

**A STUDY ON FRAMING OF PRE- ELECTION NEWS STORIES
IN THE 2015 ETHIOPIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS: THE CASE
OF ADDIS ZEMEN, REPORTER, EBC AND FBC**

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Abstract

A Study on Framing of Pre- election News Stories in the 2015 Ethiopian general elections: the case of Addis zemen, Reporter, EBC and FBC.

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These days, media plays a decisive role in all aspects of political, economic and social affairs of a country being the main source of information. It turns into an actor during political parties running for general elections in a given country. Along with that, the media play either an adverse or significant role in such a critical time of national elections by framing the news and programs in the way that to gratify the abiding interest of owners adherent to one side.

This study was conducted mainly to investigate the framing of pre - election news stories during the 2015 Ethiopian general elections by the country's government owned and privately owned media. The study employed qualitative content analysis approaches. To conduct the study, two newspapers namely *Addis Zemen* and *Amharic Reporter* and two broadcasters namely *EBC* and *FBC* (television and radio respectively) with a relatively larger circulation and high coverage of domestic politics were under the study. Two major contending opposition parties, the Blue party and Medrek were interviewed to help the researcher see how the framing of pre - election news stories was done. The study included news stories and editorial pieces published and broadcasted within the period of March 24 to May 21, 2015.

Results of the study revealed that the government owned media *Addis Zemen* and *EBC* were under the pressure of the government and portrayed the ruling party (EPRDF) positively whereas the privately owned media *Amharic Reporter* and *FBC* were relatively under a lesser pressure

and portraying the political parties relatively neutrally in framing of the pre - election news stories during the fifth round Ethiopian general elections. Morality frame and conflict frame were the predominant frames employed by the selected media during the pre election period. Finally, recommendations are given based on the findings.

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List of Acronyms

ANDM – Amhara Nationalities Democratic Movement

AU – African Union

EBA – Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority

EBC – Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation

EFDUF – Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum

ENA – Ethiopian News Agency

EPRDF – Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front

ETV – Ethiopian Television

EU – European Union

FBC – Fana Broadcasting Corporate

FM – Frequency Modulation

IFES - International Foundation for Electoral Systems

MW – Medium Wave

NEBE – National Electoral Board of Ethiopia

OAU – Organization of African Union

SW – Short Wave

TPLF – Tigray People Liberation Front

UDJ – Unity for Democracy and Justice

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Media and politics are vastly entrenched in to the entire motion of human beings and highly inseparable too. Both are mutually benefiting and reinforce each other, one cannot totally disengage itself from the other because politics is life and media operates in the lives of mankind. The media uses public officials to maintain its power to avail the public with high newsworthy contents whereas politicians need the media publicize their activities, especially during an election. To be precise, there is a symbiotic relationship between public officials and the media. For example, the media want information from officials to produce available product, and the officials need the media to distribute their messages to the constituency (Ashenafi, 2012).

The media also intends to win commercial competition among readership demands by framing the issue of political parties for its own business. "News paper publishers were often men who held strong views about politics, foreign policy and domestic issues, and their newspapers reflected those views from the front page to the editorial page. These strong views and accompanying news coverage have a practical business benefit" (Gawiser and Witt, 1994. p.12).

In addition, the media uses to capture the attention of the public so that the public can make informed decision 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.

When interpreting an event a reporter employs frameworks or schemata of interpretation—categories that exist in mind—that enable the reporter to locate, perceive, identify and label that event or occurrence. Observers actively project their values and perspectives, or frames of reference, onto the world around them (Stone, Singletary and Richmond, 1999). Therefore, framing of contents by the media interest has the power to convert the audiences' decision in the critical time of election when they can participate in their national affairs periodically. The way how the tone of voice in which the story is imparted again frame the understanding of the readers or the viewers in line with the interest of the media. The tone of the voice in which a message is given frames the message and helps people understand it (ibid, 278).

Media operates in any politics where democratization is given attention like in national election before, during and after the process including developing countries such as Ethiopia. As the country strives for the realization of development, democracy and peace as a contemporary agenda, there is a need to build the capacity of the media to make the public participate holistically in every affairs of the country without bias. This cannot be merely ensured by the involvement of government owned media alone, but it needs effective participation of both government and private media. Since media and democracy are inseparable, the media frame has to treat fairly the interest of the public and the government to maintain their social responsibility. (Harper and Row 1986:45) are acknowledging the importance of media neutrality to realize democracy during election as:

If the press cannot effectively communicate about the government to the people at large, it can nonetheless hold the governors accountable to the relatively small number of informed and powerful people. The press can serve as a stand-in for

the public, holding the governors –not to the public (which is not terribly interested) but to the ideas and rules of the democratic polity itself.

As many scholars noted, mass media constructs social reality by framing images of reality . . . in a predictable and patterned way. Media discourse is part of a process by which individuals construct meaning, and public opinion is part of the process by which journalists . . . develop and crystallize meaning in public discourse. By incorporating media framing with agenda setting, priming and bias, Entman cited by Cissel believes that readers can better comprehend how and why framing occurs in the media (Cissel , 2012). Framing is a tool used by media and politicians to make salient points that would direct their readers to a desired frame of mind. Professional pollster can systematically use the concept of framing as a campaign tool. It's not what you say, it's how you say it. Luntz cited in Margaret has researched Republican campaign messages and “distilled terms and phrases that resonated with specific interpretive schemas among audiences and therefore helped shift people's attitudes” (Cissel , 2012. p. 69).

Most of the studies have explicitly explored bias focus on presidential campaigns and administrations have found little evidence of decisive or consistent, liberal or conservative, Democratic or Republican bias which can be applied in developing countries. Powerful players devote massive resources to advancing their interests precisely by imposing such patterns on mediated communications. The media may be helping to distribute political power to particular groups. This brings us to the proposed definition of content bias: “*consistent patterns in the framing of mediated communication that promote the influence of one side in conflicts over the use of government power*”. By this definition, to reveal media content biases, we must show patterns of slant that regularly prime audiences, consciously or unconsciously, to support the

interests of particular holders or seekers of political power (Entman, 2007). Hence, framing content of media texts has an influential role to drive potential audiences either negatively or positively.

Framing of events in a way that the public become well informed to make the right decision (positive framing) is the uncompromising responsibility of the media regardless of being private or public. It is the media that many people usually rely on to get themselves informed about candidates and campaign issues. Daily news coverage of candidates issue, positions and views are arguably the most credible way that candidates can speak to voters. They argue that the intent of news coverage is to inform the public rather than promote a candidate. Therefore, the media have to make it their fundamental mission to inform the public in the most complete, balanced and fair manner possible (Markos , 2006).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Sometimes media become political actors by promoting certain political views of some groups and interest rather than being an independent informer and channel for free market place of ideas. Moreover, the media frame the political parties in a certain way to obtain a particular political, economic or bureaucratic benefit especially in such a critical time of national election campaign (Sheldon, Gawiser , Witt , 1994). According to Yosef , 2005, the private press evinced a degree of bias patterns clearly supporting certain parties in their coverage of the election. The private press reported on more meetings that are totally partisan to the opposition and the public press to the then government. However, the study addressed only the media`s coverage and bias

during the 2005 Ethiopian national election rather than assessing the biases resulted by the name of framing both in private and public media.

Ownership influence is also considered as a pretext for the media to frame its news contents either positively, negatively or neutral in the case of both private and government owned media. It sometimes deprives the peoples` right to access relevant information to make informed decision before an election (Hailemarkos , 2006). Similarly, information that news reporters collect does not necessarily get published rather it will be filtered to include some and omit others with reference to the interests of owners (Simret , 2006).

Although the framing of political parties` news stories at any time is very usual, it is more influential during pre-elections because of its power to downplay or overplay their role of bringing policy alternatives to the public. As to Entman, 2010, to establish the existence of content biases is that regularly promoting support for some interests or actors who seek power – and disapproval of their opponents without an audience`s conscious awareness. The previous studies indicated that framing as a strategy can influence either positively or negatively by tuning voters understanding of political parties when the time they are conducted.

In developing countries like Ethiopia, media need to play significant roles in mobilizing development resources to ensure fast and sustainable economic development as well as in promoting human rights and democratization. They help the citizens make informed decisions in every aspect of their life by providing them factual and reliable information of their interest as the media is expected to monitor and supervise the government`s roles (Fufa , 2013). However,

the framing of before, during and after election news stories has a greater impact on the citizens contribution to the country's development compared to other types of framing like framing of Sino-Ethiopian relation or framing occasional uprisings which are most common types of framing studied by previous researchers.

Ethiopia is a country that is currently struggling to ensure development, peace and democracy as a primary agenda. I believe the existence of various socio-economic and political changes due to the time gap between the previous studies and this study, which focuses on the 2015 Ethiopian National elections.

As to my personal observation, most of the studies conducted in the area of framing election news stories are one sided (either in print or broadcast only). Moreover, the framing of political news and pre-election news stories in the private and government owned media comparatively is not the area which is adequately addressed yet by the previous studies. In the contrary, journalists have a challenging task before them to objectively frame news contents despite the media's ownership influence (private or government owned) and type of media (print or broadcast). The presentation of information, ideas, and outcomes is a significant assignment that journalists can have an influence on society, and consequently make significant impacts on the future (Stalin Gebresellassie, 2009).

This study examines the ownership variance and influence in political parties' news stories on each selected media as one strategy to identify framing of pre-election news stories. Previous studies such as a study by Simret Yasabu, 2006 revealed that the types of ownership, that is,

whether it is public, private, or government affects the type of news the public receives. Therefore, the research is conducted from both private -government and print- broadcast perspective in Ethiopia.

To this end, although framing has an immense role to help the audience acquire comprehensive and coherent information, little attention has been given to media framing of news stories in the pre-election period of Ethiopia, which directly and indirectly affects election results in Ethiopia. Since all citizens above the age of 18 years are entitled to vote for candidates irrespective of literacy level, both government and private print and broadcast media have to be under study because most of the previous studies in the area (a study by Ashenafi Gudeta, 2012, Hamdy, Naila & Gomaa, 2012, Ashenafi, 2013, Asmeret, 2013) are all conducted in print media which is solely for those voters who can read and write. In the contrary, the impact of television on voters has been investigated by Stella Amara Aririguzoh, noted that television broadcasts made voters curious about the contestants. He also indicated that political parties' affiliation to television broadcast houses and other mass media channels are very high. It is aimed at not only for the electorate to be more knowledgeable about them but also to secure their votes and loyalties and to increase the voters' participation from registration through the actual voting (Aririguzoh, 2007). Therefore, his study shows the role of broadcast media become very influential during elections. In addition, this study totally examines how the media framed the 5th round Ethiopian general elections in 2015, which has not been studied by others ever before. The study is the latest one in terms of its time, approach and content.

1.3. Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General Objective

This study, therefore, was aimed at investigating how the selected private and government media frame articles and news stories prior to the 2015 Ethiopian general elections.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

Thus, the specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess how framing of pre-election news stories of various political parties was carried out by the selected media institutions.
2. Analyze the type of framing used by the selected media in covering pre-election news stories.
3. Determine whether there is any difference between the private media and government owned media in framing of pre-election news stories.

1.4. Research questions

Accordingly, the study was guided by the following specific research questions:

1. How did the selected media portray and frame the political parties during the pre election period of the 2015 Ethiopian General Elections?
2. What types of frames are commonly used for pre-election news stories?
3. What were the major differences in framing pre-election news stories between the public and privately owned media?

1.6. Significance of the study

This study provides latest information on framing pre-election news stories in a federal democratic political system like Ethiopia. Therefore, the findings of this study will be of paramount importance to students of journalism, to the concerned government bodies for the selected media institutions.

Especially in countries like Ethiopia where building democracy is at its infant stage, assessing the role of the media in relation to employing its holistic social responsibility during national political elections will have immense benefits especially for media practitioners and owners to reconsider their deeds.

The research output can provide additional information to policy makers, media practitioners and owners and can be used as a reference for future study.

The research is believed to help political parties to examine and evaluate how they were being framed and use the insights in private and government owned media in order to boost their future performance.

Furthermore, the findings of this research may initiate other researchers to conduct study on the other dimensions of the topic and may help as a reference to support their hypothesis who are interested to study in the same or related areas.

1.7. Scope of the study

This study merely focuses on investigating to how and what extent pre-election news stories are framed by the selected media institutions. Hence, it is all about, *Analysis of pre election news stories during the 2015 Ethiopian national election: The case of Addis Zemen, the Reporter, EBC and FBC*. Therefore, other issues in the country's media and other managerial aspects in the selected sample media houses are not considered in the study.

1.8. Limitation of the study

I encountered the problems below throughout identifying the topic, gathering information and analyzing the findings. Accordingly, the researcher faced challenges among the informants to give timely responses due to other businesses and shortage of ample resources to be considered within the given period of timeframe. In addition, over loading activities from my respective office somehow hindered me exerting my full efforts on this work to complete the work effectively and efficiently. Uncertainty of the researcher was the other limitation due to the interviewees' responses is genuine and truthful.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter deals with discussion of related literatures which would help us grasp the overall scenario of this paper. This Chapter has several parts. In the first part of this chapter, overview of Ethiopian democratization, the media landscape and politics are given. In the second part, the contemporary challenges of the press are discussed. The third part deals with theoretical background (framing theory). And the last section provides the focus of the study such as news bias, news source and news tone are reviewed.

2.1 Media and politics

Politics is a part of individuals' daily lives whether to become a partisan or opposition. In addition, media operates in any politics where democratization is given attention like in national election before, during and after the process. According to Rafael Roncagliolo, the media relates to electoral authorities in four different ways. "The first is the electoral authority as a subject for media coverage because the electoral authority is often the source of news in itself. The second is the electoral authority as an influential agent over the media. The third is the media as a tool for transmitting and diffusing not just news, but also information about the electoral process. Finally, electoral authorities can relate to the media as agents charged with oversight capacities" (Roncagliolo.2009, P.23). Generally, there is a symbiotic relationship between media and politics in order to benefit each other.

Similarly, news paper publishers often held tough views about politics, foreign policy and domestic issues, and their newspapers reflected those views from the front page to the editorial page. These strong views and accompanying news coverage have a practical commercial benefit

(Sheldon, Gawiser and Witt, 1994). Consequently, media in politics and vice versa has an influential role both in the broadcast and print media in the time of election in particular and all aspects lives in general.

2.2. Media and Elections

The media are required to afford pertinent information, analyze it and additionally tender substantive opinions to the public, while also serving as a platform for debate and discussion. Besides, the media shall fulfill their watchdog role by promoting transparency and thus tackling electoral fraud and deception. In addition, the media have a responsibility to supply election coverage that gives the voter comprehensive, accurate, and reliable information on all aspects of the electoral process. This information helps to ensure that the voters recognize and comprehend their democratic rights and how to put into effect them free from panic, threats or coercion. However, the media is not operating its responsibility independently in election periods especially in developing countries like Ethiopia. That is why scholars frequently quote, “The media is not neutral; they have interests and positions and will try to steer electoral processes in favor of these interests. As such , the media acts in a similar way to a candidate or a political party” (Roncagliolo.2009, P.24).

Similarly, Deloir and Sada state that parties and candidates competing in an election must get fair access to media. If this opportunity is guaranteed in the election process, a fundamental principle of free, reliable and transparent elections are more likely to be in place (Deloir and Sada, 2000).

Since the country's politics has passed through centralized government system, the role of the Ethiopian press in an election remained limited for most of its history because of nonexistence of multiparty election in the political arena. It was in 1995 that the country conducted its first multi party election which allowed 30 different political parties to play a part in and proclaim their plans to the electorate through the mass media. It is after 1995 and the remaining four rounds of elections took place in which both privately and governmentally owned media outlets played their role in informing the citizenry about the elections and the candidates programs ... however the 2005 national election was exceptional and remarkably witnessed election in making all political parties participate and sensitize their plans both in private and government owned media (Ashenafi, 2013).

In this year, Ethiopia ran its fifth round national election in 2015 since the defeat of the Derg in 1991 although various elections have been conducted since then such as elections for Kebele officials (1992), a constituent assembly (1994), national and regional officials (1995), and national officials again (2000). According to International Foundation of Electoral Systems' (IFES) Ethiopia Pre- Election Assessment Report prepared by Edward McMahon, Stephen Beale, Genet Menelik-Swanson, regional elections were not stable. The media also covered the disastrous part such as killings, candidate harassment, voter intimidation and allegations of ballot box filling. The media's major sources were complaints from opposition parties of unequal access to media, biased election officials, lack of transparent procedures, a flawed election law and a partisan National Electoral Board (NEBE) have all continued (McMahon, Beale and Genet, 2004). Based on all these experiences, the government declared the 2015 national election to be fair, peaceful and trustworthy by the people.

There have been recent demands by opposition parties for electoral reforms and a “leveling of the playing field in the media so that they can introduce their policy alternatives to the public. Therefore , more than 600 newspaper columns and about 700 hour broadcasting air times were allotted for political parties to approach the public through media.

2.3. News bias

News bias is primarily related to the essences of journalists not being objective in presenting their news or programs concerning election campaigns and debates. That means, neither standing for nor against in favor of any political party while providing the general public with election news stories and programs. Journalists need to facilitate the surface where all political parties can participate in without any biased preconditions. Any claim by a journalist or anchor against this principle can be referred as biasness. Skjerdal, 2012, has strengthened this idea by saying “...maintaining that journalists should attempt to stay objective even if the work conditions are less conducive. Objectivity is the attitude of not taking sides and representing different parties in a fair manner. The journalists connect objectivity to fairness, balance, neutrality and unbiased reporting” Skjerdal, 2012, p.209). Entman (2010) mentioned that the two major framing biases as content bias and decision – making biases in which promoting the success of a specific interest, party or ideology in competitions to control government power and the influence of journalists’ belief systems on the texts they produce respectively. From this we can understand that framing bias emanated from the journalists political orientation and due to all the conditions what covers them.

2.4. News source

Sources are very crucial in the work of journalists to carry out their daily responsibility truly. In the absence of relevant sources, it is extremely complex for journalists to supply plausible and trustworthy information for the public. More than ever, the use of source becomes very important while dealing with sensitive issues like that of politics. Many studies indicate that the relationship between journalists and politicians is basically relied under a symbiotic relation of their (media, politicians) mutual benefits. Sources can easily influence the tone and the way the journalist frames the news stories. As Ashenafi (2013) noted, media can easily influence their news framing by only referring to sources that held out the same notion with their agendas. for this reason , I have set a research question to identify the use of sources in framing political parties during the 2015 Ethiopian National Election.

Accordingly, Ashenafi (2013) identified in his study that the Ethiopian private news media were very contingent on opposition party leaders and government official sources to frame their news where as international sources, civic society and ordinary peoples were hardly used (Ashenafi , 2013) .

2.5. News tone

The way journalists cover certain group either positively or negatively imply the presence of some kind of political orientation in the media which intern affects the audience perception of politics entirely. The Carter Center pre-election assessment report of May 2005 Ethiopian National Election witnessed extraordinary participation by opposition parties and sovereign

candidates and an unmatched level of political debate in the state-dominated electronic and print media and at public forums apprehended across the country (Carter Center, 2009). However, the tone of the stories from both the private and government owned media were significantly different.

The IFES' report of 2005 election also indicated that the media plays a critical role in ensuring a legitimate, participatory and transparent electoral process. There appears to be little equilibrium in news or campaign coverage and the limited audience in addition to the biased tone of the news contents (Mc Mahon, Beale, Genet, 2004).

Framing involves several aspects of a story, including how it is structured, what information is incorporated, and what tone is adopted although framing may involve the writers use of rhetoric to persuade the reader and framing essentially is organization; they use framing to present information in a particular context (Tutt, 2009). It is aliened to the the changing tone of the stories frequently and paves the way for biased framing of election related news stories.

As of Ashenafi Gudeta's study about the framing of 2010 parliamentary election in print media, out of the coverage offered to EPRDF and Medrek , the tone of the stories by Addis Zemen's publications towards EPRDF was 90.5 % positive where as Reporter's publications towards EPRDF was only 46.2 % positive.

On the contrary, from the total coverage provided to Medrek, the government owned newspaper, Addis Zemen did not publish any positive stories about the party while the other newspaper,

Reporter, out of its total coverage, 33.3 % was positive (Ashenafi , 2010). This clearly notify that there is a noteworthy demarcation between the private and government owned media in framing political parties during reporting of pre-election news stories.

2.6 . Democratization in Ethiopia

Democratization is referred as the transition to a more democratic political regime from less or no stable political regime. It may be the transition from an authoritarian regime to a full democracy, a transition from an authoritarian political system to a semi-democracy or transition from a semi-authoritarian political system to a democratic political system. However , it is influenced by various factors, including economic development, history, and civil society. It results in ensuring the people`s right to vote and have a voice in their political system.

In Ethiopia, democratization has vast association with to do one`s daily work in peace, undisturbed by arbitrary interventions from the authorities however democratization goes deeper to make the people the ownership of the country`s political system in all aspects. According to Pausewang, Tronvoll and Aalen (2002:1), When the military dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam and the Derg regime ended in 1991, there was a wide expectation that, finally , they would be free to decide their political future for themselves. Hence , unless fair representation of citizens in the political system is ensured, the realisation of democratization remains unanswered. The mechanism to approach the system is through periodic, transparent, fair and trustworthy election.

However, building democracy is not a one time work and something without drawbacks. It is not achieved once and for all, nor is it an absolute ideal. It requires constant improvement, and it can deteriorate quickly if it is not kept alive. It may suffer temporary setbacks, but as long as the democratic spirit is kept up with timely and permanent watchful eyes of citizens it can always be recovered (Pausewang, Tronvoll and Aalen, 2002).

Most Ethiopian cultures contained elements of democratic practice : councils of elders mutual aid organisations, age cycles arrangements for the distribution of scarce resources and procedures to deal with conflicts and crime (Pausewang, Tronvoll and Aalen, 2002) . In spite of the above argument, Yosef (2005) noted that an enlightened, prepared, and committed local media have a power to accelerate democratization process through well-informed and responsible news reporting. This kind of media can also help to create and fuse public opinion. A democratic government is believed to serve its people and is expected to fulfill what is the common good for its people. Nevertheless, democratization involves much more than the regular ritual of multiparty elections (Yosef, 2005).

Ethiopia had new hopes for a better future in the country's politics as a democratic federation of ethnic regions in which all nations and nationalities with equal rights take part in 1991. The regime of Mengistu was defeated and Mengistu himself escaped to Zimbabwe, leaving his country to the victorious ethnic resistance movements. There were many indications that did not point to Ethiopia developing the status of an entrenched democracy prior to the 2000 and 2001 elections. EPRDF (Ethiopian people Revolutionary Democratic Front), the ruling party today, strongly believes its control of power is dependent on the extent to represent the interests of

peasants, especially the suppressed peasants from ethnic minorities (Pausewang, Tronvoll and Aalen, 2002).

2.7. FDRE Government and the Media Landscape

Many studies and literary works witness that noteworthy change has been registered in the Ethiopian media Scenery after EPRDF came to power. “This period could be termed as the flowering point of the Ethiopian media, especially the private media” Ashenafi (2006:11). The private media in the country have been remained unpracticed during the previous feudal and military regimes.

However, a research work by Population Media Center (2006) indicated that the 1991 change of government has been given a remarkable phenomenon in the development of Ethiopian journalism resulting two main events. The first one is that pre- published censorship was banned, 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 (Ashenafi , 2006). But when this study was being conducted, the private broadcasters were proliferating across the country, notably radio broadcasters of FM.

One who has been the instructor of Addis Ababa University Journalism and Communication graduate study, Terje S. Skjerdal in his dissertation in 2012 states that the media situation during EPRDF is significantly different from that of the two previous regimes, especially with regard to formal media policy and openings for independent journalism. Nevertheless, there are also signs

of lasting challenges, specifically on the informal level. Consequently, what he argued in the following section is that there is not a single commencement that could adequately describe the developmental history of Ethiopian media since the advent of the 1991 government, EPRDF into power (Skjerdal , 2012).

He stated the ups and downs of the country's media between 1991 and 2012 as the interchange of coercion and liberalization commonly known as irresponsible journalism and professionalism. Therefore, he divided the period 1991–2012 into different phases, each of which is characterized by a major inclination. The period begins with liberalization (1991–92) and explosion of new media outlets (1992–96); turning into a phase of government clampdowns (1996–2000); followed by strengthened and renewed diversity (2000–05); then abruptly changing direction due to post-election drawbacks (2005–07); succeeded by an interval of revitalization (2007–10); before once again being affected by a wave of coercion (2010–12). He argued that the phases are not exclusively characterized by either intimidation or liberalization but still contains subtleties that sometimes appear to be inconsistent. Nonetheless, the overall general progress for each phase is points in the direction of either coercion or liberalization (Skjerdal , 2012).

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. Although the numbers vary from time to time, more 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), *Addis Admas* (31,000 copies).

According to Ishiyama cited in Ashenafi , after 2005 election and the crackdown that followed it, promising of media development environment began to get worse due to a number of journalists together with the opposition party leaders, were arrested for allegedly undermining the constitutional order, and the publication of the newspapers come to an end; only a limited number of newspapers those underwent in line with the above principles were allowed to continue publishing without interruption (Ishiyama, 2007).

2.8. Ethiopian Media law and Framing of Political News

It is the supreme law of the country that guaranteed the rights of citizens freedom of expression.

Article 29(2) of the 1995 constitution states:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of expression without any interference. The right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any media of his choice.”

For this reason, by virtue of Article 29 of the constitution the right to freedom of expression has a package of rights within it such as the right to own ideas, opinion and expression. In recognition of which Article 29(1) of the constitution stipulates: “Everyone has the right to hold opinions without interference.” This very right protects person from being coerced by the state to

reveal what opinions they are assumed to hold.

Press Proclamation law 34/1992 is also the first legislation that fully recognizes freedom of the press and freedom of expression. This is understood from the preamble of the proclamation that states: "The existence, promotion and expansion of a free and strong press are prerequisites for the full translation in to practice of freedom of expression (Preamble of proc. No. 34/92). Accordingly, the purpose of this enactment is to "issue the appropriate law providing for the freedom, rights and duties of the press" (Preamble of proc. No. 34/92). Article 3 of the press law recognizes freedom of expression and to this effect it rules out censorship and any restriction of a similar nature. This is a great leap forward for the press precisely because the previous regime has handcuffed the press through censorship which defeats the purpose of freedom of expression.

In spite of the fact that the press law recognizes the freedom of the press, Gudeta (2008) argues the press law prescribes the content of the press products and dictates what the objectives of the press organizations are. On top that, Kasoma (2000) cited in Gudeta (2008) states that African press laws are mainly prohibitive than facilitative. These are referred as negative precepts which prohibit the press and journalists from certain action and not positive regulations which give the press and journalists greater capability to perform their Profession independently. However article 4 of the proclamation states that: "Press stands for the pursuit of fundamental freedom, peace, democracy, justice, equality and for the acceleration of social and economic development". This provision has an intention to put into effect neutral framing of the contents of any press in the eyes of development journalism that propagates development issues for the ultimate benefit of the people. How ever many disagree that it is a systematic and impliedly

dictates the content and the objective of any press organization in congruence with the above-mentioned values.

Later, the government has drafted, Law on Mass Media and Freedom of Information to make certain improvements with the previous law because of its lack of clarity. Article 10(2) of the press law makes any press duty bound to ensure that any press product it circulates should free from:

“Any criminal offence against the safety of the state or of the administration established... any defamation or false accusation against any individual, nation/nationality, people or organization; any criminal instigation of one nationality against another or incitement of conflict between peoples and any agitation for war.”

When such liabilities occur the responsibility lies on the concerned editor, journalist, or publisher. Beside this, the press organization is also “jointly liable for any criminal acts committed and/or any civil damage caused by the press” (Article 14(1) of Proc. No.34/92). It is directly alliened to various types of framing such as conflict frame, human impact frame, economic frame, attribution of responsibility frame and morality frame. Such circumstances are usual in our country especially during electiond periods by framing conflicts ,false accusation and defamation among political parties.

2.9. The Development of Government Owned Media in Ethiopia

Ethiopian media had remained under the control of the government who was in power across various regimes. It has been used as a tool for extending the powe of the rulers. During the

imperial regime, only some news papers were existed with very limited circulation and with poor content quality. A milestone for Ethiopian journalism is the establishment in 1921 of the printing press in Addis Ababa that later came to be known as Berhanena Selam which truly signaled the looming Emperor's mindful attitude towards media communication (Skjerdal, 2012). In May 1941, the local administration enthusiastically launched *Addis Zemen*, an Amharic publication which has remained the most important state-owned newspaper in the nation ever since. Its loyalty to the nation and the serving has always been incontrovertible. One of the first issues proclaimed that the newspaper «was established with the permission of His Imperial dignity to explain to the people about what they should do for their country, for their King and for His government» (*Addis Zemen* 7 June 1941, quoted in Skjerdal, 2012, p. 11).

Radio broadcasting came to Ethiopia in 1935, just before the Italian occupation 1936–41 and the first television signals in Ethiopia were distributed on a closed circuit in Africa Hall in Addis Ababa later in May 1963 on the important occasion of the first meeting of the former Organization of African Unity (OAU) now African Union (AU). “Ethiopian Television (ETV) began permanent broadcasting on 2 November 1964, coinciding with the 33th coronation of Haile Selassie” (ibid. P. 13). Generally speaking, media governance during the Ethiopian Empire served to evident imperial righteousness and Amharic domination by affecting both media structures and media content for the benefit of those who owned and monopolized the media.

After the overthrow of Emperor Haile Sellasie by the military junta (1974-1991), the regime have unambiguously been portrayed as a gloomy chapter in the history of Ethiopian media and

journalism. The regime turned all media outlets into propaganda channels and effectively forbade any opening for professional independence for journalists of the regime. The newsroom atmosphere was filled with fear and anxiety. The famous founding editor of *African Times* and media analyst Frank Barton described the Derg's media as «the worst piece of Marxist mouthpiece on the Continent» (Ashenafi , 2012).

Mengistu Haile Mariam, during his 17- years rule, the government-and party-owned publications such as *Meskerem* (September), *Serto Ader* (Worker), and the pre-Derg *Yezareyitu Ethiopia* (Ethiopia Today) were in print. The establishment of privately owned media was legally banned and the Ethiopian radio and television also continued providing service for the good of the regime and had been propagating the military dictatorship. During then, all media were under tough control and direct supervision of the government (Ashenafi , 2012)

Unlikely to the previous regimes media ownership by the government during the federal democratic system, is a time when the media born again across the country`s media history. As per the 2008 Freedom House report, conditions for press freedom in Ethiopia Improved slightly in 2007 however press freedom remained imperfect due to the prevalence of arguments indicating government interference in the media`s independence.

By and large, it can be concluded that with some exceptions in the reign of the EPRDF, governments in Ethiopia have influenced the media directly and indirectly so that the practice of journalism could become an advocator of the needs and interests of governments in power, who used the mass media to impose their ideological orientations (Shimelis, 2000).

2.10. The Development of Private Media

Following the collapse of the military Derg by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in 1991 the country achieved a great success in its mass media history by ratifying the first proclamation yielding private media entities to operate autonomously which was not attempted ever before. Due to this huge chance, "... different privately owned print products mushroomed in the country. This period was a period in which the country witnessed a significant amount of newspaper and magazine start-ups in its history. The number of printed materials between 1992 and 1997 reached 385 whereas the broadcast media is still dominated by government control" (Ashenafi , 2013. p. 26). On the other hand, currently the number of privately owned radio broadcasters is increasing significantly. In a notion not that much different from Ashenafi's, Skerjdal argued the media state of affairs during EPRDF is significantly dissimilar from that of the two earlier regimes, particularly with regard to formal media policy and openings for free journalism.

Nevertheless, there are also signs of long-term constraints, mainly on the informal level. Hence, he argued that there is not a single commencement in the development of private media that could sufficiently describe the developments in the Ethiopia media environment since the onset of the current government in 1991. Instead, he clearly demonstrated the path in the media situation as a sandwich between irresponsible journalism and professionalism (Skerjdal, 2012). According to him, the two cases (professional journalism and non-professional journalism) are the major causes for the occurrence of all ups and downs in Ethiopia's media history even after the permission of the legitimate functioning of private media by EPRDF since 1991. Therefore,

he also noted, “The green light for private media outlets spurred an explosion of new titles” (ibid. p. 17).

2.11. Factors affecting the performance of the media in Ethiopia

The challenges of the press in Ethiopia has undergone various ups and downs due to the interference of government officials and other interested groups in the media`s independent operation especially in the time of national elections. The framing of political parties either positively, negatively or neutrally really matters in facilitating the role of the press during an election periods.

2.11.1. Politics-related factors

According to Skjerdal in his Doctoral thesis submitted to University of Oslo, in spite of rumors from different directions, direct government intervention in the news production is rare. “The editors-in-chief of each state media outlet are trusted with the responsibility to lead their institution according to journalistic criteria and the editorial policy. That said, there are ample accounts of higher officials and government representatives who have contacted journalists directly to complain about their work. «If you criticize a minister, the minister will call immediately,» an *Ethiopian Herald* journalist says, although direct criticism of government ministers is unusual. A long-time editor with ENA informs that «there are times when news, especially political news, is read through the telephone directly and edited by officials themselves, sometimes by party officials». However, although this might have been common

practice earlier, it is no longer the order of the day. This might indicate that officials and government persons have become more mindful of the distinction between the political environment and the media, at least when it comes to regular news coverage” (Skjerdal, 2012).

2.11.2. Economic factors

Economy is another challenge for the public and privately owned press in Ethiopian; it is more prevailing in the private press. Most of the newspapers have limited circulation which is emanated from low profitability and the country’s high level of poverty. Gebremedhin (2006) cited in Ashenafi Gudeta 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, but Ethiopian newspapers are suffering from lack of advertisers”. On top of the above problems, the constantly increasing publishing price and stationery materials is challenging the print media in Ethiopia that ultimately results in a large number of papers withdraw from market due to competition, inadequate sales and low levels of advertising income (Ashenafi , 2012). Therefore, the presence of financial insecurity in the media can be considered as the major challenges of Ethiopian private and government media that directly or indirectly affects the framing of political parties during election periods.

2.11.3. Professional issues

Gebregziabihher cited in Hailemarkos (2006) stated that chiefly the private press without any verification unenthusiastically reports the government mentioning lack of professional journalists and code of ethics as a basic problem. He also suggested that intensive training of journalists and establishing codes of ethics for the practitioners. Although self-censorship is most often allied with the private media where journalists put constraints on themselves to avoid ruthless reactions from authorities, it is also an observable fact in the state owned media (Hailemarkos , 2006). These intimidating factors and the assumed reactions in the state media may not be as strong as in the private one, but journalists fear that not complying with the expected norms could have other consequences, such as lost chances for promotion and general agony in the working environment. The situation drives the media practitioners to frame the news contents as well as the audiences in a certain way.

2.12. Theoretical framework

2.12.1. Framing Theory

The cotemporary media is widely becoming a political battlefield where political conflicts take place not through guns but with bullets of words and ideas that the media entertains. That is why press coverage of political issues such as election campaigns has grasped more attention from political communication theorists, media scholars, media practitioners and the public as a whole. However, the media has a power to cook and re-cook the news stories in a way it wishes based

on the organizations experience of framing news before and during election and other times as well.

The basic theoretical foundation for this research is framing by the one who is frequently cited by many media scholars called Entman (1991, 1993, 2004, and 2007). For Entman, "framing is selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution". Similarly, framing referred as the activities of the mass media they select, emphasize and present some aspects of ``reality`` to audiences, while ignoring others (Stone, Singletary and P. Richmond, 1999).

To assess how the media framing process is discharged by the reporters, the sociologist Goffman cited in Stone and et al noted that framing as the process of observing and making sense of events in the organizational experience. When interpreting an event, a reporter employs frameworks or schemata of interpretation-categories that exist in the mind-that enable the reporter to locate ,perceive, identify and label that event or occurrence like election in this study.

According to Stone, Singlary and Richmond (1999), framing is done for either of the following purposes, "1) select certain aspects perceived reality, 2) highlight them, 3) communicate them in a way that promotes, 4) a particular version of a problem, 5) interprets its causes, 6) passes moral judgment and 7) prescribes a remedy for the problem described". According to this perspective, news gathering is framing (Ibid, 278). According to Fair Hurst & Sarr (1996) identified three elements of framing, namely: Language, Thought, and Forethought. The way in which the content of a text framed is how it is presented to its audiences to make it fore

grounded or back grounded according to the author's choice of emphasizing, de-emphasizing or, indeed leave out of the text (Paltridge and Brian, 2008).

2.12.1.1 Frames in Political News

As Entman has stated in his book, the use of framing has got considerable benefits in political communication. Since frames deal with emphasizing some aspects of reality while hiding other information which may affect audience reactions in diverse ways, politicians looking for support come across very important to apply. "Framing in this light plays a major role in the exertion of political power, and the frame in a news text is really the important of power" (Entman 1993:55). In such cases frames come up with politicians most important identity and aspirations in the text (Fufa, 2013). As a result, framing has got due attention by the political parties as well as the media practitioners during elections since politics and media has symbiotic relationship.

2.12.1.2. Factors Affecting Media Framing

Framing can be affected by various factors. According to Scheufele (1999), journalists framing of an issue may be influenced by several socio-structural or organizational reasons and by individual or ideological factors. He further identified five variables that may potentially affect journalists' framing of an issue or an event: *social norms and values, organizational pressures and constraints, pressure of interest groups, journalistic routines, and journalists' ideological or political orientations*. It is more habitually in Ethiopia in the media houses in framing of their

election related news stories and political parties during election periods when the the citizens have a say in the political system of their country.

2.12.1.3. Types of Frames

The type of frame used has tremendous impact on how the readers grasp the idea of the story of an event. According to Wolfsfeld (1997:5) cited in Simret (2006) the news media are central agents in the construction of social frames about politics. This is done by ways of giving due emphasis on certain features of an issue while downplaying the other side. This shows the media act as political agenda setters for the public. In many cases journalists use already established frames that fits into the current situation. Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992), in their book called common knowledge: news and construction of political meaning investigated the construction of political world in the media. After a series of study on media coverage, they came up with five predominant frames by which the media covers political discourse. These are economic frame, conflict frame, powerlessness frame, human impact frame , and morality frame (pp.62-73). The researcher used most of these types of frames and included other types which are common in media framing of issues.

The Economic frame - when media use economic frame to present an event, the attention of the content will focus on the profit and loss aspects. When the story mentions an event, problem, or issue in terms of the consequences, it will have consequences economically on an individual, groups, organizations, or countries.

The conflict frames- this type of frame is the most employed frame by the media in times of covering disputes and controversial issues. There are ample evidences on which media interprets reality in terms of conflict frame. One reason for abundant use conflict frame might be because of the inherent assumption of many journalists that conflict is a way of attracting more readers (Neuman, Just and Crigler, 1992:64).

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.

The human impact frame- media people use this type of frame to describe individual and groups who are likely to be affected by an issue. What is different in here is that journalists try to give a ‘human face’ for the story by ways of giving human examples (personification) rather than the direct words of the victims. Media contents employ terms loaded with adjectives to incite feelings of sorrow, empathy, and compassion from the public (Neuman, Just and Crigler, 1992:70).

The morality frame- in cases where media covers events in terms of morality aspect that is either emphasizing the bad or good side of an event it can be said as morality frame. When the story tells the readers to do or not to do something, this is also concerned with right or wrong judgments of issues.

Issue Frames - the term issue frame refer to the interpretative patterns that focuses on candidates issue position and proposal. This kind of frame gives a clear idea about the candidates' position on specific issue. Issue framing emphasizes policy issues, problems and solutions in campaign coverage. According to Rhee this reporting style or frame presents proposals for problems, information about who are advocating which policy alternative and consequences of the problems and proposals (Rhee, 1997, cited in Ashenafi, 2013).

This study has made use of the above major types of frames as a standard to assess frames employed by the selected media institutions. Because the study was primarily aimed at responding to the question, what type of frames are used in framing pre- election news stories in the 2015 Ethiopian general elections.

2.9.1.4. Criticism of Framing Theory

Even though framing theory is prominent in the social sciences and humanities research paradigm, it has its own criticism. One criticism emanates from its empirical vagueness (Scheufele, 1999). Scheufele, attributing the idea to Entman's (1993) 'scattered conceptualization' explain that "framing theory lacks consistent or common fundamental definition that shows how frames are fixed and become visible in a text as well as how it influences thinking". As a result, the use of framing varies from context to contexts and from discipline to discipline (Fufa, 2013).

The second criticism is related to the theory's relation with media's direct effect theory which disregards audience's autonomy of making meaning. According to Entman, 1993, "Framing suggests the notion of dominant meaning which consists of the problem definition, causal

interpretation, evaluative and treatment interpretation with predisposition that it will be accepted and understood audiences. But this notion is debatable as to whether people could recall their own experiences and facts that were not given in the text to decode meaning “(Fufa, 2013). Furthermore, audiences of broadcasters and readers of newspapers are not peoples who passively receive all the information that come out of the media rather they absorb, analyze and give their own meaning based on past experiences. This implies that the framing of media texts is an absolute strategy to influence the decision of electorates to give their respective candidates during election periods.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study mainly set out to analyze the framing of pre election news stories during the 2015 Ethiopian general elections by the country's private and government media. The study employed qualitative content analysis that included textual analysis and in depth-interview and observation. According to Gunter, qualitative research embraces methodologies that are theoretically framed by critical or interpretivist social science paradigms that give emphasis to interpretation over measurement. Hence, critical and interpretivist perspectives are more concerned with understanding how people interact with and make sense of the media through reference to various communities which symbolize membership or reference groups from which they obtain their values and standards. All these things can be difficult to quantify and may be better understood through qualitative methodologies (Gunter, 2000). The framing of the discourse during the pre-election period was also analyzed in interpretive' perspective.

3.1.1 Method of Data Collection

As discussed earlier, qualitative research method is employed as the dominant research method in this study. The approach helps to qualify the coverage, tone, themes, the type of frames and sources of information used by the media and it is used to interpret themes, words and expressions (idioms, metaphors and proverbs) of the texts written or spoken on the issues related to the political parties' pre-election news stories. Both primary and secondary source of data have been used to gather all the necessary information regarding the topic. The tools are

document review, observation and interview with the political writers and editors of the selected media institutions.

Qualitative Content Analysis

The qualitative content analysis was used to interpret the frames used in the reporting of pre election news stories by the selected newspapers and how they appeared in the selected broadcasters. However, an emphasis is given to interpret the language use, the tone, the themes, words and expressions (idioms, metaphors and proverbs) of the articles and news stories on the issues related to the 5th Ethiopian national election and legitimately contending political parties.

Therefore, the following categories are used to interpret and analyze the data as unit of analysis. These are items such as coverage, organizational experiences, use of sources, use of language, tone, biasness and framing and types of frames generally employed in the pre- election period of the 2015 Ethiopian general elections.

According to Yin (2011) cited in Asmerete Hailesellasies' recent study in 2013, qualitative method is employed to find out the meaning of people's lives that is uttered in their writings which has an appropriate impact for studying the views and perspectives of people in detail. In addition, the method encompasses the way how the issues are covered, treated and the discourses are framed. An applied research methodologist, John W. Creswel also supplemented this idea saying "Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a world view, the possible use of theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswel,2007. p.37).

In depth Interview

The other method applied was an in-depth interview with the editors from each selected media institutions as it is pertinent in supporting the findings gathered through content analysis. According to Gunter cited in Asmeret, 2013, in-depth or interview is one of the most widely used data collection methods in qualitative researches which includes media and communication research (Asmeret, 2013). Furthermore, an in depth interview was used to further investigate how the framing of pre election news stories is related to the ideological affiliation of the private and state owned media institutions that have been under study. Some representatives of the most contending political parties were interviewed to maintain the representation of the results and to make the process more informative. By using these two methods, the researcher attempted to have a comprehensive examination of the framing of political parties and election related news stories by the Ethiopian private and government owned media.

Observation

The researcher observed the overall reactions of the selected media towards the political parties in framing of the pre - election news stories. Live television and radio news presentation about the election, discussions and feelings of journalists (friends) working for the selected media and informal but important comments are carefully observed for the purpose of the study.

Similarly, the researcher is also the part of the study for that he is not a machine which independently analyzed the contents of the media utterances without sharing its own inputs into it. In the interpretive view, the media research is characterized by the close attachment of

the inquirer's views, thinking and attitudes with the subject being studied. As far as I understand it, it does not erode the neutrality of the facts since all the possible mechanisms were applied to uphold the findings of the study remained sound. Creswel has strengthened the notion as qualitative research is a form of interpretive inquiry in which the researcher interprets what he see, hear, and understand ...so as not to detach his interpretations from his own background, history ,context, knowledge and schemata (ibid, 2007).

For Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen as cited in Kawulich, 2005. p. 2), "Observations enable the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a written photograph of the situation under study". Therefore, I have felt the entire situations across the beginning of the election campaign to the election process through friends, colleagues, families and the media with particular attention to the selected media institutions. From the same source by Schmuck, 1997 also indicated that the method provide the researchers with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other, and check for how much time is spent on various activities (Kawulich, 2005).

3.1.2 Sampling Technique and Procedure

Obviously, it is not manageable for any researcher to study and address the whole population of the study what the issue is dealing about. Consequently, it is a routine to take samples from the appropriate subjects of the research. As the title of the the study obligates, I took samples from the private and public media. It is not enough to simply include private and government media rather it is vital to analyze the framing of broadcast and print media based on their distinct nature

of reporting. However, the media's coverage and accessibility of both the state vs private and broadcast vs print media in this case was the main reason for the sampling strategy.

Generally, there are two types of sampling strategies. One is random or probability sampling where each unit or subject has equal chance of being selected as a sample for the study. The subsequent one is non random or non probability sampling which means the researcher does not follow criterion like the first one rather follows other alternatives. According to Berg cited in Asmeret ,while probabilistic sampling includes simple random sampling, stratified random sampling and, cluster sampling nevertheless the most widely used method of non-probabilistic sampling are quota sampling and purposive sampling (Berg, 2011). Therefore, purposive or non probability sampling is used to take samples and four private and government owned media are selected from both print and broadcast media to get representative data in the framing of the country's media during the pre-election period.

3.1.3 Research Subject and Data source

The subjects are selected both from the broadcast and print based on their high circulation, accessibility, viewing and readability across the country from private and government owned media. Therefore, print media such as Reporter and Addis Zemen and from the broadcast media, EBC and FBC are selected for the purpose of obtaining relevant data for the study.

The Reporter --*The Reporter* was established by Amare Aregawi, who still owns the newspaper. It has been the most famous personality for many years in the private news business in Ethiopia. The former TPLF fighter and general manager of ETV that later came to be known as EBC from 1991–95, as a general manager for Ethiopian News Agency. Amare began *The*

Reporter as an EPRDF-friendly newspaper to balance the muscularly oppositional press at the time. Since then, *The Reporter* has played an undecided role as critical partisan of government policy. In spite of the occurrence of many unfavorable conditions among the news paper and the press in general from the authorities, *The Reporter* has covered ruling party's policy in critical-supportive manner. *The Reporter* has therefore managed to stay away from reactions from the authorities for the most part, even though the newspaper organization and its owner have been the area under discussion to violent attacks from various parties. However, that *The Reporter* has survived for more than 18 years in an unstable private media market cannot exclusively be explained because of its general positive attitude towards the ruling party. The newspaper's journalistic profile is evenly vital which has attracted a solid readership and marketing base (Skjerdal, 2012). Currently, it has also continued to be competitive in the print media in circulation and popularity as a result of its bi-weekly Amharic and weekly English publications.

Addis Zemen - In May 1941, the local administration of the Imperial regime passionately launched *Addis Zemen* in its rough Amharic translation 'New Era', an Amharic publication which has remained the most important state-owned newspaper in the nation ever since. It has been published since its establishment in Berhanena Selam Printing Press which is almost monopoly institution run by the government. Addis Zemen has been serving as the main official press organs of the state and as the main source of information for literate people even before the flourish of other news papers following the abolishment of pre-publication censorship by the press law of 1992.

From the very inception of the news paper during the reign of Haile Sellasie, its devotion to the nation and the incumbent has always been indisputable because it was established with the aim of explaining about what people should do for their country, for their King and for His

government (*Addis Zemen* 7 June 1941, quoted in Skjerdal, 2012.p.11). Therefore, the news paper is also under the monopoly of the government to cover government policies, strategies and various social, political and economic issues of the country through its daily Amharic publications and its counterpart Ethiopian Herald.

FBC - Fana Broadcasting Corporate S.Co., the Nation's first commercial National Broadcaster and multi-lingual Radio Station, used to be a covert anti-Dergue voice of Liberation (Voice of EPRDF) before its establishment as "Radio Fana S.Co." in 1994. With the defeat of the notorious military regime by the EPRDF led popular struggle, Radio Fana has been re-organized under the ownership of the four Regional Endowments.

As of January 2011, Radio Fana S.Co. , grew to Fana Broadcasting Corporate S.Co. so as to enter into the TV business. It operates three SW, one MW and 7 FM transmitters Nation-wide. FBC has incorporated commercial and public service values and advocates developmental journalism to achieve its vision to become a favorite, progressive and popular voice of Ethiopians and Africans. The institution is also providing media services that help build democratic and prosperous Ethiopia however it is being frequently criticized for its pro government stance unlikely to serve the public as an independent body.

However, it is currently exerting its endeavor to make a difference in the country's radio broadcasting and television industry (planned to be launched sooner) the same to its counterparts Ethiopian National Radio and Sheger FM. FBC had designed a program named '*Mogach*' (debate in its Amaharic translation) that brings different political parties competing for the 2015 Ethiopian National Election to provide their policy alternatives to the public, it has been broadcasting both in radio and online television.

EBC- According to Skjerdal's study of Journalism culture in the Ethiopian state media, 2012, the first television signals in Ethiopia were distributed on a closed circuit in Africa Hall in Addis Ababa in May 1963 on the important event of the first meeting of the former organization of African Unity (now became African Union). Ethiopian Television (ETV), recently in 2014 changed its name to Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC), has begun permanent broadcasting on 2 November 1964, coinciding with the 33th coronation of Haile Selassie. The program list had a mixture of news, live drama, story reading for children, dancing and cultural documentaries. In line with the profile of ETV at the time, the first televised Amharic drama productions represented the manner and wealth of the higher class (Wondimagegn cited in Skjerdal, 2012). Television broadcasting is not open for private actors in Ethiopia except the prevalence of some needs and applications from the private investors until recently.

During elections citizens have the right to access information about political parties in the best alternative channels. In Ethiopian context, there is limited access to media particularly to make an informed decision about the political future of the country since EBC is the only national television broadcaster. Therefore, EBC is selected as a subject of this study because it is more powerful in informing all kinds of electorates about the political including those who cannot read and write.

“The only channels available on local networks are the government-run ETV1 (national) and ETV2 (an urban channel managed by the Addis Ababa City Administration). According to a representative survey among 4,000 house-holds, 39% responded that they have access to television in some way, and 40% said they watched television (Ward and Selam, quoted in Skjerdal, 2012). Certainly, many do not have access to television at home, but in cafeterias,

public places or at a friend's house. The most watched channel is naturally the easily available ETV, although an increasing number of viewers also have access to satellite channels, particularly within the urban population" (ibid, 2012.p.43).

Therefore, EBC is almost the only or the major television station owned by the state at the time of this study. It had broadcasted many new stories about the political parties during the pre-election periods and played a major role in facilitating debating forums for the parties to help the constituency acquire information about them.

Political Parties

According to the 2010 Ethiopian National Electoral Board report, 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 Semayawi party were included in the study and have been interviewed to solicit how the media were framing the parties during the pre-election periods by both the government and privately owned media institutions. They were selected because they were frequently criticizing the media for their biased framing of opposition parties and the major ones although the compliant has gone to other opposition parties too.

3.1.4. Time Frame

This study was planned to find out how the contending political parties' pre –election news stories in 2015 national election were framed by the Ethiopian private and government media.

Given the time framework of the election, the pre-election news stories of the media were analyzed from March 24 through May 21/2015 before the election. This time frame was chosen based on the schedule of the 2015 national Election set by The National Electoral Board of Ethiopia. According to the schedule of the Electoral Board, the registration of voters was begun early in January 9, 2015 and voting took place on May 24, 2015. The above mentioned period, January to May, 2015, was from the beginning of the registration of voters up to the voting day. However, the registration of voters was not the concern of the study whereas the framing of the two months news stories prior to the election were given attention because it is the time when the media got more attention as the election day was getting closer. Therefore, the researcher assumed that this period was conducive enough for the broadcast and the print media to talk or write about the election more than any other time.

3.1.5 Methods of Data Analysis

In order to explore the relationship between media framing and its effects on the portrayal of events in the news stories, a content analysis is performed on news contents pertaining to the 2015 Ethiopian national election in the case of some selected private and government owned media. According to Paltridge and Brian, critical discourse analysis does not merely encompass contextual description and interpretation of discourse, but also gives why and how discourses work. However I preferred to use the content analysis to analyze the framing of pre-election news stories. Accordingly, “critical discourse analysis may consider the *framing* of the text; that is, how the content of a text is presented, and the sort of angle or perspective the writer, or speaker, is taking. Closely related to framing is the notion of *foregrounding*; that is what concepts and issues are emphasized, as well as what concepts and issues are played down or *back grounded* in the text (Paltridge and Brian, 2008:185). For the purpose of this study,

emphasis is given to analysis of foregrounding and downplaying of issues related to political parties in the pre-election news stories instead of analyzing based on critical discourse analysis.

Data from the politics column of the selected newspapers were selected for the analysis. According to Creswel's inductive data analysis, qualitative researchers build their patterns , categories, and themes from the 'bottom up,' by organizing the data into increasingly more abstract units of information. The process involves the researcher's dynamic change of specific ideas and views until he establish a comprehensive set of themes which I tried to employ in this study (Creswel, 2007).

For the purpose of obtaining adequate data for the analysis, **46** news stories from Addis Zemen, **20** news stories from The Reporter, **40** news stories from EBC and **47** news stories from FBC are included in the study which are all available news within the time frame. Totally, **153** news stories are used to make the analysis and the opinion of 6 selected interviewees is also incorporated.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Presentation and Analysis

This section primarily analyzed the framing of pre-election news stories of Addis Zemen, Reporter, EBC and FBC using qualitative content analysis. The stories related to the contesting political parties of the 2015 Ethiopian general elections within the time ranging from March 24 to May 21/ 2015. Accordingly, the total publications of the two newspapers in the given time frame, 60 publications of Addis Zemen (daily), and 16 Amharic publications of the Reporter (bi-weekly), totally about 76 publications have been reviewed under this study. In the broadcast media, the framings of pre election news stories of EBC and FBC that have run in the time frame of the study have also been examined. Accordingly, about 40 news stories of EBC and 47 news stories of FBC have been identified and analyzed.

Generally, 66 news articles from the sample print media and about 87 news headlines from the broadcast media were selected for the qualitative content analysis. Therefore, 153 all available pre-election news stories within the two months time were used for the data analysis.

In addition, in-depth interview was made with editors- in – chief and deputy editors- in chief of the media in order to detect the organizational, personal and professional experiences of the media houses in framing their election news stories giving especial emphasis to the pre election periods. Furthermore, the major contesting parties' higher officials (Blue party and EFDUF-medrek) were interviewed to recognize their experiences of media usage as well as to maintain the equilibrium of the data. Hence, 4 people from each media and 2 people from the opposition parties totally about 6 people were interviewed.

4.1.1 Media Coverage of the election

Almost in all the selected media institutions, the coverage of political issues in general and election related news stories in particular were given priority the very beginning of voters' registration up to the actual voting day. However, the study has given due attention only to the two months pre election news stories of the 2015 national election. Indeed, in this short period prior to the voting day, political parties' news stories were the most frequently appeared ones in the four selected media.

According to **Addis Zemen** which is the prominent and long lived state owned newspaper, the 2015 National Election was its primary agenda to help the citizens make an informed decision of their representatives whom to rule the country for the upcoming five years. Nevertheless, there was a variety in the use of possible sources of its both news contents and editorial pieces, which is going to be discussed later in the use of sources in this section. As per the personal interview with the Deputy Editor in Chief of the newspaper, Fekadu Molla said, "Since December, 2015, issues concerning the election were our primary news and program contents in every phases of the election by contacting political parties, organizing forums and creating agendas in one way or another because it was the part of the annual plan even before the official campaign was commenced" (Personal interview, 20 May 2015).

Therefore, the overall coverage of the election by Addis Zemen during the pre election period was wide and most of the stories were appeared in the front page, front inside and political column of the publication. The newspaper had a free page dedicated to all political parties so that they can communicate their policy alternatives to the public. It implies that the newspaper's

framing of pre election news stories and editorials in terms of its coverage was a strategy employed to make the issue more salient.

Reporter newspaper, which is considered as widely read and stayed for long among the private newspapers across the country, covered the 5th national election of Ethiopia extensively. The coverage of the election was begun earlier than the other. It has started its coverage by examining the political parties' preliminary activities up to the registry and the campaigns to assess the standing and readiness of the parties towards the election. Among the total political issues covered by the newspaper in the pre election period, the election related news has accounted about 90% in its cover page stories as well as in depth treatment of the issue in the political column. Consequently, in terms of its coverage, one can understand that the election has been widely covered by the Reporter.

Among 16 publications reviewed in this study, around 20 news articles about the election and various political parties have been appeared in the newspaper which is more than an article per publication.

EBC was one of the subjects of this study which is the only state owned national television broadcaster nationwide. It has played a critical role in informing the electorates about political parties and organizing various forums associated to the political parties' policy alternatives and the way how elections should be executed. Among the top political issues that EBC has covered in the three months time, the 5th Ethiopian general election was exceptionally the one and the most. It indicates that the election has gotten greater attention by the media as it has a massive

public responsibility to inform, educate and create access to information to the general public since it is the giant television broadcaster in the country.

The researcher had an interview with deputy-editor-in chief of EBC regarding the coverage of the election in the media and said among the entire political issues such as news contents from the PM office, news contents from different political parties and news releases from government communication affairs; election news stories were the major one because the media might not talk about the election in other times than this time. The government had given a direction to emphasize on issues related to the election since EBC is state owned. From the two months pre election news stories, EBC had 40 different news headlines about the election. Generally speaking, the election was the primary agenda for EBC from any other political issues.

FBC is another media outlet selected for this study since it is the first multilingual commercial radio broadcaster which broadcasts its programs in many regional cities out of Addis Ababa. It has played a significant role in the pre election periods by organizing a variety of forums for political parties and sensitizing the issue through its news and programs. *Mogach*, *debate* in its rough Amharic translation, was the one that brought all political parties in to a table debate and helped them to provide their policy alternatives to the general public. The program was abundantly prepared and financed by the radio itself.

As per the personal interview with editor-in- chief of FBC, a special emphasis has been given to the election by organizing many discussion forums with various stakeholders to open rooms for the role of these bodies so that the election would be peaceful, democratic, fair and trustworthy. In addition, FBC had covered the election based on its plan and all the events held in different places on the topic of the invitations from the national and regional electoral board offices.

Referring to the editor's response, the researcher had reaffirmed the coverage of the election by FBC during the pre election period. From the consecutive 60 days news stories of the media, 47 of the news were about the election and political parties. FBC totally accounted nearly 80 % of its entire news coverage. As a result, I could comprehend that FBC was enthusiastic to the election news stories during the pre election periods to make the issue salient and the most important agenda for the public.

To sum up, the general media utilization of political parties and the media coverage of elections during the pre election periods have been increased however opposition parties still fail to use the free air time allocation and newspaper columns effectively. According to the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority's (EBA) report on the political parties' utilization of the allotted air time and newspaper columns, EPRDF used 98%, opposition parties used about 51% and parties representing the minorities used about 73% .

The following table summarizes the overall allocation of the media in the last three general elections in Ethiopia.

Table one: the free air time allocations for political parties in the 3rd, 4th and 5th general elections in Ethiopia.

Year	Allocations			
	Radio (hrs)	Television (hrs)	Newspapers (columns)	In terms of Money
1997/2005	136 hrs	43.06	----	27 million birr
2002/2010	490 hrs	88	776	38 million birr
2007/2015	500 hrs	100	700	128 million birr

Source: EBA, published in Addis Zemen, 12 March, 2015

From the table above, there is a development of air time allocation in broadcast and print media and budget allocation for political parties from the previous round elections to the later. A government of a country is expected to facilitate all these things although it is not consistently applicable in all nations; it varies from nation to nation and one system of government to another. Deloir and Sada , 2000, Fair access does not necessarily mean strictly equal access. In cases in which parties or candidates are very numerous, apportionment of space (in the print media) or airtime (on radio and TV) can be calculated according to their importance. The criteria most often used are the number of parliamentary seats, the number of members in the government, the percentage of votes received in the previous election, or the number of candidates running in the current election (Deloir and Sada , 2000, p.37).

One can say that the government of Ethiopia was committed to avail all political parties with communicating their policy alternatives through media by allocating free air time in the public media both in print and broadcast in this general election.

4.1.2 Organizational Experiences of the selected media in Framing

Deputy Editor-in-chief of Addis Zemen said, “Coverage of pre election news stories was vastly determined by assessing what the public want to know about since it is a state owned news paper. So, most of the news stories were framed based on what the public should be aware of about the election rather than sticking on what the political parties want to convey to the general public. The contending political parties are political actors where as the citizens are the judges for those actors” (personal interview, 20 May 2015).

On the other hand, Assistant editor of Reporter, Neamen Ashenafi explained, “Reporter has a strong organizational rule to frame issues and govern the practices of the journalists not only in

the time of election but also in other times too. It has a social media utilization in house policy for the journalists and other house styles in addition to its editorial policy. Secondly, when it comes to covering election related news stories in the case of the newspaper; basic journalistic principles are always considered as a pillar for framing the issues as an organizational experience” (personal interview, 30 April 2015).

However, they tried to make two side stories in order to keep the balance and maintain neutrality and the people can evaluate it whether the news is presented neutrally or not. The editor said,

“If the National Electoral Board blames a certain party, the Reporter cannot take it as news content. Instead, there are organizational experiences to go extra miles to examine the reaction of the other party that has been blamed” (personal interview, 20 May 2015).

According the personal interview with the deputy –editor –in –chief of EBC, the organization was reliant on its editorial policy to frame pre election news stories. In framing pre election news stories and issues associated to various political parties, it was exclusively intended to be the election peaceful, fair and democratic. It was the primary framework of EBC as per the editor. However, the editor, Ayal Abebaw stated:

“There is no any news that is free of framing, every single news contents were controlled and passed according to the interest of various stakeholders who have different interests such as government and political parties. Therefore, any political party registered by NEBE and running for peaceful election has the right to get access and the media attempted to serve in accordance with those diversified interest groups” (personal interview, 10 May 2015).

Similarly, FBC was mainly dependent on the media's editorial policy and was striving for the election to become peaceful and without grievances. It was working to deal with the complaints raised from various political parties towards the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia and the government (ruling party) in order to preserve balance of news sources. It had similar organizational experiences in its framing of pre election news stories with the Reporter because it had made investigations from different sources while any grievances had occurred among any political parties. There is a *'brief'*, every morning where reporters, editors and editors –in-chief gather and evaluate already broadcasted news contents were whether or not newsworthy . Thus, in the case of the FBC, unless the story is made balanced with its relevant entities, it is to be left out automatically.

According to the editor- in -chief of Fana, Digafe Dagnachew said:

“FBC had been exerting too much to investigate issues and complaints from oppositions that were pointing to the ruling party (EPRDF) and NEBE to illustrate and get the complaints resolved so that the general public becomes informed about the candidates. In the process we had impacted on the public to stand for peaceful elections” (personal interview, 20 May 2015).

4.1.3 The sources of information for the selected news stories

The use of sources by the selected media was accounted as an element of framing of pre election news stories. Based on the media's tendencies to use different bodies as their sources of pre election news stories, I managed to differentiate among the institutions' framing of news

contents qualitatively rather than simply counting the number of similar source appearances quantitatively.

However, all the media institutions have used certain bodies communally that seems similar although the dominant use of sources for the sampled media varies from one another. As a result, National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, opposition parties, the government (the ruling party), the public, judiciary bodies and academicians were the commonly used sources of pre election news stories for the targeted media in 2015 Ethiopian general elections.

Table two: the following table provides the use of sources by the selected media;

No	Sources	Addis Zemen		Reporter Amharic		EBC		FBC	
		In No	In %	In No	In %	In No	In %	In No	In %
1	National Electoral Board of Ethiopia	5	7.5%	2	6.7%	16	28.6%	19	33.3%
2	Opposition parties	20	29.8%	16	53.3%	8	14.3%	14	24.6%
3	The government (the ruling party)	23	34.3%	7	23.3%	17	30.3%	16	28%
4	The public	6	8.9%	0	0%	7	12.5%	14	24.6%
5	Judiciary bodies	1	1.5%	4	14.3%	4	7.14%	2	3.5%
6	Academicians	2	3%	1	3.3%	4	7.14%	2	3.5%
Total = 153		46		20		40		47	

NB: a single news story might use multiple sources of 2, 3, 4, 5 or all in the list at a time.

As we can apprehend from the table above, there was the interest of the media institutions to use the major political actors as a source for framing their pre -election news stories in this national election in spite of the continuing ownership pressures to rely on one kind of dominant source use.

In the case of print media included in the study, Addis Zemen has been treating the issues of the government or the ruling party EPRDF dominantly where as Amharic Reporter relied on the oppositions as its source of pre - election news content. For instance, Addis Zemen gathered 34% of its news from the ruling party while 29.8% of its sources were from the opposition parties. In the contrary, the Reporter dedicated its sources to the opposition parties and the government about 53.3% and 23.3% of respectively. This kind of usage reveals that ownership influence has many things to do with the framing of political parties and pre - election news stories in Ethiopia.

In the other hand, the broadcast media had greater opportunities to access the electorates than the print media because television and radio broadcasters can present variety of news to the audiences many times in a single day. Therefore, the subjects of this study, EBC and FBC had provided the general public with the information about the contesting political parties without any literacy level hindrances. They both similarly dedicated their source to the government (EPRDF), 30.3% by EBC and 28% by FBC respectively. However, FBC used the opposition parties as its source much greater than EBC; i. e FBC used 24.6% for opposition parties while EBC used only 14.3% of its sources for the oppositions.

In general, from the fore stated use of sources for pre -election news stories among the selected private and government owned media, we can understand that the privately owned media were

more independent than the state owned one to use various sources. The state owned ones were more controlled and tied to various interest groups in whom the government interference is the major one in this particular case. This has also been identified during the interview conducted with the deputy-editor –in – chief of EBC as follows;

“The greatest challenge of EBC in framing election news stories is government interference in the journalistic routines. Since the leaders of the state owned media are individuals who are politically appointed, the influence of government interest become higher and orders the framing of news especially during elections” (Personal interview, 10 May 2015).

In the contrary, Assistant Editor and special nominee for the election in the Reporter, Neamen Ashenafi said;

“We do not depend on sources; rather there is a tendency to come up with investigative and analytical issues as a house style. However, sources such as NEBE and political parties have been used to confirm the results of those investigations whenever necessary” (Personal interview, 30 April, 2015).

4.1.4 The use of language in pre-election news stories

According to the interviewees from each selected media, they communally elaborated that language usage has been given much emphasis not only in the framing of pre -election news stories but also in their daily routines. However, it becomes more critical in the time of elections. Derogatory words, phrases that might cause grievances among diverse ethnic or religious groups, words resulting conflicts between the people and the government and words and phrases

aggravating violence were not used in any of the selected media as per the reaction of the interviewees.

However, I was not convinced by the mere data through the interview and went to analyze the contents of each selected media. Accordingly, the use of language in the sample news leads and headlines in the framing news contents during the pre- election periods were analyzed in terms of wording, figure of language and idiomatic expressions as follows;

Addis Zemen, it constructed the Blue Party negatively using personification. It reads;

...The Blue party to sniff violence ...

Few opposition parties particularly 'Blue' party leaders were to promulgate extremists' agenda in the expense of political agenda and seen mobbing their acts overtly (Addis Zemen, May 7, 2015, p.3).

Whereas the Reporter covered this similar issue in its lead reading;

- The government reported as it completed investigation for accusing over hundreds of people including members of the Blue party.
 - The Blue Party asks the government to stop its campaign on defamation
- (Reporter, April 30, 2015, p.1).

Both newspapers employed different use of languages in the above news stories. Addis zemen was personifying the Blue party using words like *sniffing* which is the behavior of human beings, a strong desire for something for bad. Nevertheless, the Reporter Amharic was neutrally

representing both parties as independent counter parts to use the media as their free market place of ideas. The wordings in the story from the Reporter were less sensational than Addis Zemen`s even though the surface meaning of the words used by the Reporter somehow predisposed to the Blue Party , Semayawi Party in Amharic.

The other government and privately owned television and radio broadcasters, EBC and FBC used formal and non sensational languages predominantly in their news as;

Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation,

“Active participation of contending political parties and the public in general become pertinent to make the 5th round general election peaceful, democratic, fair and successful” (EBC (TV), 9 April 2015).

In addition to that, similar news headlines news with moderate language usage has been appeared frequently. Like;

“Ethiopian Federal Democratic Unity Forum reported that it is running its campaign successfully” (EBC, 2 May 2015).

Whereas, Fana Broadcasting Corporate presented the pre - election news stories in the language like,

“Political parties improved campaigning of their alternative policies through diversified media outlets made the eve of the 5th round general elections warmer” (FBC,15 May 2015).

Consequently, both EBC and FBC were critical to avoid biased language than Addis zemen and The Reporter in their pre - election news stories to favor or harm, to benefit the owner and to stand for or against a certain political party, group of people, individual religion and organization. However, the two media had a clear cut discrepancy in the other elements of framing which is going to be discussed in detail later in the other sub topic of this chapter.

In brief, among 40 news headlines from EBC and 47 news headlines from FBC are reviewed in this project. I could not find a considerable biased use of languages from both. In the other hand, the print media, Addis Zemen and the Reporter employed observable use of sensational languages although it was not dominant use. From this, we can understand that the language was used to favor the interest of the owner of the media and the print media are where such kind of biased languages are observable compared to the broadcast media.

4.1.5 The tone of the stories in the selected media

The tone of stories in a certain media plays a significant role in either getting or losing the attention of its audiences. It is applied for various purposes such as for maintaining commercial benefits, satisfying owners` (financers`) interests and trapping audiences` concentration to the media. However, it adversely or favorably affects the media at the same time because the tone of the news stories finally impacts the audiences thought positively, negatively or neutrally.

For the purpose of this project, the country`s four major government and privately owned broadcast and print media are selected. The tone of the news stories appeared from each selected media in the pre - election period of the election have been analyzed and interpreted separately.

The analysis was made based on both the tone of the reviewed news articles and news headlines as well as in- depth interview with the editors of each media. It is presented as follows;

Addis Zemen,

According to the personal interview with deputy editor- in- chief of the newspaper, “The newspaper by its nature is not with high tone. The stories in the news articles were usually written in standard and modest tone not only in the time of elections but also at any time (personal interview, 20 May 2015).

The researcher had reviewed the contents of the newspaper and found most of its stories were in moderate tone. However, there were few stories with highly positive tone towards the ruling government and negatively constructing the opposition parties. For example;

“The government of Ethiopia and its people has to carefully scrutinize the dealings of terrorist actors beginning from radical oppositions extended to EPLF- Shabiyaa and Al-shabab who strives for color revolution” (Addis Zemen, 20 April 2015, P. 11).

Here, the publication reads high tone in favor of the government of Ethiopia where as it stand against the so called extremists and terrorists although it is not known by writing in higher tone frequently.

The Reporter,

As per the interview held with Assistant Editor of the newspaper, Neamen Ashenafi, indicated that many complaints have been received from the readers of Amharic publication in terms of its

tone. Nevertheless, he said that there are also some people who complain on the news articles written in the neutral tone because of their personal interest (personal interview, 30 April 2015).

In addition, the editor said that all possible measures were being taken to make the tone of the stories down and moderate in the expense of its commercial benefits because high toned stories might result in adverse impacts such as disagreement among the public at large.

The researcher tried to assess the tone of some news leads and articles of the newspaper through content analysis. Thus, most of its stories were written in the neutral tone and some were relatively in high tone in the pre - election period of the 2015 Ethiopian general election. For instance,

- The government should get persistence in public protests (Reporter, 13 May 2015, p.7).
- EFDUF`s manifesto pointing on the partiality of government institutions (Reporter, 24 March 2015, p.6).

EBC

In terms of news tone, it is obvious that EBC`s news presentation was almost below the average so that it do not arouse the interest of its viewers. Similar fashion had been observed in its news presentation during the pre- election period of the 5th round Ethiopian general election. However, it was sometimes using higher tone either in constructing the government positively or criticizing the oppositions negatively. It was occasional and not dominantly appeared one. For this reason,

its news stories were less catchy and less investigative during the pre-election period of the 2015 Ethiopian general elections.

FBC,

It provided many news stories about the election through its FM and National radio broadcasting. Among the total number of its pre -election news stories, about 47 different news contents were used for this study. According to the examination, most of the stories were presented in moderate tone. Beside this, the stories were frequently depicting neutrality although some of them were appealing positive tone toward the ruling party, the people and the existing systems of government.

4.1.6. Biasness Vs framing of the news contents

In this section, the framing biases of the sample media in framing their pre - election news stories and how these news stories were framed according to the respective organizational experiences. In addition to that, the ownership influences of the selected private and government owned media is helped to identify between private and government media in Ethiopia. The following table summarizes analysis of the framing of pre - election news stories by categorizing the media into government and privately owned; I did not included all the news contents gathered for the purpose of the entire project into this sub section rather I tried to take the same or nearly the same news leads or headlines from each to see the differences.

Table 3: Biasness vs. Framing of Government and private owned media

State owned media	Privately owned media
News contents/editorial pieces	News contents/ editorial pieces
Police said, Blue Party is accountable for the violence in rally against ISIS killing of 28 Ethiopians. (EBC, 26 April 2015,)	The quarrel between the government and Blue Party due to the rally turned to violence. (Reporter, 26 April 2015, p. 7)
The Blue party to sniff for violence. (Addis Zemen, 6 May 2015, P.3)	Blue Party head appealed that his passport taken and the flight is cancelled with no reasons he knows. (Reporter, 5 April, 2015, P.1)
Women and youths reported their promptness to ballot for the party that to strengthen the country's existing progressive development programs. (EBC, 20 May 2015)	Political parties` effective campaigns helped the public to vote among the political parties.(FBC, 18 May 2015)
NEBE warns to examine political parties having financial sources against the electoral law. (EBC, 6 April 2015)	Oppositions suffer with financial constraints and the government`s subsidy. (Reporter, 15 April 2015, P.6)
Political parties` disparate utilization of the media. (Addis Zemen, 14 March 2015, P. 11)	The government is liable for unutilized campaign programs, said oppositions. (Reporter , 3 May 2015, P.1) Oppositions complained, "Censorship is being applied to our campaign messages." (Reporter, 29 March 2015, P.1)

<p>There are three kinds of electorates in this national election. These are people who are knowledgeable, oppositions and puzzled. The second one says “Whatever happens to me, I would not vote for EPRDF, why not the peace and national benefits all should go to hell instead of giving my ballot to EPRDF. This kind of electorate is based on ignorant hatred, did not understand the future of the country , filled with false full propaganda, did not want to see the success of EPRDF and having evil spirit ”</p> <p>(Addis Zemen, 15 May 2015, p.11)</p>	<p>A scholarly study revealed that the preliminary phase of the 5th round Ethiopian general election was successful. (FBC, 14 May 2015)</p> <p>China’s news agency reported, “Ethiopia has made massive preliminary activities to conduct its 5th round general election peacefully and fairly.”</p> <p>(FBC, 24 May 2015)</p>
<p>NEBE, warns the Blue Party`s campaigning against the electoral law in such areas of churches, mosques and schools. (EBC, 28 APRIL 2015)</p>	<p>UDJ, ANDM, Agew democratic party reported that no problems have been encountered in the overall pre election periods. FBC , 5 May 2015</p>

From the table above, we can understand that there were differences between government and privately owned media in Ethiopia in the framing of pre - election news stories during the 2015 general elections.

Independence of the media is none compromising that it should operate in spite of diversified pressures from inside and outside. However, in the Ethiopian case, the framing of news is determined by the interest of the owners. Precisely, the subjects of this study were two state owned media (Addis Zemen and EBC) and the other two privately owned media (Reporter and FBC). As a result, the state owned ones were tending to be biased in favor of the government by

framing their news positively while criticizing the opposition parties although it was not an approach most dominantly appeared. In the contrary, the privately owned media were comparatively framing their pre - election news stories and editorial pieces to neutral approach more dominantly. Disparities have also been found out with in the private ones, the Reporter and FBC, i.e. the Reporter was exceptionally framing the issues by emphasizing to the oppositions analytically where as FBC frames its news to the triumphant stories in the pre - election periods.

The researcher also interviewed the two most contending political parties, Blue Party (Semayawi) and EFDUF (Medrek). The interview was conducted with the Blue's Communication and Public relations Head, Ato Yonatan Tesfaye and Head of Medrek's office, Ato Alemu Kuera to find their views about the framing of their party issues. Consequently, the Blue's PR head alleged;

“Most of the media institutions mentioned above were biased to the government in framing and covering of pre - election news stories and other programs too. Exceptionally, state owned media like EBC and affiliated radio like FBC were framing the messages about the Blue Party were denouncing and allegations of hostility where there is no any evidence. Anti Terrorist Law Ethiopia states that anyone who mobs and applauds terrorism where there is no any terrorist act is a terrorist. Therefore, such media institutions are available in Ethiopia and should be accused according to the law. Particularly, the broadcast media were framing the news and documentaries by censoring, omitting, prejudicing and distorting the information about the party”. (Personal interview, Yonatan Tesfaye , 16 May 2015).

Similarly, Medrek's Office Head, Ato Alemu Kuera notified;

“Compared to the broadcast media, the print media were relatively framing the party's campaigns messages and news releases without censorship however these are not our center of concern since they are not easily accessible to all. But the broadcast media such as EBC and FBC were continuously covering the party's information by distorting, omitting, censoring some important messages from the party in the pre election periods. Hence, I can say that there is no an independent media in Ethiopia both from the broadcast and print except Sheger” (Personal interview, 16 May 2015).

4. 1.7. Types of frames used by the selected media

According to my investigation to identify the types of frames used by the selected media, there was a fragmented use of framing pre - election news stories from each; nonetheless some had a certain type of dominant framing in the 2015 Ethiopian general Elections. Furthermore, I tried to loop the major types of framing used by each selected media as follows;

Addis Zemen

It's framing of pre election news stories and editorial pieces were dominantly in morality frame. It does not mean that Addis Zemen was framing its pre- election news stories in the pre election period of the 2015 Ethiopian 5th round general election using this type merely. However, the fore mentioned ones were the most dominant ones in the news paper.

Example: It is to mean, federalism fits for Ethiopia, opposition's alternative policy to the federal government system of Ethiopia is to reinstate the past exploitative and oppressive system which is most primitive government system.

Reporter

Conflict frame and attribution of responsibility respectively were the most dominant frames appeared in its coverage for the 2015 Ethiopian general elections during the pre election periods. Out of 20 news stories and editorial pieces reviewed from the newspaper, disputes among political parties and court case issues appeared frequently.

Example;

- Blues are accused of violent behavior (Reporter, 13 May 2015).
- UDJ reported that it is to prolong across the election progression in spite of members suffer (Reporter, 20 May 2015).
- The quarrel between the government and Blue Party due to the rally turned to violence (Reporter, 7 May 2015).

EBC

The framing of EBC's pre-election news stories in the 2015 national elections was mainly morality and economic frame respectively because it was covering the events in terms of morality aspect that is either emphasizing the bad or good side of the event. It was frequently presenting its news according to the election's peaceful and decent completion based on success stories. For instance,

- NEBE said, preparations have been made based on lessons from the previous general elections so that the 5th round election become democratic and all-encompassing (EBC, 14 May 2015).
- Academicians witnessed that Ethiopian democratic system is mounting through time (EBC, 14 May 2015).

FBC

It was framing the pre election news stories of the 5th round Ethiopian general election by treating the issues related to the contesting political parties and public opinions about the election. With regard to the researcher's review of two months consecutive news stories, issue frame was dominantly appeared. The following examples imply how the stories were most frequently framed however it sometimes emphasizes on success stories like wise of EBC.

Example;

NEBE reported, grievance appeals began to appear in their legal procedures is among the successful achievements during the pre election periods in the 2015 Ethiopian general elections (Fana Broadcasting Corporate, 12 May 2015).

A national election is measured by its process and ending. The pre election period also has four key international parameters. These are public participation, free debate among political parties, the existence of independent and neutral executive body and free campaigning avail to the parties (FBC, 11 April 2015).

4.2. Discussion of the findings

From the very beginning of this study, three questions were set to be answered by the end of its findings. The first research question was *how do the selected media portray and frame the political parties during the pre election period of the 2015 Ethiopian National Election?* Based on the findings of the study, the pre - election news stories and editorial pieces of the sampled media were treating the political parties in different ways. However, there was a slight discrepancy among them in their framing of political parties positively, negatively and neutrally. Therefore, the findings revealed that the ruling party (EPRDF) was frequently framed positively by the state owned media where as the Blue party; Semayawi Party in Amharic was the most negatively quoted party among any other opposition parties. The Reporter newspaper which is a privately owned newspaper accounted a wider coverage to the Blue Party compared to other oppositions where as FBC brought no any positive or negative stories about the party in particular and it had plenty of happy stories about the government and the oppositions in general.

Secondly, as it is previously stated the types of framing among the sampled media were interchangeably used and this is to discuss *what types of frames were commonly used for pre-election news stories?* That was the second question of this study. Accordingly, Addis Zemen and EBC used morality and economic framing predominantly where as the Reporter and FBC were chiefly using conflict frame and issue frame respectively. More precisely, Addis Zemen and EBC were concerned with right or wrong judgments of issues either emphasizing the bad or good side of an event by framing the news towards the country's laws such as Ethiopian electoral law and how they should be obeyed by the oppositions particularly the Blue party. In the other hand, the Reporter was covering the conflicts, disputes, controversial issues and court cases

between the ruling party (EPRDF) and the Blue party to attract reader's attention whereas FBC discussed various issues related to the election in detail.

The third research question was *what are the major differences in framing pre-election news stories between the public and private media?* According to Entman (1993) to frame means "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in communicating text in such way as to promote particular definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman, 1993, p.52). Therefore, the study reveals that the government owned media were less independent than the privately owned media in their framing of pre election news stories in the 2015 Ethiopian general elections. Since a media ought to maintain its autonomy as a free market place of ideas regardless of its ownership influence and in any pressing circumstances, it is none compromising to be the voice of all contending political parties during elections. However, there was some deterioration in the framing of pre election news stories in the sampled state owned media although framing the issue to make salient is not forbidden as stated by Robert Entman. In the contrary, the private ones were more nearly neutral by relying on their sources of information equally for both the ruling party and the opposition parties and more investigate to frame the news contents than the state owned media.

As per the analysis and discussion of the data, the findings of this study are curled by giving due attention to major ones. Accordingly, the media played a significant role in framing political parties' issues during this National election compared to the previous elections.

The selected media, in terms of use of source variance to frame the pre election news stories related to the 2015 general election, the privately owned media used multiple sources than the

state owned media for that the state media stick towards utilizing the government (EPRDF) as a dominant source.

The use of language by the sample media in framing pre election news was relatively formal language except some offensive and informal diction especially from Addis Zemen and EBC.

In terms of framing bias, the government media were constructing the government and its policies positively however not giving room or denouncing the opposition political parties. Comparatively the privately owned media were relatively neutral.

The watch dog role of the media in framing the issues through investigation during this election was feeble although attempts have been made in the print media like the Reporter.

The framing of news contents in Ethiopia especially during such a critical time of election has undergone through a continuing pressure of interest groups particularly in state owned media.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Conclusions

Media is powerful in playing either adverse or significant role in any countries' political economy. It becomes more influential during elections when the symbiotic relationship between the political parties and the media turned to its maximum culmination. In this critical time, the media downplay or play up certain issues about the political parties while the parties tend to mischief the media through the mouthpiece pressures of individual journalists and the media institution at large. It has greater impact on the electorates' decision-making.

This study was based on framing theory as its theoretical framework. The study focused on Entman's definition of framing in which he defined, "framing is selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution". Similarly, framing referred as the activities of the mass media they select, emphasize and present some aspects of "reality" to audiences, while ignoring others (Stone, Singletary and Richmond 1999. P.278). Hence, this study was set out to analyze how the Ethiopian media framed the pre - election news stories of the 2015 Ethiopian general elections.

In order to conduct the study, four major media institutions (print and broadcast) from the private and government owned media were taken as the subjects of the study which has wider coverage and circulation nationwide. Namely, the two state owned media Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation and Addis Zemen newspaper including the other two privately owned media Fana Broadcasting Corporate and the Reporter Amharic newspaper.

According to the findings, framing of the pre - election news stories among the state owned media was influenced by the government. The findings demonstrated that the media were framing the news stories by portraying the oppositions negatively and providing success stories about the government and the election process as a whole. However, the Reporter treated the issues of the oppositions predominantly and FBC entertained both sides although it framed the government and the preliminary election process positively.

The analysis of this study also revealed that the privately owned media were more independent and investigative than the state owned media in framing their pre- election news stories about the contending political parties and the entire election process in the pre-election periods.

Moreover, the finding of the study discovered, there was diversified types of frames were used among all the sample media to frame election related news stories even though some types of frames were employed predominantly. Morality frame and conflict frame were the most frequently appeared frames almost in all the selected media. Briefly, Addis Zemen and EBC utilized morality frame, Amharic Reporter conflict frame and FBC issue frame predominantly.

Therefore to conclude, the findings of the study noticeably illustrate that the coverage of the election in Addis Zemen and EBC slanted towards the state interest while Amharic Reporter and FBC relatively remain independent in framing the election during the pre-election period. This indicates that media ownership determines the deterioration of journalistic principles in Ethiopia during elections. In addition, the framing of election related news stories is done based on the primary interest of the media owners rather than responsibly addressing the information what the

citizens really need to be informed. This kind of framing ultimately results in misleading of the electorates and having undesired outcome of general elections.

5.2. Recommendations

This study was conducted to investigate the overall framing of pre - election news stories in the 2015 general elections by some of the country`s major broadcast and print media. The study also attempted to examine the differences between private and state owned media in framing of pre-election news stories. Thus, the researcher provides the following suggestions for media practitioners, media owners and political parties that are the main actors during general elections.

- Since media`s framing of pre-election news stories has a significant influence on the electorates` decision making, journalists shall report about the contending political parties by giving ultimate priority to what the citizens need to know instead of what the citizens want to know in spite of the owners influences.
- Journalists shall rely on multiple sources of an issue rather than promulgating one side stories in framing pre-election news stories and issues related to the political parties. The study revealed that state owned media utilized single source more frequently than the privately owned ones.
- Political writers ought to frame pre-election news stories in line with the basic principles of journalism more than any time because the pressure of interest groups and mouthpieces become more challenging for them.

- Media owners in collaboration with media scholars should organize continuous trainings regarding to framing and reporting election news stories in order to attain successful general elections in Ethiopia.
- Both state owned and private media shall equally ensure appropriate use of language, source and tone in framing pre-election, during election and post-election reporting surrendering themselves to journalistic principles.
- Political parties are expected to provide their information to both state owned and private media without distortion so that the people can get access to relevant, accurate and useful information about the parties' issues and about the election process.

The researcher also recommends further researches needed to be conducted to investigate;

- How far the existing framing of elections in Ethiopia is affecting (priming) the electorates and bring about changes in the general outcome of the elections in detail?
- What kind of frames the Ethiopian media predominantly use to frame political parties during elections compared to the western media?
- How the upcoming Ethiopian general elections different from the previous ones in framing election reporting and timely investigation of each round?

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APPENDIX A

A. Interview guide for media professionals & stakeholders

1. What do you think are some of the top political issues in your selection of news contents in these three or four months time?
2. How do you evaluate the coverage given to the national election by your news paper /corporation in comparison with other political issues?
3. How do you frame pre-election news stories as an organizational/institutional experience?
4. Do you have any contact/ frequent contact, with any political parties to use them as the source of information? If yes which of them are most frequently used?
5. How much you are concerned to the use of language in your news stories or programs as a political writer especially during the pre-election period?
6. According to your perspective as a journalist, what should be the tone of the media either print or broadcast in reporting political parties` pre-election new stories?
7. What are some of personal, organizational or professional problems that prohibit journalists from reporting unbiased election news stories?
8. What is the most commonly selected type of frames by your media like human interest frame, conflict frame, attribution of responsibility frame, human impact frame, economic frame or morality frame when framing political parties?
9. What do you think that a media need to play in creating a better political environment particularly in such a critical time of election?

APPNDIX B

Interview guides for political parties

1. How your party has efficiently used the allotted time both in the broadcast and print media during the pre- election period?
2. What were the major challenges that the party has faced in communicating its policy alternatives to the public?
3. How the news stories of the party have been framed/ covered by the media? Biased/ neutral/balanced.
4. What type of framing elements were being frequently employed by the media while framing the party`s pre-election news stories? Language ,tone, source etc
5. Do you think that there is any difference between the private and government owned media in framing political parties` news stories? How?
6. What were the major challenges the party faced regarding the use of media as a tool to access the public during the election campaign period? Such as distortion of information, inadequate coverage, omission of information, prejudiced angling of stories etc...
7. Which media were more neutral or biased in reporting election related news stories throughout the pre election periods? And why? EBC,FBC, Addis Zemen, The Reporter

Appendix C

Sample news stories from each selected media (in Amharic)

Addis Zemen

የነውጥን መንገድ የሚያማትረው ሰማያዊ ፓርቲ፣ አንዳንድ ተቃዋሚ ኃይሎች በተለይም የሰማያዊ ፓርቲ አመራሮች የፖለቲካ ትርፍ ያስገኛልናል በማለት የአክራሪዎችን አጀንዳ እንደ ፖለቲካ አጀንዳ በመቁጠር የአክራሪዎችን ጉዳይ የፖለቲካ ጉዳይ እንዲሆን በማድረግ በየ አደባባዩ አይዟችሁ ጉዳያችሁ ጉዳያችን ነው በማለት በግልፅ አክራሪነትን ሲደግፉ ነበር (አዲስ ዘመን፣ሚያዚያ 28/2007፣ ገፅ -3)።

በውስጡ ካሉት የቀለም አብዮት ናፋቂ ከሆኑ አክራሪ ተቃዋሚዎች ጀምሮ እስከ ሻዕቢያና አልሻባብ ድረስ ያሉ ሽብር አራማጆች ህዝብና መንግስት በልዩ ትኩረትና ጥንቃቄ ዙሪያቸውን መመልከት አለበት (አዲስ ዘመን፣ሚያዚያ 12 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም፣ ገፅ 11) ።

ጉራማይሌው የፓርቲዎች የመገናኛ ብዙሃን አጠቃቀም። አዲስ ዘመን መጋቢት 5/2007 ዓ.ም ገፅ 11

በዚህ ምርጫ ወቅት ሶስት ዓይነት መራጮች አሉ። እነሱም 1ኛው በትክክል የሚመርጥ ፣2ኛው የሚቃወም እና 3ኛው ግራ የተጋባ። ሁለተኛው መራጭ “የመጣው ይምጣ እንጂ አህአዴግን ለመምረጥ ካርዴን አላወጣም። ሰላም ባይኖር ይቅር እንጂ፣ካርዴ ገደል ይግባ እንጂ ከአህአዴግ የሚገኝ ብሄራዊ ጥቅም ሁሉ ጥንቅር ብሎ ይቅር እንጂ ንብን አልመርጥም።” የሚል ወገን አለ። ይኸኛው በጭፍን ጥላቻ የተመሰረተ፣ የሃገሪቱን የወደ ፊት እጣ ፈንታ የልተረዳ፣ ስር በሰደደ መሰረተ ቢስ ፕሮፓጋንዳ የተሞላ፣አህአዴግ የሰራውን መልካም ስራ

ላለማየት አይነትን የጨፈነ እና በመጥፎ መንፈስ የተበረዘ ነው። አዲስ ዘመን ግንቦት 7 ቀን
2007 ዓ.ም ገፅ 11

ፌዴራሊዝም ለኢትዮጵያ ልኳም መልካም ነው። አማራጭ ብለው የሚያቀርቡት የመንግስት
ስርዓት የቀደመውን የአንድ ብሄር ስርዓት የሚመልስ የተቀረውን የሚጨፈልቅ፣ ላለንበት ክፍለ
ዘመን የማይመጥን የዚያ ዘመን ድራቆች ነው (አዲስ ዘመን፣ መጋቢት 11 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም ገፅ 11)።

Reporter

መንግስት የሰማያዊ ፓርቲ አባላትን ጨምሮ ከ 100 በላይ ሰዎችን ለመክሰስ ምርመራ
ማጠናቀቁን አስታወቀ። ሰማያዊ ፓርቲ መንግስት ከስም ማጥፋት ዘመቻ ይታቀብ አለ
(ሪፖርተር፣ ሚያዚያ 21/2007 ዓ.ም፣ ገፅ-1)።

በግጭት በተጠናቀቀው የተቃውሞ ሰልፍ የመንግስትና የሰማያዊ ፓርቲ ውዝግብ ። ሪፖርተር
ሚያዚያ 18 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም ገፅ 7

የሰማያዊ ፓርቲ ሊቀ መንበር በማላውቀው ምክንያት ፓስፖርቱ ተነጥቄ ጉዞ ተስተጓጉሏል
አሉ። ሪፖርተር መጋቢት 27/2007 ገጽ 1

በበጀት እጥረት የሚፈተኑት ተቃዋሚ ፓርቲዎችና የመንግስት ድጎማ ። ሪፖርተር ሚያዚያ
7/2007 ዓ.ም ገፅ 6

በተቋማት አድሎአዊነት ላይ ያነጣጠረው የመድረክ ማኒፌስቶ፣ ሪፖርተር መጋቢት 20/2007
ዓ.ም ገፅ 6

ተቃዋሚዎች ለባክኑ የቅስቀሳ ፕሮግራሞች መንግስትን ተጠያቂ አደረጉ። ሪፖርተር ሚያዚያ
25 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም ገፅ 1

ተቃዋሚ የፖለቲካ ፓርቲዎች በምርጫ ቅስቀሳ ወቅት መልዕክቶቻችንን ላይ የቅድመ ምርመራ እየተደረገ ነው አሉ። (ሪፖርተር መጋቢት 20/2007 ገፅ 1)

ብጥብት በመፍጠር የተጠረጠሩት የሰማያዊ ፓርቲ አባላት ክስ ተመሰረተባቸው (ሪፖርተር፣ ግንቦት 5 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም ገፅ 1)።

ኢዴፓ በእጩዎቹ ላይ እንግልት እየደረሰባቸው ቢሆንም በምርጫው እንደሚገፋ አስታወቀ (ሪፖርተር፣ ግንቦት 12 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም ገፅ 3)።

Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation

ምርጫ 2007 ሰላማዊ፣ ዲሞክራሲያዊ፣ ፍትሃዊ ሆኖ በተሳካ ሁኔታ እንዲጠናቀቅ የፖለቲካ ፓርቲዎች እና የህብረተሰቡ ተሳትፎ ወሳኝ መሆኑ ተገለፀ (የኢትዮጵያ ብሮድካስቲንግ ኮርፖሬሽን፣ ሚያዚያ 1 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም)።

የኢትዮጵያ ፌዴራላዊ ዲሞክራሲያዊ አንድነት መድረክ የቅስቀሳ ዘመቻውን በተሳካ ሁኔታ እያከናወነ መሆኑን ገለፀ (የኢትዮጵያ ብሮድካስቲንግ ኮርፖሬሽን፣ ሚያዚያ 24 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም)።

በአይ ኤስ ለተገደሉ ኢትዮጵያውያን የተሰማውን ሃዘን ለመግለፅና ድርጊቱን ለማውገዝ በወጣው ሰልፍ ላይ የተፈጠረው ሁከት በዋናነት ሰማያዊ ፓርቲ ማቀናበሩን ፖሊስ አስታወቀ። (ኢብኮ ሚያዚያ 18/2007 ዓ.ም)

የተጀመረውን ልማት ሊያስቀጥል የሚችል አካል ለመምረጥ መዘጋጀታቸውን ወጣቶችና ሴቶች ገለፁ። (ኢብኮ ግንቦት 12 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም)

ሰማያዊ ፓርቲ ህጉ ከሚፈቅደው ውጪ ለምርጫ ቅስቀሳ በተከለከለባቸው የኃይማኖት ተቋማትና ትምህርት ቤቶች ፖስተር በመለጠፍ ያደረገው ህገወጥ ተግባር በአስቸኳይ እንዲያቆም የኢትዮጵያ ምርጫ ቦርድ አስታወቀ። (ኢብኮ ሚያዝያ 20 ቀን 2005 ዓ.ም)

የኢትዮጵያ የዴሞክራሲ ስርዓት ግንባታ ከጊዜ ወደ ጊዜ እየጎለበተ መምጣቱ የጎንደር ዩኒቨርሲቲ ምሁራን ገለጹ (ኢብኮ፣ግንቦት 5 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም)።

አምስተኛው ጠቅላላ ምርጫ ሰላማዊ እና ዴሞክራሲያዊ፣ ሁሉን አሳታፊ እንዲሆን ከቀደምት ምርጫዎች በተገኙ ልምዶች ላይ በመመስረት ዝግጅት መደረጉን የኢትዮጵያ ብሄራዊ ምርጫ ቦርድ አስታወቀ (ኢብኮ፣ግንቦት 5 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም)።

የምርጫ ህጉ ከሚፈቅደው ውጪ የፋይናንስ ምንጭን በሚጠቀሙ የፖለቲካ ፓርቲዎች ላይ አስፈላጊውን ቁጥጥር እንደሚያደርግ ምርጫ ቦርድ ገለጸ። ኢብኮ መጋቢት 28 /2007 ዓ.ም

Fana Broadcasting Corporate

ግንቦት 16 2007 ለሚካሄደው ጠቅላላ ምርጫ የፖለቲካ ፓርቲዎች በመገኛኛ ብዙሃንና በሌሎች አማራጮች ራሳቸውንና ፖሊሲያቸውን እያስተዋወቁ መምጣታቸው የምርጫ ዋዜማውን አድምቆታል (ፋና ብሮድካስቲንግ ኮርፖሬት፣ ግንቦት 6 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም)።

እስካሁን የተደረጉት የፖለቲካ ፓርቲዎች ክርክሮች እና የምርጫ ቅስቀሳ ህዝቡ የፈለገውን ፓርቲ እንዲመርጥ አስችሎታል። (ፋብኮ ግንቦት 10 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም)

የ5ኛው ሃገር አቀፍ ቅድመ ምርጫ ሁለንተናዊ አዝማሚያ በምሁራን ጥናት ሲገመገም እጅግ አዎንታዊ መሆኑ ተረጋግጧል። ፋብካ ግንቦት 6 ቀን 2007.

ኸንዋ እንዳስነበበው የኢትዮጵያ ምርጫ ቦርድን ዋቤ በማድረግ ሃገሪቱ 5ኛውን ሀገራዊ ምርጫ በሰላማዊና ፍትሃዊ መንገድ ለማካሄድ ሰፊ ዝግጅት አድርጋለች ብሏል። (ፋብካ ግንቦት 16 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም)

እስካሁን በነበረው የምርጫ ሂደት ምንም ያጋጠመን ችግር የለም ያሉት የአገው ዴሞክራሲያዊ ፓርቲ፣ የብአዴን የገጠር የፖለቲካ ሃላፊ፣ የኢዴፓ ዋና ስራ አስፈጻሚ ገልፀዋል። (ፋብካ ሚያዚያ 27 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም)

ቅሬታዎች የህግ ሰንሰለት ተከትለው መምጣት መጀመራቸው በቅድመ ምርጫ ወቅት ከተመዘገቡት መልካም እምርታዎች ውስጥ አንዱ መሆኑ የምርጫ ቦርድ ገለፀ (ፋና ብሮድካስቲንግ ኮርፖሬት ግንቦት 4 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም)።

ምርጫ በውጤትም በሂደትም ይመዘናል። የቅድመ ምርጫ ሂደትም በአራት አለም አቀፍ መስፈርቶች ይለካል። የህዝብ ተሳትፎ፣ በፖለቲካ ፓርቲዎች መካከል የሚደረግ ክርክር፣ ነፃና ገለልተኛ አስፈጻሚ አካል መኖር እንዲሁም ፓርቲዎች አማራጮቻቸውን ለማቅረብ የቀረበላቸው መደላደሎች (ፋብካ፣ ሚያዚያ 4 ቀን 2007 ዓ.ም)።