

THE FRAMING OF POLITICAL PARTIES BY THE ETHIOPIAN PRINT MEDIA IN THE 2010 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

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Abstract

The Ethiopian Media Framing of Political Parties during the 2010 Parliamentary Election

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The main aim of the study was to examine how the Ethiopian print media framed the political parties of the country during the 2010 Parliamentary Election. The research employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches. To conduct the study, three newspapers namely *Addis Zemen*, *Reporter* and *Awramba Times* with a relatively high coverage of domestic politics and larger circulation, and two contending parties-the EPRDF and Medrek-which had seats in the parliament were included in the study. The study included newspapers published within the period of January 15 to May 15, 2010. Results of the study revealed that the government owned newspaper *Addis Zemen* portrayed EPRDF positively, but it portrayed *Medrek* negatively. On the contrary, the privately owned newspapers, *Reporter* (though with some exceptions) and *Awramba Times*, portrayed EPRDF negatively, whereas they portrayed Medrek positively. *Awramba Times* appeared to favor Medrek while *Addis Zemen* seemed in favor of the EPRDF, and this shows that there was biased view in the newspapers which could lead to less informed and more polarized electorate. However, *Reporter* was relatively in a neutral mode. The study also showed that conflict frame, followed by attribution of responsibility and economic consequence frames, was found to be the most manipulated frame. Finally, recommendations for further research were forwarded.

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Acronyms

EPRDF- Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front

EUEOM- European Union Election Observation Mission

ICA- International Communication Association

IES- Institute of Ethiopian studies

PMC- Population Media Center

SJC- School of Journalism and Communication

USA- United States of America

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Media and politics are inseparable. Media favors more sources concerning politicians and political parties involved in policy making and governance of the country. As Tuing and Hasim (2009) noted, parties and politicians are considered to be items of high news value, and politicians need the media for publicity and for informing the people of their activities, specially during an election. Similarly, Black (2006) argued that a symbiotic relationship exists between public officials and the media. The media want information from officials to produce available product, and the officials need the media to distribute their messages to the constituency. According to Ha (2003, p. 11), “without news media, both the voters and political actors cannot even imagine how to participate in and maintain the democratic process.”

Media have a persuasive power on their audience and the effects are illustrated at different levels. The first is change in the attitude, after being exposed to a certain media message over some time, and through time, it leads to changes of behavior, which at a higher stage results in the creation of a behavior that persists over time. Communication is influencing what people buy, how they vote, what they wish and strive for, and how they conduct their daily lives. Companies spend millions of dollars to advertise their products, which indicate that the messages are getting through to the audience bringing back profit. The same principles that are used in persuading people by advertisers can be applied to persuading people to adopt healthy principles and attitudes using the media (Sparks, 2000).

One of the common influential ways that the media shape public opinion, as de Vreese (2005) noted, is by framing events and issues in a particular way. These days, people receive plethora of information about an issue from different directions. When people receive different views on an issue, they choose the information that is consistent with their values or principles. As Scheufele (1999) pointed out, framing changes attitudes by ostensibly altering the underlying considerations used in once evaluation. Similarly, Bernisky and Kinder (2006) noted that frames in communication shape how individuals process and store relevant information and understand politics.

Although framing is a useful concept, it suffers from a lack of clear and coherent definition. Along with this, Halaham (1999) stated that an exhaustive literature search suggests that there are more than 1000 citations about framing in the academic literature. One commonly used definition is that of Entman. According to Entman (1993, p. 51), "Framing is the selection of some aspects of perceived reality and make them salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation". In addition, Gamson and Modigliani (1987, p. 640) said that framing is a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about and the essence of the issue. On the other hand, Chang and Druckman (2007, p. 106) defined framing as the process of organizing everyday reality by providing meaning to unfolding strip of events and promoting particular definition and interpretations of political issues.

Though there are different definitions for a framing concept, most studies of framing have focused on either contents (frames in news, articles, editorials etc) or framing effects. Journalists construct different frames through selection of different story introductions, details,

video clips and story wrap-ups. According to Scheufele (1999), the relationship between President Clinton and former Whitehouse intern has been framed as a story about government corruption, mental corruption and as a sex scandal. Concerning effects, research by de Vreese (2005) has demonstrated that conflict and economic consequence frames have the ability to influence the direction of audiences' thoughts when conceiving contemporary political issues. Similarly, de Vreese and Boomgaarden (2003) argued that frames emphasizing on positive or negative aspects of an issue have the ability to influence public support of policies.

In a broad sense, there are two types of framing: episodic and thematic. Episodic framing depicts public issues in terms of concrete instances or specific events (Iyengar & Simon, 1993, p. 369). Thematic framing, on the other hand, places public issues in some general or abstract context (*ibid*). When we see crime for example, it can be framed episodically covering crime by covering criminal acts and their victims, and it can also be framed thematically discussing the causes of crime or the changes in crime rates and occurrences. Iyengar (1991) noted that subjects shown episodic reports were less likely to consider society responsible for the event, and subjects shown thematic reports were less likely to consider individuals responsible. In one of the clearest demonstrations of this phenomenon, subjects who viewed stories about poverty that featured homeless or unemployed people (episodic framing) were much more likely to blame poverty on individual failings, such as laziness or low education, than were those who instead watched stories about high national rates of unemployment or poverty (thematic framing). Viewers of the thematic frames were more likely to attribute the causes and solutions to governmental policies and other factors beyond the victim's control. In light of the above arguments, media framing is an important area of research that can shed light on media shape audiences' perception of phenomena.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

After the downfall of the Derg regime, two important changes have been introduced to Ethiopia: the free press and multi party system. Though it has constraints (Berger, 2007), the freedom of the press and peaceful political struggle have been assured by the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Consistent with this, research conducted by PMC (2006) argued that the 1991 change of government has been given a unique place in the history of Ethiopian journalism because of two main events. The first one is that pre- published censorship was outlawed, and this led to the publication of different press products. Secondly, press ownership, which had been monopolized by government and the ruling party for many years, was permitted to private citizens with the exclusion of radio and television.

As a result of this, there have been several newspapers that supply social, political, economic and cultural information to the people. These newspapers provide different news, articles and editorial views. For good or bad, these newspapers are believed to influence peoples' perception towards the parties. As Tuing and Hasim (2009, p. 406) noted, "Newspapers are able to downplay or play up a certain issue while portraying the image of politicians and their parties." Furthermore, Gamson (1992) argued that media act as gatekeepers, supporters and interpreters by deciding selectively to do coverage on the side of one party or all parties on certain issues, giving them their own interpretation and greater coverage to certain issue compared to other issues.

This being the case, however, very little is known about how the print media have been framing political parties during elections in Ethiopia. As a step towards filling this gap, this study set out to examine the print media's framing of political parties during the 2010 Ethiopian parliamentary election.

1.3 Objective of the Study

1.3.1 General objective

The general objective of the study was to examine how the print media in Ethiopia framed the political parties in the 2010 parliamentary election.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

Specifically, the study was meant:

to look at the extent of the coverage of the print media in terms of frequency.

to identify themes of the stories and their significance.

to analyze what frames the selected print media used in reporting the issues.

1.4 Research Questions

The study posed the following research questions:

- How did the selected newspapers portray the political parties during the 2010 Parliamentary Election?
- What type of frames did the selected newspapers often use in portraying the political parties during the 2010 Parliamentary Election?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study would shed some light on the manner in which the print media cast political parties during the 2010 parliamentary election. The output of the study will be of paramount importance for the media organizations in terms of learning their strengths and weaknesses in portraying political parties. It would also help political parties to examine and

evaluate how they were being framed and use the insights in order to boost their future performance.

Last, but not least, the study would serve as a stepping stone for others who might be interested in exploring media's coverage of politics in the future.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

Owing to constraints, such as time, resources, and research experience, the study was limited to a few selected print media outlets, and, hence, the broadcasting media as well as a significant number of print media outlets were out of the scope of the study. As a result, the findings of the study would have limited generalizability, and, hence, they should be used with caution.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Related Literature

2.8 Historical Development of Print Media in Ethiopia

Ethiopians have a very long history of literature, and it has served as a principal medium for the transmission of information to the people. For instance, different scripts of stone and other materials, written before and during the Aksumite Kingdom in Sabian and Geez languages, were found by archeologists. Concerning this, Markakis (1974) noted that traditional Ethiopia was a literate society, possessing its own highly developed written language and body of literature, comprising religious and historical works. Though the art was practiced mainly by the clergy, it was not unknown among the nobility and was utilized in the administration of the state.

After the down fall of the Aksumite Kingdom, Ethiopian literature had shown a decline, but it began to revive in 1310's again, and the period between 1314 and 1344 become to be known as a literary Renaissance in Ethiopia: the 15th century was the flowering and culminating point in Ethiopic/Geez literary activity (Ullendorf, 1960, cited in PMC, 2006). In this period, different spiritual books were translated into Geez, and different books such as liturgical prayers of *Duggua*, the *Arganone Mariam Dinghil*, some stories of St. Mary's Miracles and *Annales Regum* were also written.

The printing of Ethiopian works in Europe dates back to the century that saw the invention of printing. Mathew (1947) has noted that the book of Psalm and the Song of Songs and the New Testament were translated into Geez and published in the years 1513 and 1548, respectively.

In 1863, the first printing press was introduced to Ethiopia, as well as East Africa, by a missionary called Lorenzo Biancheri. It was a small printing press and a sort of Amharic type cart,

and he began to publish an Amharic catechism. In 1879, another printing effort was made at *Keren*, and an Amharic-Geez grammar was printed by Lazaretto missionaries.

Emperor Menelik II, the father of modernization in Ethiopia, was interested in developing modern communication. Rail way, telephone, road construction, electricity, modern transportation etc. were first introduced by the Emperor. Especially after the battle of Adwa, his interest of communication, including newspapers, rose, but he couldn't do what he had planned to do due to various problems (Tadesse, undated).

Before the advent of modern mass communication, news was first made public by an '*Awaj Negari*' (announcer) stationed in towers of a town or in a relatively elevated area. Modern mass communication began in 1890 with a bulletin *de la Leproserie de Harrar*, which was published in *Harrar* in Amharic and French languages. The main purpose of this paper was to help the campaign against leprosy. It continued until 1905, and it changed its title to *Le Semeur d'Ethiope* which means 'the sewer of Ethiopia' (PMC, 2006).

Some historical evidences suggest that the first Amharic newspaper, if one can call it so, is a handwritten sheet produced by an Eritrean patriot by the name *Blata Gebre Egziabher* around 1900. Fifty copies of his newspaper were printed, and the paper emphasized the need for unity, strength, and it aroused considerable interest in court circles. Two years later, in 1902, the first real Amharic newspaper, '*Aemro*', was issued by a Greek business man Andreas E. Kovadia. It was published weekly with 25 copies, but later it rose to 200 copies.

In 1921, Teferi Mekonen founded a printing press in *Genete Leul* palace, which is now the campus of the Addis Ababa University. This was named as Teferi Mekonen Press, but later it was changed to *Berhanena Selam* Printing Press, which is still functioning. At that time *Aemro* was

under publication, and another weekly French newspaper, '*Courier d' Ethiopie*' was being published.

2.1. The Practice of Mass Media during Three Ethiopian Regimes

2.1.1. Monarchy/ Emperor Haile Slassie I

Haileslassie I showed interest in the establishment of a printing press as well as the publication of newspapers and educational materials. During World War I, with the help of the allied powers, he disseminated the news to counter the German propaganda through an Amharic newspaper called '*Yetor Wore*' (War News). *Berhanena Selam* an Amharic newspaper was also founded in 1923 with a circulation of 500 copies, and the first monthly magazine consisting of different European Languages, and an Amharic section was founded by Mr. Weizinger.

Until the invasion of Italy, many small hand presses continued to be imported from various countries of Europe. The government press published at least 30 books in Amharic. '*L' Ethiopie Commerciale*, a French business weekly, was established in 1932. In 1935 two newspapers were established, a quarterly *Kasate Birhan* (The Light Giver) and a political weekly *Atibiya Kokeb* (The Morning Star) but it was short-lived.

During the Italian invasion the printing facilities went out of order and it took some time to restart it after the liberation. However, a number of weeklies, monthlies and periodicals started being published in Addis Ababa and Asmara. As a result, Newspapers such as *Addis Zemen*, and *Sendek Alamachen* were launched in 1941. Publication of other two popular papers, the *Ethiopian Herald* and *Yezareyitu Ethiopia* was started in the subsequent years. At this point the traditional means of message dissemination to the masses, drum (*Negarit*) beating and verbal shouting (*Awajj*), was totally replaced by newspapers. In 1942, an official *Negarit Gazetha* was

founded. What should not be forgotten here is that there was an attempt to begin a private press. The first private newspaper called *Ye Ethiopia dimts* was begun in 1950. But, due to some internal problems and impositions made by officials of the monarchy, it couldn't stay long (PMC, 2006).

During the monarchical regime, information was transferred from the king or the ruling class to the people, and running the mass media in general was the responsibility and function of the government. The main purpose of most of the newspapers, radio and television was to eulogize the monarchical rule, praise the Emperor and tell his greatness, kindness, wisdom, leadership, and his unparalleled benevolent rule.

2.1.2. **Military Government /Derg**

A military group, the Derg, took power from Emperor Hailelassie in September 1974 and arrested him. The Derg member, Colonel Mengistu HaileMariam, established his own leadership within that organization in February 1977. Following this, Mengistu declared himself chairman, and began his military rule in 1977. During his 17- year rule, the government-and party-owned publications such as *Meskerem* (September), *Serto Ader* (Worker), and the pre-Derg *Yezareyitu Ethiopia* (Ethiopia Today) were published in addition to the previously mentioned *Addis Zemen* and the *Ethiopian Herald*. The establishment of private media was legally prohibited. In addition to this the Ethiopian radio and Television also continued providing service for the regime.

The Derg was following the Soviet / Communist Media theory which was derived from the ideologies of Marx and Engels which advanced the notion that "the ideas of the ruling classes are the ruling ideas". All media were under strong control of the government. Their main

purpose was to mobilize the society to strength unity and stand for the development of the country under the umbrella of communism.

2.1.3. FDRE Government

After EPRDF came to power, the media history underwent a significant change. This period could be termed as the flowering point of the Ethiopian media, especially the private media. According to research work by PMC (2006), the 1991 change of government has been given a unique place in the history of Ethiopian journalism because of two main events. The first one is that pre- published censorship was outlawed, and this led to the publication of different presses. Secondly, press ownership, which had been monopolized by government and the ruling party for many years, was permitted to private citizens with the exclusion of radio and television.

The Ethiopian publishing industry mushroomed after the Press Bill of 1992. As Gebremedhin (2006) noted, Private-sector ownership and control has risen in the print sector in recent years, but the radio and TV sectors are still state/ party-dominated. Though there are differences in figures, according to the Ministry of Information, the Department of Press License and Supervision, 760 publications were registered between October 1992 and February 2005, of which 630 were newspapers and 130 were magazines. At any given time, there were probably about 20 different newspapers for sale in the capital, Addis Ababa.

Although the numbers vary from time to time, about eighty newspapers, on average were published and circulated monthly. For instance, in February 2005, about eighty three newspapers were published. According to the Department, among these newspapers, five belonged to the government, four were political party papers, eight were owned by religious institutions, and the remaining sixty-six were published by private individuals. The distribution

of the most read newspapers, *Reporter* (9,767 copies), *Tobia* (2,325 copies), *Et'op* (1,280 copies), *Menelik* (10,875 copies), *Addis Zena* (2,050 copies), *Nation* (6,250 copies), *Addis Admas* (31,000 copies), continued until the government took measure against members of Coalition for Unity and Democracy Party(CUD) and other journalists, following the disputed election of 2005. In fact, newspapers such as *Reporter* and *Addis Admas* are still in print.

After the election and the crackdown that followed it, nascent of media development environment began to deteriorate. A number of journalists, together with the opposition party leaders, were arrested for allegedly undermining the constitutional order, and the publication of the newspapers cease; only a limited number of newspapers were allowed to continue publishing without interruption (Ishiyama, 2007).

According to the 2008 Freedom House report, conditions for press freedom in Ethiopia improved slightly in 2007. During 2007, in advance of the year long celebrations planned to mark the new millennium as per the Ethiopian orthodox calendar, the government released political prisoners and journalists and re-activated the text messaging service that had been shut down after the November 2005 post-election crackdown. In practice, however, press freedom remained limited in 2007, and there were no notable new entrants into the media market to increase diversity. In addition, the government is still shutting down newspapers which have relatively wider acceptance from the public. Fearing the 2010 election, as the organization supposed, a very influential newspaper, *Addis Neger* was closed down by the government, but the government denies the accusation, and said that the owners of the newspaper stopped the business due to lack of profit.

Generally, it can be concluded that with some exceptions in the reign of the EPRDF, successive governments in Ethiopia have muzzled the media. The history of mass media in Ethiopia

demonstrated that the practice of journalism has been greatly shaped by the needs and interests of governments in power, who used the mass media to impose their ideological orientations (Shimelis, 2000).

2.2. The State of Ethiopian Media Today

Media is a very important and powerful tool that governs the direction of a society today. As David and Berman (1981) put it, media inform people and develop public understanding of events. For Mefalopulos (2008), media is used to persuade people to achieve, maintain, and strengthen development goals. Recent literature highlights the fact that independent media is important for the quality of governance. Free and competitive media promote accountability of elected politicians (Lacrinese et al., 2007, Puglisi and Snyder, 2008) while uninformative media prevent accountability mechanisms from working (Besley and Prat, 2006, Besley and Burgess, 2002 cited in Petrova, 2009).

In spite of the above argument, media are being misused in Africa. According to Kasoma (1997:299, cited in Gudeta, 2008), the rate of truth telling in Africa's newspapers, particularly those behaving as political oppositions, is extremely low. The newspapers are full of exaggeration; basing their reports on flimsy hear-say; making headlines cry 'wolf'; quoting sources out of context; not giving people against whom allegations are made a fair hearing.

Despite its importance, media has been monopolized by the government from its beginning in Ethiopia, and there was a belief that only the government media can bring change in the society. It was in 1991 that the establishment of private media became evident. In Ethiopia the private press began to appear after the downfall of the Derg Military regime and the introduction of the press legislation in 1992. Prior to this period, the imperial and military regimes did not allow the operation of the private press in the country. The government was the sole owner of the means

of public information and used the media to extend its power and legitimacy, to control the population, and to stifle public awareness (Desalegn and Meheret, 2004).

Similar to this, different studies suggest that there is a partisan posture in the Ethiopian media. Gebremedhin (2006) pointed out that pluralism of views is developing and was evident during the May 2005 elections, particularly in the print sector. However, there was a noticeable partisan tendency in newspapers, with private papers promoting opposition groups and state papers predictably supporting the government. Similarly, Gudeta (2008) is of the opinion that the practice of the profession in Ethiopia indicates that there are irresponsible journalists who do not contribute to the welfare of the society. Some of the private newspapers appear to develop habit of merely opposing the government's policies without putting forward alternative policy options. The agenda set by such newspapers are not predicated upon the public interest; rather they are loaded with certain selfish political or other interests. Such practice was also common in the 1994 Rwanda genocide. In such instances, the media have contributed to aggravate the ethnic conflict instead of mitigating the conflict. These problems are observed not only in the private media but also in the government media. In this regard, Gudeta (2008:9) added,

There was a north-south dichotomy in the press. Some of the private presses were serving as a mouthpiece for certain opposition political parties while others were highly affiliated with the incumbent government. Still others were established to promote parochial ethnic politics. The government press was also serving as a conduit to the government propaganda.

Similarly, report by SJC (2005, cited in Berhanu, 2009) commented that the public print media were highly favorable towards EPRDF and critical to opposition parties while the private print

media were highly critical of the EPRDF and its activities and pro opposition parties standing for election.

2.2.1. Challenges of the Press

The press in Ethiopia is suffering from a number of problems. Researchers have identified different reasons for the problem, but the main ones can be categorized into three: government, economy and profession related problems.

2.2.1.1. Politics-Related Problems

Different studies affirmed that government actions and laws are the main obstacle for the practice of press in Ethiopia. Though the incumbent government has liberalized the media (Desalegn and Meheret, 2004, Gudeta, 2008), the later laws and practices became impediment for the media.

One manifestation of this is media related laws and proclamations. According to Tracy (2010), the aim of the Freedom of the Press and Access to Information Proclamation is to suppress the mobilizations and criticisms against the government. Similarly, Amare Aregawi, the owner of *the Reporter* Newspaper, said that the different articles, such as defamation, access to information, etc, the law are inhibiting the free press. According to him, in addition to the media laws, other laws like Anti corruption Law and the Election Law are dangerous for the development of the press and freedom of expression. He added that one article of the draft Election Law, for example, stipulated that media cannot inform the public about a democratic election without the permission of the Electoral Board; he wondered, how one can say there is freedom of speech and access to information when the media is not able to inform the people (cited in Muller-Scoll, 2009). Kifle Mulat, former chairperson of the Ethiopian Free Journalists'

Association, alleges that the 1992 repressive press law that severely punished these flourishing press products under the guise of defamation, dissemination of false information and threat to national security has contributed to the disappearance of some press products (speech by Kifle Mulat, October 21, 2003 cited in Gudeta, 2008). Despite this allegation, there is a broad agreement, especially among people in the media, that the press law of 1992 has opened the door to the growth of the private press in the country (Shimeles, 2000).

Yasha (1999) noted that state-owned newspapers have been required to observe the principles of equality in their reporting of campaigns. If the funding is secured from public sources, the concurrent obligation to represent the views of the public as a whole is justifiable. But in Ethiopia, it is the opposite. As Loukeris (2004) explained, the public media is fully controlled by the government. Absolute control of electronic media and some control of written press is the most serious problem for Ethiopian politics.

Another politics- related challenge is restrictions imposed by government officials. As stated in some research works, the government is often observed while indirectly restricting the contents of newspapers and taking actions against journalists. The government of Ethiopia is quite intolerant to criticism and had frequently imposed restrictions on the country's private media (Ishiyama, 2007).

2.2.1.2. Economic problems

Economy is another challenge for the Ethiopian press, specially the private press. Most of the newspapers have limited circulation; this emanates from low income and high poverty level of the country. Gebremedhin (2006) noted that high poverty levels, low reading levels and the high cost of distribution outside the capital Addis Ababa have not produced a climate conducive to investment and growth in the media.

Higher profits from advertising allow newspapers to break their alliance with political parties and to declare themselves independent (Petrova, 2009), but Ethiopian newspapers are suffering from lack of advertisers. Gebremedhin (2006) stated that low advertisement base is one of the problems the print media is facing. In addition to the above problems, the ever increasing publishing price and stationery materials is challenging the print media in Ethiopia. According to Shimeles, (2000), a large number of papers went out market due to competition, limited sales and low levels of advertising revenue.

2.2.1.3. Professional Problems

The primary purpose of the media is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self governing (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2006). The duty of journalists is working towards the attainment of this purpose of the media. They should provide fair, balanced and accurate information that helps the people to make choices on their daily life. To do so, there are ethical considerations and principles that should be practiced by journalists.

Journalists in Ethiopia, both in private and in state owned, media are observed violating the ethics and principles of journalism. The practice of the profession in Ethiopia indicates that there are irresponsible journalists who do not contribute to the welfare of the society (Gudeta, 2008). Journalists of the state owned media magnify the speeches of government officials neglecting their responsibility of providing balanced information to the public. According to Nebyu (2008), journalists do this mainly for political reasons: fear of bosses, editors and government officials. Some of the private presses in Ethiopia, too, do not adhere to the fundamental principles of journalistic ethics. The main categories of ethical breaches by the private press are thought to be related to inaccuracy, imbalance, partiality and misrepresentation. There are private presses that serve as a mouthpiece for certain political

parties; however, the public usually question the independence of state-owned presses (Gudeta, 2008).

2.3. The Influence of the Media

Media has a persuasive power on its audience and the effects are illustrated at different levels. The first is change in the attitude. After being exposed to a certain media message over some time and through time, it leads to changes of behavior, which at a higher stage results in the creation of a behavior that persists over time. Communication is influencing what people buy, how they vote, what they wish and strive for, and how they conduct their daily lives. Companies spend millions of dollars to advertise their products indicating the messages are getting through to the audience bringing back profit it works. The same principles that are used in persuading people by advertisers can be applied to persuade people to adopt healthy principles and attitudes using the media (Sparks, 2000).

McCombs & Shaw conducted a content analysis of several types of news media and discovered a direct correlation between the amount of news coverage of a particular issue and the amount of importance placed on that issue by the public (Baran & Davis, 1972 cited in Cramer, 2008). This study differed from prior studies in that it concentrated more on information transmission – what people learn from news stories – as opposed to attitude change, which had been the focus of earlier studies. McCombs & Shaw (1972) pointed out that mass media has the ability to mentally order and organize our world for us.

White (1972) puts the power of mass media more noticeably. According to him, the power of the press in America is a primordial one. It sets the agenda for public discussion; and this sweeping political power is unrestrained by any law. It determines

what people will talk and think about an authority. Similarly, it is widely accepted that what we know about, think about and believe about what happens in the world, outside of personal first-hand experience, is shaped, and some would say, orchestrated, by how these events are reported in newspapers and communicated through the mass media. This view of the influence of the media is elaborated in Cultivation Theory which posits that mass media has the power to influence our view of the world and it is “primarily responsible for our perceptions of day-to-day norms and reality” (Infante et al, 1997 cited in Fields, 2005). Many commentators attribute enormous power to the news media claiming that they have the ability to move and shake governments (Cohen, 1994 cited in Robinson, 2001).

2.4. Media and Politics

Media and politics are two sides of the same coin. Cook (1998) defined media as a political institution that plays an important role in politics along with many other institutions. Media favors more sources concerning politicians and political parties involved in policy making and governance of the country which directly involve public interest. As elections are the cornerstone of any politics, the media has a vital role in informing the public about what the politicians are promising, in telling the politicians what ordinary people want, or do not want, and in ensuring that the polls are “free and fair”. This is particularly important in countries lacking a solid background of democratic rule. According to Black (2006), a symbiotic relationship exists between public officials and the media. The media want information from officials to produce available product, and the officials need the media to distribute their messages to the constituency. According to Ha (2003), without news media, both the voters and political actors cannot even imagine how to participate in and maintain the democratic process.

Literatures on the relationship between media effects and political participation vary considerably. Many argue that the effect of media use is negative. Scholars, both in the U.S. and in Europe, cite a variety of reasons for coverage that leads to low voter turnout, apathy and social disengagement. George Gerbner and his colleagues (1980) argue that the media's flow of bad news (and its increasing consumption) creates a fearful and untrusting public. Others view the negative, strategy-focused and cynical presentation of political communication as failing the requirement of democratic government (Entman, 1989). Yet, a growing number of studies show that media use is positively related to higher levels of political knowledge and participation (Brynin & Newton, 2003, Clarke & Fredin, 1978, McLeod et al, 1999, 1998, Pinkleton & Austin, 2001 cited in Peer, et al, 2003).

An extensive literature review and a large-scale comparative study led Norris (2000) to argue that there is no conclusive evidence of a negative relationship between media use and political participation, let alone a clear causal link between them. On the contrary, she finds evidence to support her theory that active, involved people attend to the news media and are more likely to be affected by the media than others (cited in Peer, et al, 2003). Iyengar (2005) also noted that strategic political communication is pivotal to election outcomes. The party more capable of integrating issues with values and the candidate with the sound bite that more intuitively evokes the triggering metaphor for the appropriate value system wins.

In media politics, there are three principal actors: politicians, journalists, and citizens, and these actors have quite different goals. For politicians, the goal of media politics is to use mass communication to mobilize the public support they need to win elections and to get their programs enacted while in office. For journalists, the goal of media politics is to produce stories that attract big audiences and that emphasize the "Independent and Significant Voice of

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

According to Zaller (1999), producers are more likely to organize to get what they want out of government than consumers; reporters too reflect the political biases of their publishers but do not otherwise affect the political process. It was alleged that Berlusconi, who became Italy’s prime minister in 2001, has benefited in that he was the country’s largest media magnate. The concern raised involved how he might utilize his vast media holdings to slant news in ways favorable to his administration. As stated in Sterling (2009), some critics argued that this was the kind of integration of political power with media ownership that is a fundamental conflict of interest. Rupert Murdoch, media magnate whose business holdings include newspapers, magazines, television stations and news services, also has been frequently criticized for utilizing his control of a wide range of media outlets both in the United States and abroad to advance his conservative political agenda. Murdoch’s Fox News cable channel has, in recent years, received much criticism for advancing his conservative agenda, and thus, providing a distorted picture of the war in Iraq to foster support for the war effort (ibid).

Different media are accused of being biased towards or against certain political parties or individuals. Since journalists are human beings, they may have interests and, hence, might favor whom they think would advance their interests. Semetko (2008) noted that Journalists facing multi-candidate fields in presidential primaries routinely limit their coverage to two or three contenders that they think voters are most likely to favor. For instance, The Guardian (pro-Labour) attacked Tony Blair for being too vague and going too far to win over Conservative voters with promises not to raise taxes. The Daily Telegraph (pro-Conservative) attacked John Major for not being eurosceptic enough (Yasha, 1999). In Russia, for instance, the state-owned

newspapers Rossiiskaya Gazeta and Rossiiskie vesti (the organs of the Russian government and presidency, respectively) heavily supported President Boris Yeltsin during the 1996 campaign. (ibid).

2.5. Framing Theory

2.5.1. Definition

An analytical technique of framing was developed by social psychologists (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1991; Gitlin, 1980) to study and explain the role of the news media in defining issues for the public. Several studies suggested that the concept of 'framing' is now more or less established as a field in mass communication studies.

Although framing is a useful concept, it has become difficult to provide a clear and coherent definition. According to Kirk Halaham (1999), an exhaustive literature search suggests that there are more than 1000 citations about framing in the academic literature. One commonly used definition is that of Entman (1991). He defined framing as the selection of some aspects of perceived reality and make them salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation. According to him, frames are an information-processing schema that operates by selecting and highlighting some features of reality while omitting others (Entman, 1993). Gitlin (1980) defines media frames as "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual". In addition, Gamson and Modigliani said that framing is a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about and the essence of the issue (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987: 640). Another familiar definition is

Chang and Druckman's definition. They defined framing as the process of organizing everyday reality by providing meaning to unfolding strip of events and promoting particular definition and interpretations of political issues (Chang and Druckman, 2007: 106). For McGrath (2002), framing devices are operative, whether consciously or unconsciously, in the media reporting of unions, feminism, environmentalism, antiracism, lesbian and gay activism, and most certainly anti-globalization protests.

Though there are different definitions for a framing concept, most studies of framing have focused on either contents (frames in news, articles, editorials etc) or framing effects.

2.5.2. Framing as Practice

Framing practices are observed by studying the social organization of the news and by analyzing the linguistic and rhetorical organization of journalistic texts. The underlying implication of the frame concept is that a story has more than one way of being told and that editorial decisions affect the way reality is transferred from its actual occurrence to its symbolic representation in the news. Journalists collect a body of facts relating to an event or series of events, and they are then required to digest considerable factual information and incorporate it into fairly short news stories by choosing which elements to tell and deciding how to tell them. Reducing news occurrences into narrow frames allows journalists to deliver the news efficiently to their audience. The efficiency of framing has to do with not only brevity but also with the use of words and concepts that are already familiar to the audience and established in use. Otherwise, journalists would have to introduce and explain each occurrence they report without assuming prior knowledge by their audience. As a result, Sterling (2009) notes, journalists are less likely to frame the news in a manner that challenges their audience's pre-existing beliefs. The news media frame news by stressing certain aspects of issues or people on which they report while

de-emphasizing others. They may choose to cover a new presidential initiative by emphasizing its merits and shortcomings, or discussing it as an election gimmick. Either approach may be justified, but the way in which the story is told (the policy-frame or the gimmick-frame) becomes socially important, since it can affect the way the public will consider this policy.

2.5.3. Framing as Effect

The expectation for framing effects is premised on the notion that frames are likely to shape the way people think about issues, persons, and events. This effect can be driven at times by choices of particular words, which activate distinct and predictable ways of thinking. The workings of this process are best understood through psychological studies, dating to the 1970s, which are the foundation for the study of framing effects. Economists, Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, (cited in Sterling, 2009), observed how seemingly minor changes in wording can bring impact on people's support for policy choices. Famously, they found that people would prefer a program where 200 out of 600 people might be saved as opposed to one in which there is a one-third probability that all 600 will live but a two-thirds probability that no one will be saved. Even though the prediction for lives saved were mathematically equal, the way in which the options were worded, emphasizing risk or gain, activated biases that are inherent to human nature. In this case, the bias was against risk. Since people are, by and large, risk averse, they will likely oppose political candidates that are framed as more risky, even where the facts may not back this estimate of risk. Along the same lines, health information can affect behaviors differently when it centers on avoiding loss rather than on possible gains as well. For example, young women exposed to information about breast cancer were found more likely to conduct breast self-examinations when provided with negatively framed information, which emphasized the risks of not doing so, than when presented with the benefits of such action (Sterling, 2009).

The receiving end of the framing effect is the individual exposed to the news media message. For the effect to take place, the media frame needs to activate pre-existing mental “nodes,” or pre-existing frames, through which the person receiving the message might think about the world, such as risk and gain. Such pre-existing frames of thought are called “schemas” (Scheufele, 1999). Media frames make certain schemas more accessible to the receiver, which means the way the story is told becomes the way in which the individual thinks about the issue discussed.

The evidence for framing indicates that editorial decisions about which terms to use in a news story, which attributes of a person or an issue to highlight, and what social values to invoke can impact the audience’s opinions. These decisions are not necessarily deliberate, but they can be of great consequence.

2.5.4. Types of Frames

In a broad sense, there are two types of framing: episodic and thematic. Episodic framing depicts public issues in terms of concrete instances or specific events (Iyengar & Simon, 1993, p. 369). Thematic framing, on the other hand, places public issues in some general or abstract context (Iyengar & Simon, 1993, p. 369). When we see crime for example, it can be framed episodically covering crime by covering criminal acts and their victims, and it can also be framed thematically discussing the causes of crime or the changes in crime rates and occurrences. Iyengar (1991) found that subjects shown episodic reports were less likely to consider society responsible for the event, and subjects shown thematic reports were less likely to consider individuals responsible. In one of the clearest demonstrations of this phenomenon, subjects who viewed stories about poverty that featured homeless or unemployed people (episodic framing) were much more likely to blame poverty on individual failings, such as laziness or low

education, than were those who instead watched stories about high national rates of unemployment or poverty (thematic framing). Viewers of the thematic frames were more likely to attribute the causes and solutions to governmental policies and other factors beyond the victim's control (*Ibid*).

Communication researchers, in their part, have identified two distinct types of media framing effects: equivalency framing and emphasis framing. Equivalency framing, derived from the experiments described above, involves “the use of different, but logically equivalent, words or phrases” to describe the same phenomenon while emphasis framing involves highlighting a particular “subset of potentially relevant considerations” (Druckman, 2001, cited in Iyengar, 2005).

Based on previous studies, as cited in Ann and Gower (2009), Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) analyzed five national newspapers and television news stories in the period surrounding the Amsterdam meeting of European heads of state in 1997 and identified five news frames in order of predominance: attribution of responsibility, conflict, economic, human interest, and morality. In addition to the above, Sterling (2009) added two frames, Strategy and Issue Framing and Attribute Framing, which are common in political communication.

2.5.4.1. Value/ Morality Framing

This frame puts the event, problem, or issue in the context of morals, social prescriptions, and religious views. Neuman et al. (1992) found that the morality frame was commonly used by journalists indirectly through quotations or inference, rather than directly because of the journalistic norm of objectivity.

Media coverage can affect the types of moral, religious, or social values that people apply when processing a news story. When news reports stress values such as honesty or discuss which candidate can be an agent of change, they are also framing these criteria as central to the audience. Framing occurs through the salience afforded to different values and by subtle linguistic differences that favor one value or another (Sterling 2009).

Value-framing research often finds that framing is dependent on individuals' predisposition, suggesting that framing is not inevitable. One experiment found that people's support for national security policies is affected differently when the story's wording centers on individuals impacted by the policy than when it focused on groups (thematic). Media framing in this case affected the type of values (national security or individual rights) activated by the individuals in conjunction with their own ideological leanings. Liberals were more likely to be affected by the individual rights frame than conservatives, while the national security frame affected conservatives more than liberals (Sterling 2009).

2.5.4.2. Conflict Frame

The conflict frame is used in such away as to reflect conflict and disagreement among individuals, groups, or organizations. Neuman et al. (1992) found that conflict was commonly used by U.S. news media. In the Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) study, the conflict frame was the second most common frame, and the more serious the newspaper, the more the conflict frame was in evidence.

2.5.4.3. Human interest frame

This frame “brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). In crisis situations, the frame stimulates the psychological pulse of people, which ultimately leads them to a more negative attitude toward the crisis (Padin, 2005 cited in Ana and Gower, 2009). According to research work by Bruktawit (2008), human interest was the frequently used type of frame by the Ethiopian print media while reporting gender violence.

2.5.4.4. Attribute Framing

The study of attribute framing (sometimes called “second-level agenda setting”) demonstrates how news media emphasis on particular characteristics of an issue or a person can affect attitudes. When a desirable attribute of an object is stressed, it will lead people to think about it more positively than when an undesirable feature is emphasized. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that research has found that people prefer beef that is 75 percent lean to that which is 25 percent fat even though it is exactly the same product. Simply put, the label attached to an object, meaning whether it is good or bad, affects the way people think about it, no matter what its actual qualities are. In electoral campaigns, attribute framing refers to those characteristics of public figures that are made salient for prospective voters. For example, the coverage of Al Gore during the 2000 presidential campaign was centered on his perceived tendency to exaggerate. This became the frame through which the public came to view him. To the extent that this was perceived as a negative attribute, voters were less likely to support him. In this manner, the news media can frame candidates by the emphases they put on candidate traits. Since political reporting tends to center on candidates’ shortcomings, attribute framing

can affect not only the way people think about particular candidates; persistent framing of negative attributes can foster negative outlooks on political life as a whole.

2.5.4.5. Economic Frame

This frame reports an event, problem, or issue in terms of the consequences it will have economically on an individual, groups, organizations, or countries. Neuman et al. (1992), cited in Ana and Gower (2009), identified it as a common frame in the news. The wide impact of an event is an important news value, and economic consequences are often considerable (Graber, 1993). Economic frame, which was totally ignored in *Polis na Ermijaw*, is the least employed type of frame by the Ethiopian print media while reporting gender violence (Bruktawit, 2008).

2.5.4.6. Attribution of Responsibility Frame

This frame is defined as “a way of attributing responsibility for a cause or solution to either the government or to an individual or group” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) also found that the attribution of responsibility frame was most commonly used in serious newspapers (cited in Ana and Gower, 2009).

A long-standing body of research illustrates how the framing of news stories affects the way people attribute responsibility for various social problems. Consider two ways of discussing a problem such as homelessness. Stories may provide straightforward facts and figures as to the underlying cause of this problem, such as an economic downturn. Or news organizations may choose to personalize a story, as they often do, by centering on the individuals affected by homelessness in order to illustrate the issue. Political communication researcher Shanto Iyengar’s experiments found that viewers exposed to a problem through the travails of particular victims (“episodic framing”) are more likely to attribute responsibility to dispositional

or individualist factors, while stories that focus on the problem itself (“thematic framing”) are more likely to lead viewers to fault systemic factors and ultimately the government. As a result, this difference in media framing has undeniable political implications (Iyengar, 1991).

2.5.4.7. Strategy and Issue Frame

In the course of political campaigns, candidates make countless speeches, issue numerous position statements, and offer a set of policies and promises for the voters. Political news coverage, however, often seems more interested in “horse race” matters such as poll standings and tactical strategy by the candidates. Communications researchers Joseph Cappella and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (2003) studied the effects of these two types of frames (“issue” and “strategy”) on people’s sense of political trust. Experiments they conducted revealed that when people watch politics discussed through the strategy frame, they express higher levels of political cynicism, or distrust, than when the campaign is discussed by focusing on the issues at hand (cited on Sterling, 2009).

2.6. Framing and Individual Factors

People tend to process information in accordance with their pre-existing outlooks, rather than by invariably reacting to new information as it is transmitted to them. At times, individuals may resist or ignore this new information and they will tend to see, understand, and remember things as they always have. Therefore, media effects, such as framing, may be conditional on the extent to which a frame is compatible with individuals’ pre-existing knowledge structures and with the prevailing beliefs in a given culture. Some frames may simply not be registered with their audience. The less congruent the media frame is with an individual’s schemas, the lesser the likelihood of frame transfer (Sterling 2009).

Framing research does not assume automatic frame transfer. This is evident in a study that exposed participants to political messages that were focused on either candidate traits or the issues. As framing theory would predict, those in the trait frame condition expressed more thoughts about candidate traits than those in the issue-frame condition and vice versa. However, the effects were particularly strong for those who were more likely to think that way to begin with: people who thought traits were most important ("trait schematics") in politics were more affected by the trait frame than the issue schematics while those who considered issues most important were more affected by the issue frame than the trait schematics. In this way, framing reinforces existing conceptions (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996).

Most of the researches on framing discussed above took place in lab settings that do not amount to an exact replication of the way people actually receive media messages. Some scholars have demonstrated that framing effects are short lived and may dissipate quickly, especially if people discuss the media messages with others, who may have different viewpoints.

The fact that framing may be conditioned by individual factors as well as by the setting in which the message is received should not, however, diminish framing's importance. There is an overwhelming body of evidence that indicates that how a story is told can have a significant effect on how broader social concepts and central political figures are considered by the public. In some cases, the way news media frame a story can affect not only opinions but also actions and behaviors; that is why Knight (1999) said "Frames are powerful mechanisms that can help define and solve problems and shape public opinion" (cited in An and Gower 2009: 107).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1. Research Method

In this study, mixed research method was employed as the main research method. Zoltan Dornyei (2007) noted that mixed research method helps to reduce the inherent weaknesses of individual methods, qualitative and quantitative, by compensating them with the strength of the other. The quantitative approach was used to quantify frequency of coverage, tone, themes, the type of frames and sources of information used by the newspapers, whereas the qualitative approach was used to interpret themes, words and expressions (idioms, metaphors and proverbs) of the texts written on the issues related to the political parties.

3.2. Method of Data Collection

Content Analysis

This study used content analysis techniques. As mentioned earlier, the research used a mixed research method. Therefore, both quantitative content analysis and qualitative content (textual analysis) were employed. Weber (1990 as cited in Zhang and Wildemuth, undated) pointed out that the best content analysis studies use both qualitative and quantitative operations.

The content analysis aspect is based on the news source, focuses on the news text concept, written script, discussed theme and structure. Generally, content analysis is a method to collect and analyze data on media contents such as topics or issues, frequencies, messages determined by key words, circulation and media type.

Content analysis has been long used in communication studies and could be detected through Lasswell's examination of propaganda in 1927 (Wimmer and Dominick, 2010). Neuman, Marion

and Ann (1992) also explained that content analysis is a technique to collect and analyze text content where the content mentioned consists of words, meaning, picture, symbol, idea, theme or any message that could be used in communication. The Neuendorf (2002 cited in Vreese, 2005) defined media content analysis as a way to shorten and analyze quantitative message through scientific method.

Different scholars have said different things about media content analysis. Shoemaker and Reese (1996), for example, explained that media content analysis could be split in to behavior tradition and humanity tradition. Behavior tradition prioritizes the media's effect by using scientific method, whereas in humanity tradition, the content analysis is done by looking through the media's content and what they wish to deliver to the society and the culture where the media exist. But this matter was not the focus of the study. Instead, it focused on the idea of Shoemaker and Reese (1996), which suggests that media contents should be analyzed from the aspect of medium, publication technique, message, source, reference, and the context to find the meaning of a certain message.

3.3. Subjects of the Research and Data Sources

Newspapers

As mentioned earlier, the downfall of the Derg can be termed as the flowering point of the Ethiopian media, especially the private print media. Following this, different private and government owned newspapers are being published. According to the Ethiopian Broadcast Authority 2010 report, there are about 83 private and government owned newspapers in Ethiopia. From these, 36 newspapers cover political, social, health, criminal and economic issues; others focus on sport, fashion, advertisement, education and other issues. From the

newspapers that cover political issues, three newspapers, two privately owned newspapers, *Awramba Times* and *Reporter*, and one government owned newspaper, *Addis Zemen*, were included in the study. The selection of the newspapers was made based on two important criteria: circulation and coverage of domestic politics. The above mentioned newspapers namely *Awramba Times*, *Reporter* and *Addis Zemen* dedicate 44 per cent, 20 per cent and 16 per cent for domestic politics and have an average circulation of 6,500, 22,000 and 12,500 copies, respectively (Ward and Selam, 2011). Newspapers with higher circulation but low coverage of domestic politics or vice versa were left out from the study, and the existence of both private and government owned newspapers helps the researcher to do a comparative analysis.

Addis Zemen was established in 1941. It is a government owned newspaper which focuses on social, political, economic and entertainment issues. It is one of the oldest newspapers in the country. Since its beginning, it is the loyal servant of the last three governments of Ethiopia. Due to this, it has changed its ideological orientation for years. During the time of the Emperor, its main purpose was to eulogize the monarchical rule, praise the Emperor and tell his greatness, kindness, wisdom, leadership, and his unmatched benevolent rule. During the Derg regime, too, it was the first cheerleader of the *Derg* propaganda: *Ethiopia Tiqdem* (Ethiopia first), unity and communism. Thus, its main purpose was to mobilize the society to strengthen unity and stand for the development of the country under the umbrella of communism. Similar to its service to the previous two regimes, it is the devoted maid of the incumbent government; for this newspaper, all policies, strategies, laws and proclamations of the government appear perfect.

The *Awramba Times* was a privately owned newspaper that was established in 2008. It mainly focuses on Ethiopian politics. In addition to politics, the newspaper covered social, economic and entertainment issues. It was functioning until its editing manager fled to the USA claiming

that he had been intimidated by government officials though the government rejected the claim.

The *Reporter* is also a privately owned newspaper that focuses on social, political, economic and entertainment issues. It is one of the most read newspapers in the country. It was established in 2003. The newspaper is still in circulation tolerating all the pressures, as its owner repeatedly expressed.

Political Parties

According to the 2010 Ethiopian National Electoral Board report, 79 political parties participated in the 2010 Ethiopian Parliamentary Election. Most of the parties were ethnic-based which were registered to compete in a single ethnic constituency, and some political parties also come together and formed a coalition. From these, the two largest contending parties, The Ethiopia Federal Democratic Forum (*Medrek*) and The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), were included in the study. They were selected because they were the only political parties that have had seats in the parliament at the time of the study

3.4. Time Frame

The study intended to find out how political parties were framed by the Ethiopian press within the period of January 15 to May 15, 2010. This time frame was chosen based on the schedule of the 2010 Parliamentary Election set by The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia. According to the report of the Electoral Board, the registration of voters was conducted from January 9 to 17, 2010 and voting took place on May 23, 2010. The above mentioned period, January to May, 2010, was from the beginning of the registration of voters up to the voting day; the researcher

believed that this period was conducive enough for the newspapers to talk about the political parties.

3.5. Story Selection

As mentioned above, the newspapers that were selected for the study were a weekly newspaper, *Awramba Times*, a bi-weekly newspaper, *Reporter*, and a daily newspaper, *Addis Zemen*. The study included all publications of *Awramba Times* and *Reporter*, and two publications per week (Wednesday and Saturday) of *Addis Zemen*. These two days have been chosen based on the days the other two sample newspapers are published. To be precise, *Awramba Times* used to get published every Saturday and *Reporter* is published every Sunday and Wednesday. The selection of the two publications, Saturday and Wednesday, was done expecting that there would be a high degree of similarity of the events discussed in the newspapers. Thus, 18 publications of *Awramba Times*, 35 publications of *Reporter*, and 35 publications of *Addis Zemen* (a total of 88 publications) were considered for analysis. From these, all factual articles (news and features) where the political parties were covered were included as part of the study.

3.6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collection method of the research was content analysis, in both qualitative and quantitative senses. To analyze the contents of the newspapers, coding sheet was developed from former researches and from the review of literature in order to look into the frequency of coverage, tone, themes, sources of information, and frames of articles used to discuss about the political parties. The data was gathered by thoroughly reading the news, articles and features of the sample newspapers. Two trained coders, who had a better understanding of the issue, took care of the coding.

As mentioned before, the research used both quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The coding sheet of the quantitative data was classified into five analytical categories. The first part was frequency of coverage, and this helped the researcher to examine how frequently the issues of the two political parties were covered. The second category was tone, which refers to whether the coverage was positive, neutral or negative. The third category was source, and this dealt with individuals or organizations that were directly or indirectly quoted as source of the information. The other category was about the theme of the articles. This analyzed whether the main idea of the article was corruption, human/ democratic rights, government/party promises, economy, national interest, crime and other political issues. The last category was about the different types of frames used in the media, and this included attribution of responsibility, human interest frame, conflict frame, morality frame, economic consequences frame and other types of frames.

The qualitative aspect of content analysis looked into the words and expressions used by the writers of the stories. Here, words, figurative speeches, proverbs and other expressions were analyzed. In addition to the quantitative data, thorough interpretations of the themes of the articles took place. The study also tried to examine how differently the print media framed issues by comparing different headlines of the newspapers on same issue.

Once the data were gathered and classified into different categories based on their themes, types and other important concepts of framing, they were translated from Amharic into English. Finally, a thorough analysis and interpretation of the gathered data took place. Finally, conclusions and recommendations of further research were drawn.

Inter-coder Reliability

Inter- coder reliability was assessed through Holist's formula where:

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

M represents the number of coding decisions with which the two coders agree while N1 and N2 are the total number of coding decisions by the first and the second coder, respectively. The inter-coder reliability across all categories ranges from 89 per cent to 100 per cent for the stories the two coders coded.

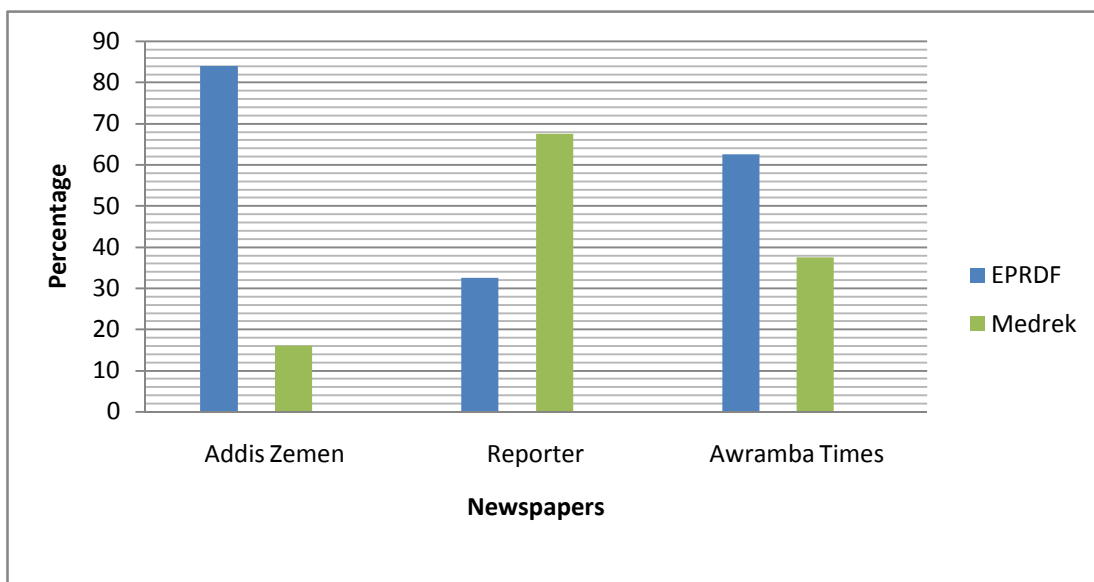
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the results found from the quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative aspect basically focuses on frequency, tone, sources of information, themes and frame used, whereas the qualitative aspect focuses on analysis and interpretation of themes and expressions of the selected newspapers.

Figure 1. Coverage Frequency According to the Newspapers

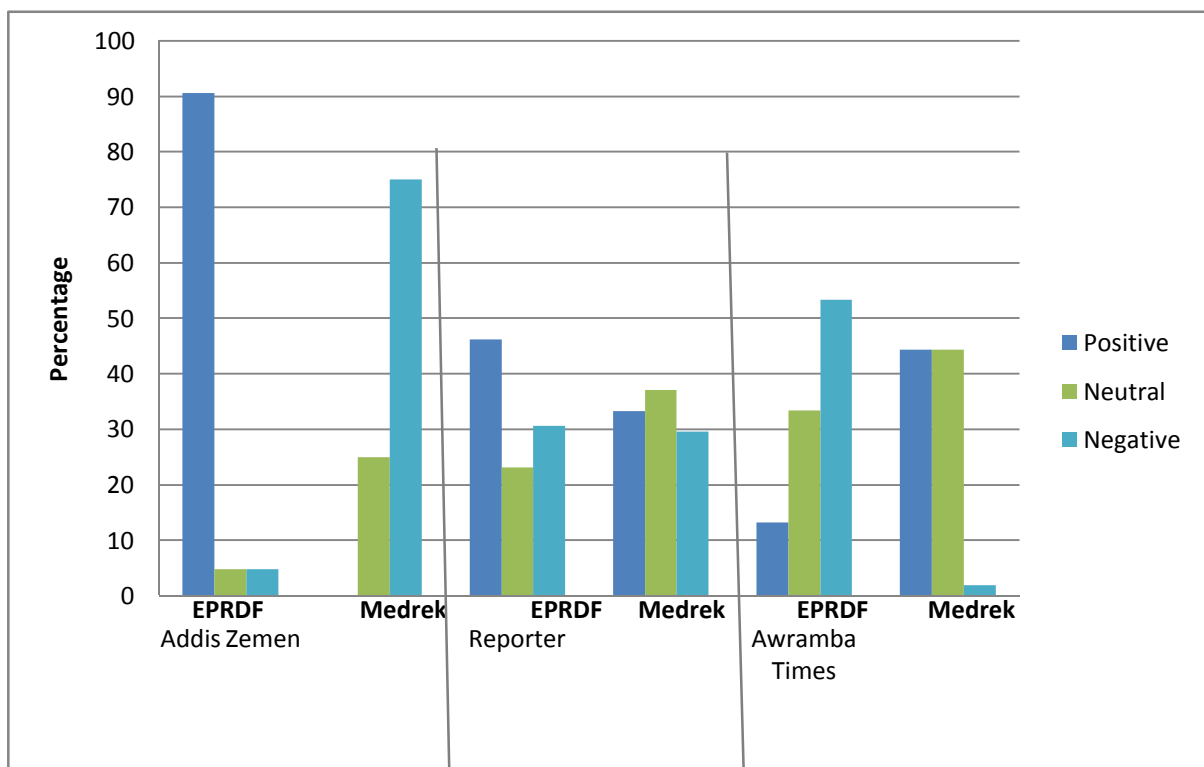


Out of the coded 50 news articles and features of *Addis Zemen*, 84 per cent of the coverage was dedicated to EPRDF, and the rest, 16 per cent, was given to *Medrek*. Similarly, *Awramba Times* provided, though there is difference in their tones, 62 per cent of its coverage to EPRDF, and the rest, 38 per cent, to *Medrek*. *Reporter*, however, offered more coverage to *Medrek*: from the total coded stories, 67.5 per cent of the coverage was given to *Medrek*, and the rest, 32.5 per

cent, was given to EPRDF. From the above data, it can be said that *Addis Zemen* and *Awramba Times* covered more stories about EPRDF, whereas *Reporter* covered more stories about *Medrek*.

In addition to this, *Addis Zemen* portrayed EPRDF using words and phrases such as መንግሥት (the government), መንግሥቱ (Constitution), የግንባታ ጦርነት (the armed Struggle), በ1983 ዓ.ም. (after 1991) and በግንባታ ጦርነት (after the overthrow of the Derg regime).

Figure 2. Tone of Stories of the Newspapers Dedicated to the Political Parties



As can be seen from the figure above, out of the coverage offered to EPRDF, *Addis Zemen* published 90.5 per cent of the stories positively, 4.8 per cent neutrally and 4.8 per cent negatively. Similarly, *Reporter* published 46.2 per cent of the stories positively, 23.1 per cent neutrally and 30.7 per cent negatively. On the contrary, 13.3 per cent, 33.4 per cent

and 53.3 per cent of the stories of *Awramba Times* carried positive, neutral and negative tones, respectively.

From the total coverage provided to *Medrek*, the government owned newspaper, *Addis Zemen*, did not publish any positive stories about the party; 75 per cent of its coverage about the party was negative, and the rest, 25 per cent, was neutral.

The other newspaper, *Reporter*, out of its total coverage, 33.3 per cent was positive, 37.1 per cent was neutral and 29.6 per cent was negative. What is more, 44.4 per cent of the stories of *Awramba Times* were positive; the other 44.4 per cent of the stories was neutral and the rest, 11.2 per cent, was negative.

In the process of either opposing or supporting, the newspapers used different words and phrases in describing the political parties. *Addis Zemen*, for example, called EPRDF **ልማታዊ መንግሥት** (developmental government) saying:

ይህ የሚሆንው ግን ልማታዊ ወይም ለሕዝብ ቆመ መንግሥት ሲኖር ብቻ ነው። ይህ እውነታ በሀገራችን በተጨማሪ ማየት ይቻላል። ከ1983 ዓ.ም. በፊት ባሉት ዓመታት በመንገድ አውታር ያለው እድገት ዘግቦተኛ ነበር። ... ከደርግ ውድቀት በኋላ መንገድ ለሀገሪቱ እድገት ወሳኝ ሚና እንዲጫወት ተጨማሪ እርምጃ ተወስዷል። በዚህም ባለፉት ዓመታት 14,536 የመንገድ ግንባታ ተካሂዷል። (አዲስ ዘመን፤ የካቲት 13 ቀን 2002 ዓ.ም. ገጽ 2)።

Translation:

This will be evident if and only if there is a developmental government or a government which stands for the people. This reality can certainly be seen in our country. In the years before 1991, development in the road sector was slow.

... But after the downfall of the Derg regime, tangible measures have been taken for the road to play a decisive role for the development of the country. Thus 14,536 kms of road have been constructed in the past few years. (Addis Zemen, Feb. 21, 2010, p. 2).

In contrast, *Addis Zemen* portrayed *Medrek* and its leaders as arrogant.

መድረኮች የምረጡኝ ጋጋታዎች እየፈጠሩ ነው። እኛ አልተመረጥንም ማለት ምርጫው ተጭብርብሯል ማለት ነው እያሉን ነው (አዲስ ዘመን፤ የካቲት 03 ቀን 2002 ዓም. ገጽ 11) ።

Medreks (its leaders) are intensifying their electoral campaign.

They are telling as that if they are not elected, the election is fraudulent.

(Addis Zemen, Feb14, 2010, p. 11).

And this was juxtaposed against the Eritrean President, Essayas Afewerki's remark made on the eve of Ethio-Eritrean war of 1998, in which the president said “ባድመን ለቀን ወጣን ማለት ፀሀይ ዳግም አትወጣም ማለት ነው።” (For us, to withdraw from *Badme* would be tantamount to saying that the sun will never rise again), and this comparison was meant to create negative image of *Medrek* in the electorates' mind

Furthermore, the newspaper called *Medrek* የበዝባኝ ሥርዓት ተቀፅላ (the offspring of the past exploitative system):

እነ የመድረክ ስብስብ መሰባሰብ እና ሌሎችም የሚያራምዱት በሙሉ የወደቀው የበዝባኝ ሥርዓት ተቀፅላ መሆናቸውን ጠንቅቆ ማወቅ ያስፈልጋል (አዲስ ዘመን፤ መጋቢት 29 ቀን 2002 ዓም. ገጽ 3)። Means

It is necessary to recognize that *Medrek's* collection and gatherings, and others (refers to political parties) are continuity of the overthrown exploitative rule. (Addis Zemen, March 8, 2010, p. 3)

A privately owned newspaper, *Awramba Times*, gave different names to EPRDF. It, for example, portrayed the ruling party as □□□ (*oppressor*).

የዛሬው የኢህአዴግ አመራር ባዘጋጀው የሶሻሊስት ርዕዮተ ዓለም የሚመራና የጠቅላላውን ሕዝባችን አስተሳሰብ በዚህ ለማነፅ የሚታገል ስለሆነ ይሄንን ግለሰባዊ ነፃነትን አፋኝ አገዛዝ ማሳጣትና መታገል ያስፈልጋል። (አውራመባ ታይምስ፤ ግንቦት 7/ 2002 ዓም. ገጽ 6) It is to mean:

Since the current EPRDF leadership is led by a socialist ideology, it designed and is struggling to indoctrinate the public with this ideology, it is necessary to fight this oppressive regime that violets individual rights. (*Awramba Time*, May 15, 2010, p. 6).

In addition, the newspaper termed EPRDF □□□ (*fastidious*) saying:

አሰብን ያጣነው በአሰብ ላይ ለውጥ የሚታሰበው በመቃብራ ላይ ነው በሚለው ግትር የኢህአዴግ አቋም ነው። (አውራመባ ታይምስ፤ መጋቢት 4 ቀን 2002 ዓም. ገጽ 4) It is to mean:

We lost Assab because of the arrogant stand taken by EPRDF which insists that any change of policy with respect to Assab would only be affected on its grave. (*Awramba Time*, May 15, 2010, p. 6)

The other newspaper, Reporter, described EPRDF *fearful*. It said that EPRDF fears those who challenge it in a peaceful struggle.(Reporter, Jan. 04, 2010 p. 4).

Table 1. Sources of Information Used According to the Newspapers

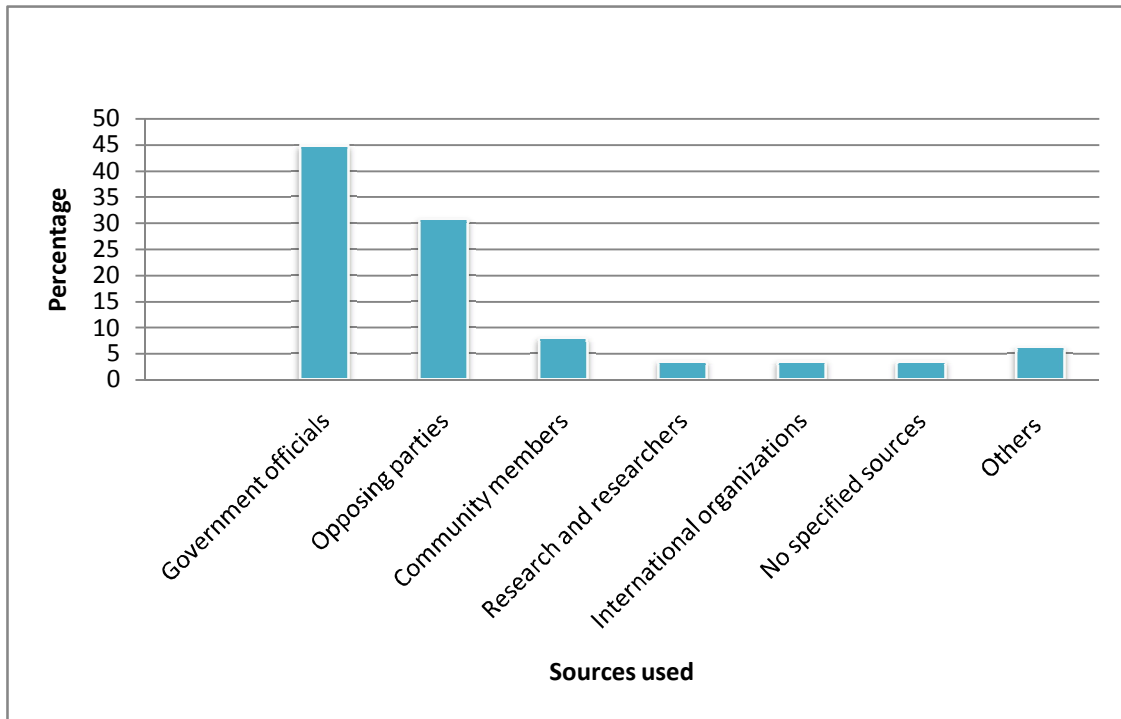
Sources	Addis Zemen		Reporter		Awramba Times	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Government officials	34	68%	13	32.5%	4	16.7 %
Opposing parties	3	6%	21	52.5%	11	45.8%
Community members	7	14%	0	0%	2	8.3%
Research and researchers	0	0%	0	0%	4	16.7%
International organizations	0	0%	1	2.5%	3	12.5%
No specified sources	2	4%	2	5%	0	0%
Others	4	8%	3	7.5%	0	0%

The table above depicts that 68 per cent of the sources of *Addis Zemen* were government officials, whereas 14 per cent of the sources were community members. What is more, the newspaper got 6 per cent of the information from opposition parties and 4 per cent of the stories from unspecified sources, and the remaining, 8 per cent, of the information from other sources such as party leaders, electoral board officials and Ethiopians living abroad. Unlike other newspapers, researches and researchers, and international organizations were not used by *Addis Zemen* as source of the stories.

For most of the stories of *Reporter*, 52.5 per cent, opposing parties were used as the main source, followed by government officials, accounting for 32.5 per cent. The newspaper didn't use community members, research and researchers as its source of information. Only 2.5 per cent of the sources used in the paper were international organizations. Besides, 5 per cent of the stories had not specified sources, and 7.5 per cent were other sources such as the electoral board and members of the Ethiopian diaspora.

The other newspaper, *Awramba Times*, quoted 45.8 per cent of its information from opposition parties. In addition to opposition parties, both governmental officials and research and researchers constituted 16.7 per cent of the sources. Similarly, international organizations and community members constituted 12.5 per cent and 8.8 per cent of the sources, respectively.

Figure 3. Percentage of sources quoted in the newspapers



As can be seen from the chart above, government officials, 44.7 per cent, were the dominantly used sources followed by opposition parties, 30.7 per cent. Community members constituted 8 per cent of the total share, and 6.1 percent went to other sources that were not included in the categories, such as diaspora members, investors and expatriates. Both research and researchers, and international organizations constituted 3.5 per cent each, and the rest, 3.5 percent, were unspecified sources. From this, it can be said that government officials and opposition parties were the dominant sources used by the selected newspapers.

Table 2. Theme distribution across the newspapers

Themes	Addis Zemen		Reporter		Awramba Times	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Corruption	1	2%	3	7.5%	1	4.2%
Human/ democratic right	9	18%	24	60%	14	58.2%
Government/party promises	17	34%	7	17.5%	6	25%
Economy and development	12	24%	2	5%	1	4.2%
National interest	2	4%	1	2.5%	1	4.2%
Crime	3	6%	3	7.5%	0	0%
Social issues	6	12%	0	0%	1	4.2%
Others	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Theme is another important issue in framing. The theme of a certain story can play an important role in portraying the political parties. As can be seen from the table above, the government/ party promises, 34 per cent, was the dominant theme in *Addis Zemen* followed by economy and development, 24 per cent. Other categories: human/democratic rights; social issues, crime, national interest, and corruption constituted 18 per cent, 12 per cent, 6 per cent, 4 per cent and 2 per cent, respectively.

When we see *Reporter*, 60 per cent of the themes were human/ democratic rights, followed by 17.5 per cent government/ party promises. Corruption and crime constituted 7.5 per cent of the theme, and economy and development and national interests covered 5 per cent and 2.5 per cent, respectively.

In the other newspaper, *Awramba times*, the majority, 58 per cent, of the themes were on human and democratic rights, and 25 per cent were on government/party promises. As can be seen from the data, the newspaper did not publish a story whose theme was crime, and the rest, i.e., corruption, economy and development, national interest and social issues have equal share of 4.2 per cent.

As the study was a mixed approach, it called for an analysis of selected themes. A thorough analysis and interpretation of the above quantified themes are given below.

As mentioned earlier, human and democratic rights was the dominantly discussed theme category of the selected newspapers. It was the main theme in the privately owned newspapers, *Awramba times* and *Reporter*, whereas it was given less attention in the government newspaper, *Addis Zemen*.

Most of these stories were statements, given by opponent parties and international organizations, such as Human Rights Watch, US State Department, Journalists without Borders and others, on the management of human and democratic rights, and the political sphere of the country.

There was a great difference between the government owned newspaper, *Addis Zemen*, and the privately owned newspapers, *Reporter* and *Awramba Times*. The privately owned newspapers reported that there was a violation of human and democratic rights by referring to opposition parties and the above mentioned organizations, whereas the government owned newspaper published news and articles that countered the claims.

Reporter, for instance, said; “Violation of rights in Ethiopia is getting worse.” (Reporter: Feb 2, 2010, p.7). In addition, it also expressed that EPRDF fears those (political parties) who challenge

it in a peaceful political struggle (Reporter Feb 3, 2010 page 41). This did not express only its fearfulness but also the different actions taken by the ruling party in order to suppress the opposition and competence. It also pointed out different violation of rights in the article **በሕገ መንግስቱ ብቻ የቀረው መብት** (Rights remained only in the constitution, Reporter, Jan 28, 2010, P. 6).

Similarly to *Reporter*, *Awramba Times* reported that the political sphere in Ethiopia has narrowed down after 2005, and it held the ruling party responsible for it. (See Feb 1, 2010 page 4). It also reported

ኢትዮጵያ ሰብአዊ መብቶችን እየጣሰች ነው። ሕገወጥ ግድያ፣ ድብደባ፣ ያልተገባ የእስረኞች አያያዝ፣ የተቃዋሚ የፖለቲካ ፓርቲዎችና ደጋፊዎቻቸው ሕገወጥ እስርና የመብቶቻቸው ጥሰቶች ይገኙበታል። (አውራግባ ታይምስ፣ መጋቢት 4 ቀን 2002 ዓም ገጽ 1)። it is to mean:

Ethiopia (refers to the government) is violating human rights. These includes: murder, beatings, improper handling of detainees, illegal arrest of opposition political parties and their members, and violation of rights. (*Awramba Times*, March 14, 2010, p. 1).

In opposition to *Awramba Times* and *Reporter*, *Addis Zemen* reported that there was nothing wrong with the ruling party. It also published several articles against the reporters of Human Rights Watch, US State Department and other international organizations, and the privately owned newspapers. It repeatedly reported that there was a conducive environment for political parties willing to compete in the election peacefully. (See *Addis Zemen* April 16, 2010, p. 12). It, for example, reported:

ስቴት ዲፓርትመንት ያወጣው ሪፖርት አንዳችም የማጣራት ሥራ ያልተሰራበት የተቃዋሚዎች መሰረተ ቢስ ክሶች ብቻ መሰረት አድርጎ የቀረበ የሀሰት ውንጀላ ነው። (አዲስ ዘመን፤ ሚያዝያ 13 ቀን 2002 ዓም. ገጽ 3)።

It is to mean;

The US State Department report is a false accusation based on the unfounded and unproved assertions provided by the opposition political parties. (Addis Zemen: April 21, 2010, p.3).

Despite the report, it said; “It is evident that Ethiopia begun to breathe a peaceful air after EPRDF controlled the country.” (See Addis Zemen March 8, 2010, p. 8). On the contrary, the newspaper accused *Medrek* of providing false accusation, illegal activities and preparing for disturbance and unrest (Addis Zemen May 2, 2010, p. 1). As with *Addis Zemen*, all the complaints and grievances of *Medrek* are nothing else other than political scream (የፖለቲካ አሳታ) (Addis Zemen, Jan 18, 2010, p. 3). Unlike the privately owned newspapers, *Addis Zemen* called the jamming of VOA ፍትሐዊ (*fair*) saying:

ዓለም አቀፍ የመገናኛ ብዙኃን በፍርድ ቤት መጠየቅ አትችልም።የራድዮ ጣብያውን አሉታዊ ውጤት የሚያስከትል የመረጃ ስርጭትን ለመከላከል በሕግ የተደነገገው ውጤት እውን ለማድረግየሚያስችላት ብቸኛ መንገድ ከተቻለ (በገንዘብና በቴክኖሎጂ) ስርጭቱን ማገድ (ጃም ማድረግ) ብቻ ነው። ይህ እርምጃ መወሰዱ ፍትሐዊ የሚሆነውም ለዚህ ነው። (አዲስ ዘመን መጋቢት 22 ቀን 2002ዓም. ገጽ 3)።

The country couldn’t sue international media in court. To prevent the negative effect caused by the information transmitted by the radio and to implement the law, the only way is to jam the transmission with the help of money and

technology. For this reason, the action would be fair. (Addis Zemen, March 30, 2010, p. 3).

Another discussed theme was economy and development. Like the other themes, there was a difference between government and privately owned newspapers. *Addis Zemen* published different stories stressing the presence of all rounded development in the country. Most of the stories expressed that the dark era has passed and the future is bright. There were also stories that argued that policies and strategies of the ruling party has brought tangible change, and accused the opposition parties for not wanting to have debate on policies and strategies (Addis Zemen, April 03, 2010, p. 3). To express the economic development of the country, it, for instance, said:

ትናንት- ትናንት አልፏል። ዛሬ ሌላ ቀን ነው። ካሁን በኋላ ኢትዮጵያና ኢትዮጵያውያን ከድህነት የመጨረሻ ጠርዝ ላይ ናቸው እያሉ አስደንጋጭ ዜናዎችን መለፈፍ ያረጀ ያፈጀ ታሪክ ሆኗል። ኢትዮጵያውያን በአዲስ ህይወት ውስጥ ይገኛሉ። በየዓመቱ እድገት ያውም ከተጠበቀው በላይ ማስመዝገብ ያለፉት አራት አምስት ዓመታት ዐበይት መገለጫዎቻቸው ከሆኑ ውለው አድሯል። (አዲስ ዘመን፣ ጥር 22 ቀን 2002 ዓም. ገጽ 2)

Yesterday has passed. Today is another day. From now onwards, heralding horrible news that Ethiopians are at the edge of poverty has become an old story. Ethiopians are leading a new life. It has been a long time since rapid economic development had become their manifestation (Addis Zemen; Feb 2, 2010, p. 2).

Awramba Times newspaper didn't support the above view of *Addis Zemen*. The newspaper expressed that there was no economic development that benefited the society with the

exception of some practices observed in infrastructure development. To explain this, it used an Amharic proverb:

እንጀራ የለም እንጂ ቢኖር ኖሮ እንበላ ነበር። ከእንጀራውም ከነፃነቱም ያልሆነው ይህ ሕዝብ ስለ ኃይል አቅርቦት ለመሪዎቹ ሲያነሳ፤ ድሃ ባልሆንን ኖሮ መብራት ይኖረን ነበር ይባላል። (አውራምባ ታይምስ፤ ጉንበት 7 ቀን 2002 ዓም. ገጽ 8)

means:

If there was *enjera*, we would have eaten it. When the people who didn't get both freedom and *enjera* ask their leaders about the shortage of power, they would be told: "if we were not poor, we would have an electric power. (Awramba Times, June 15, 2010, p. 8).

It also criticized the different reasons provided by the government for the interruption of electric power, and it accused the incumbent government of bringing neither economic development nor freedom. Opposing *Awramba Times*, *Addis Zemen* argued that EPRDF has brought all round change saying:

ኢህአዴግ ስልጣን ላይ በቆየባቸው ዓመታት ልማትን በማስፋፋት፤ ሰላምን በማረጋገጥ፤ ለዴሞክራሲ መሰረት በመጣልና መልካም አስተዳደርን በማስፈን አመርቂ ድሎች አስመዝግቧል። (አዲስ ዘመን፤ ሚያዝያ 8 ቀን፤ 2002 ዓም ገጽ 2)

It is to mean:

In the years EPRDF stayed in power, it has brought about changes on expanding development, ensuring peace, introducing democracy and reassuring good governance (Addis Zemen, march 16, 2010, p. 2).

The other newspaper, *Reporter*, however, described the above issue in a neutral approach. It, for example, used sentences such as:

የኢህአዴግ መንግስት በተለያዩ መስኮች ሀገሪቱን አንድ እርምጃ ያራመደ ቢሆንም ረሀብን ግን ጨርሶ ማጥፋት አልቻለም በመሆኑም ኢትዮጵያ አሁንም እርዳታን ከመጠበቅና ከልመና መላቀቅ አልቻለችም። (ሪፖርተር፣ ጥር 19/2002 ዓም. ገጽ 6) means

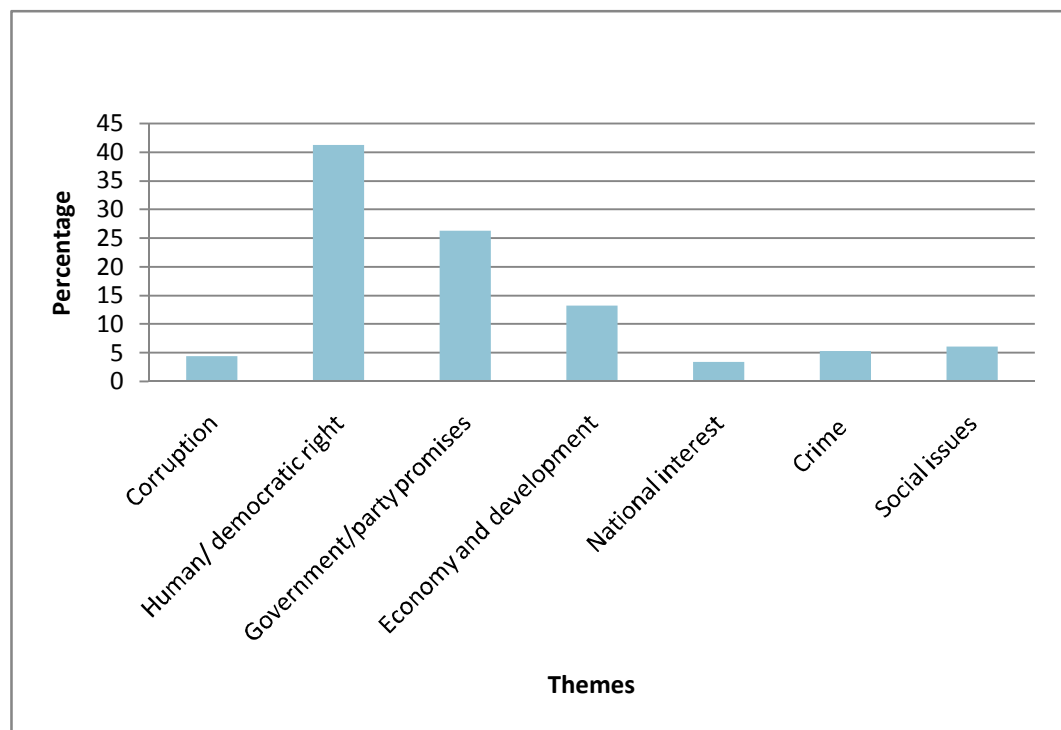
Though the Government of EPRDF has moved the country one step forward in different sectors, it couldn't completely eradicate poverty and as a result the country couldn't get rid of begging and looking for aid. (*Reporter*, January 27, 2002, p. 6).

The issue of corruption was also another theme that entertained differences among the newspapers. *Reporter* noted that corruption was being the greatest problem in the country, and this has occurred due to lack of freedom in the country. According to the newspaper, if citizens do not have freedom, they will not have the opportunity to expose corrupt officials, and this is what happened in the country (*Reporter*, Feb 5, 2010, p. 5). Similarly, it also noted that EPRDF didn't take measure on higher officials with the exception of the former deputy prime minister, Ato Tamrat Laynie , and ministry of defense, Ato Siye Abreha. Hence, it is possible to say that EPRDF has undetermined stand on corruption (*Reporter*, June 4, 2010, p. 7). *Addis Zemen*, on the contrary, said nothing about corruption except the arrest of officials who committed corruption.

The other discussed theme was national interest, and this mainly focused on the issue of Eritrea and the seaport, *Assab*. *Awramba Times* criticized the EPRDF's policy and strategies of foreign affairs articulated in the following words: "as for the EPRDF, the issue of ports of *Assab* and

Massawa as possession of Ethiopia is a dead issue”, and it wondered on what legal base did *Assab* was offered as a gift to Eritrea. Similarly, *Reporter* also criticized EPRDF and noted that they (officials of EPRDF) should recognize that they will always be blamed for their action that assured freedom to Eritrea with the pretext that it was the colony of Ethiopia leaving Ethiopia without seaport (*Reporter*, Feb. 26, 2010, p. 7).

Figure 4. Percentage of Themes Discussed by the Newspapers



As mentioned earlier, theme plays a crucial role in portraying the political parties in a newspaper. As can be observed from the above data, the majority, 47 per cent of the themes discussed by the selected newspapers, were issues related to human/ democratic rights, followed by those related to party/government promises, 30 per cent. The remaining categories, such as economic and development, social issues, crime, corruption and national

interest, constituted 13.2 per cent, 6.1 per cent, 5.3 per cent, 4.4 per cent and 3.5 per cent, respectively.

Table 3. Frames Distribution of the Three Newspapers

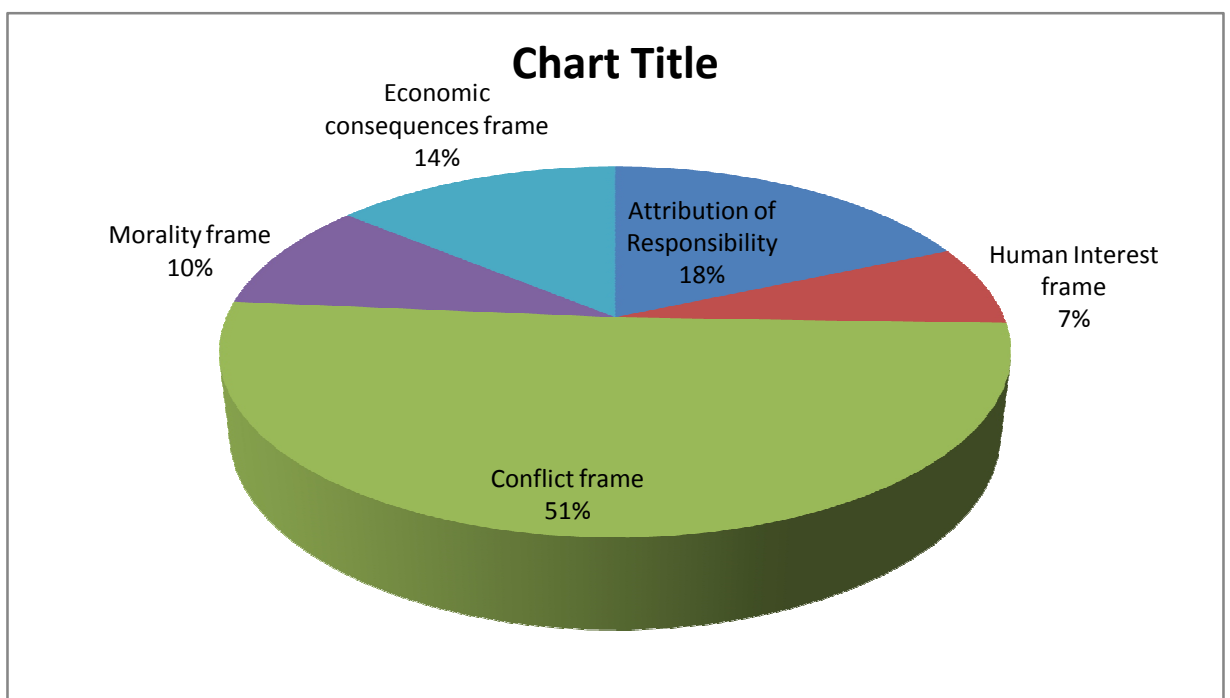
Frames	Addis Zemen		Reporter		Awramba Times	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Attribution of Responsibility	14	28%	3	7.5%	4	16.7
Human Interest frame	4	8%	1	2.5%	3	12.5
Conflict frame	16	32%	30	75%	12	50
Morality frame	5	10%	3	7.5%	3	12.5
Economic consequences frame	11	22%	3	7.5%	2	8.3

As can be seen from the table above, conflict frame accounting for 32 per cent was the dominantly used frame in *Addis Zemen*, followed by attribution of responsibilities frame which accounted for 28 per cent. Economic consequence frame and morality frame constituted 22 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively. Human interest frame, which constituted 8 per cent, was the least used frame in *Addis Zemen*.

Like *Addis Zemen*, the majority, 75 per cent, of stories in *Reporter* focused conflict frame. Attribution of Responsibility frame, morality frame and economic consequences frame constituted equal share of 7.5 per cent each, and the least manipulated, human interest, frame constituted 2.5 per cent.

Similar to *Addis Zemen* and *Reporter*, *Awramba Times* shaped most of its stories, 50 per cent of them, using conflict frame, and attribution of responsibility frame that accounted for 16.7 per cent was the second used frame in the newspaper. Both human interest frame and morality frame accounted for 12.5 per cent each. Unlike the other newspapers, economic consequence frame was the least used frame in *Awramba Times*: it accounted for 8.3 per cent of the frames.

Figure 5. Frames Used by the Newspapers



As can be seen from the figure above, above half, 51 per cent, of the sample newspapers used conflict frame, and attribution of responsibility frame stood second, accounting for 18.5 per cent. Economic consequences frame, and morality frame accounted for 14 per cent and 9.6 per cent, respectively, whereas human interest frame, which was the least used frame, contributed for only 7 per cent.

4.1. DISCUSSION

1. Coverage Frequency

Results of earlier studies reported that there is a significant association between the amount of political news and propaganda a voter receives and his/her better understanding of the policies and strategies the parties put forward (McQuail, 1961 cited in Franklin, 2004)

The data analyzed above revealed that there was a difference between the newspapers covering issues related to the political parties. *Addis Zemen* and *Awramba Times* provided more coverage to the EPRDF, whereas *Reporter* gave more coverage to *Medrek*. Exposure to media can make certain things popular and this popularity can lead those things to become an agenda. As Tuing and Hassim (2003) noted, the frequency, depth and importance given by the media towards certain issues is believed to determine the level of reaction or thoughts of targeted audience towards it. Similarly, Rias (2008) contends that increase in the news coverage is thought to bring about increase in the salience of particular issues or events.

2. Tone of the Stories

The extent to which things are portrayed positively or negatively is believed to affect their credence on the audience. That is why McCombs (2000) argued that the content of mass media messages including the tone of the messages influence the pictures of the world in our minds. They also influence attitudes and opinions grounded on those pictures.

When we see the tone of the sampled newspapers, a great difference was observed between government owned and privately owned newspapers. From the total coded stories of *Addis Zemen* related to the EPRDF, the majority, 90 per cent, was positive. The newspaper never published more than two negative stories that were articulated by the opponent parties. On the

contrary, the same newspaper published more negative news, 75 per cent, and no positive stories about *Medrek*. In addition, the newspaper called the EPRDF developmental government and condemned *Medrek* and its leaders for being arrogant, for providing false accusation and preparing for disturbance and unrest.

In contrast to *Addis Zemen*, *Awramba Times* published more negative stories and very few (2) positive stories about the EPRDF, but it published more positive stories, and very few negative stories about *Medrek*. The newspaper also used strong words such as *fastidious* and *oppressor* to describe the EPRDF.

The other newspaper, *Reporter*, published more positive stories, 46.2 per cent, about the EPRDF and more neutral stories, 37.1 per cent, about *Medrek*.

From the above summary, it can be said that *Addis Zemen* favored the EPRDF, where as *Awramba Times* favored *Medrek*. *Reporter* appeared tilting toward the *Medrek*, but when we see the distribution of its stories, the tilting was not that much exaggerated. It should also be understood that the newspaper used strong words to criticize the EPRDF. This finding concur with Berhanu's (2009) which reported that the government print media are highly favorable towards the EPRDF and critical of opposition parties while the private print media are highly critical of the EPRDF and pro-opposition parties standing for the election.

3. Sources of Information Used by the Newspapers

Media can easily be biased by referring to those who oppose the political parties and their policies and strategies. The sources or references used by newspapers also play significant role in framing the news. Media can easily manipulate their news framing by only referring to sources that held out the same thought with their agenda as Tuing and Hassim (2009) noted.

When we see the analyzed data, the dominant source, 68 per cent, used by *Addis Zemen* was government officials. The sources were quoted from different press conferences and speeches of officials at different meetings, demonstrations and other occasions. The newspaper referred to very few opposition parties, and it didn't use researches, researchers and international organizations as source of information. From this, it can be said that *Addis Zemen* simply relied on official sources.

On the other hand, for more than half of the coded stories, 52.2 per cent, sources of *Reporter* were opposition parties, and 32.5 per cent of the sources were government officials. The newspaper didn't use researches, researchers and community members as sources of information. Similar to *Addis Zemen*, though the degree varies, there was reliance on one source in the case of *Reporter*.

Compared to the two newspapers, a better use of different sources has been observed in *Awramba Times*. The majority of the sources, 45.8 per cent, were opposition parties and 16.7 per cent were government officials. The newspaper also used community members, researches and researchers, and international organization as sources. Though the degree varies, there is also reliance on opposition parties in the case of *Awramba Times*.

Generally, it can be said that the difference in ownership brought about a difference in the use of sources. The government owned newspaper, *Addis Zemen*, mainly used government officials as its sources, whereas the privately owned newspaper, *Awramba Times* and *Reporter*, used opposition parties as their main source.

Here, two things can be said. Newspapers shouldn't rely on one source. Such type of problem is observed among many journalists around the world. Media critic Leon Sigal who analyzed nearly 3000 news stories that appeared in the New York Times and the Washington Post between 1949

and 1969 found that nearly four out of five of the stories involved official sources. This reliance on officially provided information is, as Tom Wicker of the New York Times has described it, “The biggest weakness” (London, 1993).

The other point is that journalists should verify their news from different sources, if not the news can be distorted or tilted to one side. Reliance on official sources for news affects the social reality depicted by the media. Journalists usually rely on sources for news, but these sources can have their own personal or organizational interests, and they will protect their vested interests while giving the information to the reporters (Riaz 2003). Similarly, Nelson et al.(undated, cited in Shen 2004) stated that journalists’ common reliance on politicians, interest groups and other experts for quotes and analysis means that the news media may serve as conduits for individuals and interest groups eager to protect their perspectives.

4. Themes Discussed by the Newspapers

A theme plays a crucial role in framing an issue. Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) pointed out that framing is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by the audience. This characterization is the central idea/ theme of the story.

Generally, human and democratic right was the main focus of the newspapers. Government or party promises and economy and development were also the next dominantly discussed themes in sampled newspapers. Other theme categories, such as corruption, national interest, and social issues have been given little attention.

What should not be forgotten here is that there was a difference on the treatment of themes and the focuses of the newspapers. The main focus of *Addis Zemen* was on government or party

promises and economic and development issues, whereas the main focus of the privately owned newspapers, *Reporter* and *Awramba Times*, was human or democratic rights and government or party promises.

Most of the analyzed themes of *Addis Zemen* favored the EPRDF government and were against *Medrek*. On the contrary, most themes of *Awramba Times* and *Reporter*, though there is a difference, favored the opponent party, *Medrek*, and were critical of the party in power. The government owned newspaper, *Addis Zemen*, mainly focused on the changes brought by the EPRDF, whereas the privately owned newspapers focused on gaps they thought were not filled by the government.

Generally, *Addis Zemen* tried to portray the EPRDF as a promoter of change, which the country had never seen before, and it portrayed *Medrek* as anti-development, propagator of terror, noisy, and one that could not manage and rule the country. *Awramba Times*, on the contrary, tried to portray the EPRDF as oppressor, fastidious, and one who has made the country landlocked, especially with reference to the port of *Assab*. However, *Reporter* was a little bit different. It acknowledged that the EPRDF has brought change with respect to the economy, infrastructure and spread of education, whereas it criticized the government (EPRDF) for the violation of rights, poor governance and its unwillingness to fight for the national interest of the country. It also blamed the government for granting independence to Eritrea and the loss of the seaport, *Assab*.

As mentioned before, persistent support and opposition of one side have been observed in the newspapers narratives. With some exception of *Reporter*, *Addis Zemen* was in favor of the EPRDF but critical of *Medrek*, whereas *Awramba Times* was in favor of *Medrek* but critical of the EPRDF. Media can help to distribute political power to particular groups or individuals. As

Kuklinski and Sigelman (1992) argue, such framings are called content bias, and they occur when patterns of slant regularly prepare audiences to support the interests of particular holder or seekers of political power. According to Scheufele (1999), organizational or journalists' personal ideologies can lead to such biases. Such content biases can also exist even where journalists and news organizations possess no conscious ideological goals and when they consciously practice balance (kuklinski and sigelman 1992).

Generally, the above results show that the newspapers, *Awramba Times* and *Addis Zemen* stood on two opposite ends. The government owned media tilted toward the ruling party, whereas the privately owned newspapers tilted toward the opposition parties. Alesina and Rosenthal (1995 as cited in Campante and Hojman, 2010) called this, polarization which refers to extreme differences between groups or ideas as the result of a party ideological motive. Layman and Carsey (2002, cited in Iyengar and Hahn, 2007) also noted that the impression of mass polarization may reflect the nomination of extreme rather than centrist candidates, and an electorate that votes along party lines.

Some studies suggested that there are such kinds of extreme differences in Ethiopia. Gudeta (2008), for example, noted that there was a north-south dichotomy in the press; some of the private presses were serving as a mouthpiece for certain opposition political parties while the government press was also serving as a conduit to the government propaganda. Similarly, Lidetu Ayalew, in his book መደላኝ (which means balance), there are two extreme ideas even in decisive national issues in Ethiopia. To magnify it, he said, "We Ethiopians have two flags, two maps of our country and two national anthems in that we use to argue against each other." The media, too, he added, is polarized. Though the role of the media is to inform, educate and entertain the public, they are hardly observed while providing objective and balanced news. The

government owned media are loyal to the government, whereas the privately owned media have opposition or adversary role (Lidetu, 2002 EC, p. 167).

Early works suggest that Polarization can be caused by reporters' and audiences' political preference and the need for high profit. According to Baron (2004, cited in Bernhardt, Krassa and Polborn, 2006), bias can arise because journalists have a preference for providing news that is in line with their own political views. Political preferences of journalists and media owners facilitate polarization by slanting their news in the way it favors their political ideology and interests; for this reason, scholars criticized the political reporters for being agents of polarization (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009). Similarly, Lidetu (2002 EC, p. 172) stated, "it is clearly observed that most journalists in the country blindly criticize the government, and blindly support the opposition and vice versa."

Economy and high competition are also other causes for the polarization. In a society with extreme partisanship, it can be profitable for media to gear the news to one side of the political spectrum precipitating an increase in polarization. Thus, the desire of partisans to receive confirmatory news reinforces the externality problem so that political polarization can alter electoral outcomes (Sunstein, 2001 cited in Iyengar and Hahn, 2007).

Biased information providers may lead consumers to wall themselves off from topics and opinions that they read or listen to (Sunstein, 2001 cited in Iyengar and Hahn, 2007). The end result of bias could be a less informed and a more polarized electorate. In this case, it can be said that the media are not playing their role, for the primary purpose of the media is to provide citizens with the information they need to be free and self governing (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2006). Taking all these into consideration, Benn (2001 as cited in Franklin, 2004) argued that it would be the media that destroys democracy. Similarly, Lidetu (2002 EC) noted that both

government owned and privately owned media are playing a role that impedes the democratic process of Ethiopia. He added that journalists had contributed a lot for the political polarization of the country, and this has resulted in the absence of national consensus and reasonable political stand (ibid).

5. Frames Used by the newspapers

Unlike other categories, similarities have been observed between the newspapers while framing the issues. Conflict frame was the dominantly used frame in all the newspapers, but there was a difference with regards the other frames. To elaborate more, it is better to treat them separately.

As mentioned before, Conflict frame was the dominantly manipulated frame in all the newspapers. Half of the analyzed stories of *Awramba Times*, one-third of the stories of *Addis Zemen* and three-fourth of the stories of *Reporter* were framed in conflict frame. In line with this, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) found out that conflict frame was the dominantly used frame in the USA national print and television news.

Attribution of responsibility frame is the other commonly manipulated frame. It was the second dominantly used frame in *Addis Zemen* and *Awramba Times*. On the other hand, it has been given little attention by *Reporter*. Unlike in the Ethiopian newspapers, it was the most commonly used frame in the USA national print and television news (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000).

The other commonly used frame was economic consequence frame. It was the third dominantly used frame in *Addis Zemen* and the second manipulated frame in *Reporter*, but it was the least

used frame in *Awramba Times*. According to Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), it is one of the frequently used frames following the attribution of responsibility and conflict frames.

Human interest and morality frames were other frames used by the selected Ethiopian newspapers. They were the least manipulated frames by *Addis Zemen* and *Reporter*, but the third manipulated frame in *Awramba Times*. One way of capturing and retaining audience interest is by framing in human interest term (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). However, the selected newspapers have failed in this regard.

As mentioned earlier, the newspapers used conflict frame while shaping their stories. Instead of treating the events either in human interest or economic consequences frame which could capture the interest of the audience, they preferred conflict frame. This could be due to the nature of the media. The tendency of the media to treat conflict as more newsworthy than consensus, often lead journalists to make their headlines 'cry wolf' (Kasoma, 1997 cited in Gudeta 2008).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Media has a persuasive power on its audiences. One influential way that the media shape public opinion is by framing events and issues in a particular way, for frames in communication shape how individuals process and store relevant information and understand politics. Since media and democracy are indispensable, they have the ability to downplay and play up a certain issue while portraying the images of politicians and their parties, and this can have an effect on the public opinion. Thus, this study set out to examine how the Ethiopian print media framed the political parties of the country during the 2010 Parliamentary Election. Hence, it attempted to answer the following research questions:

How did the selected newspapers portray the political parties?

What types of frames did the selected newspapers frequently use in portraying the political parties?

Framing theory was the theoretical framework of the study. Despite its importance, this theory is criticized for its lack of comprehensive and coherent definition. This study was based on Entman's conceptualization: "Frames in the news can be examined and identified by the presence and absence of key words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, source of information and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments." (Entman, 1993, p.52).

To conduct the study, three newspapers, *Addis Zemen*, *Reporter* and *Awramba Times*, which have a relatively high coverage of domestic politics and larger circulation, were selected. It

focused on two contending parties, the EPRDF and *Medrek*, which have had seats in the parliament at the time of the study. The research employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative content analysis was performed to count coverage frequency, tone of the stories, sources, theme and types of frame used by the newspapers. In addition to the quantitative method, the research also used qualitative method to analyze and interpret themes of the selected stories.

The findings of the study revealed that *Awramba Times* and *Addis Zemen* covered more stories about the EPRDF. The majority of the stories on the EPRDF by *Awramba Times* were framed negatively, while stories on *Medrek* were framed positively. On the contrary, majority of the stories on the EPRDF by *Addis Zemen* were framed positively, whereas the majority of its stories on *Medrek* were framed negatively. *Reporter* covered more stories about the opponent party, *Medrek*. Unlike the two newspapers, balance on the tone was to some extent observed in *Reporter*. Generally, *Awramba Times* appeared to favor *Medrek* while *Addis Zemen* seemed in favor of the EPRDF. However, *Reporter* was relatively in a neutral mode.

Sources from government officials, followed by opposition parties, were the dominantly utilized sources in the newspapers, and little attention has been given to researches, researchers and community members. Ownership of the newspapers has brought a difference in using sources of information. The government owned newspaper relied on sources from the government officials, whereas the privately owned newspapers relied on sources from the opposition parties.

Despite the differences observed in the newspapers, human and democratic rights was the dominantly discussed theme, and it was followed by government/party promises. *Addis Zemen* tried to portray the EPRDF as a pioneer of change, concerned and developmental government,

but it described *Medrek* as a collection of arrogant individuals, the nostalgic about the overthrown regime and a party blame-mongering. *Reporter* described that EPRDF has brought change, but blamed the party for its weaknesses on the protection of rights, national interest and its stand on corruption while it described *Medrek* as popular and choice for the election. *Awramba Times*, on the other hand, described EPRDF as oppressor of rights, a party that forgets its promises and seller of the country's national interest.

Although there were differences between the newspapers on the frequency of the frames used, conflict frame was the dominantly used frame in all the newspapers. Human interest frame was the least used frame in *Addis Zemen* and *Reporter*, and economic consequence frame was the least used frame in *Awramba Times*. Generally, conflict frame was the dominantly used frame, followed by attribution of responsibility and economic consequence frames. Morality frame and human interest frame were the least used frames by the selected newspapers.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

This research work mainly focused on how the political parties in Ethiopia were portrayed by the print media of the country, and the types of frames frequently used by the newspapers. Studies on framing are based on the assumption that the way events and issues are characterized in media can have positive or negative impact on how they are perceived and understood by the public. Thus, the researcher invites researchers to conduct further studies on:

The way political parties are portrayed in media is assumed to have positive or negative impact on the image of the political parties, and can affect the outcome of the election. Thus, it is important that studies should be conducted on the effects these portrayals might have brought on the public opinion and the outcome of the election.

Framing can be affected by various factors. Previous studies have identified different factors for framing positively or negatively. The researcher would like to invite other researchers to investigate the reasons and factors behind the portrayals shown in the study.

There are so many ethical and professional considerations while practicing journalism. The practice of these considerations help journalists to provide fair, balanced and objective stories, but many researchers show that there are a number of journalists who do not practice them. Hence, the researcher invites other researchers to study the level and practice of neutrality, fairness, minimizing harm and other ethical and professional considerations of the newspapers in Ethiopia.

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Appendix A

Coding Guide

Only items written by staffs or official columnists will be coded

1. Coverage Frequency- refers to what the story talks about.

2. Tone- refers to whether the story is positive, neutral or negative.

Positive- a story that shows agreement, support, or affirmation to policies, events or actions taken by either EPRDF or Medrek

Neutral- a story that favors or assists neither to EPRDF nor Medrek; it entertains different views and opinions of an issue or event.

Negative- a story that shows disagreement, opposition or denial of policies, events or actions taken by either EPRDF or Medrek

3. Sources – refers to name(s) of a person, group or organization that are quoted directly or indirectly in the story as source of the information.

4. Theme

Corruption- Does the main idea of the story discuss dishonest exploitation of power for personal gain?

Human/ Democratic Rights- Does the main idea of the story discuss any violence or protection of either human or democratic right or both?

Government/party Promises- Does the main idea of the story discuss the speech or wish of government/ party officials that suggest things will get better for the next term of power? Does it imply that promises were not met, or that they were met?

Economy and development- Does the story talk about economic gains and losses, including employment, that occurred due to policy or strategy, and suggestions or alternative policy suggested by the opposition party?

National interest- Does the story discuss actions, circumstances and decisions that facilitate the gain and the loss of benefits of the country due to international relations and treaties.

Crime- Does the story suggest any criminal acts by anyone? Does the story discuss any levels of government attempts to fight violent or criminal acts?

Social issues- Does the story discuss issues related to education, health and housing?

5. Frames

Conflict frame – when the story provides two or more opposing views or statements, or reflects conflict and disagreement among individuals, groups, or organizations.

Human interest frame- when the story involves people and their testimonies, or brings a human face or an emotional angle to the presentation of an event, issue, or problem

Attribution of responsibility frame – when the story suggests individuals or an organization should take actions on the issue, and point responsibility for a cause or solution to either the government, to an individual or opposition parties.

Morality frame - When the story puts the event, problem, or issue in the context of morals, social prescriptions, and religious views. When the story tells the readers to do or not to do something; or when the story involves religious or human right perspectives.

Economic frame – when the story mentions an event, problem, or issue in terms of the consequences it will have economically on an individual, groups, organizations, or countries.

Appendix B

Coding Sheet

Coder _____

Source: _____ 1) Addis Zemen 2) The Reporter 3) Awramba Times

Date: _____

Mark each question as yes (1) or no (0)

5. Coverage Frequency

_____ EPRDF

_____ Medrek

6. Tone 1) Positive 2) Neutral 3) Negative

EPRDF

_____ 1) Positive _____ 2) neutral _____ 3) negative

Medrek

_____ 1) Positive _____ 2) neutral _____ 3) negative

7. Sources

_____ Government officials

_____ Opposing parties

_____ Community members

_____ Researches and researchers

_____ International organizations

_____ No specified source

If other, please specify _____

8. Themes:

Corruption

_____ Does the story provide an example of corruption trials?

_____ Does the story suggest the need for the strong anticorruption movement?

_____ Does the story mention anti corruption attempts or failures?

_____ Does the story mention that anticorruption movements are going well, or does it highlight _____ a positive anticorruption movement story?

If other, please specify _____

Human/ Democratic Rights

_____ Does the story mention any violence of human/ democratic rights?

_____ Does the story mention practices made by government or public officials to protect _____ Human/ Democratic Rights?

_____ Does the story suggest responsible body?

If other, please specify _____

Government/party Promises

_____ Does the story mention any level of government/party making promises?

_____ Does the story mention a positive and optimistic future?

_____ Does the story suggest broken promises?

If other, please specify _____

Economy and Development

_____ Does the story mention loss of property?

_____ Does the story mention any economic policy helpful for the development of the _____ country?

_____ Does the story mention any economic policy hampering the development of the _____ country?

_____ Does the story mention loss of jobs or unemployment problems of these days?

_____ Does the story mention stasis (immobility) of private business/ investment?

_____ Does the story mention development of private business/ investment?

_____ Does the story mention the stand of other political parties?

If other, please specify _____

National interest

_____ Does the story mention loss of national interest?

_____ Does the story mention any international relations policy useful for the country?

_____ Does the story mention any international relations policy hampering the country?

_____ Does the story mention examples in which the country lost/ may lose its
national interest?

Crime

_____ Does the coverage mention acts of violence/crime?

_____ Does the coverage mention police/government efforts to resolve
crime issues/problems?

_____ Does the coverage mention causes of crime?

If other, please specify _____

_____ Social issues (health, education and housing)

_____ Does the coverage mention development of education sector both in quality
and quantity?

_____ Does the coverage mention development of health sector both in quality
and quantity?

_____ Does the coverage mention development of housing sector or is housing problems being solved?

Frames

Attribution of Responsibility

_____ Does the story suggest that some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?

_____ Does the story suggest that some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem?

_____ Does the story suggest solution(s) to the problem/issue?

_____ Does the story suggest that an individual or group is responsible for the issue/ problem?

_____ Does the story suggest the problem requires urgent action?

If other, please specify _____

Human Interest frame

_____ Does the story provide a human example or “human face” on the issue?

_____ Does the story employ adjectives or personal explanation that generate feelings of outrage, empathy caring, sympathy or compassion?

_____ Does the story emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/ problem?

_____ Does the story go into the personal or private lives of the actors?

_____ Does the story contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy-caring, sympathy or compassion?

If other, please specify _____

Conflict frame

_____ Does the story reflect disagreement between parties, individuals or groups?

_____ Does one party, individual or group criticize another?

_____ Does the story refer to two sides or to more than two sides of the problem or issue?

_____ Does the story refer to winners and losers?

If other, please specify _____

Morality frame

_____ Does the story contain any moral message?

_____ Does the story make reference to morality, God and other religious tenets?

_____ Does the story offer specific social prescriptions about how to behave?

If other, please specify _____

Economic consequences frame

_____ Is there a mention of financial losses or gains now or in the future?

_____ Is there a mention of the cost/degree of expense involved?

_____ Is there a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing
a course of action?

If other, please specify _____

Appendix C

Open ended Questions for the Qualitative Content Analysis

1. Words and expressions used to describe the political parties

No.	Idiom	Source	metaphor	Source	proverb	Source
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						

2. Sample headlines of the newspapers on the same issue

No.	Addis Zemen	Publication	Awramba Times	Publication	The Reporter	Publication
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						