

Addis Ababa University  
School of Graduate Studies  
School of Journalism and Communication

**Self-Censorship in News Production: The Case of Ethiopian Radio  
and Television Agency**



By

Gelila Zekarias Aregawi

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A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in  
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Advisor

Dr. Gebremedhin Simon

June 2014

Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Gelila Zekarias entitled: *Self-Censorship in news production, the case of Ethiopian Radio and Television Journalists* submitted in partial fulfillment for the Degree of Master of Arts (Social Science) complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## Acronyms

ERTA:	Ethiopia Radio and Television Agency
ENA:	Ethiopian News Agency
USA:	United States of America
AAU:	Addis Ababa University
DWET:	Dimitsi Woyane Tigray
EPRDF:	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
TPLF:	Tigrayan People's Liberation Front
FM:	Frequency modulation

## Abstract

Self-censorship in news production: the case of ERTA

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There are indications that Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency journalists practice self-censorship in news production. Self-censorship is the tendency to leave out or omit partially or fully a news item. The main objective of this study is to explore how wide spread the practice is among Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency journalists and how often is the practice and the reasons for the practice. By situating the issue on the two basic theoretical frame work of social control (McQuail 1984) and gatekeeping (Lewin 1947) theory the study outlines and estimates the practice of self-censorship in the specific organization.

A blend of the qualitative and quantitative methodologies was used to collect data. The qualitative methodology includes an in-depth interview used to collect the data on such issues; how wide spread journalists practice self-censorship and how often they censor their work and the reasons for the practice. The quantitative methodology was used to collect extra information which was not addressed by the above. The quantitative methodology was conducted by distributing self completion questionnaires.

The study found out that the majority of the journalists in the news and current affairs department of Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency practice self-censorship. When they practice sometimes they avoid the news or the issue itself or they change the tone of the news or the article. The common reasons for the practice are economic or issue of survival, cultural or norms of the society and political reasons. To minimize the practice of self-censorship journalists a concerted effort should be exerted to enhance the degree of professionalism of the journalists.

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The mass media in Ethiopia consists of radio and television, which remain under the control of the Ethiopian government, as well as private newspapers and magazines. In comparison to the length of Ethiopia's over 2,000 years' history as a sovereign nation, the media is a very recent phenomenon. Even if the level of censorship was different from era to era in a different shape Censorship has been practiced starting from the Imperial period to present. There are different reasons for practicing censorship. During the imperial period, there was one office around AAU SJC Abuna Pétros campus near to Awalia School which worked on censorship.

When the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power in 1991, one of their first act was to give the Ethiopian media far more freedom than it had previously experienced, ending the censorship that had prevailed for decades under both the derg and the imperial regime, these rights have since been renege gradually, in particular since the elections in 2005.

Self-censorship occurs in several positions in media administrations all over the world. For many reasons, journalists censor themselves in producing news and other kinds of stories. As a result, they consciously or unconsciously withhold information and reshape

the content of such stories. Self-censorship is commonly defined as the conscious suppression of one's ability and right or freedom to express one-self.

Culturally, Ethiopians have attachments thus often censor before speaking for and or to someone. This shows self-censorship is applied in every sector of our daily communication. But journalists, in particular are often blamed of self-censorship because their act might have a serious consequence on the nation or on the audience they are serving. Media administrations in a different place private and state media in Ethiopia practice self-censorship when they produce news due to several reasons.

This study explores self-censorship and its causes in Ethiopia radio and television agency /ERTA/ owned by the state and run by the government media. While examining self-censorship in the ERTA context, the study also considers to what level does practicing it shape the tone of the news.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Ethiopia is a new emerging country in promoting and endorsing democracy and democratic imperatives. The struggle of maintaining freedom and democracy needs the upholding of freedom of speech and expression. The issue of self-censorship has been discussed and debated by scholars throughout the world. Even though a number of articles have been written about the Ethiopian media, only a few have touched upon self-censorship. These include Gezahegn Teji's (2007), 'Music censorship in contemporary

Ethiopia'; Hailegebriel Endeshaw's (2005), 'Ethical issues in news reporting and broadcasting with particular reference to the Ethiopian Herald newspaper' and Solomon Alemu's (2005), 'Censorship and ethics: Practices and problems in Ethiopian Television'. This study will expand this rare research, examine self-censorship more deeply, and perhaps division of more academic studies.

The study attempted to find out the occurrence of self-censorship practice in ERTA and to explore its degree of practice and reasons. The idea of media freedom covers both the degree of freedom valued by the media and the degree of sovereignty and access of citizens to media content. The crucial norm is that media should have certain independence, sufficient to protect free and open public expression of ideas and information.

The study may also be useful to differentiate the line between being responsible and practicing self-censorship. As Skejerdal in 2008 state if the individual journalist rejects self-censorship as unethical, what is the reasoning process that in the end seems to justify the practice or at least enables one to live in peace with one's conscience. This study will address such confusions because it is believed that journalists need to be more responsible on the delivery of information but that doesn't mean they should avoid the fact or change the fact and report contradictory information. This study could be used as a starting point for those who would like to understand media self-censorship in Ethiopia and who would like to do more research on the reason of the practice

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

#### **1.3.1 General objective**

The general objective of the study is to explain the practice of self-censorship among journalists in Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency.

#### **1.3.2 Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of the study are

- To find out how many and how often journalists in ERTA practice self-censorship
- What journalists actually do in self-censorship
- To find out the journalists reasons for practicing self-censorship

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study attempt to answer the following questions:

- How many journalists and to what extent they practice self-censorship?
- What are the common instances or examples of self-censorship?
- What are the common reasons forwarded by the journalists for self-censorship?

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The study focuses only on state-owned media, particularly in ERTA journalists. This study tried to investigate the practice of self-censorship and its reasons to practice.

Studying the contextual of self-censorship thoroughly and in detail is important in order to have a clear image of what is going on in the targeted media organization; however, the different ways to define self-censorship and professionalism made the research challenging.

### **1.6 Limitation of the study**

The study does not include private media outlets due to time restriction. The study examines self-censorship, not any other form of censorship. Some respondents did not fully address the interview question and the questionnaires. Some respondents also hesitated to state their views freely. Thus, the identification of interviewees is not given and their definite responses kept unidentified. Written material on self-censorship in Ethiopia was very difficult to find and so was transcribing and translating of recorded interviews, which was time-consuming.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Following the previous chapter which deals with the objective, research questions, scope and organization of the research. This chapter two will deal with the theoretical framework and scholarly theories underpinning the study, background of Self-censorship, types and forms of self-censorship and review of different relevant literatures. In doing so an attempt has been made to show the general image of self-censorship. This chapter also discusses and challenges the research questions (How many journalists and to what extent they practice self-censorship? What are the common instances or examples of self-censorship? What are the common reasons forwarded by the journalists for practicing self-censorship?) scholars and different literatures will address the research question and the theories shape the general feature of the research.

#### **2.2 Broadcast media in Ethiopia**

The broadcasting sector in Ethiopia has broadly three different kinds of broadcasters: 1) publicly funded television and radio services owned by national and regional mass media agencies 2) commercial sector radio stations; and 3) community broadcasters that were licensed in 2008 and are largely in the process of establishing themselves. In total there are 31 radio and television stations registered in the country; six of these stations are

operated by five private radio broadcasters and the remaining are a combination of state owned and community broadcasters.

According to the above distinctions the radio and television sector is comprised of: the publicly owned radio and television stations include Ethiopia Radio, Ethiopian Television and FM Addis 97.1 and these are all a part of the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency, which has near national coverage and can be received across the country through a network of transmitters. These stations provide multilingual news and programming across Ethiopia. The local radio and television stations owned by the regional mass media agencies include: Addis Television (ETV 2) and FM 96.3 (Addis Ababa Mass Media Agency); Amhara FM and FM Bahir Dar (Amhara Mass Media Agency); South FM 100.9 (South Mass Media Agency); Dire Dawa FM 106.1 and Dire Dawa Television (Dire Dawa Mass Media Agency); Oromia TV, Oromia Radio and Finfine FM (Oromia Mass Media Agency); Harar FM (Harari Mass Media Agency); Mekelle FM (Tigray Mass Media Agency). The Harari and Somali mass media agencies are setting up two further television stations in their respective regions. These stations generally have a reception range of anything up to 150km but as little as 10km in some areas.

According to Ethiopia media mapping 2011, Ward, D. electoral reform international services, there are a total of five commercial radio broadcasters which are included in the second ground: Afro FM, Dimitsi Woyane Tigray (DWET), Fana Broadcasting Corporation, Sheger FM and Zami FM. Four of these: Afro FM, Fana Broadcasting Corporation, Sheger Radio and Zami FM are located in Addis Ababa. Both DWET and

Fana Broadcasting Corporation have historical associations with the TPLF and EPRDF respectively, but are today legally registered as private companies. The Fana Broadcasting Corporation operates two radio stations: Fana FM and Fana Radio. Their transmission range varies: Fana Radio is the only broadcaster apart from ERTA that has near national coverage, Afro FM estimates a footprint of 100km radius and Sheger and Zami have a transmission radius of 40km in and around Addis Ababa. The final private radio broadcaster, Dimitsi Woyane Tigray (DWET), operates in Mekelle and has an estimated transmission range of 1,500km. Eight community radio broadcasters are registered.

The third group is the community radio stations it cover a radius ranging from 16km-75km and their population coverage varies significantly. In some cases they have a limited reach of 16,000 and in other cases this rises up to 1.5 million potential listeners. These stations include: Argoba Radio, Kombolcha Radio, Kefa Radio, Waghimra Radio, Sudie Radio, Jimma Radio, Korrie Radio and Kembata Radio. These stations largely rely on a volunteer.

### **2.3 Background and Overview of Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency**

It is estimated that there are 2000 journalists in the state media and 500-600 in the private or “independent” media. Journalists are employed in the broadcasting media, which consist of large media institutions and are the only media with nationwide coverage.

A study indicated that, the largest institution, the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA), employs around 512 journalists in television and 560 in radio. Around 45 journalists work in news production and current affairs department. The agency is essentially a wire service and serves as a hub for media information flowing in and out of the country, with exchange agreements with international news bureaus. In a country with more than 80 languages, it is difficult to establish nationwide radio/TV programming. Traditionally a rather high percent of the urban population understand Amharic, and most radio and TV programs are available in that language. Currently a few programs in radio and television are produced in other languages.

The media institutions in Ethiopia have been state-owned. ERTA was established during Emperor Haile Selassie's reign and dates back to 1935 on the radio side and 1964 on the television side (Brook, 2000). It continued to be actively used as the official broadcaster by the military regime 1974–1991. The current editorial policy from 2005 (only in Amharic) expresses that it is a government media institution, and its primary function is to serve the public. It is a major source of information for the Ethiopian government media, but also for foreign media outlets through exchange agreements with international news agencies, such as Reuters, Xinhua and AFP.

News and current affairs department was selected for the study because the department is the one where self-censorship applies among the most influential departments the institution has and because they employ a considerable number of journalists.

## **2.4 Self-censorship in the media**

It is indicated that self-censorship is the act of leaving or classifying one's own work such as blog, book, film, news, program or other means of expression. The reasons for the practice could be out of fear of, or deference to, the sensibilities of others, without overt pressure from any institution of authority. Journalists in particular practice self-censorship in order to keep themselves from any inconvenient or sometimes they practice to secure the nation they are serving. (Chomsky and Herman 1988)

Self-censorship can also occur in order to conform to the expectations of the market. For example, the editor of a journal may consciously or unconsciously avoid topics that will anger advertisers, customers, or the owners in order to protect her or his livelihood either directly or indirectly. The media can disseminate human rights information, mobilize human rights NGOs, strengthen popular participation in civil society, promote tolerance, and shine a light on governmental activity. Yet, without the presence of communication receivers and other technological supports that today's media rely on, the benefits of free and open media would be controversial. Human rights advancement requires both unrestricted media and a reachable audience. Studies expose that in most undemocratic and on authoritarian countries, creators of artworks may remove material that their government might find controversial for fear of sanction by their governments.

Researchers define self-censorship in different ways, regularly dependent on natural features. According to Kasoma, "One of the most abhorrent forms of censorship, which

hounds the press in Africa, is self-censorship. Self-censorship is based on fear of persecution, which either the journalist or her/his close associate(s) have experienced” (Kasoma, 2000: 93).

Chin-Chuan Lee in his research into journalism cultures in Hong Kong, defined self-censorship as:

A set of editorial actions ranging from omission, dilution, distortion, and change of emphasis to choice of rhetorical devices by journalists, their organizations, and even the entire media community in anticipation of currying reward and avoiding punishment from the power structure. (1998, 57)

Self-censorship describes fear sensed by media practitioners themselves or colleagues in the process and gathering news. Some fear politicians as (Solomon, 2005:9). Explain this fear may link to press freedom or lack of press freedom directly or indirectly and to freedom of expression.

#### **2.4.1 Types of self-censorship**

According to Cook and Heilmann (2010) there are two types of self-censorship which are indicated in this chapter below.

#### **2.4.1.1 Passive versus Active**

Active self-censorship is a practice where journalists withhold or alter information already gathered because its broadcasting or publishing could lead to unwanted tensions of a political, social or cultural nature.

Passive self-censorship, on the other hand, occurs when the journalist or the news desk decides not to cover an issue or begin the collection of certain information. Journalists are more concerned on active self-censorship because it puts them in a position where they can easily be recognized. Active censorship imposes more responsibility on the journalist, while passive self-censorship is easier to justify because it comes out as an act which is collectively decided by the news desk. Passive self-censorship thus prevents reporting the whole picture and is a major factor increasing dissatisfaction among journalists. It is journalists' duty to report the truth to people. Yet some journalists, even those working for media that claim to uphold press freedom, practice sometimes active self-censorship or passive self-censorship it depends on the issue they write and report.

#### **2.4.1.2 Public and private**

In public self-censorship, individuals restrain their expressive attitudes in response to public censors. In private self-censorship, individuals do so in the absence of public censorship. Private self-censorship may occur when an agent acts on behalf of a public agent or when individuals constitute their own censorship regime absent a public agent.

There are different forms of self-censorship as well, among those self-censorship guided by the media, self-censorship out of fear of losing one's job or career, Self-censorship to avoid stories affecting their media organization, self-censorship on specific stories due to pressure from the organization, self-censorship on stories that could hurt advertisers, self-censorship to avoid defamation, invasion of privacy, national security issues, self-censorship in the face of press law and self-censorship to appease bosses or government authorities are the majors.

Ethiopia's state-owned media endorse and circulate the same editorial policy, which its editors and reporters are required to follow. This may require selective reporting of facts and stories, which is a form of self-censorship. Some scholars like Cronau describe self-censorship guided by the media as the process of self-censorship which can develop in journalists from an internalizing of the values of the news organization in which they are working. Over time, through training and a form of socialization, journalists develop a set of news values, an ability to know what makes for good news and what doesn't. That set of values is absorbed from the news values of their media organization, and from other journalists they work with from the culture of their workplace. Unless journalists follow the laws or editorial policy of their media houses, they may be fired. As Kohut notes, Journalists may censor themselves when reporting about their own news organization.

As Gans points out, "Journalists are employed professionals working for mainly commercial news media that try to supply what the news audiences will accept and what

advertisers will pay for” (Gans, 2003:21). So they may avoid stories involving “profit pressures” or triggering “budget reductions” (Gans, 2003:24). The problem can be acute even in developed countries. Kohut quotes a joint survey by the Columbia Journalism Review (CJR) and the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (PRCPP), noting: “About three-in-ten (journalists) believe that stories are ignored because they might conflict with the financial interests of their news organizations or advertisers.”

Government attacks on the media often claim defamation, invasion of privacy or violation of national security, regardless of the validity of these concerns. In Botswana, for instance, Good (1994) notes, “the existence and occasional utilization of laws on sedition encourages self-censorship.” (Cited in Nebiyu, 2008:7).

Journalists may fear government laws that affect or control the media. Tettey says that “among the hindrances to press freedom are the maintenances of anachronistic laws on libel and sedition, censorship, physical harassment of journalists and the violation of their premises and equipment, denying them access to inputs and audiences debilitating media laws, etc.” (Tettey, 2001:8).

According to Solomon (2005), journalists practicing self-censorship often favor government authorities over other groups with different views in a number of ways. For instance, information could be suppressed in such ways as choosing safe-side, avoiding sensitive issues or giving responsibilities to faithful bosses, suppressing the stories in

favor of politicians in power, giving emphasis for official speeches over other significant events and unquestioning the news worthiness of events where government authorities involve (Solomon, 2005: 11).

## **2. 5 Theoretical framework**

The study is informed by two theoretical frame work: The social control theory of McQuail 1984, and the gatekeeping theory of Kurt Lewin 1947. Social control is one of the key concepts in the modern social and political sciences. Its idea is potentially and extremely useful in understanding social life. Alternatively, gatekeeping is the process of culling and crafting countless bits of information into the number of messages that reach to people every day and it is the center of media's role in modern public life. This study situate the two theories in relate to self-censorship practice.

### **2.5.1. Social control theory**

In the early 20th century, the theory of social control emerged to describe how social systems force individuals to conform to specific rules; no matter the belief system is different. According to McQuail, (1984), social control theory is the authority must prove its legitimacy by way of ideology and awareness. The theory suggests that people engage in criminal activity when their bond to society has weakened. Social control theory refers to a perspective which predicts that when social constraints on antisocial behavior are weakened or absent, wrong behavior emerges. In other words, when an individual has experienced a lack of social connections or a lack of social network that would normally

prohibit criminal activity, the likelihood that the individual will participate in criminal activity increases.

McQuail (1984:212) defines social control as "... systematic tendencies to propagate conformity to the established order and reaffirm the legitimacy of existing authority, by way of ideology and the 'consciousness industry.'" It follows that individuals need to comply with the established order or norms; and consider also the "legitimacy of the existing order" consciously. The social control theory seems all about complying with certain laws or norms.

Social controls can be formal or informal. Formal social control is internalized through laws statutes, rules, and commands that function to maintain norms. Under this sort of control, individuals, in this case journalists may be forced to abide by the government laws or press laws to maintain the established order. Punishments include fines and imprisonment.

Unlike formal social control, under informal social control, individuals follow the customs, traditions, norms and other social values of traditional society. Without explicitly stated rules to enforce, sanctions can be informal: ridicule, sarcasm, criticism and disapproval. Thus they select issues or events in the process of abiding by the policy of their media houses. For instance, state-owned media outlets use their own ways of presenting headlines or news, which differ from independent media houses. In this regard, policy can be a starting point to set rules and regulations.

In connection with setting news policies and its followers, (Breed, 1955:327) classifies newsmen into two. "Executives" include the publisher and his editors, "Staffers" are reporters, rewrite men, copy readers etc. In between there may be occasional city editors or wire editors.

Breed insists that conformity to rules is "not automatic" even though "the publisher does set news policy and members of his staff usually follow this policy." To excuse deviant behavior, Breed mentions ethical journalistic norms, the staff's liberal attitudes and perceptions; and the publisher's hesitation to force the staff to follow newsroom policy.

According to Breed (1955:327),

Policy is covert, due to the existence of ethical norms of journalism; policy often contravenes those norms. No executive is willing to risk embarrassment by being accused of open commands to slant a news stories.

This breach of ethical norms can create "conflicts among the interests or attitudes of staffers and executives" (Breed, 1955:327). Self-censorship and social control theory are correlated on their nature of reserve information from the audience or from the targeted body. Self-censorship occurs when journalists themselves prevent the publication of information or when they prevent themselves from report the issue to be broadcast. On the other hand social control is reserving information because of laws and norms.

### 2.5.2 Gatekeeping theory

Gatekeeping is a process by which filtered information goes through to the public by radio, TV, or newspapers. Social psychologist Kurt Lewin first coined the phrase 'gatekeeping', referring to a mother who, as a gatekeeper for a family meal, decides what food ends up the dinner table (Lewin1947). He then noted how gatekeeping could determine the passage of a news item through communication channels in a group (Lewin, 1947). By acknowledging Lewin's comments, in 1950, White (1964) related the idea to journalism. In the 1970s McCombs and Shaw modified this idea, noting how audiences understand the value of a news item. Hence, they linked gatekeeping to agenda setting (McCombs et al., 1976).

More recently, Fourie states that: "the gatekeeper concept is now 50 years old and has slipped into the language of many disciplines, including gate keeping in organizations" (Fourie, 2004: 54). Fourie refined the definitions of gatekeeping and gatekeepers. gatekeeping can be defined as the process through which certain information passes a series of checkpoints (gates) before being finally accepted as news material. Gatekeepers are the people or groups that have an impact on this process. They are part of the news organization and their influence can also extend beyond the daily tasks of news identification, newsgathering and publication.

Fourie's definition identifies gatekeepers and gatekeeping as a pre-publication process, with those journalists (editors and reporters) who, directly or indirectly, select news or any information and make final decisions for publication. Berger's definition of

gatekeepers is similar: “Individuals in media organizations who decide what will be shown or written about” (Berger, 1995: 64).

Gatekeepers are crucial to gate keeping theory. While gatekeeping controls the flow of information, and gatekeepers decide what passes and what stops (Gate keeping, 2006). In the context of journalism, gatekeepers control what the public knows about events by allowing some stories to be on air and keeping other stories from being presented. Berger expands the idea by stating that:

gatekeeping theory demonstrates to us that the news we get is, in the final analysis, someone’s view of what is important news or news that will attract and keep the attention of readers or audiences – not necessarily what is important news (Berger, 1995: 65).

As Chris Roberts mentioned on his doctoral research gatekeeping theory may also describe how editors and reporters decide what the news will be. Media gate keeping showed that decision-making is based on principles of news values, organizational routines, input structure and common sense. As journalists, acting as gatekeepers, select news, they may make decisions that may have vastly different consequences. In some circumstances gatekeeping can be useful and it can also be dangerous, since it can lead to an abuse of power by deciding what information to discard and what to be broadcast.

Gatekeeping theory relates to the mass media and organizations. In mass media the focus is on the organizational structure of newsrooms and events (Gatekeeping, 2006). Gatekeeping theory explains how newsrooms operate by gathering news, processing information and producing news items.

The primary effect of gatekeeping, according to Fourie, “is that it changes the media’s original message in some way. What readers read in a newspaper or hear or see on radio and television is thus seldom an accurate reflection of reality” (Fourie, 2004: 205). As he notes, gatekeeping “seriously influences the content of newspapers. It leads to the evaluation of news and the creation of news reality” (Fourie, 2004: 205). So, for example, reporters or editors may smooth, soften, or change the tone of news stories. Consequently, what is on air would more likely reflect the perceptions of reporters and editors rather than reality of the news event.

The most important gatekeeping activity occurs within the news organization, involving two stages, newsgathering and news processing (Fourie, 2004). His model outlines how writers, reporters, local editors and translators gather news and how editors and copyeditors turn it into copy and a completed story. This model shows that journalists who gather and process news are gatekeepers and how individual preferences are crucial to gatekeeping. The journalists identify events, select details and supervise publication.

At each step, gatekeeping theory suggests, these journalists, as gatekeepers, impose the values of their newsroom to produce news that reflects more their perceptions of news than its reality. So journalists' individual preferences are crucial in gatekeeping. As Van Heerden, (1996). emphasizes, gatekeeping remains a necessity so long as it is not used consciously to obscure facts or slant the perception of the reader or audience. When used deliberately to mislead, gatekeeping becomes unacceptable.

The link between gatekeeping theory and self-censorship is both prevent the flow of free information. On gatekeeping theory there are gatekeepers who control the gate. Those gatekeepers have the access to decide which issue in what way can be present. In the case of practicing self-censorship the editors could be the gate keepers who can decide which issue need to be broadcast and when it can be on air.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the qualitative and quantitative methods used to carry out the study. The study triangulate the three data results; in depth interview, questionnaire and editorial policy. This triangulation approach offers “a combination of research methods that will produce a better and deeper understanding” (Hansen et al., 1998: 1). Qualitative research is one of the two primary approaches to conduct social science research. At the core, qualitative research focuses on the meanings, traits and defining characteristics and it is a superior means for conducting meaningful research. The chapter also explains the methods of data collection, such as individual in-depth interviews, questionnaire, and refer the editorial policy of ERTA.

#### **3.2 Qualitative methodology**

The study’s main approach is qualitative, using in-depth interviews of journalists, i.e. reporters and editors. “Qualitative research is concerned with the interpretation of subjective meanings, description of social context and the privileging of lay knowledge” (Fossey et al., 2002: 723). The study’s key qualitative method is in-depth interview. Lindlof (1995) describes the importance of interviews. In qualitative research, one interviews people to understand their perspectives on a scene, to retrieve experiences

from the past, to gain expert insight or information, to obtain descriptions of events or scenes that are normally unavailable for observation, to foster trust, to understand a sensitive or intimate relationship, or to analyze certain kinds of discourse. (Lindlof, 1995: 5)

### **3.3 Quantitative methodology**

The study used self-completion questionnaires to fill the gap which was created during in-depth interview because there are some points which were not addressed on the face to face interview and focus group discussion. The self-completion questions emerged after the individual in-depth interviews. According to Holland and Campbell (2005: 242), “Quantitative research prioritizes descriptive analytical breadth of coverage and produces data in the form of numbers that can be aggregated and analyzed to describe and predict relationships.”

The self-completion questionnaires included questions such as what type of pressure the journalists are facing in their daily work and whether these put limitations on them when reporting. During the in-depth interview if the journalists hesitate to respond face to face this method help the researcher to get more information.

### 3.4 Data collection methods

Qualitative research attempts to go beyond surface features to reach a deeper understanding of the subject. To do this, in-depth interviews were employed in the study. Moreover to triangulate the study and in order to avoid any bias and false responses, the researcher used self-completion questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

#### 3.4.1 In-depth interviews

There are around 47 journalists in ERTA news and current affairs department and from those 30 journalists (editors and reporters) working in Ethiopian radio and television agency were interviewed about self-censorship. The interviews, each semi-structured and unstructured, probed the concept, the possible practices, and the likely cause of self-censorship in the state-owned media. (Appendix A). In addition to the in-depth interview focus group discussion was arranged even if it was not that successful but it took place in ERTA lounge but the participant's loss consensus and it failed to achieve its objective.

#### 3.4.2 Questionnaires

Total Number of Journalists working in ERTA news and current affairs department	No. of questionnaires distributed	No. of respondents
47	35	21

The 21 respondents included editors, assistant editors, senior editors, deputy editors and editor-in-chief reporters and senior reporters. The questionnaire is attached on the

appendix part (Appendix B). The content of the questions are designed based on the objective of the study and also by rotating the research questions and the information collected from interview helped to design the contents of the questionnaires.

According to Deacon et al., questionnaires are “printed documents that people complete on their own. This is the most structured form of questioning because no intermediary is involved in presenting the questions or recording answers” (Deacon et al., 1999: 64). Bryman identifies the research strength of such questionnaires, noting how “objectivity is maintained by the distance between observer and observed along with the possibility of external checks upon one’s questionnaire” (Bryman, 1988). The editorial policy of the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency was also referred and some chapters are attached in (Appendix D).

### **3.5 Sampling method for selecting participants**

I started by submitting a supporting letter to the director of ERTA. This was the only option I get to access the editorial policy and to interview journalists the director should give permission to proceed with the topic. Then one of the journalists introduced other staff members to find other interviewees to arrange a place for interviews and to organize colleagues to answer the interview guide and the questionnaire. The journalist who were interviewed were assigned by myself it was a random selection. To avoid bias I picked the journalists in different time. List of interviewees is attached in (Appendix C).

## Chapter Four

### Data Presentation and Analysis

#### 4.1 Introduction

The collected data were analyzed in terms of literature and research questions. The interviews took place in appropriate places where the interviewees felt more comfortable and their privacy was secured as far as ethical consideration is concerned. As stated in the introductory chapter, the main objective of the study is to find out how many journalists and how often they practice self-censorship, what aspects of news or what type are self-censored and what are the common reasons for practicing self-censorship. This chapter will address the objective of the study and the research questions as well.

The research findings indicate that in ERTA journalists practice self-censorship. The majority numbers of the journalists employ self-censorship due to economic, political and cultural reasons. Around 47% of ERTA news and current affairs department journalists change the tone of the news always and around 23% apply it sometimes but as the finding indicate 30% of the journalists didn't change the tone. As the data indicate sometimes the practice is conditional they apply it in some hard issues in order to protect the nation.

## 4.2 Self-censorship and ERTA journalists

The research found that different meanings were recognized to the concept of self-censorship according to the journalist's understanding and experience. Here, journalists refer to both editors and reporters. Editors in this research include editor in chief, deputy editor in chief, senior editors, assistant editors and other editors, whereas reporters represent both senior reporters and regular reporters or freelancers.

Different editors and reporters from ERTA were interviewed about their understanding of self-censorship. Journalists in the state media outlet apply developmental journalism. However, when it comes to their perception of self-censorship, some differences are noticed. For instance, journalists who relate the definition of self-censorship with obeying and respecting policies, some take it as editorial policy of the organization.

It is mentioned that they practice self-censorship in order to satisfy their director and editor. Due to the fact that, most of the editors and directors often get chosen to their positions, they thus never tolerate or allow any issues that reflect bad or negative image of the government. To the contrary, some respondents who were editors said that journalists, can criticize the outcome of any policy but they cannot criticize the policy itself. For instance, journalists may comment on lack of good governance and its impact and outcome on the society, but they cannot say that this particular policy is good or bad. Besides, some journalists believe that they practice self-censorship because of the culture that the organization has and practiced.

From the explanations of self-censorship another Informant respond,

In Africa particularly in Ethiopia, self-censorship occurs extremely, especially here in ERTA. Sometimes it is from fear. It touches the journalist from different angles and you cannot resist the penalties. Because of that, every journalist practices It. (senior reporter)

Some informants also said “Self-censorship is a restriction which giveaway one’s self-assurance and keeps somebody from doing the exact thing. Briefly, it is an exclusion which you execute on yourself.” Alternatively the other Informant understood self-censorship as it is a thinking that takes place before producing the news.

It is in fact a way of contrasting any counter-productive news that goes against the editorial policy and government laws. When they discussed how much the government and the editorial policy give them approval

The government does not forbid us from writing any article professionally and honorably. But it is the culture that forces the journalist to practice self-censorship. We passed through a trend in which we experienced to transfer very limited information to the society. We usually observe when our close associates practice it and you would also join them believing that should be the proper way because they have more experience than the fresh journalists do.

For some journalists, self-censorship is saving oneself from doing any mistakes. As they explain they often check any information at hand before it reaches the public and they ask themselves what consequences and interpretations would this information carry to the public?

The journalists interviewed subordinates' the perception of self-censorship with preserving the editorial policies. They believe that they practice self-censorship when they are applying what is specified in the editorial policies. Journalists are expected to follow the principles and objectives of the editorial policy of ERTA.

Generally, their definition mostly rotates around laws, policies, principles, the Ethiopian Constitution and selection of news items. In this regard, the gatekeeping theory, as defined by Fourie (2004) in the literature review – “the process through which certain information passes a series of check-points (gates) before being finally accepted as news material” is applicable. By “series of check-points” Fourie refers to editorial policies and even editors themselves. These determine or decide what information to pass or discard before any news articles are on air.

Differences in the definition of self-censorship were observed. Certain respondents believe that practicing self-censorship arises from the internal fear they sense within themselves. Another respondent related self-censorship to following the culture of the organization it is practiced when he/she performs his/her duty. One respondent

considered self-censorship as a serious form of editing. For some, it simply means banning the journalists from transferring the right information. For others, it refers to restrictions, which enforce the journalists, and as a result, those restrictions attack the journalist's self-esteem or self-confidence. "To be on the safe side", "to secure oneself for being accountable" or "to think of boss's directors (editors) and the society" were some of the reasons given by the respondents.

However, some respondents talk about some sort of fear that the journalists possibly sense, which in return encourages them to practice self-censorship. In this aspect, the researcher could notice some similarities with the definitions given by Francis Kasoma when he mentioned the possible practice of self-censorship, which arises from fear by journalists and their colleagues (Kasoma, 2001: 93).

Those respondents whose definitions of self-censorship were related to being on the safe side regarding their career could have meant that acted as gatekeepers in a certain way simply to keep their jobs. As Nebiyu (2008) cite Cronau, "Living and working in condition of employment insecurity is a reason why they practice self-censorship". The findings show that some practice self-censorship out of fear while others practice it to be on the safe side. This implies a sort of panic action; they do not want to lose their jobs when they have lots of life commitments.

The researcher could also notice that the recently or newly employed journalists would imitate the senior journalists. The study also revealed that the forms of self-censorship, which were mentioned in chapter two and other additional forms, subsist in the organization. These include pleasing the bosses, losing one's confidence, holding responsibilities, making one-self free from any mistakes, and considering it as a serious form of editing.

It is concluded that from all 30 interviewees 25 of them practice self-censorship in some form. However, some of them exercise it once in a while, others practice it often and quite a few of them said it is conditional and it depends on the issues they deal with. For instance, some informant said

Yes, I sometimes censor myself. As I am working in a state-owned media, I sometimes withhold or avoid issues, which do not meet the interest of the media, which is ruled by the government. Or else, I may report the story by changing or moderating the tone of the news and it is fallacious to say that we don't practice it. As long as you work in the state-owned media, you always think of your boss first then at the end the society's need follow. Therefore, when different information reaches you differently and start to report that particular information, you take into account all those sides and you sometimes

skip the issue if you found it not interesting for your boss specially if it is any news related to lack of good governance, by default you know the editor will keep it in a trash. And as a journalist we don't want to be someone whose news is always thrown in to a trash. So, we censor it ourselves before we give it to the boss.

On the other side, when the editors described how they practice self-censorship they said mostly since the journalists know the editorial policy and the trend of the organization they work based on the editorial policy. However, once in a while, for instance when their news goes extremely against the government policy, the editorial members together practice self-censorship even though such issues are rare.

#### **4.3 Most common areas where self-censorship is practiced**

The research exposed that in Ethiopia, self-censorship is practiced in political, economic, societal, and cultural, religious and nation and nationalities related issues. However, at the same time it was found that it is mainly practiced in political issues. In addition, it also depends on the specific issues to be covered. For example, if journalists work on societal issues, they make the necessary precautions, especially if the issues are related to politics or against any official policies (policies on health, education, etc.) they self-censor before broadcasting.

As the informants respond practicing self-censorship in some sensitive issues for instance, on religious issues. When celebrating a religious ceremony, the journalist usually write the news or the article addressing all Ethiopians. In case if the news ignore or separate the unity of Ethiopians, the journalist would avoid or omit that particular part of the story.

Journalists practice self-censorship both perceptively and innocently. The informants mentioned possible advantages and disadvantages of practicing it. In fact, there were also some respondents who argued that it is conditional; i.e. it can be both advantageous and disadvantageous depending on the issue or news item.

The study showed indeed that practicing self-censorship has also good and useful sides. In fact, this notion seems different from what has been discussed in chapter two literature reviews. Most literatures stated that self-censorship is considered as a threat to freedom of expression. But some journalists believe that self-censorship is important as it secures the well being of a nation or a country; it avoids religious, societal, political and sensitive issues that could bring conflict or harm among people.

Unsuspected finding shows that some journalists believe that self-censorship certainly is good to censor one-self because it enables you to check the quality, content and standard of your article or your news before it broadcasts. Generally, it is good. When you produce interesting news, you should always consider whether most of the audiences think that your news is useful or not. If it is not useful to most audiences, better to avoid the story. In addition there are certain things that the society holds as a norm.

Regardless of the valuable sides of self-censorship that were mentioned by some interviewees, for the most part they favor the destructive sides. In this regard, some of the journalists opinion is that it is immoral because it discourages professional journalists from reporting the fact on the wrongdoings of the government, very important fact or truths may be held back, it prohibits journalists to report on sensitive facts or issues that are not even banned and Practicing it prohibit the journalist from applying journalistic principles and ethics based on the discipline.

The issue regarding the disadvantage of self-censorship raised among different journalists and the consensus was self-censorship sometimes interpreted negatively for two reasons one is if the journalists are over-suspicious and if he/she writes dull news which will not be interesting and second when worrying too much unnecessarily may create withholding back some important issues. It's hard to say that self-censorship is totally wrong but it has some negative connotation to some extent.

In addition to the above-mentioned points some of the informants did not think it is good to practice self-censorship because sometimes the journalist may hide the wrongdoings of the government and it encourages journalists to practice one-sided reporting. One of the informants also said “No, how can it be good? Why cannot a journalist report anything other than those issues that are banned by laws? There are certain laws that exist in the Ethiopian Constitution that ban journalists from reporting. These include: issues on national security, issues that arise conflicts among people, but why are we not allowed to report on political issues freely? Why is it that other political parties are not given fair coverage like the ruling party? As it is stated on the editorial policy” adding up other informant

I don't think it is good but it is unavoidable. If a journalist works freely without pre-censoring I think it is good because journalism is about letting the public know the truth. Unfortunately, journalists sometimes hide or hold back some dangerous information to some extent but it would be good if there were no limitations on news articles that could not bring any negative effect or harm on the public. Thus, if there are limitations, I personally do not believe that we can serve the public properly.

Practicing self-censorship by journalists has different reasons. The reason for practicing self-censorship in ERTA state-owned media has political, cultural, economic, religious and editorial nature.

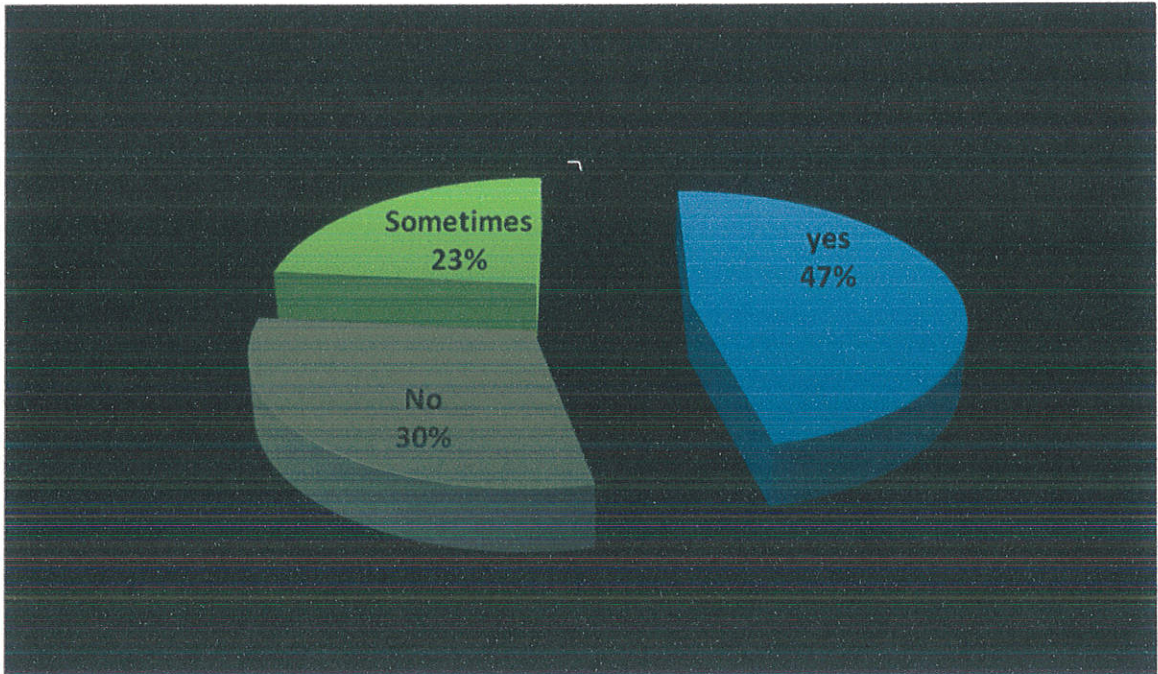
They seem to mostly practice it because of the pressures from their editors, editorial policy, the government laws and ethical considerations. They also exercise it just to be on the safe side, to please their boss, to be free from being accountable for the wrongly produced news, to save oneself from making any possible mistakes, to take the necessary precautions, to soften the tone of the news story, not to bring harm to the public, and not to lose credibility.

According to Kohut (2000; 121)

Nearly one-third (32 percent) in the local media acknowledge they have softened the tone of a news story on behalf of the interests of their new organizations: only 15 percent of those in the national media say they have done so.

The following chart illustrates to what extent the respondents from the ERTA affirms that they adjust the tone when producing news:

*Figure 1: The Role of Journalists in Shaping the tone of the News or Articles*



The research shows that there is a connection between each journalist's definition of self-censorship and the reasons he/she gives for justifying the practice. The other informant explain why they censor themselves

Most journalists practice self-censorship because of the fear they sense and this fear shoots from respecting the editorial policy, the ruling party and from not losing their jobs. For instance, if any political news arrives and if this particular news goes against the ruling party, no journalists dare to

work on that. This is because it needs to pass through different stages: The senior authorities will check it.

In other way around the other informant mentioned that his reason to practice is to please his boss and to get more income; the more he deliver a news which his boss likes the boss will send him to field works which has allowance and more income due to those reasons he conclude the reason he practice it is to survive.

As the informants explained, they practice self-censorship for the society sake. As one informant mentioned

For the sake of the society there are times we ignore very sensitive issues just to be on the safe side. Honestly speaking, when I produce news, I always censor myself because I want to be on the safe side. It is a question of survival putting bread on a table or dying hunger.

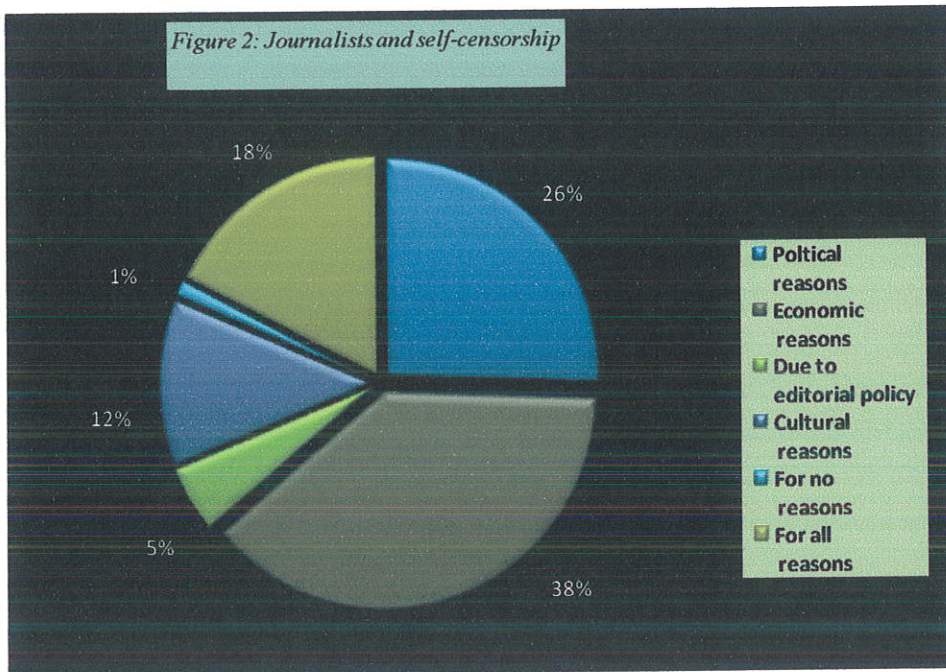
As per most of the informants stand if the journalist reports everything as it is without censoring it, there might be certain societies who could be unhappy about it or could even create conflicts or violations due to this reasons the practice may include the audience or even the editors themselves. Sometimes, what you believe correct may be considered as incorrect and the editor may not like your article or your production.

The other informant mentioned the experience he had

one friend of mine who works here happened to write news about Zewditu Hospital's new building construction how the construction has bad quality and on his news he declared that the issue is becoming serious for the hospital staffs and even for the patients, but the government or the minister seemed to ignore what is happening. He included all this facts in his news with different evidences together but the editor avoids it automatically. So, when you see this you knew such thing could happen on you tomorrow.

On the other hand other informants described the reason of practicing Self-Censorship as it is a giveaway one's self-assurance and keeps somebody from doing the exact thing. Briefly, it is an exclusion which you execute on one as others said it is often practiced to check any information at hand before it reaches the public and they ask themselves what consequences and interpretations would this information brings to the public.

The following chart shows why journalists who filled out the questionnaire practice self-censorship.



#### 4.4 Conditional self-censorship

Some journalists argued that practicing self-censorship is conditional. That is to say, it can be both advantageous and disadvantageous depending on the issues at hand or the situation in general. Here is how the informants support conditional self-censorship: “It can have both advantages and disadvantages. It is good because it makes the journalist accountable. Sometimes, there are certain news items, which can put you in jail for reporting them. For instance, if the judge doesn’t allow you to report court cases even if the public has to know it, you cannot report that news. Thus, the news could be avoided. Sometimes, we cannot report a case if it is being handled by a police. The police often avoid the issue claiming that things should be filtered out before they are reported.”

Others also explained that it depends on the issues. It can be good or bad. It could be bad when you always abide by government and editorial policies, you may hide sometimes the truth from the public. However, it may be sometimes good for the public even because knowing those stories might create danger and insecurity on the society. As long as you do not violate some policies or laws that ban any issues that provoke conflict among people it is okay to practice self-censorship sometimes.

#### **4.5 Self-censorship and its effect on news delivery**

The research discloses that self-censorship could have positive or negative impact depending on the perceptions and experiences of the journalists under study. Some of the respondents believe that it has a positive impact on the news articles because it encourages journalists to consider ethical issues and follow the editorial policy and not to broadcast anything that creates conflict among nations, religious groups, and the like. It also determines which direction to follow when producing news, and how deep journalists go about their story or event.

Most informants believe that it influence the audience to get a clear information on news articles or stories. Self-censorship limits the right and authority of the public to know the truth, Journalists will feel incomplete for what they report and it could also distort the fact in some way.

Regarding the direct influence of self-censorship on news articles, the interviewee gave such responses:

When you practice self-censorship very much, you may leave out some important facts out of fear. The question is to what extent do I practice self-censorship. First, if I write any article just by simply following the editorial policy, it means there is some fear I sense. Second, if I produce any article believing that my boss or senior editors would comment negatively on it, I may distort information from my past experience.

The other informant explained as it can have impact because it determines which direction to follow to produce the news, how deep you go about your story or event. Even your sources are individuals. They can limit or wide the information that journalists receive. So, it can affect the news article. Generally, Self-censorship can sometimes have impact on news stories. It limits the right and authority of the public to know the truth. Sometimes, news or some stories go out of the reality.

In the designed questionnaire, 21 journalists were asked if practicing self-censorship could have a negative impact on their news stories. The following table illustrates their responses:

Table 1. Perceived negative impact of self-censorship

Do you think practicing self-censorship can have negative impact on news stories		
Possible responses	No. of respondent	Percentage
Yes	13	61.9%
No	4	19%
Yes and no	3	14.2%
I have no idea	1	4.7%

#### 4.6 Self-censorship and Freedom of Expression

Practicing self-censorship can be related directly or indirectly to freedom of expression and press freedom. Most studies conclude that self-censorship puts limitations on both freedom of expression and press freedom. Although freedom of expression is a human right and everybody has a right to express his/her thoughts and impart or receive information, it does not necessarily mean that he/she can apply it liberally. There are some limitations conflicts among nations, ethnic groups or among small communities are not entertained freely. For that reason, journalists should perform ethical considerations.

Seeing that to the impression of self-censorship in news reporting, journalists in the research believe it could influence freedom of expression both positively or negatively.

This implies journalists may sometimes report what they do not want and to the contrary they do not report what they are expected to do professionally and ethically due to the practice of self-censorship. Therefore, this would affect their freedom of expression one way or the other as long as they remain unable of express their thoughts or ideas freely. Above all on hard and sensitive issues like politics and religion. On the other hand, the whole issue of self-censorship in relation to freedom of expression revolves around to what extent journalists should exercise their right and freedom of expression.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Summary**

The study mainly finds out how frequent journalists in ERTA practice self-censorship to what extent and how they practice self-censorship and find out the prominent reasons for the practice of self-censorship. As the study focused only on journalists who are working in ERTA news and current affairs department journalists, the results cannot be expected to generalize instantaneously to the practice of self-censorship by all department journalists.

To analyze the findings both methodologies were applied. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used. As for the qualitative research method, individual in-depth interviews and official document analyses were employed. The center was generally on qualitative methods because this advance serves best to examine the used categories of people studies of perspective or the internal perceptions of journalists concerning the issue. However, to fill the noticed gap in the in-depth interviews, questionnaires were also employed as a quantitative research method.

The findings expose that self-censorship is practiced in ERTA for social, economic, political, cultural and religious reasons. In addition, journalists also apply it in reaction to editorial policies, and fear of editors or their bosses. Journalists also try to describe self-censorship based on their own perspective and knowledge. It was noticed that a few journalists have a vague idea about what self-censorship is. They instead try to define it as a form of editing. It was also found that involved in self-censorship was seen by the journalists as both useful and harmful depending on the issues supplied and the circumstances in common.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The main findings of the research are the majority number of Journalists in ERTA practice self-censorship due to various reasons. Exercising self-censorship has both positive and negative result and the public might not entertain accurate, fair and balanced information due to performing self-censorship. The concept of self-censorship understanding is different between Journalists. Due to different reasons Journalists practice self-censorship like political, religious, nation and nationalities related issues; economic and cultural issues, editorial policy, fear of their boss and internal fear are their main reasons. News articles or stories could be biased because of the practice of self-censorship. Journalists practice self-censorship both intentionally and unintentionally. Journalists soften or change the tone of news articles in the process of practicing self-censorship.

The research found out that, if more pressures from the editors or government officials are imposed on journalists working in the state-owned media, they couldn't perform their job ethically and professionally. As a result, the public may not receive accurate information and the government media houses lose their reliability. There has to be accountability and transparency that can allow journalists to exercise their right to report not only developmental issues and positive issues but also the weaknesses of the ruling party and lack of good governance; to give equal coverage to opposition parties as it is stated in the editorial policy of the organization and to identify the wrongdoings or the result of lack of good governance.

Journalists can practice self-censorship to the extent of not hiding or denying the fact of the phenomenon. But the threat is that journalists may not report what they are expected to report due to the internal and external fear. On the contrary, they may sometimes practice it for good reasons; such as not to mixing up conflict among nations or religious groups. For example, if two students one from Oromiya and the other from Tigray fight in AAU the journalist doesn't have to report the issue as ethnic conflict because those two students might fight because of their own personal reasons. In such cases, it may be justified to practice self-censorship as long as it does not overrule other important ethical considerations in journalism, such as uncovering misconduct. All in all, journalists have to take the essential actions as to when and how to practice self-censorship.

This thesis could serve as encouragement for further studies. As the thesis tried only to examine the possible practice of self-censorship by journalists who work in the state-owned media, particularly in ERTA any interested researcher can investigate if self-censorship is practiced in private owned media outlets or can still do a comparison study between the state-owned and private media houses. It is also possible to explore the same issue whether journalists working in a print media stream practice it and for what reason.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The study recommends some actions to be done in order to minimize the practice of self-censorship:-

- Government should organize trainings and conferences for journalists who work in ERTA to be more professional, loyal and ethical for journalism discipline.
- Further researches need to be conducted in order to simplify the prevalence of self-censorship practice in ERTA.
- For the benefit of the journalists to learn from their mistakes such researches and comments should address directly to the responsible and targeted parties.

Even if practicing self-censorship has advantages in order to protect the nation it is recommended that the journalist should stick with the fact of the news or the event. Because the audience has the right to access to the innovative information or detail.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Interview Guide**

#### **Addis Ababa University**

##### **School of Journalism and Communication**

Dear Journalist,

I am conducting a research on the possible practice of self-censorship in this organization and on the department you are working. And you have been randomly selected as one of the participants in this survey. The data you provide will be used exclusively for a master's thesis, which you may later use as a point of departure for your own future studies.

Your responses will be strictly kept and managed with extreme confidentiality and ethical care. I alone will have access to the data or to the record, which will later be presented, to my thesis advisors as group scores. There is no special interest in individual persons. Only your confidence in the researcher and your genuine responses can make the survey a meaningful exercise.

I thank you for giving me your time and allowing me to record you.

1. What does self-censorship mean to Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency journalists?
2. What are the causes for the practice of self-censorship in news production? And who or which age and professional groups practice it most?
3. How does self-censorship shape or influence the news that ERTA journalists produce?
4. How does self-censorship impact or relate to freedom of expression and developmental Journalism?
5. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of practicing self-censorship?
6. And to end with, what feelings do journalists develop when they practice self-censorship?

## **Appendix B**

### **Questionnaire**

#### **Addis Ababa University**

##### **School of Journalism and Communication**

Dear Journalist,

I am conducting a survey on the possible practice of self-censorship in the state-owned media in Ethiopia case study on the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency News and current affairs department. You have been randomly selected as one of the participants in this survey. The data you provide will be used exclusively for a master's thesis, which you may later use as a point of departure for your own future studies.

Your responses to items will be strictly anonymously kept and managed with utmost confidentiality and ethical care. I alone will have access to the data, which will later be presented, to my thesis advisors as group scores. There is no special interest in individual persons. Should you have special needs, you can ask that I scrap the questionnaire that you fill in. Only your confidence in the researcher and your genuine responses can make

the survey a meaningful exercise. Please take a few moments to complete the survey and return the forms the next day. Please, DO NOT write your name.

I thank you individually for completing the questionnaire.

Note: Question 1-11 can be answered both by reporters and editors but only editors should answer question 12-17.

1. Your age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

2. Your academic background (qualification) and in what field?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your position in the ERTA?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Your experience in the media (put a  mark on the box)

A. Less than a year  C. Two years  E. Four years

B. A year  D. Three years  F. Five years and above

G. If other than these, specify it \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you think you work freely from any pressure?

Possible response	Make a <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> mark
A. Yes, I do.	

B. No, I don't	
C. I don't know	

6. What kind of pressure do you usually face while reporting or writing news?

(If the space provided is not sufficient, please, use a separate sheet of paper or the back Side of this paper.)

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7. Have you ever regretted for not reporting a certain story or news item as you wished?

Possible response	Make a ✓ mark
A. Yes, I have.	
B. No, I haven't	
C. I don't remember	

8. If your answer is A for question number 7, please, state what was the regret about?

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9. Do you think practicing self-censorship can have a negative impact on your news Stories?

Possible response	Make a ✓ mark
A. Yes.	
B. No.	
C. I have no idea	

10. If your answer is yes for question number 9, what could this negative impact be?

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11. For what reason do you practice self-censorship? (Put a  mark on the box)

A. Political reason  B. Economic reason

C. Because of editorial policy  F. For no reason at all

D. Cultural reason  E. For all reasons mentioned above.

12. (For editors) have you ever received a pressure from high level officials to broadcast their story? (Put a  mark on the box)

A. Yes  B. No

13. (For editors) Do you often censor yourself in deciding what news stories should broadcast or not regardless of their news worthiness? (Put a  mark on the box)

A. Yes  B. No

14. (For editors) Are there stories which are ignored or not broadcasts in fear of the government official? (Put a  mark on the box)

A. Yes, there are some  B. No, there isn't any  C. I don't really remember

15. (For editors) Do you often shape the tone of stories which you think are straight forward or could likely to bring some negative impact or consequences on the public? (Put a  mark on the box)

A. Yes, I often do.  B. Yes, I sometimes do  C. I never do

16. (For editors) do you allow stories that show the weak side of the government to be broadcast? (Put a  mark on the box)

A. Yes  B. No

17. (For editors) do you believe journalists working in ERTA perform their task with professional integrity? (Put a  mark on the box)

A. Yes  B. No  C. I have no idea.

## Appendix C

### List of Interviewees

#### Interviewees

**Note:** All personas names were not used and only informant's occupational titles were used to protect the identity of the participants.

- All interviews conducted in person from April to May 2014.

No.	Years of Service	Qualification	Title	Date of interview
1	15	BA in English	Senior Editor	14, April 2014
2	15	BA in Journalism	Senior editor	14 April 2014
3	11	BA in English	Editor	14 April 2014
4	10	BA in Journalism	Assistant editor	14 April 2014
5	8	BA in English	Reporter	14 April 2014
6	11	BA in Journalism	Editor	14 April 2014
7	9	BA in Journalism	Assistant editor	14 April 2014
8	7	BA in Journalism	Reporter	14 April 2014
9	8	BA in Journalism	Senior reporter	14 April 2014

10	7	BA in Journalism	Reporter	14 April 2014
11	4	BA in Journalism	Reporter	14 April 2014
12	2	BA in Journalism	Reporter	14, April 2014
13	3	BA in Journalism	Reporter	14, April 2014
14	3	BA in Journalism	Reporter	22, April 2014
15	3	BA in English	Reporter	22 ,April 2014
16	6	BA in Journalism	Senior reporter	22, April 2014
17	1	BA in Journalism	Reporter	22, April 2014
18	1	BA in Journalism	Reporter	22, April 2014
19	1	BA in Journalism	Reporter	22, April 2014
20	2	BA in Journalism	Reporter	26, April 2014
21	2	BA in Journalism	Reporter	26, April 2014
22	3	BA in Journalism	Reporter	26, April 2014
23	2	BA in English	Reporter	26, April 2014
24	2	BA in English	Reporter	05, May 2014
25	5	BA in Journalism	Senior reporter	05, May 2014
26	6	BA in Journalism	Senior reporter	05, May 2014
27	5	BA in English	Senior reporter	05, May 2014
28	2	BA in Social studies	Reporter	05, May 2014
29	3	BA in English	Reporter	05, May 2014
30	2	BA in English	Reporter	05, May 2014

Appendix D

Editorial Policy of Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency

[Relevant sections]

**ለጥናቱ አስፈላጊ የሆኑት ክፍሎች እና ምዕራፎች ከታች ተዘርዝረዋል**

**ክፍል አንድ**

**ምዕራፍ አንድ**

**1. መግቢያና አላማ**

**1.1 መግቢያ**

ይህ የመንግስት መገናኛ ብዙሃን/ሬድዮ፣አዜአ፣ፕሬስ እና ቴሌቪዥን/የኤዲዮሪያል ፖሊሲ በዋነኝነት በሁለት ክፍሎች የተዋቀረ ነው። ክፍል አንድ ሁሉም የመንግስት ሚዲያ አካላት በጋራ የሚመሩበትን ደንብ የያዘ ሲሆን ክፍል ሁለት ደግሞ ይህ ውጤት ጉዳይ እንደተጠበቀ ሆኖ እያንዳንዱ ሚዲያ እንደባህሪው የሚሰራቸውን ልዩ አፈፃፀሞች የሚመራበት ነው። በመሆኑም ለዚህ ሰነድ ጠቀሜታው በክፍል አንድ ውስጥ የተካተቱን መጠቀሙ አስፈላጊ ይሆናል።

**ምዕራፍ ሁለት**

**2. የመንግስት ሚዲያ የኤዲዮሪያል ፖሊሲ መነሻና የማዕዘን ድንጋይ**

የመንግስት ሚዲያዎች የይዘት አመራረጣቸውንና የአሰራር እና የውሳኔ

አሰጣጥ ሂደታቸውን የሚወስኑበት ኤዲቶሪያል ፖሊሲ ከአራት የማዕዘን ድንጋጆች የሚፈልቁ ናቸው። እነዚህም፡-

2.1 ሕገ-መንግስታዊ ሀገራዊ ግቦች፤

2.2 የሚዲያዎች መቆቆሚያ አዋጆች፤

2.3 የፕሬስ እና የብሮድካስት ሕጎችና

2.4 አገራዊ የጋራ አመለካከት የመፍጠር እንቅስቃሴዎች ናቸው።

1.1 ሕገ-መንግስታዊ ሀገራዊ ግቦች

የመንግስት ሚዲያ የኤዲቶሪያል ሥራዎች እና መመሪያዎች መሰረታዊ ምንጭ ብሔራዊ የሆኑት ታላላቅ ግቦች ናቸው። እነዚህ ሀገራዊ ግቦች ደግሞ በሕገ-መንግስቱ ውስጥ የተካተቱ ሲሆኑ እነርሱም ከአራት ዋናና እምነቶች የተቀዱ ናቸው። እነዚህም የሚከተሉት ናቸው።

1.1.1 የሕዝብ ሰፊ ተሳትፎን የሚያስከብር ዘላቂ ዲሞክራሲያዊ ሥርዓት መገንባት፤

1.1.2 ከጉዋላ ቀርነት ድህነት በመላቀቅና በእድገት ጎዳና በመገሰገስ የሕዝቡን ሁለንተናዊ ብልጽግና ማምጣት፤

1.1.3 የኢትዮጵያ ሕዝቦችን ዲሞክራሲያዊ አንድነት በጽኑ መሰረት ላይ ማነጽ፤

1.1.4 አገራዊ ክብርና ነፃነትን በአስተማማኝ ሁኔታ ማስጠበቅ በሚል ሊቀመጡ ይችላሉ።

እነዚህ ከላይ የተጠቀሱት ዋነኛ ብሔራዊ ግቦች የተልእኮዎችንና ዓላማችን መሰረታዊ ምንጮች ናቸው ስንል የኤዲቶሪያል ሥራችን ዞሮ ዞሮ እነዚህን ግቦች በላቀና ውጤታማ በሆነ መንገድ ለማሳካት ይንቀሳቀሳል ማለታችን ነው። በመሆኑም ደግሞ የይዘት አመራረጣችንና የአቀራረብ ስልታችን ውስጣዊ ይዘት መለኪያው ይህን ግብ በአንድ ወይንም በሌላ መልኩ በማሳካት ኃይሉ ላይ የተመሰረተ ይሆናል ማለታችን ነው። ስለዚህም ደግሞ ከላይ የተጠቀሱትን አራት ብሔራዊ ግቦች አጠር አጠር አድርጎ በዝርዝር ማየቱ ጠቃሚ ይሆናል።

1.2 የሚዲያዎች መቅቅሚያ አዋጆች

የኤዲቶሪያል ሥራዎቻችን ሁለተኛው ምንጭ የመንግስት ሚዲያዎች የተቆቆሙባቸው አዋጆች ናቸው። የመንግስት ሚዲያዎች በህብረተሰቡ መካከል ሀሳቦችና አመለካከቶች ህገ-መንግስቱ በደነገገው መሰረት በነፃ መንሸራሸራቸውን በማረጋገጥ የተቆምና የአሰራር ነፃነት ይዘው እንዲደራጁ ከሚል መንፈስ በአዋጅ በአዲስ መልክ የተዋቀሩ መሆኑ ይታወቃል።

አዋጆቹ በዋነኝነት የይዘት -አመራረጥ ቅኝታቸውን ይወስናሉ። በዚህም መሰረት የሕዝቡን ዕውቀት የሚያዳብሩና የመዝናናት ፍላጎቱን የሚያረኩ ልዩ ጀምሮ ሕዝቡ ስለ ሰብአዊና ዲሞክራሲያዊ መብቶች ያለው ግንዛቤ እንዲዳብር፣ ኢትዮጵያን በሚመለከት ልዩ ልዩ ጉዳዮችን በውጭ ቅንቅዎች በማዘጋጀት እንዲያሳውቁ ወዘተ....ኃላፊነት ይሰጣቸዋል።

1.3 ሀገራዊ የፕሬስ ነፃነት ነክ እና የብሮድካስት ህጎች

የመንግስት መገናኛ ብዙሀን የሚዲያ ተቆማት እንደመሆናቸው የፕሬስ ነፃነት ጉዳይ በቀጥታ ይመለከታቸዋል። ምክንያቱም የሚሠሩበት የህግ ማዕቀፍ ተልዕኮዎቻቸውንና ዓላማቸውን እንዲሁም አሠራራቸውን በመወሰን ላይ ቁልፍ ሚና አለውና ነው። የኢ.ፌ.ድ.ሪ ህገ-መንግስት ስለዲሞክራሲያዊ መብቶች ካስቀመጠበት ክፍል ሁለት ስር በአንቀፅ 29 የአመለካከትና ሀሳብን በነፃ የመያዝና የመግለፅ መብትን ዓላማና ተግባር ደንግጋል። በዚህም መሰረት የፕሬስ ነፃነት ዋና አላማው ሕዝቡ በመንግስት አስተዳደር ጉዳይ ላይ በባለስልጣናት የሥራ ክንውን ስልጣን ለመረከብ ስለሚመረጡ ሰዎች ነፃ ውይይት እንዲያደርጉና የመንግስት ባለስልጣናት ፕሬስን በመገደብ የሕዝቡን አእምሮና አስተሳሰብ እንዳይሸብቡት እና እንዳይለጉሙት ማድረግ ነው። በተመሳሳይ መልኩ የፕሬስ ነፃነት አዋጅ 34/1985 እንዲወጣ ከተደረገበት ምክንያቶች መካከል ፕሬስ ዜጎች አንገብጋቢነት ጉዳዮች ላይ ሚዛናዊ ግንዛቤ እንዲኖራቸውና በመንግስት አመራርና አሠራር ላይ ሀሳብ እንዲያቀርቡ ጉልህ ሚና የሚጫወት በመሆኑ እንደሆነ ያብራራል።

1.4 ሀገራዊ የጋራ አመለካከት የመፍጠር ጉዳይ

አገራችን የዲሞክራሲ ሥርዓት ግንባታን ሥራ የተያያዘችው የዳበረና የተረጋጋ ዲሞክራሲ የሚጠይቀው አገራዊ የጋራ አመለካከትና እምነት ባልተፈጠረበት ሁኔታ ነው። በመሆኑም እንደዚህ ዓይነቱን የጋራ እምነት ለመፍጠር ልዩ ትኩረት ሰጥቶ መረባረብ ይጠይቃል። በዲሞክራሲያችን መሠረታዊ መርሆዎች ላይ የጋራ አመለካከት መፍጠር ያስፈልጋል። በመሠረታዊ የልማት አቅጣጫዎቻችንና በብሄራዊ ጥቅሞቻችን ወዘተ. ጉዳዮች ላይ አንድ

አይነት የጋራ አቅም መያዝ አለብን። ከዚህ ውጭ በየትኛውም አገር የዳበረና የተረጋጋ ዲሞክራሲ አልተፈጠረም። በኛም ሀገር ሊፈጠር አይችልም። ስለሆነም ለዲሞክራሲ ሥርዐት ማበብ መሠረት የሆነው ይህ የጋራ እምነትና አመለካከት በአፋጣኝና በተሳካ ሁኔታ መፈጠሩን የማረጋገጥ ጉዳይ በተዘዋዋሪ መንገድ አገራችንን ከጠቅላላ ጥፋት የመታደግ ጉዳይም ነው።

ከዚህ አካያ ሚዲያዎቻችን ቁልፍ ሚና ይጫወታሉ። ሊጫወቱም ይገባል። የጋራ አቅምና አመለካከት የመፍጠር ጉዳይ ህብረተሰቡን ስለጉዳዩ የማስተማርና ኢንፎርሜሽን የመስጠት ጉዳይ ነው። ይህ በሚዲያዎቻችን እጅ ያለ ሥራ ነው። የጋራ አቅምና አመለካከት የመፍጠር ጉዳይ ህብረተሰቡን ስለጉዳዩ የማስተማርና ኢንፎርሜሽን የመስጠት ጉዳይ ነው። ይህ በሚዲያዎቻችን እጅ ያለ ሥራ ነው። የጋራ አቅምና አመለካከት የመፍጠር ጉዳይ ህብረተሰቡ በሁሉም ጉዳዮች ላይ በሰፊው ሲወያይና ሲከራከር ነው። አንድ አስተሳሰብ የበላይነት ሊያገኝ እና በህብረተሰቡ ዘንድ ሊሠርፅ የሚችለው አማራጭ አስተሳሰቦችን በመድፈቅ ሳይሆን አማራጭ አስተሳሰቦችን በመድፈቅ ሳይሆን አማራጭ አስተሳሰቦችን በማሸነፍና የተሻለ ሀሳብ መሆኑን በማሳመን ነው። በመሆኑም ሁሉም አማራጮች ለህዝቡ በሰፊው ቀርበው ህዝቡ የተሻለውን የሚመርጥበትና በዚህ ዙሪያ የጋራ እምነት የሚፈጥርበት ሁኔታ የተሻለውን የሚመርጥበት ሁኔታ መመቻቸት አለበት። ለእንደዚህ አይነቱ ውይይትና ክርክር መድረክ ሆኖ ማገልገልም የሚዲያው ሥራ ነው። በቀጣይነትና በጥራት መፈጸም ያለበት ሥራ።

## Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all the sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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