



SEEK WISDOM, ELEVATE YOUR INTELLECT AND SERVE HUMANITY!



**Addis Ababa University**  
**Graduate Studies**  
**School of Journalism and Communication**  
**Department of Multimedia**

**Broadcast News Framing of the Attack on Federal Army North Command  
(FANC) and War Outbreak in Tigray, Ethiopia: A Comparative Study of  
EBC and Dimtsi Woyane**

**By Mahlet Tadelle**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts  
in Journalism and Communication**

**Addis Ababa University**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**  
**October, 2023**

**Addis Ababa University**  
**Graduate Studies**  
**School of Journalism and Communication**  
**Department of Multimedia**

**Broadcast News Framing of the Attack on Federal Army North Command  
(FANC) and War Outbreak in Tigray, Ethiopia: A Comparative Study of  
EBC and Dimtsi Woyane**

**By Mahlet Tadelle**

**Advisor: Anteneh Tsegaye (PhD)**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts  
in Journalism and Communication**

**Addis Ababa University**  
**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**  
**October, 2023**

**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of Graduate Studies**

The thesis conducted by Mahlet Tadelle, entitled *Broadcast News Framing of the Attack on Federal Army North Command (FANC) and War Outbreak in Tigray, Ethiopia: A Comparative Study of EBC and Dimtsi Woyane*, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication complies with the regulations of Addis Ababa University.

Examining Committee Signature

Examiner \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Examiner \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Declaration**

I, Mahlet Tadelle, declare that this thesis *entitled Broadcast News Framing of the Attack on Federal Army North Command (FANC) and War Outbreak in Tigray, Ethiopia: A Comparative Study of EBC and Dimtsi Woyane*, is my own work and I duly acknowledge the sources of materials I have used.

Mahlet Tadelle, Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date October, 2023

## **Acknowledgments**

I am indebted to my advisor Anteneh Tsegaye (PhD) for his critical care in reading, commenting and shaping my thesis, and unrelenting constructive comments ever since its inception.

I am grateful again to Paulos Geremew and Beyene Wolde for their cooperation in reading and commenting my draft. I am also grateful to Addis Ababa University, particularly IES Library and its supportive staff for the various supports they granted me.

I finally owe to my family whose love and encouragement have been so invaluable.

## **Acronyms**

ANDM- Amhara National Democratic Movement

CDA- Critical Discourse Analysis

DW- Dimtsi Woyane

EBC- Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporations

EPRDF- Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

FANC- Federal Army North Command

OPDO- Oromo People Democratic Organization

PP- Prosperity Party

TPLF- Tigray People Liberation Front

## Table of contents

Contents	Pages
Acknowledgments.....	I
Acronyms.....	II
Table of contents.....	III
Abstract.....	VI
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	4
1.3Objective of the study.....	6
1.3.1 General Objective.....	6
1.3.2 Specific objectives.....	6
1.4 Research Questions.....	6
1.5 Significance of the study.....	6
1.6 Scope of the Study.....	7
1.7 Limitations of the Study.....	7
Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature.....	9
2.1. Ethnicity: Identity and Conflict.....	9
2.2. Media and Politics.....	12
2.3 Media: an Important Source of Information.....	13
2.4. Theoretical Framework.....	17
2.4.1. News Framing and Social Influence.....	17
2.4.2 The Effect of Media Ownership.....	20
2.4.3 Media framing, Agenda setting and Priming: A Distinction.....	21
2.4.4 Forms of Media Frames: in situations of crisis and conflict.....	23

2.4.5 Framing in TV Broadcasts .....	25
2.4.5.1 Techniques of broadcasts and newscasts in TV .....	25
2.4.5.2 Verbal and Visual components: Duality of TV Broadcast.....	26
2.4.5.3 Transcription: Converting an Audio File into a Text.....	27
2.5 Review of Local studies .....	28
Chapter Three.....	33
Research Methodology .....	33
3.1 Research Design .....	33
3.2 Data Selection.....	34
3.3 Method of Data Collection and Analysis .....	35
3.3.1 Sampling and Collecting the Broadcastings.....	35
3.3.2 Analyzing Broadcastings.....	36
3.4 Interpreting Frames.....	38
Chapter Four .....	39
Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings .....	39
4.1 Framing Analysis on the Outbreak of the war on November 3, 2020.....	39
4.2 Framing of Perpetrators of the attack .....	40
4.3 Victims Framing during the Outbreak.....	44
4.4 Framing the FANC attack.....	46
4.4.1 Discussion of EBC's framing of the attack.....	46
4.4.1.1 TPLF is a terrorist and undemocratic; its act is inhuman.....	46
4.4.1.2 Framing of treason .....	49
4.4.1.3 Empathy Framing.....	51
4.4.2 Discussion of DW's framing of the attack .....	52
4.4.2.1 Defense against Eminent attack .....	52

Chapter Five.....	59
Conclusion and recommendations .....	59
5.1 Conclusion.....	59
5.2 Recommendations: .....	61
References.....	62

## **Abstract**

*This thesis examines the framing of FANC attack by TPLF related force, by taking TV broadcastings about the attack from EBC and DW and exploring them in a comparative way. A content analysis and thematic analysis of six broadcastings, three of them from EBC and three others from DW, are used in the analysis and exploration of framing in this study. The findings indicate that there is remarkable divergence in the framing of the broadcastings in the two media houses regarding the attack and subsequent war outbreak. Their coverage is under influence and interest, showing their affiliation to the federal government in case of EBC and to TPLF in case of DW. EBC framed that the attack is perpetrated by a terrorizing TPLF and its act as inhuman. It is represented as an attempt to retain power by force. DW, on the other hand, considers the act as an operation to defend an imminent attack on Tigray, which is arranged by Abiy's regime, Eritrea (Esayas Afeworki) and Amhara forces-threefold antagonists.*

## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

The past decades in Ethiopia have marked a prevalent tension and contention basically as a diverging position and polar opposition between two main blocks. The first block tends to approach Ethiopia and its history with the lens of oppression, particularly with the stand of the Amhara ethnic group oppressing the remaining. The radicalized intelligentsia “*portrayed the country as ‘a prison house of nations and nationalities’ claiming that to be Ethiopian one had to wear ‘Amharan mask’*” (Tadesse, M.et al, 2021, 458). And this block brutally advocated a political reformation, by questioning the very essence of Ethiopia’s historic past, and strived to grant independence and maximum autonomy to nations and nationalities. The other block, on the other hand, considered that past as an attempt at nation building despite acknowledging its democratic deficiency in the process. This wing rather advocated democratizing the process, unifying the nation and granting priority to individual rights and privilege citizens than extended self-determination rights and autonomy of nations and tribal entities for that “*would lead the country down to disintegration*” (ibid, 466).

The TPLF-dominated Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) was then lucky enough to overthrow the military regime in 1991 and to impose the first block’s view, as it was a mastering advocate of this position. It has established a new federal system that granted an immense power to ethnic groups to administer themselves to the utmost degree of seceding from the federation if and whenever they want (Article 39, 1). This, however, has been opposed by advocates of the latter category that feared and resisted EPRDF’s position would be fragmenting the nation and lead to conflict and civil war. The EPRDF’s federal-arrangement has been challenged by various entities like politicians, journalists, historians, students and youths at large.

After dominating the nation’s entire system in its federalism structure (what many criticized as a divide-and-rule system in practice) for almost three decades, the EPRDF began

dismantling. It was threatened by protests, particularly in Oromia and Amhara regions, and later in areas of the Southern region. A political Study on the Tigray war reflects the exacerbation that *“from 2014, this [discontents] gave rise to protests, first in Oromia, and later in Amhara and pockets of areas of the Southern region. It led to, and then compounded with, power struggle within the EPRDF”* (Moses T. et al, 2022). The opposition and resistance by various entities was comingled with the power struggle within the party itself, as the TPLF, the outweighing sub-party, was losing its hierarchy and power over other sub-parties of EPRDF, particularly over Amhara and Oromia representing parties in EPRDF, ANDM and OPDO respectively. These parties highly sympathized with the Amhara and Oromo protesters.

The growing protests and the failure of achieving far-reaching reforms by EPRDF led to the resignation of the then Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, in February 2018 and the ruling coalition appointed Abiy Ahmed as Prime Minister of Ethiopia on 2 April 2018. His appointment, many say, shifted a significant power control into the Oromo wing of the party, OPDO, having an important support from the Amhara side. Then things change swiftly; Abiy Ahmed unveiled and propagated a reform. The decisive leaders of the TPLF moved to Mekelle and began opposing Abiy’s reform. They accused his reform was violating the constitution, and intentionally targeting the Tigrians to attack (ibid).

In December 2019, the parties in EPRDF, except the TPLF, unanimously changed the EPRDF into a new emerging Prosperity Party (PP). This move has been brutally smashed by the TPLF, as a move to fragmentation of the nation, dismantling of the constitution and introducing a unitary system.

Tensions mounted, both sides began making military preparations; war become inevitable, many forecasted. The political tension has been exacerbated due to the election schedule during the Covid-19. The suspension of the electoral issue was submitted to the House of Federation, which has the mandate to interpret the constitution. It has then decided to extend the terms of federal and regional government beyond their five-year constitutional mandate

for the pandemic is challenging the smooth undertaking of the election. The TPLF refuted this decision by echoing it was violating the constitution, and it has solely undertaken “a parliamentary election in the Tigray Region on 9, September 2020, securing 98% of the Vote” (ibid). The federal government declared the election held by the Tigray regional government was illegitimate while the TPLF claimed the federal government is rather illegitimate on the ground that its constitutional mandate had ended.

The tension was escalating in the country. The federal government disregarded the TPLF and the Tigray Regional Administration. It has decided to allocate the budgetary rather to Tigray’s local levels, stopping dealing with the regional administration and the cabinet. The TPLF regarded this decision by the Abiy administration as “declaration of war” and deprivation of Tigray’s constitutional right.

The ongoing tension and conflict finally shifted to its climax with the outbreak of military confrontation happened on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2020, when the TPLF brutally attacked the Federal Army Northern Command (FANC). The former foreign relations chief of EPRDF, Sekoture Getachew, subsequently confirmed that the Tigray Defence Force operated a ‘blitzkrieg’ attack on the North Command of the Ethiopian national army and controlled all the military bases (<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=K2d4WAtbhBc>) . He claimed that the attack was a pre-emptive response to the “massive” deployment of all round forces (the Amhara, the Federal government and Eritrean) to assault Tigray.

The federal government, on the other hand, claimed that the attack was intended to overthrow the federal government by power and to regain supremacy in the country like before. PM Abiy Ahmed, in the National TV, EBC, announced the attack was an act of treason. The federal government then officially declared, next day after the attack of FANC, a military act to defeat TPLF and disarm the regional force in Tigray by mobilizing all possible forces: the Defense Force, militias and special forces of Amhara and Afar regions in particular. This war has spawned a large range of social-economic devastations, and caused

death of hundreds of thousands, and migration of millions in Tigray and parts of Amhara and Afar which butts on Tigray.

One of the contentious issue regarding this war is the positions taken by various institutions, countries and power-held individuals, and the positions of media outlets (so debatable of taking positions, against the code of conduct of media) and their coverage ever since the outbreak of the war. From the very inception, the war was reported by many media outlets, which are local and international, government-affiliated and TPLF-affiliated. This study thus examines the media framing of the news coverage of the attack of FANC and war outbreak by taking the reporting of the local-government affiliated media outlet EBC and the the TPLF-affiliated DW. The framing analysis of this study operates to explore how similar events and stories are represented in the two media outlets. It explores what issues are emphasized and what others are omitted by critically examining the reports of the two media houses regarding the war. The study analyses the news reports of the two media outlets in terms of the instigators and perpetrators of crimes, sufferers and victims as well as the entire nature of the war itself by undertaking a thorough content analysis.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The north war was highly devastating and dynamic. One of the distinctive features of this war has been the use of cyber warfare- level of competition over information and narrative; there have been various entities with diverging interests. The Media reporting has been under the influence of a number of factors, and that has challenged the prospects for accurate and balanced report regarding the war.

From the very beginning, there were limitations of accurate reporting. From the very inception of the outbreak of the war, on November 2020, there has been internet and telecommunications block across the Tigray region, which has created a huge information gap. The attempts by Journalists, reporters and aid groups to access the region as well as information from the region has been challenged; the widespread atrocities, destructions and

human rights violations were very difficult to be verified accurately. The war, particularly in the first days of the outbreak, was undertaken in almost total darkness.

To make the matter worse, it has been witnessed that both the warring parties were deliberately campaigning on the control of information-cyber war, on accusing and blaming the antagonist side. They have sometimes been completely discredited any sources and reporting that countered their position and refute their narrative of the conflict. In addition, the issue of media's independence and impartiality is there. It has affected the accuracy of reports. The government-owned Medias like EBC's independency is questioned, biasing to the stands and narratives of the government, as the case is expected. Medias affiliated to TPLF are not different. Impartiality and accuracy have been in question, anyway.

All these challenges have significantly limited the possibility for having a balanced and accurate report. It has also made it difficult to differentiate propaganda from information; confused accurate reporting from misinformation. The framing of news reports of the incidents, stories, and acts during the time of the war have been a point of dilemma and contention, and that determines the perception of the fact and information by the recipients. Scheufele emphasized the relevance of framing saying, "*the framing presentation of events and stories in the mass media ... systematically affect how recipients of the news come to understand these events* (Scheufele, 1999: 107).

This makes the studying of the Media Framing of the attack and subsequent war outbreak indispensable. The war being held in darkness and the respective atrocities committed, the blatant cyber-warfare between parties during the attack and the various interests and positions by the media houses and owners need a due study, and my thesis attempts to explore these issues. Many studies have been held on diverging concerns regarding the war, as this paper attempts to review them in Chapter Two. None of the studies reviewed makes a framing study from the angle of perpetrators of crime and violence and war victims as well as the representation of the conflict by comparing government vs. TPLF affiliated broadcast Medias. The study, therefore, is a contribution of its own by critically scrutinizing how the

Government-affiliated, EBC and TPLF affiliated, DW framed the attack regarding perpetrators, all-round victims and the conflict as whole.

### **1.3 Objective of the study**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of the study is to explore the framing of events and issues during the FANC attack and outbreak of war in Tigray by analyzing the reports of the local government and TPLF affiliated media houses, EBC and DW.

#### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

The study has the following specific objectives.

1. To analyse the nature and extent of the news coverage of the attack on FANC and subsequent war outbreak as of EBC and DW
2. To pinpoint the type and nature of frames used in covering the attack and war outbreak
3. To explore the main sources of information that EBC and DW used in reporting the issue
4. To explore the tones of the news reports, comments and interviews of the two media houses concerning the attack

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What was the extent and nature of EBC's and DW's coverage of the FANC attack and war outbreak in Tigray?
2. What frames did EBC and DW use in covering the attack and war outbreak?
3. What were the main sources of EBC and DW for the attack and war news?
4. What were the tones of news, comments, and interviews in EBC and DW of the nature of the attack and war outbreak?

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study on a framing analysis of two local media houses concerning the attack on FANC and war outbreak is significant in multiple ways. First and foremost, it is an important work in studying the attack on that day regarding its representation in media frames as well as the media bias and misinformation thereof. Second, it contributes to the existing research on media framing of war and conflicts by emphasizing on how the government and TPLF affiliated Medias framed the attack and the underlined assumptions. Third, it is a significant study showing the cause, perpetrators and victims of the attack as framed by the Medias mentioned in a comparative approach. It finally helps researchers on the area of conflict, media and framing being an important reference and triggering advanced researches on the various Medias' representation of the attack and the entire war.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

This study is delimited to a framing analysis of the coverage of FANC attack and war outbreak as represented in the government-affiliated local media outlet, EBC and TPLF affiliated DW. The two are chosen primarily because they both have a large number of audiences as well as there have been diverging reports of the war in their reports, which help to explore the framing and underlined assumptions by various media outlets (affiliation, political interest, media ownership). It pays particular attention to the reports of the attack on the FANC on November 3, 2020 and reports of the subsequent outbreak of war. The study again is delimited to the broadcastings, selected-three from both, on the same month of the incident, November. The study thus analyses the coverage of the two media houses in terms of actors and perpetrators, crisis and victims as well as causes of the attack.

## **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

The war in Tigray has been so dynamic and passed through various phases. The cyber warfare and competition of narratives have been so remarkable. Because the media coverage of the war, particularly the incidents on the attack on November 3, 2020, and the outbreak have been under the influence of various factors. So this study is limited in studying those

multiple factors that affect the media framing. It, for example, does not consider the various factors like reporters challenge to access information, issues of internet and communication gaps during the time & etc and the impact in framing of the selected medias. Time and resource deficiency could not allow that.

Moreover, the study could have been conducted on a wider scope by considering other media perspectives, like print media as well as western media narratives. Again, due to time constraint, the study is only on the two media outlets, and their media framing of the war outbreak.

## Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

### 2.1. Ethnicity: Identity and Conflict

A range of scholars attempted to explain ethnicity and ethnic identity and tensions and conflicts thereof. Among well-articulated theoretical foundations, three theories of ethnic identity have been prominent in the academia. These are primordialism, constructivism and instrumentalism. In Ethiopia, ethnicity has become so prominent that affect the political system as well as the media functioning. The constitution grants higher recognition to ethnicity and ethnic rights; political parties do organize in ethnic-base arrangement and objective; there are medias that tend to represent ethnic groups and languages. So the issue of ethnic identity is so important to be discussed and is related to the media coverage in the current study and the underlined assumptions and interests.

#### 1. Primordialism

This theory of identity relies on the assumption that ethnic identity is inborn, natural, and immune to any of cultural and political make-ups. Primordialism stands apart from, “*rational choice and the pursuit of material interest that characterize much of our lives*” (Smith, 2005: 5). It is a form of ethnic identity that is not dependent to factors and remains fixed throughout time and space. Horowitz (2001) adds the basis for communities relies on “*traditionality, the persistence of the past into the present, and a sense of collective self-interest*” (2001: 51). That is, an individual would remain a member of and belonging to a certain ethnic group that remains unchanging over time and space. According to primordialism, ethnic conflicts are natural and inevitable as two different ethnic groups would fight one another as a result of conflicting interests.

Primordialism has been critically criticized for it is regarded as too simplistic in understanding and explaining ethnic identity and conflicts. It has been disregarded for its “inability to explain the emergence of new and transforming identities or account for the long period in which either ethnicity is a salient political characteristic or relations between different ethnic groups are comparatively peaceful” (Lake and Rothchild, 1998: 2).

## **2. Constructivism**

Constructivism theory to ethnic identity argues that identity is constructed and reconstructed by a range of factors. Collective identities are rather reconstructed, fabricated and remade by narratives, institutions, and discourses over a period of time and throughout generations. Constructivism states that assuming a single and one attribute to members of any ethnic group is totally wrong, and this theory criticizes the notion of primordialism that emphasizes on natural attribute to groups and communities. There is innovation, and production in constructivism; *“Novel in this view...[are] the elements of cultural representation and social engineering and the importance of deliberate elite innovation that this implies...[nations] are the product of “cultural work” on the part of elites; without such elite narratives, the nation is unimaginable and incommunicable”* (Smith, 2000: 53).

The proponents of this theory also argues that ethnic identity can never be one, and an individual cannot be a member of only one and exclusive ethnic group. It rather underlines a supposed ethnic identity *“is actually a mixture of several other cultural identities”* (ibid: 49).

Constructivism, too, is not free from criticism and is questioned for some of its flaws. One of the gaps in this theory is the fact that some of ethnic communities remain unchanging and uniform, when there are even seemingly changing socio-political factors (Jesse and Williams, 2018, 12). This theory also fails in recognizing and explaining how some ethnic communities persist as they harm their members instead of benefiting (ibid).

## **3. Instrumentalism**

In this theory, ethnicity is considered to be a tool/instrument of influencing and mobilizing people in ordered to achieve a certain gain. According to primordialism, human beings pursue their interests and goals in a shared group, so they manipulate ethnic identity. It is usually manipulated by politicians and elites to organize and mobilize differences (religious, cultural and other) and achieve monopoly (Sisk, 1996).

Ethnicity is used as an important tool to mobilize and promote the community; an all-round support is gained by the elites to achieve power, prosperity and monopoly. In addition, ethnic identity, in this school of thought, has meaning in tempo-spatial contexts, unlike the case in primordialism. Instrumentalism is well understood as “*contextual, fluid, and a function of structural conditions in society, ethnic identities wax and wane, contingent on a wide variety of variables*” (Sisk, 1996: 12).

People attempt to achieve their shared interest basically by emphasizing how their ethnic group and identity is significantly different from the other, and usually blaming the assumed ‘other’ for their loss, poverty and misfortune. According to Horowitz, polar opposition, radicalism and the subsequent ethnic conflict is the result of accusing others, viewing ones situation in terms of others, the latter being usually accused by the former (Horowitz, 1985:143). Instrumentalism, generally, means a mechanism by which an ethnic group, often promoted by its elites, attempts to achieve a certain ‘material end’. It can be well summarized by the words of Lake and Rothchild, to quote them at large:

*Instrumentalism understands ethnicity as a tool used by individuals, groups, or elites to obtain some larger, typically material end. In this view, ethnicity has little independent standing outside the political process in which collective ends are sought. Whether used defensively to thwart the ambition of others or offensively to achieve an end of one’s own, ethnicity is primarily a label or set of symbolic ties that is used for political advantages—much like interest-group membership or political-party affiliation. Given the existing structure of states, and the geographic concentration of individuals with common social or economic backgrounds within these entities, ethnicity may be a powerful and frequently used political tool, but according to instrumentalists this does not distinguish ethnicity fundamentally from other political affiliates (1998: 6).*

Instrumentalism is again criticized for its flaws. It is basically criticized that instrumentalism doesn’t consider most of the conflicts that actually outbreak in the contemporary world that are not necessarily triggered and aggravated by ethnic identity. Conflict due to religious fundamentalism, tension on the control of technology and space, west-east dichotomy are beyond the case here.

## **2.2. Media and Politics**

Mass media and politics are highly intertwined; one is the reciprocal of the other in multiple of cases. The two have been interdependent, being the two sides of same coin, from the very beginning of Media's popularity (Martin & Copeland, 2003). It has been the feature of mass media, particularly in the ancient times, which its basic function is to disseminate to the mass information from the center (ruler) and in accordance with the ruler's interest. It has been a propaganda tool, the mouth of the state, by which its policy, regulation, achievement etc...is addressed to the public.

Politicians and politically-affiliated Medias influence how the mass media functions directly or indirectly. They may invest on it, they can own it for their own sake, they may intimidate media professionals and etc. The two are highly interdependent; the political atmosphere directly or indirectly influences media.

This influence has been more serious in earlier times, during the dictatorial rule when the practice of democracy and freedom of expression was not prevalent. However, the impact of politics and politicians has been so remarkable even today (Kumar, 2006).

People learn about their surrounding and know stories, events and happenings in the world from different sources of information. They can perceive their surrounding basically using three sources of information. These are from personal experiences, in our interpersonal day-to-day communication as well as from the Media (Asp 1986, mentioned in Shehata & Stromback, 2011). Though we get first-hand information in our experiences and communications, we do not reach a wide coverage like media; media remains a significant way of perceiving and disseminating information.

When the case is about politics and serious issues like conflict, election, world incidents and the like, we highly rely on and are dependent to the information we get from media. Sometimes, even in cases that we are familiar to and directly experienced, what we know

may not be representing the reality, how things really seem, how incidents really happen (Mutz, 1998).

Particularly when the case is politics, most of the information and instances are highly dependent to media; politics today is highly mediated, the two are inextricably intertwined (Kaid et al., 1991). Politics is the result of mediatization in which a lot of information in the political context and the society and government at large is constituted by information of media (ibid).

### **Mediation and Mediatization in Political Issues**

Scholarly reflections on the two concepts have been undergoing, and there is an increasing interest in conceptualizing them. Though there are contexts that the two concepts are used interchangeably, we see a significant difference between them. Shehata & Stromback (2011) argue that most British and US scholars use the term ‘mediated’ while mediatization is preferred by Europe and Scandinavian critics when speaking of the role of the media in transmitting information to the society.

However, the two are remarkably different, though not distinct. Mediatization can broadly mean “*the extent of the influence of the media*” (Mazzoleni, 2008) on a public sphere while mediation is more of a neutral act, dissemination of information by a range of media outlets without the assumed influence (Esser, 2013). In the context of politics, therefore, messages can be transmitted to the audience, without assuming impact, propaganda or campaign, and we call that role of media as mediated. On the other hand, mediatization refers to the impact the media has on the public, while transmitting political message.

### **2.3 Media: an Important Source of Information**

The media is a crucial source of information, as mentioned above, and its significance in the context of politics has become truism. Shehata & Stromback (2011) discusses three approaches in understanding the importance of media about political and other affairs. These are:

### ***1. Knowing the source of information people rely on***

Asking the source of information people rely on is the first technique to examine the mediated communication and its relevance, particularly in political and social affairs. The studies on people's reliance and usage of media are necessary to figure out how important media is in addressing the public. Such studies contain "*survey-based assessment of citizens' reliance on the media for information about politics and current affairs*" (ibid: 97). This way of analyzing mediated information tells its role in political context compared to other sources of information, like interpersonal communication, as discussed earlier. Shehata & Stromback mentions an exemplary case that citizen's in US are asked to answer an open-ended question about how they could get international news, and the majority of them replied they highly rely on Television broadcastings, particularly in getting political related information. The case study also points out that internet is becoming a relevance source of information, even challenging the TV's dominance. Shehata & Stromback says "*US data shows that TV is the most important source of news about national and international issues, it is increasingly challenged by the internet*" (2011: 98).

The current study uses TV broadcastings as its source of data in analyzing Framing. The reliance of people in accessing information of political and current issues needs a due examination in our case, actually. It is truism that majority of the population in Ethiopia are in remote areas, not accessing technological advancements like electricity, internet, TV. However, TV still remains an important source of information for the significant number of population, particularly for those living in towns and cities, and for those sensitive to political affairs. So, this study employs data that significant degree of citizens relies on.

### ***2. Media's role in creating awareness***

It is another important way of examining the relevance of media in mediated politics and affairs, observing the awareness it creates on the citizens concerning political issues. Media, various studies show, increases the awareness of people, makes them familiar to political issues and other current affairs. Elenbaas et al. states that, "*wider distribution of political*

*information in the media strongly increases the odds that citizens acquire that information”* (Elenbaas, 2012: 15).

Media matters a lot and peoples’ awareness to political affairs is highly determined by how they acquire information from the media. Most of political issues and agendas are conveyed and perceived by using mass media as a mechanism. Citizen’s perception on political ideologies and programs, the position they take, their participation in time of election, their siding during contentions between parties and entities ... would be the result of their awareness, which is constructed, basically by the media.

### ***3. Sociotropic perceptions***

Media has to do with the perception of the national and societal issues at large, beyond personal levels. *“Through various media, people learn about issues, events and actors beyond their personal and everyday experiences- with potentially significant implications for citizens’ understanding of politics”* (Shehata, 2022: 2). The media affects how people understand their surrounding and define perceptions in the society; our world view, our perception to social reality, our reaction to political issues all are determined by mediated communication. The case in sociotropical perception is particular to the media’s impact on the entire environment, on the whole system and society, to a significant degree.

The media effect in societal level has been dealt in various theories, basically in agenda setting, framing and cultivation (ibid: 2). Social issues and affairs can be understood from the arguments of media theories and their underlying assumptions.

Agenda setting is a prominent classical theory of media and mass communication. The argument in agenda setting relies on the importance of the media to set public issue for media by underlying its relevance to the public. *“By focusing attention on specific societal issues, the news media provide cues regarding what societal issues deserve attention”* (ibid: 5). The issues and problems are put in hierarchy of relevance, ‘top of mind’ consideration (Kinder & Iyengar, 1987). News reporting and broadcastings, thus, set agenda of selected issues to be mediated, which are considered to deserve particular emphasis and attention. Agenda-setting

thus affects how we perceive social issues and problems, and influences what issues we set to be agendas.

Media critics argue that, unlike agenda setting which is primarily focused on news reports, cultivation media effect focuses on broader cultural context, and its impact is related to Television, i.e. on narratives disseminated basically by Television. Cultivation has distinct features. The first distinct feature is its effect is conceptualized in long-term effect. This theory argues that citizens are ‘cultivated’ in a range of repeated and constant information. Its effect is not assessed in an immediate response of people, but in continuing and cumulative effects throughout time (Potter, 2014). Being particular to Television as the case is in the study of cultivation theory, its other distinct feature is that the theory’s interest relies on the relationship between Television and its impact on perception, which is particularly related to crime (Shehata, 2014). However, cultivation can be perceived in terms of other topics, too, though crime and perception to it is the dominant one.

Another theoretical issue in understanding and studying the sociotropic media’s impact is framing. The concept of framing has a diverse application in a range of disciplines, compared to the two theories. The analytical approach and conceptual issues of framing have been dealt in a range of disciplines like psychology, sociology mass-communication and etc.

*“While most framing effects studies focus on political attitudes, the primary outcome variable in framing is issue interpretation, that is, how citizens make sense of an issue in terms of ‘the presence, weight and consideration’”* (Matthes & Schemer, 2012, mentioned in Shehata, 2014). That is, framing is the impact of the mediated communication in the thought of the people. On the basis of mediated communication, people develop a sense of something, conceptualize a topic, and make perception of incidents in the surrounding. The framing of media, therefore, tells about people’s outlook and perception to their environment, i. e. their sociotropic perception.

Sociotropic belief of citizens thus is the impact media has on peoples’ perception on social issues in their surroundings. That impact has been addressed in studies of media in the prominent theories of agenda setting, framing, and cultivation (ibid).

The media outlets and their effects are today changing as the political environment is changing and as new technological advancements are emerging. People are to select from various media outlets, TV, internet, magazine, and to acquire information on their selected topics. There is a necessary shift in concern today, people are selective, and that shift “*from a low-choice to a high-choice media environment allows people to personalize their media diets, selecting and avoiding content at the genre, ideological, channel and outlet level*” (ibid).

## **2.4. Theoretical Framework**

The TPLF-led force and the Federal government-led force war in Ethiopia has been destructive, causing hundreds of thousands die and millions flee. It has spawned a lot of social and economic crisis, even today as of the writing of this paper, though the war has been concluded in a Pretoria convention. Though the all-round destructive conflict and war has ended, the triggering factor-attack of the FANC by the TPLF and the media coverage during that period is still of due concern and study. This study, therefore, explores the framing of the attack and related stories in order to understand how the Medias affiliated to the warring parties made sense of and represented the atrocity of the attack and outbreak of war. This study thus aims to capture how the framing of FANC attack is represented by the two local media outlets, EBC and DW, by relying on framing theory and literature of identity and conflict.

### **2.4.1. News Framing and Social Influence**

It has been one of the basic concerns of scholars in the field of communication to study framing and its theoretical issues. Like many other concepts, these scholars do not have a similar perspective to framing and never defined it alike. In addition, there are also scholarly reflections on how framing can be related to other media concepts, like Agenda Setting. Despite such limitations, media framing can have its own theoretical foundation and can be understood in having its own impact on the perception of the recipients regarding events and issues.

Goffman (1974), to whom most critics credited introducing framing theory, defines framing that it is “*the principles of organization which govern events... and our subjective involvement in them*” (1974: 172). De Vreese (2005) also explains that framing implies “*an emphasis in salience of different aspects of a topic*” (2005: 53). He again states that framing is more important in the context of political communication, more helpful in “*media’s role in political life*” (ibid). In his study of media framing, Tankard (2001) contends that framing basically “*reflects the richness of media discourse and the subtle differences that are possible when a specific topic is presented in different ways*” (2001: 97).

Framing theory in media communication recognizes that information dissemination actually constructs reality by selecting certain aspects of the story and making it salient, while disregarding other aspects (Entman, 1993; Reese, 2007). Framing generates a range of meanings—from defining societal issues to assigning moral evaluation and blame, from identifying and pointing problems to recommending solutions (ibid).

In an important work, *Theories of Mass Communication* (2009), McQuail explains framing in two approaches that show causal relationship. The first is about how the news is produced, while the second is about the effect that production would have on the public. It is what Bennett (2011) emphasizes that “*great frames help people visualize, aspire, and put messages into the contexts of their personal lives*” (2011: 127).

According to Goffman, frames are perceived as “*a schemata of interpretation ... into something meaningful*” (1974: 21). It is the way that defines situations, organizes ideas and information and finally conveys meaning. Kosicki claims that frames can be understood as “*a conceptual framework for examining the details of how issues are conceptualized in public discourse as highly contested matters over which there is often considerable disagreement*” (2001: 18). To be particular to the news media, framing is viewed as “*how issues are presented*” and the subsequent impact of that presentation on how the recipient/public/audience perceive the events and issues (Price and Tewksbury, 1997).

Framing cannot be meaningful without the assumption of its impact on the public/recipient. Scheufele shows this feature of framing that “*The framing presentation of events and news in the mass media can thus systematically affect how recipients of the news come to understand these events*” (1999: 107). In an extensive discussion of a certain framing and its overall impact on the recipient, Scheufele also mentions a two-fold way of presentation of news and perception and comprehending it: these are *Media Frames* and *Audience Frames* (ibid).

*Media frame* is viewed as “*a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events. ... The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue*” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987: 143). It is how information is organized and how a story is told, to unfold some sort of incident to the public. *Audience framing*, on the other hand, is how recipients of that information use the frame to comprehend that information, to understand the issues and events in the news media. This framing helps recipient’s perception by providing “*mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide individuals’ process of information*” (Entman, 1993: 53).

Druckman (2001) also discusses the framing and its audience-impact in his important study, *The Implications of Framing Effects for Citizen Competence* (2001). The study uses rather different, terms: *frames in communication* and *frames in thought*, in explaining the above two-fold process, and critically scrutinizing, we understand that they are the ‘presentation of news’ and ‘the perception by the audience’ respectively. Druckman explains that framing is a process and an impact in which the former (*frames in communication*) influences the latter (*frames in thought*), the two being similar with Scheufele’s *Media frames* and *Audience frames* respectively. Entman attempts to discuss the basic functions that media frame can have in this two-fold process. He summarizes four important functions: 1, it defines problems that are measured in terms of cultural values, 2, examine the cause of the problem for suggesting solutions, 3, making moral judgments, and finally suggest remedies and treatments for the prevailing problems (1993).

Many other critics also discussed this two-fold process, presentation and impact in their studies concerning framing. Pan and Kosicki (2004) argue that the two elements are significant in our conceptualizations of media framing. They contend, “*Frames are generally considered to reside in both discourse and individuals’ cognitions, and framing refers to a process of social influences that connects the two*” (2004: 11). Gamson and Mayor again states that “*Frames are, on the one hand, part of the world, passive and structured; on the other, people are active in constructing them. Events are framed, but we frame events*” (1996: 276).

Framing thus implies influence, achieving power and monopoly. Entman (2003) summarizes well on this account, stating “*Successful political communication requires the framing of events, issues, and actors in ways that promote perceptions and interpretations that benefit one side while hindering the other*” (2003: 417).

#### **2.4.2 The Effect of Media Ownership**

The media is expected to be a watchdog for the public, to report objectively and without bias. However, that interest usually fails, as we examine media’s actual functioning, and its true nature; it is under the influence of various entities; it is guided by underling interests. Scholars in the field have particularly warned on the long-arm influence of media owners in manipulating the industry. They manipulate what should be reported and how that should be framed; they impact what story should be magnified and what others are silenced; they cause forms of misinformation and disinformation. “*The political economic approach assumes that the material aspects of production in the media industries affect the content (conceived as ideology) to such an extent that everything that occurs in the media is shaped by these material aspects to fit with the interest of media’s owners and controllers*” (Jakubowicz, 1994: 17).

The content of the media, its news reports, is highly influenced by the owner of the media and respective material interests. The media houses and the owners of the industry pay attention to stories and events that are measured in business, succinctly speaking to stories

and reports that are ‘sellable and profitable’. The following long quote summarizes how media is susceptible to market very well.

*The public’s attitudes on foreign affairs are set much more by the objective content of the issue and by the position of major policymakers than by the media. The media are not so much agenda setters as purveyors and entrepreneurs of tantalizing information and, like any other entrepreneur; they are susceptible to market forces. If they give an issue big play, it may arrest attention for a while, but this is no guarantee the issue will “take”. As with any business enterprise, media moguls follow up on those proffered items that stimulate their customers’ interests. In that very important sense, the media does not set the agenda, the public does (Wittkopf, 1999: 55).*

### **2.4.3 Media framing, Agenda setting and Priming: A Distinction**

Framing has been discussed above: an attempt on reflection of its definition, its function and impact. And in this part, the paper briefly reflects upon how framing is related to Agenda setting as well as priming and how they differ. The three models in the study of communication have received particular attention by scholars in the area. Scholars in the field of communication have attempted to define and differentiate them. They have discussed the three models in terms of their characteristics, effects and relevance in the political communication.

Some scholars have viewed both agenda setting (priming) and framing as similar and concepts that can be used interchangeably (Price and Tewksbury, 1997, for instance). Others consider one is a sub-part of the other, and still a significant degree of critics, like Scheufele (2000), consider the three as significantly different.

In the earlier decades, back 1970’s (according to Scheufele), Agenda setting has been the major area of studies in communication. According to the review of Chaffee in his important study on mass communication with the title *What Communication Scientists do* (1997), Agenda Setting has been the prominent topic concerning the perspectives of news reports. It

has been the study of how Medias cover issues, what they emphasize and silence, and how they put them in hierarchy.

Some scholars including Kosicki (1993) deal with what is called Public Agenda setting and argues that *“not only do people learn factual information about public affairs from the media, but also they learn how much importance to attach to a topic based on the emphasis placed on it”* (Sietman2005: 14). There are also other two important forms of Agenda setting mentioned by Rubin and Haridakis (2000), named *Media Agenda setting*, the first, and *Policy Agenda setting*, the other. The former deals with the multifaceted factors that affect the media coverage of issues and events. The latter is about policy, and what factors affect elected officials in their decision and making of policy.

Agenda setting in media communication briefly refers to the emphasis given to issues and events by the media. It is about the extent and prioritization of such issues by mass media (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Priming has been considered as an extension of agenda setting in that audiences/recipients would use the issues presented on mass media as benchmark of evaluating political leaders and the government at large. It stands to mean *“changes in the standards that people use to make political evaluations”* (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987: 63). It implies that the attitude of the people and the subsequent decision and judgment they make are based on the considerations of the agendas that recur in the media. *“By making some issues more salient in people’s mind (agenda setting), mass media can also shape the considerations that people take into account when making judgments about political candidates or issues (priming)”* (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007: 11).

Agenda setting as well as priming and media framing are two different theoretical perspectives, they are considered to be distinct in the recent discussions of mass communications. The former is primarily concerned with the ‘what’ of the coverage in news media, having no interest on the ‘how’ of the presentation of an issue. It deals with the nature of the topics reported, the prominence and emphasis of those topics, the selection of the topics etc. (Price & Tewksbury, 1997). *“Framing, in contrast, is a conceptual framework for*

*examining the details of how issues are conceptualized in public discourse as highly contested matters over which there is often considerable disagreement” (Kosicki, 2001: 18).*

Framing is thus significantly different from such idea of accessibility of issues and events, their presentation. Framing in media communication has the assumption that the presentation and characterization of events and issues in news report influence the recipients and their perception.

The distinction between the three models of communication can be discussed in terms of how information is created, and the ultimate effect it would have on the audience. Discussing them in terms of the production of the message (the news) and its effect help understand and differentiate them better. Scheufele & Tewksbury (2007) argue that the basic difference between framing and agenda setting (priming be an extension) is the “cognitive effect” the news media has on the perception of the audience/recipient. Accordingly, agenda setting basically relies on “accessibility-model” (ibid) of communication, the accessibility of the issue by the media. Framing, on the other hand, is applicable to the effect of the issue that is accessed/presented in the media. Agenda Setting and framing thus differ in that they deal with “*whether we think about an issue and how we think about it*” (ibid: 14).

#### **2.4.4 Forms of Media Frames: in situations of crisis and conflict.**

The framing and identifying it in media are basically addressed in two approaches. In analyzing the content of news frame, we basically use either inductive or deductive approaches (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). Inductive approach helps to identify the multiple possibility of framing by defining pre-conceptual frames. Deductive framing, on the other hand, means pre-setting a specific frame in advance and reference of the use of that frame in the news story (ibid). Semetko and Valkenburg argue that deductive approach is more appropriate in undertaking a comprehensive framing analysis.

A range of framing types can be mentioned in a scholarly discussion of mass communication. Iyengar (1991), for example, discusses two well-known forms of media

framing in his important study, *Is anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues* (1991). These are 'Episodic framing' and 'Thematic framing'. He begins his discussion of these framings by arguing that all forms of news report are the result of a certain perspective. For him, episodic framing is associated with individuals and argues that individual events as well as individual people affect social issues. Thematic framing, on the other hand, is an assertion that a certain social problem is caused by societal group or the government at large.

In this section, an attempt is made to discuss prominent frames in the context of crisis and ethnic conflict so that that would be significant in the discussion of people, victims and actors in such situation. Concerning such varieties on the intention and implication of media framing, Robinson (2002) argues that:

*News media reports do not 'objectively' reflect humanitarian crises. Rather, they report crises in particular and often very different ways...Accordingly, we can theorize that news media influence is greatest when coverage is framed so as to criticize government policy and empathize with the plight of suffering people. Conversely, when coverage is framed so as to produce an emotional distance from the plight of suffering people, the likely political effects will be to deter politicians from intervening (2002: 25).*

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) discuss five news frames that are preferably analyzed in deductive approach to framing. Most of these framing types are common in the situation mentioned. They are Conflict frame, Human Interest frame, Economic consequences frame, Morality frame and Responsibility frame.

**Conflict frame**-this framing emphasizes on conflicts that arise between individuals or groups in capturing the audience's perception.

**Human Interest frame**- it is concerned with the interest/point of view of people in depicting an issue/event.

**Economic consequences frame**- is concerned with the report of events and issues that might have economic effect on the individuals.

**Morality frame**-it attempts to represent issues and events from the moral point of view; religion, social norm, right-wrong dichotomy is important.

**Responsibility frame**-the emphasis here is attributing a responsibility to certain individual, group or the government.

Four major framing types (Robinson, 2002) are also of a paramount significance to mention with regard to framing the reporting and broadcasting of conflict and crisis. These are distance framing, empathy framing, support framing and critical framing. **Distance framing** keeps the audience/recipient and the victim apart, the former would not feel the pain of the latter, because a story is omitted or put aside. So the audience in this case lacks empathy as a result of the block or the distance from the story. **Empathy framing** is just the opposite of distance framing, whereby the audience and the victim become intertwined and close. The former feels the pain and sufferings of the later, sympathizes. **Support framing**, on the other hand, deals with issues of policy, government action/inaction and intervention/non-intervention during the time of crisis and conflict. The last one, **Critical framing**, is critical of criticizing failures (inaction and non-interventions) during a time of crisis, like humanitarian crisis, ethnic conflict and war outbreak (Robinson, 2002).

## **2.4.5 Framing in TV Broadcasts**

### **2.4.5.1 Techniques of broadcasts and newscasts in TV**

Many TV newscasts and broadcastings begin telling their story usually with “a headline-type overview” (D’Angelo, 2018) of events and issues of the day. The daily events are broadcasted in a range of possibilities (Clausen, 2003; Schaefer & Martinez, 2009). The first common way is the presentation of stories by anchor narration that is usually having images, sometimes appearing fully in the screen and sometimes in the background. Images that appear fully in the screen are called VO (Voice Over) or VO/SOT (Voice Over/ Sound On Tape), while moving images appearing in the background are called “studio anchor scenes” (D’Angelo, 2018). There are two basic techniques of narration of story by anchor while image is fully shown, VO and VO/SOT. Their difference relies on the narration of the anchor.

*In VO, the anchor reads out the entire script live while a news video is played. In VO/ SOT, the anchor reads out the script live while video is shown until a sound bite is played (video or audio). The anchor is quiet while the SOT is played and potentially continues reading the news story after the SOT is over (ibid: 193).*

The second popular technique of telling story in TV broadcasting is characterized as “a lead-in with news package”. Here, the lead-in can be anchor narration or anchor-reporter exchange, while the news package is a message/story already produced and ready to be aired after the lead in (Clausen, 2003; D’Angelo, 2018).

#### **2.4.5.2 Verbal and Visual components: Duality of TV Broadcast**

In TV broadcastings, there are two basic components whereby a story/an incident can be told. The first one is the verbal story, the narration of the story using words, and the second is visual presentation, the story in images. In the verbal transmission, background information, overview of the incident, reporters’ reactions and reports are presented. In this part of the transmission, D’angelo argues the reporter’s reaction is the most important one; “*The reporter voiceover is the most common format for this segment*” (2018: 193). Beyond the reporters and journalists reactions and reflections, other individuals, either ordinary or public figures, are also common here in reflecting and describing events and issues.

An important component of storytelling that is salient feature in TV broadcasting is Visual presentation. A moving image paired with the overview of events and the Voice-Over of the reporter is the common feature in TV newscasts and programs. “*Researchers who analyze both the verbal and the visual framing in TV news must, at some point, say something about the extent to which the verbal frames matched the visual frames— i.e., about verbal–visual frame congruence*” (ibid, 205).

There are theoretical arguments concerning the connection between verbal and visual segments in the presentation (Walma van der Molen, 2001; Kelly, 2010). There have been attempts in exploring the matches in the presentations between the two segments, and quite a

lot of studies have pointed out that there are a range of mismatches in many occasions. Walma van der Molen and Klijn (2004) argue that the visual aspect in case of mismatches is more to get conceived and remembered.

*When verbal and visual information do not correspond, viewers' attentional capacity is exceeded and ... priority will be given to processing of visual information. This implies that when text and pictures are not semantically related, the main message of a television news story, which is usually presented through the audio channel, will be lost to most viewers (2004: 90).*

When the interplay between the verbal and visual presentation is in conflict, the visual aspect is more likely to be conceived and remembered. It can be perceived more easily and quickly, and acknowledged and recalled better.

There are also issues of reflection on stories told by one segment and ignored by the other, stories presented in both, mismatches in meaning and the like. For example, Doris Graber in her study *Seeing is Remembering: How visuals contribute to learning from television news* (1990) has found 49% (nigh half ) of the news stories analyzed in her case are presented visually, unspoken. Another study on children and adult programmes by v.d. Molen argues that children broadcastings are more likely to use visuals than adults.

#### **2.4.5.3 Transcription: Converting an Audio File into a Text**

In using TV broadcastings as a data of analyzing in research work, it is very common to convert the presentation into words, text. The transcription can actually deal with the representation in text of spoken words as well as the transcription of texts on the screen and the description of visual images into words (Walma van der Molen, 2001). D'Angelo argues, "For a long time, studies of TV news framing relied exclusively on transcripts of the audio track (2018: 201). It has been for long a trend to rely on the transcription of what has been spoken, neglecting words written on the screen and the description of what is seen. However, the presentation on the screen: what we hear and see, are relevant, and both should be given emphasis in interpreting meaning and making analysis.

## 2.5 Review of Local studies

In this section of this thesis, an attempt is made to review some of the important studies regarding the North Ethiopian war and framing of conflict and crisis. In doing so, it would also be significant to show how this study is different from the earlier ones and points out what gaps it covers and scholarly contribution it has.

The first important study is Behailu Negussie's *Western Media Rhetoric on the Armed Conflict News Coverage in Tigray Region: Ethiopia: the BBC, AP and Reuters* (2021), unpublished MA thesis, AAU. This study pays a particular attention to the news coverage of the Tigray war, particularly by the western media houses, and analyzed the rhetoric of the war, as well as framing and representation by those Medias. By employing a qualitative approach of content analysis, the study has come up with a 'war frame' and 'ethnic-conflict frame' that has been aggravating the war and polar opposition. It concludes that the framing of the three media news framing "*presented the battle as a civil war and full scale war in the Horn of Africa, which had destabilized the region. According to the study's finding, the media focused on narratives that endangered people's peaceful relations*" (2021: 2).

Behailu's remains a significant review to the current study in that it touches up on the issues of framing as well as a similar topic, war in Tigray. However, it still remains quite different from the intent and coverage of this study. The study being undertaken emphasizes on the attack of FANC and outbreak of war, while Behailu's considers the rhetoric in the extended period of war. Furthermore, Behailu's study is on western media rhetoric in their coverage of the war, while mine is focused on local media outlets, being more concerned with victims, perpetrators and thematically framing the attack.

The study by Temesgen Endale, again unpublished MA thesis of AAU, *Global Media Coverage of the War between Federal Government and Tigray Armed Forces: The Case of BBC and Reuters* (2021) has also attempted to explore the coverage of the war by those renowned international media outlets. The study analyzed one month duration media coverage of these media houses by using framing and priming as its theoretical frameworks.

Temesgen again explores the employment of war-aggravating media frames like military-action frames and concludes that the entire representation of the war harms the peaceful co-existence of various ethnic groups in the nation and widens the gaps. Temesgen's underlines the war coverage of Tigray by both of the media houses shows the position of the western world, i. e against the Ethiopian federal government.

Temesgen's study again is an important research work in the exploration of the north war from the perspective of media coverage as of west media's lens. Unlike the current study, however, its concern is not the two media's which are affiliated to antagonist entities in the conflict. The concern, methodology and finding between Temsgen's and the current study are different.

*Political and Media analysis of the Tigray Conflict in Ethiopia* (2022) by three researchers, Moses Tufa, Alagaw Ababu and Hubert Kinkoh is a study which has a paramount significance. This study argues that the outbreak of the war is a result of the polarization of ethnic identity and state structure. The researchers state that this devastating war, which causes massive humanitarian crisis and violations of human rights, has been subjected to bias and selective coverage, when coming to media representation. By taking a range of media outlets, both local and western, the study emphasizes that the accuracy of the reporting has been questioned and the voices of the victims have been significantly suppressed.

This study overviewed the war in phases, and attempts to explore sorts of misinformation and media bias across various media outlets. The current thesis once again diverges from the study above. My thesis is not an attempt to overview the media coverage by multiple media outlets in and out, but delimited to EBC and DW, having affiliation to the antagonist parties and analyzing their framing.

Medhane Tadesse, Alagaw Ababu and Dade Desta also published a short but significant article about considerations and reconsiderations in the state building of the nation-Ethiopia. This study, entitled *Evolving state building conversations and political settlement in Ethiopia* (2021), examines that ethno-nationalism and polarization are the direct causes of ethnic tensions and conflicts in Ethiopia, including the outbreak of the Tigray war in 2020. The researchers nicely depicted that “ *mistakes in state and nation building, the radicalization of the Ethiopian Student Movement coupled with Marxism–Leninism and ethno-nationalism polarised and fragmented the state-building conversations of the country leading to civil war in the 1970s and 80s ... and “led to an exclusionary victor settlement in 1991 when the TPLF/EPRDF militarily defeated other groupings and the Derg”* (457: 2021).

The study, *Evolving state building conversations and political settlement in Ethiopia*, has been relevant sort of material that discusses trends of conflict and polarization in Ethiopia, to which the war outbreak in my case too is attributed to. State building, political resolution and historical review of Ethno-nationalism in Ethiopia, however, are not the issue in my study.

*War on paper: A critical discourse analysis of war reporting in Ethiopia* (2023) by Biset Ayalew is a more recent study that undertakes a discourse analysis of the representation of the war by local newspaper, Bekur. By deploying a critical discourse analysis as its theoretical framework and methodology, the study explains the construction of the war by Bekur is as ‘a war of existence’. Bekur, the study argues, represents TPLF on the one hand, and the Federal government and allying forces, on the other, as dismantlers and protectors of Ethiopia respectively.

The study analyzes the Tigray war in a CDA, by using Bekur, Newspaper. It is not discussing the attack on FANC & its framing of TV broadcasts in a comparative approach: quite different from the current study.

Kosun Birhanu's thesis, *Critical Discourse Analysis on Ethiopian Media Coverage of Anti-ISIS Demonstration Held in Addis Ababa* (2016) is also another important work that this study reviewed. Though Kosun's thesis doesn't directly deal with media framing and its concern is not the Tigray Conflict, it has an extensive explanation and analysis of media representation, discursive media practices as well as discourse in the case mentioned. His study is a qualitative analysis employing CDA as its theoretical framework and attempts to examine the Ethiopian media coverage of a demonstration held in Addis Ababa against the terrorist group-ISIS. The study concludes, by comparing state versus private owned medias, that the reporting has been influenced by institutional values and ideologies, by showing exemplary like in case of private media, the demonstration has an element of protest against the government for not controlling and resolving illegal immigration.

Though Kosun's study touches up on issues of media framing in cases of tension, and remains an important reference work concerning the issue in Ethiopian media coverage. The current study, however, is different in its scope, coverage, and objective as well as media selection.

The last study reviewed related to the current one is *Fasikaw Tadesse's Framing of Identity and Boundary Disputes by Regional Media in Ethiopia: Amhara TV and Tigray TV in Focus* (2020). This study is an important work on the framing of Medias in Ethiopian context and attempts to depict the framing of two regional-state media houses, Amhara TV and Tigray TV on a serious issue (boundary contentions) in a comparative way.

Fasikaw's study examined that the Medias rather worsen the tensions and chaos related to border disputes, than calming as it should be the role of media. By using framing and political economy theory, the study attempted to explore the prevalent types of frames used and the reliance of news sources as of the two media outlets. The study is delimited to time frame of the broadcastings between September 2018 and March 2019, and taken sixty purposively selected news reports. It argues that the Amhara TV stresses on the broadcasting of ethnic assaults on Amharas raising the question of border, while the Tigray TV

emphasized in underlining the border issue has already been solved constitutionally and meddling on it is war-mongering tendency. Fasikaw's study concluded that both media houses have been framing the issue in way of exacerbating the contention, harming people's coexistence, and attempted to set forth recommendations to alleviate the matter, like stating "political consensus between two regional states is needed".

This study remains an important reference material for the current study. It deals with conflict and contention and the media's coverage of that, highly related to the current one. It attempts to explore the intervention of politics and various interests in the coverage of the issue by the Medias, and after all, it treats the framing in a comparative approach. However, the current study is again different in its scope, coverage, and objective as well as media selection. It again is different that the current study is more interested in the coverage of a single incident, attack of army's command and war outbreak, which is far from what Fasikaw's thesis studied.

## Chapter Three

### Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to undertake a framing analysis of the representation of events and stories in the attack of FANC and outbreak of war in Tigray. It takes news articles from two prominent media sources, EBC, from the local-government affiliated Medias, and DW from the TPLF-affiliated. Therefore, this chapter presents the methodology, the selection, and data gathering instrument and procedure and related issues.

#### 3.1 Research Design

Framing analysis relies on understanding context, and requires exploring interpretations and contexts. This study, therefore, predominantly applies qualitative research method in analyzing and interpreting the broadcastings. It is “*a process of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge*” (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). The study basically undertakes a content and thematic analysis in its exploration of framing in the two media reports.

Azpiroz (2014) has explained the advantages of qualitative research in the study of framing analysis. He contends that a qualitative approach, like in discourse analysis, focus group, and framing, would have a better interpretation and contextual outlook. Ritchie & Lewis (2003) again contends that employing a qualitative method helps to emphasize on the social environment, the context, the implication of a situation. They also state that it requires the researcher’s perception and comprehension of the issue under scrutiny and investigation.

Hijmans, E. (1996) has also argues, being particular to framing analysis, a qualitative research is more appropriate method in order to undertake an in-depth study and understand the issue under investigation.

The study, therefore, employed a qualitative methodology and document analysis in its attempt of a framing study of the war as covered by the two media houses. It has basically relied on news articles of the reports of the two media organizations: the local government-affiliated media, EBC, and the TPLF-affiliated, DW. The content of their reports in the selected broadcastings is systematically and thematically examined.

### **3.2 Data Selection**

It is an important step in undertaking a study to select the source of the data to analyze. This study has chosen EBC and DW, local media sources in the framing study of the attack and war outbreak, and their coverage. The selection has also been specific in time in the selection of the article resources. Its selection has been particular to the coverage and programs in November 2020, the same month reports, just in the fresh days after the attack of FANC. Six broadcastings that cover the TPLF's attack of the Federal North Command on November 3, 2020, three from EBC and three from DW are selected for the study.

The first reason the study selected, the two media houses is that both have significant number of viewers. Both EBC and DW are thus chosen as they reach a larger community, the former in Ethiopia for it is a national TV Chanel, and the latter in Tigray, so their impact is immense. The other reason is that the two media outlets have been reporting the war frequently. Along with other media houses, local and west, EBC and DW have given wide media coverage of the Tigray war ever since its outbreak. The third important reason in this selection is to review the case in terms of representative media sources, and examine the situation in comparative study. The study needs the framing of the government-affiliated EBC against the TPLF-affiliated DW, and the underling interests and assumptions.

### 3.3 Method of Data Collection and Analysis

#### 3.3.1 Sampling and Collecting the Broadcastings

The broadcasting links are collected from the YouTube sites of EBC and DW: <https://www.youtube.com/@EBCworld> and <https://www.youtube.com/@DimtsiWeyaneTV>, respectively.

The broadcasted programs and news reports about the Tigray war are the emphasis. It is the Amharic broadcasting in both media outlets used for this study. In the search engine, important phrases like North war (የሰሜን ጦርነት), Tigray war (ትግራይ ጦርነት) and north command attack (ሰሜን እዝ ጥቃት) would be typed on the sites and the broadcastings are narrowed down by time, those reported on November 2020, the month of the attack to get fresh to the mood. They are chosen based on their relevance, and from those in the time framework, only those articles written about the Tigray war are collected for this study. Other stories that present issues other than the conflict, like migration, Ethiopian tourism, sport, are omitted.

Since the articles are selected based on relevance, purposive sampling is used. At first, nearly 20 links of broadcasts are collected from both media houses, and this study finally selected only six, three from each, that are more relevant and representative. In mentioning them while quoting, the short form of the English versions of the titles with the point of the minute that the source is taken is mentioned.

The collections are:

1. EBC (2 November 2020). የፅንፈኛው ህወሀት ቡድን ጥቃትን ተከላክለው የተረፉ የሰሜን ፅዝ የመከላከያ ሰራዊት አባላት በዕዙ ላይ የተፈፀመውን ጥቃት አስመልክተው የሰጡት አስተያየት። (Commentaries of Members of FANC who defended and survived extremist TPLF attack) Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qiSsrOsklo>
2. EBC (8 November 2020). “የጁንታው ሴራ” ዘጋቢ ፊልም። (Documentary, ‘Junta’s Plot’) Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AScRo02bJQ>
3. EBC (24 November 2020). “ሠሜን እዝ ከጀርባ የተወጋው በፅንፈኛው የህወሀት ቡድን በሚመሩ ከሀዲ የጦር መኮንኖች ነው”። እጃቸውን የሰጡ የጽንፈኛው ህወሀት

- ታጣቂዎች።** (Witnesses of TPLF Captives, ‘Nth Command is attacked by TPLF extremist group in the army) Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6f-3lKAUeI>
4. DW International (23 November 2020). **እይታ፣ የመጀመሪያው ምዕራፍ በድል መጠናቀቅ እንድምታ።** (View: Implications of the Victory of Phase One) Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1yThWjhYYo>
5. DW International (4 November 2020). **እይታ፣ የሰሜን እዝ ወሳኔ እና የብልጽግና ጫጫታ።** (View: North Command Decision and Prosperity Party’s commotion) Available <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jj1GpP6Juys>
6. DW International (13 November 2020). **አማርኛ ዜና ሰዓት 01:30።** (Amharic News Hour 7:30 PM) Available: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObfGEDP\\_gQs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObfGEDP_gQs)

The six broadcastings are shorted as follows, while quoted in the discussion:

1. *EBC Commentaries*,
2. *EBC Documentary*,
3. *EBC Witnesses*,
4. *DW Implication*,
5. *DW Decision*, and
6. *DW Amharic News*.

The exact minute from which the quote is taken is mentioned. For instance, if it begins on the 5<sup>th</sup> minute and 3<sup>rd</sup> second in the first broadcasting, it is quoted as (*EBC Commentaries*, 2020, 5:03).

### 3.3.2 Analyzing Broadcastings

Basic information in the hearing, viewing, transcription and translation of the broadcastings is used in the analysis. The audio in the airing is first transcribed into Amharic, and then translated into its English version, being sensitive only to meaning equivalence. In addition, a description of images and non-verbal expressions would also be considered when found relevant in substantiating the transcription. Information like title and perspective of the broadcasting, images and graphics, the source and reporter (if mentioned) are all important. A content analysis is used in analyzing the selected broadcastings.

The content analysis emphasized on the individuals who are quoted and their view, identifications and descriptions of perpetrators, and the violence and its framing are also important.

### **Perpetrators**

A range of atrocities and human rights violations have been reported from the broadcasts of the two media outlets. They include murder, rape and military attack, loot and plunder, ethnic assault and etc. particularly salient during the war outbreak. Individual and groups who commit all such acts are considered to be perpetrators in this study. In fact, the identification and depiction of them have been drastically contrasting, side-taking and biasing as of the news reports of the two media houses.

Descriptions concerning who the perpetrators are and the acts committed are identified from the quotes or from the reporters. The perpetrators description as fascist regime, comrades, betrayals, fascist group, extremists and etc. is very important. They are to be critically examined; in some context, people who are actually victims are portrayed as perpetrators of victims.

### **Victims**

The attack on FANC on November 3, 2020 has been gruesome and shocking. It has been remembered to be an atrocious day in history; it caused death of a number of comrades in different units of the North command on that hellish night. Military men have been brutally murdered and assaulted and it caused many, even civilians as the war outbreak, dreadfully victims. In this study, victims are thus crucially scrutinized as the news reports of EBC and DW, again contrasting and countering stories here as the two media houses tell their stories concerning the issue. Those murdered, assaulted, plundered, ethnically targeted are victims in this study; the study explores the stories of these victims as the news reports of the two media houses in a comparative approach.

The victims, likewise, are identified from the quotes and the description of the broadcastings. The descriptions like soldiers, civilians, are to be scrutinized. In most of the instances, perpetrators and victims are confused, narratives are influenced by interests.

### **Framing of the Attack and War Outbreak**

Violence and specific actions during the attack are categorized in various forms. They are categorized as ranging from looting to ethnic cleansing and genocide, backstabbing to destabilizing a nation, as well as mass killing, law enforcement and the like. How the broadcastings framed the nature of the violence is thus of due concern.

### **3.4 Interpreting Frames**

An important step is then interpreting the framing of the war as of the presentation of the selected broadcastings from the You Tube sites of the two media houses. This interpretation is basically undertaken using a content and thematic analysis. The overall hearing, the data within, in light with theoretical foundation of media framing is used in the study. The study explores the representation of the two media houses in the selected broadcasts concerning the perpetrators of attack and crime as well as the victims of the outbreak. There is also exploration of framing by undertaking a thematic analysis of the presentation. The transcript of the audio information remains the primary data used, description of images and the mood being used as supportive.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings**

#### **4.1 Framing Analysis on the Outbreak of the war on November 3, 2020**

The attack of the FANC by the TPLF force on 3<sup>rd</sup> of November 2020 has triggered a nationwide tension and a subsequent military battle and confrontation. The TPLF immediately claimed that it has operated that pre-emptive attack because there has been deployment of military preparation by the federal, Amhara and Eritrian forces to assault Tigray and its people. The TPLF and its propaganda claimed that the forces mentioned had an all-round preparation to seize and attack Tigray, and argued the peace pact between Ethiopia and Eritrea after two decades of hostility has this intention.

The federal government, on the other hand, believed the TPLF was war-mongering, undemocratic, and had bad track of record from its inception, and argues prepared to come to power and autocracy by attacking the north command, which has disproportionately the major military potential.

The TPLF claimed this command was having the mission of the suspected attack against the Tigray regional government and to submit Tigray and its people by power. The Front declared to handle its 'blitzkrieg' attack (as Sekoture Getachew, one of the highest officials of TPLF who was later killed in the war, mentions) against the north command, and able to neutralize an imminent attack on the people of Tigray and regional sovereignty. The federal government, by contrast, argued the TPLF betrayed its own country, killed the savior of its people to take over the weaponry in the military bases of the north command and to forcefully retain power and rule Ethiopia once again in its autocracy, divide-rule and embezzlement.

Immediately after the attack, Abiy Ahmed, the PM of Ethiopia, declared, in the national TV, a military operation to disarm the Tigray force. As the federal force, together with militias and regional forces, was marching towards Tigray, atrocities, massacres and human right violations have been reportedly committed.

The outbreak of the war and the atrocities, massacres and violations in that very day, including the above massacres, have had media coverage by local and west media houses, though with a varying degree. EBC and the DW are two of the media outlets covering the outbreak and related atrocities, with varying perspectives and interests. Therefore, a discussion of the media framing relative to the framing of the war as well as the perpetrators and victims in that outbreak is what this chapter is devoted to.

As discussed in the methodology, the study basically relies on a total of six broadcastings, three from EBC and three from DW, though other links are used as supporting one. The links of the broadcasts are, in their short forms, 1. *EBC Commentaries*, 2. *EBC Documentary*, 3. *EBC Witnesses*, 4. *DW Implication*, 5. *DW Decision*, and 6. *DW Amharic News*. In the following section, a discussion of the framing of the attack, the perpetrators and victims in the attack are discussed.

## **4.2 Framing of Perpetrators of the attack**

### ***EBC***

As of the attack committed against the FANC, EBC presented it as perpetrated by the TPLF force. It has actually been plain who perpetrated the attack against the army; even TPLF-affiliated Medias never denied it.

However, EBC framed the perpetrator as cruel and treachery against its own army. It has framed TPLF as a traitor that attacked an army of Tigray people, stationed in Tigray for years to protect them, helping them in time of social needs including agricultural roles and harvesting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qiSsrOsklo>). In this broadcasting, Commentaries of Members of FANC who defended and survived extremist TPLF attack has

been aired. Members of the FANC, particularly in the north regiment, high commanders and fundamental soldiers, who survived the atrocity speak out. They speak with agony and anger, their expression showing they are deeply saddened by the act, the betrayal by TPLF. In the background is seen the scene, the compound, holes and fractures as a result of the outrageous raid and attack by TPLF force.

The framing we can comprehend here is portraying the perpetrator of the attack, TPLF, negatively, as war-mongering entity, backstabber and treacherous even to the people of Tigray whom it vows to protect their right and interest. Men and women, fundamental soldiers and those with position recall the moment, the screen with a desert background, fractures and gun-shot holes seen, filthy scene common. They blame and curse the perpetration and betrayal.

In another of its program, EBC once again underlined the atrocious nature of TPLF by interviewing soldiers who have been captives after the attack and later freed (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6f-3lKAUeI>). They have witnessed they were misguided; some say they were recruited to be police and they had no idea that they would be given mission to attack the army. They regret; they blame the act and curse TPLF. In the interview, they have exposed how grave crimes, torture and insult perpetrated by the TPLF against the army, recalling the massacres of their comrades.

TPLF, the perpetrator of mass killing and atrocity against the north command, has not only been framed as a backstabbing traitor and murderer, but also as illegal group in situations even prior to the outbreak of the war. It has been mentioned that the party consequently overrode the laws of the nation that it has used to say dying for them during its nearly two decades' supremacy in the EPRDF rule (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AScRo02bJQ>).

In this documentary, entitled Junta's Plot, a lot has been said and shown to expose TPLF's crime and conspiracy, its interest to create ethnic violence and chaos. Interview with government officials like V/Commissioner Zelalem Mengiste of the Federal Police Crime Investigation and Commander Getachew Mulatu, Haik Town Police Head, has been shown in exposing the crime and the investigation and capturing of criminals. On the other hand, TPLF men like Siyum Mesfin seen in the background screen, negatively depicted and narrated, as extremists and radicals, working day and night to declare chaos in the nation. Video goes in the background that show photos of a number of individuals who held TPLF's mission of crime to bomb on cities and social occasions, to kill people, together with the witness of some of them captured. They tell story; who they met, mission they took, the case of budget, and the story leads to TPLF mastering the crime to create instability and chaos in the country. Negative descriptions and background in the screen concerning TPLF, like by showing the Special force's cordon and show up wearing the Tigray's flag symbol in their uniform, the earlier statements by various individuals in the media. To the federal army is the reverse, a story that would create compassion and sympathy on the hearer and viewer perception; they are shown collecting crops, helping Tigray people during Covid 19 pandemic like supplying package of food items, and they, with grief, witnessed they are just betrayed.

TPLF'S rejection of the federal government's intent to postpone the national election due to the epidemic COVID 19, after decided by the house of federation, which has this mandate, has also been shown in the airing as manifestation of its war-mongering nature. The party was shown to be chauvinist and undemocratic, enemy to Ethiopia, and treacherous even to the Tigray people.

In the documentary, other perpetrators, particularly for crimes and murders after the outbreak of the war, have also been attributed to groups like the OLF-Shene (Oromo Liberation Front) and Benishangul armed rebels (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AScRo02bJQ>). These group, however are not presented as autonomous and perpetrating plot against Ethiopian government, and the crimes and atrocities against civilians. However, it is not depicted as

perpetrated by the rebel groups in their own plan, resource and political goal. They rather are enticed and sponsored by the TPLF to challenge the federal government and to take central power violently after destabilizing Abiy's regime.

### *DW*

The entire presentation, mood and framing of the media outlets affiliated to TPLF, including DW, are quite diverging, contrary to the presentation in EBC. Similar events and incidents are framed differently, sometimes contrary and contrasting.

Concerning identifying the perpetrator of the attack and mass killing of the FANC, DW and other TPLF-affiliated Medias are not different from government-affiliated media sources, including EBC. DW had overtly reported that the TPLF has successfully undertaken the operation against the FANC in order to save Tigray and its people from an imminent attack and invasion (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1yThWjhYYo>). This media aired TPLF and its conduct as bravery, tough and heroism that is taken to help Tigray prevail and to protect its sovereignty.

Unlike the case in EBC, DW never framed the attack was an act of provoking war and targeting against Ethiopian sovereignty. It is framed as 'anticipatory self-defense'. In the above airing with the title, *View: Implications of the Victory of Phase One*, an exhaustive interview is held with two TPLF members of the high staff, Sekoture Getachew and G/Michael Meles. They have argued that Tigray has been targeted by Abiy's regime and collaborating entities, basically Eritrean government and Amhara elites. The attack is just an attempt of destabilizing that threat, the individuals contend.

Therefore, perpetrators of criminal act, instigators of violence and triggering of the war are rather directed to other groups and individuals. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghcDBhyWbe0>). Abiy Ahmed and Eritrean president Esayas Afeworki as well as Amhara nationalists are accused to be war-mongering and

making an all-round invasion to defeat and embarrass Tigray. TPLF'S brutal attack, consequently, is fantasized as the savior of Tigray.

This broadcast contended that Abiy has been depriving the sovereignty of Tigray, his regime was purposely removing Tigray officials from federal positions, and insulting Tigrians now and then. It has presented a perspective that Tigrians have been targeted to death, starvation and flee their home, particularly after Abiy's government declared retaliation, and that is supported by Esayas Afeworki and other "enemies" of Tigray (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irifouTmUMY>).

### **4.3 Victims Framing during the Outbreak**

#### ***EBC***

Immediately after the FANC was attacked, EBC, in its news reports, broadcasted the victim-soldiers in various bases of the north command (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yXisTB5aFM&t=1926s>). By showing shocking graphics and videos (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qiSsrOsklo>), the soldiers have been depicted as victims who are betrayed and subjected to atrocity, while they have lived in those bases for years, Tigray being their home.

EBC emphasized to give empathy framing that while the soldiers were protectors of Tigrians, harvesting their crop, and maintaining the nation's sovereignty, the soldiers were rather betrayed and backstabbed (ibid). Images as well as audio narratives have been abundant that shows the soldiers involvement in getting responsive when Tigrayans were in need. They were cooperating with the people in helping them during social and economic activities as well as in protecting and securing them. The broadcasting emphasizes that the army never deserve such a betrayal and atrocity.

The soldiers interviewed have contended, with anger and agony, that the TPLF and its affiliates in the FANC have betrayed and backstabbed them. They even argued that they are not attacked by any force out of the army, like the Tigray Special Force as some speaks out;

they as betrayed and hit by men in the army, which is shame they say. They argue the TPLF political leaders and military men had conspired to massacre their own citizens, and protecting-soldiers, to worsen the matter. Their own friends, soldiers say with heavy feeling, fired them, killed them, betrayed them.

The soldier-victim orientation has shifted to cover a large scope including civilians of the neighboring residents, particularly Amharas when the war was escalating. It emphasized on the mass killing and atrocious crimes perpetrated by Tigrian forces against mass civilians on days after the FANC attack, which of course is not the concern of this study.

### ***DW***

For TPLF-affiliated Medias including DW, the victims are framed to be Tigrian civilians in most of the instances. This media was distant to soldier-victims in the operation, and echoed rather the suffering of Tigrians because of their ethnic identity. It has many reports broadcasted that Tigrians have been subjected to ethnic cleansing and genocide (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvmXw0V8Slo>).

The media was also airing various voices that mobilize Tigrians in order to stand together with TPLF so as to counter the attack targeted. In its news reports, Abiy Ahmed, Eritrean government and Esayas Afeworki are causing starvation, massacre, sexual assault, insult and all forms of atrocious crimes in Tigray. Tigrians are depicted as living in hell, in an all-round attack. The DW has accused that Abiy and his regime arrested Tigrians in Addis Ababa and other towns only their ethnic identity being their crime. He was also blamed and cursed for calling Tigrian regional government, elected by its people, in derogatory terms, including 'Junta'. Abiy and all forces standing with him were framed to be working hand in hand to perpetrate ethnic cleansing in Tigray (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jj1GpP6Juys>).

DW and other TPLF-affiliated Medias contend, now and then, that there have been victims, ethnically Tigrians, distancing the massacre's reality and context. DW in its various programs and news reports has rather emphasized that Tigray and its people are victims and

continue to be targets under Abiy regime, and self-defense has been perpetually contended. Tigray is under threat of conspiring three-fold enemy, particularly after Abiy came into power. The three groups are mentioned to be Abiy and his leadership, Eritrea and Unity force (usually referring to the Amhara Politics and movement). G/Michael in his reflection says, Abiy Ahmed was allying with Amhara and Eritrea forces to attack Tigray. He mentions cases like propagations by Amhara elites, like hearing of propagations and mobilizations on issue of territory (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1yThWjhYYo>)

## **4.4 Framing the FANC attack**

### **4.4.1 Discussion of EBC's framing of the attack**

The news report of the attack and war-outbreak and perpetration of crime, as EBC reports, is framed as attack on the nation's integrity and sovereignty. The outbreak of the war as of the attack against FANC again is framed as 'political', on the one hand and 'law enforcement' on the other. That is because the November 3 attack of the FANC by TPLF has been intended to regain political power using military force, and the federal government is responsible to ensure the enforcement of the law.

There is an element of empathy framing concerning the first day attack against Ethiopian soldiers as well as civilians latter. The soldiers in those military bases were not attacked by enemies, but their own friends, betrayed by their comrades. EBC depicted the atrocious nature of TPLF's attack and inhuman nature of the perpetrators against "sleeping comrades".

#### **4.4.1.1 TPLF is a terrorist and undemocratic; its act is inhuman**

The act of TPLF, its attack of the North command and subsequent perpetration, has been framed as inhuman and terrorizing the nation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qiSsrOsklo>). In this broadcast, the report describes the nature of the attack as exceptional and cruel, the world never witnessed. Such an attack on a protector of a nation's sovereignty by its own members is unimaginable and terrifying. The report recalls the attack is very atrocious and shameful, saying, “አስነዋሪ ጥቃት-shameful

attack”. The perpetrator (TPLF) has been shown to be intending to destabilize the nation. The reporting contends:

**ጁንታው የፈፀመውን አገር የማፍረስ አላማ ... የኢትዮጵያ ህዝብ ሊያወግዘው ይገባል።**

*Ethiopians should condemn the Junta’s act [TPLF’s attack of the army] ... its interest is just disintegrating the nation. (Commentaries, 2020, 6:01).*

The report has also mentioned that the TPLF knows very well how sensitive the case of nations and nationalities in the contemporary Ethiopia. Using that sensitive area for its objective, i.e. to create chaos, the organization conspires far, the airing argues, to create internal instability and disorder. Another report, a documentary on the conspiracy of TPLF, has presented an organized report on this (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AScRo02bJQ>).

In the documentary, Vice C. Zelalem Mengiste of the Federal Police Crime Investigation, and other police officers giving their findings and reflections on the suspected crime; accused persons conspiring with TPLF to undertake terror act are also presented, and some of the perpetrators being witnessing. The Vice Commissioner says:

**ይህ የጥፋት ሀይል አልተኛም፤ 3 ዓመት ሙሉ ። በየጊዜው በርካታ የጦር መሳሪያ ተይዟል። በርካታ ሽብር ሀይል ተይዟል። በርካታ ብሄርን ከብሄር የሚያጋጩ ተልዕኮ ተሰጥቷቸዋል። ገንዘብ ሰጋጋሪ ሆነው፤ ተልዕኮ ወስደው፤ በተለየ አካሄድ ሲንቀሳቀሱ ነበር። ፖሊስ በምርመራው ያገኛቸው ፋይንዲንጎች ከጀርባው ስጋን ሰር የሚደርግ ሀይል ይህ የጥፋት ሀይል ነው።**

*The traitor has never stopped its conspiracy for the last three years. There have been terrorizing groups, weapons captured on the mission to provoke ethnic violence, fabricated and sponsored by TPLF (Documentary, 2020: 2:21).*

TPLF has been framed as terrorist organization, fabricating and sponsoring terror acts in Ethiopia to put the country into total instability, and finally retaining and supremacy in the federal level. The attack committed against the FANC is just the manifestation of the peak of

its cruelty and inhumanness. The report also attempted to expose TPLF's long arm in designing terror attacks and sponsoring them; they are planned to be committed in different places, in Addis Ababa and towns in Amhara, Oromia and Benishangul regions. Destabilizing the nation and turning into a complete chaos, the report contends, TPLF wanted to put Abiy's administration completely fail.

In the documentary reporting, individuals recruited by the TPLF for undertaking the mission, terror act, are shown, as they are accused by the federal police before the suspected attack. They were meeting various officials of TPLF, arranging documents, possessing weaponries, as they witness and the investigation ascertained. They are trained and oriented to take part in the operation TPLF arranged:

***ሀገራዊ ቀወስ ለመፍጠር አልያም አገሪቷን ለመበታተን***

*In order create chaos, and destabilize and disintegrate the country (ibid).*

These men, arrested by the federal police and their investigation being held, are walled on the screen, with their names and pictures, and witnessing. One of them, the report publicizes, was having 19 bank accounts, and one of the accounts alone balanced 12 million birr.

Some of them are exposed to have affiliation to OLF Shene, another terrorizing group, the report contends, and witnessed having taken a mission from TPLF to organize a terror act. One of them, named Endris Muhammed, who is seen pictured with Eskiel Gabisa (Oromo Diaspora nationalist) in a photo, witnesses the mission he held, in Afan Oromo, being narrated in Amharic.

The report attempts to correlate TPLF and OLF Shene in the act of organized terror. The TPLF is shown conspiring, sponsoring, fabricating terror acts. It has been recruiting individuals, particularly members of Shene and working with Oromo extremists, for achieving its goal: political power by violence. It wants to emphasize framing TPLF as terrorist, and its act as inhuman and treacherous. That is, its terror act, violence, war-mongering, and finally the attack of FANC are represented as intent of meeting political interest, overthrowing Abiy's regime.

Though TPLF's act has predominantly been framed in terms of terror and inhumanness, we also see the intent of looting (weaponry and other equipments) as framing of its act, empowering its farther attack. For example, a witness says:

**ይህን ካደረጉ በኋላ [ግድያውን] ፣ ግቢ ወስጥ በመግባት፣ ንብረት በመዘረፍ ነው የጀመሩት።**

*After committing this [the massacre], they manipulated the camp, began looting (Commentary, 2020, 3:45)*

The framing of looting is reported to be a mechanism of farther attacks, to destabilize the whole nation. This framing in the first days of the report, however, is very rare.

#### **4.4.1.2 Framing of treason**

Framing of treason and betrayal has been another prominent perspective in the reporting of EBC concerning TPLF attack on the Command's soldiers and military officials. The reporting presents and interviews military men who defended and survived the attack. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qiSsrOsklo>).

They say, as one of them reflects:

**ሰራዊቱን በማታለል እና ደባ በመስራት ክድናል [ሀወሀት]።**

*[TPLF] has plotted against us, betrayed us (Commentary, 2020, 0:54)*

Curses and accusations on treason and betrayal of TPLF dominate the reporting. Another of the survivors, interviewed, tells with agony:

**እሱንም ሲፈፅሙበን የነበሩ እካወ ወስጥ የነበሩ የሀወሀት ተላላኪዎች፣ ከአባል እስከ አመራር ያለው ... ሊስት መጥቀስ ይቻላል ካስፈለገ፣ በመጀመሪያ ደረጃ ኦፕሬሽን ሲያከናውን የነበረው የ4ኛ ክ/ጦር ዋና አዛዥ ኮ/ል ገ/ስላሴ በላይ የሚባል ባንዳ ነው።**

*We are betrayed by those who were in the military bases with us, our comrades: from fundamental soldiers to commanders. I can mention names; it was colonel G/Selassie, commander of 4<sup>th</sup> Division, who organize and lead the 1<sup>st</sup> attack on us, a traitor (ibid, 1:22).*

The soldiers interviewed speak out the TPLF and its affiliates in the FANC have betrayed and backstabbed them. They are attacked not by the Tigray Special Force, they contend, but as betrayed and hit by men in the army, which is shame they say.

Another survivor adds:

**ከጥቂት ቀናት በፊት የሀወሀቱን ቃል አቀባይ አቶ ጌታቸው ረዳን ወደሰራዊቱ ካምፕ አስገብቶ ማስገባትን አስታወሳለሁ።**

*Just few days before the attack, I remember he [C. G/Selassie] had invited Mr. Getachew Reda, TPLF's spokesman, to the camp to visit (ibid, 1:46)*

They argue the TPLF political leaders and military men had conspired to massacre their own citizens, and protecting-soldiers, to worsen the matter. Their own friends, soldiers say with heavy feeling, fired them, killed them, betrayed them.

The news report framed the entire presentation to depict how treacherous and backstabber the organization is, with its story telling, description and direct words of survivors and soldiers. A different survivor, again, tells:

**ካንተ ጋር አብሮ ተኝቶ፣ ካንተ ጋር አብሮ እየበላ ... ልዩ ሀይል የሚባል ደካማ ነው፣ ወሽት ነው። ... ወ.ስጥ የነበረ ታጋይ ነው እኛን የገደለን።**

*We used to sleep in the same roof, to eat together ... not the Special Force [of Tigray], not the case. We have been killed by our own comrades (ibid, 2:13).*

The documentary, entitled *የጁንታወ ሴራ* (i.e *the Junta's plot*), adds in its presentation the following, in its framing of TPLF and its attack as betrayal.

**በተፈፀመበት አስነዋሪ ጥቃት ለሀገርና ህዝብ የዋለው ወለታ በክህደት ተመለሰለት።**

*Its [FANC] reward, after all, is betrayal ... for its commitment to its country, to the people (Documentary, 2020, 2:14).*

In another context, soldiers who are captives have spoken out that they had unwillingly and by coercion allied with the betraying and radicalist group. In a news report of EBC, they admit that the betrayal has been plotted and lead by the commanders in the army, saying

*ጽንፈኛው የህወሀት ቡድን የሚመራው ቀድሞ የመከላከያ ሰራዊት አባል የነበሩ ከሀዲ የጦር መኮንኖች መሆናቸውን እጃቸውን የሰጡ የጽንፈኛው ህወሀት ታጣቂዎች ገልፀዋል።*

*TPLF's radicalism has been directed with those in the army, war surrenders tell (EBC, Witness, 2020, 0:05).*

The airings mentioned above and the entire mood of the presentation emphasizes that TPLF is betrayal and treachery; its crime is inhuman and an act of treason.

#### **4.4.1.3 Empathy Framing**

Most of the reports aired after the attack on FANC, including those discussed here, have depicted the victims, both survivors and martyrs, with empathy. The military is not shown as fighting and loosing/defending as the case in war may be. It is attacked because it was genuine and trusting those committers, who turned out to be evils. It was attacked because it has trusted the perpetrators rather as friends and comrades; its weakness is trusting them and sleeping without doubt they would fire arms against the army. One of the soldiers mentioned earlier speaks:

*እጅግ በጣም የሚያሳዝን ነገር ቢኖር እዛ የቀሩት ጓደኞቻችን፣ የእነሱን እድገት፣ የእነሱን ልማት ለማሳለጥ ሲሉ ህይወታቸውን አሳልፈው የሰጡት ነው።*

*... Deeply discontented. Those comrades brutally killed were actually cooperating with the people [of Tigray] to help them prosper and secure, all their life (EBC, Commentary, 2020, 1:16).*

Those betrayed and killed in the army are framed to hold the hearers/viewers empathy. They were with Tigrians in time of need; they lived there, married and having children, because they feel that is their home. But they were backstabbed, massacred, what an empathetic feeling!

**ሠራዊቱ ... አንበጣን በመከላከል፣ ሰብል በመሰብሰብ፣ ጤና ጣቢያ እና ት/ቤቶችን በመገንባት አገልጋይ እንደነበርም አስታወሰዋል።**

*The army was helping the people in defending locust, collecting crops, and constructing health stations and schools. (ibid, 4:25).*

And that men were killed as if enemies of Tigray; hearers/viewers feel it with discontent and agony. In that way, empathetic framing, making the victim-soldiers and the hearers/viewers, into a state of compassion is made.

#### **4.4.2 Discussion of DW’s framing of the attack**

DW, in its news reports of the inception of the war, makes ethnic framing behind the case. It again framed the attack, without denying, as a Defensive act against imminent invasion. It broadcasted now and then that the multiple forms of attack and aggression, exclusionary act, labeling of Tigrayans by the enemies (Abiy’s military, Esayas force, Amhara force...) have targeted Tigrians just because of their ethnic identity. Together with that, a framing of genocide has been prevalent. The DW has a distance framing concerning the victims and atrocities the TPLF committed against Ethiopian defense force, FANC.

##### **4.4.2.1 Defense against Eminent attack**

DW, in its news reporting and programs, framed the operation undertaken at FANC merely as Defense, not attack. In a weekly program እይታ (view), with the title ‘የመጀመሪያው ምዕራፍ በድል መጠናቀቅ እንድምታ’ (Implications of the Victory of Phase One), aired on November 13, 2020, Sekoture Getachew and G/Michael Meles (High TPLF officials) are presented as analysts of the outbreak and speculating the war. They contend that war has already been declared on Tigray, and demobilizing the North Command is just a defense for that threat. Sekoture in the discussion says,

**አምባገነኑ አብይ አህመድ የትግራይን ህዝብ ለማንበርከክ ሲያከናውነው የነበረ ሴራ፣ ቀደም ብሎ የጀመረ ነው።**

*Abiy, the autocrat, has been conspiring to invade Tigray, even before the war outbreak (Implications, 2020, 8:15).*

They argue in the discussion that Tigray has been targeted and Tigrayans labeled. A framing of ethnic attack and genocide is made. There has been a sort of conspiracy and discrimination against Tigrayans ever since Abiy came into power; Tigrayans have been in a state of imminent attack, so justifiable is the defense. There were cases like:

**ገና ከመጀመሪያው መንገድ በመዘጋት በትግራይ ተወላጆች ላይ የተለያዩ ጉዳዮችን በማድረስ ... ስም ሁሉ እየሰጠ የቀንጅቦች፣ ፀጉረ ልወጦች ሌላም ሌላም ...**

*From the beginning, Tigrayans have been threatened ... they were labeled as day-hyenas, strangers ... (ibid, 8:48).*

There was also an attempt of depriving Tigrayans their constitutional rights (election case mentioned). And defending that has been Tigray people's and the leading government's (TPLF's) responsibility.

**ምርጫው ከተካሄደ በኋላ እንኳን፣ በትግራይ ላይ የተካሄዱት ርምጃዎች ከፍተኞች ናቸው። በጀት ተዘግቷል ሴፍቲ ኔትም አቋርጧል፣ የኮቪድ እንቅስቃሴዎችን፣ የአንበጣ መከላከል...**

*A lot of suppression ever since the election: budget blockage, safety-net cut, inaction and conspiracy in Covid and locust prevention (Decision, 2020, 11:53).*

Arranging the army, the Nth Command, and conspiring has just been the peak of the attack. It was the climax of all conspiracies by interesting parties to block Tigray, to seclude it, and to deprive its sovereignty.

*በመጨረሻ ግን ሠራዊቱን በማንቀሳቀስ በሃይል፣ ከበጀት፣ ... ከኢኮኖሚ ተጽዕኖ ባሻገር፣ በሀይል ወደማጥቃት እንደሚሸጋገር ግልጽ የሆኑ እንቅስቃሴዎች መታየት ጀመሩ።*

*At last, a military attack has become imminent, beyond economic conspiracies (Implications, 2020, 9: 23).*

So the higher TPLF officials contend that the cautious Tigray forces have successfully demobilized it; defended the imminent attack.

Sekoture has mentioned an international principle; he calls ‘anticipatory self-defense’. It is, he argues, a principle whereby when people (usually weaker, less powerful, with small population) are targeted and an attack is imminent, defending that is inevitable, justifiable. He says:

*እንግዲህ ይህ እርምጃ [demobilization] ፣ anticipatory self-defense የሚባል አለማቀፍ concept አለ። ትንንሽ አገሮች ለጥቃት የተጋለጡ መሆናቸውን ሲያዩና imminent የሆነ፣ ግልጽ የሆነ የመጥፋት ስሜት በሚሰማቸው ጊዜ፣ እንጨፈለቃለን ብለው ባሰቡበት ጊዜ፣ ፈጣን የሆነ፣ መብረቃዊ የሚባል ጥቃት በማድረስ፣ ወራሪውን ሀይል በማዛባት፣ በማተራመስ፣ ራሳቸውን ከጥቃት የሚያድኑበት መካኒዝም ነው።*

*There is an international principle called ‘anticipatory self-defense’. The less powerful nations take a ‘blitzkrieg’ military operation to demobilize and destabilize an assumed enemy and stop imminent attack (ibid, 13:03).*

In the program, it has been argued that the attack was a justifiable defense, and it is believed that it successfully demobilized the plot, the arrangement of invading Tigray and depriving its sovereignty, which Tigrayans are dying for years, mentioning their struggle against the Derg Regime as a similar case. The defense- demobilizing and destabilizing the plot in North Command has not only been an anticipatory self-defense to Tigray, the officials argue, but also a defense of chaos and instability in the entire Ethiopia. It again is depicted as a defense for other nations and nationalities and the federal structure.

*ያ መብረቃዊ ርምጃ ባይወሰድ ኑሮ ... ብዙ እልቂት ይደርስ ነበር። [በትግራይ] ብዙ ጥፋት ይደርስ ነበር .. ምናልባት ... የአምባገነኑ አብይ አህመድ ህልም .. ለጊዜውም ቢሆን የበላይነት ያገኝ ነበር።*

*If not that blitzkrieg attack had been taken, chaos would have been in Tigray and Abiy's dream would have been achieved, at least temporarily (ibid, 15:52).*

*ያ Anticipatory self-defense ባይወሰድ ... ወራሪው ህይል ባየመከት ኑሮ፣ ... በኢትዮጵያ ያለው ሁኔታ በብዙ መልኩ የተለየ ይሆን ነበር።*

*Assume the defense had not been taken; the entire nation would have been in tops curvy (ibid, 18:57).*

It has been also reflected in the discussion of the programs that defending Tigray is to continue from any form of attack. Further resistance is yet to come to defy suppression, marginalization and deprivation of Tigray. In *DW Implications*, 2020, it is clearly stated in the very Title of the Program itself:

***የመጀመሪያው ምዕራፍ በድል መጠናቀቅ እንደምታ***

*The implications of victory in Phase One (DW, Implications, Title)*

Again:

***የመጀመሪያው የድል ምዕራፍ ለቀጣዩ turning point ነው።***

*The victory of the first phase has been a turning point to the forthcoming (ibid, 37:43)*

They argue that though Tigrayans and the regional government are proponents of peace, they would struggle and die for their freedom and sovereignty, defend any form of invasion and attack, by potential enemies in and out. In a news program, DW Amharic News, 2020, this issue has been firmly stated.

**የትግራይ ህዝብ ለህልውናው፣ የራሱን መብት ለማስከበር የሚያደርገውን ትግል፣ አጠናክሮ ሊቀጥልበት ይገባል ሲሉ ያነጋገርናቸው የተለያዩ የህብረተሰብ ክፍሎች ገለጹ።**

*Body of the community comment that Tigrayans should stand firm in defending their rights and securing their existence (DW, Amharic News, 6:55).*

And the people (Tigrayans) interviewed have reflected their strong stance to stand with the Tigray Regional Government for defending themselves.

#### **4.4.2.2 Three-fold Enemy**

DW in its various programs and news reports has payed particular attention to three-fold enemy threatening Tigray, particularly after Abiy came into power. These are mentioned as Abiy and his leadership, Eritrea and Unity force (usually referring to the Amhara Politics and movement). G/Michael in his reflection says, Abiy Ahmed was allying with Amhara and Eritrea forces to attack Tigray. He mentions cases like propagations by Amhara elites, like hearing of propagations and mobilizations on issue of territory.

Eritrean and Amhara Forces have been accused for conspiring and attacking Tigray, manifestations given. For example, from his dicta ‘game-over’ and friendship and cooperation with Abiy (suspected to be motivated by common enemy, but nothing more), Esayas was showing hatred against Tigray, attacking its sovereignty and moving his army.

**እነዚህ ሴራወችና የጋራ እቅዶች ፍንትወ አድርጎ እንዲታይ የሚያደርግ ግልጽ ጦርነት ወስጥ የኤርትራ መንግስት ገብቷል ... የኤርትራ መንግስት ጭንብሉን ገላልጦ ሰራዊት ነዉ ያሰማራዉ።**

*Eritrea declared an overt war, clearing the plot made. Putting its mask off, Eritrean government moved its army towards Tigray (DW Implications, 2020, 23:34).*

The unity force again was shown to be opponent to Tigray, in various occasions, particularly on account of territorial claim. The two were allying with Abiy in his blockage, invasion and marginalization of Tigray.

*አምባገነኑ የኢትዮጵያ መሪ፣ አሀዳዊያን ሀይሎች፣ እንዲሁም የኤርትራ መንግስት በጋራ ዘመቱበት።*

*The Ethiopian ruler, forces in unity camp and Eritrean government assaulted Tigray in alliance (ibid, 24:45).*

And Abiy’s alliance, particularly with Eritrea, has been said to be threatening sovereignty of Ethiopia as whole, which was the discourse of Federal government affiliated Medias accusation against TPLF. As Sekoture argues, in a countering context:

*ይልቁንስ ከባድ ጋር በመወገን፣ የኢትዮጵያን ጥቅም ለባዕድ አሳልፎ በመስጠት የሚታወቀው፣ አብይ አህመድ ነው።*

*It is Abiy himself, who committed treason against Ethiopia (DW Decision, 2020, 13:30).*

#### **4.4.2.3 FANC Cooperated with Tigray**

The TPLF affiliated Medias, including DW as the broadcasts in this study show, have contended that the FANC rather cooperated with Tigray’s demobilization operation against Abiy’s plot. Significant unit of the army were said to have understood the issue and conspiracy, took position for Tigrayans and cooperated with Tigray forces. Sekoture states:

*ከትግራይ ህዝብ ጎን እንዲሰለፉ የሚደረጉ ጥረቶች ነበሩ ... በርካት ያሉ የጦር መሪዎችም የትግራይን ህዝብ አንወጋም ... ጠበቃችንን ወደትግራይ ህዝብ አናዞርም፣ የሚል አቋም ላይ ደርሰዋል ነበር።*

*There has been negotiation with the army, attempt to let them know the threat Tigray faces. Many commanders indeed chose not to attack Tigray, not to fire arm (DW, Implications, 2020, 11:19).*

*የሰሜን ዕዝ ... ህዝቡን አልወጋም፣ ታሪኩን አላጎድፍም፣ በሚል ታሪካዊ ወሳኔ የወሰነበት ቀንም ሆኗል።*

*It is a historic day when FANC decided not to assault Tigray (DW Decision, 2020, 0:55).*

Those who led the operation in demobilizing FANC are appreciated to be loyally, preferring right over wrong, people over tyranny. The army, according to those broadcasts, has played indispensable role by cooperating with the people of Tigray. The army members and commanders, to a significant degree, understood Abiy's wrong way, and knew Tigrayans do not want war. So an operation to demobilize has been taken only to disarm and destabilize those military men who refused the negotiations and obdurate with Abiy.

The FANC members have come to know that Tigrayans are just defending their sovereignty. For their cooperation and genuineness, they are valorized, as Sekoture tells:

**የሰሜን እዝ አመራሮችም ሆኑ አባላት፣ በወሰኑት ወሳኔ የተሰማኝን ኩራት እና ደስታ ለመግለፅ እወዳለሁ።**

*I'd like to express my pride and pleasure for that decision of FANC, not to assault Tigray (ibid, 6:04).*

In a headline of a news report too, a presentation goes like this:

**የሰሜን እዝ መከላከያ ሰራዊት ህዝባዊ ወገንተኝነት፣ ለሌሎች ዕዞች ምሳሌ መሆን የሚችል፣ የጀግንነት ተግባር እንደሆነ ያነጋገርናቸዋል የህብረተሰብ ክፍሎች ገለፁ።**

*Populism of the FANC is exemplary to other bases too (Amharic News, 2020, 0:41).*

The members of the army are presented in the news reflecting their stand. They argue that Abiy is invading and assaulting Tigray; they would no longer ally with him, and would continue helping Tigray's defense in protecting its rights and sovereignty.

In the DW broadcasts, therefore, the commanders and members in the FANC are framed as cooperators of the operation, not victims and poor comrades. The operation is needed because there is a sort of arrangement and plot by Abiy; some men in the army are having that mission. Significant position of the army, it is argued, has taken a pro-Tigray position and helped the demobilization.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion and recommendations

#### 5.1 Conclusion

Framing is an important concept in Media whereby events and stories would have meaning and perspectives are represented. It matters the effect of media on how audiences perceive and think. *“the framing presentation of events and news in the mass media can thus systematically affect how recipients of news come to understand news”* (Scheufele, 1999, 107).

Although the media is supposed to be objective and expected to report accurate information, it is highly under the influence of various factors; it is affected by interest groups and individuals, politicians and elites as well as media owners. When the case is conflict and crisis, the issue is more serious, subjected to influences and interests.

This study has taken selected broadcastings aired on EBC and DW on the attack of FANC, on November 4, 2020 and the subsequent outbreak of war, basically between TPLF and the Federal government. In the study, there has been analyzed significant degree of divergence in the framing of events and happenings as well as the triggering factors in the representation of the two media houses.

EBC, in its framing of the attack and related stories, has shown its affiliation to the narratives of the federal government, while DW frames events and stories regarding the outbreak, perpetrators and victims of the attack from the position of TPLF and allying forces. Their framings have different impacts on the perception of recipients. The study found a noticeable media bias towards the narrative concerning the perpetrators and victims of the attack, as well as the nature and trigger of the war outbreak.

The study found that EBC framed perpetrators of the attack on FANC assuredly. The framing in EBC, as the presentations in its broadcastings show, makes TPLF inhuman and

terrorizing perpetrator against its own army and savior of the country. DW, though undeniably admit TPLF's attack, framed the act as bravery, self defence.

Soldiers, who are protectors of sovereignty, helpers of Tigray and genuine comrades, are the victims of the attack as the case is in EBC. Victim-soldiers in that dark incident are framed by imagery, graphics and witnesses. The victims, both of killing and suffering (insult, hunger and injury), are all in all soldiers in the broadcasting of EBC. DW, by contrast emphasizes on victimization of Tigray and its people on ethnic basis. It distanced itself from soldier-victim narrative, but it concerns, in the broadcasting, on the threats, suppression of Tigray to arranging army (FANC) to invade and attack Tigray, that could extend to ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Thematically speaking, there are three framing discussions in this study to each of the media houses in the selected airings. In the case of EBC, it is found that a framing of inhuman nature of TPLF being abundant. The other is framing of TPLF as betrayal and its act as treason against a country. The last major framing the study explored by scrutinizing the broadcasting in EBC is empathy framing, empathetic representation of those attacked on that doomsday.

DW, on the other hand, frames the attack as 'anticipatory self-defense' from the very beginning. It rather framed the act (attack on FANC) as an attempt to demobilize imminent threat and to save Tigray. In DW's broadcasting, there is a framing of three-fold enemy, namely Abiy and his regime, Eritrea (Esayas Afeworki) and Unity force (Amhara forces in its implication). The last framing of DW that this study explored is that the FANC rather cooperated with the mission of demobilizing the army and Abiy's plot to a significant degree.

The study thus found a significant pattern of media divergence between the framing of events and issues in the broadcasting of the two media outlets. Media affiliation, interest group and political intervention have remarkably challenged accuracy and objectivity in the reporting; there is striking divergence, media bias and misinformation in the reports of EBC and DW on the attack of FANC.

## 5.2 Recommendations:

The following recommendations are given in this study, after undertaking its analysis and discussion.

- Media, reports and journalists should consider the relevance of bringing forth relatively accurate and objective information, minimizing inaccuracies and influences.
- As the study shows, politics and political interest play a paramount role in determining the way media functions. Bettering political system, democratizing a country and promoting peace make media works better.
- Other independent parties are responsible to report on accurate information, particularly when medias bias in cases of tension, crisis and conflict
- Media is influenced by various factors: interest group, ownership,, affiliation, and etc. Therefore, any user of information from media would have a challenge of accuracy; there is a need to cross-check, assume framing as of the interest behind the reports
- Researchers in the area of media, politics, history and other social sciences are recommended to study more on the issues connected to the outbreak of the war, representation of incidents, violations and atrocities.

## References

### Primary source: Broadcastings

- EBC (2 November 2020). የፅንፈኛው ህወሀት ቡድን ጥቃትን ተከላክለው የተረፉ የሰሜን ፅዝ የመከላከያ ሰራዊት አባላት በፅዙ ላይ የተፈፀመውን ጥቃት አስመልክተው የሰጡት አስተያየት። (i.e Commentaries of Members of FANC who defended and survived extremist TPLF attack) Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qiSsrOsklo>
- EBC (8 November 2020). “የጁንታው ሴራ” ዘጋቢ ፊልም። (Documentary, ‘Junta’s Plot’) Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AScRo02bJQ>
- EBC (24 November 2020). “ሠሜን እዝ ከጀርባ የተወጋው በፅንፈኛው የህወሀት ቡድን በሚመሩ ከሀዲ የጦር መኮንኖች ነው”። እጃቸውን የሰጡ የጽንፈኛው ህወሀት ታጣቂዎች። (Witnesses of TPLF Captives, ‘Nth Command is attacked by TPLF extremist group in the army’) Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6f-3lKAUeI>
- DW International (13 November 2020). እይታ፣ የመጀመሪያው ምዕራፍ በድል መጠናቀቅ እንድምታ። (View: Implications of the Victory of Phase One) Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1yThWjhYYo>
- DW International (13 November 2020). እይታ፣ የሰሜን እዝ ወሳኔ እና የብልጽግና ጫጫታ። (View: North Command Decision and Prosperity Party’s commotion) Available <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jj1GpP6Juys>
- DW International (13 November 2020). አማርኛ ዜና ሰዐት 01:30። (Amharic News Hour 7:30 PM) Available: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObfGEDP\\_gQs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObfGEDP_gQs)

### Secondary source

- Azpíroz, Maria Luisa (2014). "Framing and Political Discourse Analysis: Bush's trip to Europe in 2005", Observatorio (OBS), 8, 3, 075-096 (2014)
- Behailu Negussie. (2021). *Western media Rhetoric on the Armed conflict News coverage in Tigray Region: Ethiopia: the BBC, AP and Reuters.* (MA unpublished thesis). AAU.
- Bennett, W. L. (2011). *News: the politics of illusion / W. Lance Bennett* (9th ed.. ed.). Boston: Boston : Longman.
- Biset Ayalew. (2023). *A Critical Discourse Analysis of War reporting in Ethiopia.* Avelable.

- Chaffee, S. H. (1977). Mass media effects: New research perspectives. In D. Lerner & L. M. Nelson (Eds.), *Communication research—A half-century appraisal* (pp.210-241). Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii.
- Chaffee, S. H., & Berger, C. R. (1987). What communication scientists do. In C. R. Berger & S. H. Chaffee (Eds.), *The handbook of communication science* (pp. 99-122). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Clausen, L. (2003). *Global news production*. Copenhagen, Denmark: Copenhagen Business School Press.
- Dahir, A.L. & Walsh, D. (29 June 2021). *As Ethiopia Fights in Tigray Region, a Crackdown on Journalists*
- De Vreese, C. H. (2005). *News framing: Theory and typology*. *Information design journal+ document design*, 13(1), 51-62.
- D'Angelo, P. (2018). *Doing News Framing Analysis. Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives*. Yaylor and Francis Group.
- Doles, A. (2009). *“The Name Of The Game”.A Framing Analysis of Media Reporting On the 2007 Kenya Post – Election Violence*. MA thesis. Ohio university.
- Druckman, J. N. (2001). *The implications of framing effects for citizen competence*. *Political Behavior*, 23, 3, 225-256.
- Elenbaas, M., De Vreese, C., Schuck, A., & Boomgaarden, H. (2012, 2013). *Reconciling Passive and Motivated Learning: The Saturation-Conditional Impact of Media Coverage and Motivation on Political Information*. *Communication Research*, first online 20 November 2012, DOI 0093650212467032.
- Entman, R. (1993). *Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm*. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58
- Entman, R. (2003). *Cascading activation: Contesting the White House’s frame after 9/11*. *Political Communication*, 20, 4, 415-432.
- Esser, F. (2013). *Mediatization as a Challenge: Media Logic Versus Political Logic*. In H. Kriesi, S. Lavenex, F. Esser, J. Matthes, M. Bühlmann & D. Bochler (Eds.), *Democracy in the Age of Globalization and Mediatization* (pp. 155–176). Basingstoke: PalgraveMacmillan.

- Fasikaw Tadesse. (2020). *Framing of Identity and Boundary Disputes by Regional Media in Ethiopia: Amhara TV and Tigray TV in Focus*. MA Unpublished Thesis. AAU.
- Gamson, W. A., & Meyer, D. S. (1996). Framing political opportunity. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings* (pp. 275-290). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1987). *The changing culture of affirmative action*. In R. G. Braungart & M. M. Braungart (Eds.), *Research in political sociology* (Vol. 3, pp. 137-177). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.
- offman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Gash, J. (24 November 2020). *War in Tigray: How did it start and can it be resolved?* Available: <https://www.rte.ie/news/world/2021/1124/1262944-tigray-ethiopia-war/>
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*: Harvard University Press.
- Golan, G. (2006). Inter-media agenda setting and global news coverage: Assessing the influence of the New York Times on three network television evening news programs. <https://impoff.com/importance-of-media/>
- Graber, D. A. (1990). *Seeing is remembering: How visuals contribute to learning from television news*. *Journal of Communication*, 40(3), 134–155.
- Hagan, I. (1997). *Communicating to an ideal audience: News and the notion of the “informed citizen.”* *Political Communication*, 14, 405-419.
- Hellevik, O., & Bjorklund, T. (1991). *Opinion leadership and political extremism*. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 3, 157-181.
- Hijmans, Ellen. (1996). *The logic of qualitative media content analysis: A typology*. Redbound University
- Holsti, Ole. R(1969). *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities*. <https://www.worldcat.org/>
- Horowitz, D. L. (2001). *The deadly ethnic riot*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Iyengar, S. (1991). *Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Iyengar, S. & Kinder, D. (1987). *News That Matters: Television and American Opinion*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Jakubowicz, A. (Ed.). (1994). *Racism, ethnicity, and the media*. Australia: Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd.
- Kaid, L. L., Gerstlé, J., & Sanders, K. R. (Eds.) (1991). *Mediated Politics in Two Cultures: Presidential Campaigning in the United States and France*. Westport: Praeger.
- Kanner, M. D. (2004). *Framing and the role of the second actor: An application of prospect theory to bargaining*. *Political Psychology*, 25, 2, 213-239.
- Katz, E. (1957). *The two-step flow of communication: An up-to-date report on an hypothesis*. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 21, 1, 61-78.
- Kelly, M. (2010). *Regulating the reproduction and mothering of poor women: The controlling image of the welfare mother in television news coverage of welfare reform*. *Journal of Poverty*, 14(1), 76– 96. doi:10.1080/ 10875540903489447
- Kosicki, G. M. (1993). *Problems and opportunities in agenda-setting research*. *Journal of Communication*, 43, 2, 100-127
- Kosicki, G. M. (2001). The media priming effect: News media and considerations affecting political judgments. In J. P. Dillard & M. P. Pfau (Eds.), *The persuasion handbook: Developments in theory and method* (pp. 63-81). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Kosun Birhanu. (2016). *Critical Discourse Analysis of Ethiopian media coverage of Anti-ISIS demonstration held in Addis Ababa*. (MA unpublished Thesis). AAU.
- Kumar, D. (2006). *Media, war, and propaganda: Strategies of information management during the 2003 Iraq war*. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 3(1), 48– 69.
- Lake, D. A., & Rothchild, D. (Eds.). (1998). *The international spread of ethnic conflict*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Levy, M. R. (1978). *Opinion leadership and television news uses*. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 42, 3, 402-406.
- Martin, S. E., & Copeland, D. A. (Eds.). (2003). *The function of newspapers in society: a global perspective*. Praeger Publishers.

- Matthes, J. & Schemer, C. (2012). 'Diachronic Framing Effects in Competitive Opinion Environments'. *Political Communication*, 29(3), pp. 319–339.
- Mazzoleni, G. (2008b). Mediatization of Society. In W. Donsbach (Ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Communication* (Vol. VII, pp. 3052–3055). Malden, MA: Blackwell
- McCombs, M. E. (2004). *Setting the agenda: The mass media and public opinion*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). *The agenda-setting function of mass media*. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36(2), 176–187.
- Medhane T., Alagaw A. & Dade D. (2021). *Evolving State building Conversations and Political settlement in Ethiopia*. African Leadership Centre, Conflict, Security & Development 2021, VOL. 21, NO. 4, 455–474
- Moses T., Alagaw A. & Hubert K. (2022). *Political and media analysis of Tigray Conflict in Ethiopia*. European Institute of Peace
- Mutz, D. (1998). *Impersonal Influence: How Perceptions of Mass Collectives Affect Political Attitudes*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Pan, Z., & Kosicki, G. M. (2004). Framing and the understanding of citizenship. Chapter manuscript prepared for S. Dunwoody, L. B. Becker, G. M. Kosicki, & D. M. McLeod (Eds.), *The evolution of key communication concepts: Honoring Jack M. McLeod*. Cresskill, N. J.: Hampton Press.
- Potter, J. (2014). 'A Critical Analysis of Cultivation Theory.' *Journal of Communication*, 64(6), pp. 1015–1036.
- Price, V., & Tewksbury, D. (1997). *News values and public opinion: A theoretical account of media priming and framing*. In G. Barnett & F. J. Boster (Eds.), *Progress in communication sciences* (pp. 173-212). Greenwich, CT: Ablex.
- Ritchie j. & Lewis J. (2003). *Qualitative Research Practice. A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. Sage publications. London
- Robinson, P. (2000). *The policy-media interaction model: Measuring media power during humanitarian crisis*. *Journal of Peace Research*, 37(5), 613.
- Robinson, P. (2002). *The CNN effect: The myth of news, foreign policy and intervention*. New York: Routledge.

- Rubin, A. M., & Haridakis, P. M. (2000). Mass communication research at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 24* (pp. 73-79). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schaefer, R. J., & Martinez, T. J. (2009). *Trends in network news editing strategies from 1969 through 2005*. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 53(3), 347– 364. doi:10.1080/08838150903102600
- Scheufele, D. A. (1999). *Framing as a theory of media effects*. *Journal of Communication*, (Winter), 103-122.
- Scheufele, D. A. (2000). Agenda-setting, priming, and framing revisited: Another look at cognitive effects of political communication. *Mass Communication and Society*, 3, 2/3, 297-316.
- Scheufele D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). *Framing, Agenda Setting and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models*. Internal Communication Association, *Journal of Communication*, 9-20.
- Semetko, H. A. and Valkenburg, P. M. (2000). *Framing European politics: A content analysis of press and television news*. *Journal of communication*, 50(2):93–109.
- Shehata, A. (2022). *Media effects on perception of Societal Problems: Belief formation in fragmented Media Environments*. Taylor and Francis Group, London
- Shehata, A., & Strömbäck, J. (2011). A Matter of Context: A Comparative Study of Media Environments and News Consumption Gaps in Europe. *Political Communication*, 28(1), 110–134.
- Sisk, T. D. (1996). *Power sharing and international mediation in ethnic conflicts*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- Smith, A. D. (1986). *The ethnic origins of nations*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Smith, A. D. (2000). *The nation in history: Historiographical debates about ethnicity and nationalism*. Hanover: Historical Society of Israel.
- Tankard, J. W. (2001). The empirical approach to the study of media framing. *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world*, 95-106.

- Temesgen Endale. (2021). Global Media Coverage of the War between Federal Government and Tgray Armed Forces: The Case of BBC And Reuters. (MA unpublished thesis). AAU.
- Walma van der Molen, J. H. (2001). *Assessing text- picture correspondence in television news: The development of a new coding scheme. Journal of Broadcasting & ElectronicMedia*, 45(3), 483– 498. doi:10.1207/ s15506878jobem4503\_7
- Walma van der Molen, J. H., & Klijn, M. E. (2004). *Recall of television versus print news: Retesting the semantic overlap hypothesis. Journal of Broadcasting & ElectronicMedia*, 48(1), 89– 107. doi:10.1207/ s15506878jobem4801\_5
- Wittkopf, E. R., & McCormick, J. M. (Eds.). (1999). *The domestic sources of Americanforeign policy* (3rd ed.) Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

### **Link sources**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qiSsrOsklo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AScRo02bJQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6f-3lKAUeI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1yThWjhYYo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jj1GpP6Juys>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObfGEDP\\_gQs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObfGEDP_gQs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghcDBhyWbe0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irifouTmUMY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvmXw0V8Slo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jj1GpP6Juys>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wtT23e6-1d4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qiSsrOsklo&t=293s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5-fBsNihJ2w>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aexX2FHVyXk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVmEchPdM9A>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2crgFhFbFrc>

[\(https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/11/ethiopia-survivors-of-tplf-attack-in-amhara](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/11/ethiopia-survivors-of-tplf-attack-in-amhara)

[\(https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/OHCHR-EHRC-Tigray-Report.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/OHCHR-EHRC-Tigray-Report.pdf)