

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES,
JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS

A STUDY ON HOW SOME NEWSPAPERS SUSTAIN THE
CHALLENGING PRIVATE PRESS MILIEU IN ETHIOPIA:
REPORTER AND ADDIS ABABA IN FOCUS

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Wondwossen Girma, entitled *A Study on How Some Newspapers Sustain The Challenging Private Press Milieu in Ethiopia: Reporter And Addis Admas in Focus* and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication complies with the regulations of the University and notes the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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ABSTRACT

A Study on How Some Newspapers Sustain the Challenging Private Press Milieu in Ethiopia: Reporter and Addis Admas in Focus

Wondwossen Girma

Addis Ababa University, 2015

The history of the press in Ethiopia goes as far back as the second half of the 19th century. In spite of its long history, the press is still in its infancy materially, professionally and economically. Other than serving the public interest, the press has been muzzled by successive governments to serve their interests. Even at times when the grips of the state have become moderate, the majority of the private press in its earlier days opted to serve political interests whose ramifications sustain to this day creating a polarized press environment. The polarization of the private press in turn has resulted in many negative consequences which culminate in jeopardizing its very existence. As a result, in the last couple of decades, the private media market in Ethiopia has seen the coming and going of hundreds of private newspapers where only a handful of them have sustained over a decade. This research had the objective of investigating and explaining factors responsible for the survival of those few newspapers focusing on *Reporter* and *Addis Admas* thereby implicating how and why the others vanished from the market. In order to address its objectives, the research has been generally informed by the Political Economy Theory. Among the models that can be included in the theory, Polarized Pluralist Model and the Political Economy of the Mass Media, Propaganda Model, have been selected.

Triangulation of data in the realm of qualitative research method employing in-depth interview and document analysis has been employed. Thirteen key informants representing the surviving and defunct newspapers, media associations, media researchers and/or scholars and a government representative have been purposively

selected. In addition, convenience sampling has been used to analyze available documents.

The findings of this research have revealed two things. Firstly, they have ascertained previous research findings about the existence of multiple challenges that have kept the private sector fragile and prone to extinction. Secondly and mainly, despite the existence of a myriad of challenges in the sector, factors that have helped the survival of *Reporter* and *Addis Admas* have been uncovered. These are professionalism, discharging roles and responsibilities, maintaining independence, getting access to ads and decreasing the likelihood of charges by maneuvering responsibly and defending the unavoidable ones likewise.

The findings imply that in order to survive the challenging private press situation in Ethiopia, the press needs to work in a professional and responsible manner avoiding confrontational approach with the government. This does not mean that the press should not be critical to the government; rather, it should present its criticisms constructively but not in a hostile intent as it has been proven counterproductive.

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

AAU	Addis Ababa University
BSPE	Brehanan Selam Printing Enterprise
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
EBA	Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority
E.C.	Ethiopian Calendar
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
EFPJA	Ethiopian Free Private Journalists Association
ENJU	Ethiopian National Journalists Union
EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
ERCA	Ethiopian Revenue and Customs Authority
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
GCAO	Government Communication Affairs Office
HHI	Herfindahl–Hirschman Index
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MCC	Media and Communication Centre
MoI	Ministry of Information
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
OAU	Organization of African Unity
Plc	Private Limited Company
PMC	Population Media Center Ethiopia
PPM	Polarized Pluralist Model
SJC	School of Journalism and Communication

TPLF Tigrian People Liberation Front
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USD United States Dollar

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Like many other countries, the media history of Ethiopia starts with the print media. Even though authorities disagree with the exact time and the name of the print material (Skjerdal, 2012: 31), they agree that the sector is over a century old. However, Shimelis (2000: 6) citing (Deneke, 1991:53) considers the country a late comer in the production of magazines, newspapers and other periodicals compared to its long history and leadership in written literature in the continent. Shimeles goes further on to clarify as to why the country is considered a late comer to other African countries by citing Mairegu (1996:6):

One of the paradoxes facing Ethiopia is that, despite a longer and richer literary tradition, it has significantly lagged behind many African countries in terms of publication output. Besides, those moments in which the people had fully or partially exercised their freedom of expression on matters of national concern were little more than transitory (ibid.10).

Considering the small number of newspapers available currently and their limited circulation coupled with their immaturity to discharge their roles and responsibilities, one may not find Shimeles' argument exaggerated.

Skjerdal (2012) argues that ever since its inception, the Ethiopian media has experienced different features: international (as in the case of 'Le Semaine d'Ethiopie' (1905) by the Catholic missionaries); governmental (as in the case of 'Aemero' (1901)); and political criticisms of 'blatta' Gebre Egziabher's satirical poems distributed (before 1900) in the Emperor's courtyard having the format of

a newspaper with yet unknown title. However, Getachew (2003) sees three phases characterizing the historical development of the press in Ethiopia in terms of its role and ownership style. He considers the inception of newspaper (1902-1935) as the first phase; the period of Italian occupation (1936-1941) as the second phase; and from the eviction of the Italians from Ethiopia to the first decade of (TPLF/EPRDF) regime (1941-2002) as the last phase. Getachew divides this last phase into three periods: the imperial period (1941-1974); the military period (1974-1991); and the post-military (TPLF/EPRDF) period (1991-2002). Birhanu Olana (2008: 15) describes this last period as a period of exceptional proliferation of mass media in Ethiopia. In any case, Birhanu argues citing Getachew (2003) ‘... the successive governments in Ethiopia have ‘muzzled’ the media’ (ibid: 15).

This shows that the media in Ethiopia has undergone through a lot of challenges and opportunities to reach where it is today. In spite of its relative long history of existence, as some argue it to be over a century old (Skjerdal, 2012; Getachew, 2003; Shimeles, 2000), the Ethiopian print media in general and the private press in particular, can be said is still in its infancy. According to Population Media Center Ethiopia (PMC) 2006, the first private newspapers were in circulation from the mid-fifties to the early sixties. In spite of this fact, the prominence of the private press has never been felt until the 1990’s (Shimeles, 2000: 9-10). The print sector which has run over a century and seemed to have reached its high time in the 1990's with hundreds of ‘private’ publications (Halelujah, 2008: 12) has only a handful of them sustaining in the market over a decade (Skjerdal and Halelujah, 2009: 3). This paper posits why only those very few newspapers made it through while their counterparts have vanished focusing on the *Reporter* and *Addis Admas*.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

After the introduction of journalism courses both in the undergraduate and graduate programs at Addis Ababa University, scholarly studies in Ethiopian media have become a common experience by local and some international

researchers. Since these previous works have shed light on what has been ‘unchartered territory’ for decades, the cliché ‘lack of previous studies’ may not be acceptable now.

In their attempt to identify the major challenges facing the private media, (Halelujah, 2008; Misrak Adugna, 2009; Dagim Afework, 2013; Gudeta Seifu, 2008; Skjerdal and Halelujah, 2009; Skjerdal, 2012), pin point lack of responsibility and professionalism, ambivalent state-press relation and weak financial status, lack of trained journalists and security force’s assault and lack of in-house code of conduct as major issues observed in the sector resulting in negative consequences. Almost all of the works cited report that the private press is suffering from these negative consequences as a result of internal and external factors. Whereas the internal factor emanates from the private press itself, the external ones are mainly from the government.

Based on Kasoma’s theory of the role of the independent press, (Skjerdal and Halelujah, 2009), argue that the Ethiopian private press has lost its independence by siding with the opposition or with other economically powerful groups. In addition, the partisan approach of the press has resulted in government clampdown. To consolidate their argument, they cite Kasoma as saying, ‘...the media can only thank themselves if the freedoms are taken away from them because of unprofessionalism.’(ibid: 52) As a result, they present the counter-reactions taken by the government to curb the ‘opposition press’. They state the measures taken as poor access to government information, delays and sometimes denial of legal registration, imprisonment of journalists and media owners and more or less forceful closure of many newspapers. Skjerdal (2012: 33) states the overall situation of the time like this:

...many of the newfound publications were beyond any journalistic standard, and the government turned out not to be genuinely prepared to accept critical reporting and what it regarded as political aggravation in the public domain. A series of crackdowns followed,

accompanied by delays in media legislation reform. Around 2000, the private media market had largely parted in two groups: one clearly opposition-affiliated and the other consisting of less politicized or moderately pro-government publications. While the first group continued to face harassment, notably in the aftermath of the 2005 elections; the latter group laid the foundation for stable publishing and a sustainable in-house economy.

The works consulted for this study (Halelujah, 2008; Misrak Adugna, 2009; Dagim Afework, 2013; Gudeta Seifu, 2008; Skjerdal and Halelujah, 2009; Skjerdal, 2012) have identified factors such as lack of responsibility and professionalism; ambivalent state-press relation and weak financial status; security force's assault and lack of in-house code of conduct responsible for the decline and underdevelopment of the sector in this country. In contrast, the researcher has not come across with research works that directly dealt with the other side of the equation. That is to say, how the surviving very few private newspapers sustained this challenging¹ 'industry' for over a decade?

Therefore, this paper tries to answer this question focusing on two private newspapers, *Reporter* and *Addis Admas*, by investigating how they have made it through while most of their counterparts have vanished.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The study investigates how the two private newspapers, *Reporter* and *Addis Admas*, have sustained over ten years in the challenging private press market in Ethiopia where many have come and gone.

¹ The sector is considered as challenging due to the presence of many factors that crippled its growth. These challenges emanate from internal and external sources as they are thoroughly discussed in Chapter two (section 2.2.2.1.). Chapter four too, (section 4.2.) consolidates the presence of these challenges: internal deficiencies of the press itself and government's way of handling the press.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the research are to:

- ✓ Examine factors that helped the newspapers sustain in the market
- ✓ Identify the newspapers' main sources of income
- ✓ Assess their litigation status
- ✓ Assess whether the newspapers are discharging their roles and responsibilities in terms of building a democratic society,

1.4. Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

- ✓ What are the factors that helped the sustainability of the selected newspapers?
- ✓ How do they earn their income?
- ✓ Do the newspapers spend most of their energy and resources to litigations?
- ✓ Are they discharging their role in terms of building a democratic society?

1.5. Significance of the Study

In its attempts to explain the rarely asked reason as to why some private newspapers have sustained while many others have perished, this research seeks to serve different stakeholders in the sector. To begin with, as an academic endeavour, the research would help in increasing the understanding of survival of newspapers in the Ethiopian context. Besides, it would also serve as a stepping stone for further investigation in the area. Secondly, the private press as an institution would take some lessons from the surviving ones that would help it withstand the challenges emanating from the socio-political situation of the country. Finally and most importantly, the research would also indicate intervention areas where the government can work in collaboration with pertinent bodies in the sector for the vibrancy of the private press as a democratic developmental state cannot be built without a vibrant private press.

1.6. Scope of the Study

Currently, there are close to 20 private newspapers in the market. To make the research manageable and in-depth, two newspapers that have stayed over ten years with a reasonable market share and different genres have been selected. As a result, this study focuses on the survival story of *Reporter and Addis Admas*.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

This research has been conducted amidst limitations. Key among the limitations is the difficulty of finding appropriate documents that support the research. In spite of the fact that documents showing financial status and litigation of newspapers be in the public domain, the researcher was unable to secure them from both pertinent government bodies and the studied newspapers after having presented his request in a formal letter and repeated personal appeal.

The reason behind declining the requests has two facets: considering the documents as 'secret' or unshareable; and poor data organization which makes retrieval difficult. However, the financial data, though not in the way and amount it was planned, was found from a draft research by GCAO. Litigation documents, very few of them, were also found from the papers. The failure of including one government official and one manager as key informants owing to one's busy schedule and the other's reluctance was another limitation. As a result of which the researcher was forced to apply convenience sampling technique to use the data available. Last but not least, since all of the in-depth interview participants, with the exception of one foreigner, opted to use Amharic for interview, the researcher had to face the challenge of keeping the taste and pungency of the content in the target language-English while translation.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Brief Overview of the Ethiopian Print Media

2.1.1. The Print Media during the Empire

As it has been stated in the background section of chapter one, both the exact time in which the print medium started in Ethiopia and the identity of the first publication remain a point of disagreement due to mainly lack of conclusive evidence (Shimeles, 2000:7). While some like (Pankhurst, 1962; Deneke, 1991; MOI, 1966) as cited by Shimeles (2000:6-7) take the first time publications of the sort started as early as the 1860's in Massawa, others like (Kaplan *et al.*, 1971) bring it closer to the beginning of the 20th century (ibid: 7).

Skjerdal (2012), in an attempt to reconcile the two groups, tries to draw a common line that connects them. He cites (Aadland and Røe, 2000; Mekuria, 2007; Shimelis, 2000; Shinn and Ofcansky, 2004; Talbot, 1955; Pankhurst, 1962; Irma, 1994) for his argument. According to him, three publications could qualify to be the first: The weekly French/Amharic *Le Semaine d'Ethiopie* ('Ethiopian weekly'), produced by Franciscan missionaries focusing on health issues, in 1905 in Harar, (alternatively as early as 1884, 1888, 1890 or 1896), possibly under the name *Le Semeur d'Ethiopie* ('the Ethiopian Sower'); another weekly, a-four-page Amharic, *Aemero* ('intelligence') controlled by the government to the extent of being named by the emperor himself, appeared in the newfound capital Addis Ababa around 1901 (alternatively 1895, 1900 or 1902); and a third weekly satirical poem by Blatta Gebre Egziabher having the format of a newspaper circulated every Sunday in the Emperor's courtyard before 1900 with yet unknown name. These three periodicals which largely mark the inception of print media in our country seem to have something in common- all of them had been

weekly. Can we say that this trend of being weekly has continued to be a dominant feature for most of our periodicals until now?

Skjerdal argues that whichever of the publications is assumed to be the first, what matters most for him is the characteristics feature they left in Ethiopian journalism ever since: international influence, government allegiance and political criticism as reflected by *Le Semaine d'Ethiopie*, *Aemero* and Blatta Gebre Egziabher's satirical poem respectively. Considering the fact that most of our current periodicals are either critical of the government or show their allegiance to it one way or the other, one may not find Skjerdal's evaluation of the situation largely unacceptable. As to deciding on the pioneering periodical, unlike Skjerdal, Shimeles (2000: 7) takes a bold stand in making *Aemero* as the first periodical considering the unresolved arguments surrounding the two periodicals with regards to the question of their ownership due to inconclusive evidence. Initially *Aemero* had 24 hand written copies until the introduction of a copying machine which increased its copies to 200. As a result of financial difficulties, shortage of newsprint and the Italian aggression, the universally accepted Ethiopian first periodical, *Aemero*, had to pass through temporary suspension and revival (ibid).

In spite of their difference in the establishment year, both Shimeles (2000:8) and Skjerdal (2012:10) agree that the establishment of Berhanena Selam Printing Press somewhere in the early 1920's and the publication of a weekly government owned newspaper, Berhanena Selam, in 1925 have signaled a landmark in the history of Ethiopian press. As Menelik II was instrumental for *Aemero* by coining its name, Haile Sillassie I, then Ras Teferi Mekonnen, was the one who conceived Berhanena Selam newspaper. Unlike *Aemero* which concentrated on external affairs, Berhanena Selam was focusing on internal affairs (Skjerdal, 2012:10). Although the newspaper was government owned, progressive ideas and views of young intellectuals were accommodated despite the fact that many of the articles were poorly written on papers that were less appealing, the subject matters they treated and their circulation was limited (Shimeles, 2000:8). During this time,

along with Berhanena Selam newspaper, a fair number of smaller periodicals were also available including titles in English, French, Italian and Greek (Skjerdal, 2012:10-11). In spite of these efforts, the country could not prevent itself from being called ‘a country without newspapers’ by a Central European newspaper back in 1929. No matter how things have gone, Skjerdal sees this particular time as a period in which a lasting tradition of Ethiopian journalism has been formed (ibid: 11).

The slow press progress witnessed in the couple of decades since its inception was interrupted by the occupation of Ethiopia by Italy for five years (1935-1941). The occupation brought a devastating effect to the already struggling infant press either by demolishing printing presses all over the country or using them to disseminate its fascist propaganda. As the saying goes ‘a blessing in disguise’, the occupation has resulted in the creation of a bi-weekly field paper of the liberation forces by the name *Bandirachin*, later named *Sendeq Alamachin* which literally means ‘Our Flag’. During the occupation, however, there were many publications produced in foreign countries to promote Ethiopian causes (Shimeles, 2000: 8).

Immediately after the end of occupation, *Addis Zemen*, a weekly Amharic newspaper was established in 1941. Two years later in 1943 an English weekly, *The Ethiopian Herald*, was founded. Some nine years later in 1952 another newspaper, *Yezareyitu Etyopia* was added to the list. The first two weekly newspapers established after the occupation were made dailies in 1958. The post liberation years which saw quite an interesting time in the Ethiopian press with the creation of the above mentioned influential and enduring newspapers, were taken to another height in 1950’s and 1960’s by the formation of ECA (1958) and OAU (1963). This period witnessed a large number of daily and weekly newspapers and other press products most of which were government owned and limited in their reach to elite readership (ibid). The three decades after the liberation (1941-1974) have seen great people like Wolde Giyorgis Wolde-Yohannes, ‘father of Ethiopian Journalism’, the first private press newspapers, *the*

Voice of Ethiopia and *Ye Ethiopia Dimits* (PMC, 2006) and above all a number of legal grounds for the blossoming of the press in Ethiopia. These include the decrees of 1942 and 1944, the *Revised Constitution of 1955*, the *Penal Code of 1957* and the draft constitution in 1974(Halelujah, 2008:21). However, for Skjerdal (2012: 12) the enactment of these laws serves more to formalize the censorship of the time in legal grounds than as an enabling factor.

2.1.2. The Print Media during the Derg (1974-1991)

Ever since its inception, the Ethiopian press has largely exhibited subservient feature to the incumbent regime due to coercive media strategy of the consecutive governments. This has never been felt as it was in the Derg regime (Skjerdal, 2012: 32). True, the regime had been tolerant to press freedom for a year or two by going to the extent of cancelling the censorship laid during the imperial time which resulted in as some would call it ‘the golden time of Ethiopian journalism’. However, the compliment and the freedom did not last long as the Derg became a different animal other than the rhetoric it used to have. As a result, it took total control of the media to denounce and humiliate the imperial regime and consolidate its military power. This sudden change of the military junta into a real dictator within a year or two after taking power has made the mushrooming periodicals go clandestine and finally disappear. Among the ill-fated periodicals of the time which had incongruent views with the regime include *Democracia*, *Labader*, *Struggle* and *Ye Sefiw Hizb Dimts* (ibid: 21-22). Shimeles (2000: 14) summarizes the harsh treatment of the military to the press as follows:

Concomitantly with the confiscation of privately-owned papers and the prohibition of establishing new ones, the government proceeded to eliminate any trace of independent exercise in the government-owned print medium. The method frequently and successfully employed was censorship. A censorship organ, which had been working under the

Ministry of Information and National Guidance since 1972, was given, in 1977, special powers of 'refining' all kinds of information.

This shows that the hope of hearing a different view other than the government has been dashed and the media have ended up being a propaganda machine serving only partisan interest of the government. As it has been said earlier, this not only shows that the Derg had a heavy hand on free press but also would not tolerate its existence in any form other than being its mouthpiece.

2.1.3. The Print Media during EPRDF (1991-present)

Unlike the situation in the two regimes that preceded it, the media situation under EPRDF regime is considered somewhat different with regards to having formal media policy and openings for independent journalism (Skjerdal, 2012:17; PMC, 2006:32; Shimeles, 2000: 9; Shimeles, 2002: 184; Zewge, 2010:3; Gedion, 2010: 205). However, Skjerdal finds it difficult to explain the media situation under EPRDF in a single conception as a result of its paradoxical nature. For him the media situation of the time has been marred by quite contrasting and interchangeable occurrences between coercion and liberalization; irresponsible journalism and professionalism; uniformity and diversity. In order to see these contrasting characteristics of the print media of the time, he has divided the period into seven phases. Since Skjerdal's classifications are too detail and recurring, it would be much more manageable and logical to categorize them into two broad sections, namely times of proliferation and times of decline, the following sections are devoted to them.

2.1.3.1. Proliferation and Decline of the Private Press

2.1.3.1.1. Proliferation of the Private Press

Although there seem to be ups and downs within this period itself, the years between 1991-2005 can be considered as times of the proliferation of the private press. This particular period has witnessed, among other things, the ratification of

Transitional Period Charter of 22 July 1991 which has given special emphasis to ‘the freedom of conscience, expression, association and peaceful assembly’ based on the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Press Law of 1992 which have given formal ground for the expansion of the press. The press law in particular was considered as a pivotal step in Ethiopian media policy due to two basic things: the abolishing of censorship and the right given to any Ethiopian to establish media outlet. These two things had been nightmares in the previous regimes (Shimeles, 2002: 184; Skjerdal, 2012: 17). Another important milestone that affirmed the legal ground for the freedom of the press comes from the Constitution of 1995. Under Article 29, the constitution guarantees freedom of expression without interference; prohibition of any form of censorship; access to information; and legal protection for independent media. In addition to the freedoms it granted to the media, under the same article, the constitution has also put some restriction on the media involving prohibition of content which could damage minors, harm the reputation of individuals, or provoke armed conflict. Though cautious about their practicality, Gedion (2010: 205) considers those legal frameworks unprecedented in the nation’s history:

A dramatic change occurred as far as freedom of expression was concerned with the collapse of the ‘Dergue’. Not only did the Transitional Charter recognize freedom of expression, but freedom of the press and speech became a reality with an unprecedented proliferation of privately run newspapers and magazines. The extent to which that freedom has subsisted till this day is a debatable issue, but what is certain is that in our constitutional history, freedom of expression was stipulated in the 1995 FDRE Constitution in the most elaborate manner.

In explaining the boom of the private press following the green lights enshrined in the legal documents mentioned earlier, PMC, (2006:32) states that the total number of registered periodicals between 1991 to February 2005 has reached 630.

Skjerdal (2012:19) also puts his observation of the period under investigation like this:

... until 2001, statistics show that 543 newspapers and 182 magazines were licensed during the first ten years of publication freedom in Ethiopia (Dessalegn and Meheret, 2004, p. 57). Indeed, some publications did not even have the patience to wait for the press law. Five magazines went to the printers in the succeeding months from December 1991, and the first newspaper, *Eyeta*, appeared on 18 May 1992, almost half a year ahead of the impending press law (Shimelis, 2000, p. 20). Even after the press law was passed, some newspapers did not bother to apply for a license and were published without formal permission. The real boom of newspapers, however, came in 1994, when a total of 128 publications were registered (Shimelis, 2002, p. 191; Vaughan and Tronvoll, 2003, p. 72).

Skjerdal argues that the mushrooming of the private press in Ethiopian is not a peculiar feature to the country for many countries coming out of long oppression have done the same when the situation changed for the media to function freely. As it was the case with countries like Somaliland, Mongolia and the Baltic states that got free media market after the 1990's liberalization, the media situation in Ethiopia was volatile too. As a result, most of the newfound publications were short-lived; others stayed for a couple of years or more; and circulation numbers were equally unstable (PMC, 2006; Skjerdal, 2012). The following citation illustrates how volatile publications of the time had been by taking one newspaper as a case in point:

The first newspaper, *Eyeta*, pertinently illustrates the situation. Published by Paulos Publishing House, the tabloid soon printed 50,000 copies, which would be a high circulation figure at any point in time in Ethiopian media history since the press markets opened in 1991. On the event of critical news, circulation figures

could rise to 70,000. However, challenged by its sensationalist profile, *Eyeta* faced several charges of defamation and shrank to a circulation of 5,000 copies until it vanished in October 1993 (Ellene et al., 2003, p. 32; Shimelis, 2000, p. 20 Skjerdal (2012:19)).

Even though the description given above could govern most of the publications of the time (note the paradox here too, a period of proliferation where most of them were short-lived), the period under discussion has also produced long serving and still sustaining newspapers. These include the popular Amharic *Addis Admas* (December 1999) and the two English-language financial newspapers *Capital* (December 1998) and *Fortune* (May 2000). In addition, *The Reporter*, which has both an Amharic (1995) and English (1996) editions (ibid: 22).

At the end of its proliferation phase, the private press showed unprecedented vibrancy following the approach of 2005 election. During this particular time, the number of publications doubled; the opposition-aligned press reached new heights; and some titles multiplied their circulation figures many times. *Ethop*, for example, which had 5,000 copies regularly rocketed to 130,000 copies in the weeks before the Election Day 15 May 2005 (ibid: 23).

2.1.3.1.2. Decline of the Private Press

As mentioned earlier, it has been proved difficult to categorize the events that happened to the private print media post Derg Ethiopia in any simple terms or conceptualizations. However, it is also not impossible to deal with it following such historical landmarks that either benefited or suppressed the sector. Even though an independent section treating factors resulting in the decline of periodicals in Ethiopia has been assigned, this section deals the declining stage of the private press.

As many would argue, (Skjerdal, 2012; Halelujah, 2008; Simret Yasabu, 2006; Dagim Afework, 2013; Shimeles, 2002; Price et al., 2009; Youssef, 2004) the press in Ethiopia has developed a partisan nature. For Skjerdal (2012), the

culmination point where a mounting polarization between the press's different sections was observed immediately after the post Election Day of May 2005 which resulted in negative consequences for the private press. While most of the private press aligned themselves with the opposition, with the exception of the moderate ones like the *Reporter* that questioned whether the elections had been free and fair, the government press on its part was against the opposition. This would remind what has been common in Africa in the 1990's. Kasoma (2000: 49) describes a similar situation like this as governments in Africa using government press to protect themselves and their parties from attacks from the private press, a protection which many democratic countries have done without.

While the government strengthened its pressure on the private press, on the other hand, many of the private press newsrooms were staffed with politically motivated personnel who stood against the incumbent as a result of their background highly attached with the Derg regime (Skjerdal, 2012: 19-20). Due to the polarization of things, the chaotic months after the election have resulted in the imprisonment of journalists, managers and editors which resulted in the closure of newspapers like *Addis Zena*, *Ethop*, *Menelik*, *Meyisaw*, *Meznagna*, *Netsanet*, *Satenaw* and *Seife Nebelbal* (Skjerdal and Hallelujah, 2009). Unlike the pre election time that saw doubling of the existing publications, the following quote shows the plummeting trend of the press in the post election periods:

Of the total 85 news-papers that were in circulation in June 2005, only 51 were still being published in February 2006 (Kibnesh, 2006, p. 15). Although many of the closures must also be explained by the condition of poor journalistic quality and absence of professional ethics (Wondwosen, 2009, p. 100), government pressure was severe and practically ruled out opposition-minded journalism of the kind seen during the 2005 elections (Skjerdal, 2012: 25).

This period has not only witnessed the release of the imprisoned journalists but also most importantly the promulgation of Proclamation no. 590/2008, ‘A Proclamation to Provide for the Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information’. In spite of continuous criticisms on it ever since it was in a draft stage, for Skjerdal (2012: 25-26), the proclamation has introduced four important improvements: prohibited pre-trial detention of journalists; abolished licensing of newspapers and acknowledged registration by default if no response is received within 30 days of application for no fee; explicitly proclaimed the right of journalists to form professional associations; and contained an extensive section on access to information. Parallel to the rights given, however, the proclamation also puts forward stringent articles:

Some restrictive provisions nevertheless survived into the new media law, of which the opening for criminal defamation and harsh punishments for false accusations have received the most attention (Ross, 2010). The compensation for such damage amounts to up to ETB 100,000 (USD 5,500), up from ETB 50,000 in the 1992 proclamation. Also, the authorities can lawfully confiscate a press product in advance of circulation if it is believed to represent a serious threat to national security (ibid: 26).

Along with the restriction laid in the 2008 media law, some rights groups allege the enactment of other rules for the decline of the private press post 2005 election. They claim that Charities and Societies Proclamation no. 621/2009 and Anti-Terrorism Proclamation no. 652/2009, both promulgated in 2009, have been used to muzzle the media. As a result, they claim with 49 exiled journalists over the five-year period from 2007–12, Ethiopia has the third highest defection rate of journalists in the world, after Somalia and Iran (Skjerdal, 2012: 30; CPJ, 2012; Freedom House, 2012). But Skjerdal (2010a) challenges this claim stating that several names on lists of journalists in exile do not have a known reputation as

journalists back in Ethiopia. Hence, hinting that the defection could be motivated by reasons other than journalistic practices.

Against the pessimistic views of some Western governments and right groups who often accuse the Ethiopian government on its handling of the private press, Allen & Stremlau (2005: 9), cited by Zewge (2010: 4), consider the situation in a different perspective:

The country could be said to be "...pursuing a path of media development" with combined elements of "...aggressive constraint procedures with provision of relatively considerable space for dissent". The writers attempt to justify the measures of some African Governments including that of Ethiopia against the private press by, among other things, the need to go beyond the common and simplistic dichotomy of free/unfree media environment to address complex situations and ensure eventual peace and order (ibid.).

This implies that the press in Ethiopia has some glimmers of hope which the media has to use in a responsible manner and governments, too, have a responsibility of securing peace and order.

2.2. Factors Responsible for the Decline of Newspapers

2.2.1. Western Experience

These days the decline of newspapers has become a hot issue being discussed all over the world. In the West, for example, newspapers are largely declining due to the advent of the internet and a sharp decrease in advertisement revenue and readership (Daily Newspaper Circulation Trends, 2013; Kirchhoff, 2010; Picard, 2006; Hooke 2012). Kirchhoff (2010) in a summary of a report presented to the US congress highlights the issue:

The U.S. newspaper industry is suffering through what could be its worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. Advertising revenues have plummeted due in part to the

severe economic downturn, while readership habits have changed as consumers turn to the Internet for free news and information. Some major newspaper chains are burdened by heavy debt loads. Between 2008 and early 2010, eight major newspaper chains declared bankruptcy, several big city papers shut down, and many laid off s and editors, imposed pay reductions, cut the size of the physical newspaper, or turned to Web-only publication.

Though the West seems in a trouble of declining newspapers, the east is getting pleasure from the strong growth of newspapers owing to robust economic growth and demand from an emerging urban and literate middle class that is enjoying higher incomes and rising standards of living. Christoph Riess, CEO of the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers, likens the situation with the rising and setting of the sun: “Circulation is like the sun. It continues to rise in the East and decline in the West” Hooke (2012: 36).

All in all the decline of newspapers in the West is a result of technological advancement and issues pertaining to it.

2.2.2. African Experience

Generally speaking, telling the trend of African newspapers in simple terms may not be as easy as the East-West dichotomy mentioned before mainly due to lack of research works supporting ones arguments. Kasoma (2000: 99-100) predicts that the decline of the press in Africa continues unless drastic measures are taken in relation to economic slump, bad management, and above all increasing civic awareness of the public. Based on the information of two African countries available to the researcher, the trend in Africa too seems to be declining albeit for contrasting reasons. Whereas the cause of decline in South Africa resembles what is happening in the West, the cause of decline in Ethiopia is quite different. According to South African print and digital media transformation task team

Report on the Transformation of Print and Digital Media (2013), ‘Sales of established mainstream newspapers in South Africa show a steady decline over the last twenty years’ (ibid: 40). The report attaches, as is the case in the West, the decline to the advent of the digital media which is fragmenting newspapers revenues (ibid: 28).

However, the situation in our country does not seem to be comparable either with the east or with the West and even with South Africa. Well, the decline of newspapers could be a common feature between the West, South Africa and Ethiopia albeit the reasons behind are quite contrasting. The following sections deal with the factors behind the decline of newspapers in Ethiopian particular situation dividing them into two.

2.2.2.1. Ethiopian Experience

2.2.2.1.1. Internal Factors

Compared to the experiences seen in the West and South Africa, Ethiopian causes for the decline of the private press are unique. In the previous two experiences, with the exception of the blanket prediction given by Kasoma (2000), the main factor for the decline of newspapers has been the advent of the internet or the digital world. So far there is no indication of research that attaches the decline of the private press in Ethiopia to this technological advancement. Instead researches repeatedly discuss other factors being responsible. These include low standard of professionalism, lack of experience, journalists’ poor understanding of their roles, unethical exercise of their powers, poor economy and incompetent leadership (Halelujah, 2008; Misrak Adugna, 2009; Dagim Afework, 2013; Gudeta Seifu, 2008; Skjerdal and Halelujah, 2009; Skjerdal, 2012; PMC,2006). The presence of these negative factors is manifested ‘in the rampancy of misquoting, misinterpreting, and plagiarism, the focus on trivial issues, poor layout, subjectivity, sensationalism, fixation on most sordid and volatile issues, obscenity and outright lies’ Shimeles(2002: 198). Comparing the current situation with the experiences elsewhere in the world, Shimeles concludes:

The private press in Ethiopia, as in other developing countries under similar circumstances, could be said to be reminiscent of the press in more developed areas a century ago. This applies to its multiplicity, urban concentration, economic insecurity, limited advertising, comparatively small circulation, relatively untrained staff and, frequently, modest equipment (ibid: 199).

Particularly talking about the private press in the early days, Girma Beshah, former editor-in-chief of *Press Digest*, as quoted by Skjerdal and Halelujah (2009) recalls the unprofessionalism of the newborn press: “The independent press which came into being following the 1992 press proclamation was acting like a jinni out of the lamp, but it was a mad jinni” (ibid: 49). But Bereket Simon, a veteran politician in the incumbent party, interviewed by the same researchers, does not seem to agree on the time limit of unprofessionalism of the press. He insists that the private press has not shown improvement (sensible journalism) until the last two years (referring to the years after 2005).

In a nut shell, considering the myriad challenges within itself, the internal factors alone seem to be quite debilitating to halt the progress of the private press let alone external ones were to be added.

2.2.2.1.2. External Factors

While the internal factors are mainly the faults of the private press either due to its immaturity or cases related with its inception, the external ones often come from the government side. The Ethiopian government has taken different measures to tame the private press which it considers has taken quite a long time to improve itself. Skjerdal and Halelujah (2009) state these measures as poor access to government information, delays and sometimes denial of legal registration, imprisonment of journalists and media owners and more or less forceful closure of newspapers of the like *Menlik*, *Netsanet*, *Ethop*, *Addis Zena*, *Satenaw*,

Meyisaw, Seife Nebelbal and Meznagna. In an attempt which seems to demystify the cause of the blurry relationship between the press and the government, Skjerdal and hallelujah (2009) propose the following justification:

One could argue that the unhealthy tension between the government and the press is a result of unclear roles. On the one hand the government would not grant the media a free reign because it does not trust that they will use their freedoms responsibly. On the other hand the media cannot be considered an independent fourth estate because they identify themselves too much with the political opposition. Neither the government nor the media are therefore prepared to grant and assume the independent fourth estate role of the media (ibid: 53).

Other than government's direct influence, substantial increase in printing costs and difficulties in attracting advertisers (especially for sensationalist newspapers), could be mentioned as factors responsible for the decline of newspapers (Skjerdal, 2012: 22). Some rights groups like Amnesty International (2011), reports that the criminal code and anti-terrorism legislation are being used against journalists. Others like PEN International, Committee to Protect Journalists and Freedom Now (2013) in their joint report consider the Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation 590/2008 and the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation No. 652/2009, directly undermining the rights enshrined in the Constitution. Ross (2010) also sees three restrictive provisions introduced in the 2008 proclamation which did not exist or were lighter in the 1992 proclamation. According to her, the new proclamation has strict provisions of defamation, government dependent registration system and excessive fines. Skjerdal (2012: 33-34) despite the fact that he believes in the presence of some restrictive clauses in the new media law, he argues with the rights groups that 'meshing of media policy with other policy is not grounded in a sound analysis of Ethiopian media legislation'. He rather advises those who are interested in understanding the

situation to look closely the pragmatic use of adjacent legislation and other informal mechanisms that are affecting media governance in this country.

The facts presented above show that the decline of the private press in Ethiopia, unlike that of the West and South Africa, is influenced by two factors emanating from the nature of the private press and the way the government wanted to handle the matter.

2.3. Roles of the Private Press

2.3.1. Pre-requisite Vs Co-requisite for Democracy

Almost 200 years ago the French political writer Alexis de Tocqueville while visiting the United States wrote, “You can’t have real newspapers without democracy, and you can’t have democracy without newspapers” (Potter, 2011: 76). The quotation implies that for democracy to flourish the existence of a free press is necessary. Not forgetting that free press also flourishes in a democracy. The question to be raised here is which comes first: democratic system or free press; or does democracy require free press or free press requires democracy? Even though it would be as difficult as solving the age old ‘chicken and egg’ debate, this section attempts to answer this seemingly silly question.

Halelujah (2008: 25) citing Kasoma (1997:297) argues that should it act ethically and professionally, the independent press has roles as both a necessary prerequisite and a co-requisite for democracy and multiparty politics. UNESCO’s *Windhoek Declarations on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Media (1991)* under article one seems to prove Kasoma’s assertion with regards to the role of the press in building and maintaining democracy:

Consistent with article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the establishment, maintenance and fostering of an independent, pluralistic and free press is essential to the development and maintenance of democracy in a nation, and for economic development.

Kasoma (2000: 49-50) further argues that there is a causal relationship between press and democracy citing two somewhat opposing sources. Whereas Brant and Soune (1998: 128) consider the press to be a prerequisite for the well functioning of democracy, Lahav (1985:339) considers freedom of the press to be woven in the texture of modern democracy. However, Kasoma wonders why others like (Held 1996; McPherson 1997; McChency 1999; Grosswiler 1997 and Dahl 1998) could not see or be undecided to clearly come out and attribute the causal relationship between the press and democracy.

Notwithstanding the argument that could be raised on the part of scholars taking a different stand in relation to Kasoma's, his arguments seem reasonable in terms of describing the relationship between the press and democracy. This will lead us to the conclusion that there is a strong relationship between free press and democracy- one cannot live without the other, like the egg and the chicken.

2.3.2. Serving as a Watchdog

Historically speaking, according to the words of Coronel (2010: 111), the notion of watchdog press is over 200 years old. However, the advent of globalization, the fall of authoritarian and socialist regimes, and the deregulation of the media worldwide have fueled a renewed interest in it. She claims that watchdog reporting covers a wide range of different types of journalism including exposure journalism. The things to be exposed also could range between small-scale wrongdoing involving petty officials like traffic policemen or clerks, but can just as well be on high-level political corruption involving millions, even billions of dollars. Describing the cross-cutting and all encompassing nature of watchdog reporting, she states:

[W]hile many exposés are about wrongdoing in government, they can also uncover malfeasance in the private sector, such as corporations that cause damage to the public interest, as well as nonprofits that take money from unsuspecting citizens. Watchdogging can involve oversight of both individuals and

institutions. Almost no public person or group is immune from investigation —indeed, journalists have investigated scamming Buddhist monks (Thailand), sexual abuse in the Catholic Church (United States), and wrongdoing in venerable institutions such as the Boy Scouts (United States) *ibid* (112-113).

Exposing wrongdoings has a lot of impacts benefiting the public. They include prompting investigations of those involved in malfeasance and catalyzing changes in laws and regulations; helping shape public opinion against corrupt governments; and generating public hostility against those who abuse their office. Protes et al. (1991) cited in Coronel (2010:24) present three policy effects of investigative reporting: a) “deliberative,” when reports result in official commitments to discuss the problems raised and the possible solutions; b) “Individualistic” results take place when sanctions are applied against individuals or enterprises accused of wrongdoing; and c) “Substantive” reforms happen when the investigations result in tangible changes in rules, laws, procedures, or policies or new governmental units or bodies are created or public funds are reallocated. However, there are also times in which many well documented investigations may end up in oblivion after having made waves, won awards, generated controversy for a couple of weeks if the wrongdoings they expose are not acted upon.

If used appropriately, watchdog function of the press can serve a lot in securing the public interest like the watchdog secures its masters compound.

2.3.3. Creating Public Sphere

Among the crucial roles of the press in a democratic situation is serving as a public sphere. However, according to Fleming (2000: 5), citing Habermas (1996), public sphere or public discussion has been reduced by the activities of politicians, advertisers, public relations and the media in general. Similarly,

Benson (2009:176-177), citing Habermas (1989: 185), discusses how the press itself became manipulable to be 'a platform of advertising' after the mid-1800s losing its independent critical edge and becoming more sensationalized and trivialized.

Habermas' public sphere if not interrupted by those powers, is capable of providing the public a forum for open debate where different segments of the society get a chance to air their opinions which are aimed at resolving practical disagreements. The forum does not work haphazardly- it has got its own rules of engagement including equal rights of all participants; provision of appropriate evidence in support of arguments; an obligation to provide reasons for challenging what others assert; and the examining of alternative and other people's perspectives. What makes the public sphere unique is that there is no coercion of any sort in the decision making process, be it internal or external. What matters most in a debate of the public sphere is reasonable argument where everyone is entitled to make provisional decisions that could be overturned when a better argument comes (ibid: 6). Fleming further describes what has been in the mind of Habermas in formulating his public sphere:

...the coffee houses, salons and table society of Europe were examples of inclusive literary public spaces because of their equality, critique, accessibility, reflexivity and problematizing the unquestioned. The ideal of a public sphere asserts itself as a bulwark against the systematizing effects of the state and the economy (ibid:2).

The German philosopher Habermas, in his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (1989)*, sheds light on the classical concept of public sphere as follows:

The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon

claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor (ibid: 27).

A freely functioning press could serve as a public sphere or a forum for open discussion providing equal opportunity to all citizens to air their concerns about the things which they think are right or wrong. So long as the forum is open for all, what matters to win people's heart and mind is rational argument not coercion of any sort.

2.3.4. Informing, Entertaining and Educating

All the functions of the press mentioned earlier and many more can be described by the three roles of informing, entertaining and educating the public it is supposed to serve. The breadth and depth of treatment given to these functions could be different based on the media philosophy and the powerful actors involved in it, however (Holtz-Bacha & Norris; 2001, Herman and Chomsky; 1988, Ravi; 2012, Rosie & Gorringer 2009). Herman and Chomsky (1988: 1) put their version of the function of the media this way:

The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfill this role requires systematic propaganda.

Even though there are about three functions assigned to the media, entertainment often seems to dominate. ‘One major concern was that entertainment programmes would outweigh and marginalize informational content, leading to an impoverished public sphere’(Holtz-Bacha & Norris; 2001: 123). This imbalance undoubtedly narrows the chance of the public to get the most out of the media particularly in terms of serving as a public sphere and watchdogging.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework which informs or possibly lays a theoretical background to this research emanates from Political Economy Theory. Among the different models that can be subsumed in the theory, two models from two sources have been selected. These sources are Hallin and Mancini’s work on three models of media and politics, to be precise, Polarized Pluralist Model, and Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky’s *The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, the Propaganda Model.

2.4.1. Polarized Pluralist Model

Based on their media experience on Europe and America, Hallin and Mancini have divided media systems into three: a) The Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model; b) The North/Central European or Democratic Corporatist Model; and c) The North Atlantic or Liberal Model. From the very fact that these models are made based on Western experiences, one can expect that there could be a difficulty of replicating them in our context. Hallin and Mancini, (2004:6) too, have acknowledged the problem beforehand:

...the models developed here will not apply without considerable adaptation to most other areas of the world, though we hope they will be useful to scholars working on other regions as points of reference against which other models can be constructed.

Therefore, considering the room left by the scholars to adapt it and since construction of another model is not the intention of this research, among the three models proposed by Hallin and Mancini, the one that can be adapted to our context is the Polarized Pluralist Model (PPM). Hence, PPM informs this research in particular. Even though there are overlapping characteristics between the models, unlike the other models, PPM is selected as it reflects many facets of the current media situation in Ethiopia (Halelujah, 2008; Misrak Adugna, 2009; Dagim Afework, 2013; Gudeta Seifu, 2008; Skjerdal and Halelujah, 2009). In a table that summarizes the three models, Hallin and Mancini (2004:299) characterize the situation in PPM as low development of mass press, high political parallelism, low professionalization and high state intervention which in many instances resemble the situation in Ethiopia. When they elaborate their concept, they describe PPM as follows:

The Polarized Pluralist Model is characterized by a high level of politicization, with the state and political parties intervening strongly in many areas of social life, and with much of the population holding strong loyalties to widely varying political ideologies. Loyalty to these ideologies goes along with widespread skepticism about any conception of a “common good” that would transcend them, and a relative absence of commonly agreed rules and norms (ibid: 298).

Generally speaking, systems in PPM are characterized by unequal consumption of public information, high degree of external pluralism, close ties between journalists and political powers and active intervention of the state in the media sector.

2.4.2. The Political Economy of the Mass Media: Propaganda Model

As Hallin and Mancini's work was focused on the media experiences of Europe and America, which one would possibly argue it to be quite minimalist to talk about the trend of media worldwide, Herman and Chomsky's work too focuses specifically on one country, the U.S., to tell us how the media are manipulated by powerful agents of the society. As a result, in their book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1988), Herman and Chomsky argue that the U.S. media serve and propagandize on behalf of the powerful societal interests that control and finance them. This idea of theirs has been ignored a lot in the target country and Europe both in media coverage and academic discussions due to its critical nature and premises (Herring and Robinson, 2003; Mullen, & Klaehn, 2010; Klaehn, 2002).

In their book Herman and Chomsky (1988) introduce the concept of the 'propaganda model' to critically analyze the performance of the U.S. media based on institutional structures and relationships within which they operate. According to them, the mainstream media propagandize the elites' perspective to the public in a systematic and well positioned manner which could trick the populace to believe that what is presented by the media should be taken for granted. Based on their extensive research, they even go further to conclude that contrary to the notion of 'societal purpose' and standard liberal myth of the news media in the West, the media in the U.S. is used to inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state. They present how systematic and subtle the media are in terms of delivering their objective as follows: 'The media serve this purpose in many ways: through selection of topics, distribution of concerns, framing of issues, filtering of information, emphasis and tone, and by keeping debate within the bounds of acceptable premises' (Herman & Chomsky, 1988: 298).

In order to substantiate their argument which bases itself on the propaganda model and maintains its criticism throughout on the ill practice of the media in the U.S., particularly on that country's foreign policy, in a relatively no deviation from the elites' interest (be it corporate or political), they postulate five 'filters'. Congruent with the premises of the propaganda model, these filters function to shape the news media output (Herring and Robinson, 2003: 555). In addition to shaping the media outputs, these filter elements continuously 'interact with and reinforce one another' and have multilevel effects on media performance; are used to refine news materials arriving in the media houses in a way that dissent is marginalized; the government and dominant private interests are allowed to get their messages across to the public which ultimately leaves 'only the cleansed residue fit to print' (Herman & Chomsky, 1988: 2).

The five filters that have been used to build the propaganda model being basic ingredients are dealt in sufficient details by the authors providing empirical evidences. Even though one or two of them could be applicable to the purpose of this research, they are presented as follows for introduction:

- (1) the size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms;
- (2) advertising as the primary income source of the mass media;
- (3) the reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power;
- (4) "flak" as a means of disciplining the media; and
- (5) "anticommunism" as a national religion and control mechanism (ibid:2).

As it has been stated earlier, considering their relevance to this particular research and the situation in Ethiopia, it would be wise to focus on two of these filters which could have likely impacted the private press in this country. As a result, filter two and three that discuss advertising as the primary income source; and

reliance on information provided by government, business and 'experts' have been selected.

In discussing how advertising affects the media, the authors state: 'With advertising, the free market does not yield a neutral system in which final buyer choice decides. The *advertisers'* choices influence media prosperity and survival' (ibid: 14). This idea is shared by Klaehn, (2002: 159), who maintains that 'To remain financially viable, most media must sell markets (readers) to buyers (advertisers). This dependency can directly influence media performance.' Another dependency that cements and even intricates the relationship between media and the elites manifests itself in the supply of continuous, 'reliable', ready to use and economic news which is all about sourcing. Herman and Chomsky show how news sourcing strengthens the relationship between the media and elites:

The mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest. The media need a steady, reliable flow of the raw material of news. They have daily news demands and imperative news schedules that they must meet. They cannot afford to have s and cameras at all places where important stories may break. Economics dictates that they concentrate their resources where significant news often occurs, where important rumors and leaks abound, and where regular press conferences are held (ibid: 18-19).

According to them this symbiotic relationship could result in two things, at least. One possibility is that due to the closeness, personal relationships, threats and rewards could be used to further influence and coerce the media on the part of the powerful sources. As a gesture, the media on their part 'may feel obligated to carry extremely dubious stories and mute criticism in order not to offend their sources and disturb a close relationship' (ibid: 22). In spite of the obvious

difference that exists between Ethiopia and the U.S. where the model was crafted for, at least these two filters could be functional to our situation too.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

As it has been stated in the preceding chapters, the purpose of this research was to investigate how some newspapers have sustained the challenging newspaper market in Ethiopia focusing on two newspapers, namely *Reporter* and *Addis Admas*. In order to arrive at a possible answer as to how these papers made it through in spite of the challenges, a relevant research methodology that commensurates with the research objectives has been designed. As a result, this chapter deals with the methodology, data collection instruments, sampling techniques and data presentation and analysis methods used to come up with the answer.

3.1.1. Qualitative Research Methodology

As Miller and Brewer (2003:192) describe it, methodology connotes a set of rules and procedures to guide research and against which its claims can be evaluated. They also underscore the importance it has in the construction of all forms of knowledge. In its attempt to shed lights on our understanding of how some newspapers are surviving while others have disappeared from the Ethiopian private press context, this paper intends to use 'data triangulation' as opposed to 'method triangulation', Grix (2004: 136). That is to say, using different research tools (in-depth interview and document analysis) in the realm of qualitative approach. This method is selected due to its suitability to the nature of data to be gathered and the flexibility it provides as a social research. As Dawson (2007: 33) puts it, qualitative research explores attitudes, behavior and experiences through such methods as interviews or focus groups. Creswell (2007: 37) on his part gives an elaborated definition to qualitative research:

Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. [...] The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem and it extends the literature or signals a call for action.

In his definition, Creswell emphasizes that qualitative research is based on a process which starts from theoretical assumptions and evolves into calling action to problems using its own procedures. What is more in this research method, according to the definition, is that participants' voices are included in the report and the researcher is not a bystander. In order for a qualitative research to achieve its objectives, there are four primary data collection methods it relies on (Marshall & Rossman, 1999: 97). They put the four data collection methods as follows:

Qualitative researchers typically rely on four methods for gathering information: (a) participating in the setting, (b) observing directly, (c) interviewing in depth, and (d) analyzing documents and material culture. These form the core of their inquiry—the staples of the diet. Several secondary and specialized methods of data collection supplement them.

However, among the four methods outlined above, this research uses in-depth interview and document analysis for they are appropriate to answer the research questions. The following two sections discuss these methods.

3.2. Data Collection Instruments

3.2.1. In-depth Interview

In-depth interview is a qualitative research tool used in providing ample opportunities to grasp the research elements' internal feelings, perspectives, interpretations, knowledge, opinions and life experiences (Ezzy, 2002; Stokes, 2003; Mack, N. et al 2005; Boyce, C. & Neale, P. 2006; Jensen, 2002; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Patton, 2002). Mack, N. et al (2005: 29) put how useful the tool could be both to the researched and the researcher alike:

In-depth interviews are one of the most common qualitative methods. One reason for their popularity is that they are very effective in giving a human face to research problems. In addition, conducting and participating in interviews can be a rewarding experience for participants and interviewers alike. For participants [...] in-depth interviews offer the opportunity to express themselves in a way ordinary life rarely affords them. [...] interviewers engaged in in-depth interviews are offered the privilege of having people who are virtually strangers entrust them with a glimpse into their personal lives.

In spite of being an effective tool to gather qualitative data, in-depth interview requires key skills like rapport-building, emphasizing the participant's perspective and accommodating different personalities and emotional states on behalf of the interviewer. In addition to these core skills, lending a sympathetic ear; encouraging participants to elaborate on their answers; avoiding showing approval, disapproval, judgment, or bias; balancing track of the questions and natural flow of conversation; and managing the interview considering participants as expert are required on the part of the interviewer (ibid:38).

Using in-depth interview has its own advantages and disadvantages too. The former include, among other things, yielding richest data, immediate follow-up and clarification, face-to-face contact with respondents, opportunity to explore topics in depth and allowing the interviewer to be flexible in administering the interview. But the disadvantages are, it is prone to bias, consumes time to analyze, information could be distorted through recall error, selective perceptions, desire to please interviewer and people do not always say what they think, or mean what they say (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Boyce, C. & Neale, P. 2006; Jensen, 2002).

In this research, semi-structured in-depth interview was used as a main tool to gather data from key informants lived experience concerning the factors which they think helped the newspapers under investigation survive the challenging Ethiopian private press milieu while their counterparts have disappeared. This tool is selected due to its ability to provide a wide range of perspectives from the samples included in the research which would have never been possible in other tools. As Seidman (2006: 9) puts it, 'At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience.' Having this in mind, therefore, an array of participants representing the sector one way or the other have been included to grasp their take on the issue under investigation. The participants of the research include editors and a manager of private newspapers, scholars who have studied the sector or have some kind of attachment with it, a government representative and press associations heads (13 in total).

3.2.2. Document Analysis

Even though in-depth interview has been used as a main tool to gather data from research participants, to consolidate the data gathered with the in-depth interview, document analysis was conducted to corroborate the findings. To that end, documents related to income sources of the two newspapers; limited litigation cases of the two newspapers; and other pertinent materials supporting the research

were analyzed. Flick (2009: 255-256) defines what documents are citing Prior (2003: 2) as follows:

If we are to get to grips with the nature of documents then we have to move away from a consideration of them as stable, static and pre-defined artifacts. Instead we must consider them in terms of fields, frames and networks of action. In fact, the status of things as "documents" depends precisely on the ways which such objects are integrated into fields of action, and documents can only be defined in terms of such fields.

Prior to giving Prior's definition of documents used in a qualitative research setting, Flick has put forward a succinct definition to documents citing Wolff (2004b: 284):

Documents are *standardized artifacts*, in so far as they typically occur in particular *formats*-, as notes, case reports, contracts, drafts, death certificates, remarks, diaries, statistics, annual reports, certificates, judgments, letters or expert opinions (ibid: 254).

As it has been the case with the in-depth interview, this tool, too, has its own drawbacks and strengths. The strengths include it is relatively inexpensive; it provides a behind-the-scenes look at a program that may not be directly observable; it may bring up issues not noted by other means; it is good source of background information; and it supports data gathered in interviews or observations. The drawbacks are bias due to selective survival of information; information may be incomplete or inaccurate; time consuming to collect, review, and analyze many documents; and information may be inapplicable, disorganized, unavailable, or out of date (Flick, 2009; Creswell, 2012; Creswell 2013).

Concomitant with the research objectives, this paper sought to use financial reports of the newspapers under study that could be available either with the

media houses themselves or the tax collection authority-ERCA. These documents included financial statements of the media houses and income and expenditure reports. As a result, ten consecutive years' income and expenditure reports in terms of copy sell and advertisement revenues were supposed to be investigated. In addition, court cases the newspapers have faced, lost and won over the same period and other pertinent documents were supposed to be assessed. However, as it was rightly anticipated in the limitations section of the study, either due to the secrecy of the matters involved with the data or lack of cooperation, MoJ and ERCA could not provide the documents required. As a result, only available documents from the newspapers and an unpublished research were analyzed.

3.3. Sampling Technique

3.3.1. Purposive Sampling

The research emphasizes on newspapers that survived the private press market over ten years, *Reporter and Addis Admas* being in focus. These newspapers were selected against the others as a result of them being long serving Amharic private newspapers addressing different issues. Since the samples were limited in number, both the key informants and documents, purposive sampling method was used. Purposive sampling is a type of nonrandom or non probability sampling which involves the use of the researcher's knowledge of the population in terms of research goals (Dattalo, 2008: 6). Dattalo further describes purposive sampling as follows: (ibid)

... elements are selected based on the researcher's judgment that they will provide access to the desired information. For example, sometimes purposive sampling is used to select typical cases, and sometimes it is used to select atypical cases. Purposive sampling also can be used to select participants based on their willingness to be studied or on their knowledge of a particular topic.

This implies that purposive sampling mainly focuses on the relevance of the subjects to be studied vis-à-vis achieving the objective of the research which of course demands the conscious decision making ability of the researcher in selecting the elements. Therefore, the samples (both the in-depth interview participants and the documents) used in this research were selected in a purposive sampling method. Whereas the 13 interview participants were selected owing to their knowledge in the area to be investigated, the ten consecutive years income and expenditure reports of the newspapers and court cases (from 1997-2006 E.C.) were selected based on their significance in the history of the private press in Ethiopia. As it has been discussed in the review of related literature, this is the time in which major decline of the private press was observed. The assumption was that selecting this particular period could be good indicator whether the newspapers are surviving due to their financial viability or responsible journalism they are pursuing.

3.3.2. Convenience Sampling

The researcher was forced to introduce this sampling technique later in the data collection stage. Initially when this research was at a proposal stage, purposive sampling was chosen as sole sampling technique. However, when data collection was started, some of the supposed documents and two in-depth interview samples were not available as planned. For example, only some documents showing charges of *Reporter* newspaper over the study period were available as the rest of them have been sealed by police in their former office. Even if financial document showing income of the newspapers were available, they were only five year documents and were not disaggregated. Therefore, as Yin (2011: 88) puts it, convenience sampling is selecting data collection units simply because of their ready availability, document analysis of financial and litigation status of the papers and in-depth interviews were made on available data and samples based on convenience sampling.

3.4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

As a qualitative research, data was gathered in the aforementioned tools and interpretive analysis was made. While collecting, analyzing and interpretation of the data, common procedures were observed. In the in-depth interviews, for example, consensual semi-structured interviews were recorded and additional notes were taken to strengthen them. The recorded interviews in turn were transcribed; thematic areas were translated into English by the researcher; the data were categorized into themes; and interpretive analysis was made afterwards. As to the document analysis, a five-year financial data obtained from GCAO (2007E.C.) draft research was analyzed. Analysis was also made on the available court cases. In addition, other useful documents supporting the research were analyzed. Along with the data gathered, analyzed and interpreted from key informants, the analysis made on documents had indicated aspects that resulted in the sustainability of the newspapers.

3.5. Profile of the two Newspapers under Investigation

3.5.1. Reporter

Media and Communication Centre (MCC) is a plc that publishes two newspapers having the same name in English and Amharic languages. Whereas *Reporter*, the Amharic Newspaper, is published twice a week on Wednesday and Sunday, The *Reporter*, English newspaper, is published once a week every Sunday. Both newspapers are published in a government publishing house. However, sometimes they use a private publisher when the pages are quite many. The number of pages the newspapers will have depends on the date and language of publication. As a result, on average, the Wednesday and Sunday Amharic newspapers have 40 and 164 pages respectively. The English newspaper, however, has 36 pages. Circulation wise too, the newspapers have different figures. While the Amharic newspaper has about 22,000 copies per week (12,000 for Sunday and 10,000 for Wednesday), the English one ranges between 4,500-5,000. These newspapers reach customers through distributors, the post office and

in a door to door service. Since 1993 E.C. the newspapers have been on the web too.

MCC most of the time uses both content and manpower interchangeably across the newspapers. Currently there are 28 journalists (five female and 23 male) working full time for the company. Out of these journalists 22 of them have a first degree and six of them have a second degree. Whereas two female and four male journalists have a second degree, the rest of them (three female and 19 male) have first degrees. While most of the journalists (18 of them) are trained journalists, the rest are in the fields of language and literature and social sciences. With the exception of three journalists who earn between 2,000 and 4,000, most of them earn over 6,000 birr.

3.5.2. *Addis Admas*

Addis Admas is a weekly Amharic newspaper published by Admas Advertising plc every Sunday. The newspaper is solely published in a government publishing house. Its average number of pages is 28. The newspaper has a weekly circulation of 8,000. *Addis Admas* reaches its customers through distributors; and over the past four years the newspaper has been on the web too.

Addis Admas has twenty journalists (four female and 16 male). Among them, while eight are full time, twelve are part time journalists. Out of these journalists six of them have a second degree, eight of them have a first degree and six of them have a qualification below a first degree. Among them one female and five male journalists have a second degree, one female and seven male have first degrees and two female and four male have less than a first degree. Qualification wise four are trained journalists, five are in the fields of language and literature and social sciences. The rest of them are from different fields. The salary of the journalists also varies. One of them earns less than 2,000, ten of them earn between 2000 and 4,000, six of them between 4001-6000 and three of them earn over 6,000 birr.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of this research was to find out how some private newspapers sustain in the market focusing on *Reporter and Addis Admas*. To arrive at possible answers, data from primary and secondary sources have been gathered via qualitative method employing two data gathering tools: in-depth interviews as a main tool; and document analysis as a supplementary one. This chapter, therefore, presents the analysis of the data gathered in the aforementioned tools in an eclectic manner in three sections. It begins with the past ten year's history of the private press at a glance to be followed by challenges of the sector and state of professional journalism. Finally, the core issue of the thesis-reasons for the sustainability of the papers under investigation and the future of the private press will be presented.

According to a recent unpublished document released by EBA (List of Periodicals Since 1992, hereafter, EBA 2007 E.C.), ever since the press bill of 1992 was promulgated, a total of 1360 periodicals have been registered until March 2015. Out of these periodicals, 843 were newspapers and 517 were magazines. The document also shows that after 2005, the number of newspapers getting registered declines sharply. For instance, in 2005, fifty two newspapers were registered. Until 2010 the figure keeps falling albeit keeping its double digit fashion at registering 26 newspapers that year. The figure accelerates its downward movement after 2010 where the double digit tradition of newspaper registry comes to an end by registering only four newspapers in 2015. The data shows during election years many newspapers get registered as opposed to the following year. For example, in 2005, there had been 52 while 33 the following year. In 2010, there had been 26 while nine the following year. Currently, in 2015, an election year itself, there are only four newspapers registered. This year

seems to mark the end of the trend where newspapers flourish following election years. Hallelujah (2008: 53) citing a personal interview he had with Bereket Simon, former minister, MoI, later GCAO, tells why election years mark higher number of newspapers:

It [the private press] has always been a crisis media, the circulation and the market goes up to 180,000 copies for bad news and at crisis times and the circulation and the number of the papers declines when the people start to live in peace and stability and the country experience development. They were papers of crisis and they were playing based on the political temperature. They eat crisis. The independent press has been the contest of who was the ugliest.

Following the 2005 elections, it was not only the number of newspapers, but their circulation too was falling. Skjerdal (2012:) citing Kibnesh (2006: 15) puts the number of newspapers during the election time that year over 80 with a single newspaper having a circulation of over 100,000 at the moment. But currently, as of March 2015, there are 16 newspapers with a total circulation of less than 60,000 copies on a weekly basis. According to a report released by www.nationamaser.com in 2004, where the circulation could have been higher owing to the high number of newspapers at the time, Ethiopia's newspaper per capita was 4.65 per 1000 people making the country 103 out of 123 countries compared. This was one of the lowest newspapers per capita in the world and many African countries. After ten years where the number of newspapers has reduced sharply, Ethiopia's standing may not be any better.

Even though many newspapers have come and gone over the last ten years, the ones that sustained in the market more than ten years are very few in number. As to EBA's April and March 2015 monthly reports, there are 16 newspapers in the market. With the exception of the sports titles, only four newspapers are over ten years old. These are *Reporter*, *Addis Admas*, *Capital* and *Fortune*. These newspapers are not only the oldest private press in the country, they are also the

ones leading the market share. According to GCAO's draft research report on media market share (hereafter GCAO, 2007E.C), between 2001-2005E.C, *Reporter*, *Addis Admas* and *Fortune* have led the market with a continuous and ever increasing share (ibid: 103). As a result, percentage of their market share in consecutive five years in ascending order (from 2001-2005 E.C) looks like this: *Reporter*: 39.63%, 86.93%, 31.2%, 47.12% and 51.93%; *Addis Admas*: 17.75%, 32.53%, 9.81%, 7.82% and 5.91%; and *Fortune*: 17.49%, 36.14%, 14.39%, 15.34% and 16.51%.

In a nutshell, confirming the argument in chapter two, the past ten years have witnessed a continuous decline in the number of newspapers and their circulation. It is to be recalled that in chapter two the researcher has argued that the private press during EPRDF can be roughly divided into two-time of proliferation and time of decline. The analysis made on EBA's document too, confirms that argument. Showing phenomenal decrease in newspapers could be the downside of this second period. However, on the upside, the period has also witnessed a relative stability of the sector with a hand full of household titles establishing themselves in the market with ever increasing market share.

4.2. Challenges of the Private Press

As it has been discussed in chapter two, the challenges of the private press emanate from internal and external sources. Dichotomizing the challenges was also common among the key informants. As indicated in the literature section, whereas the internal ones come from the press themselves, the external ones mainly come from the government. All the key informants have dealt at length the challenges of the private press in this country than any issue raised during the in-depth interview. Almost all of them agree that partisanship, lack of professionalism and lack of vision have been typical features ever since the sector started flourishing in the early 1990s. On the government side too, lack of patience, discrimination and labeling and developing antagonistic relationship with the private press have been mentioned. The amalgamation of these factors

has resulted in poorly developed, polarized, short-lived and highly concentrated private press environment.

Asked about the challenges of the private press, Leul Gebru, deputy general director of EBA, says:

From the onset the private media had attitudinal problem. They consider themselves as liberators and they are ready to pay the price for their cause. Up to now this has been the nature of almost all the private press with the exception of a few ones which try to stay neutral. Attitudinal problem is the mother of all the problems seen in the sector. As a result of which you do not see ethical journalism, balancing and social responsibility in their reporting. Their contents are full of opinions than facts. What you often see is that the private press works only for its political objective like a cadre (Personal interview, April, 2015).

Tettey (2006: 230) describes a similar situation observed in emerging African democracies in the 1990s as follows:

In fact, some observers have been very virulent in their criticism of the media, highlighting attitudes that portray them as irresponsible, self-serving, unaccountable and a threat to the credibility and sustenance of the democratic process. Mupfurutsa (1999), for example, contends that ‘the media has [*sic*] become the object of public and government outrage . . . Journalism has been equated with uncivilized political propaganda and criticized for its bias, irresponsible and unethical behaviour.

However, Melaku, managing editor of *Reporter* newspaper, sees the challenges in perspectives-those coming from internal deficiencies of the press itself and externally from the government:

As some would like to call it, the private press in Ethiopia is not an industry. It is at a small and micro enterprise or peddler stage, better to say it is a 'candle in the wind'. Go to places where the press works and you would prove it yourself. Its capacity is limited in all aspects: professionally, materially and financially. It is a sector that anyone can join. The government on its part is not supportive to the press. Government information is difficult to get; the press law focuses on penalties and restrictions than supporting the press. Until recently there was a sense of animosity towards the private press on the part of the government- we were not allowed to attend press briefings by government institutions. Thanks to Government Communication Affairs Office (GCAO), now things are improving as we get media tips from the office to attend different governmental events (Personal interview, April, 2015).

The quotation implies that the sector is engulfed by internal and external factors that could not let the private press get out of its shell.

In a nutshell, the above discussions show that there is some kind of polarization in the media system of this country which in turn implies the presence of partiality and the absence of objectivity. The government accuses the press in its lack of objectivity; the press accuses the government of being discriminatory. This shows there is mistrust between them. As discussed in chapter two, in connection with the Polarized Pluralist Model, which has partly informed this research, there are many features that go along with our media system. According to PPM, the media in southern Europe share some major characteristics: low levels of newspaper circulation, a tradition of advocacy reporting, instrumentalization of privately owned media, politicization of public broadcasting and broadcast regulation and limited development of journalism as an autonomous profession (Papathanassopoulos, 2007: 192). These features of PPM are succinctly put

forward in the following quotation showing the similarity of the media system with its Ethiopian counterpart which would be discussed in detail in the coming sections:

the media in the Southern European countries are relatively strongly politicized, and political parallelism is relatively high. The style of journalism tends to give substantial emphasis to commentary. Newspapers tend to represent distinct political tendencies, and this is reflected in the differing political attitudes of their readerships; at times they play an activist role, mobilizing those readers to support political causes (ibid: 193).

By the same token, Dawit Kebede, editor-in-chief of the defunct *Awramba Times* newspaper, consolidates the similarity of Ethiopian private press with that of PPM. As to him, “The Ethiopian private press ever since its inception has grown wildly considering itself as a liberator or advocate of change whose job is toppling the government by supporting the opposition in spite of their programmes or policies.” This has resulted, he believes, “In setting militant or advocacy journalism as a standard journalism in the minds of the newspaper reading public. This bad example set by the majority of the private press itself is a challenge for newcomers that want to do professional journalism.” He also criticizes the government in its lack of tolerance. The government thinks otherwise in this regard, however.

Redwan Hussien, Minister, GCAO, in an interview he gave to *Zemen* (2006E.C: 66) argues against Dawit. He says, “At the moment, the government is extremely patient with the private press.” However, he adds, “The government cannot be patient forever as it has a responsibility to safeguard law and order in the country.” As to him, “Many members of the private press consider themselves as freedom fighters; if they do so, they are in the battlefield where counter-attack is the norm. Their option is, therefore,” he notes, “either to face counter-attack for being a freedom fighter or serve as a forum for free ideas and discussions.” Dawit,

who had been a militant journalist himself, seems to understand the consequence of militant journalism. He argues that militant journalism could be good only for some time to attract readers but at a cost. He adds, "When the party you have been fighting fights back, you are no more there." For Dawit, three bodies are responsible for the things raised earlier. He considers the political culture inherited from the 1970s which capitalizes on destroying the other for ones survival as the main cause; lack of professional ethics on the part of the personnel involved in the sector; and government's impatience (Personal interview, May, 2015).

In an interview he gave to Zemen (2006E.C: 48) Abdissa Zerai, Dean, SJC, AAU, also puts the political environment or ideological polarization responsible for the polarization of the media. Abdissa further argues that the private press was forced to assume the role of the opposition as there is no strong opposition that challenges what the government presents on its media in exaggerated manner (ibid: 49). The solution to the problems discussed above can be sought from the problems themselves. As Dawit and Abdissa have pointed it out, something must be done with the political culture. Waisbord (2000: 15) citing Schudson (1978) tells us how the partisan character of the US newspapers was weakened as a result of changes in the social and cultural conditions:

Against arguments that attributed objectivity and partisan detachment to the coming of the telegraph and other technological innovations, sociological studies have emphasized the importance of changing social and cultural conditions as responsible for the weakening of the partisan character of U.S. newspapers.

As implied in the quotation, before we see a vibrant press which reports objectively, the fabric of our social and political culture needs a makeover in this country.

Another challenge the sector has to face is short life span. According to a report by EBA (2007E.C.), ever since press licenses were issued from 1992- March 2015, more than 1300 periodicals, over 800 of them newspapers, have been registered by the authority. But as of March 2015, no more than 20 newspapers are in the market. The answer you get for the question as to why the periodicals are short-lived, depends on whom you ask or where you get your information from. According to Leul Gebru, the answer is very simple. He argues: “Though not the main one- easy criteria to get registered is a challenge in itself- as any Ethiopian with an ID card fulfilling very minimal requirements can get a license. Since the license can be acquired easily, people without enough capital, experience and professionals to run the business join it. Most of these licenses are revoked as they are not being used for a year. But the main reason that makes the life span of the private press so short is lack of factual content to be read by the public” (Personal interview, April, 2015). Leul’s argument on lack of capital, experience and professional competence as a cause of short life span is shared by most of the key informants. GCAO (2007E.C: 95) report too confirms this. According to the report, those people who are not currently in the sector had joined without research, the necessary initial capital and professionals.

However, Elias Gebru, who had been working in different defunct private newspapers and magazines (*Mesenazeriya, Awramba Times, Fitih, Enku and Kedami Gets*) at different capacities ranging from to deputy editor-in-chief, negates Leul’s idea of easy licensing. According to Elias, the criteria required to get licensed are getting tougher and are at times challenging (Personal interview, April, 2015). Elisabeth Equbay, editor at *Addis Admas* newspaper, on her part considers lack of economic capacity of the press due to shortage of advertisement and poor readership culture for the short life span of the press (Personal interview, April, 2015). In describing the reason behind the short life span of most newspapers, Melaku agrees with Elisabeth to some extent. He believes that most of the defunct newspapers vanished mainly due to internal reason-capacity problems. However, he also believes that there are some newspapers pushed out

of the market by external forces (Personal interview, April, 2015). Being in agreement with Melaku, Ayalew Asres, editor-in-chief of the defunct Negadras newspaper, is courageous enough to describe the cause of the external pressure and the party involved in it. He does not deny that most of the newspapers could not sustain the market due to their limited resources. However, he also believes that owing to the fear it has of the private press, particularly the critical ones, the government had excessive control and negative campaigns on them. As a result, he adds, “Some newspapers that had good market base and readership were pressurized to get out of the market” (Personal interview, May, 2015).

As to GCAO (2007E.C) report on market share of private and public media in Ethiopia, conflict of interest between journalists and owners in the private press and lack of mechanisms to resolve them; lack of professional competence; journalists’ bias due to external forces influence; lack of columnists; infiltration of some negative forces in the sector as a shareholder or a columnist; and disparity between theory and practice are mentioned as internal factors affecting the sector negatively. The external ones, on the other hand, are readers’ and distributors’ influence to determine the contents, bureaucratic red tapes of EBA and ERCA, lack of proportional market share, increasing publishing cost, lack of support to the sector on the part of the government, absence of advertisers, threats and intimidations coming from unknown sources, presence of direct and indirect influences, considering the sector as destructive and politicizing everything (ibid: 95-97).

A third challenge the press faces is related with the printing press. While some complain about the shortage and limited capacity of printing presses in the country, others allege them of being discriminatory in their service. Firew Abebe, editor-in-chief of *Sendeq* newspaper talks about this:

Problems related with the printing press are becoming severe from time to time. Private press newspapers are not coming out on time-

they are delayed by two or three days. The repercussion of delays in newspapers is immense. Unless this problem is addressed on time, the surviving papers would be history sooner or later. I do not know why Berhanan Selam Printing Enterprise's (BSPE) machineries fail to print private papers after having printed the government ones (Personal interview, April, 2015).

Melaku, managing editor of the *Reporter*, not only agrees with what Firew has said about the delay of newspapers but also could not hide his frustration with the recurrent delays. His response has implied yet another challenge to the sector–internet. Recalling a recent delay he said, “We gave our newspaper to be published by BSPE for Sunday, Ethiopian Easter, carrying our advertisers’ messages for the holiday. But the paper came out on Friday. What do you think our customers would feel? Do not forget also that we are in the information age where information exchange is speedy. If my newspaper cannot provide the information on time, the audience gets it from the internet. Who would buy my dead news then?”(Personal interview, April, 2015). Elisabeth Equbay is also concerned about the challenge posed by the internet. According to her, “Even if the publisher gets it on time, some news items in the newspaper have already died before they reach the reader, thanks to the internet” (Personal interview, April, 2015).

Truly speaking, considering the low level of internet penetration (0.75 per 100 people as to Infoasaid, 2011: 10, citing ITU) and newspaper circulation (4.65 per 1000 as to www.Nationmaster.com 2004), making the internet a challenge of the press in Ethiopia seems over emphasizing. However, when internet penetration increases and a sizeable amount of the public get access to it, undoubtedly, newspapers would face a formidable challenge. As it was discussed in the literature review section, newspapers in the West are struggling to survive the competition coming from the internet which is amassing their readers and

advertising revenues. Whether this would happen here sooner or later, we have to wait and see.

According to a report by GCAO, the delay of newspapers has been mentioned as one of the factors affecting their distribution. As a result, the delay causes overlapping of newspapers which used to come out at different times. This gives distributors a reason not to distribute partially or wholly (ibid, 2014: 94).

Human Rights Watch report (2015) accuses the Ethiopian government in putting in-direct pressure on private printers not to publish some critical periodicals:

As a result of such threats and intimidation, private printing presses often refuse to print private publications. Virtually every private print publication had serious challenges finding a printing press that is willing to print. Some printing presses will take on publications when print runs are small, but once those publications reach a certain size of print run they come under pressure from security personnel to refrain from printing copies (ibid: 34).

One of the key informants in this research seems to agree with part of Human Rights Watch's report:

Getting printers is quite difficult these days. It has been BSPE, a government printer, which has been printing our publications without a precondition. However, recently it has adopted a ten-point MoU one has to sign if its publication is to be published in the enterprise. It is to be recalled that individual newspapers efforts to establish their own publishing enterprise as the attempt made by the newspaper was curtailed by the government (Elias Gebru, personal interview, April 2015).

Shimeles Kemal, State Minister of GCAO, in an interview he gave to 'Mass Media' (2004 E.C.: 35-36) EBA's special edition magazine, argues that the MoU prepared by BSPE does not breach any law and by any means cannot be equated with censorship. He adds, "As any business entity, BSPE can have an MoU that administers its business relationship with its customers. Like a business entity, it can refuse to publish contents that go against its policies. This is a standardized international practice followed by US and British printers."

In a telephone interview he had with the researcher, Anteneh Abrham, president of ENJU, raises another problem related with the printers. He argues that printing prices increase for no reason (Personal interview, April, 2015). In a recent World Press Freedom Day conference attended by the researcher, Amare Aregawi, manager of the *Reporter* newspaper, was heard saying the same thing like that of Anteneh while presenting his paper. He too argues that price increments are unreasonable and haphazard. He adds, "Sometimes we are told the increase while we are half way to the printer between our office in Bole and the printer in Arat Kilo. At this moment", he notes, "We find it difficult what to do as the increments are sudden and unplanned." In spite of his reservation on the logic behind the increases, Melaku seems to know the reasons for the price increments. He argues, "Globally neither the price of paper nor ink has increased. But people at BSPE tell you that the increase happened as they have started importing paper from Brazil." Melaku could not swallow the idea of bringing paper as far as from Brazil. He even goes further asking the sanity of the people at BSPE; whether they are flippant on the government or they have indulged themselves in corruption in that regard (Personal interview, April, 2015).

Delay of publications coupled with ever increasing printing cost and the eminent threat that would come sooner or later from high internet penetration are some of the challenges the sector has to face.

A fourth challenge is related with distribution. Shimeles (2002: 199) tells how significant distribution can make or break the press: 'It is no use having a first

class newspaper only to find that it is late in reaching its target or, even worse, as it happens at times, it fails altogether to be delivered to many potential readers.’ Based on his experience in the sector, Firew Abebe considers some powerful but invisible hands in the distribution network as determinant factors in blocking one’s newspaper if they are not happy with its content. “If the government wants to save the press, among other things, it has to do something to tame the distribution system” (Personal interview, April, 2015).

Consolidating Firew Abebe’s idea on distributors’ misdeeds, GCAO (2007E.C) research report reveals that distributors are reluctant to distribute some papers, that is to say, they distribute the ones they like while keeping the ones they dislike and returning them to the publishers saying that they cannot sell them; and showing keen interest to dictate the content if one wants them to distribute its papers (ibid: 94). In addition to the misdeeds of distributors presented earlier, Anteneh argues there is yet another bottleneck that requires a solution on the part of readers, distributors and retailers:

The sector has a problem of readers who are willing to buy a newspaper. Instead, they lease newspapers for a lower cost and return it to the distributor or the retailer. Similarly, the distributors and retailers also encourage this act as they make better money than selling the papers. This in turn has limited the sell of newspapers and their circulation. Since there is no rule governing this misconduct, the practice continues (Personal interview, April, 2015).

A fifth challenge is related with government’s exclusion policy towards the private press. Some key informants argue that the government is not interested in encouraging the private press. According to Anteneh Abrham, this lack of goodwill on the part of the government to encourage the press is challenging the very existence of the press. He argues that with the exception of very few newspapers that have monopolized the advertisement, most newspapers are

struggling to survive. “Even though the government fights monopoly elsewhere in the economy, it has not showed any interest to share government advertisement to other private papers. Instead, under the guise of ‘the most readable’ newspaper, almost all government advertisements are channeled to a single private newspaper”. He adds, “Government printers too delay newspapers for days without impunity; they increase their price and determine the number of copies one can publish. All these things affect the sustainability of the press directly. Since the government does not care about the existence of private press, it has given a deaf ear to all the problems engulfing it.” As to him, “The ignorance of the government to all the woes of the private press is a political decision” (Personal interview, April, 2015).

Likewise, Genet Gosaye, manager of *Addis Admas* newspaper, has her own concern on the treatment of the private press by the government. She does not think the government sees the private press equally. According to her, even if they have paid lots of sacrifices over the years to assure the sustainability of *Addis Admas*, they are now in a difficult position they cannot escape due to tax disputes. As to her, “*Addis Admas* is being asked by ERCA to pay taxes on newspapers that were distributed for free ten years ago.” Even though she does not think the government works for the destruction of the private press, what is happening to *Addis Admas* with regards to the tax dispute implies otherwise. She adds, “Distribution of ads is not fair between the private presses.” She even goes further in showing how discriminatory government institutions are by declining her request for sponsorship following their 15th Anniversary claiming they do not sponsor a political press (Personal interview, April, 2015). Elisabeth is also critical of governments’ attitude and action towards the private press. She recalls, “until recently the late prime minister used to address the private press collectively as ‘Tomar & et al.’; the private press was considered as an enemy, defamer and destructor not as a fourth state; and government’s legal actions seem revenge as they are taken collectively and lately long after damages have already

been made and even the perpetrators have forgotten them” (Personal interview, April, 2015).

4.3. Roles of the Private Press

Theoretically speaking roles the media have to discharge are crystal clear. The question is how much of the theory has been put into practice. In his article ‘The role of the independent media in Africa's change to democracy’, Kasoma (1995: 547) states these roles as providing alternative information, promoting accountability, transparency and good governance. Kasoma argues in spite of playing these roles, the independent newspapers in Africa sometimes deliberately fail to do so:

... there are sometimes the possibility that the independent newspapers, instead of genuinely exposing acts of bad governance by the rulers, conduct unethical journalism to put those in power on the spot based on hatred of those in power than an honest desire to make them answerable to the electorate for their action or lack of them. Some of the so-called independent newspapers in Africa today are guilty of this unprofessional conduct (ibid).

According to most of the key informants approached in this research, Kasoma’s argument about the unethical nature of the private press holds true in Ethiopia, too. Instead of becoming a watchdog and serving as a public sphere where the citizenry reflect their views, the private press in Ethiopia has been working against the government due to either its hatred to the establishment or reluctance to do so. Dagim (2013: 89) in a survey he conducted to figure out whether the private media is discharging these roles, he found out that ‘the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that the private media are playing democratic roles’. His finding shows that even members of the private media themselves are not confident enough to say that they are discharging their roles. Amanuel Gebru,

assistant professor at AAU, on his part tells why hatred engulfed the private press in its early stages and endured until recently. According to him, “Most of the private press has never been serving as a ‘fourth state’ rather as ‘opposition press’ with the exception of some mature newspapers.” He argues that the press acted this way because it was managed by demobilized derge cadres and soldiers who wanted to regain the battle they lost in the war. As a result, he adds, “They waged war on the incumbent government using the private press as a weapon. Apart from their keen interest to overthrow the government using the press as a weapon, they had problems of professionalism, maturity and capacity” (Personal interview, April, 2015).

Shimeles (2002:199) consolidates the issues raised by Amanuel:

Another important distinctive feature of the private press in Ethiopia is polarization. The private press in Ethiopia has begun life not as an instrument of government but as a rebel. Accordingly, the story it presents, interlocked as it is at every point with the political and social changes in the country, is a saga of valor in the defense and, to a large extent, the fostering of the democratization process.

Elias does not see why one could be wrong in wanting to overthrow the government if it thinks its policies are damaging the country. He further goes on to say:

A journalist is not a conduit where ideas flow through him without his touch. This is what the government wants us to do. In spite of government officials’ ignorance, article 29 of the constitution gives us every right to hold our own thought. As a result, as a journalist and an individual, I have the right to say this government should be changed so long as I have my reasons presented in a balanced manner. I can also tell which

party is appropriate for the country. This is my right as an individual and as a journalist. I can reflect this idea of mine both in the media I work or elsewhere (Personal interview, April, 2015).

Though a lone voice, in addition to showcasing the polarized and advocacy based nature of the private press in Ethiopia, Elias' stand with regards to the role of journalism seems against one of the pillars of professional journalism-objectivity. As to Maras (2013: 140) "objectivity is so commonly associated with impartiality, detachment and value-free judgment that any sign of bias, favouritism or involvement is taken as an indicator of failure. In other words, objectivity cannot coexist with political and ethical commitments." As to Waisbord (2000: 8) journalistic heritage of South America also shows the presence of advocacy or activist journalism. When he describes the publication of the time, he argues: "These publications were testimonies for the concept of journalism as a political tribune rather than an impartial chronicler of facts, and for the journalist as an activist for specific causes rather than a "neutral witness to history."

As to Maras, Shimeles Bejiga too does not agree with Elias. According to him, the main purpose of the press is not to stand against government or blindly support it. Whether it is a government or private press, the role of the media is serving the public. If the private press sees itself like a fighter, this stand is not only wrong but also it is counterproductive for its survival (Personal interview, April 2015). Potter (2011: 77) supports Shimeles' argument saying "Journalists have a responsibility to provide information that is accurate and reported fairly—and independently—from outside influences." She even goes further in underlining the importance of the objectivity of the journalist to separate himself from his reporting: "By using an objective, scientific method for verifying information, journalists can report stories that do not reflect their own personal views. The story itself, in other words, should be impartial and fair" (ibid: 84).

Considering oneself as a militant journalist has been a typical feature of Ethiopian journalism as it was reflected in the above discussions. However, most of the key informants of this research do not seem to buy it. Generally speaking, they subscribe to the role of the press as a watchdog and public sphere even if they believe that the roles have not been exploited as such.

4.4. State of Professional Journalism in Ethiopia

Waisbord (2013) in his book-*Reinventing Professionalism* which interrogates conventional arguments in professionalism, argues defining professionalism in journalism has never been an easy job owing to the different journalism cultures practiced worldwide and occupational ethics attached to it by powerful sources. However, citing Barbie Zelizer (2005), he defines professionalism as follows:

... an analytical device to think about journalism. It is an analytical prism to examine the constant and unpredictable interplay between the press and other actors that affect the conditions of journalistic practice. Professionalism is a conceptual category, a normative ideal, a narrative that reveals how journalism intersects with economic, political, social, and cultural forces that shape media systems (ibid: 4).

He believes that there is not a considerable difference in defining newsworthiness and setting standards of acceptable quality news practices in newsrooms around the world. However, he argues that practices are not as uniform as the standards. In describing the contradiction between theory and practice, he underlines, “In contrast, the canonical ethics of the “professional” model, such as public service, objectivity/neutrality, and fairness, remain weakly institutionalized in the global South”(ibid: 227). Even though he argues that the global South is dragging its legs towards professionalism, he did not hide that the West arrived at that stage after having a political and social consensus: “Professional” journalism became consolidated at a time of political and social consensus in the Anglo-American

world during the first half of the twentieth century” (ibid: 23). This implies that social and political consensus precedes the practice of a consolidated professional journalism which this country has yet to establish.

Unlike their agreement on the failure of the majority of the private press to discharge their roles, key informants of this research are divided over the state of professional journalism in the country. While some argue that it is there with all its limitations, others claim that it is difficult to talk about professional journalism per se. Those in the first group raise two things that limited the application of professional journalism in the country. The first one is the presence of volatile and divided society where one cannot make a demarcation between the educated and the layman. The second one is the presence of polarized political environment which tries to make the press serve its interest.

Supporting the first group of the key informants, Melaku argues: “Since the society is divided, as a starter a professional has to be ready to pay heavy prices until it can buy the heart and mind of some sectors of the society to be its audience base. This would require the starter to have dependable financial back up that sustains frequent bankruptcy.” He adds, “If you are noisy, the polarized political environment makes you a hero from zero.” As to him, this is discouraging to the professionals who would like to stick to the principles of professional journalism. Shimeles Bejiga, who somehow supports Melaku argues, “If the private press comes well prepared to defend the challenges commonly happening in the sector, the chance of being a professional journalist is a matter of choice” (Personal interviews, April, 2015).

Skjerdal, who has made his PhD on Ethiopian media, also agrees with the first group in an email interview he had with the researcher. He argues: “There is certainly professional journalism in Ethiopia, but there is still room for improvement, particularly in terms of critical coverage.” He adds, “I think the media channels which will survive in the long run will be those who are professional, meaning fair and balanced and investigating stories properly”

(Personal Interview, May, 2015). However, Amanuel is against the previous key informants. As to him, “It is difficult to say there is professional journalism.” He argues that the profession looks like the politics and the country; it is not rewarding to the practitioners; and anybody can join it. Even trained journalists opt for PR as a result of the low pay and the challenges facing the profession. He adds, “The problem of professionalism is not unique to journalism alone. I hope it would develop with the country.” Elisabeth also supports the second idea like that of Amanuel. However, she has a different reason for saying so. As to her, the chance of practicing professional journalism in the current socio-political situation of the country is impossible. She argues:

The society wants the journalist to write something which it wants to read, not what has happened, which is in direct contradiction with professionalism. If you report what is happening as a professional, the society either labels or boycotts you. As you might recall we have seen many newspapers that followed and served the temper of the society but not the facts on the ground. That is the reason why we often see many newspapers of this nature coming and going out of the market. If you really want to be professional, you cannot survive. It is not only the government’s charges and threats that shorten your life; the society also will not welcome you. If you are not welcomed by your society, you cannot sell copies; if you do not sell copies, you do not get ads; if you do not get ads, you are done (Personal interview, April, 2015).

Dagim (2013: 83) has also identified poor level of professional journalism as a challenge to the sector in this country. In an interview he gave to Zemen (2006E.C: 48), Abdissa consolidates Dagims’ finding:

Journalism in this country is at its infancy. We do not have an organized, knowledge based and well-developed journalism. Earlier anyone who tried to write not only considered himself as a

journalist but also had organized himself as such. This should have been improved and developed into professionalism, but that is not the case. Our journalism is in a poor condition. Even in African standards, our journalism is among the poorest in the continent.

All the information gathered with regards to professional journalism indicate that the state of professionalism in the sector is at a precarious condition which requires the intervention and active role of all the parties involved in it.

4.5. Factors² for the Sustainability of the Newspapers under Investigation

Figuring out the reasons behind the sustainability of *Reporter and Addis Admas* is the core issue of this research. As it has been mentioned repeatedly, in a country which has licensed hundreds of newspapers in two decades, there are only a few of them in the market where most of them are struggling to survive. This has required an investigation which would reveal the ‘secret’ behind these surviving papers. In the attempts made by the two research tools- in-depth interviews and document analysis, the following reasons have stood out:

4.5.1. Professionalism

In spite of the fact that the key informants have major differences on the state of professional journalism in Ethiopia, they deviate from their assertions when they are asked the same question about the two papers. Shimeles Bejiga who is assistant professor at AAU, SJC has his own outlook towards the sustainability of the newspapers. He raises issues of relative professionalism, better investment, presentation of variety of information and having big vision to stay in the business as factors. In addition, he mentions that the papers to be rich in information owing

² These factors do not necessarily imply that all the vanished newspapers did so because they could not fulfill them nor the papers under investigation are perfect in this regard. However, previous researches have repeatedly underlined that the absence of these factors have been the main reasons behind the disappearance of most of the private press in this country.

to their ability to hook themselves with credible government sources who could feed them with valuable information as leaks. This confirms the application of filter two of the propaganda model which talks about the link between the elite and the paper. He adds, “Sometimes government related information we get from these papers; especially from, is not aired by the government media.” According to him, “Since these leaks are approved by government actions later, they increase the readability and trust of the papers. The papers also attract advertisement which in turn increases their confidence in reporting. “Put it simply,” he concludes, “they have understood the craft of the trade” (Personal interview, April, 2015).

Generally speaking, Amanuel Gebru’s views on the sustainability of these papers are somewhat similar with that of Shimeles Bejiga. As a result, he argues that the success of these newspapers emanates from different factors. “These include their careful handling of information and their ability to verify it; their objective and fair reporting; their workable business model-as they attempt to be a fourth estate-they criticize the government on its failures and at the same time they work with it without jeopardizing their journalism. Despite the common knowledge in our country,” he challenges, “the mainstream media elsewhere in the world do not get in to direct conflict with the government as it is counterproductive for their sustainability. True,” he notes, “in the US, there are newspapers that seem balanced in their approach that sometimes criticize the government strategically. But this is not their typical nature. Those big surviving newspapers in our country must have learned from the American experience” (Personal interview, April, 2015).

In the same vein, Skjerdal agrees with the two scholars. As to him, both newspapers are professional and moderate in the way they treat local issues (Personal interview, May 2015). In a way that shows agreement with the scholars mentioned earlier, Melaku, managing editor of *Reporter*, talks about the reasons for their survival. According to him, they survived in the market as a result of their effort to be as professional as possible avoiding ‘militant journalism’; tried

to do what mainstream media worldwide do by presenting variety of information; and even if it cannot be capitalized that much, he notes, they have built credibility because of their efforts (Personal interview, April, 2015). Genet, manager of *Addis Admas*, gives her reason for the survival of her paper: “We have our own readers; our own policy and strong staff.” Elisabeth also agrees with Genet: “Relatively we have a professional staff; our policy does not give a chance to exaggerate things; we do not endorse one body and ignore the other—we would like to serve all fairly. Unfortunately we cannot please all of them” (Personal interviews, April, 2015). Ayalew Asres, editor-in-chief, the defunct *Negadras* newspaper, also agrees with the above informants in the professional approach of these newspapers. Particularly he admires how *Reporter* presents its contents professionally. He argues unlike other papers that try to decide on issues by themselves, not leaving it for the public to decide, *Reporter* presents its content in an implicit manner leaving the decision to the readers. “In addition to their professionalization,” he adds, “these papers have attractive genre, well established vision, good organization and marketing strategy which are not common in the sector” (Personal interview, May, 2015).

Even though professional journalism is in a precarious situation nationally, these papers have shown that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Since the comparison is subjective and no key informant has said that these papers are perfect in their professionalism, a lot remains to be done as well.

4.5.2. Discharging Roles and Responsibilities

Another departure point that shows the swing of key informants from their general assertion is their assessment of the two newspapers in terms of discharging their roles and responsibilities. Most of the key informants consider *Reporter* and *Addis Admas* as newspapers that are trying their best to discharging their democratic responsibilities by serving as a public forum and a fourth estate, even though some swerve towards *Reporter*.

Wondwossen Mekonnen states that the two newspapers are doing their level best to serve as a fourth estate. He also argues that the newspapers criticize the government on its political and economic endeavours. They also appreciate positive aspects. He notes, “The right private press has to criticize the government appropriately based on evidence whether that pleases the government or not. *Reporter and Addis Admas* are doing this. Believe it or not, the government too takes its own lessons from these papers” (Personal interview, April, 2015). Amanuel too supports Wondwossen’s argument albeit swerving towards *Reporter*. Among other things, he cites the paper’s opinion and commentary pages that carry different attitudes of the society. He believes that due to its fairness and soberness, *Reporter* does not get into conflict with many institutions. For him, “*Addis Admas* too does not carry conflict inciting contents. Though not very often,” he adds, “it raises sharp and critical issues.” He believes that *Addis Admas* is more of a social than a political paper and less critical in nature (Personal interview, April 2015). Skjerdal seems to agree with Amanuel’s evaluation:

[... the] two newspapers differ. *Addis Admas* has not really been exercising its watchdog function a lot. It is mostly a newspaper not covering conflict much, and more entertainment oriented. *Reporter* (both Amharic and English) on the other hand, does touch controversial issues. *Reporter* has been able to fulfill its watchdog function to some extent; at the same time, it could have engaged more in critical investigative reporting (Personal interview, May, 2015).

Redwan Hussien, minister, GCAO, in an interview he gave to *Reporter* newspaper in connection with the recent World Press Freedom Day, argues that *Reporter* is one of the trustworthy papers in the private press discharging its responsibility. However, he notes that everything written in the paper is not acceptable by the government. “Look at the editorials,” he adds, “they raise issues against the interest of the government. Sometimes the issues are exaggerated and

sometimes they are ill informed. But they are not crafted in such a way that destroys the system. Rather it proposes ways in which the system improves itself the way the paper thinks right” (*Reporter*, 2007E.C: 37).

For Shimeles Bejiga, “These newspapers are means of ‘check and balance’ for the public. Particularly *Reporter* provides information based on credible sources. Often the piece of information one gets from these papers are not reported in the government press. Besides, these newspapers have columns where the public can air its opinions.” As to him, “Their sustainability emanates from their proper service to the public” (Personal interview, April, 2015).

The key informants’ argument as to the role of the newspapers serving as a public sphere to some extent resembles this definition of classical liberal theory of public sphere:

[Public Sphere] is the space between government and society in which private individuals exercise formal and informal control over the state: formal control through the election of governments and informal control through the pressure of public opinion. The media are central to this process. They distribute the information necessary for citizens to make an informed choice at election time; they facilitate the formation of public opinion by providing an independent forum of debate; and they enable the people to shape the conduct of government by articulating their views. The media are thus the principal institutions of the public sphere or, in the rhetoric of nineteenth-century liberalism, ‘the fourth estate of the realm’ (Curran, 1991: 29).

Anteneh Abrham who is critical of the dominance of the private press by a single newspaper, is somehow in agreement with the previous key informants on the public forum role these papers are discharging albeit with a certain reservation. Unlike the above ones, he thinks that their performance is below their capacity.

However, for Elias these newspapers' performance of their role is at the lowest stage. Even though he is not against their existence, he is unhappy with the way they handle issues. As to him, "They are harming democracy more than benefiting it" (Personal interviews, April, 2015).

As discussed in the review of literature section, Kasoma (1995) argues that African presses have served as a prerequisite and co-requisite for democracy in the 1990s. Considering the limitations of most of the private press in Ethiopia in terms of discharging their roles and the timing they joined the sector, one would find it difficult to talk confidently that they have been carrying out these roles to the fullest. Besides, since the newspapers have joined the sector after the abolishing of censorship and the subsequent establishment of a multi-party democracy, their prerequisite role to democratic government had been negligible. However, their co-requisite role cannot be totally ignored. Therefore, as it has been argued by the key informants, the two newspapers, *Reporter* and *Addis Admas*, in spite of their limitations, are trying to discharge their roles.

4.5.3. Issue of Independence

There is no doubt that the issue of independence is a crucial matter for the press. But this does not mean that the press has to be an island for itself. As they are necessary evils, the press cannot escape working with political and economic elites, albeit cautiously. Against this fact, the majorities of presses in Ethiopia either avoid these elite forces or are avoided by them. Waisbord (2000: 17) indicates how important working with the government is: "The state was too important, politically and economically, to be put at a distance. Cutting ties with the state undermined the interests of newspapers in being close to power. It would have been a suicidal move, pulling the plug that supplied indispensable resources." The same can be said about big businesses.

Asked about how independently they are working with these powerful sources of influence, the key informants respond differently. Melaku says that *Reporter*

carries out its responsibilities independently. However, he also wants to remind that it does not mean that there is no influence. As to him, the influences are many: “Some (both in the government and the private sector) would get angry when they see uncomfortable report affecting their vested interests. As a result, they react in many ways to pressurize our reporting; and others try to bribe us so that we do not disclose their misdeeds.” He adds, “Even if you are independent in your reporting, influences are always there to derail you” (Personal interview, April, 2015). But Anteneh disagrees with Melaku’s claims. He does not think *Reporter* is an independent newspaper that reports all issues in a balanced and impartial manner owing to the interest it wants to secure (Personal interview, April 2015). As to Melaku, Genet also says they that are doing their level best to maintain their independence. However, she is concerned about influences coming from the government and the public. “While the public wants us to report hot political issues, which is not the focus of our paper, the government is not happy even with some of our reports in politics” (Personal interview, April 2015).

Based on his personal relation with the two newspapers, Shimeles Bejjiga argues that these papers are editorially independent. He says, “I personally know the owner and editor-in-chief of the two newspapers. I have not seen a single day in which someone has tried to influence their editorial. They are both independent people. They are rather worried about the content they provide the public responsibly. The government will not dictate them what to do. I do not believe that they have government influence in their editorial” (Personal interview, April, 2015).

Consolidating Melaku and Genet’s argument, Dawit says “No matter how independent it is, no newspaper could be free from possible influence coming from different sources.” Waisbord (2000: 116) puts it succinctly how complicated the relationship between media and powers of interest could be: “There is no absolute independence or dependence between media and powerful interests, but rather multilayered and contradictory relations that produce openings and closures for adversarial reporting.” In the complicated world of journalism, newspapers

have no chance of independence unless they observe one of the golden principles of the trade-maintaining their editorial independence from those they cover. If newspapers can maintain their editorial independence, they are independent in spite of the fact that there are forces to influence them otherwise.

4.5.4. Advertisement

Contrary to the arguments of the above informants, Anteneh Abrham sees a different picture for the existence of these papers. He believes that *Addis Admas* sustains mainly due to copy sells whereas *Reporter* on advertisements. Ward (2011: 10) supports Anteneh's argument. As to him, while *Reporter* gets 70% of its income from advertisement, *Addis Admas*, due to limited access to advertisement, relies on copy sells. Anteneh highlights that one of the papers, *Reporter*, is favoured by the government to carry most government advertisements and due to its special attachment with the private business, it also attracts their ads too. This does not show that the paper is exceptionally professional. Rather *Reporter* is attracting the ads because it is working as a PR for some powerful interest groups that provide it with ads. Even though these groups commit grave mistakes, the paper turns a blind eye due to its attachment. Generally speaking, for Anteneh, *Reporter* is not impartial in its reporting. He adds, as there are groups whom we often hear their voice in the paper, there are also groups denied or have limited voice in it-be it a government official or an investor. He believes one can check his argument with simple content analysis (Personal interview, April 2015).

Skjerdal disagrees with Anteneh's argument. He says: "Both papers have been successful in attracting advertisers. I think advertisers in general prefer newspapers which are not controversial." He adds, "[That] in order to survive, it is better to be less controversial." Skjerdal's argument supports Ayalew's experience. Ayalew, editor-in-chief of the defunct Negadras newspaper, recalls what had happened to him when he approached a private business organization for ads. As to him, the person declined to give his ads to Negadras saying that the

paper is controversial and against the government (Personal interviews, May, 2015).

Even though content analysis has not been employed in this research to prove the claim of Anteneh, nor did the researcher was able to get financial information of the papers which shows their income as a copy sell and ad revenue separately, some of his arguments seem to hold water indirectly. A document analysis made on five year gross income of the two papers show that the papers' incomes are increasing year after year. What negates Anteneh's argument is that both papers are claiming that they are surviving on incomes derived from ads (Genet & Melaku, Personal interviews, April 2015). One of Anteneh's arguments about the influence of advertisers, however, goes hand in hand with political economy of the mass media which argues that the U.S. media serve and propagandize on behalf of the powerful societal interests that control and finance them. As it has been discussed in chapter two, political economy of the mass media has been chosen as a theoretical framework informing this research. Though the theory has five filters used to evaluate the American media, this research has focused on two of them which could have likely impacted the private press in this country. As a result, filter two and three that discuss advertising as the primary income source; and reliance on information provided by government, business and 'experts' have been selected. Taking Anteneh's argument along with the document analysis made on GCAO report (2007E.C.) on market share of the private press, one would come to conclude that *Reporter* is really dominating the market share followed by *Addis Admas* and *Fortune* where *Reporter* leads the private press market share unchallenged.

GCAO report reveals some fascinating facts about the situation of the private press in Ethiopia. According to the report, between 2001-2005 E.C. (2009-2013), *Reporter*, *Addis Admas* and *Fortune* newspapers had higher and increasing market share compared to the 15 newspapers included in the study. The study also reveals that the Herfindahl–Hirschman Index (HHI) which shows the concentration of newspapers is increasing year after year reaching 3,107 which shows high

concentration of the market. If we see annual income of these three leading newspapers in percentage points taking their lowest and highest income over the study period (five years), the difference becomes even more visible. In this regard the report shows that *Reporter* had taken 31%-86%; *Fortune* 14%-36%; and *Addis Admas* 5%-33% of the total newspaper income registered in the five years. With the exception of some newspapers, most of the newspapers included in the study had less than 2% income throughout the years (ibid, 60). This data confirms that the private press is highly concentrated and dominated by one newspaper.

Global experience shows that the newspaper industry's lifeblood is advertising. As it has been discussed in the review of literature section, globally, the industry is losing its lucrative business from advertising due to the advent of the internet. This loss is dwindling the sector in the West. Describing the importance of ads to the industry, Cole & Harcup (2010: 90) say: "Revenue from selling advertising is an essential component of the economic model on which newspaper businesses are based. In paid-for newspapers it [ad] is the only major source of revenue apart from that derived from the price to the buyer of the paper. With free newspapers it [ad] is the sole source."

As it was pointed out by Anteneh about the 'improper linkage' of the *Reporter* with its advertisers, attracting ads does not come without a cost-the advertisers often try to influence by their money. McNair (2003b: 58) quoted in Cole & Harcup (2010: 91) describes the intricacy between attracting ads and maintaining editorial independence:

Further commercial pressure is exerted, according to some variants of the economic approach, by the constraints placed on journalistic content because of the need to attract and retain advertising revenue. There is evidence that such pressures exist. Companies do on occasion withdraw, or threaten to withdraw, advertisements from publications of which they disapprove.

Coincidentally managing editor of *Reporter* has an experience that strengthens Cole & Harcup's argument about the commercial pressure advertisers could have on the press. According to the managing editor, the story is like this: *Reporter* makes a report on court case of a certain company that sells cars which had ads on the paper. Following the publication of the news, the company threatened the paper to stop reporting the case or face the consequences. As to the managing editor, because they wanted to maintain their editorial independence, the latter was their option in which the ads were taken away. "Even though," according to the informant, "they had come back some time later" (Melaku, Personal interview, April, 2015).

Unless one argues otherwise by saying that the newspapers are only changing masters by relying on ads than government subsidy, Cole & Harcup (2010: 63) discuss the importance of increasing revenues that come from ads in increasing the independence of the press from government control thereby improving their efficiency:

A section of the commercial press became politically more independent largely as a consequence of the growth of advertising. This additional revenue reduced dependence on political subsidies; encouraged papers to reject covert secret service grants; improved the wages and security of employment of journalists so that they became less susceptible to government bribes; and above all financed greater expenditure on news gathering so that newspapers became less reliant on official sources and more reluctant to trade their independence in return for obtaining 'prior intelligence from the government' (ibid: 63).

Since the press itself is a powerful instrument, powerful elites of the society (political and/or economic) would always try their best to get it under their

control. What the media have to do is to maintain their independence while working amicably with the powerful.

The following paragraphs show another form of survival in the private press just for a contrast.

Firew Abebe does not think the private press in Ethiopia is business friendly. Unlike the West where big corporations have interest to invest in the media, Ethiopian investors do not like to take the risk of failure by investing in the press sector. Even though there are some newspapers making profit out of the sector, most including his paper are languishing in bankruptcy. According to him, had it not been for the subsidy they get from some private sponsors who are interested in social responsibility than the business aspect, his newspapers, *Sendeq*, would not have covered the 50% loss they incur annually. He thinks that in addition to business entities, there are some private newspapers subsidized by the government (Personal interview, April, 2015). In spite of the fact that Firew's assertions are not directly shared by other key informants, nor could be checked by document analysis due to the secrecy of the matter, the survival of some bankrupt newspapers would tell us something. There are surviving private newspapers not because they are making profits but because they are subsidized either by the government or investors.

Similarly, Ward (2011: 10) says 'The main source of income for many of the newspapers is private donations and nearly all of the newspapers that reported loss were heavily reliant on receiving some form of donations.' In an interview he gave to Zemen (2006: E.C: 71) Redwan Hussien, minister, GCAO, alleges that there are some in the media that depend on money that comes from external forces that want to enforce their policies in Ethiopia. Elias completely opposes the minister's allegations. As to him, "The government often accuses the critical press being supported by external forces but cannot produce evidence for its claims" (Personal interview, April, 2015). In a way that seems to prove Elias' argument, the minister confirms that they do not have concrete evidence to support their

claim. However, he argues, “Even if additional efforts are required to prove the claim, there are signs that support the claim.” This would in turn make one raise questions: Why is the subsidy discriminatory? How are the subsidized newspapers to reciprocate to the favours made? What are the interests of those subsidizers? As the saying goes, ‘there is no free lunch’.

Wondwossen Mekonnen, president of EFJA, is against any form of subsidy received by the press either from local or international sources. He argues that any form of subsidy coming from any source derails the press from its route and makes it slave of the donors. “If a press has to sustain and be confident to discharge its responsibility, it has to sustain on its income-advertisement,” he adds (Personal interview, April, 2015). His idea is largely shared by communication and media scholars. In this regard Waisbord (2000: 4) argues “What better place to watch the state than from a press firmly anchored in the market? Economic independence is the only ticket for arriving at press freedom and making concrete the ideal of a watchdog press.” This would seem straight forward. However, Herman and Chomsky (1988:74) argue that the advertiser itself is another subsidizer: “With advertising, the free market does not yield a neutral system in which final buyer choice decides. The *advertisers'* choices influence media prosperity and survival.” For two reasons the press cannot escape working with the two elite forces-political and economic. Firstly, these forces are major sources of information; secondly, they provide the lifeblood of the sector-a chunk of the ads. Both avoiding them and succumbing to their interests is counterproductive.

4.5.5. Litigation

Most of the key informants in the sector who represent the surviving or the defunct newspapers commonly agree in one point- litigations have been part of their business and the cases were often related to defamation. Particularly key informants from *Reporter* and *Addis Admas* have categorized their plaintiffs as government or governmental institutions, religious and business institutions and

individuals. Both papers claim that they have won almost all of the defamation charges against them. Though limited, the documents too prove the claims of the papers. As to the document analysis, *Reporter* has won four of the five charges available to the researcher. *Addis Admas* too has won the only formal charge it had with a university. The rest of them, according to a report by the paper, were resolved before they reached the court with a warning at lower levels.

Bivins (2004:119) defines defamation as follows: “Although it is variously defined (each case seems to bring a new definition), defamation can be said to be any communication that holds a person up to contempt, hatred, ridicule, or scorn.” He also tells why defining defamation could be problematic: “One problem in defending against accusations of defamation is that there are different rules for different people. It is generally easier for private individuals to prove defamation than it is for those in the public eye”.

As to Bivins for defamation to be actionable, the following five things need to be there: (1) communication of a statement that harms a person’s reputation in some way; (2) published or communicated message to a third party; (3) identification of the defamed person in the communication either by name or by direct inference. This is the toughest to prove if the person’s name hasn’t been used directly; (4) proof of the defamed person that the communication has caused damage to his or her reputation; and (5) presence of negligence on the part of the source of the communication during research or writing (ibid: 119-120).

Bivins also presents three ways in which defamation can be defended. First, if the communication is the truth, regardless of whether the information harmed someone’s reputation or not; the second one is privilege, which applies to statements made during public, official, or judicial proceedings; and the third most common defense is fair comment which applies primarily to the right to criticize, as in theater or book critiques, and must be restricted to the public-interest aspects (ibid: 120).

According to Elisabeth, *Addis Admas* works in strict ethical and professional manner to serve the society. Genet also adds that *Addis Admas* works based on concrete evidence. She argues, "That is why in spite of the charges and influences, we often win cases." By the same token, Melaku says, "Charges come from different angles with different degrees and we defend them. Sometimes they are trivial and sometimes they are serious." As to him, they defended themselves and won almost all the cases against them because of the fact that they observe the rules of the game (Personal interviews, April 2015). Wondwossen Mekonnen also agrees with the key informants' defense in relation to litigations. He argues, "As a media association head, I know that the two papers had litigation issues they had to deal with. But they have survived them owing to their responsible handling of issues" (Personal interview, April, 2015). Ayalew Asres supports Wondwossen's argument. He argues that the two newspapers are careful in their treatment of issues, as a result of which they do not face many charges. "Even if they do some," he notes, "they win them as they are evidence based" (Personal interview, May, 2015).

The key informants' argument for the defense of the papers from defamation charges more or less goes along with Bivins' first defense-communication of truth. However, during an informal talk with the Communication head of MoJ, Desalegn Teresa, the researcher was able to grasp another version of the story. Desalegn argues that these papers are surviving not because they are flawless in transgressing the law. Instead, it is the government's decision not to punish every transgression for the sake of saving the private press from extinction. As a result, he notes that most of the time warnings are given, even if legal rooms are open for punishment, when some reputable papers make mistakes.

According to Skjerdal (2012: 31), government's crackdown of the private press which often results in the imprisonment and fleeing of journalists and shut down of periodicals have happened many times during post Derg Ethiopia. As to him, the years 1996-1999; 2005; and 2010-2012 have been times where major crackdowns happened in the country. Reporters without Borders also considers

the year 2014 as the biggest year of crackdown after 2005 where 30 journalists have fled abroad; five magazines and one newspaper were convicted; 18 journalists were fired from the state-owned broadcaster in Oromia; and six Zone 9 bloggers including three journalists were arrested.

Reporter and *Addis Adms* have witnessed almost all of these crackdowns intact during their life time. Even if documents could not be exhaustively analyzed as the researcher was not able to secure them to prove the claims of the newspapers, their existence by itself tells something. Given their responsible handling of things; their professional approach; coupled with governments positive attitude towards these papers, one may not find their survival of litigations a surprising issue.

4.6. The Future of Private Press

For Elias, the future of the private press is so bleak. He does not see much hope in it. He argues why:

“We began to finish” is the motto of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. I am really jealous about it. As a human being, when you see something completed, you will be delighted. But journalism in Ethiopia is not something you start and finish it. You start it; but you are stopped in the middle. This is how journalism has been in this country. You may have big dreams and passion for journalism. But your dreams suddenly change to nightmares. This makes your vision narrow (Personal interview, April, 2015).

Even though most of the respondents are not as hopeless as Elias, they have their concerns too. They argue, unless some kinds of measures are taken to change the statues quo, the future is not hopeful for the private press. The key informants

raise two pressing issues in this regard: (1) lack of capacity in all aspects of the sector; and (2) government's disinterest in the sector.

In a paper he presented at World Press Freedom Day, May 2, 2015, Amare Aregawi, manager of the *Reporter* newspaper, has a fairly similar view with that of the key informants on issues challenging the sector. Among other things, he presents negative aspects affecting the 'free press' emanating from two sources- government and the press itself. As to him, negative aspects of the government include: violating the spirit of the constitution in some contents of the press freedom laws; difficulty of working with state owned printing press; ignoring the role of the private press (by branding it as a rent seeker); lack of encouragement to invest in the sector as opposed to other sectors; extremely harsh penal code (provisions relating to defamation and libel); and confusing anti-terrorism law. On the private sector too, he has presented these negative aspects: corruption and compromise of independence; succumbing to the influence of the wealthy, political parties and others; mixing professional journalism with activism; polarized and highly politicized press; absence of institutionalization within the sector; lack of code of conduct and ethical standards; lack of strong and united professional journalists association; difficulty of establishing a self-regulatory media council; and lack of mechanism for capacity building (Amare, 2015).

Improving the grim realities facing the private press needs to be an issue of great concern for all parties involved. In a country of over 80 million people and a long tradition of written literature, taking the status of the private press for granted will not be acceptable. In this regard, the key informants have proposed what should be done for the vibrancy of the sector from the parties involved.

Shimeles Bejiga proposes the establishment of a press council; reduction of the cost of printing; facilitating trainings for the private press by the government; providing information; and trusting the press on the part of the government as possible ways out of the status quo in the sector. He also advises the importance of believing in professionals. He adds:

Newspapers are relics. You can refer them any time you want. If the next generation wants to know about history, it turns the pages of newspapers. This shows the importance of newspapers. Therefore, the unified efforts of government, the public, professionals and investors are required for the development of the sector (Personal interview, April 2015).

Amanuel has pretty much the same idea with that of Shimeles. He believes that the government can do a lot to improve the situation by helping the sector in professional development; extending financial compensation; showing patience; changing the negative mental set up towards the sector; and working in partnership with it. Anteneh also agrees with the two scholars. Even though he argues that the private press has its own role for its weaknesses, he believes that currently it is at the mercy of the government for its survival. He underlines that unless the government devises ways in which ads can be distributed fairly; and it does something to control the ever increasing publishing cost, the sector will be untouchable for many (Personal interview, April 2015).

Representing the government, Leul states the things the government needs to do for the vibrancy of the sector. He believes that conducive legal frame- works have been laid down already as a first step. He also mentions that distributing government ads fairly to responsible press would also reduce their financial burden; resolving the distribution problem is another task the government has to engage itself in; and building the capacity of the sector in order to carry out its duties and responsibilities are among the tasks he believes the government has to do. He has also stressed the importance of establishing a press council that would solve ethical misconducts of the press in a self correcting manner before things get more complicated (Personal interview, April 2015).

Redwan Hussien, minister, GCAO, in an interview he gave to Zemen (2006E.C: 65) believes that a lot has not been done to support those media outlets which

observe professional lines and have their impact on the positive development of the media environment. He adds, “The government has plans to support the sector by providing trainings and laying down detailed legal frameworks that create opportunities that benefit the sector.” In a recent interview he gave to *Reporter* newspaper (2007E.C: 37) in connection with World Press Freedom Day, 2015, he has also explained how the support will be materialized:

[The government] has a lot of transactions that require advertisement in which a large sum of government money is involved. One thing the government wants to do is making the distribution of government’s advertisements fair. The distribution will be based on the capacity, effort and the contribution of the particular media house. Since the process has taken too long, it needs to be speeded up. ... The distribution mechanism also needs to be centralized. It should not be left to the whims of the PR head or anybody else. There should be a criterion; one of them should be circulation.

Abdissa in an interview he gave to Zemen (2006: 49) warns that unless the sector is subsidized to be self-sufficient, it can be manipulated by any interest group that could cause many problems. He adds, “For the sake of the country and its politics, taking care of the press is very essential.”

If all the stakeholders of the sector take their respective roles and act accordingly-the press by behaving itself to fulfill the minimum standard of professional journalism; and the government by fulfilling its commitments-the future of the press in this country will not be doom and gloom.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

This research was conducted to find out how some newspapers sustain in the Ethiopian private press milieu where many of their counterparts had been short-lived. Among the very few newspapers surviving over ten years, two of them, *Reporter* and *Addis Admas*, have been the focus of the study. In order to understand the survival of these papers, an appropriate method that can help answer the research questions has been selected. Using the method and data collection tools, findings that commensurate with the research questions have been discovered.

The objectives of this research were to identify the factors that helped these newspapers survive the challenging private press situation in this country; assess their main sources of income and status of litigation; and see whether the newspapers are discharging their roles and responsibilities. A qualitative research method employing in-depth interview that took over 10 hours with 12 key informants and document analysis were used to address the research questions.

This research has done two things. Firstly, it has ascertained what has been found by previous researchers as the sector is full of internal and external challenges. Among other things, this research has found out that polarization and short life span, publication and distribution problems and government's disinterest in the sector and lack of advertisement as formidable challenges. These challenges are found to be direct reflections of inability to carry out roles and responsibilities and not being professional in approach on the part of the press and government's lack of interest in the sector. Even though the private press is both the culprit and victim of its actions, the government too cannot be free from taking a

responsibility for the current status of the press. This research has also found out that complete darkness has not covered the sector. As it has been learnt from the research, there is a glimmer of hope for survival in the challenging private press situation as exemplified by *Reporter* and *Addis Admas*.

Secondly, in its attempt to find out the reasons behind the survival of some newspapers in the already challenging situation, this research has identified five factors that resulted in the survival of *Reporter* and *Addis Admas*. These are relative professionalism, discharging roles and responsibilities, maintaining independence, access to ads and a tendency to avoid and defend charges.

In spite of the low level of professionalism seen in the sector, these papers have been found out to be professional in the way they handle issues happening in the country following major professional yardsticks. They largely treat issues in a fair, balanced and objective manner. Even though there are remaining things to be done, these papers are also discharging their roles and responsibilities. Due to the variety of information they provide to the public, the papers are promoting accountability, transparency and good governance. This has given the papers the opportunity of serving as a public sphere and a watchdog, albeit with limitations. Another sustainability factor of the papers is their ability to maintain their independence. Although maintaining independence from powerful interest groups is a complicated matter (Waisbord, 2000: 116), these papers have shown a relative independence that has given rise to their sustainability. Newspapers also need their own income to survive and remain independent (Cole & Harcup, 2010: 63). Global trend shows that this income basically comes from advertisement (Cole & Harcup, 2010: 90). This research has also revealed that *Reporter* and *Addis Admas* newspapers' main source of income is from ads.

As to a document that shows financial status of the surviving newspapers, these newspapers, in spite of the wide gap in their income, are leading the market share of the private press in the country. These papers have also faced defamation

charges. However, the study has found out that the papers have defended most of them successfully owing to their professional handling of things.

The reason behind the sustainability of these papers in the challenging Ethiopian private press environment can be summed by a single word-professionalism. The researcher believes that all the findings of this research, notwithstanding some peculiar occurrences, indicate that professionalism is a key concept that can encompass the spirit of all the other factors.

5.2. Recommendations

Having the second most populous country in Africa with a rich literary tradition, it is quite paradoxical to talk about the sustainability of very few newspapers in the private press. Therefore, this existing situation calls for a concerted effort from the spectrum of the society: practitioners, academia, government and the wider public.

In no way to capitalize it, no matter how small they are, the existence of these papers has its own lesson particularly to the practitioners of the craft or would be new entrants. Until our political psyche changes, polarization continues to be a fact one has to face while joining the sector. This requires the existing or newentrant practitioners to come up with well prepared financial, professional and psychological set up. Since changing the political psyche is a difficult job, it would surely be consuming all the potentials of the practitioner; however it would also be paying handsomely at the end like the newspapers under investigation. Therefore, practitioners need to work hard to win the heart and mind of their audience by presenting professional and responsible contents.

The academia on its part has to seek research based, fast and possible ways out of this deadlock as the country does not deserve the status quo. This can be best done by replicating best local and international experiences in which countries have achieved a vibrant private press by coming out of a polarized one. The government

too has to extend its support to the fragile press at its mercy. As a democratic developmental state, the Ethiopian government has a huge power to make or break things in this country. Considering the function of a vibrant press for the well functioning of the system and sustainability of the state, a lot is expected from the government. These include arranging training opportunities for practitioners; encouraging investment by reducing taxes on paper and providing grace periods as it is common in other sectors; above all changing the negative mind set towards the press; and creating an even playing field where government's ads can be distributed fairly. If the three bodies, i.e. the press and its practitioners, the academia and the government work harmoniously for the vibrancy of the sector, the vibrant press in turn would shape the opinion of the public thereby marginalizing polarization once and for all.

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APPENDICES

I. Interview Guide for Key Informants

A. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MEDIA MANAGERS AND EDITORS

ለግል ሕትመት ሚዲያ ማኔጅሮችና ኤዲተሮች የተዘጋጀ መጠይቅ

1. Based on your lived-experience and knowledge of the private print media sector in this country, what do you think are its major challenges?

በኢትዮጵያ የግል ሕትመት ሚዲያ ላይ ካሉት ልምድና እውቀት አንጻር የዘርፉ ዋነኛ ተግዳሮቶች ምንድን ናቸው ብለው ያስባሉ?

- ✓ Do you think one can put the challenges in perspectives as they have happened before and after the 2005 elections? Why?
ተግዳሮቶቹን ከ1997 ምርጫ በፊት የነበሩና ከ1997 በኋላ የተከሰቱ ብሎ በመከፋፈል ማቅረብ የሚቻል ይመስላል ? ለምን?

- ✓ Why do you think most newspapers are short-lived in this country?
አብዛኞቹ የሀገራችን ጋዜጦች እድሜያቸው አጭር የሆነው ለምን ይመስልዎታል?

2. Scholars who studied the Ethiopian private press consider it as a volatile sector. What is your response to their assessment?

ዘርፉን ያጠኑ ምሁራን የኢትዮጵያን የግል ሕትመት ሚዲያ ‘ያልተረጋጋ’ በማለት ይገልጹታል። በዚህ ላይ የእርስዎ አስተያየት ምንድን ነው?

3. How do you explain your survival in the volatile private press situation in this country?

‘ያልተረጋጋ’ በሚባለው የኢትዮጵያ የግል ሕትመት ሚዲያ ውስጥ እንዴት መቆየት እንደቻላችሁ ቢገልጹልኝ?

- ✓ What do you think are the main factors that helped you sustain in the market?
በዘርፉ እንድትቆዩ ያገረጓችሁ ዋና ዋና ምክንያቶች ምን ይመስልዎታል?
- ✓ Some argue that your survival owes to your moderate stand than becoming professional

in your approach. How do you balance this narration?

አንዳንዶች በዘርፉ የቆያችሁት በአቀራረባችሁ መደዋዊነትን ከመከተል ይልቅ ወገንተኛ በመሆናችሁ ነው ይላሉ፤ በዚህ ላይ ምን አስተያየት አለዎት?

- ✓ What is the possible lesson other newspapers learn from you?
ሌሎች ጋዜጦች ከእናንተ ምን ሊማሩ ይችላሉ?

4. Do you think your media house is discharging its roles in terms of building a democratic society in a responsible manner? How?

ዴሞክራሲያዊ ማህበረሰብን ለመገንባት ምን ያህል በሀላፊነት መንፈስ ትሰራላችሁ?

- ✓ Do you think your newspaper is serving as a public sphere, watchdog/ fourth estate? ጋዜጣችሁ ለህዝቡ የውይይት መድረክ በመሆን፣ የመንግስትን አሰራሮች በመከታተል ወይም እንደ አራተኛ የመንግስት አካል በመሆን እየሰራ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ? እንዴት?

- ✓ How do you evaluate your newspaper in terms of its portrayal/handling of events happening in the country, based on principles like objectivity and independence? ጋዜጣችሁ የሚያቀርባቸው ዘገባዎች ምን ያህል ከወገንተኝነትና ከተጽዕኖ ነጻ ናቸው?

5. What are the main charges against your media house?

በብዛት ከስ የሚቀርቡባችሁ ከምን ጉዳይ ጋር በተያያዘ ነው?

- ✓ Tell me about the type of charges. Which charges dominate charges by individuals or by a government body? Why do you think it is so?

ዋነኛ ከሳሻችሁ መንግስት ነው ወይስ ግለሰቦች? ይህ ለምን የሆነ ይመስላችኋል?

- ✓ Do you often lose or win the cases in the court? Why?
ብዙውን ጊዜ በሚቀርቡባችሁ ክሶች ትረታላችሁ ወይስ ነጻ ትወጣላችሁ?

6. What is the chief source of your income?

ዋነኛ የገቢ ምንጫችሁ ምንድን ነው?

- ✓ Do you think the sector is profitable? Why?
ዘርፉ አትራፊ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ ለምን?

in your approach. How do you balance this narration?

አንዳንዶች በዘርፉ የቆያችሁት በአቀራረባችሁ ሙያዊነትን ከመከተል ይልቅ ወገንተኛ በመሆናችሁ ነው ይላሉ፤ በዚህ ላይ ምን አስተያየት አለዎት?

✓ What is the possible lesson other newspapers learn from you?

ሌሎች ጋዜጦች ከእናንተ ምን ሊማሩ ይችላሉ?

4. Do you think your media house is discharging its roles in terms of building a democratic society in a responsible manner? How?

ዴሞክራሲያዊ ማህበረሰብን ለመገንባት ምን ያህል በሀላፊነት መንፈስ ትሰራላችሁ?

✓ Do you think your newspaper is serving as a public sphere, watchdog/ fourth estate? ጋዜጣችሁ ለህዝቡ የውይይት መድረክ በመሆን፣ የመንግስትን አሰራሮች በመከታተል ወይም እንደ አራተኛ የመንግስት አካል በመሆን እየሰራ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ? እንዴት?

✓ How do you evaluate your newspaper in terms of its portrayal/handling of events happening in the country, based on principles like objectivity and independence? ጋዜጣችሁ የሚያቀርባቸው ዘገባዎች ምን ያህል ከወገንተኝነትና ከተጽዕኖ ነጻ ናቸው?

5. What are the main charges against your media house?

በብዛት ከስ የሚቀርቡባችሁ ከምን ጉዳይ ጋር በተያያዘ ነው?

✓ Tell me about the type of charges. Which charges dominate charges by individuals or by a government body? Why do you think it is so?

ዋነኛ ከሳሻችሁ መንግስት ነው ወይስ ግለሰቦች? ይህ ለምን የሆነ ይመስላችኋል?

✓ Do you often lose or win the cases in the court? Why?

ብዙውን ጊዜ በሚቀርቡባችሁ ክሶች ትረታላችሁ ወይስ ነጻ ትወጣላችሁ?

6. What is the chief source of your income?

ዋነኛ የገቢ ምንጫችሁ ምንድን ነው?

✓ Do you think the sector is profitable? Why?

ዘርፉ አትራፊ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ ለምን?

7. How do you evaluate the practice of Professional journalism in this country?

በሀገራችን የሙያዊ ጋዜጠኝነት አተገባበርን እንዴት ይገመግሙታል?

✓ Do you think professional journalism has place in this country?

Why?

በኢትዮጵያ ሙያዊ ጋዜጠኝነትን ማካሄድ ይቻላል ብለው ያስባሉ? ለምን?

✓ Do you think professional but responsible newspapers have a future in this country? Why?

በሀገራችን በሙያዊ መርህ ለሚሰሩ ነገር ግን በሃላፊነት መንገድ ለሚነቀሳቀሱ ጋዜጦች ዕድል አለ ብለው ያስባሉ? ለምን?

✓ What do you think a newspaper has to do to sustain the Ethiopian particular situation?

በኢትዮጵያ ተጨባጭ ሁኔታ አንድ ጋዜጣ በገበያ ውስጥ ለመቆየት ምን ማድረግ አለበት ብለው ያስባሉ?

8. What advice would you provide to new entrants to this sector?

አንደ አዲስ ዘርፉን ለሚቀላቀሉ ጋዜጦች ምን ምክር ይሰጣሉ?

9. What do you expect the government or other regulators (like press council) do to create vibrant and independent media in Ethiopia?

ጠንካራና ነጻ ሚዲያ እንዲፈጠር ከመንግስትና አንደ ፕሬስ ካውንስል ከመሳሰሉ ሌሎች ተቆጣጣሪ አካላት ምን ይጠበቃሉ?

10. Any final thought?

የሚጨምሩት ወይም ቀረ የሚሉት ነገር ካለ?

B. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SCHOLARS WHO HAVE STUDIED THE SECTOR

1. Based on your experience and knowledge of the private print media sector in this country, what do you think are its major challenges?

በኢትዮጵያ የግል ሕትመት ሚዲያ ላይ ካሉት ልምድና እውቀት አንጻር የዘርፉ ዋነኛ ተግዳሮቶች ምንድን ናቸው ብለው ያስባሉ?

✓ Do you think one can put the challenges in perspectives as they have happened before and after the 2005 elections? Why?

ተግዳሮቶቹን ከ1997 ምርጫ በፊት የነበሩና ከ1997 በኋላ የተከሰቱ ብሎ በመከፋፈል ማቅረብ የሚቻል ይመስሎታል ? ለምን?

- ✓ Why do you think most newspapers are short-lived in this country?
አብዛኞቹ የሀገራችን ጋዜጦች እድሜያቸው አጭር የሆነው ለምን ይመስልዎታል?

2. According to some sources, following the fall of the Derg regime, over six hundred private periodicals have taken licenses. But there are now only a handful of them surviving in the market, what do you think the surviving ones have done which the defunct have not?

መረጃዎች እንደሚያሳዩት ከደርግ ውድቀት ወዲህ ከ600 በላይ ሕትመቶች ፈቃድ ቢወስዱም በገበያ ላይ ያሉት ግን በጣም ጥቂቶች ናቸው። በገበያ ላይ ያሉት ጋዜጦች ከገበያ ከወጡት የተለየ ምን ቢያደርጉ ነው በዘርፉ ሊቆዩ የቻሉት ብለው ያስባሉ?

3. *Addis Admas* and *Reporter* are among the few surviving private newspapers. According to your observation, why have these papers sustained the volatile/challenging private press milieu in this country?

በገበያ ውስጥ ከሚገኙት ጥቂት ጋዜጦች መካከል አዲስ ሰድማስና ሪፖርተር ይገኙበታል፤ በእርስዎ ምልከታ እነዚህ ጋዜጦች እንዴት በገበያ ውስጥ ሊቆዩ የቻሉ ይመስሎታል?

- ✓ What do you think are the main factors that helped them sustain in the market?

ጋዜጦቹ በዘርፉ እንዲቆዩ ያደገረጓቸው ዋና ዋና ምክንያቶች ምን ይመስልዎታል?

- ✓ Some argue that their survival owes to their moderate stand than becoming professional in their approach. How do respond to this narration?

አንዳንዶች ጋዜጦቹ በዘርፉ የቆዩት በአቀራረባቸው ሙያዊነትን ከመከተል ይልቅ ወገንተኛ በመሆናችሁ ነው ይላሉ። በዚህ ላይ ምን አስተያየት አለዎት?

- ✓ How do you relate their ability to attract advertisement and their deterrence to litigations/closure in this regard?

ከዚህ አንጻር ማስታወቂያ የመሰብ ችሎታቸውንና በክስ ምክንያት አለመዘጋታቸውን እንዴት ያዩታል?

- ✓ What do you think are the possible practical lessons others could learn from these newspapers?

ሌሎች ጋዜጦች ከእነርሱ ምን ሊማሩ ይችላሉ ይላሉ?

4. Based on the principles of professional journalism (objectivity, serving the public interest, etc.), how do you evaluate the level in which these newspapers are discharging their roles and responsibilities?

ከሙያዊ ጋዜጠኝነት መርህ አንጻር አዲስ አድማስና ሪፖርተር ምን ያህል ሚናቸውንና ሃላፊነታቸውን እየተወጡ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ?

✓ Do you think these newspapers are serving as a public sphere, watchdog/ fourth estate? Why?

ጋዜጦቹ ለህዝቡ የውይይት መድረክ በመሆን፣ የመንግስትን አሰራሮች በመከታተል ወይም እንደ አራተኛ የመንግስት አካል በመሆን እየሰሩ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ? እንዴት?

✓ How do you evaluate the newspapers in terms of their portrayal/handling of events happening in the country, as professional or moderate? Why?

ጋዜጦቹ ከሚያቀሩባቸው ዘገባዎች አንጻር ምን ያህል ከወገንተኝነትና ከተጽዕኖ ነጻ ናቸው ብለው ያምናሉ?

5. How do you evaluate the practice of professional journalism in this country?

በሀገራችን የሙያዊ ጋዜጠኝነት አተገባበርን እንዴት ይገመግሙታል?

✓ Do you think professional journalism has place in this country? Why?

በኢትዮጵያ ሙያዊ ጋዜጠኝነትን ማካሄድ ይቻላል ብለው ያስባሉ? ለምን?

✓ Do you think professional but responsible newspapers have a future in this country? Why?

በሀገራችን በሙያዊ መርህ ለሚሰሩ ነገር ግን በሃላፊነት መንገድ ለሚነቀሳቀሱ ጋዜጦች ዕድል አለ ብለው ያስባሉ? ለምን?

✓ What do you think a newspaper has to do to sustain the Ethiopian particular situation?

በኢትዮጵያ ተጨባጭ ሁኔታ አንድ ጋዜጣ በገበያ ውስጥ ለመቆየት ምን ማድረግ አለበት ብለው ያስባሉ?

6. What advice would you provide to new entrants to this sector?

እንደ አዲስ ዘርፉን ለሚቀላቀሉ ጋዜጦች ምን ምክር ይሰጣሉ?

7. What do you expect the government or other regulators (like press council) do to create vibrant and independent media in Ethiopia?

ጠንካራና ነጻ ሚዲያ እንዲፈጠር ከመንግስትና እንደ ፕሬስ ካውንስል ከመሳሰሉ ሌሎች ተቆጣጣሪ አካላት ምን ይጠበቃሉ?

8. Any final thought?

የሚጨምሩት ወይም ቀረ የሚሉት ነገር ካለ?

C. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MEDIA ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVES

1. Based on your experience and knowledge of the private print media sector in this country, what do you think are its major challenges?

በኢትዮጵያ የግል ሕትመት ሚዲያ ላይ ካሉት ልምድና እውቀት አንጻር የዘርፉ ዋነኛ ተግዳሮቶች ምንድን ናቸው ብለው ያስባሉ?

✓ Do you think one can put the challenges in perspectives as they have happened before and after the 2005 elections? Why?

ተግዳሮቶቹን ከ1997 ምርጫ በፊት የነበሩና ከ1997 በኋላ የተከሰቱ ብሎ በመከፋፈል ማቅረብ የሚቻል ይመስሉታል ? ለምን?

✓ Why do you think most newspapers are short-lived in this country?

አብዛኞቹ የሀገራችን ጋዜጦች እድሜያቸው አጭር የሆነው ለምን ይመስልዎታል?

2. Scholars who studied the Ethiopian private press consider it as a volatile sector. What is your response to their assessment?

ዘርፉን ያጠኑ ምሁራን የኢትዮጵያን የግል ሕትመት ሚዲያ ‘ያልተረጋጋ’ በማለት ይገልጹታል። በዚህ ላይ ምን አስተያየት አለዎት?

3. According to some sources, following the fall of the Derg regime, over six hundred private periodicals have taken licenses. But there are now only a

handful of them surviving in the market, what do you think the surviving ones have done which the defunct have not?

መረጃዎች እንደሚያሳዩት ከደርግ ውድቀት ወዲህ ከ600 በላይ ሕትመቶች ፈቃድ ቢወስዱም በገበያ ላይ ያሉት ግን በጣም ጥቂቶች ናቸው። በገበያ ላይ ያሉት ጋዜጦች ከገበያ ከወጡት የተለየ ምን ቢያደርጉ ነው በዘርፉ ሊቆዩ የቻሉት?

4. *Addis Admas* and *Reporter* have survived over a decade in the market. How do you explain their survival?

በገበያ ውስጥ ከሚገኙት ጥቂት ጋዜጦች መካከል አዲስ ሲድማስና ሪፖርተር ይገኙበታል፤ በእርስዎ ምልክታ እነዚህ ጋዜጦች እንዴት በገበያ ውስጥ ሊቆዩ የቻሉ ይመስሎታል?

- ✓ What do you think are the main factors that helped them sustain in the market?
ጋዜጦቹ በዘርፉ እንዲቆዩ ያገረጓቸው ዋና ዋና ምክንያቶች ምን ይመስልዎታል?
- ✓ Some argue that their survival owes to their moderate stand than becoming professional in their approach. How do you respond to this narration?
አንዳንዶች ጋዜጦቹ በዘርፉ የቆዩት በአቀራረባችሁ ሙያዊነትን ከመከተል ይልቅ ወገንተኛ በመሆናችሁ ነው ይላሉ በዚህ ላይ ምን አስተያየት አለዎት?
- ✓ How do you relate their ability to attract advertisement and their deterrence to litigations/closure in this regard?
ከዚህ አንጻር ማስታወቂያ የመሳብ ችሎታቸውንና በክስ ምክንያት አለመዘጋታቸውን እንዴት ያዩታል?

5. Based on the principles of professional journalism (objectivity, serving the public interest, etc.), how do you evaluate the level in which these newspapers are discharging their roles and responsibilities?

ከሙያዊ ጋዜጠኝነት መርህ አንጻር አዲስ ሲድማስና ሪፖርተር ምን ያህል ሚናቸውንና ሃላፊነታቸውን እየተወጡ ነው ብለው ያሰባሉ?

- ✓ Do you think these newspapers are serving as a public sphere, watchdog/ fourth estate?

- ✓ ጋዜጦቹ ለህዝቡ የውይይት መድረክ በመሆን፣ የመንግስትን አሰራሮች በመከታተል ወይም እንደ አራተኛ የመንግስት አካል በመሆን እየሰሩ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ? እንዴት?
- ✓ How do you describe the newspapers in terms of their portrayal/handling of events happening in the country, as professional or moderate? Why?
ጋዜጦቹ ከሚያቀርቧቸው ዘገባዎች አንጻር ምን ያህል ከወገንተኝነትና ከተጽዕኖ ነጻ ናቸው ብለው ያስባሉ?

6. How do you evaluate the practice of professional journalism in this country?

በሀገራችን የሙያዊ ጋዜጠኝነት አተገባበርን እንዴት ይገመግሙታል?

- ✓ Do you think professional journalism has place in this country? Why?
በኢትዮጵያ ሙያዊ ጋዜጠኝነትን ማካሄድ ይቻላል ብለው ያስባሉ? ለምን?
በሀገራችን በሙያዊ መርህ ለሚሰሩ ነገር ግን በሃላፊነት መንገድ ለሚነቀሳቀሱ ጋዜጦች ዕድል አለ ብለው ያስባሉ? ለምን?
- ✓ Do you think professional but responsible newspapers have a future in this country? Why?
በሀገራችን በሙያዊ መርህ ለሚሰሩ ነገር ግን በሃላፊነት መንገድ ለሚነቀሳቀሱ ጋዜጦች ዕድል አለ ብለው ያስባሉ? ለምን?
- ✓ What do you think a newspaper has to do to sustain the Ethiopian particular situation?
በኢትዮጵያ ተጨባጭ ሁኔታ አንድ ጋዜጣ በገበያ ውስጥ ለመቆየት ምን ማድረግ አለበት ብለው ያስባሉ?

7. What advice would you provide to new entrants to this sector?

እንደ አዲስ ዘርፉን ለሚቀላቀሉ ጋዜጦች ምን ምክር ይሰጣሉ?

8. What do you expect the government or other regulators (like press council) do to create vibrant and independent media in Ethiopia?

ጠንካራና ነጻ ሚዲያ እንዲፈጠር ከመንግስትና እንደ ፕሬስ ካውንስል ከመሳሰሉ ሌሎች ተቆጣጣሪ አካላት ምን ይጠበቃሉ?

9. Any final thought?

የሚጨምሩት ወይም ቀረ የሚሉት ነገር ካለ?

D. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

1. As a government, what do you think are the major challenges of the private print media in this country?

እንደመንግስት አካል የግሉ ሕትመት ሚዲያ ዋነኛ ተግዳሮቶች ምን ይመስልዎታል?

✓ Do you think one can put the challenges in perspectives as they have happened before and after the 2005 elections? Why?

ተግዳሮቶቹን ከ1997 ምርጫ በፊት የነበሩና ከ1997 በኋላ የተከሰቱ ብሎ በመከፋፈል ማቅረብ የሚቻል ይመስሎታል ? ለምን?

✓ Why do you think most newspapers are short-lived in this country?

አብዛኞቹ የሀገራችን ጋዜጦች እድሜያቸው አጭር የሆነው ለምን ይመስልዎታል?

2. Scholars who studied the Ethiopian private press consider it as a volatile sector. What is your response to their assessment?

ዘርፉን ያጠኑ ምሁራን የኢትዮጵያን የግል ሕትመት ሚዲያ ያልተረጋጋ በማለት ይገልጻሉ። በዚህ ሀሳብ ላይ ምን አስተያየት አለዎት?

3. According to some sources, following the fall of the Derg regime, over six hundred private periodicals have taken licenses. But there are now only a handful of them surviving in the market, what do you think the surviving ones have done which the defunct have not?

መረጃዎች እንደሚያሳዩት ከደርግ ውድቀት ወዲህ ከ600 በላይ ሕትመቶች ፈቃድ ቢወስዱም በገበያ ላይ ያሉት ግን በጣም ጥቂቶች ናቸው። በገበያ ላይ ያሉት ጋዜጦች ከገበያ ከወጡት የተለየ ምን ቢያደርጉ ነው በዘርፉ ሊቆዩ የቻሉት ብለው ያስባሉ?

4. *Addis Admas* and *Reporter* have survived over a decade in the market. How do you explain their survival?

በገበያ ውስጥ ከሚገኙት ጥቂት ጋዜጦች መካከል አዲስ ስድማስና ሪፖርተር ይገኙባቸዋል፤ በእርስዎ ምልከታ እነዚህ ጋዜጦች እንዴት በገበያ ውስጥ ሊቆዩ የቻሉ ይመስሉታል?

- ✓ What do you think are the main factors that helped them sustain in the market?
ጋዜጦቹ በዘርፉ እንዲቆዩ ያገረጓቸው ዋና ዋና ምክንያቶች ምን ይመስልዎል?
- ✓ Some argue that their survival owes to their moderate stand than becoming professional in their approach. How do you respond to this narration?
አንዳንዶች ጋዜጦቹ በዘርፉ የቆዩት በአቀራረባችሁ ሙያዊነትን ከመከተል ይልቅ ወገንተኛ በመሆናችሁ ነው ይላሉ በዚህ ላይ ምን አስተያየት አለዎት?
- ✓ How do you relate their ability to attract advertisement and their deterrence to litigations/closure in this regard?
ከዚህ አንጻር ማስታወቂያ የመሳብ ችሎታቸውንና በክስ ምክንያት አለመዘጋታቸውን እንዴት ያዩታል?

5 . Based on the principles of professional journalism (objectivity, serving the public interest, etc.), how do you evaluate the level in which these newspapers are discharging their roles and responsibilities?

ከሙያዊ ጋዜጠኝነት መርህ አንጻር አዲስ ስድማስና ሪፖርተር ምን ያህል ሚናቸውንና ሃላፊነታቸውን እየተወጡ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ?

- ✓ Do you think these newspapers are serving as a public sphere, watchdog/ fourth estate?
ጋዜጦቹ ለህዝቡ የውይይት መድረክ በመሆን፣ የመንግስትን አሰራሮች በመከታተል ወይም እንደ አራተኛ የመንግስት አካል በመሆን እየሰሩ ነው ብለው ያስባሉ?
እንዴት?
- ✓ How do you describe the newspapers in terms of their portrayal/handling of events happening in the country, as professional or moderate? Why?
ጋዜጦቹ ከሚያቀርቧቸው ዘገባዎች አንጻር ምን ያህል ከወገንተኝነትና ከተጽዕኖ ነጻ ናቸው ይላሉ?

6. How do you evaluate the practice of professional journalism in this country?

በሀገራችን የሙያዊ ጋዜጠኝነት አተገባበርን እንዴት ይገመግሙታል?

✓ Do you think professional journalism has place in this country?
Why?

በኢትዮጵያ ሙያዊ ጋዜጠኝነትን ማካሄድ ይቻላል ብለው ያስባሉ? ለምን?

✓ Do you think professional but responsible newspapers have a future in this country? Why?

በሀገራችን በሙያዊ መርህ ለሚሰሩ ነገር ግን በሃላፊነት መንገድ ለሚነቀሳቀሱ ጋዜጦች ዕድል አለ ብለው ያስባሉ? ለምን?

✓ What do you think a newspaper has to do to sustain the Ethiopian particular situation?

በኢትዮጵያ ተጨባጭ ሁኔታ አንድ ጋዜጣ በገበያ ውስጥ ለመቆየት ምን ማድረግ አለበት ብለው ያስባሉ?

7. What advice would you provide to new entrants to this sector?

እንደ አዲስ ዘርፉን ለሚቀላቀሉ ጋዜጦች ምን ምክር ይሰጣሉ?

8. What do you think are the roles of the government and other regulators (like press council) to create vibrant and independent media in Ethiopia?

ጠንካራና ነጻ ሚዲያ እንዲፈጠር ከመንግስትና እንደ ፕሬስ ካውንስል ከመሳሰሉ ሌሎች ተቆጣጣሪ አካላት ምን ይጠበቃል ይላሉ?

9. Any final thought?

የሚጨምሩት ወይም ቀረ የሚሉት ነገር ካለ?

II. List of Key Informants

Amanuel Gebru,	Assistant Professor, AAU
Anteneh Abrham,	President, Ethiopian National Journalists Union
Ayalew Asres,	Editor-in-chief, the defunct <i>Negadras</i> Newspaper
Dawit Kebede,	Editor-in-chief, the defunct <i>Awramba Times</i> Newspaper
Elias Gebru,	who had been working in different defunct private newspapers and magazines (<i>Mesenazeriya, Awramba Times, Fitih, Enku and Kedami Gets</i>) at different capacities ranging from to deputy editor-in-chief
Elisabeth Equbay,	Editor, <i>Addis Admas</i> Newspaper
Firew Abebe,	Editor-in-chief, <i>Sendeq</i> Newspaper
Genet Gosaye,	Manager, <i>Addis Admas</i> Newspaper
Leul Gebru,	Deputy General Director, Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority
Melaku Demissie,	Managing Editor, <i>Reporter</i> Newspaper
Shimeles Bejiga,	Assistant Professor, AAU, School of Journalism and Communications
Terje Skjerdal,	Associate Professor, NLA University College, Kristiansand, Norway
Wondwossen Mekonnen,	President, Ethiopian Free Journalists Association

III. Questionnaire to collect Profile Information on *Reporter and Addis Admas*

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የጋዜጠኝነትና ኮሙኒኬሽን ት/ት ክፍል

‘A Study on How Some Newspapers Sustain the Challenging Private Press Milieu in Ethiopia: *Reporter and Addis Admas* in Focus’ በሚል ርዕስ በማዘጋጀት ላይ ላለሁት የሁለተኛ ዲግሪ ማሟያ መመሪያ ጽሑፍ መረጃ በማሰባሰብ ላይ እገኛለሁ። ጥናቱ በጋዜጣችሁ ላይ ስለሚያተኩር የተቋማችሁንና የጋዜጠኞቹን ፕሮፋይል ማካተት ይጠይቃል። በመሆኑም የሚሰጡት መረጃ በጥናቱ ውጤት ላይ ሊኖረው ከሚችለው ተጽዕኖ አንጻር ቀጥሎ የቀረቡትን ጥያቄዎች አንደአቀራረባቸው (በጽሑፍ/ በማክበብ) በጥንቃቄ በመመለስ ለሚያደርጉልኝ ትብብር ምስጋናዬን ከወዲሁ አቀርባለሁ።

1. የጋዜጣው ስም፡- አዲስ አድማስ/ ሪፖርተር/

2. የተቋቋመበት ጊዜ፡- -----

3. ጋዜጠኞችን በተመለከተ፡-

3.1 ጾታ (ብዛት)

ሀ. ወንድ ----- ለ. ሴት ----- ሐ. ድምር -----

3.2 የቅጥር ሁኔታ (ብዛት)

ሀ. ቋሚ ----- ለ. ጊዜያዊ ----- ሐ. ሌላ -----

3.3 የት/ት ዝግጅት (ብዛት)

ሀ. የመጀመሪያ ዲግሪ ----- ለ. ሁለተኛ ዲግሪ ----- ሐ. ሌላ -----

3.4 የትምህርት ዝግጅት (በብዛት/ በጾታ)

ሀ. የመጀመሪያ ዲግሪ ሀ. ወንድ ----- ለ. ሴት ----- ሐ. ድምር -----

ለ. ሁለተኛ ዲግሪ ሀ. ወንድ ----- ለ. ሴት ----- ሐ. ድምር -----

ሐ. ሌላ ሀ. ወንድ ----- ለ. ሴት ----- ሐ. ድምር -----

3.5 የሰለጠኑባቸው የት/ት ዓይነቶች (ብዛት)

ሀ. ጋዜጠኝነት ----- ለ. ቋንቋና ስነ ጽሑፍ -----

ሐ. ማህበራዊ ሳይንስ ----- መ. ሌላ -----

IV. Letters

መጋቢት 3 ቀን 2007 ዓ/ም

ለኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ ሪፑብሊክ

የፍትሕ ሚኒስቴር

አዲስ አበባ፣

ጉዳይ፡- ትብብር መጠየቅን ይመለከታል

በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የጋዜጠኝነትና ኮሙኒኬሽን ት/ት ክፍል የሁለተኛ ዲግሪ ተማሪ ስሆን ‘**A Study on How Some Newspapers Sustain the Challenging Private Press Milieu in Ethiopia: Reporter and Addis Admas in Focus**’ በሚል ርዕስ የመመረቁያ ጽሑፌን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ። ለዚህም ስራ ስኬታማነት የሁለት ጋዜጦችን የአስር አመት የክስ ሁኔታ መመርመር ያስፈልገኛኝ። ለምርምር ስራዬ በግብአትነት የሚያገለግለኝ ይህ መረጃ በተቋማችሁ ስለሚገኝ ትብብራችሁን እንድታደርጉልኝ እየጠየቅሁ፤ ከጉዳዩ ስራነት/Sensitivity/ አንጻር መረጃውን ለሶስተኛ ወገን የማላስተላልፍና በተዘዋዋሪ እንጂ በቀጥታ በጥናቴ ውስጥ የማላቀርበው መሆኑን ከወዲሁ እገልጻለሁ።

በመሆኑም ከ1997 እስከ 2006 ዓ/ም ባሉት አስር ተከታታይ አመታት ውስጥ አዲስ አድማስና ሪፖርተር ጋዜጦችን በተመለከተ **የተመሰረቱባቸውን ክሶች ብዛት**፤ ከክሶቹም መካከል **ጋዜጦቹ የረቱባቸውንና የተረቱባቸውን** ክሶች መጠን እንዲሁም ባለፉት አስር አመታት በክስ ምክንያት የተዘጉ ጋዜጦችን ብዛት በየአመቱ ለይቶ የሚያሳይ ሪፖርት ተዘጋጅቶ እንዲሰጠኝ በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ።

ከሰላምታ ጋር

ወንድወሰን ግርማ

ለኢትዮጵያ ገቢዎችና ጉምሩክ ባለስልጣን

አዲስ አበባ፣

ጉዳዩ፡- ትብብር መጠየቅን ይመለከታል

በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የጋዜጠኝነትና ኮሙኒኬሽን ት/ት ክፍል የሁለተኛ ዲግሪ ተማሪ ስሆን ‘A Study on How Some Newspapers Sustain the Challenging Private Press Milieu in Ethiopia: Reporter and Addis Admas in Focus’ በሚል ርዕስ የመመረቁን ጽሑፌን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ። ለዚህም ስራ ስኬታማነት የሁለት ጋዜጦችን የአስር አመት ገቢና ወጪ ሂሳብ መረጃ መመርመር ያስፈልገኛል። ለምርምር ስራዬ በግብአትነት የሚያገለግለኝ ይህ መረጃ በተቋማችሁ ስለሚገኝ ትብብራችሁን እንድታደርጉልኝ እየጠየቅሁ፤ ከጉዳዩ ስሱነት/Sensitivity/ አንጻር መረጃውን ለሶስተኛ ወገን የማላስተላልፍና በተዘዋዋሪ እንጂ በቀጥታ በጥናቴ ውስጥ የማላቀርበው መሆኑን ከወዲሁ እገልጻለሁ ።

በመሆኑም ከ1997 እስከ 2006 ዓ/ም ባሉት አስር ተከታታይ አመታት ውስጥ አዲስ አድማስና ሪፖርተር ጋዜጦችን የተመለከቱና በተቋማችሁ የሚገኙ የወጪና ገቢ ሂሳብ (ገቢው ከጋዜጣ ሽያጭና ከማስታወቂያ የተገኘን በሚያሳይ መልኩ) የየአመቱ የሂሳብ ሪፖርቶች ተዘጋጅተው እንዲሰጡኝ በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ።

ከሰላምታ ጋር

ወንድወሰን ግርማ

ለኢትዮጵያ ብሮድካስት ባለስልጣን

አዲስ አበባ፣

ጉዳዩ፡- ትብብር መጠየቅን ይመለከታል

በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የጋዜጠኝነትና ኮሙኒኬሽን ት/ት ክፍል የሁለተኛ ዲግሪ ተማሪ ስሆን 'A Study on How Some Newspapers Sustain the Challenging Private Press Milieu in Ethiopia: Reporter and Addis Admas in Focus' በሚል ርዕስ የመመረቄያ ጽሑፌን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ። ለዚህም ስራ ስኬታማነት የሁለት ጋዜጦችን የአስር አመት የክስ ሁኔታ መመርመር ያስፈልገኛኝ። ለምርምር ስራዬ በግብአትነት የሚያገለግሉኝ ይህ መረጃ በተቋማችሁ ስለሚገኝ ትብብራችሁን እንድታደርጉልኝ እየጠየቅሁ፤ ከጉዳዩ ስራነት/Sensitivity/ አንጻር መረጃውን ለሶስተኛ ወገን የማላስተላልፍና በተዘዋዋሪ እንጂ በቀጥታ በጥናቴ ውስጥ የማላቀርበው መሆኑን ከወዲሁ እገልጻለሁ።

በመሆኑም ከ1997 እስከ 2006 ዓ/ም ባሉት አስር ተከታታይ አመታት ውስጥ አዲስ አድማስና ሪፖርተር ጋዜጦችን በተመለከተ የተመሰረቱባቸውን ክሶች ብዛት፤ ከክሶቹም መካከል ጋዜጦቹ የረቱባቸውንና የተረቱባቸውን ክሶች መጠን እንዲሁም ባለፉት አስር አመታት በክስ ምክንያት የተዘገዙ ጋዜጦችን ብዛት በየአመቱ የሚያሳይ ሪፖርት ተዘጋጅቶ እንዲሰጠኝ በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ።

ከሰላምታ ጋር

ወንድወሰን ግርማ

ለአድማስ አድቫርታይዚንግ ሃ/የተ/የግ/ማ

አዲስ አበባ፣

ጉዳዩ፡- ትብብር መጠየቅን ይመለከታል

በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የጋዜጠኝነትና ኮሙኒኬሽን ት/ት ክፍል የሁለተኛ ዲግሪ ተማሪ ስሆን ‘A Study on How Some Newspapers Sustain the Challenging Private Press Milieu in Ethiopia: Reporter and Addis Admas in Focus’ በሚል ርዕስ የመመረቄያ ጽሑፌን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ። ለዚህም ስራ ሰኬታማነት የጋዜጣችሁን የአስር አመት የክስ ሁኔታና ከገቢና ወጪ ጋር የተያያዙ መረጃዎችን መመርመር ያስፈልገኛኝ። ለምርምር ስራዬ በግብአትነት የሚያገለግለኝ ይህ መረጃ በተቋማችሁ ስለሚገኝ ትብብራችሁን እንድታደርጉልኝ እጠየቅሁ፤ ከጉዳዩ ስራነት/Sensitivity/ አንጻር መረጃውን ለሶስተኛ ወገን የማላስተላልፍና በተዘዋዋሪ እንጂ በቀጥታ በጥናቴ ውስጥ የማላቀርበው መሆኑን ከወዲሁ እገልጻለሁ ።

በመሆኑም ከ1997 እስከ 2006 ዓ/ም ባሉት አስር ተከታታይ አመታት ውስጥ አድማስ ጋዜጣን በተመለከተ የተመሰረተባችሁን ክሶች ብዛት፤ ከክሶቹም መካከል የረታችሁባቸውንና የተረታችሁባቸውን ክሶች መጠን እንዲሁም በተመሳሳይ ዓመታት ውስጥ ያስመዘገባችሁትን ገቢና ወጪ (ገቢው ከጋዜጣ ሽያጭና ከማስታወቂያ የተገኘን በሚያሳይ መልኩ) በየአመቱ ለይቶ የሚያሳይ ሪፖርት ተዘጋጅቶ እንዲሰጠኝ በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ።

ከሰላምታ ጋር

ወንድወሰን ግርማ

ለአድማስ አድቨርታይዜንግ ሃ/የተ/የግ/ማ

አዲስ አበባ፣

ጉዳዩ፡- ትብብር መጠየቅን ይመለከታል

በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የጋዜጠኝነትና ኮሙኒኬሽን ት/ት ክፍል የሁለተኛ ዲግሪ ተማሪ ስሆን ‘A Study on How Some Newspapers Sustain the Challenging Private Press Milieu in Ethiopia: Reporter and Addis Admas in Focus’ በሚል ርዕስ የመመረቂያ ጽሑፌን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ። ለዚህም ስራ ስኬታማነት የጋዜጣችሁን የአስር አመት የክስ ሁኔታና ከገቢና ወጪ ጋር የተያያዙ መረጃዎችን መመርመር ያስፈልገኛኝ። ለምርምር ስራዬ በግብአትነት የሚያገለግለኝ ይህ መረጃ በተቋማችሁ ስለሚገኝ ትብብራችሁን እንድታደርጉልኝ እየጠየቅሁ፤ ከጉዳዩ ስራነት/Sensitivity/ አንጻር መረጃውን ለሶስተኛ ወገን የማላስተላልፍና በተዘዋዋሪ እንጂ በቀጥታ በጥናቴ ውስጥ የማላቀርበው መሆኑን ከወዲሁ እገልጻለሁ ።

በመሆኑም ከ1997 እስከ 2006 ዓ/ም ባሉት አስር ተከታታይ አመታት ውስጥ አድማስ ጋዜጣን በተመለከተ የተመሰረተባችሁን ክሶች ብዛት፤ ከክሶቹም መካከል የረታችሁባቸውንና የተረታችሁባቸውን ክሶች መጠን እንዲሁም በተመሳሳይ ዓመታት ውስጥ ያስመዘገባችሁትን ገቢና ወጪ (ገቢው ከጋዜጣ ሽያጭና ከማስታወቂያ የተገኘን በሚያሳይ መልኩ) በየአመቱ ለይቶ የሚያሳይ ሪፖርት ተዘጋጅቶ እንዲሰጠኝ በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ።

ከሰላምታ ጋር

ወንድወሰን ግርማ

ለሚዲያና ኮሙኒኬሽን ሴንተር

አዲስ አበባ፣

ጉዳዩ፡- ትብብር መጠየቅን ይመለከታል

በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የጋዜጠኝነትና ኮሙኒኬሽን ት/ት ክፍል የሁለተኛ ዲግሪ ተማሪ ስሆን ‘A Study on How Some Newspapers Sustain the Challenging Private Press Milieu in Ethiopia: Reporter and Addis Admas in Focus’ በሚል ርዕስ የመመረቂያ ጽሑፌን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ። ለዚህም ስራ ሰኬታማነት የጋዜጣችሁን የአስር አመት የክስ ሁኔታና ከገቢና ወጪ ጋር የተያያዙ መረጃዎችን መመርመር ያስፈልገኛኝ። ለምርምር ስራዬ በግብአትነት የሚያገለግለኝ ይህ መረጃ በተቋማችሁ ስለሚገኝ ትብብራችሁን እንድታደርጉልኝ እየጠየቅሁ፤ ከጉዳዩ ስሜት/Sensitivity/ አንጻር መረጃውን ለሶስተኛ ወገን የማላስተላልፍና በተዘዋዋሪ እንጂ በቀጥታ በጥናቱ ውስጥ የማላቀርበው መሆኑን ከወዲሁ እገልጻለሁ ።

በመሆኑም ከ1997 እስከ 2006 ዓ/ም ባሉት አስር ተከታታይ አመታት ውስጥ ሪፖርተር ጋዜጣን በተመለከተ የተመሰረተባችሁን ክሶች ብዛት፤ ከክሶቹም መካከል የረታችሁባቸውንና የተረታችሁባቸውን ክሶች መጠን እንዲሁም በተመሳሳይ ዓመታት ውስጥ ያስመዘገባችሁትን ገቢና ወጪ (ገቢው ከጋዜጣ ሽያጭና ከማስታወቂያ የተገኘን በሚያሳይ መልኩ) በየአመቱ ለይቶ የሚያሳይ ሪፖርት ተዘጋጅቶ እንዲሰጠኝ በአክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ።

ከሰላምታ ጋር

ወንድወሰን ግርማ

Declaration

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

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Signature:  _____

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Place of submission: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia