

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**PRESS COVERAGE OF THE POST MAY 2005
ELECTION PROTESTS IN ETHIOPIA: MEDIA
OWNERSHIP IMPACT ON NEWS OBJECTIVITY**

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the current study was to analyze and examine whether the news coverage of the post May 2005 election protests in Ethiopia were objective or not in presentation. Particularly, this study aimed at assessing how media ownership affected the type of media content that the public received. Three newspapers from the Ethiopian print media were selected as sources of data. The newspapers were selected based on purposive sampling technique. Content analysis was the principal research method employed to analyze the news. To substantiate the findings from the content analysis interviews were administered with two willing editors: one from the private and one from the government media were conducted. One month and a week period were selected for news analysis. The first time frame extended to one-month period from June 8 - July7, 2005. This was the period starting from the first largest protest. The second time frame was a one-week period that extended from November 1 -November 7, 2005. This time frame was a one-week period starting from the second largest protest. To find out how objective the newspapers were, any existence of bias in the news was investigated. Lack of balance, fairness and neutrality were considered when investigating biasness in the news. Five coding categories were used to find out how balanced, fair and neutral the stories including story sources, story tone, story frame, story placement, and headline tone. Upon the completion of coding, the data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The findings of this study revealed that the selected newspapers were biased either in favor of or against actors. The findings of study revealed that the newspapers were not objective while covering the post May 2005 election protest. And this was highly attributed by the difference in the type of ownership.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and statement of the problem

The year 1991 can be considered as a bridge in the history of Ethiopia. It was a transitory period from the Derg regime, which followed a socialist type of political system, to somewhat democratic form of government introduced by the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front, (EPRDF).

Some changes surrounded the coming of EPRDF. Among which was the commitment of the then transitional government to accept the 1948 United Nation Declaration for the Respects of Human And Democratic Rights. Article 10(2) of the 1995 constitution is a witness to the commitment of the government ensuring the prioritization of human and democratic rights of peoples and citizens: “human and democratic rights of citizens and peoples shall be respected” (The House Of Peoples Representatives, 1995: 80).

Along with the respect of democratic rights, EPRDF officially acknowledged multiparty democracy whose preface demands the formation and legitimization of contending political parties (Merera, 2002). Thus, for the first time in the country’s history legal formation of political parties outside of the ruling party became operational.

Post 1991 elections

As noted earlier the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front took power as a form of transitional government. The transitional period was taken as a preparation time to conduct an election so as to bring an elected government. Consequently, the transitional government terminated on May 1995 when the first ever-general election was held

following the 1992 and 1994 local and regional elections. Under the umbrella for respecting people's democratic rights the election was taken as one step forward towards fulfilling government promises (Pausewang, Tronvll and Aalen, 2002). Despite this, according to some observers the election did not meet any international standard of democratic elections. (Tronvll and Aadland, 1995). EPRDF won the election as was expected in advance (Merera, 2002).

The second national election took place in May 2000. Unlike the previous election, where the main opposition parties boycotted, many of them took part in the 2000 election. In contrast to the 1995 election where media campaigning was almost totally absent, in the second general election there existed media campaign, though, with no equal distribution among parties (Pausewang, Tronvll and Aalen, 2002). The government was using particularly the electronic media to boost its agendas and to reach votes.

In spite of some progress, the 2000 election had some negative characteristics. According to some international observers the government was forcing voters to elect its candidate or else they will lose their property, for instance, their land (Pausewang, Tronvll and Aalen, 2002).

Above all, the strong financial and material bases of the ruling party were totally incomparable to the oppositions, which were weak in any kind (Pausewang, Tronvll and Aalen, 2002). As a result, the May 2000 election once again confirmed the continuity of EPRDF as a government for five more years winning the majority seat in the parliament except few, which the opposition did hold.

To conduct the third national election on May 2005 the preparation started earlier. One unique feature that created competitive election environment was the nascence of strong opposition parties like Coalition

for Unity and Democracy (CUD) and United Ethiopian Democratic Forces (UEDF) in to the political field (Carter center, 2005).

In addition to the efforts made by each individual parties and candidate to win the governing cup, the government had allotted free airtime and space in the different mass media for party as well as independent candidates. This in turn created opportunities for those that did not have their own outlets. The live televised debate sponsored by Inter Africa group, an NGO, which was the first in its kind was also believed to give flavor and also life to the contest (Carter center, 2005).

The Election Day was peaceful and calm in most parts of the country except in some rural areas where minor unrest occurred due to poor handling of the election process. Domestic as well as international observers were able to observe the election. Electorate turnout in polling stations was very high. According to the officials of the National Electoral Board Of Ethiopia (NEBE) among the 25.6 million registered voters more than 90 percent have cast their vote (Carter center, 2005).

As many witnessed the election can be noted as a success to Ethiopia in the efforts undertaken towards democracy. Unfortunately, however, the unrest erupted in the aftermath of the election shadowed all the positive images. It was even without the official announcement of the board that major contending parties namely, EPRDF and CUD, claimed their victory in their respective part. During the voting night the ruling party through Prime Minister Meles banned any demonstration that will last for a month. This was irrespective of the right to demonstrate granted in the constitution under article 30, which states, “every one has the right to assemble and to demonstrate together with other peaceable and to petition”(The House of Peoples Representatives, 1995:90).

The government's action as per the officials' justification was for security reason and to clamp down any unforeseen disturbances. Mean while, for the opposition and their supporters this was totally against constitutional rights and thus suppresses their voices. These all controversy exploded on June 8, 2005 as Addis Ababa University students began to protest against the government victory declaration. University students started protesting against the government, which they said the ruling party has manipulated and rigged the election results. This was much more similar to opposition leader's accusations of the government.

The tension that erupted inside the university compass did not take that long to spread to the rest part of the city as well as to other part of the country. During the first move of the students one person was killed and more than 500 arrested. The confrontation between the government police force and the protestors was thus exacerbated, as people were shot dead after the police force opened fire. As a reaction the protestors start to throw stones on the police and government properties and burn tires in the middle of roads A total of not less than 36 and not more than 42 people were killed during the weeks of the protest. This was in addition to the larger number of people who were arrested and imprisoned (BBC News, 2005). . Many of them were later released up on investigation.

As per the official results EPRDF secured the majority votes in the country except the capital, which they lost the entire seat. By contrast, the main opposition party (CUD) in addition to their victory all over Addis Ababa gained substantial seat in the parliament. UEDF on the other hand is also reported to gain some seats in the parliament. Despite this, opposition politician's complaint of earlier irregularities and threaten to reject the results unless re –elections is conducted in areas where they said the election was rigged. Later they did reject the results of the election and the investigation results as well. With the opening of the

new parliament only members of UEDF joined the parliament .The majority elected members of CUD boycotted it.

In late October and early November further violent clashes erupted between protestors and police forces leading to the deaths of people not less than the previous riot. This second largest protest came on the last week of October after CUD leaders made public calls for civil disobediences. They proposed different means to show oppositions to the government and it's supporters including home sit strike that will last for couple of days. Though the leaders of CUD said it was a peaceful means of struggle it curved to violence as supporters of CUD started to protest in the streets of Addis Ababa. To get the protest under control the police force opened fire on the people, which they indeed killed people counted not less then the previous one (BBC News, 2005). It caused damage in terms of human death and material destruction as supporters of the CUD got in confrontation with policemen (BBC News, 2005).

Shortly after the leading members of the CUD were arrested, including Engineer Hailu Shawle who was chairman, and Dr.Berhanu Nega, vice-chairman of the party. In addition, editors and publishers of some private newspapers were also imprisoned. Consequently, many private newspapers were shut down.

It is well understood that Media coverage of such kinds of events is critical. For many people there is a high and complex interconnectedness between protests and the mass media. Protestors heavily rely on the media to inform wide audiences of their issues, ideas and messages. And the media in turn gives coverage to such events, as they are news worthy (Wolfsifeld, 1997). In such times the media decide how to cover and present the news as public information. Researches conducted by Wolsifeld, 1997and Ballinger, 1994 found that a great tendency of the mass media to promote the interests of the powerful rather than divergent groups. This is because divergent groups are threats to the

dominant social as well as political paradigm (Ballinger, 1994). More over, the media become political actor, which promote certain political views of some groups and interest rather than being an informer, and independent channels (Oliver and Maney, 2000).

The base line of this research was to find out if such cases were at work in Ethiopia. This research attempted to determine if the mass media were objective and unbiased in reporting or whether they were promoting certain political interests. The analysis looked how news stories were framed (which aspect of the issues was more emphasized and which were omitted) and the overall tone of the news stories. Detecting newspapers biases through headline analysis was also applied in this research. This study also examined the source variance and domination in news stories on each newspaper as one strategy to identify bias.

The analysis of media presentation was dealt from ownership perspectives. Researches conducted in many countries revealed that the types of ownership, that is, whether it is public, private, or government affects the type of news the public receives. Since public ownership does not exist in Ethiopia the research was conducted from the private and government ownership perspective. This study applied Altshcull (1995) media ownership theory to test news stories objectivity regarding the post May 2005 election protest in Ethiopia.

1.2. Objective of the study

The main objective of this research was to analyze how objectively the post May 2005 election protest in Ethiopia was covered on some selected newspapers. By this the study tried to explore if news stories were biased in favor of or against certain political actors due to the difference in the type of media ownership. More specifically, as a strategy to achieve the general aim, this study tired to answer the following research question.

1.3 Research questions

In general this research intended to answer the following question:

1. What was the overall story tone in each newspaper?
2. What types of sources dominated in each newspaper?
3. Was there any significant difference regarding the types of sources used by the newspapers that might lead to biases news reporting?
4. What types of frames were used to present the news in each newspaper?
5. Which types of frames were dominantly used in each newspaper?
6. What types of headline tone were used across the different newspapers?
7. Were there differences in news placement that might have lead to biased content?

1. 4 Significance of the study

In Ethiopia, to the researcher knowledge studies regarding media in general and media bias in particular are almost absent. In countries like Ethiopia, which are considered to join the vein of democracy, conducting research on media bias has paramount importance to know the extent to which the media is serving its democratic functions. In democratic type of political system the media serves as a representative of the public and reflects what happened on the ground through balanced and neutral coverage (Raboy and Dagnais, 1995).

One-way to know how the media perform is through conducting researches on media content. Thus, the researcher found conducting this research significant. More specifically,

* This research helps to examine how ownership pattern affect the message the public receive,

*Besides, for those who are interested in media research this paper could be used as a reference material

1.5 Limitation of the study

One of the limitations of this research comes from the sample size. It cannot be denied that larger sample size is preferable. In Ethiopia there are more than 80 newspapers according to the 2005 report of the Ministry of Information. Despite this, in this study the researcher was not able to manage more than three newspapers. Generalizing all the print media based on the findings of this research is beyond the scope of this study, but this study was able to point out results that identified biased reporting based on the difference in media ownership on a small selected sample of newspapers.

Another limitation of this study was the category selected for content analysis. Photographs and cartoons were not included.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

This study was confined to one month and a week period after the May 2005 election. It was also limited to the study of media bias on news, which was related to the post May 2005 election protest.

1.7 Key words and abbreviations

Bias

Headline

News/story

News Frame

News Source

Objectivity

Protest

EPRDF- Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front

CUD -Coalition For Unity And Democracy

UEDF - United Ethiopian Democratic Forces

NEBE –National Electoral Board Of Ethiopia

1.8.organization of the study

This thesis has six chapters. The first chapter includes, background and statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, research questions, design of the study, limitation of the study, delimitation of the study, key words and abbreviations. Chapter two deals with the theoretical framework and literature review. In this chapter the theory in which this study based and also previous studied and written documents pertinent to this study are included. Chapter three deals with design of the study. This chapter includes population of the study, sample selection, key coding category and definition, and coding process. Chapter four presents the data in the form of tables. Chapter five deals with the analysis and discussion part. This chapter discusses the findings of this research and their implications and also other researcher's findings. The last chapter, chapter six, is the conclusion part.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter deals with the theoretical background of this research as well as related literatures that were written by different scholars in different countries and they are presented in headings and subheadings

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1.1 Media Ownership Theory

The basic theoretical foundation for this research is the one developed by a media scholar called Altshcull (1995). For Altshcull, "the content of the news media inevitably reflects the interest of those who pay the bills" (1995:52). Along the same line (Parenti, 1986) asserted that, the independence of the media to publish any material is as far as it does not contradict the interest of those who finance the media When the media is commercially owned the contents of the media reflect the interest of advertisers and consumers who are the major financers of most private press. By contrast, in what Altschull called the official pattern the content of the media in one-way or the other reflects that of the government (Altschull, 1995).

Altshcull was not the only one that discussed influence of media ownership on content. For instance, the political economic approach, which is very much molded by Marx's thought, gives a broader understanding of how the process of communication is shaped. This argument goes beyond economic limitation to include the influence of the political environment in which the media operates. Proponents of this approach contend that the news media is not an island that operates without any pressure from the surrounding political environment (Williams, 2003; McQuail, 2000).

McQuail (2000) supported Altschull's theory of media ownership and expand the concept, specifically, recognizing media institutions as big businesses that give priority to profit generation. In the words of McQuail, from the very nature of commercial enterprises, it is inevitable that they should aspire for profit. This, McQuail noted, is the way by which they can secure their livelihood. However, this is not without any cost. Rather, The contents of the media will be driven in a way to attract more readers and advertises who are the major financiers of most privately owned media (McQuail, 2000).

But this does not mean advertisers and the audience have direct involvement in daily activities of the media (McQuail, 2000). Rather, as Tunstall (cited in McQuail, 2000) noted, commercially owned media generate their income from direct sales and advertisements. This financial factor pressures the news media to reflect the views and interests of audiences. This in turn attracts more advertisers, because advertisers want to advertise on a news media, which have more readers. In short, as Graber (2002) put it "increase in audience size in just 1 percent can mean million dollars in additional advertising income"(p.16).

Those people who see press independence from government control perspective assumes commercially/privately owned media as independent. And call them independent media interchangeably with private and commercial. However, as Graber (2002) and many other communication scholars argue this is a mere assumption. Accordingly, Graber noted that no total independence exist in any where in the world. Media performance is influenced by external pressure including governments and advertisers. Nonetheless, when talking about government control there is a difference in the degree and nature of control depending up on the country the media operates. The difference lays mainly on the development of press freedom. Consequently, those countries where freedom of the press has developed through time, for instance the USA; government control is minimal (Altschull, 1995). By

contrast, in those countries where freedom of the press is dead or at its infant stage government intervention is high to the extent of limiting journalists' independent decision (Graber, 2002). Beside government control, Graber described that the pressure of advertisers and owners cannot be ignored. Graber substantiated this argument with existing cases in America where advertisers influence became highly pervasive limiting independent decision of news people (Graber, 2002).

But, not all communication theorists agree on the impact of ownership on media products (Kruger, 2004). Rather, some allot professional decision to journalists 'who are qualified' to do so. Critics on professional model draw attention to the vertical hierarchy that information has to pass through before it reaches the public (MaQuail, 2000). There are steps before the message is finalized. This wipes out any existence of personal opinion and reflection on final products. Besides, the working environment through time baptizes journalists. Thus, consciously or unconsciously journalists censor themselves to abide by the organization priority and goals (Parenti, 1986).

The personality factor posed the question of the extent to which media institutions take risks to retain their independence and perform professionally. As stated by Graber (2002) the press cannot ignore the money factor because it is the backbone for their existence. Like wise, Siegel (1996) gives due consideration to the economic factor to have great effect on media content: "the economic of the mass media is a key factor in how they are organized and the kind of messages they deliver" (p.32). But there are times where personal opinion is tolerated. Here is not a place to go deeper to the personality factor that might affect media contents. However, to mention some exception might help to understand where personality factor prevails more than that of organizational objectives. For example, Gibbs and Warhover (2002) distinguished some exceptions that personal reflection and opinion exist other than news: "although experienced journalists often include opinion in clearly

labeled news analysis, editorial or reviews, opinion has no place in the day –to- day news story” (p.48).

Siegel (1996) from his experience from Canadian media outlined and discussed money as a determinant factor in media performance. Accordingly, money has the power to define and shape the role of media as well as their content. Consequently, the content of the media echo ideas and interests of advertisers and audiences, who are the source of the money. Nonetheless, he noted, when government owns and runs the press, the final product ultimately shows government priority and agenda. This is because government finances government media in the form of subsidy (Siegel, 1996).

All information that news reporters collect or receive does not get published. It will be filtered to include some and omit others with reference to the interests of owners. Owners also involve in hiring and firing to select journalist that comply with their wishes (McQuail, 2000). Furthermore as Graber (2002) pointed out, to ensure news stories to go in harmony with the prevailing political environment/system, “people and events outside the dominant system or remote from the center of power are generally ignored” (p.24).

In a market based economy media should compete in order to survive and make profit. Thus, to make more money and stay in the market the activities of media, mainly that of commercial, needs to promote the interest of the source of its income (Gans, 2004). Okigbo (1994) stated the economic factor as a main reason for many African media to run out of the market as, “the African terrain has very many cases of newspapers and magazines that did not show adequate respect for economic principles and thus had to die prematurely”(p.288).

Concluding the influence of owners on media activities William’s statement is a good summery to include: "Owners could directly intervene to insure their views prevailed and media practitioners,

regardless of direct intervention, are constrained in what they can report or represent by the economic parameters laid by capitalist production" (Williams, 2003:71).

2.1.2 Framing Theory

The media is increasingly becoming a political battlefield where political conflicts take place not through guns but with words and ideas. That is why press coverage of political issues has received more attention from political communication theorists, media scholars, media practitioners and the public as well (Wolfsfeld, 1997).

Every day the newsroom is flooded with large amount information. In spite of this, quiet few get published as news. Parallel to this, the public is not exposed to every fragment of information (Neuman, Just and Crigler, 1992). Keeping in mind the fact that all information cannot be news, another factor is the selection process that information have to pass through to ensure only wanted materials come out as news stories. This makes selection inevitable in the day-to-day practice of journalists.

The literatures on news framing suggest different understandings and definitions of framing. One of the prominent writer on news framing, Giltine, as quoted by Wolfsfeld (1997:32) Wrote "media frames are persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation and presentation of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual". Framing accounts to how news people process information so as to present it as news. In this process journalists give emphasis to some parts of an event while down playing others. Framing assumes social reality as construction of individual reporters by which they give meanings to events. In short, news framing is all about construction of stories so as to represent the reality. Reality as McQuail understood consists of facts and events out there, which exist independently of how news workers think of them and

treat them in the news production process (2000:279). The same understanding is at work in this study.

Framing assists media workers to present stories as a truthful reflection of the reality. Mean while, for Neuman, Just and Cigler (1992) "frames are conceptual tools which media and individuals rely to convey, interpret, and evaluate information" (60). They described frames as hooks that help the media and the public to get hold of the political world (Neuman, Just and Cigler, 1992).

Researches evidenced selection patterns of media attention. Selection pattern is manifested through interpretation and construction of meanings. The same story written on two different newspapers will not have identical presentation. Stories are presented differently. According to Gibbs and Warhover (2002), this is not with out any reason but due to the difference in the angle or frames that different newspaper use.

From psychological perspective news framing has been correlated with journalists perception of events and issues, giving news selection a humanly element. This makes news a highly selective process that demands journalistic efforts to make a story that gives meaning. Entman (1993) offer perhaps the most widely cited definition of framing. According to the author to frame means "to select 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 treatment for the item described"(Entman, 1993:52).

Framing is a crucial as well as determinant factor to shape the kinds of news the public receive. Siegle (1996) forwarded that the media exert influence on the public by ways of presenting certain types of news while omitting others (p.22). Media frames give journalists an interpretative role. The frame selected ultimately implies how the news people construct a story. This in turn shows that the type of frame used has

tremendous impact on how the readers grasp the idea of the story of an event.

According to Wolfsfeld (1997:5) the news media are central agents in the construction of social frames about politics. This is done by ways of giving due emphasis on certain features of an issue while downplaying the other side. This shows the media act as political agenda setters for the public (Wolfsfeld, 1997).

News selection is made with regard to what information to include and exclude, what kind of tone a story should have and how actors in an event are described (Gibbs and Warhover, 2002). Besides, the selection of words that build up the news has great impact in the construction of meanings. For instance, using descriptive words give different sense of the news to the one “adverbial” and “adjective words” are used (Gibbs and Warhover, 2002:60) .The later is loaded with pre- determined judgment. Many people believe that framing can be one means of news bias since it is related with selection. This is based on the assumption that selections presuppose choice and preference. In addition, the process of presentation, selection of actors, tone and words could lead to bias since interest consideration might be involved.

For Gibbs and Warhover (2002) there is no as such what are known as bad or good frames. Instead, what should be considered in selecting a frame is whether that frame is appropriate to tell the story at hand. In the views of Wolfsfeld (1997) also no correct frame exists, but there are always alternative frames that journalists may choose to construct reality. In many cases journalists use already established frames that fits into the current situation. For example, ‘terrorism’ these days is one predominant frame in many westerns media to cover stories describing innocent victims of brutal violence (Wolfsfeld, 1997:34). Another common frame Wolfsfeld identified is the Law and Order frame. Law and Order frame is used in news so as to present leaders actions as justifiable and acceptable particularly in times of political crisis (wolsfield, 1997).

Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992), in their book called *Common Knowledge: News and Construction of Political Meaning* investigated the construction of political world in the media. Through a series of depth interview and content analysis of media coverage they came up with five predominant frames by which the media covers political discourse. The frames were the economic frame, the conflict frame, the powerlessness frame, the human impact frame and finally the morality frame (pp.62-73).

The Economic frame-when media use economic frame to present an event the attention of the content will focus on the profit and loss aspects. According to Neuman, Just and Crigler the economic frame fits well with media's propensity to cover news from the standpoint of official sources (pp.63).

The conflict frames-this type of frame is the most employed frame by the media in times of covering disputes and controversial issues (Gibbs and warhover, 2002). Conflict framing fits well with the media game interpretation of the political world as an out going series of contests, each with a new set of winner and loser (Neuman, Just and Crigler, 1992:64). There are ample evidences on which media interprets realty in terms of conflict frame. For example, the 1999 research conducted by project for excellence in journalism and Princeton, which looked in to the story telling techniques of front pages of seven news papers, revealed that thirty percent of news were framed as conflicts: emphasizing on issues of winner and losers and wrong deeds (Gibbs and Warhover, 2002). One reason for abundant use conflict frame might be because of the inherent assumption of many journalists that conflict is a way of attracting more readers (Neuman, Just and Crigler, 1992:64).

The human impact frame- media people use this type of frame to describe individual and groups who are likely to be affected by an issue. What is different in here is that journalists try to give a 'human face' for

the story by ways of giving human examples (personification) rather than the direct words of the victims. Media contents employ terms loaded with adjectives to incite feelings of sorrow, empathy, and compassion from the public (Neuman, Just and Crigler, 1992:70).

The morality frame-in cases where media covers events in terms of morality aspect that is either emphasizing the bad or good side of an event it can be said as morality frame. This is also concerned with right or wrong judgments of issues.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1. News Bias

Broadly speaking, one of the basic functions of the mass media is to provide the public current news and information regarding politics and related issues. This is based on the contention that media covers and entertains a variety of views or opinions simultaneously. But many critics say this is not more than a genuine assumption. The media are not like football fields where all players have equal chance to get the ball. Rather the media are channels for transmitting particular viewpoints and issues, which show that media are not free from politics (Oliver and Msney, 2000).

Media bias has been an area of debate among media scholars and journalists for long time. Despite its wide range acceptability no clear and unanimously accepted definition exists for the concept. Such diverse and sometimes-opposing literatures are largely beyond the scope of the current study, as a result only the most relevant literatures are presented. Generally speaking, the term bias has been understood and described in various ways. For McQuail bias means "a consistent tendency to depart from the straight path of objective truth by deviating either to left or right" (1992:191). According to him, the word bias "originate in the game of bowls, in which a ball can have an inbuilt tendency to deviate or be made to deviate by a player" (McQuail,

1992:191). From his description the absence of bias in news can be found some where in the middle, though not always.

Bias can also mean "distortion" (Parenti, 1986:213). Arguments around media distortion assert that media institutions hesitate to present the reality as it is. Instead, news is a 'reality' that the news people invented. In such cases the actual event and issues are misrepresented and misreported (Williams, 2003). The limited capacity of the news media to report each and every event in our daily life makes selection inevitable (Parenti; 1986). According to Parenti (1986), news selection by its nature creates conducive environment for bias.

Gans (2004) on the other hand, used the term distortion as a substitute for bias. He described distortion of news in terms of ideological favoritism where by one ideology or another is given special consideration. Distortion can also imply unfair treatment to a certain public officials (Gans, 2004:304). This is mostly due to journalist's heavy reliance on officials as their main sources for different reasons. Sources Bias will be covered in subsequent sections.

According to Agba (cited in Okigbo, 1994:119) biased stories are imbalanced. Lack of balance is described in terms of the disproportionate attention given to actors as well as events in news stories (Parenti, 1986). The existence of bias for people like Altschull (1995) is linked with the media's function to serve a particular interest, namely, that of owner's interest. The interest can be political, economical or both depending up on the type of press under consideration, which is discussed earlier in this chapter.

Bias is usually related to political relevant news (McQuail, 1992). Discussions on bias outline that issues/events covered in biased news are narrow in perspective, excluding a wide range of viewpoints. This handicaps the news to give full picture to readers and makes difficult to understand the whole set-up (Gibbs and Warhover, 2002).

In trying to examine bias many researchers focus on the content of the news. Source selection, types of information included as well as excluded, the tone of presentation and also the description of actors are major ways to detect bias as these are the focus by which news people use to interpret the social reality in their own ways (Gibbs and Warhaver; 2002; Parenti, 1986).

Generally speaking, bias can take different forms. Agba (as cited in Okigbo 1994:119) based on his observation of many African media identified some 11 forms of bias in times of political reporting. This includes bias in source of news, bias through selection of news, bias through omission of news, bias through placement of news, bias in the headlines and bias in the use of words.

Bias in news can be intentional and unintentional. Intentionally news will be shaped to attract more readers as well as to promote certain agenda (Graber, 2002). Scholars in different countries have researched the question of media bias particularly in times of political reporting. Some of the researches revealed that bias exist not only in non - democratic countries but also in democratic countries where the media are relatively free from political pressure (Niven, 2003). Similarly, in Nigeria as Agba (cited in Okigbo, 1994) noted the mass media in Nigeria are not free from political bias.

Graber (2002) identified two types of bias as structural and political bias. In his first category bias is caused by "the circumstances of news production" (p .253 and p.128). News people, for example, to meet deadlines may present the information at hand, which might increase the tendency of bias. In structural bias the news people also may present imbalanced and unfair news stories for reasons like variation in news worthiness and accessibility of actors to news media. Structural bias mostly is unintentional and out of journalists control. Where as, in political bias news becomes a victim of bias due to "partisan reasons" (p.253). Opposed to structural bias political bias is mostly intentional

and done to favor a certain political party or interest over the others (Graber, 2002).

The existence of bias in news reporting for many implies lack of objectivity. For the purpose of this research bias has a paramount importance to investigate objectivity. As William (2003) said the discussion of bias could not be understood without the concept of objectivity. Thus, looking at objectivity is very crucial as it is the main question under this research.

2.2.2. The Concept of objectivity

Journalists just like any other professionals are supposed to be guided by ethical principles. Among these principles objectivity is one and may be the most important that journalists should adhere in their day-to-day performance. Objectivity as a basic principle in the field of journalism emerged in America during the late 19th and early 20th century. During the old days as Hoyer (2005:13) called them “dark ages of partisan journalism” the press was characterized by its extreme affiliation with the existing political system and political parties. Consequently, it was hardly possible to distinguish the role of the media other than its partisan functions (Hoyer, 2005). The raise of objectivity for McQuail was associated with the historical development of modern news media that claimed news people to "render true account of events" (McQuail, 1992:183).

Increase in readership and advertisement in the early 20th century was considered as a landmark in journalism. During this time Newspaper publishers and owners began to heavily rely on readers and advertisers as their main source of revenue. This in turn tightens the strong bond that existed between the press and the politicians for long time. The decline of political pressures on media operation thus opened a wider chance to journalists to act independently and autonomously in search of the truth (McQuail, 1992).

Since then the principle of objectivity became conventionally accepted norm in journalism. Objectivity prioritizes professional practice (Allen, 1999:17). One of the distinguishing criteria of professional journalism is the promotion of the public interest by treating the social as well as the political reality without any political leanings (Allen, 1999).

In objective reporting journalists present only facts and images of the society (Kruger, 2004:76). In other words, journalists are expected to refrain from commenting on news and slanting the news in favor of certain interests. Simply put, objectivity implies "fact oriented news stories" (Hoyer, 2005:14). Objectivity is highly related with impartiality. Impartiality in news reporting according to the American Society of Newspaper Editors (as cited in Allen, 1999:24) implies reporter not tied up with "opinion or bias of any kind". In times of presenting news stories journalists are obliged to free themselves from any values, opinion and political ideologies (Gans, 2004:182). In short, objectivity opposes subjectivity of journalists.

Objectively reported news is inclusive in its nature. Human life is embedded with controversy and conflicts. Such kinds of phenomenon create life for news as they are worth reporting. Usually, if not all the times, such issues have two contending sides (Sielgel, 1996). Thus, media coverage needs to include the different viewpoints and arguments. This in turn helps readers to grasp the full picture.

According to Williams (2002), "absence of objectivity can be equated with bias" (p.125). As already noted earlier, bias stands for the tendency to favor one side or a particular viewpoint in media coverage (McQuail, 1992). In contrast to biased stories objectively covered news stories are neutral in presentation. Neutrality contradicts taking either side in writing stories more importantly in times of dispute. And it is usually analyzed from the tone of presentation.

The term objectivity also denotes fair and balanced coverage. Kruger (2004:76) defined fairness in three words as “getting all sides” of an event or actors in an event. Fairness in news reporting for Kasoma (cited in Okigobo, 1994) implies journalists giving hearings to all the contending sides of a story. Balanced stories also overlap with the understanding of fairness. As one cannon of good journalism, balanced reports are written based on the information gathered from different sources: particularly in times of controversy competing sources needs to get access to give their comments (Parenti, 1986). This also contributes to the completeness of news presentation. According to Parenti, in many cases the public get unbalance and unfairly reported news stories for many reasons more importantly due to political bias: "In any case, even this minimal rule of getting “both sides” often falls by wayside, sometimes because of space limitations, the pressure of deadlines, careless reporting, and other such factors, but more often because of the political bias that dominates news production "(Parenti, 1986:218).

Despite all those good accepted wisdoms of objectivity it has been found to be a challenge in journalistic profession. In a nutshell the idea of objectivity for many is a marvelous idea. However, many agree that in a real world where journalists are tight with lots of pressures objectivity becomes a myth than realty. Proponents of this argument also put truth is a relative term. No journalist presents the realty in its raw form. Instead the social reality is cooked with a variety of spice before it is brought into the dish table.

Sharing the above argument Altshcull also recognizes the impossibility of absolute objectivity (1995). Therefore, objectivity can best be understood in relative concepts. Understanding journalistic objectivity in relative terms according to Hoyer is:" ...an overarching idea of accuracy, balance and fairness or neutrality. Demonstrated by the use of multiple sources of information representing different interests or points of views (2005:11).

The basic assumption is that if a journalist cannot be objective s/he can at least be fair balanced and neutral in presentation. What is interesting about the notion of objectivity is that there are times where lack of objective news reporting is tolerated. For example, in times where once country is in dispute with another county journalists are not expected to give equal coverage to both sides in news. Here to think of being objective can mean to be “unpatriotic”(Altschull, 1995:68).

For many researchers measuring objectivity in news stories has been difficult due to the impossibility of objective reporting. Thus, when trying to analyze objectivity alternative measurements are usually taken into account. One and the major way is to detect the existence of bias in media contents. The researcher believes and shares the idea that absolute objectivity is impossible. Thus, in this study the same path is going to be followed. Accordingly, for the purpose of this research objectivity means news coverage giving to all the contending actors in the protest equal hearing, which goes with fairness. Neutrality in tone of news presentation: with out favoring/disfavoring one group or the other. And also use of different source for the balance of the news. More specifically, with the agreement that bias is the opposite of objectivity in this research the existence of news bias would mean lack of objectivity.

2.2.3. News sources

The news that journalists render to the public comes from different sources, basically either through observation, interviews, or from documentary sources (Gans, 2004). It is unlikely that journalists gather information through first-hand observation in all places all the times where news might occur. Thus, journalists heavily rely on other secondary sources (Tiffen, 1989). It is very difficult to say there is news with out sources. Sources are just like windows through which the public can look into the wider socio-political environment (Graber, 2002). Behind the scene a major factor in the production of news are sources.

Consequently, the study of news in one way or the other touches the sources of the news. Likewise, looking at the sources has paramount importance in analyzing the final story.

In news writing not all sources are quoted. Similarly not all information that sources provide are included. Rather, few sources are cited as backers of news stories. This process of source selection, thus, usually opens itself for debate. Why are some sources treated well while others neglected? There has been researches have devoted in search of journalists and source relations. And many concluded that journalists seek for sources that are suitable for making a particular news story (McQuail, 2000). Sources are thus taken into account in news production considering their importance in relation to particular event/issue. In fact, this is advisable if not all the times. This is because strict confinement to certain sources increases the tendency of bias (Pape, Susan and Featherstone, 2005).

In many instances, the doors of news media are closed to let in all potential sources. For Manning (2001) this backfires in the process of building democracy for the reason that diversified views that might contribute to democracy are denied access. By contrast, media institutions have wide open doors for those groups and individuals who are either politically or economically powerful. For instance, Gans noted that official sources usually face no major problem to become sources of news, however, a layman is unlikely to be sourced unless extraordinary events like disobediences and protests occur (2004). This, Gans, argues is a reflection of hierarchies in the nation and the society as well.

Journalists are usually accused to extract information from very limited sources. It is not uncommon to read news reports having a single source. As many media scholars including McQuail (1992) demonstrated, this trend creates bias in news presentation. Similarly, Garber (2002) contended that lack of source diversity in reporting implies one-

sidedness of the news content. Information collected from different sources not only gives news credibility but also enables the readers to have a better picture of the story (Leiter, Harriss and Johnson, 2000). In a similar manner, Pape, Susan and Featherstone (2005) describing the impact of sources on news stated that, sources are providers of facts, the more facts journalists collect from a diversity of sources, the more it contributes to the completeness of the final story.

The evaluative dimension of news objectivity cannot ignore the source bias in media content. One noticeable quality of balanced news story is the extent to which equal or proportional quota/attention is given to different sources (McQuail, 1992). For instance, in times of dispute, giving unequal access to contending groups and individual ideas may imply lack of objectivity. By contrast, entertaining both sides could be a manifestation of objective reporting: "If one party's version of 'reality' is balanced by a competing account within the news text, then the 'objective of the report can be defended" (Manning, 2001:21).

In political reporting there seems to be a general trend that most journalists turn their faces to officials as their main sources of news. This heavy reliance on authorities according to McQuail is one source of bias reflected on the news content (1992). One major reason for heavy reliance on official sources could be due to partisan politics (Graber, 2002). Besides, not to lose the value of timeliness of news as well as its authoritative sense journalists use official sources while in the hunt for information.

A study of source usage in the front page news stories in New York times, Washington post and other wire services by Graber between 1994 to 1995 revealed that fifty to sixty percent of the quoted sources were government officials where as less than ten percent of the news refers private / ordinary persons as sources (the least). This according to Graber (2002) "gives public officials an excellent chance to influence the slant of the news" (p.101). Sources may also use the news outlets as a

promotional means so as to get publicity (Tiffen; 1989). The risk of news bias arise as sources provide information that promote their agendas and omit those which does not coincide with their interest. In such a way as Tiffany (1989) said it is easy to get "a story" but very difficult to get the "real story" (p.34).

There is no specified agreement that says how many sources should be used to get the real story and minimize bias. For example, Gibbs and Warhover (2002:103) insist, "Each story should include at least three sources who can give both information and context". More importantly, in times when journalists cover controversial issues they are supposed to depend on diversified source. This emanates from the assumption that in times of dispute there are different and opposing views. Thus, to get balanced and full information reporters are expected to dig out information from different directions rather than limiting to a single source story (Gibbs and Warhover, 2002). This in turn gives weight of evidence to the final

Official versus un-official Sources

Broadly speaking, sources can be distinguished as official and unofficial sources. Official sources, according to Fishman (cited in Allen, 1999), are those sources structurally positioned to know what ever is happening. These sources become major sources for many journalists by virtue of their position. This gives authoritative people to manipulate the press by way of providing a large amount of information that could divert the reality on the ground (Parenti, 1986). And media institutions not to lose their main information providers offer the public with what they say. In short, information that come out of the mouth of officials positioned high up in the power ladder are more trusted to give a full picture than those who are at the grass root levels having only partial and slice of the information (Allen, 1999).

The other types of sources are unofficial sources. Pape, Susan and Featherstone (2005) called these types of sources as off-diary sources. According to the authors these are "sources that produce unexpected, and unanticipated news stories" (p.137). Some examples of unofficial sources are media people/journalists, members of the public, political parties (out side the ruling party), victims, witnesses and experts/scholars. Unofficial sources (excluding journalists) receive more attention from journalists in controversial times than in normal times (Gans, 2004). One reason for this may be the higher probability to take part in such occasion.

The type of source selected by journalists to get hold of information are tantamount important in framing the news. Those sources that are irrelevant to frame particular news will be omitted with those that can (Allen, 1999). Sources are significantly important in news reports. For Allen the choice of sources and the search for 'facts' mutually determine each other. More over, the types of sources used are important factors in how news is framed and presented to the public.

2.2.4. News headlines

In times of investigating media bias headlines are believed to have paramount importance. This is due to the supposition that a majority of editors and reporters heavily rely on coloring headline to divert the attention of the readers. In this process of coloring, headlines might be exposed to bias: losing accuracy and fairness. McCluskey (2005) stated, headlines are usually exposed to bias because editors and reporters emphasize on certain aspect of the story. For McCluskey such kinds of bias could be the result of owners, publishers' as well as editors' political affiliation.

Headlines are abstracts of the total text that tell readers what happens in the news. The primary purpose of headlines is to highlight the main subject in the news. Readers, in turn, by skimming headlines only, try to

grasp the main issues of the day with out even going deep into the news content. In short, headlines are an informative summary of the text.

News headlines are increasingly becoming the focus of attention of news people. Headline writing for many journalists is a difficult task since they have multi- purpose. One reason is that headlines more than being a short summary of the story are used as a way of attracting readers to sale more newspapers (Leiter, Harriss and Jonson, 2000). Accordingly, headlines have strength to the extent of influencing readers either to buy the whole paper or at least to go through the whole text. More importantly, headlines are becoming instrument for political purposes (Radder and Stempel, 1942). Headlines are distorted to disseminate certain types of political agenda, which incline towards the political affiliations of that particular newspaper (McCluskey (2005). Their appearances, therefore, are basically designed to get hold reader's newspapers choices.

As noted previously, headlines give highlight of what issue is at peak. Despite this many researches conducted on headlines revealed that the majority of news people use headlines to dictate the readers preferences. Headlines are given due emphasis more than the text given that they influence the attitudes of the readers. For instance, during the times of the Second World War negatively written headlines were found to instigate people to participate in the war than those headlines written in positive tone (Blesk, 1996).

The over all evidence regarding headlines imply that more than being guidance for readers to select a text headlines influence the public while make sense of that message. This means the positive or negative slant of headlines have great impact on reader's judgment of actors in the story. Exemplifying these effects of headline Blesk (1996) referring earlier experiment of sociology study, put forward that headlines affect on how readers label protagonists. Accordingly, the more neutral the headline the more positively readers view protagonists .By contrast, when the

headline include a sense of pessimistic overtone the more negatively protagonists are distinguished by the public.

In a similar manner, McCluskey (2005) who conducted a content analysis on headlines on two prominent newspapers found out political bias during the 2004 presidential election in American. According to the study bias was detected as two newspapers select different aspects of emphasis and also differs in the usage of words (positive, negative or neutral qualities) while constructing their headlines.

Like wise, Nyamnjoh (2005) from African media perspective wrote that many newspapers whether it is of the government or the private use words that depict different tone to readers. For him news people usually apply emotive words and are full of exaggerations. Besides, through changing the font and size of headlines they try to give hierarchy to the news. Headlines that are often designed to focus on conflict, giving prominences to oppositional outlooks, also predominate in many African media. Many private Newspapers also use their pages to create bad picture of the government. Contrarily the government media uses headlines as tool for uneven propaganda (Nyamnjoh, 2005). According to the author these all are results of impartiality and lack of independence of African media.

2.2.5 News tone

The potential for content bias in media crop up in the overall tone of the news. By examining news stories tone many researchers have been able to determine to what extent media are bias in times of reporting events, more specifically, contentious issues. According to Pieper and Hughes (1997) the overall tone of news is the general holistic flavor of the story highlighting how the story is concluded (<http://www.americanreview.us/medtabl.htm>: accessed on April 30, 2006). In a research they conducted to determine how the news media framed media mergers they found out that depending up on the type of

media ownership there is variation in story tone. They classified the overall tone testing in terms of: positive/optimist, negative /pessimist and neutral/balanced.

Cappon (2000) refer tone as the inner music of words (pp.51). For Cappon, news tone is first and foremost created through the selections of words. Such as, familiar words journalists use to report a particular event give different tone to those news written with a single word but having multi meanings. Words differences give different connotations. Based up on the context some words might give overtone while others down play the story tone. In many cases different media covering the same subjects were found to apart in tone of the text. According to Cappon, tone needs not be consistent across different media but a sudden shift in tone of the same story across different media might mean to favor / disfavor certain viewpoint or interest.

Pfau, etal (2004) investigated the extent to which journalists deployed by the US in Iraq were decontextualized in form or more favorable in tone. They discovered that compared to other reporters journalists deployed by the US were more favorable in tone towards US military and in depiction of individual troops (pp.74). This could lead to biased news coverage, as it tends to favor only one part of an event that is favoring the US military and its personnel reaction and leaving out the sides from the Iraqi. One explanation they gave was the organizational culture that assumes shared basic assumptions, which new members take it as a correct ways of carrying out their duties.

2.2.6. Story placement

One way that is commonly employed by researchers to recognize the existence of bias is, bias by placement. Placement, for instance, in newspapers inevitably shows where the story is located, that is, whether the story is placed in the front page or inside pages of a certain newspaper. Placement is usually considered to have paramount

importance to detect bias since it shows prominence (Journalism. org, (2006). Those news that news people consider as important, and thus needs to get attention, are placed in the front pages of a particular medium. Whereas, news that are considered as less important are usually placed in the inside pages. Journalists also hid stories in the inside pages those they do not wasn't to get attention. Such bias in distribution emanated from many journalists assumption that reader read front pages news and give not much attention to news that are placed in the inside pages (Journalism .org, 2006).

2.2.7 The Ethiopian media landscape

It was before hundred years that the mass media became functional in Ethiopia. Nevertheless, there has not been a single private media until recently (excluding the French Amharic '*le Semiane d' Ethiopie*' and a Blatta Gebere Egziabher's written sheets as they had a question of ownership)(shemelis, 2000). The history of media in Ethiopia is, thus, highly characterized by full government control. The liberalization wind that blew from the west reached many African countries after the 1990s, that is, after the end of the Cold War. In Ethiopia too, the downfall of the Derg regime and the coming of the EPRDF-lead government in 1991 brought a shift towards democratization.

In line with democratic principles EPRDF enshrined press freedom in the 1995 constitution under article 29(3) "freedom of the press and other mass media and freedom of articles as guaranteed" (The House of Peoples Representatives, 1995:89). More over, the 1992 press proclamation can be considered as a landmark to press freedom in the country. Freedom of the press implies, among other things, the proliferation of alternative sources of information for the public. Under the current situation of Ethiopia television broadcasting is entirely within the hands of the government. Whereas, two privately owned radio stations were licensed only at the beginning of the year 2006.but, in view of this study the

immediate concern refers to the print category, more specifically, to newspapers.

2.2.8 Media ownership pattern in Ethiopia

A distinguishing characteristic of the Ethiopian media since 1991 is the boost up of the print media both in types and numbers. A large number of privately owned newspapers emerged. Numerous periodicals including party/government papers are also published (Shimelis, 2000:10). From the start, the evolution of private newspapers was surrounded by both drawbacks and some glimmer of hopes.

Looking at the positive feature, private press increasingly became alternative source of information for the public. This has a paramount importance in the process of building democracy since informed citizens are its foundations. Besides, the private media became channels for the public to express their opinion (Mekuria, 2005). As it is experienced in many parts of the world private press have crucial task in this regard than the government press, which are usually government interest protector.

Keeping the positive aspects as they are, it will be necessary to look at some drawback that the commercial press was born and grew up with. One major problem emanates from the lack of professional journalists in the country, which the government journalists also share. Many of the private press evolved and continue to operate with low financial status, which later become the major factor for many of them to shorten their circulation only to the capital and also to run out of market.

In many cases they are blamed for partisan content, which the government press also shares (shemelis, 2000). The up lifting of censorship since the proclamation might be one push factor for many of the private papers to publish sensational contents. Lastly, many journalists and media people join the profession as a means of income

and business. In many instances this is within the circle of profit making that has a backlash effect on the content as well as on the profession.

Currently, in Ethiopia the term ownership implies either private or government ownership (Shimelis, 2000). The birth of state owned media dates back to the early 1900th whereas private press aged not more than 15 years, which shows latter's infancy. In addition to their economic deficiency, the government evades some private newspapers at different times with a variety of reasons, which might be for political reason. For example, after the May 2005 election government shut down some private newspapers claiming that they are flaming the unrest in the country. This left few commercial papers in the market.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

3.1 Research methods

The main purpose of this research was to find out if news stories regarding the post May 2005 election protests were objective or not in presentation depending up on the difference in media ownership. There may be bias or lack of objectivity in news reporting. The principal method applied in order to achieve the goal of this study was content analysis. This type of research method is widely employed in media researches. Particularly, this method is preferred to other methods when a researcher wants to analyze the content of any recorded information (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006). Content analysis is chosen over other methods in this study for a number of reasons. First, content analysis is more appropriate for a study that is concerned with news bias or objectivity or accuracy (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005). Second, this method enables analysts to describe media messages as well as to make a comparative study between different media out puts (McQuail, 2000). Besides, as McQuail stated, content analysis helps to explore any overt intention and unintended bias as far as there are supportive theoretical formulation as well as description (2000). Since the main purpose of this study was to examine the contents of some selected print media, content analysis was found as most relevant and appropriate method to accomplish the objectives of this paper.

To substantiate the findings of the content analysis interviews were conducted with two willing and long time experienced editors: one from *Reporter* and the other from *Addis Zemen*. For their conveniences their names are withhold. For the purpose of this study informant A refers to editor from *Addis Zemen* and informant B refers to editor from *Reporter*.

3.2 Subjects of the study

Newspapers were selected as the data source for analysis. The main reason why newspapers were preferred to broadcasts is that broadcast media, as discussed in previous chapter, is entirely under the control of the government except the two privately owned radio station that are only licensed at the beginning of the year 2006. Thus, broadcast media do not permit the sort of comparative analysis that is the goal of this study.

3.3. Sample selection

Three newspapers were selected from the print media in Ethiopia as subjects for this study. These newspapers were: *Addis Zemen*, *Ethop* and *Reporter*. The three newspapers were selected using a sampling technique called purposive sampling. In cases where a researcher is familiar with the problems s/he is dealing with or the purposes of her/his research, purposive sampling, which presupposes best guess based on the researcher own experience, is more appropriate than any other (Budd and Dominick, 2006). The goal of this study was to find out the impact of media ownership. *Ethop* and *Reporter* were able to stay in the market for more that 10 your. One factor that might have helped the two papers could be the results of their understanding of the economic principles (to satisfy the readers, who are the major sources of their income). Thus, they were selected on the assumption that they best feet to understand the ownership impact on the contents of the two newspapers.

Beside the above major reason for selection, circulation, language, as well as accessibility for the researcher were considered. The 2005 report of Ministry of Information showed that these newspapers were among those newspapers that were recorded as having a high circulation. They are all published in Amharic, which is the national language.

Addis Zemen is a government owned newspaper and one of the major outlets for the government. It is the oldest newspaper established in 1941. According to the 2005 report of the Ministry of Information it had average daily circulation of 19,514. It is a daily newspaper. Only *Addis Zemen* was considered from the government side because the researcher supposed that other government newspapers have similar contents and differ merely in language.

Ethop was a weekly privately owned newspaper. It had an average circulation with 27,520 copies of circulation as per the 2005 report of the Ministry of Information. *Ethop* was established about 10 years ago. It is included in those newspapers that stopped publications immediately after the second largest protest since May 2005 election.

The third newspaper selected for this study was the Reporter. It is published both in Amharic and English languages. For this research the Amharic version was selected as a source of data. Reporter is currently a Bi-weekly private newspaper. Average daily circulation counts to 14,363 copies.

Since the purpose of this study was to investigate difference in news coverage based upon the difference in ownership, the selected samples of newspapers is assumed to provide a good combination from the private press and the government. Depending on their ownership pattern the papers have different source of revenue. *Addis Zemen* is subsidized and financed by the government whereas the two privately owned newspapers generate their income through advertisement and direct sale to the public.

3.4. Coding

In this study news stories were selected as its units and the units of analysis were headlines and paragraphs. The time frame for the present study was divided into two parts. The first major sample of news stories

was the one-month period that extended from June 8 to July 7, 2005. The starting date is selected because it was a time when the first and largest protest reached its climax as Addis Ababa university students began an outward demonstration. The ending date was chosen because after this time many of the newspapers diverted to other issues, less relevant to the protest news. The researcher also thought this time duration will be appropriate to investigate the existence of bias in the papers since it was a time that the riot garnered much attention from the media.

The second time frame was a one-week period from November 1 to November 7, 2005. This was one week starting from the second largest phase of protest. Due to the reason Ethop was closed instantly after the second protest, the researcher was not able to look at news coverage of the newspaper more than the specified time duration. Despite this, the researcher believed that the selected period would be sufficient to examine whether the news coverage of the selected three papers were biased or not.

3.5. Key coding categories and definitions

The purpose of this research was to determine the extent to which ownership interest is evident in the news stories of *Addis Zemen*, *Ethop* and *Reporter* newspapers. In other words, the goal was to determine if the three papers show a recognizable difference in the way they covered the protest news. In times of news analysis two major actors were identified for the purpose of this study. These are the government or the ruling party on one side and the opposition parties with the protester on the other side.

Five major coding categories were selected for analysis. Thus, each news story was coded for 1) story source 2) headline tone 3) story frame 4) overall story tone 5) story placement and. In this study categories not coded included editorials, cartoons and photographs.

3.5.1. Source categories

To code the source of the news story two main categories were identified: official and unofficial sources. **Official sources** fall under what Gans refers to as “knowns” (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005:178). These categories include those officials from any level of the government that is from federal to state and local officials. For the purpose of this research, official sources included any member from the government side and any official statements and documents referred by the journalist. For example, if news story sourced police officials or high government officials like the Prime Minister it was coded as official source. Official documents included written statements released from government offices, for instance, from the Ministry of Information.

Unofficial Sources included those sources, which Gans identified as “unknowns”(Bertrand and Hughes, 2005:178). Under this category, protestors and rioters, strikers, victims and participants in unusual activities are included. In this research in addition to what Gans identified as unknowns, media people/journalists, witnesses, opposition sources and scholars/experts were used as a coding category under unofficial sources.

For the purpose of this study, **unofficial sources** will be identified in the following ways,

Media people/ Journalists: members of the news organizations that turn out to be storytellers' rather than being mere reporters.

Victims: this category included individuals that were directly affected by the tragedy or relatives, friends and parents of the victims.

Witnesses: people who tell about the event, for instance eyewitnesses, these were people who speak what happened during the protest.

Opposition Sources: included members of opposition parties, such as, a news story written based upon interviews with higher officials or members from the CUD or UEDF. This group of sources also includes protesters, those people who were participants in the protest.

Scholar/Experts: people sourced due to their profession (like doctors) or analysts (politicians, economists, sociologists and lawyers).

Others: those sources that neither falls under the official nor the unofficial were coded as others. This category included international community, as well as unnamed sources, ordinary people and non-governmental originations.

After the sources were identified coders counted the frequency of particular sources in stories to find out the predominant source. Here efforts were made to find out if there was any imbalance and over dependence on certain types of sources.

3.5.2. Framing categories

News frames were also recognized as one category in this study. Thus, for framing analysis six framing categories identified by previous studies were employed. Accordingly, building up on Neuman, Just and Crigler's (1992) analysis of the construction of political world in the media and Wolfsfeld's (1997) analysis of news of political crisis, the study used six framing categories for coding. These were the economic frame, the responsibility frame, the conflict frame, the human impact frame, the morality frame as well as the law and order frame.

Economic frame: when media use an economic frame in news stories the attention of the content will focus on the profit and loss aspects of an incident. In this study, for instance, when analyzing the news stories of the post May-2005 election protest if the story was told in terms of material and resource destruction it was coded under economic frame.

Conflict frame: in this category news stories particularly that have controversial and conflict issues were presented as competitions between actors. In covering the protest story, for example, when the media cited different actors including the police force versus the protestors, or the ruling party versus the opposition it were coded as conflict frame.

Human impact frame: in here media people describe individual and groups who are likely to be affected by an incident. They use people to humanize the story. Under this research, when the media used examples of killed, injured and beaten persons while presenting the news, the news was coded under human impact frame.

Morality frame: in cases where media covers events in terms of moral and ethical aspect, stories are said to be framed using morality frame. That is, journalists will emphasize on the right and wrong judgments of an issue. For instance, the action of the government towards the opposition and the protesters was presented as injustice; inhuman against civilians it was coded under morality frame.

Law and order frame: according to Wolfsfeld (1997) this type of frame is commonly used in news when it is needed to give positive justifications of government measures towards divergent groups. For instance, if news reads in such a way that the measure taken by the police force was intended to collapse the spreading of the protest and to maintain peace and order it was coded as law and order frame in this case.

In addition, **Responsibility frame** was used as one framing category. According to (Kensicki, 2004) –this frame is usually employed when a journalist wants to present news so that as to make actors responsible form causes of problems. Khudiyev (2005) found that in times of political protests two types of frames, namely, responsibility to opposition frame and government responsibility frame are widely used. The same types of framing categories were used in this study.

Because a particular story may contain more than one frame, frames were labeled as main or subsidiary frame. The main /dominate frame is the single frame which the story is told, while subsidiary frames are those that accompany the dominant frame. Thus, in this study efforts were made to identify the single dominant frame used in each stories as to detect any biasness.

3.5.3. Headlines tone

In examining the difference between newspapers content headlines were used as one category. For the purpose of this research two major actors were identified in the event -the government one side and the oppositions /protestors on the other. Thus, coders coded headline tone as positive, negative or neutral in relation to the actor mentioned in the headline.

Accordingly, **positive** was labeled to those headlines that tended to positively or favorably describe actors. Positivity will also be judged on the basis of actor's actions represented as right, lawful and justifiable.

By contrast, **negative** tone was related to headlines that showed tendency to unfavorably describe actors. This group also included those headlines that depicted actor's action as wrong and unlawful.

Headline tone was marked as **neutral** if it conveyed facts in a straightforward manner with out taking any side or if it presented both sides or with out clearly showing tendency to favor or disfavor a single actor.

Such kind of tone analysis was very challenging because subjectivity might affect their definition. As a result, a small pilot study was taken to make sure all coders' agreement was achieved. This in turn has helped the researcher to make certain changes in order to attain agreement in the final coding.

3.5.4. Story Tone

The overall story tone enabled the researcher to identify a story as positive, negative or neutral to the assigned characters-the government or the oppositions/protestors. The same trend as the headline categorization was followed to identify the story tone. Thus, in searching for such identification the over all tone was marked as positive, negative or neutral.

Positive was related to favorable and positive descriptions of an actor. Besides, if the over all story tone tended to promote the actions of actor positively and as right, lawful and successful the tone was assigned a positive mark. This showed there are more positive paragraphs in the story regarding the actor and its actions.

Negative story tone tended to negatively or unfavorably describes actors. This group also included those stories that depicted actor's action as wrong, or unacceptable. Negativity with regard to the story implied that there are more negative paragraphs about an actor and its action.

When the over all tone tended to balances between the two opposing interests as well as presented the facts objectively it was marked as **neutral**. A story that neither favor nor disfavor one sides was also included in this category. In order to minimize any significant effect of personal bias, just like the headline analysis, coder's agreement was given due consideration.

3.5.5 Story placement

Based on where the news is placed, the story placement was coded as **front page** (if it is written on the first page of the newspapers) and **inside pages** when the stories were placed starting from the second page.

3.6 The Coding procedures

While conducting content analysis a problem may arise due to the researcher's personal bias. Thus, to minimize this kind of problem the researcher hired additional coders. Two coders who are students of Addis Ababa University were hired. They both coders have journalism educational backgrounds

Before the coders started coding the news a brief explanation were given on the purpose of the study, the coding categories as well as how to coded the categories. After this, samples of news stories were coded to check the inter-coder reliability. Inter coder reliability relates to the extent to which the coder agree on the coding categories after reading the news. Sample consisting of 15% of the news were given for the coders. Percentage agreement for each coded category was found satisfactory. The results were 90% for story tone, 89% for headline tone, 95% for story placement, 94% for story type, 98% for story source and 98% for story frame.

After the inter-coder reliability was attained the coders started coding the remaining news. Up on completion of the coding the researcher entered the data on a program called Statistical Package For Social Science Research (SPSS), which is mainly prepared to analyze coded data. Finally the researcher started to analyze and interpreting the data based on the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION

This chapter deals with the findings from the content analysis. A total of 315 news stories relevant to the protest were published in the three newspapers during the five weeks period selected for analysis. *Addis Zemen* published a total of 156 news stories and the two private newspapers, *Reporter* and *Ethop*, published 100 and 59 news stories respectively.

As discussed in chapter three each news story was coded for, story placement, headline tone, story source, story frame, story type and overall story tone. The finding of each coded category is presented below.

4.1 Headline tone

Each headline tone was coded as positive, negative or neutral depending up on the depiction of actors in the headlines. Leaving out the neutral headlines, as table 1 demonstrates there were differences in headline tones with reference to the actors under consideration.

Table 1: Headline tone across the different newspapers

		News paper			Total
		<i>Ethop</i>	<i>Reporter</i>	<i>Addis Zemen</i>	
Headline tone	Negative to the government %(n)	33.9% (20)	34.0% (34)	0% (0)	17.1% (54)
	Positive to the government %(n)	1.7% (1)	4.0% (4)	26.3% (41)	14.6% (46)
	Negative to the oppositions %(n)	3.4% (2)	5.0% (5)	44.2% (69)	24.1% (76)
	Positive to the oppositions %(n)	16.9% (10)	13.0% (13)	0% (0)	7.3% (23)
	Neutral/Balanced %(n)	44.1% (26)	44.0% (44)	29.5% (46)	36.8% (116)

Despite the difference in numbers, *Ethop* and *Reporter* tended to follow similar pattern in many of their headline tones. For example, if we take negative headlines to the government in each newspaper the result revealed that, *Ethop* had 20 and *Reporter* had 34. One interesting finding was that, negative headline to the government that was frequently used in *Ethop* and *Reporter*, was totally absent in *Addis zemen*.

Looking at those headlines that were positive to the oppositions it becomes visible that *Ethop* had 10 and *Reporter* had 13. However, in *Addis Zemen* there was no headline that was positive to the oppositions.

As table 1 clearly illustrates, *Addis Zemen* had many headlines that were negative to the oppositions. Statistically, this headline counted to 69 of the headlines in *Addis Zemen*. The other frequently used headline in *Addis Zemen* was the one that was positive to the government, which counted to 41 of the headlines. *Ethop* and *Reporter*, however, had few headlines that were positive to the government and negative to the oppositions.

4.2 Story Source

Source usage was another category used to detect bias. Table 2 illustrates the differences in the types of source used across the different newspapers.

Table 2: source usage across newspapers

		News paper			Total
		<i>Ethop</i>	<i>Reporter</i>	<i>Addis Zemen</i>	
Story Source	Government Official sources %(n)	10.2% (6)	14.0% (14)	46.2% (72)	29.2% (92)
	Media people/journalists %(n)	32.2% (19)	20.0% (20)	4.5% (7)	14.6% (46)
	Victims %(n)	3.4% (2)	6.0% (6)	0% (0)	2.5% (8)
	Witness %(n)	0% (0)	4.0% (4)	0% (0)	1.3% (4)
	Opposition source %(n)	22.0% (13)	15.0% (15)	0.6% (1)	9.2% (29)
	Scholars /Experts %(n)	0% (0)	5.0% (5)	1.3% (2)	2.2% (7)
	Others %(n)	32.2% (19)	36.0% (36)	47.4% (74)	41.0% (129)

Form table 2 one thing that become clear is that sources that fall in the category of ‘others’ were dominantly used in all newspapers. This source category consumed 47.4% in *Addis Zemen*, 36% in *Reporter* and 32.2% in *Ethop*. One case that was found in *Ethop* was that media people/Journalists also consumed equal amount of source percentage.

When it comes to the second dominant source in each newspaper the data showed that they have clear differences. According to the figures in table 2, the second dominant source in *Addis Zemen* news was official sources. This category received 46.2% of source distribution. *Reporter* used media people /Journalists as the second dominant source. Numerically, it received 20% of the total source in *Reporter*. Next to the dominant sources in *Ethop*, opposition sources were largely used. Statistically, this category consumed 22% of the sources.

4.3 story frame

Content analysis of story frames used by the three newspapers to write news about the post May 2005 election protest revealed that *Ethop* and *Reporter* relatively had similar angles of writing the story than *Addis Zemen* did.

Table 3. Story frame used by each newspaper

		News paper			Total
		<i>Ethop</i>	<i>Reporter</i>	<i>Addis Zemen</i>	
Story Frame	Economic %(n)	1.7% (1)	6.0% (6)	9.0% (14)	6.7% (21)
	Conflict %(n)	11.9% (7)	13.0% (13)	5.1% (8)	8.9% (28)
	Responsibility to the government %(n)	18.6% (11)	15.0% (15)	0% (0)	8.3% (26)
	Responsibility to the opposition %(n)	5.1% (3)	7.0% (7)	57.1% (89)	31.4%(99)
	Human impact %(n)	57.6%(34)	54.0%(54)	5.1% (8)	30.5%(96)
	Morality %(n)	1.7% (1)	4.0% (4)	0.6% (1)	1.9% (6)
	Law and order %(n)	3.4% (2)	1.0% (1)	23.1% (36)	12.4%(39)

According to the findings *Ethop* and *Reporter* dominantly used human impact frame. In *Ethop* out of 59 stories human impact frame was found in 34 stories. Similarly, *Reporter* used this frame in 54 of its stories out of the 100 stories. *Addis Zemen* used a different frame that was dominant in many of its stories. As Table 3 vividly illustrates responsibility to the opposition frame was found in 89 stories of *Addis Zemen*.

Next to human impact frame, *Ethop* and *Reporter* largely employed responsibility to the government frame. As it is shown in table 3, responsibility to the government frame was found in 11 stories of *Ethop* and 15 stories of *Reporter*. *Addis Zemen* had no news that was framed as responsibility to the government. The second dominant frame in *Addis Zemen* was law and order frame. The figure in table 3 shows that law and order frame took 23.1% of the total frame distribution in *Addis Zemen*.

Economic and morality frames were the least used in *Ethop*, which each received 1.7% of the total frame. The least used frame in *Reporter* was the law and order frame that consumed 1% of the total frame distribution. Morality frame was found only in 0.6% stories of *Addis Zemen*, which shows its insignificance.

4.4 story tone

Table 4. Story tone across the different newspapers

		News paper			Total
		<i>Ethop</i>	<i>Reporter</i>	<i>Addis Zemen</i>	
Story tone	Negative to the government %(n)	64.4% (38)	59.0% (59)	0% (0)	30.8% (97)
	Positive to the government %(n)	6.8% (4)	8.0% (8)	25.6% (40)	16.5% (52)
	Positive to the oppositions %(n)	20.3% (12)	7.0% (7)	0% (0)	6.0% (19)
	Negative to the oppositions %(n)	3.4% (2)	7.0% (7)	67.3% (105)	36.2% (114)
	Neutral/balanced %(n)	5.1% (3)	19.0% (19)	7.1% (11)	10.5% (33)

The findings of story tone in *Addis Zemen* showed that the majority of its news were negative to the oppositions. From the total stories, 105 had negative tone to the oppositions.

Ethop and *Reporter* had similar story tone in a way that negative to the government dominated in many of their stories. In *Ethop* out of 59 stories 38 were negative towards the government. Similarly, in *Reporter* from its 100 stories 59 were negative to the government. One finding that is significant different between the government and the private was that, negative to the government which was dominantly found in *Ethop* and *Reporter* was totally absent in *Addis Zemen*.

The second dominant story tone in *Addis Zemen* was the positive tone to the government. 40 positive stories to the government were found in *Addis Zemen*. When looking at the stories that had positive tone towards the oppositions it becomes visible that *Ethop* had 12. *Reporter* had almost equal stories that were positive to the government (8) and positive to the oppositions (7). None of story in *Addis Zemen* was found to be positive. Neutral /balanced stories were also found in the three newspapers. As table 4 shows, 3 stories in *Ethop*, 19 stories in *Reporter* and 11 stories in *Addis Zemen* were neutral / balanced in presentation.

A further investigation of the existence of bias was analyzed in terms of placement. A cross examination of placement with headline tone, story source, story tone, and story frame were carried out. Two types of page placement were identified: front page (FP) and inside pages (IP).

4.5 Headline Tone Placement

Table 5. Headline tone by page type

			Headline tone					
News paper			Negative to the government % (n)	Positive to the government % (n)	Negative to the opposition % (n)	Positive to the opposition % (n)	Neutral/balanced % (n)	Total
<i>Ethop</i>	PT	FP	60.0% (12)	100.0% (1)	0% (0)	80.0% (8)	26.9% (7)	47.5% (28)
		IP	40.0% (8)	0% (0)	100.0%(2)	20.0% (2)	73.1%(19)	52.5% (31)
<i>Reporter</i>	PT	FP	26.5% (9)	25.0% (1)	20.0% (1)	53.8% (7)	29.5%(13)	31.0% (31)
		IP	73.5% (25)	75.0% (3)	80.0% (4)	46.2% (6)	70.5%(31)	69.0% (69)
Addis zemen	PT	FP	0% (0)	78.0% (32)	46.4%(32)	0% (0)	47.8%(22)	55.1% (86)
		IP	0% (0)	22.0% (9)	53.6%(37)	0% (0)	52.2%(24)	44.9% (70)

As the above table shows there were differences in headline tone placement across the different newspapers. For instance, *Ethop* placed more negative headline to the government in its front pages. *Ethop* placed 60% of the negative headlines to the government in its front pages and the remaining 20% in its inside pages. If we look at how positive headlines to the oppositions were placed in *Ethop* it becomes clear that more were found in the front pages. Out of the total 10 headlines, 8(80%) came in the front page and 2(20%) in the inside pages.

Looking at how *Reporter* placed its headline tone, it was found that from the total 34 negative headlines *Reporter* had to the government only 9(26.5%) were written in the front pages and the rest 25(73.5%) were in the inside pages. Headlines that were positive to the oppositions were placed in *Reporter* was placed in such a way that 7(53.8%) came in the front pages and 6(46.2%) were in the inside pages.

As the table 5 shows, *Reporter* had 44 headlines that were neutral/balanced. When we look at its distribution by page it comes to their distribution by page type 13(29.5%) were written in the front pages while

31(70.5%) were placed in the inside pages. This results were similar to *Ethop* which placed 7(26.9) neutral headlines in its front pages and 19(73.1%) in its inside pages.

In Addis zemen the distribution of negative headlines to the oppositions revealed that 32(46.4) were positioned in the first pages and the remaining 37(53.6%) were written in its back pages. Distribution of positive headlines to the government shows that 32(78%) was presented in the front pages and the remaining 9(22%) in the inside pages. The neutral headline in *Addis Zemen* was distributed in such a way that 22(47.8%) were placed in the front pages and the remaining 24 (52%) were positioned in the inside pages of the paper.

4.6 Story Source Placement

Table 6-story source by page type

Story source			News paper			Total
			<i>Ethop</i>	<i>Reporter</i>	<i>Addis Zemen</i>	
Officials %(n)	PT	FP	33.3% (2)	14.3% (2)	58.3% (42)	50.0% (46)
		IP	66.7% (4)	85.7%(12)	41.7% (30)	50.0% (46)
Media people/Journalists %(n)	PT	FP	31.6% (6)	35.0% (7)	57.1% (4)	37.0% (17)
		IP	68.4%(13)	65.0%(13)	42.9% (3)	63.0% (29)
Victims %(n)	PT	FP	50.0% (1)	33.3% (2)	0% (0)	37.5% (3)
		IP	50.0% (1)	66.7% (4)	0% (0)	62.5% (5)
Witness %(n)	PT	FP	0% (0)	25.0% (1)	0% (0)	25.0% (1)
		IP	0% (0)	75.0% (3)	0% (0)	75.0% (3)
Opposition source %(n)	PT	FP	61.5% (8)	53.3% (8)	100.0% (1)	58.6% (17)
		IP	38.5% (5)	46.7% (7)	0% (0)	41.4% (12)
Scholars/ Experts %(n)	PT	FP	0% (0)	20.0% (1)	0% (0)	14.3% (1)
		IP	0% (0)	80.0% (4)	100.0% (2)	85.7% (6)
Others %(n)	PT	FP	57.9%(11)	27.8%(10)	52.7% (39)	46.5% (60)
		IP	42.1% (8)	72.2%(26)	47.3%(35)	53.5% (69)

No similar patterns of distribution were found between the two equally dominant sources in *Ethop*. Media people/Journalists was distributed in such a way that 31.6% were presented on the front page and 68.4% in the inside pages. If we look at ‘others’ Out of these sources 33.3% were placed in the first pages while the remaining 66.7% were positioned in the inside pages.

A similar pattern with that of *Ethop* was followed in *Reporter* in its distributions of Media people/Journalists. *Reporter* placed 35% of in sources in its front pages and 65% in its inside pages. Whereas its distribution of ‘others’ was totally different from *Ethop* in such a way that less (27.8%) was placed in its front pages and the more (72.2%) were positioned in the inside pages.

Addis Zemen used ‘others’ and official sources more frequently than any other source category. When it comes to their distribution Addis Zemen placed more (58.3%) official sources in its front pages and less (41.7%) in the inside pages. ‘Others’ was distributed in such a manner that 52.7% came in the front pages and 47.3% goes to the inside pages.

4.7. Story Frame Placement

Table 7-story frame by page type

News paper			Story frame						Total % (n)	
			Economic % (n)	Conflict % (n)	Responsibility to the government % (n)	Responsibility to the opposition % (n)	Human impact % (n)	Morality % (n)		Law and order % (n)
Ethop	PT	FP	0% (0)	14.3% (1)	72.7% (8)	33.3% (1)	44.1% (15)	100.0% (1)	100.0% (2)	47.5% (28)
		IP	100.0% (1)	85.7% (6)	27.3% (3)	66.7% (2)	55.9% (9)	0% (0)	0% (0)	52.5% (31)
Reporter	PT	FP	0% (0)	46.2% (6)	46.7% (7)	14.3% (1)	29.6% (16)	0% (0)	100.0% (1)	31.0% (31)
		IP	100.0% (6)	53.8% (7)	53.3% (8)	85.7% (6)	70.4% (38)	100.0% (4)	0% (0)	69.0% (69)
Addis Zemen	PT	FP	60.0% (9)	100.0% (7)	0% (0)	51.1% (45)	33.3% (3)	0% (0)	61.1% (22)	55.1% (86)
		IP	40.0% (6)	0% (0)	0% (0)	48.9% (43)	66.7% (6)	100.0% (1)	38.9% (14)	44.9% (70)

As table 7 demonstrates there were almost unevenly distributions of frames on the different pages of each newspaper. *Ethop*, for instance, distributed its dominant frame so that 44.1% came in its front pages and 55.9% in its inside pages. *Ethop* used a different pattern of distribution in its second dominant frame. More (72.7%) responsibility to the government frame was placed in the front pages and only few (27.3%) were positioned in the inside pages.

The finding showed the dominant frame, human impact frame, in *Reporter* was distributed in such a way 29% came in its front pages and the remaining 70.4% in its inside pages. The second dominant frame in *Reporter* was responsibility to the government frame and it was placed so that 46.7% were found in the front pages and the remaining 53.3% in its inside pages.

Among the seven frames *Addis Zemen* was mostly dominant on responsibility to the opposition frame. According to table 7, 51.1% of this frame were found in its front pages and the remaining 48.9% in *Addis Zemen's* inside pages. Second dominant frame in *Addis Zemen*, the law and order frame, was distributed in *Addis Zemen* so that 61.1% was found in the front pages and 38.9% were placed in the inside.

4.8 Story Tone Placement

Table 8-story tone by page type

News paper			Story tone					Total % (n)
			Negative to the government%(n)	Positive to the government %(n)	Positive to the opposition %(n)	Negative to the opposition %(n)	Neutral/balanced %(n)	
<i>Ethop</i>	PT	FP	44.7% (17)	75.0% (3)	50.0% (6)	50.0% (1)	33.3% (1)	47.5%(28)
		IP	55.3% (21)	25.0% (1)	50.0% (6)	50.0% (1)	66.7% (2)	52.5%(31)
<i>Reporter</i>	PT	FP	33.9% (20)	50.0% (4)	28.6% (2)	0% (0)	26.3% (5)	31.0%(31)
		IP	66.1% (39)	50.0% (4)	71.4% (5)	100.0% (7)	73.7% (14)	69.0%(69)
<i>Addis Zemen</i>	PT	FP	0% (0)	62.5% (25)	0% (0)	49.5% (52)	81.8% (9)	55.1% (86)
		IP	0% (0)	37.5% (15)	0% (0)	50.5% (53)	18.2% (2)	44.9%(70)

The last descriptive analysis was made to find out how the different story tones were distributed in the pages of each newspaper.

An interesting finding in story tone placement of *Ethop* and *Reporter* was that fewer stories that were negative to the government were placed in their front pages. As it is clearly seen in table 8, *Ethop* placed 17 of the stories in its front pages and the remaining 21 in its inside pages. In a similar manner, *Reporter* put 20 stories in its front pages and 39 in its' inside pages.

A balanced distribution was found in *Ethop*' second largest story tone, positive to the oppositions. Table 8 shows that each pages received a total of 6 stories. Many stories in reporter were neutral/balanced. From these stories *Reporter* put less (5) neutral/balanced stories in its front page and 14 neutral stories in its' inside pages.

When it comes to *Addis Zemen*, negative to the oppositions which was the dominant story tone, was placed in such as manner that 52 stories came in the front page and 53 stories was placed in the back pages. The second dominant story tone in *Addis Zemen* was positive to the government. It was distributed to so that more (25) came in the front pages and 15 stories in the inside pages of *Addis Zemen*

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section deals with the discussion part. In here, effort was made to make a correlation between the existing literatures (discussed in chapter two), the findings from the current research data (presented in chapter four) and findings of other scholars from other countries. More importantly, the chapter thoroughly discussed what the implications of the major findings of this study might be.

The purpose of the study was to find out whether news stories of the post May 2005 election protests were objective or not in presentation. In order to reach this end the researcher tried to assess if there was bias in the news. Any biased report was, thus, distinguished through story source, story placement, headline tone, story type, story tone and news frames.

In line with the literature discussed in chapter two that objective news are balanced, fair and neutral, this study found the literature d as supportive evidence as to the existence of bias in news of *Addis Zemen*, *Reporter* and *Ethop* with regard to the post May 2005 election protests. This was mostly concluded depending upon the findings from the content analysis, which was presented in chapter four and with some evidences from the interview. Accordingly, there were clear differences between news presentation of the government owned newspaper, *Addis Zemen*, and that of the private's, *Ethop* and *Reporter* in terms of reporting biased news. The findings are presented and discussed with reference to the basic research questions that were posed in chapter one.

Research question 1) what was the overall story tone in each newspaper?

One strategy used to detect bias was to examine how neutral the stories were in each newspaper. Neutrality was tested through the overall story tone. As a result, it was decided that the existence of positive /negative news towards an actor in the protest was contradictory to the notion of

neutrality. Depending upon this assertion, the tones of stories of the three newspapers were tested and it was found that the majority of the news were not neutral in presentation.

To explain the above finding it might be useful to look at some specific examples as to how the newspapers were labeled as biased in favor of or against a certain actor in their news. For instance, if we look at stories in *Addis Zemen* it seems they were promoting government interest in two ways. First, the government and its actions were described positively. Second, the protestors /oppositions, who were in contradiction with the government, were negatively covered. This was evidenced since 67.3% of the total stories in *Addis Zemen* were negative to the oppositions. At the same time 25.6% from its entire story were sympathetic to the government.

According to Ballinger (1994) in times of political unrest like protests and demonstrations the national media (in our case the government media) primarily serve the interests of the ruling power. They do this by less positively covering the protestors, condemning their actions as well as by misreporting their voices. The justification Ballinger gave for such negative treatment of protestors was that, protests by their nature challenge the dominant political system. This is because protests are usually conducted for social and political changes. Thus, in order to culminate such threats the media, which is owned by the government, acts as one protector of the interests of the government (Ballinger, 1994).

One finding that made the researcher to argue that *Addis Zemen* was in favor of the government was that it had no story that was negative to this the government. In addition to this *Addis Zemen* refrain to present any news that had positive implication to the protestors. Therefore, such finding might suggest that the only interest that *Addis Zemen* promoted was that of the government. A similar result was found in other government owned media in Ethiopia. Solomon (2005) quoted one journalist saying “Ethiopia radio, let alone, news, even programs that

attempt to criticize the government officials or exposure the weakness of the government will not be tolerated”.

This finding agrees with the media ownership theory developed by Altschull (1995). According to Altschull, those media whom the government controls promote the interests and priorities of the government. This is for the economic reason that the media promotes the interests of those who finance them. As a result, the government owned media (*Addis Zemen*), which is largely financed by government subsidies, promotes government interest and no one else's.

The overall assessment of stories written on *Ethop* and *Reporter* revealed that both papers were largely biased against the government. Though the overall assessment showed both were negative to the government, their degree of negativity was different. *Ethop* was more negative to the government in its news than the *Reporter*. There was no evidence that showed the two newspapers were totally in favor of the oppositions but the highest percentage they gave to the negative depiction of the government in their news has an implication that they indeed took side. According to Nyamnjoh (2004), most privately owned newspapers in Africa are often critical to the government with the assumption that what is anti-government is pro-public. The argument of Nyamnjoh was observed in *Ethop* and *Reporter*. According to the results from the content analysis, 64.4% of *Ethop* news and 59% of *Reporter* news were negative to the government. Once again, Altschull's(1995) theory of media ownership is supported. According to this theory the private/commercial press tends to support and promote the interests of the public because they are the major sources of its money.

Research questions

- 2) What types of sources dominated in each newspaper?
- 3) Was there any significant difference regarding the types of sources used by the newspapers that lead to biased news?

This study also found out that bias is prevalent in the sources cited by *Ethop*, *Addis Zemen* and *Reporter*. According to the findings from the content analysis the newspapers largely depended on some sources at the expense of the others. Based on the literature that says source diversification has paramount importance to get all sides of a story: particularly in times of reporting controversial issues, it can be argued that the over dependence in any of the sources in one-way or the other was used by the newspaper as one means to insert bias.

One interesting finding that was common to the three papers was that sources that fall under 'others' category were frequently used. This result was interpreted in two different ways. One, it has maintained the argument forwarded by Gans (2004); Papa, Susan and Feathersone (2005) that unofficial sources becomes important sources in extraordinary events like demonstrations and protests. Two, it gave evidence for the researcher not to confine with the argument of Graber (2002) as well as Gans (2004) which says journalists most of the times turn their faces to official sources.

A further analysis revealed that 'others' which embraced NGOs, international community, ordinary people and unnamed sources took large percentage in each newspaper. This is because a large number of ordinary people were quoted for their opinion regarding the incidence. But, when it comes to the types of opinion they gave it became visible that there were differences between the information of the 'public opinion' in the government media and those in the privates.

Many of the news *Addis Zemen* carried out, as a 'public opinion' was those that either strongly condemned the oppositions/protestors or those that supported the actions of the ruling power. By contrast, in *Ethop* and *Reporter* the 'public opinion' was presented in such a way that the public was largely convicting the government or supporting the protestors. This kind of misrepresenting the larger public in few people's opinion was also found during the 2003 political unrest in Azerbaijan.

Khudiyev (2003) who conducted a research on how the media covered the 2003 political unrest in Azerbaijan concluded that the government media manipulated few people's idea as if the larger public was on the side of the government.

For Parenti (1986) such kinds of misrepresenting /misreporting the public in news are usually used by the media to divert attention toward certain direction. As a result, by highlighting some peoples opinion over the larger public the media tries to promote a particular agenda that goes along with its interests (Parenti, 1986). This argument quite well fitted with the news of *Reporter*, *Addis Zemen* and *Ethop*. These newspapers tried to highlight few people's opinion as if many people were either supporting or cursing the action of a single actor during the post May 2005 election protests.

In addition to the above finding the study also revealed other supplementary evidences as to the existence of source bias. For instance, in *Addis Zemen* 72 stories out of the 156 were written based on the information collected from government officials and official documents. Informant A confirmed their reliance on officials as “we use official sources as our main sources most of the times and this is for the reason that other sources are not cooperative with us, only because it is a government media they believe we do not present their ideas as it is”.

Such abundance of official sources has great influence on the types of stories reported. In the views of Graber (2002) the over use of official sources give them the opportunity to slant the news to favor the government or to omit information that does not. The study took this as one major factor that might have contributed to have more favorable stories to the government and unfavorable to the oppositions. More over, *Addis Zemen* had only one story that used oppositions as its main source. This in turn implies that the stories were not balanced and fair

(McQuail, 1992). This is because *Addis Zemen* failed to give proportional/equal chance to the main actor of the event.

Another factor that might have increased the degree of bias in *Addis Zemen* was the total denial of some major sources. It cannot be denied that people were killed, injured and arrested during the post May 2005 election protest. This implies that there were high tendencies that victims and witnesses could become major sources of the news during the protest. Despite this assumption, witnesses and victims were totally denied access in *Addis Zemen*. This study took this denial as one possible mechanism that the government media used for political purposes. Almost all the people that were killed, injured and arrested were due to the measures taken by the government police (BBC News, 2005). As a result, to give voices to these types of sources might threaten interests of the government since they might reveal some actions of the police. Therefore, *Addis Zemen*, which is owned and run by the government, chose to withhold such voices. This is also supported by Altschull's (1995) argument that media usually promote the interests of the existing political system by marginalizing those voices that fall outside its' interest.

In an earlier discussion, it was said that *Ethop* was more negative to the government than *Reporter* was. Some strong evidence for such argument was found in *Ethop's* source distribution. The statistical analysis revealed that *Ethop* used opposition sources as nearly twice as great as that of official sources. Numerically, it was 20% for opposition sources and 10.2% to official sources. As the name opposition implies it is very unlikely that *Ethop* received information that supported the government from these sources. For such reason, the researcher took it as one attribute as to why *Ethop* had an overall story tone that was negative towards the government. Unlike *Ethop*, *Reporter* gave almost proportional representation to official and opposition sources. This was confirmed as 14% of the sources were official and 15% were opposition sources in

Reporter news. The result might not tell much about sources dominance but according to informant B they have a trend to give opposition more space in their news “as much as possible we try to give oppositions more coverage in our news this is because they do not have their own outlets”.

Opposition and official sources distribution cannot be attributed to the fact that *Reporter* was balanced and fair in its news. This is because extraordinary events like protests do not only have two sides (Parenti, 1986). Thus, in such cases fairness and balance cannot be attained unless journalists give proportional hearings to those actors that were directly or indirectly concerned with the event (Kasoma cited in Okigobo, 1994). To carry this argument a bit further: *Reporter* failed to give proportional quota other than official and opposition sources, for example, to witnesses, scholars / experts and victims.

The abundant use of media people/journalists, as news sources might also be one reason that *Ethop* and *Reporter* presented biased reports. Statistically, it became 32.2% in *Ethop* and 20% in *Reporter*. But journalists as sources were not significant in *Addis Zemen* because only 4.5% of the news used this sources. According to Hansen and Paul (2004) journalists become sources of news when they personally witness an event/issue. Observation as to Hansen and Paul is highly suitable for bias by its nature. This is because during observation observers are confined to see what they expect and prepared to see. This implies that they ignore other elements of the same event, which they did not expect to see. This has an implication that observations are limited within certain context (Hansen and Paul, 2004). Journalists go out to report being aware of their organizations goals and priorities (Hansen and Paul, 2006). It is with in this context they observe and report the final news. Consequently, what comes as final news is incomplete and inaccurate that only took into account those elements that fit the organizational interests of the media. Such reliance on journalists might also open

space to bias as journalists are people that could chose certain words and expression that best attracts more readers.

One way content was biased in the three newspapers could also be attributed to the minimal or no use of scholars /experts sources. Under the current study it came out that *Ethop* wrote no story that used experts/scholars as its sources, whereas, 5 stories in *Reporter* and 2 stories in *Addis Zemen* used scholars/experts as their main source. In most cases it is believed that information scholars /experts provide are independent, accurate, credible and in depth (Hansen and Paul, 2004). With this in mind it can be argued that the more scholars /experts sources journalists, use the more unbiased the story might be. Thus, this suggests that the minimal use of experts in *Addis Zemen*, *Ethop* and *Reporter* might have increased their tendency to present biased news, which mostly considered their own organizational objectives and goals.

Research questions

- 4) What types of frames were used to present the news in each newspaper?
- 5) Which types of frames were dominantly used in each newspaper?

This study also found out that ownership did affect objectivity in terms of the frames that newspapers used on their news coverage. Framing essentially implies selecting and emphasizing some aspects of an event /reality while down playing others. Consequently, the frame selected to tell a story has great influence to drive attention towards certain aspects of an event, which also could mean to divert attention away from the other aspects of the same event (Entman, 1993).

As the statistics presented in chapter four vividly illustrates the frames that were selected to present the news were different from the government newspaper to those in the private newspapers. The study has also identified that the three newspapers have used a variety of frames, but there was a tendency that a single frame dominated in their

news coverage. The dominance of a single frame in one way implies audience exposure to some features of reality (Siegel, 1996).

The result of this study revealed that the most commonly employed frame in *Ethop* and *Reporter* was the human impact frame. Many of their stories showed to be framed as human impact. This frame accounted for 57.6% in *Ethop* and 54.0% in *Reporter*. *Addis Zemen* employed a different type of story telling frame. According to the finding, responsibility to the opposition frame was the dominant frame. Stories built around responsibility to the opposition frame in *Addis Zemen* amounted to 57.1% of the stories. In short, such differences in frames shows that the newspapers took different angle to present the same event, which was the post May 2005 election protests.

The difference between that of the government and the private owned newspapers was not only with the dominant frames but also with the subsidiary frame. Accordingly, next to human impact frame *Ethop* (18.6%) and *Reporter* (15.0%) employed responsibility to the government frame so as to present the protests as if they were the results of the actions of the government. Meanwhile, *Addis Zemen* seems optimistic about the actions of the government. As a result its news seemed to convey the meaning that the government took actions for the sake of maintaining peace and order in the country. To put it differently, law and order frame was the second dominant frame in *Addis Zemen*, which amounted to 23.1% of the frames.

On the bases of such differences in frames it is inevitable to ask the why question. What was the reason behind the difference in the types of frames employed by the government and that of the private media? Supportive literatures were found as to why the private media were much more concerned with the human aspect of the news. According to Parenti (1986); Radder and Stempel (1942), newsreaders are much more interested to read news that has human elements. That is to mean

people have interests in themselves and other peoples stories. News that tells about deaths and injuries is more readable than those that report issues and figures (Parenti, 1986). With such evidence it was not surprising that the majority news in *Ethop* and *Reporter* were framed as human impact. Operating in a market-driven economy the private papers has to attract more readers by ways of reporting news that fits readers demand. Informant B also supports the selection of the frame, as “there were lots of stories that we covered from the human aspects of the event and that is they way how you do it. If you are serving the public and if you prioritize material destruction it shows your disrespect to the public”.

When looking at frames in *Addis zemen* it can be said that both in its dominant as well as subsidiary frames, *Addis Zemen* seemed to safeguard the interests of the government. *Addis Zemen* did that by ways of labeling the oppositions as the causes of the problem and through justifying the actions of the government as lawful and acceptable. This finding much more coincides with the literature wrote by Wolfsfeld (1997). According to the author, in most cases government media support government actions during crisis and justify its action as right and appropriate.

Another result that supported difference in news framing was that responsibility to the government frame, the second largest frame in *Ethop* and *Reporter*, was left unused by *Addis Zemen*. This might also imply that *Addis Zemen* was pro-government since it framed no news that blamed the government and its actions during the protests.

The analysis of the data also revealed the fact that differences existed between the government and the private newspapers with reference to the rest of the frames. For example, a certain pattern of prominence was detected in the cases of economic and conflict frames. As the statistical analysis shows, a high percentage of economic frame was observed in *Addis Zemen* (9.0%) than *Ethop* (1.7%) and *Reporter* (6.0%). A high

percentage of conflict frame resulted from *Ethop* (11.9%) and *Reporter* (13.0%) than *Addis Zemen* (5.1%). A high percentage of economic frame in *Addis Zemen* suggests that it had more news from the standpoints of official sources (Neuman, Just and Crigler, 1992). Whereas, high percentage of conflict frame in *Ethop* and *Reporter* could be interpreted as, the inherent assumptions of journalists that conflict and confrontation attracts more readers (Gibbs and Wahover, 2002; Neuman, Just and Crigler, 1992).

Research question

6) What types of headlines tone predominate across the newspaper?

This study found more evidence to support Altshcull theory of media ownership impact on content through the differential headline tones the three newspapers showed. In the headline analysis, leaving out the neutral headlines, differences were found in the way in which the government and the oppositions/protestors were presented. However, when neutral headlines are included, the data shows that *Ethop* and *Reporter* devoted nearly half of their headlines to neutral/balanced tone. Though not comparable with the privates, *Addis Zemen* also offered many headlines with neutral/balanced tone.

When we put neutral headlines in figures it amounted to 44.1% of *Ethop*, 44% of *Reporter* and 29.5% of *Addis Zemen* headlines. These headlines were labeled as relatively neutral only because they did not clearly promote /demote one side or the other in the protests or they were relatively straightforward in presenting the facts.

In this study the above neutrality may not necessarily imply the newspapers were objective. Some quantitative evidences come from the frequencies of the non-neutral headlines. As per the data it becomes visible that the newspapers headlines were slanted in favor or against a single actor during the protest coverage. For instance, if we take headlines that had negative tone to the government, *Ethop* had 20;

Reporter had 34, while *Addis Zemen* had none. This data by itself might show that the private newspapers were biased against the government, while, *Addis Zemen* strongly seemed to continue to be optimistic to the government similar to its overall story tone.

When looking at those headlines that were positive to the government *Addis Zemen* made it clear that it was pro-government. In other words *Addis Zemen* had 41 headlines that were favorable to the ruling party. By contrast, *Ethop* and *Reporter* showed low positive frequencies to the government. Numerically, *Ethop* had only 1 and *Reporter* had 4 headlines that depicted the government positively. These findings are supported by the explanations of Nyamjoh (2005) regarding the ways in which headlines are presented in many African media. According to the author, headlines of the private press are usually dedicated to create bad images of the government; however, the reverse is true for the government press. That means the government media usually write headlines that propagates the positive images of the government while leaving out any of its wrong deeds (Nyamjoh, 2005). According to informant “A” many people label them as servants of the government because they highlight the positive aspects “Mostly we use positive headlines that are necessary for the development of the country. We do not use sensational headlines like the privates. Thus, many label us as promoters of government images”.

Comparisons between negative depictions of oppositions revealed that *Addis Zemen* was anti-opposition in most of its headlines. However, *Ethop* and *Reporter* had only few headlines that negatively portrayed the oppositions. Statistically, 69 headlines in *Addis Zemen* were unfavorable to the oppositions; where as, only 2 in *Ethop* and 5 in *Reporter* were negative to the oppositions. On the other hand, when the positive headlines to the oppositions were considered it became visible that there were extreme cases between the private and the government press. According to the statistical analysis, oppositions received substantial

amount of positive headlines in *Ethop* and *Reporter* than *Addis Zemen*, which had none. No other justification can best explain such differential treatment of actors between the headlines of the government and that of the private press than Nyanjmoh's. According to Nyanjmoh (2005) many private Newspapers in Africa use their headlines to create anti - government news based on the assumption it means pro-public. Contrarily, the government media uses headlines as tool for uneven propaganda.

Headline bias was also found in previous study. Hailemarkos (2006) who studied bias during the 2005 election in Ethiopia found that the private media as well as the government media under his analysis were biased either in favor of or against the contestants.

A close look at the headlines also suggested that the newspapers were not objective. Many of the 'neutral' headlines revealed that they contained value loaded, judgmental and sensational words and phrases that convey different meanings. For instance, if we read headlines of the private newspapers words like massacre, crisis, tension, beaten, death atmosphere were quite common. By contrast in the government media words like unconstitutional, unlawful, incitement, condemn sustainable peace and stability, riots, street disobediences were commonly employed.

Research question

7) Were there differences in story placement that might have lead to biased content?

One way to detect media bias is through investigating placement related biases. In the current study a cross tabulation was conducted in terms of placement by headlines, placement by source, placement by frames and placement by overall tone as an investigation for bias.

If one looks at how prominently headlines were placed in *Ethop*, it tends to reinforce the existence of bias. For instance, more headlines (60%) that

were negative to the government were placed in the front pages than in the inside pages (40%). This result signifies that *Ethop* tried to highlight the negative images and wrong deeds of the government in its front pages. Another finding that suggests biased reporting in *Ethop* is the pattern it followed to place headlines regarding opposition. According to table 5, *Ethop* buried the two negative headlines it had towards the opposition in its inside pages. More over, *Ethop* placed more positive headlines to the oppositions in its front pages than its' inside pages. Such findings imply that *Ethop* was favoring the oppositions by ways of hiding their negative deeds in the back pages and through magnifying their positive images in the front pages.

Headline placement in *Reporter* indicates that the newspaper has maintained its' biased reporting against the government and favorable to the opposition in the majority of the cases under analysis. For example, if we look at how *Reporter* placed the positive headlines to the government it became visible that 25% were in the front pages and the remaining 75% in the inside pages. By contrast, more positive headlines to the oppositions were positioned in the front pages. Meanwhile, *Reporter* placed only 20% of the total headlines that were negative to the opposition in the front pages which means the remaining 80 % were hidden in the inside pages. This pattern coincides with that of *Ethop*. This is so because similar to *Ethop*; *Reporter* tried to magnify the positive image of the oppositions either by placing more positive headlines in the front or through hiding negative headlines in the inside pages.

Headlines placement on the different pages of *Addis Zemen* illustrates that its front pages contained more headlines that were positive to the government. According to table 5, more positive headlines (78%) were positioned on its front pages and the remaining 22% were placed in the inside pages. Such result strengthens the argument, which says *Addis Zemen* was promoting positive images of the government. No significant

difference was observed in *Addis Zemen* in its distribution of negative headlines to the opposition.

One common finding that the three newspapers share is all of them placed less neutral headlines in their front pages. Many of the neutral headlines were buried in the inside pages. This in turn suggests that the front pages of the newspapers were much more devoted to the non-neutral (biased) headlines.

News bias was also detected on source placement. The majority of the cases show that the newspapers gave unequal treatment to sources on the different pages. Here the discussion mainly concentrates on how officials, oppositions and scholars/experts were distributed. This is because the researcher believed that the remaining sources placements have less significance to show how biased the newspapers were.

There were similar cases in *Ethop* and *Reporter* that showed biased distribution. The case of official sources is one case. According to table 6 (see chapter four), both the private newspapers placed the majority of the official voices in their back pages. Such pattern signifies that although official sources that were favorable to the government and/or against the opposition were cited they were hidden in the back pages so that unfavorable opinions towards the opposition and/or favorable ideas to the government are de-emphasized. *Addis Zemen*, by contrast, followed a different type of official source placement. As a result the majority (58.3%) of official sources were placed in its front pages. Such finding might suggest that more space on the front pages of *Addis Zemen* was devoted to entertain the views and ideas of the government.

As discussed previously, scholar/expert voices are considered as unbiased and independent. Such unbiased and independent views, however, were suppressed both in *Addis Zemen* and *Reporter*. The statistics shows that 80% of the scholars in *Reporter* and 100% in *Addis Zemen* were placed in their inside pages. Thus, this might support the

finding that the front pages of *Addis Zemen* and *Reporter* much more treated biased opinions than those that were unbiased.

If we look at how opposition sources were distributed, the finding indicates that *Ethop* put more opposition voices on its front pages. Numerically, *Ethop* distributed opposition sources in such a way that 68% were on its front pages and the remaining 38.9% in its inside pages. *Reporter* also followed a similar pattern. But in *Reporter* the difference was not as significant as that of *Ethop*. Accordingly, *Reporter* placed 53.3% of the opposition sources in its front pages and 46.7% in its inside pages. Such results substantiate the previous findings that more than official sources the private press were used as major outlets for the oppositions. Besides, such placement might also suggest that more positive images and ideas regarding the opposition were given prominence on the private press. *Addis Zemen* placed the single opposition source it has on its front page. But such finding was less important to suggest that *Addis Zemen* was biased through its placement. But, it can be assumed that whether this single source was placed in either of the pages it tells about similar idea, either supporting the government or condemning the oppositions.

Looking at how prominently frames were placed – roughly comparable differences were found in the majority of the cases. Although there are not enough of the frames distribution for more detailed analysis and discussions, two vital cases were distinguished that supports the argument of biased coverage based on the difference in ownership. These cases were the distribution of economic frame and responsibility to the opposition frame.

Economic frame placement was identical on the two private newspapers. According to the quantitative results both *Ethop* and *Reporter* placed all (100%) economic framed stories on their inside pages. This result might be interpreted in three ways. First the result might suggest that private newspapers were less interested on the economic angle of the protests.

Second, based on Neuman, Just and Cringler (2004) argument that economic aspect of an event usually comes from official sources, the result might also signify that official voices were buried in the inside pages of *Ethop* and *Reporter*. This finding much more coincides with earlier findings of official placement in *Ethop* and *Reporter*. Third, during the time of the protests the economic aspect of the news was much more related with the action of the protestors (BBC News, 2005). Thus, the present result might imply that *Ethop* and *Reporter* wanted to bury the economic aspect of the crisis so that the actions of the protestors stay off attention.

Addis Zemen followed an opposite placement pattern when it comes to economic frame. According to table 7, more economic framed stories were placed in the inside pages of *Addis Zemen* than on its front pages. This finding suggests that the government media wanted to highlight the actions of the protestors, it also might mean *Addis Zemen* gave prominence to the official voices, which coincide with earlier finding of official sources placement in *Addis Zemen*, or it might also mean *Addis zemen* was concerned with the economic aspect than human aspect of the event, which most probably was the agenda of the government during that time.

The other difference between the private and the government newspapers was vivid on their placement of responsibility to the opposition frame. According to table 7, *Ethop* and *Reporter* followed a similar pattern so that fewer stories from the opposition responsibility angle appear in their front pages. This finding might signify that, though, *Ethop* and *Reporter* labeled the oppositions as responsible in some of their stories they hid most of it in their inside page so that unfavorable coverage towards the oppositions receive less attention.

In *Addis Zemen*, responsibility to the opposition frames was placed in such a way that 51.1% appear on the front pages and the remaining 48.9% in the inside pages. It cannot be said there was significant

difference between the number of stories on the front pages and the inside pages. But, the tendency might show that *Addis Zemen* was following a different pattern to that of *Ethop* and *Reporter*, that is, towards giving more prominence to those news that were unfavorable to the oppositions.

Still some supportive evidence regarding the impact of media ownership was found in story tone placement. For instance, if we look at how *Addis Zemen* placed its stories that were positive to the government, it appeared that more stories (62.5%) were placed on its front pages and the remaining 37.5 % of the stories in its inside pages. This might mean *Addis Zemen* promotes the images of the government, which is much related to our previous findings.

Supportive evidence was detected in *Reporter*. According to the statistical finding, *Reporter* placed all (100%) its negative stories to the oppositions in its inside pages. This might substantiate earlier findings of the study that shows the private press hiding negative contents towards the oppositions in their inside pages so that little or no attentions are given to unfavorable stories to the oppositions. *Ethop* and *Reporter* also put neutral stories in such a way that every few appear in their front pages. This in turn might suggest that non-neutral stories that are considered as biased stories were given prominence in their front pages.

This chapter discussed and made correlations between the findings of the content analysis of the current study, the interview responses, other previous findings and implications of the study. The majority of the cases under analysis showed that, based on the difference in the type of ownership, that is, private and government, there existed biased reporting. The media ownership theory that was developed by Althscull (1995) has justification of such difference. The difference is because the media promotes the interest of those who finance them.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to investigate the impact that the difference in media ownership pattern posed on the objectivity of the news coverage of the post May 2005 election protests. As a strategy to achieve the difference in coverage the study looked in to the existence of bias in news reports. The existence of bias was examined through the difference in story source, story tone, story frame, and headline tone, placement and story type.

The content of a total of 315 news stories from *Addis Zemen*, *Reporter* and *Ethop* were analyzed. In addition, two chief editors: one from the private and the other from the government media were interviewed. Based on the findings of this research the conclusion of the study is summarized as follows:

Bias was detected in the overall story tone each newspapers had. Story tone was analyzed in terms of neutral coverage. In the study it was found that the majority of news of the newspapers tended to be negative/unfavorable or positive/favorable to the traits in the protest. It was found that *Addis zemen* was against the oppositions and also was favorable to the government. By contrast, the two private newspapers were largely negative to the government in the majority of their news.

Un- objective reports were also detected due to the un-proportion source distribution of newspapers. There was unfair distribution of source. Lack of fairness was detected by the over dependence on certain types of sources and also through the minimal or no use of some source. There was a case that the three newspapers used a similar source frequently but the qualitative analysis revealed that the information the sources gave were entirely different based on the difference in ownership. The

newspapers also seemed to consider source that go in line with their organizational goals.

Evidences for bias were also detected on story frames. Based on the difference in ownership the three newspapers used different types of frames/angles to tell the story. Such difference was also found on the subsidiary frames. *Addis Zemen* used frames that either labels the oppositions as the causes of the problems and also frames that safeguard the images of the government. *Ethop and Reporter*, by contrast, used a different angle to highlight the human aspect of the event. They also used frames that do contradict the actions of the government during the political unrest.

The difference in headline tone was another category that showed bias reporting. The non-neutral headlines showed that *Ethop* and *Reporter* were either positive/favorable to the oppositions or negative/unfavorable to the government in many of their headlines. *Addis Zemen*, however, was either favorable/positive to the government or pessimist to the oppositions in many of its headlines.

Placement of the stories, the headlines, story tone and frames were found to differ from the two private papers to that of the government in many of the cases. The newspapers placed those information they wanted to positively promote on their front-pages. They also used this page to exposed some information that the disfavored about the actors. By contrast, they used their inside pages to hidden the unfavorable information to their favorable trait. They also used the inside pages to bury those information that they do not want to receive much attention. In many of their responses the respondents also outlines that the there is difference between news in the government media and that of the privates.

Generally speaking, many news in *Ethop* and *Reporter* were biased either against the government or in favor of the oppositions/protestor. By contrast, *Addis Zemen* was biased in favor of the government or against the oppositions/protestors in the majority of its news. According to Nyamnjoh (2005) the private papers usual are critical and negative to the government on the assumption that what is anti-government is pro – public. Where as, as Altshcull (1995) stated, government media usually promotes the interest of the existing political system. According to the theory of media ownership that Altshcull (1995) developed both the private and the government promote different interests because they promote the interests of their major sources of income.

Absolute objectivity is impossible on the day to day activities of journalists since there might be lots of pressures from their internal as well as external working environment. But they can be balanced, fair and neutral in presentation by giving access to different source, through presenting facts and through entertain various viewpoints. It is though such balanced and neutral coverage that the media can serve the public and its democratic functions (Raboy and Dagnais, 1995).

This study has showed that the types of media ownerships have impact on the media content. More specifically, it had revealed that the lack of objective reporting was due to the fact that the newspapers promoted the interest of their sources of income. That is, there were differences between the coverage of the private media and that of the government media that revealed bias.

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APPENDICE

APENDEX I: CODING PROTOCOL

This research aims at analyzing the coverage of post May 2005 election protest in Ethiopia. It will try to find out if the type of ownership affects news coverage. More specifically, it will try to discover the relationship between media ownership and news objectivity. Newspapers namely, *Addis Zemen*, *Ethop* and *Reporter* are selected as data source. News stories are selected for analysis.

Coding instruction

Date: the month and day of the publication

General story characteristics

1) Newspaper

a) *Addis Zemen* B) *Ethop* c) *Reporter*

2) **Headline tone**: you are requested to identify headlines as positive, negative and neutral with reference to the assigned actor in the headline.

Accordingly, **positive** will be labeled to those headlines that tended to positively or favorably describe actors. Positivity will also be judged on the basis of actor's actions represented as right, lawful and justifiable.

By contrast, **negative** tone was related to headlines that showed tendency to unfavorably describe actors. This group also included those headlines that depicted actor's action as wrong and unlawful.

Headline tone was marked as **neutral** if it conveyed facts in a straightforward manner with out taking any side or if it presented both sides or with out clearly showing tendency to favor or disfavor a single actor.

3) **Story source**: after reading each paragraph identifies types of source and the dominant source as official and un- official sources as

-**Official sources** include any member from the government side and any official statements and documents referred by the journalist.

Identify unofficial sources in the following categories:

Media people/ journalists are members of the media organizations who turn out to be storytellers' rather than being mere reporters.

Victims: this category includes individuals that are directly affected by the tragedy or relatives, friends and parents of the victims.

Witnesses are people who tell about the event, for instance eyewitnesses, these are people who speak what happened during the protest.

Opposition sources include members of opposition parties. This group of sources also includes protesters, those people who were participants in the protest.

Scholars/Experts are people who are sourced due to their profession (like doctors) or analysts (politicians, economists, sociologists and lawyers).

Others: Those sources that neither falls under the official nor the unofficial were coded as others. This category included international community, as well as unnamed sources and ordinary people and people from non-governmental organizations.

4) **Story frame:** identify how the story is told and find the dominance frame as follows After reading each paragraph count the type of frame in the paragraphs:

The **Economic frame** when the news talks about material destructions

The **conflict frame**-if news stories are presented as competitions between actors.

The **human impact frame** when the news tells about killed, injured and beaten persons during the protests.

The **morality frame** –when news covers events in terms of moral and ethical aspect, stories.

Law and order frame– if news gives positive justifications of government measures towards divergent groups.

Responsibility to the government-if the story labels the government as the causes of the problem

Responsibility to the oppositions- if the story labels the oppositions as the causes of the problem

5) **Overall story tone** -label the story tone as follows;

Positive if favorable and positive descriptions of an actor dominate. Positive tone also relates, if the overall story tone tends to promote the actions of actor positively and as right, lawful and successful

Negative- if the overall tone describes actors negatively or unfavorably. This group also includes those stories that depicted actor's action as wrong, or unacceptable.

Neutral - if the overall tone tends to balance between the two opposing interests as well as present the facts objectively.

6) Story Placement

Based on where the news is placed, code the story placement as front page (if it is written on the first page of the newspapers) and inside pages if the stories are placed starting from the second page.

APENDEX 2: CODING SHEET

Name of the newspaper-----

Issued date-----

Story ID	Placement type	Headline Tone	Story source	Story Frame	Overall story tone

Appendix 3. Interviews with editors

With Reporter (informant B)

1. How long have you worked as a journalist?

* I have worked for more than 25 years

2. How long have you worked as an editor?

* It is easy for me to say almost all. I have been working with higher positions in different media organizations.

3. Do you have any training in journalism?

* None.

6. In your daily activities who are your major sources of news?

* Our sources could be witnesses, documents, or any who acted and becomes a major source of news

7. Do you use official sources?

* Yes

8. Are they willing to give you information as you want?

* Some of them do while others do not give unless it is a government media

9. Why?

* Sometimes it is because many of them do not understand the value of the information while some may not give us information because we do not present the news, as they want it.

10. Do you use opposition as sources?

* To your surprise, as much as possible we try to give oppositions more coverage in our news. This is because they do not have their own outlets.

11. What is the major source of income for your reporter?

* Mainly from advertisement and also to some extent from direct sale.

12. What do you do that you attract readers?

* In many cases our newspaper is not geared towards attracting more readers. What we outline in our daily routine is that, inform the public and then they will be attracted to you.

13.what types of headlines do you usually write?

*We present only facts. If the government is doing better we tell that in our headline .if we see wrong deed we expose that. The same hold true for other party's coverage

14.how did you cover the protest?

* We assigned five of our journalists to go out and report each and every thing that happened

15 I have seen some of your news during the post May 2005 election protests. They seemed to highlight the cost of human deaths and injuries. What do you think about that?

* Indeed there were lots of stories that we covered from the human aspect of the event and that is the way to do it. If you are serving the public and if you prioritize material destruction it shows your disrespect to the public

With Addis Zemen(informant A)

1.How long have you worked as a journalist?

* I have worked for more that 14 years in different government owned media

2.How long have you worked as an editor?

* More that seven years

3.Do you have any training in journalism?

* I only have three weeks training. .

6.Let us talk about how you carry out news. Who are your major sources of news?

*We use sources government sources as our main sources most of the times and this is for the reason that other sources are not cooperative with us, only because it is a government media they believe we do not present their ideas as it is.

7. Has their been any interference from the government that might affect your news production?

* There is no as such direct government interference. There is a policy that we peruse.

8. Do you think that the policy allow you to report any news?

*Our newspapers is a government owned, so, it serves the government .How ever; this does not mean there is a direct interference.

9. What is the major source of income for your Addis zemen?

*It is from the government budget.

10. Do you think that you satisfy readers?

*I do not think we are serving the public thus we do not have many readers

11. Has their been any news that challenged your personal integrity but you made it as news?

*Of course there are but as far as you are employed in a certain organization you have to do it. This case is not only applied in media but also even other organizations.

12. What types of headlines do you usually write?

* Mostly we use positive headlines that are necessary for the development of the country. We do not use sensational headlines like the privates. Thus, many labels as only promoters of government images

13.I have seen some of your news during the post 2005 election protests.

They were having difference with that of the privates. What do you think about that?

* Yes we were writing news that mostly condemning violence and promote peace and stability.