

Addis Ababa
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**Framing of the War in Northern Ethiopia: Cable News Network and
Ethiopian Press Agency in Focus**

By

Belay Tessema

January, 2023

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A Thesis Submitted to the School of Journalism and Communication Addis Ababa
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THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

Addis Ababa University

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DECLARATIONS

I, the undersigned, do hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and that it has not been submitted partially, or in full, by any other person for an award of a degree in any other university/institution, and all the references used or quoted have been duly acknowledged.

Name Belay Tessema Signature _____ Date _____

ENDORSEMENT

This thesis entitled “**Framing of the War in Northern Ethiopia: Cable News Network and Ethiopian Press Agency in Focus**” has been submitted to **Addis Ababa University**, College of Humanity Language Studies, Journalism and Communication Studies for examination with my approval as a the candidate’s supervisor.

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Approved by Board of Examiners

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Belay Tessema, entitled: **Framing of the War in Northern Ethiopia: Cable News Network and Ethiopian News Agency in Focus** and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in journalism and communication complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality. Signed by the Examining Committee:

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Chair of Department or Graduate Program Coordinator

ACRONYMS

CNN- Cable News Network

ENDF - Ethiopian National Defiance Force

EPA – Ethiopian Press Agency

TPLF- Tigray People's Liberation Front

U.S. - United State

U.N – United Nations

Operational Definition

Northern Ethiopia- the three regions affected by the war namely Tigray, Afar and Amhara

Law Enforcement – the phrase used by the federal government and federal government affiliated media to describe the war

War/Conflict- ‘conflict’ and ‘war’ are the words that have been used interchangeably to refer to the happenings

Contents

ACRONYMS	5
Operational Definition	6
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	9
ABSTRACT	10
Chapter One	11
1. Introduction	11
1.1Background of the Study	11
1.2 Background of the Selected Media	12
1.2.1 A Brief History of Ethiopian Press Agency	12
1.2.2 A Brief History of Cable News Network (CNN).....	13
1.3 Statement of the Problem	16
1.4 Objectives of the Study	17
1.4.1 General Objective of the Study	17
1.4.2 Specific objectives	17
1.5 Delimitation of the Study	17
1.6 Limitation of the Study	17
1.7 Significance of the Study	18
Chapter Two	19
Review of Related Literature	19
2.0 Introduction.....	19
2.1 Agenda-Setting Theory	19
2.1.1 Defining the concept	20
2.1.2 The processes of agenda-setting	21
2.1.3 Research issues in agenda-setting	22
2.1.4 Examples of research studies within the agenda-setting paradigm.....	24
2.2 The History and Concept of Framing	25
2.3 Typology of News Frames	31
2.3.1 Framing of Situations.....	32
2.3.2 Framing of Attributes.....	33
2.3.3 Framing of Risky Choices.....	33

2.3.4 Framing of Actions	33
2.3.5 Framing of Issues	34
2.3.6 Framing of Responsibility.....	34
2.3.7 Framing of News.....	34
2.3.8 Chapter Summary	35
Chapter Three	36
Research Methodology	36
3.1 Research Design.....	36
3.2 Sampling Technique	37
3.3 Sources and Types of Data.....	37
3.4 Data Presentation and Analysis.....	37
Chapter Four	39
Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis.....	39
4.1 Framing of the beginning and Early Phase of the conflict.....	39
4.2 Framing of Mekelle’s Capture by the ENDF and the June Incidents	43
4.3 Framing of the 3rd wave of the conflict.....	47
4.4 EPA’s Framing of the Early and Medieval Stage of the Conflict.....	51
4.5 EPA’s Framing of ENDF Gains in Tigray.....	56
Chapter 5	61
Conclusions and Recommendations	61
5.1 Conclusions.....	61
5.2 Recommendations.....	64
Reference.....	65

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ABSTRACT

The news of the conflict between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and Ethiopia's federal government has got massive attention from the local and global media outlets. Several thousands of people are believed to have been killed in this conflict. We have observed significant amount of differences in the ways followed by various media outlets in reporting the conflict. This study aimed at exploring how Cable News Network (CNN) and Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) covered the conflict. The study was conducted by taking media framing as its underpinning theoretical framework. In doing so, relevant data for the study was gathered by examining the news stories produced by CNN and EPA from November 2020 to November 2021 (actual commencement of the conflict) up to November 2021 (TPLF's influx into Wollo and further expansion to Shoa). This study employed qualitative method as a research design. News stories that were broadcast within the stated time were selected and were analyzed and interpreted to examine types of news frames. The findings of this study showed the media employed various types of news frames to treat their interest. CNN's framing stressed on TPLF war advancement and attribution of responsibility frames while EPA chose framing strategies that magnify TPLF's crimes. This study determines that CNN employed several framing techniques that would harm the coexistence of people and puts endorsements on how to improve the gaps. EPA on its part strongly adhered to combination of framing techniques that position the Ethiopian National Defense Force as protective of the whole Ethiopian population and demonize TPLS. In conclusion, CNN discourses are focused on TPLF military activities and western world interests.

Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The African continent which is home to more than 1.4 billion people according to latest UN estimate hosts blessings and adversaries that capture the attention of the entire world. Poverty, disease and conflict seem to be synonymous with the word “Africa” in the eyes of Westerners and Africans themselves to a certain degree. It is undeniable that the worst tragedies that have ever unfolded in the history of human race one way or the other relate to the continent beginning from the transatlantic slave trade to the modern day tyranny of African despots. The continent has been a playground where repetitive coups are staged, sectarian violence erupt, and recurrent bloodletting claim human lives and cause debilitating aftermaths. The Eastern African subcontinent is the most conflict ravaged area compared to the rest of the continent. Ethiopia is not an exception when the dismal sociopolitical crises which hamper the continent’s multifarious developmental endeavors come under the limelight.

African conflicts are complex as they make ethnicity the core of the problems even though they are initiated and aggravated by economic and political crisis in general. According to (Norman, 2004) examples of these problems in relation to the wars in Angola as well as that of the Democratic Republic of Congo; he contends that the former is financed by Diamond and Oil and the latter is due to economic plunder. Hence, there are sufficient researched evidences to indicate that the community conflict problems in most of the African countries are not merely due to ethnic differences but due to other variables such as political and economic causes which surface the existing ethnic differences.

This thesis mainly focuses on media framing of the law enforcement operation in the Tigray Region, Northern Ethiopia. The researcher selected Cable News Network (CNN) and Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) due to the emphasis both gave to the developments in the course of the major incidents of the conflict. The conflict grabbed the eyes of different local and global media.

Media ideology and their editorial policy are different from country to country and medium to medium their way of news framing may have a chance of misleading others.

Thus, the current study tries to investigate how the chosen media framed the news stories in relation to the major events of the conflict in the northern Ethiopia. The researcher also believes that an attempt to understand how the news stories were framed by the stated media might also help to understand their sphere of influence on the audience's perception of the situation.

1.2 Background of the Selected Media

1.2.1 A Brief History of Ethiopian Press Agency

The Ethiopian Press Agency was founded during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie and was Ethiopia's first print medium. As a result, it serves as a repository of major historical occurrences in the country, as almost every major historical, social, and political milestone attained by the country has been recorded in the newspaper under scrutiny.

The Ethiopian Press Agency is currently operating in six languages: Addis Zemen-Amharic, The Ethiopian Herald- English, Al-alem- Arabic, Barisa- Afaan Oromoo, Bakkalcha , and Wagahata-Tigrigna newspapers. The agency is the sole publisher of the only daily Amharic language newspaper known as “Addis Zemen” in local language. It also publishes “The Ethiopian Herald”, a daily newspaper except on Mondays in English language.

The researcher selected The Ethiopian Press Agency's web news which is published in English. Ethiopian Press Agency also publishes the Ethiopian Herald news paper in English. It was launched as a weekly newspaper in 1943. It was started with the name the Voice of Ethiopia during the emperor and lately changed to The Ethiopian Herald. Herald is the first English news paper owned by black nation in Africa. Due to that many African nations use to produce article on the paper during the war for freedom. Most African freedom fighters that were fighting against the white colonist power back then were using the Ethiopian herald as their own medium. The Ethiopian Herald marked its 78 anniversary recently.

1.2.2 A Brief History of Cable News Network (CNN)

Ted Turner founded the Cable News Network (CNN) in Atlanta in 1980. CNN has since gained a reputation as one of the most important news sources in the international sphere. CNN's 24-hour news format was a significant change in the news industry. Similarly, its online version (CNN.com) provides news stories and extended news coverage. CNN.com is ranked 22 among the most visited websites in the United States, according to web traffic data company Alexa.

CNN was chosen for analysis in this study due to its central role as an agenda-setter in foreign news coverage. "The simultaneous transmission of news from many countries has often made CNN the quickest way to get information about what's happening around the world," writes Shoemaker (1996, p. 48). Several recent studies have shown CNN's impact on foreign policy. In fact, the CNN effect was named after the network's influence (Robinson, 1999).

According to Thusu (2003), CNN and other elite media outlets set the agenda for other news outlets. Thusu affirms that CNN's coverage of the Gulf War in 1991 "brought military conflict into living rooms around the world" for the first time in news history (p. 124). Furthermore, Miladi (2003) claims that the Gulf War transformed CNN into the "eyes and ears of the world" (p. 149). According to Gilboa (2005), the Gulf War was a watershed moment in CNN's history. "CNN's growth and diversification, including the creation of CNN International, have affected many faces of global communications and international relations, such as technology, economics, culture, and law,". CNN's extensive reach and ongoing CNN's website was chosen for analysis in this study as a representative of US/western media because of its wide reach and continued popularity as a news source.

1.2.2.1 CNN as a policy influencer/ CNN Effect theory

Literature has it that the term 'CNN effect' was first formally used during the first Gulf War in 1991 to describe the way that real-time news coverage of foreign stories appeared to affect the decision making of political elites, either directly or through the influence upon domestic audiences. It was defined as a 'generic term for the ability of real time communications

technology via the news media to provoke major response from domestic audiences and political elites to both global and national events' (Robinson, 2002). But versions of this argument that media coverage influence foreign policy had been around already for years.

The distinction which arose in the early 1990s was not just the wider question of media influence upon policy, but specifically the way that real-time live pictures, often transmitted via newly emerging 24 hour news TV channels, might potentially have a role in shaping decision making. (Robinson, 2011) And in recent years this has widened into a consideration of how an ever-changing range of online and social media might influence considerations of foreign policy.

Yet in the period since 1991, as the debates surrounding the CNN effect developed, there have been many further discussions about cases, where retrospectively media coverage may have appeared to have had an effect upon foreign policy or at least prompted action in relation to foreign events. There have been considerable debates between those who highlighted the effects of media reporting upon political decision making and those who downplayed the role of the media (Robinson, 2000).

So the overall term 'CNN effect' subsequently became used retrospectively to analyse the more widespread effects of media coverage upon previous foreign crises, in a period long before the advent of 24 hour real-time news coverage. It is particularly linked to so-called humanitarian reporting and the presentation of extreme suffering as a driver for politicians to react. But the question of how this mechanism might operate, let alone whether there is in fact a causation between pictures of humanitarian distress and policy response is complex and often unresolved.

In fact according to this interpretation versions of a CNN effect (when defined as the wider impact of media upon policy) was already discernible even centuries earlier, where there are examples of press coverage of a crisis stimulating a response to 'do something' among readers and politicians. The Bulgarian atrocities in the nineteenth century are an early example.

In the mid-1870s there was dramatic newspaper coverage of the Turkish slaughter of the Bulgarian Christians, in the reporting of the American journalist A. J. MacGahan for the *London*

Daily News and by W. T. Stead in the *Northern Echo* (Goldsworthy, 2006) These articles prompted former prime minister William Gladstone to produce a famous pamphlet *The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*. And the reporting ultimately inspired Gladstone to return to active politics and to campaign energetically on behalf of the Christian population in order to persuade the British government, in spite of Disraeli's initial indifference, to become involved (Little, 2012). The media coverage of the Turkish atrocities was a critical catalyst in Gladstone's campaign for Western intervention and the establishment of the Christian state of Bulgaria. So although the term was only invented during the first Gulf War in 1991, the phenomenon has been around in different versions for a very long time.

Moreover, the media coverage of the Ethiopian famine in 1984–1985 is one of the best-known examples of humanitarian coverage which is generally assumed to have had an influence and impact upon decisions about aid policy. Although many scholars agree that there is now very often a doubt about the extent of media effects on the overall policy process, in particular the degree to which coverage can result in a military intervention, there has nevertheless been considerable consensus between Robinson and others that in the case of *humanitarian assistance* the media is more likely to have a substantial effect. Despite uncertainty about the way that media coverage might influence wider foreign policy there was some agreement that in the case of stimulating humanitarian action there is a discernable link to the influence of the media reporting of a crisis. Indeed Robinson even calls the Ethiopian famine in 1984 'a seminal case of the CNN effect where media coverage led to an apparent dramatic humanitarian intervention' (2002).

A claim has usually been made that three studies have elevated the debate about the CNN effect to a higher paradigmatic level. O'Neill (1993) suggested for the first time a new paradigm of world politics that accorded global television a decisive and dominant role. He argued that television and public opinion have democratized the world and that CNN's real-time coverage has destroyed the conventional diplomatic system and determined political and diplomatic outcomes. Ammon (2001) and Edwards (2001) also claimed that the media, particularly television, have completely transformed world politics. Both respectively used postmodern terms to describe their new paradigms of media domination: *telediplomacy* and *mediapolitik*.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Media play both a constructive and destructive role in maintaining peace and stability. Basically, their role can take two different and opposed forms. Either the media take an active part in the conflict and contribute for increased violence or stay independent with balanced framing of realities thereby contributing to the resolution of conflict and alleviation of violence, Wondeson (2016: 17).

Obviously, conflicts may result from situations where political, economic and social crisis pose themselves as direct threats, as a result of which, entities who observe the scenario from opposing vantage points would take arms to solve their problems with barrels of guns rather than negotiations. This endangers the peace and security of the host country. Whenever there are conflicts, the media rush to the scene to gather information and present it to their audience in consonance with each media house's intentions embedded in the story rendering. Thus, people receive excess of information about the issue from different directions. Foreign and local media framing of conflicts in Ethiopia remains important because through frames, media define the problems, suggest solutions and attribute responsibilities for solving the problem (Entman, 1993).

Moreover, local media report the situation in their own framing scheme to serve their own interest with different media ideology. There are significant numbers of framing studies conducted on conflict but most of them focus on media representation of foreign conflicts. Therefore, this study will have a strong significance to unveil the framing of local and international media with particular reference to the conflict in the northern part of Ethiopia.

The researcher believes that it is timely to see how the conflict in the northern Ethiopia was projected by the western and local media outlets to attain their intended goals vis-à-vis how things were going on in reality during the events that got media coverage.

The output of this research may serve as a document that would throw some light on the hidden and unexplored realities forged by local and international media those who were actively reporting on the conflict that broke out in the northern part of Ethiopia and lasted for more than 18 months until the final production of this thesis was executed.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective of the Study

The main focus of this study is to examine how the law enforcement operation in the Tigrai has been framed by local and international media.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- To identify the framing type used by the selected broadcasters.
- To examine how the conflict in Tigrai has been portrayed by the selected media organizations.
- To identify the selection they made in reference to events.

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

This study is confined to the investigation of how the law enforcement operation in the Tigrai region has been framed by the selected media outlets. Specifically, it is delimited to the major events of the conflict that had been recorded as major events in the ongoing war.

Taking the advantage of qualitative research which sticks not on generalization but on examining how and why certain issues exist the research focuses on assessing how the two media outlets i.e. CNN and EPA framed the war and issues related to it.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

The current study passed through several ups and downs beginning from its inception. At its early stage the researcher faced a stumbling block owing to the change made to the supervisor (Dr. Getachew Dinku) who was assigned to assist the project. Fortunately, the project came to fruition with the help of Dr. Samson Mekonnen who was providing his insightful comments and generous consultation. He has been source of strength to the completion of this project. The researcher managed to overcome other limitations and produced this thesis whose gap could be bridged by the future researchers.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The researcher believes that the findings of this study have the following significance: First, the comparative presentation of news framing by local and international media of the conflict in the northern part of Ethiopia would one way or the other reveal that there should always be a cautious scrutiny of foreign media's coverage of the local topical issues since what they report may have direct contradiction to the contents of the local media's presentations and the lived reality. Second, it may help as a reference for other researcher who would like to conduct further study on the topic. Last but not least, it may help as an account of the historical facet of media coverage of the conflict in the northern part of Ethiopia.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

2.0 Introduction

This chapter offers a cursory review on the historical development and concept of framing which will lay foundations for the analytical procedure in the forthcoming chapter dedicated to analysis of the obtained data.

2.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

According to Tedesco (2005:187), the concept of agenda-setting dates back to 1922, with the publication of Walter Lippman's book "Public Opinion" (Tedesco, 2005:187). Lippman, a newspaper columnist at the time, contended that humans' perceptions of reality are entirely dependent on the information available to them (Peterson 2002:249). According to Brosis and Weimann (1996:561), the theory of agenda-setting originated in the early 1960s with Bernard Cohen, who believes that media cannot be successful by telling people all the facts in every context, but must instead selectively report.

Despite the fact that some scholars have focused on agenda setting since Lippman, it is widely accepted that the landmark empirical study of Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, considered to be the pioneers of this theory, provided concrete evidence on the occurrence of agenda-setting in media texts (McQuail 2000; Tedesco 2005).

According to media scholars (Hugel, Degenhardt, & Weiss 1998:191; Kiouisis & McCombs 2004:36), the theory was derived from a study conducted by McCombs and Shaw in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where the researchers surveyed 100 undecided voters during the 1968 presidential campaign on what they thought were key issues and compared that to actual media content. The order of the issues was nearly identical. The findings supported their hypothesis: the mass media shaped public opinion by emphasizing specific issues. Communication scholars have worked hard to conceptualize and map out the various aspects of the agenda-setting paradigm since the publication of this empirical study.

2.1.1 Defining the concept

"Agenda" refers to a collection of issues that are communicated in a descending order of importance at a given point in time (Dearing & Rogers 1996:1-3). According to McQuail (2000:426), the hierarchical importance of such issues is made possible by providing relative attention to issues and actors in news' coverage by influencing the rank order of public awareness of issues and attribution of significance. As a result, the processes and outcomes of public policy may be influenced. Fourie (2001:304) too characterizes agenda- setting as "the dynamics to news coverage: the spectrum of viewpoints, symbols and questions that are selected to construct the news and the way they are ranked or accorded legitimacy". All of these expressions imply the omission of certain issues and actors, as well as the overemphasis of others, in a given news report in order to establish a particular way for media users to think about reality. In doing so, some issues and actors are made to get preferential treatment or emphasis, or distortion from the news media. It is therefore plausible to adapt the definition of McQuail (2000), which states that agenda-setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media.

The agenda-setting thesis, according to McQuail (2000), is based on two assumptions: (1) the press and media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it; and (2) media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than others. According to Shaw and McCombs (1977), the concept of agenda-setting frequently encompasses many similar ideas. They use two concepts to clarify this inference: status inferral and stereotyping, which both deal with the salience of objects or attributes and are related to agenda-setting.

The ability of the media to influence an individual's prominence in the public eye is referred to as status conferral. Stereotyping, on the other hand, refers to the prominence of characteristics such as: All Ethiopians are prone to famine! Every Frenchman is a romantic! According to Shaw and McCombs (1977), status-conferral and stereotyping typically reduce a wide range of differences in people to simplistic categorization and turn assumptions about a specific group of people into realities. As a result, they perpetuate social prejudice and inequality, which are frequently difficult for affected groups to address. These have however been criticized as invalid

characterization of objects because of their overemphasis on a few selected traits of a certain subject.

2.1.2 The processes of agenda-setting

Dearing and Rogers (1996) divide the agenda-setting process into two categories: "basic" and "second level" or "attribute agenda-setting". They define basic agenda-setting as a process by which certain issues and actors become more visible than others through mass media. Takeshita (1997) defines the attribute agenda-setting process as the unique characteristics and traits of issues and actors. According to him, there is an agenda of attributes for each issue or actor because when the media and the public think and talk about an issue or actor, some attributes are emphasized while others are left out. He goes on to say that attribute agenda-setting provides a more detailed understanding of the images in media users' heads, as well as the subsequent attitudes and opinions based on those images, by paying closer attention to the specific content of mass media messages - including the tone of those messages.

Although some scholars classify the agenda of attributes as another aspect of the mass media's agenda-setting role, McCombs, Shaw, and Weaver (1997) equate this role with that of framing. Saliency, defined by Dearing and Rogers (1996:8) as the "degree to which an issue on the agenda is perceived as relatively important," is the key aspect of agenda-setting. This prominence on the media agenda informs media users about the issues they should consider. According to research on the agenda-setting process, the relative saliency of an issue on the media agenda determines how the public agenda is formed, which influences policymakers' considerations. Control over the options available for action is thus a manifestation of power, as policy makers only act on those issues that reach the top of the policy agenda.

Dearing and Rogers (1996:1-3) depict the agenda-setting process as an ongoing competition between proponents and opponents of issues for the attention of media professionals, the public, and policy elites. Thus, it explains why information about certain issues is available to the public but not others; how public opinion is formed; and why certain issues are addressed through policy actions while others are not. A single example relevant to Ethiopia exemplifies the concept of agenda-setting.

The BBC's Michael Buerk's presentation of the Ethiopian famine in October 1984 stunned the world and elicited the most implausible responses (Tornau 2006). Because of their financial investment, the BBC and Buerk became proponents of the famine, viewing it as an important issue worthy of news coverage and public concern. Buerk's recurrent attention to the issue represented a certain amount of power for him and his organization to influence global society and policy decision-making. The editor's decisions about the relative importance of the famine story in relation to other possible news stories were influenced by the visual power of the news.

The famine news influenced millions of people and nations in a variety of ways as it was broadcast, helping to raise funds and influence policies and legislation. Furthermore, other news outlets around the world gave the famine prominent coverage. Within a few weeks, Ethiopia's very real but little known famine problem had been transformed into the "famine" issue and risen to the top of many people's agendas around the world. Famine issues continued to dominate for some time, as proponents and opponents of the problem were able to generate some new and timely and related arguments. For instance, the causes of the famine were begun to be seen in light of the Cold War rivalries, as Ethiopia was, then, a socialist country with close ties to the former USSR (Tornau, 2006).

2.1.3 Research issues in agenda-setting

Agenda-setting research studies have expanded far beyond their original domains in recent years. According to McCombs (2005:544-550), agenda-setting research studies currently cover five distinct areas: Agenda-setting effects are classified as basic, attribute, psychology, sources, and consequences.

- Basic agenda-setting research studies focus on the function of the media in reporting key public issues and actors;
- The attribute agenda-setting research studies mainly concentrate on the variety of characteristics and traits of issues and actors that the media describe. When the news media talk about issues and actors, some attributes are emphasized, others are mentioned only in passing;
- The research studies on psychology of agenda-setting examine the significant differences in the responses of media users to the media agenda;

- Communication scholars engage in the research works of the sources of the media agendas, examine the responsible body that sets the media agenda. This inquiry is concerned largely about the pattern of news coverage, the norms and traditions of journalism, the daily interactions among news organizations themselves and the continuous interactions of news organizations with numerous sources. Inter-media agenda-setting is thus one aspect of this inquiry;
- The research studies on the consequences of agenda-setting effects have been dominant areas of examination for communication researchers, as the salience of issues and actors have significant consequences on people's attitudes and opinions.

Dearing and Rogers (1996:5-6) also note that research traditions exist for the public agenda, the media agenda and the policy agenda, of which the latter is the interest of this dissertation.

- Public agenda is the public's hierarchy of issues at a certain point in time. For instance, citizens may lobby for legislation to force the airline industry to ban smoking on all flights. This invites two types of research studies: hierarchical and longitudinal. While the former investigates the main issues on the public agenda at a certain time, the latter examines the rise and fall of one or few issues over time;
- Policy agenda-setting study is concerned about policy actions that emanate from the application of the public agenda or media's role as an agenda setter. For instance, city governors may ban all smoking in restaurants, the policy of which may spread out to other places;
- The media agenda, as explained earlier, deals with the salience of issues and actors by the media, and the implications this salience brings to life on media users.

The agenda-setting paradigm is one of the growing theoretical frameworks, which has invited a number of communication scholars. As shown in the following section, the agenda-setting theory has been vastly employed to examine the role the media play in shifting the attention of media users in many public and political issues, including conflicts. The online medium (the Internet) is also becoming an interesting area to explore the extent to which the agenda-setting paradigm is potentially applicable in study of the influence of online contents on the users.

2.1.4 Examples of research studies within the agenda-setting paradigm

A few recent studies' examples can briefly illuminate the areas and applications of media agenda-setting research studies. In his study of the coverage of the Kosovo bombing and related events as reported by nine different US media systems, Vincent (2000) finds that international news agencies' coverage of the bombing of Kosovo was so limited that the media could not sustain the issues as a significant agenda in comparison to the actual harm on the ground, and was frequently peppered with potential bias. Werder (2002), while studying the coverage of the Euro currency's introduction in the United Kingdom (UK) and Germany, appears to distinguish a strong relationship between media position and audience recognition of issues. Similarly, Inoue and Patterson (2007) used agenda-setting and framing theories to study the perceptions of the US media on Japan during the 1990s, and discovered that the US press was portraying the relationship in a negative light, which prompted the negative perception of Japan in the US community.

Roberts, Wanta, and Dzwo (2002) study the agenda-setting role of the Internet, specifically electronic bulletin boards, as an emerging genre of agenda-setting research studies (EBBs). They discovered that only abortion had no apparent agenda-setting effect in their analysis of the online media coverage of four issues (abortion, immigration, health care, and taxes) in five news media, while the other topics' coverage significantly altered importance ranking.

The findings of recent research studies appear to confirm the existence of agenda-setting roles for media systems. In five US elections, Kioussis (2005) investigates the relationship between media agenda-setting and public opinion of political candidates (1980 to 1996). His findings suggested that media salience of candidate attributes was strongly related to voters' attitudes and judgments. Kuhn's (2005) study, which examined French television's news coverage of the issue of 'insecurite' in the run-up to the first round of the 2002 presidential election, discovered that French television did not center the campaign agenda on this issue. However, the manner in which the news coverage was presented provided objective support for the competing candidates' campaign themes. Tedesco (2005:197), who investigated the candidate-journalist relationship during the 2004 presidential election, discovered parallels between candidates' and media agendas throughout the general election campaign.

The majority of research findings on agenda-setting point to the media's powerful role in elevating certain issues and actors above others. These findings also indicate that agenda-setting, but also agenda framing for a specific goal, has been identified as the pinnacle of political power.

2.2 The History and Concept of Framing

Media outlets and journalists intentionally adopt a specific ideology, but their work routines and source availability frequently drive these decisions. To achieve their goal, they frame the news story in a way that accurately postulates the issues as presupposed. The concept of framing is widely used in the social and behavioral sciences. Framing is important in communication science, particularly in health communication, news and journalism research, and political communication research. Both sociological and psychological literature can be traced back to the origins of framing as it is used in political communication research today. In any case, news frames lay the foundation on which the audience builds collective understanding of the world constructed in the news.

Thus, since Goffman (1974) introduced the approach, news and journalism researchers have frequently used the concept of framing. A frame, according to Goffman, is a "schema of interpretation" that enables people to "locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined within its limits" (p. 21). Entman (1993, p. 51), on the other hand, referred to framing as "a scattered conceptualization," claiming that previous studies lacked clear conceptual definitions and relied on context-specific rather than broadly applicable concepts.

According to Reese, Goffman and Bateson are often credited with introducing the framing approach (2001). Goffman (1974) defines frames as "the organizational principles that govern events... and our subjective involvement in them" (p. 192). Tuchman goes on to say that frames "convert nonrecognizable happenings or amorphous talk into a discernible event" (1978, p. 192). De Vreese (2005) defines a frame as "an emphasis in the salience of various aspects of a topic" (p. 53). According to Gitlin (1980), a media frame makes the world beyond direct experience appear natural. According to Entman (1991), media framing helps to shape public consciousness (p. 141).

Furthermore, he claims that "framing essentially involves selection and salience," referring to the process of choosing "some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient" (1993, p. 52). Scheufele (1999) divides previous approaches to framing research into two categories: the type of frame examined (media frame vs. audience frame), and the way frames are operationalized (independent variable or dependent variable). According to Maher (2001), framing scholarship focuses on the constructed nature of media messages.

McCombs and Ghanem (2001) write "Frames typically are macro-attributes, often containing a mix of cognitive and affective elements". Furthermore, De Vreese (2001) suggests that framing has been useful in understanding the "media's role in political life." According to Tankard (2001, p. 97), framing reflects the richness of media discourse as well as the subtle differences that can occur when a specific topic is presented in different ways. The current study seeks to investigate this specific media discourse across two media systems, as previous research has linked framing to attitudinal and behavioral changes.

McQuail defines framing research in two ways in his book "Theories of Mass Communication" (2009, p. 557): the first is about how journalists form news, and the second is about how framing affects the public. He also defines framing as a "method of providing some overall interpretation to isolated items of fact" (p. 380). Indeed, according to Chong and Druckman (2007), "framing refers to the process by which people develop a specific conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue." They argue that frames influence the attitudes and behaviors of their audiences, which is why framing is important in communication studies.

Furthermore, the main principle of framing theory is viewing an issue from a variety of perspectives and viewing it as having implications for various moral evaluations or reflections (p. 104). According to Bennett (2011, p. 127), great frames help people visualize, aspire, and put messages in the contexts of their personal lives. Similarly, Al Emad and Fahmy (2011) see framing as an important method for explaining how the media influences audiences' attitudes toward wars and conflicts.

The most common generic frames in the news, according to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), are conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality, and responsibility. Scholarship on political news in general, and foreign news coverage in particular, discovered that conflict

framing tends to predominate over other interpretations. Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) content analyzed over 3000 news stories in four newspapers and three daily television news programs in 1997 for their study on the framing of European politics in the Dutch national news media. The study looked at how different outlets and topics used frames. They studied five news frames, namely attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality, and discovered that attribution of responsibility and conflict were the most commonly used frames in the news. Furthermore, they claim that television news in Holland was primarily episodic. The Dutch press, on the other hand, claims that "the reverse was true: 32% of stories were episodic and 68% were thematic" (p. 93-102). The current study intends to apply this generic framing model to news coverage of the conflict in northern Ethiopia.

Dimitrova, Kaid, Williams, and Trammell (2005) used a similar framework to investigate the quantitative coverage of the 2003 Iraq War on international news websites. The sample included 246 news websites from 48 different countries. These websites included newspapers, TV channels, and radio stations, including CNN. The study discovered differences in "the sources, issues, and initial coverage on each web site" (p. 31). In their study, they used the following frames: conflict, human interest, diagnostic, responsibility, media self-referential, and prognostic.

According to the findings, US news websites framed the war differently than other international websites. One of these distinctions was "the lack of discussion of responsibility issues across the United States' web publications," whereas international websites "were more likely to discuss and analyze issues." The study discovered that these news websites' coverage used more episodic frames (p. 35-36). Iyengar (1991) distinguishes between episodic and thematic framing, where episodic framing is more event-oriented and fragmented, whereas thematic framing contextualizes the event (p. 14).

Dimitrova and Connolly-Ahern (2007) used a quantitative content analysis to examine the homepages of four major international news organizations during the Iraq War, with the goal of examining the media's story of war from two different perspectives. Two of the coalition's websites were from the United States (The New York Times) and the United Kingdom (The Guardian), while the other two were from Egypt (Al-Ahram) and Qatar, respectively (Al-

Jazeera). The investigation concentrated on the use of sources, frames, and the tone of the coverage.

They discovered that "the story of war was constructed differently by different international media" because it was one of destruction and violence in the Arab media while it was "one of military conflict leading to the rebuilding of the people of Iraq" in the Coalition media (pp. 153-165). Nonetheless, framing research has its detractors, particularly when it comes to study variation (Elmasry, El Shamy, Manning, Mills, & Auter, 2013). The current study seeks to contribute to a specific area of framing research, namely conflict framing in light of the conflict in northern Ethiopia.

Furthermore, framing is frequently seen as an attempt to create a frame of reference for the news audience to perceive and understand it in a specific way. This is consistent with Reese (2001), who states that the core of framing research has aimed to understand "how people respond on expectations to make sense of their everyday social experience" (p. 7). These daily expectations - the frames in one's head - are socially constructed, a dynamic process involving the social contexts and the actors who generate the frame. The means for developing and transmitting frames, as well as the individual cognitive mechanism for perceiving and evaluating them, must be considered.

Schemata, frame packages, framing devices, and reasoning devices are all components of framing (Van Gorp, 2007). It is critical to comprehend these elements because they are critical in comprehending the findings of a frame analysis. Schemata are defined as mentally stored clusters of ideas that guide an individual's information processing. A frame package is a collection of logically organized devices that serve as the frame's identity kit. The frame package is made up of framing and reasoning devices.

Furthermore, according to Janssen (2010), Bateson (1972) believes that a frame specifies the relationship between several connected elements in a text. Defining this relationship can help you understand the issue or topic covered in the text better. As a result, any message has two components: the specific content and a frame that shows how the message as a whole should be interpreted. Lecheler & de Vreese (2019) maintain that *frame setting* is the interaction between news frames and individuals' prior knowledge and predispositions.

Frames in the news can influence learning, interpretation, and evaluation of issues and events, among other things. This aspect of the framing process has received the most attention, often with the goal of determining the extent to which, and under what conditions, audiences reflect and mirror frames made available to them in the news, among other things. The effects of framing can be considered on both an individual and societal level. Individual-level consequences may include altered attitudes toward an issue as a result of exposure to certain frames.

On the societal level, frames may contribute to shaping social-level processes, such as political socialization, decision-making, and collective actions. The potential of the framing concept lies in the focus on communicative *processes*. Communication is not static, but rather a dynamic process that involves frame-building (how frames emerge) and frame-setting (the interplay between media frames and audience predispositions).

Furthermore, news content is more than just a collection of words; it contains embedded social meaning and reflects societal organizing principles through journalists' choice of words, news sources, and metaphors. This process defines an issue's boundaries, reduces a complex situation to a simple theme, and shapes people's interpretations by emphasizing some elements while ignoring others. News content is problematic in the "Arab Spring" and nuclear "progress" frames because it contains social values and conveys ideologies, wielding significant social power.

Besides, literatures have it that in analyzing this power of news framing, researchers often emphasize one or the other side of the process, focusing on how news media frame an issue or how audiences perceive it. These two approaches, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, map the traditional research territory. New media, meanwhile, have challenged framing research in terms of how we reconcile and adjust these approaches to "shaping" and "effects" in the provider-receiver relationship. In the new media environment, a networked, multidirectional relationship has replaced the traditional linear and unidirectional relationship between media and audience, and the term *actor*, which represents the active role of participants and a blurred boundary between producer and users, has replaced *audience*, which connotes a passive receiver. As a result, researchers have more difficulty identifying the source of any given news frame as it steers public discourse.

Moreover, there are scholars who opt to treat framing as generic and issue specific. In this respect, Lecheler & de Vreese (2019) uphold that certain frames are pertinent only to specific issues or events. Such frames may be labeled *issue-specific frames*. So far, studies of issue specific news frames have looked at the framing of healthcare, the Internet, labor disputes, and biotechnology. Other frames transcend thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different topics, some even over time and in different cultural contexts. These frames can be labeled *generic frames*. An issue-specific approach to the study of news frames allows for a profound level of specificity and detail relevant to the event or issue under investigation. A high degree of issue sensitivity makes analyses that draw on issue-specific frames difficult to generalize, compare, and use as empirical evidence for theory building.

The authors, further maintain that some of the most commonly identified generic frames are the *conflict*, *human interest*, *attribution of responsibility*, *morality*, and *economic consequences* frames, the *game* frame, and the *strategy* frame, as well as *episodic* versus *thematic* frames. Research that tries to detect news frames in texts, such as political news, often relies on an *inductive* approach and refrains from analyzing news stories with a priori defined news frames. Frames emerge from the material during the course of analysis. An inductive approach produces rich knowledge about the framing of the issue at hand but makes it hard to extrapolate and replicate the findings. A second approach is *deductive* in nature and investigates frames that are defined and operationalized prior to the investigation.

Put in a nutshell, the boundary of news framing definition is attracting emergent themes from diverse areas of research interest in the area of media studies. Thus, it could be said that developing an elaborate and comprehensive theoretical review that assesses the ongoing conceptual development is an apt task. Dwelling on the elaboration of the aforementioned frame types remains fundamental owing to the fact that the narrative of any media story falls into one or more of those types of frames. There is, in fact a large possibility of new frames to emerge in different framing studies.

2.3 Typology of News Frames

An often cited scholar in the area of media framing, de Vreese (2005) upholds that scholars agree on the matter that abundance in choice in how to tell and construct stories can be captured in analyses as certain distinctive characteristics while newsmakers may employ many different frames in their coverage of an issue. The author claims that certain frames are pertinent only to specific topics or events. Such frames may be labeled *issue-specific frames*. Other frames transcend thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different topics, some even over time and in different cultural contexts. These frames can be labeled *generic frames*. This typology serves to organize past framing research focusing on differences that help explain the use of the catch-all ‘framing’ phrase.

More to the point de Vreese (2005) reiterates that an issue-specific approach to the study of news frames allows for a profound level of specificity and details relevant to the event or issue under investigation. This advantage, however, is potentially an inherent disadvantage as well. The high degree issue-sensitivity make analyses drawing on issue-specific frames difficult to generalize, compare, and use as empirical evidence for theory building. The absence of comparability has led researchers to ‘too easily finding evidence for what they are looking for’ and to contribute to ‘one of the most frustrating tendencies in the study of frames and framing [being] the tendency for scholars to generate a unique set of frames for every study’ (Hertog & McLeod, 2001, pp. 150–151, cited in de Vreese (2005)).

Furthermore, the subject of issue specific and generic framing has been summed up underlining the importance of generic framing model in light of its role in linking the generic quality of the frames with a specific resonance with the issue in focus. The use of similar news frames in different political and journalistic cultures nevertheless emphasizes the *generic* nature of such news frames. Thereby generic frames teach us about journalism and render cross-national differences visible. de Vreese (2005) states that in the article entitled “*News framing: Theory and Typology*” the study was a first exploration of the frame-building process in the integrated process model, namely investigating the relationship between journalistic conventions and news frames asserting that conflict and consequences are not only cues to journalists for selecting events to become news, they also provide a template for the content structure. Obviously more

work is needed to explore the frame-building process in its totality, including for example the perspective of political elites and how they contribute to this process. The current study fully agrees with the point made in here since the analysis of framing and interpretation of the data hardly exclude themes that fall outside of the clearly setout category of framing typologies.

Other research has demonstrated that the two news frames, conflict and economic consequences, have the ability to influence the direction of audiences' thoughts when conceiving of a contemporary political issue (de Vreese, 2004). Moreover, news frames carrying an inherent valence emphasizing positive or negative aspects of an issue have the ability to influence public support for policies (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2003). This emphasizes the necessity for understanding the nature of news frames as they are antecedents of individuals' understanding and interpretation of current affairs.

Having dealt with what appears to be more generic in its approach, an attempt has been made to adopt Hallahan's Seven Models of Framing which was developed in 1999. The adoption is done with the thought of providing clear nuance of framing taxonomy in line of which the analysis of the current research's data will be carried out;

The author whose classification has been adopted argues that framing suffers from a lack of coherent definition although it is a theoretically rich and useful concept. Besides, a statement in the same manuscript entails that exhaustive literature search suggests the existence of more than 1,000 citations about framing in the academic literature. Framing has been adopted as a textual, psychological, and socio-political construct. Depending on the circumstances, the meaning of framing varies based on the research question, the level of analysis, or the underlying psychological process of interest. Hallahan's seven models involve the framing of situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues, responsibility, and news. Each of the seven models are summarized as follows;

2.3.1 Framing of Situations

Researchers from anthropology and sociology were the first to examine communication using a framing paradigm. Their legacy of using framing to describe how reality is constructed through language and the structure of interactions among people can be labeled as *relational* or

situational framing. Anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1972) is credited as the originator of situational framing theory. He defined a psychological frame as “a spatial and temporal bounding of a set of interactive messages” (p. 191). According to Bateson, the participants’ understandings of the interaction in which they engage—including their roles and the rules to be followed—operate as a form of *metacommunication* (i.e., communication about communication that guides the process).

2.3.2 Framing of Attributes

Separate from defining and describing overall situations found in everyday life and literature, a second and distinct form of framing involves the *framing of attributes* (i.e., the characterization of objects, events, and people). When used in this context, semantic framing is used to focus on particular attributes that might be flattering orderogatory and, thus, be advantageous or disadvantageous to message sponsors in persuasive communications.

2.3.3 Framing of Risky Choices

A third important area of framing for public relations involves the *framing of risky choices*, wherein individuals must not merely evaluate attributes but must make a choice between two independent options when some level of uncertainty or risk is present. (The framing of risky choices can be distinguished from framing where no independent choice is at issue and only one course of action is involved. This latter case is labeled *framing of actions* and is described in the next section.)

2.3.4 Framing of Actions

Closely aligned to prospect theory’s emphasis on the influence of framing gains versus losses, other research related to decision making has focused on the best way to describe action that might be undertaken by individuals to achieve a desired goal. This idea can be labeled *framing of actions*. Whereas the framing of attributes involves focusing attention on inherent qualities of an object, and whereas the framing of risky choices focuses on willingness of individuals to take risks, framing of actions focuses on persuasive attempts to maximize cooperation in which no independent options or choices are involved. For persuasive communicators, the concern is how to frame actions necessary to achieve compliance with a desired goal.

2.3.5 Framing of Issues

Framing has received increased attention among sociologists and others as a way to examine alternative interpretations of social reality. This approach can be labeled the *framing of issues*. An issue is a dispute between two or more parties, usually over the allocation of resources or the treatment or portrayal of groups in society. Issues frequently result in extensive public discussion and frequently require resolution within a public policy forum, such as a legislature or the courts. Issues are the bases around which publics are organized and public opinion is formed (J. E. Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Issues can be constructed by as few as two individuals but also can emerge at the group, organization, interorganizational, or societal levels. At the heart of most issues is the question of interpretation (i.e., how a particular problem or concern should be understood or explained). Disputants involved in an issue often vie to have their preferred interpretation predominate so that others will see the dispute from a perspective similar to their own (i.e., using similar schemas).

2.3.6 Framing of Responsibility

Beyond matters of definition, most issues and social problems entail questions of cause and responsibility (i.e., who should be credited or blamed for events). Whether because of instinct or experience or for self-protection, individuals engage in what Heider (1976) termed “intuitive factor analysis” to understand why events happen. Sillars (1982) suggested that attribution of an event to either personal or environmental factors determines the extent to which an individual is held responsible. However, the attribution of responsibility does not always reflect the objective facts of a situation accurately and can be distorted based on how events are described.

2.3.7 Framing of News

The final model of framing relevant to public relations deals with *news framing* (i.e., how news stories are portrayed or framed by the media in an effort to explain complex or abstract ideas in familiar, culturally resonating terms). Significantly, news framing can incorporate many of the notions of framing discussed in the previous sections. Framing has received considerable attention in the past decade as an approach to understanding news processes and effects, although the role of public relations as sources in news framing has been largely overlooked. Drawing on Goffman (1974), Tuchman (1978) was the first researcher to recognize the integral

role that framing plays in news gathering by media workers and news processing by audiences. She suggested news workers use frames to construct social reality for audiences and thus give meaning to words and images. Gitlin (1980) described news workers as “symbol handlers” who use *frame selectivity* to shape the way news is defined using dominant social frames.

2.3.8 Chapter Summary

Ardèvol-Abreu (2015) maintains that any communicative text, either informative or persuasive, requires narrative structures to organize its discourse. In the case of the media, news stories appear to be systematized, based on narrative conventions that offer an explanation about who is doing what, and with what purpose. Tuchman (1978) describes news as a window whose frame limits the perception of reality, by limiting the perception of different realities and focusing on a specific piece of it. As a result of these processes, some aspects of the reality perceived through the news will be more prominent than others. News messages, therefore, are textual and visual structures built around a central axis of thought, from a certain perspective, and by information professionals (but not only by them), who will provide an interpretive framework for the audiences exposed to the news messages. From this approach, framing can be defined as a process in which some aspects of reality are selected, and given greater emphasis or importance, so that the problem is defined, its causes are diagnosed, moral judgments are suggested and appropriate solutions and actions are proposed (Entman, 1993). The framing approach used by the selected media outlets will be scrutinized by systematically harness the tenets of the framing typologies discussed in this section of the thesis.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Intriguing the advantage of qualitative research which sticks not on generalization but on examining how and why certain issues exist, the research focuses on assessing how certain media outlet frame conflicts that is taking place in northern Ethiopia.

Qualitative research is a type of scientific research which helps to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations. With the intention that qualitative research is engaged here because of its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue. Under qualitative method, this study used a technique called textual descriptive qualitative comparative design as a research method. To analyze the rhetoric and words of journalists, textual analysis allows a close study of the way journalists thought about the issue selected in their minds, and then disseminated those thoughts to the public. Besides, textual analysis is a method to critically examine cultural artifacts or texts to establish meaning.

While working on qualitative textual descriptive qualitative comparative analysis, the researcher needs to be systematic in dealing with texts. Krippendorff (2004) asserts that qualitative researchers should support their interpretations by providing enough quotes from their sample data. While emphasizing the idea that researchers should offer detailed examples from relevant statements, Berg (2001) in a similar line of thought proclaimed that the researcher should incorporate independent coders to avoid subjective interpretation.

Particular to this study, initial frames are identified for the purpose of categorizing the media contents based on the type of frame since it is helpful to view the issue of portrayal of the major incidents of the war in the northern part of Ethiopia. Hallahan's seven models that have been treated in the preceding chapter and involve the framing of situations, attributes, choices, actions, issues, responsibility, and news will be the bedrock of the analytical process in this study. These

are identified as potential frame of reference to closely examine the framing process and subsequent implications thereof. It is the researcher's conviction that the stated frames have a lot to do with the intention and resulting impact aimed at by the chosen media.

3.2 Sampling Technique

Sampling is a method of picking a segment of a population or universe. Moreover probability and non probability sampling are the two major categories of sampling methods which help to select a representative sample of population.

This study specifically employs non probability sampling method called purposive sampling technique, which is also called judgment sampling. While purposive sampling technique is taken as an approach, there is an implicit understanding of the fact that the selection criteria are predefined to meet the research objectives. To this end CNN and EPA are selected purposively for the current study. Emphasis will be given to the contents of the news stories in light of the landmarks of the conflict. More to the point, contents that have been broadcast during the beginning of the war, siege of and capture of Mekelle by the Ethiopian defense force, withdrawal of Ethiopian national defense force and TPLF's influx into the Amhara region. Furthermore, additional contents that are palpable for analysis within the scope and objectives of the study will also be given due considerations to augment the analysis.

3.3 Sources and Types of Data

The researcher makes use of materials which are commonly known as primary and secondary texts. The primary texts are the news stories that have been used as primary sources of the data from which extracts will have been taken for analysis. Secondary texts are sources that relate to or support the researcher's thesis ideas and analytical discussions. The materials include scholarly works such as critical edition/casebook, reader's guide and other related resources from which viable framing issues are adopted. Accordingly, the study attempts to explore possible and most likely meanings of the texts.

3.4 Data Presentation and Analysis

It is believed that textual analysis requires the researcher to understand that texts are unique to the setting, culture, intellectual point of view as well as human experiences in which they are set

by their creators, i.e. journalists. As a result, a meticulous selection and a contextual analysis of texts is needed while conducting media framing research. Accordingly, the analysis will be carried out on the selected news contents by providing theoretical backings where there need be. Hence, special attention is offered to the most important texts that constitute tenable elements for analysis so as to meet the set research objectives.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the data in line with the framing techniques used by the media while the war was going on actively. The chapter mainly gives prime attention to major events of the conflict that happened in their chronological precedence.

4.1 Framing of the beginning and Early Phase of the conflict

This section presents the comparative analysis of framing schemes used by CNN during the earlier phase of the conflict. This includes, the way each of the media institution broadcast the beginning and the process as the conflict raged until the ENDF took control of the regional Capital of Tigray. In the process, extracts from the sources will be used along with the particular techniques employed to project the incident.

On November 4, after accusing the TPLF of attacking a federal army base outside Tigray's regional capital Mekelle and attempting to steal its weapons, Abiy ordered a military assault against the group, sending in national troops and fighters from the neighboring region of Amhara, along with soldiers from Eritrea.

Scholars argue that framing received attention from various practitioners and theoreticians in the fields of humanities to examine alternative interpretations of social realities. This approach is said to be palatable to be labeled as the framing of issues. An issue is a dispute between two or more parties, usually over the allocation of resources or the treatment or portrayal of groups in society. Similarly, in the above extract taken from the CNN's report on the conflict in the northern Ethiopia, how the incident in the north is purported shows that the organization is putting the issue up for the audience in a very controversial way that may appear disputable even among the consumers of the information. Because, the notion of issue framing according to J. E. Grunig & Hunt, (1984) is that issues are the bases around which publics are organized and public opinion is formed.

In the above quote CNN's report puts the attack on the northern command as a mere allegation by the federal government and on the contrary develops the story of the central government's

role in the conflict with higher degree of certainty. Contrary to this, Alagaw et al (2022) claim that the immediate circumstances that transformed the conflict into a military confrontation happened on 3 November 2020, when the TPLF attacked the Northern Command and reportedly attempted to encroach on the Kirakir area of Amhara region. The TPLF claimed that the attack was pre-emptive because it was a response to the “massive” deployment of Amhara, federal government and Eritrean forces that were planning an assault against Tigray.

From this, it could be deciphered that CNN has an interest in the matter from the framing technique used because a particular framing technique, especially, framing of issues is used when the intention of that particular story is aimed at creating debates on the topic so that it grabs audience’s attention. Moreover, CNN’s reports used a wide range of framing strategies to instill the facets of the conflict. The following portion taken from what it had published on its website on November 16, 2020 shows that the issue at stake was not taken as just an issue which could be reported and passed over.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed’s government said on Monday it had captured another town in the northern Tigray region after nearly two weeks of fighting in a conflict already spilling into Eritrea and destabilizing the wider Horn of Africa. Hundreds have died, at least 20,000 refugees have fled to Sudan and there have been reports of atrocities since Abiy ordered air strikes and a ground offensive against Tigray’s rulers for defying his authority.

What makes the above story a centre of attention according to the researcher is that CNN fetched the issue from Reuters and posted on its website while it had its own correspondents who were giving the issue detailed coverage in whatever way they liked. As it has been shown in the previous extract, CNN’s framing of the conflict was covertly positioning the central government as the root cause of the problem by using a framing technique called issue framing. CNN’s interest in the conflict transpires as it kept reporting on the incidents as the conflict progressed.

In the reporting of the above incident, the media house, i.e. CNN used a framing technique called framing of responsibility. Heider (1976) argues that beyond matters of definition, most issues and social problems entail questions of cause and responsibility (i.e., who should be credited or blamed for events). Whether because of instinct or experience or for self-protection, individuals

engage in what author termed “intuitive factor analysis” to understand why events happen. If CNN were not intent to blatantly accuse the federal government for the happenings, it could do a simple fact checking.

In the preceding examples, CNN attributed the unleashing of the evil to the federal government. This form of framing as Heider (1976) puts it is simply searching for someone to hold responsible or blame for what had happened in this context. To elucidate this argument, looking at the extract taken from the story itself is important. “...conflict already spilling into Eritrea and destabilizing the wider Horn of Africa. Hundreds have died, at least 20,000 refugees have fled to Sudan and there have been reports of atrocities since Abiy ordered air strikes and a ground offensive against Tigray’s rulers for defying his authority.”

As it can be interpreted from the above quotation, what seemed important for CNN is not what it sparsely highlighted in its report, rather magnifying its claim that the cause of the conflict is the wrath of the PM who was allegedly angered by Tigray’s rulers’ defiance to his authority. The framing technique employed in this extract clearly shows that CNN is blaming the prime minister for the conflict which caused all the consequences.

Similarly, Sillars (1982) suggested that attribution of an event to either personal or environmental factors determines the extent to which an individual is held responsible. However, the attribution of responsibility does not always reflect the objective facts of a situation accurately and can be distorted based on how events are described. Thus, it is evident in: “Hundreds have died, at least 20,000 refugees have fled to Sudan and there have been reports of atrocities since Abiy ordered air strikes and a ground offensive against Tigray’s rulers for defying his authority” that CNN is exclusively blaming the prime minister for the conflict and subsequently citing numbers and circumstances that may magnify the tragedy in order to meet its purpose. It is such a presentation that Sillars describes as attribution of an event to either personal or environmental factors.

The same author states that framing of responsibility determines the extent to which an individual is held responsible. However, the attribution of responsibility does not always reflect the objective facts of a situation accurately and can be distorted based on how events are described.

CNN's report sometimes pretends to be sympathetic to the country caught in adversaries while practically doing the other way round. To examine how this premise holds water, looking at the following excerpt is important;

The conflict could jeopardize a recent economic opening, stir up ethnic bloodshed elsewhere around Africa's second most populous nation, and tarnish the reputation of Abiy who won a Nobel Peace Prize last year for a peace pact with Eritrea. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), which governs the region of more than 5 million people, has accused Eritrea of sending tanks and thousands of soldiers over the border to support Ethiopian federal troops. Asmara denies that.

The above extract still juxtaposes different points to give its story importance since it is using framing of responsibility. As it can be seen in the above text, the story is framed in a gloomy face that causes sense of urgency in any sensible person. While the conflict has nothing to do with ethnic conflict, it has been produced with a tone that gives it the tinge that it didn't have. As it is evidenced in 'the conflict could jeopardize a recent economic opening, stir up ethnic bloodshed elsewhere...' CNN's framing of the issue is apparently presenting what the consequences would be if interventions are not done. It is such form of framing that Heider (1976) puts as a task of simply searching for someone to hold responsible or blame for what had happened in this context. Similarly, it is such a presentation that Sillars describes as attribution of an event to either personal or environmental factors.

CNN's framing of the conflict from its onset to the fall of Mekelle to the federal government is apparently biased in a way that significantly digressed from the principles of journalism. Respect for truth and the public's right to information are fundamental principles of journalism. Journalists describe society to itself. They convey information, ideas and opinions, a privileged role. They search, disclose, record, question, entertain, suggest and remember. They inform citizens and animate democracy. They give a practical form to freedom of expression. Many journalists work in private enterprise, but all have these public responsibilities. They scrutinize power, but also exercise it, and should be accountable. Accountability engenders trust. Without trust, journalists do not fulfill their public responsibilities. From this point of departure, CNN's framing of the first phase of the conflict is left to professional and scholarly scrutiny.

4.2 Framing of Mekelle's Capture by the ENDF and the June Incidents

This section presents the comparative analysis of framing schemes used by the two media outlets, namely, CNN based on the stories developed from the time Mekelle City fell under the control of the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) the Federal Forces withdrawal in June. This includes, the way each of the media institution broadcast the capturing of the city and subsequent events. In the process, extracts from the sources will be used along with the particular techniques employed to project the incident.

The issue of framing could be dealt with specifically as has been done in the previous section of this chapter. However, there are circumstances under which combination of techniques could be used to achieve a particular effect. In this regard, Vreese (2005) states that the first exploration of the frame-building process in the integrated process model, namely investigating the relationship between journalistic conventions and news frames asserting that conflict and consequences are not only cues to journalists for selecting events to become news, they also provide a template for the content structure. By the same token, CNN appeared to be selective of the issues and tactical in its mode of framings in line with how the conflict's tide was taking momentum. The following extract reflects how selective it was;

Abiy declared the offensive a success after just three weeks when government forces took over Mekelle, and installed an interim administration loyal to Addis Ababa.

CNN has always been systematically neglecting the federal forces gains in the course of giving coverage to the conflict in the north and rarely highlighted what could be perceived positive when seen from the side of the federal government. Vreese (2005) states that story developments of this kind fall outside of the conventional framing classifications. That is why the author calls for more work that need to be done to explore the frame-building process in its totality, including for example the perspective of political elites and how they contribute to this process. Concomitantly, this study fully agrees with the point made in here since the analysis of framing and interpretation of the data hardly exclude themes that fall outside of the clearly sorted out category of framing typologies. Nonetheless, it doesn't mean a news story doesn't have features to be interpreted.

Cognizant to the above fact, the excerpt regarding the capture of Mekelle by the Ethiopian national defense forces was pushed to the background while the installation of an entity loyal to the federal government has been purported in a more visible manner. Thus, as has the samples taken in the previous tasks been depictive of CNN's selective story making, the extract under scrutiny also shows that the federal government's assigning of administrative elements in the Tigray region emerged as a point of discussion in an apparently biased way.

What appears to be interesting about the situation after Mekelle fell to the Ethiopian national defense forces is that CNN had little or no interest in giving coverage for what was going on in the areas under the control of the federal forces until the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF) vowed to fight back to recapture most of the areas in the region from the federal forces. The following extract is worth investigating;

Leaders in Tigray are refusing to surrender in the face of the alleged gains by the Ethiopian military. In a statement posted by the TPLF on Facebook Wednesday, Tigrayan leaders vowed that "the people of Tigray will never kneel down to actions of aggressors," as Abiy said that the deadline for them to surrender had expired. "Tigray is now a hell to its enemies," the statement read, claiming "remarkable victories" on the battlegrounds, directly contradicting the government claims. The Tigrayan leaders also accused federal forces of killing innocent civilians while targeting churches and homes.

The federal government's claim of overwhelming victory over TPLF and call for the group's immediate surrender by the PM is treated as a background against which CNN constructed a story that projects TPLF's might over the federal government that was calling for the combatants to surrender. Using the government's call as a springboard, CNN foregrounded the TPLF's accusations against the federal government of committing several crimes. CNN largely ignored the federal government's efforts to alleviate the humanitarian crisis and the alleged obstructions of the TPLF, while local media did not provide sufficient reporting on the atrocities committed in Tigray during this phase.

CNN specifically opted for framing of issues. As Grunig & Hunt (1984) put it, an issue is a dispute between two or more parties, usually over the allocation of resources or the treatment or portrayal of groups in society. Issues frequently result in extensive public discussion and

frequently require resolution within a public policy forum, such as a legislature or the courts. Thus, CNN's framing strategy can be seen in light of framing of issues through which the media institution was exerting pressure on the federal government of Ethiopia. Apart from its reporting or framing strategies, it is memorable that it used several unverified and fake images while covering the incidents.

Moreover, CNN engaged in using language that dominantly put the Ethiopian government in a vindictive position. The following sample text offers a good insight into the organization's story development technique;

The government has denied targeting civilians and CNN has not been able to verify claims from either party due to the communications blackout. This image, made from undated handout video released by the state-owned Ethiopian News Agency on November 16, 2020, shows Ethiopian military in an armored personnel carrier near the border of the Tigray and Amhara regions of Ethiopia.

In the above extract the claim is clear that CNN is purporting a likely criminal act committed by the federal government which it depicts as denial of the act which has already been committed. Moreover, it can also be understood that CNN is directing additional blame on the federal government claiming that its effort to verify whether what it already reported was authentic or not. The principle of journalism pertaining conflict reporting dictates that issues should be well examined while reporting on sensitive issues. This aligns with fact checking and verification to prevent the possible consequences a certain report may bear. In this regard, CNN's reporting breaches professional ethics and thereby discloses its intention. The framing strategy used in this piece is framing of responsibility which is quite used to accuse or hold the target responsible for the consequences of an action.

Put in a nutshell, Framing of responsibility encompasses beyond matters of definition that most issues and social problems entail questions of cause and responsibility (i.e., who should be credited or blamed for events). Whether because of instinct or experience or for self-protection, individuals engage in what Heider (1976) termed "intuitive factor analysis" to understand why events happen. CNN's intention could be seen in light with what Heider calls "intuitive analysis". Nevertheless, it doesn't converge with the assertion that this framing strategy is used

because of experience or for self-protection. For obvious reason, neither the Ethiopian government nor the international community would blame CNN for the conflict in the north.

CNN's interest in the conflict was clear that it had been engaging in producing a series of stories that damage the reputation of the federal government without even having tangible evidence that could substantiate its accusations as the sentence "The government has denied targeting civilians and CNN has not been able to verify claims from either party due to the communications blackout" reveals that CNN had an interest in framing the story in the stated way without going further to balance the content. Sillars (1982) sums this point stating that attribution of an event to either personal or environmental factors determines the extent to which an individual is held responsible. However, the attribution of responsibility does not always reflect the objective facts of a situation accurately and can be distorted based on how events are described.

CNN's continued war reporting ceases while it seemed that the federal government was gaining upper hand in the war and emerges whenever an incident that turns out to be discrediting the federal government's actions or intentions takes the centre. This is evident in its coverage of the 6th round national general elections held in the country except in the areas affected by war.

Despite promises to heal ethnic divides and pave the way for a peaceful, democratic transition, Abiy has increasingly invoked the playbook of repressive regimes: Shutting down internet and telephone services, arresting journalists, suppressing critics and failing to hold a credible election. This July, in the midst of the war, Abiy and his party won a landslide victory in a general election that was boycotted by opposition parties, marred by logistical issues and excluded many voters, including all those in Tigray – a crushing disappointment to many who had high hopes that the democratic transition Abiy promised three years ago would be realized.

In the above extract, CNN tried to intertwine a number of happenings that took place in the country since the prime minister took office to depict the vice of the government rather than focusing on what was in actual sense going on when the news was made. It opens with a negating phrase to the hopes and aspirations of the people. It further allegedly blames the prime

minister for communication blockades and several other anti-democracy deeds. CNN fails in its reference to the election which was hailed as the first democratic election by many though there were diminutive claims from the contenders' side and later on solved by the measures taken by National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE).

CNN would have reported on the pros and cons of the election and electoral processes if it had been genuine. Nonetheless, it persistently opted for framing of responsibility to undermine the government and anything related to it and the activities. CNN's news as indicated in the above quotation heavily dwelt on the negative facet of the election for which it didn't provide substantive evidence that goes beyond accusations. This is apparently manifest in "...Abiy and his party won a landslide victory in a general election that was boycotted by opposition parties, marred by logistical issues and excluded many voters, including all those in Tigray...". The report would have hit the balance if it had also highlighted things that could be perceived positively.

A week after the general election was held on the 21st of June 2021, the federal government announced a unilateral ceasefire on the ground that the decision was made to pullout the federal forces from Tigrai region including Mekelle. CNN's news framing of the incident was not that different from the way it used to frame the previous phenomena in its news as it can be understood from the following extract: "Ethiopia's government declared a unilateral ceasefire in June, when Tigrayan forces retook the regional capital Mekelle. But the TPLF categorically ruled out a truce, and the fighting has spread beyond Tigray's borders into the neighboring Amhara and Afar regions.

4.3 Framing of the 3rd wave of the conflict

This section presents the analysis of framing schemes used by CNN after the withdrawal of Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) from Tigrai and TPLF forces encroachment of the neighboring Amhara and Afar regions. This includes, the way the media institution under scrutiny broadcast the conflict up until the TPLF forces gained control of many areas outside of Tigrai region. In the process, extracts from the sources will be used along with the particular techniques employed to project the incident.

But the TPLF categorically ruled out a truce, and the fighting has spread beyond Tigray's borders into the neighboring Amhara and Afar regions. Now, Tigrayan forces say they have joined forces with the OLA – a historic alliance of former enemies – and captured the key towns of Dessie and Kombolcha in Ahmara, on the main road to the Ethiopian capital.

It is to be recalled that the federal government announced the withdrawal of the Ethiopian National Defense Force from Tigray region on the ground that it reached a conclusion that the farmer's in the region should engage in their farming activities. The government also announced a unilateral ceasefire claiming that it is giving the TPLF to contemplate on the government's offer. However, the TPLF didn't stop fighting even after the whole Tigray including the regional capital Mekelle had fallen into its militant hands. It is at this juncture that CNN reinstates its usual reporting on the conflict using its conventional framing strategies.

The above excerpt emerges after CNN's long break from reporting on the conflicts in the north until TPLF forces intensified their assault on infrastructures and civilians in the neighboring Amhara and Tigray regions. As TPLF forces advanced further south into the Amhara region, they committed crimes against humanity and destroyed and looted public and private properties. Nevertheless, CNN generically reported on the TPLF's rejection of truce and victorious march towards south. The above sample offers CNN's portrayal of the incident in which it used framing of issues to depict how the situation is worsening.

Consistent with the above interpretation, scholarship focusing on political news in general and foreign news coverage in particular found that conflict framing tends to dominate at the expense of other interpretations. In their study about the framing of European politics in the Dutch national news media, Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) content analyzed over 3000 news stories in 1997 in four newspapers and three daily television news programs. The study tested the variance in the use of frames among outlets and topics. They investigated five news frames, namely attribution of responsibility, conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality, and found that the responsibility and the conflict were the most used frames in the news. Also, they claim that television news in Holland was predominantly episodic. In so far as CNN's coverage of the northern Ethiopia conflict is concerned, several framing strategies have been used to

achieve the intended effect. The above extract alone shows the organization employed framing of responsibility and consequence as it highlights that TPLF's accord with Oromo Liberation Army (OLA).

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday said Washington was alarmed over reports that Tigrayan forces had taken over the two towns, and urged all parties to begin ceasefire negotiations. US special envoy for the Horn of Africa, Jeffrey Feltman, will travel to Ethiopia on Thursday and Friday, a State Department spokesperson confirmed Wednesday, saying: "The United States is increasingly troubled by the expansion of combat operations and inter communal violence in Ethiopia and is closely monitoring the situation."

The above sample text shows that CNN moved on to selecting issues that best serve its interest for the reason it knows. The above extract magnifies how worrisome the conflict was. It reveals that the US which is home base of the CNN is extremely troubled by the situation while in actual practice the US government itself was imposing pressures on the government of Ethiopia which won an election that was relatively considered the fairest election ever after the demise of the Derg regime by many. Apart from the conflict CNN was engaging in producing stories that undermine positives developments in the country including the election which many Ethiopians believe is fair and transparent. Focusing on the above given context, CNN opted for issue framing to grab the attention of its target audience.

Furthermore, it is to be noted that framing theory's main principle is observing an issue from a diversity of viewpoints and taking it as having implications for various moral evaluations or reflections (p. 104). Bennett (2011) states that "great frames help people visualize, aspire, and put messages into the contexts of their personal lives" (p. 127). Likewise, Al Emad & Fahmy (2011) consider framing as an important approach in explaining how the media influence audiences' attitudes toward wars and conflicts.

Towards the end of October 2021, the Tigrayan fighters, aided by the outlawed OLF-Shene, took the strategic towns of Dessie and Kombolcha, about 350 km northeast of Addis Ababa. They continued to advance to Addis, eventually reaching as close as Debre

Sina, some 190 km from the capital. At this point, the capture of Addis looked probable, and the federal government responded by declaring a six-month state of emergency on 2 November 2021.

What appears to be interesting in CNN's reporting of the conflict in the northern Ethiopia was its story crafting that depicted the distance this media organization travelled to unveil its bias against the principles of journalism. In framing theory, while the media or journalist frames news without evaluating its consequence or make choice even if it may bear consequences. In the second chapter of this thesis, this form of framing is labeled as framing of risky choices, wherein individuals must not merely evaluate attributes but must make a choice between two independent options when some level of uncertainty or risk is present.

A question may arise inquiring what risk CNN could face if it follows any framing strategy while reporting on Ethiopia. This premise might seem naïve. Putting aside the assumptions, the above text transpires CNN's framing strategy that depict the advancing TPLF and OLA forces might while nothing has been said regarding the apparent criminal acts the TPLF committed in the areas it captured. The TPLF militias executed more than one hundred fifty civilian youths in broad day light in Kombolcha while a number of cases that could catch the attention of the media and international community with regard to human rights violations. Nonetheless, since CNN had interest in a projection that renders the rebel forces winners and the central government loser, the growing concern over the safety of the civilians was not something to worry about.

CNN framed its news on the conflict in an illuminating manner to prove that its broadcast had the most accurate prediction of the conflict in the northern Ethiopia and that of the whole political condition in the country. This is evident in its reference to the assumption that the expansion of the conflict accompanied by massive displacement of civilians, loss of lives and livelihoods, destruction of civilian property, sexual violence, gross violations of human rights, communications blackout, and the disruption of humanitarian aid consuming the whole of the country portraying the federal government incapable of dealing with the mater. Besides, it cites all sort of adversaries but does not name the instigator for if name has to be put to the responsible body to the crimes, TPLF appears the prime one.

4.4 EPA's Framing of the Early and Medieval Stage of the Conflict

Citing the claim made by the chief executive officer of the crisis group (ICG), the local news paper *The Ethiopian Herald* hits back at foreign media and some personalities which are dubbed to be siding with the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front. The Ethiopian Press Agency, which is another media outlet owned by the government and selected for this study reverberates what its counterpart published regarding the conflict in the north. This is manifest in the following extract:

The article authored by President and CEO of the International Crisis Group (ICG), Robert Malley, issued on December 3, 2020 has clearly exposed the group's attempt to give false representation of government's law enforcement operation in Tigray State, a renowned law expert said. Speaking to *The Ethiopian Herald*, Wuobishet Mulat stated that the article could be regarded partly as often the stand of the ICG at the same time to defend their biased stance in the current situation in the northern part of Ethiopia. According to him, the president's remark is also caused by the mismatch between their prediction of huge humanitarian crises and bloodbath and what is happening today in Tigray State following the swift control of the capital Mekelle by the federal forces. Malley has also made attempt to unconvincingly defend Crisis Group's Ethiopia Senior Analyst William Davison who was being expelled by the government due to the breach in connection with legal work permit. It was stated that ideas that are entertained in Davison's reports are not merely his stance, but the stance of the group.

The above extract vividly shows that the media under investigation is attempting to refute the claims foreign media outlets make regarding the conflict in the northern Ethiopia. In fact, some of the media institutions based outside the country, especially those in the West, bluntly developed stories that position the federal government as a sole responsible body for what had happened and might have not happened. CNN's reporting proves a good example for selective sympathy and bias the West based media had been into during the conflict. Leaving the authenticity of and claims either of the parties makes aside, one thing is real. That is, the Ethiopian Press Agency as portrayed in the above quotation attempts to project a story that

depict foreign media and some entities that may have interest in the conflict are engaged in marring the federal government's reputation. The framing technique used in this regard is, framing of responsibility.

Literature has it that framing of responsibility goes beyond matters of definition, most issues and social problems entail questions of cause and responsibility (i.e., who should be credited or blamed for events). Whether because of instinct or experience or for self-protection, individuals engage in what Heider (1976) termed "intuitive factor analysis" to understand why events happen. Sillars (1982) suggested that attribution of an event to either personal or environmental factors determines the extent to which an individual is held responsible.

The selected quote from the Ethiopian Press Agency's news content apparently denounces the way foreign media and their affiliates frame their stories on the situation in the northern Ethiopia. Has it has been hedged in the previous paragraph, the current research is not interested in investigating how factual the contents are, but how framed the stories are by the chosen media. Concomitantly, framing of responsibility stipulates that the media or an individual journalist may use framing of responsibility even though the attribution of responsibility does not always reflect the objective facts of a situation accurately and can be distorted based on how events are described.

As is the case with CNN, Ethiopian Press Agency which is selected for this study also switches between vast array of framing techniques to succeed in affecting its target audience. Such framing technique is termed as framing of news which employs informative or persuasive approach to its content. To examine this, let's look at the following extract;

"In the pre-2018 Ethiopia, when many foreign journalists and analysts were barred from operating in the country, Davison had enjoyed an unfair privilege to work in Ethiopia. Hence, his clear bias to the Junta may also originate from the advantage he secured." Wuobishet indicated that ICG was being mesmerized by TPLF's false glory in war and the one-sided stories that were being presented by William Davison had no significant difference from what was propagated by Getachew Reda, TPLF's spokesperson. Contrary to ICG's claim to remain faithful to their main constituency, civilians threatened by war; the senseless approach William Davison had shown to the ruthless attacks against

members of the Northern Command manifests his link with the outlawed Junta, the expert stressed. Apart from the close affiliation with the junta, the ICG's representative has been largely worked as lobbyist and paid writer to promote the causes of the outlawed group towards the international community.

The above extract taken from the Ethiopian Press Agency's December 5, 2020 publication amidst its set of information presents the social reality that existed before the change that took place in 2018. The story entails the point that the pre 2018 Ethiopian media landscape was not favorable to media personalities except the crisis group's representative who allegedly acted as a media personality. The report presents a content that reminds the audience of handling of journalists in general and foreign journalists in particular to show that the Crisis Group Affiliate, William Davison had enjoyed special prerogative to work in the country. Besides, the story is framed as speculative of the essence that Davison is relentlessly working to payback the favor he received from Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) by producing defamatory and belittling stories against the federal government.

Furthermore, the above quotation indicates that Davison is serving as a mouthpiece of the rebels by echoing what the Tigray People's Liberation Front spokes person speaks. Journalists or media as framing theory indicates selectively use a single or combination of techniques that would help them meet their specific target. Accordingly, Ethiopian Press Agency employed a narrative structure that draws a pattern of its story that informs the audience and thereby persuades the readers that all the accusations hurled towards the federal government and news stories developed by William Davison are nothing but fake news. On an intellectual plane, Ardèvol-Abreu (2015) maintains that any communicative text, either informative or persuasive, requires narrative structures to organize its discourse. In the case of the media, news stories appear to be systematized, based on narrative conventions that offer an explanation about who is doing what, and with what purpose. Concomitantly, it could be deduced from the sample text and the subsequent interpretation that Ethiopian Press Agency organized its news story in consonance with Ardèvol-Abreu's insight.

As a government affiliated medium, Ethiopian Press Agency continued to publish contents that contest the propaganda campaigns wagged on the country by either foreign media or the Tigray

People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Whether the contents produced at that stage of the conflict in the north were rebuttal or informative of the fact on the ground, the current study primarily aimed at how framing techniques were used. The following excerpt whose portions have been scrutinized previously is presented as a sample to examine the degree to which the narrative structure or framing used in the entire text resonated with scholastic assumptions.

Wuobishet further emphasized that the article former Ethiopia's Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, who is among the trustee of the group, published in the Washington Post has triggered the president to write the article in a self-defense manner. Hailemariam's piece has played an instrumental role in exposing the group's lies about Ethiopia to the global community and attested the way ICG has taken to report the situation is biased and unprofessional. The expert has called on the continuation of the existing strong campaigns by Ethiopia's diplomatic missions to approach and aware global actors on the real pictures of the law enforcement operation thereby nullifying ICG's unconstructive attempts.

In the above sample text taken from the Ethiopian Press Agency's featured news content, miles have been travelled to reinforce an argument that appears to be protective of the government and rebuttal of the claim made by the International Crisis Group and its affiliates on the matter of the conflict in the northern part of the country. A mode of presentation or a framing technique which the media or journalists use to describe a particular projected reality confines the audience to a context in which realities are presented and conjecture are made based on the available information. In a similar line of thought, Tuchman (1978) describes news as a window whose frame limits the perception of reality, by limiting the perception of different realities and focusing on a specific piece of it. As a result of these processes, some aspects of the reality perceived through the news will be more prominent than others.

Ethiopian Press Agency's treatment of the story appears to be mindful of the criticisms content may receive if substantial backup is not given. The stated media outlet creates a set of links between events that occurred long before the conflict and other phenomena that had taken place in the country. To reveal International Crisis Group's biased treatment of the situation in the country during those days, a set of incidents have been selected and presented in an interwoven

manner to substantiate the claim that the International Crisis Group is waging a propaganda campaign in a way that is farfetched from professionalism.

Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) made an attempt to backup its rebuttal task by entertaining a scholar's take on the matter along with the backdrop of the incident that triggered the International Crisis Group to present a biased story apart from the entity's close affinity with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). This is evident in: "...triggered the president to write the article in a self-defense manner. Hailemariam's piece has played an instrumental role in exposing the group's lies about Ethiopia to the global community and attested the way ICG has taken to report the situation is biased and unprofessional".

This mode of story rendering directly falls into the category of framing that is termed as general news framing. Entman (1993) maintains that news messages, therefore, are textual and visual structures built around a central axis of thought, from a certain perspective, and by information professionals (but not only by them), who will provide an interpretive framework for the audiences exposed to the news messages. From this approach, framing can be defined as a process in which some aspects of reality are selected, and given greater emphasis or importance, so that the problem is defined, its causes are diagnosed, moral judgments are suggested and appropriate solutions and actions are proposed.

Similarly, the Ethiopian Press Agency allows the audience to reckon what was happening to journalists while the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) dominated Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Front (EPRDF) was in power. This is manifest in:

"In the pre-2018 Ethiopia, when many foreign journalists and analysts were barred from operating in the country, Davison had enjoyed an unfair privilege to work in Ethiopia. Hence, his clear bias to the Junta may also originate from the advantage he secured." Wuobishet indicated that ICG was being mesmerized by TPLF's false glory in war and the one-sided stories that were being presented by William Davison had no significant difference from what was propagated by Getachew Reda, TPLF's spokesperson.

In the above textual evidence the news content apparently aims at nullifying William Davison's and his International Crisis Group's accusations against the Ethiopian government. It recaps the

privilege the entity and its affiliate enjoyed during the reign of the ousted regime fighting the federal government. This directly goes in consonance with Entman's thesis that framing can be defined as a process in which some aspects of reality are selected, and given greater emphasis or importance, so that the problem is defined, its causes are diagnosed, moral judgments are suggested and appropriate solutions and actions are proposed.

4.5 EPA's Framing of ENDF Gains in Tigray

This section offers the framing structure of the story that had been developed by the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) as the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) advanced on strategic positions in the Region. While dealing with the analysis of certain aspects of the local media's framing strategy Galtung (2002)'s model for peace journalism appears as the one of the most suitable analytical lenses. Galtung's model presents a comparative perspective on peace and war journalism. The model sets forth four main points that demarcate the boundary between war journalism and peace journalism: war journalism is violence---oriented, propaganda---oriented, elite---oriented and victory---oriented, and is often linked to a dualistic method, a zero---sum game where the winner takes all (as in sports journalism)(Galtung, 2002). In contrast, peace journalism is peace/conflict---oriented, people---oriented, truth---oriented and solutions--oriented. Having these points into account, sample texts are taken to reveal the degree to which particulars of framing techniques are employed.

Ethiopian Foreign Affairs State Minister Redwan Hussein said the major military operation to enforce law in Tigray regional state is over and the Tigrean People Liberation Front (TPLF) clique that has been controlling the entire region has lost its control within three weeks of operation. Speaking to TRT WORLD on Tuesday, Redwan also said that in the last three days, the clique lost Mekelle, the capital of Tigray and "many of its militia and special forces have been surrendering to our Defense Forces in their thousand." The upper echelon has left Mekelle and fled to some villages 45 KM away from the capital. "Our forces have been tracking them down and have found their hideouts. And it is a matter of day since many of them would be captured," he said adding some of the senior leadership have also been handing over to the government.

The above excerpt taken from one of the Ethiopian press agency's report on the conflict in the northern part of the country has been apparently framed in light of the federal government's gain. Apart from selecting the incidents that project the federal government's victory, the selected media outlet heavily relied on the attributes of war journalism that Galtung stated. Such technicalities that media and journalists often use to magnify the event beyond the ordinary include sensationalizing the triumphs and portray the opposing force as a total threat to the entire welfare of the public. The first point that could be scrutinized from the above given example is that Ethiopian Foreign Affairs State Minister Redwan Hussein describes an entity which was once upon a time a dominant and influential political party, Tigray People's Liberation Force (TPLF), dominating the country and even international political spheres as just a 'clique' which can no longer be a mighty force to stand the federal force's assault.

Moreover, the story reveals that the major military operation to enforce law in Tigray regional state is over and the Tigrean People Liberation Front (TPLF) clique that has been controlling the entire region has lost its control within three weeks of operation. This story is framed in a way that shows that the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is such a feeble faction that failed to protect its strong hold and fend off the Ethiopian national defense force that controlled the territory within three weeks time. Thus, war framing is used to achieve the intended target of the medium.

To recap some points in this regard, Galtung's model presents a comparative perspective on peace and war journalism. The model sets forth four main points that demarcate the boundary between war journalism and peace journalism: war journalism is violence---oriented, propaganda---oriented, elite---oriented and victory---oriented, and is often linked to a dualistic method, a zero---sum game where the winner takes all (as in sports journalism)(Galtung, 2002). Another substantive point that reflects war framing was used in the story's build up is that "One of the nine executive committee members, who was the former speaker of the house of federation handed herself to our Defense Forces on Tuesday." It also draws on the state minister's claim that "...there could be sporadic shootings here and there out of desperate actions. "Otherwise, there is no way to continue fighting. The thinking that the thing would descend in to gorilla fighting would be simply far-fetched. If they lose the whole region in three weeks, there is no way they are going to continue standing against our Defense Forces." The

state minister's statements directly fall into the category of news framing that adhere to war, propaganda, elite and victory to stick to what Galtung terms as the winner takes all.

In addition to what has been addressed in the above analysis, the following sample text also takes on an analytical plane which depicts that Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) dominantly opted for journalistic techniques that narrate the happenings in a very striking way to appeal to senses.

Individuals who lost their family members and friends have spoken out about the horrific Miakadra massacre that has claimed lives of over 600 civilians. The survivors told local media recently that vicious crimes committed against innocent civilians that have nothing to do with the conflict erupted in Maikadra by the youth group called themselves Samiry who were supported by the State's security apparatus. One of the survivors, who lost his father, brother –in- law , and others, said that before the Samiry youth group butchered the civilians, they had carried out preparations in identifying those who should be killed on the spot. “They [the youth group] used to call the civilians chauvinist and Derg sympathizers. They as well accused them of taking part in Wolkait Restitution Committee meetings before they launched the cold-blooded attack that day,” he said.

As discussed extensively in previous segment, due to journalists' reliance on conflict as a news value, war reporting is thought to display: sensationalism; identifying with one side or the other; overemphasis on losses such as human casualties and material damage; military triumphalist language; and narratives that lack in context, background and historical perspective are used. The above sample text taken from Ethiopian Press Agency's report on the “Maikadra Massacre” uses expressions that are charged with emotion. In this particular story a combination of different framing techniques has been used. Framing of responsibility is one of the techniques used in the above extract.

With regard to framing of responsibility, it has been put that Beyond matters of definition, most issues and social problems entail questions of cause and responsibility (i.e., who should be credited or blamed for events). Whether because of instinct or experience or for self-protection, individuals engage in what Heider (1976) termed “intuitive factor analysis” to understand why events happen. Sillars (1982) suggested that attribution of an event to either personal or environmental factors determines the extent to which an individual is held responsible. Similarly,

the story's framing is designed to show that the Samiry group committed atrocious crime against some six hundred youth whom it had labeled as sympathizers of the Dergue regime. In this story, the cause and effect of the massacre and the instigator had been clearly mentioned which in its clearest term shows that framing of responsibility is used to hold Samiry group for the crimes committed.

Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) paid much attention to the federal government's victory and vindictiveness of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) as the war went on as opposed to Western media including CNN. The following extract offers a vantage point from which the news framing techniques could be deciphered;

If the Ethiopia National Defense Forces (ENDF) did not capture Humera town and its surroundings earlier than expected, the TPLF crime- soaked junta would massacre over 1,000 citizens, Humera residents have told local media recently. As to the residents, the junta had profiled the identities of over 1,000 citizens living in Humera town to brutally massacre as it did in Maikadra. However, they said the junta was defeated and forced to flee the town in panic by the ENDF and Amhara Special Forces while plotting to massacre innocent people. Thus, the conspiracy to carry out mass killing was totally curtailed. The residents also said that apart from digging grave, the junta had been preparing for over a week to identify and prepare list of the citizens who would be massacred. "Many of our sisters and brothers have been tortured and killed by the junta and others have fled the area to save their lives. We used to live in fear as the junta so often terrorized us because of our identity.

The above extract can be seen in accordance with Gultang's model to draw on a framing strategy that has been used to give the story a given tinge. Gultang maintained that journalism acknowledges, in an ethical standpoint, that media play a role in the propaganda war by presenting a truthful, people---oriented approach to the audience as there is also the opposite angle from which news are framed. As discussed broadly in previous contents, due to journalists' reliance on conflict as a news value, war reporting is thought to display: sensationalism; identifying with one side or the other. Nothing fits this assertion that Ethiopian Press Agency's rendering of: "If the Ethiopia National Defense Forces (ENDF) did not capture Humera town and

its surroundings earlier than expected, the TPLF crime- soaked junta would massacre over 1,000 citizens, Humera residents have told local media recently. As to the residents, the junta had profiled the identities of over 1,000 citizens living in Humera town to brutally massacre as it did in Maikadra.”

The above analytical perspective reveals that special emphasis is placed on sensitive issues that would have an emotional impact on the audience. This technique of devising story structure is well articulated in Galtung & Ottosen’s works. The nuance of the idea is that overemphasis on losses such as human casualties and material damage; military triumphalist language; and narratives that lack in context, background and historical perspective are employed to amplify the effect of the news. Similarly, the story lays special focus on the damages done to human lives and material. There is also a discourse that demonstrates the might of the Ethiopian Defense Force that as to the context annihilated the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and salvaged the people residing in the stated localities. Thus, it could be deduced that the Ethiopian Press Agency(EPA) employed framing of responsibility along with other strategies that one way or the other projected its story in an attention grabbing manner.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

This research was conducted to examine how CNN and EPA covered the war between the government of Ethiopia and the Tigray armed forces. In light of this, CNN and EPA were selected. The news contents of the media houses under scrutiny were analyzed qualitatively. The qualitative context analysis (textual analysis) was used to identify textual shreds of evidence and supporting arguments for the news frames.

Based on the analysis, it was found out that CNN and EPA used framing of responsibility and issue framing dominantly while other framing techniques were also used. CNN had focused on TPLF armed forces, the response of international organizations and TPLF war advancement. On the contrary, EPA's story selection and framing technique overtly reinforces the government's position in a way that sidelines the truth that could exist on the other side of the story. It has also been observed in the current study that CNN neglected giving coverage to the government's actions while EPA did the same in balancing the potential human rights violations committed by the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF). Such a presentation from CNN indicated that the broadcaster is passionate about promoting a discourse of conflict. In the meanwhile, EPA aggressively engaged in a rebuttal activity to defend the federal government's actions. Yet, in the exposure of human right issue CNN neglected human right abuses that were committed by TPLF and its forces and loudly echoed the political stance of the west during the coverage of the war.

Both EPA and CNN switched between different framing techniques to attain its goals. The broadcasters projected different scenarios to illuminate the human aspect of the conflict in which the later had given little or no evidence of its claims while the former presented human stories to support the claims made. The news report produced by the broadcaster under scrutiny, i.e., CNN emphasized on issues that put the federal government in a vindictive position while using framing strategies that evade the atrocious crimes the Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF) warriors committed. EPA on its part neglected CNN and other Western Media that had been

waging a propaganda war against the federal government and focused on individuals or personalities that have little or no reputation to put pressure on the Ethiopian federal government.

It was found out that CNN predominantly used framing of responsibility to blame the federal government for what it had done and what it had never been up to by using framing of responsibility. EPA on its part, aimed at justifying some of the Ethiopian National Defense Force's actions and presence in the Tigrai region. In this regard, Lecheler & de Vreese (2019) maintain that frame setting is the interaction between news frames and individuals' prior knowledge and predispositions. Frames in the news may affect learning, interpretation, evaluation of issues and events, and so on. This part of the framing process has been investigated most elaborately, often with the goal of exploring the extent to which, and under what circumstances, audiences reflect and mirror frames that are made available to them in the news, among others.

The consequences of framing can be conceived on the individual and the societal level. An individual-level consequence may be altered attitudes about an issue based on exposure to certain frames. Thus, both CNN and EPA extremely endeavored to impact the attitude of the local and international audience so that the cause and responsibility of the conflict in the northern Ethiopia would be perceived to be what each media institution set their eyes on. On the societal level, frames may contribute to shaping social-level processes, such as political socialization, decision-making, and collective actions. The potential of the framing concept lies in the focus on communicative processes. Communication is not static, but rather a dynamic process that involves frame-building (how frames emerge) and frame-setting (the interplay between media frames and audience predispositions).

It is worth noting that CNN in its news coverage piled accusations up on the federal government for any harm resulting from the conflict without identifying in its news coverage the role of the instigator and the one at the other end in the war. However, EPA was never up to reacting on any of these claims that concentrating its energy on exposing the Tigrai People's Liberation Front's prime role in the conflict. More specifically, CNN blamed the federal government of declaring war against TPLF for failing to recognize its legitimacy while TPLF itself acknowledged that fact it had carried out a preemptive attack against the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF)

base in the Tigrai region. However, Kalyvas & Kenny (2017) maintain that the causes of civil war include economic motivations or greed, and political or social grievances. Greed based explanations focus on individuals' desire to maximize their profits, while grievance based explanations center on conflict as a response to socioeconomic or political injustice.

In sum, the results show that the conflict frame dominated the coverage of the selected sample texts that were analyzed in this study. The dominance of the conflict frame was expected because of the events' nature.

5.2 Recommendations

This study was made based on an analysis that involved set of website news stories, from November 4, 2020- December 2021. It primarily focused on CNN's and EPA's news coverage of the war that broke out between federal and Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF). The current study focused on English news stories broadcast by CNN and EPA. Both CNN and EPA produced a wide range of media productions such as documentaries, special programs, interviews with authorities, press briefings, news commentaries, etc. on the conflict in the northern part of Ethiopia.

The researcher didn't consider all productions owing to the delimitations of the study. Thus, the researcher recommends further study to be carried out on the subject and the media houses selected for this study so as to bridge the gap which future researchers would identify as they read this thesis.

Furthermore, since the current study did not consider the images and video footages used to portray the situations, it is doable for would be researchers if they select topics that may allow them to investigate the image and video contents overlooked by the current study.

Accordingly, the current researcher recommends undertakings that would consider visual framing analysis so that the endeavors of the current researcher appear supplemented. Besides, the issue could be approached using a comparative framing analysis by expanding the number of media that gave coverage to the conflict.

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