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School of Journalism and Communication**

**Perceived Challenges of Reporting Political News (Post 2018): EBC  
Journalists in Focus**

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**Addis Ababa University School of Graduate Studies School of Journalism and  
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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Habtamu Wondimagegn, entitled “Perceived Challenges of Reporting Political News (Post-2018): EBC Journalists in Focus”. The thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication (Broadcast Journalism).

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## **Abstract**

*This research was for analyzing perceived challenges of political news reporting in Post 2018 era, regarding the perception of EBC (Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation) ETV journalists in order to identify the major challenges journalists faced in political news reporting. To conduct this study, the researcher employed a descriptive survey design and data collection method through both qualitative and quantitative (mixed) approach. Questionnaires' and In-depth interview used to collect data from 50 informants comprising media managers, senior political news editors, reporters, and media experts who were purposefully selected for the study. To conceptualize the subject matter, scholar articles related to the purpose, importance and role of political journalism/news reporting, as well as agenda setting, framing, spiral of silence and political communication theory used and discussed as theoretical framework. The findings of the study indicate that challenges of political news reporting emanates from Journalists lack of experience, skilled manpower, lack of sufficient training and limited sources to conduct political news reports that cover land grabbing and serious political issues.. According to the findings internal (Personal & organizational) and external challenges such as self –censorship, lack of organizational team, lack of professionalism, insufficient interest and lack of training and skill aside with unwarranted interference by organizational and external political actors, which challenges the journalists autonomy and freedom to access information's for their political news reporting production process. So to tackle this prevised challenges and improve the quality of political news reporting EBC(ETV) needed to assure professional safety and security of journalists and should insist for the enforcement of the media laws and polices to assist the freedom& right to access and freedom of information. Moreover, to refine the journalist skills on political news reporting adequate trainings and guidance required.*

# Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgments .....	i
Abstract .....	ii
Table of Contents .....	iii
Lists of Acronyms .....	vi
Lists of Figures .....	vii
Lists of Tables .....	viii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study .....	5
1.3.1 General Objective .....	5
1.3.2 Specific Objectives.....	5
1.4 Research Questions .....	5
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	5
1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study .....	6
1.6.1 Scope .....	6
1.6.2 Limitations.....	6
1.7 Organization of the study .....	6
CHAPTER TWO.....	7
2. Review of Related Literature .....	7
2.1 Conceptualization of Terms .....	7
2.1.1 Media and Politics .....	7
2.1.2 Political communication.....	8
2.1.3 Political News Reporting.....	9
2.1.4 Political News Reporting in Ethiopia.....	10
2.1.5 Freedom of Information Act in Ethiopia .....	12
2.2 Theoretical Framework .....	15
2.2.1 Agenda Setting Theory.....	15
2.2.3 Framing Theory .....	16
2.2.4 Gate keeping theory.....	19

CHAPTER THREE.....	21
3. METHODOLOGY .....	21
Introduction .....	21
3.1 Research Design.....	21
3.2 Sources of Data .....	21
3.3. Sampling Technique and Size .....	21
3.4 Methods of Data Collection .....	22
3.4.1. Questionnaire.....	23
3.4.2 In-depth Interviews.....	23
3.5. Analysis of Data.....	24
3.6 Ethical Considerations.....	24
CHAPTER FOUR .....	25
4. Quantitative and Qualitative Data presentation and analysis .....	25
Introduction .....	25
4.1 Quantitative Analysis .....	25
4.1.1 Profile of Respondents.....	25
4.1.2 Professional Support of EBC (ETV) Toward Political News Reporters/Journalists....	28
4.1.3 Neutrality on Reporting Political News.....	29
4.1.4 Freedom and Access to information.....	31
4.1.5 Autonomy in Reporting Political News.....	32
4.1.6 Regarding Censorship and Self-Censorship in Political News Reports .....	34
4.1.7 Factors for the Challenges of Political News Reporting .....	34
4.1.7.1 Personal Factors .....	34
4.1.7.2 Organizational Factors .....	36
4.1.7.3 External Factors .....	37
4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis.....	39
4.2.1 Major Perceived Challenges of Reporting Political News in EBC (ETV).....	39
4.2.1.1 The Relationship between the Media and the State (The Nature of State Intervention).....	39
4.2.1.2 Autonomy and Freedom of Journalists .....	43
4.2.1.3 Professionalization and skills of Journalists .....	45
4.2.1.4 The Media Laws/Editorial Policies and Freedom of Access to Information .....	47
4.2.1.5 Polarization and Equal Coverage on Political issues .....	49

4.2.1.6 Major Sources of Political News Reporting Of EBC(ETV) .....	51
4.2.1.7 The Impact of the New Media (Internet) On Political News Reporting.....	53
CHAPTER FIVE.....	55
5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	55
5.1 Summary of Findings .....	55
5.1 Conclusion.....	55
5.2 Recommendations .....	59
References .....	60
APPENDICES .....	64
APPENDIX I.....	64
APENDIX II.....	71

## **Lists of Acronyms**

EBC	Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front.
ETV	Ethiopia Television
FOIA	Freedom of information Act
PP	Prosperity Party
UN	United Nations Organization
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

## **Lists of Figures**

Figure1.Demography of respondents.....	26
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## **Lists of Tables**

	Page
Table 1: Profile of Sample Journalist.....	25
Table 2: Educational background of respondents.....	27
Table 3: Level experience of respondent in ETV (EBC).....	27
Table 4: Journalist assignment regarding political news reporting .....	28
Table 5: Professional Support and training based on the questioner obtained from the journalists .....	28
Table 6: Assignment of journalists regarding political news reporting in EBC (ETV).....	29
Table 7: Neutrality of journalist in EBC when they produce political news .....	30
Table 8: Freedom and Access to information in case of political news reporting.....	32
Table 9: Journalists Autonomy .....	33
Table 10: Organizational Autonomy and freedom .....	33
Table 11: Self-Censorship in Political News Reports.....	34
Table 12: Personal Factors/Challenges .....	35
Table 13: Organizational Factors/ Challenges .....	36
Table 14: Response on External Factors/Challenges.....	38

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Political journalism constitutes one of the foremost distinguished and has the most “sacred” domains of journalism (Neveu, 2002:23). There are several reasons for this First, political journalism inextricably linked with politics and democracy is working close to centers of political power, and functioning as a key mediator between political actors and institutions. Second, it influences how citizens understand the world and, by extension, their political attitudes, opinions, and behavior. Third, mainly its serves as both an arena and an entity in political processes, influencing how political institutions, actors, and processes work (Strömbäck and Shehata, 2018)

In essence, political journalism is deeply drive in and potentially influences in all political progressions in democratic systems. Likewise, the communication of political information is an important process in the political system and the media or political journalists play a key role in this activity (Dahit, 2009).

In democratic systems, media and politics are interdependently associated. This means citizens need to be informed by the media to make evidence-based decisions. Media institutions, on their part, act as a watchdog that ensures government accountability. However, such a symbiotic relationship is not found in all countries (Menychle, 2020). For instance, Authoritarian systems use the mass media as an instrument for systematic manipulation and for elongations of their political power. Therefore, a political system is a key factor that shapes the political journalism of any country.

On the other hand, the practices of political journalism are not as ‘peaceful’ or ‘sacred’ as their definition on papers. Such type of journalism is the most challenging journalism division or arena until these days. Almost in all countries all over the world, political new journalists are victims of either repression or abuse and imprisonment because of their reports toward politicians or the ruling government in their country.

With the above in mind, when we trace back the history of Ethiopian political journalism is characterized as a struggle to construct a professional coverage of politics, free from party

commitments on the part of media owners, from state control, or from formal linkages with political parties (Kuhn and Neveu,2017). Since the empirical era up to the current federal system the media in Ethiopia under the high shadow and presence of state/politicians as well as characterized by full state ownership and instrumentalization. This make the trend of political journalism trend challenging, for the journalists. In addition, this put the journalist's autonomy in the question mark (ibid).

Especially the post-1991-2018 era led by the EPRDF collation party saw the private media and journalists as a challenge to their establishment and started using different techniques and repressive actions to deteriorate the media and the pluralistic political landscape (International Media Support, 2018)

As the Norwegian media scholar Terje Skjerdal (2010, p.47) notes, repressive measures against the media in the late 1990s began to push Ethiopian reporters and editors into exile. These political journalists typically first departed to Kenya, but many ended up as asylum seekers and refugee in Western countries, particularly the U.S. and Canada. In a publicly obtainable file from 2006, 106 Ethiopian journalists in exile in foreign countries, of whom at least 50 have been successful in getting enduring settlement in North America or European countries. (Skjerdal, 2010:47).

This exhaustive and authoritarian approach toward journalists and the media makes the political journalism trend challenging in Ethiopia. However, the coming of Dr. Abiy Ahmed to power as Prime Minister (PM) of Ethiopia on 02 April 2018 seems, initially, to be dramatically changing the country's stiff authoritarian history (Menychle, 2019). Immediately after assuming power, the PM introduced a number of reforms that might lead the country in the direction of democratization. This administration free imprisoned journalists and has re-opened more than 260 blocked news media sites in the country. Nevertheless, it was short-lived (Ethiopian Herald, June 28, 2018). Yet, after 2018 things are shifting and changing color, there are still repressive measures toward journalists.

Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) is one of the biggest and mainstream media houses when we talk about media in Ethiopia. Regarding political news reporting/ political journalism as state-owned media EBC is well known for serving the governments in charges for many years. Like in most developing nations, the media has been under government control in Ethiopia. The

control becomes more severe and stricter when it comes to audiovisual media platforms. No wonder all successive establishments in Ethiopia have kept the only audio-visual channel Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) under inspecting scrutiny and control. Obviously, the medium's role is often hooked with, what the government plans and riggings. The ambiguity in the role of Political journalism as a concept and its practice, lack of clarification in its scope, and political inclination of the state media are still unanswered questions in Ethiopian media houses including EBC (Skjerdal, 2011:57).

Based on this, it is understandable that the challenges of Political news reporting emanate from the relationship between the state and media most of the time externally and with the internal (personal and organizational) challenges that political news reporters/journalists face. Therefore, this study will try to show the major challenges of political news reporting by investigating the EBC political news Journalists/Reporters discernments regarding on journalistic professionalism, ethics, autonomy, and nature of state intervention tendency in political news reporting arena in post 2018 era.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Challenges to political journalism or political news reporting are the most common phenomena in many countries. Political reporters and Journalists face challenges during reporting political issues. These challenges are visible in both state and privately owned Media. Several governmental or political actors use the media as an apparatus for political propaganda, party power elongation, and other systematic political manipulation purposes, by suppressing and instrumentalize the journalist in the area in different ways. This situation also put the journalist's professionalism and autonomy in question on the other hand.

Different researchers' studied political issue coverage from different perspectives and came up with findings in showing the challenges of political journalism in Ethiopia.

Engedawerk, (2012) studied "Challenges of Journalists in Reporting Politics: Comparative analysis on FM Addis & Sheger FM", conclude that the constraints of journalists in doing political reporting were caused by some external & internal factors by the government officials and politicians take the lion share. On the other hand lack of professional competency, self-censorship poor management and others are the internal factors that have been manifested with the journalists themselves."

According to Menychle (2019), who studied “The Relations between the Media and Political System in Ethiopia’s Revolutionary Democracy from May 1991-April 2018”, argued that, TPLF/EPRDF chose to reduce space for negotiation through mass media, favored protecting group over individual rights, and planned for a populist discourse aiming to create a direct connection with the mass of the public. At the height of revolutionary democracy, Ethiopia had a media system marked by an unstable environment, lack of professionalization, limited press freedom, and a significant polarization due to the government’s desire to use the media as a tool. In addition, a symbiotic relationship between the media and political system has not been nurtured in 27 years of revolutionary democracy ideology. However, the upcoming of PP party lead by PM. Abiy ahmed brought significant reform and declared to give up the revolutionary democracy ideology. Today, the government does not seem to consider the media as a threat. (Menychle, 2019:34)

Both of the above two pieces of researches shows political journalism in Ethiopia is full of constraint. Especially the government domination and abusiveness is very high in political issue coverage. Nevertheless, these previous researches have focused only on the Former EPRDF administration, which is not currently in power. This put the relevance of the researches bit low these days. Also, do not clearly justify the nature and the degree of state intervention. Furthermore, the last one by (Menychle, 2019) just gives a personal comment regarding the current PP regime's relationship with media.

Moreover, in my preliminary research, a key informant said to me that, political reporters in Ethiopia face a huge challenge in getting the documents from the government offices, they lack security in reporting politics and their autonomy is in question. Therefore the purpose of this study is to look into such challenges and what important points are considered in political reporting by focusing on EBC journalists and media practitioners perceptions in the area from 2018-2021.

Correspondingly, investigate the current challenges in covering political issues, by regarding journalistic professionalism, ethics, levels of autonomy, and the degree & nature of state intervention in political news reporting.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to show the major perceived challenges of reporting political news in EBC (ETV) in post 2018 period by focusing on EBC (ETV) Journalists.

### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

- To assess the nature of state intervention and examine the relationship between journalists and politicians
- To identify problems of journalists in getting sources and information for political news reporting
- To observe the level of freedom and autonomy journalists possess in covering political news
- To perceive journalists professionalism in reporting political news
- To assess journalist altitude toward media laws and editorial policies

## **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What are the major perceived challenges of reporting political news in EBC (ETV) in post 2018 period?
2. What is the nature of the state of intervention and relationship with the media organization EBC (ETV) in political news reporting?
3. What are the major sources of political news stories in EBC (ETV)? and did political news journalists have freedom and access to information?
4. Are political news reporters/journalists in EBC (ETV) autonomous and professional in their work? and is self-censorship an issue during political news reporting process?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The researcher believes that this study help in finding the fact how media in Ethiopia covers political issues especially in state-owned media in the current political regime. The researcher hope that it provide possible solutions for the media organization EBC (ETV) and other media organization journalists to improve the quality of political news reporting and aimed to pave the ways in tacking political news reporting challenges in Ethiopian media landscape .

## **1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

### **1.6.1 Scope**

The study carried out on the perceived challenges of reporting political news stories Ethiopian Broadcast Corporation (EBC), by focusing on the perception of the journalists who are active on political news reporting in post-2018. Moreover, this survey only focused on TV Channel journalists. The data collected by using both quantitative and qualitative research methods from EBC(ETV) reporters, editors and media managers.

### **1.6.2 Limitations**

The issue of study needs to address from various perspectives. To come up with a more comprehensive outlook and wide application, it needs to conduct in many places and contexts. Nevertheless, due to time and resource constraints, the research was limited to collect data from only EBC (ETV). The other big challenge for this study was the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic in the world and in our country. This Virus has an obstacle to meet the advisor and interviewers in the face-to-face situations. Hence, these limitations have a negative impact on the quality of this study.

## **1.7 Organization of the study**

This study is consists of Five chapters. Chapter 1 presents a general background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions, significance of the study, the scope of the study, and limitation of the study. Chapter 2 focuses on conceptual and theoretical frameworks of Political Journalism. Meaning it deals with a review of related literature in the area. Chapter 3 deals with the overall research methodology style or types used in conducting this research analysis. Then Chapter 4 will be the analysis part based on the data that collected. Then most importantly, the findings demonstrated in order to give a possible answer for the stated problem. The fifth (5) chapter resided on the summary of findings, conclusion and suggested recommendations based on the outcome of the research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. Review of Related Literature**

#### **2.1 Conceptualization of Terms**

##### **2.1.1 Media and Politics**

Media and politics are intense relationship in a functioning democracy. Despite their divergent missions, it is a interdependent connection. Political forces turn to the public to motivate their actions, to campaign for their ideas, and to win people's trust. Media, in turn, have to inform people about politics and exercise control over politicians when the latter perform their duties. They necessitate each other and, symentaniously; they get advantage from each other. Without access to current political affairs and dealings, media would be rundown out of topics to cover, and without media, politicians would barely find a way to the people. So, this relationship is investable and very important in the social, economic development of a country (Lozanov & Spassov, 2011). In this sense, we can easily understand that political journalism/reporting and the political structure of one country is dependent variable or correlated.

In other words, the media have power in both domestic and international politics. Also on the other side, politics play a great role in the media or journalism foreplay. The media supply information, and at the same time shape people's learning process about the world and their country, thus mass media have a correspondingly large influence on individuals' picture of their country and world. In this context, the media become important tools for defining "in-group" identity against "out-group" identity based on representing a series of contrasts and oppositions. As well, the political or governmental structure of a country matters on the flow and nature of the media (Coban, 2016:46).

Moreover, augmented information flows through the media have elicited the loss of the government's traditional control over information related to politics and political affairs. The speed in moving information has created a system in which power over information is much more widely distributed, which means decentralization and less official control of government agendas. In that spirit, the media are not just the means of reproduction of power relations, but also pluralizing forces that work against the government's ability to influence and control. The media acting as the public watchdog works out a check on elite behavior, thus it can help make

political actors accountable to the public, assisting in the empowerment of the latter as citizens and voters. So in the media plays a great role in one counties politics or in building a democratic system (Nye, 2004:53). Then this thesis understands the relation of political reporting and state from this perspective.

### **2.1.2 Political communication**

Political communication illuminates the important processes in which elected and in charge leaders, the media, and public citizens use messages to construct meaning about political practices. In other words it is political communication theory is the study of political ideas and values like justice, power, and democracy that we use to describe, understand and assess political practices and institutions (McNair,2003).

The political communication practice is without a doubt complex that demonstrate five distinct yet interrelated features. It is, first, multilevel containing social, political and media systems and organizations, political and journalistic communicators, different involved populations or citizens, with the surrounding political ethos. Second, it frequently evolves including not only changes in all the above respects but also major changes in the technologies that offered more support and undergird the process, conveyed by societally significant to extra media developments. Third, it is virtually society-spanning reaching into the numerous spheres of organization and activity, which politics affects. Fourth, it pivots on a structured but also on unstable and volatile politics-media axis involving the interdependence of and many relations between organizations shaped by altered purposes and different logics. Finally, its patterns and practices are intimately normative i.e., consequential for the realization or otherwise of effective citizenship in a meaningful democracy (Dahlgren, 2004).

Throughout the postwar period in Europe, scholars have engaged in a debate over the likely magnitude of political communication effects in general. Though in earlier years a "limited effects" paradigm have a tendency to triumph, notions of more "powerful effects" subsequently gained ground, largely in response to the dependence of political actors and audiences on news media's (especially TV's) depictions of the political arena. More recently, Bennett and Iyengar (2008) have maintained that a new era of minimal effects might be emerging from present-day conditions of communication abundance. However, such emphasis about the overall strength of

impact no longer makes much sense, nevertheless, when multiple message/ information sources are now so diverse and fragmented.

When we come to the core meaning of Politics communication, it refers to a long-term change process in which the media's distinctive ways of regarding the world are said to be becoming increasingly influential in politics. As the media become the most important source of information about politics and society; it become more independent from political and social institutions, as its coverage of politics is increasingly directed by a media logic rather than a political logic. Moreover, as political institutions and actors themselves guided by a media rather than a political logic, then the logic of media institutions will increasingly shape politicians' publicity efforts and colonize political institutions as policy-making sources. It offers a useful guide to empirical political communication research, designed to specify what kinds of materials politicians will tend to make available (Dahlgren, 2004:17).

In other words, political communication is a guide about the interplay between political journalists and politician's effects, on the public in communicating, reporting, and addressing political issues. In this interplay the political reporters/journalists take a great part, for instance, they play a key role in the development, democratization, and nation-building process of a country. In addition, the nature of state intervention on the media matters in such communication process (Wojcieszak, 2012).

### **2.1.3 Political News Reporting**

Political journalism constitutes one of the most prominent domains of journalism and is essential for the functioning of democracy. Unpretentiously, political journalism ought to function, as an information provider, watchdog, and medium for political discussions, by this means, it helping citizens understand political matters and prevent abuses of power. The extent to which it does is, however, still debatable. Apart from normative ideals, political journalism molded by dynamics at several levels of analysis, which include the individual level, the media organizational level, and the system level inquiry. Not least important for political journalism is the close, interdependent, and contentious relationship with political actors, shaping both the processes and the content of political journalism (Strömbäck, 2018).

Moreover, political news coverage or political news reporting is coverage of political activities and events with aim of collecting and disseminating truthful, unbiased information on the state/government, political parties, and other political actor's activities to the public. And the practitioners or the journalist in this area are expected to provide the public with information that would enable both public and the political actors to make intelligent choices regarding political issues. For instance, during election time political reporting plays a vital role in both the electorate and the public to make wise decisions and choices (National Media Commission, 1996:8).

Furthermore, political news coverage/reporting is a very sensitive area of journalism. Meaning this area of reporting is required to be comprehensive and fair to all and that provide information gathered impartially as possible. Because such type of reporting has a direct impact with a higher consequence on one country's/public well-being (ibid). In other words, the journalists/practitioners are expected to avoid all actions that could compromise their integrity or issue of judgment or the reputation of their organization and autonomy by, for example refusing bribes and other inducements.

On the other hand, media houses must not be limited in their coverage of politics. Political news reporting should be extended to encompass all phases of politics in any country both domestic and foreign relations (Shafer, 1998: 32-52). Then from this stand, this paper give an analysis on EBC political news reporting trends and possible challenges in the area.

#### **2.1.4 Political News Reporting in Ethiopia**

There has continuously been a close relationship and interplay between Ethiopian politics and the country's media system. Ever since the first Amharic newspaper came into being in 1902 (in the reign of King ManlikeII) to enjoy a very small circulation among palace dignitaries, the media have largely served the government. (Feleke, 2012) Ethiopian rulers well recognized the power of the media in their service as a Government mouthpiece that when, for instance, the other Amharic weekly, 'BerehanenaSelam', was launched in 1921, it was Emperor Haileselassie's (who reigned from1930 to 1974) own initiative that indeed stood in the praise of His Majesty. Nothing less can be said about radio that came in 1935 and television that kick-started by televising the 33rd anniversary of Emperor Haile Selassie's coronation. The era of Dreg, the military dictatorship (1974-1991), was a period when state control and repression of media

operations mounted with official censorship introduced against all forms of media products especially on political news reports, and private media were not allowed to exist. The Marxist regime owned the entire media to utilize them as its propaganda machinery (ibid).

The post-1991 era is a turning point in Ethiopia's media history and political journalism, Also this era under the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDF), has arguably exhibited a double face in on Ethiopian media landscape in general. It opens political space allowed for the unprecedented flourishing of the free press and opens the gate for privately owned media, unlike the previous rulers. The Transitional Government formulated a Constitution that has made clear provisions, among other tenets of democracy, for freedom of thought and expression. EPRDF government was founded on its promises of enshrining democratic standards in its policy reforms and respecting human rights. This was followed by extensive constitutional embracement of human and democratic rights which, according to Article 13/2 of 4 the Constitution "...shall be interpreted conforming to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenants on Human Rights and international instruments adopted by Ethiopia". Even the EPRDF government abolished censorship of any form in its early years (Bekele, 2018:17-18).

However, unfortunately, this promising start by EPRDF will not continue. Especially after the 2005 election huge damage to the overall process of democratization and specifically to the media exercises in Ethiopia. The Government's anger has been expressed through strong media denunciation of the allegedly irresponsible behavior of the private press as well as the detention of journalists. Although highly polarized media style and instrumentalization of the media by the government become the character of the Ethiopian media system during the EPRDF era until its dramatic fall down in 2018 from power (Dodolla, 2019).

Moreover, according to, Hallin and Mancini (2004, p.38), where political parallelism is very high, with media organizations strongly tied to political organizations, and journalists deeply involved in party politics, professionalization is indeed likely to be low. Journalists are likely to lack autonomy, except to the extent that they enjoy it due to high political positions, and journalism is likely to lack a distinct common culture and separate sense of social purpose, apart from the purposes of the political actors with which media are linked. In Ethiopia, Such political parallelism, lack of logistics, lack of professionalization, organizational pressure, external

interference, absence of incentives, absence of protection for journalists, and people's reluctance to be a source of information are highly challenging the practice of political journalism (Negeri, 2013).

With this in mind, political journalism or political news reporting trends in Ethiopia are not a paradise for journalists and media houses in the arena. There were and still repressive measures toward journalist, especially who work on political journalism area in Ethiopia.

### **2.1.5 Freedom of Information Act in Ethiopia**

The free flow of information and ideas lies at the heart of the very notion of democracy and is crucial to effective respect for human rights. In the absence of respect for the right to freedom of expression, which includes the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas, it is not possible to exercise the right to vote, human rights abuses take place in secret, and there is no way to expose corrupt, inefficient government (Ojo, 2010).

Freedom of Information or the right to information, can be defined as the right to access information held by public bodies and it is an important component of the internationally guaranteed right to freedom of expression (UNESCO, 2017). Freedom of information also plays an important role in keeping government transparent and accountable, and has been used to expose a wide range of government misconduct and waste, along with threats to the public's health and safety and it can also be assist in developing citizen trust in government actions and maintaining a civil and democratic society (History, 2018)

The origins of the Freedom of information date back to the 18th Century, the Age of Enlightenment. The world's first freedom of information legislation was adopted by the Swedish parliament in 1766. The fundamental achievements of the 1766 Act were the abolishment of political censorship and the gaining of public access to government documents. (Mustonen, 2006). Importantly, however, over the last ten years the 1766 act legacy has gained widespread recognition in all regions of the world. Several international bodies with responsibility for promoting and protecting human rights have firmly recognized the fundamental human right to access information held by public bodies, as well as the need for effective legislation to secure respect for that right in practice. These include the United Nations, regional human rights bodies

and, the Council of Europe and the African Union, and other international bodies (Mendel, 2008).

Laws opening government records and processes are now commonplace among democratic countries. Despite challenges of effective implementation, Ethiopia as a country adopted the Law on Mass Media and Freedom of Information in 2008. Although merged with a media law and the constitution the Ethiopian law contains significant characteristics of a Freedom of Information law (Ojo, 2010).

FDRE Constitution provides for the ‘Right of Thought, Opinion and Expression’ and freedom of information on the article 29. This article tries to elaborate freedom of press specifically on access to information that everyone has the right seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, orally, either in writing or in print. (Gedion, 2010)

Article 29 of FDRE Constitution provides the ‘Right of Thought, Opinion and Expression’ in the following terms:

- Everyone has the right to hold opinions without interference.
- Everyone has the right to freedom of expression without any interference. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, orally, either in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any media of his choice.
- Freedom of the press and other mass media and freedom of artistic creativity is guaranteed. Freedom of the press shall specifically include the following elements: (a) Prohibition of any form of censorship; (b) Access to information of public interest.
- In the interest of the free flow of information, ideas and opinions, which are essential to the functioning of a democratic order, the press shall, as an institution, enjoy legal protection to ensure its operational independence and its capacity to entertain diverse opinions.
- Any media financed by or under the control of the State shall be operated in a manner ensuring its capacity to entertain diversity in the expression of opinion.
- These rights can be limited only through laws which are guided by the principle that freedom of expression and information cannot be limited on account of the content or

effect of the point of view expressed. Legal limitations can be laid down in order to protect the well-being of the youth, and the honor and reputation of individuals.

- Any citizen who violates any legal limitations on the exercise of these rights may be held liable under the law.

The Constitution also stipulates that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and international human rights instruments ratified by Ethiopia. UDHR, the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), the ACHPR (African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights) and other pertinent human rights instruments ratified by Ethiopia should be read alongside this constitutional provision in order to have a full picture of the legal regime that is expected to accord protection to freedom of expression in Ethiopia ( Gedion, 2010)

The other most important act on freedom of information in Ethiopia is Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation No. 590/2008. The proclamation begins by defining information. "Information" means any material recorded in any form. The information can be any document, file or manuscript relating to the medical, educational or the academic, employment, professional or criminal history of the individual or information relating to the information recorded by the government. The main principle behind freedom of information proclamation is that people have a right to know about the activities of public authorities, unless there is a good reason for them not to. The act also believe that access of information encourage and promote public participation, transparency, accountability and efficiency in the functions of public bodies and to encourage and promote good governance.

Article 12 Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation No. 590/2008 describe and guarantee Right of Access to Information in the following terms:

1. All persons have the right to seek, obtain and communicate any information held by public bodies, except as expressly provided for by this Proclamation.
2. The right referred to under sub-article (1) of this Article shall include the right to be informed whether or not the public body holds a record containing the requested information and to obtain information from any public body by means of;
  - A. Inspection, taking extracts and notes;
  - B. Certified copies of any records of such public authority;

- C. Diskettes, floppies or any other electronic mode or through print-outs where such information is stored in a computer or in any other device.
3. Nothing in this Proclamation shall be understood as limiting the power of public bodies to provide access to information on an informal basis (Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information, Proclamation, 2008).

The adoption of freedom of information laws in developing country such as Ethiopia would help the media to address these impediments. The media should then be able to obtain more accurate and reliable information that will enhance the relevance and reliability of the media. However, in many countries, including Ethiopia, it is an offense for public officers to give information to the public, including the media. This creates a serious problem for the investigative journalist seeking the information, as public officers are usually unwilling to give the media information. The journalist can therefore hardly secure any information through official sources (Mendel, 2008)

Although there is the option of getting information through unofficial sources, this can be extremely dangerous because most countries in Africa do not have any protection for journalists' confidential sources, and journalists enjoy no immunity regarding the disclosure of their sources. They can therefore be compelled by judicial or legislative bodies to disclose where they got their information even when such information was obtained from confidential sources, thereby putting those sources at risk. This affects the willingness of public officials to give information to journalists anonymously or confidentially (Ibid).

In this regard, this paper will investigate the extent of freedom of accessing information of political news journalists in EBC. Following the above laws, proclamations, and regulations the country ratified and accepted.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.2.1 Agenda Setting Theory**

Maxwell McCombs & Donald Shaw created this theory. It is well known as the "Not what to think, but what to think" paradigm. The agenda-setting theory of media distinguished that mass media determine or regulate the issues that concern the public rather than the public's outlooks. Under this theory, the issues that receive the most attention from media become the subjects that

the public discusses, debates, and demands actions. This means that the media are determining what issues and stories the public thinks about (Borah, 2017).

The agenda-setting theory begins as an explanation of how the mass media affects change the pattern in political behavior during elections (Cohen, 1963). Afterwards, the theory has inspired and developed hundreds of later explorations on how the mass media peaks and frames topics for their audiences. Not only limited to such, but the discussion also covers how the mass media gives coverage to a specific event for their media spectators (Matsaganis and Payne, 2005). Therefore, the mass media can be considered responsible for influencing and shaping public opinion and agenda. Such influence of mass media on the public agenda or opinion can happen intentionally or unintentionally (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

Continuously, the agenda-setting theory stands as an important theory not only on mass communication but extends to other related social science studies such as political communication (Reese, 1991). Under the agenda-setting theory, the mass media is supposed not to preserve and possess the capability to set the public agenda especially in matters of opinions or attitudes (Cohen, 1963). However, the mass media has particular access in contributing to or influencing the audience's perceptions, values, focus, and priorities. With such influence from the mass media, the media audiences tend to form their own opinion or focus on those issues that are considered worthy of inclusion on their mental agendas (Littlejohn and Foss, 2009).

So How far is the mass media able to influence or frame the public agenda? , Is the basic question in this paradigm, meaning the effects of media agenda setting on individuals or audience is the basic issue in this case. Second, how directly and to what degree the media set the public agenda is the core part of this theory. Therefore, from this perspective, this paper will explain the effect of political new reporting/political journalism on the public by referring to the mainstream media EBC.

### **2.2.3 Framing Theory**

Framing-effect theories, some say framing effect theory as an extension of agenda-setting theory. The frame can be a phrase, image, analogy, or metaphor that a journalist or media uses to communicate the essence of an issue or event. Frames simplify the story-writing process for journalists and help audiences make sense of what they encounter in the news. Political

communication researchers have identified two primary stages in the framing process (Scheufele, 1999). These junctures directly parallel to those developed to define and term agenda setting theory. Frame building refers to the development of frames and their inclusion in news stories. Frame setting describes audience consumption of news with frames and audience members' consequent adoption of frames as ways to understand issues and problems. Separating the stages highlights domains of theory and research that focus on the sociology and political economy of news production on the one hand, and on the psychology of message processing on the other. The stages are linked, of course, because of the ultimate goal of journalists and other actors in the audience's acceptance of frames as descriptors of the events and issues of public life.

Besides, framing theory consists of multiple perspectives and sides, but all perspectives and sides rarely get equal media attention. Some aspects of an issue or event become more dominant. Several factors are involved in creating and addressing social, political, and economic issues. Media framing refers to the selection process whereby pieces of information selected and placed together in news stories (Andsager & Powers, 1999). Two newspapers may present the same story differently by selecting and focusing on different aspects or angles of the same. Media framing deals with how a given media outlet shapes an event. Media do not just simply provide facts; they enhance and add some perspective and contexts to engage their viewers, readers and spectators. For instance, a tabloid newspaper or another media outlet might draw on the human implications of drought while a more serious newspaper would focus on its political and economic consequences (Gibbs and Warhaver, 2002:159)

Framing theory is also useful in addressing these differences. Tankard et al (1991,p.11), described media frames as "a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration" (Cartee, 2005: 24). Using similar principles, provides a generally accepted framing definition, where framing refers to "selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (Entman,1993:52).

Most importantly what we need to understand here is Framing generally focuses on how media draws the public's eye to specific topics – setting agenda, and then it takes a phase further to

create a frame, through which the audience will understand such information. Constructing frames for stories is usually a mindful choice by sources, reporters, journalists, and editors. The in a way justifies the media as gatekeepers who mindfully collect, select, "organize and present the ideas, events, and topics they cover" (Mass Communication Theory (Online), 2017).

Then when we see it from a political journalism perspective, politics is typically competitive, fought between parties or ideological factions, and issues that are debated are framed in opposing terms. Individuals receive multiple frames with varying frequencies. In one of the few experiments that have tested the effect of simultaneous exposure to frames, Sniderman and Theriault (2004) found that individuals favored the frame that was consistent with their values. On the hate-group issue, when people barley exposed to both the free-speech and public safety frames, those who placed a higher priority on freedom than law and order were inclined to be tolerant, but those who subscribed more strongly to law and order tended to be intolerant. Also, they concluded that framing might be less influential in politics than experimental studies have suggested because competing frames may cancel each other and fail to move public opinion (Brewer & Gross, 2005).

Although competition likely improves the odds that citizens will resist framing strategies as Sniderman and Theriault ,(2004) suggest that, it does not guarantee that the opposing sides will be equivalent opponents or that audiences will receive equal and concurrent exposure to equally swaying alternate frames. Pan and Kosicki (2001, p. 45) stated, "Resources are not distributed equally. Actors strategically cultivate their resources and translate them into framing power" Campaigns that have greater resources to conduct public opinion research may be better able to identify the frames that appeal most to the public. Uneven and inadequate resources may also permit one side to advertise its themes more frequently to a wider audience and to count on advocates that can more credibly deliver its messages to the mass (Chong & Wolinsky-Nahmias, 2006).

As a result, we can say the efficiency of any framing structure will relay on its design and implementation within a particularly competitive environment. To assess whether it is possible for one side to gain a framing advantage over the other requires that we study framing effects under several competitive conditions (Ibid).

So, in general what we are trying to indicate here is the framing of political news matter, in other words, the way journalists frame the news has a great effect on the public, on the ruling government, and even on their media houses. Also, the framing style of any political news has a great effect on one countries development and democratization process. From this perspective, this paper will assess the political news reporting framing style of EBC and the related challenges in the process.

#### **2.2.4 Gate keeping theory**

Gatekeeping theory is the nexus between two inarguable facts: events occur everywhere all of the time and the news media cannot cover all of them. And so, when an event occurs, someone has to decide whether and how to pass the information to another person, such as a friend, an official, or even a journalist. Many decisions are made between the occurrence of an event and its transmission as news: decision points are referred to as gates and decision makers as gatekeepers. The decision-making process is the core of gatekeeping. It is possible for anyone to be a gatekeeper—anyone who has information about the event and decides to pass it to another person or organization. In processing information and conveying it to someone else, gatekeepers consciously or unconsciously change the information (Erikova,2018)

Besides the gate keeping theory helped in conceptualizing what happens to items such as misinformations, fake news and polarized ideas when it gets to reporters and editors in the field or in TV newsrooms. Gate keeping theory also brought to the fore the critical roles played by journalists, management and regulators in determining news from non-news. The phrase “Gate keeping” was coined by Kurt Lewin to refer to the process of blocking and or discarding information that is useless or unwanted using a gate or filter (Shoemaker, 2017). Lewin referred to the person who makes decisions on what to allow in and what to discard as the gatekeeper. Therefore the concept of gate keeping involves gatekeepers (individuals or groups) who make decision on what information to allow to certain individuals or groups and what not to. The gatekeepers act as decision makers for the larger group that depend on them for information. Gatekeepers are influenced by personal, regulatory, cultural or social factors in filtering what gets into the system and what is left. Through such gates, the gate keeper is able to regulate information flow by barring sensational, controversial or unwanted information from reaching the audience or entering a system (Ibid).

This theory fitted well in conceptualizing the study of spotting and counteracting polarized ideas. The Gate keeping theory posit that in news media, editors decide on what news item to publish and what to discard based on the house policies, ethics, and book (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). The editors and the reporters on the ground receive volumes of news items but have to decide on what to let to the public and what not to. This implies that well informed and trained journalists will easily spot and discard fake news. In the same vein, the Gate keeping theory helped me conceptualize the way fake news purveyors' filter certain news and decide on items that make circles on social media. Shoemaker and Vos (2009) further affirm that in deciding what to allow and what to discard, gate keepers are influenced by social, political, cultural and regulatory factors. Gate keeping theory posits that, editors remove controversial and unwanted information from news in order to control the society to certain directions. It is in the process of cross checking that fake news can be spotted. However, gate-keeping theory informs of factors that may influence the gate keepers like political, social, religious and economic (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009). In this case, biased news may therefore filter into the TV screens if reporters and editors are not independent actors.

Therefore, the researcher of this study tried to see the gatekeeping role of journals in EBC (ETV), when there is polarized and inarguable facts in reporting political news, aiming to show the level of independence and ability of decision making that EBC (ETV) journalist poses to expose and filter facts for the public.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter gives an outline of the methods that were used to conduct this research. It gives information about the techniques that were employed in selecting and determining the sample, collecting the data and in analyzing the data. The chapter begins by briefly describing the methods used and it then gives information about the sampling techniques, the sample and the analysis methods used.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This thesis employed both qualitative and quantitative research approaches with descriptive survey analysis design. Using such combined methods has its own significance: Flick (2002:265) says, “The different methodological perspectives complement each other as the complementary compensation of the weaknesses and blind spots of each single design.” There for, quantitative approaches were used to collect data from the journalists at EBC(ETV) through questionnaires, which were distributed among the journalists during the survey. Also, qualitative methods had been utilized to supplement the information gathered through in-depth interview.

#### **3.2 Sources of Data**

The study used primary and secondary data sources through quantitative and qualitative data gathering techniques, questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The first hand data or primary data source employed for this research includes in-depth interviews with media managers, editors, reporters, and media expertise in EBC (ETV).Correspondingly, for the secondary data the researcher reviews secondary materials relating to the most relevant published books, journals, articles, government publications and online materials related to study.

#### **3.3. Sampling Technique and Size**

In order to draw the area of study and selecting research subjects used sampling technique. Purposive sampling (also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling) is a sampling technique in which researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in the study. It is also called a non-probability sampling method and it occurs when “elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher.

purposive sampling method prove effective when only limited numbers of people can serve as primary data sources due to the nature of research design and aims and objectives. In addition, it very important and most effective when one needs to study a certain or specific domain when experts within (Tongco, 2003:147).

Accordingly, the researcher used purposively selected the public media owned by the state, which is EBC. The reason for selection of such media is it has well-established organizational structure and has long experiences in Ethiopia. These indicate that it has a huge number of audiences and stakeholders. Moreover, it participate in various political events, which a very help full media organization to this study.

Hence, the researcher prepared questionnaires and disseminated to purposively well select political journalists/reporters and news editors who found in the EBC (ETV). Based on the pre-research sample taken, in EBC there are only 7 -10 permanent or specialized political news journalists and the rest work by rotation in every year on political journalism department of EBC (ETV). Thus, the questionnaires disseminated purposively for 50 journalists/reporters and news editors especially who were active in reporting political news both permanently (specialized political journalists) and generalist reporters who work by rotation in EBC (ETV) from (2018-2021).

Similarly, the informants of the in-depth interview purposively selected based on their reporting experience and relevance to the issue being studied. The main subjects were deputy director/vice CEO of EBC, Senior Political News Editor and Administrator of EBC, 2 Senior Political News editors and reporters, Editor of News and other News programs in ETV, and political news reporter in ETV.

### **3.4 Methods of Data Collection**

Two types of data collection tools were employed in this study, questionnaires and in-depth interviews. In order to make possible data collection processes, tools like notes, and phone recording typically utilized. Phone recording with the participants' consent and with the guarantee to mention their names in the text where appropriate recorded the discussions. Maintaining the confidentiality of information has also an approach, and each participant has asked to identify himself/herself in terms of name, age, and other demographic information for the purpose of identification. This helped the resarcher to transcribe the data as accurately as

possible. The researcher also tried to take a written short note while the issues were being discussed.

### **3.4.1. Questionnaire**

According to Sajakabir,(2016:52), Questionnaires provide a relatively cheap, quick and efficient way of obtaining large amounts of information from a large sample of people. Data can be collected relatively quickly because the researcher would not need to be present when the questionnaires were completed. Data was collected quantitatively using questionnaires. Compared with other approaches including face-to-face and over the telephone questioning, the ability to provide anonymity with an online questionnaire is a significant benefit, particularly when you are looking to survey respondents on sensitive issues.

So that the objective of the questionnaire in this study ishas to explore the perceived challenges of reporting political news in EBC (ETV) from 2018-2021. Therefore, the questionnaire has distributed to a total of 50 journalists. Close ended, ranking questions and multi-choice questions were included in the questionnaires.

### **3.4.2 In-depth Interviews**

In-depth interviews were used to gather information from the identified experts as part of the qualitative data analysis of the study. IDI method is very important for analyzability of the data and is a byproduct of the interviewer–interviewee relationship and the depth of interviewing techniques, which produce a granularity in the IDI data that is rich in fine details and serves as the basis for interpreting the narrative within each interview. These details also enable researchers to readily identify where they agree or disagree with the meanings of codes and themes associated with specific responses. Also, in mixed research approach IDI is very supportive for the quantitative data with detailed and specified qualitative data analysis (Margaret, 2020).

Therefore, in this study IDI were valuable in getting an insight into some of the factors that may be behind the basic perceived challenges of reporting political news in EBC (ETV) regarding the journalist autonomy, freedom and access to information, the nature of state intervention and interplay in EBC (ETV) political news. In correspondence with journalist’s professionalism, skill and neutrality in their political news reporting post 2018 period.

Additionally, this in-depth interview is very helpful in getting the actual situation on the ground as experienced or observed by experts, editors and management staff of EBC who are working in the area of political reporting. Interview guides with the questions were produced beforehand so as to obtain in-depth information required. The schedule questions were prepared in a manner that probed the experts on the subject.

### **3.5. Analysis of Data**

As mentioned, the researcher employed both mixed approach. So the data analyzed based on appropriate quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. So, the quantitative data collected by using questionnaires which were entered into the study by using descriptive statistics. Which allowed the researcher to use Likert's Scale. As a result, mean scores, percentage, numbers and statistics applied and used to demonstrate the quantitative.

In addition, information through qualitative instrument (in-depth-interviews) analyzed qualitatively. To examine the analysis, category was made for the types of responses generated in relation to the major themes and the specific issues by the interview guide (Hansen et al., 1998:279). The in-depth interview discussions were highly focused around the topic and issues the researcher selected. Some direct quotes were used in an effort to create a clearer picture of how the interview participants generally interacted.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

The study considered an ethical concern. In the data gathering process from respondents, the researcher first asked for their permission to fill the questionnaires and permission was asked from the EBC (ETV) media organization for conducting the research.

The name of the respondents isn't required because when they are filling the questionnaire to get their real answer without any fear, it helps to increase the self-confidence of the respondents. In addition, the questionnaire described that the purpose of research is for academic purposes and the respondents were included based on their willingness.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. Quantitative and Qualitative Data presentation and analysis

#### Introduction

The aim of this chapter is the status of the current political news reporting trend in EBC and especially the major factors and challenges face the journalists who are active from 2018-2021 in area political news reporting. Therefore, this chapter deals with data presentation, analysis and discussion based on the collected data from primary sources. Thus, data generated from questionnaire and interviews with EBC (ETV) journalists, leaders and media expertise have been presented and analyzed. Questionnaires distributed for 50 journalist who work both permanently on political news reporting and by rotation (temporality) from 2018-2021.

The questionnaires that prepared for journalist was both open-ended and closed ended. Here, this 50 journalist who were selected as informant will express their experience on the current trend and challenges of EBC toward political news reporting (From 2018-2021).As well as interviewee's made with media manager, editors and senior political news experts or reporters in EBC (ETV).

#### 4.1 Quantitative Analysis

##### 4.1.1 Profile of Respondents

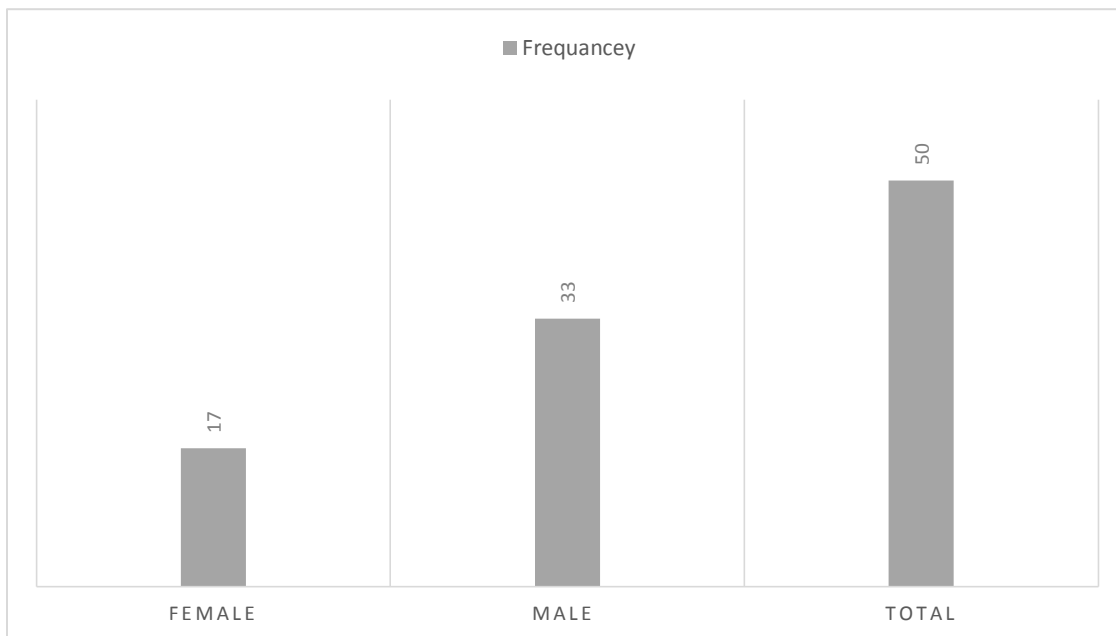
The researcher analyzes the overall profile of the sampled journalist in EBC (ETV) according the table below.

**Table 1: Profile of Sample Journalist**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Parentage (%)</b>
60 and Above	0	0%
50-59	1	2%
40-49	7	14%
30-39	19	38%
20-29	23	46%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100 %</b>

According to, Table 1. Or based on the above data among the sampled journalist who were active on political news reporting from 2018- 2021, the highest number of journalist age group were in between 20 – 29, this means 46%. In addition, the age groups between 30-39 journalists are the second highest frequency, which take 38% of the sample. Moreover, the other age group, which is above 40, take, 14% and 2 % and 0% respectively as demonstrated on the above table. In this sense or based on the obtained sample higher number of journalist who worked on political news reporting are at younger/youth level. Which help to conclude and indicate that highest number of EBC (ETV) political new journalists are productive and active work force currently.

**Figure 1 and / Sex and demography of the respondents**



According to (Figure 1) 34% of respondent are female and 66% are male. This designates ratio of female and male journalist is not balanced. So based on the sample taken by the research the highest number of organization journalists who work in political news reporting is male. So the gender equilibrium regarding political news reporting in EBC (ETV) journalists are male dominate based the sample data obtained.

**Table 2: Educational background of respondents**

<b>Educational background</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Parentage (%)</b>
Diploma	1	2%
BA/BSc	37	74%
MA and above	12	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to the above table 3.drown from questionnaires' and based on the samples the researcher took, journalists who have1rst degree are 37, which is 74% of the total population taken in this sample. Next EBC (ETV) journalists who work on political news reporting and have master's degree are 12, which is 24 %. Last but not least 2% from the total population sample are diploma holders. It indicates that the organization thoughtfulness to develop the capacity of their journalist's further capacity of political news reporters in the organization is promising from educational/intelligence perspective.

**Table 3: Level experience of respondent in ETV (EBC)**

<b>Educational background</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Parentage (%)</b>
10 years above	1	2%
5-9 years	18	36%
2-4 years	22	44%
1 year and above	9	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to the above table 4. The level of experience the 50 sampled journalists in this study, 44% and 36% of the total population sample in this research have 2-4 years of experience and 5-9 years of experience journalists respectively. which is the first and the second highest frequency which is 36 %. Which indicate the level of experience of who work on political news reporting is in encouraging level but not at adequate level in ETV.

**Table 4: Journalist assignment regarding political news reporting**

<b>Assignment and number of political journalists</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Parentage (%)</b>
Generalist journalists/ who work by rotation frequently	40	80%
specialized reporter /Political New reporters and editors	10	20%
<b>Total</b>	50	100%

Regarding this based on the received data which indicated on the above (table 5) most of the informants of this study in EBC (ETV) are generalist reporters of political news stories who work by rotation take 80% and specialized reporters or who work in the position of political news reporters and editors are only 10% of the total sampled respondents. .

#### **4.1.2 Professional Support of EBC (ETV) Toward Political News Reporters/Journalists**

**Table 5: Professional Support and training based on the questioner obtained from the journalists**

<b>Professional Support and training toward political new reporting/journalism</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Parentage (%)</b>
Often	1	2%
Sometimes	37	74%
Rarely	12	24%
Never	None	None
<b>Total</b>	50	100%

According to table 6. Regarding professional support and training for political reporters to encourage political news reporter is no adequate. Based on the above data obtained from the distributed questionnaires, 37 (74%) journalists respond sometimes and the other 12 respondents, which means 24%, respond rarely. This displays the effort of the organization to develop the capacity and skills of political news reporters by various training is insufficient. Only 1 or 2% of the total frequency claimed 'often' on the variable that they get frequently training and support on reporting political news.

**Table 6: Assignment of journalists regarding political news reporting in EBC (ETV)**

<b>How Political News reporters/journalists assigned</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Parentage (%)</b>
Based on reporters/journalists own plan	1	2%
Based on editorial will/meeting	29	58%
Based on experience	16	32%
By Political and Personal affiliation	4	8%
By Other means	None	None
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Base on Table 7. Data received from the questioner, 58% said they assigned for reporting political news reporting based on editorial will /meeting decision. Also 32 % of the sampled journalist in this research argued that journalist assigned for investigative issues is based on experience. Thirdly, the rest 4% of journalist claimed political and personal affiliation is the way EBC (ETV) assigned political new journalists. So this indicates the level of journalist/reporters own plan or will to report political issues almost not encouraging in case of EBC(ETV). More the will of the mangers and the editorial staff is the dominating part in regarding allot of journalists for political new reporting. The will of the editorial. The finding reveals Editorial meeting assigned 23 % of journalists for investigative report. Editorial decided the one who are going to report investigative issue.

### **4.1.3 Neutrality on Reporting Political News**

Here is there stance:-

**Table 7: Neutrality of journalist in EBC when they produce political news**

Variables	Response Frequency					Response Parentage (%)				Total
	Alwa ys	Sometimes	Rarely	Ne ver	Total	Yes	Sometim es	Rarely	Neve r	
I am neutral and free to keep my professional standards in EBC	22	-	-	28	50	44%	-		56%	100%
I believe I have neutral Stance in my political news reports in (ETV)	21	-	-	29	50	42%	-	-	58%	
Me and my Colleagues have been ordered by government and politicians to write a news story in a particular fashion/Frame	12	18	9	11	50	24%	36%	18%	22%	100%
The editorial staff of EBC gives me freedom and support for my neutrality	13	14	11	2	50	26%	28%	22%	4%	100%

1) In accordance with above Table 8. The researcher tried to see the level of neutrality of journalist who work on political new reporting. In that case based on the distributed questionnaires' the findings show, most the journalist response inclined and believe toward they do not have neutral stance or were not in the environment to keep professional standards and neutrality in their political new reporting. For instance 56% of the sampled journalists who worked permanently and by rotation the past for years (2018-2021) claimed that don't believe they have neutral stance and free to keep their professional standards in case political news reporting by saying 'Never'. However, the rest 48% said 'Always' they are neutral and free to keep their professional standards. This indicates the question of neutrality in ETV regarding

political news reporting not that much promising, rather it's a problem that need active resolution based on the sample taken in this research.

2). Secondly, in case of state/government and other actors intervention, on the frames and angles of political news frames angles. 12 and 18, or 22% and 36% of the sampled respondents said 'always' and 'sometimes' there is an interference and unwanted intervention from the government and third parties to write a news story in a particular fashion/Frame. Also on the other side, 11 which is 22% of the respondents claimed they don't witnessed in any interference from the government or from the third party at all. The rest 9% claimed rare experience from this variable. So based on this finding we can argue government and third party interference in political news stories and pressure on journalists can't be neglected issue. Even if the frequency of the journalists claimed no interference is almost at equal level of those who respond positive or yes.

3) Moreover, the sampled respondent's response claim the editorial staff of EBC gives political news reporters/journalists freedom and support to possess neutrality in their work, 13% and another 14% from sampled population respond 'always' and 'sometimes' respectively. The rest 11 and 2% answered rarely and No for this question. Based on this we can say the editorial staff of EBC (ETV) backing its journalists to maintain their professional standards especially neutrality on their political news stories is at satisfactory level.

#### **4.1.4 Freedom and Access to information**

On the questionnaires, the researcher also asked the respondent journalists about their freedom to access information and documents in case of political news reporting. In that case, based on the questioner distributed by the researcher access to government information in political news reporting is one of the major political news reporting challenges. Many journalists respond that it is difficult to access information especially from the government/state organization. It is the difficult job that they face when the report political news stories. Some officials are not willing to give information even offensive and abusive toward the political news reporters.

**Table 8: Freedom and Access to information in case of political news reporting**

<b>Response for Access and freedom to information</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Parentage (%)</b>
Always/ Often	16	32%
Sometimes	5	10 %
Rarely	None	None
Never	29	48%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

In this case, respondents answered ‘often’ is 32%, which claim they have freedom to access to any information regarding political news reporting frequently. 29 or 48% of respondents affirmed that their experience on access and freed to information regarding political news report is negative/unfavorable or they answered ‘never’. The rest 5% affirmed they had ‘sometimes’ freedom and access to information.

Freedom to access information is a very important criteria and a right for any journalist. So based on the sampled data EBC and the current ruling government is better work together in this case. Almost the highest frequency of journalists indicates they do not have access and freedom to information based on the obtained data in this research. Besides, it relevant to consider freedom to access information is an indicator the nature of relationship existing between reporters and the political class.

#### **4.1.5 Autonomy in Reporting Political News**

**Table 10 and 11.**The sampled journalist’s response on base on the questioner received from the question Do you believe that EBC ensures the autonomy of its journalists and do you believe you are autonomous/ independent? In case of political news reporting.

**Table 9: Journalists Autonomy**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Parentage (%)</b>
<b>Yes</b> (and I believe I am independent and autonomous)	22	44%
<b>No</b> ( I don't believe I am independent and autonomous)	28	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 10: Organizational Autonomy and freedom**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Parentage (%)</b>
<b>Yes</b> (EBC(ETV) Ensures and defend my Autonomy )	24	48%
<b>No</b> , (EBC doesn't ensures and safeguard my autonomy)	26	52%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

According to the above Table 10 and Table 11, which is the data gathered regarding EBC (ETV) journalists extent of autonomy in case of political news reporting. 56 % of respondents affirmed and inclined toward 'I don't believe', I am independent and autonomous' answer. The rest 44% respondents by opposite claimed they are independent and autonomous when they report political news. The rest of the respondents meaning the 5% abstained or prefer neutral stance.

In related to that, the respondents answer about their organization ensuring and defend the autonomy of its journalist as indicated on (Table 11.) More than half of the total respondents, which is 52% of the total population affirmed that EBC does not ensure and safeguard their autonomy regarding political news reporting. On some of their explanation EBC (ETV) itself is under the influence of the ruling government and the political news reports produced on the interest of the ruling party so expecting to be autonomous as in this situation is difficult. Furthermore, some of their details explained that autonomy on sensitive issue like politics an expected. Last but no list some of them also claimed even if we have a feeling or offered full autonomy by EBC, self-censorship and fear by itself make is another difficulty, that kill our autonomy.

Yet, the rest of 48% of the respondents affirmed they are autonomous and EBC (ETV) ensures and safeguarded their autonomy. Which is indicated on the next topic;-

#### 4.1.6 Regarding Censorship and Self-Censorship in Political News Reports

Self-censorship occurs when journalists deliberately manipulate their expression out of fear of, or deference to, the sensibilities or preferences (actual or perceived) of others and without overt pressure from any specific party or institution of authority. Then, the researcher asked the respondents, **did self-censorship affect your political news reporting career in the past Four years (2018-2021?)**, here is the sampled journalist’s response

**Table 11: Self-Censorship in Political News Reports**

<b>Self-Censorship affect my political news reporting career</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Parentage (%)</b>
Often	14	28%
Sometimes	19	38 %
Rarely	5	10%
Never	12	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

So based on the questionnaires distributed, 19 around 38% EBC (ETV) agreed that self-censorship and censorship affect their political new reporting’s sometimes. Further 28% of respondents affirmed government censorship and self-censorship totally affected their political news career in the past four years. Yet, the rest 10% and 24%= 34% in total affirmed that self-censorship and government censorship is not a challenge all and rare in their political news production and reporting.

#### 4.1.7 Factors for the Challenges of Political News Reporting

##### 4.1.7.1 Personal Factors

The first challenge is challenge that emanates from personal factors .which means it is the journalist’s individual and interpersonal challenge that affects political news report. According to responses from questionnaires, the following figure shows the degree of personal challenges journalists face while reporting political news.

**Table 12: Personal Factors/Challenges**

Variable		Response					
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
I believe I am skill full and professional while am reporting political issues in EBC(ETV)	Frequency	15	8	None	16	11	50
	Percentage	30	15	None	32	22	100
I am producing truthful and balanced contents of news stories	Frequency	4	1	11	18	16	50
	Percentage	8	2	22	36	32	100
I prefer neutral stance in my reports and free from self-censorship	Frequency	8	14	6	16	6	50
	Percentage	16	28	12	32	12	100
I believe my political news reports on ETV expose facts for the public	Frequency	2	10	None	25	13	50
	Percentage	4	20	None	50	26	100
I believe myself as an agenda setter and gate keeper for the public while I conduct political news stories/reports	Frequency	7	14	None	13	16	50
	Percentage	14	28	None	26	32	100

The above Table 13 shows the response of survey about personal challenges of journalist inclination on the above factors/challenges affect their political news reporting. In that case 16 (32%) and 11 (22%) which is 54% from the total respondents merely disagree and strongly disagree respectively on being professional and skilled on political news reporting. With the same pattern 18(36%) and 16 (32%) disagree and strongly on producing truthful. Also regarding exposing facts for the public and 25(50%) and 13(26), 76% in total disagree and strongly

disagree respectively. Also regarding playing a watchdog and gatekeeper role for the public 13(26%) and 16(32%) which is 58% in total disagree and strongly disagree respectively.

#### 4.1.7.2 Organizational Factors

Besides the personal challenge political new reporters, face organizational challenges. Which means in case of this study we will see EBC (ETV) organization impact on the journalists. In addition, readers must notice that, these challenges have factor or influence on the political news reports of organization. With this in mind, the researcher tried to find out this organizational challenge on journalist.

Based on the following variables used during on the survey questionnaires;-

**Table 13: Organizational Factors/ Challenges**

Variables		Responses					
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
(EBC) supports journalists in conducting political news stories	Frequency	31	11	6	None	2	50
	Percentage	62	22	12	None	4	100
EBC has strong tools or rules, regulations and editorial policy to manage bias	Frequency	16	6	9	19	None	50
	Percentage	32	12	18	38	None	100
EBC provide full security and protection for its journalists when there is an intervention	Frequency	15	4	4	10	17	50
	Percentage	30	8	8	20	34	100
EBC assigned full budget and security for political news reporting	Frequency	7	8	4	12	19	50
	Percentage	14	16	8	24	38	100

The above Table 14, displays the response of the questionnaires about organizational challenges of Journalist face while reporting political issues/news. Based on the variables 31(62%) and 11(22%) merely answered strongly agree and agree respectively that EBC (ETV) supports journalists in conducting political news stories. Also regarding the question EBC (ETV) has strong tools, rules and regulations and editorial policy to manage bias' 16(32%) and 6 (12 %) strongly agree and disagree respectively which is 44/% of the total respondents, when the rest 19 (38%) and 9 (%) disagree and neutral respectively.

Besides regarding organizational security and protection of political news journalists when there is an intervention 10 (20%) and 17 (34%) which is 54% from the total merely disagreed and strongly disagreed, and 15 (30%), 4 (8%) which is 38% merely strongly agreed and agreed respectively. In addition, regarding organizational assignment of full budget and security for political news reporting 12 (24%), 19(38%) disagreed and strongly disagreed which is 62% from the total respondents, when remaining of the respondents answered the opposite agreement choices, except 4(8%) abstained (neutral).

#### **4.1.7.3 External Factors**

The third challenge the researcher tried to trace in this study is, challenges that emanates from external body. Which includes government/state officials, political parties and individual entities, which affect both positively negatively the political news reporting trend of EBC. Especially on the last four years (2018-2021). So in this regard, this study finds out the inclination of journalist in EBC (ETV) Based on the following variables, which were part of the survey questionnaires.

**Table 14: Response on External Factors/Challenges**

<b>Variables</b>		<b>Responses</b>					
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	<b>Total</b>
I have full access and freedom of information from government and politicians	Frequency	7	9	8	16	10	50
	Percentage	14	18	16	32	20	100
The current media laws and proclamations of the country are strong and enforceable and has positive impact on political news reporting	Frequency	5	2	8	19	16	50
	Percentage	10	4	16	38	32	100
The current government committed toward neutral and balance political news reports	Frequency	14	3	12	15	6	50
	Percentage	28	6	24	30	12	100
I have been ill-treated or offensively by politicians while reporting political news	Frequency	12	9	12	8	9	50
	Percentage	24	18	24	16	18	100
Government officials politicians and other political entities tried to induce me to change the frame of my political news stories	Frequency	12	none	17	10	11	50
	Percentage	24	none	34	20	22	100

The above, Table 15. Displays the Responses of the sampled respondent's inclination towards the variables mention on the above as external factors and challenges of political news reporting. So Based on the variable having freedom and access to information from the government and political actors for reporting political news 16 (32%), 10(20%) which 52% in total disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, when 7( 14%), 9(18%) which is 32% merely strongly agreed and agreed respectively. The rest 8% abstained.

Second, about the current media laws and proclamations of the country are strength and enforceability and positive impact on political news reporting, 19(38%), 16 (32%) which is 70% of the total respondents dominantly disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively . In related to that 15(30%), 6(12%), 52% in total disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively about the current government commitment toward neutral and balance political news reports when the rest 14 (28%), 3(6%) , which is 17% of the total respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively, 12(24%) abstained or preferred neutral stance.

Third, 12(24%), 9(18%) which is 42% of the total respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they experienced ill treatment or offensiveness from politicians while conducting and reporting political news. However, the rest 17% disagree and strongly disagree and 12 % preferred neutral stance about this claim. Correspondingly for the variable ‘Government officials politicians and other political entities tried to induce me to change the frame of my political news stories’ highest number of the total respondents which 17 (34%) abstained to answer when 12(24%) strongly agreed when the remaining 10(20%), 11(22%) strongly disagreed and disagreed for the claim.

## **4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis**

The researcher forwards the same question for interviewing media managers, editors, and journalists who are active in political news reporting for the past years (2018-2021). They are not willing to call by their names. Because of that, the researcher uses the following title instead of their name. Respondent 1, Respondent 2, Respondent 3, Respondent 4, and respondent 5 so on.

### **4.2.1 Major Perceived Challenges of Reporting Political News in EBC (ETV)**

#### **4.2.1.1 The Relationship between the Media and the State (The Nature of State Intervention)**

The relationship between the media and the state is a very important aspect of one country's existence. Further, the interplay between this two is the basic part of the democratization process to achieve democracy. Therefore, in this study, the researcher tried to reconnoiter the relation between EBC (ETV) with the current ruling government regarding the political news reporting

of EBC (ETV). Especially the researcher tried to figure the major perceived challenges of the journalist in the area vis-a-vis this relationship in post 2018 period.

So, based on the in-depth interview question **‘How do you evaluate the Ethiopian government and your media organization relationship regarding in protecting the media and journalists from abuse by political officials or government unwarranted interventions in post 2018 ?’**

Based on the above arguments obtained from the respondents, the relationship between the state and media in the last four years (2018-2021) has both pros and cons. As many of the respondents for this research claimed, the year 2018/19 is a massive change both internally and externally for EBC (ETV). Regarding political news, reporting/journalists were free from self-censorship. Professional freedom also mutual respect between the media and the state is the character of that year based on the respondent's claims. Yet, this change was a very momentary not an ongoing phenomenon (in-depth interview with informants, 2021).

One of the sampled journalists in EBC (ETV) (**Respondent number 1**), for the in-depth interview questions, (who is a senior political news journalist who works for seven years) in the organization argued that, the relationship between the ruling government has two different faiths. In the year 2018, the organization (ETV) had internal changes and reforms. Also during the transitional period, the current ruling party (prosperity party) who comes to power well supported these internal changes of EBC (ETV) in that year. This internal change emanates from the media professional who was on the managerial staff of EBC. Therefore, in regarding this both internal and external reform in EBC the political news reports in the year 2018 were more balanced and neutral. Aside from that, the political news trend changes relative to the EPRDF era. For instance, the varieties of political news stories in the year 2018 were very massive, diversified, and based on the public or the mass interest. Correspondingly, the relation between the media and the government in that year was very harmonious and the replica of the democratic system interplay between the state and the media. However, this relationship was short-lived.

For the rest of the three years meaning from 2019 until 2021 current days, the harmonies and democratic relationship between the state and media changed. The cause for this was the reform

token by the ruling government in 2019 on EBC. The reform made media professionals who were the godfathers of the internal change in EBC to be changed by the politically affiliated member of the ruling party. In that case, the relation between the state and the media became resembling the old days. In other words, the instrumentalization of the media for government agendas and propaganda or one's political interest became the ongoing characters of the media organization. Finally yet importantly, censorship and self-censorship became the common trend of the media organization. In addition, the public interest in the political news stories put aside and more of state agendas, manifestos take the place instead. So in this the role of the media organization EBC regarding the relationship with the government deteriorating to propaganda tool rather than serving the public interest in relative to the year of 2018 (In-Depth Interview With Senior Political News Reporter In EBC).

Also, another respondent (**Respondent 7**, the vice CEO of Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation) argued by the following words regarding the relationship In-depth interview questions between the state and the media organization.

"Our media organization EBC (ETV) is the voice of the mass which serve the mass/public interest, and the relationship between the state and the media is what we call a supportive relationship in the past four years (from 2018-2021). The ruling government is supportive of our political news journalists to be more autonomous and to keep a neutral stance in our political news stories. The government appreciated us covering a variety of stories. Yet EBC is a public media that is under the supervision of the state/government. So that we work on the agendas of the ruling party and play a fourth state role by assisting the ruling party. Because many of the agendas we cover are very help full for the mass (Public). We believe we are playing agenda-setting role as a media and working for the public good" (In-depth interview with the vice CEO of Ethiopian broadcasting corporation).

Moreover, it is believed that EBC is an independent media organization, and the journalists are free from any unwanted government interventions. As well as the organization, that does not work in favor of any political parties including the ruling party. Therefore, the relationship between the ruling party and EBC (ETV) regarding political news stories is very independent,

balanced, and neutral interplay. Except the state intervene on the political news stories that put the countries national security and interest in danger, on very hostile issues, hate speech, very sensitive and conflictual issues that need responsibility and attention or intervene in state of emergency times only ( In-depth interview with the chief vice CEO of Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation)

Further (**Respondent 2**) of the in-depth interview questions who work on senior news editor in EBC (ETV)) claimed that, the relationship between the government and the media is a very trust full and independent relationship. In other words, the change/ the transition in 2018 offered high autonomy independence and a very open platform/space for political journalists to work on freedom and to exercise all their journalistic immunity. Moreover, the political journalists of EBC (ETV) exposed the fact neutrality for the public. In addition, the frames and angles of the political stories were very balanced. However, this relationship between the state and media changed and colder in the past three years, because of the unstable and unsettled political situations in the country. In the respondent's perspective, the good side is very high including the up and downs in the past four years. In addition, the relationship between the state and the media is promising and unique relative to the previous era and systems. The journalist exercised their freedom without any fear of self-censorship and government other political staff censorship especially in the year 2018. This was a unique experience for the media organization EBC (ETV) (In-Depth with Interview Senior News Editor in EBC).

as mentioned before after the management staff reform seized in EBC the relationship between the ruling party and EBC in the past couple of years especially starting from 2019, became and more characterized by direct intervention by government officials who came on the management areas of EBC. This puts the 2018 internal change on backtrack and the process to become a public media and to only serve the public interest can no longer go.

Yet, on the bright side, some of the respondents claim the spark of the change is still in the organization. The management staff also does not exercise full control and intervention on the political news reports of the journalist of the organization. But the unstable situation of the country by its self in the past couple of years & self-censorship is more of the influences and characters that explain the relationship between the state (which is the ruling party) and the

media (EBC) ( In-depth-interviews with political new editors, reporters and media managers in EBC)

So based on the responses of the journalists, editors, and media managers, it is clear that the relationship between this two has both good and unfavorable trends or more like a two-faced trend as mention before the past four years (from 2018-2021).

#### **4.2.1.2 Autonomy and Freedom of Journalists**

The notion of journalistic autonomy is an idea that can be seen from different levels. Meaning journalism in an institution, as well as individual journalists in their workplace (the newsroom), should be free from unwarranted or unnecessary influence from other third parties, societal institutions, and actors. The term also highly linked with "independence" is frequently used as synonymous with autonomy (Örnebring and Karlson, 2019)

Therefore, with the above in mind, the researcher of this study also tried to investigate **“the freedom of political news reporters/ journalists and their level of autonomy in the past four years in the political news reporting process of EBC (ETV)”**. Here is the response of the political news journalists based on the in-depth question that were asked by the researcher face to face.

**Respondent 3**, (who is a political news journalist who works for 5 years in the political news reporter team permanently) discussed that EBC is a state media that work for the public. In addition, it is a fact that EBC (ETV) is a medium that controlled by the government since its creation as a medium in Ethiopia. The organizational culture by itself favors the ruling party's agendas. Also by default the EBC most of the time works for the government. So expecting full journalistic autonomy or independence of political journalists on their news stories is a bit difficult. Also in the past four years (**Respondent 3**) explained that the political new reporters/journalist mainly worked on the agendas of the ruling party and the management staff (who are party members of the ruling party) gives order and implement tacit rules. In addition, implicit policies on the journalist to mainly working on state agendas with the consideration of the public interest regarding political issues and events. In this regard, the journalist's possession of autonomy and freedom is highly attacked by such organizations and external actors. In addition, (**Respondent 3**) claimed that the freedom of journalists on political news is still in

question. Besides the past four years' experience, only the year of 2018 is a promising year for the journalists to experience such freedom and autonomy without any interference in their political news reporting. Also as a political journalist to play a watchdog role for the public good is almost seems impossible in state-owned media like EBC (ETV) (In-depth Interview political news reporter in EBC).

Also by supporting Respondent Number 3's viewpoint (**Respondent 1**, senior political news reporter) claimed that

"I believe I am free and autonomous as a political news journalist personally. However, from the year 2019, after the reform token on the managerial staff of EBC. If the political news stories are not in favor of or unfavorable for the ruling party's interest, will be dropped. For instance, in my experience two of my political news stories which were focused on opposing political parties dropped by the editorial" (In-depth interview with senior political news reporter journalist in EBC).

**Respondent 4**, (editor of news and other news programs in EBC), argued that EBC didn't play a watchdog role adequately in the past four years because the journalist's autonomy and freedom were birched by the reform on 2019 token by the ruling government. The management staffs are not media professionals most of them are politicians. Moreover, they are politically oriented officials to execute the party agenda. Therefore, that makes it difficult for journalists to exercise autonomy and freedom. In addition, journalists by them self's are not willing to take the risk and they self-censor themselves. So Respondent 4 claimed, the question of autonomy and independence of political new reporters is still in the big question mark in the case of EBC in the past four years (In-depth interview with the editor of news and other news programs in EBC)

Also on the other side, the management staff of EBC (**Respondent 7**, Vice CEO of EBC) argued that regarding journalist's autonomy and freedom, the political news reporters/political journalists are free and autonomous particularly in the past four years (from 2018-2021). The transition period in 2018 is a resurrection period for EBC. The respondent also claimed in relative to the experiences of EBC (ETV) the post-2018 era is the most autonomous and freedom full era for the political journalists in EBC to play a watchdog role as political news journalists.

Besides the unstable arena of the country's political system by itself is a challenge to exercises freedom and autonomy as a political journalist.

**Respondent 7**, also said there are still problems regarding journalist's autonomy on both organizational and national levels. Besides, the current unsettled political unsettled situations affected the change. Yet, the past four years' the trend of political news reporting of EBC mostly characterized by autonomy and freedom regarding the mentioned problems. Respondent 7, also believes that EBC is part of the democratization and change process that the country is currently in, so that, some of the problems mentioned by the journalists will expected to get solutions soon.

#### **4.2.1.3 Professionalization and skills of Journalists**

Another major issue that the researcher put analyses is the political news journalist's professionalism. It often stressed that media are crucial vehicles for citizens' demand for accountability from state and private actors. However, the media must be held accountable if they are to play their role as a watchdog of authorities and other powerful stakeholders, and self-regulation is a function that lies at the very center of this. Nurturing the media's responsibility towards the public and enhancing the quality of the media through voluntary mechanisms that media professionals (journalists, editors, and managers) should follow (UNESCO, 2011:11).

The researcher received two different points of view regarding the professionalism and skills of political new journalists. As mentioned above most of the respondents claim that the management staff of EBC is weak in giving training and guideline about political new reporting or political journalism. Besides, at the same time, the media managers are not professional based on the in-depth interview used in this survey (In-depth interview with the informants, 2021)

Yet, on the other hand, the media managers claim professionalism and skills of political news reporters is not that much frequent problem organizationally. It is problems of some individuals that can be solved by on job training and practice. In addition, it claims that most of the journalists are not willing and interest to take part in political news reports because of their skill level. However, one thing we should notice here is both the journalist and the managerial staff of EBC agreed on thing professionalism and skill are still one of the major problems of EBC (ETV) regarding political news reporting (In-depth interview with informants,2021)

See here the in-depth interview response regarding the questions asked about “**Professionalism and skills of political news reporters'/ journalists**”.

**Respondent 1**(senior political news reporter/ journalist in EBC who work for seven years in EBC) said that

"I believe I am professional and put all my efforts to produce neutral and balance political news stories. For instance, when I work on one political news story I just do not use or refer only to political individuals or organizations. I use also political analysts /academicians and the public point of view to balance my reports most of the time. However, our organization EBC does not that much give help in providing on job training and guidelines that how political news should be reported. Also because of lack of skill and interest most organization journalists are not, willing on political news reporting is tasks. So these personal and organizational challenges are the barriers to journalist professionalism and skill" (In-depth Interview with senior political news journalist in EBC).

In support of the above Respondent 1 argument, **Respondent 3**(Senior Political news Editor in EBC) claimed that

"Professionalism is the biggest problem in the trend of political news reporting. Most of the journalists, editors and management staff should not that much understand their role. Their first target must be the public interest on the news reports not the agendas of the ruling political party only. Especially the media managers must know their responsibility, even if not all of them but most of them are cadres of the ruling party who work only to execute the party agenda only. Even you can see their photos of candidacy on the roads, for the current 2021 election, and at the same time, they are media managers of EBC. So the number of neutral media professionals in the management area of EBC is all most none. This is a paradox and inappropriate trend for an organization to stand as the mainstream media for the public on the front. In this sense professionalism is one of the biggest challenges still these days" (in-depth interview with Senior Political news Editor in EBC).

Moreover, for the above claims and regarding journalist professionalism and skill fullness in reporting political issues the management staff of EBC gives the following response; At first hand, the organization journalists are not that willing and interested to work on political news reports. In addition, the organization does not pressure any journalist to work in that area without their consent. Besides, regarding their skill, the organization provide training and abroad learning chance scholarship for journalists to develop their skill and professionalism in the field of political news reporting. Also regarding the managerial staff even if most of them are party members assigned by the ruling government they keep their neutral stance regarding political news reports and even support and motivate the journalist to cover a variety of topics including the opposition parties and other necessary political entities activates. Additionally, the management staffs of EBC believe that regarding professionalism, it is not an organizational challenge or factor. They believe it is more of a personal factor that comes from some individuals (journalists, editors, media managers) who have gabs on their skill and discipline (In-depth interview with Vice CEO of EBC).

#### **4.2.1.4 The Media Laws/Editorial Policies and Freedom of Access to Information**

Ethiopia has media laws and policies that serve both media practitioners and the public interest. In addition, the most important thing that should be noticed here is such active media laws and editorial policies of media are very important for the democratization process and nation building. However, the enforcement of these laws is still the biggest question. Especially in the case of the media Freedom to access information is still the biggest challenge, even if Article 29 of the Ethiopian constitution puts everyone has the right to freedom of expression and access to information without any interference..." (Bekele, 2018:37).

Especially in the past three decades under the former rule of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) crippled the ability of the media to function as an independent watchdog institution by different harsh regulatory, administrative, and political measures (IMS, 2018).

Yet, in this study, the researcher investigated the post 2018 trend regarding political news reporters in EBC's freedom to access any information. Based on the face-to-face in-depth interview question, **'How do you evaluate the editorial policy of your media organization**

**regarding political news reporting?’ In giving leeway, respecting journalistic professionalism and state intervention perspectives’** here are the responses of the respondents

According to **Respondent 6** (senior news editor and administrator in Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation), both media laws of the country and including EBC (ETV) editorial policy give the journalists full freedom and access to information without any interference. However, when we see situation regarding the trend of political journalism in EBC in the past four years, access to information is one of the basic external challenges that need quick solution political news reporters does not have full freedom in case of access to information for political news productions.

**Respondent 6**, also said access to information for government documents or from government/state officials is a difficult job in reporting political news of EBC. Most politicians that are from both state and political parties are not willing to give Information. In this sense according to the respondent access to information is the most prominent and unsolved problem in the political journalism trend of EBC as a whole.

In addition, **Respondent 5** (Political News Reporter in EBC) argued the following words regarding the media laws and access to information

"In the case of political news reporting, one of the major challenges we faced as a journalist who works in the area is access to information and documents that are relevant for our political news reporting. Many state officials, government officials are not willing to give us information. Some of them are even abusive toward us if the news we produce or the questions we ask are not in favor of them or their organization. Also on the other side, there are trust issues with some of them too. For instance, most of the opposing parties do not believe EBC's (ETV) neutrality in its reporting on political news issues regarding that most of them are not willing to give information to us. The past four-year's trend is also the same except in the year of 2018/19 the attitude of all the political parties and the whole public about us was good and their willingness to give information for the organization was good and we worked on a variety of political news stories from different angles and frames. Congruently in that year, the flow of information's regarding political issues/new stories was outstanding. However, the unsettled and unstable political

situations and the polarized interest of different political actors in the past three years changed whole things. Many political actors have seen EBC (ETV) as the mouthpiece of the ruling (PP)"(In-depth interview with political news reporter in EBC).

Also, **Respondent 1** (Senior Political News Editor in EBC (ETV)), added the media laws and the editorial policies of EBC are just paper tigers. They do not protect the journalist's freedom to access information without any interference. The enforcement of such media laws and regulations is not that much on the ground. The respondent said the current government and EBC management staff is better if they evaluate the enforcement of these laws and policies because it is one of the constraints for political news journalist to possess their journalist immunities, freedom and quality information for the public(Senior Political News Editor in EBC).

#### **4.2.1.5 Polarization and Equal Coverage on Political issues**

So, based on the one of the major in-depth interview question “**what are the major areas of political news topic or issues that covered by EBC (ETV) in the past four years? And do you think your media organization is giving equal coverage opportunity in covering for all political entities regardless of government’s position?”**

Regarding polarized ideas and equal coverage the degree or angles of explanations, the respondents differ on the equal coverage of political news stories of EBC but it is still/a major challenge for the journalists in the area in achieving and utilization of the public/ mass interest. Some of the believe political news reports of ETV (EBC) is biased and one sides and they do not believe they have independence and ability for decision making power on polarized political issues to filter the facts. On the other side as some informants claim as a state-owned media it mandatory and expected to report state guided and oriented issues for the public (In-depth interview with the informants,2017)

**Respondent 1**, (senior political news reporter, who is working for more than 7 years in EBC) claimed that most of the issues covered are one-sided. Meaning most of the political news stories, especially in the past four years (from 2018-2021) the major source of coverage came from the government and government organizations frequently. This affects the balance of political news stories in EBC (ETV). As mentioned, the unsettled and unstable political system

of the country gets in, the last three years and different and polarized political ideas that come with this situation make it difficult for political news reports to come up with balanced ideas.

Furthermore, **Respondent 1**, also argued that the three years (2019-2021) reforms taken in the management staffs of EBC(ETV) makes the political news reports one-sided and only agendas of the ruling party (In-depth interview with senior political news reporter in EBC)

Another respondent of the survey who works on political news reporting area claimed, the coverage of political issues are not that much adequate in covering all areas of the country's politics and activities of political actors ( for instance opposing political parties). The reason for that is the management staff or the editorial staff of EBC more focused on agenda setting works for the ruling government. Yet in the four years especially in the year of 2018 equal coverage for all political entities was there but it was short-lived and only lasted for one year. For the rest of the three years, the management personnel assigned by the government starting from 2019 are more focused on governmental activities. This put the public interest in second place regarding the political issue. The frames/angles of the political stories delivered by EBC (ETV) were not that much balanced and one-sided since then. So equal coverage for different and political ideas is still a major problem. In addition, a major factor regarding political news reporting of EBC (ETV) journalists (In-depth interview with senior and junior political news reporters of EBC).

On the flipped side of the coin, **Respondent 7** (the vice CEO EBC) claimed that

"Regarding our equal coverage in case of political news reports, we are doing a good job in my opinion since the 2018 transition. We covered a variety of political news stories from different parts of the countryside by side with the government agendas. However, the complicated political arena of the country's politics makes it complicated. Especially starting from 2019 the hostile situations, the identity-related conflicts from different parts of the country affected the production of political news stories, and the follow-up political news stories were small in number. Nevertheless, in relative to other media organizations we are the front-runners by giving equal and balanced coverage for all political issues and entities based on the interest of the public/the mass. Also, I believe, even if sometimes unbalanced and unequal coverage of political news stories happened in our organization it was only by our inadequacy. Most of the time the unwillingness of the

political actors or political entities unwillingness to give information to our media organization. Our media organization is twenty-four seven open for any political ideas that come from any political actors that emanate concerning the public interest. Except for hate speech, defamation and hostile stories that put the countries national interest and security in threat or danger" (In-depth interview with the Vice CEO of Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation).

In addition, **Respondent 7** suggested that such claims on equal coverage of EBC on political news stories are possible and will be appreciated. Because respondent 8 believes that current civil unrest and unstable political issues of the countries will be settled and resolved, then the number of polarized ideas also deteriorate and will be vanished in time. Likewise, the polarization of ideas and even instability and conflicts are part of the democratization process in one country's path to the democratic system (In-depth interview with the Vice CEO of Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation).

So based on the degree or angles of explanations the above respondents differ on the equal coverage of political news stories of EBC but it is still/a major challenge for the journalists in the area in achieving and utilization of the public/ mass interest .

#### **4.2.1.6 Major Sources of Political News Reporting Of EBC(ETV)**

Here is the response from a face-to-face interview with the sampled respondents, regarding the major in-depth interview question, **‘What are the major sources of political news stories in your organization in the past Four years?’**

Most of them claim that most of the time the source of political news stories received from documents, interviews conducted with government officials, and the public as a source for the political new reporting that it delivers. Further online sites are the source of news in case of political issues. So in comparison to other sources of news such as political parties and individuals prominent political actors and organizations, the government sources are dominant (In-depth interview with political news reporters).

**Respondent 1** (senior political news reporter in EBC (ETV) argued that

"EBC (ETV) is national media. In this regard, most of the political news stories come from government officials and legal documents or political events (such as elections). In addition, it expected that to take state (government) as the major source of news in state owned media like EBC. However to considering other sources such as different political parity and organizations to make a variety of stories and to utilize the public thirst for information about the country's political daily political situation. In the past four years political news stories trend regarding the sources, only the year of 2018 was that EBC used a variety and different sources without any interference and intervention. Yet after the year 2019, most of the sources come from the government (the ruling party). Which make us to be criticized by the audience; our political news stories are one-sided and unbalanced as well the mouthpieces of the ruling party"

Moreover, **Respondent 3** (political news reporter/ journalist who work for 5 years in the political news reporter team permanently) argued that,

"Most of the time the blame goes to the government. However, the organization journalist including me is not that effort-full to use a variety of sources. In addition, this problem is more of an internal problem for the organization than an external problem. Individuals who are both in the managerial level and regular media practitioners or expert level does not know their responsibility self-censorship is one of the biggest problem here. Some of them think working for state media is just serving the ruling government interests only. This is a media culture in most state-owned media like our organization EBC. We need to put the mass/public interest at first place because one of the criteria of Bing a journalist is serving the public and working for the greater good of the mass"(political news reporter who work for 5 years in the political news reporter team permanently)

Moreover, **Respondent 7** (Vice CEO of Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation), argued that the organization is in full effort in using a variety of sources and in giving equal coverage for all political issues, events, and entities. To achieve balance and neutral reports inadequate level regarding both organizational and external challenges /Factors that the organization faces and being through in the past couple of years (In-depth interview with Vice CEO of Ethiopian Broadcasting corporations).

So regarding the above finding, the major sources of political news stories EBC(ETV) in the past four years (2018-2021) the major sources of information for political news reporting's is the government/ state entities most dominantly. This put the balance and the frames/ angels of political news reporting trend of EBC in question and one-sided until this day based on the journalist's perception.

#### **4.2.1.7 The Impact of the New Media (Internet) On Political News Reporting**

The new age, which is the 21st century, is well known for its digital and electronic advancement, because of high technology tools that diffuse easily all over the world. One of the major technological progressions is the internet or the new media. This new media plat-form changed the media industry totally and has a great impact on broadcasting Media such as EBC. It has both negative impact and positive impacts on the media industry. However, in this paper, the researcher only looks into the impact of the internet (new media) on political news reports of EBC journalists. In this sense, the researcher tried to overlook the journalist's perception through the in-depth interview provide and collect during the research survey.

According to the informants, since there is a lot of fake news and misinformation the press can have trouble maintaining their credibility with their audiences. This can lead to negative relationships between the press and the public, so the EBC (ETV) trying to fix this is a way social media is forced to align with journalism and news distribution. In addition, they believe tackling this challenge is very important on sensitive issues like political news (in-depth interview with informants,2021).

On the political news reporting one of the respondents **Respondent 6**, (senior news editor and administrator in Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation) claimed that. The spread of the internet especially social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube highly affected the political news reporting process of their organization. One of the major challenges to political reporting is the vast news stories posted on social media walls. Aside that fake news and misinformation is a common phenomenon on this fat flow of information. Therefore, it makes the job of political news reporters difficult to clarify and address the facts by using the new media as a source of news.

In supporting Respondent 6 idea, another informant of this survey **Respondent 4** (Senior News Editor) claimed the following by his/her words

"A fundamental challenge of the new media (internet) is very advantageous for our fast communication and dissemination of political news stories in; however, the fake news and hoax stories and hate speech are at a high level nowadays on the new media platform. Especially in Ethiopia, the current ethnic-related conflicts and unstable political situations increase the trend on many social media. Highly polarized angles stories by politicians, activists, and individuals are the biggest problem and disadvantage of the new media. In addition, that miss- and disinformation typically looks the same as real news in your feed. As a result, at first glance, it can be very hard for journalists and non-journalists alike, to discern fact from fiction. So the negative impact of social media (new media platforms) is one of the challenges that affect the works of political news journalists in EBC" (In-depth interview with senior news editor in EBC (ETV)).

So in this regard, that **Respondent 4** suggested that, political news Journalists and anyone using social networks needs to be cognizant about the potential repercussions of what they say online. These spaces are not safe from onlookers, and actions taken in these spaces are not without consequence. Especially journalists who work on the areas that are sensitive like politics must responsible and careful when they use the new media (social media) as sources of news and for their news dissemination purpose.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The overall findings of this study show that challenges reporting political news emanates from personal, organizational and external factors in EBC (ETV). The findings of the study indicate that challenges of political news reporting emanates from Journalists lack of experience, skilled manpower, lack of sufficient training and limited sources to conduct political news reports that cover land grabbing and serious political issues. Also the nature of state intervention and the interplay between the state and the media organization in post 2018 era in EBC(ETV) characterized by interference of media managers that are appointed by the state. According to the findings internal (Personal & organizational) and external challenges such as self –censorship, lack of organizational team, lack of professionalism, insufficient interest and lack of training and skill in producing political news reporting in editors, reporters aide with unwarranted interference which challenges the journalists autonomy and freedom to access information’s for their political news reporting production process.

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

The main objective of this research paper was to analyze the challenges of political news reporting in Ethiopia in post 2018 era from EBC (ETV) journalist perception who work on the area of political journalism. To answer the major questions and to meet the objectives of the study, descriptive survey method of data collection, through quantitative and qualitative approaches employed. Since descriptive survey approach used to analyze the existing situation in EBC (ETV) journalist’s political news trend and challenges, Questionnaires’ and in-depth interview was applied to dig out detailed and reliable data about the topic. The researcher has selected informants and interviewees purposefully based on (a). Their background knowledge & experience they have (b). Their proximity to the subject matter (c). Work and position in the organization EBC (ETV). Accordingly, the researcher analyzed the journalists or the media practitioners’ perception concerning the challenges and barriers they face throughout their

practice and production of political news reports. In addition, some theoretical foundations regarding political journalism and news reporting were raised.

This study looks at the concept of political news reporting as the most prominent domains of journalism and is essential for the functioning of democracy. Ideally, political journalism should function, as an information provider, watchdog, and forum for political discussions, thereby helping citizens understand political matters and help prevent abuses of power. In addition, the literature review of the study indicates that, political news coverage/reporting required to be comprehensive, accurate and fair to all and that provide information gathered impartially as possible. Because such type of reporting has a direct impact with a higher consequence on one country's/public well-being. In other words, the journalists/practitioners are expected to avoid all actions that could compromise their integrity or issue of judgment or the reputation of their organization and autonomy. Based on this foundations and distinction of political news reporting /political journalism the researcher tried to bear the limitations and perceived challenges of reporting political news in EBC (ETV) by focusing on journalists' perception.

Based on the study findings the researcher comes up with following conclusion:

- The challenges of political news reporting in EBC(ETV) emanates from Journalists lack of experience, skilled manpower, lack of sufficient training and limited sources to conduct political news reports that cover land grabbing and serious political issues Based the Perception of the informants and interviewees of this study . Which personal and internal challenge through the trend of political news reporting of EBC (ETV) in post 2018 era.
- Second, challenges of reporting political news's emanate from the delay by politicians, state/officials and other political entities in volunteering information or confirming information available to the political news reporters. Which is barrier for the journalist to exercise journalistic autonomy and immunities. Moreover, a barrier for political news journalists to exercise their freedom of access to information (FOIA) without unwarranted delay and unwarranted interferences that indicated on the literature review of this study.
- Third, based on the perception of the informants in this study, that journalist have practiced self-censorship and censorship form the especially in the last three years (2019-

2021) in EBC (ETV), so this put the political news journalists in EBC (ETV) professionalization in question. Aside with that such censorship and self-censorship affected the balance of the political news reporting's and the neutrality of the journalist in conducting political issues.

- Throughout this study, the researcher found out most of the political news sources and coverage's are governmental or state orientated issues in case of EBC (ETV) relatively. Which the puts the public interest in the second palace based on the survey. Which put the frame and angles of the political news stories limited. Also according to framing theory variety of sources are important. Because frame building refers to the development of frames and their inclusion in news stories. From this theoretical foundation stance, EBC should work on variety of political news reporting with variety of sources to play the role of agenda setting and gatekeeping role for the public, as state medium who work for the mass/public sources based on the perception of the informants in this survey.
- Furthermore, that the relationship between media (journalist) who cover the political arena and the politician characterized by censorship and mutual suspicion. By mutual suspicion most of the opposition political parties does not have trust on the state owned media like EBC (ETV), they believe that the organization (EBC) is the mouthpiece and the gatekeeper of the current ruling party. Correspondingly, Most of the opposition parties are not willing to give information's for the political news reporters or political news journalists. Which is an external challenge for the political news reporters until these days. In related to this, most of the political news reporting are onside, even if there are changes and relatively better in comparison of the previous political systems.

Also as mentioned on review literature one of the conceptual and theoretical foundation of this study 'political communication' the relation between the media and political actors should be check and balanced. In order to illuminate democratization process as a country and enlighten the public about what is going on the political arena. From this perspective, EBC (ETV) still needs to supervise and work on its relationship and truest with the government and other political actors' thirds parties to ease the political new journalists job in delivering quality political news as an organization.

- Another major challenge mentioned by the journalist and management staffs of EBC (ETV) in this study is the instabilities and the hostile situations that, the country been

through in the past three years and the massive ethnic and religious based polarized ideas in the political arena. Which makes it difficult to give coverage for the political issues that are active in the political arena of the country. This situation cause unbalanced and unequal coverage reporting of political news stories in case of EBC (ETV). And based on the 'gatekeeping' one of the theoretical foundation of this study, such polarized ethnic and religious issues aside with the impact on the new media ( such as Facebook and tweeter) makes people it difficult for political news journalists to satisfy and cover all minority political opinions and filter the facts in case of EBC (ETV) reporting political news .

## 5.2 Recommendations

The main objective of the research was to examine the perceived challenges reporting political news in post 2018 period by focusing of EBC (ETV) journalist's .

So, based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations made. To tackle the challenges in the political news reporting by the researcher;

- The ruling government and the management staff members of EBC should insist for the enforcement of the laws and the media polices regarding the journalists right to access to information on their right to information.
- Journalists should work in collaboration with relevance agencies of government ensure the removal of all impediments to egalitarianism and professionalism with a view to according nobility to journalism.
- The political class should be enlightened on the need to grant journalist access to information and to respect their rights to freedom and human dignity.
- The opposing political parties and other political entities must change their attitude toward media organization like (EBC) under the government/state ownership.
- In related to recommendation number (4) Media proprietors, editors and reporters are encouraged to broaden their views on sensitive national issues other than the ruling party activities. Moreover, must develop their skills on how to report polarized political incidents, ideas and issues.
- Political news reporters should stop self-censorship and should not open censorship from any unwarranted intervening body including the government, by being autonomous. Rather it better the give first hand for the mass/public interest and in utilizing all political issues that are relevant for democratization process. Because one of the criteria of good/ Nobel journalism is serving the interest of the mass/public and working for the well-being and development of the country.
- Last but not list, on job training is very essential to develop capacity of journalist, editors and the media mangers who assigned to do political reporting. Because it help them to be professionals and neutral journalist/ Media practitioners and help them to produce balance political stories.

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**INTERVIWES**

4. Respondent 1.Senior Political News reporter In Ethiopian Broadcasting corporation
5. Respondent 2.Political News Reporter in Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
6. Respondent 3.Editor of News and other News programs in Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
7. Respondent 4. Senior News Editor
8. Respondent 5. Political News Reporter in Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
9. Respondent 6. Senior News Editor And Administrator In Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
10. Respondent 7. Vice CEO of Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

#### **Questionnaire Designed for journalists/reporters who are active in political news reporting from 2018-2021.**

Dear respondents,

The purpose of this survey is just for an academic purpose, MA thesis writing for the fulfillment of the Master of Arts degree in the school of Journalism and communication, Addis Ababa University. In regarding for the data analysis and presentation for the topic entitled “**The trend and challenges of political news reporting in Ethiopia (from 2018-2021): Focusing on the perception of Ethiopia Broadcasting Corporation (ETV) Journalists perception**”. This is a survey among journalists involved in political news reporters/ editors/executive producers at Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporate. It will approximately take 15 minutes to complete the survey. All of your answers are private and confidential.

I rely on your voluntary co-operation in carrying out such surveys and so I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part in this survey.

Thank you in advance for participating in the research

#### **PART 1: Profile**

1. Sex: Male   
Female
2. Level of education  
A. MA and above      B. BA/BSc      C. Diploma      D. Certificate  
E. Secondary school      F. Primary school  
G. Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. Field of specialization \_\_\_\_\_
4. Age group  
A. 60 and above      B. 50-59      C. 40-49      D. 30-39      E. 20-29
5. Years of experience in present position  
A. 10 and above      B. 5-9 years      C. 2-4 years      D. 1 year and below

What is your position in the organization? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Your assignment

- Generalist reporter
- specialized reporter Political News reporter
- You do both, generalist and specialist

**PART 2: What is your stance on the following questions?**

**1. Professional Support**

1.1 How often you get trainings and professional support in regarding political news reporting from your organization EBC (ETV)?

- A. Often
- B. Sometimes
- C. Rarely
- D. Never

1.2 How are journalists assigned? For Political news reporting?

- A. It is based on reporters/journalists own plan
- B. Based on Editorial will/meeting
- C. Based on experience
- D. By political and personal affiliation
- E. E. by other means ...

If Answer by other means or choice (E) for the above question

Mention or explain it in the space below

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## **2. Regarding Neutrality and Autonomy**

2.1 Do you believe you are neutral and free to keep your professionalism, when you report political news stories?

Yes  No

2.2 Have you or your colleagues ever been ordered by political/state officials or other entities to write a news story in a particular fashion?

Often  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

2.3 Did any state officials censored your political news stories or did self-censorship affect your work?

Often  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

2.4 Did the editors and the editorial staff of EBC gives freedom and support for its reporters/journalists in case of political news reporting in the past four years (2018-2021)?

Often  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

## **3. Regarding Freedom on Access to Information and Sources**

3.1 Does the Ethiopian Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) help you in political stories reporting.

Yes  No

3.2 Do you have freedom to access any information and documents in case of political news production in EBC (ETV)?

Yes  No

3.3. Do you have freedom to select sources and issues while you report political news?

Yes  No

3.4 Do you believe EBC (ETV) always or often use credible sources in its political news stories?

Often  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

3.5 Do you consider the Frames/Angles of political news stories of EBC (ETV) used in the past four years, help in exposing the truth for the public?

Often  Sometimes  Rarely  Never

3.6 Where do you go for facts you can trust for political news reporting?

Meeting  Speech  News release  News conference

Internet and Your Network sources  Documents as per the leeway to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

3.7 What are your major sources of political news stories?

Political Party

Government

Press secretary

Other

If your answer is **Other** for question Number 5 mention it on the followings space provided

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6. What are the major challenges you faced as a political news journalist?

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7. Do you believe that EBC ensures the autonomy of its journalists in case of political issue/news reporting?

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**PART 3: Please put this√symbol on the boxes to show your level of agreement to the extent to which each of the following factors affect your political news reporting/political journalism career**

**I. Personal Factors/challenges**

Questions	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neutral
I believe I am skillfull and professional while am reporting political issues					
I am producing truthful and balanced contents of news stories					
I prefer neutral stance in my reports and free from self-censorship					
I believe political news reports on ETV expose facts for the public/audience					
I believe myself as an agenda setter and watch dog for the public while I conduct political news stories/reports					

## II. Organizational challenges/factors

Questions	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neutral
(EBC) supports journalists in conducting political news stories					
EBC has strong tools or rules, regulations and editorial policy to manage bias					
EBC provide full security and protection for its journalists when there is an intervention					
EBC assigned full budget and security for political news reporting					

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### III. External factors/ challenges

Questions	Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Neutral
I have full access and freedom of information from government and politicians					
The current media laws and proclamations of the country are strong and enforceable and has positive impact on political news reporting					
The current government committed toward neutral and balance political news reports					
I have been ill-treated or offensively by politicians while reporting political news					
Government officials politicians and other political entities tried to induce me to change the frame of my political news stories					

## **APENDIX II**

### **In-depth interviews for Senior Political News journalists/Reporters, Editors and Media Mangers in EBC (ETV)**

1. What were the major challenges of political news reporting in Ethiopia in post 2018 transitional period?
2. How do you evaluate the editorial policy of your media organization regarding political news reporting? In giving leeway, respecting journalistic professionalism and state intervention perspectives
3. How do you evaluate the Ethiopian government and your media organization relationship regarding in protecting the media and journalists from abuse by political officials or government unwarranted interventions?
4. How do you evaluate the level of autonomy and freedom that political news journalists exercise in political news reporting process?
5. Do you think your media organization is serving as the mouthpiece of political officials or the political system as a whole during political news reporting? In regarding professionalism
6. Do you think the political news journalists/editors /media mangers of the media you are serving are politically affiliated gatekeepers or watchdogs for the development of the political system?
7. What are the major sources of political news stories in your organization in the past Four years?
8. What are the major areas of political news topic or issues that covered by EBC (ETV) in the past four years?
9. Do you think your media organization is giving equal coverage opportunity in covering for all political entities regardless of government's position in the past four years?
10. Have your political news reports been censored by political officials? Do you undertake self-censorship?

11. How do you assign journalists to political news reporting? Are they professionals and ethical?
12. Are the political journalists free to keep professional standards and select sources and issue?
13. What are the impacts of the new media (social media) regarding political news reporting?
14. What are the mechanism your organization used to prevent unwanted state intervention and to protect its media freedom regarding political news reports?
15. What should be done to strength and tackle challenges in political journalism/political news reporting as a whole?