestion that journalists act as *gatekeepers* of media messages—that they select from among the day's events those that will become “news”—and with Warren Breed's (1955) description of how journalists become socialized to their jobs.

Since then, an increasing number of studies have focused on the ways in which media workers and their employers, as well as organizational structures and society itself, affect media content. To put it simply, a number of researchers who previously studied media effects now find themselves asking why such effect-producing content exists to begin with.

Media contents- the complete quantitative and qualitative ranges of verbal and visual information distributed by the mass media- are believed to be indicators of numerous other underlying forces: the people and organizations that produce the content and also other internal and external factors that have stakes with the working of the media in one way or the other.

This study, at the outset, aims at: understanding the kinds and the possible reasons of influences and pressures that emanate from within broadcast media organization, top executives/owners of broadcast media organization, and other external factors and impinging on media content; explaining the effects ensued from such internal and

external influences exerted on broadcasting media content, and also exploring the mechanisms, if any, which are in place to protect the media contents from such influences/pressures.

After selecting the population using purposive sampling, a random sampling technique, which is done by random number generator, was used to select samples from subjects to be respondents.

The questionnaire is designed based on Likert's scale type of measurement. This measurement allows us to cover not only the various facets of what are often complex and multidimensional attitudes or values but also dilutes the impact of the "random" error to which any individual item is inevitably subject.

The questionnaire was designed in such a way as to incorporate both close and open-ended questions. The latter were deliberately included as they help to cross-check the close-ended questions and also with a view that they will enable the respondents to express their ideas/opinions more elaborately.

The data collected through questionnaires were coded and tabulated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Analysis and interpretation of the data were also presented using SPSS tools using mainly the frequency distribution, percentage and cross tabulation as these were believed to serve the statistical purposes of the study.

This study draws heavily on the sources/levels of the IOMC that are illustrated in five levels/hierarchies by Shoemaker and Reese (1991; 1996; 2001) : the levels of individual-the backgrounds, attitudes and professional orientations of the journalists-, media routines (journalistic practices), organization, the extra-media (information sources, revenue sources, social institutions, and economic environment) and the ideological levels (system-level influences-these to be viewed from the wider political economy perspective).

Influences on the individual level originate from the journalists' personal and professional backgrounds and orientations, as well as from their specific roles and occupational characteristics within the news organization. These individual factors matter

because journalists constantly have to make perceptual decisions. This level of influence predicates on the assumption that the personal characteristics of those most directly responsible for media production will influence content.

The media routines level generates forces that have, over time, led to professional standardization of news production. These forces become manifest, for instance, in the form of routinized investigation, news gathering and presentation of content. In a procedural sense, these sources of influence often appear as concrete constraints to the journalists' work, mostly in the form of limited resources.

Organizational level influences refer to the internal apparatus that governs decision-making processes and management routines of newsrooms and media organizations. This domain or level includes sources of influence that stem from multiple levels: from within the newsroom (supervisors and higher editors) and from within the media organization (management and ownership).

Economic influences, which of course are parts of the organizational level, encompass factors that have direct consequences for the news organizations where the journalists work. This level of influence reflects the fact that most media companies are profit-oriented institutions that compete in the markets. Even when making money is not a primary goal, as is the case for EBC, the high costs of modern news production and distribution introduce economic criteria at every stage. Among the sources of economic influence the major ones are the profit expectations of media companies and the needs of advertisers and sponsors.

The systemic level of influence incorporates the relevant social, cultural and ideological contexts within which journalists work. This includes the political and legal conditions of news making, mostly introduced by the state through means of regulation, media laws and limitation of press freedom.

Though this ideological context presumes that media organizations are not really autonomous but are penetrated by other sources of power (especially political and economic), this study hasn't specifically dealt with it because these sources of influence are perceived as being less pervasive and much more remote by the journalists.

Various studies demonstrated that no definitive answer has been found regarding the relative importance of these levels of influence. There seems to be a growing awareness of the supremacy of systemic influences, as well as the increasing power of economic criteria and media structures. Organizational factors are also believed to have a substantial impact on the production of news, but the extent to which their effects compare to other sources of influences is largely unknown. A number of studies in the tradition of gatekeeper research also point to a significant but modest influence of individual predispositions on the journalists' news decisions.

On the other hand, two theoretical frameworks or perspectives, so to say, viz., the political economy theoretical perspective and the theory of social control in newsroom are applied as frameworks because these very much underpin the descriptive analysis of the influences on media contents in EBC and Sheger FM 102.1 radio station.

Political economy theory is opted because, as a socially critical approach it focuses primarily on the relation between the economic structure and dynamics of media industries and the ideological content of the media. Hence, the media institution has to be considered as part of the economic system, with close links to the political system. It is also valuable to address the influences on newsmaking and other media productions vis-à-vis conflicts of interests between the freedom of the press and economic pressures (be these from media proprietors or advertisers) as well as more traditional forms of direct political intervention. It is also very instrumental to examine the workings of media organizations in the face of the growing roles of public relations, sponsorship and other information subsidies. Its insistence on revealing political and economic dynamics beyond the public and private domains also helps us to look the larger picture instead of restricting ourselves within limited variables.

Theory of social control in newsroom stipulates that media personnel owe most of their relevant attitudes and tendencies to socialization from the immediate work environment (e.g. Breed, 1955). This thesis stresses the greater probability of organizational, rather than individual and subjective, determination. It demonstrates how media organizational policy is learned through the "socialization" of the journalist in a newsroom. New journalists are never told what the policy is, or what slant to put on a

story. Journalists learn policy as they learn the job and discover how the newsroom works and what its values are. Enforcement of policy is most of the time done indirectly and light-handedly lest there may occur violations of journalistic autonomy and ethics.

All these demonstrate that, as Schiff and Francis (2006:39) maintained, what becomes news is a product of publishers, editors, reporters, sources and advertisers, each of whose influence is not idiosyncratic but reflects collective constraints -- profit motives, corporate expectations, professional norms, newsroom policies, political affiliations, career-interests and issues management. News items are the final product, resulting from decisions about assigning, reporting, killing, running, placing and trimming a story within the commercially available news hole.

Hence, based on these levels of influence on the media contents analysis and the theoretical perspectives, this study comes to understand that the specifically identified sources of influences are well in play, at various degrees, in both EBC and Sheger radio.

5.2. Conclusion

The findings make it vivid that, taking the condensed responses of the journalists a whole, the most noticeable sources of influences and pressures in their respective media stations emanates from: first the government/politicians; second, media owners/executives, and third, the editors. Next to these come advertisers'/sponsors' and PRs influences and pressures.

This study has found the improper influences of government/politicians on the media contents of Sheger radio-as a privately-owned broadcasting station- a little bit striking. From this, however, one is warranted to conclude that no media organization in Ethiopia is immune from this particular source of influence and pressure; there may be a tendency, especially in Sheger radio, to take such undue influences and pressures for granted, and/or this interference in the media content may be a testimony for the usual accusation on the Ethiopian government for its unimpressive record in terms of respecting the ideals and practices of freedom of the press.

The respondents used for this study also indicated that other factors are also gravely affecting the media contents of their stations. Thus, factors like media work procedures, unprofessional media personnel, unstable work conditions in media stations, harassment in newsrooms, lack of transparency and team spirit, the outside public, and so on, are all cited as negatively impacting media contents.

The journalists, particularly the majority of those drawn from EBC, as this researcher found out from their responses given to the open-ended questions, complained and also make abundantly clear the numbers of other additional factors impinging on their station's media contents. Thus, unwritten rules; "hobnobism" between EBC's executives and some media personnel; forced self-censorship; financial benefits and promises to journalists by external bodies who pressured the media to cover or avoid covering certain stories or issues to which they seem to have a stake; providing merit and dedication a lesser place in EBC; lack of proper and regular capacity building trainings, are all mentioned as negatively affecting media contents at various degrees.

The journalists also quite clearly enumerate the effects of the various influences and pressures at the individual level. Thus, avoiding the covering of certain topics, stories or issues; lacking self-confidence and motivation for their work; distorting facts; working on unbalanced contents, and so on.

Regarding, the consequences of the influences and pressures on their media organizations, the respondents mentioned lack of reliability or trustworthiness in the eyes of the public (the audience); broadcasting of distorted information to the public; allotting more time for unnecessary entertainment programs and advertisements as the major setbacks that the media organizations, particularly the EBC, have been forced to live with.

On the other hand, this study finds out that it is difficult to assert authoritatively that there are any viably effective media level in-house protective mechanisms that shield the media contents from the internal and external influences and pressures. EBC, in fact, has a documented editorial policy enacted in 2013. It also has some eight manuals that address issues regarding news content, infotainment program contents, and so on. However, not only that most of the journalists of EBC do not believe that these are not

enough to provide protection to media contents but also, even to the worst, many journalists are not even sure to the presence of these manuals. It is also noticeable that there is no code of conduct (at least in a codified form) in EBC.

This deficit of protection or safety-valve is also witnessed in Sheger radio. The media organization has neither any kind of written editorial policy nor code of conduct. What seems to govern media content is simply what we call media routine practice and the whims of editors and top management.

Overall, the findings from this study should also be valuable to those working in public relations, advertising, and the government because they shed light on how, how often, and under what conditions these professionals' communications strategies are most effective. As a result, this research may help professionals in these areas alter these strategies accordingly to ensure that they are using their resources most efficiently. The findings from this project also provide valuable information for policymakers who deal with such issues as ownership of media organization, along with other interests emanating from having stakes in other commercial entities, political involvement, and advertising.

Finally, this study is believed to have strong theoretical implications for academics, as it provides information to advance theory with regard to agenda- and frame-building research, social control of the newsroom studies, as well as the development of agenda cutting. The advancement of these areas should also be useful to professionals, especially those in public relations and advertising, because the theories apply to strategic communication.

5.3. Recommendation

From a professional perspective, this finding could serve as the starting point for creating innovative newsroom policy and guidelines of how to deal with such situations of influences and pressures whenever they arise. At the very least, implications of the influences on media contents could provide a basis on which to facilitate newsroom as well as media organizational level dialogues about these issues.

The finding should be of use to those making management and content decisions in terms of ethical treatment of media contents, editorial and journalistic independences media organizations. Since, as the results show, newsroom managers and executives have a direct influence on media contents and coverage decisions, they should exercise this influence with both the public interest and journalistic ethics in mind.

This study illuminates the need to recruit journalists and media management personnel based on journalistic training, previous journalistic experience, and their track record with regard to running a newsroom and, perhaps, abiding by journalistic ethical standards. In turn, the managers might be less likely to bow down to unfavorable pressures coming from forces at the extra-media and organizational levels.

This student researcher also believes that media organizations should have their own code of ethics and other in-house mechanisms to protect their media contents. Government's commitment in upholding the principles and practices of freedom of the press will also be quite instrumental in shielding media contents from undue influences and pressures.

The role of the ombudsman (at least at media organizational level) or public editor might also be considered. Instead of sources of attempted influences going straight to newsroom management or journalists, these media "mediators" may be experiencing the brunt of these pressures. The role of the ombudsman is also important to investigate, as they can also use their position to inform the public about the means by which their respective newsrooms deal with attempted pressures from forces such as advertisers, owners, and government officials. Doing so could help media organizations not only to shield their media contents from undue influences and pressures but also rebuild and maintain trust with the public and possibly attract more listeners and viewers.

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Laws/Proclamations

Broadcasting Service Proclamation' No. 533/2007"

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia Proclamation No. 1/1995

Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation Establishment Proclamation No. 858/2014

Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation No. 590/2008

Freedom of the Press Proclamation No. 34/1992 Proclamation No.1 of 1987, Negarit
Gazetta, vol.47, No.1, Addis Ababa, 12

September 1987 (The Constitution of the People's Republic of Ethiopia)

The 1955 Revised Constitution of Ethiopia

Appendix-1

Questionnaire

Addis Ababa University Graduate School of Journalism and Communication

Dear Respondents,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate the potential and/or actual influences and pressures on the media content, especially with regard to new coverage and entertainment programs of EBC (Television) and SHEGER FM 102.1, and thereby, with your help, recommend remedies so as to abate the negative consequences of the potential and/or actual influences and pressures on the media content.

Your genuine and accurate answers have great contribution to the outcomes of the research. Therefore, you are kindly requested to give genuine responses to the questions below. The researcher would like to remind you that the answers you give to these questions are going to be used for research purposes only. You can ask at any time any question or further explanation, if any, by using the e-mail address or mobile phone indicated at the end of this questionnaire. Thank you in advance.

Part 1

Instruction: Answer the following questions by putting an 'X' sign in the boxes given below.

- | | | |
|--------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Age | 18-24 years | ☐ |
| | 25-34 years | ☐ |
| | 35-44 years | ☐ |
| | 45-54 years | ☐ |
| | 55-64 years | ☐ |
| | 65- above years | ☐ |

2. Gender Male ☐

Female ☐

3. In what section you are serving at your station currently?

News Section ☐

Entertainment Section ☐

In both sections ☐

Part Two

As a broadcasting journalist, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following. Answer by circling the numbers given on the right side of the questions/statements. The numbers represent:

1= Strongly Agree

5= Strongly Disagree

2= Agree

3= Neither Agree nor disagree (a neutral point of view)

4= Disagree

1	An inadequate media staff size hurts the quality of news coverage and/or entertainment programs.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Public relations and/or advertising materials fill holes in news programs caused by lack of staff.	1	2	3	4	5
3	When the size of staff is reduced at a station, it has negative effects on news and/or entertainment programs coverage.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Your broadcasting station owner/s and top-level executives have little to no influence on news and/or	1	2	3	4	5

	entertainment programs coverage and their content decisions.					
5	In general, your broadcasting station stress profits over quality of program coverage.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Bottom-line pressures are hurting the quality of media news and/or entertainment programs coverage in your broadcasting station.	1	2	3	4	5

Please choose by circling the one option that most closely corresponds to your experience as a journalist. The numbers represent:

1= Very Often

4= Almost Never

2= Fairly Often

5= Never

3= Sometimes

7	In your experience as a journalist, how often do advertisers or sponsors pressure your broadcasting station for favorable coverage?	1	2	3	4	5
8	In your experience as a journalist, how often do owners or top-level executives try to influence which stories and/or programs are or are not to be covered or emphasized?	1	2	3	4	5
9	In your experience as a journalist, how often do politicians or government officials try to pressure your broadcasting station for favorable coverage?	1	2	3	4	5
10	How often do politicians or government officials provide leaks or off-the-record interviews to your broadcasting station?	1	2	3	4	5

11	How often does your broadcasting station receive VNRs/prepackaged news produced by government agencies or other information on behalf government officials or political figures? (Note: This information can come directly from the officials, their offices or through another channel, such as communication/information offices.)	1	2	3	4	5
12	How often does your broadcasting station use public relations materials (e.g., broadcast News releases, video news releases) as the basis for a news story, including just sparking a story idea?	1	2	3	4	5
13	In your experience as a journalist, how often do public relations professionals try to influence the media station that certain stories be or not be covered or emphasized?	1	2	3	4	5
14	How often do you think that your broadcasting station's news and/or entertainment program content is compromised because of economic pressures?	1	2	3	4	5
15	In your experience as a journalist, how often are journalists pressured to avoid covering certain stories (not cover them) because they might be damaging to the economic interests of the organization?	1	2	3	4	5
16	How often are you, as a journalist, pressured to specially handle stories involving companies or organizations with some economic clout over your broadcasting station?	1	2	3	4	5

17	How often do managers/superiors within your broadcasting station (e.g., assignment editors, producers, news directors) directly suggest to journalists to cover a story that would normally not be covered? (Note: These suggestions include a superior directly instructing a journalist to take the action or providing overt instructions about what kinds of stories to cover/avoid and perhaps how to cover them.)	1	2	3	4	5
18	How often do managers/superiors within your broadcasting station directly tell journalists to avoid (not cover) certain stories, topics or issues?	1	2	3	4	5
19	How often do managers/superiors within your broadcasting station give indirect signals/suggestions to journalists to cover a story that normally would not be covered (Note: Indirect signals might include purposely showing a journalist a similar type of story from another station, mentioning the topic/angle in passing, showing great interest in or airing this type of story, or positive reinforcement)	1	2	3	4	5
20	How often do you think that broadcasting news and/or entertainment programs content is compromised because of your personal and/or professional backgrounds (e.g. religious belief, political orientation, gender perspective, personal economic benefit, favor, promise of economic benefit, etc.)?	1	2	3	4	5

21	How often do you think that broadcasting news and/or entertainment programmes content is compromised because of the patterned, routinized and repeated practices of your station?	1	2	3	4	5
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Part 3

Now I would like to know a little about you and the station where you work, the specific effect of the pressures or influences enumerated in the above resulted in the media content you are assigned to work upon, and also on the mechanisms to protect media contents from the pressures or influences. Please fill in the blank/give specific answers.

23. How many years have you worked as a journalist in the broadcasting industry?
_____years

24. How many years have you worked at your current broadcasting station?
_____years

25. In your experience as a journalist, which source of pressures or influences mostly affect your work? Please specify.

26. In your experience as a journalist, what exactly results in from the pressure or influence exerted on your work or the media content you are assigned to work on?

27. In your experience as a journalist, what is/are the effects on your broadcasting station that are caused by the influences and/or pressures exerted by one or more internal or external factors? Please specify.

28. In your experience as a journalist, is there any mechanism/policy/law that protects the media content you are working on from being influenced/pressurized by internal or external factors? If yes, please specify.
29. In your experience as a journalist, what mechanism/s will better protect media contents from external or internal pressures?
30. Do you have an additional opinion or comment to add regarding the issues raised in this questionnaire? If yes, please write herein below.

Thank you for your time and cooperation! If you have any additional comments or issues you are not clear with, please contact me at adoseifu@gmail.com or 0912 869355.

Appendix-2

Questionnaire- Amharic Version

መጠይቅ

የአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የጋዜጠኝነት እና ኮሙኒኬሽን ትምህርት ቤት

ውድ የመጠይቁ መላሽ፡-

የዚህ መጠይቅ ዋና ዓላማ በኢብኮ (ቴሌቪዥን) እና በሽገር 102.1 ኤፍ ኤም ሬዲዮ ሥራዎች በተለይም በዜና እና በመዝናኛ ፕሮግራሞቻቸው (ወይም ይዘታቸው) ላይ ከውስጥም ሆነ ከውጭ የሚደረጉባቸውን ተፅእኖዎችና ግፊቶች ጠለቅ ብሎ በመመርመር እነዚህ የሚያስከትሉትን አሉታዊ ውጤቶች ለመቀነስ የሚያስችሉ ምክረ-ሃሳቦችን ማቅረብ ነው።

የእርስዎ ልባዊ እና ትክክለኛ ምላሾች ለዚህ ጥናት መሣካት ከፍተኛ አበርክቶ ይኖራቸዋል። በመሆኑም በመጠይቁ ላይ ለቀረቡት ጥያቄዎች ምላሽዎን እንዲሰጡ በትህትና ይጠየቃሉ። የሚሰጧቸውም ምላሾች ለዚህ ጥናት ብቻ የሚውሉ መሆኑን አጥኚው ያረጋግጥልዎታል። እርስዎ ማናቸውም ዓይነት ጥያቄዎች ወይም ማብራሪያዎች ካስፈለግዎ በመጠይቁ መጨረሻ ላይ በተቀመጠው የኢ-ሜይል አድራሻ ወይም ስልክ ቁጥር መላክ ወይም መደወል ይችላሉ። ለሚያደርጉት ትብብር ሁሉ በቅድሚያ ከፍተኛ ምስጋናዬን አቅርባለሁ።

ክፍል አንድ

መመሪያ፡- ለሚከተሉት ጥያቄዎች በሣጥኑ ውስጥ የ"x" ምልክት በማድረግ ምላሽዎን ይስጡ።

1. ዕድሜ ከ18 – 24 ዓመት ☐
- ከ25 – 34 ዓመት ☐
- ከ35 – 44 ዓመት ☐
- ከ45 – 54 ዓመት ☐
- ከ55 – 64 ዓመት ☐
- ከ65 ዓመት እና ከዚህ በላይ ☐

2. ፆታ ሴት ☐
- ወንድ ☐

3. አሁን ባሉበት ጣቢያ በምን ክፍል ውስጥ እየሠሩ ነዎት?

- በዜና ክፍል ☐
- በመዝናኛ ክፍል ☐
- በሁለቱም ክፍሎች ☐

ክፍል ሁለት

ከዚህ ቀጥሎ ከተዘረዘሩት ዓረፍተ ነገሮች ጋር ምን ያህል ይስማማሉ ወይም አይስማሙም? እባክዎ ከጥያቄዎቹ/ዓረፍተ ነገሮቹ ሥራ ከተቀመጡት ቁጥሮች መርጠው በማክበብ መልሥዎን ይስጡ። ቁጥሮቹ የሚወክሉትም፡-

1. በጣም አልስማማም
2. አልስማማም
3. አስማማለሁም አልስማማም ማለት አልችልም (ከሁለቱም ያልሆነ/Neutral Position)
4. አስማማለሁ
5. በጣም አስማማለሁ

1	በሚዲያ ጣቢያ የሚሠሩ ሠራተኞች ብዛት በቂ አለመሆን በዜናዎች አሸፋፊነት እና/ወይም በመዝናኛ ፕሮግራሞች ጥራት ላይ አሉታዊ ተፅእኖ ይኖረዋል።	1	2	3	4	5
2	የድርጅቶች የህዝብ ግንኙነት መልእክቶች እና/ ወይም የሚተላለፉ ማስታወቂያዎች በሚዲያ ድርጅቱ በቂ ሠራተኞች አለመኖር ምክንያት የሚፈጠሩትን ክፍተቶች ያሟላሉ።	1	2	3	4	5
3	በሚዲያ ድርጅቱ የሚሠሩ ሠራተኞች ቁጥር መቀነሥ በዜና እና/ወይም በመዝናኛ ፕሮግራሞች ላይ አሉታዊ ውጤቶችን ያስከትላል።	1	2	3	4	5
4	እርስዎ የሚሠሩበት የብሮድካቲንግ ጣቢያ ባለቤት/ቶች እና/ ወይም ዋና ዋና ሥራ አስፈጻሚዎች በዜና እና/ ወይም በመዝናኛ ችሮታዎች አሸፋፊነት ይዘት ላይ ያላቸው ወሳኝነት እጅግ ውስን ወይም ምንም ነው፡	1	2	3	4	5
5	እርስዎ የሚሠሩበት የብሮድካቲንግ ጣቢያ ከፕሮግራም ጥራት ይልቅ የሚያተኩረው በገንዘብ ትርፍ ላይ ነው።	1	2	3	4	5
6	እርስዎ የሚሠሩበት የብሮድካቲንግ ጣቢያ ትርፋማ ለመሆን በሚያደርገው ግፊት/ተፅእኖ የጣቢያውን ዜና አሸፋፊነት እና/ወይም የመዝናኛ ፕሮግራሞች ጥራትን እየነዳው ነው።	1	2	3	4	5

እባክዎ ከዚህ ቀጥሎ ከተዘረዘሩት ውስጥ ከጋዜጠኝነት የሥራ ልምድዎ ጋር በቅርብ የተገናኛውን ይምረጡ።

ቁጥሮቹም የሚወክሉት እንደሚከተለው ነው፡-

1. ፊልሞ
2. እጅግ በጣም አንዳንዴ
3. አንዳንዴ(አልፎ አልፎ)
4. በርካታ ጊዜ
5. እጅግ ብዙ ጊዜ

7	በጋዜጠኞችን ልምድ ማስታወቂያ አስነጋገሪዎች ወይም ስፖንሰሮች አዎንታዊ ሽፋን እንዲሰጣቸው ምን ያህል ግፊት ወይም ተፅዕኖ በብሮድካስቲንግ ጣቢያው ላይ ያሳድራሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
8	በጋዜጠኞችን ልምድ የብሮድካስቲንግ ሜዲያ ጣቢያ ባለቤት/ቶች ወይም ዋና ዋና ሥራ አስፈጻሚዎች የተለዩ ዘገባዎች እና/ወይም ፕሮግራሞች ሽፋን እንዲሰጣቸው ወይም እንዳይሰጣቸው ወይም የበለጠ ጎልተው እንዲቀርቡ ምን ያህል ግፊት/ተፅዕኖ ለማድረግ ይሞክራሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
9	በጋዜጠኞችን ልምድ ፖለቲከኞች ወይም የመንግሥት ባለሥልጣናት አዎንታዊ የሆነ ሽፋን እንዲሰጣቸው በብሮድካስቲንግ ሜዲያው ጣቢያ ላይ ምን ያህል ግፊት/ተፅዕኖ ለማድረግ ይሞክራሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
10	ፖለቲከኞች ወይም የመንግሥት ባለሥልጣናት እርስዎ ለሚሠሩበት በብሮድካስቲንግ ሜዲያው ጣቢያ ድብቅ መረጃዎችን ወይም በድምፅ እና/ወይም በምስል የማይቀረፅ ቃለ-መጠይቆች ይሰጣሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
11	እርስዎ የሚሠሩበት የብሮድካስቲንግ ሜዲያ ጣቢያ በመንግሥት ድርጅቶች ወይም በመንግሥት ባለሥልጣናት ወይም በፖለቲካ ሰዎች አስቀድመው የተዘጋጁ ዜናዎች/በድምፅ እና/ወይም በምስል የተቀረፁ መግለጫዎችን ወይም መረጃዎችን ምን ያህል ያገኛል? (ማስታወሻ:- መረጃዎቹ በቀጥታ ከባለሥልጣናቱ፣ ከፅ/ቤታቸው ወይም እንደ የኮሙኒኬሽን/መረጃ ቢሮዎች በመሳሰሉት አማካኝነት ሊመጣ ይችላል)	1	2	3	4	5
12	እርስዎ የሚሠሩበት የብሮድካስቲንግ ሜዲያ ጣቢያ የህዝብ ግንኙነት መረጃዎችን/መልእክቶች (ለምሳሌ የድምፅ ወይም የምስል ዜና መግለጫዎች) ምን ያህል የዜና ዘገባ መሠረቶች ወይም ፍንጭ በማድረግ ይጠቀምባቸዋል?	1	2	3	4	5
13	በጋዜጠኞችን ልምድ የህዝብ ግንኙነት ባለሞያዎች የተወሰኑ ዘገባዎች ወይም ጉዳዮች የሚዲያ ሽፋን እንዲያገኙ ወይም እንዳያገኙ ወይም ጎላ ብለው እንዲቀርቡ በብሮድካስቲንግ ጣቢያ ላይ ምን ያህል ግፊት/ተፅዕኖ ያደርጋል?	1	2	3	4	5
14	እርስዎ የሚሠሩበት የብሮድካስቲንግ ሜዲያ ጣቢያ ዜናዎች እና/ወይም የመዝናኛ ፕሮግራሞች ይዘቶች በኢኮኖሚያዊ ግፊቶች/ተፅዕኖዎች ምክኒያት ምን ያህል ማመቻመች (Compromise) ይደረግባቸዋል?	1	2	3	4	5
15	በጋዜጠኞችን ልምድ ጋዜጠኞች አንዳንድ ጉዳዮች የሚሠሩበትን የብሮድካስቲንግ ጣቢያ ኢኮኖሚያዊ ጥቅሞችን ሊጎድ ይችላሉ በሚል ምክኒያት ሽፋን እንዳይሰጡ (ወይም እንዳይዘግቡባቸው) ምን ያህል ግፊት/ተፅዕኖ ይደረግባቸዋል?	1	2	3	4	5
16	በሚሠሩበት የብሮድካስቲንግ ጣቢያ ላይ አንዳንድ ኩባንያዎች ወይም ድርጅቶች ኢኮኖሚያዊ ተፅዕኖ ያላቸው በመሆኑ እርስዎ እንደጋዜጠኛ እነዚህን ኩባንያዎች ወይም ድርጅቶች የሚመለከቱ የተለዩ ዘገባዎችን እንዲያዘጋጁ ምን ያህል ግፊት ይደረግብዎታል?	1	2	3	4	5
17	እርስዎ በሚሠሩበት የብሮድካስቲንግ ጣቢያ ያሉ የሥራ ኃላፊዎች/አለቆች (ለምሳሌ:- አዲተሮች፣ ፕሮድዩሰሮች፣ ዳይሬክተሮች) ሽፋን ሊሰጣቸው የማይገቡ ጉዳዮች ጋዜጠኞች ሽፋን እንዲሰጡ ምን ያህል ግፊት ይደረግባቸዋል?	1	2	3	4	5

	ያህል በቀጥታ ሃሳብ/መመሪያ ይሠጣሉ? ማስታወሻ:- እነዚህ ሃሳቦች /ጥቆማዎች ጋዜጠኛውን በቀጥታ ወይም ምን ምን ዓይነት ጉዳዮች ሽፋን ሊሠጣቸው ወይም ላይሠጣቸው እንደሚገባ እንዲሁም እንዴት ሽፋን ሊሠጣቸው እንደሚገባ በግልፅ የሚሠጡ መመሪያዎችን ይጨምራሉ፡፡)					
19	እርስዎ በሚሠሩበት የብሮድካስቲንግ ጣቢያ ያሉ የሥራ ኃላፊዎች/አለቆች ሽፋን ሊሠጣቸው የማይገቡ ጉዳዮች ጋዜጠኞች ሽፋን እንዲሠጧቸው ምን ያህል በተዘዋዋሪ (ቀጠተኛ ባልሆነ መልኩ) ጥቆማዎችን/ሃሳቦችን ይሠጣሉ፡፡ (ማስታወሻ:- ተዘዋዋሪ (ቀጠተኛ ያልሆኑ) ጥቆማዎች በሌላ ጣቢያ ሽፋን የተሠጠበትን ተመሳሳይ ጉዳይ ለጋዜጠኛው ማሳየትን፣ ርዕስን/የአዘጋጉበ ቅርፅን (angle)፣ ጉዳዩ ሽፋን እንዲሠጠው ከፍተኛ ፍላጎት ማሳየትን ወይም ለጋዜጠኛው የማበረታቻ ቃላትን መግለፅን ሊጨምሩ ይችላሉ፡፡)	1	2	3	4	5
20	በእርስዎ ግላዊ እና/ወይም ሙያዊ ማንነት/ ዳራ (personal and/or professional backgrounds) (ለምሳሌ፡- ሃይማኖታዊ አስተሳሰብ/አምነት፣ ፖለቲካዊ አቋም፣ የታ፣ግላዊ ኢኮኖሚያዊ ጥቅም በማግኘት ፣በውለታ፣ቃል በተገባ ጥቅም፣ ወዘተ...) ምክንያት የብሮድካስቲንግ ጣቢያው ዜና ወይም መዝናኛ ፕሮግራሞች ይዘት ላይ ምን ያህል ማመቻመች (Compromise) የሚያደርጉ ይመስልዎታል?	1	2	3	4	5
21	እርስዎ የሚሠሩበት የብሮድካስቲንግ ጣቢያ እና/ወይም የመዝናኛ ፕሮግራሞች ይዘት ምን ያህል በጣቢያው በታወቁ፣ በተለመዱና በተደጋገሙ ልምዶች (patterned, routinized and repeated practices) የሚመራ ወይም ተፅዕኖ የሚደረጉባቸው ይመስልዎታል?	1	2	3	4	5

ክፍል ሦስት

በዚህ የመጠይቁ የመጨረሻ ክፍል በተዘረዘሩት ጥያቄዎች አማካኝነት የዚህ ጥናት አድራጊ እርስዎ ስለሚሠሩበት የብሮድካስቲንግ ጣቢያ፣ እርስዎ እንደጋዜጠኝነት በሚሠሯቸው የፕሮግራም ይዘቶች (media content) ላይ ከላይ በዚህ መጠይቅ የተቀመጡት የተፅዕኖ/ግፊት ምንጮች/ አካላት ተፅዕኖዎች/ግፊቶች ምክንያት የተከሰቱ አሉታዊ ውጤቶችን ለይቶ ለማወቅ እንዲሁም እነዚህን ተፅዕኖዎች/ግፊቶች ለመከላከል ወይም ለማስወገድ በጣቢያው የተቀየሙ ዘዴዎች ካሉ እነሱን ለማወቅ ከሌሉም እርስዎ እንደጋዜጠኝነት ምን ዓይነት የመከላከያ ወይም ግፊቶችን/ተፅዕኖዎችን የማስወገጃ ዘዴዎች መኖር አለባቸው ብለው እንደሚያስቡ ለመረዳት እባክዎ የሚከተሉትን ጥያቄዎች ይመልከቱ፡፡

22. እርስዎ በብሮድካስቲንግ እንዲሰሩት ውስጥ በጋዜጠኝነት ለምን ያህል ጊዜ ሠርተዋል?

_____ ዓመት

23 አሁን ባሉበት የብሮድካስቲንግ ጣቢያ ውስጥ ለምን ያህል ጊዜ ሠሩ?

_____ ዓመት

24. በጋዜጠኝነት ልምድዎ በእርስዎ ሥራ ላይ ከፍተኛውን አሉታዊ ግፊት/ተፅዕኖ ያደርሰው የተፅዕኖ ምንጭ/መነሻ የቱ ነው? እባክዎ በተለይ ይግለፁ፡፡

25. በጋዜጠኝነት ልምድዎ በእርስዎ ሥራ ላይ የተደረገ ግፊት/ተፅዕኖ ውጤት በትክክል ምንድን ነው?

26. በጋዜጠኝነት ልምድዎ በሚሠሩበት የብሮድካስቲንግ ጣቢያ ላይ ከውስጥ ወይም ከውጭ ኃይል በተደረገ ግፊት/ተፅዕኖ ምክንያት የደረሰው አሉታዊ ውጤት ምንድን ነው? እባክዎ በተለይ ይገለፁ፡፡

27. በጋዜጠኝነት ልምድዎ እርስዎ በሚሠሯቸው ፕሮግራሞች ይዘቶች ላይ ከውስጥና ወይም ከውጭ የሚመጡትን ግፊቶች/ተፅዕኖዎች ለመከላከል የሚያስችል ዘዴ/ፖሊሲ/ደንብ እርስዎ በሚሰሩበት የብሮድካስቲንግ ጣቢያ አለን? አዎ ካሉ እባክዎ ለይተው ያስቀምጡ፡፡

28. በጋዜጠኝነት ልምድዎ የብሮድካስቲንግ ጣቢያ ፕሮግራም ይዘቶች ከውስጥ ወይም ከውጭ ከሚደረጉ ግፊቶች/ተፅዕኖዎች በተሻለ ለመጠበቅ ምን ዓይነት ዘዴዎች/ስልቶች መኖር ይገባቸዋል ይላሉ?

29. ከዚህ መጠቅይ ጋር ከተያያዙ ጉዳዮችን በተመለከተ ተጨማሪ ሃሳብ ወይም አስተያየት አልዎትን? መልስዎ አዎ ከሆነ እባክዎ ከዚህ በታች ይዘርዝሯቸው፡፡

ይህን መጠቅይ ሞልተው በመመለስዎ ላደረጉልኝ ቀና ትብብር እጅጉን አመሠግናለሁ፡፡ ተጨማሪ ሀሳብ ካለዎት ወይም መጠይቁ ላይ በግልፅ ባለመቀመጣቸው ምክኒያት ማብራሪያ ካስፈለግዎ እባክዎት በሚከተሉት የኤ-ሜይል አድራሻ ወይም የተንቀሳቃሽ ስልክ ቁጥር ያግኝኝ፡-

E-mail- adosifu@gmail.com

Mob. No 0912 86 93 55

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Adonay Seifu _____

School of Journalism and Communication

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Approved by _____
Advisor