

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
AND COMMUNICATION**

**CONTENT ANALYSIS ON *REPORTER'S*
COVERAGE OF CORRUPTION**

**BY
SILESHI YILMA**

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Content analysis on Reporter's Coverage of Corruption

By

Sileshi Yilma Reta

Approved by the Examining Board

Chairman, Department Graduate Committee

Signature

Dr. Mohammed Hassen

Advisor

Mohammed Hassen

Signature

Gebre Medhin Simir (P.D)

Examiner

[Signature]

Signature



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Signature

Internal Advisor

Signature

External Examiner

Signatu

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Abstract

While stressing the importance of the media's struggle against corruption, one should ask whether or not the Ethiopian media houses make an effort to uncover corruption cases in timely manner so that the public can make an informed decision. This thesis has, therefore, attempted to assess the content corruption coverage by the Amharic bi-weekly, *Reporter* for the period of two years. Content analysis was employed as the major method. In-depth-interview was also made with two of the newspaper's staff. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect the data. As a result, systematic random sampling of 216 articles were taken from all the 159 editions of the newspaper. The analysis was done based on the type of story, theme, source, placement, author and the case of individual vs. institutions. The data found from the interview as well as underlying theoretical frameworks were used to back up the analysis. Results show that embezzlement was the leading form of corruption theme. *Reporter* used anti-corruption watchdogs as its major sources of story. From the research it is possible to conclude that *Reporter* gave more prominence to corruption issues on institutional level rather than on individual bases. The study further concluded that the biggest strength of *Reporter* emanates from the news section as majority of the news stories were authored by its own staff reporters. The newspaper's coverage of corruption was dominated by the news genre. In addition, significant number of the corruption stories were placed on the middle pages of the newspaper. From the overall finding of this research, it is possible to conclude that *Reporter* seems somewhat responsible in fulfilling its duty as the Fourth Estate by consistently reporting events of corruption in the country.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Corruption is a world-wide phenomenon and no part of the globe is immune from its devastating perils. It is a pattern of behavior that can be found virtually in every sphere of life (Stapenhurst & Kpundeh: 1999). However, in Africa corruption seems to spread by leaps and bounds.

Rose-Ackerman (1999) indicates that corruption may have its roots in culture and history, but it is, nevertheless, an economic and political setback. In addition, various studies conclude that corruption is principally a symptom of institutional failure. It may involve cash or economic benefits, power or influence, and occurs in both government as well as the private sectors.

Corruption has extensive effects wherever it occurs. It hinders economic development and good governance. Deep-rooted corruption has the capacity to holdback state reform. Furthermore, a rampant corruption undermines the legitimacy of governments and erodes just and predictable legal systems.

Nowadays, there is an increasing consensus on the media's potential to expose corruption and raise public awareness. The role of a free and independent media is critical in fighting corruption and promoting good governance. The media have to play a watchdog role and thus keep the government under constant surveillance (Dennis & Merrill 1996). According to Schultz (1998), the Fourth Estate asserts that the role of the media is to act as information conduit. The government can get help from the media in the governance of the society by acting as a platform for ideas and opinions. Moreover, the media can accomplish such kinds of tasks by reporting, analyzing, and criticizing the actions of the powerful players on the behalf of the public which lacks direct access to information.

A vigilant press ensures that individuals and institutions that are supposed to serve the public remain transparent and are held accountable. The press culture, evident in many democracies today, contains a sense that <it is the duty of the press to afflict the comfortable -those holding the public office- in order to comfort the afflicted -the public as a whole> (Stapenhurst 2000:18). This could be realized especially when news reports exposing wrongdoing leads to forced resignation of public office holders. In turn, for such a role to be effective, investigative journalism is fundamental as it can shape public opinion against power abusers.

The Watergate investigation of the *Washington Post* in 1972 is widely considered as the classical example of watchdog journalism's power in democracy. The event had led to the eventual resignation of then US President Richard Nixon. Furthermore, the scandal showed <the public and, more profoundly, reporters and editors how perseverance can reveal truth in the face of a formidable opponent who seeks to hide it> (Gaines 1994:3).

While stressing the importance of the media's struggle against corruption, one should ask whether or not the Ethiopian media houses make an effort to uncover corruption cases in timely manner so that the public can make an informed decision. This study, thus, looked in to the content of corruption coverage by the Amharic bi-weekly newspaper, *Reporter*, for the period of *Meskerem* (the beginning of new year in Ethiopian Calendar) 2000 to *Pagume* (the last month of the Ethiopian Calendar) 2001.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia is one of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa that are hugely affected by corruption. According to Transparency International's *2009 Corruption Perception Index*, Ethiopia is located on the 120th rank, out of the total 180 positions. As in many nations, corruption in Ethiopia emanates from the country's policies, bureaucratic traditions, political developments and social history (Korajian 2003). Some of the major causes of corruption in the country include poor governance, lenient penalty system, extreme poverty and inequity, lack of accountability as well as transparency. In addition, low level of institutional control, centrality of authority and resources, low level of

democratic culture and tradition are considered to be the other contributors of corruption in Ethiopia (Tesfaye 2007).

The media, in Ethiopia as in anywhere else, have the responsibility to inform the public and set the agenda about issues concerning the general population. In Ethiopia, little has been known about whether the media have adequately covered corruption issues as there has not been detailed information concerning thorough research on the subject-matter. Nevertheless, researches conducted in Africa in general suggest that the mass media in many instances have resorted to sensationalism than objectivity. Most of the cases alleged are suspicions and fabrications which the media do not even care to investigate (Africa Leadership Forum 1994).

A survey carried out by the Addis Ababa University's Institute of Educational Research indicate that both the official and private print and electronic media in Ethiopia routinely report several incidents of corrupt practices. Allegations of corruption covered by the media comprise, for instance, <kick backs from public works contracts, embezzlement, unlawful preferential treatment of groups and individuals in return for gratification> (IER 2001:14). The institutions which were identified by the survey as being infested by corrupt practices include provision of telephone and electric services, allocation of land and government housing, privatization and investment areas, licensing and issuance of permits, customs and tax collection system, the legal/court system and issues related to obtaining loans from banks.

Hence, the assumption behind this research thesis is that there is a need for more studies on the trend of corruption coverage by the Ethiopian media. It is usually believed that the circulation of newspapers in the country is very low. In addition, the newspapers only reach to a very few numbers of literate readers. However, the press in general is enormously powerful in setting national agenda and raising the public's consciousness on issues such as corruption.

The focus of this research paper, *Reporter*, has been decisive in building its brand by frequently exposing corrupt practices of various institutions in Ethiopia. Some of the noticeable achievements of the newspaper for over the past 14 years include organizations such as the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation, National Bank of Ethiopia, Ethiopian Airlines and Ethiopian Electric Power Corporations. This research, thus, attempts to assess the content of corruption coverage by one of the leading private newspapers in the country, *Reporter*, for the period of two years- 2000 to 2001 Ethiopian Calendar.

1.3 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the predominant forms of corruption themes that are covered by the newspaper?
2. What types of sources does the newspaper use while covering corruption issues? How does this affect the content of the stories?
3. Who authors (writes) the corruption stories?
4. What types of corruption stories are featured in the newspaper?
5. Does the newspaper target on corruption stories of individuals or institutions ? Is the major focus on government offices or on the private sector?
6. How are the corruption stories placed on the newspaper?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess the content of corruption coverage by *Reporter* newspaper. In particular the research focused on the following points:

- ❖ To find out the dominant corruption themes covered by *Reporter*
- ❖ To assess the types of sources used in the corruption coverage
- ❖ To examine who writes the corruption stories featured in the newspaper
- ❖ To explain the types of stories featured in the newspaper
- ❖ To uncover whether the focus of the corruption stories is on institutions or individuals

- ❖ To analyze the way corruption stories are placed on the newspaper

1.5 Significance of the Study

It is a tedious task to find ample research materials on the coverage of corruption by the Ethiopian media. Therefore, this study will have a paramount importance and can be used as a stepping stone for further research on the topic in the future. It may also be used as a means to measure whether or not one of the major private media establishments in the country, i.e. *Reporter*, is discharging its responsibility of informing the public and acting as the Fourth Estate.

The study can, thus, be significant and illustrative base in providing preliminary information for stakeholders such as policy makers, media outlets, anti-corruption institutions and those who have vested interest in studies related to the role of the press in Ethiopia.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

This research primarily focuses on assessing the content of corruption coverage by *Reporter* newspaper. To achieve this goal, a content analysis method was used. By its nature, this method has various shortcomings. Content analysis cannot give us information as to <what dimensions (categories) of content to analyze, or how to interpret the wider social significance or meaning> of the quantitative aspect derived from the content analysis (Hansen et al 1998:123). These types of aspects are inferred from the theoretical framework selected for the study.

The method also does not tell how the coverage influences the audience. Due to the limitation of time and resource, the study has not addressed additional newspapers from the private as well as from the government part. As a result, the findings of the thesis might not be generalized.

The research findings might have been different had there been extra samples and extension of the study period. In addition, it was a back-breaking task to find local research materials on the media's coverage of corruption. Despite its limitations, however, the findings of this study will have a huge importance for media researchers and anti-corruption organizations.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

This part deals with reviewing of various issues that are related to the basics of corruption. In addition, the underlying theoretical frameworks of this study are discussed.

2.1 What is Corruption?

Corruption, like obscenity, is more readily condemned than defined or explained (Williams 1991). Like beauty, corruption could only exist in the <eyes of the beholder.> Attempts to define or classify it for different reasons have been based on various perspectives and criteria (Langseth 2002). Definitions of corruption, therefore, vary from country to country in accordance with cultural, legal or other factors and the nature of the problem as it is manifested in each country.

No single definition encapsulates corruption. Stapenhurst and Kpundeh (1999) define corruption as <the abuse of power, most often for personal gain or for the benefit of a group one owes allegiance.> Other types of malfeasances such as bribery, nepotism, extortion, fraud and embezzlement are also included under this general definition.

Girling (2007) suggests that corruption, narrowly defined, denotes illegal behavior. The broad definition of the term refers to what may be legal but is considered as <illegitimate> by large sections of the public. In normative sense, corruption is the <abuse> of positions of public <trust> for private gain. In the Aristotelian terms, on the other hand, it is an act of derogation from the common good.

For Rose-Ackerman (1999:1), corruption is < the misuse of public power for private gain. Agency-principal relationships in the public sector give rise to corrupt opportunities.> This explanation, however, simply asserts that a clear distinction exists between one's public and private roles. The reality on the ground shows that in many societies no such clear distinction prevails. In the private sector, gift giving is a highly valued culture and is pervasive as well as natural to offer jobs and/or contracts to one's friends and relatives.

No one sees any reason not to conduct such practices in the public realm. This explains that one person's bribe is considered as another person's gift. Scholars such as Ronning argue that perceptions of what constitutes corrupt behavior vary from society to society:

It [corruption] ranges from what, in some places, is only regarded as traditional gift giving to complicated schemes of transactions between public officials and businessmen.(...) Clearly, corruption, and what it is not, is deemed to be always fluctuating(2009:158-159).

There is also no universal consensus concerning what specific sorts of activities should be included or excluded as corruption. As a result, it is a difficult task to develop criminal charges against sensitive concepts of impropriety:

For example, the proposition that corruption is an abuse of public power for private gain that hampers the public interest raises issues about whether definitions of corruption should be limited to abuses of < public > interests, and if not, what sorts of private elements should also be included (Langseth 2002:2).

Corruption is a complex and vague concept. It manifests itself in a variety of forms and operates at different stages. It may be trivial and incidental or serious and systematic. If some forms of corruption are simple, direct, bilateral transactions, others may incorporate networks of complex, indirect and intangible deferred understandings. In a similar manner, it may be petty and trivial or gigantic and profoundly significant (Williams 1991).

Although the economic aspect is the dominant feature of corruption, it is not necessarily the only characteristics. Academic corruption, judicial corruption and political corruption are also considered as the non-economic forms of corruption. The class of corrupt actions comprises of an extremely wide array of moral as well as legal offences. Hence, there is a further source of confusion, often leading to tension, between < what is officially legal and what is still considered socially to be illegitimate > (Girling 1997:10-11).

To sum up, corruption embraces a wide range of meanings. Researchers explain that various definitions appeal to different scholars. Therefore, it would be unrealistic to come across unanimity of approach towards corruption. The act of corruption is not the result of discrete phenomenon. It is not also separate and isolated from the influence of political and administrative behaviors. Thus, corruption can only be understood in the context it occurs.

2.2 Major Forms of Corruption

2.2.1 Bribery

Heidenheimer and Johnson (2002:7) define bribery as < the use of reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust.> Many consider it as the essence or quintessential form of corruption. It also receives the largest share of reference among the forms of corruption.

The definition of bribes and gifts is a matter of <culture,> but < culture> is dynamic and constantly changing (Rose-Ackerman: 1999). If a behavior characterized < corrupt> by some observers is considered as acceptable gift giving or tipping within a country, it should be labeled as legal and reported. However, if these conducts are imposing hidden or indirect costs on the population, analysts can involve in the clarification as well as in the documentation process.

Bribery can be offered in the form of money or favors for influencing individuals, institutions or senior government officials. Using bribery businesspersons can compromise political favors, escape the burden of taxes and import-export licenses. Furthermore, bribery can be used to secure protected markets, monopolies as well as environmental regulations.

According to Transparency International and World Bank, bribery encompasses payoff for wide variety of illicit activities:

- (1) Getting around licenses, permits and signatures;
- (2) acquiring monopolistic power (i.e. entry barriers to competitors);
- (3) access to public goods, including illegal and/or uneconomic awards of public Procurement contracts;
- (4) access to the use of public physical assets, or their outright stripping and appropriation;
- (5) access to preferential financial assets (credits);
- (6) illegal trade in goods banned for security and health considerations, such as money laundering and illegal exercise by the official of insider information for financial sector activities;
- (7) influencing administrative or legislative actions;
- (8) influencing judicial decisions (1998:3).

United Nations Manual on Anti-corruption Policy (UNMAP) claims that the concept of bribery can be hidden under the guises of other terms like < kick backs, gratuities sweeteners, commercial arrangements, hush money, pay-offs and milking> (UNMAP 2001). Despite the variety of vocabularies, these words explain payments that are aimed at facilitating transactions between two parties more swiftly, smoothly and more favorably.

Bribery may also manifest itself as an informal taxation when public officials charge extra unofficial payments or expect gifts from clients so that easy access and gain of major state contract projects can be secured. Even, some public officials consider bribes as incentive payments. However, bribery can undermine the prospects for long-term reform. In a competitive environment, it can breed itself until the entire system is permeated with corruption. It can also raise transaction cost and uncertainty in an economy. In addition, bribery is frequently associated with other crimes, such as money laundering, accounting fraud, tax evasion and extortion. Above all, bribery tends to delegitimize government in the eyes of its citizens.

2.2.2 Nepotism

Nepotism is defined as < bestowal of patronage due to ascriptive relationship rather than merit > (Heidenheimer & Johnson 2002:7). It is another common form of corruption. It occurs when officials favor relatives or close friends in which they hold some decision-making authority. Such type of favoritism exists both in the public and private sectors (UNMAP 2001).

employee, agent or servant gains initial possession of property lawfully, but subsequently misappropriates it> (Shaw & Bologna 2000:1). From this perspective, embezzlement is different from larceny (theft). Larceny involves property theft without the consent of the owner.

Embezzlement exists both in private and public sectors. When it happens in the private arena, it affects the innocent citizens because public officials misappropriate resources that are allocated for public use. In the public realm, it <disturbs the balance of the national budget and cheats people of the goods and services to which they are entitled by virtue of their citizenship> (UNMAP 2001:6).

To sum up, in all cases of embezzlement, the public is immensely deprived of its inherent rights and benefits. It exposes corrupt nations to clear and present danger, as embezzlement is one of the fastest way to obtain wealth. Embezzlement also helps public officials to use their political office and influence to build their private business empire. Therefore, in order to combat embezzlement, governments have to instill an independent judiciary system with legal capacity to challenge and eradicate embezzlers.

2.2.4 Fraud

Fraud is another form of corruption. It is more of a generic term and is usually considered as a financial crime. According to Jones, fraud describes <any significant and deliberate misinterpretation of financial affairs for the benefit of the perpetrator, or others for whom the perpetrator is acting, possibly without their knowledge> (2004:6). It occurs when a person cheats another through deceit in order to make money.

Through the act of deception and misrepresentation, fraud usually involves deliberate manipulation or distortion of information and facts. Deception could incorporate, for instance, false advertising, identity theft, illegal trade networks, counterfeit credit cards, racketeering, forgery, smuggling or confidence tricks (UNMAP 2001).

Many people consider this natural tendency of preferential treatment as negative because the person who gets the offer is usually not qualified enough to have it. Nepotism can manifest itself in hiring, honoring, promotion or awarding contracts.

Nepotism may exist in the political arena when political parties recruit candidates for public office. Political leaders, for instance, who doubt the loyalty and support of their close aides, frequently find that a dash of nepotism makes them more secure. < Where the ideological cement is too porous to bind leaders and followers together, ties of blood and money must suffice> (Williams 1991:63).

The ties of blood and community may encourage and sometimes demand nepotism. However, the cohesion of kinship and tribe could be weakened in the process of what is sometimes misleadingly referred to as modernization. As a result, officials' sentiment for communal obligation may be combined with increasingly clear perception of self-interest.

Generally, there are no uniform laws that govern nepotism. Nevertheless, there are various ways to approach legal cases where nepotism is found to be suspicious. The different complexities of the concept, thus, make it problematic legal issue to deal with.

2.2.3 Embezzlement

Embezzlement is a kind of financial fraud that involves fraudulent misappropriation of money or property by someone (for instance, employer, employee, principal, agent or servant) who has been entrusted with the money or property by virtue of their status or employment. As a form of corruption and power abuse, embezzlement can grow in more confined environments, confidentially without being traced by public's knowledge or sanctions.

Embezzlement occurs when public officials steal money or other government property, or when disloyal employees steal from their employers. Typically, it occurs <when an

In the public sector, a public official who commits fraud manipulates the information flow for his or her personal gain. In situations of high-level fraud, government employees exasperate economic crimes by an official sanction. Even when they are not active participants of fraudulent acts, government officials who ignore the crime are considered to be passively involved in the fraud that is committed by others. Generally, what distinguishes fraud from other common error is the fact that the act of intentional deception by the perpetrator. In addition, obtaining proof of intention is usually one of the most complex features of a fraud investigation.

2.2.5 Clientelism

Like corruption, the concept of clientelism is elusive and is used to describe widely differing relationships. One problem with clientelism is that <itself a form of corruption, it encourages corruption in other ways> and in particular clientelism <lends itself to form of government by hand-out, in which the government itself becomes dependent on the sources of funds through which it is effectively obliged to buy support> (Clapham 1985:59 cited in Williams 1991:118).

Clientelism is characterized by < patron-client> relationships in which relatively powerful and rich <patrons> promise to offer relatively powerless and poor <clients> with benefits, such as jobs, protection or infrastructure, in exchange for votes, for instance (UNMAP 2001). Determining what causes the presence of clientelism and patronage and their relative diffusion is a different task, which is further complicated by the confusion that surrounds their definition.

Drawing from the possibly most authoritative and profound definition of patron-client relationship by Eisenstadt and Roninger (1984:48-49 cited in Piatoni 2001:9) which summarizes the contribution of various authors, the prominent elements of the patron-client relation appear to be:

- (1) the dynamic, personal nature of the relation,
- (2) the simultaneous exchange of unspecified bundles of resources,
- (3) the sense of obligation inherent in the relation, often verging on emotional attachment, and
- (4) the informal, semi legal character of the relation.

Clientelism is one of the major factors behind corruption in places like Africa. The regimes are principally based on patronage and patron-client network. Clientelism and the networks it generates both contribute to the spread of corruption. However, this does not mean that corruption and clientelism are synonymous. In addition, it is not possible to argue that one is a sufficient condition for the other. To sum up, clientelism promotes a modicum of instability through the creation of networks of support. Furthermore, it serves as powerful brake on political and economic transformation.

2.3 Causes of Corruption

Responding to the development challenges posed by corruption requires a profound understanding of its causes (USAID 1999). There are varieties of attractions that motivate corruption. For instance, power, status, addiction to drugs or gambling, sexual pleasure as well as economic gain are considered by many as the prominent factors that expose to malfeasance. In addition, corruption can be instigated by greed and the belief in a supposed greater good (Stapenhurst & Kpundeh 1999).

Various researches conducted on corruption confirm that the reward structure installed by a country's administration system is key determinant in the evolution of corruption. Widespread corrupt practices are observed when the individuals concerned receive inadequate salaries, have many opportunities to be corrupt, and are unlikely to be caught or not immediately prosecuted, fired and face social stigma when exposed, criminal acts as well as a culture of impunity may prevail within in a society.

Corruption is a complex phenomenon. In numerous instances, it is the outcome of <more deep-seated problems of policy distortion, institutional incentives and governance> (Transparency International & World Bank 1998:2). Corruption is mainly governments' failure to effectively manage society by means of framework of social, judicial, political and economic checks and balances. If these systems breakdown, it becomes an impediment to enforce laws and policies that ensure accountability and transparency.

From an institutional point of view, corruption arises when public officials have wide authority, little accountability and respond to informal rather than formal forms of regulation (USAID 1999). The more duties public officials control or regulate, institutions designed to govern the relationship between the citizen and the state are used instead for personal benefits and enrichment (Rose-Ackerman 1999).

2.4 Costs of Corruption

A profound understanding of the full-scale consequences of corruption is critical in order to prescribe successful remedies. Langseth (2002) suggests that it is important to understand corruption not merely as an economic problem, affecting the parties directly involved, rather in terms of the additional harm it causes.

Corruption hinders economic development and diverts investment. Rampant corruption can threaten economic stability, slowdown growth and weaken institutional capacity. Furthermore, it can contribute to an uncertain business climate. Rose-Ackerman (1999) asserts that new corrupt opportunities are considered as the growing pains of economic and political transformation. Such practices can also undermine the legitimacy and fairness of promising state reforms. This in turn creates an environment for unsound economic policies, unpredictable processes and distorted public expenditures.

Corruption can distort entire decision-making processes on investment projects and other commercial transactions (Transparency International & World Bank 1998). Recent studies conclude that high levels of corruption are interrelated with lower levels of investment and growth. Mostly, corrupt administrations tend to ignore spending on education and other social sectors. Corruption minimizes the effectiveness of sound policies and encourages business to operate in an unofficial environment in violation of tax and regulatory laws. In relation to this, corruption discourages foreign direct investment. Corrupt high-level officials support too much unproductive public investment. Most abandoned public projects are the results of in-built fraud in their planning as well as execution stages.

Corruption fosters an anti-democratic atmosphere characterized by uncertainty, unpredictability and deteriorating moral values. Since corruption rewards selfishness, it can be disempowering to the people and can create a sense of disrespect for constitutional institutions as well as authority. The society could also develop a sentiment of isolation and skepticism towards its political leaders. Langseth (2002) points out that corruption is an impediment to good governance and predictable legal systems. Irrational and shortsighted decisions are taken not based on suitability, rather in actions motivated by greed. In effect, corrupt decision-making in inappropriate projects is sold to the highest, best-connected bidder (Stapenhurst & Kpundeh 1999).

According to Africa Leadership Forum, corruption flourishes in situations of non-accountability, relative anonymity and it is exacerbated by absolute discretion:

Corruption grows like a cancer and pushes whatever limits there may be if there are no checks and controls. A corrupt regime is the one most likely to abuse human rights in order to repress the the accountability which would reveal the dishonesty of the culprits. As regimes become more corrupt, so do the stakes rise and levels of repression with them. What is more, its pernicious effects are debilitating, more oppressive, more corrosive and more of hindrance to democracy, human rights, good governance and development in Africa than elsewhere (1994:26).

Corruption is both created by and is attractive to organized crime at the domestic and international level. Senior government officials can be exposed to bribery so that they overlook the smuggling of narcotics, weapons or even human beings, to mention a few. Langseth(2002) and Rose-Ackerman (1999) claim that illegal businesses seek to operate securely by paying off the police, politicians and judges or by allowing them to share from the unlawful act. Law enforcement authorities could also be vulnerable to extraordinary demands of payment to ignore criminal law violations or limit penalties. The threat for economic prosperity arises when organized criminal groups start to

dominate otherwise legal business. Similar incidents have been observed in places such as Italy, Latin America and some parts of Eastern Europe.

Of course, there are cynics who pretend that corruption greases the development machinery and makes it work (Africa Leadership Forum 1994). They also argue that corruption can help facilitate the wheels of a slow-moving and overregulated economy (Stapenhurst & Kpundeh 1999). However, apart from the moral aspect, a distinction has to be made between the little tips (acceleration fees) that can assist some administrative processes and grand corruption that deters the development endeavor. There is almost no doubt that corruption increases the cost of goods and services, promotes unsustainable investment projects and contributes to a country's indebtedness as well as impoverishment.

The roots of corruption may emanate from culture and history. However, corruption is primarily an economic and political setback. It results in shortage and unfair distribution of public benefits and costs. Corruption is an indicator that the entire political establishment of a country is operating with little concern for wider public interest. Generally, in situations of widespread corrupt practices, political legitimacy could be undermined as government officials permit some individuals and groups to obtain disproportionate gains at the expense of others.

2.5 The State of Corruption in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the countries in Africa that are highly affected by corruption. According to the 2009 Transparency International's *Corruption Perception Index*, the country is ranked as 120th, out of the total 180 positions. Like many other nations, corruption in Ethiopia emanates from the country's policies, bureaucratic traditions, political developments and social history which negatively affects the lives of the general public (Korajian 2003).

The survey conducted by AAU's Institute of Educational Research (IER) shows that the major corruption crimes often observed in Ethiopia include <abuse of power, bribery and extortion, fraud and embezzlement, nepotism, illegal reduction of taxes and failure to discharge duties> (IER 2001:14). The common breach observed fell in the area of embezzlement of public money and property. The areas where corruption is believed to

be rampant are those where financial resources are transferred from the private to the public sector and vice versa (Tesfaye 2007).

Corruption is also widespread in telephone and electric services, granting of loans, licensing and issuance of permits as well as collection of taxes. A similar problem arises in other agencies which are identified as being infested with corrupt practices are those engaged with the allocation of land and government housing. Transparency International's report claims that with an increasing value of land in Addis Ababa, incentives for corruption are increasing as it is awarded to individuals on the basis of bribes or forged bank statements (TI 2009).

In order to reduce such catastrophe, the Ethiopian Government took the initiative in May 2001 by establishing the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC). The Commission is responsible with investigating and prosecuting allegations of corrupt practices which involve federal offices. It has revised the working procedures and practices in various government offices and enterprises. Although the FEACC has prosecuted some high-profile cases of government officials, there are still concerns that the commission is not fully independent (TI 2009)

2.6 The Role of Media in Fighting Corruption

A critical feature of any country's anti-corruption program is an effective media. A free and independent media is pivotal in raising awareness about corruption so that the public can demand policy as well as personnel changes. In emerging democracies, the media can support prosecutorial bodies by investigating and reporting incidents of corruption. Fear of exposure by the media helps keep government officials and private institutions accountable and honest to their citizens.

The media can act as a force against corruption in ways that are both tangible and intangible. Stapenhurst (2000:2-3) identifies the tangible ways in which the news media perform:

This function includes those in which some sort of visible outcome can be attributed to a particular news story or series of stories- for instance, the launching of investigation by authorities, the scrapping of a law or policy that fosters a climate ripe with opportunities for corruption, the impeachment or forced resignation of a crooked politician, the firing of an official, the launching of judicial proceedings, the issuing of public recommenda-

tion by a watchdog body, and so on.

The tangible effects, on the other hand, can be characterized as those checks on corruption which emanate from the broader social climate of enhanced political pluralism, enlivened public debate and a strong sense of accountability among politicians, public and private institutions. The strongest signal of journalism's potential for controlling corrupt practices is often observed when hard-hitting investigative reporting leads to the resignation of renowned politicians or other public servants. Examples of such type of phenomena are common in places like contemporary Latin America, where fearless reporting on corruption scandals has forced no fewer than three heads of state from office.

Stapenhurst and Kpundeh (1999) explain that the growth of both Internet and media conglomerates that are less fearful of repressive regimes has forced corruption out in to the public sphere. In several countries, vigorous media campaigns have helped keep corruption front and centre in the public eye. Nowadays it is widely accepted that the media are not passive recorders of events. Rather, they are expected to monitor the daily routines of government aiding citizens to evaluate the effectiveness of its performance.

Some media scholars claim that corruption scandals fueled by the media may lead to policy reform efforts. Media attention is decisive for scandals to surface. Others argue that the constant scandal-mongering tendency can undermine the support for public officials and creates cynic public towards the democratic institutions and values. Moreover, permanent coverage of scandals may distract public attention away from vital issues that need urgent action. Proponents of this critical reporting trend, on the contrary, regard it as an indication that checks and balances of democracy are at work.

Rose-Ackerman (1999) believes that the revelations of corruption must have credibility with the public and the public must be sufficiently concerned to express outcry and distress. This dynamics may finally tempt the government to investigate allegations and correct underlying abuses. Scandals could be outstanding opportunities to mobilize

support for institutional restructuring. In addition, responses to corruption scandals should not focus on individual scapegoats; rather it must target on the systematic conditions that created incentives for corruption in the first place is considerate.

In general, the media through consistent reports and news analysis on the anti-corruption struggle can help reinforce values of honesty and integrity in the society. The effectiveness of the media, in turn, depends on access to information, freedom of expression, independence, proper standards of journalistic practice as well as wide-ranging training of journalists. Moreover, high-quality investigative reporting does not sensationalize and base itself on rumor.

2.6.1 Watchdog Journalism: The Press as the Fourth Estate

The watchdog role of the press has become central to contemporary understanding of the Fourth Estate by journalists and editors. The role may seem like an <unleashed mastiff> to many outside the media industry. However, it is a key aspect of exemplary professional quality in journalism and is considered as unrivaled opportunity for public service by those working in media houses.

The media, especially those involved in public affairs, are said to play a watchdog role and thus keep the government as well as the private sector under constant surveillance. One of the primary purposes of a free press in a democratic system is keeping the public informed about government's daily activities. However, since the media often plunge into a resistant government that is not eager to disclose all information, inherent conflict results (Dennis & Merrill 1996).

Over its 200-years of existence, the ideal of the Fourth Estate, has assumed different guises for press barons, politicians and journalists. Widely used but seldom precisely defined, these meanings range from:

The news media as an adjunct of the political process; as an independent source of Power, as an industry which must not be regulated, for fear of comprise or co-option as the watchdog of powerful institutions and individuals on behalf of the public; as the permanent political opposition;

as the neutral agency for conflicting political opposition; as the neutral agency for conflicting political messages; as the agency for securing public consensus for political, economic and social change(Schultz 1998:49).

Thomas Carlyle first coined the term <Fourth Estate> in 1811 to refer to reporters in the British House of Commons (McQuail 2003). It has often been used to characterize the position of the press in the process of government as a source of power parallel with that of other branches, especially the judiciary and upper and lower houses of the legislative (parliament). In the nineteenth century, the British press adopted the expression and idea of the role seriously as the influence became apparent.

The Fourth Estate ideal is based on the premise that powerful states, individuals as well as institutions have to be prevented from overstepping their limit. The press can act as a conduit for information, ideas and opinions to assist in good governance of society. It can also report, analyze and criticize the actions on behalf of the public, which usually lacks access to direct information or power.

By the late 1960s and 1970s, a watchdog style of journalism revived in newsrooms around the globe. The Pentagon Papers and the Watergate Scandals were particularly important in the USA and internationally. Many of the press regard that era as something of <a golden age of investigative reporting and as a paradigm for the role of the press should play in public debates in a free society> (Stapenhurst & Larose 2006:96).

The Fourth Estate label has moved a long way starting from its inception. From a critical perspective, the self-assigned Fourth Estate model over privileges the powerful, established media as compared with ordinary citizens, especially where they are more concentrated and harnessed symbiotic solidarity with political power. It is also arguable that where the assertion is made and taken seriously, it embodies certain responsibilities, including an unwritten obligation to offer a dependable channel of communication from government to citizens and vice versa (Mc Quail 2003).

As to Schultz (1998), there should be a distinction between the press as watchdog scrutinizing the activities of the powerful, adversarial, and oppositionist press fueled by partisan ambition. The presence of an oppositionist press has been a crucial element in all political movements. When the press overlooks the conduct of the government and attacks government secrecy and alleged corruption, this fosters an adversarial relationship between the government and the press:

The government can exercise its adversarial role by withholding information the media want. Some critics say this antagonistic relationship has a <checking value,> where in the press checks on government and makes certain that it is performing properly (Dennis & Merrill 1996:19).

Kriehbaum (1972), on his part, argues that if there were no frictions between the news media and politicians, it would indicate either a breakdown in the media's long-term role as watchdog or the widespread selection of <angels> for tasks in both group.

Like other ideals, the Fourth Estate is a combination of ambition and reality. It survives partly due to its ability to accommodate a wide range of definitions, meaning and changing emphasis through time. The definition of the ideal has adopted in response to changing political, economic and social times. It holds its head in politics while its feet are grounded in commerce. This paradox remains pivotal and provides the resilience which makes it possible for the model to value disclosure and criticism when the atmosphere is right and other times to present as an ostensibly neutral transmission belt for information (Schultz 1998).

Since Watergate, many agree that the role of the watchdog press has transformed into one of attack dog. This could be attributed to the media's search for sensational stories that sell newspapers and boast television ratings. Straubhaar and Larose (2006) believe that the watchdog role is nowadays spreading from major national newspapers to smaller, local newspapers and to web logs. In addition, watchdog journalism is devolving into scandal mongering.

One of the most compelling reasons for the conducting of watchdog journalism is the increasing sophistication of the information era and the desire to uncover these highly complicated information businesses. Majority of the media outlets are swarmed by the press releases massed by spin-doctors. As a result, they lack context, background, analysis or context. Furthermore, the sky rocketing public relations industry and the increasing sophistication of media management distort information, undermine claims of journalistic freedom and autonomy.

It is important to recognize that different times make different demands and raise various expectations concerning the role of the news media. In the late twentieth century, the news media has revived remarkably, as the public has grown cynical and suspicious about the motivations and integrity of those in power. For nearly two centuries, the idea that the press plays a pivotal part in the management and maintenance of a representative democracy has framed debates about the media. The eighteenth-century claim that the press was entitled to its own independent standing in the political arena, as the Fourth Estate, has become an ideal that constitutes to affect the attitudes of those working in the late twentieth-century news media, as well as politicians (Schultz 1998). However, the role entails more:

Our [the media] mission, then, as a third force, as a permanent, if sometimes shapeless, structure of opposition, must be not only to seek an independent point of view, based on our independent research and reporting, but to submit it to our readers only- I repeat that, only- as a contribution to public debate (Gross 1996: 174).

Several media scholars agree that the nineteenth-century press has ceased to be simply an echo of political institutions. The news media, journalists and editors have involved in a process of debate with the judiciary, executive and parliament to strengthen its role and responsibility. The essential elements for the press to be recognized as the Fourth Estate include <autonomy from government and politicians; having the duty to speak the truth; and having primary obligation to the public and to readers> (McQuail 2003: 52).

There is little or no doubt that the institutional establishment of democracy provides the most friendly atmosphere for watchdog journalism to flourish. A revived Fourth Estate

must be independent, accountable and responsive to the audience. The press has to be ethical in its dealing with sources and honorable in its intentions. The survival and continuation of the ideal highly depend on the professionalism of journalism and the extent to which responsibility is passed from the news media as an institution to journalists, editors as well as producers.

2.6.2 Investigative Reporting

Investigative reporting is an exciting part of journalism that has witnessed growth and enhanced prestige during the end of the twentieth-century. Media analysts claim that investigative reporting is perhaps the most celebrated form of watchdog journalism. As a result, the prestigious Pulitzer prizes are usually awarded to prominent investigative stories across the globe.

There is no easy definition of what constitutes investigative reporting. However, there is agreement on some of its tenets:

- In-depth reporting of serious matters, which affect the public interest.
- Proactive journalistic enterprise to reveal information that someone wants hidden or something that may not be well known or appreciated.
- A long-term process of planning, information gathering and corroboration using a diverse range of sources.
- The application of more sophisticated techniques to interrogate and piece together meaning from fragments of information provided by various sources.
- Investigative reporting needs to be independent of special interests; it must aggressively serve the public trust and enrich public debate.
- Investigative reporting may have an agenda, to expose any form of villainy or wrongdoing with the object of inspiring positive change through informed public debate and outrage (Forbes 2005:6).

Gaines (1994) argues that investigative reporting knows no geographical limitations and no subject have ever been considered off-limits to an investigative reporter. The targets of exposure journalism range from simple news-oriented inquiries to undercover operations that piece together a jigsaw puzzle of events, ending up in a final expose'. Furthermore, investigative reporting might involve a wide area of malfeasance including sex scandal,

financial wrongdoing, smuggling, and enrichment in public office, corporate scandals and other types of wrongdoing.

Newspaper readers as well as radio and television audiences have grown to accept investigative reporting as a public service. The public may consider investigative reporters as its champion against the powerful and as a last resort when other efforts for justice fail. Some reporters believe that they exercise their rights as citizens via their investigative stories. Investigative reporting may also forge closer ties between reader/audience and media houses by fostering their loyalty, credibility as well as strong base for circulation/ratings. Others, however, regard investigative journalism as a myth—an extension of what good journalism should be (Forbes 2005).

Prominent investigative pieces expose not individual, but also systematic failures. The stories reveal how individual wrongs are part of a larger pattern of negligence or systematic abuse. Ronning (2009:166) argues that <exposing the personal lives of individuals should not be the main focus> of journalistic inquiries into corruption. Rather, he claims, investigative reports should focus on the wider issues of systematic abuses of power and on how corrupt acts hinder development endeavors.

There has always been contention between stories unearthed because of investigative reporter's own enterprise and those that are the products of leaks. Gaines (1994) asserts that investigative reports are those that are the original work of the reporter, rather than a report on a public agency investigation. Robert Greene, a respected American journalist, argues that investigative reporting must be distinguished by a disclosure as a <result of effort and initiative by a report.> He claims that reporting leaks of publicly important, but suppressed document, is not investigative because it does not involve substantial task by the reporter (Ulmann & Colbert 1991: vii cited in Schultz 1998: 58).

Executive director of the World Press Institute, John Ulmann amplifies this debate using two well-known investigative reporting cases in the US: The Pentagon Papers and The Watergate Scandal. In the 1960s, the *New York Times* received several thousand pages of

documents from a source within the US Defense Department. These papers, which revealed disturbing actions on the part of the US government during the Vietnam War, became known as the Pentagon Papers. The editors of the newspaper, assuring themselves concerning the authenticity of the documents and weighing considerations of national security, published the story (Stapenhurst 2000). The classic Watergate investigation by the *Washington Post*, on the other hand, began in 1972 as a follow-up to a routine story and ended in the resignation of then US President Richard Nixon due to his government's abuse of power to undermine the opposition Democrats and anti-Vietnam War movements. Many scholars suggest that the press alone did not uncover Watergate investigation. Rather, it was the result of the cooperation of political insiders and government investigators.

Forbes (2005:5) puts the John Ulmann's claim into the context of these contentious debates:

The Pentagon Papers story was not a result of investigative journalism *per se*. The primary facts of that story came from a top secret government study that was leaked to the *New York Times*: there was no testing of a thesis or unraveling of a complex string of events and factors. [He] regards the Watergate scandal as investigative journalism because it was the result of genuine spadework by reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein to corroborate information passed onto them by their informant.

Sometimes investigative reporting is the result of leaks from interested parties like government prosecutors, rival businesses or opposition political parties. Whistle blowers from inside organization as well as lobbies, pressure groups, trade unions, citizens' groups, advocacy groups and campaigners can also trigger and provide leads for investigative stories. Media critics warn that publishing accusations that emanate from sources that refuse to be identified should be considered critically. Houston et al (2002) advise journalists to take three steps to avoid such dilemma. First, journalists should try hard to find the information from on-the-record human sources and from documents. Second, they should try their best to persuade the original off-the-record source to go public. Finally, when nothing else works, they should explain why the source has requested and been granted anonymity.

A common complaint concerning investigative reporting is its nature of aggressiveness. Investigative reporters might ignore the rights of privacy or stopover the line of legality in an attempt to collect information for a story. However, investigative reporters do not have extraordinary right to have access to information than any other ordinary citizen.

Investigative journalists are sometimes used as instruments to promote a political or financial agenda through the publication of well-timed leaks. Such type of compromised investigative reporting is driven by vested interests that cripple the independence of journalists and media outlets. Gaines (1994) asserts that investigative reporting might be implemented with more specific and perhaps selfish purposes. A publication might promote a certain political party and seek to investigate and discredit its opponents.

Investigative journalism is an extremely dangerous profession. In many parts of the world, journalists face physical attacks and sometimes encounter death because of their work of exposing malfeasance. Repeated incidents of violence towards journalist may lead them to self-censorship, with reporters and editors refraining from reporting on corruption for fear of retaliation. Uniquely, in many African countries, investigative reporters are confronted by strict defamation laws, which serve to control both proper exposure of the abuse of power as well as protect elite perpetrators (Ronning 2009).

Much of what is presented as investigative story in places such as Africa is based on poorly sourced material. It is often one-sided source of information that has not been properly counter-checked. Excellent and profound research is frequently lacking. Often, sensationalistic and accusatory language in stories about corruption ruin the credibility of the cases reported.

Various media scholars argue that while the ideal of watchdog journalism is strongly assumed as one of the most crucial elements of journalism, it is among the least fulfilled. This could be attributed to audience dissatisfaction, the cost of investigations, political and legal pressures, commercial aspects and the identity of interest between powerful

media establishments and the other agencies of power that may become the focus of investigative reporting (Schultz 1998).

The promotion of appropriate conditions for investigative reporting requires action at a wide range of levels. Journalists need to have excellent skills of analysis, communication and research. Furthermore, journalists have to acquire the capacity to make sound and balanced political as well as social judgments. Failure to do so would jeopardize the reliability of their work (Stapenhurst 2000).

While it is true that investigative journalism is pivotal in the ongoing process of democratization in places like Africa, it is also true that investigative reporting can only prevail in a society that respects democratic norms. In situations that entertain repressive regimes and are blatantly dictatorial, the essence of investigative journalism cannot thrive.

Transparency International and World Bank (1998:88) indicate three main conditions that create an ideal environment for investigative journalism to flourish:

First, there should be an independent, pluralistic media which is both interested in and capable of undertaking investigative journalism. Second, journalists must be able to identify problem and investigate them: this implies, most importantly, that they can have access to relevant information from a variety of sources. Third, the media must be free to publish or broadcast the stories their journalists have uncovered in the public interest, without fear of censorship, recrimination or penal sanction.

Careful consideration needs to be given to legal implications of gathering or publishing stories of alleged corruption or other criminal offences. In relation to this, a suitable legal framework is vital to facilitate successful investigative reporting. A concerned regulatory organization that conforms to international standards regarding freedom of expression is fundamental to create the environment for investigative journalism. Houston et al (2002) advise that journalists need to ensure that the compelling story they produce will avoid breaches of ethics, fairness, factual accuracy and contextual accuracy.

In general, journalists are seen as active participants in the struggle against corruption. It is important to consider investigative reporting within the framework of the movement to democratize continents such as Africa. To this end, both print and electronic media need to be independent. There should also be media diversity and the government must furnish an enabling setting in which the independent media can thrive. Furthermore, journalists need continuous trainings regarding investigative techniques, professional standards as well as newsroom organization.

2.7 The Social Responsibility Theory of the Press

At the beginning of the twentieth century, sensationalism, commercialism, political imbalance and monopoly tendencies were the dominant features of the American press. In response to the widespread criticism on newspapers, a private commission inquiry was established in 1942. The founder was the publisher Henry Luce and it was conducted under the leadership of Robert Hutchins, Chancellor of Chicago University (Blanchard 1977 cited in McQuail 2000:148).

The private initiative, the American Commission on Freedom of the Press, was aimed at inquiring the failings of the press and suggesting possible remedies. As McQuail (2003) explains, the move was the first attempt to establish a basis of considered criticism and prescription concerning the social role of the news media. In addition, assessing the impact of the government, readers and owners on the press were the major areas the Commission focused. The key outcome of the inquiry later on referred to as the social responsibility theory.

The Commission on Freedom of the Press in its various books following the Second World War did a tremendous task toward making social responsibility <a new, integrated theory instead of a mere appendage to the traditional one>(Siebert et al 1963:75). Particularly the most crucial books were *A Free and Responsible Press* by the Commission as a whole and *Freedom of the Press: A Framework of Principle* by William E. Hocking, a member of the Commission.

As twentieth century began, newspaper publishers were more concerned about their duties that accompanied the privileged status of the press under the US Constitution. Other members of the industry, however, spoke not only their right to exercise their freedom, but also the responsibilities attached to its exercise (Siebert et al 1963). The essential task of the Commission was, therefore, to ensure the press would <earn its right freedom by delivering on the unwritten contract made with the people to inform fully and freely (McQuail 2003:54).

The social responsibility theory, which is an Anglo-American concept, is closely related to the libertarian press system. However, its proponents see it as going beyond the free press theory, in that <it places many moral and ethical restrictions on the press> (Merrill 1970:16). Siebert et al (1963:74) points out the major premise of the theory as: <Freedom carries concomitant obligations; and the press, which enjoys a privileged position under our government, is obliged to be responsible to society for carrying out certain essential functions of mass communication in contemporary society.>

The functions under social responsibility are the same as those under libertarian theory. Six tasks came to be ascribed to the press as traditional theory evolved:

1. servicing the political system by providing information, discussion, and debate on public affairs;
2. enlightening the public so as to make it capable of self-government;
3. safeguarding the rights of the individual by serving as a watchdog against government;
4. servicing the economic system, primarily by bringing together the buyers and sellers of goods and services through the medium of advertising;
5. providing entertainment;
6. maintaining its own financial self-sufficiency so to be free from the pressure of special interests(Siebert et al 1963:74)

Although the theory generally accepts the above six functions of the press, it is dissatisfied with how those functions are interpreted and carried out by some media owners and operators. The theory implies recognition by the media that they must perform a public service to warrant their existence (Merrill 1970). The theory puts strong faith in the conscience of every reporter. <It expects him, in following it, to do duty not only to himself but to society as well> (Peterson 1996:46).

The important features of the theory included the view that freedom from restraint is not enough. Peterson (1956 cited in McQuail 2003:54) argues that there has to be freedom to pursue positive goals. He asserts that to be real, freedom must be effective. Moreover; there must be the appropriate means of attaining those goals. The theory rests on a concept of positive liberty, <freedom for,> which calls for the existence of the essential implements, for the attainment of a desired goal (Siebert et al 1963).

The social responsibility theory considers purely negative liberty as insufficient and ineffective. Negative liberty, according to this school of thought, is an empty liberty. It is put in a context as:

It is like telling a man that he is free to walk without first making sure that he is free to walk without first making sure that he is not crippled. To be real, freedom must be effective. It is not enough to tell a man that he is free to achieve his goals; one must provide him with the appropriate means of attaining those goals (Siebert et al 1963:93-94).

The Commission of Freedom of the Press has pointed out five crucial things which contemporary society requires of its press. These points taken together can be considered as a measure of press performance. Media practitioners as well as the principles of the media profession have contributed a lot for the following requirements:

The first requirement [...] is to provide a <truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning.> [...] A second requirement of the press, the Commission, is that it serves as <a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism.> [...] A third requirement of the press, the Commission states, is that it project <a representative picture of the constituent groups in society.> [...] A fourth requirement mentioned by the Commission is that the press be responsible for <the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of a society.> [...] The final requirement mentioned by the values Commission is that the press provide <full access of the day's intelligence> (Siebert et al 1963:87-92).

According to the social responsibility theory, freedom of expression is a moral right with an aspect of duty. This claim is grounded on the duty of the individual to his thought or to his conscience. Under this theory, freedom of expression is not an absolute right. This is because one's right to free expression should be balanced with others private rights and crucial social interests. For instance, if a person uses freedom of expression to inflame

hatred, to lie, or to deliberately contaminate truth, then the person has no claim to right. This implies the fact that moral right comes with a concomitant moral duty. However, this right does carry with it the right to commit error, not deliberately or irresponsibly.

The theory holds that there are at least two reasons for tolerating honest error. Firstly, the social responsibility theory (Siebert et al 1963:98) assumes that the quest for truth and the spread of truth require considerable freedom. <Liberty is experimental, and experiment implies trial and error.> Secondly, each individual has the right to ensure that he has found truth through his own < free discovery instead of having it imposed up on him by some authority.>

The Commission on Freedom of the Press identifies the government, the public and the press as the three prominent sources that are vital for improving the performance of the press. The Commission argues that the government should recognize the fact that the press must be confined to the private ownership status. Merrill (1970) believes that the supervision of the press does not necessarily imply government control. The social responsibility theory holds that the government should not simply allow freedom (Siebert et al 1963); it must also actively promote it. When the stakes are high, the government have to take cautious measures in order to intervene in press supervision and control.

Governments across the globe can encourage the communications industry rather than becoming competitors of privately owned media outlets. For example, it can set up new ventures in the arena to support the private sector, not to eliminate it. Furthermore, the government can adopt new legal remedies to put an end against abusive press laws.

The public is the other crucial stakeholder vital to the improvement of the press. As Siebert et al (1963) put it, public awareness of the tremendous power enjoyed by the mass media crucial. The theory suggests that the concentration of media power in too few hands fails to serve the needs of the society. Non-profit organizations, educational institutions and independent agencies are also instrumental to help the press carry out its required tasks. For instance, schools of journalism and mass communication can set up

advanced research institutions for the critical publication of discourses on the fields of communications.

The press too has to assume a professional spirit. As McQuail (2003) suggests, apart from the accomplishment of the informative role, the press should contribute to the unity of society and representation of its diversity. The press have to make sure that it provides interpretation of events, include views representative of the people as whole and raise standards of journalism (Peterson 1996). Moreover, the press should engage in mutual criticism and research with high quality content, which offers no instant guarantee of financial return (Siebert et al 1963).

McQuail (2003) argues that the different theories concerning social obligations of mass media turn on two assumptions. The first assumption asserts that the media have a number of roles that are essential for society. In particular, this is fundamental in relation to democracy, social order and social change. The second assumption holds that <the media are (and should be) free to choose their own role, express their own views of others, without external pressure or subsequent penalty> (2003:119).

The social responsibility theory has been called <unrealistic.>The theory, which was developed by the Commission on Freedom of the Press, was not well received by the American press at the time, partly because it feared losing some of its privileges, already under threat (Blanchard 1977 cited in McQuail 2003). The main parts of the Commission's report seemed to have antagonized many American editors (Merrill 1970) especially the intimidation over the possible involvement of the government in the press system. Publishers were not also in consensus with all of the logical extensions of the Commission's idea (Peterson 1996).

Despite these criticisms, however, the Commission forms an important milestone in forming the ideas and principles of the social responsibility theory. The report became an essential point of reference in the growing trend towards the professionalism and self-regulation of the press. Its recommendations in large measure accommodate themselves

with the emerging worldview and thought patterns. The findings were critical of the press for its frequent failings and for being so limited in its service mostly confined to the privileged circle of elites (McQuail 2000).

The progress of a responsible press by the evolving nations depends on how well the notion of the press is understood by both the public and government (Arpan 1970). Intelligent preparation of objectives and goals, rules of operation, codes of ethics and self-discipline, are influential elements in championing the battle for a responsible press unfettered by restrictions. The social responsibility theory that emanated from the 1947 American Commission was truly applied with various resilience and outcome in countries other than the United States, particularly in Western Europe in two or three decades following World War II.

Generally, it should be recalled that in those countries that are praised neither for having a responsible press, the goal has not been attained instantly nor by a magic formula. Sometimes it took a century or two to achieve the desired stability, freedom as well as responsibility. Mostly the process involved painstaking compromises.

2.8 Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda setting is explained as a process through which public figures and crucial events help to shape the content of the media. The concept of agenda setting theory asserts that <the priorities of the press to some degree become the priorities of the public> (McCombs & Shaw 1978:98). The audiences of the media in turn accentuate the stress that is instigated by the press privately as well as publicly. This notion of the theory is a relational concept specifying a firm positive relationship between the emphases of mass communication and the salience of the topics in the audience (Graber 1990).

The view of agenda setting was perhaps first suggested by Harold Laswell, psychologist and social scientist, in his observation concerning the 1948 post-World War II US presidential election (Pavlik & McIntosh 2004). The political scientist Bernard Cohen later presented the clear articulation of the agenda-setting model.

During the 1968 US election, the communication scholars Max McCombs and Donald Shaw conducted the first empirical attempt on verification of the agenda-setting role of the media. The researchers further tested and revealed in 1970s the fact that the media's coverage of prominent issues is effective at influencing public opinion:

Among undecided voters in Chapel Hill, North Carolina there were substantial correlations between the political issues emphasized in the news media and what the voters regard as the key issues in that election. The voters' beliefs about what were the major issues facing the country reflected the composite of the press coverage, even though the three presidential contenders in 1968 placed widely divergent emphasis on the issues. This suggests that voters-at least undecided voters-pay some attention to all political news in the press regardless of whether it is about or originated with a favored candidate (Graber 1990:76-77).

The decisions as to which stories to make are central considerations of journalists' ability to understand, assess and reflect public views. As Schultz (1998) explains, it is in this agenda setting function that journalists and the news media are observed to exercise considerable influence in shaping public opinion. Not only does the public learn social reality of events across the world, it also learns how much importance to attach to an event or issue depending on the emphasis placed on it by the mass media.

The media, through the course of time, by highlighting some issues prominently and some issues less prominently and still other issues not at all, provide the public a sense of what subjects are crucial- issue's salience. Media outlets alert the public the importance of a topic in different ways:

We get a sense of the importance of an issue in media by its prominence (Is it at the top of the front page, or buried somewhere inside? Is it the first item in the evening news, or near the end?), and by the extensiveness, both of stories in a given day and of the duration of coverage overtime- Is there one story, or is there a main story and one or more related *sidebar* stories ? How long and detailed are the stories? Does art work-photos, charts, or graphs- accompany the story? Does the issue receive treatment over many days, weeks, months?(Grossberg et al 1998:347).

Communication scholars mostly consider *position* and *length* of a story as the two main criteria of prominence. For newspapers, the size of front-page headline story and lead

editorial are often counted as evidence of value placed on the salience of an item. As Griffin (2006) suggests, significance in television news format is defined by placement as one of the three news items or any other discussion that takes more than 45 seconds.

Various studies illustrate that different media tend to play a different role in the agenda setting process. Pavlik and McIntosh (2004) point out that traditional print media have historically tended to get the general agenda of a major question emerged in the 1990s regarding the role of the Internet and other online media in the agenda setting discourse. To support their case, communication scholars such as McCombs and Shaw consider the *Washington Post*'s investigation of the Watergate Scandal as a perfect example. Although many researchers agree with the pioneers of the agenda setting theory, little research to date has examined how communication through Internet and other online media affects public opinion, especially in relation to the perception of important issues.

There has not been complete consensus as to who sets the media agenda. For instance, during election period opinion leaders such as presidential candidates can routinely command the attention of media. The media tend to be guided by the issues raised by these ultimate sources of issues salience. Other times, the media set agenda for candidates. For example, extensive media coverage concerning the alleged human rights abuses by American soldiers put the Iraqi Prison Scandal on the 2004 US presidential election spotlight (Straubhaar & Larose 2006).

The media, however, may not always be successful in setting the news agenda. For example, the constant media publicity of the Clinton-Monica Scandal had no effect on the President's approval ratings, perhaps because the affair was not a highly relevant issue for the American public (Yioutas & Sergic 2003 cited in Straubhaar & Larose 2006). Other media scholars believe that the new media environment with its unprofessional and rival features may undermine the real world events there by intervening in unexpected ways to upset previous agendas (Ivengar & Kinder 1987 cited in McQuail 2000).

Grossberg et al (1998) argue that the power of the media to set the public agenda is sometimes constrained instructively. Among the limitations are individual differences, media differences, issue differences and salience differences. On the other hand, four theoretical cues affect the agenda setting process by drawing audience attention to the salience of particular news items. These include frequency of repetition, the prominence with which items are displayed, the degree of conflict present in the news item, and the framing of news item in what context and when it appears (McCombs & Gilbert 1986 cited in Laughey 2007).

Other view considers a handful of news editors as the guardians or gatekeepers of political dialogue. Griffin (2007) argues that nothing is considered as political agenda without the concurrence of eight media elites in the US- the operation chiefs of the Associated Press, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, ABC, NBC and CBS. Graber (1990) believes that the public's knowledge and opinion of the political arena is largely shaped by these prominent mass media outlets.

Current thinking on news selection focuses on the crucial role of the public relations industry in setting the media's agenda. Even prestigious media establishments across the globe get over half of their news stories from press releases and press conferences. Other public figures and interest groups also hugely attempt to set the agenda by constantly creating media frenzy in their public statements.

Communication researchers test for agenda setting impact by obtaining measures of media agenda and the public agenda and then comparing the two (Grossberg et al 1998). Most agenda setting studies have combined content analysis of news media and interviews of media audiences to assess how well media priorities and audience priorities coincide with one another. (Graber 1990).Some research findings provide evidence that the media agenda is, in fact, the cause, while the public agenda is its somewhat delayed effect (Griffin 2006). However, critics of this theory claim that correlation is not necessarily causation.

Agenda setting research continues to be productive in demonstrating and defining the association between media coverage and the public's thinking. The agenda setting theory has a priority place on the agenda of communication theory and research. According to media scholars, the theory has reaffirmed the power of the press while still allowing individuals to choose freely according to their own needs.

The classic remark about the media's limited agenda setting role- the media aren't successful in telling the public what to think, but they are stunningly thriving in telling the public what to think about- is no more subscribed by media scholars. Rather, they now headline their work with a revised and explained version that describes agenda setting as a much more powerful function: <The media may not only tell us what to think about, they also may tell how and what to think about it, and perhaps even what to do about> (Griffin 2006:403).

Generally, the whole notion of agenda setting theory has been part of the political culture. As McCombs and Gilbert (1986 cited in Laughey 2007) suggests, perhaps a positive contribution of the theory is that news media can set the agenda in relation to political participation by raising the level of political interest among the general public.

2.9 Brief Profile of *Reporter*

Reporter is one the leading privately-owned newspapers in Ethiopia which have stayed in the often volatile media landscape. It is published by Media and Communications Center in both Amharic and English languages. The Amharic version is a bi-weekly (Wednesday and Sunday) newspaper with a circulation of 16500. It could sometimes reduce the circulation below 11,000 copies depending on issues raised. According to Population Media Center (2006), on the other hand, the number of copies of the Amharic bi-weekly was 9,567 before October 2005.

The Amharic version of the newspaper was established in September 1994. Apart from the Amharic edition, *Reporter* is also available every Saturday. In addition, the website of the newspaper is reportedly the leading source of news referred by the Ethiopian Diaspora across the world.

Reporter is widely known for its <undertaking of investigative and adversarial news report> both on the government as well as the private institutions who have pivotal stake in the political, economical and social issues of the country (Yetnayet 2008:89). Interviewed journalists of the newspaper claim that their newspaper has been successful in uncovering corrupt practices of high-ranking institutions such as Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation, National Bank of Ethiopia, Ethiopian Airlines and Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, to mention but a few. Even the ardent critics of the paper agree to the newspaper's role of exposing of wrongdoing in such huge companies of the country.

The newspaper is also recognized for unraveling of exclusive news reports and commentaries there by setting the agenda for the rest of the media houses. Various observers relate the exclusive nature of the breaking news stories of *Reporter* mainly to its owner and general manager, Amare Aregawi. As the former fighter of the Tigrian People's Liberation Front, Amare has developed closer ties with a numerous government officials and major palyers in the private sector. As a result, the has been acknowledged in providing exclusive news items before any other media house on several occasions. *Reporter* is also credited for the relatively less staff turn over in its newsroom, which contributed for its strength in becoming as the famous and influential media brand in the Ethiopia's media business.

Using its critical editorial, *Kibur Minister*, as well as commentary columns, the newspaper has frequently voiced several issues. Some of the prominent ones include:

- The need for restructuring the former Ministry of Information in to a new and strong Government's spokesman Office.
- The issue of creating a lively and firm public relations industry especially across the various government institutions.
- The immediate ratification of the law related to wealth registration of government's officials.
- The need to revise the <draconian> press law.
- The issue of taking strong action against corruption.

The Amharic version of *Reporter* has continuously stayed on the media scene and is now on its 15th year of publication. Over all these years, the paper has been labeled at times as supporter of the ruling party and on other occasions as backer of the opposition camp. Nevertheless, a critical study of *Reporter's* works of the past 15 years indicates that it has seriously criticized both the government (the ruling party) and the opposition parties albeit at differing levels. In relation to this, the newspaper explained the issue of partisanship on its editorial section the 1000th special edition on Hidar 20/ 2002 as:

When we criticize the government and the ruling party, we are labeled oppositions' newspaper. When we criticize the opposition parties, we are

given the name as the paper of EPRDF. We are neither in favor of the ruling party nor the opposition parties. We belong to the public. In our endeavor to inform and educate the public, there are people who people who feel happy and those are not comfortable at the same time. There are people who try to label, defame and accuse us. There are also people who attempt to bring our cause to an end, imprison and attempt on our lives as well. Our stand, however, is unshakable. We are ready to pay any necessary sacrifices today or in the future in our professional endeavor of informing the public (Translated from Amharic *Reporter* Vol.15 No. 8/100).

Reporter has gone through various ups and downs to reach to its present day-status. According to its 1000th special edition, the newspaper has entertained over 20 different charges. Few years back its staff reporter and then editor-in-chief as well as owner of the paper were imprisoned thousands of kilometers away from Addis Ababa in Gondar. In addition, the owner the newspaper had narrowly escaped an assassination attempt on his life by people whose identity is unknown to until this day.

Despite these trying times, *Reporter* enjoys influential position across the spectrum. It owns its own media institution known as Horn Press Institute. This institution occasionally holds meetings and workshops on various aspects of the press. Mr. Amare Aregawi also holds the position of Board of Director in the corruption watchdog, Transparency Ethiopia. Furthermore, *Reporter* is still trying to fight for the freedom of the press by highlighting the popular logos, *Free Press*, *Free Speech*, *Free Spirit* and *Rescue Press Freedom from the Hangman*, on the front pages of both versions of the newspapers and their respective website.

Name of column	Issues covered in the column
News	<i>local news items collected across the nation</i>
Editorial	<i>the stand of the newspaper on various issues</i>
Letter to the editor	<i>letters from readers</i>
Politics	<i>issues of politics on national, continental and international level</i>
Delalaw	<i>different social, political as well as economical issues are discussed in a humorous way</i>
Business and economy	<i>local and international topics of business, finance and economy</i>
Koyita	<i>interview with different personalities</i>
Mahiberawi	<i>various social- related issues of the country</i>
Temuaget	<i>different outlooks on debatable topics</i>
Zinik	<i>collection of various brief entertainment items</i>
Women	<i>diverse affairs of women</i>
Art and culture	<i>topics associated with entertainment and culture</i>
Law	<i>various legal issues</i>
My perspective	<i>opinion of readers on different topics</i>
Tesfish & Gebirish	<i>presentation of humorous issues using cartoons</i>
Weekly anecdote	<i>anecdotes sent from readers' of the newspaper</i>
Brief local & international news	<i>brief local and international news collected from press releases and news agencies</i>
Diaspora	<i>subjects interrelated to the Ethiopian Diaspora across the globe</i>
Teles	<i>topics linked to HIV/AIDS</i>
Sport	<i>local and international sporting events</i>
Taxi	<i>various topics related to the transport problem of the nation</i>
Fermata	<i>collection of various brief entertainment items</i>
Min eyesreu new?	<i>introduces the achievements of individuals and institutions</i>
Kibur Minister	<i>humorous presentation of issues related to the daily lives of ministers</i>
Science & Technology	<i>news on latest scientific and technological innovations</i>
My opinion	<i>readers' opinions on diverse issues of their interest</i>
Verbatim	<i>best quote of the week</i>

Table 2.1 Summary of the columns of Reporter and the issues it covers

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

This chapter deals with the methodology and procedures of the study, under which the methods, sampling techniques and sampling size, unit of analysis, analytic categories, coders' reliability and consistency as well as data analysis techniques are discussed.

3.1 Methods of the Study

This research has made use of both quantitative content analysis and in-depth interview methods. Such kind of approach is commonly referred to as <triangulation>. Many scholars suggest that this approach may result in revealing unexpected angles of an enquiry. Holsti (1969:11) explains the advantage of such a perspective as:

[...] The content analyst should use qualitative and quantitative methods to supplement each other. It is by moving back and forth between these approaches that the investigator is most likely to gain insight in to the meaning of his data.

Generally, the triangulation approach compensates the drawbacks of one method by the strength of the other.

3.1.1 Quantitative Content Analysis

Content analysis by definition is a quantitative method. Hansen et al (1998:95) describes the purpose of such a method as identifying and counting <the occurrence of the specified characteristics or dimensions of texts, and through this, to be able to say something about the messages, images, representations of such texts and their wider social significance.> It is believed that using quantitative content analysis provides a vivid description of the different variables by quantifying the issues raised in the *Reporter* newspaper. Moreover, this type of approach is successful especially when the aim of the study is to analyze the manifest content of meaning. Therefore, it is assumed conducive enough for this research project as one of the research question is shaped to find out how wide coverage has been given to corruption stories by the newspaper.

3.1.2 Interview

The research has also employed an in-depth interview, as it is crucial research method for uncovering individuals' attitudes and values towards a topic. As a result, the researcher has conducted interviews with two journalists from *Reporter* newspaper. This semi-structured interview is used to explore the research questions and to further substantiate the results obtained by the quantitative content analysis. Apart from the main questions developed at the stage, follow up questions were also forwarded during the interview with the deputy editor-in-chief and the senior editor.

3.2 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

According to Holsti(1969), sampling decisions in content analysis will vary according to the type of documents and the purpose of the analyst. The sampling scheme may also depend on the population to be sampled and the kind of inferences to be derived from the text (Weber 1990).

Stratified sampling is often used in studies related to mass media to allow <subclasses of larger sources to be treated differently> (Holsti 1969:116). The researcher, thus, has employed stratified sampling along with systematic random sampling in order to collect the vital representative data.

It was very difficult to cover all Ethiopian newspapers for this research. Therefore, the researcher only selected the Amharic bi-weekly *Reporter* newspaper. The English version of the same newspaper was deliberately not included in the researcher for sake of simplicity and consistency. The researcher chose the Amharic version of the paper for two major reasons. Firstly, as a privately owned newspaper, *Reporter* has consistently remained in the often unstable and volatile scene of the Ethiopian press for more than 14 years. Secondly, the newspaper has developed undisputed brand by continuously exposing corrupt practices in various governmental and privately owned institutions.

Several steps were involved in developing samples and sampling techniques. The chosen newspaper appears twice a week (Wednesday and Sunday). The two years editions (starting from the first month of 2000 to the last month of 2001) were divided in to strata –Wednesday and Sunday. Then, using systematic random sampling of 216 articles were taken from all the 159 editions of the newspaper. The researcher selected the time span purposively to understand the very recent trend of the newspaper's coverage of corruption issues. In addition, the timing may also hint the content of corruption coverage by *Reporter* immediately after the Ethiopian Millennium celebration.

3.3 Unit of Analysis

According to Weber (1990), one of the most decisive and crucial decisions in content analysis concerns the definition of the basic unit of text to be classified. For different reasons the theme, a single assertion about some subject, is usually the most important unit of content analysis (Holsti 1969). Therefore, individual article that dealt with corruption related issues was the unit of analysis for this study.

3.4 Analytic Categories

The most demanding and vital task of any content analysis research is to define the analytic categories. As the categories contain the important ingredients of the investigation, a content analysis can be no better than its arrangement of categories. Hence, in this research, a meticulous attempt was made for the categorization to reflect the objectives of the study, the research questions and the underlying theoretical frameworks.

The researcher has given operational definitions for the various categories with an explicit specification. According to Holsti(1969), a good operational definition is a valid representation of the investigator's concepts and it guides coders to come up with reliable judgments. To this end, due attention was given to shape exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories. Moreover, the researcher has made an effort to produce operational definitions that are as precise and unambiguous as possible. The following are the brief descriptions of the categories:

Theme of story: This refers to the main or central message of the stories. The predominant themes of the corruption coverage were coded as - *embezzlement, fraud, clientelism, bribery, nepotism* and *others*.

Source of story: This refers to the main source used in the stories. The sources were coded as - *documents, anti-corruption watchdogs, law enforcement bodies, government officials, institutions, anonymous* and *others*.

Type of story: This refers to the genre that the story belongs to. The corruption stories were coded as - *news, feature, commentary, editorial, letter to the editor* and *others*.

Individual/institution: This refers to the people and/or the governmental and private institutions that get the leading corruption coverage. Institutions were coded as - *private sector, government sector, both* and *others*.

Author of story: This refers to the people who write the stories. Five categories were coded as - *in-house writers, news agencies, unknown, readers* and *others*.

Placement of story: This refers to the position in which the corruption the corruption stories are placed on the on the newspaper. Three categories were employed as:- *front page, middle pages* and *back pages*.

The categories under *theme of story* are defined as follows:

Embezzlement: It is a kind of financial fraud that involves fraudulent misappropriation of money or property by someone who has been entrusted with the money or property by virtue of their status or employment.

Fraud: As a form of corruption, it is mainly considered as a deliberate financial crime. Deception could involve identity theft, counterfeit credit cards, forgery, racketeering etc.

Clientelism: It is characterized by patron-client relationships in which relatively powerful and rich patrons promise to offer relatively powerless and poor clients with benefits.

Bribery: It is the essence of corruption where by an offer is given in the form of money or favors for influencing individuals, institutions or senior government officials.

Nepotism: It is a form of corruption and occurs when officials favor relatives or close friends in which they hold some decision-making authority.

Others: This category was employed if a story employed if a story had a theme other than the one mentioned above. Stories with multiple themes as well as those with ambiguous themes were included in this category.

The categories under *source of story* are defined as follows:

Documents: Articles sourced from reports, surveys, letters etc were coded under this category.

Anti-corruption watchdogs: This category refers to organizations whose main task is investigating and prosecuting corruption perpetrators.

Law enforcement bodies: This category represents mainly prosecutors, police(investigators) and lawyers.

Government officials: This category refers to those who hold public office and are involved in government administration.

Institutions: This category represents organizations that were used or mentioned directly in the stories.

Anonymous: This category was used when the identity of the source of a story was not revealed.

Others: This category was used if a source could not be classified under one of the above-mentioned categories. Articles with multiple sources were also coded in this category.

The categories under *type of story* are defined as follows:

News: News stories highlight the day's major new happenings or events. The stories attempt to give answers to the fundamental questions: who, what, where, when, why and how.

Feature: This is usually accompanied by vivid descriptions helping the reader to get picture of the story.

Commentary: This includes any article that involves criticism, discussion or explanation of ideas, opinions or facts.

Editorial: It reflects the opinion or stand of the newspaper concerning an issue.

Letter to the editor: It is written by readers on topics relevant to the publication's audience.

Others: Any article that is other than the above-mentioned categories or is not clear to categorize under the above-mentioned categories was coded here under.

The categories under *institutions* are defined as follows:

Private sectors: This category was used when the stories focused on privately owned organizations.

Government sector: This category was used when the stories focused on organizations owned by the government.

Both: This category represents the stories that focus on both the private and government sectors.

Others: Institutions that were not clearly stated as one of the above-mentioned categories were coded here under.

The categories under *author of story* are defined as follows:

In-house writers: This category refers to the staff reporters who are employed within the target newspaper.

News agencies: They include communication organizations who sell news to their client media outlets.

Readers: They represent people with different backgrounds and are assumed to be regular or occasional clients of the newspapers.

Unknown: This category was used if a story had an author other than the above – mentioned categories or if a story had no clearly stated author.

The categories under *placement of story* are defined as follows:

Front page: The category refers to the very first page of the newspaper.

Middle pages: This category was used while referring to pages 2 up to 5.

Back pages: This category refers to pages including pages 6 and above.

3.4 Coders' Reliability and Consistency

Reliability is defined as <repeated measurement of the same material [resulting in] similar decisions or conditions> (Wimmer 1983:156). The important goal in content analysis is reliability and consistency of assessment across various coders to confirm uniform in the coding as well as analysis procedures.

Two coders- the researcher and one trained- conducted the coding process. An in-depth explanation was given for the coder before coding. The contents to be analyzed were chosen based on explicit and constantly applied rules. A similar set of guideline was employed throughout the research process to which both the coders had to be abided.

All the 216 articles were analyzed for the inter-coder reliability check. The inter-coder reliability check was performed using Holsti's formula. The researcher moderated for some of the inconveniences and disagreement observed throughout the process. The problems were resolved by rigorously employing double coding mechanism. As a result, the researcher computed and come up with an overall inter-coder reliability coefficient of .97 (97.37%). Hence, this figure is more than required when compared with the standard used in most content analysis studies. <As a rule of thumb, most published content analyses typically report a minimum reliability coefficient of about 90% or above when using Holsti's formula> (Wimmer 1983:156).

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

Most content analysis researchers claim that the type of research design depend on the aims of the questions the investigator plan to answer and on the data available. <The data analysis needs to address the questions or hypothesis set out in the definition of the main axes of comparison [that] need to be examined> (Hansen et al 1998: 122).

After coding all corruption related articles using the previously mentioned categories, in-depth analysis was conducted by using the quantitative data ad interviews with *Reporters* journalist. In addition, the insights from the review literature and other supplementary non-content data were used to back up the findings. Robson (1993) and Holsti(1969) support such kind of perspective. According to these scholars, the most common approach to relate variables derived from content analysis is with other outside non-content indices. Weber (1990:19) argues that <much stronger validity is obtained by comparing content-analytic data with some external criterion.> Thus, the study has incorporated various external criterion data as non-content standard to audit the communication content of the findings.

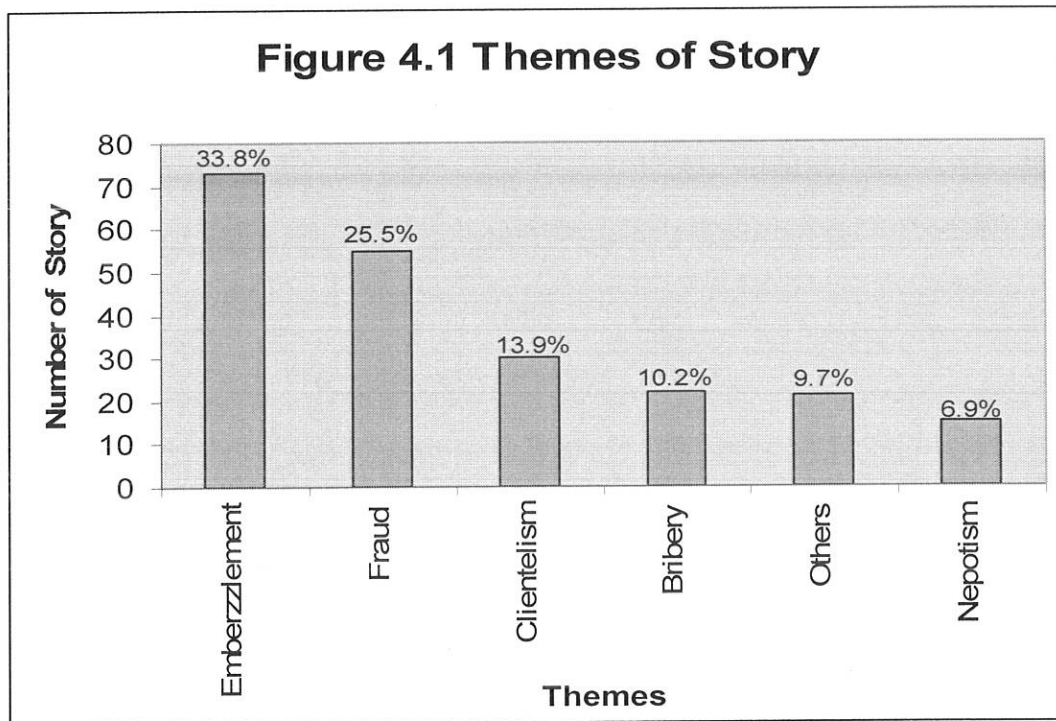
CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Discussions

In this section, the major findings of the study are presented using bar graphs, pie charts and tables. The collected data are also discussed in the next part qualitatively using the information gathered through interview and the underlying theoretical frameworks.

4.1 Presentation of Findings

4.1.1 Theme of Story



Embezzlement was the most common theme of corruption articles for *Reporter* during the selected period of this study. Stories with central focus on embezzlement consisted of 73 (33.8%), out of the total 216 (100%) articles monitored. Most of the embezzlement themes of corruption appeared on the news section of the newspaper. Some of the embezzlement stories focused on allegations of officials' illegal land distribution across various parts of Addis Ababa and Oromia Regional State. The finding also reveals that majority of the embezzlement stories were related to different government-led institutions.

The second common theme of corruption coverage was fraud. As the above bar graph indicates, articles with fraud themes received 55(25.5%) stories. One point worth mentioning here is that the newspaper vigorously attempted to denounce fraudulent activities observed at National Bank of Ethiopia in the infamous fake gold (*balestra*)

scandal. *Reporter* used its editorial, commentary as well as news items to consistently reflect on this issue. Moreover, the paper continuously reported the lengthy trial which implicated a number of suspects from the National Bank of Ethiopia, Ethiopian Geological Survey technicians, businesspeople and police officers.

There were 30(13.9%) stories which dealt with clientelism as their major theme of corruption. Many of such themes were discussed based on court proceedings. It is interesting to observe the newspaper's caution in handling court reporting especially in the news genre. Another interesting finding is that the clientelism were mostly portrayed in terms of illegal activities in relation auction. The alleged crimes were committed as the perpetrators repeatedly favored their patrons tasks such as contracts, projects and consultancy works, to mention but a few.

Reporter was relatively less active in providing coverage of corruption-related themes of bribery and nepotism. Out of the total 216(100%) articles, only 22(10.2%) dealt with bribery, where as 15(6.9%) of the stories considered nepotism as the prominent theme. This contradicts with the widespread acts of bribery and nepotism in Ethiopia. The category <others> made up 21(9.7%) of the articles as the central corruption theme. Some of the variables under this category included allegations of extortion, money-laundry, officials' wealth registration law and general issues concerning corruption.

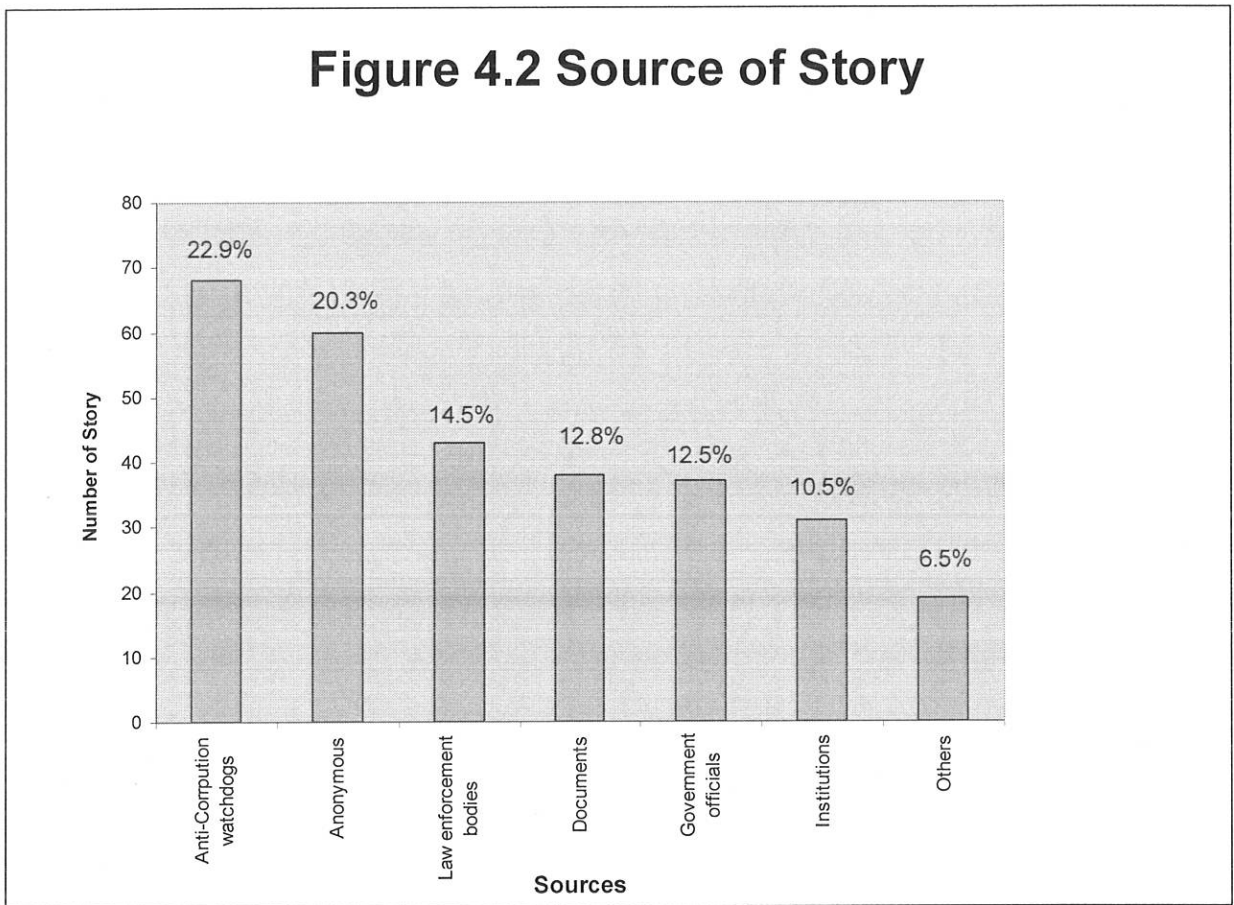
4.1.2 Source of Story

Anti-corruption watchdogs were the major sources of information used by *Reporter* to produce corruption stories. Out of the total 296(100%) articles, 68(22.9%) were sourced from anti-corruption watchdogs especially from the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC). It was interesting to understand that the public relations office of FEACC was the backbone of several news stories produced by *Reporter*.

Anonymous sources were the second common sources that the newspaper used to cover corruption articles. 60(20.3%) of the stories monitored during the study period were prepared based on anonymous sources who declined to be named. This might cast doubt on the trustworthiness of the sources as well as the stories. The interviewed journalists from *Reporter*, however, defended their sources on the ground that corruption scandals could be very sensitive and might have daring consequences on the whistleblowers if their identity is revealed.

Law enforcement bodies were found to be another important sources of journalists to write corruption stories. 43(14.5%) of the articles were based on these groups. These sources, especially criminal charges filed by prosecutors of FEACC, provided pivotal information for court-related corruption news items.

Figure 4.2 Source of Story



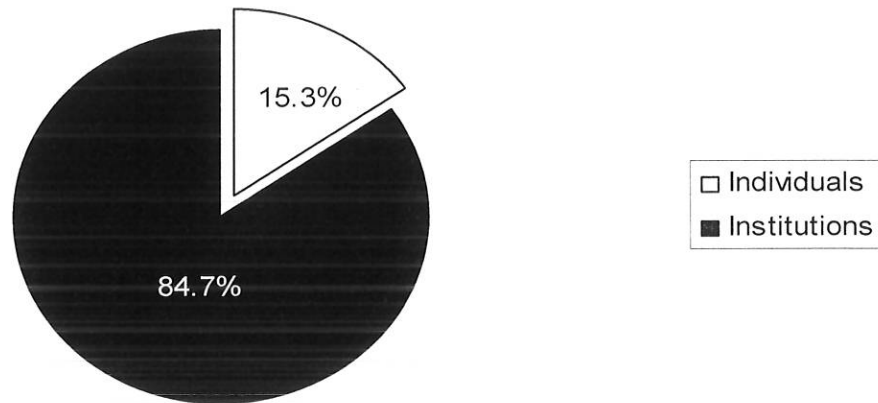
(N.B. Unlike the other categories, the total number of sources monitored during the study is 296. This is because some of the stories used more than one source).

Almost with similar number, documents and government officials became the 4th and 5th crucial sources of corruption articles for *Reporter* respectively. 38(12.8%) of the articles were sourced from a variety of documents such as reports, letters and minutes of meetings. Government officials on different posts were used as sources for 37(12.5%) of the stories.

The category <others> resulted in as the least sources of corruption articles during the selected period of the study. 19(6.5%) of the articles were coded under this category. The reason as to why some of the sources were labeled under this category was because some stories used multiple sources. Victims of corruption and alleged corruption perpetrators made up a significant portion of this category.

4.1.3 Individuals vs. Institutions

Figure 4.3 Comparison of percentage of corruption coverage on individuals and institutions



The research finding shows that *Reporter* gave more prominence to corruption issues on institutional level. As indicated on the above pie chart, the number of articles focusing on cases of alleged corrupt individuals received little coverage up to 33(15.3%) stories. In contrast, cases of corruption-related issues featuring institutions accounted for 183(84.7%) showing a dramatic significance in number. This might suggest that the newspaper gave considerable coverage for systematic and organized corruption crimes perpetrated by a group of people rather than mere individual-related anecdotes.

Among the institutions, the coverage on the government sector was more dominant. 109(50.5%) of the articles focused on corruption scandals made by government-led organizations, where as corruption stories featuring the private sector accounted for 27(12.5%),out of the total 216(100%) articles.

65(30.1%) of the stories dealt with corruption-related items featuring both the government and the private sectors. Majority of these stories were discussed on the commentary section of the newspaper. 15(6.9%) of the newspaper's articles, on the other hand, did not clearly state which institutions were the target of discussion.

4.1.4 Author of Story

Table 4.1. Author of Story

Author	Frequency	Percentage
In-house writers	149	68.9
Readers	23	10.7
News agencies	18	8.3
Unknown writers	15	6.9
Others	11	5.2
Total	216	100

Most of the corruption stories were authored by *Reporter's* own staff writers. Out of the 216(100%) articles, 149(68.9%) were written by the newspaper's in-house writers. The finding of the study indicates that the biggest strength of *Reporter* emanates from the news section as majority of the news stories were authored by its own staff reporters. Readers of the newspaper were the second largest contributors in producing the corruption stories. 23(10.7%) of the articles were authored by the readers of *Reporter* mainly in the form of commentary and letter to the editor genres. This seems that the readers were the backbone of the paper in providing their insights on corruption-related issues.

The contribution of news agencies in authoring corruption articles was insignificant. 18(8.3%) of the stories were fed to *Reporter* by the prominent news agencies in Ethiopia- Walta Information Center and Ethiopian News Agency. None of the stories appeared on the front or middle pages as most of the articles focused on petty corruption crimes and boring workshops. This might suggest that the newspaper is less dependant on the service provided by the news agencies.

15(6.9%) of the authors of the corruption articles were unknown. This could indicate that the newspaper was occasionally careless in revealing the identity of the writers of some stories or it intended to protect the writers from potential future conflict. Such kinds of worries are apparent in most newsrooms of the country following the legislation of the recent press and anti-terrorism laws.

The <other> category accounted for 11(5.2%) of the corruption-related authors. This group mainly included public relations officers who reacted and wrote articles in response to reported stories concerning their respective organizations.

4.1.5 Type of Story

As the table below shows, news was found to be the leading type of story in corruption coverage by *Reporter*. Out of the total 216(100%) articles, 164(75.9%) were dominated by news items. This might suggest that more emphasis was put on the news genre. In addition, most of the exclusive and in-depth news analyses were prepared by the effort of *Reporter*'s staff writers.

The second common type of story went to both commentary and letter to the editor genres. Out of the total 216(100%) articles, both genres received 15(6.9%) stories. This result might reveal that *Reporter* gives a decisive place for its readers to have their say on corruption issues by acting as a platform. It is interesting to mention the various eye-opening comments forwarded from readers on the corrupt practices of financial institutions in Ethiopia.

Table 4.2 Type of Story

Type of Story	Frequency	Percentage
News	164	75.9
Commentary	15	6.9
Letter to the editor	15	6.9
Editorial	12	5.7
Feature	5	2.3
Others	5	2.3
Total	216	100

12(5.7%) of the corruption articles were expressed on the newspaper in the form of editorial. This shows that *Reporter* gave relatively considerable attention to the issue of corruption by highlighting its views on such critical matters high on the public agenda. It

is also worth reminding the ever present humorous cartoons that accompanied the editorial content.

The features and <others> categories were given less emphasis by the newspaper. These categories received 5(2.3%) articles each, out of the total 216(100%) stories monitored during the selected period of the study. The <others> category included, among others, various corruption-related items in the form of cartoons and interviews.

4.1.6 Placement of Story

Results obtained on what pages stories are published give us an idea about the importance of the content. While comparing the overall finding shown on Table 4.3, *Reporter* gave a significant position for corruption articles on its front page. Out of the total 216(100%) articles, 66(30.6%) appeared on the front page of the newspaper. All these stories were news articles which focused on different corruption themes. Thus, the front page coverage of corruption articles confirms the importance that was given by *Reporter* for such crucial issues.

Table 4.3 Placement of Story

Placement	Frequency	Percentage
Middle pages	82	37.9
Back pages	68	31.5
Front pages	66	30.6
Total	216	100

82(37.9%) of the stories were displayed on the middle pages (page 2- page 5). These immediate pages, following the front page, were also pivotal as they contained the editorial, continued news stories from the first page, letter to the editor, politics, business and economy columns.

The back pages (page 6 and above) accounted for 68(31.5%) stories, out of the total 216(100%) articles. This part of the newspaper mostly contained commentary, feature articles and news stories continuing from the front and middle pages.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Theme of Story

The vital feature of most content analyses is to classify types or sub-categories of coverage within a broader area of an enquiry. The classification of what themes or topics are covered within a general area of coverage selected for analysis is a common starting point for media content researches (Hansen et al 1998).

Regarding the themes of corruption-related articles, this research reveals that significant focus was given by *Reporter* for stories that highlighted embezzlement as the prominent theme. This finding is similar with the study conducted by Addis Ababa University (AAU) concerning the state of corruption in Ethiopia. According to the survey prepared by AAU's Institute of Educational Research (IER), the <majority of the transgressions witnessed fell in the area of embezzlement of public money and property> (IER 2001:14).

The sample stories of *Reporter* within the study period indicate that fraud theme was the second predominant corruption-related topic. Out of 216 (100%) articles, fraud-related topics accounted for 55 (25.5%) of the stories. With regards to this, the <fake gold scandal> at the National Bank of Ethiopia was the prominent topic on fraud that *Reporter* highlighted repeatedly. The informants from *Reporter* confidently express that this scandal revelation was purely their work and feel proud of events unfolded thereafter. Apart from series of follow-up news stories concerning this scandal, the newspaper entertained various critical comments in the letter to the editor and commentary sections. The paper also demanded those individuals who were allegedly involved in the crime to be held accountable in different editions of its editorial pages. One such editorial was published on Megabit 17/ 2000 as:

It has now become obvious what kind of institution the National Bank of Ethiopia is as it was exposed to fraud involving fake gold amounting 158 million Birr.(...) The paper money notes the Bank prints do not properly work. The ones that are utilizable are thrown into fire. All these facts confirm that the institution is not in a position to act as the nation's central bank. The government should not be limited on accusing those individuals at the lower rank. Rather, it has to expand its inquiry by holding those officials of the Bank both at the lower and higher positions immediately responsible for the whole mess (Translated from Amharic *Reporter* Vol. 13 No. 27/825).

This enormous case of fraud is associated with the country's very decisive economic atmosphere, due to the Bank's supervisory and oversight role in connection with the rest of the banks in the nation (TI 2009). The interviewed journalists from *Reporter* proudly claim that the fake gold scandal was their original work. FEACC also praises the contribution of the media in uncovering the scandal. < The media has shown its deep concern by closely following and informing the public about the court proceedings and the press release of the FEACC > (*Ethics* 2008:34).

The finding of the research suggests that topics related to clientelism themes were considered as the third favorite of *Reporter*. 30 (13.9%) of the articles dealt with clientelism as the major issue of corruption stories. Another interesting finding is that the clientelism were mostly portrayed in terms of illegal activities in relation auction. The alleged crimes were committed as the perpetrators repeatedly favored their patrons tasks such as contracts, projects and consultancy works, to mention but a few.

The other finding shows that bribery and nepotism themes were relatively less reported by *Reporter*. Corruption themes related to bribery accounted for 22(10.2%) stories, where as the issue of nepotism accounted for 15 (6.9%) of the overall stories run by the newspaper. This finding seems somewhat contradictory with actual phenomenon on the ground. Various research articles indicate that corrupt practices manifested in the form of bribery and nepotism are widespread in different parts of Ethiopia. Although stories on nepotism were limited, the ones that got the limelight were worth praising. For instance, the exclusive news story about the alleged nepotism practice of the president of Somali Regional State, Abdullahi Hassan, was eye-catching. He was accused of money laundering and was deposed from his presidency. According to the newspaper's sources, the president had already helped to send his family abroad (*Reporter Meskerem* 25/2001 Vol. 14 No.4/880).

4.2.2 Source of Story

Media of all kinds depend on a readily available supply of information sources in order to produce stories. The relationship between journalist and their sources is vital as it often constitutes a very active two-way process. With regards to this, the analysis of sources is necessary both from a straightforward and literary point of view. Furthermore, analyzing sources or actors of a story is pivotal <from a more sociologically articulated theory of media representations and media roles > (Hansen et al 1998: 18).

Several research findings have demonstrated that the type of source or authority used to back up news items does tend to influence the content of the article even when the principle of neutrality is applied (McQuail 2000). One of the objective of this study is to identify the types of sources *Reporter* used in corruption articles and to evaluate how they might have influenced the coverage of the stories.

Anti-corruption watchdogs were overwhelmingly used by *Reporter* as a prominent source in corruption articles. Out of the total 216(100%) articles monitored, 68 (22.9%) employed anti-corruption watchdogs such as Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC) and Transparency Ethiopia as a source in order to produce corruption stories. The research finding clearly indicates that the role of FEACC was pivotal as a primary definer of events of corruption as they are unfolded in the public arena. The public relations officer of FEACC has contributed a lot as an ever present source of information by providing exclusive news tips and elaboration for *Reporter*.

As FEACC is the leading anti-corruption institution to fight corrupt practices in Ethiopia, it is worthwhile to use such type of source to back up claims of corruption articles. It has first hand account of events than any one else. Since its inception in May 2001, FEACC has provided the public as well as other stakeholders with various information about corruption. Similarly, the interviewed journalists confirmed that *Reporter* has a good working relationship with FEACC and they get important information from the institution. However, since FEACC's jurisdiction is limited on federal institutions, it was difficult to use it as a primary source of information concerning corrupt practices in the private sector. During such instances, the newspaper is forced to turn its face to other types of reliable sources.

Another important sources of *Reporter* in corruption stories were anonymous sources that accounted for 60 (20.3%) of the total articles monitored under the period of the study. The use of secret or unnamed sources is inevitable in sensitive topics like corruption. In relation to this, the interviewed journalists claimed that their media house refrains from using anonymous sources unless it is forced under various circumstances. Their newspaper, according to the informants, acts responsibly to balance stories by contacting reliable and knowledgeable sources before publishing allegations of corruption. Even when they receive important leaked documents, the journalist routinely attempt to cross-check the information by strictly following the code of ethics exercised in the media house. The informants strongly believe that it is their duty to balance and confirm information provided by anonymous sources.

Some researchers argue that anonymous sources may have hidden agenda while concealing their identity. However, Kvandal (2006) argues that sources who attempt to serve other interests public services are not disqualified as sources. This might not be an

obstacle according to some observers. The important issue is that the tip provided to media houses is factual and the whistle blower's intention is inconsequential.

One problem identified through this study in relation anonymous sources is that *Reporter* doesn't have the habit of providing explicit reasons as to why the unnamed sources declined to be named. This finding contrasts with the explanation forwarded by Houston et al. Although the sensitive issue of publishing accusations based on information remains controversial, it would be less intense and pervasive if news reporters would follow three vital steps:

First, they should try hard to find the information from on- the-record human sources and from documents; based on our experience, at least half the time, the information is available. Second they should try hard to persuade the original off-the-record source to go public; many will when asked the right way .Third, when nothing else works, they should explain why the source has requested and been granted anonymity while defaming other human beings(Hansen et al 2002:540-541).

Other media researchers provide different filtering mechanism while approaching anonymous sources. For instance, reporters and editors of the *New York Times* are urged to consider two points concerning unnamed sources. These include the direct knowledge the anonymous source has about the event and confirming if the source has the any motive or hidden vital facts that might alter the impression of the information. On the other hand, New house newspapers in Washington reinforce two additional rules for anonymous sources. First, <Never use an anonymous source to offer an opinion of another person.> Second, <Never use an anonymous source as the first quote in a story> (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001:91). Generally, journalists must be careful while using anonymous sources and have to assume themselves as well as their audience that independence by balancing and cross-checking vital public information.

Law enforcement bodies such as police, lawyers and prosecutors were also used by *Reporter* to produce corruption articles. These groups accounted for 43(14.5%) articles, out of the total 296 (100%) sources employed by the newspaper under the period of the study. News reports focusing on court proceedings of alleged perpetrators were significantly sourced from criminal charges which were filed by several prosecutors. The newspaper was admirably careful in reporting court meetings by basing itself on criminal charges and the court room debate. According to the *Reporter's* informants, the journalists have taken various court reporting techniques at different instances. Moreover, they cross-check different proclamations legal documents of the country that are readily available in the newsroom. Some of the high profile court reporting news items that used mostly law enforcement bodies include alleged corruption crimes by higher officials of ETC, National Bank of Ethiopia and Nile Insurance Bank Company.

Documents and government officials were also employed by *Reporter* as sources which accounted for 38 (12.8%) and 37(12.5%) articles respectively. The study finding shows that the newspaper used various document sources such as letters, communiqué, annual reports as well as corruption surveys to back up news items. The problem with the use of documents as a source to prepare news articles is that the journalist mostly printed the summary of the documents. There was less attempt in some news reports to develop stories based on these types of documents by contacting other sources to confirm instances of alleged corrupt practices.

When it comes to using government officials, *Reporter* was very cautious not to be dominated by the discourse of these types of sources. This is a vital move because government officials may hide secrets and change the direction of stories to protect their institutions' name and to protect their employees. When corruption allegations are handled by government officials or institutions (which accounted for 31 or 10.5 % sources of news for *Reporter*) with close ties to officials, media outlets should be critical from being manipulated by investigating sources. Kovach and Rosenstiel explain such threats as :

[...] Rather than a watchdog of powerful institutions, the press is vulnerable to being their [official sources] tool. Reporting on investigations require enormous due diligence. Paradoxically, news outlets often think just opposite - that they can more freely report the suspicions or allegations because they can more freely report the suspicions or allegation because they are quoting official sources rather than carrying out the investigation themselves(2001:120).

To conclude, social stereotyping, misrepresentation or under-representation of various groups and types of people in society have been the central concern of content analysis researches. The analysis of sources used by *Reporter* to produce corruption articles confirms that some groups are quoted frequently and others are referred rarely. The coverage of anti-corruption watchdogs and law enforcement bodies as voices and primary definers of corruption discourse was evident in the monitored editions of the newspaper. In contrast, researchers and educators of various disciplines were occasionally depicted as sources of corruption stories. One feature article that focused on money laundering in the Ethiopian case was exemplary in its use of university lecturers' point of view as powerful sources of various phenomena. Therefore, the newspaper needs to involve these types of sources to represent the corruption-related discourses of the academic circle.

4.2.3 Individuals vs. Institutions

Whenever corruption-related scandals erupt, the media is frequently criticized for personalizing the news item by targeting individuals at the centre of the crisis. Responses to corruption scandals often tend to center only on personalities-covering up blame and searching for possible scapegoats. The media establishments often ignore <the systematic

conditions that created incentives for corruption in the first place> (Garment 1991 cited in Rose-Ackerman 1999: 209-210).

In light of the above discourse, *Reporter's* corruption coverage seems on the right direction. Out of the total 216 (100%) articles monitored, 183 (84.7%) focused on corruption on institutional level, where as those articles targeting individuals accounted for 33(15.3%) stories. This doesn't, however, mean that corruption scandals perpetrated by individuals should be kept quiet by the media. Rather, the investigative reporters' endeavor must not be limited to exposing just individuals only, but systematic failures of institutions as a whole. The press should be able to pinpoint that individual wrongdoing is part and parcel of huge pattern of negligence as well as abuse of the established system.

Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) argue that the watchdog ideology means more than merely monitoring government, but it extends to all the powerful institutional establishments in society. With regards to this, it would be appropriate to examine how the case of institutions were dealt with in relation to corruption under the period of this study. The finding indicates that corruption stories on the government sector got dominant coverage with 109 (50.5%) articles, out of the total 216 (100%) items. In contrast, the private sector received 27 (12.5%) articles which focused on corruption. *Reporter* displayed 65 (30.1%) stories which targeted on both the government and the private sectors. 15 (6.9%) of the articles were not clear to identify whether their focus was the private or the government sector.

According to the two years monitoring of *Reporter*, various prominent institutions from the private as well as the government sectors were covered in relation to alleged corrupt practices. As a result, the major institutions that were implicated with such crimes several times are described as follows in descending order:

- National Bank of Ethiopia
- Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation
- Customs and Revenue Authority
- Ethiopian Geological Survey
- Nile Insurance Company
- Ethiopian Postal Service
- Ethiopian Development Bank
- Ethiopian Airlines and Civil Aviation Authority
- Federal Police Commission and Addis Ababa Police Commission
- Commercial Bank of Ethiopia

As the above list indicates, significant number of the institutions are fully or partly owned and led by the government. The private sector is dramatically underrepresented in the list. Various reasons could be given for such scenario. It was indicated in the earlier part of the discussion chapter that the newspaper has a close working relationship with the

prominent anti-corruption watchdog in Ethiopia- the Federal Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (FEACC). The finding of this study shows that FEACC was used by *Reporter* as the main source of corruption-related articles. According to the establishment Proclamation of this institution, FEACC has the responsibility to oversee complaints of alleged or suspected cases of corrupt practices in public offices or public enterprises (Tesfaye 2007). The limited jurisdiction of the watchdog institution to control private institutions could have been one possible reason for *Reporter* to get a lot more information on government institutions from FEACC as compared to the private sector ones. This doesn't, however, mean that the newspaper was weak in reporting alleged corruption crimes in the privately-owned companies. There were several individual cases or instances of impropriety in the private sector albeit outnumbered by articles related to the government institutions.

It is interesting to compare and contrast the above list with the survey finding conducted by the FEACC's research team on June 2005. This *Corruption Susceptibility Index* the first of its kind in Ethiopia. It made a comparative analysis of 56 government offices and 132 government enterprises on a three point scale- vulnerability to corruption, impact of corruption and the scope of corruption (Ethics 2005). Out of the 56 government offices covered by the research, the top ten include the following:

1. The Ethiopian Roads Authority (ERA)
2. Ministry of Agriculture and [t]he Ethiopian Customs Authority
3. The Ethiopian Agricultural Research Organization
4. Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice
5. The Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Commission
6. Ministry of Federal Affairs and [t]he Federal Inland Revenue Authority
7. Ministry Of Foreign Affairs
8. Federal Police Commission
9. Ministry of Mines
10. National Bank of Ethiopia (Ethics 2005:39-40).

On the other hand, the top ten most susceptible government enterprises described by the research team of FEACC include:

1. Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation (ETC)
2. Ethiopian Airlines (EAL)
3. Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation (EEPC)
4. Commercial Bank of Ethiopia (CBE)
5. Ethiopian Insurance Corporation
6. Merchandise Whole sales and Import and Trade Enterprise and Ethiopian Civil Service College
7. Dire Dawa Textile, Ethiopian Postal Service, Ethio-Djibouti Railway Enterprise and AAU [Addis Ababa University]
8. Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency

9. Agricultural Mechanization Service Enterprise
10. Berhanena Selam Printing Enterprise, Educational Materials Production and Distribution Enterprise, Ethiopian Development Bank, Ethiopian Sugar Industry Support Centre S.C. and Water Works Construction Agency (*Ethics* 2005: 40).

While comparing and contrasting the two lists compiled by the research survey of FEACC and the finding of the prominent institutions covered by *Reporter*, one will come up with different interesting facts. Most of the institutions that were covered by the newspaper in relation to corruption are also found in either of the lists presented above. From this it is possible to infer that *Reporter* has more or less attempted its watchdog role as the fourth estate to oversee these powerful institutions by putting the issues on the public agenda.

The coverage given by the newspaper for these huge institutions is pivotal for different reasons. These government offices and enterprises have immense stake in the development process of Ethiopia. The organizations are entrusted with the authority and responsibility of policy implementation in order to achieve sustainable development. Many of these enterprises that are involved in the expansion of infrastructure, investment, trade and protection of national interest, among others, have billions of Birr in capital. Any corruption hazard on these institutions could risk the country's future development endeavor as it dwindles the already inadequate funds (*Ethics* 2005).

Another interesting finding of this study is that some of the large organizations were repeatedly covered by *Reporter* as result of one major corruption breakthrough. In relation to this, National Bank of Ethiopia, National Geological Survey and Federal Police Commission were together mentioned in the corruption articles as a result of the infamous fake gold scandal.

The stories the Nile Insurance saga was also given enormous coverage albeit mostly based court proceedings. The coverage focused on the federal prosecutors' accusation on shareholders and former senior managers of the company. They were accused of complicity in unlawfully benefiting from the private insurance firm. The paper has carefully and consistently reported about the alleged violations the country's commercial code by the defendants in away mostly clear for readers. Furthermore, *Reporter* has also rigorously covered the famous court battle of the businesspeople popularly known as <IMF> and <Morocco>. They were allegedly involved massive tax evasion. Like the Nile Insurance saga, this story was based on court proceedings and carefully reported.

To conclude, one can raise the issue advertising while discussing the coverage corruption in relation various influential institutions. As *Reporter* hugely dependent on advertising income, one could question its determination to expose its advertising clients. However, the interviewed staff of the newspaper argue that marketing and editorial are totally separate. They claim that they are not worried about advertisement. According to these

informants, the advertisements come to them, not the other way round. As to the journalists' knowledge, there has not been any client whom they remember boycotted ads as a result of unfavorable corruption coverage. They mention Ayat Real Estate as the best example. There has been repeated allegations of corrupt practices. But the company is still the client of the newspaper. The same goes to Ethiopian Airlines, Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation, to name a few.

4.2.4 Author of Story

The finding of this study strongly confirms that *Reporter* has strength in producing corruption articles by its own staff writers. Out of the total 216 (100%) articles monitored, 149 (75.9%) were authored by the newspaper's writers. In particular, the news genre is mainly written by journalists of the paper showing less dependency on news agencies. These organizations such as Walta Information Center and Ethiopian News Agency authored only 18 stories in relation to corruption. All of the agencies' contribution was on the news section given not more than two or three paragraphs of the newspaper. In addition, the stories wired by the agencies were mainly related to meetings and issues of petty corruption.

The contribution of *Reporter's* readers in authoring corruption-related commentaries was also invaluable. It seems that the readers have shouldered the burden of the in-house writers to concentrate on the news section. The readers were very active especially in the sections of commentary and letter to the editor. This mechanism confirms that the newspaper has attempted to implement its crucial role of acting as a public forum. Another interesting point drawn from the finding was that 15 (6.9%) of the authors of corruption articles were unknown. Informants in the *Reporter* explain such instances in two ways. Firstly, the authors of the stories may not be revealed in order to protect the writers from any potential danger. Secondly, the writers' name could be left out if the stories are directly translated from foreign language sources.

Significant number of corruption stories were properly attributed by *Reporter* with the name of the writer clearly indicated with a byline. Out of the total 216 (100%) articles, 167 (77.3%) were attributed with names of the writers, whereas 34 (15.8%) were simply indicated with the byline as <by staff reporter> with no name of the reporter. It was discovered during the interview with *Reporter's* journalist that such kind of situation occurs if the stories are sensitive and may lead the writer to possible danger. At other times, <by staff reporter> technique could be used for materials that are directly translated from foreign language sources.

Informants from the newspaper say that since it is difficult to have beat reporting specialization on various areas, their newspaper assigns reporters who are familiar with the subject-matter or event. In relation to this, it is interesting to observe that most of the journalists in *Reporter* have stayed in the paper for long period of time. This makes them

more closer to the working environment of the newspaper industry as well as developing stories such as prolonged court proceedings.

One major debate concerning corruption reporting deals with what constitutes real and original investigative journalism. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001:116) believe that <original investigative reporting involves reporters *themselves* uncovering and documenting activities> that the public has not been aware of previously. Forbes (2005:4) supports this perspective by stating:

[...] Real investigative journalism is the result of a reporter's own enterprise, and that a distinction should be made between stories unearthed as a result of genuine investigation and those that are <discovered> as a result of some one else's work and research.

The two years' monitoring of corruption articles by *Reporter* reveals that significant number of the stories were written by the newspaper's staff. However, there are variety of reasons when it comes to what initiated the journalist to write the corruption stories. Through interview, it was discovered that the journalists of *Reporter* believe that original investigative reporting is the one made by the initiative of the journalist or the one produced as a result of the tip forwarded by informants. The two years monitoring of *Reporter*'s corruption articles confirms that the initiative of authoring the stories relates with court proceedings, the journalists' own enterprise, meetings as well as corruption survey reports.

4.2.5 Type of Story

In connection to the type of corruption stories covered by *Reporter*, the finding of this study confirms that significant attention was given for news items. Out of the total 216(100%) articles monitored, 164(75.9%) were corruption-related news stories. *Reporter* seems determined to expose local corruption crimes by somewhat consistently covering events on major institutions of the country. Foreign news on corruption issues only accounted for less than 10% of the total news articles monitored during the study period.

It seems that the news genre is the major strength of *Reporter*. The finding of this research indicates that most of the corruption-related news stories were exclusive that were prepared by the newspaper's staff writers. Majority of the news items, especially those related to court procedures, were presented with a series of follow-ups. In this respect, it is possible to suggest that *Reporter* has strongly built the public discourse by setting the agenda for the other media outlets.

With similar number of stories, the genres of commentary and letter to the editor were used by *Reporter* to let readers express their ideas on various corruption issues. It is

possible to suggest that the newspaper has become an open forum for community discussion with a primary role of illuminating and rarely agitating readers. Some researchers argue that if there is a lively and attractive letter to the editor column, newspapers could encourage public participation in different national issues.

According to the monitored two years editions of *Reporter*, encouraging steps were taken on the commentary section as a result of letters forwarded by concerned readers and stakeholders of the paper. In particular, this column was pivotal in exposing the alleged malpractice of various activities in the National Bank of Ethiopia, following the <fake gold scandal> and corrupt practices in the financial sectors in general. In contrast, the letter to the editor column sometimes failed to convey the much needed messages. There were times when this section of the paper was sacrificed for advertisement. Most of the time only two or three brief letters from readers were published to express their say about previously run stories. On other occasions, the newspapers had entertained complaint and correction letters from public relations officers. However, sometimes the paper had presented the complaint letters in a delayed manner. This could emanate from shortage of space on the newspaper or due to delayed reply from those who submit the correction letters.

The interviewed journalists also confirmed that letters and tips sent from readers and concerned stakeholders were used as an inspiration to embark on stories of different kind. According to Sommerlad (1966), some letters sent from readers can be employed as a base for further enquiry by the newspaper's staff. This type of input may lead to news or feature stories and occasionally as a means of powerful campaign.

The editorial page was one of the prominent column of *Reporter* for displaying its outrage against corrupt practices in various government and private institutions of the country. This section of the paper has always been a hot topic of discussion by several critics especially during the 2005 national election. Often with a humorous strong revelations of facts, the editorial page was also accompanied by recommendations along with the ever-present attractive cartoons. In one of the editorials, *Reporter* had openly requested the Prime Minister of Ethiopia- Meles Zenawi- to clear his cabinet and government from alleged practices of corruption:

(...) If the Prime Minister [Meles Zenawi] himself starts an inquiry with special attention about what government officials do and how they live; if he starts investigating such issues in 10 meters away from his office, he will come up with shocking revelations. In order to find out corrupt officials' identity, one does not need to their blood sample to Pasteur. Opening the eyes widely and giving one's ear to the public is more than enough(Translated from Amharic, *Reporter* Tahsas 5/2001 Vol.14 No. 14/900).

According to Phillips (1992), the value of editorial coverage of issues differs greatly from that of advertising. He explains this idea as:

The act of faith shown by a publication in printing a story is very significant and is one that grows with the amount and quality of the coverage provide. There is not only a distinct emotional coverage but a considerable subliminal effect of on the reader (1992:42).

Although there have been criticisms in relation to lack of objectivity in other topics, *Reporter's* coverage of corruption in its editorial page was interesting and worth praising. Many researchers agree that the editorial pages of a newspaper has every right to be opinionated. As Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001:136) explain, if writers of editorial pages want to call themselves journalist, <they should not misrepresent the facts-that they should to the same standards of truthfulness or allegiance> to the interest of the public like that of any other part of the journalism profession.

The finding of this study clearly shows that feature articles of corruption issues were significantly under-represented. This could be related to the busy schedule of *Reporters'* journalists as they always strive to publish three newspapers per week- two Amharic and one English editions.

4.2.6 Placement of Story

Various media researchers believe that the location of articles on a newspaper is one of the factors contributing to decide the prominence of certain issues on the public agenda. Journalism professors Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw established *position* and *length* of a story as the two main criteria of prominence (Griffin 2006). In this regard, headline stories on the front page of newspapers is a representation of prominence and significance. Stories displayed on the front page have an impact in capturing readers' attention and may suggest urgency rather than articles placed on the inside pages.

Kvandal(2006) argues that the front page of newspapers may serve the purpose of convincing the literate and potential buyers of the paper. Serving as a poster for each edition, the front page can act as an advertisement for the editorial product there by selling the newspaper. In addition, using their appeal and adherence to customers' interests, newspapers can implement front pages to highlight what is considered most newsworthy.

It is important to analyze where corruption stories were placed on *Reporter* under the period of the study. Relatively the newspaper displayed a significant number of corruption-related articles on the front page. Among the 216(100%) articles published, 66(30.6%) appeared on the front page. Prominent news items of corruption were put on this section of the paper. One will come up with interesting outcome while contrasting

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this finding with the research conducted on the two Kenyan newspapers'-*the East African/ Sunday Standard* and *the Nation*- coverage of corruption from the years 2001-2005. The number of front page stories on corruption was 30 in 2001, 18 in 2002, 53 in 2003 and 85 in 2004. By 31st of October, the number was 52 for 2005(Kvandal 2006). This shows that the two years sample of front page corruption articles on *Reporter* is almost half of the five years articles of the two papers combined. The comparison becomes more interesting while considering that the two Kenyan newspapers are daily and had the chance to produce more stories on corruption as compared to the bi-weekly *Reporter*.

The other way to analyze the front page coverage of corruption on *Reporter* is to closely examine some of the major stories highlighted over the two years period of this study. It is important to note that more than 2/3 of the news stories on the paper's front page focused on government institutions. With a total of 20 articles, <the fake gold scandal> at the National Bank of Ethiopia dominated the front page headline. The interviewed journalists of *Reporter* asserted that it was their newspaper which exposed the fraud in the Bank.

According to the agenda setting theory, reporting one issue regularly is one way in which newspapers give readers a sense of identifying crucial issues. In this regard, *Reporter* has succeeded as a platform in setting the agenda by becoming a point of discussion. The front page disclosure of the fake gold scandal was pivotal as the National Bank oversees the financial sector in the country and has billions of Birr in capital. In addition, exposure of such scandals by the newspaper is vital since the Bank is the backbone of Ethiopia's endeavor to development.

Allegations of corruption crimes at the Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporation(ETC) also attracted the front page of *Reporter*. The newspaper was strong and determined to run the articles related to ETC as the outstanding stakeholder in Ethiopia's future technological advancement. Moreover, the alleged involvement of ETC's top management in the crime made it headline story on the front page of *Reporter*. With somewhat closer number, corrupt practices in the land provision sector around Addis Ababa also competed for the front page coverage of the newspaper. Some of the remaining institutions and/or issues that appeared on the front page of *Reporter* in relation to corruption during the period of the study include:

- Nile Insurance Company
- Government Officials' Wealth Registration Law
- Oromia Regional State's justice system
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Ethiopian Football Federation
- Ethiopian Postal Service, and
- Federal Transport Authority

Following the front page section, relevance of stories differ from one publication to the other. It is not possible to across with a grading common to all publications. According to Phillips (1992:44), <it is the message and readership profile which economically dictates page position value> if the media sample is not small. In relation to this, the next most important position of corruption articles on *Reporter* is the middle pages (page 2- page 5). The finding of this research shows that 82 (37.9%) of the corruption stories were placed on this section of the paper. Placement of corruption-related articles on the middle pages is important as this part of the paper contains editorial, news, letter to the editor and the politics' column. A three column story on an inside page and the lead editorial were all considered as evidence of significant focus on issues (Griffin 2006).

Relatively speaking the least desired position for placing corruption articles was found to be the back pages (page 6 and above). This assumption might be related to the nature of *Reporter's* page composition. The number of pages differs according to the day of publication. During the Wednesday's issue, the paper usually has an average size of 32 pages. On the Sunday's edition, on the contrary, *Reporter* usually has an average size of 80 to 85 pages including a separate supplement page containing job vacancy advertisement. In occasions of major holidays such as Easter, Christmas and Ethiopian New Year, the newspaper is invaded by full page display ads there by increasing the page number dramatically. Thus, this makes the back pages section of the newspaper that contain corruption stories to be buried inside huge amount of ads. The research finding also shows that continued news stories from front page and middle pages were sometimes not exactly located on the back pages of *Reporter*. In few occasions, the continued stories were totally not found due to mistakes that could possibly emanate from work load and the rush to meet deadlines.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion and Recommendation

This part of the study deals with the conclusions of the findings and attempts to come up with workable recommendations that are assumed to be useful for future coverage on corruption issues.

5.1 Conclusion

Ethiopia is one of the countries that are highly affected by the blight of corruption. In such instances, the role of a free and independent media is pivotal in raising public awareness about corruption so that they can demand policy as well as personnel changes. Thus, this research paper attempted to examine the content of corruption articles by the Amharic bi-weekly *Reporter* over the period of 2000 and 2001 Ethiopian Calendar. This newspaper was selected as result of its reputation in exposing various corrupt practices in different institutions over the past 14 years.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of data gathering and analysis were employed in the research. To this end, 216 stories that had appeared on 159 editions of the paper were sampled. The size of stories selected and the span of time covered are considered representative as well as valid choices for the study. In addition, the analytic categories include theme of story, source of story, type of story, individual vs. institution, author of story and placement of story. The theme of each individual article on corruption were considered as the unit of analysis.

From the overall finding of this research, it is possible to conclude that *Reporter* seems somewhat responsible in fulfilling its duty as the Fourth Estate by consistently reporting events of corruption in the country. As the research findings indicate the newspaper focused more on corruption themes of embezzlement which goes in line with various research findings. With regards to the use of sources in corruption stories, the newspaper relied more the anti- corruption watchdog in the country, FEACC. This approach is assumed to be crucial as the institution is pivotal in handling several corruption cases there by providing the newspaper with credible and first hand information. However, when it comes to corrupt practices in the private sector, *Reporter* was forced to come up with other sources as the jurisdiction of FEACC is limited on to government offices only. Most media houses are criticized for targeting individuals whenever corruption scandals erupt. In relation to this, *Reporter* seems on the safe way as majority of its corruption articles focused corrupt practices at institutional bases. Some of the major corruption scandal revelations included National Bank of Ethiopia, Ethiopian Telecommunications Corporations and Nile Insurance Company. The continuous coverage of such institutions is meaningful as their contribution for the country's economy is tantamount.

The two years' monitoring of the paper confirms that *Reporter's* strength emanates from its staff writers. The lion share of the corruption stories were authored by the in-house writers of the newspaper. It was discovered from the study that the low staff turn out of journalist-not observed in most media houses in the country- helped the authors of the articles to be familiar with corruption issues especially lengthy court proceedings.

Another strength of the newspaper observed in this study is related to the richness of *Reporter* in setting the news agenda by mostly providing exclusive news stories on corruption. Due to its presence in the Ethiopian private press scene for the past 14 years, the paper has been able to enrich itself with sources from every sector. As a result, it was able to uncover corruption scandals with its breaking news there by setting the agenda for the media houses in the country. The newspaper is also well aware of the use of entertaining the insights and tip of its readers in the commentary and letter to the editor sections.

Last but not least, while comparing the overall finding of this research, one can understand that *Reporter* has given a significant position for corruption articles on the front page. The front page coverage of corruption articles confirms the importance that was given by *Reporter* for such crucial issues. In this regard, headline stories on the front page of newspapers is a representation of prominence and significance. Stories displayed on the front page have an impact in capturing readers' attention and may suggest urgency rather than articles placed on the inside pages.

5.2 Recommendation

By fulfilling its role as the Fourth Estate, the press can bring reforms by harnessing civic discourse. Furthermore, the media is pivotal since it can act as a conduit for information, ideas and opinions to assist in good governance of society. To this end, the researcher suggests the following specific points as a recommendation for future consideration:

- *Reporter* needs to give more attention for specific instances of corruption themes especially that of bribery and nepotism. The newspaper should move all its resources at its disposal in exposing such forms of corruption crimes observed in various institutions of the country.
- It is inevitable to use anonymous sources while covering corruption stories. However, there must be extra precaution while using such types of sources as they might have hidden agendas of settling old scores.
- In relation to the use of anonymous sources, *Reporter* has to develop the tradition of disclosing the rationale to its readers as to why the anonymous sources were

allowed to hide their identity. This could reduce doubt of readers towards the unnamed sources and the story.

- *Reporter* have to continue its endeavor in exposing corrupt practices at institutional level rather than targeting escape-goats at individual bases. The effort should focus on uncovering systematic abuse of power and exposing complicated corruption networks.
- The newspaper has to further broaden its horizon of authoring corruption stories by providing continuous training of investigative reporting for its journalist. *Reporter* has to use documents such as survey and annual reports as additional materials to support stories and must engage in the revelation of original corruption stories.
- *Reporter* must increase the number of feature stories on corruption as they can easily draw readers' attention. To this end, the newspaper has to employ and organize a dedicated feature's team who are solely assigned for embarking on in-depth stories on corruption.
- *Reporter* should capitalize on its role as the forum for community discussion by broadening commentary sections on the newspaper. In particular, readers and potential stakeholders should be encouraged to express their insights in relation to corruption. The newspaper can invite prominent professors from various universities as guest writers.
- The newspaper has to be efficient in placing corruption articles in a suitable. It must be careful from burying stories in the middle of congested display and classified ads.
- In general, *Reporter* should steadfastly continue its role as watchdog of the government as well as the private institutions' day to day activities. It has to serve as a strong deterrent in combating the perils of corruption in the public's interest.

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Appendix A

Coding Sheet

Date of Publication	Theme of Story	Source of Story	Type of Story	Individual/ Institution	Author of Story	Placement of Story

Main Category	Sub-categories to be included
Theme of Story	<i>Embezzlement, fraud, clientelism, bribery, nepotism and others</i>
Source of Story	<i>Documents, anti-corruption watchdogs, law enforcement bodies, government officials, institutions, anonymous and others</i>
Type of Story	<i>News, feature, commentary, editorial, letter to the editor and others</i>
Individual/ Institution	<i>Private sector, government sector, both and others</i>
Author of Story	<i>In-house writers, news agencies, unknown, readers and others</i>
Placement of Story	<i>Front page, middle pages and back pages</i>

Appendix B

General Interview Questions for Journalists

1. What are the prominent achievements of *Reporter* in the fight against corruption?
2. What are your major targets (focus) on corruption crimes? (Individuals vs. institutions. Private institutions vs. government institutions).
3. How do you evaluate your sources in relation to corruption stories? What is your stand and handling mechanism on anonymous (hidden) sources?
4. How do you assign journalists to report on corruption stories? Are there any specific criteria? When and why do you use the expression <by staff reporter>?
5. What are the precautions that you take while covering court proceedings of corruption cases?
6. What kind of response do you receive from the private sector as well as the government when you report on corruption stories on them? Have they ever withdrawn advertisement from your paper?
7. Can you explain your relationship with anti-corruption campaigning organizations (such as the Federal Ethics Anti-Corruption Commission and Transparency Ethiopia)?
8. Some scholars argue that investigative reporting should not be <end product> of leaks or a report on a public agency investigation. Rather, they say it should be the journalist's own enterprise or original work. What is your stand on this?
9. What are the major obstacles your media house or journalists face when covering corruption stories?
10. Are there any trainings or special considerations your media house provide to enrich its staff members' endeavor of investigative reporting?
11. Have you ever been charged because of your coverage corruption stories?
12. Are there any awards that *Reporter* received as a result of its corruption articles?

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all the sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.



Sileshi Yilma

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