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**PUBLIC MEDIA REPORTING OF THE CONFLICT
BETWEEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND
THE FORCES OF TPLF: THE CASE OF ETV AND TTV**

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PUBLIC MEDIA REPORTING OF THE CONFLICT
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AND THE FORCES OF TPLF: THE CASE OF ETV AND TTV

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Declaration

I declared that the thesis in titled “public media reporting of the conflict between the Federal Government and the Forces of TPLF: the case of ETV and TTV” is my work and I have duly acknowledge the sources of materials I have used.

With Great Regards

Belsti Awoke

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Acronyms

EPRDF- Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front

TPLF- Tigray People Liberation Front

HPR- House of Peoples Representative

HP- House of Federation

DW- Dimts Woyane

ETV-Ethiopian Television

EBA- Ethiopian Broadcast Authority

ENA- Ethiopian News Agency

EPA- Ethiopian Press Agency

EBC- Ethiopian Broadcast Corporation

FBC- Fana Broadcasting Corporate

EBS- Ethiopian Broadcasting Service

IDS- Institute of Development Studies

IMS- International Media System

OBN- Oromia Broadcasting Network

OMN- Oromia Media Network

TTV-Tigray Television

PM- Prime Minister

ERTA- Ethiopian Radio and Television Authority

UNDP- United Nation Development Program

UNESCO- United Nation Education Science and Culture Organization

Abstract

Public media is an organization to serve the public equally and objectively in disseminating information which helps the society aware of what was happened, what is happening and even what will happen in the form of news, educational program or other forms of content. Public media differs from the private one in which it focused on the profit of the owners, but Public media focuses on informing, educating and entertaining the public without discrimination, because it gets its fund either from the public in the form of license fee or from the government that is collected in the form of tax. In both cases the source of the money is the public and that is way its main objective is to serve the public equally. Unfortunately the current public media in Ethiopia are not serving the public equally as the findings of the thesis indicated; rather they are taken by the political arrangement of the current ethnic politics which is the main source of the conflict in the country. Using content analysis qualitative research, the analytical examination of the news stories showed that the two media are highly polarized in entertaining the interests of Political Parties who owned the media. The research identified that ETV favored the Federal Government and Tigray TV favored TPLF in reporting the news stories during the conflict between those two government bodies. Both media biased the facts on the ground and broadcasted divisive contents to escalate the conflict in Tigray that broke out in November 2020. Even after military confrontation both media indicated political parallelism by demonizing and undermining the rival to deceive the audience. Particularly Tigray TV was not only partisan in its reporting, but also it practiced ethnic parallelism to isolate the people of Tigray from the rest of the people of Ethiopia by portraying messages that indicates an attack on Tigray people from the neighboring community. ETV on the other hand underestimated the violent conflict to the level of law enforcement operation which involves high scale military ammunition in the violence. So the study showed that those media are public in name but politically parallel to the conflicting bodies to aggravate the military confrontation in Tigray Regional State, Ethiopia.

Chapter One

1. Introduction

Since EPRDF came to power, Ethiopia is a Federal state with ten regional states including Sidama, which is separated from Southern Nations Nationalities and People State in 2020. The federal structure was established based on ethnicity to resolve ethnic conflict in the country by destroying unitary government. But the central government led by EPRDF monopolized democratic institutions in the country and undermined regional states to control the power and the economy of the country. Because of the power monopoly of the federal government the people almost in all the regional states revolt against it. Because of the youth movement in the country EPRDF tried to reform the politics but the coalition party EPRDF itself disintegrated and TPLF, the leading partner, relegated from the central power to its origin Tigray. Since then TPLF was accused for sponsoring ethnic conflict in different part of the country, and finally it interred a direct conflict with the Federal government in November 2020. Therefore this thesis tried to study the role of the public media in the argument of who started the attack and the level of the conflict whether it is a law enforcement operation or invasion between the two rivals.

1.1 Background of the Study

Ethiopia passed through a series of conflict during the last half a century because of the nationalism and pan-Ethiopian interests of the politicians involved in the country. Particularly during the last quarter century after nationalism grounded its foot as a major political ideology of the country, conflict became regular phenomenon of the country under the EPRDF. As Semir said the multinational state project of the EPRDF also contributed to the intensification of an array of nationalist mobilizations, both in the ethnic and Ethiopian nationalist camps (2019, p.6). Thus ethnic federalism both empowered and disempowered societies in the country which leads to regular conflict in the last thirty years.

At this period both public and private media flourished in the country but didn't use to settle the conflict of the country because of the polarization of the media to the politics and the ethnic structure of the country. Particularly after the expansion of regional media houses, they magnified the victimization narration of the ethnic political tensions in the country. Skjerdal

(2020) described the divisive nature of the public media at regional level, in which they increasingly nurture a profile independent from that of the federal state media. They are conscious that their audiences are people living in the regional state and, increasingly, people of their ethnicity residing in other parts of the country and abroad. As such, the regional mass media serve to bring cohesion among specific ethnic cohorts, and their distinctiveness challenges a pan-Ethiopian agenda (Skjerdal, 2020, p.26). That means media becomes an instrument of division and conflict rather than integration and cooperation in the country.

Of course conflict is a natural characteristic of human being as far as living as a society. Because of this natural behavior of human conflict, it is difficult to put a specific definition for the word conflict since it has a long history or it is as old as human history. Anywhere in the world, human beings whatever their civilization or living standard, lives with series of conflicts from their existence till now and for the future because of so many interests. “So long as man has other men around him, there will be issues of disagreement, because interest differs and interests do clash, which may lead to disagreement or confrontation, said Folarin. He further describes the nature of community or society as it creates room for explosive attitudes and relations (2013, p.2).

Even though man has the capability to settle conflicts in to peace, sometimes conflicts ends with vast devastation (as we have seen In Tigray in November 2020) and lasting separation of societies and communities on earth. Such conflicts may not be initiated by the general public or the community at large; rather some individuals’ and/or political groups’ disagreement may spread in to overall unmanageable distrust and finally outlawed practices. Conflicts may arise in so many cases like what we have observed in Tigray region, Ethiopia, in November 2020. Interests like natural resource, social value, political struggle, diversities of ethnic, religion, social status, and so on lead to conflict and violence at any level from using traditional to modern weapons to avoid the rivals from the common interest. Conflict is said to exist when two or more groups of people or ethnicity engage in a fight over values and claims to status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate the rival groups from the competition.

Now what matters is how it is reported either in mass media or other means of addressing it for the public or to put it as history to take a lesson for the future. Especially when it is a conflict within a nation or between peoples of a country like we are facing continuously, media reporting

may escalate the conflict rather than helping to solve it. Professional journalists do not set out to reduce conflict. They seek to present accurate and impartial news. But it is often through good reporting that conflict is reduced, said Howard (2004, p.8). He further explained the requirements of conflict reporting skills as follows.

To provide reliable information to the public in a time of violent conflict requires additional journalism skills. Reporters need to understand more about what causes conflict, and how conflict develops and ends. Reporters need to know where to look for these causes and solutions. By providing this information, journalism makes the public far more well-informed about the conflict beneath the violence, and can assist in resolving it. Reporters need to be aware of this crucial role that journalism can play in a time of conflict (p.5).

Conflict by nature involves more than a group of people or at least it engages two parties who disagree on ideas, resources, and values and so on to share or to own the whole part alone. In this case media reporting should be objective and ethical to help people control their emotion and judge fairly the two sides. Presenting at least the two sides of the story by using independent sources might hinder the expansion of violent conflict in a society. Such reporting might help the conflicting parties to look inward and to calm themselves from aggravating the discontent. Howard (2004) recommends in his conflict sensitive journalism book as examining and reporting on the two sides' misperceptions of each other, the media encourages disputing sides to revise their views and move closer to reducing conflict. Especially public media, since they are serving the general public without discrimination, have such social responsibilities to avoid conflicting issues from their outlets. Broadcast media because of their simultaneous reach, either they can help to solve or spread the violent conflict in the society. To make them productive in conflict resolution they have to frame their story beyond the victims' story. Howard (2004, p.12) further explained the techniques of achieving more alternatives in a dispute that is by bringing more people into the conflict. It produces more ideas for seeing the conflict differently. It helps discover different solutions to be shared. When two sides are deadlocked, other members of the community, such as religious leaders, the business community, the civil society, a friendly neighboring country, or international organizations, can bring different visions and alternative solutions.

If the media production focuses on the pattern of the ‘we and them’ approach it is obvious that the outbreak of a violent conflict will spread as a fire in a jungle speeded by wind pressure. How this ‘we and them’ rhetoric emerged takes us to the transition socialist Derg to the ethnic federalism created by the EPRDF in 1991. This is the result of nationalism movements for the last half a century and after the fall of Derg, the EPRDF established the federal structure based on nationalists interest or based on ethnicity. After two decades of repressive ruling of EPRDF the ethno-nationalistic interests upraised the unfair political economic distributions of the government and then the ‘we and them’ violent conflicts erupted throughout the country. “The EPRDF was long known for being formidable, and for its internal discipline, said Semir (2019). It was also known for its impressive ability to control and manage political processes. Recently, however, it has not only lost its ability to manage a stable political transition, but has become a source of conflict itself. In this sense, it has contributed significantly to the proliferation of violence in the country, added Semir (2019, p.25).

Not only the nationalist for the interest of their ethnic identity, but also the sister parties within the EPRDF started the ‘we and them’ fatigue and lost peace and security at a national level. Especially after the political reform in 2018, led by Dr. Abiy Ahmed, TPLF lost its major power share and dissatisfied with the reform. The ongoing reform relegated TPLF to its regional state and become arrogant for the central power. Dr. Semir Yusuf described the interests of TPLF as it didn’t want even to see the transition to happen at the expense of their corrupt leaders. “Elements within the TPLF, for instance, don’t want to see a transition that starts from the assumption, as they see it, that the recent past was wasted time in recent Ethiopian history. They also don’t have much appetite for the new balance of power between the sister organizations” (2019, p.27).

After TPLF lost central power, it became the catalyst or main sponsor of ethnic conflicts throughout the country particularly it took the initiative to destabilize its neighboring Amhara regional state by militarizing the Qemant and Benishangul oppositions. Semir (2019, 28) said, “The TPLF is singled out in this respect, and is frequently accused of waging proxy wars across the country”. TPLF was the brain of the ruling party from its establishment up to the reform and no federal officials and regional authorities can decide without the consent of the leaders of

TPLF in all matters. Rules and regulations didn't work for them, or they violate regulations at federal and regional level to fulfill their interests, said Semir (2019), and he quoted it as follows.

Not a single important political or organizational question is decided by government officials or mass organizations without guiding direction from the party. The Front [TPLF] stands above all and the leaders do not test their policies in a forum of free speech and fair elections. Instead they mobilize and enforce consent” (Vestal, 1999, as cited in Semir, 2019, p.29).

This inherent demand pushed TPLF to smash not only the federal government but also the regional states to show its upper hands. But regional states like Amhara and Oromia prepared themselves not only to defend but also to dismantle their earlier superior. Such competition became difficult even for the central government to manage according to the federal arrangement. “Regional governments have increasingly flexed their muscles regarding the federal government, thereby creating new facts on the ground. Neither the Tigrayan nor the Amhara regional states, for example, are run the way Regions were governed in the past”, said Semir. He added “Flouting federal orders to apprehend suspects is common in Tigray, while in both Tigray and Amhara, autonomy has steeply increased in security matters”(2019,p.31).

All regions were establishing a formal armed force called special force (liyou haile) and enlarged during these regional competitions without the consent of the federal government to enforce their nationalistic interest by themselves. In a parallel way Public media particularly those owned by regional states emerged to serve the community in local language. Mulatu (2019) conducted a rapid assessment about the media reporting of the current political transition and confirmed that most stories were used single sources; they avoid media pluralism and diversity of sources in a story. His major finding assured such a pattern in all mainstream media owned by the federal and regional states. This is because the media landscape established following the EPRDF political monopoly and its repressive rules and regulations to avoid divers' political views and opinions. Scholars like Dibu, Ahadu (2020, p.440) agreed with Mulatu's assessment and said “To stay in their power, the party made more repressive laws on antiterrorism, civil society, and the media that enables them to cemented the EPRDF's authoritarian rule, effectively eliminating opposition parties and independent news outlets and stifling all forms of opposition”. Scholars such as Mulat and Skjerdal (2020) also asserted in their research that the previous stronghold of the

federal state media (EPRDF-supportive) has been overtaken by a fragmented state media structure and with a growing significance of regional mass media agencies. Such media arrangements finally discriminated TPLF itself, which was the founder and guidance of EPRDF and it depend on media based in Tigray region only those are TTV and DW. And as indicated in Dr. Mulatu's assessment those regional media were reporting only the interests of TPLF which is the ruling party of the region on that time to defend the propaganda that came from the federal and other regional states media.

All such factors forced TPLF to think as it is encircled by the federal and regional forces and took the initiative to break out violence by committing atrocity against National Defense Force North Command. And Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed declared that all forces are in a command to defend themselves and the security of the nation on 5th Nov.2020. The study attempt to examine how both Tigray TV and the national television, ETV reported the conflict between the Federal Government and the TPLF forces. Unfortunately, because of its presence, unresolved and undefined high scale conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia, the probability to find previous research work is difficult. Off course there are research documents that focused on ethnic conflict and media reporting in which they indicated as there is political, and ethnic parallelism in there finding. For example Bonde (2018) "Overview of Ethiopian Media Landscape, Engda (2019) Analysis on media framing of ethnic conflict in Ethiopia, and Mulatu and Skjerdal (2020) the ethnification of the Ethiopian media are some of them. But the conflict that happened in Tigray is not a conflict between ethnicity; rather it is a conflict between state actors with high scale military involvement, and the media reporting needs framing in a war zone with military sources and other sophisticated mechanisms.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Ethiopia as a state has long history with different government forms, from Feudalism to Federalism in its modern history. In the current state structure Ethiopia practices ethnic based federal government structure which accompanies 10 regional states and two cities administrations. As a general practice the political economy of a nation reflects the media landscape of a country. In practice what matters is the media independence and media pluralism to serve the public equally with complete information. If media are not independent and report objectively, they don't serve the public to solve their problems and conflicts rather they flame the

conflict to spread across ethnicity and other divisions. The political transition is too difficult for the media as Semir (2019) described it with the coming into being of a new dispensation of politics in the country, that relationship has remained neither feasible nor desirable. Regional governments have increasingly flexed their muscles regarding the federal government autonomy, thereby creating new facts on the ground (Semir,2019 ,p.31). For citizens or in our practical societal arrangements ethnics in a conflict to make well-informed decisions and perhaps resolve their conflict, they must have objective journalism, which is impossible because of unsettled politics. Unfortunately there are many places where journalists have to work under different rules as Howard (2004) described it as imposed by governments or by powerful interests. In Ethiopia party leaders, cabinet members, religious heads; organizational bosses and so on are powerful entities to influence media professionals from practicing objective journalism. In the violence between Tigray Regional State and the Federal Government, media were the main instrument to propagate the violence and announce victory with in a nation. If the violence was with outside forces what matters was the national security issue and media works to maintain national interest, but it was violence with in a nation. In intra -state conflict, objective reporting is important to bring about solution. Especially the public media are expected to serve the society to solve their problem and the conflict they faced. So I focused on researching the roles of public media in Tigray conflict that broke out in Nov. 2020.

1.3. **Objective of the research**

1.3.1. **General Objective:** The general objective of this study is to assess how ETV and TTV practiced professionalism in their reporting of the conflict between the forces of TPLF and the National Defense Force.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives: The specific objectives are to

- Identify the framing of news reporting of ETV and TTV during the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia.
- Identify selection of news sources in violence reporting.
- Identifying the issues covered and the patterns followed by the public media reporting during the violence.

1.4. Research Questions

1. How did ETV and TTV report the pre- violent conflict period?
2. How did ETV and TTV report the violent conflict?
3. Who were the sources of the news of ETV and TTV?
4. What are the major issues that are reported during the conflict?
5. What are the patterns of reporting in both media stations?

1.5. Significant of the study

The conflict between Tigray Regional State and the Federal Government of Ethiopia was unique in its type; it developed in to violence between the forces of TPLF and the National Defense Force. Even it is not determined yet whether it is law enforcement operation, civil war, coup d'état (mutiny) or insurgency, and there are different international crimes committed in the conflict, like genocide, crime against humanity, war crime as we heard from national and international human right organizations. So this study is probably the first one and can be used to initiate other researchers to study further.

Its main significant is to evaluate the media professionalism of the country particularly the practice of public media framing by taking sample media which represents public media at the Federal and Regional level. It is also significant to put as a compiled report of the event which is the history of the country how media of the nation reported in this particular conflict.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is divided into two categories; the pre-violent period which includes the media reporting of October that indicates the progress of the conflict, and during the violence that is the media reports of November when the active violent conflict took place. In this research it is impossible to extend the investigation beyond November because TTV was not operational after December 1st and the government of Ethiopia announced officially the end of the violence at the end of November. It seems short duration for a research, but the major issue of the media particularly during November was the violence almost in all media and at all news programming. . Though it was hot issue at that time in all local and international media, the study

covers only two public media, which are TTV and ETV in which they represent public media at regional and federal level respectively. And it focuses on the news reporting's of both media which is the main formats of current issue reporting.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

Tigray television was eliminated or downed from air at the end of November, may be because of TPLF forces lost towns in Tigray region, and is difficult to get news from TTV to precede the data collection. This is the first high scale violence between a region and the federal government during the current federal structure and there is no study of such type to use as a reference. It is also difficult to define and establish background literature to the undefined aggression between two forces of a nation. And the situation in Tigray at that particular period was unique, so that the applicability of the finding to the other regional public media may be limited.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The research has an introductory part to show the overall content and arrangement of the paper even though it follows the usual procedure followed by related literature. In chapter two there will be review of related literature to come up with sufficient knowledge of the topic and it includes both the concepts of public media, the concept of conflict and how to report conflict in public media. In this part determining the conceptual framework of the research to evaluate the professionalism practice of the media in conflict reporting is important. In chapter three there is research methodology, the source of the research content and the techniques and procedures used to research the subject. Chapter four contains the data presentation and data analysis with the instruments to do the analysis based on the knowledge acquired in the related literature review. The data are presented by using transcription and translation techniques and analyzed with the frames selected that are important to content analysis which is the selected method of the research. Finally, summarizing the paper with conclusion and some recommendations based on the finding will be done.

Chapter Two

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Concepts and definitions of public media

In the phrase “public media” the term media, which is the plural of medium, refers to the communication channels through which we disseminate information in the form of news, educational program and other forms of messages to the society. It describes the various ways through which we communicate in society by broadcasting using electronic means or by distributing printed outlet physically. But what makes it sophisticated is the adjective public, which differentiates media in so many dimensions like ownership, political independence, means of income etc. Paulino, Guazina (2016, p.72) show the multi-dimension of public media as an expression which, moreover, has certainly inspired many debates questioning the autonomy of the public. This implies that the public have the right to get service from those media organizations without discrimination as an owner. They further define public media as an alternative to the commercial segmentation of audience. “These media companies are guaranteed by the state: that is to say, they belong to everyone in terms of ownership and they are intended to be pluralistic in terms of content diffusion, to be for all”.

The word public as in public media, public school, public transport, public space, etc. indicates a property or a service owned in common to a group of people for some purpose. Scholars like Fernando O. Paulino and Lizian Guazina (2016, p.71) defined the word public from the perspectives of media. As a noun, the word public refers to the idea of a set or group of people, usually with common interests, which is why it can be used as a synonym for audience or listeners. Therefore, it is a word as old as the socialization of people due to coincident motivations and joint practices. As an adjective, the qualifying word public means something that belongs to everyone. “Unlike private, the term public assumes in some way the idea of sharing or allocation of resource, well denoted in expressions such as public space, public sphere, public opinion, or public consultation”.

So, public media can be defined from the perspective of public service in which any one has the right to access the media regardless of their status whether they are poor or rich, authority or

ordinary citizen, literate or illiterate. Public in contrast to the private indicates the common interests in the society to engage in or to get a service from an institution or from a property regardless of their political, social, and economical status. Therefore public media is an institution or an organization in which it serves the public as a whole by providing information without any discrimination. Or as UNESCO defines public media as made, financed and controlled by the public, for the public

Even though the objective of state and public institutions are similar in serving the public, there are clear distinctions between state media and public media particularly in political influence and in funding the media. As UNDP (2017) clearly distinguished state media is funded by the government from the public tax and the political pressure from government is strong than the public media. But public media is funded from different sources like license fees from television set holders, telecommunication taxes, direct government funds and from other revenues. Hallin and Mancini (2004) have their own public media definition from the perspective of the parliamentary or proportional representation model of the formation, and they stated as “public broadcasting is divided among the political parties by proportional representation, ...The parliamentary model is only really distinct from the government model in systems where coalition government and power sharing are typical” (p.49)

Concerning media independency and media pluralism, public media are the best model in serving the public freely since they are governed by public representative, civic society and academic institutions. So, different scholars propose for the state that instead of owning the media to regulate by the government body it is better to leave for the public. Hallin and Mancini (2004) suggest the role of the state in shaping the media system in any society. But there are considerable differences in the extent of state intervention as well as in the forms it takes. “The most important form of state intervention is surely public service broadcasting” as they advised (p.59).

In Ethiopia, during the 2018 political transition, as indicated in IMS, one of the exemplary reforms was the media opening up in which the state gave up its control of the media in to the public institutions. “Media reforms are part of the reform agenda proposed by the prime minister. And consultations on the media reform process have been initiated by the government and

UNDP” as stated in IMS (p.8). Even though the independence of those media are confirmed by a study whether they are free from the pressure of ruling political party the regulation reform was vital as a first step as Mulatu (2019) indicated below.

The Abiy government has put in measures to opening up the media space limit the role of the executive on state media. For instance, the accountability of regulator the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (EBA), and the public media such as Ethiopian News Agency (ENA), Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), and Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) shift from executive to the legislator. The aforementioned institutions were first accountable to the prime minister, but now, they are directly under the Ethiopian parliament (p.5).

But it doesn't guarantee independence by shifting the media regulation from state to the public in a political landscape where a single party dominated parliamentary system. Though there are differences in the level of media independence and media pluralism, there is no politically independent media anywhere in the world; they are operated by people who have their own interests and political ideology, whether they are professional journalists or freelancer media personnel. Hallin and Mancini (2004) argue that journalists whether they are in democratic media culture or in anywhere in the world they can't be neutral of interests be it politics or social engagement. “No serious media analyst would argue that journalism anywhere in the world is literally neutral. A tremendous body of research has been devoted to debunking that notion” they confirmed (p.44). So, the reform of regulation from state to public service broadcasting doesn't guarantee for EBC to serve public interests or to give equal coverage of news for both the ruling party and the opposition one. That is why scholars minimize the differences between public and government media in political independence. Hallin and Mancini (2004) put together the model of regulations of both public and government media in a similar category and they stated as “The government model in which public broadcasting – which in this case approaches state broadcasting – is controlled directly by the government or by the political majority (p.30).

Even on terminology usage, Skjerdal (2020) used ‘state media’ instead of ‘public media’, even if he believes the correct term to describe the official Ethiopian media as public media. “This is because in the general research literature, ‘public media’ points to channels which are not

associated with particular political interests (p.7). And this paper assumes state media and public media have the same purpose that is to serve the public as the name is used interchangeably in different literature. Mulatu (2019) also identified three modalities of media in Ethiopia, public, private and community. Rather public media have paramount difference with the private media and the usual media differentiation in Ethiopia is as public and private.

2.2. Difference between public media and Private media

A media classification as public and private indicates the proprietorship in which who owns the media as a property, and this is the explicit distinction that anyone can understand simply. But such media models determine not only who own the media organization but also it determines the plurality or diversity of content, independence of organization, and the accessibility of the media itself. Accessibility grows as UNDP shows the nature of the media is changing rapidly, arguably more rapidly than any other sector. “Media is exploding and flourishing in some countries, and is in economic or political crisis in others, with changes happening often very rapidly” (IDS, as cited in UNDP, 2017, p.4). This shifting landscape has implications for the role of media in conflict and conflict prevention.

Of course the nature of the state and the policies it nurture are significant for the media to flourish and to serve the public properly. An authoritarian regime doesn't allow private media even to exist in the industry whatever their content are. Hallin and Mancini (2004) argue that “one cannot understand the news media without understanding the nature of the state, the system of political parties, the pattern of relations between economic and political interests, and the development of civil society” (.p.26). What matters is the function they provide for the public in most cases as UNDP stated here. “State media that serves as a mouthpiece for a regime cannot hold leaders to account and Private media, while technically independent, may become highly factionalized when influenced or co-opted by political or business figures with an interest in manipulating editorial coverage” 2017, p.6).

The classical difference between public and private media is the sources of finance to run the organization, which is the other element to exist. Private media get their financial resource from advertising and subscription fee which helps them to be independent of political pressure. “There are strong reasons to expect that citizens in new democracies would place considerably more

trust in private media organizations than in public ones” (Moehler, Singh, 2011) argue. As discussed earlier public/state media get the fund from the public either in the form of tax from the public or license fee from television holders. The license fee itself is defended by many as a guarantee of autonomy and the means to provide a direct link between broadcasters and the public. As Papathanassopoulos (2007,p.156) argues, in contrast to the license fee, “Direct public or government funding may, in one way or another, seriously affect public broadcasters’ independence, or in the best case, the public perception of their independence.” Moehler, Singh (2011) also argue that the state-owned media have been closely associated with past authoritarian regimes and to this day are less critical of serving governments than private media are (p.278). Of course in relative advantage public media that are dependent in license fee are better than others that are dependent on state fund or advertisers. In addition to establishing a buffer against dramatic changes in governmental funding, the license fee also has historically had “a social dimension,” in that “by contributing to their national public broadcaster, citizens felt that it was more accountable to them than to the politicians, (Benson, powers, 2011, p.12).

2.3. Functions of Public media

Public media, as the name indicates serve the public as a responsible institution by providing accessible arena for the society to make a dialogue on issues that concerns the public. On the other hand it serves the society by safeguarding them from those who have power to manipulate public rights and public resources. In recent years, the importance of a free, professional and plural media in contributing to good governance has gained attraction in the international development community. A vibrant media gives people free flowing access to information, enables dialogue, encourages people to express their views, prompts greater political participation and encourages accountability (UNDP, 2017, p.1).

Public media are often established by government through acts of parliament, and while some are subject to broad oversight by the state, most also have strict guarantees of independence written into their constitutions concerning their roles and responsibilities. The state or the government allocates their resources to make them free of any financial dependence. Such guarantees and resource availabilities help the media just to maintain their primary goals that is serving the public equally. Particularly, the function of public media is to facilitate the welfare of the community by exposing maladministration and by promoting good governance in a nation. It

exposes conflicts of interests between different parties and interest groups, and it serves all equally without any discrimination and differences. To be public means it is being potentially for all in a community. In other words, it means admitting the participation and involvement of all, insofar as what is said to be public may directly or indirectly affect the collective interest and the collective life. Paulino and Guazina, (2016) described as, being public means being potentially for all, having a general impact. There is inclusive meaning in the public being that, in a democratic context, also has an implicit suggestion of equality among those to whom the public item is addressed (p.3).

Such public interests and equalities are addressed in public media where there are democratic and accountable state institutions. Other ways, even though they are public media, instead of serving the society, they may portrait the interests of authorities and party members, by covering up state corruption and by promoting the interests of individual. UNESCO described such shortcomings as follow.

The media may potentially fulfill any or all of these functions. It is equally apparent that, in some contexts, the media may serve to reinforce the power of vested interests and exacerbate social inequalities by excluding critical or marginalized voices. The media may even promote conflict and social divisiveness, particularly in non-pluralistic media “ecology” (2007, p.15).

So the main purposes of public media are to disseminate significant information to the general public independently of authorities, sponsors and other interest groups. And they have to be pluralistic in content to accommodate verities of issues in the society.

2.4 Media landscape in Ethiopia

Ethiopian radio is celebrating its 75 years of regular transmission and EBC is approaching its half a century from its inauguration in 1965. These broadcasting media were serving the then imperial governments not the public to be called public media and this trend continued during the socialist Derg. But after the fall of Derg regime in 1991 freedom of the press was declared and ratified as constitutional law in 1995 under article 29 which is quite clear in its provisions for freedom of expression and freedom of the press, as well as in the right to access to public

information. But scholars challenged the provisions which are not implemented properly. One of the researchers, Bonde presented his argument as follows.

Despite these clear constitutional provisions several articles in the existing media related laws have in practice been interpreted so as to limit journalists' and media's right to expression. Ethiopian laws and proclamations directly or indirectly regulating the freedom of expression, media and journalists have been used to restrict journalistic freedom significantly and impose harsh and arbitrary sentences on media and journalists for many years (2018, p.6).

Even to get private broadcast media (radio) Ethiopia awaited more than a decade and to get private television we looked for 22 years. Of course regional state media were established under the regional mass media agencies by relocating them from the federal state media which is centered in Addis Ababa. Till that they were departments based in their regional languages under ERTA i.e. Ethiopian radio and television agency. As Skjerdal (2020) indicated, restructuring process based on regional language started in the state broadcaster around 2009, however, the Tigray and Affaan Oromo departments were relocated to regional mass media agencies in Mekelle and Adama, respectively (p.11).

After this exemplary decentralization of public media almost all regions and city administrative organized their own media house under their media agency. As of 18 June 2020 Ethiopian Broadcast Authority (EBA) updated the number of media in which there are around 8 public television media and 18 private television media and altogether Ethiopia consists 26 television stations. Concerning radio stations there are around 71 stations, of which 49 of them are community, 12 of them are private and 10 of them are public. The numbers of broadcast media are dramatically increasing and EBA indicated that 10th of broadcast media are under trial transmission and there are stations under preparation. In fact some broadcast media were exhausted and closed because of many reasons and the number of stations decline. For example in Mulatu's rapid media assessment in 2019 the numbers of electronic media were higher than what EBA updated in 2020, and he listed as, there are 29 television (both privately and state owned) and 72 radio channels including regional, federal and community radio stations in the country (2019, p.6).

Unfortunately the print media houses are rapidly declining and now they are less in number and circulation than the broadcast media. A data collected from the Ethiopian Mass Media Authority (EMMA) indicated that currently 20 privately owned newspapers and magazines are under circulation. In a similar manner, 23 newspapers and magazines owned by the federal and regional states are circulating information for their readers on various languages.

Concerning public media, it is controversial as discussed above from its naming to the purposes they provide. EBC, which contains three TV channels and three radio frequencies transformed from state to public media during PM Abiy political reform and approved by the parliament. In media regulation state media and public media are not synonymous. As clearly defined in UNDP (2017) state broadcaster is accountable to the government while a public media is accountable to the public and parliament. A state broadcaster is directly controlled by the Minister of Information, while a public media is controlled by a board of independent Trustees. In Ethiopia it is difficult to differentiate both forms of media regulation and financial resource. In the new mass media policy (2020) under the conceptual framework it says public broadcast service is an organization established at federal or regional level is accountable to the HPR or respective regional counsel and majority or full of its fund is allocated by the government. But the controversy is the independence of the media; the policy says these public media are independent of the government to serve the public with pluralistic content. But in UNESCO definition of Public Service Broadcasting it is a media made, financed and controlled by the public, for the public. It is neither commercial nor state-owned and is free from political interference and pressure from commercial forces (UNDP, 2017).

So it is difficult to define public media in Ethiopia, and scholars generalize all federal and regional state media as public media. In the current media ownership in Ethiopia as Mulatu (2019) identified, “there are three types of ownership. These are public media, which are owned by the regional and federal governments or states, commercial media and community media. Licensing the latter two media tiers started since 2007” (p.6). Bonde, (2018, p.18) also leveled the regional media as public. “Each of the eight regions has their own radio and television organization, defined as public broadcasters, which is owned by the regional authorities”.

EBC, the former Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency are the first and foremost broadcast public media at federal level which transmit content from its Addis Ababa station. It has three

television channels; ETV News, ETV Language and ETV Entertainment. It also owns the oldest public radio station as old as 75 years, which transmits content in long wave, medium wave and in FM. The same is true for public print media; it is the Ethiopian Press Agency that circulates newspapers at national level. *Addis Zemen* and the *Ethiopian Herald* are the oldest newspapers published daily. For this thesis the main focus is the broadcast public service particularly Ethiopian television from the public media at national level.

Ethiopian Television was the only media that provides news and entertainments in local languages for the last half a century. But after satellite televisions like EBS, launched their products from abroad, ETV started to lose its audience share gradually. Especially after the establishment of regional and other party affiliated media started disseminating their content, ETV became less alternative both to the public and the state itself.

The general tendency, nevertheless, is that EBC is losing its previously dominant position in the Ethiopian media market. It loses to regional competitors and is not welcome in various regional cities on different occasions. It is subordinate to other government-affiliated media companies, in particular Fana Broadcasting Corporate, which is perceived by EBC employees as better equipped and more journalistically ambitious than the official state broadcaster”, (Skjerdal, 2020, p.32.)

The current political transition by itself is difficult for the media to frame and report independently. For ETV, in which it doesn't favor any identity other than being the mouse piece of the government, experts, politicians and government officials don't like to give comment on it. Especially when there is conflict no one wants to give his neutral opinion to such public media. This is because as UNDP stated, many conflict or transitional environments constitute a disabling, rather than enabling, environment for independent media to flourish. It further explains that corruption is rampant, pay is low, sources (official and unofficial) often refuse or are afraid to talk to journalists, unions and associations, if existent, are usually weak and the regulatory and legislative environments are more punitive than supportive of freedom of expression and freedom of the press (2017, p.6).

The polarizations of the media parallel to the ethnic division of the country remain ETV with no target audience geographically and in social class. For ETV to be public at federal level means it is for all in the country, because the federal or the central arrangement has no specific community as the region owns their own community at a specific area. “The operations of public service broadcasters do not experience discrimination in any field compared to private, commercial media” (Bonde, 2018, p.38).

Unfortunately the media landscape changed in to a polarized position to sandwich ETV in between the two extremes. However, the post-2018 polarization is of a different type and character than before as Skjerdal stated. While previous dividing lines were described in political terms, often following a private vs. state media axis, the new polarization is overwhelmingly informed by ethnic interest. It is now common to describe media outlets primarily out of their ethnic sympathies, (2020, P.16). As Mulatu, (2019) interpreted in his assessment, the polarization itself is very diverse that the previous division is still affecting the current media landscape.

Taking the overall result of the media in Ethiopia, it can be described in a very extremism polarization. Previously, it was only two polarizations in the Ethiopian media (pro government and pro opposition parties). However, these polarizations are now increased into four. The two added are ethnic interest (those attached to certain ethnic interests only) and unionism (those promote unity with less on diversity (p.20).

The first official regional public broadcast media are Oromia Broadcast Network OBN (the former Oromia Radio and Television Organization) and Tigray Radio and Television organization. They started operation from their respective regional cities in 2009 under the regional mass media agency. But in print media Amhara Regional State is pioneer by starting the circulation of Bekur newspaper since 2001. Now almost all regional states have their own media houses to provide public service broadcast. The belief that the media have become an important “exogenous” variable affecting other political institutions is one reason scholars in comparative politics have begun to pay attention to media institutions they previously ignored Hallin and Mancini stated (2004, p.26).

The main objective for the regional public media to be implanted was on the essence of development to the respective population of the regional states and the public at large. Gradually they develop the competition of political parallelism between regions and their ethnic identity. Previously mainstream media were highly centralized and represented the EPRDF coalition as a whole, but now as Skjerdal (2020) stated, regional media gradually grew and each media house is now nurturing their own identity, resulting in increased polarization with agencies in their region carrying different ethnic belonging (p.16).

Skjerdal further explained these regional public media were supported by other extreme ethnic media with private ownership. DW, OMN and Asrat Television were examples of such type. Ownership has become subordinate to ethnic commitment. For example, in the Tigray region, privately-owned DW joins forces with state-owned Tigray Mass Media Agency to counter the media from other regions. Even the competition between media with in the same region and similar ethnic constituency grow extremely to represent that specific ethnic community. To achieve such interests they promoted the negative sides of happenings which lead to conflict than peace and security. As a trend, professional journalists tend to cover their own group positively and others more critically when they report on a conflict between countries, regions and local population groups even in very democratic and highly professional media contexts, Bonde explained. This is undoubtedly also the case in Ethiopia as reflected in the coverage of the conflicts between regions and Specific ethnicity (2018, p.37).

Before the violent conflict between the forces TPLF and the Federal Government regional media were promoting differences whatever the consequence in the end. The media, which are particularly ethnic centered, have brought the agenda that particularly favor their ethnic groups and undermine others. As a result, they tend to play a negative role in reinforcing dissociation and hate among the Ethiopian community, Mulatu explained (2020, p.55). So, media organizations played negative role rather than playing constructively in the nation.

2.6 Concepts and definitions of conflict

Conflict is natural in societies where they share resources, power, and values in their communal area. As Florain discussed it, Conflict is inherent in society because the latter is structured to produce conflict; just as it is inbuilt in the human nature to have flashes of temper. There have

always been the haves and the haves-not, the strong and the weak, the dominant and the vulnerable; a situation that is often accompanied by perpetual struggle between the divides. These are the stimulating factors in local and international conflict, as well as the basic characteristics of the global human society in general (2013, p.10). But conflict may not end with violence always; it might be constructive for human development when it is managed properly. Friends, families, and groups of people may vary in issues, ideas, and concepts, so that they might debate on those differences, and end up with consensus. Here, it may mean differences in perceptions, interpretations, or views which include religion, customs and values. Such differences may not end in direct confrontations. Different scholars explained such social interactions in human life. “Conflict also connotes different perceptions, which may not necessarily result in hostility. This way, conflict simply means ‘a different perception’ or view to an issue or situation (Barash, Webel, 2002, as sited in Folarin, 2013, p. 3).

Unlikely to the above situation conflict may result to the mass devastation of human life and human environment. As we have seen in Ethiopian Tigray region last year the conflict escalated in to such damages that killed many of the military personnel and civilians. And that was a result of power struggle between the region and federal structure. “Conflict is said to exist when two or more groups engage in a struggle over values and claims to status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate the rivals” (Jeong, 2000, as sited in Folarin, 2013, p 3).

So scholars define conflict from different perspectives based on the causes and the consequences it brought in human evolution. Nicholson, (1992) defined Conflict as it is an existing state of disagreement or hostility between two or more people. And Folarin (2013) defined conflict as it is the coexisting event of human being. He also extended to the extreme position as “so long as man has other men around him, there will be issues of disagreement, because interest differs and interests do clash, which may lead to disagreement. A community or society of men thus can create room for explosive attitudes and relations” (p.2). Others also defined conflict as, a state of significant dispute about something, which is considered or perceived important by the one party and the other party disagrees, (Schramm-Nielson, 2002, as sited in Kahn, 2017, p.6).

2.6.1 Causes of conflict

Human beings behave differently in different situations and have different interests to satisfy life dreams. To achieve those interests and necessities man always fights with others unreservedly. Since conflict is unavoidable amongst human species and their desire is limitless there is always fight almost in all interactions. Even the desire for improvement can generate conflict as this is attainable only at the expense of others. The basic human needs ranges from physical to spiritual needs and these needs are not negotiable. These human needs are universal. Every human being demands the satisfaction of these needs as they are common to all of us (Adegbonmire, 2016, p.5).

Egoistic nature of mankind is also the other cause of conflict to satisfy those self-interests, not only to fulfill the future but also to reward the last loses. As Adegbonmire (2016) described, conflict has elements of unresolved issues dating back to the era of the Ottoman rule and the Second World War. Unresolved issues from past atrocities can deepen the desire for revenge. Revenge 'is the arbitrary, narcissistic exercise of violence in which there is no accountability except to oneself and to a personal memory of the dead (p.8). Either to gain the power from others or to maintain the status quo people always fights in group or individually in their life. As folarin (2013) any awkward attitude capable of charging up the political or social environment is likely to culminate in conflict. Greed, covetousness, self-centeredness, discontent, envy, arrogance, rudeness, impunity, among other acts, is capable of producing a quarrel between individuals or groups of people which breakdowns human relationships.

2.6.2 Types of conflict

As its definitions and conceptual perspectives vary, conflicts are different in its type. Conflict can be intra-personal, when a person feels discontent psychological, or it can be inter-personal, when individuals quarrel each other because of common interests. For the purpose of this paper conflicts that happened between groups either in a nation or between nations are discussed briefly.

2.6.2.1 Intra-state conflict

Intra-State conflict is a type of conflict which takes place with in a confined border of a sovereign state. Such conflicts can be provoked by economic factors as land, uneven development, resource control and revenue-sharing formula could cause a conflict within a state.

When social needs are getting higher the type of conflict develops in to political factors. “political factors such as power-sharing, power equation or zoning formula in public administration, lopsidedness in political appointments, quota system and the likes could cause intra-state conflict” (Folarin,2013, p.6). The conflict that we have seen in Ethiopian Tigray region last November 2020 is exactly resembles with such intra a state conflict that was instigated by power share and status quo.

2.6.2.2 Inter-state conflict

This type of conflict is caused by the violation of a sovereign state either by crossing the border with military invasion or by violating diplomatic agreements which can be economic, social or political relations. Because of shared interests between states, such conflicts expand in to the neighboring states, and can be a conflict between two or more states. “In some cases, this type of conflict degenerates to a state of war. We must remember that all wars are described as conflict. As such, all inter-state wars are same as international conflict. Inter-sate conflict can be caused by territorial encroachment by another state, breakdown of diplomatic ties, exportation of toxic or contrabands to another country, et cetera, as Folarin (2013) described (p.6). At the end of 2020, Sudan passed the border to Ethiopian territory and holds a land in the northern part, unless negotiated it will escalate in to inter-state conflict which causes military confrontation. In 1978 Ethiopia was invaded by Somalia republic, and Ethiopia had got a support from Cuba to defeat its invader, such conflict is the best example for inter-state conflicts.

2.6.2.3 Global conflict

When states regrouped in to aliens’ to fight common enemies or other groups of states, such conflict is labeled as international or global conflict. Best examples for such type of conflicts are the First World War and the Second World War. The Serbia-Austrian conflict of 1914 resulted in the First World War and The German-British conflict of 1939 culminated in the Second World War. As Florin (2013) discussed inter-state conflict can expand in to a global disorder, although it also connotes international conflict. This kind of international conflict however transcends the type which involves two or more sovereign states. It is however instructive to note that a conflict between two or more states could become a full-blown global conflict (p.6).

2.6.3 Forms of Conflict

2.6.3.1 War

As professor Folarin described, war is a state of mutually declared aggression between two or more parties prosecuted by conventional (uniformed and armed) soldiers, with the knowledge and observation of a third (neutral) party who sees to it that acts are within the rules of engagement (2013, p.3). From such description it is clear that war is intra group conflict in which it involves at least two parties who prepared themselves as rival. And it is a declared aggression at the face of observers or third party knows even before the war broke out. It can be civil war; a war between groups in a state caused by ethnic, religious, social other differences prosecuted by armed personals.

2.6.3.2 Mutiny

Mutiny is an act of disobedience in the military or an uprising in the security forces against its high command or against the Commander-in-Chief, usually aimed at dismantling established order and which may result in the toppling of government. When an act of mutiny fails, the culprits usually face a Court Marshall (a military court) where sentences vary from dismissal to death of the mutineers (Folarin, 2013, p.7). Ethiopia faced such military disobedience in 1974 when the Derg military overthrown the Emperor Hille Selasie I. Such an uprising sometimes is called military coup d'état.

2.6.3.3 Insurgency

Insurgency occurs when a rebellion against the state happens. It could be led by a religious entity, ethnic or sectional groups to destabilize the state with a view to be heard or recognized, as well as to forcefully control the affairs of the state or secede. Insurgencies have produced new states in global politics. These have included Eritrea that emerged from old Ethiopia; South Sudan that emerged from Sudan. Some insurgencies have failed to produce desired results, but have caused maximum chaos for sovereign states, such as what Ethiopia faced in November 2020 in Tigray region by TPLF forces. Revolts and protests are also forms of conflicts caused by differences in policy issues, political and social variables, but they can be resolved after peace full demonstration.

2.6.4 Conflict in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a country lasting with so many conflicts in its history. In modern Ethiopia colonial interests faced the country with multiple conflicts especially with the Western Europe. It engaged in war with Italian in 1890s and in 1930s. And in 1970 the neighboring Somali Islamic republic invaded Ethiopia in its eastern part but defeated by the Ethiopian and its allied forces. Meanwhile Ethiopia is challenged by intra-state conflicts instigated by ethnic tensions especially after the fall of unitary imperial government. Semir (2019) studied the ethnic conflict of country since the Ethiopian revolution of 1974, and he showed the ethnically divided society in the country (p.5)

Scholars mentioned so many reasons for the instability of Ethiopia during the last half a century in which some factors emerged from the Italian colonial narration and some factors came from the communist ideological theories. Smir (2019) refers the legacies of Italian colonialism (especially in Eritrea), and the decolonization and Marxist-Leninist thoughts and movements of the mid 1950', which contributed to the rethinking of the whole project of nation building that was under way at the time. "These factors led to the ripening of sub-nationalist sentiments across the country" he said (p.13). Even after the implementation of ethnic federalism in the beginning of 1990s the conflicts never ever end in Ethiopia. Political groups and intellectuals dissatisfied with the federal structure and some ethnicity rolled out the functions of such diversity. And the ethnically organized group, the EPRDF, orchestrated and led by the TPLF didn't bring lasting solution for the country's conflict aroused from nationalistic movement in the last 50 years.

The ethnic federalism didn't function as it was expected because of several reasons. As doctor Semir (2019) explained it as follows.

On the one hand, the ethnic federal system created ethnic units with their own structures of administration, as a result, each region had its own distinct local politics and symbolism, manifested by a regional flag and working language in most cases. On the other hand, hierarchical rule influenced across the country, whereby ideology, policies, programs and projects were issued from the very top of the EPRDF leadership down to the lowest level of administration (p.6).

Therefore centralized state rule practically undermined the very principle of self-rule in the federation. The centralized party structure with the TPLF chairs at the top generated a strong sense of Tigrayan domination over some major ethnic groups in the country. And such divisive

politics created dissatisfaction and marginalization which is a strong cause of conflict in a society. Because of such dissatisfaction and marginalization, so many ethnic uprising have been taken place in the country during the last 3 decades. These ethnic tensions pressured the TPLF lead ethnic based political groups EPRDF to disintegrate and dissolved to relegate TPLF from the front party in to its origin Tigray. At this time media were relaxed to insure the accountability of authorities in the country. Even the PM, who led the political reform, was challenged live in his press briefing.

One of our informants from a state media channel tells about an incident where he challenged the Prime Minister to respond to the claim that there are two governments in Ethiopia; one in Addis Ababa and one in Tigray. Dr. Abiy was irritated by the question, but he gave an answer and the interview was broadcast. In the past, it is unlikely that an interview where the premier was visibly annoyed would have passed the editorial desk, if the question was at all asked in the first place (Skjerdal, 2020, p.14).

2.6.5 Conflict between Regional States and the Federal Government

The Federal Government was pressured by ethnic conflicts from all directions of the country especially in need of political and economic freedom. Particularly in Oromia Regional State uprisings escalated because of the master plan reform that is done in Oromia Finfine special Zones around Addis Ababa. Since 2015, anti-regime protests – aided by splits within the ruling party have paved the way to the bursting forth of all suppressed contentions. As legal and organized opposition failed to seriously challenge the regime, social movements emerged as a new form of contender, and succeeded where political parties failed. As Semir (2019) explained it the long-simmering popular grievances over administrative, political and economic problems, interacting with growing urbanization and the use of cyber technology, scaled up into a series of ethnic-based movements. Loosely networked cells mushroomed across the country especially in Oromia, and transcended the organizational challenges of the past (p.10).

The over flow of protest spread in to the northern part of the country particularly around Gonder asking political freedom and ethnic identity recognition. Those regional movements integrated to further their interests on the federal government. And these movements were backed by political

activists from outside and from the ruling coalition itself. And this activism developed to form “Oro-Mara” collaboration organized by sister ethnic groups from the EPRDF itself. Semir emphasized, the contradictions within the EPRDF intensified when elements in the front challenged the hegemony of the TPLF, and re-aligned their position in favor of the social movements. In the process, the TPLF lost its control over the institutional levers of the EPRDF. The process gave a clear victory to the reformists, ushering in a series of political liberalization measures (2019, p.1).

Then a new phenomenon came true in the country and the political liberalization under way in Ethiopia since April 2018 led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, which gave hope to many that the country was moving towards significantly better future than its autocratic past. But it was not as such smooth to implement the hopes across the country. TPLF itself became an obstacle to destabilize the state directly and indirectly by sponsoring regional conflicts. The TPLF is singled out in this respect, and is frequently accused of waging proxy wars across the country, said Semir. Although many conflicts are quite unscrupulously associated with ‘Tigrayan skullduggery’, some are given more emphasis than others by intelligence sources (2019, p.36). Finally the forces of TPLF committed treason on the north command of the national defense on 4th November 2020 to resolve their grievance with the Federal Government, and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed declared the violence conflict to defend the national security by ordering all the military forces in a single command, (EBC 5th Nov. 2020).

2.6.6 Public media and conflict reporting

Media, if they are working independently, can help to prevent violent conflict in any nation. But in most cases they are aligned with political and economic entities to get advantage on both sectors. Of course as Hallin and Mancini (2004) assured in their research, there is no media professionals’ independent of any political interest anywhere in the world. At least they can distance themselves from such interests not to be part of conflicts in different groups and the public at large. UNDP explained that when editorial coverage is politically aligned it can be used as proxies in the battle between rival political groups, in the process sowing divisiveness rather than consensus, hate speech instead of sober debate, and suspicion rather than social trust. In these cases, the media can be anti-democratic, contributing to cynicism about government and

democratic decay. The public loses confidence in the media and in democratic institutions in general. The result is public apathy and democratic breakdown (UNDP, 2017, p.7).

If the public loses trust in media especially during conflict the media become a fish on dry land. A study by Moehler and Singh (2011) indicated that public media are less trusted than the private one. There have strong reasons to expect that most respondents will have greater trust in private media than in public media. The state-owned media have been closely associated with past authoritarian regimes and to this day are less critical of serving governments than private media are. Given that despotic and corrupt regimes held power in recent memory, one might expect citizens of these countries to continue to be wary of the public media (p.3). If we seek to create strong public media as a conclusion, Hallin and Mancini (2004) proposed, as free as possible from both political and commercial influences, yet deeply committed to a democratic civic mission — then a sustainable, long-term trust fund is perhaps the best model. This approach could build upon the experiences of trust ownership forms developed in the United Kingdom and Sweden (p.13).

Theoretical framework

Framing: Framing theory adds a new perspective to the old debate on journalistic objectivity. The response offered by the theory of framing to objectivism is to deny its postulates, because when journalists narrate what happens they frame reality and give their point of view. When journalists make news, when they build the description of an aspect of reality with words and images, they select a frame. The strategies used to give prominence to one piece of information to the detriment of others can be very varied as Abreu (2015) stated. Omission is one of them, but not necessarily the most important. All news stories have omissions, deliberate or not, as it is impossible to approach a topic from all its perspectives, using all possible sources and explaining the role of all the actors directly and indirectly involved in the problem (p.429). So framing is natural as we have limited perspective or dimension for something, and framing is important to present the most important elements of a news story in our reporting.

There are different types of framing, like human interest framing, economic framing, responsibility framing and conflict framing. Since the thesis is focusing on conflict, conflict framing is preferable as a theoretical frame for the research. Conflict frame as Sematko and Patti

mentioned that conflict frame is the popular frame in the U.S and Europe (Sematko and Patti; 2000: 96). This frame popularizes conflicts between individuals, groups or institutions as a means of capturing audience interests. Because of the emphasis on conflict, the news media have been criticized for inducing public suspicion and mistrust of political leaders. From this definition, it can be presumed that this frame occurs in the coverage of political crisis like ethnic tensions, war, terrorism and protests.

Under framing theoretical framework, the deductive approach is preferable to analyze news stories selected as sample. The complexity of the studies based on an inductive approach has led most studies to use a deductive method (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). The content analysis carried out through this approach is easier to perform, can be applied to a large sample and is easily replicable. The main drawback of this approach is the loss of relevant information, since the frames that have not been defined a priori cannot be detected or measured. A usual strategy followed by deductive studies to carry out the previous selection of frames is to consider those frames that have been used successfully by other researchers, and which are applicable to the object of study in question. Framing theory adds a new perspective to the old debate on journalistic objectivity as Abreu (2015, p.7) said. But it doesn't mean that framing replaces journalism objectivity theory. So the following elements of elements of objectivity are helpful to evaluate the professionalism of the selected media.

Accuracy: Getting the correct information is most important of all. The main objective for reporting conflict is to deescalate the violence or aggression acts between

parties who are in disagreement. Howard (2004) suggests that everything which is reported must be described accurately in which it includes the spelling of names, the facts as they happened, and the real meaning of what was said. Before reporting the news to the audience, it seeks the evidence and accurate facts. One of the factors that make the media to lose their audience is trust, and credibility, which is the result of inaccurate reporting.

Impartiality (balance): Almost every code of good journalism puts importance on impartiality, or not taking sides in which it seeks to produce a report which is balanced. Also inspired by the so-called peace journalism paradigm of Johan Galtung, “the list stresses the responsibility of

journalists to cover the “trauma and the human stories of all the conflict’s victims” and that true balance requires a look at alternatives to war”, (Orgeret, Tayeebwa, 2016, p.19).

To be balanced is to include at least both sides, in which there are always two sides in any story involving conflict. Citizens need to know what the other side says, and how it will affect them in a prolonged violent conflict. Impartiality also means that the professional journalist is not an active leader in any political or other interest group or movement. Impartial journalism is an important defense for reporters in a time of conflict. This is the value that makes journalists to be respected in the community, because they take no sides with any actor in the conflict.

Responsibility: Journalists have obligations to the society to whom they report the news, and their duty is to present accurate, balanced and solution oriented news to their audience. At the same time journalists have a responsibility to protect their sources. Many people will not tell journalists important news if they fear they will be revealed. The Institute on War and Peace reporting has a set of “six duties” for journalists covering conflict and peace: “understand the conflict; report fairly; report the back ground and the causes of the conflict; present the human side; report on peace efforts; recognize journalists’ influence”, (Orgeret, Tayeebwa, 2016, p.19).

Chapter Three

3. Research methodology

3.1. Qualitative research methodology

Research can be done using one of the three methodologies namely quantitative, qualitative or by mixing the two methodologies depending on their importance. If the researcher wants to know numerical findings it is better to use quantitative research methodology, to interpret the meaning qualitative research can employ better result. But in some cases researchers may be interested to know both the numerical value and the meaning of some phenomenon. To come up with such findings employing mixed methodology of both quantitative and qualitative is important.

For this thesis which focused on conflict, qualitative research methodology particularly qualitative content analysis that is one of the numerous approaches in qualitative research is important to analyze the media reporting of the conflict. Vaismoradi, et al. (2016, p.100)

described that, qualitative research methodology covers a broad range of approaches, with a wide variation in concepts, assumptions, and analytic rules. Despite this variation all qualitative methodologies contribute to description and interpretation of complex phenomena, developing and revising understanding, rather than purely verifying earlier conclusions of theories. So, qualitative content analysis is one of those broad approaches that can be used to interpret the conflict that happened in Tigray regional state between the forces of TPLF and the Federal Government in November 2020.

Shannon, Hsieh (2005) explained qualitative content analysis as one of numerous research methods used to analyze text data. Other methods include ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, and historical research. Research using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text. In language there are words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and the content as a whole with the tone, context and so on to be considered to develop theme for the interpretation. Qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis are classified under the qualitative descriptive design. They are sets of techniques used to analyze textual data and elucidate theme. Their key characteristic is the systematic process of coding, examining of meaning and provision of a description of the social reality through the creation of theme, (Vaismoradi, et al. 2016, p.100). To analyze the theme of the content, framing is important approach to understand media content in identifying the intents and interests of the media house how they build their news stories from an events or happening in a particular situation and context.

Any communicative text, either informative or persuasive, requires narrative structures to organize its discourse. In the case of the media, news stories appear to be systematized, based on narrative conventions that offer an explanation about who is doing what, and with what purpose, (Abreu, 2015, p.424). Mulatu (2020) also emphasized that framing is vastly used in analyzing texts, could help the research in structuring the meaning of the text by taking into account sources, themes, audiences, and cultures, as framing can be produced in all these aspects, (P.38). So it would be possible to study the representation of the conflict between the Federal Government and the Forces of TPLF in November 2020 by using systematic approach how ETV and TTV reported the conflict. Both media are public at federal and regional level respectively,

and are owned by the confronting bodies; that leads the media tended to frame news either to exaggerate or to undermine even to hideout the existing situations in the conflict. Framing essentially involves selection and salience as Entman (1993, p.52) described it as to frame is to select some aspect of a perceived reality and make more salient in a communication text. Therefore, based on this rationalization, this thesis uses framing as the best method to analyze the media framing of the conflicts in Tigray, Ethiopia that happened November 2020.

3.2. Research design

Media professionals or journalists have to tell a story within certain time and space constraints, and make it accessible to a broad and often heterogeneous public. The only way to do this is by structuring the information, creating an interpretive framework that allows the comprehension of the message. In the making of news stories, journalists use frames to give meaning to and simplify reality, in some way, and to maintain the interest of the public as Valkenburg, et al. (1999) said. To evaluate the meanings of media content qualitative research design is preferable particularly when the phenomenon that is covered by the media is new and needs more interpretation.

Research design is a plan or outline incorporating all the steps in research, ranging from problem identification through interpretation of the result. Kerlinger (1973) as cited in Riffe, et al. (1998, p.41) argued that the outline of what the investigator will do from writing the hypotheses and their operational implications to the final analysis of the data is part of the research design. In the qualitative research method, the hermeneutics approach, which is one of the approaches in framing, allows the researcher to explore meaning from words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs in a content with all its richness and complexities which appears to be less possible in some of the other approaches, especially those that share the quantitative tradition (Getnet, 2019, p.37).

Qualitative content analysis is a method of analyzing written, verbal or visual communication messages. (Leedy, Ormrod, 2001, cited in Mohajan, 2018, p.36), define it as “A detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of materials for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases.” At present, it has a long history of use in communication, journalism, sociology, psychology, and business (Neundorf, 2002; Akşan, Baki,

2017). For example; through the framing of the media content, researchers can analyze the tone (negative, positive or neutral) of the news stories published by the selected media. Therefore, I try to answer the research questions raised using qualitative content analysis research design by framing the media contents reported by ETV and TTV in the conflict.

3.3. Media selection

The media selected are ETV and TTV. Both are public media and they are expected to serve their public responsibly. They represent public media in Ethiopia at Federal and Regional level respectively, and the research is supposed to be duplicable for other public media in the country. The other reason for selecting these two media is both use same language that is Amharic, to present their prime-time news in the evening. Of course the conflict is between the Federal Government and the Tigray Regional State and the selected media are owned by these two confronting bodies so that the media content is framed on the interests of those state actors. This is the main reason for selecting the two public media for the research.

3.4. Sampling

Sample is the subset of unites from the entire population being studied, and it can be obtained by nonprobability sampling or probability sampling. The main purpose of qualitative content analysis is to give meaning, to identify theme, to identify pattern and to describe situation from the predetermined standard frames. And sampling helps to select the representative of the populations in the research scope to get those purposes. These representatives can be selected in nonprobability sampling or in probability sampling technique based on the researcher preference. For this thesis nonprobability (nonrandom) sampling technique is appropriate, because of the nature of the conflict that happened in Tigray in November, 2020. Even though the conflict developed in to aggression in November 2020, it escalated during the prior months (even in the previous 3 years) because of the activities taking place on both sides, the Federal Government and TPLF. To start from October 2020, which can be discussed below in sampling technique, TPLF and the Federal Government have passed major decisions that escalated the conflict to a higher level. My sampling is based on those decisions and activities which are framed by the media parallel with the two confronting bodies. The sampling is based on two situations that are

pre-violent conflict that is from October 1st to November 4th and during the violent conflict that is from November 5th to December 1st.

Most TV channels prefer 8 pm in the evening to air their prime time news in Ethiopia, and the selected media, ETV and TTV, have the same trend, so, the prime time news is selected for the research. Both channels have news using the same language Amharic at that particular news program which is applicable for the research and helps to be consistent in the research. The placement is also important to influence the audience in a news program, and the first three news stories which are the major issues of the day are treated. Some days this major issue can be framed from different angles and can be taken as sampling units to be discussed based on sampling technique. The total populations of the research are about 180 news stories, and the samples are around 20% of the population. The number of samples in pre-violent conflict is smaller than that of the samples taken during the violent conflict, the reason is that during the conflict the attention of the media and of course the audience is the aggression between the two forces. So the sample taken during the confrontation is more of double than the pre-violence conflict.

3.5. Sampling technique

The conflict between the Federal Government and TPLF was begun since the political reform took place three years ago in 2018. It is better to use nonprobability (nonrandom) sampling technique to limit the population and its representative sample within a specific period of time. “Such samplings are appropriate under some conditions, but often must be used because an adequate sampling frame is not available, (Riffe, et al. 1998, p.48).

Nonprobability sampling technique has its own categories, like convenience sampling and purposive sampling. Convenience sampling technique often is used because the content was collected in a way not related to the studies purpose, and plays a role as Riffe, et al. (1998) described it when a sampling frame is difficult to create and when important relationships have yet to be tested adequately. The most preferred one is purposive sampling technique, because of the nature of the research project in which the sample frame are highly related to the conflict that I am going to interpret in the thesis.

In my research particular news presentations at particular periods have unique interests, because they showed turning point in the conflict that took place in Tigray. To deal with such relationships between the sampling and the research, purposive sampling is applicable and useful. That is why purposive sampling is believed to be helpful to show how the media framing indicates the development of the conflict in to aggression in Tigray and it helps to use consecutive-unit sampling, which involves taking a series of news produced during the violent conflict period under the scope of this research. More or less the numbers of sample that are taken from both stations are equal to ensure consistency, of course some issues are omitted deliberately which I will discuss it in the analysis part.

3.6. Data source

The source of the data that I collected is the social media particularly YouTube video player. The other option for the media house particularly TV channels to reach their audience beyond television is the social media. Almost all television stations upload their content on You Tube to get additional viewers. Both ETV and TTV use YouTube to upload their news stories to reach their You Tube viewers. Using this source I collected all the necessary data according to the sampling technique. As Riffe, et al. (1998) discussed forms of contents, a variety of content forms and combinations of forms that are verbal, written, and visual communications can be analyzed even though there are familiar distinctions between print media and broadcast media as discussed in Riffe, et al. (1998, p.55). So it is possible to use Audio-visual contents that are available in You Tube to analyze in a research.

3.7 Data Collection instrument

3.7.1. Transcription

To make the audio-visual content comfortable for content analysis, first I transcribed it in to textual content so that it get text format. I viewed television news stories of both ETV and TTV that are uploaded on You Tube for two months thoroughly to write the news stories which are secondary sources framed by the reporters of the stations.

3.7.2. Translation

I translated the news stories that are transcribed from YouTube to make them suitable for the research language that is English. These English news stories are the equivalent of the original Amharic news stories in meaning, context and tone to be consistent in the research. “None text communication adds dimensions that can, by comparison, cloud the manifest content of communication. For example, spoken or verbal communication depends, like text, on the meaning of words or symbols, but it also involves inflection and tone that affects the meaning applied by receivers, said Riffe, et al. (1998, p.57).

3.8 Unit of Analysis

No matter what content form an analysis selects to study, as Riffe, et al. (1998) explains that content must be reduced to units in order to measure it (p.58). They further elaborates that unit of content is the defined element of the study that can be a word, sentence, paragraph etc. content units can be either meaning unit or physical unit. Because meaning units involve physical unit, Krippendorff (1980) suggests four types of symbolic units for use in content analysis: syntactical, referential, propositional and thematic units, (Riffe, et al. 1998, p.66). For this research I preferred thematic unit that relates to how concepts of interest in the content, useful in developing narratives, explanations, or interpretations of contents can be identified structurally, as Riffe et al. (1998, p.67) interpreted. So the units of analysis for this research are words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and the whole story to develop theme which is the central element of a news story.

3.9. Procedure and Method of Data Analysis

In media framing as Entman elaborates the text contains frames, which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain key words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments (1993, p.52). Using framing method I follow the procedure of clustering words, phrases, and sentences including their tone, their source of information, to build theme which leads to the perceived meanings in the audience. Different framing approaches, like *annihilation frame*, *attribution to responsibility frame* can be used to check their media professional carriers that are listed in conceptual framework. And such process helps to answer the research questions in the thesis.

Chapter four

4. Data presentation and analysis

4.1. Data presentation

As stated in sampling above in chapter three the data collection starts from the news stories broadcasted 1st Oct. 2020. To make suitable for comparison the data presentation is done separately from the two TV stations that is TTV and ETV. It is also categorized as pre-violence and during violence in both TV stations to see the reporting trends clearly. I myself transcribed and translated the sample news stories for the thesis.

4.1.1 TTV news stories in pre-violence

On 1st Oct 2020 TTV's news story was on Federal media blaming with equivalent headline, "Federal media are working for the group in Arat Kilo by avoiding their public responsibility". The news is based on the event which was organized to celebrate access to information day. In the news it says, even though they are challenged by Federal authority, media in Tigray are considered to be independent and working for the nations and nationalities, but others that are working at Federal level are labeled as disseminating false information, particularly to attack the people of Tigray. In the anchor sentence the source is mentioned as scholars but in the body the major content is extracted and inserted from the speech of Lia Kassa who is the Head of Tigray Information Bureau positioned politically. Those who are presented as scholars said the Federal Government is not respecting the law of the country, similarly the media working for it is not following professionalism ethics to serve the overall public equally. They mentioned that the violence throughout the country except Tigray is the result of the irresponsible Federal Government and its media partial activity. (TTV, Oct. 1, 2020)

TTV reported that the HPR and the HF common meeting are unlawful, and the decision they make will be unacceptable since the parliamentary period is over. Executive of TPLF lifted the legitimacy of those who represented the people of Tigray in the HPR and authorities at Federal level. After 25th September 2020 except Tigray Regional States all government bodies are illegal in all Regions and City Administrates, the news explains. All the decisions passed by these bodies are unacceptable because they are illegible and the authorities including the PM are called

as the former one says Oromo experts in the news. The news also explains that the government hasn't the right and public representation to sign international agreements in all matters. The source is secondary that is taken from OMN produced in Afan Oromo language. [#ቴሌቪዥን ትግራይ:አማርኛ ዜና 25-01-2013ዓ.ም.mp4](#). (TTV, Oct.5, 2020)

TTV produced retaliating news with the anchor “The action taken by Federal Government in cutting Tigray’s subsidiary budget will have equivalent reaction from Tigray Regional State”. The news interprets the speech of the Vice President of the regional state, Abraham Tekeste (PhD) as the action of the Federal Government is pushing Tigray Regional State from the federation. The source of the revenue is regional states and it should be redistributed to them including Tigray. Other ways it is illegal as the news concluded. (TTV, Oct. 8, 2020)

“በህገ-ወጥ የአብይ አህመድ ቡድን ሳንባ የሚተነፍሱ የመገናኛ ብዙሃን በትናንትናው እለት በትግራይ ክልል የአንበጣ መንጋን ለመከላከል በአውሮፕላን የኬሚካል ርዕዮት ተካሄደ ተብሎ የተዘገበው ዘገባ ከእውነት የራቀ መሆኑ ተገለጸ። በትግራይ ክልል ያጋጠመውን አንበጣ ለመከላከል እየተሰሩ ያሉ ሥራዎችን በማደናቀፍ እንቅፋት የመሆኑንና የትግራይ ክልልን ለማዳከም ከሚሰሩ ሰራዎች አነዱ መሆኑ ማሳያ ነውም ተብሏል”። Mass media, which breathes by illegal Abiy Ahmed’s group lung, reported yesterday that chemical was sprayed by plane to prevent locust overrun in Tigray has said to be untrue. This has been said one of the many actions that distracts the activities done in Tigray to prevent locust to weaken the region. (TTV, Oct. 14, 2020) [#ቴሌቪዥን ትግራይ:አማርኛ ዜና 04-02-2013ዓ.ም.mp4](#)

TTV reported that Tigray police commission graduate special commando for special mission and to prevent any one who cross Tigray boarder. In the news there is military parade to show their efficiency acquired in the extensive training. The President of Tigray Debiretsion G/Michael attended the ceremony and gave his message that the commando will protect the region from those who want the people of Tigary kneeling down by force. (TTV, Oct. 18, 2020)

The Tigray Regional State and its people never kneel down by the serious anti-human act done by the dictator and unitary group said Tigray communication bureau on it press release. The news indicates that the illegal group is keeling, displacing, and suffering the citizens of the country, and it tries to kneel down the people of Tigray by taking the share of safetinete budget of the Tigray region. It further condemns the group that prohibited Chinese design experts who

land in Bole International airport to help the water project of Mekele clean water. (TTV, Oct. 22, 2020)

TTV reported news about the rearrangement of the defense force and it says, “Reorganizing the defense force is unacceptable unless political forces of the country discussed on it”. A press release by the regional government is presented as it is with the standing points of the government in the news hour which includes budget cut, agreements on renaissance dam, and call for the military disobedience beyond the military arrangement. The news criticized the action of the government which weakened the national defense force which exposes the country for foreign invasion and gives instruction to the military not to transfer any artillery from Tigray regional state. (TTV, Oct. 25, 2020)

TTV sourced Getachew Reda to present news story about North Command that agreed to join the Tigray Force. The news presented in the beginning by the anchorman with such statement, but in the package it placed in the third place. Not only the placement but also the content is not similar which indicates cooperation in the detail that changed in to defiance in the anchor. The original English interview of Getachew Reda indicates that the North Command of the national defense force is cooperative to the Regional State like harvesting, COVID-19 prevention and locust elimination. (TTV, Oct. 27, 2020)

4.1.2 TTV news stories during violence the conflict

TTV focused on the admission of students to Mekele and Raya University to continue their courses that were interrupted by COVID-19. The news speaks the peaceful situation in Tigray for everyone and the students were referred as lucky to complete their education on schedule. (TTV, Nov. 3, 2020)

TTV come up with the reality and reported “Federal Government illegal, force invaded Tigray, and attacked Mekele city using air strike, the source is the Regional Communication Bureau and it follows with “Dictators Abiy and Essayas declared war against us said Debiretsion and he expressed sorrow on the death of members of Amhara ethnic group in west Wollega before days, but denied the blame by the HPR. The news downplayed the accusation of PM Abiy who Blamed Tigray Special force as it attacked the North Command to express his frustration on the decision that the command was agreed to fight with TPLF. On the other hand the news shows

TPLF forces controlled all the artillery in Tigray and started to use it, but it is our people's capability not the weaponry that wins and assured as TPLF wins, "anyone who came here never go back, but buried here" said Debiretsion in the report. (TTV, Nov.5, 2020)

TTV reported by attributing the President of the region Debiretsion that the defeated Abiy force damaged Wolkaite Sugar Factory and Tekeze Hydropower Plant. And he denied the Michadra massacre, and he said before investigation claiming the crime to TPLF is wrong. (TTV, Nov. 10, 2020). The issue continued on 11th Nov. and on this day TTV reported that the dictator Eritrean government Essayas crossed Ethiopian boarder to support Abiy in attacking Tigray. The news indicated the invasion of Eritrea by the invitation of the "dictator" Abiy. The president said, "Our difference is not with the defense force but it is with PP." instead of dealing with the difference in round table they invaded us with Eritrea, but we are defending ourselves. The issue is not only for Tigray's people but it concerns both the people of Eritrea and nations and nationalities of Ethiopia. The news presents a call for to the people of Eritrea and Ethiopia to protest against the government of Abiy. (TTV, Nov, 11, 2020).

TTV reported that Tigray regional state declared emergency to protect its people and the "sovereignty" of the region. The declaration is aimed at protecting terrorism, spying, and to protect the regional constitution and infrastructure. The "unitary" and "dictator" government is cooperating with the enemy of Tigray, Eritrea. So the emergency helps to protect the sovereignty of the region and its people. (TTV, Nov. 12, 2020)

TTV presented another press release in which it says, Abiy and Essayass declared genocide on Tigray people and nation's nationalities including the international community must condemn such an act. The news shows the conflict is not in a particular area rather it intensifies regional threat in east Africa, so that it concerns not only Ethiopian, it destabilize the continent and the international community should react up on it. (TTV, Nov.13. 2020) On 16th Nov. TTV presented news stories with the theme the "Ethiopian Defense Force failed to maintain its doctrine to protect the nations and nationalities; rather they serve Abiy in destroying Tigray's people to change the country in to Derg regime. The people of Ethiopia should not assume as it has a defense force rather the country is exposed to foreign enemies. The military humiliated us by invading and killing the people of Tigray with foreign forces says the president in demonizing the defense force.

TTV presented the type of weapons and military forces, in which Abiy used complicated drone that are not found in Africa to destroy Tigray. The news is produced using the letter written by the president of Tigray to the international community, European Union and the African Union. The news further explains the dictator Abiy and his counterpart Essayass are realizing human crisis as they planned using sophisticated drones beyond Amhara, Eritrean and Ethiopian defense force. (TTV, Nov. 17, 2020)

Starting from 19th Nov. 2020, TTV and showed new military spokesperson, Gebre Gebretsadik who announced military victory to the audience every day. He counts numerous national military brigades defeated in different battle fields by Tigray Forces. The news further gives a conclusion that indicates the failed plan of the Federal Government to kneel down the people of Tigray.

TTV reported that Tigray forces defeated 21st military brigade in Raya Front says the first news by attributing the regional president with military scarf on his neck. The president further explains the victory is scored in three fronts. The news continues using sources like the military spokesperson Gebre Gebretsadik and spokesperson of the central command post Getachew Reda. Both speak military victory particularly the defeat of 21st brigade in southern Tigray. They reminded the great achievements of 21st brigade in Ethio-Eritrea boarder dispute, but impossible against the forces Of TPLF. 28 Nov. (TTV, Nov. 23, 2020)

1st Dec. was the end of TTV under TPLF with field report by unknown personnel, and the overall theme of the news was “we are on the way to defeat Abiy”. Of course this is the news story package that I found uploaded on You Tube by TTV with its logo (water mark). The news is produced by interviewing military personnel’s who denied the end of the violence and they speaks that they damaged the National Defense Force and the Forces of TPLF are in a good condition backed by Tigray people to regain Tigray regional state. The news is supported by video that shows military vehicle loaded with long range artillery that they call it BM (ballistic missile).

4.1.3 ETV news stories in the pre-violence period

1st Oct. ETV daily Corona virus report was given priority with statistical presentation and followed by gender news and Irreecha celebration. There is no news to defense or offense against TTV which blamed the federal media including ETV. 5th Oct. ETV focused on the two houses

peoples representative common meeting and the speech of the president which indicates the government focuses of the year 2013 Ethiopian year: Government focuses on illuminating irregular forces in the country, election will be the focus of the government, Sidama and Southwest regions will get answer for their self-rule request. 8th Oct. ETV focused on the HPR regular discussions on different bills and send to the respective standing committee ignoring the out loud news stories in TTV about the illegibility of HPR.

Oct. 14, 2020, ETV reported that the Federal Police reformed itself based on the needs of the nation and its people by attributing Police Commission. President Essayass of Eritrea Visited both Entoto Park and Bishoftu Air-Force base with PM Abiy, after he landed in Jimma. The news has no detailed information about the air force base visit.

18th Oct. ETV prioritizes a news story in the anchor about Addis Ababa Transport Problem in which it is the major focus of the city administration declared by deputy mayor of Addis Ababa Adanech Abiebe. In the brief news there is announcement about the meeting of the HPR that will be held on the next day followed by the PM explanation about PP's Medemer Ideology taken from his social media. Oct. 22, 2020, the first news of ETV was Corona virus daily report followed by President Sahile Work visit to Arba Minch Town to motivate students in Universities.

25th Oct. ETV reported news about 75% of the locust were cleared from north eastern part of Ethiopian, particularly from Wollo by attributing the PM. On 27th Oct. the anchor prioritize the news of Trump's retaliation about the Ethiopian renaissance dam that lets Egypt to destroy (blow up that dam) it. But in the detail ETV placed first the press release of the PM about Muslim holy day Mauled (birth day of Prophet Muhammad).

4.1.4 ETV news stories during the violence period

3rd Nov. ETV reported the news of HPR that urges the government to stop the killing of people based on their identity after the massacre in west Wollega based on their identity, whom they blamed TPLF and Oneg Shene (Oromo liberation military). In the detail the tweet of the president Sahile Work Zewdie, which condemns the massacre presented first. ETV showed members of parliament crying while they gave opinions about the killing of people in front of the public. "Government press release about the killing is nonsense and what we need is action",

members said and they raised the issue of defining TPLF and Oneg shene as terrorist group. 4th Nov. ETV wrote a headline equivalent to “The gang, betrayal and the extremist group attacked the North Command of the National Defense Force” by attributing HPR. The house announced a call for action to the people of Ethiopia to defend the country from the extremist group. The news exposes the action of TPLF forces how they prepare artificial military uniform in Almeda Garment to kill the members of North Command. Following the press release of the HPR the PM Abiy recalled former generals Abebaw, Bacha and Yohans, 5th Oct. a call for supporting Defense 7th Nov. ETV prioritize the news about the violence produced from the press release given by defense force, and it says in the anchor “TPLF group attacked the defense force to regain power but its plan failed at all level” by attributing General Birhanu. But in the detail the meeting of the HPR placed first which declares a 6 month emergency in Tigray Regional State, and established a board who examines the activity of the command post in Tigray. The news that was presented in the anchor first comes 4th in the detail.

10th Nov. ETV took a slogan from the statement of the PM which says “The Tigray conflict is a law enforcement operation not a war” and this statement goes more than a week as the intro of the news program even before the anchors announcement. On this day ETV explained the Evil act of the “Junta” as described by General Bacha, “They dance on solders’ dead bared body”. He explained the preparation of the forces of TPLF how they tried to disintegrate the North Command but in the aftermath of the violence he indicated that there were no military personnel to captivate voluntarily. He also explained the presence of OLF military personnel’s to cooperate with TPLF forces in the battle ground.

11th Nov. ETV reported by attributing Deputy PM Demeke that “Woyane Junta slaughtered the Micadra civilians. 12th Nov. ETV said “HPR lifted the immunity of TPLF 39 representatives out of 43 from the house and cabinet”. The news justifies that the reason of such action is the crime of terrorism and attacking the national defense force initiated by TPLF representatives in the house and authorities in federal level. The general athorny suspected those members and presented to the house to accuse them in court. 13th Nov. ETV showed that TPLF Junta presented themselves as victim of the conflict to the international community, and scholars should expose such conspiracy as Zadig Abrha, Asrat Denero, discussed with Addis Ababa university scholars. 16th Nov. ETV reported that deputy PM Demeke visits East African nations and confirmed no

negotiation with TPLF. He stressed the operation is an internal affair to secure law and order in the country. 17th Nov. ETV claimed that Ethiopian defense force scored major victory in east and west Tigray by attributing defense force officials.

19th Nov. ETV said PM Abiy discussed with Tigray transition administration, the main theme is to protect Tigray towns and the people from damage by TPLF forces and opposition political parties attended the meeting and they commented as the people of Tigray liberated from TPLF. The chairperson of the interim government Dr. Mulu Nega declared as he starts his responsibility in Tigray areas where freed by the defense force from TPLF. 23 Nov. ETV reported about the visit of the president sahilework in South Africa to address the ongoing situation in Ethiopia. 28th Nov. ETV showed that Mekele was controlled by National Defense Force with no major damage and the operation is over by attributing General Birhanu. In the up sound the General says the remaining task is to hunt the leaders of TPLF after he congratulated the people of Tigray. And he appreciated the people of Ethiopia who backed the defense force. He confirmed the difference between TPLF and the people of Tigray which falsifies the statement of “the people of Tigray and TPLF are one and the same”.

1st Dec. (ETV) PM Abiy explained the operation and the challenges of political transition for the last 3 years to the HPR. The news program placed first the irrigation activity of the PM in Addis Ababa roadside Plantations followed by the detail of the explanation of the PM in parliament. The members of parliament asked the PM about his reservation of law and order particularly in governing TPLF, and he explained that even he was not free to move in the palace because of the conspiracy of TPLF specially the intelligent office lead by TPLF members.

4.2. Data Analysis

As determined above in the procedure, annihilation frame and attribution to responsibility frame can be used to discuss the samples analytically in this part. One of the hermeneutic research traditions, as Patterson, Williams (2004, p.19) discussed, it has been referred to as hermeneutic reconstructionism or critical hermeneutics and is associated with Karl-Otto Apel and Jurgen Habermas (Arnould and Fischer, 1994; Nicholson, 1984; Russell 1988). One of the distinctive features of this branch of hermeneutics is the belief in the existence of a "false consciousness" that systematically distorts our understanding of human experience (Hould and Fischer, 1994).

4.2.1. Annihilation frame

To analyze such systematically distorted news stories it is applicable to use annihilation frame as Mulatu (2020) explained annihilation frame as it is adapted from symbolic annihilation theory which seeks to explain trends of undermining, underrepresentation and trivialization of objects. So I applied annihilation frame to examine the two media organizations, TTV and ETV, how they distort, hideout, and delay news stories in their media outlet. And annihilation frame consists of different techniques like silence, blurring, slanting, and charming interest.

4.2.1.1 Silence (Omission)

Media sometimes prefers to be silent even though there is news worthy phenomenon is available in the news market. Silence is a technique that is used to ignoring such significant issue from the audience is to make a favor or to avoid negative impact from a group even to hideout the positive image from the group that is leveled as others. Some scholars identify it as omission. Media strategic omission of public information from being an agenda is sometimes referred as a bias which is deliberately denying the public's right to know.

Based on these explanations we can find sample news that are reported in one of the selected media but omitted on the other media. TTV reported military parades and commando graduations in Tigray Regional State continuously. For example on 18th October 2020, that is in pre-violent conflict, TTV reported a news story with a general theme "Tigray police commission graduate especial commando for cross-border operation". This is an issue that signifies the progress of the conflict not only for the regional state but also it is an alarming issue for the nation as whole. But ETV didn't cover it or omitted deliberately from the news of the day as it was non-news worthy issue for its audience. A special police commando is like special force or "liyuu hille" which is leveled as unconstitutional in the ministry of peace at the level of regional states (ETV, Oct.10, 2020). And the news indicates that the commandos were prepared for the operation that comes from outside the Tigray region which is a responsibility for the forces under the federal government. This is an issue that can be an agenda all over the country but ETV omitted it as nonsense for its audience.

Anyone can argue that ETV omitted the news of Tigray commando graduation at their prime time because of other news stories which are numerous and protocol sensitive. But the news story that is placed 1st on 18th Oct. was the news of Addis Ababa transport problem which is not a nationwide issue. So ETV deliberately omitted the issue of Tigray police commando graduation and the statement of the officials including the president of the Regional State to hideout the escalating nature of the conflict between the Federal Government and TPLF.

TTV used the same silence technique on 25 Oct 2020 when the PM and his delegation visited north eastern part of Ethiopia concerning the locust overrun of crops in that location including Tigray Region. It was natural disaster that harms the country by minimizing the annual crop production that leads to a problem of food insecurity to the citizens of the country including Tigrians. But TTV omitted the news deliberately may be not to recognize the effort of the PM and his delegation to prevent that natural disaster.

Abreu (2015, p.7) discussed all news stories have omissions, deliberate or not, as it is impossible to approach a topic from all its perspectives, using all possible sources and explaining the role of all the actors directly and indirectly involved in the problem. But what I am examining here is the total and deliberate omission to harm, to disqualify, and to misrecognize the positive image of others and so on. Of course media can use withholding information technique to delay a news story for some time to get the intended purpose.

Withholding information can be either withholding all of the information about an event until there has been some form of change in relation to that particular incident or releasing the information to the readers through the newspapers after the conflict is resolved, (Getnet, 2019, p.46). For example TTV used this withholding technique to delay the news story of the death of members of Amhara ethnic group in west Wollega, Oromiya. But after Tigray conflict it reported the incident and expressed the sorrow of the Regional State President to show sympathy to the Amhara people. So withholding information is a type of silent, but it is for the time being either to hide the cause or the consequence from the audience.

Most frames are defined by what they omit as well as include, and the omissions of potential problem definitions, explanations, evaluations, and recommendations may be as critical as the inclusion in guiding the audience, (Entman, 1993, p.4). Therefore the omission of the news and

its explanation and recommendations of the event of the prime minister while he visits the problem of locust overrun on major crop season is as critical as the problem of food insecurity in the society.

4.2.1.2 Blurring

Mulatu (2020) described blurring as it is a form of making the sensitive parts of an issue vague and instead deal with other aspects that are related to the main case, (p.40). It is a type of defocusing or shadowing purposely the main issue of the story to gain the intended goal. This leads the audience to interpret the issue by themselves to make full the half empty glass. If the text frame is in a variety of mutually reinforcing ways that the glass is half full, the evidence of social science suggests that relatively few in the audience will conclude it is half empty, (Entman, 1993, p.6). Tuchman (1978) describes news as a window whose frame limits the perception of reality, by limiting the perception of different realities and focusing on a specific piece of it. As a result of these processes, some aspects of the reality perceived through the news will be more prominent than others, (as cited in Abreu, 2015, p.2).

The exact type of such blurred news in the sample is the news stories reported by TTV on 5th Nov. 2020, to show how the aggression broke out in Tigray between the Defense Force of North Command and the forces of TPLF. TTV used Dr. Debiretsion's press release as a source to produce a news frame, "North Command agreed to fight with "Tigray Defense Force" against the dictator Abiy Government and we controlled all the artillery accumulated in the region". In here the key phrases like "they agree, Tigray defense force, we controlled, dictator Abiy" are confusing, strange, and are used to blur the accusation of insurgency by the Federal Government. The audience already heard from ETV that the TPLF force attacked the North Command from its back at night on 4th Nov. And the federal government already declared to defend the sovereignty and unity of the nation by putting all the federal forces in a central command.

But TTV counter framed by using phrases "North Command agreed and Tigray Defense Force controlled the weaponry" which are controversial by themselves just to blur the agenda in the audience. Audience can interpret the news of half empty glass by asking the question "if the North Command agreed to fight against the Federal Government, why they controlled (took) the weaponry? Can a regional state establish a "defense force" other than police force? TTV tried to

clear out the blaming of the federal government on TPLF as traitor, hitch on his mother breast by blurring the issue of who started the violence. So blurring is one of the techniques in annihilation framing to deny the truth from the audience by shadowing the clarity of the news stories.

4.2.1.3. Charming interest

This is another technique in annihilation frame a little bit opposite to blurring or shadowing the issue to influence the audience by denying the direct phenomenon. Charming interest is a kind of maximizing positive self-image to attract others by modifying common character. In the above example TTV reported on the issue of organizing supplementary defense command without the consent of political actors is illegal, which indicates the political force have the right to discuss on and gives consent or deny it beforehand. This is just to downplay the activity of the Federal Government particularly the ministry of defense on the other hand to magnify the will of TPLF and other political parties of the country.

There is a number of news stories produced in TTV using this charming technique to show only Tigray Regional State is doing things constitutionally or the right thing in the nation. For example on 8th Oct. TTV reported that cutting subsidiary budget from regional state is unlawful, because the source of the budget is the regions themselves. The news story tries to charm other regional states as they have the right as Tigray to get subsidiary budget from the Federal Government without any restriction. The other example is the news story that narrates the friendly relationship between the Tigrians and Amhara people. On 5th Nov. TTV reported that the unitary, dictator and personal Abiy government blamed Tigray Regional State as it invaded the Amhara regional state to feud the two sisterly people for his own advantage. And the president of Tigray Regional State expressed his sorrow about the death of people in western wollega because of their Amhara identity days earlier to the outbreak of aggression in Tigray. This is a type of charming to the people of Amhara as if they are friendly and peaceful neighbors in the region. This reporting tone and context changed a few days later in TTV with exactly the opposite interpretation that blames the Amhara regional states and its people and identified them as the land recaptures.

On the same day TTV reported a charming news story to the nations, nationalities and peoples of the country that their self-rule is under threat by the unitary dictator Federal Government, so that

they have to stand with the Tigray Regional State to defeat their common enemy. In general charming in annihilation frame is the interpretation of news stories that have a narration of maximizing supporters by establishing common interests with others, or it is the process of exhibiting oneself as a model of others to make them supporter of an agenda or activity.

4.2.1.4 Slanting

Content bias refers to consistently slanted framing of mediated communication that promotes the success of a specific interest, party or ideology in competitions to control government power, (Entman, 2010, p.393). Entman further explains his definition of slanting as biased content assists such entities as political parties or interest groups in consistently persuading people to accept interpretations helpful to the favored actor for some significant period. It is not only to favor the actor parallel to the media, but also deviating from the main issue is done for the disapproval of the opponents. And this has been done frequently both in ETV and TTV to promote and undermine the two rival parties.

For example on 1st Oct. TTV reported a news story “*Federal media are working for the group in Arat Killo by avoiding their public responsibility and forgetting to stand with the public at large*”. This is a news story that indirectly blames the federal government in which it is putting pressure on Tigrians to make them under control or to kneel them for the federal government. TTV framed the news from the perspective of media impartiality to convince the audience instead of blaming the federal government power grapping. ETV, one of the federal media, and accused for working for the group in Arat Killo, didn’t defend the blame rather it deviated the issue to the corona virus pandemic as it is working for the public rather than the group in Arat Killo.

On 25th Oct. TTV reported a news story that indicates the illegal action of the federal government in supplementing two extra defense commands located in central and northwest of the country before the debate between all political forces. This is to make a bias on the audience whether to reorganize the defense force is the responsibility of the executive body or the parties involved in the country. Instead of showing the illegal action taken by the federal government the news story diverted the issue to the matter of discussion between political forces of the country. This is a technique of annihilation framing in news writing to make bias in the parties and the

audience at large. Even during the violence the two media slanted their news by reporting victory for their own sides rather than showing the actual devastation on the ground.

The framing and priming literatures suggest that all external influence over ‘what people think’ derives from telling them ‘what to think about’. When the media shape what people think about, they must logically influence what people think, (Entman, 2010, p.392). Not only using framing technique, media also influence the thoughts of the public by priming and placing the issues in their news program. Particularly during the pre-conflict period TTV promotes the success of TPLF and the failure of the federal government to confuse the audience from knowing the actual situation on the ground. The same is true for ETV; it reports only the peaceful activities in Tigray to hideout the escalating nature of the conflict.

4.2.2 Attribution of responsibility frame

This frame presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for its cause or solution to either the government or to an individual or group, (Semetko, valkenburg, 2009, p.96). Responsibility frame is a technique that is used to push the accountability to others particularly to the opponents during crisis or during failures. Some scholars exchange this technique with othering frame which indicates attribution of problems to others during crisis. Lajos Brons defined othering as simultaneous construction of the self or in-group and the other or out-group in mutual and unequal opposition through identification of some desirable characteristic that the self/in-group has and the other/out-group lacks and/or some undesirable characteristic that the other/out-group has and the self/in-group lacks. Othering thus sets up a superior self/in-group in contrast to an inferior other/out-group, but this superiority/inferiority is nearly always left implicit, (Brons, 2015, p.70).

In local media content analysis research, Mulatu (2020) preferred to use othering frame and Getnet (2019) preferred to use attribution of responsibility frame to analyze the ethnic conflict and media reporting in Ethiopia. Both used similar specific techniques like blaming the other (externalization) and I started with this common technique to show how TTV and ETV presented responsibility to the rival state actors.

4.2.2.1 Blaming the other (externalization)

This is a responsibility framing technique used to externalize the cause of an occurrence or a conflict in this case to the other group (perhaps an individual) and to neutralize the self/in-group. This happens particularly when the conflict results a devastating effect in a community or at national level. After the aggression broke out in Tigray, both ETV and TTV used this blame shifting technique to externalize the consequence of the damage to each other. For example on 3rd Nov. ETV reported a news story “*HPR call for the government to stop the killing of innocent people in west wollega*” after the massacre of Amhara ethnic community whom they blamed TPLF behind the atrocity. The same story was reported by TTV on 5th Nov. the President of Tigray Regional State expressed his sorrow about the death of people in western wollega because of their identity and he blamed the federal government behind the massacre. The media used a technique of reciprocating similar cause to the rival state actor whom they are blaming each other in the cause and effect of the conflict at its climax.

After 4th Nov. or during the aggression the media used blaming the other technique to shove away the responsibility from who started the attack to the devastating effect of the violent conflict. On 5th Nov. for example both ETV and TTV reported news stories to show how the attack started by attributing the two confronting forces. ETV starts its blaming frame with negative key words like the betrayal, gang, junta... TPLF attacked the North Command of the Defense Force from its back at night. On the other hand TTV reported using adjectives like the unitary, dictator, illegal, personal...Abiy Government invaded Tigray to kneel down its people using force. TTV produced several headlines from a single press release by the Regional State President Debiretsion G/ Michael to transfer the responsibility of the aggression eruption in the region to the federal government.

4.2.2.2 Urging narrative

Urging narrative is a technique in responsibility frame to urge those who have a concern on the matter before it gets worse. It is a type of call for news story to desire a solution for the problem. On 5th Nov. TTV presented a news story which is a typical example of such urging narrative and it reported as “United Nation urges dialogue between Tigray Regional State and the Abiy group to deescalate the aggression before it gets regional conflict”. Here the desire is to initiate the

rivals for dialogue instead of scraping peace in Tigray and making it a war zone by attributing third party that is the United Nation. Similar urging narratives were used in TTV particularly after the hostility escalated in the region. On 13th Nov. a news story was presented in TTV as *“Abiy and Essayass declared genocide on Tigray people, and nations and nationalities including the international community must condemn such an act”*. The main theme developed here is mass killing to the level of genocide or a killing of human with specific identity, which is international crime, so that it must be stopped urgently and everybody is responsible to do this.

On the same day, 13th Nov. ETV counter framed a news story but with similar urging frame and it is presented as *“TPLF junta presented themselves as victim of the conflict to the international community, and scholars must expose such conspiracy”*. The sources of the news are civil and military officials from the federal government who discussed the issue with Addis Ababa university scholars. TTV urges to stop military confrontation on the other hand ETV urges to stop the propaganda warfare.

4.2.2.3 Victimization (exaggeration)

Victimization or exaggeration is a technique in responsibility or othering frame to show the self/in-group is more victims and the responsibility is to the other/out-group. This is a technique similar to pushing responsibility to others but the persuasive power is high in victimization technique that is way it is known as exaggeration. On 10th Nov. ETV presented a news story by attributing Gen. Bacha who returned from the violence front and the narration is really persuasive which demonized TPLF. He called TPLF as junta and showed the evil act of it in strong words. The news describes the dead body of the soldiers which is bared and left for scavengers after killed by the TPLF forces. ETV used the up sound of the military general as saying *“the junta, the betrayals...killed the soldiers, they took off their uniform, and they danced on the bared body of the soldiers”*. [ETV\ምሽት 2 ሰዓት አማርኛ ዜና...ህዳር 01 2013 ዓ.ም .mp4](#). Such explanations were used to show the degree of the victim to persuade the audience and make them to condemn the rival that is the forces of TPLF. On 11th Nov. ETV also produced a news story using the deputy prime minister Demeke Mekonen as a source to narrate the criminal act of TPLF in slaughtering the Micadra civilians in Micadra Town.

TTV also used the victimization technique by exaggerating the causality of civilians in Tigray up to the crime of genocide to make the accountability international. For example on 13th Nov. TTV reported that the federal government in collaboration with Essayass, the President of Eritrea, committed genocide in Tigray. And on Nov.17th it reported that Abiy Government used complicated drones that are not found in Africa to destroy Tigray. These are a type of narrations to exaggerate the casualty of civilians in Tigray committed by the Federal Defense Force during the violent conflict. On the other hand TTV used the exaggeration technique in othering frame in reporting the victory of the military fight after the Federal Defense Force controlled major towns in Tigray. Particularly after the appointment of G/Gebiretsadik on 19th Nov. as the spokesperson of the “Tigray Defense Force”, he declared huge victory on the National Defense Force and he fades in counting the battalions that are destroyed.

4.2.2.4 Undermining others

As Mulatu (2020, p.52) discussed it, undermining the others is a technique applied to ignore others’ good values because of their ethnic differences. As the name indicates, undermining others is intentionally disregarding someone’s positive activities or initiatives. TTV and ETV used this technique both before and during the Aggression to undermine the strength, capacity, proficiency, and legitimacy of the rivals. On Oct. 5th, 8th and 25th TTV undermined the activities done by the federal bodies like undermining the opening of the two councils’ common meeting, the budget cut of Tigray Regional State, and the reorganization of the Defense Force respectively. Similarly during the aggression TTV undermined the capacity, commitment, and canon of the federal defense force even to contest with the Tigray rivals in the conflict.

ETV also used this undermining technique especially after the hostile activity in Tigray to down play the forces of TPLF and the violence itself. On 5th Nov. ETV undermined TPLF and its forces as it is a gang, betrayal and extremist by attributing the HPR to demonize its behavior in the region. On 7th Nov. ETV reported by attributing Gen. Birihanu Jula that TPLF Junta attacked the North Command to regain federal power but failed. It was the beginning of the violence, but down played the capacity of TPLF in recapturing its position. 10th Nov. ETV presented a news story which determined the violence in Tigray is not a war but it is a law enforcement operation by using the up-sound of PM Abiy Ahmed.

“በሰሜን የአገራችን ክፍል አደደረግን ያለነው አገርንና ህዝብን የመከላከል አፕሬሽን ዋና ትኩረቱ ህግ ማሰከብር ነው” This is a statement used by ETV frequently to undermine the violence and capacity of the forces of TPLF in struggling against the Federal Government. The news stories of the ultimatum given several times to the forces of TPLF were a type of undermining their capacity in the contest during the violence in Tigray. In all the above responsibility framing technique both ETV and TTV were used to display the contestation of the two rival forces that are Tigray Regional State and the Central Government who owned the media, and those media framed and counter framed the interests of those state actors respectively.

Based on the conceptual frameworks and the research questions stated in chapter one, I will try to put comparative discussion below as the conclusion of the analysis and as a testimony of professionalism in both ETV and TTV. As per indicated in conceptual framework, accuracy is accompanied with trust and credibility, impartiality is the mother of balance, neutrality, and other ethical values of journalism. On the other hand responsibility is the principle of any profession and journalists have obligations to the people they report about, and to the society to whom they report the news, and their duty is to present accurate, balanced and solution oriented news to their audience particularly during conflict. Framing as a conceptual framework and as working instrument for this thesis, it is used to evaluate how the media are working genuinely, since they are using framing technique either to exclude or include issues, sources, tones, contexts etc. to report major parts of an event. Because framing is natural to professionals’ perspective and in news reporting there is always time and space constraint to frame an issue.

4.3 comparative discussions

This section helps to look at the two selected media, ETV and TTV, closely and in a comparative way to evaluate from the perspective of public media organization which is distinct in nature and their central mission is to serve the public with complete information that improves the lives of the community and protect them from those who have power. And in this section the research findings that answers the research questions are stated.

As presented in the data and data analysis part, ETV used the silent technique of annihilation frame to prohibit the rights of the audience to know about what is going on there in Tigray. Including the criticism on ETV itself about its independence and disinformation it broadcasted

on 14th Oct. 2020. ETV omitted so many issues particularly during the pre-violent conflict period including the military preparations, and other conflict escalating activities as none news worthy issue for its audience. Being ignorant for an event which is worthy enough to the public by itself is a media bias and that is unethical especially for a public media. Media bias doesn't affect only the rivals or the in-group and out group, but also it harms the general public from knowing the truth. Such media omission violets the impartiality of objectivity and journalism ethics, further it doesn't fulfill the principle of responsibility for professionalism, particularly when it is public media. Paulino, et al. defined, "being public also means being potentially for all, having a general impact. There is indeed an inclusive meaning in the public being that, in a democratic context, also has an implicit suggestion of equality among those to whom the public item is addressed, (2016, p.3).

In contrary, TTV uses slanting, blurring and undermining techniques to deconstruct the activities of the federal government during the pre-violent conflict period. Such an act violets principles and ethics of journalism like accuracy, truth, impartiality, balance and so on. Those journalistic failures occur when the media is used as a playground for politics. Entman (1993) discussed it under frames in political news, and he says reflecting the play of power and boundaries of discourse over the issue many news texts exhibit homogeneous framing at one level of analysis, yet competing frames at another (p.55). That means political interests make journalists blunder consistency in reporting complete news to their audience, rather they become the retainer of their political masters. Such news partiality is done using slanting technique as Entman (2010) properly explained. "Slant occurs when a news report emphasizes one side's preferred frame in a political conflict while ignoring or derogating another side's. One-sided framing emphasizes some elements and suppresses others", he explained (p.392). This has been done in TTV in continuous pattern to undermine the institutions of Federal Government.

TTV didn't even name the prime minister of the country properly which violets news values like accuracy, neutrality, respect, etc. that indicates the unprofessional practice of the journalists. So the first research question that is "How did ETV and TTV report the pre-conflict period? Has got the response in which both media was working in a political parallelism to the recipients or political institutions that they owned and contest their politics using the media as instrument. ETV used silent or omission technique in pre-violent conflict to hideout the reality in Tigray in

particular and in the country in general that prohibits the rights of the public to information. And this indicates that such public media are in a floating professionalism, either they are functioning as political propaganda instrument or they lost their institutional missions by jamming news worthy events.

Thought it needs further research, no one can expect these journalists working in ETV and TTV to be neutral, independent and autonomous in their content production, as Hallin and Mancini (2004) affirmed, “No serious media analyst would argue that journalism anywhere in the world is literally neutral (p.26). The minimum requirement from the public media as scholars advised are, they should at least to name properly higher officials, to report what is relevant to the public, and to halt from escalating conflicts in a society etc. which I didn’t find in both ETV and TTV.

During the violence both ETV and TTV used blaming, victimization, undermining others, and urging narratives framing techniques most frequently and almost in a similar manner to protect the in-group and to expose the out-group in the face of the audience or to transfer responsibility to the group they considered as the antagonist. The slight difference is the degree of exaggeration, externalization and victimization, in which ETV tries to construct facts using military officials both from the field and in office interview, on the other hand, TTV in most cases presents a conflict propaganda that shows the collapse of not only Ethiopia, but the conflict will make instability in the horn of Africa by producing a call for news stories to the nations and nationalities and it furthers its panic to the whole Africans and the international community. In contrary, ETV exaggeratedly minimizes the magnitude of the violence to the law enforcement operation level as it is hunt for some criminals in Tigray, and to confirm the narration it used the statement of PM Abiy Ahimed at the beginning of the prime time news.

ETV tries to show the conflict as it will be completed within a short period of duration, by presenting military analysis that indicates the National Defense Force is pushing forward to capture the major part of Tigray; on the other hand TTV exaggerates it to the extent of extended civil war in the region. Such media reporting trend is originated from the interest of the rivals who owned the media houses. As discussed in the related literature, in most cases public broadcasting is controlled by the government or the ruling party, so that the function of the media is determined by the desire of the government other than the editorial direction of the media. Hallin and Mancini (2004, p.30) confirmed this in their research as “The government

model in which public broadcasting – which in this case approaches state broadcasting – is controlled directly by the government or by the political majority”. And this research finding indicates similar result that means the media are an instrument for the political majority, not the public.

The news stories were produced by attributing political and military officials which exaggerates their victims to make responsible their rivals. The sources of the news during the pre-violent conflict were the same in both ETV and TTV; those are civil authorities from the federal government and the Tigray Regional State respectively. Of course ETV was shy to report the progress of the conflict and it omitted the threatening narrations of the dethroned TPLF from the federal power. On the other hands TTV uses the political leaders and military old guards to pressurize the Central Government. But in the aftermath of the violent conflict the sources were reciprocated that ETV prefers to use military chiefs and military staffs to show what is happening in the fight between the rivals. But TTV persists either to use similar political appointees and further decline to use civilians to show civil casualty. Of course ETV also used some civil authorities and citizens to show the fairness of the military aggression in Tigray.

The sources also shows the major issues covered in pre-violence and during the violence in both media houses. Even though the locust campaign interrupted TTV in mid-October from propagating the anger of TPLF on the federal government, it focuses on the counter framing of ETV to deconstruct the activities of the federal government including the events performed by Tigray Regional State that threatens Prime Minister Abiy Ahimed’s political reform. After the violence both TV stations focused on the matter of who started the military aggression in Tigray to entertain the blame game. After blaming each other for the instigation of the violence the major issue became the announcement of military victory on each other.

The pattern of reporting in pre-violence was different in ETV and TTV: ETV tries to hide the progress of the conflict by omitting the events in Tigray which was news worthy at national level specially the military preparations which are directly related to the conflict. The reason, even though it needs further research, might be the irregular election that takes place in Tigray which resulted in unrecognized administration in the region. On the other hand TTV follows the pattern of reporting issues that perhaps escalated the conflict between the Regional State and the Federal Government by reporting provocative acts in Tigray.

As I discussed major issues covered during the violence above, the pattern is similar that is echoing the antagonism between the two rivals. Both TV stations claimed the fairness of the violence that forced them to engage in and they claimed the victory is for them. The other decorated reporting was the way they addressed the conflict to the local and international community to stand for them and against the other. Particularly TTV reiterated that unless the international community intervene in the conflict, it will be terrible for the region. ETV on the other hand establishes a pattern of “no negotiation” with the TPLF forces since it ignite the fire. In general the two TV stations always mismatch even on national issues. For example ETV reported the news of Donald Trump, the President of the United States of America who threatened the Ethiopian Renaissances Dam and he said, “ unless signed on the tri-party negotiation, Egypt may blow-up that dam” at the telephone conversation with Sudanese interim Government Gen. Abdulfetah Al-Burhani. Few days after this conversation the tri-party negotiation started and TTV reported that Ethiopian government lost the sovereignty of the country by continuing the tri-party dialog ordered by President Trump. But ETV appreciated the Ethiopian Government in forcing the two countries to bring them to the discussion regardless of American threatening behavior.

As a summary: the two public media, off course they are public only in name not in practice, as the research finding indicated, they are used as propaganda machine in the conflict between the two confronting bodies. Even though it has been transformed from state media to public media in terms of regulation, ETV is still following it traditional practice of serving the majority politics or the government. In Tigray conflict, ETV played a role of public relation for the government by producing one sided news stories. It undermined not only the forces of TPLF but also the conflict itself to the level of law enforcement operation which involves high scale military weapons including missile in the violence conflict. It produced news stories that judged the conflict in which it would be completed within weeks, and after weeks it undermined the conflict as hunt to some criminals in Tigray Mountains.

On the other hand TTV used annihilation frame and responsibility frame to hide and undermine the realities in Tigray and to push all the responsibilities to the Federal Government. During the outbreak of the violence, TTV undermined the National Defense force to contest with the forces of TPLF in the confrontation. But after weeks TTV shifted to the victimization or exaggeration

narrative to show the devastating effect of the violence in Tigray and to attribute the responsibility of the confrontation to the Federal government. It also used urging narrative to call for solution not from the confronting party but from the international community to intervene in the conflict.

In such report framing the media served the two antagonized parties to fuel-up the conflict instead of deescalating the conflict. So, the so-called public media are in political parallelism to serve the political parties not the public at large in the region or at national level. This leads us to define these media as state media which is forced to serve the state not the public in a nation. Even they were not serving the state in a professional way during the conflict in which they used insults beyond the inaccurate, impartial, and irresponsible production of contents to be broadcasted for the public.

Chapter five

5. Conclusion and recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

The audio-visual content analysis of both ETV and TTV indicated that the public media are not serving the public with solution oriented local issues in the conflict between the TPLF forces and the Federal Government: I didn't find solution oriented news stories to deescalate the violence. On the one hand they ignored the issues that are significant to the public which is denying the right to information; on the other hand they magnify incidents to intensify conflict between the two state actors and the peoples of a nation. What I understand in the data reading and analysis is that instead of looking in to human pain, both TV stations were reporting the interests of rival groups how they take over the upper hand of the power in the face of the public. In the majority news stories, they used sources of political appointees and military personnel to propagate the conflict. There is no professional perspective of conflict reporting that is identifying the cause of the conflict, using independent sources and proposing possible solutions for the conflict. Even there is no journalism ethics to give priority for the human side of the story to protect victims.

Unless journalism ethics govern to the minimum level of responsibility, it is obvious that our public media will continue serving the political power, not the society. As Hallin and Mancini

stated “The ethic of public service may be particularly important in the case of journalism, compared with other occupations claiming professional status: because journalism lacks esoteric knowledge, journalists’ claims to autonomy and authority are dependent to a particularly great extent on their claim to serve the public interest” (2004, p.36).

Without those journalism principles and ethics, the media will continue to out loud to the party who owns the media. This is done not only because of the political orientation of the media but also it originates from the journalists’ affiliations to the parties involved in the conflict. Hallin and Mancini (2004) claimed that a journalist, who is affiliated to a political party, frames the news from the perspective of his affiliation. So on behalf of the public media TTV and ETV practices the even below the role of state media concerning the public interest. They ignored the rights of the public to know the truth; even they didn’t report the stories of minorities during conflict to uncover the impacts of the conflict on those minorities.

The deliberate omission, slanting and blurring frame of news stories didn’t change the reality on the ground as anyone can understand from the news coverage of the public media and what happened in Tigray during the November 2020 crises. ETV tried to cover up the ongoing situations there, and TTV tried to pressure the Federal Government to recognize the activities in Tigray and to undermine the activities at the federal level. Finally those narrations end up with military aggression which is the climax of the contestation. It is better to sum up this part based on the analysis done with the critic cited in UNDP document published in 2017, which it says “When editorial coverage is politically aligned it can be used as “proxies in the battle between rival political groups, in the process sowing divisiveness rather than consensus, hate speech instead of sober debate, and suspicion rather than social trust. In these cases, the media can be anti-democratic, contributing to cynicism about government and democratic decay. The public loses confidence in the media and in democratic institutions in general. The result is public apathy and democratic breakdown (p.6).

4.2 recommendations

Based on the research finding here are the recommendations for those who concern the public media of the country.

For ETV

- ✓ Though it needs further research about the independence and autonomy of the editorial leadership, journalist should report an issue that causes violent conflict beforehand. Instead of omitting causes of violence and exaggerating after erupted, it is better to show the development and produce a call for action news stories for the solution. Skjerdal (2020) also showed, echoing the government's attitude, EBC chose to largely ignore the regional elections in Tigray in September 20 (p. 32). This indicates that there is political parallelism in those public media which is a characteristic of partisan state media.
- ✓ Journalists should not repeat political Jargons and words of insults in their news reporting. In content production particularly in news writing adjectives are not advisable to be used unless in rare cases. Particularly during conflict adjectives that demonize the opponent party has a pushing factor or escalates the conflict to the worst situation.
- ✓ ETV should reply for the accusations even on itself, since I didn't find news of defending itself when accused by TTV of miss information about anti locust chemical spray in Tigray and of leveling the organization which is breathing with the lung of the group in Arat Killo or leveled as parrot.

For TTV

- ✓ TTV restarted life without TPLF and started broadcasting content as public media in Tigray Regional State, and I think it represent other regional public media. Previous researches also showed common characteristics of regional public media in which they are in a situation of ethnic polarization (Mulatu, 2019, p.19). So TTV should not focus on divisive issues, should avoid taking only positive thoughts to the in-group and negative thoughts to the out-group.
- ✓ TTV as that of ETV should avoid adjectives that levels individuals, groups and societies in general, and should develop professional practices. At least it should name the PM of the country properly to practice accuracy, credibility, respect etc. as scholars say, personality makes news. "Nationally, the bigger the name, the more likely it is to make news. The more entertainment a station mixes with its news, the more prominently personalities" (Boyd, 2001, p.25).

- ✓ There are news sources other than politicians, so TTV should use independent sources out of the conflicting parties to indicate solution. Boyd also recommended not sticking with politicians. Political comment is cheap and readily available and this type of reaction can be overdone, lead to accusations of political biasUse sparingly (2001, p.34).

For stakeholders

In my literature review I go through d/t articles that indicate the media open-ups and the regulatory shift from state media in to public in the 2018' political reform particularly at federal level. But in my research finding one of those public media, ETV is still propagating the issues of the political majority.

- ✓ So stakeholders, like EMMA, HPR, Scholl of Journalism here in Addis Ababa University and the public media themselves should reexamine the functions of public media than simply calling the public instead of state media.
- ✓ “To use the media for political reform it is better to transform the media themselves before other political and democratic institutions”. This is a recommendation I read in UNDP document that I agree strongly.

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7. Appendix

7.1 ULR Address of TTV of major issues

- Oct.1 Federal media are working for the group in Arat Killo by avoiding their public responsibility <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-abHpTK4Wt8&t=309s>
- Oct. 5 The two houses common meeting is illegal, and the decision they passed will be null and void since the parliamentary period is over <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZijYkEaQry0&t=322s>
- Oct. 8 The action taken by Federal government in cutting Tigray's subsidiary budget will have equivalent reaction from Tigray regional state <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TWBrxmeI9IE&t=305s>
- Oct 18 Tigray police commission inaugurate special commando on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grKQrjqlXi4&t=124s>
- Oct. 25 Unacceptable military reorganization and addition of two commands <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Wd7jLoAnEc&t=100s>
- Nov 5 Ethiopian military north command joins Tigray regional state https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozOJ04_qQKs
- Nov 9 Federal government attacked mekele using air strike , Federal government invaded Tigray-official announcement by President Debretsion, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pa011H51Dyo&t=578s>
- Nov.11 Ertiria crossed crossed Ethiopian boarder to support Abiy in fight against Tigray. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_R3Va4PGZw&t=191s
- Nov.12 Tigray gov't declaired emergency to protect the regional state, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kexlOBFAQpo&t=133s>
- Nov.16 Ethiopian defense force left its mission and brought Derg regime <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3f45cIQ-qI&t=100s>
- Nov 17 Abiy used complicated drone that are not found in Africa to destroy Tigray, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2qwZgYDsJE&t=145s>
- Nov.19 Gebre Gebretsadik the new military speaker started victory announcement <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXqWnbYa7m0&t=89s>
- Nov. 20 Fascist Unconstitutional and unitary Abiy government displaced Tigrians from federal position; we will buried the invader, nations and nationalities must force the federal government for peace deal, Debiretsion, Ethiopia is in a civil war, Awol Allo (PhD), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0w3Vpzog8c&t=226s>

Nov 24. Tigray force destroyed the 21st regiment, which was the well-known regiment in
Ethio-Eritrea boarder conflict.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5JQfT7JZdY&t=46s>

Last episode Dec.1 the unknown personnel speaks victory from the field.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VOA41GdceYw&t=642s>

7.2 ETV news ULR address of major issues

Oct.1(21-01-13) COVID-19 pandemic daily report was given priority ;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1p6574ID1bQ>

Oct.5(25-01-13) The two houses 6th year common meeting, and the speech of the
president <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPZoZdUFWTM>

Oct.8(28-01-13) HPR discussed on different bills and sent to respective standing
committee, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=htJJYFBpg-0&t=34s>

Essayas visited Ethiopia particularly Entoto park and Bishoftu air force base,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8D8Lt3_DK8

Addis Ababa transport problem, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acnrWkXIZLU>

PM Abiy visited south Wollo where locust damage was high and declared 79 % cleared
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VT_CezRZUpE

The inauguration of urban saftinate program lounched,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XhRXzhZRtN8>

Nov.3(24-02-13) HPR asked the gov't to prevent the people from killing based on their
identity, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhKNjw6j-Sg>

Nov.4(25-02-13) We can't tolerate the attack on the military by the extremist denayal
group, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJHksbeuyos>

Nov 10(29-02-13) We deter the expansion of TPLF force, new Assignments was given to
Diputy pm demeke, genral Birhanu, and intelegent director ,Liutnant Bacha
explained the evil act of TPLF
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZaPXnqtNtUw>

Nov.11(02-03-13) Tihineg slaughtered the Micadra civilian,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2WXHIIIE5A>

Nov.12(03-03-13)HPR took the immunity of members and other officials,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OA3jMJO7sfE>

Nov.16(04-03-13) Ethiopia alone can defeat Its enemy and the operation is going well,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOqfARalgMo>

- Nov.17(08-03-13) Demeke started visiting East African nations and confirmed no negotiation with TPLF, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGUc52a7ltc>
- Nov19(10-03-13) PM Abiy discussed with the Tigray Transition Administrator, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_EgUpJ5ITQ
- Nov.21 (11-03-13) Defense force controlled Aksum, Adwa <..\Downloads\ምክት 2 ሰዓት አጣርኛ ዜና...ህዳር 11 2013 ዓ.ም etv.mp4>
- Nov28(19-03-13) defence force controlled Mekele with no major damage, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J35rsQVvTLU>
- Nov29(20-03-13) The operation completed <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hkb7zmJIQt8&t=96s>
- Dec 1(22-03-13), Former director of the intelligent complicated the political change; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHGuFERvcYg>