



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**



**JOURNALISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR
AUDIENCES: A STUDY OF ETV, RADIO
FANA AND SHEGER FM 102.1 NEWSROOM
JOURNALISTS**

BY

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ADDIS ABABA

June 2010

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BY KEJELA KENA DENBALI



**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND
COMMUNICATIONS**

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS**



ADDIS ABABA

JUNE 2010

Journalists' Perception of their Audiences: A study of ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM
102.1 Newsroom Journalists

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Approved by the Examining Board

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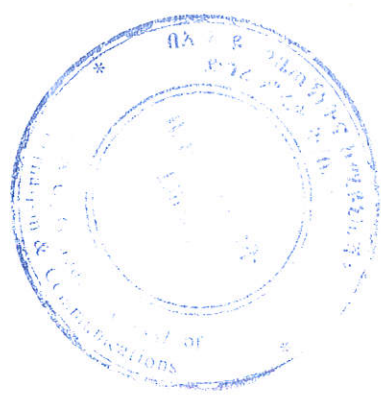
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Acknowledgement

This thesis would not have been successfully completed without the unreserved advice, assistant and involvement of my advisor, family and friends.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my adviser, Dr. Gebremedhin Simon for his invaluable advice and unreserved support in showing the direction, providing valuable feedbacks and for his greater interest in the accomplishment of this study.

Most of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family and friends for their moral and material encouragements. My deepest and warmest gratitude also goes to my wife Almaz Kebede, my daughter Sena Kejela and my little son Obsan Kejela. I am really no-body without the all-time love and presence of them.

My thanks also go to all research participants from ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 without whom this research would not have been conducted. God bless you all.

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Acronyms used in this study

ERTA	Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency
ETV	Ethiopian Television
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
RF	Radio Fana
SFM	Sheger FM 102.1
NR	Newsroom
MOI	Ministry of Information
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front

Abstract

In most newsrooms around the world journalists are often advised to have images of the people who constitute their target audiences and to write for the average viewer, listener or reader they perceive. In newsrooms where not much has been researched to know who the actual audiences are, such perceptions of the journalists set a chance to give some ideas of what journalists think of their audiences. Although, research on journalists' perceptions of their audiences is literally absent in Ethiopia, this study through qualitative in-depth assessment, has drawn some ideas of how journalists in ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 newsrooms perceive their audiences. Being the immediate gate keepers in the news production process, views from individual journalists about their audiences certainly are not only interesting, but may be also crucial in determining what news is eventually presented to the audiences. The findings show that journalists in ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 newsrooms perceive their news audiences as wide ranging general audiences in the public which spans all ages and professions with varied interests, preferences, and behaviors towards the media. Accordingly, newsroom journalists from ETV perceive that their audiences are the general public who need development and change in line with nationally established policies, who should receive information on government economic, social and political ideologies and who should accept and participate in the ongoing development and democratization process of the country. ETV newsroom journalists specifically perceive that most of their news audiences are matured adults who mainly want investigative news on wrong doings and hate ETV news on government political and development activities and are only fairly satisfied with ETV news. These journalists preconceive that considerable members of their audiences: hate their national media ETV and adore others' media like BBC and CNN; are suspicious about ETV news on government political and development activities; hastily label ETV as partial to the government; have low level of understanding to interpret news; are uninterested in ETV news; are biased and non critical about ETV news.

The findings from Radio Fana newsroom journalists, similarly, show that journalists perceive their audiences as a general public who need to receive information on social, economic and political ideologies of the country and who are required to participate, with full knowledge, in the ongoing development and democratization processes of the country. The majority of Radio Fana news audiences are perceived as adults who are employees or farmers living in rural areas and small towns. Radio Fana newsroom journalists also preconceive that substantial members of their audiences: are only moderately satisfied; mainly want news on social, economic and political problems; do not like Fana news on government political and development activities and receive such news with suspicion; hate Fana news simply because they think that it is partial to the government; are uninterested, biased and ignorant about Radio Fana news.

Journalists from Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom, on the other hand, perceive that their news audiences are wide ranging general audiences living in Addis and its vicinity. Furthermore, these journalists perceive that their audiences are consumers of goods and services who need good moods and pleasure when they listen to Sheger news. These journalists also think that the majority of their audiences: like negative news reports on government political and economic activities; mainly want news on social and economic problems in the society; are more interested in news on consumer goods and services and are highly satisfied and interested in Sheger FM 102.1 news.

Another finding from this study is that journalists in ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 newsrooms perceive their audiences as someone like themselves, and think that what interests them would interest the audience and what bores them would bore the audiences too. These journalists tend to act as audience representatives in their newsrooms. They also perceive their audiences as an extension of their own social contacts. They learn about their news audiences through personal contacts, friends, relatives, families and some feedbacks from audience members. So, they perceive their audiences as someone like in these groups and tend to consider the interests of these groups as the interests of the overall audiences.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background

Looking at news construction process in the newsrooms of media organizations one observes multi-layered decisions made by journalists, news editors and their directors at different levels. Journalists and their editors among, several news items, select certain events and decide to report news stories on them while rejecting or downplaying others based on various considerations. Their perceptions of their audiences, personal judgments, newsroom routines, organizational regulations, and other socio-cultural influences are among the considerations. In this context, journalists are the main actors, who based on these considerations, sense, value, select, gather, arrange and report news that flows along the communication channels to their perceived audiences.

In examining the nature of news construction process and the news audiences, scholars have looked at various aspects of the newsroom routine with various foci (e.g., Schudson, 2003; Eldridge, 2001; Berkowitz, 1997; Chang and Kraus, 1990; McQuail, 1987; Gans, 1979.) Some of the perspectives, for example, include the sociology of news, journalistic practice in the newsroom, news production and presentation, deciding what news is, the influence of social structures and institutions on the news, the effect of technology on the news and political, economic, social and cultural impact of news on the public.

Among journalistic practice in the newsroom journalists' perceptions of their audiences is a more recent point of analysis used to understand how journalists perceive their audience in their work routine and how that perceptions may influence their work. Their perceptions about their audiences may shape how they value news story, how they write it and what to include and/or exclude from it. For instance Bauer (1964) and Pool and Schulman (1959) quoted in McQuail (1997) argue that the reference group that form the imagined targets of communication (perceived audience), can influence the content of the message as well as facilitate the process of communications.

The concept audience is latently involved at many levels of newsroom routines. For example, when journalists select a news story the concept audience is tacitly at play. When they argue in favor of certain story idea, their last word is often it interests the audiences. They also say the purpose of their work in the newsroom is to inform the audiences. The question of what type of audiences they perceive and how that perception influences their practice is an example of implicit knowledge that journalists should give an account of it.

Journalists too often tend to rely on their professional skill, previous experiences and personal instinct to assess who their audiences are and what they want (Chang and Kraus, 1990). This is generally important where marketing and audience research is expensive or non-existent as is the case in most media in developing countries like Ethiopia.

In Ethiopia, although the media scene is significantly changing in the past decade, no appreciable attempt is made so far by media organizations to know who their news audiences are and what they want or at least what they say they want. One possible reason, may be, is that audience research is expensive and/or the media did not pay much attention to it. But, even, when the media organizations are not committed to audience research, audience consideration is still a key to newsroom practices by journalists- often tacitly involved in their news judgments and newsroom work routines. Accurate or not journalists' perceptions of their audiences are part of overall news construction process.

Scrutinizing these perceptions would enable one to understand how individual journalists perceive her/ his audiences and how these perceptions are involved in news construction process in the newsroom. To this end, this research project would attempt to explore how journalists in the newsrooms of Ethiopian Television, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 perceive their audience and how their perceptions are involved in news construction process. The focus of this study is the journalists involved in the evening primetime news of the stations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Journalists' knowledge of their audience is believed to shape and facilitate the way they select, write, edit and report news story. Whether the actual audience is known or unknown to them, most journalists are believed to deploy perceptions or images of the audience receiving their

news messages. This perception, whether it meshes with real audience or not, influences the way they write and edit news stories

The existing literatures on journalists- audience relationship indicate that it is important for journalists to envisage their audience in their daily chores. For example in deciding what to include in a news story and what to leave out, journalists are advised to consider who their audiences are and what they want to know (Allan, 1999:110; Franklin et al., 2005:173 and Kershner, 2009:54).

The questions of how journalists perceive their audiences and whether they are influenced by such perceptions in their news judgments have been part of recent scholarly inquiries. Nevertheless, in Ethiopian media landscape very little is done in this regard. The actual media audience and their taste of news and programs are not yet explored adequately. In spite of this, most media stations continue to give their perceived audiences a variety of programs among which daily news is one. In fact no single study has been undertaken in ETV, Radio Fana and Sherger FM 102.1 to understand who the news audiences are and how the journalists in the newsrooms perceive them in their work routines. So, how the journalists in these newsrooms perceive their audiences and how that might influence their work in the newsroom need to be investigated. I feel that assessing journalists' perceptions of their audience in their news construction process in these media institutions will be fundamental to improve the nature of the existing journalists- audience relationship.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to explore how journalists in ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 newsrooms perceive their audience in their news construction process and how that perceptions might help shape their work. The specific objectives include:

- Explore how individual journalists perceive their audiences in their work routines
- Examine how audiences are defined at organizational level
- Examine how journalists preconceive their audiences
- Explore how tacit images of audiences develop out of journalists practice in the newsrooms.

1.4 Research Questions

This study starts with an assumption that journalists in the newsroom consider their audiences when producing their daily news. Hence, close attention is paid to how the journalists relate their news to their audiences. The following questions are asked to substantiate this.

- What sort of audiences do the journalists have in their heads?
- What sort of audiences' interests do the journalists perceive and how does that influence their work?
- Is there any systematic way of envisaging audiences or audiences' interests by journalists in their newsroom?
- Is there any organizational definition of audiences in these media?
- What preconceptions do the journalists hold about their audiences?

1.5 Significance of the study

For a news media organization the knowledge of what the audiences *want to know* and what the journalists think their audiences *need to know* presupposes understandings the journalists and their organizations have of their audiences. This is why media practitioners are often trained to work with images of their audience and what they (audience) want. A good fit between the journalists' perceptions or images of their audience and the actual interests of the audience strengthens the efforts of the media to reach their audience. In this light, it is paramount to know how the journalists perceive their audiences. More specifically this researcher hopes that the study will have the following advantages:

- The research will be a baseline study to see into the gap that exists between journalists' perception of their audiences' and the actual audience interest and expectations. It may also initiate the media institutions to know their actual audiences, which this researcher did not look into due to time and fund limitations.
- It can also be used as an initial point by scholars and other interested in this area.
- It helps the media organizations to understand the roles journalists' perceptions of their audiences play in their thinking and working in the newsroom.
- For journalists, the research will indicate the need to consider audiences' interests in their daily work routine.

1.6 Limitations of the study

This research has been highly constrained by shortage of time and inadequacy of relevant literature on the media organizations chosen for the study. The time constraint limited me from using other research techniques like quantitative survey of perceptions while lack of relevant literature might have influenced the overall outcome of the study. In addition, the subjectivity nature of perception by itself might have influenced the study.

1.7 Thesis Organization

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter presents an overall introduction to the study which includes background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study and its limitations. Chapter two reviews related literature. It provides relevant backgrounds of Ethiopian Television, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1. This chapter also discusses the existing literature on journalists' perceptions of their audience and theories more relevant for understanding the media audience from journalists perspectives. Then, the methodology and techniques used in this study are discussed in chapter three of the study. Chapter four analyses and presents the findings obtained from the individual in-depth interviews, observations and an examination of relevant documents. Finally, conclusions from the research, recommendations and summaries of the study are presented in chapter five.

Chapter Two

Review of related Literature

This chapter is devoted to the presentation of literature review that relate to the concept of journalists' perception of their audience. It also aims to assess the relevant theoretical foundations of journalists practice in the newsroom with particular emphasis on journalists' perceptions of their audiences. This chapter also highlights the available literature on the issue with relation to Ethiopian media. It begins by reviewing the backgrounds of the media under study.

2.1 Brief Background of ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1

2.1.1 Ethiopian Television

Ethiopian Television was established during the reign of Emperor Hailesillase in 1964. Found, owned, controlled and run by the government, ETV has remained the only television broadcaster of the country. From its inception, the purpose of the medium was supposed to be to *inform, entertain and educate* the public (MoI, 1966:12).

During the Emperor's days Ethiopian Television remained under the direct control of the Monarchy. News and programs were mainly intended to attract local and international elites who were residing in Addis Ababa (MoI, 1973). As its transmission coverage was limited to only Addis Ababa area, the supposed audiences were also the elites of this area.

The military Derg, which took power in 1974, emphasized the propaganda role of the media and put all media under its direct control. As a result ETV continued to function under the full command and strict censorship of the government. News and programs were tailored to socialist orientations and the audiences were given only the information that could be appropriate- mostly revolving around workers party, socialism, unity and solidarity with sisterly socialist countries (Kinfu, 2001).

The coming to power of The Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1991 marked an important turning point in the media landscape of Ethiopia which led to a relatively liberal working of the media in general. Censorship of any kind was prohibited by

constitution and various proclamations which reinforced press freedom and access to information were proclaimed. The importance of independent operations of the mass media and free flow of information and ideas among citizens were given strong emphasis. As a result, Ethiopian Television started to enjoy relative freedom under a more lenient supervision by the state compared to the previous regimes.

Ethiopian Television is the TV branch of Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA) which is currently accountable to the House of People's Representatives. According to proclamation 114/87 ETV has got the following objectives;

- Collecting and disseminating useful information in the form of news and programs
- Publicizing government policies, procedures and laws to the public
- Receiving public opinion and producing different programs that help the public understand their democratic rights
- Transmission of educational and entertainment programs that enhance overall citizens knowledge and insight

Ethiopian Television editorial policy also indicates that the primary function of the medium is to serve the public. Communicating information regarding government laws, policies, proclamations and activities to the public, strengthening the relationship between the public and the government and facilitating fair access to the media by political parties are provided as the main objectives of the media (ETV Editorial Policy, 2005:23-24).

In accordance with this policy and other proclamations, ETV is currently running its news and programs for about 18 hours each day. On its main channel it transmits programs in Amharic, Tigrigna, Afar and Somali. Every evening from 7:00-8:00, Afan Oromo news and programs are also fed to ETV channel from Oromia Television which is recently launched and run by Oromia regional state. In addition to this, ETV on its other channel ETV2, whose coverage is limited to Addis Ababa area, has news hours in English, French and Arabic languages. The Addis Ababa City Administration television program and other local programs are also run on this channel. At present the total broadcast coverage of ETV is estimated to reach about 47.7 percent of the

overall geographical area of the country (ETV Strategic Plan, 2007).

Amharic news makes up to two hours of the total broadcast of ETV each day. Currently, the station runs its prime time news in Amharic from 8:00pm to 8:30pm in the evening. Major news stories on national and international events and major issues of each day are reserved for this prime time newscast. The rest of the stories which qualify for newscast are held for the 9:00 o'clock evening news or other news hours. The focus of this study is the evening prime time news and the journalists involved in its production.

Ethiopian Television Newsroom is organized under News and Current Affairs directorate which reports to the deputy General Manager of news and current affairs in ERTA. The deputy General Manager leads the overall activities of the newsroom and current affairs while a news and current affairs director is responsible for both news and current affairs programs. The newsroom routine is directly managed by two deputy editors in chiefs and about 42 newsroom journalists working at various professional levels. On every news day, there are two regular editorial meetings in ETV newsroom, one in the morning at 10:00am and the other in the afternoon at 2:00 pm. The content and structure of each day newscast and stories to be covered are mainly decided in the afternoon editorial meetings while the previous newscast and problems encountered during the newscast are evaluated in the morning editorial meeting. Deputy General Manager of news and current affairs chairs the afternoon editorial meeting in which editor in chief, assignment editor, deputy editor in chiefs and daily news editors of news and current affairs take part.

In editorial meetings decisions are made on which news story to carry, which lineup to follow, what content to include or exclude, which news to take for analysis and which story to cover from that time onward. These decisions are made based on various considerations and the participants' perception of their audience is one tacitly involved force. In other words, among other things, notions of the audience may help define what is to be considered newsworthy.

2.1.2 Radio Fana

Establishment of Radio Fana was directly linked to the armed struggle by the Tigray People Revolutionary Front (TPLF) against the military Dergue in the northern part of Ethiopia. Its origin dates back to the time of the beginning of the armed struggle in 1980. At its inception, the

name given to it was the *Voice of Revolutionary Tigray* (Radio Fana Magazine, Special issue, 2005:3). Under this name, it continued to transmit news and programs which supported the armed struggle until it discontinued for one year in 1985. Later in July 1986, it again commenced its transmission under the name of *Voice of Tigray Liberation Front* in the *liberated* land of Tigray.

In May 1990 the radio station was renamed *The Voice of Ethiopian People's Peace and Democracy* and continued to serve Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front armed struggle against the military Dergue. Its transmission hours increased from two hours to four hours a day and variety of programs that propagate anti Dergue ideologies were included. At the beginning the Radio used to transmit in Tigrigna and Amharic languages but, later in 1990 it expanded its transmission hour to include Afan Oromo under the title *The Voice of the Oromo People*. This Radio, has managed to work and survive through severe attacks until the downfall of the military Dergue in 1991 (Radio Fana Magazine, Special issue, 2005:4).

After 1991 the radio station continued to transmit from Tigray and Addis Ababa under direct supervision of EPRDF. The Radio secured a legal ground to continue its transmission after the 1992 Proclamation No. 34/92 which provide for press freedom in Ethiopia.

Radio Fana was officially established under its current name in November 1994 and continued to broadcast its programs on medium waves and short waves with a potential to reach all over the country. Currently it is running its news and programs for 18 hours each day in four local languages namely Amharic, Afan Oromo, Afar and Somaligna. In addition to this Fana's FM 98.1 was launched in March 2007 putting different news and programs to the audience of Addis and the surrounding. Recently it has launched FM programs in Jimma, Mekele, Harar, Shashemene, Dessie and Gonder towns.

On every week days Radio Fana allots up to three hours of newscast time on its short wave and medium wave broadcast. Amharic newscast obtain 90 minutes of this news hour and the rest is for Afan Oromo news (up to 60 minutes each day), and Afar and Somali languages share the remaining.

On every news days Amharic news has a prime time newscast of 20 minutes at seven o'clock in the evening. The station gives special emphasis to this time. Important news stories and news projects which are exclusive to Fana are also kept for this prime time. In addition, prime time commercial slots that follow everyday news are the most needed times by advertisers. Although it is not confirmed by research, the station aims to reach the maximum potential audience at that time.

Radio Fana's Amharic newsroom is currently run by 19 journalists working on different status. Newsroom division head (an equivalent of newsroom director) who reports to the station program director leads the newsroom. There are two editors in chiefs many editors, producers and reporters in the newsroom.

On every weekday Fana's newsroom holds two editorial meetings to select, decide and plan for the newsroom activities. The first meeting is at 9:00 o'clock in the morning and the other is at 2:00p.m in the afternoon. News division head leads both the meetings. In addition to this, all editors in chiefs, department heads and division heads meet for overall editorial conference every Saturday morning which is chaired by the General Manager of the station. Weekly performance of the station is evaluated and new plan for the following week is decided on this meeting.

The current Editorial Policy and Manual document of Radio Fana under its fundamental directives indicates that the station satisfies the interests of its audiences if and only if it broadcasts news and programs that have significant impacts on the listeners. The importance of clarity in writing and audibility in presentation is also emphasized under this section. Fana's editorial policy does not indicate who the audiences of the station are and what they want, but it clearly specifies that their interests must be met.

The first two objectives in the policy explain that the station works to create *informed society* and serves as a *public forum*. Its current marketing maxim reads, *Station not only to listen to, but also to talk through*. The following paragraphs are extracted from different sections of the policy based on their relevance to the audience and translated into English.

- The primary goal of Radio Fana is to satisfy its listeners' and gain credibility accordingly. In a free market system, winning and sustaining a competition by competency of services necessitates a growing audience share. And, in order to increase

audience share, satisfying the listeners' interest and increasing credibility is paramount. Therefore, the station needs to create such a capacity and strengthen it ((p.42)

- Fana news and programs are primarily valued by their *public importance* and their contributions to the wellbeing of the people (p.18).
- Fana journalists are required to have all-round professional skills that would help them produce news and programs that satisfy the interests of the listeners (p.43).
- When news is written, to make the lead hook the listeners and catch their attention to listen the rest of the story, it should be short, clear, interesting and should focus on one key idea (57).

Ownership implication of Radio Fana is often contested. It is quite common to hear from some people that Radio Fana was and is a party instrument of EPRDF. Perhaps this is due to its past legacy and historical background. But what one can simply judge from its current legal broadcast license is that it is commercial radio station under the name of *Radio Fana Share Company*. The station also does not accept that it is a party instrument or government affiliate. Here is what one of the top men of the station argue.

Our station does not get any budget subsidy or material support from the government or EPRDF. We do not receive any order or control from government or the party. No one interferes into our editorial practices. And no one decides on our organizational structure or our salary except the organization itself. We are autonomous share company. So, why do some people call us party instrument or government media? We are not. (Interview Asefa Ahimad, March 2, 2010)



As it is not the intention of this research, no effort is made to explore who really the share holders of Radio Fana are, which may in one way or another indicate where the station stands in terms of ownership and control. But in this study, whenever the station is referred to, the legally indicated ownership i.e. Radio Fana Share Company is used.

2.1.3 Sheger FM 102.1

Sheger FM 102.1 was established under the ownership of Aday Tinsae Media and Entertainment Private Limited Company in November 2008. A group of interested veteran journalists who used to work in different media organizations came together and started this station. It is one of the seven FM radio stations that are licensed by the Federal Broadcast Authority (FBA) to broadcast in Addis and its vicinity. Its current broadcast coverage reaches 250 square kilometer radius around Addis. Shegers' current marketing proposition statement reads, "Sheger is yours-it is all about you".

Shegers' profile document written under the title *Inside Sheger* shows that the stations' target audiences are all adults between ages 18-49. Moreover, the station works to attract urban elites who are above 35, opinion leaders, businessmen, and academicians. The document also states that within the targeted audience structure there would be breakdowns and deviations. The *editorial attitude* forwarded in the profile document of Sheger FM 102.1 reads as follow.

- We aspire to create good mood, entertain and then acquaint our audience with their world by providing " the informational resources for daily life and important decisions"
- Provide consumer news background and interpretation with which our audiences can make the best out of the opportunities of the day.
- We aspire to be a station of information of consequences and problem solving and life loving.

The station is currently running a variety of informative, educational and entertainment programs for 18 hours per day. Newscast takes up to 150 minutes each day from Monday to Thursday and 210 minutes on every Friday. On Friday evenings the station has a one hour news show which runs from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm. This news show is repeated at 9:00 pm on the same day and at 8:00am on Saturday morning. The station does not have newscast on Saturday afternoon, Saturday evening and the whole Sunday.

The major news hour of Sheger FM 102.1 is the one that runs from 6:00pm and repeated with some developments at 9:00pm in the evenings. This news runs for 30 minutes from Monday to Thursday and for one hour on Friday.

Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom is organized under news and information department which directly reports to the General Manager of the station. There are seven working journalists in the newsroom who are managed by one editor in chief (news director).

On weekdays everyday in the morning the newsroom journalists meet for editorial discussions and briefings. They discuss and decide on the daily news, news tips for coverage, feedbacks from audience and other newsroom routines. Head of news and information department leads the discussion.

2.2 News

In defining news, scholars have focused on a wide variety of its formulation and manifestations. Some have incorporated the actors involved in its production and dissemination while others have focused on its social impact. Some others have also explained news based on the criterion by which journalists are trained to identify news from non news happenings. But, finding a single universal definition of news remained difficult. Despite this difficulty, news is recurrently desired by its audience and persistently offered by the communicators.

In most of the definitions of news provided by scholars, the major actors behind its productions and presentations are clearly or tacitly implied. Gans (2004), for example, defined news by including its main actors;

I view news as information which is transmitted from sources to audiences, with journalists-who are both employees of bureaucratic commercial organizations and members of a profession-summarizing, refining and altering what becomes available to them from sources in order to make the information suitable for their audience. (2004:80)

Here, Gans definition of news presupposes the role of the main actors involved in the production of news namely journalists, audiences, media organizations and news sources. Tai and Chang (2002:251) similarly explain news with reference to its main actors. For them, " News as a special kind of social product requires something to have taken place in the first place, to be captured by news people and published by the media and ultimately to be consumed by the audience. Every stage is crucial for the news manufacturing process".

Other scholars explained news based on its social impact. Schudson (2003:6) argues that, “News is what is publicly notable” and what would “affect how people act”. He further explains that news and news audience are inseparable. “The news media do not find and respond to existing audience; they create one. There is no news consumer apart from news” (2003:68).

Schudson further argue that news is one source of public knowledge in that it constructs a symbolic world that has a kind of priority and a certification of legitimate importance. This symbolic world, he argues, is the property of all citizens which in turn make news a valuable resource when citizens decide to take political action (Schudson, 1995:33). This argument underscores that news plays a significant role in forming public knowledge and hence, democratic culture.

DeFluer and Dennis (1991) emphasize the role news plays in building democratic society. They argue that news is the most powerful media outlet, which can make a significant contribution to building a democratic society by depicting a reasonably true picture of what is going on in the world, creating what should be a close correspondence between the *world outside* and the *picture in our heads* of that world.

In a democratic society, news reflects diversities of views providing the public with a market place of ideas from which to choose. “A democratic society, it is argued, requires a diversity of views and news sources available, a market place of ideas, from which the public can choose what it wishes to read and believe about public affairs”(Hachten ,1998:37). News then is required to entertain diversity of views in order to give the public a preference among choice.

News lacks purpose unless it touches people and affects their lives (Lorenz, 1996). As some scholars like Roscho (1999) have argued, news is a consequence of human desire to know the state of the surrounding social and physical environment. For media organizations and their professionals, the need to fulfill this desire is paramount in order to accomplish their social responsibilities.

2.3 Stages of News Production

News production process in a news organization can be boiled down into four major stages. These are planning, gathering selection and presentation. At planning stage, attempts are made to

reduce uncertainty of random and unpredictable events by plotting events in advance and determine which is to become news. News organization often has both long run and short run plan in which they try to include the general themes and policies and determine daily news production. Golding and Elliott (1999:112) suggested two mechanisms of keeping these plans: the diary and the editorial conference.

The diary is an important document that “records predictable events that merit coverage by their unquestionable *public importance*” (Golding and Elliott, 1999:113). It also contains less significant events that could be included or rejected in news coverage. The diary, “referred to as an “implicit script of news” by Golding and Elliott can be written from the press releases and invitations which stream into the newsroom. In addition to this diary, the daily routine of newsroom is planned at the editorial conferences.

The second stage of news production process is gathering of news. At this stage various considerations are at play. Golding and Elliott (1999) for instance put three major considerations for broadcast news organizations. First, broadcast news journalists face shortage of time and space to include large volume of reportage. Second, they require film and sound recording equipment which involve team of news gatherers, which are not easily mobile as one man with a note pad. Third, broadcast journalism is inherently passive because of labor and resources required for processing it.

The third stage of news production process is selection. At this stage journalists employ various considerations to determine story suitability. Gans outlined three categories of story suitability considerations: substantive considerations- based on news values judge story content and the news worthiness of what sources supply; product consideration- evaluate the “goodness” of stories, and competitive considerations- test stories for their ability to serve in the continuing rivalry among news organizations to provide the most satiable news” (Gans, 2004:146).

The final stage of news production process is presentation. At this stage greater attention is given to the audience. What audiences will and will not accept, comprehend or enjoy is given emphasis. These considerations of audience interest can affect the news production process as it can influence the journalists who select the stories.

2.4 The News Audience and Journalists

News is gathered from the source, produced and presented by journalists for the ultimate consumption by news users-the audience. For news to be consumed, its ingredients first have to cater to the interest of the audience. Audience interest appears to be one of the underlying factors that account for most, if not all, of the news valuing ingredients (timeliness, proximity, conflict, impact or consequence, human interest and prominence) which are recognized news judgment values in journalism textbooks (Brooks et al., 1999; Hough, 1988; Itule and Anderson, 1987; Kersner, 2009; Lorenz, 1996; and Mencher, 1994). All these ingredients directly or indirectly relate to the news audience.

In news gathering and reporting, the notion of audience interest also involve journalists' perceptions of what their audience wants and what news should be to capture the attention and imagination of that audience on a regular basis (Tai and Chang, 2002). News in this case is then an end result of journalists' judgments who, based on various factors, try to find the best fit between the news and the interests of the news audience.

The news producers (journalists) and the news audience exist independently that one would not easily dictate over the other. In other words the audience would not directly dictate what news should the journalists produce and the journalists do not easily order what news the audience should consume. But journalists are often trained to have some perceptions of what their audiences want.

Journalists in the newsroom accomplish their social responsibility only when their product (news for example) reaches their audiences who are themselves autonomously willing to consume the media product that may influence their lives one way or the other. In order to attract the audience, journalists consider and take into account their (the audience) preferences as the media product (news in this case) is planed, produced and distributed. In this news making process how journalists perceive their audiences and whether they have been influenced by such perceptions has been part of scholarly inquiry into the underlying mechanism of news making process.

In a more developed media in the West (US media for example), journalists tend to provide their audience with what they ask for (Hough, 1988). This has led to an extreme case of *market driven journalism* discussed by McManus (1994). McManus argues that in the world of commercialism

and competition, where the mass media industries have turned the news into profitable commodity, journalists are forced to have some means through which they assess the interest of their audience- audience researches, readership surveys, circulation figures, letters to the editors and feedback from the audience are such a means. But when all these are not easily available or expensive and time consuming to obtain (for example as in Ethiopian media), journalists rely on their perceptions, instinct and previous experiences in assessing what their audiences want.

Numerous studies that have been undertaken in Western media have indicated that journalists in the newsroom do not solely rely on formal external rules or guidelines in their news making chores. Instead, their selection and judgment of news appears to be based on a set of subjective perceptions of how the news would be related to their audience. This audience interest, whether real or perceived, allows the journalists to organize the news stories accordingly.

In Ethiopia, as far as my reading is concerned, there is no single investigation into newsrooms to understand journalists' perception of their audience. Birhanu Olana, in an attempt to examine the Professional Role orientation of Ethiopian journalists, observed how journalists perceive what their audiences think of their profession and found that journalists do not have strong view of what their audiences think (2009: 56).

Skjerdal (2008) examined professional culture in three government media organizations in Ethiopia and revealed that journalists he observed developed a gut feeling which helps them to select and edit news, guided by unwritten rules in their news making process and many of them had a feeling of being curtailed in the profession. Majority of them perceive themselves as capable journalists and potentially good reporters, but are somehow stifled by institutional constraints. Perhaps, this last point indicates that these journalists may have some perceptions of what their audiences want or what they ought to give them.

2.5 Journalists' Perceptions of their Audience

Journalists in the newsroom make choice everyday- what stories to cover, which sources to consult, whose door to knock at, what question to ask, who to believe, what angle to take, what quotes to use, how much context to include, what words to use, what pictures to use, what to leave out (Harcup, 2004:153). Harcup further argues that these are not entirely free choices, they

are not taken in a vacuum, sometimes there will be orders from high, but for the most part they are still choices of the journalists. These choices are based on various considerations among which journalists' perception of their audience is one.

Journalists are often trained to have an image of their audience in their professional practices. For instance Kersner (2009) emphasizes the importance of considering audience when writing and reporting news story. The following is the first of Kersners' 15 steps in writing good news story:

Remember that just because something is interesting to you does not mean that it is interesting to everybody. Picture the member of your audience, and try to figure out what would interest them. If your story tells them something new that will affect their lives chances are that you have a good news story (Kersner, 2009:54).

Yopp and McAdams in their *Reaching Audiences*, also argue that journalists must recognize their audience. "Writers must identify their audiences. A short cut is to ask the question "who cares?" the answer will be a list of groups or audiences that are potential consumers of the message" (2003:9).

Scholars who examined news making process argue that news is not just something that happens in a void to be reported by journalists, but instead news is something that is created by journalists from a myriad of happenings in and around their world (e.g. Schudson, 2003; Berkowitz, 1997; Gans, 2004). News, then, is constructed within the everyday work of journalists and within the organizations for which they are employed. In that process of constructing the news, various perceptions of the audience evolve and further contribute to the kind of news that is produced.

Journalists' allegiance to the audience is often underlined as fundamental element of the profession of journalism. Kovach and Rosenstiel, for instance, put "The primary purpose of journalism is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self governing" (2001:17) and "Journalists first loyalty is to citizens" (2001:51). But, how journalists and their news media consider the audience for whom they work continues to be a focus of scrutiny.

Two views are commonly heard about journalists' knowledge of their audience. On the one hand there are scholars who argue that journalists have perceptions or images of their audience which they think about in their work routines (Bauer 1964; Gans 1979; McQuial 1997; Pool and

Schulman (1959); Weaver and Wilhoit (1986); White (1950). On the other hand there are some scholars who argue that journalists' knowledge of their audience is an abstraction only realized through feedbacks and personal contacts (Gaunt 1990; Schlesinger 1978). Schlesinger for example put in the following words:

Total audience remain an abstraction, made real on occasion by letters or telephone calls, encounter of a random kind in public places, or perhaps more structured ones such as conversations with lifemen, barmen and taxi – drivers(1978:107).

Many scholars still believe that journalists have perceptions or images of their audience which they think about when they work. For example, McQuial (1997) by referring to early theory of Hebert Mead (1934) and Charles Cooley (1908) explained the idea of imagined or constructed receiver of communication. He explained the essence of the theory as:

In order to communicate we need to have some known “reference person” or groups to whom we can address ourselves as well as having a shared cultural and social space and a common language. Where the other party to communication cannot directly observed, it has to be constructed (or imagined). This involves self selection and stereotyping of the significant other (McQuial, 1997:112).

White (1950) in his *Gate Keeper* study observed that journalist have working sense of their audience. Through studying the overt reason given by journalists to select or reject news stories he found how highly subjective, based on journalists' experience, attitude and expectations the communication of news is. White asked, among other things, for example, how editors conceived of their audience and obtained the following from one of his informant. “... They are all entitled to news that pleases them (stories involving their thinking and activity) and news that informs them of what is going on in the world.” (Quoted in Berkowitz, 1997:71)

In his study of CBS evening news, NBC nightly news, and Newsweek and Time, Gans (2004) similarly argued that journalists see the audience as someone like themselves and therefore view themselves as audience representatives. “Most journalists take the congruence of their own and the audiences feeling for granted. In the process they become representatives of the audience, reacting for it vis-à-vis their sources” (2004:237).

Gans also observed that among journalists he studied in the newsroom top editors, producers and writers tend to judge news story from audience point of view while reporters tend to judge news story from the perspective of news sources. "The final shape of the story is often a comprehensive, but usually more audience related, for top producers and editors have more power"(2004:90). He further argues that journalists must be aware of their audiences.

Even if journalists do not have to keep the actual audience in mind, they must be aware of it. Knowing little about it, however, they construct an image of the audience, which does not always mesh with the reality. But then it does not really have to do so, for what interest journalist is how the audience (that is their image of it) reacts to their work (Gans, 2004:238).

Gans further observed that the only characteristics of audience that journalist do keep in mind is its receptivity of the news. Based on this he identified four types of audiences that the journalists he had studied had perceived. These are the interested audience, the uninterested audience; the rejected audience and the invented audiences (2004:239). These are discussed below.

2.5.1 The Interested Audience

These audiences are imagined to care about the news and to keep up with it on a regular basis. Journalists, naturally, are most enthusiastic about these categories of audiences. They perceive that these audiences accept journalistic news judgments which allow journalists a maximal autonomy. In addition, journalists perceive some characteristics of this audience. They imagine them to be well educated, and of younger age.

2.5.2 The Uninterested Audience

The uninterested audience, journalists perceive, are careless irregular audiences whose attention must be sought and then held and who is mostly interested in local news. When journalists take the audiences into account in their work routine, they think about these uninterested audiences who must be perused continuously. Journalists are often fearful of losing or upsetting these audiences. They treat them with a mixture of contempt and acceptance. They do not totally ignore or sufficiently serve because these audiences do not care much about important news. The uninterested audiences that journalists perceived in Gans' study are imagined to be poorly educated, older aged and those who share the cultural and political conservatism of their locality.

2.5.3 The Rejected Audience

The rejected audiences as perceived by the journalists are those people whom the journalist's would like to extrude. Gans grouped these audiences into two. The first group are made up of the *would be intellectuals* who are imagined to prefer more detailed and thus boring, stories than the journalists are willing or able to supply. These audiences are also assumed to be experts who might write letters to the news organizations accusing the journalists of oversimplification. The second groups of rejected audience are made up of a group of people perceived to be interested solely in sensational stories. Gans argue that television journalists are fearful of these audiences, for they worry that because of their large number their station might therefore want to cater to them in the quest for higher rating.

2.5.4 The Invented Audience

These categories of imagined audience are those which journalists construct to satisfy themselves that their news judgments guarantee them audiences. In their invention of these audiences, journalists, assume that the total audience spans all age and educational levels. These invention enables the journalists to ignore the audience altogether and allows them to assume that every news story is sure to appeal to someone. Journalists try to adjust these invented audiences to coincide with their own judgments.

2.6 Organizational Definition of Audience

Scholars who studied news construction process from the perspective of media organization found that the notions of audience are implied in organizational routines and practices. For instance, Tuchman (1978) in her classic work, *Making News*, argued that news media organizations assume that what ever their media cover interests their audiences too. Media organizations plan their routines (news for example) based on their own perceptions of their audiences. And news directors, editors, reporters and others in the newsroom are guided by the plan and stories are covered accordingly. This way the news media organizations' perception of its audiences shape or influence that of the journalists and hence define what is newsworthy.

More often than not, it is the media organization rather than the journalists that provide guidance for the type of audiences the media want to reach. These organizational guidance and orientation

depend on the goal of the news media as well as the regulatory environment in which the media function. In either case the audiences are defined at organizational level. McQuail (1997: 115) cited Tunstall (1971) to distinguish between revenue goals and nonrevenue goals of the news media organization.

The revenue goals include commercial success or high rating. Here the news media requirement is to draw the attention of the right audience to the right message while increasing the size of the receiving audience. The non revenue organizational goals of news media for example include media owners and editors desire for political and social influence on the audience. McQuail notes this as follow:

The desire for political and social influence is quite a common ambition of media owners and editors. In such cases the target audience and the desirable form of message receive specific definitions that reduce communicator uncertainty. This applies to non commercial media, such as party political news papers and to public broadcasting which usually has non profit social and cultural goals. (1997:115)

McQuail further notes that in traditional public broadcasting such as British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the leadership is required to maintain standards of integrity and cultural quality .They have a mission that rises above the pursuit of audience ratings. Based on their mission or purpose whether religious political or cultural some media organizations tend to define their audience as receivers of their ideology. The relationship between the media and the audience in this case is one of leadership and propagation of ideology. On the other hand the media may simply try to express the voice of the group or public they serve in which case their relationship within the audience may be is more comfortable and balanced (McQuail, 1997:116).

Audience can also be perceived from the communicative relationship between the message sender and the receiver (audience). McQuail (1994) outlined three alternative models of the communicative relationships between message sender and receiver (the audience). These are transmission model, expressive or ritual model, and an attention model. They are briefly discussed below.

The transmission model- audience as target

In this model, the communication process is perceived primarily as the sending of message over time for the purpose of influence over the receiver. The receiver, and

thus the audience, is perceived as target for the purposeful transfer of meaning. This model applies to public information campaigns, advertisements and education among others. Communication is instrumental in this model.

The expressive or ritual model- audience as participant

In this model, communication is defined in terms of sharing and participation, increasing the communicability between sender and receiver, rather than in changing “receivers” inline with the purpose of the “senders”. Carey (1975) quoted in McQuail, 1997:41) describes this kind of communication as “not direct towards the extension of messages in space [over distance] but the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information, but the presentation of shared beliefs”. In this model, communication is not instrumental and audience members are essentially participants.

The attention model- Audience as spectators

In the attention model, the source does not seek to transmit information or belief but simply to capture the attention of the audience, regardless of communication effect. This audience attention is measured by ratings and cashed in the form of advertisements or subscriptions. Audience attention as “Spectatorship” is temporarily but not deeply involving. It implies no “transfer of meaning” or sharing or deepening of ties between sender and receiver (Elliot, 1972)

The regulatory environment in which the media functions is another factor which shapes journalists out put and hence poses particular picture of the audience. Webster and Phalen (1994) for example, in their analysis of broadcast policy in the United States of America suggested three models of audiences. These are, the effect model, the marketplace model, and the commodity model which are briefly discussed here;

The effect model -Audience as Victim

This model perceives audiences as victims of media product. The objective in this model is to protect the audience from harmful media content or provide them with, healthier content.

Market place Model-Audience as Consumer

In this model audience is assumed as consumer of media product. The audience of this model is thought as active and knowledgeable and the best media content is thought to survive because it is best catered to this audience.

Commodity model- Audience as Coin of Exchange

In this model audience was treated as an “object” to be sold to advertisers. The best media content was that which attracted a sizeable audience that could be sold to advertisers.

The media technologies available to newsroom journalists also convey assumptions about the news production process and the way in which the news audience retrieve the news. One modern portrayal of the news audience from those who focus on changing technological picture of news production is the audience as *technocrats* with host of technologies at their disposal to help them design the news for themselves. Neumann (1991) contrasted this “technocrat” view with a passive and slow moving audience. He noted that, although, the technology for vast changes in the media are possible those changes will be slow in coming, because people are relatively passive when it comes to making changes in their private use of the media and because of economic constraints on the media themselves. There is also a notion of perceiving audience both as *technocrats* and as *passive*. This is implicitly audience as market. Large media organization which use new modern technologies tend to segment and personalize their media out put for a variety of audiences – viewing the audience as market.

Journalists understanding of their audience in the newsgathering process can also be examined from economic perspectives. Media economists such as Owen and Wildman (1992), for example, treated audiences as rational who have clear preferences and who will chose media contents based on those preferences. These economists also characterized media organizations as completely rational entities that are operating to maximize profit. DeWerth-Pallmeyer (1997:7) for example cites Squires (1991) who suggests that such a view is increasingly practiced at modern news originations in U.S. “Owners and mangers of the new media . . . want content defined in advance by target audience responses to surveyor’s questions and then designed to fit inside the elite and narrow parameters of the most desired advertiser targets with a single goal –

attainment of the corporation's financial objectives". Here, from institutional perspective, the audience is viewed or perceived as a market served up for advertisers. Thus, news organizations try to construct the best gainful audience they can.

2.7 Audience Considerations in Newsroom

In selecting and judging news stories, journalists sometimes explicitly think about and act on their audience perceptions. Gans (2004:241) refers to this act as "audience considerations" and argues that journalists audience considerations are invoked for the *uninterested* audience to attract them or to protect them, and hence, in the process the journalists and the social order. He explains how the notions of audience evolve:

Most of the time , journalists do not think about the audience while choosing stories but apply audience considerations ex post facto when someone suggests that a story could upset, displease ,or confuse some views or readers. In such cases the imagined audience becomes a veto group, although most of the time, the story survives and is edited during story production so as to eliminate offending components. At other times if not very often, stories that do not particularly interest story selectors but are imagined to grab the audience will be chosen solely for that reason (2004:241)

Journalists often aim to attract and hold their audience's attention .They do this by providing them with suitable stories. Gans for example, identified three types of stories that help journalists to attract and hold audience attention. They are *identifying* stories- which engage the audience due to their relevance and appeal; *service stories* -which have personal relevance to the audience (such as health, consumer stories and periodic review of complicated phenomena) and *non burdening* stories – non complicated, non excessive, non detailed stories which may disinterest the audience .The selection of these stories appears to be based on subjective perceptions of how the news would be related to the audience.

Journalists also try to give their perceived audience important stories that they should know and interesting stories that please them. Burgroon et al. (1982) argued that *interest* and *importance* are the main criteria journalists use in their news decision. *Interesting* news is news that audiences *want to know* and important news is news that journalists think their audience *need to know*. Both are largely determined by editor's perceptions of the taste and preference of their audience (Chang and Tai, 2002).

Protecting the audience from harmful or upsetting media content is one larger set of audience consideration by journalists. This set of audience considerations are consistent with the effect model of audience discussed in section 2.6.1. In these set of considerations journalists generally try to protect their audience by avoiding those news stories which upsets their perceived audience.

Gans (2004) outlined four categories of protective audience considerations. First, television journalists for example are careful to guard their audience from unnecessary personal upsets which may result from shock as a result of incomplete news stories about major accidents like plain crashes. Second, journalists work to discourage panic among audience members which may result from disaster or civil disturbances. Third, journalists also try to reduce *imitative behavior* of audience by avoiding news with such possibilities for example, civil disturbances which may incite other spectators who might join in after receiving it through news media. The fourth as argued by Gans, the major protecting consideration, and in fact the most important audience consideration, guides the exclusion or editing of stories on the grounds of what journalists call taste. This consideration is applied by taboos, mainly against nudity, profanity, blasphemy and the depiction of bloodshed, which exist to protect both the audience from being upset and the news media from massive audience anger (Gans, 2004:245).

2.8 How Journalists Perceive their Audience

Journalists perceive their audience in a variety of ways. They may perceive them as an extension of their own social world - like friends, families, relatives and contact persons, they may perceive them as their professional colleagues – e.g. fellow journalists, and they may also perceive audience as defined by their media organization. These perceptions help to substantiate the nature of the audience they have in mind and make their relationship with the audience more manageable (McQuail, 1997).

Stereotyping is also one possible way of perceiving audiences. Journalists and their media organizations often develop a certain stereotype concerning interests, expectations and tastes of their audience and seek to match this stereotype with appropriate media content. This technique is often used in news stories, television shows, music and films. Here the aim is to maximize the correspondence between media organizations' or journalists' perceptions of their audiences'

interest and the media product.

Journalists can also perceive their audience in relation to their professional role. Eldridge (2001) for example argues that journalists often regard themselves not simply as reporters of the events, but also as socially responsible educators. In this regard, it is plausible to argue that journalists perceive their audience as 'learners' who are less powerful in terms of knowledge about news events. Tuchman (1978) also argued that journalists perceive their audiences as *less qualified* than themselves- in determining news worthiness of events against the interest of their audience. There are also notions of perceiving audience as 'narrow minded' and passive receivers of whatever the news media provide to them.

Journalists' perception of their audience may also depend on the existing media system. For instance Sieber, Peterson and Scheramm (1956) in *Four Theories of the Press* historically suggested the following arguments. In an *Authoritarian media system*, which envisions knowledge as coming from a wise few, the audience is perceived as *ignorant* and so is given only the information that could be appropriate. In *Libertarian media system*, which was the result of enlightenment period, journalists perceive their audience as being enlightened and their role as a 'watchdog' against government is given emphasis. In the system where the media follow *the Social responsibility* model, journalists perceived their audience as *active democracy* requiring certain information. In the *Soviet Communist model* the audiences were perceived as people *evolving and maturing* into a classless society.

McQuail (1984) on the other hand indicated audience presumption of Democratic- Participant media theory which perceives audiences as seemingly *controllers of the media content*. The essence of this perception is that media should exist primarily for their audience and not for media organizations, professionals or the clients of the news media.

In the more recent *Development Media theory* there is a notion that media audience should be perceived as members of society who need development in line with nationally established policy, who prioritize national culture and language and who need news and information from other developing countries which are geographically close, as well as culturally and politically similar (McQuail, 1984:95).

However, journalists' perception of their audience, in most part, is the result of their subjective thought and interpretations about the people for whom they make news items. Their perception may vary based on culture, religion, beliefs, values, ethnic background, experience, political inclination, educational level, organizational structure, legal institutions etc.

Mass media audience in general is not easily observable except in an indirect and fragmented ways (McQuail, 1997). Probing journalists' perceptions of their audience is one indirect way of understanding the audience image that exist in their minds and hence its' bearing on their works. Exploring journalists' perception of their audience is also one way of understanding the news media audience that the journalists are reporting for.

Journalists' perception of their audience is also shaped by the political system under which their media organizations operate. For most media, the notion of audience is implied in editorial policies, broadcast policies and other media policies which by themselves are dependent on the existing system. When the existing system change, policy adjustment may follow and consequently media organizations may make new institutional arrangements.

For instance, during the time of emperor in Ethiopia, most news and programs of ETV were intended for local and international elites (MoI, 1973). The socialist military Dergue, which took power after the monarchy, followed strict censorship policy under which journalists were forced to provide the audience with what Dergue believed was important- mostly revolving around socialist ideology (Kinfе, 2001). Audiences in this system, seemingly, were believed to be passive receivers who absorb everything that flows to them through the media.

Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), after overthrowing Dergue, came to power in 1991 with a promise of building democratic order in the country. On the morrow of its control over Addis Ababa, a voice of one EPRDF soldier appeared on Ethiopian Radio early morning news announcing that the front controlled the radio station for the benefit of the mass - promising to serve the mass audience (Ethiopian Radio News, May 28, 1991). For the first time in the history of the country, the benefit of the mass audience is considered and openly announced.

Moreover, censorship of any kind was prohibited. A proclamation to provide press freedom (Proc. No. 34/92), a proclamation to provide for the systematic management of broadcasting service (Proc. No. 178/1999), the revised broadcasting service proclamation (Proc. No. 533/2007) and more recently Freedom of Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation (Proc. No. 590/2008) were proclaimed. In all these proclamations the importance of independent operations of the mass media and free flow of information and ideas among citizens were given strong emphasis. It is reasonable to argue that under the current political system the notions of audience are given due emphasis in policies and proclamations. Hence, it is also possible to examine to what extent journalists' perceptions of their audience in Ethiopia may have been shaped by these policies and proclamations.

2.9 The Working theories or Operational theories of Audience

Denis McQuail in his *Mass Communication Theory* distinguished between five types of theories at work in understanding the media. These are working or operational, social scientific, cultural, normative, and common sense or everyday theories. Working theory or operational theory refers to the practical ideas assembled and applied by media practitioners in the conduct of their daily media work. In the case of the media, this theory serves to guide solutions to fundamental tasks including: how to please audiences, select news, design effective advertising, keep within limits of what society permits and relate effectively to sources and society (McQuail, 2005). He noted that some of the ideas involved are matters of technique, some are enshrined in traditions, professional practices, norms of behavior, rules of thumb which shape the work of the media. McQuail argued that this theory is practical because it helps to answer such questions as: 'What will please the audience?' 'What will be effective?' 'What is newsworthy?' What are the responsibility of the journalists and the broadcaster in a given case? (McQuail, 1984:18)

Because the focus of this study is on how journalists perceive their audience and its bearing on the construction of news within news organizations, the theories of the audience most relevant for this study are working theories. News workers at the organizations I observe (ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1) are quoted to illustrate these working theories.

Journalists' perceptions of their audiences, like other journalistic professional working or operational theories, develop out of the every day work of journalists. Journalists are working

professionals with a set of attitudes and behaviors about their news product and its consumer-the audience. Schon (1983) referred to working professionals as those who must deliberately involve themselves in messy but crucially important problems and, when asked to describe their methods of inquiry, they speak of experiences, trial and error, intuition and muddling through. He further noted that professionals learn to do their job based on past experience although they might find it hard to verbalize it. This can be applied to journalists involved in the construction of news.

Some scholars have applied working theories to examine journalists' understandings of their audience. Ettema (1988) for example applied Schon's model to study the work of investigative journalists in America and argued that this journalists often operate intuitively in finding and judging news stories. Scholar like Gans (1979); Guant (1990) and Schlesinger (1978) argued that journalists may not be able to clearly verbalize what they know, yet they may know or at least intuit a great deal about what they know.

Journalists' knowledge of their audience is tacit. It is imbedded in their work routine. This tacit knowledge forms a kind of working theory that Schon labeled as *knowing in action*. This is a kind of a knowledge that is used in performing a task without conscious deliberation. The argument is that much of what one knows is understood on a subconscious level, and is therefore not easily described. This idea of tacit knowledge applies to journalists and their perceptions of their audiences.

Journalists are not primarily concerned about their audience; they are primarily concerned with their news product. Their objective is to create the best news they can for the audience they perceive. Perceptions of their audience are part of their knowledge base, and can be mediated by their product. They are part of journalists' knowing in action as they create their news product and thus, can be better understood by looking for clues and assumptions made by journalists about their news audience in their work routines.

Working theories of news audience are often implied within product image. If one assumes that the news story is the key concern for the journalists, one must also consider the values inherent in that product image about the audiences to discover how more subtle audience imaginary plays a part in the construction of news (DeWerth-Pallmeyer, 1997). Some scholars like Dimmik (1974) and Ettema and Whitney (1994) have argued that traditional news values do little to

identity what constitutes news. But those news values are standardized to be part of journalistic training and work routine. These values constitute the working theories behind news construction process. In each of the traditional news values by which journalists are trained to distinguish news from non news, there is an implicit understanding of audience. For example the most commonly used news values in modern journalism textbooks like (Brooks et al., 1999; Hough, 1988; Itule and Anderson, 1987; Kersner, 2009; and Mencher, 1994).are discussed here with their relevance to the audience;

Timeliness

Is it recent development or is it old news? When journalists refer to this value, they often select recent development and give less emphasis to old news. The notion of audience behind this action is that audiences need to know or want to know new information. News values diminish with time (Mencher, 2003:68).

Human interest

Does the story have an interesting element? Journalists believe that their stories must have a wide appeal to their audience. They attempt to give their audience what it needs to know as well as what it wants to know (Boyd, 2001:20). Interesting stories are those stories that journalists believe their audience wants to know. News lacks purpose unless it touches people and affects their lives (Lorenz, 1996). Interest as a news value is more closely related to marketing orientations of the media.

Proximity

Is the story relevant to the audience? Events that are geographically or emotionally close to people interest them (Mencher, 2003:70) Here journalists look for elements of the news event which are more close to their audience. Geographically and emotionally far events are treated with less emphasis if at all they are considered.

Consequence or Impact

What effect will the news story have on the audience? Here journalists focus on events that are likely to affect many people. The more people are affected by an event, the bigger the story for the journalists, and hence for the audience.

Prominence or Eminence

Are noteworthy people involved? Events involving well-known people or institutions are important. Here, journalists cater to what they perceive as the audience's appetite for newsworthy names (Mencher, 2003:70).

Conflict

Is the issue developing, has it been resolved or does any body care? Conflict include strife, antagonism, warfare, conflict of ideas, a row at local council or in parliament. When these conflict lead to action and upheavals in society, journalists make them news. The notion of audience interest behind reporting conflict is that people want to know about conflict that divide people and groups and hence shape or alter the way they live.

Importance

Importance, although not directly listed in some journalism text books, clearly plays a key role for journalists in helping them define what news is important. It is the news value most closely aligned with a professional value orientation. Hough in his news writing noted that, by telling what is important the media serves as public servant to its audience. He says, "Without knowledge of public affairs, of the management of our government, of economic matter, of cultural and social phenomena people would find it difficult not only to vote intelligently but to manage their own lives" (Hough, 1995:182).

Within each of these news values discussed above there is imbedded an implicit understanding of the news audience. Some scholars have focused on the audience implicit in news values to understand how journalists think of their audience. Kaniss (1991) for example studied the audience in the news value of impact. He argued that the audience almost translates into a news value it self. The working perceptions of the audience are imbedded in these news values and the everyday routines and tasks conducted by journalists. Lorenz (1996) also explained that devising a composite picture of the audience is one means to develop journalists' ability to reach their audience in a meaningful way. He noted that "some newsroom veterans suggest writing stories in a way that would be understood by somebody the writer knows- a favorite aunt or brother or sister" (1996:29).

News values basically are derived from implicit assumption about there things (Golding and Elliot 1999). These are the audience, accessibility, and fit. In relation to the audience the most important questions they, argued, are: is the news important to the audience? Will it hold

audiences' attention? Is it of known audience interest? Will it be understood and enjoyed as relevant? Do the audiences really want? These are questions of audience considerations which presuppose journalists' knowledge of some traits of their audiences' news receptivity. More specifically, the questions as to who the audiences are, what they want to know, what they don't want, what they need to know, to what extent they are interested and satisfied by the news are all explored from the journalists who judge the news based on their perceptions of their audience.

2.10 Organizational Theory

Media organizations, based on their goals and objectives, often give guidance and orientations for the types of audience the media want to reach. A good deal of organizational theory has been concerned with charting goals of different media organizations or the alternative goals of the same one which may give clues for the type of audience the media want to reach. More relevant to this study is the organizational theory which distinguishes organizational classifications based on the beneficiaries of the organizations as well as their economic and non economic goals. Who are the beneficiaries of these media organizations? Is it the society as a whole; a particular set of clients, the owner, the audience, or the employee of the organization, whose welfare or good is being served? With respect to this a common element in all normative press theories is that the media should meet the needs and interests of their audiences in the first instance and then interests of clients and the state only secondarily (McQuail, 1984:104). McQuail further noted that since media depend on the voluntary choice of their audiences, this principle has a common sense basis, but the view that the audience comes first is also often expressed by media professionals themselves.

2.11 Gate keeping

In news production process the traveling of a news story through communication channels depends on the fact that certain areas within the channels function as *gates* through which news stories are let in and out by impartial rules or by gatekeepers. This analogy of gates and *gatekeeper* was first introduced by Kurt Lewin, who originally argued that certain individuals or groups in position of the gate keeper have the power to decide whether a piece of information is included or excluded from the news (White, 1950; William, 2003).

Gate keeping is “the process by which the billions of messages that are available in the world get cut down and transferred into the hundreds of messages that reach a given person on a given day” (Shoemaker, 1997 cited in Berkowitz, 1997:57). Gate here refers to an *in* or *out* decision point, while the gatekeeper is the one who determines what information exits the channel of communications. The power of gatekeepers in this process is not only limited to deciding on a piece of information but also have the potential to determine public knowledge by letting some stories through while keeping others out.

The theory of gate keeping is well suited to analyzing why some news items were selected while others were rejected in news selection and shaping process. This theory has served numerous scholars as a framework of analysis to comprehend the role of gatekeepers in deciding what is news. Berkowitz (1997) in *Refining the Gate Keeping Metaphor for local Television news*; Bleske (1989) in *Ms. Gates Take over: An Updated Version of a 1945 Case Study*; Donohue, Olien and Tichenor (1972) in *Structure and Constraints on Community Newspaper*; Shoemaker (1991) in *A new Gate keeping model*; White (1950) in *The Gate Keeper: A case study in Selection of News*; Gieber (1999) in *New is what News paper men Make It*; Williams (2003) in *Understanding Media Theory*.

The term gatekeeper encompasses newsmen employed by a news gathering bureaucracies, news sources outside the news bureaucracies and members of the audience who influence other audiences (Gieber, 1999:218). All these persons are gatekeepers at some point in the news gathering and reporting process. This study however, primarily concentrates on gatekeepers in news organizations namely reporters, editors, producers, editor in chiefs and news directors. These journalists have huge responsibilities in deciding what news should reach their audience. In that process they have implicit understanding of the audience for whom they select, shape and disseminate news stories.

Communication scholars have offered different views on how gatekeepers carry out their activities. Some scholars like David Manning White argued that the communication of news is highly subjective, reliant upon value, judgments based on the gatekeeper's own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations. Other scholars have argued that personal subjectivity of the gatekeepers is not as important a factor as “the number of news items available, their size and the pressure of time and mechanical production” (Barizlai-Nahon, 2004). Williams (2003) on his

part argues that the news organization and its procedures are important factors in the news selection process. These scholars differ in their approach to the study of gate keeping. White for example emphasized the decisions made by individual gatekeepers while, others like Williams (2003) and Barzilai–Nahom (2004) consider the importance of organizational decision making in which individual gatekeepers collectively act as one gatekeeper. Williams (2003) for instance identifies three levels at which the gate keeping can be analyzed. The first is the individual level which looks at the extent to which individuals are responsible for deciding the media content. Here, it is argued that, the individual gatekeeper's preferences, the social background and experiences that shape these preferences, the professional ideologies under which he or she works and the practices that are adopted in daily work can determine content of the news.

The second level focuses on organizational structure, work routines, and their influence on media practitioners. William defined routine as “patterned and repeated practices people learn in order to carry out certain tasks”(2003:100) .Routines play a crucial role in determining what should come out as news and events must be compatible with organizational routines to be newsworthy .

From organizational point of view, it is argued that, the successful gatekeeper is a person or a group who fully represents organizational interests in its operation. The argument here is that news media contents is shaped more by media organizations which are characterized by hierarchy , division of labor and work routine, than individuals.

The third level is the interaction between the news media organizations and the wider social political and cultural environment within which they operate. These are external factors that directly or indirectly influence the news media content. These major external factors include perceptions of what audiences want, sources of information, political and legal environment, technology and revenue sources, News judgment, news selection and news values can be also shaped by the cultural in which the news practitioners live (Williams, 2003).

2.12 Agenda Setting

In much of our lives we depend on mass media to tell us what is happening and to provide us with a picture of the external world. However, we do not only obtain factual information about the external world from the news media, we also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news (McCombs, 2006).The news media and

their professionals use a variety of techniques to give importance to their news. For example, they do this in choices and ordering of items, by privileging one voice before another in more or less combative interviewing technique, in allocation of 'the last word' and in any number of other techniques embedded in the everyday practices of the profession (Casey et al., 2002:7). In this process news medial professionals have a profound power to draw the focus of the public towards important issues while keeping others off. The issue in focus becomes a public agenda. Thus, agenda setting is defined as the process where by the mass media determine what we think and worry about (Spring, 2002).

Defluer and Dennis (1991) explained the process of agenda setting by focusing on journalistic news selection. They argued that the process start when journalists and their news media select a limited number of information from the social environment to process them as 'news' based on various criteria. These criteria include journalists' belief as to 'what the audience really wants to hear about' in the limited time available to them. Here, defining some news items as more important or more interesting than others presuppose journalists' perceptions of what their audiences *want* or what their audiences *need* to know.

The concept of agenda setting can be applied to any genre of programs. But it is widely used in television news where a variety of gatekeepers at different levels, play a key role in setting a media agenda. How and who sets the media agenda? What factors are involved in setting the media agenda? These are the most important questions often raised in discussing the agenda setting functions of news media.

Two levels are involved in agenda setting. The first refers to "the common subjects that are most important" and the second is about judging "what part of that subject is important" (spring, 2002). McCombs used the term *objects* to refer to the *subjects* that are selected by the media as the most important. These, objects are the issues that define the agenda. They are the issues on which the attention of the media and hence the public are focused (McCombs, 2002). The second levels of agenda setting involve focusing on certain characteristics and traits that describe the object. McCombs argue that, "when the media and the public think and talk about an object, some attributes are emphasized, others are given less attention and many receive no attention at all. This agenda of attributes is another aspect of the agenda-setting role of the news.

The two levels of agenda setting can be exemplified in issues of election campaign. The media's agenda-setting power during election may affect the campaign undertaken by candidates, and the emphasis put on it may also affect candidate's approval depending on whether their stances on these issues are popular or unpopular. These in turn could influence the public evaluation of the political actors as a direct outcome of agenda setting. Thus, the broad content of mass media has a specific and sometimes powerful influence on the way audiences think.

The selection, placement, duration and presentation of news items in news media is influenced by a number of related factors (Casey et al, 2002). These factors can suggest how and who sets the media agenda. First, sources shape news. News is extremely dependent on news agencies, *official* sources such as corporations, government agencies, pressure groups and the public relations. Here availability of news from sources is the main factor to determine content of news. "Content of news, in the first instance is derived not from 'the most important things happening, nor from stories hunted down by journalists but, simply from what is readily available". (Casey et al., 2002:143) Politicians' ambition to set the news agenda also shapes the news content. Franklin (1994:3) refers to this as *packaging of politics*. Politicians in government and political parties use the media to inform, shape and manage public discourse about their policy and politics. These political structures dictate news.

"The media do not define politics any more than political structure dictate news. Parties electoral systems, structure of political financing and the work of interest group are involved just as much as the news media are in shaping, organizing and setting the agenda of public discussion about politics". Schudson (2003:154)

The second factor which shapes the construction of news and its content is the professional and organizational context of the news media. The professional context includes the role of gatekeepers, editors and other key personnel with the power and ability to make key decisions on the news. Organizational context is shaped by resource constraints and by bureaucratic rules and routines which encourage a need for predictable news.

The third factor in construction of news focuses on professional news values, informal principles which define what is newsworthy and which are deemed to shape selection, ordering and presentation of news and hence help set media agenda. But, journalists are not principally interested in setting the news agenda, they are interested in the value of the news they produce and present to their audience. Within the news values, there is imbedded an implicit

understanding of the interest of news audience. This understanding about audience may have been influenced by the dominant agenda reflected in the news in the past. Studies have shown that public opinion on a certain issue often follows the dominant agenda reflected in news coverage not other way round (Casey et al, 2002:8).

Chapter Three

3 Research Methodology

As indicated in the first chapter, this thesis mainly aims to explore journalists' perceptions of their audience and how the perceptions may help shape their news. This chapter discusses the research methodology, data sources, sampling techniques, and data analysis employed for the study.

3.1 Methodology

The selection of research method in academic inquiry mainly depends on the appropriateness of the method to answer the research questions and its suitability for effective collection of the data required for the study (Maxwell, 2005:91). With this in mind, Qualitative Research Method is chosen for this study. In Qualitative research, Maxwell argues, the researcher is interested not only in the physical events and behaviors that are taking place but in how the participants make sense of, and how their understanding influence their behavior. Qualitative research tradition helps to see the social world from the actor's perspective (Bryman, 1984:78). The preference of this method is for contextual understanding so that journalists' perception of their audience is to be understood in the context of meaning system employed by individual journalists in their newsroom.

In an attempt to understand journalists' perception of their audience in news construction process in ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger F.M 102.1, this thesis mainly takes on the perspectives of how individual journalists make sense of their audiences in their work routines. In any journalistic judgments of newsworthy stories there are audience presumptions and their interests which serve as a ground rules for deciding what an identified audience is interested in viewing or listening. These ground rules may not be written down or codified by news organization, but they exist in daily practices and in knowledge gained on the job by the journalists (Harcup and O'Neill, 2001: 261).

Perception as a mental phenomenon and as a basis of knowledge about external world is one factor that influences action of an individual (Samovar and Porter, 2001). Hence, perceptions of journalists about their audiences are better understood through qualitative in-depth assessment

and personal observations in the natural setting of the newsroom where they are in the process of news making. Consequently, individual in-depth interviews and focus group discussions would become important tools of primary data gathering for this research and personal observation in the newsrooms and reviews on editorial policies and organizational documents would supplement the assessment.

3.2. Data Sources

In an attempt to generate data on journalists' perceptions of their audience, this study employed primary data from purposively selected informants and from personal observation in the natural settings of the newsrooms of Ethiopian Television, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1. Furthermore, relevant secondary data were gathered from editorial policies, media laws and proclamations, and organizational documents of the media.

3.3. Sampling Techniques

In this type of qualitative research inquiry there is no serious claim of representativeness of any population or generalization of the research findings. Hence, samples were taken purposively from government and private broadcast media newsrooms namely, Ethiopian Television (Government media), Radio Fana (Commercial Share Company) and Sheger F.M 102.1 (Private limited commercial company). The researcher assumed that different perceptions of audience by journalists may evolve from different media organizations based on their ownership, size and depth. Moreover, in qualitative research like this it is important to employ sampling techniques which permits the researcher to select informants whose experiences, knowledge, capability and qualities allow them to give valuable information on the issues under investigation, journalists' perceptions of their audience in this case. Hence, purposive sampling of research informants is considered essential for this study. Deacon et al (1999:55) argue that this type of selection often depend upon the creativity and resourcefulness of the researcher. In this regard, my long experience as a journalist allowed me to use this sampling technique effectively. Accordingly, ten newsroom journalists from ETV, ten newsroom journalists from Radio Fana and five newsroom journalists from Sheger F.M 102.1 were selected for individual in-depth interviews. In this purposive selection, experience of journalists in the newsroom, educational background working status, and gender combination of the journalists were considered.

3.4. Data Gathering Techniques

3.4.1 Individual In-depth Interview

In order to answer the research questions of this thesis, data mainly concerning human elements of respondents such as perceptions, feelings, reflections and experiences are required. These elements are best drawn out through qualitative individual in-depth interviews. In-depth interview is effective in providing a human face to research problems. It is an important tool that assists in the elaboration of data concerning respondents' perceptions, feelings, experiences, reflections, values, opinions and motivations (Wimmer and Dominic, 2006:135). Due to the following qualities in-depth interview is selected as a primary tool of data gathering in this research.

- It gives both the researcher and the researched to discuss the topics in more detail, and more importantly, it helps to understand the world from the subjects' point of view, their perceptions, and experiences and lived world (Kvale, 1996:21).
- Individual in-depth interviews are particularly suitable for studying individuals' understandings of their world, for describing their experiences and self understandings and for clarifying and elaborating perspectives of their world (Seidman, 1998:3)
- In-depth interviews are effective for making people to talk about their personal perspectives, feelings, opinions, perceptions, beliefs and experiences about an issue freely (Natasha, 2005:29).
- In-depth interview allows openness and flexibility (Kvale, 1996:105; Seidman, 1998:9)

Regardless of its virtues, in depth interview is not easy to conduct. It requires good attentive skills on part of the interviewer. A good interviewer needs to put the interviewee at ease, needs good listening skills and need to be able to manage the interview situation so as to collect data that truly reflects the perceptions and feelings of the interviewee concerning the chosen topic (Hancock, Windridge and Ockleford, 2007:21).

With these cautions in mind, the researcher has administered an in-depth interview with 25 purposively selected members of the newsroom journalists in the media stations chosen for the study. The interviews were conducted during the month of May 2010. In addition to individual in-depth interviews, the researcher was allowed to observe some of the editorial meetings of the stations and the newsroom work routines, but not allowed to record any thing in that process.

This restriction has produced no adverse effect on the research process as the researchers' main tool of data gathering were designed to be individual in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Formal and informal information obtained during personal observation in the newsroom and on editorial meetings are used to supplement the in-depth analysis.

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

In addition to individual in-depth interviews, the researcher believed that focus group discussion would enable to obtain information on how group of individual journalists in the newsroom may perceive their audiences. Therefore, due to the following advantages, FGD was used as one means of data gathering techniques;

- FGD is essentially used to explore perceptions, views, attitudes, values and beliefs of groups of individuals on a topic introduced and prompted by the researcher through interaction (Deacon, et al 1999:391)
- FGD helps to obtain perceptions in a defined area of interest in a permissive, non threatening environment
- FGD also enables the interviewer/moderator to direct the interaction and inquiry in a structured or unstructured manner depending on the purpose of the discussion

Focus group is a group of interacting individuals who has some common interest or characteristics, brought together by a moderator/ researcher who uses the group and its interaction as a means to gain information about a focused issue-their perceptions of their audiences in this case. Studies using small focus groups to collect data should include groups comprising between five and ten individuals (Deacon, et al., 1999: 391). Furthermore, selecting appropriate interviewees presuppose that the researcher has some knowledge of the researched and their situation. In light of this the researcher used the professional newsroom groups that already existed in the media institutions by arranging them into three groups having five to six journalists in each group in each newsroom. Accordingly, one focus group having five newsroom journalists from ETV, one focus group having six newsroom journalists from Radio Fana and one focus group having five newsroom journalists from Sheger FM 102.1 were selected for the discussion. This method enabled the researcher to gather information on how groups of journalists think or feel about their audiences. The focus group discussion also gave

advantages of group interactions, which was important to understand the group. And the data collected through this technique were used to corroborate outcomes of individual in-depth interviews analyzed in chapter four.

3.5. The Interview Questions

This study mainly takes on the perspectives of how individual journalists in the newsroom make sense of their audience in their work routines. Thus, newsroom journalists are the focal respondents from whom the study attempts to answer the research questions and the interview questions should be able to elicit their perceptions, feelings, reflections, views and opinions about their audience. In addition, it is important to give them a chance to react freely to the questions relevant to the research inquiry. To this end, semi-structured interviews that help to answer the research questions were designed and administered. Semi-structured interviews are a type of interviews which allow the researcher to work out a set of questions in advance, but free to modify them based on his perception of what seems more appropriate in the context of the conversation (Robinson, 1993:230).

The first part of the interview guide contains personal details that have to do with demographic profiles of the journalists. This part is included to see the respondents' demographic profile. In the second part of the interview guide, general questions that deal with how journalists in the newsroom feel about their profession in relation to their audience, their description of news and their goal in producing news are included. This part is designed to warm up the respondents as the researcher tries to probe how they associate their duty to their audience. The third part and the major part of the interview guide focuses on how journalists perceive their news audiences and their interests. Most of the answers to the research questions were elicited through this part. To avoid Language constraint that may limit reactivity of the informants, the researcher translated the interview questions in to Amharic and conducted the interviews in Amharic. But, finally all the interview data are transcribed and translated into English for the analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis

From the in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and personal observations into the newsroom practices, the researcher obtained a fairly thick description of journalists' perceptions of their audience in the newsroom. All the interview data gathered through out the study were recorded, notes have been taken, and finally transcribed from Amharic to English and analyzed

based on how the journalists perceive their audiences in their daily work routines and how that might affect them in their work.

3.7 Conclusion

The methodological approaches to be employed in this thesis have been outlined in this chapter. The researcher will utilize a qualitative perspective since it is most effective to examine and interpret meanings journalists have of their audiences. Taking the advantages of flexible traits in this method the researcher adopted interactive interviews that seem to reveal elaborate and detail responses which allowed him to provide a fairly thick description of the research questions.

The techniques employed in this research are the individual in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and analysis of secondary data. The results of the research are to be presented and analyzed in the next chapter and it is believed on the part of the researcher that they highlight newsroom journalists' perceptions of their audiences in the media under investigation. It should be noted once again that, given the qualitative approach followed, the findings of this research are not generalizable in anyway.

Chapter Four

4 Data Presentation, Discussion and Analysis

The key objective of this study is to explore how journalists in ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 newsrooms perceive their audiences in their news construction process and how that perception may shape their news. In doing so, the study sought to unearth the notions of audience in editorial policies of these stations, the audience journalists perceive in their work routines, what the journalists perceive about the interests of their audiences and how that may affect their work, and whether the newsrooms have any established system of considering the interests of their audience, and journalists' preconception about their audience.

In examining these issues an in-depth semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with newsroom journalists over a month period of time, from April 15 to May 30, 2010. Accordingly, one news and current affairs director, three deputy editors in chiefs, two editors and four producers from ETV newsroom; one newsroom head, two senior editors, four editors and three reporters from Radio Fana newsroom; and one news director, one editor and three reporters from Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom were interviewed. In addition, three focus group discussions each group having five to six discussants from each newsroom were conducted. Moreover, several informal interviews and observations were undertaken during field observation at the media stations. The general information provided at the beginning of chapter two in this study about the media organization, such as historical background, organizational profile and newsroom personnel reflect the primary study period of March 2010. The rest of the data gathered and the findings from the study are analyzed, discussed and presented in this chapter as per the objectives of the study. Accordingly, the notions of audiences in editorial policies, journalists' perceptions of their audiences, journalists' perceptions of their audiences' preferences and interests as well as journalists' preconceptions of their audiences are the major themes which are discussed under this chapter.

Except for newsroom heads and directors, who are attributed by their names in this study, all other respondents are given code numbers with a view of protecting them from any form of harm that might result from giving responses to this study.

4.1 The Notions of Audience in Editorial Policies

Much of what journalists know about their news audience is tacitly imbedded in their organizational work routines and practices in which notions of audience are implied. Whitney and Ettema (1991) argued that images of audience may reside in the goals and practices of media organizations. These goals and practices help shape the daily routines of journalists in the newsroom. Based on these routines individual journalists thus, develop different perceptions of whom or what constitute their news audience.

As discussed in chapter two, media organizations based on their goal provide guidance and orientations for the type of audience the media want to reach. Their goal in turn depends on the existing media system and the regulatory environment in which the media function. As discussed in section 2.8 of chapter two the current system in Ethiopia gives due emphasis, at least at policy level, to the importance of independent operations of the mass media and free flow of information and ideas among citizens. Whether that policy is implemented as desired or not, is a question this researcher would nor look into. But, this researcher has tried to search the notions of audience implied in some articles of editorial policies of ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1. These notions of audience are searched to see whether the newsrooms under investigation have established goals which guide their journalists to perceive their audiences in a particular way.

4.1.1 The notions of audience in ETV Editorial policy

The concept of audience is implied in chapter three and four of Ethiopian Television editorial policy. According to Article 3.1 sub article 3.1.1 of the policy the media shall serve the public and demonstrate its favor towards the public by providing editorial contents that serve their interests. Moreover, sub Article 3.1.2 under the heading of integrity stipulates that the media works to get public credibility. Sub Article 3.1.4 of the policy also contains phrase which promote respect for the public. Chapter four, Article 4.1 sub article 4.1.1 also provides that the media should respect the rights of the public to get true and accurate information. The code of conduct of ETV which is incorporated in the editorial policy also states that journalists shall have no other aims and duties than striving and reporting truth and serving the public interest(ERTA: Television Branch Editorial Policy,2005).

The policy further states that the objectives of government media are to explain and promote policies, proclamations and activities of the government ; to help the public understand the objectives, implementations and results of government policy in the areas of democracy and development; and to strengthen the relationship between the government and the public.

The concepts reflected in the editorial policy articles about the role of the media in the public imply notions of what the audience want and what is important to them. For example, the notion that the audience either wants to know or should know the objectives of government policies and their implementation is implied in this policy. The notion that the audience needs true and accurate information and the notion that journalists should strive to serve the audience and should always work to be credible to their audience is implied in much of the articles of the policy. The editorial policy clearly indicates that the media should serve the interests of the audience (public).

Much of the editorial policy articles also provide for the economic, political and social roles that the media should play in the public. These roles stem from the government (the owner of the media) desire for social and political influence in the public. As discussed in chapter two, these desires of media owners is common in public broadcasting which usually has non profit goals that rise above the pursuit of audience ratings. Based on their mission whether political, cultural or religious media owners and their media organizations define their audience as receivers of their ideology (McQuail, 1997).

Hence, one can argue that ETV has non revenue organizational goals that stem from the government desire for social, economic and political influence on the public. These goals are provided in the editorial policy. And, implicit in the goals are audience as receivers of government ideology. This notion is witnessed in Article 3.2 of the policy which states that the objectives of government media are explain and promote policies, proclamations and activities of the government. Implicit in this article is a tacit audience of ETV as receivers of government ideology. Similar notion of this presumption of audience as receivers of government development ideology is reflected in the *development media theory* discussed in chapter two. Under this theory, it is implied that, audiences are perceived as members of the society who need development in line with nationally established policies(McQuail, 1984:95).This notions of

audience is also uttered by all informants while responding to the question that asks what they think their audiences need to know from their news and why?

Informant E1 from ETV: The philosophy and the direction we follow in our media is development journalism. So, we give priority to news about development activities of the country, news which focus on poverty reduction, news about democratization, news about implementations of government policies, news about good governance, news about best practices and success stories on development. These are important news that I think the audience should know. I believe that they should know all the development endeavor of the county and participate in the activities. Without their participation it [development] would not be realized. That is why we try to create development and democratic agenda in the public through our news based on our editorial policy.

Informant E3 from ETV: Our country is a country with infant democracy, a country of many nations and nationalities and economically poor country. These are our existing situations. Based on these and what is provided in our editorial policy we decide what is important for our audience. So, I think our audience should know the development and democratization process of the country, they should know the prevailing successes in development activities. If we tell them about development success and best practices, that would encourage them to participate in an ongoing development processes.

Discussants from ETV also took similar position and argued that the media is ought to play an important role in development and democratization processes of the country. Implicit in all their arguments is the notion that the audiences are members of the public who should know development activities and democratization process of the country and who should accept government policies and participate in its implementation process. What these journalists are thinking as important news for their audience is explicitly mentioned in ETV's editorial policy. Here, it seems that the established goals in the editorial policy of the station are influencing journalists' perceptions of what is important to their audience.

These arguments also reflect that the media is sending message for purposeful ideological influence over the audience. More specifically it seems that ETV is an instrument to fulfill government mission and the audience is a target of purposeful communications. Furthermore, it looks that the socio economic and political ambition of the government to set news agenda through the media is helping define the audience and what it needs to know. As discussed in chapter two under agenda setting theory, politicians in government and political parties use the media to inform, shape and manage public discourse about their policy and politics.

4.1.2 Notions of audience in Radio Fana Editorial Policy

The current Editorial Policy and Manual document of Radio Fana under its fundamental directives indicates that the station satisfies the interests of its listeners if and only if it broadcasts news and programs that have significant impacts on the listeners (Radio Fana: Editorial Policy and Manual, 2002:43). The importance of clarity in writing and audibility in presentation is also emphasized under this section.

The first two objectives in the policy explain that the station works to create a well informed society and serves as a public forum. “Creating a well informed society with a developed democratic culture” is one of its missions. Its vision statement reads, “become popular in the profession and profitable in commercial media by promoting reform ideas in the course of building prosperous democratic Ethiopia. Article 3.4.1 also stipulates that Fana news and programs are primarily valued by their public importance and their contributions to the wellbeing of the people.

The objectives set under Article 1.2.1 of the editorial policy states that Radio Fana strives to give the public, accurate, balanced and current information so that the society would participate with full knowledge in the ongoing political, economic and social activities of the country. Article 1.2.2 also states that Radio Fana shall serve as a common forum between the government and the public.

Fana’s editorial policy does not explicitly indicate who the audiences of the station are and what they want. But, it clearly specifies that their interests must be met. Moreover, the notions of what Radio Fana thinks its audience should know are implied in the policy. For example, from the concept of *reform idea* stated in the vision statement of the station it is possible to infer that there is an understood audience who need change and development. Similarly, from the concept of *news of public importance* in article 3.4.1 of the policy one can infer that there is an implicit audience who needs useful information from the station. From Article 1.2.1 of the policy it is possible to infer that the audience Radio Fana wants to reach are required to participate in ongoing political, economic and social activities of the country.

Furthermore, it seems that Radio Fana is sending its news messages for purposeful influence over the audience. More specifically it seems that the station is acting as an instrument of reform and development. This is inline with the *transmission model* of communication discussed in chapter two. The receiver and thus the audience, is perceived as target for the purposeful transfer of meaning and the media serving as an instrument.

Radio Fana in this case has non revenue organizational goals that help define the receivers of its news and programs. The notions of audience embedded in these non revenue goals are audience as receivers of social, economic and political ideologies and who need to participate in that process. These ideologies may not simply emerge from the stations' desire only. They are part of the existing system and the regulatory environment in which the media function as well as the ownership implications of the station which is often contested. In other words, it might be that Radio Fana's share owners' desire for economic, political and social influence is shaping the stations' goal and helping define its audience. McQuail (1997) in relation to this argued that media owners and their organizations based on their mission whether political, cultural or religious define their audience as receivers of their ideology.

It seems that Radio Fana assumes that its audiences are members of the society who require reform and development and who should participate in the ongoing development activities. This notion of audience is similar to what is discussed in chapter two about audience presumption in development media theory. Furthermore, similar notion of audiences was explained by Radio Fana newsroom journalists while responding to the question that asks what they think their audiences need to know from their newsroom and why?

Informant F1 from Radio Fana: Development peace and democracy are our main themes. These activities are important to the audience and given emphasis in our news. Best practices and success stories in development are given due consideration. For example, if there is a story about a certain locality that has overcome drought through water harvesting and irrigation, that will be an important story we think the audience should know. But, news stories on these issues are not much interesting to the audiences and we need to improve our news presentation.

Informant F5 from Radio Fana: What I think our audience should know is new information about government policies, proclamations and strategies. That would help them in their daily activities. In addition, our line of profession is development journalism and I believe that our audience should know

development activities of the country. We give due emphasis to best development practices and successes stories that would add new experience and skill to the knowledge track of our audience. We do this to mobilize the community on development.

The idea of development journalism and the need to give the audiences news about development, democracy and peace are voiced by all discussants from Radio Fana. In addition to non revenue goals, Radio Fana has a revenue goal which requires commercial success of the station. As discussed in chapter two, the revenue goals require the news media to draw the attention of the right audience to the right message while trying to increase the size of the receiving audience (McQuail, 1997). This argument is maintained in the vision statement of the station. More over, the following excerpt taken from page 42 of the editorial policy clearly indicates the revenue goal of the station.

In a free market system, winning and sustaining a competition by competency of services necessitates a growing audience share. And, in order to increase audience share, satisfying the listeners' interest and increasing credibility is paramount. Therefore, the station needs to create such a capacity and strengthen it (p.42).

Thus, Radio Fana is trying to reach its wide audiences who are perceived as receivers of social, economic and political ideologies of the country and who need to participate in that process. This intention of the station stems from its non revenue goal. In addition to this the station is also catering to the interests of the wider audience trying to fulfill its revenue goals.

4.1.3 The Notion of Audience in Sheger FM 102.1 Editorial document

Sheger FM 102.1 station profile document under the title *Inside Sheger* provides the stations' editorial guidelines. The station' newsroom director told the researcher that they have not produced editorial policy document and they don't need it. "We have station broadcast strategy and programming, we have news and program format book and we have our own editorial guidelines, which stem from these documents. In addition, we are governed by the constitution of the country as well as the media laws and proclamations. Why should we worry about having editorial policy? We don't need it" (Interview with Sileshi Tesema, Newsroom Director, May 2010).

Due to the apparent patent related problems the station was not willing to provide the researcher with its broadcast strategy and program format book which may indicate some notions of

Shegers' newsroom audience. The stations' profile document is the only document found open. This document includes much of the editorial guidelines on which the station depends. For example, the document define that Sheger FM 102.1 target audiences are all adults between ages 18 and 49 with some possibilities of deviations towards one 12⁺ and 49⁺ shows. Moreover, the station works to attract urban elites above age 35 in Addis Ababa and vicinity. The towns' opinion leaders, businessmen, artists and academicians fall in this group (Sheger FM 102.1: Inside Sheger 102.1, 2009).

The editorial attitude forwarded in page five of the profile document states that the station aspires to create good mood, entertain and then acquaint its audience with their world by providing "*the informational resources for daily life and important decisions*". The document further states that the station works to provide *consumer news* and interpretations with which the audience can make the best choice out of opportunities. Moreover, it provides that the station aspires to be a source of information of consequences, problem solving and life loving. This notion of audience is also maintained by all interviewees from Sheger FM 102.1 while responding to the question that asks what they think their audience need to know from their news and why?

Informant S1 from Sheger FM 102.1: News for us is news that we can use. Who ever consumes the news must use it in her/his daily life. So, we aim to help the audience learn and better access their world, so that they will learn the costs of their world and maximize the benefits.

Informant S3 from Sheger FM 102.1: News that help them in their decisions or action, news that give them information that would solve their social and economic problems, news that would help them in their consumption decision, news that they can use in their daily life. For example, news about health related issues, news about courts and legal procedures, news about food, news about technologies and news about social problems are those news we give priority.

Discussants from Sheger newsroom also noted that any news has to be usable by the audience. "In Sheger we need edible and potable news that every audience consumes everyday", said discussant FGDS1. The notion of audiences implied in these arguments and the editorial guidelines of Sheger FM 102.1 is that audiences are consumers who need information which help them in their daily decisions. These perceived audiences need news that helps them solve their problems, feel good and love their life. This notion of audience also implies that audiences are consumers of news product in the communication process. Here, the media acting as source

of useful information and the audience perceived as consumers of that information. This is what Webster and Phalen (1994) called the *Market Place Model* which perceives audience as consumers of media product. The audience is thought as knowledgeable and the best media content thought to survive because it best catered to this audience.

Behind Shegers' perception of audience as consumer of media product there is also another implicit goal: increasing audience and market share and, thus, achieving the revenue of the station. This is a revenue goal for which Sheger FM 102.1 strives (Sheger FM 102.1: Inside Sheger 102.1, 2009:1). The organizational perception of audience implied in this revenue goal is treating audiences as objects to be sold to advertisers. This notion is similar to the commodity model discussed in chapter two, which perceives audiences as coin of exchange. So, it seems that Sheger is using a mix of models to capture the attention of its audience for the achievement of the revenue goal of the station.

4.2 Journalists' perceptions of their Audiences.

News is constructed within the every day work of journalists and within the organizations for which they are employed. Schudson (1995) argued that within news making process five parties may be are implicitly involved. These are the journalists, journalists' employing institution, the sources, sources' employing institution and the absent audience. Indeed journalists' perceptions of the news audience help shape the entire news making process. Image of the audience like other journalistic working theories develops out of the everyday work of journalists. It is based on their experiences and it forms a kind of working theory Schon (1983) labeled as knowing in action. Thus, based on what they have learned through experience and what they are doing in the newsroom journalists perceive their audience in a variety of ways among which some are discussed in this section.

4.2.1 Audiences as General or Mass

When asked to describe who the audiences they are working for in their newsroom, the majority of informants and discussants from ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 responded that their news audiences span all age, income, educational and occupational level as well as varied interests. However, they are refrained from giving further details about their actual audiences. Their reason is that all what they know about their news audience is simply what they get

through feedbacks and informal contact with audience members in the public. The most detailed descriptions are the one provided by news directors of the stations. ETV news and current affairs director Ashebir Getinet views his news audiences as people of all ages and interests.

We don't have any research that would tell who our news audiences are. What I can tell you about them, from the feedbacks we receive and from my own experiences, is that our news audience include people of all ages and interests. We have urban elites, professionals, businessmen, government employee, politicians, rural farmers, house wives and the youth. We call them general audiences. But, I think the majority are matured adults who are responsible in the social stratum. Their interest is also varied. In order to catch majority of them, we try to package our news with different contents and shapes. We give them alternatives of development news, business report, human interest news, sports, metrology, unusual or amazing news, and news analysis on topical issues.

As discussed in chapter two ETV does not have any research-mediated knowledge about its audience in general and its news audience in particular. All what its newsroom journalists know about their audience is informal content-mediated information. They conceive their audience as *general* audience and try to give them a variety of news. Likewise, informants and discussants from Radio Fana newsroom view their news audience as *mass* audience, living in rural area and small towns, middle income farmers and employees. Fana Newsroom head Asefa Ahimad gave a detailed description of audience with their age span:

I don't have research based information about our news audience. But, I think, our news audiences are mass audiences in the public with wide ranging interests. The majority I think are adults between ages 15 to 49, who live in rural areas and small towns, most of them are of middle income farmers or employee. The youth are also our audience. That is why we include small and micro enterprise activities in our news. We give them sport news too. Since we think our audiences are general audiences, we try to include variety of news in our newscast.

From this argument it seems that Fana newsroom is conceiving its audience as general mass but majority of them middle income farmers or employees living in rural areas and small towns. This conception of audience is forcing the newsroom to include variety of news items in its newscast to attract as much audience it can. This account from the newsroom head is not research mediated information. Although, Radio Fana has conducted an overall audience research for its national programs in November 2009, the research does not indicate details of the news audience and respondents from the station relay on their own concept of their audience.

In Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom all respondents view their audiences as wide-ranging public living in Addis and its vicinity, spanning all ages from teen to old, and all professions, and most of them consumers. Here is a sophisticated account from Sheger news director Sileshi Tesema:

Geographically, it is obvious that our audiences live in Addis and surrounding. Demographically, they are people from 15 to 55 and even plus. They include young teens, matured adults, the youth, elites, academicians, politicians, businessmen, employees, taxi drivers and people of varied needs and interests in the public. But, in general most of them are consumers of a variety of goods and services. As much as possible, we try to fulfill their interests through providing different categories of consumer news. But, we haven't done research that would give details of our news audiences. This is information we receive through feedbacks and others.

What this argument implies is that, Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom journalists are conceiving their audience as wide ranging mass within the geographical limit of Addis and its vicinity. In addition to this conception they perceive the majority of their audience as consumers of goods and services. This notion of perceiving the audience as consumers by Sheger FM 102.1 implies that the audience is information consumer too. This notion of consumer audience is discussed in section 4.1.3 above.

To sum up, from the accounts given by the newsroom journalists it seems plausible that journalists in ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 newsrooms perceive their audience as general or mass which is very large, dispersed and heterogeneous in interest which need to be served with a variety of news items, among which they can choose. Moreover, Sheger FM 102.1 specifically conceives its news audience as consumers of good and services who live in Addis and vicinity.

These perception of audiences as mass with a variety of interest is forcing the newsrooms to give them different sort of news packages within the newscast. Although, the notion of perceiving audience as mass or total in the public casts difficulty to appeal differently to different audience groups within the total audience, ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 newsrooms are trying to solve this problem through giving the audiences a variety of news that they think possibly will catch the interest of the majority of the audiences. Thus, the newsrooms based on their concept of the wide-ranging audience are influenced to give them different types of news. But, one

question to be raised here is how that perception of viewing audience as mass or general might influence individual journalists in the newsroom. This drew a result confirming influences:

Informant E8 from ETV: It has both negative and positive influence. For example when I translate news that we receive from Reuters, I have to think about our local audience. The local audience here is varied. Some part of the information in the news may be vague for some audiences while it is ok for others. Some audience may need the news while others may not care about it. So, I have to think right and left and all through the total audience. When I report from field I have to select among a variety of information. When I weigh news information I have at hand, I some times think about different types of audiences-what they might need or what they might hate. I ask myself "if I write on this angle or that, what would happen to the audience who wants it, or who hates it?" Especially, if it is a political issue I worry much. The influence for me is more of positive because it makes me to care much about the majority audience. It is only tiring when the issue is highly conflicting and in that case, our editorial policy would solve it.

Informant F4 from Radio Fana: In some stories, the influence is high, but in some cases I don't even worry about it. For example, when I write news on political issues, I know that varieties of views of audience are behind the news. What would happen to them as a result of my news worries me much. But, I think about the majority of the audience within the general audience.

Informant S5 from Sheger: For me, the influence is more of positive. It will make me more conscious about different perspectives. For example, when I reported on the court case of popular vocalist Teddy Afro, I used to imagine variety of interests from the audience. I used to think about how his friends, relatives and fans may feel about my news. I worried about what the victims' family, his friends and relatives may feel about the news. I also thought what the trial lawyers and prosecutors would feel about it. And finally the news is for the general public, and I had to worry about the impact of that news. All these would make you conscious and careful so that you would write facts and balanced information.

These arguments reflect that the journalists are influenced by their audience images and tend to think about another 'wider' or 'majority' audience within the mass audience they had perceived. In this way they are trying to adjust their news judgments to another "majority" audience in the mass audience. This tendency is similar to what Gans (2004) observed as the *inventing* of total audience which spans all ages and educational levels. As discussed in chapter two, journalists tend to do this to satisfy them so that their news judgments guarantee them audiences. This notion of perceiving audience as mass or total is common in many national television broadcasting services which have few or one channel that had to serve the entire population like ETV in this

case. In this respect McQuail (1984) argued that this view of the audience as mass emphasize its large size, heterogeneity, dispersion, anonymity, lack of social organization, fleeting and inconsistent composition. He further notes that the mass has no continuous existence except in the minds of those who want to gain the attention of and manipulate as many people as possible.

4.2.2 Audiences as an Extension of Journalist's Own Social World.

One of the objectives of this study is to find out how journalists in the newsroom relate to their audience. Almost all respondents from the three media stations said that they learn about their audiences through their reactions, views, and personal contacts with friends and relatives. And, therefore, they conceive this people as members of their news audiences. They believe that viewing the audience as someone in their friends and relatives is useful to make their news good.

Informant E3 from ETV: I am part of this society. When I walk around in Addis, I get people who talk to me about my news. My friends give me their comments. At home I am an audience with my family. Especially my father and grand mom likes news. They tell me when the news is good or bad. There are also some friends who call me to give their feedbacks. When I go to market, I see how cheap or dear something is. From all these I can learn what our audiences want and it really helps me to make my news good

Informant E5 from ETV: Whenever I translate international news from Reuters copy, I always think about my friend who browses internet for the latest information. One day, he called me at office and told me that our newsroom omitted an important fact from news. I checked the news and he was right. From that day onward I think about him especially when I write international news. I became more cautious and careful. And sometimes whom I consider as my audience depends on the news itself. If it is news about children, I think about my son, if the news is about women I think about my wife. What I do in the news must not bore them.

Informant F1 from Radio Fana There are audiences who like our news. When something goes wrong with our news they call us immediately, when some news are best, they tell us it is good. Even some people come to our station to give us their feedback. In addition to these, as a journalist you need to know whether you are listed or not and you ask people whom you know, friends, your neighbors and your wife ... they tell you a lot of things about your news that help you improve.

Informant S3 from Sheger FM 102.1: I live in this society. I am born and brought up here. I know all the tastes of the public, their likes and dislikes. I know what they feel about our news. I learn that from my family and my friends. Even when I take taxi, I will try to listen what people say about our news. These

ate really useful. It will strengthen your understanding of the audience and what they need.

The respondents in the focus group discussions also argued that the only way they can learn about their audiences' interest are through informal contacts with audience members such as friends, families, relatives, work links and some feedbacks that come to the station through different means. As discussed in chapter two, these media organizations do not have research based information about their news audience. Perhaps this may be is one factor forcing the journalists to this tendency of conceiving their audiences as an extension of their own social contacts.

Respondents also believed that conceiving their audiences in this way is positively contributing to their work in the newsrooms. Gans (1979) argued that the tendency of conceiving the audience as a social reference groups is likely to be supportive rather than negative. But, he farther notes that it tends to reflect the communicator's own social and cultural milieu. In this case, it is possible to argue that what these respondents in the three media organization are doing in their newsroom may be is mirroring the interests of their reference groups in their social world. But, this requires deep investigation to substantiate.

Nevertheless, it is plausible to argue that journalists in ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM102.1 newsrooms perceive their audiences as someone like their reference groups in their social world. It also seems that they consider the interests and needs of these reference groups and take for granted as interests and needs of their overall news audiences. This can be inferred from the concepts in their arguments above: "*...I can learn what our audience wants and it really helps*", "*...they tell you a lot of things about your news, it will help you improve your news*", "*...it will strengthen your understandings of the audience and what they want*", and "*... what I do must not bore them*". But, as I mentioned earlier, it requires thorough scrutiny to understand the extent to which these journalists are reflecting the interests and needs of their own social world in their news.

4.2.3 Journalists' Perceptions of what their audiences want and what they don't want

Journalists aim is to attract and hold their audience's attention. They do this by providing news stories that they think is suitable for their audience while leaving out what they think is not

suitable for their audience. On their daily practice journalists learn what their audiences want and what their audiences don't want from their news. In this context what the audiences want are news that audiences would like to get from the newsroom and what the audiences don't want are news that the audiences do not like from the newsroom. Based on these concepts, respondents from ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM102.1 newsrooms asked to explain what their news audiences want and what they don't want from their news.

4.2.3.1 What the audience Want from ETV News

Respondents from ETV newsroom listed a variety of news that they think their audiences want to get from their newsroom. When summarized, these respondents perceived that, their audiences want: investigative news on wrong doings, international news, sports, news on conflicts in society, news on social problems such as health, news on current issues, unusual news and soft entertaining news. Among all the responses investigative news is the most emphasized by respondents.

Informant E3 from ETV: I think what our audiences what most is investigative news. They want us to play watchdog on government. They want us to report on conflicts, failures, and problems rather than development and successes.

Informant E6 from ETV: What they want are first investigative news then news on social problems, failures, conflicts, entertainments, international news and unusual news.

FGDE5: Our audiences want investigative news, human interest news, news on social and economic problems, entertaining news, news on conflict, and sports. I think they prefer investigative new from all.

Almost all respondents argued that audiences mainly want investigative news on wrong doings and social and economic problems in the society. The responses they offered on whether they are giving the audiences what they want drew similar views mainly revolving around the duty of the journalists to work within the editorial policy limit and the capacity of the organization. They admit that their newsroom is not giving the audience what they want. Here is a typical response:

Informant E2 from ETV: It is not like Western media where you give audiences what they want. There, you give them conflict if they want, investigative if they want, and sex if they want. We are not doing that and we don't have that capacity too. We have scarce recourses for this media. Therefore, keeping the content of the news within the limit of the editorial policy and the agenda to be set by the

media, we try to make our news presentation attractive so that the audience would like it.

FGDE2: We are not giving the audience what they want. What we do here is trying to use languages and presentation to make the news we produce attractive to the audience. We don't follow the audience interest. We work based on our editorial policy.

Thus, from the above discussions it seems apparent that ETV newsroom journalists perceive their audiences among others, want: investigative news on wrong doings and social and economic problems in the society, international news, sport, news on conflicts in society, news on social problems such as health, news on current issues, unusual news and soft entertaining news. Furthermore, these journalists perceive that what their news audiences mainly want is investigative news on wrong doings and social and economic problems in the society. They also admit that ETV newsroom do not give much emphasis to investigative report and hence is not giving the audience at least what they want. All respondents agreed that investigative reports on social and economic problems that give or indicate solutions to the problems are important to the audiences.

In many instances investigative reporting is being treated as an important ingredient of development journalism. It includes news reporting which critically examines development activities on the one hand and control government activities on the other hand. In this case, journalists should observe critically and report on the whole government development processes which include planning, implementation, impact and shortcomings as they are. The role of the journalist is not confined to mere support and promotion of government development goals without questioning. Journalists have to make sure that the development processes are transparent and accountable. In this context, although ETV newsroom journalists are aware that their audiences want investigative reports on social and economic problems in the society, the newsroom gives not much weight to this kind of report. In this case, ETV newsroom journalists' claim to work based on principles of development journalism will be under question.

If journalism fails to provide the public with accurate and balanced facts on what they want and if it often leads to misinterpretations, it is often called bad journalism. In this case, the development journalism ETV newsroom claims to follow seems to become bad journalism when it fails to articulate what the audiences want or need from any development activities. Relevant

to this argument, Hement Shaw in his article 'Factors Influencing Development news production at three Indian dailies', outlined the most sophisticated tasks of development news which clearly indicate that in development reporting every technique needs critical investigation.

Development news should examine critically, evaluate and interpret the relevance of development plans, projects, policies, problems, and issues. It should indicate the disparities between plans and actual accomplishments, and include comparisons with how development is progressing in other countries and region. It also should provide contextual and background information about the development process, discuss the impact of plans, policies, problems and issues on people and speculate about the future of development. And development news should refer to the needs of people, which may vary from country to country or from region to region, but generally include primary needs, such as food, housing, employment; secondary needs such as transportation, energy sources and electricity; and tertiary needs such as cultural diversity, recognition and dignity (Show, 1990: 1035-36).

4.2.3.2 What Audiences don't want from ETV News

When asked to explain what sort of news they think their audiences most hate or do not like from their news and why, respondents from ETV gave response that mainly focus on government political and development activities. Most of the reasons they gave are also similar and focus on the qualities and presentations of their news. Surprisingly, all informants believe that their audiences do not like development news on which ETV places special emphasis.

Informant E2 from ETV: Our audiences do not like news that we report on government political and development activities. I know such news is hard and dry by nature. But if you give them in an interesting way, they may like them. Audience hates non balanced news that looks propaganda.

Informant E3 from ETV: Our philosophy here is development journalism-reporting on good social and economic development activities and successes. Our audiences do not like this. For example if the government builds a bridge or road and if we report on that, our audiences do not want it, they tell us that this is not supposed to be news. They tell us that the government is supposed to build them. But, if there are any minor failures or shortcomings in that construction process, they want the news. They don't also like what ever we report on government activities. They think that the government is promoting itself through this sort of news. The main reason why they hate is the poor quality of our news reports. But, I think the audience too needs to be logical.

From these discussions it seems apparent to deduce that ETV newsroom journalists think their audiences do not like ETV news on government politics and development activities, non balanced news that looks propaganda, and success stories on development issues. These journalists also admit that poor qualities and presentations of their news are contributing factors that make the audience hate such news. Furthermore, they offered similar views on how this may influence their work. Most of them noted that they don't feel comfortable to report on government and development activities, but if they have to do, they try to make their news product interesting to their audience, because they feel that this news are important.

Informant E3 from ETV: This sort of news is important news for the audience. You can't avoid them. You have to make them interesting as much as you can. But, to tell you frankly I prefer not to report on such news. If I do, I will try to do it in a balanced and interesting way.

Informant E4 from ETV: It makes me to think how I can improve my news. I believe that there are a lot of things to improve here. Our writing and presentations are poor. Personally, I am not much happy to work on boring news like that, but they are important.

One discussant argued that he will make the news on development activities interesting to the audience through writing and presentation.

FGDE5: When I am assigned to work on such news stories, I always feel that the audience may not like it. But if it is important and if I had to do it, I don't want to give the audience a boring story. I will try to make it interesting through my writing and presentation.

Here, the journalists are trying to make the important news of their station interesting to the audience. As discussed in section 4.1.1, ETV editorial policy places strong emphasis on news on development and government activities. Reporting on such news is an important part of the overall goal of the station. But the journalists in the newsroom believe that such news stories are not interesting to their audience. So, they are trying to make their important news interesting to the audience. They believe that, if news on development and government activities, that they think their audiences hate, are made interesting through writing and presentation, then the audience would like it.

But, good writing and presentation alone may not guarantee audiences' interest. What these arguments indicate is that, journalists understand that their audiences are not much interested in

mere reporting of development related occurrences or inaugural ceremonies of development outcomes. If the media, in its news, merely promotes the government development activities or praise government organizations and their executives for their role in that development process without trying to look deeper into that development process and its relevance and impact to the society, the whole report seems propaganda and the audiences would not like such news. Hence, the news first has to critically examine the development processes and its successes and shortcomings and their impact on the society.

The tendency of the journalists primarily thinking about the impotence of their news product, but feeling that these news stories may not interest their audience, and hence trying to make them interesting is part of their daily working theory gained through experience in their newsroom. Here, the main focus of the journalists is the importance of their news product. Their perceptions about their audience are mediated by the news product and are influencing the journalists to make the important news interesting to their audience. As discussed in chapter two, important news stories are news that journalists and their news station think their news audience need to know while interesting news stories are news that the journalists think their audiences want to know (Burgoon et al. 1982).

4.2.3.3 What Audiences Want from Radio Fana News

Journalists from Radio Fana newsroom believe that the majority of their audiences want news on social and economic problems with their solutions. Furthermore, news on maladministration like lack of good governance, current issues, entertaining news, and news on best practices are among sort of news the journalists think their audiences want. When further pressed to indicate the news that they think their audiences want most, almost all respondents emphasized that their audiences mainly want news on social and economic problems which give or indicate solutions to the problems in the society. They identified this type of news as problem news.

Informant F4 from Fana: Our audiences want balanced news that touches their social economic and political life. They like news that solves problems in the society. They want to hear about health problems, they want to hear about transportation problems, and economic problems in the country, they like problem news which gives them solutions; they don't want news that directly or indirectly is not relevant to their life.

Informant F7 from Fana: Our audiences most want well balanced report on controversial issues that touch their social and economic life, that directly or indirectly solve their social problems...in general they like problem news.

Development in general is considered as a solution for social and economic problems in any society. In this context, what respondents from Radio Fana newsroom articulate about news on social and economic problems and their solutions implies the notions of investigative reporting which is one element in development reporting. Here, the journalists perceive that their audiences want news on social and economic problems but, with solutions or indicative solutions to the problems. Reporting on social and economic problems require deep investigations into the ongoing development activities. This is one of the fundamental assumptions behind development journalism which Radio Fana journalists claim to employ in their newsroom. The respondents also admit that their newsroom has not done much to give the audiences what they mainly want and they hope they are trying to improve this.

Most Radio Fana newsroom discussants also argued that their audiences want problem solving news that touches their (audience) life. Although not sure who their audiences are and what they exactly want, they are convinced to produce what they call *audience centered* news: avoiding what they think their audience may hate and giving what they think their audiences may want. Here is a typical argument of Fana's newsroom head Asefa Ahimad:

We have audience research department that gives us some feedbacks from the audiences. But it is not regular. We don't know what exactly our audiences want. But, as a newsroom head, what I do here is always encourage the journalists to produce audience centered news. I always tell them that Radio Fana would not promote policy centered news, higher official centered news, and event oriented news and public relation oriented news. We promote audience centered news and I tell them that.

Producing audience centered news is a language used by all Fana newsroom respondents. It seems that what they think about the interests of their audience is influencing them. This is evident from the following discussion.

Informant F7 from Fana: In our newsroom every body is encouraged to plan, produce, edit and report news based on what she or he thinks what the audiences want. In editorial meetings and in our evaluations the main discussion is whether we have achieved to satisfy our audiences, and what we have to do to satisfy them more. Producing audience centered news is our center of attention in the newsroom.

These arguments clearly explain that notions of audience are the major part of newsroom routines in Radio Fana. A perception that audience is better served with news on social, economic and political problems which give solutions to problems in the society is leading the newsroom to produce what it brands as *audience centered news*. Based on this the journalists seek to offer more to their audiences.

Accurate or not, journalists perceptions of what their audiences want is shaping the routines of the newsroom. Through experience, Radio Fana newsroom journalists have learned that their audiences want news on social, economic and political problems which give or indicate solutions to problems in the society. And they have also learned that their audiences want news that touches their life and finally they are convinced that by providing *audience centered news* they better serve their audience.

4.2.3.4 What Audiences don't want from Radio Fana News

Respondents from Radio Fana newsroom gave details of news that they think their news audiences do not like from their newsroom. These are news on government activities such as meetings, politics, speeches, and ceremonies; news on development activities such as inauguration of infrastructures, economic growth and success stories; and propaganda. The most detested news they argued is the news that their station reports on government politics and development activities.

Informant F3 from Radio Fana: I think our audience do not like our political news on government because they feel that Fana would not balance them; they don't like our news on government political activities such as meetings, reports and ceremonies; they don't also like news on development activities because our reporting style are full of problems. We always report development events from the perspective of the government. For example if roads or bridges are constructed, we report that the government has constructed them for the benefit of the people. But government is ought to do that. We should have reported from this perspective of government responsibility, but usually we don't do that. In case of success stories on development what we often do in our news is tell the audience that the success is for their benefit. We don't tell the audience why they should care about the success.

This argument conveys two major perceptions of the journalists. First, the journalists believe that the news they think their audiences hate are not by them selves boring, but what they think the audience hate is their writing style and presentation. Second, the argument implies that audiences

do not like news that is not written from their perspectives. Based on this perception the journalists are convinced to write news from the perspectives of their audiences. The following argument further clarifies this point.

Informant F7 from Radio Fana: Our audiences hate news that is not reported from their perspectives. For example, recently I was editing a news report on legal services of one locality. The news says Business Process Reengineering has improved the legal services provided at courts. I dropped that news because there was no sentence that tells the service beneficiaries are happy with the improved services. The news was written from the perspective of the service provider not from that of the beneficiaries. I think our audiences hate such news.

The main concern of these journalists is writing the news. Inherent in that news product is the audience imaginary which plays more than a passive role. Radio Fana Newsroom journalists for example, are changing their news writing style. Based on their perceptions of what their audiences hate, they are trying to write their news from the side of the audience and are trying to avoid writing the news from other perspectives like sources. Although perceptions of their audiences are of course part of their knowledge base in the newsroom, these perceptions are mediated by their news product. In their decisions, the tacit audience played a key role, changing the working theory of the journalists. Thus, it is misleading to say that the audience plays no role in news construction process. Accurate or not, journalists perceptions of their audiences is playing more than a passive role to shape the news construction.

4.2.3.5 What Audiences Want from Sheger FM 102.1 News

In Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom journalists perceive that the majority of their news audiences want news on social and economic problems in the society. All respondents identified most of their audiences as consumers who want news on consumer goods and services. Although no research mediated information is available at the station, journalists based on their own perceptions are tailoring their news product to their audience. These journalists said that they prioritize consumer related news but, they also work to give their audience news on social and economical problems. They further noted that they write all their news in a manner that create good mood on the audience. Here is a typical response from news director of Sheger FM 102.1 Sileshi Tesema:

Most of our audiences are consumers. They want consumer news, how prices are going up or down in their daily consumption goods and services. These are our priorities in our news. Our audiences also want news on social and economic problems in their own society. They want about their daily social and economic life, they want news on consumer goods and services. They expect us to give them all interesting news in a manner that creates good mood.

Sheger FM 102.1 news director further explains that news that creates good mood is news that meets audiences' expectations in an interesting and human way. He further notes that, "even if the news is about death or horrible problems, we should package and tell them in a soft and interesting way that the audience will have a good mood." The main criteria of good news in Sheger FM 102.1 seem that does it create good mood? Can the audience listen to it with interest? The journalists based on their perception of their audience interest are crafting the news so that it will create good mood. Creating good mood through the news sometimes require telling bad news in a pleasing manner without affecting the fact.

Informant S3 from Sheger: Some news forces me to worry about the audience. For example, recently I was working on news on candle price rises in Addis. Due to hydroelectric power failure, there was shortage of power. At the same time candle price was rising. That news for me was very bad news, which I think disturbs my audience. I think the audience won't like such news, but it was unavoidable. Here, I don't want to shock the audience through my news, I don't want them to be hopeless and helpless. I have to tell the news in a soft interesting and pleasing manner without affecting the facts.

In Sheger FM102.1 newsroom clichés and journalese are conceived as enemies of news that destroy the interests of the audience to listen. And therefore, avoiding the common clichés and journalese and using conversational daily language are means of making the news interesting to the audience.

Informant S1 from Sheger: I think the audience is quite fed up with clichés and journalese, and sick of them when they hear. So, we have managed to avoid traditional common clichés and journalese and replaced almost all of them by the common words and languages that people use in their everyday life. This is liked by many of our audiences.

Eric Partridge Dictionary of clichés defines cliché as hackneyed phrases often used by journalists. Journalese is often understood as native language of news gatherers. "Clichés and journalese are devils disguised as angels" says (Boyd, 2001: 85). Boyd further notes that clichés and journalese, not only fail to enliven dull news copy, but also make even the most significant

news item trite. The notion that audiences do not like clichés and journalese is forcing Sheger newsroom journalists to avoid them- making the news interesting.

In general, the above discussions suggest that audience concerns are part of the journalists' news making process. Those concerns are imbedded in notions of what makes one story interesting or pleasing. Here, audience concerns are talked about in terms of *interesting* the audience or in terms of *good mood* for the audience or in terms of *pleasing* the audience. These are examples of knowing system akin to what Schon (1983) described as knowing-in-action. He described that, there are actions, recognitions, and judgments which we know how to carry out spontaneously. Much of the journalists' understandings of their audiences are internalized in this way and become part of their working theory.

Thus, perceptions of audience are a tacit part of news making process in Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom. For example, a perception that audiences like to be in a *good mood* is convincing the journalists to write their news in a manner that they believe creates *good mood*. A perception that the audiences like news on consumer goods and services is convincing the journalists to prioritize consumer related news. The journalists are trying to attract their audiences through giving them suitable stories they think their audiences want. The suitable stories they are trying to tailor to their audiences fall under the category of *service stories* and *non burdening* stories discussed in chapter two. Gans (2004) argued that the selection of these stories appears to be based on subjective perceptions of how the news story would be related to the audience.

4.2.3.6 What Audiences don't want from Sheger FM 102.1 News

Journalists in Sheger FM102.1 believe that their audiences don't like their news on government political and usual activities, meetings of any kind, conflicts that involve killings and clashes, inaugurations of development infrastructures, repetitions of news that looks propaganda, and clichés and journalese in news writing. The news that these journalists think their audiences hate most from Sheger newsroom is favorable news report on government political and development activities. Here are typical responses on how the journalists perceive what their audiences hate most.

Informant S4 from Sheger FM 102.1: Most of our audiences want to hear negative news about government activities. So, when we report something positive about the government they call and shout on us. They say, "We don't expect such a news from your station"

FGDS5: When government builds condominiums, roads or bridges, we try to include in our news, but many audiences always call and tell us that they don't want such news. They tell us that it is government responsibility and duty to build them and nothing new in it. So, we try to minimize such news.

These arguments typify how the journalists perceive their overall audience based on the feedbacks they receive from some audience members. Their information about audience interest in this case is content mediated. It is solely based on audience members reactions to a particular story reported on the government. But, the journalists are generalizing it to their overall audience. Based on their perception, these journalists shape their news reporting style and try to minimize what they think their audiences do not want. Whenever they write news on government and development activities they try to write the news from the side of the beneficiaries. The following argument confirms this:

Informant S5 from Sheger FM 201.1: It is common to hear that thousands of condominium houses are built, bridges and roads are constructed and the like. If we report on such news we don't want to report from the side of the government. We look into the problems in construction process and any problem related to them. For example, if ten thousand condos are built, we investigate whether important infrastructures like water, electricity and others are fulfilled. We also investigate whether the quality of the construction is standard and whether people are happy with it. We try to humanize the news in this way.

Implicit in this argument is the notion of perceiving news audiences as people who want or need to know the problems and shortcomings of the government development activities. This perception is convincing the journalists to look into the problems and impacts of the development activities on the life of people. This argument is one component of development reporting. But, one has to be sure that development reporting is not equivalent to fault finding or problem finding in development activities. It may be is also misleading to assume that audiences only want problems and shortcomings in development activities. Development reporting requires giving true and accurate information on positive as well as negative aspects of development activities. It is only through this that the perceived audience would get the true picture of the development activities.

4.2.4 Journalists' Perceptions of Audience satisfaction

4.2.4.1 ETV Newsroom Journalists' Perceptions of their Audiences' Satisfaction

All of the respondents, except three, believed that ETV news audiences are only fairly satisfied with the news they are receiving from the station. But, the other three informants critically argued that the audience is not satisfied with ETV news. The three interviewees agree that ETV newsroom is not producing its news based on audiences' interests.

Informant E5 from ETV: I think they are not satisfied because our news is not interesting to the audience. We don't assess what the audience want, we don't try to go into the audience to understand their needs and problems they face in their daily life. They want us to do that. But, what we are doing here is give them information that we think are important mostly coming from news sources. We don't work based on audience interest. I think that is why they are not satisfied with our news.

Informant E8 from ETV: Our audiences are not satisfied with our news. We are not giving them what they want the way they want.

Most of the discussants have also argued that their audiences are only fairly satisfied with ETV news. They explained many problems that the newsroom should improve. : "I don't think we have satisfied our audiences to the extent they want. We have a lot of constraints; capacity limitation, technologies like internet access and media facilities, these are our problems in the newsroom" says discussant FGDE1. Other discussants also supported this notion.

FGDE2: I think our audiences are just moderately satisfied. There are many problems with our news. They are every time repeated on every hour without any change or development and the audience may see it ones and get nothing new in it and leave it. Most of our new are also not interesting to the audience and if they have alternative news media they will switch off ours.

Other informants took almost similar position, and each of them gave their own reasons as to why they think their audiences are not satisfied with ETV news. Most of them said that ET V newsroom does not have any system or established routine that would encourages the journalists to base their news on the audiences' interest.

Informant E4 from ETV: There is no system that would help us to consider the interest of our audiences. We don't have any document which guides us to do this. We have editorial meetings on which we simply select news that come to us and decide some issues to be reported. Even in those meetings we don't talk much

about what audiences want. We simply decide on important news. Even if we plan some news on our own, they lack depth and strength to interest the audience.

Informant E6 from ETV: We don't have any system that would help us to work based on audience interest. Through experience, you learn that your work must be based on the audience interest. We sometimes informally talk about this, but we don't have any established way of basing our news on the audience interest. If we have such a system, I think we would do better job to satisfy the audience.

Others said it is difficult to improve audiences' satisfaction as the audiences are general mass with various interests and the media is only one to serve all.

Informant E6 from ETV: Our audiences have many different interests and the media would not satisfy all. But, at least we are trying our best.

All respondents admitted that, they are not satisfied with what they are giving their audience and they feel that the audiences receive their news on government politics and economic activities with suspicious. Moreover, some of them said that they don't feel comfortable when they get audience members in the society.

Informant E3 from ETV: As a journalist in ETV you don't feel confident to move through the society for newsgathering. They ask you from where you are, and when you tell them that you are from ETV they scoff at you saying, "ah...you are from the media that breathe with government lung?". These really disappoint you. Most of the time, I don't even want to identify my self as ETV journalist.

Informant E8 from ETV: It is discouraging; we are not giving the audience what they want. As a result our audiences are suspicious about our news and you feel no confident in what you do.

Thus, the overall responses from ETV newsroom journalists seem to suggest that most journalists in the newsroom perceive that their audiences are only moderately satisfied as ETV news are not interesting. And there is no established way of considering audiences' interest in their newsroom. As a result most journalists feel uncomfortable about their news and are not satisfied with the news they are giving their audiences. They believe that there are many audiences who are uninterested in ETV news. As discussed in chapter two, uninterested audiences, journalists perceive, are careless irregular audiences whose attention must be sought and then held and who are mostly interested in local news. Gans (2004) observed that journalists do not totally ignore or sufficiently serve such audiences because they think that these audiences do not care much about important news.

4.2.4.2 Radio Fana Newsroom Journalists' Perceptions of their Audiences' Satisfaction

At Radio Fana newsroom, all respondents believed that their audiences are moderately satisfied with the news they are receiving from the station. They said that the station is relatively better at its news than any other local media.

Informant F7 from Fana: I think we are better than any other local media. We are giving our audiences news that we think touch their life. But, we are only moderately satisfying them. There are many things that we need to improve in our news. For example we should go down into the public and report on social, economic and political problems.

Discussants have argued on the need to reach uninterested audiences and to increase audibility of the media.

FGDF4: The satisfaction of our audience is only moderate. Our station is not audible at all places and there are still many uninterested audiences that we need to satisfy, including those who hate our news, but simply listen to us to get some important information.

As discussed in chapter two uninterested audiences are irregular audiences whose attention must be sought. Gans (2004) points that when journalists take their audience into account they think about these uninterested audiences. All respondents have also admitted that they are only moderately satisfied with the news they are giving their audiences. Although they believe that there is an established work routine which encourages them to base their news on audiences' interest, they admit that not much has been done in this regard.

Informant F5 from Radio Fana: Our editorial policy forces us to produce audience centered news. Audience centered news means news about the audience, about their social, political, and economical life and about the problems they face in their everyday life. You need to search around to get such news. They are not simply event oriented. You have to plan them based on their impact on the audience. So far we have done very little but I think we are trying to move out of event oriented reporting to audience oriented reporting.

Informant F2 from Radio Fana: We always consider our audiences' interest. The editors, the newsroom head and other supervisors always tell us to write audience centered news and programs. We have editorial briefings on which we talk about our news. On our discussion one measure question that we raise and talk about is "what is in the public that interests the audience? We raise a lot of tips that we think the audience want. Then if it is accepted editors will assign reporters and producers. This is continues routine in our newsroom. Even after

the news is reported we will evaluate whether the news had good impact on the audience. "Write audience centered news" is watchword of our news room. This is really encouraging.

As discussed in previous section, Radio Fana editorial policy encourages the newsroom to produce *audience centered* news. Based on the policy the journalists in the newsroom have established the routine that helps them to cater to audience interests: producing *audience centered* news. In general, the above responses seem to suggest that newsroom journalists in Radio Fana perceive that their audiences are only moderately satisfied with the news they receive from Radio Fana. Although there is an established work routine that would encourage them to work based on audiences' interest, the journalists believe that not much has been done to satisfy their news audience.

4.2.4.3 Sheger Newsroom Journalists' Perceptions of their Audiences' Satisfaction

All respondents from Sheger 102.1 newsroom explain that they think their news audiences are highly satisfied with Sheger news. They believe that their newsroom has a unique news writing and presentation style that please and interest their audience. Furthermore, they perceive that their audiences use their news. Here is an elaborate explanation of Sheger FM 102.1 news director Sileshi Tesema.

From the very beginning our aim is to give the audience news they can use. Our audiences are consumer audiences. We include any thing of their interest in our news. You know, news has to be interesting by definition. So, we work to make the news interesting to the audience. Even if the news is a sort of bad news, we try to make a fun out of it-making it interesting to the listeners. We make the news more human. Secondly, our presentation style is horizontal and conversational. We tell the news in a friendly way. Because we go to the listener's home, we don't know them and they don't know us. We are uninvited guests. So, we have to be good companion, we have to tell them the new in a conversational way, like as if you talk to your close friend. Finally, we please them; we say "please don't go away, Sheger is yours".

The whole ideas in this elaborate discussion are-give the audience interesting news that they can use in an interesting, pleasing and friendly way so that the listener feels the newscaster as a good companion. Furthermore, all respondents from Sheger newsroom journalists believe that their news audiences are interested, pleased and highly satisfied by the news Sheger is providing them. Except one discussant, who said that he is not satisfied because he always sees some holes

in his news, all other are proud of their work and are satisfied with the news they are giving their audiences.

FGDS3: You know... when you make coffee, you need sugar, water, coffee, pot and stove with fire. After every thing is ready, the question is how to make the best coffee you can, that you think would highly satisfy your guest. We are working here to interest and satisfy our guests and if we think they are satisfied, than we are satisfied too.

This discussion informs one important point. The simile used to describe what is needed to make the best coffee for a guest who expects best coffee reflects the focus of the journalists on product image. The primary concern of the journalists is making the best news she/he can for the audience she/he perceives is expecting-making it interesting to the audience. As discussed in chapter two, working theories of news audience are often implied within this notion of product image. They are part of news workers' knowing –in-action as they produce the news. So, in Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom the value that journalists attach to the news as 'good', 'interesting', 'pleasing', creating good mood' are implying their audiences as people who need such values.

Respondents from Sheger Fm 102.1 newsroom believe that the established work routine in their newsroom is encouraging them to produce news that interests and pleases their audiences. They believe that their editorial guideline, their daily editorial meetings, and guidance and supervision of their news director are important inputs to their work in catering to the audience interest. Here is a detailed description of a newsroom routine in which audiences are considered at each level by individual journalists in Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom.

Informant S4 from Sheger FM 102.1: First, I think it is my duty to make the news interesting to the audience. I should search around and plan a story that I think is interesting to the audience. Editors approve it with improvements. Once the plan is approved, it is again my duty to gather information that is interesting to the audience. In the gathering process I always select information that I think would touch the life of the audience. I will ask questions that I think the audiences want answered. Finally, when I sit down to write the news I again think about what would interest the audience from my news, how they would like to be presented and which words and phrases they prefer. After all these are complete, the editor will edit it making it more interesting to the audience. They always encourage us to produce news that touches the life of our listeners. After the news is shaped, produced and casted, we sit down and evaluate the news. We use feedbacks to know what the audience feels about our news.

In general, the responses from Sheger newsroom informants seem to imply three important points. First, journalists perceive that their audiences are highly satisfied and interested in their news. Second, they believe that the audiences are pleased and interested by the news writing and presentation styles of Sheger newsroom. Third, they believe that they have established work routine which encourages them to consider audience interest in their newsroom. From these it seems plausible to infer that Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom journalists perceive that their audiences are interested audiences. Gans (2004) in relation to this argued that *the interested* audiences are imagined to care about the news and to keep up with it on a regular basis. He further notes that journalists are most enthusiastic about this category of audiences.

4.2.5 Journalists as Audience Representatives

News is for the ultimate consumption of the audiences. For news to be received its ingredients first have to cater to the interests of the audience. As the old cliché says, if no one cares to listen, view or read the content of the news media, does it become news? Thus, journalists have a lofty responsibility to make the news interesting to their audience. But, how do they know whether a given news story is interesting to their audience? In the three newsrooms I studied, it seems that, for a story to become news, it first has to interest a journalist who works on it.

Asked how they know whether a given news story is interesting or not for their audience and whether they have any audience persona when they produce news, all respondents from ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 said that they are the first audience of their news. Here is an elaborate description from Radio Fana.

Informant F1 from Radio Fana: When I produce news, I think I do it for the mass audience, all the listeners, all the public. But, I am the first person to learn about that news. That means I am the first audience of that news. First, I will try to understand the news or the event that make the news. If I understand it and if it is interesting to me, then I will write it making it more interesting for the audience. If I do not understand it and if it bores me, I think the audiences would not understand it too and it would not interest them. So, I will write the news the way I understand it. This is more of unconscious act for me. It is established in me. It may appear difficult for me to tell you the reason. But, I unconsciously put my self in place of the audience, put their eyeglass on myself and read and see the news through it. I think I developed this through experience.

This argument seems to imply that an event may become news if it first interests the journalist. It also seems to imply that the journalist is putting himself in place of his audience and writing the news for himself, thinking that his understandings and his interests represents that of his audiences. Similar point is argued by respondents from ETV.

Informant E4 from ETV: Whenever I select news, especially international news that come to our station from different sources, I put myself in place of the audience and decide it. For example, there are some news that we don't let to our society because we think that they (the news) won't interest them or may be are beyond the understanding level of our audiences. In this case I put myself in place of the audience and think what I would learn from that news if I were an audience. I think on behalf of the audience. I also do this when I gather information for news.

Here, the journalist is trying to match his interests and understandings with that of the audience. If he thinks that the news would not interest his audience, or if he thinks that the news may be is beyond the understanding level of his audience, he would not let them to the society. Furthermore, if he feels that the news would not teach him anything, he would not let them. Here, it seems that, the journalists' interest and understandings of a given story are accepted as congruent to that of the audiences on that story and news is let out or not based on them. This seems that the individual level gate keeping discussed in chapter two is at ply. William (2003) in his three level analysis of gate keeping argued that the individual gatekeepers preferences, the social background and experiences that shape these preferences, the professional ideology under which she/he works and the practices that are adopted in daily work can determine content of the news. As can be inferred from the above argument of informant E4 in determining the news content, the implicit audiences represented by the journalist is one contributing factor. In Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom too, a story survives as news if it first interests the journalists and if they understand it.

Informant S2 from Sheger FM 102: I write the news for the general audience but, I consider myself as one of them and judge what interests them. First, I will try to understand the news, and then I will tray to make it simpler for the audience so that they will understand it easily. In this process I am also an audience. The news should first interest me. If it is not interesting to me I will leave it and if it is interesting to me I will write it. I think our audiences trust, what we trust and believe what we believe about particular news we give them.

The overall responses from ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 newsrooms seem to imply that the journalists are considering themselves as audience representatives and thus writing the news that interest themselves thinking that it would also interest their audience. In other words these journalists see their audience as someone like themselves and therefore view themselves as audience representatives. This is exactly similar to what Gans (2004) observed in CBC, NBC and Newsweek newsrooms. Gans noted that, “most journalists take the congruence of their own and the audiences feeling for granted. In the process they become representatives of the audience reacting for it vis-à-vis their sources” (Gans, 2004:237).

It seems that the probability of a given story to survive as news, among other factors, depends on the subjective interests and the understandings of the journalists in those newsrooms. David Manning White in his gate keeping theory argued that the communication of news is highly subjective, reliant upon value judgments based on the gate keeper’s own set of experiences attitudes, and expectations. William (2003) also noted that individual journalist’ preferences may affect the content of the news to be received by the audience. He further argued that individual level preference of journalists may also be affected by their social background, professional ideologies in which they work and the practices that are adopted in their daily work. These might be true for ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom journalists. But, this needs closer investigation to understand what exactly is shaping their preferences. Is something interesting to the journalists necessarily interesting to their audiences? Kersner (2009) warns against this assumption: “Remember, that just because something is interesting to you does not mean that it is interesting to everybody. Picture the member of your audience and try to figure out what would interest them (Kersner, 2009:54).

4.2.6 Journalists’ Preconception of their Audiences’ Behaviors

Journalists in the three media I studied feel some preconceptions about their news audience which they think would affect their work in their newsrooms. Their preconceptions vary across the media. Respondents from ETV and Radio Fana newsrooms gave almost similar explanations of unfavorable behaviors they preconceive from their news audience. Respondents from Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom, on the other hand, perceive their news audiences in a positive sense. All are summarized and presented here.

Respondents from ETV newsroom said that there are audiences, if not majority, who;

- hate their own national media (ETV) adoring to others' media like BBC, CNN and Aljazeera
- hastily label ETV and its journalists as government advocates and cadres
- are suspicious about ETV news on government politics and development activities
- do not have adequate interpretive capability of news
- are ignorant, biased and non critical and not modern to use news information

Informants from ETV also feel concern about the audiences they conceive their behaviors this ways. They fear that their size (the audience) may be is not easily neglected. They also noted that these are discouraging factors in their newsroom. Here is one critical argument from ETV:

Informant E2 from ETV: Our audiences are not critical. Some of them, I can say, are stupid. Based on single news they would hastily label the media. They don't watch our news critically. In other parts of the world, audiences are modern. They use the information that goes to them through, the media. Here, we don't have such audiences. These are discouraging factors in our newsroom. You know, our audiences are not such audiences who try to participate to solve some of the problems they see in our media. They don't think that this media is theirs'; they don't think that there is no any alternative national media for them; they don't think that their participation is important. I think we have despising, and hastily generalizing audiences. Even, that fact that we work for the government media alone would reduce our acceptance.

Behind this argument there are various traits of the audience as perceived by the journalists. Audiences as 'non critical', as non concerned, as not 'modern', as 'despising', as 'hastily generalizing; and as 'stupid' are conveyed in this discussion. Another account from ETV informant reflects that their audiences see the media as, "media breathing with government lung". This informant explains what she faced while reporting news from the field.

Informant E3 from ETV: They ask you from where you are, and when you tell them you are from ETV, they scoff at you saying "ah ... you are from the media that breathe with government lung?" You don't expect them to believe you, but you may try to tell them that you have done nothing wrong. But, you would never convince them. They are very biased. And they are not willing to talk to you if you want some information from them.

Caution! This argument may be based on a single instance. But, it does indicate how the journalist based on this instance forms some preconception about the rest of the audience. This may seem bias from the journalist side.

In general, the above discussions of informants from ETV newsroom seem to imply that, ETV newsroom journalists have preconceptions of unfavorable traits of their news audiences which they think influences their work in the newsroom. These preconceptions include, perceiving the news audience as biased, non critical, ignorant of the media, hasty labeling, having low level of understanding, suspicious on the national media and adoring other international media. These perceptions of the journalists about their audiences seem to discourage the journalists.

Similarly, respondents from Radio Fana newsroom feel some preconceptions about their news audience. They think that there are many audiences, specially those who live in unban area who;

- hate Radio Fana simply because they think that it is government media and instrument of the ruling party
- listen Radio Fana news on government politics and development activities with suspicion because they think it is partial
- are ignorant, biased, unfair and non critical in their thinking about Radio Fana
- blindly hate Radio Fana journalists labeling them as government cadres
- think that Radio Fana would not tell the truth about government problems and failures

What these journalists think about the perceived traits of their news audiences is discouraging them as one Informant from Radio Fana critically argued:

Informant F3 from Radio Fana: On the one hand, when we report on government politics and development activities, audiences who are not government supporters would not trust our news. Because, they believe that Fana is government affiliate and would not tell the truth about government problems. On the other hand, audiences who are supporters of government politics and policies want to depend on our news, because they believe that Fana is close to the government and can easily get reliable information. In both of these cases, the audiences are labeling Radio Fana as government affiliate. Due to this, I think, most of our audiences listen to our news on government and politics with doubt. There are also some audiences who blindly hate our station. These are discouraging to our work. What ever you do to balance and report the news the other side [audience] is biased and you don't feel conformable at our work.

This argument clearly gives a picture of how this informant perceives his news audience and how that influences his work in the newsroom. “These audience traits are not encouraging and I would ignore them altogether,” said another informant from Radio Fana:

Informant F4 from Fana: Some audiences think that we are government media; others think that we are the ruling party instrument; still others call us ‘EPRDF cadres’. When I think about such audiences, I totally see them as ignorant of our media. They don’t want to evaluate our news critically. These audience traits are not encouraging and I ignore them altogether.

In this argument there is a concept of the rejected audience. The rejected audiences, as perceived by the journalists, are those people whom the journalists would like to extrude. As discussed in chapter two, Gans (2004) observed that the rejected audiences perceived by journalists are would be intellectuals who are imagined to prefer more detailed and thus boring stories than the journalists are willing or able to supply, and people perceived to be interested solely in sensational stories.

To sum up, from the oral testimonies of respondents from Radio Fana newsroom, it is possible to deduce that Radio Fana newsroom journalists hold some preconceptions about their news audience behaviors, which are unfavorable to their work in the newsroom. According to these preconceptions, journalists perceive their audiences as *biased, non critical, ignorant, unfair* and *suspicious* about Radio Fana news on government politics and development activities. These preconceptions seem to influence the journalists in their work, to extent that they admit to reject some of the audiences they perceive are unfavorable to their work.

Except few preconceptions, views of informants from Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom indicate that journalists perceive their news audience in a positive sense. They all believed that their audiences prefer Sheger news. The preconceptions emerging in the newsroom are related to how audiences behave towards Sheger FM 102.1 news.

Informant S5 from Sheger: Most audiences want you to think the way they think. When you tell them what they like to hear, they think as if you are promoting their point of view and they call and tell you that they are happy with your news. On the other hand, when you tell them factual news about something they don’t like to hear, they call and insult you. This is annoying. Here we don’t promote anybody’s view and we are not working to displease anybody. We are discharging our professional duty with responsibility.

This argument seems to imply that the journalists perceive some audience members who want to promote their own point of view through Sheger news. These perceived audiences tend to put pressure on journalists through different contacts. A case in point at Sheger newsroom, for example is they call and “insult” the journalists. This argument is what William (2003) in his three level gate keeping analysis noted as a third level of gate keeping: the interaction between the news media and the wider social, political and cultural environment. William argued that these environments are the major external factors that directly or indirectly influence the news media. Perceptions of what audiences want are among the major external factors. This is more clarified in the following arguments of Sheger newsroom informants.

Informant S4 from Sheger: Many audiences want us to report negative news about the government. Whenever we report something positive about the government they call and insult us.

Informant S1 from Sheger: We don't categorize our audiences. But, I can tell you that, in Ethiopia we have very serious problems related to this. If you don't belong to this group or that group or trait, you will never be able to stand independently. So, people must belong to the right or left group. But, from the very beginning we refused to belong to any group or any organ. This is why Sheger 102.1 has sustained.

This last argument is all about external factors that directly or indirectly influence the media and its journalists. William(2003) in his three level analysis of gate keeping theory noted that perceptions of the audiences, sources of information, political and legal environment, technology and revenue sources are the major external factors that directly or indirectly influence the media content.

Thus, from the above discussions it seems apparent that journalists in Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom have some preconceptions of their audiences which they think may influence their work in the newsroom. They perceive some audience members who want to promote their own point of view through Sheger newsroom and they also perceive some audience members who try to push the newsroom towards their self interest.

Chapter Five

5 Summary and Conclusion

This study has been conducted to explore journalists' perceptions of their audiences in Ethiopian Television, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 newsrooms. In the process, the study has attempted to unearth how individual journalists in these newsrooms perceive their audiences in general and their audiences' interests and preferences in particular. The study also attempted to examine journalists' preconceptions of their news audience. Furthermore, the notions of audiences implied in editorial policies and guidelines of the news stations were analyzed. This chapter presents a summary of the findings and conclusions drawn.

5.1 Summary of Findings

To undertake this study, attempts have been made to revise various literatures related to journalists' perceptions of their audiences. Since the focus of this study is on individual journalists working in the newsrooms, the researcher believed it appropriate to discuss the concepts related to their perceptions about their audience within the theoretical frameworks which guide their action in the newsroom. Accordingly, working theory, organizational theory, gate keeping theory and agenda setting theory and other operational theories that tend to govern and guide the behaviors of media professionals are selected as theoretical frameworks for this study. The analysis, however, was not confined to a specific theoretical framework. Rather the theoretical frameworks are used as a guide.

Qualitative research paradigm has been used as a method of study in this research. So, individual in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with newsroom journalists. These interviews have allowed the researcher to understand how individual journalists perceive and make sense of their audiences in their work routines while the focus group discussion were used to corroborate the outcome of the in-depth interviews. In addition, editorial policies and guidelines of the newsrooms were analyzed for notions of audiences that may shape journalists perceptions. The newsrooms for the study and their journalists were purposively selected. And

all of them do not have research based information about who their news audiences are and what they want or need.

Findings of the study reveal that ETV newsroom journalists perceive their news audiences as, general audience in the public who need development and change in line with nationally established policies, who should receive information on government economic social and political ideologies and who should accept and participate in the development and democratization process of the country. These audiences, as perceived by ETV newsroom journalists, span all ages, occupational and educational levels as well as varied interests. Majority of them are perceived to be matured adults who are responsible in the social stratum.

Furthermore, ETV newsroom journalists perceive that considerable members of their news audiences: are only fairly satisfied with ETV news; mainly want investigative news on wrong doings and problems; do not like ETV news on government politics and development activities; hate their national media ETV and adore others' media like BBC and CNN; view ETV news on government politics and development activities with suspicious; hastily label ETV and its journalists as government advocates ; have low level of understanding to interpret news; are uninterested in ETV news; are ignorant, biased and non critical in their judgments about ETV news.

The findings from ETV also show that newsroom journalists are influenced by what they think about their news audiences. The fact that they think ETV news audiences are general audiences in the public with varied interest is forcing the newsroom to package its newscast with variety of news items that are intended to catch the attentions of the majority audiences. In addition to this, individual journalists in the newsroom are forced to tailor their news to majority audiences they perceive with respect to their news. Moreover, they do not feel comfortable to report news on government politics and development activities because they believe that their audiences do not like such news from ETV. Furthermore, they feel that the preconceptions they hold about their audiences are discouraging their effort and most of them are only moderately satisfied at their work and feel that their news stories do not satisfy or interest their audiences. It is also found that, in ETV newsroom there is no established routine or systematic way of considering audiences' interests in the news making process.

Findings of the study from Radio Fana newsroom show that newsroom journalists perceive their audiences as a wide ranging members of the general public who need to receive information on social, economic and political ideologies of the country and who are required to participate, with full knowledge, in the ongoing development and democratization process of the country. These journalists also perceive that their news audiences span all ages, educational levels and occupations. Moreover, majority of these audiences are perceived as adults, middle income employees and farmers who live in rural areas and small towns.

Furthermore, journalists from Fana newsroom perceive that, substantial members of their news audiences: are only moderately satisfied with Radio Fana news; mainly want news on social, economic and political problems in the society which give or indicate solutions to the problem; do not like Fana news on government political and development activities; hate Radio Fana simply because they think it is a government media and instrument of the ruling party; listen to Radio Fana news on government politics and development activities with suspicion; are ignorant, biased, unfair and non critical in their thinking about Radio Fana; blindly hate and label Radio Fana journalists as EPRDF cadres; think Radio Fana is partial and would not tell the truth about government problems and failures.

The finding from Radio Fana newsroom also reveals that newsroom journalists are influenced by what they think about their audiences. The newsroom packages different sort of news stories that are intended to catch the attentions of majority audiences in the mass audiences and individual journalists are forced to work accordingly. Moreover, the behaviors of the audiences they perceive are discouraging the journalists to the extent that they tend to reject some audience members they think are not favorable to their work. It is also found that Radio Fana newsroom has an established work routine that encourages journalists to work based on audiences' interests. This work routine is established based on the directives provided by Radio Fana editorial policy. Although the system is conducive, as the journalists argued, not much has been done to make Radio Fana news audience centered as intended.

The findings from Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom show that journalists perceive their news audiences as wide ranging mass living in Addis and vicinity and majority of them consumers of goods and services. These audiences, as perceived by Sheger newsroom journalists, span all ages

with majority of them adults above 35. The journalists also perceive their audiences as people who need good mood and pleasure when they listen to Sheger news. Furthermore, Sheger newsroom journalists perceive that the majority of their news audiences: are highly satisfied and interested in Sheger news; mainly want news on consumer good and services and social and economic problems in the society; like negative news reports on government political and economic activities; tend to promote their own interests through Sheger news. It is also found that the journalists in Sheger FM 102.1 newsroom are highly satisfied and encouraged to work more because they think their audiences are interested and highly satisfied with their news. These journalists also perceive that their audiences do not like positive news on government politics and development activities and they are convinced by their perceptions to avoid such news or to balance them as much as possible if the news is *important*. There is established work routine in Sheger FM102.1 newsroom that encourages journalists to work based on their audience interests.

The research question that dealt with organizational definitions of audience revealed that both ETV and Radio Fana do not have explicit definitions of who their audiences are and what they want or need. The notions of their audiences are only implied in their Editorial policies and manuals. Sheger FM 102.1, on the other hand, explicitly defines its audiences in its editorial guideline. The station aims to reach all adults between 18 to 49 and aims to attract urban elites above age 35, town opinion leaders, businessmen, artists, and academicians. Furthermore, the editorial guideline defines Sheger audiences want mainly consumer news, and informational resources for daily life and good mood.

Another finding from this study is that journalists in ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger FM 102.1 newsrooms perceive their audiences as someone like themselves, and think that what interests them would interest the audience and what bores them would bore their audiences too. They are acting as audience representatives in their newsrooms. Journalists also perceive their audiences as an extension of their own social contacts. They learn about their news audiences through feedbacks and reactions from their audience members, through personal contacts, friends, relatives and families. So, they perceive their audiences as someone like in these groups and tend to consider the interests of their groups as the interests of the overall audiences.

5.2 Conclusions

What Schudson (1989) labeled as the “sociology of news production” presumes that news is a constructed reality. One important source of that social construction among news workers and their organizations are their perceptions of their audiences. Whether individual journalists have clear understandings about what their audiences want and need or whether they perceive them as simply those with whom they come in contact in the society or whether they perceive them negatively or positively with respect to their news, those perceptions do exist and can have a significant effect on the news that is to be produced. Journalists at ETV, Radio Fana and Sheger newsrooms observed in this study had perceived their audiences, not only in terms of demographic characteristics, but also in terms of their interests, preferences, satisfactions, dissatisfactions and biases towards their news. Accurate or not, these journalists based on their perceptions are shaping and tailoring their news stories to the audiences they have in their mind.

Journalists’ perceptions of their audience are one way in which the audience has an implicit bearing on the news that is to be produced and received by the audience. However, because the findings of this study show perceptions of individual journalists, great care must be taken in generalizing such perceptions. These findings provide individual perceptions of the journalists than showing the real situation on the side of the audiences. The full picture and real situations may be substantiated through comprehensive investigations of the audience side.

Hence, on the part of the researcher, it is believed that the findings from this study may trigger another comprehensive study on the audiences’ perceptions of the journalists. Based on such studies one can better understand the extent to which the newsrooms are meeting the interests and expectations of their audiences as well as the degree to which what the journalists perceived are real from the audience side.

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Personal Note

The appendices of this thesis consist of anonymous informants. The list of informants is removed from this thesis for confidentiality reasons.

Appendix A

Interview Guides

Addis Ababa University

Graduate School of Journalism and Communication

Dear Respondent,

The purpose of these interview questions is to study how journalists in the newsroom perceive their audience. Your genuine and accurate answers to these questions would greatly contribute to the outcome of the research. Therefore, you are kindly requested to give genuine responses to the following questions. I would like to assure you that the answers you give to these questions are going to be used for the research purpose only. Thank you.

1 Interviewee Details

1.1 Name _____ 1.2 Age _____ 1.3 Sex _____

1.4 Educational level: ___MA/MSc, ___BA/BSc, ___Diploma, ___12th complete, ___ other

1.5 Field of Education _____ 1.6 Occupational Level _____

1.7 Experiences in Journalism _____ 1.8 Religious _____

1.9 Marital Status _____

1.10 Salary Range: _____ Less than Birr 1000 _____ Birr 2000 to 2500

_____ Birr 1000 to 1500 _____ Birr 2500 to 3000

_____ Birr 1500 to 2000 _____ above Birr 3000

2. General Questions

- How does it feel being a journalist? Are you happy with it? Why?
- How do you describe news? From news media, the audience, the news source and journalists who do you think wants news most? Why?

3 On news Audience

- How do you define the audiences you are working for? Who are they? What sort of average person do you perceive? Who do you think are the majority?
- What sort of news do you think your audiences want from your newsroom? Which one do you think is the most wanted news? Do you think that your newsroom is giving the audience this news? If not why? How does that influence your work?
- What sort of news do you think your audiences hate or do not like from your news? Is your newsroom giving the audience such news? Which one do you think is most disliked? Why? How does this influence your work?
- Do you think your audiences are satisfied with your newsroom output? Why? How do you rate their satisfaction? How does this influence you? Are you satisfied with what you are doing now in the newsroom?
- Do you have any established way of considering audiences' interest in your newsroom? What are they? How are they contributing to your news work?
- How do you know whether a given story interests your audiences or not? Do you have any audience persona to think about when you work in the newsroom?
- Do you feel any preconception about the behaviors of your news audiences that may influence your work in the newsroom? What are they? How do these preconceptions influence your work?
- What sort of news do you think your audiences need to know (should know) from your newsroom? Why? Is your newsroom giving the audience this news? Please describe.
- How do you learn about your news audiences? How do you relate yourself to your news audiences in your work? Why?
- To what extent do you think are your audiences interested in your news? Please describe.
- Do you have any thing to add on how you perceive of your news audiences?

Thank You

Interview Guides for Focus Group Discussion

- Who are your news audiences? How do you perceive an average person? Do you think your concept of your audience would influence your work in the newsroom? How?
- What sort of news do you think your news audiences want most from your newsroom? Is your newsroom giving them? If no, why do you think? How does that affect your work?
- What sort of news do you think your audiences need or should know from your newsroom? Why? How does that affect your work?
- What sort of news do you think your news audiences do not like/hate from your news? Why? How does that affect your work?
- To what extent do you think is your audience satisfied with your news product? Why? How does that affect your work?
- Do you think that your audience prefers your stations' news? Why?
- How do you consider the interests of your audiences in your newsroom? Do you have any established way or routine that would help you work based on audiences' interest?
- Do you feel any preconception about your audiences that may influence your work in the newsroom? What are they? How does that influence your?
- Do you have anything more you would like to add on how you perceive your audience?

Thank You

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any form in any other university. All the sources and materials used in this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'K' followed by several vertical lines and a trailing flourish.

Kejela Kena Denbali