

Addis Ababa University
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Use of anonymous news sources by *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Fortune* newspapers: a comparative study

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Abstract

This thesis presents an examination of the use of anonymous news sources by *The Ethiopian Herald* (a government daily) and *Fortune* (a private weekly) newspapers that are in current circulation nationwide.

A triangulation of quantitative and qualitative research methods was used to gather the extent and reasons for the application of such sources in their news dispatches. Via quantitative content analysis, the study has procured the frequencies and kinds of anonymous sourcing incorporated by the newspapers. Via the qualitative (individual in-depth discussions with the concerned media practitioners), the study has collected detailed elaborations upon their stands of why, where, and how the news organs operate during the course of news gathering, writing, and printing. The news editions were systematically sampled; and the interviewees purposively. The data from both newspapers and the interviewees were then thematically analyzed. Moreover, although not with a thoroughly critical scrutiny of the agenda setting theory, the media's role in setting public agenda whilst quoting anonymous tippers is an interspersed framework featured in this research. As well the working legal-cum-ethic grounds under which the aforementioned media organs function is due attended and reflected through the source protection paradigm.

The findings in general indicate that there is a significant difference between the uses of news sources by the two media houses in question. *Fortune* has made a much greater use of anonymous news sourcing exhibiting plentiful and frequent anonymous sourcing than its counterpart in this research. *Fortune's* basic rationales turned out to be that relatively the Ethiopian society has an inexplicable reluctance to go on-record at large, apart from fear of retribution. *The Ethiopian Herald* staff maintains that in-depth and analytical investigative reporting not only takes much more time and researching than what this daily broadsheet is basically designed for, but also would be at odds with the main concern of the newspaper.

The Federal Constitution, the press proclamations, and the editorial policies of the two newspapers (i.e., the press statutes and policies regulating news sourcing means) are largely braced by provisions for press freedom; nonetheless they are not sufficiently elaborated. Further, the news and all other media are decreed to enjoy the state press provisions which are, however, followed by intricate verbose of contending enactments that put indirect restrictions on them.

List of acronyms

EPA = Ethiopian Press Agency

ENA = Ethiopian News Agency

WIC = Walta Information Centre

SPSS = Statistical Package for Social Sciences

NGO officials = Non-governmental organization(s) representatives

PR officers = Public relations spokes persons

Contents	Page
Acknowledgements	4
Abstract	5
List of acronyms	6
CHAPTER ONE.....	11
INTRODUCTION.....	11
1.1 Background	11
1.2 Statement of the problem	13
1.3 Objectives.....	15
1.4 Research questions.....	15
1.5 Significance of the study	16
1.6 Scope of the research	16
1.7 Limitation	17
CHAPTER TWO	18
LITERATURE REVIEW	18
2.1 Sources and sourcing	18
2.1.1 News sources	18
2.1.1.1 Human and non-human sources	19
2.1.1.2 Representation in the news	22
2.1.2 Relationship between sources and journalists	23
2.1.2.1 Accuracy, objectivity, and bias	24
2.1.2.2 Symbiotic interests	26
2.2 Anonymous news sourcing	27
2.2.1 Attributions	28

2.2.1.1 Off-the-record	28
2.2.1.2 Background and deep background	29
2.2.2 Sources' motives	30
2.2.2.1 Sources' axes to grind	30
2.2.2.2 Fear of retribution and litigation	31
2.2.2.3 Image and reputation	32
2.2.3 Journalists' compulsion	33
2.2.3.1 Agenda setting	33
2.2.3.2 Source protection	35
2.2.3.3 Deadline pressures	36
2.3 Debates and discourses	36
2.3.1 Proponents	37
2.3.2 Devil's advocate: Setting the wrong agenda	38
2.3.3 In balance	39
CHAPTER THREE	41
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES	41
3.1. Data sources	41
3.1.1 Newspapers	41
3.1.2 Informants	42
3.1.3 Documents	43
3.2. The research methods	43
3.2.1 Quantitative content analysis	44
3.2.2 Individual in-depth interviews	45
3.3. Sampling techniques	46
3.3.1 Systematic random sampling	47
3.3.2 Purposive sampling	48
3.4. Intercoder reliability	49
3.5 Data analysis	50

CHAPTER FOUR.....	51
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....	51
4.1 Data presentation and analysis	51
4.1.1 Overview of the extent and frequency of anonymous sources use	
4.1.2 Kinds of anonymous sourcing	53
4.1.3 Kinds and frequencies of anonymous sourcing with respect to:	
4.1.3.1 Local and international news items	55
4.1.3.2 Type of news content	57
4.1.3.3 Informants incorporated	58
4.1.3.4 The reporters	62
4.1.3.5 Type of reporting and controversial matter content ...	66
4.1.3.6 Positioning of news items	69
4.1.3.7 Tone of news reporting	71
4.2 Discussion	72
4.2.1 Gleaning inside stories	72
4.2.2 Sources who seek anonymity	73
4.2.3 How credible are they presumed to be?	74
4.2.4 Means to crosscheck anonymous informants	75
4.2.5 The central rationales	78
4.2.6 Symbiotic interests spell proponents' vs. opponents' views	81
4.2.7 Journalists' compulsion equals sources' motives	82
4.2.8 Rules and regulations	83
4.2.9 Protecting sources while setting public agenda	85
CHAPTER FIVE	87
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	87
5.1 Summary of findings	87
5.2 Conclusions	88
5.3 Further studies	91

REFERENCES	92
APPENDICES	98
Appendix 1	98
Appendix 2	102
Appendix 3	105
Appendix 4	111
Appendix 5	114
Appendix 6	115

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background: News imperatives

‘News’ has been defined and described by various scholars in as many facets as per the viewpoints of their press houses or media events in focus. By all means still, it has always revolved around anecdotes that are literally unordinary routine. Notably, it is “if a man bites a dog” than the reverse that the story passes as news-worthy.

News, hard news¹ in particular, essentially is a bit beyond this simplistic metaphor, however. It necessitates the provision of current, essential, and usable information that helps the public make informed decisions. Out of the major seven goals of the media that Schudson (1995), for example, enumerates, the foremost one is that the news media should provide citizens with fair and full information so that they can make sound decisions as citizens. Likewise, Defleur and Dennis (1991) rightly pinpoint that news is the most powerful media outlet that can make a significant contribution to building a democratic society by depicting a reasonably true picture of what is going on.

As is correctly so, mass media reporting is widely understood as the provision of important information to the public. News reports play crucial roles in informing the larger society about the varied daily conditions and statures on which it depends for its different needs. In other words, media practitioners, as actors of democracy, owe it to their public to search and present updates that can offer indispensable utilities.

In a democratic society, the news media play an indispensable role. They provide the information that sovereign people require in order to form opinions on matter of public policy and to make judgments about the

¹ Hard news refers to stories with relative importance and seriousness than soft news like entertainments.

performance of the representatives and leaders they have chosen (Mills, 2003)².

As well, an informed society is healthier than one based on rumors, gossip, and suspicion as Strentz (1989: vii) indicates. Precisely, it means that apart from entertainments and random scoops, through the news media, “highly specialized knowledge located in exclusive professional domains can be made accessible to much wider audiences” Manning (2001: 13).

Generally, “journalism is credited with being one of the upholders of freedom, a guardian of democracy, a watch dog of justice and the voice of the people,” remarks Mwaffisi (1994: 161).

As a result, a widely celebrated expression that one cannot avoid coming across within media studies - “the power of the press” - bears an inevitably vital trail of feat. Not only is it what the mere ownership of the media industry entails, but also of the repercussions of what gets printed, as seemingly minor as a single beat’s headline, may be followed by.

The impact of the press go far beyond; newspapers and television stations cover a governor’s seemingly endless mistakes, and an effort to recall him through a new election helps drive him from office; a series of television programs on child abuse is followed by state legislation requiring physicians and school teachers to report any suspicious case; ... in reviewing receipts picked up in a vice squad raid on a local massage parlor, a reporter notes the name of a respected public official as one of the customers, and the news story is followed by the official’s resignation (Strentz, 1989: 7).

It can then safely be concluded in one sentence that ‘news’, by its workable definition, at all times boils down to being something new, something interesting, and by every account something significant to the audience it is to be narrated.

² <http://www.highbeam.com/Library/Search.asp?fn=ss&q=Mill+%2b+Independence+of+media>.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In a nutshell, regular news reports provide information for people to survive. Thus, media practitioners are bound to use diverse sources of information to that end. The use of more number of sources than less unmistakably assumes a great part to win public trust in that regard. That is, accurate information provision undoubtedly comes coupled with a balanced and impartial makeup of a news story.

News sources who only wish to provide off-the-record information are evidently very well the informants that help journalists balance their stories. It follows that in order to give all sides of the picture while reporting, and so to achieve balance (besides time and other resource constraints), journalists tend to incorporate unnamed news sources.

For news to be serving great public interest, anonymous news sourcing therefore needs to be regarded as having a strong foothold in news reporting and exposés as well. The Watergate scandal would not have been heard of had it not been for the use of anonymous sourcing. Some counterpart scholars, however, have been quoted as saying “unnamed sources can burn the media”³ especially as repetitive quoting of anonymous sources toils away journalists’ credibility at times giving way to story fabrication and journalists’ manipulation by the sources.

A highly debated issue world wide, as well in the African context where it is said there is not much development of press freedom altogether, anonymous sourcing is praised and condemned by various pundits in and out of the media expertise. The case of Ethiopia is not an exception.

After Ethiopia was pronounced a democratic country in 1991, the publishing sector has seen the birth of many private newspapers. These papers, however, were caught in a fix as government kept on incriminating them of unsubstantiated reports. The confrontation

³ <http://www.collegenews.org/x4426.xml>

reached its peak in the mid 1990s as defending legal charges became a routine for the private papers. In spite of unrestrained state allegations of publishing untrue stories the private papers, nevertheless, managed to hang in the market partly for the breaking scoops they render. Their audiences were more interested in what the scoops were than being critical about which sources stories were obtained from. In particular words, anonymously sourced stories were, arguably, one of the marketing strategies used by the private press. To date, this trend is the private print media's cup of tea although it is difficult to say their intentions are quite the same as were in the then socio-political circumstances.

The researcher, hence, contends that it is relevant to take a closer look at the news sourcing trends of the newspapers in the nation, their anonymous sourcing means, press regulations regarding anonymous sourcing, and, on the way also examining whether its news press is as free, independent, and indomitable as this very nation is well popular enough for.

In the light of the debates concerning anonymous news sourcing, to unearth the essence of the differing facades of outlooks and the rationales behind them, the study attempted to scrutinize the frequency of anonymous attributions along with reasons for sources' requests to go off-the-record as fundamentally such practices appeared due finding explanations to.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General

The main objective of the research is to find out the extent to which anonymous sources are used by two of the major local newspapers—*The Ethiopian Herald* and *Fortune*—and the range of reasons for the application of such sources.

1.3.2 Specific

Specifically the research aimed to:

- a. examine the frequency of use of anonymous news sourcing in the current trend
- b. explore the kinds of anonymity used by the media practitioners; and
- c. find out the circumstances compelling the journalists to use (or not to) anonymous news sources.

1.4 Research questions

The research has attempted to find answers to the following central queries:

- a. What is the magnitude of news sourcing in the current trend amid the state owned as well as the private press?
- b. How frequently is anonymous news sourcing practiced?
- c. What are the salient ways and means used for anonymous news attributions?
- d. What are the factors for journalists to decide on using a certain news source or otherwise?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study is believed to be of weighty substance foremostly to the research subjects themselves—*The Herald* and *Fortune* newspapers. The researcher believes the findings will provide insightful reflections on their news selection and news sourcing schemes, particularly on anonymous attributions along with the organizational and societal issues involved therein. The two media organs can, thus, revisit and possibly revise their operations where it is due, thereby taking a step forward in their endeavors of doing their fourth-estate duty.

The research at overall is a good read in terms of testing how far certain press and statutory paradigms are applicable in contexts such as differing policies and priorities across newspapers however in the same media stream.

1.6 Scope of the research

The researcher has selected two newspapers as focus subjects—a government daily and a private weekly. Journalists responsible for news gathering and printing from the respective media houses were purposively selected and interviewed. The inclusion of the above data sources implies that the study design calls for triangulating quantitative and qualitative methods of data gathering and analyzing. For their relevance to the basic circumstances as to how and why anonymous sourcing is (or not) incorporated by the news reports and reporters under study, the agenda setting and source protection undertakings are also dealt with.

In other words, the research deals sharply with news stories and news sourcing mechanisms. It makes no reference to other genres of newspaper journalism like: news commentaries, feature stories, layouts, or advertisements.

1.7 Limitation

The study would have been a more profound and comprehensive finding if it had incorporated more or all of the newspapers printed in English. The generalizability of the conclusions, hence, rests chiefly on the two newspapers sampled.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Sources and sourcing

2.1.1 News sources

Sources are vital in all kinds of journalism. Being “members or representatives of organized and unorganized interest groups, and yet larger sectors of nation and society”,

[they] are actors whom journalists observe or interview, including who are quoted in [different media outlets], as well as those who only supply background information or story suggestions (Gans, 2004: 80).

Reasonably, news without any mention of where it came from is as good as no news. “Contacts are essential building blocks for a credible story,” as Forbes (2005: 27) rightly states. To use the words of Keeble (2001: 41), “at the heart of journalism lies the source; becoming a journalist to a great extent means developing sources. An issue may be long running but new information or opinion from a source will bring it into the news”.

Journalists’ reputations can be built on their ability to extract good quotes from sources as sourcing a story escalates news quality. Keeble acknowledges that ‘Did you get any good quotes?’ is often asked by colleagues when they return from an assignment (2001: 44). Nevertheless, news reporting is not solely about chaste repetitions of one-sided quotes. Journalists have to orchestrate their beats such that their information is accurate, balanced, and thus, well-sourced. Having a variety of sources is important for the balance in the news presentation.

A democratic society requires a diversity of views and news sources available – a marketplace of ideas – from which the public can choose

what it wishes to read and believe about public affairs (Hachten, 1998: 37).

News sources are at the same time news audiences since they are parcels and subsets of the larger society. In effect, sources, journalists, and audiences coexist in a system.

Sources are also an important part of the audience. The audience is, moreover, not only an information recipient but a source of income for the news firm; and insofar as its allegiance must be maintained, its viewing and reading behavior even affects, to some extent, the choice of sources by journalists (Gans, 2003: 80).

2.1.1.1 Human and non-human sources

On broader assortments, there are many types of news sources and they are categorized differently by different scholars. This chapter will give a tentative, though not exhaustive, outline of varied sources and source categories.

A main division of source material is between human and non-human sources. Human sources are oral sources, while non-human sources can be written sources, document sources or the like.

Human sources

In all certainty, human sources give evidence, color, and reliability to the news.

Who you know is often as important as what you know. Human sources always add a face, credibility and color...; provide expert testimony; elaborate on the statements of other sources; explain evidence; provide opinion and confirm or corroborate what you already know (Forbes, 2005: 27).

Personal and peer sources

Personal and peer sources are important human sources. Personal sources are primarily family members, other relatives, friends, neighbors, and people journalists meet at social gatherings (Gans, 2003: 126). Gans proposes that these sources are useful in part because of their credibility, which accrues from their close association with the journalist.

Equally crucial and “closest at hand”, peer sources, whom Gans puts as “other news media”, are “persued by story suggestors and selectors” for their own use. Spending as much time as possible, “they analyze an already published story for new angles and different ways of conceptualizing or covering it”. Then they assign the idea to their own reporters as a new story.

Expert sources

Additionally, Keeble (2001) singles out expert sources as playing a crucial role since authority and independence are associated with their views:

Journalists often use experts such as academics, think-tank members and pressure group campaigners ... [T]hey can use them more subtly to add extra weight to a view they (or their proprietors) wish to promote (Keeble, 2001: 44).

Official and non-official sources

Pertinent to human sources, news sources can be official or non-official. By an official source we mean a source which speaks authoritatively on behalf of a larger group, an organization or the like. If the official source is a person, he/she will usually be referred to by name and title. There is usually agreement within the group that the person is in a position to speak authoritatively on behalf of the entire group or organization. A non-official source, on the other hand, is not presently in a position to get acclaim from the whole group or speak authoritatively on behalf of it. The nature of a non-official source is that the information it carries has not been confirmed as authoritative.

Non-human sources

Document sources

Non-human sources are as well varied in value for evidence and archive at length.

Public documents can include judicial or court records, minutes of parliamentary committee meetings, government budgets and expenditure reports, public tender documents and deeds or property files. Non-public records include, among others, individuals' credit history, income tax returns, bank records and medical files (Forbes, 2005: 31).

Documentary sources are, however, not limited to scraps of paper, writes Forbes (2005: 32). Books, published reports, industrial, academic and government research, photographs, maps, schematic diagrams, property records, contacts, video tapes, audit reports and even diaries are elements in the package.

Diary sources

Document sources can be in forms of diaries named "on-diary sources". The diary of news rooms is an important document that "records predictable events that merit coverage by their unquestionable public importance", for preparation of stories to be included in the news bulletin (Golding and Elliot, 1999: 113). The diary can be written from the press releases and invitations whose input may either be included or rejected in news coverage depending on the significance. Hence, Golding and Elliot (1999) named it "the implicit script of news".

The internet

The internet has gained particular prominence over the last years as an indispensable non-human source (although it can also be human in the form of e-mail or chat rooms). Keeble (2001) contends:

With more than thirty years of development, email is one of the most sophisticated tools for reporters. Journalists are increasingly using it to file copy, engage in discussions with readers, receive press releases, search information and [even] interview sources (57).

2.1.1.2 Representation in the news: Power and access to media

The suitability of a certain human source for a certain news item is determined on the basis of a number of interrelated considerations. According to Gans' (2004) assertion, the efficiency can be measured in terms of time and cost—reporters who have only a short time to gather information must therefore attempt to obtain the most suitable news from the fewest number of sources as quickly as possible, and with the least strain on the organizational budget.

Sources and journalists, furthermore, must have access to each other before information can become news, argues Gans (2003). This access is differentially distributed, depending in part on the social distance between sources and journalists. For that reason, Tumber (1999) implicates that just as sources face the problem of obtaining access to the news rather than mere coverage, so journalists have the problem of obtaining access to a source organization rather than the opportunity for mere coverage.

In essence then, the way news is collected helps determine what is reported. The way a reporter gathers information helps determine what insights news sources provide and what information is shared with the news audience, as to Strentz's (1989) deduction, implying that "what you see is not necessarily what you get".

Commonly, sources representing government bureaucracies have more impact on what becomes news than ordinary citizens, as Lacy and Coulson (2000) emphasize. Gans (2003), for instance, suggests that the president of a given country has instantaneous access to all [local] news media whenever he wants it; whereas the powerless must resort to civil disturbances to obtain it. That is, sources with less power can normally gain access only with an unusually dramatic story (Gans, 2003).

In short, story pieces whose sources are personalities situated high in authority usually attain more credibility than stories whose sources are ordinary citizens. Citing Becker (1967), Allan (1999) elaborates that:

Any tale told by those at the top intrinsically deserves to be regarded as the most credible account obtainable. Thus, credibility and the right to be heard are differentially distributed through the ranks of the system (Allan 1999: 68).

Therefore, journalists' sourcing routines tend to reflect the distribution of official power in the society. Representatives of leading institutions and public services dominate having easier access to the press (Keeble, 2001: 42).

It follows that the more powerful a politician, the harder it is for a reporter to find someone who will talk against him/her having their names pronounced on newspapers after leaking inside tips. The universal way that journalists and sources go around this situation evidently is by not exposing the sources' real names. Gans (2003: 120) states, "One early indicator of Richard Nixon's⁴ declining power was the number of people ready and able to leak information."

2.1.2 Relationship between sources and journalists

Gans (2004) introduces that the relationship between sources and journalists is interdependent while Strentz (1989) more closely distinguishes them as "accomplices in the shaping and misshaping of the news" altogether.

Moreover, even though the effects of information gathering schemes and the dynamics of the reporter-source relationship may be unintended, often unperceived, and sometimes

⁴ Here, the series of leaked stories in relation to the Watergate scandal that led to the former US president Richard Nixon's resignation are referred to.

unpredictable, they are real and a part of the power and influence of the press (Strentz, 1989).

2.1.2.1 Accuracy, objectivity, and bias

News sources and news reporters are in fact accomplices in shaping the news before it reaches the public eye. The industrious effort of verifying information for accuracy and fairness, however, is for the reporters to shoulder.

If our business is truth telling, then accuracy must always be our first concern. It's also an area that audiences take very seriously. Even apparently unimportant things, like spelling errors, have a profound effect on the credibility of individual journalists and media, as well as the profession as a whole (Krüger, 2004: 58).

As a result, reporters can be argued to use news sources to distance themselves from the issues explored. Rather than expressing their views on a subject, they use sources to present a range of views over which they can appear to remain objective and neutral (Keeble, 2001).

To that end, one of the six major source consideration criteria proposed by Gans (2004) is “Authoritativeness”, whose rationale is that authority figures cannot afford to lie in public.

Story selectors consider themselves more trustworthy if they use official sources because these sources cannot afford to lie openly; ... Reporters are also comfortable to use authoritative sources because when stories become controversial, journalists can defend themselves before news executives by having relied on authoritative sources (12).

The need for neutrality is more crucial when the issues to be reported are controversial, sensitive and accusative. So as to attain the central goal of integrity in the journalistic profession, one of which is incorporating balance in the news reports, Keeble (2001)

indicates that it is the responsibility of the reporter to contact all parties involved to balance the report with their response to the allegations.

Keeble concludes that professionalism as a construct generally implies a certain objectivity and neutrality towards sources, nonetheless, admitting that “in reality, this is difficult to maintain.” Journalists often allegedly get too close to their sources. This view confirms that journalists at times obliviously fail to put aside their subjective bias from the reports that they write, more so than not if the issues are controversial, sensitive, and accusative.

Two newspapers will take identical facts and use them to build conflicting arguments. ... All journalists write out of their experiences, [w]earing their own spectacles of bias, which distort the world according to their education, cultural background, political leanings, religion, etc (Sissons, 2006: 276).

In practical terms, there exists a remarkable consensus over news values and sourcing routines throughout the mainstream press, as to Keeble (2001). Some sources will be prominent, others marginalized or generally covered in a negative way.

Some events and ideas are, after all, unbalanced, and the effort to balance them in itself adds a kind of bias. Moreover, there rarely is sufficient room on this seesaw to seat the whole range of arguments issues inspire. As a result, usually no more than two or three widely held—mainstream—points of view per issue are deemed worthy of balanced consideration (Stephens, 1997: 261).

Be that as it may, respect for a news reporter rests more on the accuracy and completeness of the news story than on the reporter’s style of gathering information, says Strentz (1989), arguing that the reporter must be sensitive, however, to any relationship with news sources that lessens the journalist’s control of news content or threatens credibility with the audience and other news sources. A reporter certainly is of little use to an employer or to the news audience if the reporter’s sources are generally inaccurate, self-serving, misleading, or irrelevant (Strentz, 1989: 83).

2.1.2.2 Symbiotic interests

A likewise argument is also Herman and Chomsky's (1998) description of the "symbiotic relationship" that journalists have with their information sources, as cited in Allan (1999: 58); their relation is driven both by economic necessity and reciprocity of interests.

These powerful establishment sources provide journalists with a steady, reliable flow of the 'raw material of news', thereby allowing news organization to spend their resources more 'efficiently'. The relative authority and prestige of these sources also helps to enhance the credibility of the journalist's account (Ibid).

Journalists may see people mainly as potential sources, but sources see themselves as people with a chance to provide information that promotes their interests, to politicize and publicize their ideas, or in some cases, just to get their names into the news (Gans, 2003). In effect, therefore, media persuasion works two ways: the media persuade us, but we and others can and do influence the media (Jamieson and Campbell, 1992).

Promoting news sources – enhancing or reinforcing their reputation, power, or prestige – is inherent in much of news reporting. ... Because a news source once is quoted speaking out on a certain issue, he or she gains increased recognition and status (Strentz, 1989: 104).

In a similar facet, as journalists are dependent on sources to get information, so are their sources often dependent on journalists to reach the public. This sometimes leads to an unhealthy relationship between journalists and sources, where journalists will protect their sources because they fear that other media will use them, and at the same time they will not file critical stories on their sources because they fear losing them.

Because a reporter has a stake in the reliability of a news source, there may be a temptation to support that source, in news items, by giving less emphasis to contrary points of view, even when evidence begins to build that in a particular instance the source is wrong (Strentz, 1989: 84).

2.2 Anonymous news sourcing

Seldom is a person so well known that his or her name will stand by itself in a news report. Thus, attributions in news stories would usually identify the source by title and name (Anderson and Itule, 1987). Despite this presumably normative sourcing procedure, sources are intermittently cited with ambiguous addresses or remain unidentified at all in the shields of “confidential sources”, “inside sources”, “news broke out that”, and so on.

In brief, an anonymous news source is a person who knows the inside affairs of individuals and/or groups and is willing to leak information to the media. The hallmark of this sourcing trend is the deliberate inclusion of whom Keeble (2001) dubs as a “mole”⁵ and whom Manning (2001) calls “whistle-blowers”. They also come in terms such as “Leaks”, “Confidential informants”, and so forth; and that keeping the anonymity of such insider sources relies on the understanding that their identity will be kept confidential, as Sissons’ (2006) argument goes.

Indeed, were it not for the journalist’s promise to keep their identities secret, many of the people who would otherwise provide information would be unlikely to do so. [T]here is the presumption that it will be against the public interest for such sources to be revealed except in certain circumstances where other objectives with an overriding public interest require it, argue Carey and Sanders (2004: 196).

It hence may hardly be surprising that people notably refrain from being quoted by name while revealing stories someone else would rather not see on print. Still, there apparently prevail complex ranges of reasons for sources to request not to be identified by name. As well, there are varied and intricate source selection criteria for journalists, named to unnamed sources and vice versa. The detailed rationales for these proceedings are discussed later in this section.

⁵ A mole is translated into a secret source for investigative journalist buried deep in the heart of organization whose activities they are prepared to reveal (Keeble, 2001: 249).

2.2.1 Attributions

Attribution is one of the distinguishing features of journalism. Our reports indicate where information comes from, allowing our audiences to judge its reliability for themselves (Krüger, 2004: 179).

Pre-arrangements for quoting between human sources and journalists are deemed to fall on one of the following basis: on-the-record, off-the-record, on unattributable background, and on deep background. It is imperative that the deal with sources must be made well before starting interviews since not all sources have a common understanding of the terms of the agreements as is discussed below. Krüger (2004) suggests that reporters need also be very clear what exactly the sources mean by the terms of contracts.

2.2.1.1 Off-the-record

As opposed to the “on-the-record” information, which is printed for public exposure and scrutiny with sources’ complete identity, “off-the-record” information requires for the source’s whatabouts to be kept discrete.

Concerning the off-the-record attribution, uneven view points exist among scholars as do among sources. By Krüger’s (2004) view, even people with no previous exposure to the media use it with surprising ease; the problem is that it bears several connotations. Among other variants, it can mean:

- that the information being offered is not to be used in any way—even if it can be confirmed through other means;
- that it should not be published but can be followed up;
- that it can be used as long as the source is not identifiable; or
- that it can be used with unspecific sourcing, like ‘according to a senior official’, ‘an informed source said’, or similar phrase (2004: 180).

As to another scholar, Keeble (2001), with an off-the-record type of material, statements and comments are made not for publication but for background only; and “it should in no way be traceable back to source”. Keeble explains that if the information to be given is of a sensitive nature, sources rather bait towards the story not being reported. At the same time, such an undertaking leaves the journalist free to try to acquire the same information from another source who might be prepared to go on record.

Anderson and Itule (1987: 106) define it more briefly and straightforwardly, “The material cannot be used. Period.” Reporters must in this case decide whether the information they could potentially gain under these circumstances is worth it.

2.2.1.2 Background and deep background

Unattributable or background information instances lie halfway between off-the-record and on-the-record comments. Reports can carry these quotes but attribution is deliberately vague to conceal identities (Keeble, 2001: 48). In other words, it is agreed that the material can be used, but attribution by name cannot be provided (Anderson and Itule, 1987).

Off-the-record unattributed briefings hold benefits for both the source and journalist. The reporter can be informed on complicated details of which they may have no specialist knowledge and will learn of the source’s bias. Sources often speak more openly at these meetings (Keeble, 2001: 48).

‘Background’ usually means that the source will not let the newspaper publish the information at all, unless it can get it from an independent third party which agrees to be quoted by name or by some attribution that prevents the original source from being identified. Concealing identity in such ambiguous phrases as ‘sources close to the Prime Minister’, ‘diplomatic sources’, ‘a high ranking official said’, ‘knowledgeable sources’ or ‘reliable sources’, etc are common ways to refer to unattributable information.

The term ‘on deep background’ is sometimes referred to cases where information is disclosed by sources clearly meant as background material for the article or report, and where the source must be trusted by the journalist not to be disclosed. It is commonly argued that such material can be used, but not in direct quotations. Also, the material should not be attributed to the source. Reporters can, however, seek verification from other sources for material on deep background and possibly get these other sources to agree to being quoted. Editors should also be consulted in these circumstances. If the material proves false or incorrect, the reporter and the newspaper or broadcast medium are left holding the bag (Anderson and Itule, 1987).

2.2.2 Sources’ motives

In parallel with the above mentioned socio-economic and political interests they obtain for talking to the media, sources also have their reservations not to confer insider information. As they do to leak interior information, they have as good a cause to withhold it.

That is, anonymous news sources, unless relatives or good friends with the reporter (‘personal sources’ as explained in the beginning section above) and are genuinely willing to help out, tend to secure their own benefits for tipping him/her. However not comprehensively exhausted, these motives are illustrated as follows.

2.2.2.1 Sources’ axes to grind

Aside any number of newsworthy causes, news sources have their own agenda for disclosing information. Besides ending the presidency of the corrupted US leader, even Mark Felt⁶ (famous for his anonymous name ‘Deep Throat’) had his own motives to leak

⁶ Felt, the former number two at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) at the time of the scandal, assisted the Washington Post’s investigation of government corruption at the white House which brought down President Nixon and which was one of the biggest scandals in American history. Felt says that

secrets to the Washington Post newspaper some decades earlier. He had been denied promotion at the office while he deserved so, so was later confided.

Keeble (2001: 62) adds that a source may be lying, conveying misinformation, propaganda or seeking revenge. “According to investigative reporter Paul Foot, ‘You just have to get into the habit of asking questions and not believing the reply;’” and as “Nick Davis comments, ‘Almost anyone with a story worth telling has a reason to withhold it.’”

Consequently, readers do not have means to judge if a source whose name is not given is, in fact, someone to depend on for accurate facts. Sources who are permitted to withhold their names can gripe and snipe with impunity. Some clearly are using reporters to grind axes, settle scores or float trial balloons (Stephens, 1997: 229).

The fact that journalists’ over-reliance on unattributed sources can make them vulnerable to hoaxes cannot be overstated. As Keeble (2001) spells it, some hoaxers make a profession of fooling the press.

2.2.2.2 Fear of retribution and litigation

Sources may only go for their end of the bargain by being anonymous; and their statements may not be fully truthful. Nevertheless, sources should not be denied anonymity at all circumstances.

There is some information—often crucial information—that sources will not give journalists if their names are to be used, for a very good reason: it might cost them their jobs. Much wrongdoing has been uncovered with their aid (Stephens, 1997: 229).

“everyone has reasons for leaking”. His reason: strong moral principles and unwavering loyalty to country and cause. However, personal feelings also entered into his judgment. Felt passed information onto journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein because he was at the time chagrined at being passed over for promotion (Forbes, 2005: 31).

Therefore, there need to be occasions when journalists will legitimately want to protect the identity of a source. For instance, Keeble notes:

- Given the high unemployment figures, people are reluctant to criticize their employers for fear of the consequences.
- Interviews with people who talk about intimate aspects of their lives such as sexual problems, illnesses and domestic violence are often carried with fictitious names.
- When an investigative journalist has acquired information without disclosing their professional identity, the newspaper does not then normally carry the sources' names (2001: 49).

2.2.2.3 Image and reputation

People wish to avoid bad publicity mainly so as to keep their established reputation in society. Grunfeld (1981) comments that they allure to “Don’t use my name” pleas.

Every editor is familiar with the person who is convicted for drunken driving or shoplifting and who then says something like “Don’t use it in the paper because my mother is sick. If she sees it, it will kill her” (11).

In general, as it is important to discern what the source is getting out of passing on information, Kruger (2004) reinstates that sources' having an axe to grind does not mean the information is unreliable. “It simply means that the need to find corroborating evidence is stronger. Some of the best stories have seen the light of day thanks to a source with a grievance.”

2.2.3 Journalists' compulsion

2.2.3.1 Public interest and Scoops: Agenda setting

In our day, more than ever before, [political] candidates go before the people through the mass media rather than in person, observes Tumber (1999).

At an obvious level, news messages register with audiences at the denotative level. Such messages also communicate along a connotative dimension because persons, events, issues or things almost always suggest, or connote, deeper associations of one kind or another, in the minds of the audience, which are then processed or thought about (Manning, 2001: 202).

Dwelling amid public affairs, not only do people “learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news” as McCombs (2006) states, but they also depend on news media in order to obtain information they depend on for decision making within their daily encounters.

This in turn suggests that the news media have profound power to set a nation's agenda by drawing the focus of the public towards few key issues. Thus agenda setting is the process whereby the mass media determine what we think and worry about (Spring, 2002).

In most cases, an agenda-setting approach to media influence suggests that although the media may not directly influence what people think, the news media do set an agenda for what people talk about and discuss (Strentz, 1989: 8).

Although few scholars denounce the fact that the agenda in news coverage impacts in shaping events, Strentz quite asserts that the notion that news coverage influences the outcome of an issue or event has merit. The news media more often have the effect of setting an agenda for discussion and contributing to the general outcome (1989: 9). For such undertakings, hence, news sources are often the catalytic means for reporters; as a result, the two set their agenda in the audiences' minds.

It is mainly in the sources' domain, that journalists find matters to be set as agenda. That is, news sources more often have greater influence in determining what issues to be raised in the public sphere for discussions and how stories will be attributed as well. Thus, sources' role is not any less significant in setting agenda for public talks.

Essentially, for a superseding public interest sake, anonymous sources' contribution for setting a public agenda is certainly not unfitting herein. Sensitive and controversial issues grab people's attention and thus set sensitive topics, and at times burning agenda and paradigm, in the public's mind.

In discussing the agenda setting function of the media, the crucial question is not only how the media set their agenda, but who and what helps to set them (Getachew, 2006: 26).

Paramount to all other causes, sources would be most legitimate and acceptable to leak unauthorized confidential information if in the public's best interests. Beyond a doubt, leaks by brave whistleblowers can be used to expose corruption (Keeble, 2001).

Perhaps the most able sources are organizations that carry out the equivalent of investigative reporting, offer the results of their work as "exclusives," and can afford to do so anonymously, foregoing the rewards of publicity. The FBI has often supplied detailed information about the misdeeds of American politicians whose political careers it wanted to end (Gans, 2003: 121).

Organizations often refuse to be open to media because of internal controversy or turmoil, which may spawn sources inside the organization eager to leak information, anonymously, either to expose immoral behavior or to publicize their side of the controversy. Gans (2003: 118) recalls that during Watergate, the more the White House tried to prevent leaks, the more it increased the eagerness of other officials to supply news about people whom they wanted exposed and forced out of the government.

2.2.3.2 Source protection

The other major compulsion for journalists' granting anonymity to their clandestine sources is their ethical duty to conceal sources' identity and protect them literally from any consequence that might follow the leaked story. Once a journalist has accepted an off-the-record arrangement of whatever kind, it must be strictly observed since honoring confidentiality is a cornerstone of journalism ethics (Krüger, 2004: 181). Krüger also quotes Raymond Louw, former Rand Daily Mail editor, saying,

The confidentiality of sources [ensures] that a newspaper is able to perform its role of a public watchdog uncovering wrong-doing, maladministration, corruption and other crimes especially in the public service. It is that promise not to reveal the identity of the source that enables informants to come forward and a newspaper to gather the information that leads to the exposure of these evils (2004: 181).

A practical instance cited by Forbes (2005) is the eighteenth of Johannesburg Principles (from South African media laws) which states that "Journalists must be guaranteed access to information and no journalist should be compelled by a judicial or other public authority to 'reveal his or her sources of information including the content of notes nor personal or professional'". Indeed, Forbes claims that "this is easier said than done". In practice,

many African countries lack the legal framework to provide access to information or to protect 'whistleblowers'. As a result, investigative journalists dealing with sensitive information are often at odds with government and other bodies of authority, such as the military or the police (Forbes, 2005: 59).

Particularly for investigative journalists, exclusive headlines on sensitive public matters are often than not very hard to come by. More still, in the name of the law and bureaucratic procedures, journalists may be forced to disclose their sources to authorities. Police have been known to raid the homes and computers of journalists involved in sensitive areas; thus every step should be taken to preserve the anonymity of such contacts, contends Keeble (2001: 41).

2.2.3.3 Unavailability of sources and deadline pressures

Findings indicate that source credibility, accessibility and deadline pressure have substantial influence on source selection (Lacy and Coulson, 2000). As to Manning's (2001) opinion, the cycle of news deadlines drives the journalists' routine within a news organization, whether this be a daily newspaper, a nightly television current affairs show, or an hourly news bulletin.

Manning (2001) explains that most news journalists and news workers have to meet deadlines as a matter of routine, and they will develop a number of techniques and organizational practices in order to accommodate this imperative. It goes without saying that newsworthy items in one way or another would find a way of accommodation when forwarded from anonymous leaks.

Journalists, for one reason or another, may be caught with very limited source which could give way for impunity and manipulation by sources. Journalists as a result would need to level with these sources' requests of anonymity. Limited source use and limited understanding of issues leave reporters open to manipulation (Lacy and Coulson, 2000).

2.3 Debates and discourses

The trend of anonymous sourcing has increasingly become a highly debated issue worldwide, and utterly controversial. There are various dynamics that come to play: press laws and ethics, credibility and trust, protection of sources from different influences, and more. Amidst these interplays, while some praise the contribution that unnamed sources can make, others refute earnestly.

2.3.1 Proponents: Source cultivation

After reporters have a working understanding of the organizational structures of the agencies and departments they cover, sources must be developed and cultivated (Anderson and Itule, 1987).

Developing a strong network of reliable sources is one key to being an effective reporter; this means that you will sometimes have to acquiesce when a source requests anonymity. Sometimes anonymous sources are government or corporate officials who do not want their names used because they believe that their bosses or institutions for which they work should have credit for the statement (Anderson and Itule, 1987: 107).

Anderson and Itule, in addition, are of the opinion that anonymous sources are also valuable because they can lead the reporter to other sources. Furthermore, people can often be persuaded to go on record if they realize how vital the story is and that without unidentified source it may never be printed (Ibid).

The Watergate legend

Watergate⁷ has now become a formidable legend for the journalism profession, a venture that proved to be a point of departure, a land mark, in the course of news reporting at large.

Most reporters avoid unnamed sources if they can. But there are some important stories that simply would never be reported if the daily media did not rely on confidential sources. Remember Watergate and Deep Throat, the anonymous source who helped bring down the presidency of Richard Nixon? (Anderson and Itule, 1987: 386).

Quoting Anton Harber⁸, Krüger (2004: 179) writes, “The scandals of Watergate, Muldergate and Inkathagate would never have burst into the open, bringing down

⁷ Watergate is initially the name of a hotel in Washington DC, USA. In recent media trends, however, the name has come to being used to refer to political burglary, fraud, corruption, and even extortion which authority figures are embezzling over using their rights to command upon public utilities.

⁸ Professor of Journalism and media studies at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa

presidents and ministers, if it wasn't for a lonely, hidden Deep Throat." As Berkowitz (1997) says, after Watergate, even guidelines appeared on how best to use the unidentified source. It apparently had taken The Washington Post some 'cultivation' time before they could get Mark Felt (their anonymous leak) to talk.

Although much in the reporting process works to the advantage of established news sources and the status quo, one value of the anonymous sources is that the practice may provide minority and dissident groups access to the news media (Strentz, 1989: 107). Therefore, fervent proponents of the cultivation of unnamed news sources argue that leaks are inevitable, even desirable, to ensure that the process is dragged out of the dark corridors of power into the open (Krüger, 2004).

2.3.2 Devil's advocate: Setting the wrong agenda

Contrary to proponents of anonymous news sourcing, other scholars argue to obliterate the use of unnamed sources as major tools for public information provision. Hagan (2005) notes, "'Sources' is becoming a dirty word in journalism." Hagan further points out that unnamed sources are overused to obscure a journalist's laziness, opinion, or even fabrication.

"It's like a bullet that comes out of the woods and hits somebody in the back and you have no idea who shot it or why;" Krüger (2004) cites Haiman's⁹ comment collection; "If I don't know who said it, how do I know if it's true?"

As well, damaging repercussions have taken place when sensitive stories were not sourced well or left unsourced at all. Shih-hsiang (2005)¹⁰ recalls an instance where a

⁹ Comments gathered in discussions with members of the public by Bob Haiman of the Poynter Institute (Krüger, 2004: 179).

¹⁰ <http://asiamedia.ucla.edu/print.asp?parentid=32854>

false report by the BBC using an unnamed source led to the resignation of the broadcaster's chairman.

The newspaper with the largest circulation in the US, *USA Today*, also published a false report based on an unnamed source last year, which led to a change of the paper's chief editor. A *Newsweek* report about the desecration of the Koran at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility led to a number of deaths (Ibid).

Some anonymous news attributes can, thus, only be translated not only into lack of hard evidence, but as well the journalists' mere laziness and blind greed for fame. Jack Kelly and Jayson Blair are revealing examples.

At the *New York Times*, Jayson Blair, was found in May 2003 to have plagiarized numerous stories. Then in early 2004 *USA Today*'s top foreign reporter, Jack Kelly, was discovered to have fabricated stories from around the world during 21 years with the paper (Sissons, 2006: 277).

Consequently, while attempting to execute their agenda setting roles in the society, media and unnamed sources are at times putting forth a faulty agenda in the reader's mind. Their pay offs are far from rewarding in retrospect. For instance, within the African setting, Kasoma (1997) claims that over use of anonymous sources among others to "defame" them and their bureaucracies, like bad advocacy and political opposition acts, have been driving the African leaders to be hard and harsh on journalists.

2.3.3 In balance

On the one hand, as Gans (2003) asserts, when reporters can explicitly attribute information to a source, they do not have to worry about reliability (and validity), the assumption being that once the story is "sourced," their responsibility is fulfilled, and audiences must decide whether the source is credible.

On the other hand, Gans (Ibid) believes that an unreliable source can damage journalistic credibility. Besides, unverifiable stories should not be regarded as formidable

breakthroughs of the reporters. Most importantly, before granting news sources anonymity, reporters need to consider:

Is the information available elsewhere? Is it reasonable to persuade the news source to be identified? Is the news source seeking anonymity to avoid retribution or responsibility? Is the information of such a crucial nature to the story and the news audience? (Strentz, 1989: 98)

Krüger (2004) consents—deals can be justified as long as and only if they do not undermine the basic integrity and truthfulness of journalism. Furthermore, reporters ought to maintain a professional distance.

There is nothing wrong with ‘cultivating sources’ – building a relationship of trust in order to encourage people to talk to us. But we should not allow a closeness to develop that undermines our professional judgment (2004: 175).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

This chapter looks into the sampling processes of data sources, data gathering schemes, and data analysis procedures.

3.1 Data sources

As the study tried to uncover the extent of use of anonymous sourcing by the Ethiopian print press in recent years, it procured primary data from two major newspapers in the country produced during the years 2006 and 2007. Samples comprising eight newspaper issues, four each from *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Fortune*, were examined. The former is a state-owned newspaper produced daily except for Mondays, and the latter is a private weekly produced every Sunday. Both are printed in English.

Primary data were also procured from interviewees who are the reporters and editors of the aforementioned newspaper organizations. Secondary data were collected from the legal and policy documents of the newspapers as well as the Federal Constitution of Ethiopia, the press code of the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), and *Fortune*'s editorial policy.

3.1.1 Newspapers

Policy-makers and enforcers, and in all possibility the public, continually read newspapers to make assorted informed decisions. It involves those media stations which operate broadly under the state's provision as well as private ones which perhaps are said

to provide rather liberal insights to metropolitan and business coverage. This study tried to incorporate both extremes.

As to the Ministry of Information (2007), there are about 53 newspapers currently circulating in Ethiopia. Since it would only be over-ambitious and unviable to include all newspapers in one research design, only two of the major ones (*The Ethiopian Herald* and *Fortune* by name) were selected for a case study. For the most part, these were selected because of their high circulation and long years of existence in the market, in addition to Herald's being the only available government newspaper printed in English.

Herald is a state-owned daily whereas *Fortune* is a private weekly. This is believed to embrace both the diversity in the Ethiopian newspapers' sourcing practices in terms of their standpoints in news coverage prominence and ethical and editorial policies.

Fortune has been in the media market since May, 2000 and arguably has outlived those that were established then and is on a fairly steady increase in its circulation from time to time. Now with its 7,500 weekly copies, it has the highest circulation of all newspapers printed in English in the nation.

3.1.2 Informants

The sourcing trends of unattributed stories by these newspapers were examined after which journalists that produce them were interviewed from the respective media houses.

In other words, to further enrich the answers for the researcher's questions as to the kinds of anonymity these newspapers use and the frequency of use they had during recent years, three prominent figures from *Fortune* newspaper were interviewed: the Managing editor, the Assistant editor-in-chief, and a reporter.

Six journalists and editors were interviewed from *The Ethiopian Herald*. Specifically, they were the Editor-in-chief, the news editor, a Senior editor, the deputy news editor,

and one news reporter. A reporter from the WIC (Walta Information Centre) was also interviewed so as to decipher the news agencies' side of standpoint.

3.1.3 Documents

Respective policy documents of the newspapers in question were examined so as to incorporate the grounds which regulate and legitimize the journalists' citing anonymous sources.

Freedom House (2004), for instance, recognizes a legal environment that encompasses “both the laws and regulations that could influence media content and the government inclination to use these law and legal institutions in order to restrict the media's ability to operate”. Thus, provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1995) and of the 1992 press proclamation, in addition to the editorial policies of the newspapers that are pertinent to the study, were put under scrutiny.

3.2 The research methods

The inclusion of the above data sources implies that the study design calls for triangulating methods of data gathering. Deacon et al. (1999: 29) argue that just as a surveyor takes measurements from a number of vantage points to fix the ‘true’ position of a particular point on the ground, so do researchers check the full range of available sources to build up the most accurate and comprehensive account possible.

The study, therefore, incorporated both qualitative and quantitative approaches as data gathering methods. They were employed in order to obtain the frequencies and kinds of anonymity used by the newspapers as well as to decipher the rather deeper reasons for the application of these sourcing practices respectively.

The qualitative method had substantiated the quantitative and vice versa. Supporting quantitative research method with a qualitative one will provide deeper understanding of the problem for these two approaches address different aspects of the problem; breadth and depth respectively (Orcher, 2005).

To count the frequencies and the kinds of anonymous sourcing, quantitative content analysis was used. To answer the questions of rationales behind the applications of the respective sourcing tendencies within the respective media houses, qualitative individual in-depth interviews were used.

Piloting, as defined by Deacon et al. (1999), which is testing out a research instrument before embarking on a full scale data collection, can help to identify any glaring problems in the design of a research instrument as well as any areas of confusion in the terminology employed. In effect, it is a particularly important step to undertake when using content analysis coding frame or standardized interview schedule (Deacon et al. 1999: 396).

The researcher took randomly selected 12 issues of both *The Herald* and *Fortune* papers printed during the years 2004 onwards as a pilot study to get the glimpse of their news sourcing trends. The pilot study gave an indication of how the coding frame and coding sheet should be structured.

3.2.1 Quantitative content analysis

Berelson (1952: 147) as to Deacon et al. (1999) famously described content analysis as a ‘research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication’.

By systematic it entails that, while frequencies are counted, rules are applied consistently, hence a systematic procedure bringing about replicability of findings. Manifest content of

communication basically relates to the overt written news features that anyone can read and comprehend. Each individual category had a classification scheme that is exhaustive, mutually exclusive, and essentially reliable.

Content analysis views data as texts, images, and expressions that are created to be seen, read, interpreted, and acted on for their meanings Krippendorff (2004: xiii). Hence, analyzing texts in the contexts of their uses distinguishes content analysis from other methods of inquiry. Krippendorff argues this is a scientific research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use.

According to Deacon et al. (1999), the purpose of content analysis is to quantify salient and manifest features of a large number of texts, and the statistics are used to make broader inferences about the processes and politics of representation. Deacon et al. (1999: 117), in addition, note that this method, being an extremely directive and rule-oriented, only gives answers to the questions the researcher posed, by supporting, refuting, or qualifying the initial research questions.

A coding sheet was used framed by analytical themes of a coding book to examine the frequency of anonymous sourcing. Exhaustive and mutually exclusive questions were posed in each classification scheme (individual category) of coding questions of the coding sheet. For the very consistency of the coding work, and for the category schemes to be thoroughly systematic, the researcher arranged a coding book outlining major definitions of some terms utilized in the coding questions.

Thus, content analysis is an indispensable technique for an investigation which strives to figure out the extent of anonymous news sourcing along with the underlying principles and policies.

3.2.2 Individual in-depth interviews

In-depth interview is an important tool that assists in the elaboration of data concerning respondents' opinions, values, motivations, recollections, experiences, and feelings

(Wimmer and Dominic, 2006: 135). Since this very study focuses on coverage of news that had needed the use of untold sources, presumably there exist sensitive issues placing the circumstances. Individually conducted in-depth interviews are hence only appropriate methodology to meet head-on those responsible in these particular news productions.

Semi-structured individual in-depth interviews in a fairly free format questioning generate richer data. As to Deacon et al. (1999), interviewees articulate their thoughts and opinions on their own terms rather than in relation to preordained response structures.

This type of question delivery was applied in this study as well for it “abandons concerns with standardization and control, and seeks to promote an active, open-ended dialogue” (Ibid). However, the interviewer still retains control of the terms the discussion by referring to a discussion guide that “sets out the issues to be covered during the exchange.”

3.3 Sampling techniques

How frequently anonymous sources were used in the newspaper issues, for what sorts of stories, by whom, and with how much (news) prominence were the salient queries of the researcher. In order to come up with the answers, therefore, the research investigated the extent of coverage of each of the issues sampled out.

So as to include two months’ issues from the year 2006 and the other two from 2007, that is for each of *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Fortune*, the months of November, December, January, and February were selected. In order to pick one issue per month, systematic random sampling was used. 199 news items were coded altogether.

Responsible personalities from both media houses were asked follow-up questions for elaborations behind their news sourcing routines. Respondents were selected purposefully with regards to *The Ethiopian Herald*; all responsible journalists were interviewed from the *Fortune* newspaper.

3.3.1 Systematic random sampling

Apart from the need to include a government newspaper in this two-subject research study, the reason of *The Herald's* inclusion as a research subject is its numerous news item content. The broadsheet at average contains 35 to over 40 news items per issue on a daily basis. This allows the researcher to scrutinize as many news items as possible and find which news sources and kinds, especially the anonymous ones, they frequently use. Although it also has opinion and feature stories' pages, only news items were dealt with for data collection to answer the research questions.

Complementing this two-subject study is *Fortune*, a weekly tabloid newspaper. It was launched by the turn of the millennium (European time), published and distributed by Independent News and Media Plc. At average, *Fortune* has 15 to 20 news stories per week; most, if not all, of which contain anonymous sources or sourcing one way or another.

In each of the two newspapers, all the news articles were considered as units of analysis. It implies that all other features were excluded from the analysis — such as 'Agenda' or Op-ed pages advertisements, commentaries, photo captions, feature articles, entertainment columns, and the like.

In order to select one newspaper issue from each of the four months (November, December, January, and February) for both of *Fortune* and *Herald*, systematic random sampling was used whereby the first day of the first week's print was taken as the first sample unit. Next, the second day of the week for the second selected month was taken, and so on so that all days and all weeks may be represented for both papers. *Fortune* comes out only on Sunday, thus only Sundays and not other days of the week have been selected for sample units.

For the coding process, the researcher trained two post-graduate students of the Addis Ababa University. They referenced the coding sheets based on the coding book's outlines

of definitions for key terms. They coded a sum of 199 news pieces featured in the eight newspaper editions. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006: 162), two to six coders would be employed in a content analysis method.

3.3.2 Purposive sampling

From both media organizations, purposefully selected media practitioners were interviewed by the researcher. Purposive sampling of these reporters and editors was applied to select them to thoroughly explicate the newspapers' underlying proceedings and convictions.

At the time of this research a total of 11 people have been partaking in the publication of the *Herald* newspaper, however, according to The Herald's editor-in-chief, at different times varying numbers of news reporters work there. All journalists participate in covering news stories (reporters, editors, and the editor-in-chief at times) besides the national news agencies they have which take the lion's share of news space on the broadsheet.

Interviewing the proofreaders who come in to work at night hours was believed irrelevant as the researcher was assured the proofreaders do nothing to alter the initial news content the editor had delivered to them.

Including a senior reporter from the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA), six journalists—editor-in-chief, the news editor, a senior editor, the assistant editor, and one news reporter—were interviewed by the researcher.

Fortune has, like *The Herald*, an indefinite number of newsmen employed at any given time. In effect, including the Managing editor all the staff journalists participate in bringing in news items. *Fortune*, at time of the interview, had about four employees working on beats out of which the researcher had selected the managing editor, the

editor-in-chief, and a reporter for data collection, which was a reasonably adequate number of concerned bodies as they have been selected purposefully, targeting only those directly involved in the news bringing and writing.

All interviews were conducted in Amharic—which all the informants spoke and were comfortable with.

3.4 Intercoder reliability

While coding, the key principle is to be consistent and systematic in applying the research instruments as possible. Intercoder reliability is an issue that relates to a formal quantitative analysis that requires using different people to numerically code research material, e.g. in quantitative content analysis, according to Deacon et al. (1999).

Everybody involved interprets the coding instruments in as consistent a manner as possible (ibid). To that end, various statistical tests can be used to check the degree of consistency among coders (Deacon et al., 1999: 392) out of which the researcher utilized the following forwarded by Wimmer and Dominick (2006:166):

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N1 + N2}$$

Where,

- M is the number of coding decisions which two coders agree
- N1 and N2 are the total number of coding decisions by the first and the second coder, respectively.

The result of the coding reliability between the two coders was 0.92. It is a number believed to be well sufficient because most published content analysis reliability results typically report a minimum reliability of 0.7 (ibid).

3.5 Data analysis

Data collected through content analysis were analyzed by the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS for Windows). The results were tabulated via descriptive statistics showing percentages and frequencies.

Different categories of themes were employed to analyze data gathered through interviews. In the effort to answer the research questions, common stands among all interviewees as well as major disparities among them were taken and presented.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Data presentation and analysis

By drawing on categories of themes vis-à-vis content analysis and individual in-depth interviews in tandem, findings are presented and discussed in this chapter in accordance with the research objectives. Aptly, Deacon et al. (1999) take this level as the stage where the researcher makes sense of the material collected, reappraising the initial hypotheses and assumptions in light of the findings.

The main objective of the study is to find out the types and frequency of anonymous news sourcing practices by local newspapers. In particular, the kinds and frequency of use of anonymous sources in the news issues, in what sorts of stories, by whom, and with how much (news) prominence were the foremost inquiries of the researcher. To answer these questions, therefore, the research investigated the extent of coverage of each of the eight issues sampled out. Essentially, overview of gate keeping and agenda setting factors in the respective media organs, source selection criteria, and legal and policy frameworks are as well intertwined and discussed below.

4.1.1 Overview of the extent and frequency of anonymous sources use

The general layouts of the newspapers in question indicate that *Fortune* features solely news stories on its front page, like *The Herald*. However, starting from its second page, it has much more diverse collections of stories, ranging from the ultimate business news – since it's a business newspaper – to politics, infrastructure, medical, entertainment, verbatim quotes, and gossip columns. At average, *Fortune* has 15 to 20 news stories per

week, most of which, if not all, contain anonymous sources or sourcing. *The Herald* contains over 30 news stories at average each day, with not many, if not none, anonymous sources in them.

Being an empirically grounded method, exploratory in process, and predictive or inferential in intent (Deacon et al., 1999), content analysis results reveal to what extent these newspapers used anonymous sourcing, as illustrated shortly. Given that, as Krippendorff (2004: 41) therefore points out, it allows the researcher to process context sensitive data texts that are significant, meaningful, informative and even representational to others. In that light, thematic analysis in conjunction with how much anonymous sourcing is used by the newspapers are explained via the subsequent output tables. Results described in percentages are rounded off to the nearest decimal point.

Table 1: Frequency of news anonymity content (number of news stories and percentage)

	Once in the story		More than once		None		Total	
<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	5	3.5%	4	2.8%	133	93.7%	142	100.0%
<i>Fortune</i>	11	19.3%	32	56.1%	14	24.6%	57	100.0%
Total	16		36		147		199	

Eight sampled newspapers, four issues each from *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Fortune*, making a total of 142 and 57 news stories respectively, were examined to answer the specific research questions. Content analysis outputs show that *The Herald* had nine news items with anonymous attributions - five of them once and four of them more than once in their stories - and 133 items none at all in their stories. Therefore, only approximately six percent of the 142 news stories contained anonymous attributions.

In contrast, *Fortune* had 43 items with anonymous attributions - 11 stories with anonymity once and 32 stories with more than once in their news items - and 14 stories with none at all. Nearly 76 percent of the 57 stories were anonymously attributed. *Fortune* has, therefore, made a much greater use of anonymous news sourcing. By far it exhibits plentiful and frequent anonymous sourcing than its counterpart in this research.

The interviewees' statements from both parties have also corroborated with the above data. Dejene Tessema, Editor-in-chief of *The Herald*, says that *Herald* does not normally at all resort to news which would need to bring in anonymous sourcing. *Fortune's* Managing editor, Tamrat W/Giorgis, however says "perhaps we use anonymous sources overly."

Consequently, *Herald's* 133 stories with no anonymous attributions out of the 142 comparatively overshadow all its anonymous attributions put together (9 of the 142). On the contrary, *Fortune's* anonymous attributions (43 out of the 57) outshone those 14 with no anonymous attributions.

4.1.2 Kinds of anonymous sourcing

Wudineh, a reporter from *Fortune*, confides that if the domain that the information was leaked from is a bigger and larger organization, *Fortune* tends to quote them with oblique and ambiguous terms so it would not be easy to identify who exactly did the leaking. However, if the anonymous leak is from a smaller firm, *Fortune* uses rather concealed identities and references to that source. For the coding process, the research refers to these sourcing trends, respectively, as "Sources ambiguously (partially) stated" and "Sources more inexplicitly stated".

By simple translation, stories that fall in the former category contain sources identified with terms like 'Sources close to the ...', 'Sources in the Ministry', etc.; while in the later

category only mere hints as ‘Reliable sources’ and ‘Knowledgeable sources’ are used for attribution.

Table 2: Kind of anonymity used (number of news stories)

	Sources ambiguously (partially) stated	Sources more inexplicitly stated	Total
<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	5	4	9
<i>Fortune</i>	30	13	43
Total	35	17	52

Accordingly, in both cases of anonymous sourcing (“Sources ambiguously stated” and “Sources more inexplicitly stated”), *Fortune* newspaper exceeds that of *The Herald*. As can be noticed from Table 2 above, 30 news items of *Fortune* were reported by the use of ambiguous sourcing while only five were from *Herald*’s part. Likewise, 13 news stories of *Fortune* were reported by the use of “Sources more inexplicitly stated” while only four stories were in that category for *The Herald*.

General analysis of the news contents, in addition to the informants from *Fortune*, reveal that *Fortune* uses the combination of overt sources (explicitly identified names of informants with their titles) along with ambiguous ones whilst reporting the same news story.

4.1.3 Kinds and frequencies of anonymous sourcing with respect to:

4.1.3.1 Local and international news items

The researcher sought to find out whether there was a significant difference in the use of anonymous sources in local vs. international news stories. One could for instance imagine that the newspapers were more prone to use unnamed sources in local news stories because they are more controversial for the readership.

Table 3: Geographical location of news items with anonymity content (number of news stories and percentage)

Frequency of news anonymity content		Local		African		Local and African		Local and international		Total	
None	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	111	83.5%	6	4.5%	11	8.3%	5	3.8%	133	100%
	<i>Fortune</i>	12	92.3%	0	0%	1	7.7%	0	0%	13	100%
Total		123		6		12		5		146	
Anonymous sources quoted once or more	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	7	77.8%	0	0%	2	22.2%	0	0%	9	100%
	<i>Fortune</i>	43	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	43	100%
Total		50		0		2		0		52	

The data in Table 3 above show that out of the nine that contained anonymity per story, seven stories of *The Herald* were exclusively local news items; and two comprised local and African stories, respectively constituting for nearly 78 and 22 percent of the total 142 news stories.

When it comes to *Fortune*, all of the 43 story items *Fortune* featured with anonymous attributions somewhere once and more than once in them did local news coverage, thus, constitute for 100 percent of the total 57 news stories.

By implication, African, international, and local-cum-international news did not get coverage citing anonymous sources by either of the two newspapers. It was a scanty coverage that local-cum-African news with anonymous sourcing got from *The Herald*, that is, two of those nine stories with anonymous attributions (22 percent), while it got no coverage by *Fortune*.

Fortune does have an exclusive “Horn of Africa News” page; its staff reporters, however, do not cover any of the stories there—hence, not the focus of this research.

The data moreover shows that, again, the greatest number of stories covered by *The Herald*, 111 of the 142, which had no anonymous sourcing in them at all, is on local stories. On the other hand, a rather smaller number of 13 local stories out of the total 57 printed by *Fortune* contain no anonymity at all.

However, it needs to be said that local news gets the utmost coverage by both newspapers. Neither newspaper in question have the resources like time and budget to go around and cover exclusively African and other international news stories, according to the informants from both parties. One should therefore not be conclusive about the differences between anonymous sources in local vs. international news.

4.1.3.2 Type of news content

Table 4: Type of news items with anonymity content (number of news stories)

Frequency of news anonymity content		Political	Social	Business and economics	Infra-structure	Culture	Medical	Other	Total
None	<i>Eth. Herald</i>	19	20	40	42	1	6	5	133
	<i>Fortune</i>	1	3	6	2	0	0	1	13
Total		20	23	46	44	1	6	6	146
Anonymous sources quoted once or more	<i>Eth. Herald</i>	3	2	2	1	0	0	1	9
	<i>Fortune</i>	1	4	31	5	0	0	2	43
Total		4	6	33	6	0	0	3	52

In sum, three political news of *The Herald* had anonymously attributed places inside their stories; two social stories contained anonymously attributed parts in their news, so did two biz¹¹ stories. One infrastructural story of *Herald* also had anonymous attribution. It can be deduced then that political news reporting takes a higher share of anonymous attributions in *The Herald* than do other types of news. *Herald's* Editor-in-chief also says that it is more of political (what he dubbed “governmental politics”) coverage that is frequented for anonymous sourcing, if ever, “once in a blue moon”.

Regarding *Fortune*, one political and four social news items show anonymous source content. Social, biz, and infrastructural news items, however, show 4, 31, and 5 anonymous source content in that order. Unlike *The Herald*, biz news had the highest number of news attributed to anonymous sources in *Fortune*, more than once per story at that.

¹¹ Biz stands for the business-cum-economics category of news content

It may not come as a surprise since *Fortune* is predominantly a business newspaper. On *The Herald's* part, except for the cultural and medical news contents, others like political, social, and economic items are almost equally frequented as it is a paper by which the Ethiopian government publicizes its political and official stand on socio-political and economic stances, according to *Herald's* Assistant editor, Mekonnen Teshome.

4.1.3.3 Informants incorporated

Besides the number of sources, it is important to note the kind of sources used by the media. Since the sources provide much of the information that journalists transmit to the audience, the use of different types of source inevitably has consequences for the journalistic content (Gans, 1980; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Manning, 2001, cited by Nord and Strömbäck (2006: 99)).

Table 5 below shows the typically used news sources by the newspapers in question and Table 6 singles out purely those anonymous sources used.

The fact that the sum of the total news items in Table 5, that is 351, exceeds 199 in number (which is the total sum of the news items coded altogether) explains that there have been more than one source for some of the news stories, both for *The Herald* and *Fortune*. For the most part, *Herald* uses government and non-government officials as well in one news report. Commonly notable is *The Herald* citing a government organization by name at the intro paragraphs and then citing the representative of that government organization in the following paragraphs. *Fortune*, relatively, tends to use both named and unnamed sources within the same story, both from government and otherwise.

Table 5: Informants stories were attributed to (number of informants)

	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	<i>Fortune</i>	Total
Gov. officials by name	75	14	89
Anonymous gov. officials	1	12	13
Officials by name	36	8	44
Anonymous officials	0	6	6
Corporate people by name	4	14	18
Anonymous corporate people	0	8	8
Non-officials by name	8	4	12
Anonymous non-officials	0	9	9
Gov. organization by name	66	8	74
NGO by name	15	4	19
NGO officials by name	10	1	11
Anonymous NGO officials	1	1	2
Foreign gov. organization by name	2	0	2
Foreign gov. officials by name	5	1	6
Clearly attributed documents	2	6	8
Anonymously attributed documents	0	1	1
Individuals by name	7	1	8
Individual anonymous sources	5	20	25
News not directly attributed to a certain source	3	6	9
Total	227	124	351

The Herald uses government officials by name highly than any other news source for its reports (21 percent of the 351 items). Next highly quoted sources are government organizations by name—19 percent. Following in the list come officials representing various local non-governmental institutions (non-anonymous)—10 percent. NGOs by name and NGO officials by name are almost equally frequently quoted at the fourth and fifth levels—4 and 3 percent respectively. Non-officials by name, individuals by name, individual anonymous sources equally with foreign government officials by name, and

corporate people by name in that order, are next in the list. Least quoted (only one time) are anonymous government officials and anonymous NGO officials with 0.3 percent coverage. It clearly shows that there is little and insignificant coverage of anonymous sources by *The Ethiopian Herald*. So did confirm all the staff employees of *The Herald* that were interviewed by the researcher.

Fortune's most highly quoted sources are individual anonymous sources (20 news items making 6 percent of the 351 items). Although not as highly, the next *Fortune*'s sources turned out to be government officials and corporate people (both named sources) quoted equally frequently— 4 percent. Almost equally with the above two (with 3 percent), anonymous government officials are the sources in the third frequency level for *Fortune*. Anonymous non-officials¹² are the fourth in the list, their say constituting nearly 3 percent of coverage. In the fifth place, officials by name, anonymous corporate people, and government organizations by name appear equally in *Fortune*'s 57 news samples with 2 percent coverage.

Next down the rows, with approximately 2 percentages, equally covered by *Fortune* are anonymous officials, clearly attributed documents, and not-directly attributed sources. The least quoted informants are NGOs and their officials, foreign government officials, individual named sources and anonymously attributed documents.

Table 6: Anonymous informants stories were attributed to (number of informants)

	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	<i>Fortune</i>	Total
Anonymous gov. officials	1	12	13
Anonymous officials	0	6	6
Anonymous corporate people	0	8	8
Anonymous non-officials	0	9	9
Anonymous NGO officials	1	1	2

¹² Vide Appendix 1, #7

Anonymously attributed documents	0	1	1
Individual anonymous sources	5	20	25
News not directly attributed to a certain source	3	6	9
Total	9	63	72

Comparatively, *Fortune* makes more diverse use of sources—both named and unnamed—than its counterpart. With regard to the anonymous sources listed in Table 6, *Fortune* exhibits 63 of them whereas *Herald* does only 9, and not as diverse as *Fortune*'s. *Fortune* has used officials (government and otherwise), corporate and other non-officials, NGO workers and individual sources as well as documents. *Herald*, on the other hand, is found to exhibit only NGO workers and individual sources for the anonymous attributions.

In a nutshell, source coverage of *The Herald* showed heavy reliance on government official sources by name whereas anonymous government sources, by and large, were used much less frequently, if at all. Thus, *Herald*'s practices comply with Allan's observation, as stated in chapter two earlier, that "Any tale told by those on top intrinsically deserves to be regarded as the most credible account obtainable" (1999: 68). The *Fortune* staff on the reverse earnestly believes otherwise. The Managing editor argues that journalists should "dare to question the most conventional knowledge let alone what an official says." Accordingly, as was pointed out in the literature review section,

It is impossible to cross-check everything official sources tell us. But at the same time, it is worth remembering that they can and do get it wrong. Skepticism is just as appropriate in our dealings with them as with other types of sources (Krüger, 2004: 177).

One of the irrefutable reasons that *The Herald* makes a scant use of anonymous government sources is lest it gives the impression that the government is not open. As

well, government officials are afraid of retribution if they have their name on print speaking on sensitive matters.

According to the researcher's impression from the interviewees' point, being employees of a state-owned newspaper, it is hardly viable for *Herald's* reporters to write investigative and accusative reports, and moreover, for the government official sources to be disclosing inside information that may in any way harm the government's reputation. Keeble (2001), cited in the literature discussion above, also notes that given the high unemployment figures, people are reluctant to criticize their employers for fear of the consequences.

4.1.3.4 The reporters

The Ethiopian Herald, according to the journalists working there as well as can be understood from its news accounts, gathers news chiefly from the national news agencies—namely ENA (the Ethiopian News Agency) and WIC (Walta Information Centre)—for most of its daily news bulletins. At rare intervals, *Herald's* staff journalists partake in bringing news. *Fortune's* staff reporters, on the other hand, produce their weekly news on their own; neither do they subscribe news from the national news agencies.

By implication, where anonymous news sourcing is concerned, *The Herald* takes up what it received from the aforementioned state news agencies and at times its staff journalists; *Fortune* does depending entirely on the integrity of its “Staff writers”, as they are called. The following tables illustrate these statements.

Table 7: Who covered the story? (Number of news stories)

	Staff journalist	National agency	Local took up from international agency	Other outlets	No byline	Total
<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	5	122	12	2	1	142
<i>Fortune</i>	54	0	0	0	3	57
Total	59	122	12	2	4	199

The lion’s share of the overall news samples from *The Herald* (122 news items) were compiled by the local news agencies, ENA and WIC, constituting for over 90 percent of the total 142 news samples. The other 8 percent and 4 percent of the stories on this broadsheet respectively were covered by international¹³ news agencies and staff journalists. To a negligible extent, nearly 1 percent, *The Herald* makes use of ‘other outlets’¹⁴.

As compared to *Herald*’s practices, *Fortune* basically entirely relies on its staff reporters, whom under their news headlines are referred to as “Fortune staff writer”, constituting for 95 percent. Among the 57 overall news samples, there were some three items with no bylines. One was an extensive analytical news which legitimately needed to have a byline. Two of them were found to be what *Fortune* at times features as “Photo captions”¹⁵, according to the journalists at the *Fortune*. They further claim that such genre of descriptions of pictures do not necessarily need attributions nor bylines.

¹³ The category that reads “Local took up from international agency” translates into either ENA or WIC reporting news that another international news agency like Xhinua, AFP, or the BBC had dispatched originally.

¹⁴ “Other outlets” are meant to refer to reports or releases by various bodies (media organizations or not) which *Herald* has printed as news items. They are clearly addressed to the outlets but do not specify the news writers nor how *The Herald* procured the story.

¹⁵ *Fortune*’s “Photo captions” are where few brief paragraphs are placed adjacent to a picture, written analytically and often critically about the picture.

However, they disclose that it is their adamant policy to write bylines in all other news stories, including the reporter’s position at the *Fortune*.

Table 8:

The following table specifically displays the reporters and media outlets that frequent coverage of anonymous news sources.

Who covered anonymously sourced stories? (Number of news stories)

		Staff journalist	National agency	Local took up from internation al agency	Other outlets	No byline	Total
<i>No anonymous sources</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	4	115	11	2	1	133
	<i>Fortune</i>	11	0	0	0	2	13
	Total	15	115	11	2	3	146
<i>Anonymous sources used once or more</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	1	7	1	0	0	9
	<i>Fortune</i>	43	0	0	0	1	43
	Total	44	7	1	0	1	52

Nine stories (out of 142) were featured by *Herald* that contained anonymous news sourcing, seven of which were covered by the state news agencies. Among the other two, one was reported by a staff journalist and the other one was taken up from international news agencies.

As far as *Fortune*’s editions are concerned, 43 stories (out of the 57 samples) contained anonymous references, all of which were covered by *Fortune*’s staff writers, with the exception of one story which had no byline.

Table 9: Kind of anonymity used by various journalists and agencies (number of news stories)¹⁶

		Staff journalist	National agency	Local took up from internation al agency	No byline	Total
<i>Sources</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	1	3	1	0	5
<i>ambiguously</i>	<i>Fortune</i>	29	0	0	1	30
<i>(partially) stated</i>	Total	30	3	1	1	35
<i>Sources more</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	0	4	0	0	4
<i>inexplicitly</i>	<i>Fortune</i>	13	0	0	0	13
<i>stated</i>	Total	13	4	0	0	17

When examining the kind of anonymity that *The Herald* has used, one finds again that the national news agencies are used for its higher number of news reports containing ambiguous sources than its staff journalists or international news agencies, three to one in proportion for both amongst the given samples. A very rare coverage (only four news items) were reported by the local news agencies within the “Sources more inexplicitly stated” category. (Table 9 above).

It is ambiguous (partial) sourcing that the *Fortune* paper frequents (in 30 of its stories) than sources with more inexplicit identities (in 13 of its stories). They were all reported by non other than their staff journalists. Esayas Mekuria, *Fortune*’s news writer for seven years, assures, “why do we need others to report for us when we can do the job.”

¹⁶ The total number of cases of anonymous stories altogether, in respective tables, got varied because when coding them, the researcher at times found that a local agency modifies a story it has originally gotten from an international agency, but still the local agency’s name is written at the byline space (even though in the body of the news it says “...so and so [international] agency has reported”. Thus in such cases, there become overlaps and thus extra numbers because some variables were ticked in multiple categories.

4.1.3.5 Type of reporting and controversial matter content

Table 10: Type of reporting (number of news stories) / Frequencies of anonymity

		General reporting	Investigative reporting	Unclear/ indistinct	Total
<i>No anonymous sources</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	133	0	0	133
	<i>Fortune</i>	14	0	0	14
	Total	147	0	0	147
<i>Anonymous sources quoted once or more</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	9	0	0	9
	<i>Fortune</i>	33	9	1	43
	Total	42	9	1	52

Table 11: Type of reporting (Number of news stories) / Kinds of anonymity

		General reporting	Investigative reporting	Unclear/ indistinct	Total
<i>Sources ambiguously (partially) stated</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	5	0	0	5
	<i>Fortune</i>	24	5	1	30
	Total	29	5	1	35
<i>Sources more inexplicitly stated</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	4	0	0	4
	<i>Fortune</i>	10	3	0	13
	Total	14	3	0	17

Tables 10 and 11 vividly demonstrate that there is more use of anonymous sources in general news reporting than in investigative reporting. This applies to both newspapers. Understandably, this is so because there is an overall more general reporting than investigative reporting. In more definite terms, nonetheless, *Fortune* did employ investigative news reporting (in 9 stories on Table 10 and 3 stories on Table 11), while *The Herald* employed none at all.

Be that as it may, “We don’t do as much investigative news as we should,” discloses *Fortune*’s Managing editor, Tamrat. He explains that the newspaper cannot afford to work on highly investigative stories from week to week. Nevertheless, like his staff colleagues sternly claim, *Fortune* does cross-check every information before printing and does not entertain “plain and ‘he said, or she said’ reporting.”

The Editor-in-chief of *The Herald* says it takes a great deal of time and budget to produce investigative stories than what *The Herald* can afford nor is mainly designed for, in addition to having to meet the demands of printing news daily on the broadsheet. *Herald* is basically meant to report news that primarily would depict the nation, and the government by extension, in a favorable light, thus does not require reports with in-depth investigation as such.

Within the general reporting cachet, again it is the *Fortune* newspaper that outshines *The Herald* when it comes to anonymous attributions. Thirty-one news items of *Fortune* were ambiguously sourced, outshining five of *The Herald*’s. Likewise, containing news sources with concealed identities, 11 news items of *Fortune* newspaper outshone that of *Herald*’s which had only one news item in this category. The editor-in-chief’s point goes in line with what Gans was quoted for in chapter 2:

The efficiency can be measured in terms of time and cost. Reporters who have only a short time to gather information must therefore attempt to obtain the most suitable news from the fewest number of sources as quickly as possible, and with the least strain on the organizational budget (Gans, 2004: 28).

Table 12: Type of reporting (Number of news stories) with regard to controversial issue content

		Controversial issue	Not controversial	Total
<i>Sources</i>	<i>Ethiopian</i>	1	4	5
<i>ambiguously</i>	<i>Herald</i>			

<i>(partially) stated</i>	<i>Fortune</i>	10	20	30
	Total	10	34	44
<i>Sources more inexplicitly stated</i>	<i>Ethiopian</i>	0	4	4
	<i>Herald</i>			
	<i>Fortune</i>	1	12	13
	Total	1	16	17

It can be inferred from Table 12 that both *The Herald* and *Fortune* used ‘ambiguous’ kind of anonymous sourcing more often to report news that had (one or more) controversial matter content than “sources more inexplicitly stated”. The same holds true for the news with no controversial matter reports; i.e., ambiguous sourcing leads its counterpart category. Considering those news with controversial matter content in them from both categories as a whole, *Fortune*’s score to *Herald*’s is ten to one.

From the side of the *Fortune* newspaper, its reporters claim to always strive to present in-depth, analytical, and sufficiently examined material, whether on controversial or else issues. A reporter from the *Fortune* says,

We particularly are not fond of attending press conferences and receiving press releases and simply re-writing them on our newspaper. We want to know what is behind the conference or the event especially that the organizers are not telling us in the open (Wudineh Zenebe, indepth interview, May 2007).

The Managing editor also argues that what he called the “he said” approach is not the correct brand of journalism to practice and not acceptable for him at all.

Typically, where there are controversies and unrest, there would be sources leaking information that some others may not want to see on print, therefore the need for concealing identities using ambiguous and indirect terms. Wudineh, *Fortune*’s news reporter, says “If the leaks are willing to go on-the-record, we would be very pleased. But

if they fear for their security and their families’, we respect their wishes and unname them.”

The Ethiopian Herald staff, on its part, argues that in-depth reporting not only takes much more time and researching than what this daily broadsheet is predominantly concerned with, but also would be at odds with it. Mekonnen, Assistant editor, says that it is rather event-based “protocol news” that they make public besides to issues that generally show the government’s socio-political stand points.

A point worth noting here, however, is that the mere inclusion of controversial matter in a news item ought not be regarded as a damaging course of action on its own. Despite that, news sources prefer not to find themselves in a controversial and debated image in the news.

To the news reporter, controversy often constitutes news and is not necessarily good or bad. Controversy may be viewed as an index of a healthy society that recognizes and addresses its problems. To news sources and others, including public officials and educators, controversy is bad; it is taken as evidence that the system is not working or is viewed as something contrived by the news media (Strentz, 1989: 17).

4.1.3.6 Positioning of news items

Table 13: Positioning of news items (number of news stories) /Frequencies of anonymity

		Front page	Second and third pages	Inside pages other than 2nd and 3rd	Back page	Total
<i>No anonymous sources</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	25	39	49	20	133
	<i>Fortune</i>	2	0	11	0	13
	Total	27	39	60	20	146
<i>Anonymous</i>	<i>Ethiopian</i>	3	2	3	1	9

<i>sources quoted once or more</i>	<i>Herald</i>					
	<i>Fortune</i>	13	0	30	0	43
	Total	16	2	33	1	52

Table 14: Positioning of news items and degree of anonymity (number of news stories) /Kinds of anonymity

		Front page	Second and third pages	Inside pages other than 2nd and 3rd	Total
<i>Sources ambiguously (partially) stated</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	2	2	1	5
	<i>Fortune</i>	10	0	20	30
	Total	12	2	21	35
<i>Sources more inexplicitly stated</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	4	0	0	4
	<i>Fortune</i>	5	0	8	13
	Total	9	0	8	17

One can comprehend from the above tables that ambiguous news sourcing (i.e. news that only partially and vaguely indicate who the sources are) prevails more exceedingly than the tendency of identifying news sourcing inexplicitly — for both *The Herald* and *Fortune*. Furthermore, as was noted earlier, on both front pages news as well as inside¹⁷ pages, *Fortune* overwhelmingly exceeds *Herald*'s anonymous news coverage.

The Ethiopian Herald has printed three news items with anonymous source attributions both on its front and inside pages. As compared to *Fortune*, which has printed 10 of them

¹⁷ *Fortune* does not feature news stories on its second and third pages, and the back pages either. The second and third pages are devoted to news analysis and commentaries. The back pages are exclusively left for advertisements. Infrequently, *The Herald* publishes only feature stories and leave out news on its back pages. For that reason, therefore, this study took into consideration only 'Front pages' and 'Inside pages other than the second and third'.

on its front pages and 20 of them on its inside pages, *The Herald* has made much less frequent anonymous sourcing, hence, has given less news prominence to anonymous sourcing than *Fortune*.

4.1.3.7 Tone of news reporting

The researcher preferred not to scrutinize wide differences between the two newspapers in terms of their tones of news reporting—for a fairly obvious reason that it would be too subjective to code news items sharply as positive or negative. “That is why,” Strentz (1989) notes, “the reporter is better advised to think in terms of accuracy and context and the story’s immediacy, prominence, and proximity than in terms of good or bad news.”

Nevertheless, the general inclinations observed by the data coders as indeed by the researcher as well hint that most of the news that *The Herald* publishes embrace positive publicity. For the most part, *Fortune*’s news had neutral and positive tones, some negative ones.

Concerning specifically those news items containing anonymity, none are to be found from the *Herald*’s part with negative tones—both within the kinds of anonymity as well as the frequency tabulations. In the case of *Fortune*, of the 33 news stories which have anonymous attributions, 11 were of negative tones which are greater in number than the seven positive publicities. Apart from that, the positive and negative tones while sourcing anonymously have almost equivalent coverage by the *Fortune* newspaper in the frequency categories.

4.2 Discussion

Having a rather more relevance to the basic circumstances as to how and why anonymous sourcing is (or is not) incorporated by the news reports and reporters under study, the sources' and journalists' interests and compulsion, the agenda setting together with source cultivation and protection paradigms, and the working legal-cum-ethical grounds therewith are discussed here in more specificity and prominence as the following.

4.2.1 Gleaning inside stories

Amanuel Adera, a reporter of *The Herald*, says that they have two means to gather daily news:

One is where reporters would be assigned to cover events; the other is where a reporter proposes stories to cover on his/her own time and accord, which is known as 'project news'. Not very often but we do make use of other wire services like the internet. And we receive press releases too (Amanuel Adera, indepth interview, May 2007).

“Because we dominantly print event-oriented news, ENA and WIC provide us with information about forth-coming events,” says Mekonnen Teshome, Assistant editor of *The Herald*. “Other times, we carry out what are known as project news; many of which are not very investigative as they take more time and manpower than we currently have.”

Senior editor of *The Herald*, Aregu Balleh, confirms this when saying, “Mostly we cover events organized by government bodies, and receive press releases whereby we quote government entities as news sources.” The Editor-in-chief, Dejene Tesema, says, “The mass media in general cover officials and authorities mostly because these personalities are the newsmakers. And ‘prominence’ is one of the major news values.”

On the other hand, speaking for *Fortune*, Wudineh Zenebe and Issayas Mekuria (its staff reporters for years) say that they normally initiate the news items on their own. As well,

‘event-makers’ call them to report about them. It could be in a form of press releases or press conferences.

“We do attend events but try to find our own angle within the events,” Wudineh claims;

We try to decipher interesting details, especially which the organizers are not telling us in the open. So when we probe for the tales behind the events we’re summoned to write about, we may not always find the officials concerned to speak on the issue. Nowadays PR [Public Relations] officers and General Managers are the ones responsible for information disclosure in companies. Regrettably these officials are, we are often told, either busy, unavailable, or do not want to comment on the matter. The irony is that PR officers usually are ignorant of what goes around their organizations, so we do not make much use of them. We resort to those sources who are aware and who will disclose inside stories (Wudineh, indepth interview, May 2007).

Strentz (1989) subsumes Wudineh’s adage: “reporters reading press releases see story elements that those who prepared the releases might have missed.” It is indeed not much of an advantage that a press conference offers for a competent news reporter.

Most of the advantages in a press conference lie with the news source and not with the news reporter or news audience. The news source generally decides who asks the questions, determines the length of the answers, can avoid any follow-up questions and rephrase tough questions to his or her liking, and sets the time, place, and duration of the interview (Strentz, 1989: 65).

4.2.2 Sources who seek anonymity

Both *Herald* and *Fortune* staffs say that the need for an off-the-record attribution depends on the kind of issue to be reported. Generally, real or imagined reasons prevail. “Almost everyone in this country asks for anonymity,” confers Tamrat G/Giorgis, *Fortune*’s Managing editor, “for real or imagined reasons.” He asserts that Ethiopia’s is a secretive society, be it the laymen or the elites. “Some ask anonymity for no tangible reason. In

fact, just to tell the media any one thing on the subject of their professional expertise, the experts ask anonymity.”

Tamrat averts, nonetheless, that there are some who seek anonymity for understandable reasons—“when their wellbeing, professional or otherwise, may be compromised if they talk to the media when they are not supposed to.” Furthermore, “Bosses don’t give that much liberty to their PR officers to talk to the media. PR officers fear that it might look as if they are trying to outshine those higher in authority.” Rightly affirming his statement, Manning (2001) writes that news journalism as a production process is shaped by bureaucratic routines and organizational imperatives.

Explaining how they attribute their anonymous sources, Wudineh, Tamrat’s colleague, says that if leaks work in a larger institution, they may not mind being addressed by vague and oblique identities. On the contrary, if they are from smaller organizations, they request much more inexplicit identifications as they would be easily identified if quoted by name.

4.2.3 How credible are they presumed to be?

In spite of the appeal and newsworthiness of a story obtained from anonymous insiders, reporters have to believe what they are about to make public is a credible account of events, and that it is beyond speculation.

As a matter of fact, anonymous sourcing is not much of a common sight for *The Ethiopian Herald* to be elaborating in detail about its appliances. In any case, according to its pro-government standpoint, there is an understanding between the news agencies and the newspaper that the news reports come from overt sources and reliable ones for the most part. “These news agencies are responsible and accountable and can be asked for explanations as well as running corrections,” underscores *Herald’s* Editor-in-chief. *The Herald’s* staff explains that the government officials speak to the people through this

paper with no reason to go off-the-record or disseminate controversial or conflicting stories.

Their line of conception fittingly corroborates with Gans' assertion mentioned in the literature review portion earlier that:

Story selectors consider themselves more trustworthy if they use official sources because these sources cannot afford to lie openly; they are also more persuasive because their facts and opinions are factual. Reporters are also comfortable to use authoritative sources because when stories become controversial, journalists can defend themselves before news executives by having relied on authoritative sources (Gans, 2004: 12).

From where *Fortune* stands, its news journalists have different contacts and tip-offs everywhere in town. We make friends with our sources, they say; however, we never take for granted what they tell us on-the-record or leak to us clandestinely. "We crosscheck every little thing that we print. We confirm with official responses too," states the Managing editor, strongly asserting that "anyone can come and challenge the assertions in our news stories and we will do our responsibility of proving it."

4.2.4 Means to crosscheck anonymous informants

If news reporters should entertain anonymity requests, they need very well be confident as to the truthfulness of the story they put on print. Hence, they are met with an additional rigor of checking out the information from as many other angles as possible. News media are responsible for assessing source credibility and for advocating news coverage to assure that both the news medium and news audience are served (Strentz, 1989).

"We do verify every little thing that we print," divulges Tamrat confidently. He says if *Fortune* dares to publish something that is not verified and accurate, it would be putting its integrity as a newspaper at stake. They do not only vouch to verify what and why a source would disclose information, but also go to the concerned state official(s) for

verification on the matter. “We ask our anonymous sources to substantiate their claims with documents or proofs. And of course we talk to people within the same company or organization for confirmation.”

Fortune's Managing editor also confronts the news reporters about how they brought inside-tips and whether their leaks can pass for credible informants. It is justified since the reporter is responsible for assessing source credibility and ascertaining both the news medium and news audience are served. Therefore, it is indispensable that reporters who turn in questionable or controversial stories may be questioned by copy editors or news directors as to the veracity of their news sources. They have to discuss, “Can the news source be trusted? Is the reporter discerning enough to know when a usually reliable source might be misleading?” (Strentz, 1989: 84).

The Editor and Managing editor (of *Fortune*) are always notified of these covert arrangements and about who *Fortune*'s anonymous leaks are. Krüger agrees:

In a news organization that takes itself seriously, the editor would want to satisfy him- or herself that the information is reliable, and that the story is worth it. Also, if there is a possibility of legal complications, it is in reporters' interests to ensure that the organization will back them (Krüger, 2004: 182).

Having done that, Tamrat rather is defensive on the issue of *Fortune*'s integrity and credibility.

Anyone who challenges any assertion in our stories, they're free to challenge it. Our responsibility is to prove it. And we can prove it, whether we had used open or anonymous sources. We accept that there is accountability involved in what we write and we will stand up to it (Tamrat W/Giorgis, indepth interview, June 2007).

A good reason for thinking very carefully about who the source is, as Krüger (2004) exemplifies, is that it helps evaluate what sources are saying and judge the value of their evidence. Some of *Fortune*'s journalists have become beat reporters covering stories

within the various state ministries and have established years of intimacy with the authority organizations. They hence claim to have built proved verifiability of their news stories enough that *Fortune*'s audiences do not critically hesitate to believe if they are true any more than appreciating the scoops. Issayas states:

We verify stories by applying other sources within the same department, for instance. I believe that's one of the major undertakings news journalists must carry out—verifying a story from multiple sources' view points. Because any sort of sources do not disclose any inside story without having their end of the gain to obtain, we investigate why they actually wanted the story out. We do not take any thing at face value. For that matter if my mother or my wife tells me that they love me I would verify if it is really true; I would not just take it for granted (Issayas Mekuria, indepth interview, June 2007).

Journalists at the *Fortune* all agree on one thing: No government or else official have complained about any story on their paper for not having been true. Rather they ask them how they knew so much and inquire to know their anonymous tip-offs. They argue that this can prove that their stories are verified and verifiable. Briefly referred to in chapter two of this study, Gans forwards that:

Reporters who come up with stories that are explicitly or implicitly critical of powerful sources must provide considerable evidence to substantiate their facts, for such stories will result in an angry call from the source, the executives cannot defend reporters whose evidence is not convincing (Gans, 2003: 120).

The Ethiopian Herald seems to have far less endeavors to undertake in this regard. It usually takes in news which the state agencies send through their online networks. Thus, the newspaper trusts that all news items are sent having been verified for accuracy and fairness, among other news values. Aregu, *Herald*'s Senior editor, states,

Herald does not do much cross checking on the news items that come in from the news agencies trusting the mutual understanding therein between these government organizations which operate within one and the same editorial policy. We do sometimes ask for deeper elaborations from the agencies on certain issues. But honestly we do not verify every bit of

every story all the time. I personally am not very supportive of the fact that we do not cover most of the stories that are run by the paper. But due to lack of man power and time constraints, we are heavily dependent on the news agencies (Aregu Balleh, indepth interview, July 2007).

4.2.5 The central rationales: Justifying and discouraging the use of anonymous sources

As elucidated in chapter 2 citing Keeble (2001), so as to attain the central goals of integrity in the journalistic profession, one of which is incorporating balance in the news reports, the reporter needs to contact all parties involved to balance the report with their response to the allegations. The rationale of maintaining neutrality for Aregu, *The Herald's* Senior editor, in addition yet premier to Keeble's point above, is that the newspaper needs to show that news reporters did not make the story up and have no say in it but the news source only. The Assistant editor additionally prioritizes Aregu's stand:

[*The Herald*] is a state-owned newspaper with the government's priorities and development-related news often being printed and government officials giving out most of the information. No need, hence, to quote them anonymously. These are chiefly protocol news there to pronounce the government's standpoints on various political and socio-economic sectors. The other aim of the paper is building and maintaining a good image of the nation. By that we mean not to focus on news that are sensational. Unlike the private media, whose primary aim is to print papers for commercial gains by reporting controversies and conflicts. We do not see the ultimate importance in doing that (Mekonnen Teshome, indepth interview, July 2007).

His colleague, Aregu, further elaborates:

Herald is owned by the government. And so it is published in line with the government's policies which are pinned on development and democratization engagements. News reports on these developments do not normally need to quote anonymous sources. The news are event-based and the sources are open government sources— government officials mostly. It doesn't mean that corruption for instance and other related issues are totally abandoned (Aregu Balleh, indepth interview, July 2007).

The Editor-in-chief, Dejene, moreover, extends that,

It depends on the focus of the newspaper to begin with. Our paper does not operate for profit generation purposes. In addition, the reason we do not usually publish investigative issues, for e.g. on corruption-related news against allegedly corrupted government officials, is because the journalists, being its employees, do not confront the government that way. Besides, investigative reporting takes too much time for the journalists to develop sources who will leak inside stories, and this is a daily newspaper. In any case I'm telling you speculatively; we haven't tried such things so far for there are no governmental set-ups and professional grounds for our journalists to do so (Dejene Tesema, indepth interview, June 2007).

On the contrary, in any story, the news substance that is mainly accentuated for *Fortune* is in the 'what is said' much rather than in the 'who said it'. Anonymous sources are useful to *Fortune* only as long as what they pass on is backed by verifiability. Speaking from his seven-year experience with *Fortune*, Issayas, confides,

For the most part, many people do not want their names on print for no good reason. By all accounts, it is not who says it that matters to our reporting. We only know that we need to take their piece of the story and validate it ourselves whether it has actually taken place. The most important thing for us is not who said it but whether it is indeed verifiably true (Issayas Mekuria, indepth interview, June 2007).

On *Fortune's* part again, Wudineh ascertains,

If officials concerned can and do answer our questions about any topic, we would have no reason to go to clandestine sources to answer them. Moreover, our regular readers as well attest our credibility because it is something we've proven ourselves over the years about. It is a series of stories that we print, none of which were found to be fabricated. We print detailed stories about an event beforehand; and our readers see that, when the event takes place, what *Fortune* had printed before hand was true. It cannot matter to them whether we use anonymous sources or not then as we've long built our credibility (Wudineh Zenebe, indepth interview, May 2007).

Fortune claims that it is impeccably crucial to talk to any and all sorts of news sources by all means exhaustively. This includes those sources whom the newspaper has to

skeptically interrogate but also respect their wishes if they request to be quoted anonymously, hence. Although in reality, it may be difficult to maintain (and many argue that journalists often get too close to their sources in these circumstances), Wudineh – *Fortune*'s reporter – says “we need to make good friends with our sources and gain their trust before they tell us any juicy information we may not gain elsewhere.”

PR officers in this country, except for some two or three, are terribly ignorant about what goes on in their own organizations, according to *Fortune*'s perception. “They find out what happens around from us when we try to inquire about something inside their domain. That is a very regrettable thing,” says Wudineh. Strentz introduces that there are such kinds of encounters in line with the *Fortune*'s—sometimes journalists are the informants of the news to the newsmakers themselves.

Sometimes a reporter is shocked when it is necessary to tell a news source something the source was presumed to have known. These instances dramatically illustrate the role of the reporter in providing information to people presumed to be news sources (Strentz, 1989: 10).

Fortune's Managing editor, Tamrat, adds that,

It has a lot to do with how the Ethiopian culture and society is. People are not quite open in telling you what you want to know and attribute their names to the statement that they give to you. There is fear, not necessarily fear of the government or fear of the opposition or a certain group. It's largely fear of the unknown. The mindsets of the society we deal with and interact with have this reluctance to be quoted on-the-record. Sometimes for very strange reasons, they ask anonymity. For example, people telling you about their expertise on HIV want anonymity. Even for simple conversations amid social gatherings, people are uncomfortable speaking to a journalist as though you would publish everything that you hear on your newspaper (Tamrat W/Giorgis, indepth interview, June 2007).

Tamrat, however, acknowledges that,

This is at times understandable in a country where bosses get upset if their PR officers disclose information on their behalf. PR officers in this

country, in many cases, are not at liberty to tell you what's happening in their ministry because they're afraid that their bosses may not be happy that they spoke to the media. Not so much because of the content of the information than because of the mere fact that they did. They'd assume that it may seem as though they are trying to outshine their bosses and trying to win greater reputation and fame than them. So there is fear of retaliation from sources' side. And there could indeed be people [who have been] subjected for talking to the media (Ibid).

“It is not something we are happy about, but the prevailing circumstances drive us to use them to the extent that we are using them” Tamrat says, and continues, “There is a certain degree of problem on the side of the media practitioners as well in that we don't try hard enough to convince sources to go on record. For whatever their reason, we're quick to respect their wishes.”

From an opinion perspective, one can empathize and appreciate both of these newspapers' justifications—since they make a pivotal point that news source selection ultimately depends upon the initial predisposition of the newspaper kind to begin with. If the stand of the newspaper and the kind of stories regularly printed call for it, the use of unnamed sources may even be the first of options to resort to (as in the case of *Fortune*). If otherwise, the reverse holds true (as in the case of *The Ethiopian Herald*).

4.2.6 Symbiotic interests spell proponents' vs. opponents' views

Concluding from the above adages raised, the research finds out that, in due course of reporter-source relationships, mutual interests are indeed punctuated. Sources do not disclose confidential stories to reporters without wanting to secure their end of the bargain. Journalists – working under deadline pressures and striving for unheard-of scoops – want to keep their sources talking and, hence, quickly respect the sources' wishes of anonymity, before other media snatch them away.

Amid the experiences of the newspapers in question, the news sources want their ideas publicized. However, they perceive doing so out in the open may be hazardous for any number of reasons. The media (allegedly, the private print press for the most part) lure to cultivate their sources, establish a regular rapport and receive inside tips, and therefore, promptly grant anonymity to sources if asked. By extension, the proponent parties toward the usefulness of anonymous sourcing by and large reflect that they do so in order for the mutual interests to be kept intact.

Conversely, opponents of this view, as the case of *The Herald*, promote assertions that not all newspapers are predominantly designated to presenting breaking scoops to the readership. The public information (on the socio-political stature of a nation), education, and image building roles of the print press do not need to be carried out via officials who cannot venture to speak up with an overt name.

It is the researcher's impression that a print medium that requires fresh ideas and ideals daily as well as weekly, in any case, must not be deprived of newsworthy scoops—provided it does not repeatedly attribute them with anonymous tippers throughout its news editions.

4.2.7 Journalists' compulsion equals sources' motives

Like the symbiotic interests of sources and the press spell proponents' and opponents' views toward anonymous news sourcing, so do their respective intents and motives in the wake of off-the-record attributions. Moreover, one's motive significantly props the other's.

In the literature review part earlier on, sources' motives for going off-the-record were listed as: having their own axes to grind; fear of retribution and litigation; and keeping their image and reputation. Likewise, journalists' motives when granting anonymity were put as: agenda setting; source protection; and deadline pressures along with source unavailability. The findings of this study suggest that the anonymous news attributions

have profoundly impelled these essential elements to complement one another. That is, sources desire to get their say heard without being spotted (and at times litigated) just as journalists desire to write continual interesting news stories meeting their deadlines without losing their tippers nor getting them harmed due to the disclosure.

In other words, sources and journalists are actually accomplices in shaping the news – as Strentz (1989) accurately distinguished them quoted in chapter two of this study – in that in order to publicize their thoughts, sources sneak information to the press; and in order to run their errand of news production, journalists would be compelled to entertain sources' requisitions.

4.2.8 Rules and regulations

Pertinent cases in point for this particular study are: the Ethiopian Constitution (1995), the press proclamation (1992), and the editorial policies of *Fortune* and *The Ethiopian Herald* newspapers.

The Ethiopian Constitution, which has become effective since 1995, ensures that freedom of expression is unconditionally guaranteed to any and everyone. Sub article 2 of Article 29 states that:

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression without any interference. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any media of his choice (1995: 89).

Despite these fair provisions to press freedom and rights, other applicable legal documents practically function as gatekeepers over which news type gets disseminated or not—and by implication, how news are attributed. Forbes (2005: 92), discussing the practice in African countries, writes, “Legislation may by design or omission force journalists to reveal their sources and to discourage criticism of the regime. While some states guarantee media freedom through their constitutions, they have in place limitation

clauses that reduce such freedom.” Alike manipulative practices are also visible in Ethiopia.

One such limitation is legislated in the 1992 Ethiopian press proclamation which is a fitting proof. Under the Right of Access to Information, sub article 4.a ensures that, “The publisher or the editor of any press may not be compelled to disclose the source of any news or information which has been used in the preparation of his press.” However, within the same section of the article, a subsequent sub article (4.b) limits that right.

The court may order the publisher or the editor of the press to disclose his sources of information in the case of a crime committed against the safety of the state or of the administration established in accordance with the Charter or of the national defense force, constituting a clear and present danger, or in the case of proceeding of a serious crime, where such source does not have any alternative and is decisive to the outcome of the case (1992: 33).

Although the above cited laws largely govern the use of anonymous sources in Ethiopian media practice, different local media adhere to these laws in different degrees. *The Ethiopian Herald*, one of the publications of the state owned Ethiopian Press Agency, for instance, welcomes use of anonymous sources in general terms. This is observable in the Agency’s editorial policy document. Sub article 5 of the policy’s Article 7 reads, “Reporters may use anonymous news sources provided that the well being of the sources and their families’ is not put in danger due to the disclosure of information, and it is made certain that the information cannot be found elsewhere.” Moreover, its Sub articles 6 and 7¹⁸ confirm that reporters are not compelled to reveal their sources unless ordered by a court of law. It can be understood that *The Herald*’s editorial policy is chiefly concurrent with the 1992 proclamation.

On the other hand, contrary to its abundant use of unnamed sourcing, *Fortune*’s editorial policy lists no account of source protection strategies to speak of.¹⁹ Apart from the objective yet civil relationships that sources must maintain with their news sources,

¹⁸ Vide Appendix 6.

¹⁹ Vide Appendix 6.

source protection is not referred to with any great depth in any of the stances stated to regulate its journalists' operations.

In conclusion, with regard to the protection of sources, the Ethiopian press law - however it endorses that publishers may not be compelled to disclose their news sources - is not sufficiently elaborated. Moreover, there subsist other contending enactments whereby, due to the need of exposing those who come in the way of the safety of the state and the national defense force, publishers will have to comply with court orders to do so. It hints that reporters are overtly at risk of losing their rights to protect their sources, which ironically is the very provision of the same press statute.

Krüger, however, spells out one contextual reality in the African media legislature.

Although the authorities have not often tried to force journalists to disclose information, the threat remains in place. This means that a promise to protect somebody's identity can have serious consequences. It can bring the journalist into conflict with the law, and so it should not be lightly offered (2004: 182).

4.2.9 Protecting sources while setting public agenda

The 2004 draft Press Law, as to Berger's (2007) observation, gives qualified protection of confidential sources. Article 8 of the Broadcasting Proclamation provides that the press disclose its source in the case of crimes constituting clear and present danger.

Issayas of *Fortune* would go to the extent of imprisonment in order to keep his sources' identity unrevealed and his journalistic integrity unruined. Krüger (2004: 183) underlines it saying that "we have to honor a promise to protect a source. Even if it means going to jail."

Cultivating sources so as to glean news ideas is a legitimate journalistic undertaking. It only becomes problematic for the stakeholders involved when sources disclose strictly

confidential information when they are not supposed to which could impose security problems for their organization.

Similarly, it is agreeable that a news journalist shall promise confidentiality to source after having exhausted other means of getting that information. It would otherwise impact adversely in the long run on his/her journalistic integrity as it would equally on the news media they work for.

Therefore, the fore-mentioned notions have to be kept at a fair equilibrium for a news medium to sustain its credibility among the public it claims to serve.

Used also as the interspersed theoretical framework of this particular thesis, one of the major obligations bestowed on journalists while reporting news is the responsibility of forwarding public agenda and sensitivities to the concerned bodies, and, at the same time, the duty to keep their sources' identities uncovered if that was their agreement for attribution.

News reporters' professional judgment (as regards the truthfulness and reliability of the story) should, however, not be compromised neither for the sake of cultivating regular sources nor protecting them from harm. News reporters function best without being manipulated. By impartial accounts, in the end, as Krüger puts it,

[t]here is nothing wrong with 'cultivating sources' – building a relationship of trust in order to encourage people to talk to us. But we should not allow a closeness to develop that undermines our professional judgment (Krüger, 2004: 175).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary of findings

The research sought to investigate the magnitude of anonymous sourcing in the news coverage of two Ethiopian newspapers; one daily and one weekly. The newspapers were the nationally distributed broadsheet *The Ethiopian Herald*; and the vastly circulated tabloid *Fortune*. Not only are they newspapers of national eminence, but are also newspapers of record read by decision-makers at various governmental and non-governmental entities to apprehend countrywide trends. *The Ethiopian Herald* is state-owned, while *Fortune* is privately-owned.

The research consisted of a content analysis of randomly selected issues as well as in-depth interviews with journalists and editors in the two newspaper houses.

So as to select representative units of newspapers printed during the years 2006-7, systematic random sampling was used. 199 news items were coded altogether. The findings in general indicate that there is a paramount difference between the uses of news sources by the two media houses in question.

Only nearly six percent of the 142 news items in *The Herald* contained anonymous attributions. *Fortune*, in contrast, had nearly 76 percent of the 57 stories anonymously attributed; and, therefore, has made a much greater use of anonymous news sourcing. By far it exhibits plentiful and frequent anonymous sourcing than its contemporary in this research.

The research also attempted to investigate the range of anonymity incorporated by the news sources. In accordance with normative journalistic practices, the newspapers are expected to employ as a broad range of sources as possible in order to represent public

opinion and outlooks. News coverage of *The Herald* showed heavy reliance on government official sources, whereas anonymous government and else sources, by and large, were used much less frequently. Coverage by *Fortune* comprised more diverse personalities from state officials by name to anonymous individuals.

While there is not much to expound on *Herald's* anonymous news sourcing, except to state that it rarely uses them in its feature stories and not in news reports in particular, *Fortune* frequently employs what the research refers to as partial and ambiguous sourcing. That is, *Fortune's* journalists report their stories often with a combination of named sources as well as unnamed ones within the same news item. Dominantly, if the domain that the information, other than what officials publicly state, was leaked from is a bigger and larger organization, *Fortune* tends to quote them with oblique and ambiguous terms so it would not be easy to identify who exactly did the leaking. If the anonymous leak is from a smaller firm, they use even more concealed identities and references to that source.

5.2 Conclusions: Rationale behind the two newspapers' policies

The research data affirm that the private print press uses anonymous sourcing frequently and abundantly, although not so much to such definitively significant causes of exposés or highly investigative reporting that reasonably needed unnamed attributions. The journalists from *Fortune* all comment that the Ethiopian society has an inexplicable reluctance to go on-record at large, for almost any sort of information they may disclose to journalists.

The Ethiopian Herald staff members, for their part, argue that in-depth reporting not only takes much more time and researching than what this daily broadsheet is basically designed for, but also would be at odds with the main concern of the newspaper. *The Herald* is mainly to report stories that primarily would depict the nation, and the

government by extension, in a favorable light, which do not require reports containing controversy and in-depth investigation as such.

The private and state-owned press houses proved to be mutually defensive of their respective ways of news reporting; and happened to be stern critiques of each others' ways. They appear to be opponents regarding their accord of news prominence and news angle selection, and do not want to compromise their priorities. *The Ethiopian Herald* and *Fortune* are local newspapers run by local personnel who assume a common understanding of news values and source selection themes. However, on the subject of anonymous news sourcing, these two are situated at far apart journalistic locales.

The rationales they forward for their ways of news provision nonetheless are virtually compelling and interesting. *Fortune* contends that it does not like the idea of quoting anonymous sources any better than the state media do. Two major factors rather are the reasons for it to do so. Firstly, PR officers are unaware of what happens within and around their own domains. And when they are, they are reluctant to speak to the media more than they perceive is due without their bosses' knowledge. Secondly, General Managers are either supposedly unavailable or refuse to comment on the subject matter; those who do adamantly request anonymity.

The above contention of *Fortune's* is in a like manner to *The Herald's* not being fond of the idea of printing news that they usually receive from the national news agencies any more than the private media are. They attribute this to shortage of manpower to fill up a broadsheet with investigative and analytical depthful reports on a daily basis. Even though *The Herald* news staffs do confirm anonymous sources can indeed play a significant role to inform the public, they confer that the premiere stand of the newspaper does not require the use of such sources to a great extent.

Herald's news are fairly short and relatively straightforward in content as well as in reporting. *Fortune* is rather detailed and exhaustive. Whereas *The Herald* attributes literally every statement put on the news to some explicit source, *Fortune* usually features

news stories without any mention of how the information came in and how their reporters obtained them until further down the closing paragraphs—mostly citing sources partially (named as well as unnamed sources included). While *The Herald*'s staff considers this trend as subversive, *Fortune*'s on the other hand dub it 'analytical in-depth reporting' underscoring that it is the correct brand of journalism.

Andargachew (2005: 16) writes, "The quarrel between the government in power and the Ethiopian private media is of international fame." Concurrently, the journalists from the two media organs assumed contravening, if not antagonistic, orientations on the news values and reporting practices that media organizations ought to undertake.

Their respective convictions, nonetheless, do not necessarily overrule each other. In fact, it only unveils a reality embraced in the profession which vividly explains that news and news source selection highly depends upon the initial predisposition of the newspaper kind and the ultimate stand of the newspaper one is looking at. As regards source selection, source treatment, and story attributions, both newspapers have their merits and demerits.

To the researcher's impression again, neither newspaper is practicing the profession in a flawless mode. So as to go around their major obstacles, therefore, (for example, for *The Herald*'s reporters to feature more newsy and investigative reports not necessarily assigned by editors; and for authorities as well as individuals to be more open so that private press like *Fortune* would not have to typically resort to unnamings informants), as illustrated by Dejene of *Herald* in chapter four of the analysis, it is recommendable that there be state facilities and opportunities set up for investigative reporting, and also reporters' tendency to use diverse sources should be more customary. Likewise, as Tamrat rightfully recommended, reporters are better off convincing their sources to go on record if no risks are involved than put their credibility in question. Being provided diversified news reports and news sources, besides to accurate and timely news, the audience can acknowledge the media's fourth estate role upon the larger society that it is

there to watch over. It is repeated endeavors that can pave the way for usual practices and procedures.

In closing, an idyllic and suiting proposition to put forth is Forbes’:

[Media] have to be empowered and supported to fulfill their fourth estate role as whistleblowers and watchdogs within their society. But reporting on misdeeds on politicians and company executives who do not live up to their duties is not enough. The media must be a progressive force to support human rights and shape new ideas in an open society through informed and impartial reporting and analyses (Forbes, 2005: iv).

5.3 Further studies

The research has not dwelt in extensive depth on the issues of internationally executed media laws vis-à-vis the local. Indeed the legal aspect of news sourcing is a pivotal division that a whole other research may quite explore. With special reference to the use of anonymous news sourcing within the Ethiopian context, it is the researcher’s belief that more studies need to be conducted whereby the country’s laws are inspected for their pros and cons and, as a result, lead the flaws to be revised. Moreover, the researcher deems it can lead to the formulation of more elaborative press laws to be sighted—that the uses and harms of anonymous news attributions are clearly theorized along with circumstances set that legitimize them.

Additionally, a media theory that reflects determinant factors gearing the means of news attribution such as the gatekeeping theory is well relatable to a study of this kind. That is, parallel to the agenda setting paradigm, it can also be worthwhile to go about anonymous news attributions in light of the role of gate keepers subsistent within the respective media houses.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Coding sheet

For each newspaper:

- a. Name of the newspaper: _____
- b. Date issued: _____
- c. Total number of pages: _____
- d. Total news items: _____
- e. Total number of news stories with anonymous sources: _____

For each news item:

1. News headline _____

2. News item:

Local	African	International	Local & African	Local & International

3. News content:

Political	Social	Business & Economics	Infrastructural (roads, hospitals, buildings, schools, etc)	Culture	Sports	Medical	Other

4. Position of the news [prominence factor]:

Front page	2 nd and 3 rd pages	Back page	Inside pages other than 2 nd & 3 rd

5. Who covered the story?

Staff journalists	News agencies		Local agency took up from international	Information bureaus	Other media outlet(s)	No Byline
	National	International				

6. How was the information obtained?

From events	Interviews e.g., “....told <i>Fortune/Herald</i> that.....”		Telephone	E- mail, fax, etc	Documents	Unclear from the reporting	Press release	Press conference
	Event Intervie w	Non- event						

7. The informants to whom the stories were attributed:

- a. Government official(s) by name _____
- b. Anonymous government official(s) _____
- c. Opposition group(s) by name _____
- d. Anonymous opposition group(s) _____
- e. Official(s) by name _____
- f. Anonymous official(s) _____
- g. Corporate (business) people by name _____

- h. Anonymous corporate people** _____
- i. Non-official(s) /e.g. experts, scholars/ by name** _____
- j. Anonymous non-officials** _____
- k. Government organization(s) by name** _____
- l. Anonymous government organization(s)** _____
- m. NGO'(s) by name** _____
- n. Anonymous NGO'(s)** _____
- o. NGO official(s) by name** _____
- p. Anonymous NGO official(s)** _____
- q. Foreign government organization(s) by name** _____
- r. Anonymous foreign government organization(s) (s)** _____
- s. Foreign government official(s) by name** _____
- t. Anonymous foreign government official(s)** _____
- u. Clearly attributed document(s)** _____
- v. Anonymously attributed document(s)** _____
- w. Individual(s) by name** _____
- x. Individual anonymous source(s)** _____
- y. News not directly attributed to a certain source** _____
- z. Other** _____

8. Related comments to the main news story from (if any):

Check from "a" to "z" above and write here _____

9. Does the news contain anonymity:

- a. once in the story?** _____
- b. more than once ?** _____
- c. none?** _____

10. What kind of anonymity was used (if any)?

News partially sourced (some named and some anonymous sources)	News with sources ambiguously stated (vaguely attributed) /company documents, inside officials, sources close to...../	News with sources more inexplicably stated /e.g. inside sources, reliable sources/	No sources mentioned

11. Type of reporting:

General reporting (G)	Investigative reporting (exposé) (I)	Unclear (indistinct) (U)

12. Tone of the news: (Publicity factor; good/bad)

Positive	Neutral	Negative

13. Does the news contain any controversial issue?

Yes _____ No _____

14. If 'yes', which sources did the news use in reporting the controversy?

- a. Both/all unnamed sources _____
- b. Named sources on one side and unnamed on the other(s) _____
- c. Balanced but not with directly attributed sources of information

- d. Both named and unnamed sources within one side _____
- e. All named sources _____

Appendix 2

Coding book for definitions of key terms

The roll numbers below refer directly to the ones on the coding sheet of Appendix 1:

2. a. “Local and African” stands for news story in which Ethiopia with other African

nations are involved or implicated.

b. “Local and international” stands for news where Ethiopia and nations other than of the African continent are involved.

5. a. “Local agency took up from international” means that such as ENA (the Ethiopian News Agency) or WIC (Walta Information Center) have been put on the paper as the reporters of the news that another international agency (like Xhinua or BBC’s bulletins) had actually dispatched originally.

b. “Information bureaus” refers to the locals—regional (or other) state correspondents.

c. “Other outlets” are meant to refer to reports or releases by various bodies (media organizations or not) which these newspapers have printed as news items. They are clearly addressed to the outlets but do not specify the news writers nor how the newspaper procured the information.

6. a. “Event and non-event interviews”, respectively, mean that the news was procured by a journalist’s presence in an event and did interviews with persons in that event which is the source of the main news story; and the latter means that whether or not there was an event as a source of news, the main information or quotes in particular were collected from an interview conducted with individual informants elsewhere. Non-event interviews are those done exclusively with people outside events like meetings, lectures, initiatives, inaugurations or ceremonies.

b. “Unclear from the reporting” is ticked where there is a considerable amount of information in the news without attributing it to a definite source.

7. “Government officials” and ‘officials’ in general refer to the local ones only, and not of foreign states.

a. “Officials” are referred to people not strictly so much in the political bureaucracies, unlike government officials, but those representative people of educational entities, spokespersons, PR officers. Non-anonymous such officers were taken as “Officials by name” whereas anonymous ones were labeled as “Anonymous officials”. The need for the presence of this category rose for the most part because some news attribute their stories to people whom they solely put as “officials”.

On the other hand, “Anonymous non-officials” are people from any section of society whom the news items sampled for this study have put as “experts”, “scholars”, “analysts” and the like.

b. “News not directly attributed to a certain source” stands for news with no clear indication of where it came from. Some news actually put what people said in direct quotations and say, for example, “participants at the workshop said.”

8. a. “Related comments” are additional quotes or information incorporated other than the main story in the news.

10. a. “News partially sourced” implies that a single news item comprises two types of sources. It means that there is a combination of both explicitly identified sources for some parts of the news and then also anonymously addressed sources for other part of the same news item. Hence, the story is said to use some named and some anonymous informants. For the data analyses, (b) and (c) below are the major components of the “kinds of anonymous sourcing” category in the research questions and data analysis.

b. “News with sources ambiguously stated” is a deliberate disguise of who sources are. Sources are quoted with less identifying addresses.

c. “News with sources more inexplicably stated” is the category for attributions that merely go only by “sources said, ...” or “inside/knowledgeable sources said, ...”.

11. “General reporting” portrays news items with no controversy, not highly sensitive and accusative matters. More importantly, “General reporting” differs from its counterpart, “Investigative reporting”, whereby the latter portrays news items not essentially printed because protocol calls for it (to introduce an event and mere speeches delivered by officials during the proceedings), but with a rather sensitive matter of individual, organizational and/or public interest, often reported from deviant angles than what the speech makers designed.

Appendix 3

Output tables from the SPSS analysis

Table 1: Frequency of news anonymity content (number of news stories and percentage)

	Once in the story		More than once		None		Total	
<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	5	3.5%	4	2.8%	133	93.7%	142	100.0%
<i>Fortune</i>	11	19.3%	32	56.1%	14	24.6%	57	100.0%
Total	16		36		147		199	

Table 2: Kind of anonymity used (number of news stories)

	Sources ambiguously (partially) stated	Sources more inexplicitly stated	Total
<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	5	4	9
<i>Fortune</i>	30	13	43
Total	35	17	52

Table 3: Geographical location of news items with anonymity content (number of news stories and percentage)

Frequency of news anonymity content		Local		African		Local and African		Local and international		Total	
None	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	111	83.5%	6	4.5%	11	8.3%	5	3.8%	133	100%
	<i>Fortune</i>	12	92.3%	0	0%	1	7.7%	0	0%	13	100%
	Total	123		6		12		5		146	
Anonymous sources quoted once or more	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	7	77.8%	0	0%	2	22.2%	0	0%	9	100%
	<i>Fortune</i>	43	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	43	100%
	Total	50		0		2		0		52	

Table 4: Type of news items with anonymity content (number of news stories)

Frequency of news anonymity content		Political	Social	Business and economics	Infra-structure	Culture	Medical	Other	Total
None	<i>Eth. Herald</i>	19	20	40	42	1	6	5	133
	<i>Fortune</i>	1	3	6	2	0	0	1	13
Total		20	23	46	44	1	6	6	146
Anonymous sources quoted once or more	<i>Eth. Herald</i>	3	2	2	1	0	0	1	9
	<i>Fortune</i>	1	4	31	5	0	0	2	43
Total		4	6	33	6	0	0	3	52

Table 5: Informants stories were attributed to (number of informants)

	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	<i>Fortune</i>	Total
Gov. officials by name	75	14	89
Anonymous gov. officials	1	12	13
Officials by name	36	8	44
Anonymous officials	0	6	6
Corporate people by name	4	14	18
Anonymous corporate people	0	8	8
Non-officials by name	8	4	12
Anonymous non-officials	0	9	9
Gov. organization by name	66	8	74
NGO by name	15	4	19
NGO officials by name	10	1	11
Anonymous NGO officials	1	1	2
Foreign gov. organization by name	2	0	2
Foreign gov. officials by name	5	1	6

Clearly attributed documents	2	6	8
Anonymously attributed documents	0	1	1
Individuals by name	7	1	8
Individual anonymous sources	5	20	25
News not directly attributed to a certain source	3	6	9
Total	227	124	351

Table 6: Anonymous informants stories were attributed to (number of informants)

	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	<i>Fortune</i>	Total
Anonymous gov. officials	1	12	13
Anonymous officials	0	6	6
Anonymous corporate people	0	8	8
Anonymous non-officials	0	9	9
Anonymous NGO officials	1	1	2
Anonymously attributed documents	0	1	1
Individual anonymous sources	5	20	25
News not directly attributed to a certain source	3	6	9
Total	9	63	72

Table 7: Who covered the story? (Number of news stories)

	Staff journalist	National agency	Local took up from international agency	Other outlets	No byline	Total
<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	5	122	12	2	1	142
<i>Fortune</i>	54	0	0	0	3	57
Total	59	122	12	2	4	199

Table 8

Who covered anonymously sourced stories? (Number of news stories)

		Staff journalist	National agency	Local took up from international agency	Other outlets	No byline	Total
<i>No anonymous sources</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	4	115	11	2	1	133
	<i>Fortune</i>	11	0	0	0	2	13
	Total	15	115	11	2	3	146
<i>Anonymous sources used once or more</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	1	7	1	0	0	9
	<i>Fortune</i>	43	0	0	0	1	43
	Total	44	7	1	0	1	52

Table 9: Kind of anonymity used by various journalists and agencies (number of news stories)

		Staff journalist	National agency	Local took up from international agency	No byline	Total
<i>Sources ambiguously (partially) stated</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	1	3	1	0	5
	<i>Fortune</i>	29	0	0	1	30
	Total	30	3	1	1	35
<i>Sources more implicitly stated</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	0	4	0	0	4
	<i>Fortune</i>	13	0	0	0	13
	Total	13	4	0	0	17

Table 10: Type of reporting (number of news stories) / Frequencies of anonymity

		General reporting	Investigative reporting	Unclear/ indistinct	Total
<i>No anonymous sources</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	133	0	0	133
	<i>Fortune</i>	14	0	0	14
	Total	147	0	0	147
<i>Anonymous sources quoted once or more</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	9	0	0	9
	<i>Fortune</i>	33	9	1	43
	Total	42	9	1	52

Table 11: Type of reporting (Number of news stories) / Kinds of anonymity

		General reporting	Investigative reporting	Unclear/ indistinct	Total
<i>Sources ambiguously (partially) stated</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	5	0	0	5
	<i>Fortune</i>	24	5	1	30
	Total	29	5	1	35
<i>Sources more inexplicitly stated</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	4	0	0	4
	<i>Fortune</i>	10	3	0	13
	Total	14	3	0	17

Table 12: Type of reporting (Number of news stories) with regard to controversial issue content

		Controversial issue	Not controversial	Total
<i>Sources ambiguously (partially) stated</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	1	4	5
	<i>Fortune</i>	10	20	30
	Total	10	34	44
<i>Sources more inexplicitly stated</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	0	4	4
	<i>Fortune</i>	1	12	13
	Total	1	16	17

Table 13: Positioning of news items (number of news stories) /Frequencies of anonymity

		Front page	Second and third pages	Inside pages other than 2nd and 3rd	Back page	Total
<i>No anonymous sources</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	25	39	49	20	133
	<i>Fortune</i>	2	0	11	0	13
	Total	27	39	60	20	146
<i>Anonymous sources quoted once or more</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	3	2	3	1	9
	<i>Fortune</i>	13	0	30	0	43
	Total	16	2	33	1	52

Table 14: Positioning of news items and degree of anonymity (number of news stories) /Kinds of anonymity

		Front page	Second and third pages	Inside pages other than 2nd and 3rd	Total
<i>Sources ambiguously (partially) stated</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	2	2	1	5
	<i>Fortune</i>	10	0	20	30
	Total	12	2	21	35
<i>Sources more inexplicitly stated</i>	<i>Ethiopian Herald</i>	4	0	0	4
	<i>Fortune</i>	5	0	8	13
	Total	9	0	8	17

Appendix 4

Interview guide for individual in-depth interviews

Thank you very much in advance for your cooperation.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your knowledge.

- 1. Your name (if willing)**
- 2. Your title/responsibility in the newspaper?**
- 3. How long have you been working here in that capacity?**
- 4. When was your newspaper established? And what is its circulation currently?**
- 5. How is it sold - by subscriptions or other? Is it distributed nation-wide or only in the metropolis?**
- 6. What are your news gathering techniques?**
- 7. What are your newspaper's news selection criteria?**
- 8. How many news reporters and news editors work at the institution presently?**
- 9. Who assigns journalists to go out and gather news?**
- 10. Who (what issues) are frequently quoted (covered) by your newspaper?**
- 11. Who decides (and how is it decided) the news content in particular reference to news sources to be quoted?**
- 12. Are there other gatekeepers?**
- 13. What impact on representation of news sources does power distribution have?**
- 14. Do you incline to certain information sources for the sake of efficiency in terms of time and organizational costs?**
- 15. Would the editor (or the responsible party for news production) refuse to print stories if they contain anonymity?**

16. Does your newspaper have any agenda setting role it tries to put in the public's mind via the news items it produces?(i.e., goals and other attributes?)
17. What about in connection to the news sources?
18. Both according to your newspaper's editorial policy and/or your personal stand point, is there any significance that anonymous sources play to inform the public? If so, please elaborate.
19. [For *The Ethiopian Herald*] Why are high government officials your typical news sources?
20. [For *Fortune*] Why are individual anonymous sources your particularly regular news informants?
21. Are there stances that news sources refuse to go on record? Please specify.
22. At rough average, how many/much anonymous sources/sourcing does your newspaper cite/quote in its news weekly (or monthly)?
23. In what circumstances do you entertain anonymous news sourcing? (That is, what compels your reporters to professionally ascertain a source deserves to be given anonymity?)
24. Do you deliberately avoid covering controversial and investigative news so that there will not be great need to quote sources anonymously?
25. Do you deliberately resort to covering controversial and investigative news even though there likely will be a great need to quote sources anonymously?
26. How do you confirm the reliability of the stories you print from anonymous tippers?
27. How far are you willing to go to protect the identity and safety of your anonymous sources?
28. Do you believe you comply with the ethic code of news sourcing while crafting news pieces?
29. Do you always work in order with your editorial policy on sourcing while gathering news stories?
30. Are there conditions that force you to digress from the normative procedures of news sourcing? Which kinds?

- 31. Do you receive feedback from audiences commenting on your sourcing strategies? If any, such as?**
- 32. How can journalists protect themselves from litigations over revealing their sources should anonymous sourcing be frequent?**

Appendix 5

Names and titles of interviewees

The interviews conducted took place between May and July, 2007.

- **Abraham Tedla, news editor of *The Ethiopian Herald***
- **Amanuel Adera, news reporter of *The Ethiopian Herald***
- **Aregu Balleh, Senior editor of *The Ethiopian Herald***
- **Dejene Tesema, Editor-in-chief of *The Ethiopian Herald***
- **Issayas Mekuria, staff reporter of *Fortune***
- **Masresha, reporter at the WIC**
- **Mekonnen Teshome, deputy news editor of *The Ethiopian Herald***
- **Tamrat W/Giorgis, Managing editor of *Fortune***
- **Wudineh Zenebe, *Forune's* special staff reporter**

Appendix 6

Regulatory press statutes and policies

Pertinent sections from the currently workable press statutes adapted for discussion are listed below.

■ **The Ethiopian Constitution (1995):**

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression without any interference. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any media of his choice (Article 29, sub article 2).

■ **Ethiopian press proclamation (1992), Right of Access to Information:**

The publisher or the editor of any press may not be compelled to disclose the source of any news or information which has been used in the preparation of his press (sub article 4.a).

The court may order the publisher or the editor of the press to disclose his sources of information in the case of a crime committed against the safety of the state or of the administration established in accordance with the Charter or of the national defense force, constituting a clear and present danger, or in the case of proceeding of a serious crime, where such source does not have any alternative and is decisive to the outcome of the case (sub article 4.b).

■ Editorial Policy of *Fortune* (ETHICS section):

#5. We acknowledge the newsman's ethic of protecting confidential sources of information.

■ Ethiopian Press Agency:

Reporters may use anonymous news sources provided that the well being of the sources and their families' is not put in danger due to the disclosure of information, and it is made certain that the information cannot be found elsewhere (Article 7, sub article 5).

Journalists are not compelled to disclose any information they procured regarding their sources during the course of news production to another party which has no relation to the news content (Article 7, sub article 6).

No journalist may be compelled to give away information that sources have asked to be kept in strict confidentiality except by a court order. In no other circumstances shall the confidentiality promise made between sources and the Agency's journalists be contravened (Article 7, sub article 7).

DECLARATION

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

Signature _____

Tizita Kebede

January 2007

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia