



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

**RADIO FANA'S COVERAGE OF THE 2015 NATIONAL ELECTION OF  
ETHIOPIA ON F.M 98.1**

**BY**  
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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Yared Mekonnen, with the title Radio Fana's Coverage of the 2015 National Election of Ethiopia on F.M 98.1, 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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## ACCRONYMS

ACPHR – African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights

AENM – All Ethiopian National Movement

CAR – Central Africa Republic

CCPR – Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

CEE - Central and East Europe

CUD – Coalition for Unity and Democracy

DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo

EBA – Ethiopia Broadcast Authority

EDP – Ethiopian Democratic Party

EDUM – Ethiopian Democratic Unity Movement

EJDFF – Ethiopian Justice and Democratic Forces Front

EPRDF – Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front

ERP – Ethiopian Raiey Party

ERTA – Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency

NEBE – National Electoral Board of Ethiopia

SADC – Southern African Development Community

UDHR – Universal Declarations of Human Rights

UDJ – Unity for Democracy and Justice

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Radio Fana's Coverage of the 2015 National Election of Ethiopia on F.M 98.1  
Yared Mekonnen  
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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed at assessing the coverage of the 2015 national election of Ethiopia on the first established private FM radio, Fana F.M 98.1. The study employed quantitative content analysis. The sample selection underwent different stages. First, the ninety seven days of the campaign period, from February 16 – May 21, were stratified under fourteen weeks of the three months and then the samples were proportionally allocated and selected using simple random sampling technique. Nevertheless, due to lack of reported news of election particularly in March and April availability/convenient sampling was also used. News stories and programs focusing on the election and broadcasted on the media were targeted. The contents of these media products then were content analyzed using coding sheets organized under seven analytical categories which the media require to fulfill for standardized coverage of elections. The findings indicated that Fana F.M covered the election by reporting follow up news stories and organizing a three month special debate and discussion program on the weekly 'Mogach' talk show. In both the news and the program, political messages that inform and educate voters were transmitted, political parties got additional media access, with irregular frequency and length of air time, beside their direct free air time access. Though the coverage of the media about the election in news stories as well as the special program of discussion and debate was vital to make voters informed, the space given to the public's participation, however, was narrow and limited. Finally, because this was only one of the steps in creating knowledgeable electorate, further area of investigations were recommended at the last section of the study.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

Media and democracy are usually labeled as the faces of a coin. In fact, the presence of one can guarantee the existence of the other.

Some scholars describe their nexus as a social contract as well. Stromback (2005:332) substantiates that, on one hand, media and journalism opens opportunity to the realization and building of democracy. The media facilitate the actualization of democracy through creating a system for the flow of information which initiates popular participation, being a forum for public discussion, and playing a watch dog function. According to Stromback, it is when the media fulfill their part of the social contract, by providing citizens with the information needed, that the public become free and self governing; and the government able to decide in the common interest “sensitive to public sentiments.” Democracy, on the other hand, with its peculiar respect and protection of freedom of speech, expression and information as well as the independence of media, fulfills its share of the social contract. Thus, this mutual exclusiveness ties media and democracy together.

Fog (2013:1)also notes that “The mass media constitute the back bone of democracy.” In addition, taking the close relationship that democracy and development have through the facilitative role of the media into account, McQuail (1994:85)asserts that by spreading democracy (=elections), the media serve as agents of development.

Particularly, in emerging democracies where participatory democracy prevails, people need to be informed and mobilized by means of media so that throughactive

participation they would be part of the decision making process. Discussing the role of citizens and the media in a participatory democracy, Stromback (2005:336) states that in order to facilitate collective action, participation and engagement, people in participatory democracy need adequate knowledge and ample information. Knowledge about how to participate in and how they influence political decision making as well as how to find likeminded people are what citizens require to fulfill the role attributed to them in this kind of democracy. In addition, they also need to understand problems of the country, the opinions and electoral platforms of the political alternatives in an election, and about their own views.

In fact, media and journalism would have great role in linking the governing and the governed starting from the scratch of the formation of a government resulted from democratic elections. According to Ward et al (2014: 11), “The media has a very influential role in the conduct of elections and its outcome. In addition to providing information to the voters needed for them to make an informed choice and providing a platform for candidates to reach the public, the media can set the agenda for the process through the topics it covers, questions it asks and tone of its coverage.”

For a democratic election to be free and fair, media should be equally accessible to parties and candidates. Accordingly, free and independent media are key institutions for the realization of such a claim. It is through free and fair elections that power should be vested to the hands of officials; and this huge process has to be facilitated by the media. According to Ward et al(2014:1), elections are credible and inclusive when they are based on some basic democratic principles. Three of these key principles are the rights to freedom of speech, access to

information, and equality before the law. Being affirmed in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, these values give both the electorate and political actors the right to freely discuss political issues and public policies and to express opinions. Since voters and candidates rely heavily on access to the media to both impart and receive information, they need an open and diverse media on which they entertain balanced and impartial coverage and equitable access.

However, there are claims that the media are not working in accordance with the expectations due to focusing more on entertainment than information providing mostly gossip, scandals, sex, and violence (Fog, 2013 p.2). Fog further admits, “It is also claimed that the watchdogs are barking of the wrong things. The media hunt for scandals in the private lives of politicians and their families, but ignore much more serious consequences of their policies” (ibid).

As a result, media need to perform its deliberative functions particularly during campaign periods to certain standards (Fog, 2013:1).

In Ethiopia, about five elections have been held since the ruling EPRDF took power in 1991. However, media coverage of election and politics in Ethiopia usually led to conflicts. Hallelujah (2008:62) claims that “the press has been polarizing issues and differences” between the government and opposition parties. According to him the independent press was the main advocate of the rigging claim and the boycotting of CUD to join the house of peoples’ representatives following the 2005 election.

In fact, election coverage of the Ethiopian independent press used to be complained about. One thing is that the strong support of the press to opposition

parties was to the extent that the editorials were no different from the “statements and position of the opposition” (Hallelujah 2008:63). He also asserts that in the 2005 national election of Ethiopia much of the independent press was “busy in demonizing the government and its officials in any way possible” (Hallelujah 2008: 28).

On the other hand, in the 2010 national election of Ethiopia *Addis Zemen*, a state owned news paper, offered 90.5% of its coverage for positive stories of the ruling EPRDF while 75% of its coverage of Medrek, the opposition party, was for negative stories of the party and 0% positive story as well (Ashenafi 2012:40-41).

Therefore, the election period scenario depicts the existence of partisan media; and the relationship between media particularly the press (both private and public) and the government or the opposition parties respectively used to be not smooth that result “less informed and more polarized electorate”.

Consequently, although it seems that the coverage of election campaigns through the local media is improving, it needs to be examined thoroughly in relation to the private broadcasters.

The intention of this research, therefore, was to demonstrate the coverage of the 2015 national election of Ethiopia on the private Fana F.M radio with particular reference to what extent and how Fana F.M was covering the election with news stories and programs to inform the public about political parties as well as the extent public sphere was opened up for public opinion and views. This study used quantitative methodology. Content analysis was used as a tool for data gathering.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The private FM radios in Ethiopia are concentrated in Addis. These institutions are serving millions through different programs that promote social, economic, and political developments. Especially during election period these media are expected to play their role in covering political campaigns.

According to article 40 number 1 of the broadcasting proclamation No.178/1999, “Every broadcaster shall allocate free air time, for political parties and candidates registered in accordance with the relevant law, to publicize their objectives and programs to the people or transmit statements during election period. The implementation shall be set out by a directive to be issued by the Agency (p.1128).”

Though they allocate free air time for direct access, they do also have professional and social responsibilities to play their deliberative role particularly in elections. However, political parties, particularly the opposition groups, used to complain that they couldn't get considerable coverage of the media during election campaigns. In that case, the party that favored the media certainly would have the advantage to win the election because “many electoral campaigns are often won or lost in the media through the way the candidate or issue is portrayed and the volume of increasingly expensive political advertisements”(Ward et al 2014:11).

On the other hand, some scholars like Fog accused the competitive news media of selecting and framing stories in ways that hamper the ability of the democratic system to solve internal social problems as well as international conflicts in an optimal way (Fog, 2013:1). In fact, the news media's engagement in emotionally appealing stories like danger, crime, and disaster or entertainment, influences the democratic process significantly (ibid).

As a result, the low amount of air time given for political parties or news coverage during election campaigns, limits parties to announce their policies. This in turn left voters in a dilemma failing to identify a party of their choice. Moreover, not only political parties but also the public need to participate in political debate and discussion to influence government policies. “In the absence of serious debate, voters are left with paid political propaganda containing only meaningless slogans making them disinterested and cynical about politics” (Bagdikian 1983; Fallows 1996; Capella and Jamieson 1997; Bennett and Entman 2001; Barnett 2002 in Fog 2013:2).

Researches that have been made so far have mainly focused on the performance of print media in election campaigns particularly on the 2005 national election of Ethiopia. For instance, Markos Mekuria, in his thesis ‘Fairness and Balance in election campaign news stories during the 2005 Ethiopian election,’ analyzed the existence of fair and balanced election news coverage of political parties in *Addis Zemen* and the *Reporter* newspapers (Markos:2006;6).

In addition, having taken seven selected Amharic news papers published in the final four weeks of election campaign, Yosef Girmay also made analysis on the extent and bias of the press on the coverage of the 2005 Ethiopian election. In this thesis, the researcher attempted to examine the extent and how bias the press had been in their coverage of the May 2005 Ethiopian election (Yosef: 2005; 7-8).

Ashenafi Gudeta as well, examined the framing of political parties during the 2010 national election of Ethiopia by the Ethiopian press. In his research he conducted a content analysis on *Addis Zemen*, a state owned newspaper, *Reporter*, and *Awramba Times* news papers to study how they frame stories about the ruling EPRDF and the opposition Medrek.

However, these researches have focused on the print media and on the 2005 and 2010 national elections. They also centered on examining how fair or bias news papers were in reporting election campaigns as well as how stories were framed.

Unlike these researches, this paper focused on Fana F.M radio which is reaching millions in Addis and its' surroundings. It also concentrated on examining the public sphere created by the private media to reflect myriad of perspectives and the extent to which the F.M radio has opened opportunities for parties to disclose their policies, and for voters to be informed & cast their vote meaningfully.

Therefore, the coverage of election news and campaigns of the medium together with its performance in preparing public forums in order to create informed voters were demonstrated.

In doing so, the researcher believes that the gap related to the trend of coverage of election news and programs by the radio station, which has been known very little about, if not at all, is filled.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

#### **1.3.1 General objective**

The goal of this research was to study the coverage of election during campaign period on Fana F.M radio in the 2015 national election of Ethiopia.

#### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

This research was designed specifically to:

- find out the extent to which the elections were covered on Fana F.M 98.1.
- examine the trend of coverage of election during campaign periods of radio Fana.

- assess the extent to which the mediated public sphere was arranged on the F.M radio targeted.

#### **1.4 Research questions**

The research was intended to answer the following questions:

1. How much coverage did Fana F.M give in relation to the national election?
2. What was the trend of election campaign period coverage on Fana F.M 98.1?
3. To what extent did Fana F.M 98.1 arrange a platform for public debate & discussion?

#### **1.5 Significance of the study**

A study in the media industry in general and in the role of media in the process of democracy building in particular would have great importance. The findings of the study improve the development of the private media institution which, in its turn, is helpful to facilitate the overall development of our society and the country.

Accordingly, this study, which focused on private FM radio's coverage of the 2015 national election, might be significant:

- 1) For policy makers- to see the extent to which the private media involve in the creation of vigilant citizens in politics chiefly during election, and make decisions that further empower private media to play their facilitative role in democratic nation building.
- 2) For the media institution- in providing with information related to the extent to which they are facilitating the democratization process of the nation mainly in the national election.

- 3) For other researchers- being a source of information about the coverage of election news on private FM radios.

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

Though the role of media in every aspect of human life, from individual to society, and nation building is immense, this research was confined to only the coverage of election campaigns and programs during the 2015 national election of Ethiopia.

In addition, while media institutions are numerous and owned by the state and private owners, this study was as limited as focusing only on one of the privately owned F.M radios in Addis Ababa, namely Fana FM.

## **1.7 Limitations of the study**

The study, at the onset, aimed to examine three private F.M radios coverage of the 2015 national election of Ethiopia in order that the trend of coverage of the private media could be generalized. However, due to constraints like time and unwillingness of the other two private F.M radios, the study had to limit itself to only Fana F.M 98.1. Thus, the findings were also limited to the target radio station.

Second, since the study used only quantitative content analysis, some important points that elaborate the coverage of election and provided from qualitative method were missed. The influence of the coverage on the public opinion and their decision, the environment around media institutions to facilitate political debates and discussions, and journalists' awareness of the standards of election reporting could not be assessed.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Media, democracy and democratization**

Craig (2007:29), in a broad sense, claimed that democracy referred to a society where equal rights for all are upheld, rather than a system based on hereditary or class distinctions, and it is a system with tolerance for minority views. In view of that, for a democracy to endorse equal rights for citizens, accommodate minority view and achieve over all development of the life of citizen in particular and the nation in general, people should have access to information by which they exercise their rights and express their opinions through political institutions like the media. In relation to this, McQuail (1994:85) also states that “mass media serve as agents of development by spreading democracy (= elections).”

For Whitehead (2002:27 in Jebril et al 2013:4) “Democratization can be best understood as ‘a complex, long term, dynamic, and open ended process; it consists of progress towards a more rule based, more consensual and more participatory type of politics.”

According to Jebril et al, (2013:2) media is a democratizing agent. “For both media and democratization scholars, the mass media are regarded as one of the key democratic institutions (Street, 2010; McQuail, 2000 in Jebril et al 2013:6) vital in improving the quality of the electoral system, political parties, parliament, judiciary, and other branches of the state, even civil society, and safeguarding their democratic performance.”

In fact, in normative media theory, democratic political structures have to precede the growth of media markets so that the political structures play their role in protecting the media through legislation (Jebril et al 2013:6).

Norris (2000 in Jebril et al 2013:6) claimed, “Freedom and independence are the most universally endorsed ideal characteristics of the media. The normative functions of the media are often based on the characteristics of representative or liberal democracies. These include serving as (1) a forum encouraging pluralistic debate about public affairs, (2) a guardian against the abuse of power, and (3) a mobilizing agent encouraging public learning and participation in the political process.”

In democratizing contexts, the media tasks are generally and usually subsumed under the ‘accountability role’ which the media have been normatively ascribed as one of their main functions in a democratic society (Gurevitch and Blumler, 1990; Schudson, 1995; Randall, 1998; Scammel and Semetko, 2000; Norris, 2006; Voltmer, 2006 in Jebril et al 2013:7). The notion that the press should hold the government and political elites accountable – that is, answerable to the electorate and subject to eventual punishment in case of wrongdoing – is particularly strongly rooted in the liberal, Anglo-American tradition of journalism, assigning the press the label of the ‘fourth estate’ and expecting it to act as a ‘watchdog’, exposing the transgressions of the public officials and other power holders within the democratic system (Waisbord, 2000 cited in Jebril et al 2013:7).

Nevertheless, these being the case in well established democracies, emerging democracies have developed peculiar types of media systems that vary considerably from the west. These differences include embedding journalistic professionalism in the wider cultural traditions of that particular country and reflecting the needs and expectations of audiences (McConnell and Becker, 2002

in Jebriletal 2013:7). Following this there created “several-and larger-gaps” between the ‘ideal’ and the reality of journalism in emerging democracies.

Accordingly, the role of the media in democratization is understood along the phases of political transformation. i.e in pre-transition, during transition, at the consolidation, and at the consumption level (Norris 2000 in Jebriletal 2013:8)

In brief, through three core values of journalism, the media play its significant role for the building of democracy. That, in turn, ensures Peace and stability, the inclusion of marginalized group as well as rapid development in every aspect of a nation. Watch dog, agenda setting and gate keeping role of the press make it contribute to democratic governance since the press “monitor and hold the powerful accountable (watch dog), cover issues of pubic significance that require the attention of citizens and policy makers (agenda setting), and facilitate the expression of a myriad of perspectives (gate keeping)”Waisboard (undated: 1).

## **2.2 Media and politics**

In modern times of the 21<sup>st</sup> century every aspect of the life of people, particularly politics, is highly influenced by what they obtain from the media. In his book, *The Media, Politics and Public life*, Craig claims that the media are the sites where politics and public life are played out, the sites where the meanings of public life are generated, debated and evaluated (Craig 2007 : 4).

### **2.2.1 Political purpose of media**

The media is a political institution. According to Shultz, they should be primarily engaged in the reporting of politics (Shultz 1998: 99). In the course of history the

media not only represented the views of those marginalized in elections but also served as information sources to facilitate informed political decisions (ibid).

The controlling or watch dog role of the media of checks and balance over the political system and the political elites in a representative democracy enabled them to be labeled as the fourth estate. However, Shultz (1998:98 - 99) showed that this labeling is maintained as far as five elements, “central to the rhetoric”, are maintained by the media. To name them, “political purpose and independence, the importance of public opinion, the diversity of information and viewpoints presented, the degree of accountability, and commercial priorities.”

Consequently, knowing their facilitative role of public opinion and the political purpose of their existence as a fourth estate, the media are required to arrange themselves well for sound functioning and maintaining of their political responsibility.

### **2.2.2 Media, politicians and citizens in politics**

According to Jebril et al (2013:6) the relationship between government [politics and politicians] and the media is highly ambivalent. There is a natural proclivity for a symbiotic relationship to develop between the media and political parties (Temin & Smith 2002: 2).

As said by Zaller (1999:6) in media politics the three actors, i.e politicians, journalists and citizens have their own goals to fulfill. Thus, he argued that media politics is the product of goal oriented behavior on the part of these key actors in the political system.

Zaller(1992) further explained the role of each actor in the system of media politics as follows:

For politicians the goal is to get certain helpful kinds of campaign information reported as news and to keep other, unhelpful kinds of information out of the news. In short the goal of politicians is to use journalists to get their story out (14). For politicians, the goal of media politics is [also] to use mass communication to mobilize the public support they need to win elections and to get their programs enacted while in office (2).

For journalists, the goal of media politics is to produce stories that attract big audiences and that emphasize the “independent and significant voice of journalists” (2).

For citizens, the goal is to monitor politics and hold politicians accountable on the basis of minimal effort” (2).

Accordingly, “the form and content of media politics are largely determined by the disparate interests of politicians, journalists, and citizens as each group jostle to get what it wants out of politics and the political communication that makes politics possible” (ibid).

### **2.2.3 Media and the political agenda**

Agenda setting is assumed to be one of the roles carried out by the media. However, there is a great deal of scholarly debate, particularly between communications and political science scholars, whether the media determines the political agenda.

Subsequently, the study of the nexus between the media and the political agenda has become area of immense attention from both media and political science scholars (Walgrave&VanAlest 2006, 88).

According to Walgrave&VanAlest (2006) media and politics are in contrasting position of influence to set the political agenda of the media. This is because either of the time periods, routine periods and election campaign period, the media agenda is influenced by these actors alternatively in the respective periods.

Recently, studies focused on the interaction between media and politics during campaign periods have confirmed that there is a limited role of the media in setting agendas. Considerable number of researches conducted in British, Irish and Dutch election campaigns revealed that it was political parties particularly the major ones who set the media agenda rather than the media (Brandenburg 2002,2004, kleinnijenhuis et al 2003 in Walgrave&VanAlest 2006 : 96-97).

Walgrave&VanAlest (2006: 97) claim that the significant change in behavior of actors like the media and politicians in the electoral context is responsible for the minimal political agenda setting power of the media in campaign periods. For them, every other central actor at routine times gives way for political parties with their “symbolic agendas”. Political actors will have wide opportunity since the media give more attention to politics during campaign times (ibid). Moreover, Dalton et al (1998 in Walgrave&VanAlest 2006: 97) say that dynamic attempts of parties and candidates to influence the public agenda results in the limited agenda setting role of the media during campaign times. From exerting pressure with continuous press releases through different activities and organized events to making provocative statements, major parties and candidates get themselves the

fountain of information for the media (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1987; McQuail, 1993 in Walgrave&VanAlest 2006:97).

The other mechanism of parties and candidates to influence the media agenda in electoral contexts is through their use of different ways of communication which are close to the public. Semetko(1996 in Walgrave&VanAlest 2006:97) points out that “parties and candidates bypass the media by directly targeting the public with ads, flyers, canvassing, and in some countries, free air time on the public broadcaster.”

It has been indicated so far that election campaign periods are times when the influence of political sources over the media agenda is stronger. However, the media have still a decisive part to play that can affect the outcome. In relation to this, Butler, (1998); Vanpraag&Brants, (1999) in Walgrave&VanAlest 2006:98) affirmed:

That the media’s political agenda setting role in election campaigns is limited does not imply that they do not affect the outcome at all. The media can follow the agenda of party A more closely than that of party B, give more attention to issue X than to issue Y. The agenda setting power of journalists in election times lies more in their discretion to include or exclude information of political actors than in their autonomous selection of issues.

### **2.3 Legal frameworks for the media and election**

#### **(Global, Continental, Regional and National)**

Lloyd (2010: 5) claims that the media has a critical role to play during elections in facilitating participation by citizens and in enabling voters to make informed choices.

Frere (2010) claims that the media sector's political and economic environments as well as its structure play a key role in the manner the media cover the elections. She further describes election period coverage as follows:

Elections are a perilous period for journalists the world over, since they generate heightened political pressure, an increase in the number of manipulation attempts, and the need to work hastily. If newsrooms also face material and financial difficulties and a shortage of competent staff at a time when citizens expect the media to be ubiquitous, journalists' work can soon become incomplete or unbalanced (Frere 2010:9).

Lang & Ward (2004: p.203 in Frere 2010:9) assert that where the media environment is unstable, covering elections according to the principles of equal access and non discrimination can become very problematic.

In fact, the operation of media particularly during elections requires an environment conducive to play its ultimate role. The UN and its associated organizations as well as various international organizations working on media, like Article 19 and Reporters without border designed standards and guide lines for election coverage and the utmost use of freedom of expression. There is a great similarity among these standards and guide lines due to the fact that they all make article 19 of the UDHR of the United Nations their hub.

### **2.3.1 Global declarations and conventions**

Lloyd (2010) asserts that a number of international standards relate to freedom of expression and/or elections. The following standards set by the United Nations or associated organizations, as Lloyd (2010) claims, are relevant to freedom of expression and/or detail rights to free and fair elections:

### **2.3.1.1 The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (adopted in 1948)**

Article 19 of the UDHR of the United Nations is usually regarded for its provision of freedom of expression. It states:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

Article 21 deals with elections and participation in government:

- “Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- “Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.
- “The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.”

### **2.3.1.2 International Covenant on Civil and political Rights**

**(enacted by the UN in 1976)**

In its article 19, the CCPR declares:

- “Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference;
- Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.
- The exercise of the rights (in paragraph 2, above) may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only such as are provided by law and are necessary:

- a. For respect of the rights or reputations of others;
- b. For the protection of national security or of public order, or of public health or morals”

**2.3.1.3 Declaration on fundamental principles concerning the contribution of the mass media to strengthening peace and international understanding, the promotion of human rights and to countering racism, apartheid and incitement to war (adopted by the general assembly of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-UNESCO in 1978)**

Article 2 of this Declaration states:

“Access by the public to information should be guaranteed by the diversity of the sources and means of information available to it, thus enabling each individual to check the accuracy of facts and to appraise events objectively. To this end journalists must have the freedom to report and the fullest possible facilities of access to information. Similarly, it is important that the mass media be responsive to the concerns of the peoples and individuals, thus promoting the participation of the public in the elaboration of information ...”

While Article 4 states:

“If the mass media are to be in a position to promote the principles of this Declaration... it is essential that journalists and other agents of the mass media, in their own country or abroad, be assured of protection guaranteeing them the best conditions for the exercise of their profession.”

Article 11 requires member states to guarantee favorable conditions for the mass media.

#### **2.3.1.4 The Windhoek Declaration on promoting an independent and pluralistic African press (adopted by the general assembly of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization-UNESCO in 1991)**

In its article 9 this declaration states:

- 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.
- By an independent press, we mean a press independent from governmental, political or economic control or from control of materials and infrastructure essential for the production and dissemination of newspapers, magazines and periodicals.
- By a pluralistic press, we mean the end of monopolies of any kind and the existence of the greatest possible number of newspapers, magazines and periodicals reflecting the widest possible range of opinion within the community.”

### **2.3.2 Continental, Regional and National Frameworks**

#### **2.3.2.1 The African Union**

According to Lloyd (2010), the African union has adopted various protocols and charters to handle elections conducted in the African soil peacefully. However, because quite considerable numbers of states have not signed some of the charters, the union has passed a resolution that calls for urgent ratification.

Some of the charters Lloyd has mentioned are:

**The African Charter on Human and peoples' Rights (adopted 27 June 1981),** which in its article 9 mentions freedom of expression, and deals with election in its article 13 reads as follows:

Article 9,

- “Every individual shall have the right to receive information.”
- “Every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinions within the law.”

Article 13,

- “Every citizen shall have the right to participate freely in the government of his country, either directly or through freely chosen representatives in accordance with the provisions of the law.”
- “Every citizen shall have the right of equal access to the public service of his country.”
- “Every individual shall have the right of access to public property and services in strict equality of all persons before the law.”

**African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007),** which Lloyd affirms that very few members of the AU have signed but even “fewer ratified” is the other charter enacted by the union. “This charter high lights the importance of access to information in a democracy,” claims Lloyd (2010:11) and it states:

“(State parties shall) promote the establishment of the necessary conditions to foster citizen participation, transparency, access to information, freedom of the press and accountability in the management of public affairs.” (Article 2:10)

“State parties shall ... ensure fair and equitable access by contesting parties to state controlled media during elections.” (Article 17:3)

**Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa (adopted by formal resolution by the ACPHR in 2002)**

“This declaration expands on the rights to freedom of expression outlined in the African charter and outlines a number of principles critical to realizing the rights outlined in the charter” Lloyd (2010:12). It begins with the following code:

Freedom of expression and information, including the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other form of communication, including across frontiers, is a fundamental and inalienable human right and an indispensable component of democracy.

Everyone shall have an equal opportunity to exercise the right to freedom of expression and to access information without discrimination.

It continues to say in Section II:

- “No one shall be subject to arbitrary interference with his or her freedom of expression; and
- “Any restrictions on freedom of expression shall be provided by law, serve a legitimate interest and be necessary in a democratic society.”

Moreover, the declaration includes how these freedoms of expression should be realized. The following provisions are highlighted by Lloyd:

- Whilst no specific clause relates to media during an election period, the Declaration does stipulate that state broadcasters should be transformed into public services accountable to the public and that “the public service ambit of public broadcasters should be clearly defined and include an obligation to ensure that the public receive adequate, politically balanced information, particularly during election periods.” (Principle VI)
- The document also states that freedom of expression “places an obligation on the authorities to take positive measures to promote diversity.” (Principle II)
- A number of clauses relate to broadcasting and the need for a three tier system including public, private and community services. The Declaration further notes that broadcasting and telecommunications regulatory authorities should be independent and “adequately protected against interference, particularly of a political or economic nature” (VII).
- The Declaration states that effective self-regulation is ideal for promoting high standards in the media (IX)
- The Declaration furthermore provides for freedom of access to information and states that “the right to information shall be guaranteed by law” (IV).
- Finally, a range of clauses relate to either abolishing or amending laws or putting in place legislation to further media freedom. For example, the Declaration suggests ways to

ensure that laws relating to defamation do not inhibit freedom of information (Clause XII). It also stipulates that laws that place criminal restrictions on freedom of expression should be reviewed (Clause XIII) and that mechanisms should be put in place for the protection of journalistic sources (XVI).

### **2.3.2.2 Guide lines of the SADC region of Africa**

#### **Southern African Broadcasting Association: ‘Guide lines and principles for broadcast coverage of elections in the SADC region’ 2005**

This guide line was adopted by the CEOs of public broadcasting services from member states of the SADC. It states a set of principles for broadcast coverage of elections in the region. According to Lloyd (2010:17) the document emphasizes the ‘duty of all broadcasters to ensure free, fair and transparent elections.’

As Lloyd (2010) points out the principles commit broadcasters to:

- Ensuring that coverage of the elections will be fair and impartial and that all parties and contestants are treated equitably (Articles 1 and 4)
- Focusing on issues of relevance and interest to citizens and not just events of political parties. This includes an acknowledgement of the need to “proactively seek out information”. (Articles 2 and 4)
- “Regard with caution any statement or action by an ... incumbent party” in view of the risk that a party in power may abuse their position to advance their election prospects. (Article 5)
- Barring staff members who either hold political office or are office bearers with a political party from broadcasting during the election period or participating in editorial decision making. (Article 6)
- Giving candidates and parties the right of reply if a report is inaccurate or includes unfair criticism “based on a distortion of facts”. The guidelines state that such right of reply must be given within 24 hours of the original broadcast and be aired in a program “of similar weight and audience”. (Article 7)

- Guidelines on the reporting on opinion polls (similar to those identified previously).  
(Article 9)

### **2.3.2.3 Guide lines for covering elections in Ethiopia**

#### **The Code of Conduct for the Mass Media and Journalists on the Manner of Reporting about Elections Regulation Number 6/2010 (adopted by NEBE)**

The code of conduct was proclaimed by the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia in 2010. It has eleven articles that state about various points in relation to reporting news of election.

One of the needs to have such a code of conduct, as stated in the preamble, is the recognition of the fact that “the crucial role... the mass media plays in a democratic election by providing information that enhances public knowledge about the electoral process so that voters may make informed choice.”

The objective of the code as stated in article 3 is:

to enable the media houses and journalists contribute their part to the electoral process by communicating political messages from parties and candidates relaying important voter information from election administrators and subjecting the whole election process to independent scrutiny and comment.

In article 6, the code proclaims the responsibility of journalists who are engaged in reporting elections while in article 7 the responsibility of the media is proclaimed. The articles are compiled at the appendix section of this research for further reading.

## **Guide Lines of Media Use for Political Parties in the Fifth National Election (adopted by NEBE& EBA)**

This guideline was enacted by the joint initiatives of National Electoral Board of Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Broadcast Authority prior to election 2015.

Chapter four of the six chapters states about paid political advertisements and election news reporting. According to chapter 4 No.7:

1. Any broadcaster or publisher shall not serve unpaid political advertisement,
2. Interruption for advertisements or programs while parties' campaign is on air shall not be permitted,
3. The charges for political advertisement shall not be more or less than that of a commercial advertisement,
4. Election campaign shall be prohibited on political advertisement.”

Regarding news and reports during campaign periods, No. 8 of the same chapter proclaims:

Every news, reports and programs during campaign period-

1. Shall be free, fair, balanced and accurate
2. Shall be free from promoting candidates or showing support or opposition for a political party running in the election
3. Shall be free from opinions and stands of editors, broadcasters, and publishers
4. While reporting controversial issues among competitive political parties during campaigning, broadcasters or publishers shall be objective, balanced, and unbiased
5. Shall transmit accurate messages in accordance with the election proclamation, electoral code of conduct for political parties, and the code of conduct for the mass media and journalists on the manner of reporting about elections
6. Shall not report or print any news or programs that have contents which state about the decision voters made, and that influences the decision of other voters on Election Day.

## **2.4 Media system and performance in covering politics**

### **2.4.1 In Central and East Europe**

Before the 1990s, most part of this region was known for being the home of the communist political ideology which has its own perspective with respect to the system/structure of media. In some countries of the region the trend has not yet been disappeared. Thus, it still shadows the way the media function. Lange (1999) points out that:

In some countries [in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union], the media situation continues to be characterized by structural monopolies in the electronic media, political and financial dependencies, governmental influence, and a journalistic culture in which bias is too acceptable. In these countries, genuine public broadcasting, private broadcasting and independent print media with a larger penetration, in combination with a professional training system to nurture future journalistic talent, should develop further (Lange 1999:17-18).

On the other hand, Rapid commercialization of the media after 1990 has been one of the most frequently quoted reasons for the apparently flawed democratic performance of the media in the CEE countries, particularly in those where privatization of the news media sector took place at an early stage and to a greater extent (Sparks and Reading, 1998; Lauk, 2008; Balcytiene, 2009 in Jebril et al 2013:10).

Jebril et al (2013:11) states that while the end of censorship, the diminishing of direct political control, and the overall pluralization of the media sector created conditions for the media to effectively aid the democratization process and the creation of the democratic public sphere, the simultaneous process of replacement

of ideological control with marketdriven imperatives has quickly made the goal of serving the public interest secondary to the search for profit.

The Eastern European media's most significant contribution to the initial phases of democratization in 1989–2000 has thus been to serve as examples of and conduits for the newly available political, economic, and cultural options, on the one hand, and as facilitators of political, market, and cultural competition, on the other (Gross, 2002: 167 in Jebril et al 2013:11 ).

The media in Georgia, for instance, was part of the Soviet propaganda machine used as a tool to achieve the goal and objectives of the authoritarian system till the new independent media appeared in the early 1990s (Koplatadze 2004:4). However, with the recognition of freedom of the press by the new government after independence and the fact that freedom of expression have got constitutional guarantees together with the abolition of any form of censorship created a conducive situation to the media to operate freely. Further, the new law regarding freedom of expression following the Revolution of Rose gives the Georgian media “the highest liberal standards” (ibid).

Nevertheless, albeit the liberal legal framework, the media have still faced problems such as “lack of professionalism” among journalists and “undeveloped business side of the media industry.” According to a study conducted in 2003 in the print media and cited in Koplatadze (2004:5) “38% of the examined stories had problems with sources and verification of information; facts and opinions were not distinguished in 50% of the stories; moreover, headlines did not correspond with content in 20% of the stories.”

Koplatadze affirms that because of lack of advertising revenue, news papers are affiliated with certain political groups and parties for the financial support they need to sustain (ibid).

Stating the role of the media during the Revolution of Rose, Koplatadze goes on to say media coverage, particularly of TV, set good back ground for the opposition to demand the resignation of the then incumbent president. Furthermore, he quotes the then opposition leaders, who admit that the independent TV stations were their unique ally, to describe the strong influence from the media (ibid).

#### **2.4.2 In Latin America**

Latin American nations have been in continues pressure to build a media system that work in accordance with the public interest. Due to the legacy of the colonial and authoritarian periods as well as local politics and globalization of recent times, the development of Latin American media is hindered. Accordingly, the demand for strong public media that grounds on public interest purposes reached at its climax (Matos 2008, Fox and Waisbord 2002 in Matos 2011:178 - 179).

The Brazilian broadcasting system, for instance, had been characterized by the control of wide shares of the market by a few companies for a long period of time, while public (state) TV channels were possessed by “sectors of the church and oligarchic politicians” (Matos 2008, 2011: 179). It is from this fact that the system has exhibited political control and limited regulation (Matos 2011:180).

As fox (in Matos 2011:182) states, critics in a meeting sponsored by UNESCO to discuss national communication policies condemned the Latin American media as surrounded by various problems, particularly by the absence of public services and channels of popular participation.

According to Waisbord (undated:1) though some changes are observed, Latin American press have been characterized by ‘structural’ diversity, which is related to ownership & regulation, and ‘performance’ diversity, the practices and content produced by news organizations. Waisbord labels these two as “important to promote media democracy.”

He further points out that “Media diversity is crucial to preserve communicative spaces that limit the influence of governments and large business” (ibid). However, the weakness of media diversity in the region could not help the press to make its greater impact to democratic expression and deliberation (ibid).

Waisbord (undated: 6) asserts that because the old structural obstacles remain in place, governments’ interest is to preserve the status quo, there is no major policy initiatives to reform press system in order to promote diversity and strengthen countervailing forces to state and market powers, a press system that work for the public interest has not been in effect until recently.

Leading newspapers in most countries in the region are controlled by few large corporations. Policies that promote media pluralism have been accepted with little interest from the governments. For instance, “In Peru, the 2004 broadcasting law lacks mechanisms to control executive decisions, promote civic participation, increase transparency of media operations, and defend audience interests.” Rather, new laws and government inaction have facilitated concentration of media ownership (ibid). Legislations passed by governments benefit officials and business allies and protects officials from public scrutiny (ibid). Press systems prioritize the interests of governments and large corporations. The press has not radically changed from lap dog to watchdog journalism (ibid).

As shown by Waisbord (undated:11): “Practicing watchdog journalism has often brought negative consequences such as tightened advertising revenues, restrictions to official events and press conferences, verbal threats, and physical attacks, assassinations and bombings for news organizations.”

In fact, not only the internal political and market powers that hampered the Latin American media from having public spirited system but also the huge influence of commercialization and the introduction of international media corporations exacerbate the search for media that promote civic interests. Matos (2011:180) explains that “from the 1990 onwards, media system in the region came under the influence of media commercialization and the formation of giant global multi-media corporations.”

As to Matos (2011:179), today most governments in the region are striving to bring about change over those “historical deficiency of public communication structures and their misuse in favor of personal/or political interests.”

Most progressive governments in Latin America that have been in power since recently have followed a distinctive approach to media policy that can enhance the performance of the media to play a role in social and economic development (Moraes,2009 in Matos 2011:182).

The governmental attempt of regulation of broadcasting in some states of Latin America clashed with groups who have commercial interest as well as politicians who would like to maintain their interest to use the state (public) media to reach out to voters to gain political support (Fox 1997 in Matos 2011:183). Accordingly, “applying public service ideals” in the media system of most Latin American countries failed. The opposition from media owners was under the banner of ‘limiting free expression’.

To sum up, though the historical legacy of repression, media pluralism problem, unregulated influence of governments and markets, collusion between the state & business, close proximity between official and business interests, turbulent politics, authoritarian censorship, persecution of oppositional media, ensuring positive news through favoring owners with business deals, as well as statelessness have undermined the prospects for a democratic press in Latin America, the demand and struggle for media reform and channels of media participation continues (Matos 2011:183).

### **2.4.3 In South East Asia**

In Singapore, although article 14 (1 a, b &c) of the country's constitution states that every citizen has the right to freedom of speech and expression, the right to assemble peaceably and without arms, and the right to form associations, organized political activities are prohibited by the political donation act enacted by the government in 2000 & 2003. Accordingly, opposition activities are limited; and the scope of unofficial political expression and action are also restricted (Gomez 2005:32).

In fact, this curb excludes groups registered and recognized as political parties or organizations. Nevertheless, even soon after the registration of political parties and organizations, there follow strict financial regulations, including a ban on receiving foreign donations.

Like most countries in the developing world, media ownership in Singapore has been dominated wholly or partially by the government. The two giant corporations, Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) and Media Corp, manage all local print and broadcast media. For instance, Media Corp Radio Singapore owns and operates

twelve local and three international radio stations that reach more than 2.4 million listeners (Gomez 2005:39).

As to Gomez, one salient point about press regulation in Singapore is that the regulatory measures create a tendency towards self-censorship among the media. Consequently, “some local journalists appear to either consciously or unconsciously adopt certain attitudes towards opposition view points and their reporting in the media” (ibid).

Currently, the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts is responsible for formulating and administrating content regulatory policy through the Media Development Authority (MDA).

Opposition politicians and critics complain about political coverage of the public media. Gomez (2005: 43) points out that the imbalanced reporting, especially during election period, characterizes the media. Negative portrayal of opposition parties is usually highlighted disproportionately. However, under the political party broadcast policy, all political parties are entitled to a certain amount of air time before polling day. In actual fact, this is depending on the number of candidates they present during general elections.

According to Gomez (2005:46), prior to the 2001 general election, the Singapore government put rules and legislations in place to limit internet use by political parties. The government justified that limits were necessary as “disinformation could be spread quickly on line.”

During election period not only political parties but also NGOs, operating in the country, are forced to remove any political article from their websites. Therefore, such a broad rule that prevents the publication of information prohibits non-party

political websites and organizations from monitoring the campaign or covering the elections (ibid).

Nevertheless, the current trend of South East Asian countries indicates the shifting of election campaigns from the main stream to the social media sites. For instance, the 2008 & 2013 general elections in Malaysia were driven by social media.

Due to the main stream media's strong favor of the ruling party, usage of the internet as a medium for accessing political information was expanded among the electorate. Opposition parties and social activists also made the online arena their strong hold (Suffian 2013:89-91).

According to an assessment by the local free media advocate quoted by Suffian, '90% of the news content in the mainstream media was in favor of the incumbent while over 80% of any reports on the opposition were negative' (ibid).

On the other hand, in the 2010 and 2013 elections in the Philippines, major political parties used social media (Licudine&Entoma 2013:72-76). This helped them to address 24% of 12.6 million of the registered voters who used the internet, especially 89% or 11.2 million who used social networking sites like Facebook (ibid).

According to a pre-election survey cited by Licudine&Entoma, nearly a tenth (8% or 4.2 million) of the projected 50 million registered voters belong to social networking sites involved in political or social issues; and 3% (1.3 million) follow any elected officials/political candidates/figures on any social networking sites (Licudine&Entoma 2013:78).

Licudine&Entoma (2013:85-87), also assert that social media has not yet reached its full potential as an election campaign tool in Philippines. However, through

social media the people are now more empowered and are able to participate in political and social discourses.

#### **2.4.4 In Central African States**

According to Frere (2010:1), election in post conflict situation in Africa is considered as ‘the last step of a peace process and the first step for establishing a new representative democratic regime’.

The media in six of the Central African countries; Burundi, CAR, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, DRC, and Rwanda is surrounded by various problems. Journalists and their working environment had been filled with obstacles that could impede the ideal role they should have carried out. Frere (2010:1) points out that working in unsafe and economically damaged environment, suffering from the lack of infrastructure, having inadequate equipment and untrained staff, “the media in the region are facing many challenges that are putting limitations to their capacities to play their part in elections, as independent key players, devoted to circulate all the necessary information towards the citizen.”

Examining the role played by the media during elections on the aftermath of decades of civil war and armed rebellion in the region, one can understand that the systems of the media as well as the performance of journalists is quite different from what they should like under a stable condition. As said by Frere (2007 in Frere 2010:2) the unfavorable economic conditions created by wars and conflicts in the region, turned reporters into propagandists, and paved the way for politicians and other groups to control the circulation of information.

In post colonial central Africa, elections were held under “single party regimes” for about three decades. These elections were aimed at renewing and legitimating the

head of state as well as exhibiting the popular support of his political program by the people (Frere 2010:3).

Accordingly, the monopoly of the state on the media made it “all spoke in a single voice.”

In this region, multiparty system and the new private media were seen simultaneously during the 1990s. However, “the new media industry” failed to make products of ideal journalism available to citizens. This was because the media focused more on “promoting or criticizing the political actors” (ibid).

Electoral processes in which the media were supposed to play a central part in informing the citizens carried out under similar milieu in the six nations of central Africa. i.e. the elections were considered as ‘highly symbolic’ for the peace process and thus given attention by the international community, the polls generated great hope in the populations, there was in security in some parts of the territory of the nations, and there were also logistical challenges.

Whether in well established or emerging democracies, media certainly face challenges or obstacles that hamper them from playing their ideal role. In post conflict central Africa the problems were even bigger. Frere (2010) points out about 12 obstacles the media in the region faced to have covered elections held so far; such as 1) the weaknesses of the media enterprises to provide rigorous & complete coverage, 2) the media’s close contacts with the political sphere so as to be the mouth piece of the candidates, 3) the ownership structures of media enterprises that tied them with either the state or political elites, 4) the executive’s influence on public media which was a well anchored tradition, 5) the media’s limited scope which denied millions to “access to balanced & fair information,” 6) press freedom violations with acts of violence and repression of journalists, 7) the

weaknesses of the regulatory authorities as they are “under financed, fragile, inactive, sometimes incompetent, and generally too politicized”, 8) difficulties in accessing information which “lead them to report rumors,” 9) the candidates’ disproportionate means which creates difficulty for the media to have covered the massive and consecutive campaigns of the incumbent organized “at the expense of public resources” and the conditional meetings of the oppositions equally, 10) inflaming discourse from the political candidates which witnessed the inability of journalists to moderate political debates, 11) confusing information and communication by practicing “advertorials”, 12) the lack of professional solidarity-failure to collaborate one another to face such grave problems, were the obstacles brought to light by Marie Soleil Frere.

Frere (2010) claims, that there have been improvements because of the presence and prospects of some opportunities for possible solutions and better developments.

#### **2.4.5 Media and Election in Ethiopia**

The Ethiopian media has undergone several historical moments. Tracing back its root during the reign of Emperor Haile – Selasie I, media had the main purpose of serving the Imperial rule, and idolizing the emperor (Ashenafi 2012:10). In the 1960s once the media system was organized under the Imperial Ministry of information, it could not be a means of development nor could it be in “a position to exercise freedom of expression” in that reign of absolute monarchy (Brook 2000:18 in Jemal 2013:3).

After the down fall of the feudal regime, the media had to adapt itself to the Marxist Leninist political ideology and the soviet communist media theory. Under such a system, the media was strongly controlled by the government, pre-

broadcast/print censorship was tight and common, establishing private media was prohibited.

Broadly speaking, freedom of expression of the United Nations declarations of human rights that was adopted in 1948 had had no room in Ethiopia for more than four decades until the EPRDF led government assumed power in 1991 and included it in the Constitution.

Freedom of expression and of the press, therefore, pays tribute to the FDRE constitution and other regulations enacted by the incumbent. In addition, the abolition of laws and institutions that regulated the publication and free circulation of the press that hampered the media to function properly, and the permission to own all form of media but Television privately are all the fruits of the current government (Ashenafi 2012).

Nevertheless, despite the fact that the Constitutional and legal frame work have been suitable and conducive to the media and journalism, it has been regularly voiced in Ethiopia that pluralistic views cannot be entertained, objectivity, fairness, and balance are also at stake (Jemal 2013:25, Brook 2000 in Jemal 2013:21). Moreover, according to a document prepared by the educational & training centre of the then Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency in 2010, to train 80 journalists of ERTA, unbalanced reporting contributed to the post-election violence in 2005. Further, it is also admitted that “much remains to be done on the human resource side of the media industry to build capacity and professionalism.” The project noted as well that attempts to improve the skills of journalists, “especially in reporting on election issues have so far been inadequate.”

Moreover, according to Media Sustainability Index (2012:133) Ethiopia's scores of 1.25 lay almost in the anti-free-press range.

## **2.5 The formative role of media in elections**

Having normatively ascribed roles of being a forum for pluralistic debate and a mobilizing agent for public learning and participation in political processes, the media should engage in proving its ideal functions particularly during election.

Frere (2010) states that elections offer an ideal opportunity to observe the extent to which a space has opened up in which to voice and discuss critical and contradictory opinions.

Temin & Smith (2002:2) claim that in emerging democracies, as in more advanced ones, the mass media can play a formative role in shaping the public's perceptions about political issues.

Accordingly, Frere (2010) points out the role of media in elections, separating the different times of activities of the process as follows.

In pre-election period media should provide information on the electoral process (electoral registers, voting procedures, etc.), analyze electoral stakes, supervise the implementation of the election (denounce any lack of transparency or rigor), and assess the outgoing government.

During electoral campaigns they have the responsibility of allowing parties and candidates to express themselves, covering the various aspects of the campaign, presenting, criticizing and comparing programs [of parties], monitoring the organization of the election, allowing citizens and civil society to express themselves.

On election-day, the media should also observe and report on voting operations, denounce dysfunctions, publish partial results (if authorized), analyze available data (turnout, etc.), cover accounts given by independent observers.

During announcement of provisional results they announce overall and/or detailed results (and tell citizens where detailed results can be found), analyze results, cover the reactions of the different parties and candidates, and cover any potential demonstrations.

When challenges and appeals arise the media should reveal the reasons behind the appeals and the unfolding of the procedure, announcement of final results, announce / publish the final results, comment on the final results, and cover the various parties and candidates' reactions.

When newly elected representatives take office their role should be covering newly elected authorities as they take office, and reminding newly elected representatives of their campaign pledges.

Outside the election period they inform citizens (fully, honestly and rigorously), monitor the activities of public and private actors on behalf of citizens, and serve as a platform for society's various components as well.

## **2.6 Theoretical frame work**

This research was guided by the public sphere theory of Jurgen Habermas. Habermas defines the public sphere as a "society engaged in critical public debate". As obviously known F.M radios can be modern platforms for public debate and discussions.

According to Benhabib, “the basic ideal belief in public sphere theory is that the government's laws and policies should be steered by the public sphere, and that the only legitimate governments are those that listen to the public sphere.”

In a simple description of the public sphere, Craig (2007:50) points out that it might be described as the forum within which public opinion is shared and formed.

Though critiques mention several limitations of the theory like; excluding significant number of people since it concentrates on the few enlightened personalities, representing the interests of the bourgeoisie as universal and ideal, excluding women, singular focus on the bourgeois public sphere and not considering other groupings, and having excessively pessimistic view about the decline of the quality of democratic speech in late modernity, it still gives greater meaning in assessing the democratic culture of dialogue deliberated by the media to hear and use multitude of opinion and views for nation building (Waisbord:2, Craig 2007:51).

As said by Waisbord (undated: 2) “Public sphere is the communicative space for the formation of public opinion and the promotion of civic interests. The notion of the public sphere remains useful to assess the state of the press in contemporary democracies.”

In emerging democracies, like ours, people need to have a platform from which they obtain information to learn and shape their political life. This in fact can be achieved through free and deliberative circulation of public opinion on the media.

In relation to this Craig (2007:51) states that “The public sphere can be articulated – a neutral arena where information about issues affecting ‘the public good’ is available, regardless of individual rank and free from the domination of the state.” He further goes on to say that the public sphere “holds public deliberation and critical information as central to the democratic process through which citizens scrutinize governments and other powerful actors, identify public demands, and shape policy-making. It draws attention to the role of institutions, including the press, in fostering reflexive and critical publics.”

From this perspective, the press should offer platforms for public dialogue, stimulate conversations on a wide range of public issues, and turn the attention of policy-makers and citizens to matters of relevant public interest.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

This chapter describes the methodology, research design, sampling procedures, and data collecting instrument as well as data processing and analysis used in the study. The chapter also includes a description of the target population. The purpose of this study was to investigate the coverage of the 2015 national election of Ethiopia by Fana F.M, a private radio here in the capital, Addis Ababa. Thus, it explored news articles & programs related to the election, and broadcasted on the medium.

#### **3.1 Approach**

This research followed a quantitative approach that applied content analysis as the main tool for data collection. Therefore, news articles and programs related to the election and broadcasted on the content source, which had aired parties' election campaign, were content analyzed.

#### **3.2 Research design**

The research design is known to be non – experimental, case study. The researcher used quantitative methodology. This was because the study required objective data to be presented in numbers and then inferred to answer the research questions.

#### **3.3 Target population and sampling**

The population and data sources or unit of analysis of this study were media messages in the form of news stories and programs focusing on the election.

The sample selection underwent different stages. First, the ninety seven days of the campaign period, from February 16 – May 21, were stratified under the three months, and then because these months had different number of weeks, the

sample days from which news stories would be taken were proportionally selected to their respective month using simple random sampling technique. However, due to unavailability of the required news on some of the selected days, availability of non-random sampling was used. In addition, the radio station was selected through purposive sampling. Fana F.M radio station was considered because it is the first private FM firm based on establishment and is recognized by the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority to allocate air time for parties' campaign.

Though three political parties were named in the coding sheets due to the fact that, based on the data gained from NEBE, these parties took first to third positions in candidature, all political parties that had been covered on the media studied were included.

### **3.4 Instruments of data collection**

The study used quantitative content analysis as basic instrument for data collection. Content analysis is often stated as a systematic, objective, and quantitative method employed to scrutinize the content of recorded information (Walizer and Wienir 1978; Kerlinger 2000 cited in Wimmer and Dominick 2011:156). With a descriptive content analysis, one can identify what exists (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:158). Moreover, it has also the potential to identify developments over long time periods (ibid).

Riffe et al (2005:22) suggest that scholars have examined content because it is often assumed to be the cause of particular effects. Accordingly, election coverage contents need to be investigated because they are often, though not necessarily, the main causes for the result which gives governmental power to a winning party for a period of at least five years in the Ethiopian context.

Furthermore, the researcher believes that this instrument provided wide opportunity to gather relevant and sufficient data to be analyzed quantitatively. Since the purpose of the study is describing the trend in covering election campaign by the F.M radio mentioned earlier, quantitative analysis of the content transmitted on the medium was vital to have the best out of the data.

### **3.5 Data analysis and interpretation**

The data gathered through content analysis was coded on the coding sheet developed. The coding sheet kept the data in seven analytical categories obtained from UNDP (2014); Article 19 (1997); and Reporters without Boarder (undated) as well as Chibita (undated).

These include volume of coverage through which evaluation of the air time share of political parties was analyzed, tone of coverage that involved the analysis of the mood that the coverage hold in it, issues coverage which discussed the agendas focused in the news stories and programs, prominence that enabled to analyze whether the political parties were approached directly or indirectly while reporting the news, accuracy and Balance where the accuracy of the news stories with respect to news sources and involvement of concerned bodies were examined, access to the media which exhibited the number of political parties covered and served in the news stories or programs by the media, and right of reply & compliant process by which the medium's handling of parties or candidates rights to respond to or correct any misrepresentations occurred was scrutinized.

These categories are comprehensive. According to UNDP (2014); Article 19 (1997); and Reporters without Boarder (undated) and other regional, continental and transnational professional organizations, media should serve in accordance

with internationally accepted norms and standards in covering elections to have a free, fair and democratic voting.

It is, therefore, these seven points at the heart of the norms and standards which are accredited worldwide. As a result, the researcher meticulously analyzed and interpreted the data using percentages in the next section before conclusions and recommendations for further investigation were suggested at the end.

### **3.6 Reliability and Validity**

Reliability and validity are important concepts in content analysis. Accordingly, inter-coder reliability check was done in this research using Holsti's formula,

$$\text{Reliability} = 2M / (N1 + N2),$$

where  $M$  is the number of coding decisions on which two coders agree, and  $N1$  and  $N2$  are the total number of coding decisions by the first and second coder, respectively (Wimmer and Dominick 2011:172).

In fact, the coding was done by two trained coders one of whom works in the media industry and knows the issue well and the other was the researcher. The two coders gather the data by thoroughly listening to the news stories and programs.

As a result, the inter-coder level of agreement was more than 90%, which indicated the existence of adequate reliability. Likewise, due to the accuracy of the measurements, the careful selection of samples, and the high inter-coder reliability, the validity was also high.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

This fourth chapter of the study concerns the presentation, analysis and discussion of results revealed. The main goal of this paper was to study the coverage of the 2015 national election during campaign periods on Fana FM. Accordingly, news articles and a talk show program called ‘Mogach’ which means Challenge, that was intended to inform and educate voters for meaningful choice among parties as well as to enable political parties to express themselves and introduce their optional policies, were content analyzed. To collect the required data for the study, two coding sheets were developed for the two targeted products of the media. A coding guide /protocol/ was also formulated in order to have a clear understanding of the elements included in the coding sheets. In addition, the coding sheets were organized under seven analytical categories which are, according to UNDP (2014); Article 19 (1997); and Reporters without Boarder (undated), assumed to be internationally accepted guidelines for the media to cover elections so as to play their deliberative role in accordance with the principles of journalism.

The results of the data are presented under their corresponding category and followed by analysis and discussion. The discussions of results are done using numbers and percentages. Tables and graphs/charts are used to present the data.

#### **4.1 Data gathered from the news stories**

##### **4.1.1 Access to the media with frequency of coverage**

During campaign periods the volume of coverage of elections has a powerful effect on the outcome of that election (Ward et al 2014: 11). It magnifies a particular party and sticks it in to the hearts of voters or diminishes it so as to be not

remembered. Accordingly, political parties which had been given access to the media and the frequency of coverage was as follows.

Table 1: Access to the media with coverage frequency

S.N	Party	Coverage frequency NN=27	
		In NO.	In %
1	EPRDF	9	17
2	EDP	8	15.1
3	FORUM	8	15.1
4	UDJ	7	13.2
5	BLUE	4	7.5
6	CUD	4	7.5
7	ERP	3	5.7
8	NEW GEN.	3	5.7
9	AEUO	2	3.8
10	EDUM	2	3.8
11	AAPO	1	1.9
12	AOPDP	1	1.9
13	EJDF	1	1.9

Within the news articles taken from the 27 days selected as sample, 13 political parties had access to the media. As shown in the table above, in terms of frequency, most news articles (17%) talked about the incumbent EPRDF. Infact, opposition parties like EDP and Forum which constituted 15% of the news articleseach have also been covered almost similar to the incumbent. Though the frequency of coverage for the UDJ party constituted the third biggest with 13.2%, the rest nine parties had been covered with low frequency, below five, and together made up (39.7%) of the coverage which was less than even the first three opposition parties total coverage which was (43.4%). Consequently, though the attempt of Fana F.M to serve such amount of parties was encouraging, the coverage among parties was varied (not only between the incumbent and oppositions but also among the oppositions themselves). Thus, equitable access to the media should be offered to the political parties contesting in the election.

In an attempt to assess themedia’s current trend of coverage of election related news during campaign periods, which range from February to mid May, the following data was obtained.

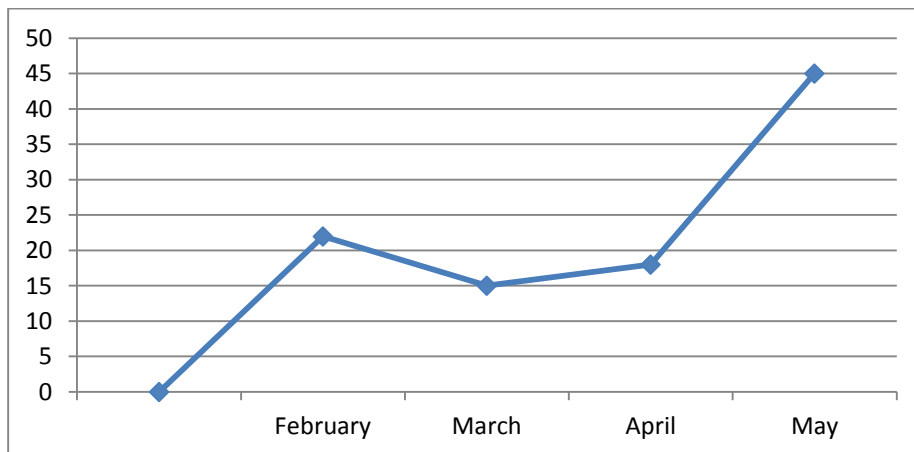


Figure 1: News coverage distribution during campaign periods in percentage

As the graph depicts, high volume of news (45%) was produced in May when the competition reached at its climax. It is also noted that the beginning period of campaign, February, holds (22%) of the coverage. However, the coverage of election during March and April with 15% and 18% respectively was low. Therefore, the current trend confirmed that the beginning and the end periods of campaign are the busiest period for election coverage. Moreover, the study has found out that not only the quantity but also the diversity of election news was highest particularly on the verge of Election Day. However, since there were a lot of issues that should be raised and transmitted to the electorate, consistent and evenly distribution of news, at least within the campaign periods, should have been realized.

#### 4.1.2 Tone of coverage

Once access to the media is achieved by parties, how they are expressed on the media would be the next question. Regarding this point, the tone of coverage obtained from the sample data is presented below.

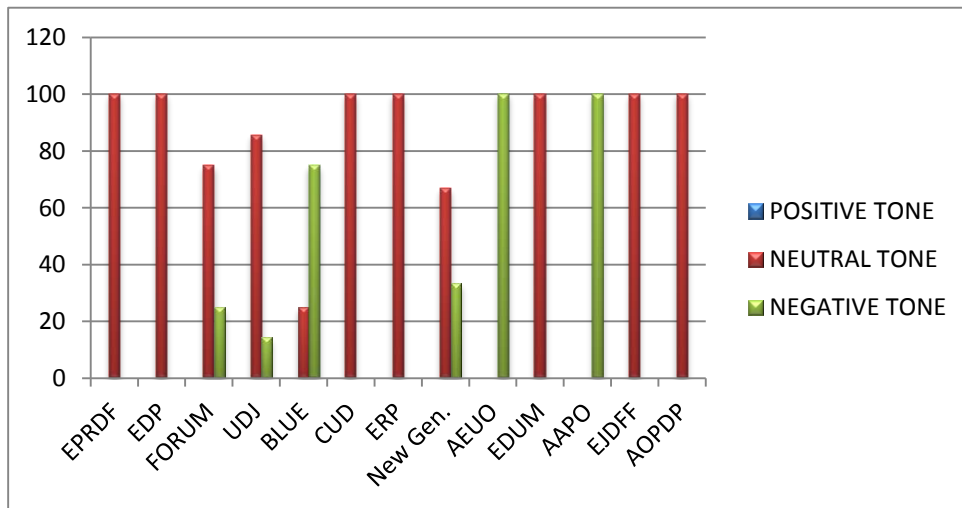


Figure 2: Tone of coverage among political parties

As depicted in the graph, no party was covered in positive tone in the news. The media maintained, in most of the news (81.1%), its neutral position. However, six of the political parties received negative tone in the news they were covered. For instance, in three(75%) of the four news Blue party was covered, the tone was negative. Parties like AEUO and AAPO which were respectively appeared twice and once in the news, covered with negative tone all in all (100%). One third of the coverage went to the negative tone for New Generation party (33.3%); Forum and UDJ also were covered with negative tone in 25% and 14.3% of the news they were covered. In fact, when there was news that portrayed political parties negatively, the response of the concerned parties on the issue should have also been heard about. Nevertheless, the concerned parties had not got the chance to admit or deny the allegations; and the audience might be left with any hesitation.

#### **4.1.3 Prominence**

This section of the coding sheet aimed at finding out how political parties were addressed. Since direct and indirect coverage increase and decrease the degree of prominence of a political party by the voter, it is advantageous to see whether parties were quoted directly or indirectly.

Table 2: Number of times parties quoted

Party	Quoted directly		Quoted indirectly	
	In No.	%	InNo.	%
EPRDF	8	88.9	1	11.1
EDP	7	87.5	1	12.5
FORUM	6	75	2	25
UDJ	4	57	3	43
BLUE	1	25	3	75
CUD	4	100	0	0
ERP	3	100	0	0
New Gen.	3	100	0	0
AEUO	0	0	2	100
EDUM	2	100	0	0
AAPO	0	0	1	100
EJDFF	0	0	1	100
AOPDP	0	0	1	100

The data in the table revealed that four of the thirteen political parties, (30.8%) which are all opposition parties, quoted directly in all their appearance on the media. They were represented by either their presidents, as often, or by their public relation officers. On the other hand, however, four of the other parties, (30.8%) which are all opposition parties as well, addressed indirectly. They were not able to voice their stand by themselves regarding the theme presented. The rest, five

political parties that account (38.5%) of the parties such as Blue (75%), UDJ (45%), Forum (25%), EDP (12.5%) as well as the incumbent EPRDF (11.1%) quoted indirectly in the news heard. In most cases Fana F.M used to present news stories with direct involvement of the concerned parties. Parties’ leaders or public relations officers were directly addressed. This trend needs to develop because it maintains the credibility of the source and the station as well.

#### 4.1.4 Issue Coverage

In the section of the literature review, it was stated that agenda setting role of the media would be snatched by politicians with their excessive & strong effort to attract voters at least during campaign periods. However, one or the other way, the message (issue) is more important here. Since voters are waiting eagerly to identify the party of their choice, they follow media messages particularly during campaign periods desperately. Accordingly, the issues broadcasted on the media need to be checked. Therefore, taking this in to account, the following data was collected.

Table 3: Nature of reported news in percentage

News nature		Content		Theme	
Descriptive	Analytical	Contending parties	Electoral process	Diverse	Specific
77.8	22.2	33.3	66.7	22.2	77.8

According to table 3, most of the news stories (77.8%) were descriptive than analytical. News stories heard with analysis constituted (22.2%) of the total news analyzed. In terms of content again, most news (66.7%) was about electoral processes. These were about to inform what had been done to make the election free and fair, the preparation of polling stations, what voters registration and

candidature looked like, distribution of voting materials etc. News stories dedicated to contending parties to reveal who they were, what promises they had including whether the incumbent had kept the previous promise or thrown away after the election, together with its new promises were not raised in the news sufficiently. In terms of theme, 77.8% of the news was specific to single issues. Whereas, 22.2% of the news was conveying multiple theme both about the process of election and contending parties.

Mean while, among the specific issues covered during the course of the campaign nine dominant agenda could be presented in figure 4, below.

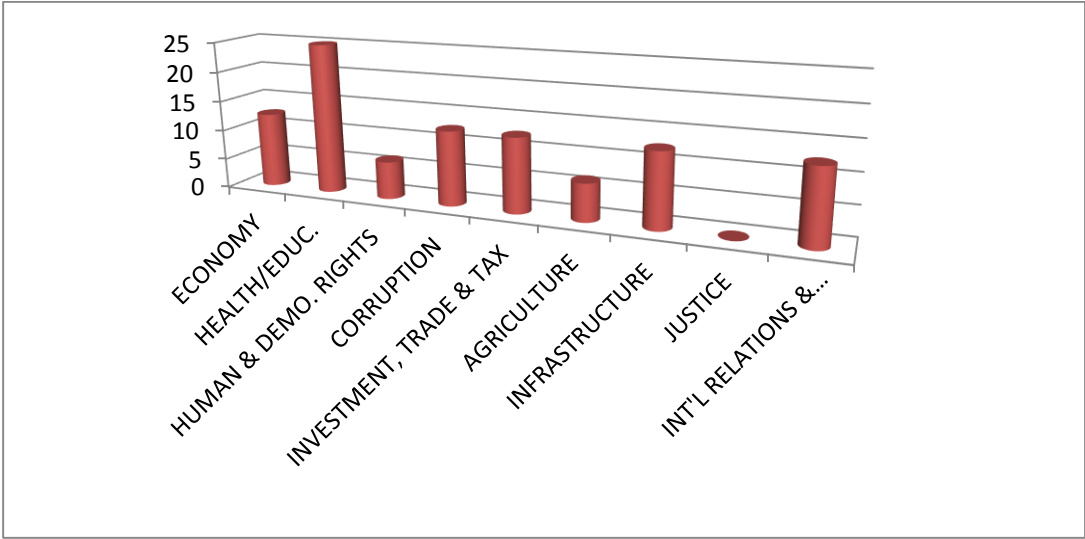


Figure 3: Issues Coverage in %

As the figure illustrates, health & education took most time of the news with 25% of coverage. Other issues like economy, corruption, investment trade & tax, infrastructure, and international relations & national security were covered with 12.5% of the coverage for each. Although justice was not found to be the issue of

coverage during those investigated days, human & democratic rights as well as agriculture took their lesser share with 6.3% of coverage.

### 4.1.5 Accuracy and Balance

This category was intended to gain data related to how accurate the media was while gathering information about electoral issues. Therefore, story sources who deliver the news are worthy to be found out. On the other hand, balance is one of the guiding principles of journalism. Particularly, in a democratic election coverage not only that but also the rights of citizens & parties for balanced coverage of election need to be known, and therefore, this data was gathered initiated by the points raised so far.

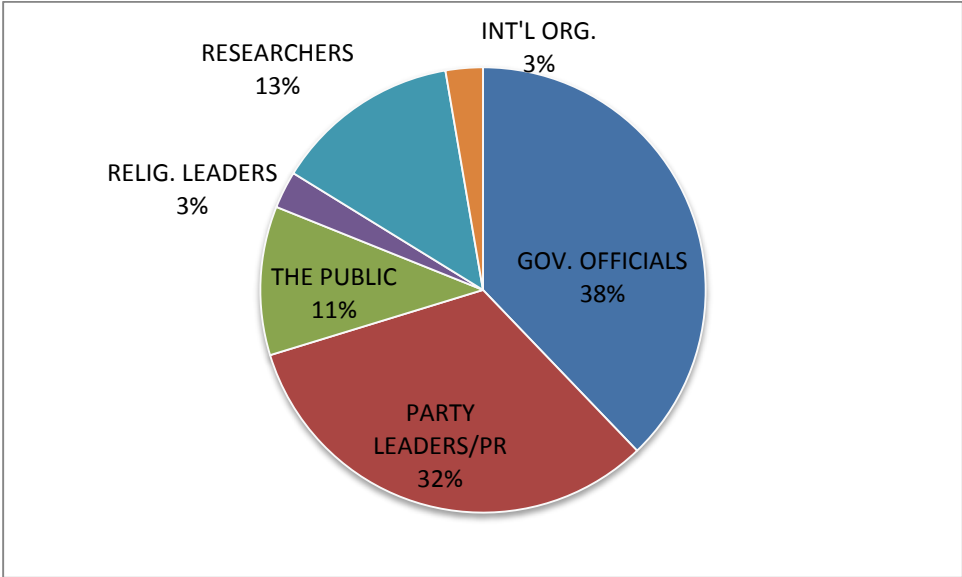


Figure 4: Story sources in %

The data in the figure above shows that government officials including electoral board officials account 37.8% of the total news sources. Party leaders and/or their public relations officers constitute 32.4%, the second highest origin of news stories during the campaign periods. Scholars particularly researchers of political science

and civics also contributed for 13.5% of the news covered. The public with 10.8%, religious leaders and international organizations each were also served as source of information for 2.7% of the news.

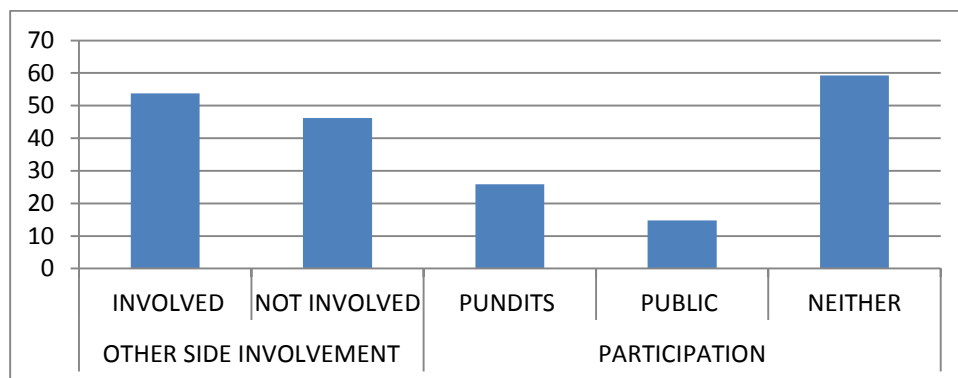


Figure 5: Degree of involvement of concerned bodies

On the other hand, the degree of involvement of concerned bodies /parties in a respective story and participation of pundits and the publicis also shown in the figure. Consequently, the figure depicts that 53.8% of the news stories involve the other side that the stories concern. In fact, in 46.2% of the stories concerned bodies /parties could not be included/ heard. Regarding participation in the news stories, pundits constituted 25.9% and the public accounted for 14.8% while neither participated in most of the news stories (59.3%).

#### 4.1.6 Right of Reply

Right of reply of, particularly, political parties /candidates for any news that was claimed “misrepresenting” is one of the areas worth investigating to check the media’s coverage of election. As a result, though the point included in the coding sheet and searched for any news having right of reply of a complainer no result/data could be found.

## 4.2 Data gathered from the program ‘Mogach’

The other mechanism Fana F.M employed to inform and educate voters about the election was a weekly talk show program known as ‘Mogach’ which means challenge. In this program political debates and discussions held frequently. It is usually aired on Sundays for about two hours and more during the campaign periods. particularly during election periods Fana FM arranged a 3 month special program where political parties, both the incumbent and opposition parties met and disclosed their ideology, their position on various social, economic and political aspects etc. In addition, this program was open for the public’s participation. As a result, the program became the other side of this study which would like to answer questions related to the deliberative role of private media on political debates and discussions. Accordingly, like the news articles, volume of coverage, issues discussed, frequency of coverage by political parties, public participation were analyzed quantitatively.

### 4.2.1 Access to the media

The program hosted thirteen political parties including the incumbent EPRDF. The political parties participated in the forum with the total time they took is presented below.

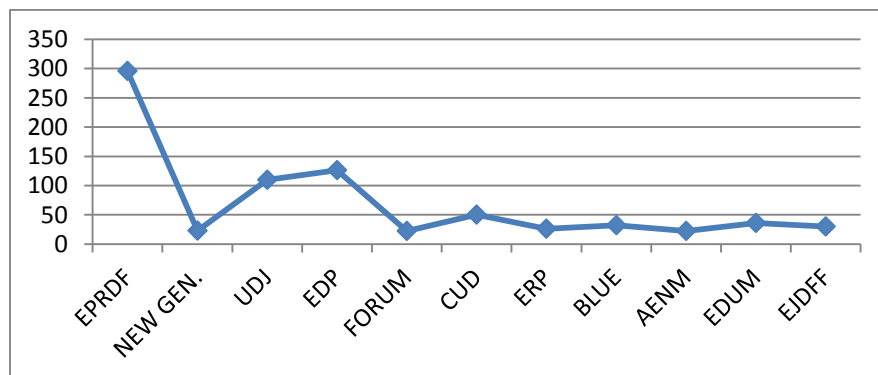


Figure 6: Air time used by political parties in min.

Table 4: Air time taken by political parties on ‘Mogach’

Party	In minute	In %
EPRDF	296	30.39
NEW GEN.	23	1.5
UDJ	110	10
EDP	126	14
FORUM	22	1.5
CUD	50	3.3
ERP	26	1.7
BLUE	32	2.1
AENM	22	1.5
EDUM	36	2.4
EJDFF	30	2

According to the data above, the incumbent EPRDF accessed the media most (30.39%) while opposition parties like EDP and UDJ covered with 14% and 10% coverage of ‘Mogach’. The rest ten opposition parties together constituted 16%, which is much less than the coverage of the other two opposition parties mentioned earlier (24%). Therefore, media access among the opposition themselves inclined considerably.

Table 5: Incumbent opposition air time share on ‘Mogach’

Air time used	In min.	In %
By the incumbent	296	32.9
By the opposition parties	477	53
By the presenter	127	14.1

In fact, as table six indicates, the aggregate air time access by the opposition parties accounted 53% out of the total time allotted in ‘Mogach’, while EPRDF alone took 33% of the total time offered. The rest 14% was taken by the presenter to facilitate the program.

#### 4.2.2 Coverage frequency

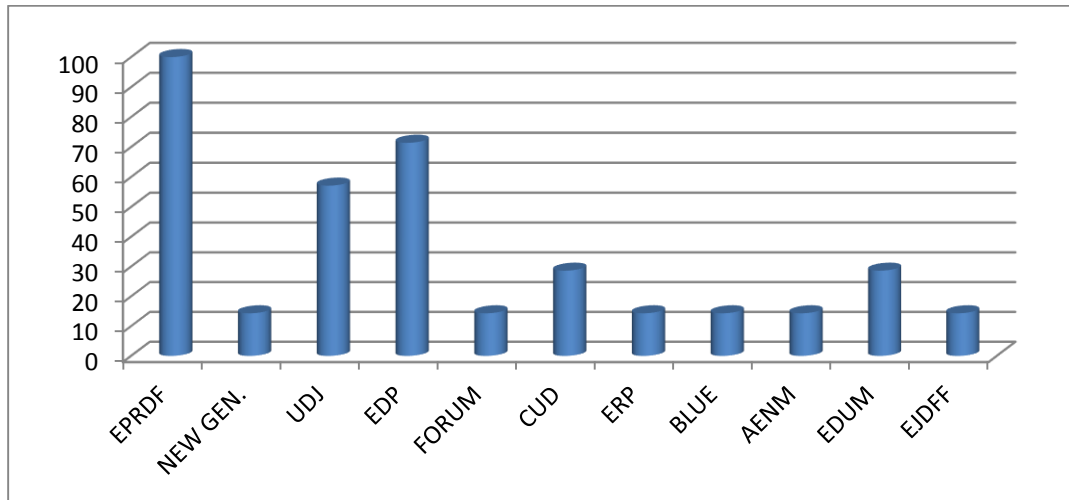


Figure 7: Coverage frequency in %

Table 6: Presence of political parties for debate/discussion in 'Mogach'

Party	Presence of parties N= 7	
	In number	In %
EPRDF	7	100
NEW GEN.	1	14.3
UDJ	4	57.1
EDP	5	71.4
FORUM	1	14.3
CUD	2	28.6
ERP	1	14.3
BLUE	1	14.3
AENM	1	14.3
EDUM	2	28.6
EJDFF	1	14.3

With respect to frequency of coverage, as indicated in the table, the incumbent EPRDF led the group with its presence in all (100%) of the debates and discussions organized on 'Mogach'. Among the opposition, EDP accounted the highest (71.4%). Other opposition party which was accustomed to the forum with 57.1% appearance was UDJ. The rest five parties like Forum, ERP, Blue, AENM, and EJDFF voiced only once and constituted 14.3% of presence on 'Mogach' while CUD and EDUM visited the studio on two occasions to confirm their 28.6% presence.

‘Mogach’ was presented in three parts. It has introduction, in detail analysis and answering/summary phases. The air time used by each of these parts could say something on the trend of the program. Consequently, the figure below presented it.

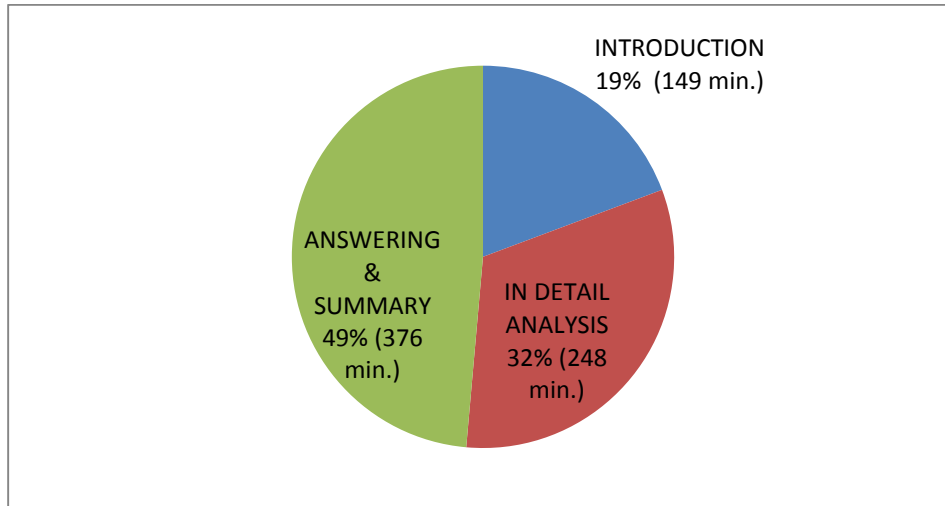


Figure 8: Air time taken by the three parts of the program

The figure demonstrates that 19.3% (149 min.) of the air time was dedicated to introduction when parties introduce their initial ideas on the subjects discussed. The analysis period of the program took 32.1% (248 min.) of the time. In this section parties presented their position and attempted to clarify their stand. Much time of the program (48.6%) or (376 min) was reserved for answering questions forwarded from the public and the presenter. The time distribution for the three divisions of the program was reasonable. Since the public participation in requesting clarification of ideas not understood had been immense, it was fair that most time was allotted to the last section of the program.

### 4.2.3 Issue Coverage

‘Mogach’ was held, for its most part, after topics were selected by the mutual consent of political parties who took part in the discussion /debate/. Therefore, the issues covered and the air time taken to discuss the themes, are presented below.

Table 7: Issues discussed on ‘Mogach’ with air time they took

Issues discussed	Air time given/hour/	In %
Peaceful & democratic election	1:46	11
Parties’ ideologies	1:36	10
Multi party system, human & democratic system in Ethiopia	1:56	12
Agriculture & rural development	2:39	18
Education	2:43	18
Health	2:19	16
International relations & national security	2:00	15

The table depicts that Education (18%), Agriculture and rural development (18%) as well as Health (16%) issues were discussed most. Being highly related to the needs of citizens and the economy of the country the themes had to be dominant. The other themes discussed on ‘Mogach’ took 15% for international relations and national security, 12% for multi party system, human & democratic rights in Ethiopia, 11% for peace full & democratic election, of the coverage time. The issues together with the allotted time with their respect enabled the parties to pass their position to the public; and the public to make informed decision.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter deals with the summary of the study, conclusions of findings and possible recommendations for further investigation on the area.

#### **5.1 Summary and conclusions**

The research has so far been attempted to assess the coverage of election during campaign period on Fana F.M 98.1 radio in relation to the 2015 national election of Ethiopia. The basic driving forces to focus on the coverage of election were to investigate the volume of coverage, examine the trend of coverage, identify the mechanisms used by the station to educate voters, assess the extent to which the public sphere was arranged, and evaluate the extent to which political discussion & debate was deliberated on the private media. All these are to lay foundations for free public participation to voice their interest and influence governmental policy to assure strong democratic culture among citizens and build a democratic nation.

To back up the research with adequate theoretical and practical works, related literature has been discussed in detail. In the review of literature attention was given to the media politics & the media democracy nexus and the role and performance of media in election to create informed voters as well as to serve parties pass their messages to the public.

The research was conducted using quantitative method. News stories and a talk show program held during election campaign periods on Fana F.M were content analyzed. The analysis was done after developing a coding guide that governed the coding process. Coding sheets for both the news & the program were also

developed. As the coding sheets were arranged in seven analytical categories, the analysis also went on following those categories.

The data gathered through content analysis was presented in percentage with in tables and figures; it was then analyzed accordingly.

Based on the findings gained from the research, the following conclusions are drawn.

Fana F.M radio station covered the 2015 national election mainly in two ways. One was through reporting follow up stories in the day to day news stories, and the other was through a discussion and debate program called 'Mogach'. The news stories covered 13 political parties in different times of the campaign periods with a total of 2hours news time while 'Mogach' featured 11 political parties in the debate and discussion of national & international issues which took 15 hours. Both the incumbent and the opposition parties had got access to the media on Fana F.M besides their direct free air time access allotted by the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority. These political parties, however, were covered with irregular frequency that favors for the incumbent EPRDF which appeared in many news stories and all the debate programs. The frequency varied not only between the incumbent & the opposition but also among the opposition themselves. There were opposition parties who were almost equal to the incumbent; and others were almost left behind. Moreover, it was revealed that news coverage during the period was concentrated around the verge of the election.

The tone of coverage was neutral in the majority of the news. However, though no party was covered in the positive tone, half of the opposition political parties were covered with negative tone in varying degrees.

Issues covered during the target period were mainly about electoral processes than about contending parties and their optional policies. In addition, most news were descriptive than analytical. Therefore, detail information or analysis of the parties or even the processes of election were not achieved.

Most parties featured directly in the news while a few could not. They were also used as the second largest sources of the stories. However, the dominant sources of the news were government officials; International organizations could not be taken as sources except in one incidence.

On the other hand, ‘Mogach’ talk show program was used to deliberate political discussion and debate on the media. Eleven political parties were presented and passed their voice through to the public. The public had got space to participate on ‘Mogach’ through SMS and via telephone calls. Nevertheless, since the participation of the public was indirect (not live), it lacked the flavor of lively influential discussions. If ‘Mogach’ is to be a public sphere, it needs to open a wide space for direct and transparent public involvement/participation to steer political programs and policies of the governing body so that the effort to build firm democratic society and nation will be successful.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

This study targeted the coverage of the 2015 national election of Ethiopia on private broadcast media, Fana F.M. Studies on election coverage are based on/ guided by the principles which are accredited worldwide by international organizations, both political and professional, and play major role to make elections free, fair, balanced, democratic and peaceful. Consequently, the researcher would like to recommend further investigation on the areas related to

public participation in political debates and discussions on the media as well as balanced coverage of elections. Some of these could be:

- The influence of the information and wave of debate & discussion over the media on the public opinion and their decision of voting.
- The interest of the public to participate in political debates and discussions facilitated by the media.
- The challenges and opportunities of facilitating political debates and discussions on broadcast media.
- The awareness of journalists on the guidelines and principles of election coverage.

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## *Appendix I*

### *Coding Guide*

#### *Election Coverage on Fana FM in the 2015 National Election of Ethiopia*

The words, phrases and expressions listed below in bold are taken from the coding sheets and assumed to have the meanings following them.

1. **Analytical news** - The nature of the news story that examines events, facts carefully to show their implication in details
2. **Corruption** - If the story discusses the dishonest, illegal or immoral behavior of the political elites or opaque administration system
3. **Coverage frequency** - The amount of mentions a party received in the news stories
4. **Covered news** - News selected and presented routinely on the media
5. **Critical news** - The nature of the news story that criticizes (makes severe judgments)
6. **Descriptive news** - The nature of the news story as giving a description of events as they are
7. **Diverse** - Whether the news includes 2 and more of the agendas listed in no.9 of the first coding sheet
8. **Economy** - Part of the news story where the movement and exchange of money and goods in the country discussed in relation to the policy of the incumbent or alternatively suggested policy of the opposition parties
9. **Educational background** - The study area/qualification of pundits asked for their opinion on the media
10. **Election related news** - News intended to promote the election, inform the process of election, and about political parties

11. **Human and/or democratic rights** - Whether the news story talks about rights stated as human/democratic in article 14-28 & 29- 44, respectively, of the constitution
12. **International relations and/or national security** - If the story includes the country's relations to other nations in one or multiple ways as well as its measures to protect its interest, territory and citizens
13. **Investment, trade and tax** - Whether the central idea of a news story involve business activities that contribute to the development of the country
14. **Justice** - Where a news story talks about the rule of law or system of judgment in the country
15. **Negative tone** -the negative feeling or attitude expressed in a news story towards a certain party.
16. **Neutral tone** - the impartial feeling or attitude expressed in a news story towards a certain party.
17. **Opinion** - The ideas or beliefs of pundits or the public about the matter discussed in the panel
18. **Positive tone**—the affirmative feeling or attitude expressed in a news story towards a certain party.
19. **Prominence** - The importance attached to a news story/ party as the presentation of details whether by parties themselves (directly) or by journalists (indirectly)
20. **Pundits** - People who knows a lot about a particular subject and invited on the media for analysis/their opinions on it.
21. **Reply** - Answer/response given by a political party/a particular body using its right of reply for “unpleasant” news reported on the media previously
22. **Specific** - Whether the news stories include only one of the agendas listed

23.*Story sources* - Where the information in the news supplied from = the origins /suppliers of information

24.*The public* - Ordinary people or citizens who take part in a discussion on the media to give their opinion through different ways of communication

25.*Tone of coverage* - The general quality, style or mood the news stories create

*Appendix II*

*Coding Sheet 1(for news articles)*

*Election Coverage on Fana FM in the 2015 National Election of Ethiopia*

Coder \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Access to the media*

1. Parties covered in the news

EPRDF\_\_ FORUM \_ BLUE \_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_

2. Coverage frequency/the amount of mentions a party received in the news

EPRDF \_\_ FORUM \_ BLUE \_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_

*Volume of coverage*

3. Air time given to election related news in minutes \_\_\_\_\_

*Tone of coverage*

4.            **positive**                      **neutral**                      **negative**

EPRDF            \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_

FORUM            \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_

BLUE            \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_

Others            \_\_\_\_\_

*Prominence*

5.                      **Quoted**                      **Quoted**  
                                 **Directly**                      **in directly**

EPRDF            \_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_

FORUM \_\_\_\_\_

BLUE \_\_\_\_\_

Others \_\_\_\_\_

***Issue coverage***

6. The news talks about

Contending parties \_\_\_\_\_ Election processes \_\_\_\_\_

7. Covered news was

Descriptive \_\_\_\_\_ analytical \_\_\_\_\_

Critical to the incumbent \_\_\_\_\_ critical to the opposition parties \_\_\_\_\_

8. Issues covered were

Diverse \_\_\_\_\_ Specific \_\_\_\_\_

9. Which agenda is addressed in the news?

9.1 Economy \_\_\_\_\_

9.2 Health & education services \_\_\_\_\_

9.3 Human & democratic rights \_\_\_\_\_

9.4 Corruption \_\_\_\_\_

9.5 Investment, trade and tax \_\_\_\_\_

9.6 Agriculture \_\_\_\_\_

9.7 Infrastructure (Road, electrification, water supply, housing) \_\_\_\_\_

9.8 Justice \_\_\_\_\_

9.9 International relations & National security \_\_\_\_\_

9.10 Other issues (should be specified) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Report/analysis on whether the promises of the incumbent had been kept or thrown away

\_\_\_\_\_ Presented as kept \_\_\_\_\_ Presented as not kept \_\_\_\_\_ not Presented at all

11. Report/analysis on the feasibility/prospect of new promises of the incumbent/opposition parties- \_\_\_\_\_ presented \_\_\_\_\_ not presented

***Accuracy & Balance***

12. Story sources \_\_\_\_\_ rally pronouncement \_\_\_\_\_ Party leaders or PR  
\_\_\_\_\_ Party's pronouncement Researchers & research works  
\_\_\_\_\_ Party manifestos \_\_\_\_\_ stations own reporters  
\_\_\_\_\_ Rallies & press releases \_\_\_\_\_ Government officials

Any other (should be specified) \_\_\_\_\_

13. Any information from the side whom the stories concern  
\_\_\_\_\_ included \_\_\_\_\_ not included

14. The stories involve \_\_\_\_\_ Public opinions \_\_\_\_\_ pundits \_\_\_\_\_ neither

***Right of reply***

15. Right of reply of parties  
\_\_\_\_\_ Presented \_\_\_\_\_ not presented

16. The right of reply was (if presented)  
\_\_\_\_\_ as long as the misrepresentation  
\_\_\_\_\_ shorter than the misrepresentation  
\_\_\_\_\_ longer than the misrepresentation  
\_\_\_\_\_ at similar time as the misrepresentation  
\_\_\_\_\_ not at similar time as the misrepresentation

*Appendix III*

*Coding Sheet 2(for a program known as ‘Mogach’)*

*Election Coverage on Fana FM in the 2015 National Election of Ethiopia*

Coder \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Day & time of the program \_\_\_\_\_

1. The length of the program in minutes \_\_\_\_\_
2. The issue (s) discussed \_\_\_\_\_
3. Name of parties took part in the discussion/debate \_\_\_\_\_
4. Participants were  
\_\_\_\_\_pundits\_\_\_\_\_ the public\_\_political parties
5. Invited professionals’ educational back ground was(if pundits participated)  
\_\_\_\_\_related to the topic discussed\_\_\_ unrelated to the topic discussed
6. The public’s participation was  
\_\_\_\_\_through phone calls presented directly  
\_\_\_\_\_through phone calls presented indirectly  
\_\_\_\_\_using social media  
\_\_\_\_\_text messages  
other ways (should be specified) \_\_\_\_\_
7. Time (in minutes) given for parties
  - 7.1 For introduction  
EPRDF \_\_\_\_\_ FORUM \_\_ BLUE \_\_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7.2 For in detail analysis  
EPRDF \_\_\_\_\_ FORUM \_\_ BLUE \_\_\_\_\_ Others \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7.3 For summary/giving answers  
EPRDF \_\_\_\_\_ FORUM \_\_ BLUE \_\_\_\_\_

## *Appendix IV*

### **Guide Lines for Covering Elections in Ethiopia**

The conduct for the mass media and journalists on the manner of reporting about elections regulation number 6/2010 (adopted by NEBE)

#### Article 6

Every journalist shall:

1. report accurately and without bias.
2. report only fact based information that the journalist knows the origin.
3. not suppress essential information.
4. observe professional secrecy regarding the source of information obtained in confidence.
5. report in a balanced manner. If a candidate makes an allegation against another candidate, the journalist should wherever possible seek comment from both sides
6. do the utmost to correct any published information that is found to be harmfully inaccurate.
7. as far as possible, report the views of candidates and political parties directly and in their own words, rather than as they are interpreted by others.
8. avoid using language or expressing sentiments that may further discrimination or violence on any grounds, including race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins.
9. when reporting the opinions of those who do advocate discrimination or violence, do the utmost to put such views in a clear context and to report the opinions of those against whom such sentiments are directed.

10. not accept any inducement from a political party, candidate or from any other source.
11. not make any promise to a political party, candidate or about the content of a news report.
12. take care in reporting the findings of opinion polls. Any report should wherever possible include the following information:
  - a) who commissioned and carried out the poll and when
  - b) how many people were interviewed, where and how were they interviewed and what is the margin of error
  - c) what was the exact wording of the questions.
13. regard the following as grave professional offences:
  - a) plagiarism
  - b) malicious misrepresentation
  - c) calumny slander libel or unfounded accusations
  - d) acceptance of a bribe in any form in consideration of either

#### Article 7

1. Every media shall make a clear separation between fact and comment. News reporting should reflect the facts as honestly perceived by journalists. Comment may reflect the editorial line of the publication.
2. Every publicly owned media shall not express an editorial opinion in favor of or against any party or candidate.
3. Every publicly owned medium have a duty to be balanced and impartial in their election reporting and not to discriminate against any party granting access to air time.

4. If media houses accept paid political advertising, they shall do so on a non-discriminatory basis and at equal rates for all parties.
5. Every media shall cover news, interviews, information or current affairs programs or articles. The public media shall not be biased in favor of or against any party or candidate.
6. Every media shall provide equitable and regular coverage to all political parties their candidates and platforms.
7. Every media shall encourage and provide access to the voters to express their opinion and views.
8. Every media shall promote democratic values such as the rule of law, accountability and good governance.
9. Every media shall cover any candidate or party that makes a reasonable claim of having been defamed or otherwise injured by a broadcast or publication shall either be granted the opportunity to reply or be entitled to a correction or retraction by the broadcaster or publisher or by the person who made the allegedly defamatory statement. The reply or correction shall be broadcast or published as soon as possible.
10. Every media shall provide news coverage of press conferences and public statements concerning matters of political controversy (as opposed to functions of state) called or made by the head of government, government ministers, or members of parliament shall be subject to a right of reply or equal time rules. This obligation acquires even greater force when the person making the statement is also standing for office.
11. Every publicly owned media shall publish or broadcast voter education material.
12. Every media shall give voter education that is accurate and impartial and must effectively inform voters about the voting process, including how,

when and where to vote, to register to vote and to verify proper registration; the secrecy of the ballot (and thus safety from retaliation); the importance of voting; the functions of the offices that are under contention; and similar matters.

13. Every media shall give voter education that includes programs in minority languages and programs targeted for groups that traditionally may have been excluded from the political process, such as women and people with disabilities.
14. Every media shall monitor their own output to make sure that it confirms to the standards set out in this code of conduct.