

**NEWS COVERAGE OF REGIONS IN ETHIOPIA: THE
CASE OF ETV AMHARIC BROADCAST**

**BY
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Acronyms and Abbreviation

ENA – Ethiopian News Agency

EPRDF- Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front

ETV- Ethiopian Television

FDRE- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

SNNP – Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples

Walta – Walta Information Center

Abstract

The aim of this research was to study the news coverage of regions on ETV Amharic broadcast. More precisely, it was to test the hypothesis set. It was hypothesized at the outset of the study that the news coverage of regions on the evening (8pm) Amharic broadcast is not proportional.

The study constituted both quantitative and qualitative data obtained using content analysis and self-completion questionnaires. The greater part of the quantitative data was gathered using content analysis. For one month, from April 1 to 30, 2006, the main evening (8pm) Amharic newscast was recorded on video.

The sample consisted of a total of 504 domestic news stories. Of the total, the study focused on 457 (90.67%) news items that referred to regions. The news items were later coded vis-à-vis each region using coding frames such as number of stories, airtime, content category, tone, priority and story producer.

The findings of the content analysis have shown regional imbalances in news coverage on the evening (8pm) Amharic broadcast. In other words, the findings conformed to the initial expectation of the researcher. Addis Ababa, SNNP, Amhara. Oromia and Tigray dominated the news scene during the sample time. The findings imply that the television station and the news agencies- ENA and Walta favored these regions.

In contrast, the findings bear out the witness that Afar, Somali, Benishangul/Gumuz, Dire Dawa, Harari and Gambella received little news coverage. Accordingly, they were not frequently on the news agenda or their stories were not as such available. The content analysis has also revealed that the disparity between the highest and the lowest number of stories that referred to regions is so wide.

While Addis Ababa received 143 (31.29%) news stories, only two, which constituted less than one percent, referred to Gambella.

In its questionnaires, the study also focused on Ethiopian Television, Walta and ENA, which may be responsible for the production of news and type of coverage. Two sets of questionnaires were designed. While one set was distributed to all the five Editorial Board Members of ETV, the other was filled in by twelve editors and chief-editors, identified based on purposive sampling, of ENA and Walta. The data obtained, which were more of qualitative, provided a background to interpreting how a few regions have come to dominate the news scene.

In sum, the study has suggested some recommendations to how regions get proportional and comprehensive news coverage on ETV Amharic broadcast.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background of the Problem

The Ethiopian Television (ETV) started broadcasting with news and other programs in Amharic and English languages in 1964. Due to various factors, its coverage of national and foreign issues was low during its early years. Leykun (2004:04) indicates, “During the establishment of the Ethiopian Television in 1964, the transmission covered about 1% of the total area of the country, but now (2004) the transmission covers about 47% of the total area of the country.”

Since 1991, after the coming of Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to power, the station, besides Amharic and English, has started broadcasting in Oromifa and Tigrigna languages. In addition to its own reporters, ETV gets news and other feature services from news agencies such as Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) and Walta Information Center (Walta)-organizations that provide the station with news stories from the different regions of the country.

Currently, the country is divided into nine regions and two administrative regions. Sub article 1 of article 47 of the Constitution indicates the member states of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE). It is apparent that these regions and administrative regions are supposed to receive news coverage from the Ethiopian Television, a national television station.

With regard to national news coverage, the Ethiopian Television Editorial Policy (2002:4) states:

ETV informs the public about the activities of legislators, executives and judiciaries of the Federal government and Regional states. In its news, it informs the government about peoples’ wishes, beliefs, resistances

and supports. It collects information that brings peoples who live in different parts of the country together; and that becomes a topic for discussion... It also makes news about annual plans and accomplishments, and big conferences of the Federal government and Regional states.

As indicated in the Editorial Policy, the station is expected to give news coverage for a range of issues and events happening in the different regions of the country.

It is evident the getting news coverage has a lot of importance. Accordingly, most people and organizations, often want to have access to media and get favorable news coverage. Regarding this, Campbell (2004:80) says, "... a wide range of people and organizations often seek news coverage, or much accurately positive news coverage." Similarly, Loges and Ball-Roeach (1993) cited in Mastin (2000) indicate that the media are important facilitators of information for the general public because they gather, process and disseminate information. The information they present, and the manner in which they choose to present it affects how individuals, groups, communities, and organizations think about and interact among themselves and with others.

Besides, giving news coverage for regions has a number of roles for regional activities. Tumber (1999:15) explains the significance of news coverage as, "... it seems that news, as a form of knowledge, contributes from its record of events not only to history and to sociology but to folklore and literature; it contributes something not merely to the social sciences but to the humanities."

Concerning the importance of informing the society, Strentz (1989) indicates that an informed society is healthier than the one based on rumors, gossip, and suspicion. However, according to Manning (2001) there is a pattern of diminishing coverage of other cultures in

any thing but a news bite, based on low expectation of audience interest.

The study, thus, used agenda setting as a theoretical framework. It is believed that giving news coverage for regions does imply setting agendas for them. Fourie (2001) states that the basic assumption of the agenda-setting theory is that, whether consciously or unconsciously, media create a particular image of reality. He further explains that the omissions of certain events and issues, and the overemphasis of others by the media, establish a particular way for media users to think about reality.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Ethiopian Television seems to have paid less attention to most regions in its evening (8pm) Amharic news broadcast. In other words, the news coverage of regions in the news broadcast does not look like proportional.

By way of introduction, it should be noted that a few regions have their own airtime on ETV to broadcast mainly about issues and events in their respective regions. However, the situation becomes different for most regions that do not have their own airtime.

The assumption is a few regions are enjoying more news coverage on the evening (8pm) Amharic news broadcast. It is believed that regions that receive less news coverage are on the disadvantage. They lose all the benefits of news coverage. Because of less news coverage, important events and issues remain uncovered; culture and development activities may not be promoted.

Concerning the relevance of news coverage to regions, Griffin (1999) cited in Tannock (2001) says that news coverage of regions is becoming important as image and identity are becoming essential

for a region's economic growth and ultimate survival. He further indicates that the mere naming of a place can generate a host of images, meanings and ideologies.

According to Griffin, local issues, activities and identities are assuming greater significance even within the global news environment. On that account, media should become more involved in covering regions proportionally in their news programs so that events and issues in most regions get chances to be viewed.

With regard to the member states, sub article 4 of article 47 of the Constitution indicates that member states of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) shall have equal rights and powers. Similarly, the Government Mass Media Editorial Policy (2002) states that the Ethiopian Mass Media do not discriminate on the grounds of age, race, nationality, religion, nations and nationalities, and social groups in their institutional and work guidelines.

Above all, it is indicated in the Editorial Policy of ETV (2002) that the station is expected to give news coverage for all member states of the FDRE. However, what actually exists seems to be different. The news coverage of regions seems to be imbalance.

In sum, the study will strive to investigate whether the news coverage of regions on the evening (8pm) Amharic broadcast is proportional. Besides, as there has so far been made no research related to news coverage of regions in Ethiopia, the study will hopefully fill this gap.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

The decision to carry out the study on the topic has been reached for three main reasons. First, the researcher's mere observation of ETV Amharic news broadcast shows that most news stories come regularly from a few regions. In other words, names of a few regions are frequently heard on the news broadcast.

Second, viewers need diversity of information. They want to know what is happening in all parts of the country. However, the evening (8pm) Amharic news broadcast does not look like providing its viewers with a wide range of news stories coming from the different parts of the country.

Third, the researcher feels that a few regions that have their own air times to broadcast mainly about regional issues and events seem to have better news coverage in Amharic news broadcast as well. It looks like doubling the advantage for the few as the disadvantage for the majority.

Accordingly, the study will discover whether the regions are receiving proportional news coverage on the evening (8pm) Amharic news broadcast.

1.4 Research Questions and Hypothesis

The study will test one major hypothesis: The news coverage of regions on the evening (8pm) Amharic broadcast is not proportional. Besides, the study will be guided by the following questions:

- Are there disparities in the news coverage of regions on the evening (8pm) Amharic broadcast? And why?
- What are the contents of the news stories?
- What are the tones of the news stories?

- What are the news selection criteria used by Editorial Board Members of ETV; and editors and chief editors of ENA and Walta?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The general objectives of the research are to:

- find out the news coverage given to the different regions in Ethiopia on ETV Amharic broadcast
- analyze the contents of the news stories broadcast about the regions

As specific objectives, the research, among others, tries to:

- differentiate the news selection criteria used by members of the Editorial Board of ETV; and editors and chief editors of ENA and Walta
- find out the tones of the news stories
- investigate the priority of the news stories broadcast
- discover the media institutions that made the news stories broadcast

1.6 Significance of the Study

Giving news coverage for regions implies providing diversity of information for people living in different parts of the country. It is about bringing the different regions into one scene-a news scene. It is also about creating chances to know more about one another. Tumber (1999: 37) says, “Everyone needs news. In every day life, news tells us what we do not experience directly and thus renders otherwise remote happenings.”

The study is significant in the sense that it shows how a national television station can serve, in its news broadcast, all the regions in the country. The fact that ETV is the only television station and is

controlled by the Federal Government, it is supposed to proportionally serve all the member states. It is expected to accomplish this in, among others, its news broadcast that runs daily.

It is also hoped that the study will enable the Ethiopia Television to weigh up the news coverage of regions on Amharic news broadcast. In a broader context, the study will also enable the Ethiopian Radio to consider the news coverage of regional in its Amharic news broadcast.

More specifically, reporters of ETV and news agencies, being aware of the situation, will try to look ways in which regions can get proportional and better news coverage.

The results of the study will also create opportunities for people in the country to know what is happening in each region. As a result, culture and various development activities of a region are likely to be promoted.

Finally, as there has been made no research related to the news coverage of regions in Ethiopia, the study will strive to fill the gap. It will also lay a foundation for further and in-depth researches in news coverage and related areas.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study focuses on the evening (8pm) Amharic news broadcast on ETV. The stories are recorded for a sample time of one month, between April 1 and April 30, 2006. Foreign news stories, often presented in a separate section are not considered.

As the study is about the coverage of regions in news broadcast, the significance of two news agencies namely ENA and Walta is assessed

vis-à-vis their editors and chief editors. Besides, Editorial Board Members of ETV, who involve in the selection of the day's news stories, are focused in the study.

In conclusion, reporters and correspondents are not directly included in the study. This is done mainly to make the research work more manageable.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study has a nation wide context. It could have been better if the researcher had moved to the different regions of the country and strengthened the research data by interviewing correspondents and reporters. It could have also been better if he had observed the news gathering processes the reporters and correspondents in the different regions go through. However, due to shortage of time and resources questionnaires were distributed to members of Editorial Board of ETV; and some editors and chief editors of ENA and Walta.

Shortage of related material was also another draw back to the study. As it is difficult to find books written and researches done on Ethiopian Media in general and Ethiopian Television in particularly, the researcher faced lack of relevant related material.

1.9 Organization of the Paper

The preliminary, which includes, among others, title page, acknowledgments, table of contents and abstract is the first part of the paper. Following the preliminary part, the text of the thesis, which is organized into five chapters, occupies the major part of the work.

Chapter one comprises topics such as background of the study, statement of the problem, rationale of the study, significance of the

study delimitation of the study, limitations of the study, organization of the paper and definition of terms.

Chapter two is a review of related literature, which includes various issues. Methodology and data analysis are discussed in chapters three and four respectively. Summary, discussion, conclusion and recommendations are treated under chapter five. References and appendix appear as the last section of the paper.

1.10 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarity and consistency, the following definitions of terms are used in the study.

1. News coverage - refers to the reporting of news stories about regions
2. Regions - refers to both the nine regions and the two administrative regions in Ethiopia

In sum, the chapter apart from indicating what the study is all about, it lays a basis for the subsequent chapters. It, for instance, becomes suggestive of issues to be included in the literature review chapter.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In this chapter, various topics and issues, which were believed to have related to the study were raised, discussed and analyzed. The review, overall, provided a theoretical framework and made the selection of particular methodologies and procedures necessary for the study.

2.1 Ethiopian Television

2.1.1. Historical Background

It is agreed that certain events, happened at different times and occasions in the country, considerably contributed to the introduction of television to Ethiopia. Similarly, the contribution of foreign corporations and companies, though limited, was so significant is the process of introducing the medium to the country.

Leykun (2004) indicates that the first attempt to introduce the concept and purpose of television in Ethiopia was made in 1956, when Silver Jubilee Exhibition took place. The main objective of the exhibition, which was carried out by British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Television, however, was to indicate the existing political and social developments in the country. In order to achieve the required out put, in a closed circuit system, the corporation presented two cameras, four monitors and a few telecasts.

Equally important, the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa was another event for television to be introduced to Ethiopia. In 1963, on the founding of the organization, a temporary closed circuit television was made. As a result, some people were able to follow the proceedings of the meeting on monitors fixed on lobby at an open space in front of the organization's hall. (Ibid)

A year later, on November 2, 1964, as indicated by [Ibid], the Ethiopian Television was established by a British firm named Thomson Television International Limited. It is also noted that the transmission time, during its establishment, was only two and half-hours a day.

In conclusion, the events arranged at different times for different purposes created opportunities for television to prove its power and importance to the then people and government.

2.1.2 Coverage Capacity

In the early years of its establishment, the Ethiopian Television covered a limited area of the country. It was very gradually that its coverage capacity relatively increased. According to Leykun (2004), the coverage capacity of the station, compared to the total area of the country, was only 1% in 1964. Because of the installment of television transmitters in different towns of the country, the coverage capacity was improved to 47% in 2004.

It is also evident that both television viewers and sets gradually increased over years in the country. Concerning the number of television viewers, it was estimated about 5000 in 1964. The number, however, increased to 4,000,000 in 1996. Similarly, the television sets through out the country were about 500 in 1964 and 240,000 in 1996. (Ibid)

Apparently, as indicated by (Ibid), different factors, favorably and unfavorably, have affected the coverage capacity of the station. The increment of airtime and the installment of transmitters have, among others, though slow, positively contributed to the coverage capacity of the station.

2.2 Regions in Ethiopia

After the fall of the Derg regime in 1991, Ethiopia has been following a system of federalism and regional states. This is done (Seid, 1999) to address the basic political questions of nation and nationalities for self-determination. It is also understood that the economic rationale of the system is that regions develop competence and self-reliance in developing their own regions.

Sub article 1 of article 47 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia indicates nine member states, which have been divided based on settlement patterns, language, identity and consent of the peoples concerned. The nine member states include:

1. The State of Tigray
2. The State of Afar
3. The State of Amhara
4. The State of Oromia
5. The state of Somali
6. The State of Beneshangul / Gumuz
7. The State of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and peoples
8. The State of the Gambela peoples
9. The State of the Harari people

Besides, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa have been recognized as administrative regions and become responsible to the federal government.

Concerning development aspects, there are disparities among the regional states. The disparities are manifested in infrastructure, income, health, education, capacity of execution and current volume of investment. While Somali and Afar regions have the least

development index, Addis Ababa, Harari and Dire Dawa are relatively better off in development aspects (Seid, 1999).

It is believed that regional differences in development and other aspects are attributed to a number of factors. As most scholars agree, giving news coverage for regions is likely to promote, among others, development activities of the regions.

2.3 News

News, one of the genres of journalism, has remained being a subject of research and discussion in media studies. Tumber (1999:15) says, “Ours, it seems, is an age of news, and one of the most important events in...civilization has been the rise of the reporters.” To this effect, most media institutions, at a global, national or local level, entertain news as a regular product.

Despite the differences, both print and broadcast news share some common values. Thus, the underlying common values have enabled media professionals to develop, relatively, a common understanding about the nature of news.

2.3.1 Definitions of News

At different times, a number of scholars have defined news in different ways. As a result, it seems impractical to get a universal definition, which works at all times and in all situations. This, however, does not mean that there are no similarities at all between or among the definitions. There are, of course, some values of news on which most academics in the profession agree.

In line with this, Tai (2005) indicates that understanding what news is and how it is presented or not presented to the local or global audience is of special significance in understanding the dynamics of the reality construction process by the mass media.

Apparently, some academics have tried to define news by considering an event as a central point. News (Snyman, 1971: Cited in Fourie, 2001) is knowledge about new, topical and contingent events that differ in the relevance and meaning they have for people.

What is clear about Snyman's definition is that events need to satisfy certain criteria to be considered as news. Besides, news stories have different significances and meanings for people who read, listen to and watch them. The implication is while some news stories may have immediate and strong relevance, others may have delayed and little relevance for the people. In the same way, news may have different political, social, cultural and economic meanings for the audiences.

Lippmann (1965) cited in Tumber (1999), on his part, defines news as a product obtained after a series of selections.

According to Lippmann, news is a product arrived at passing through a number of processes. It is apparent that because of the series of selections, which is likely to affect the process, what is obtained as news may not be the right reflection or version of an issue, event or situation.

From reporters' perspectives, Strentz (1989:33) tries to view news as:

News reporting text books list the criteria for deciding if an event or issue qualifies as news. A beginning reporting student can recite these criteria quickly, including human interest, timeliness, conflict, proximity, consequence, and prominence. Experienced reporters may not use these terms but instead may offer working definitions, such as "News is what I say it is," "News is what is reported in the papers," "News is something that you know today and that you didn't know yesterday."

As mentioned by Strentz, beginning and experienced reporters do not view news in the same way. Experienced reporters often rely on their own understandings and experiences to determine the news worthiness of an event. In contrast, beginning reporters focus mainly on certain fixed criteria to differentiate events of news worthiness.

Strentz has not taken a clear position in deciding which group of reporters is right in defining news. It seems, however, that he is in favor of the experienced reporters' approach to news definition.

In a narrower context Fourie (2001) considers something news the moment it is published or broadcast. Fourie's definition shares some similarities with the working definitions of experienced reporters.

2.3.2 Theories of News Selection

It is agreed that there exist a number of theories behind news stories selection. The theories are, thus, assumed to enable reporters to familiarize themselves with the processes of story selection. In line with this, Herbert (2000) says that the underlying idea of most theories of news selection reflects the political system of the society in which it is located.

Gans (2004), however, summarizes three major theories of story selection. These include: journalist-centered, news organization-centered and event-centered.

According to Gans, journalist-centered theory makes news to be shaped by the professional news judgment of journalist. While an organization-centered theory focuses on how organizational requirements influence story selection, an event-centered theory proposes that events determine story selection.

A media institution may follow the three theories of news selection. This, however, does not become a guarantee for theories to be equally adopted. This is mainly because there might be a number of factors deciding the type of theory to be emphasized by the institution.

As most writers agree, the basic question behind the theories seems: “Why has the event been covered?” Is it because of journalists’ decisions? Is it because of the interest of the media organization? Is it because of the newsworthiness of the event?

However, according to Donsbach (2004) theories of news selections are very complex. Their complexities often lie on how non-fictional media content is created, and on how the pictures in our heads about areas beyond direct experience come out. This, in turn, leads to the understanding that journalists’ news decisions are a highly complex and challenging phenomenon.

Concerning the place of news values in the process of news selection, Campbell (2004) indicates that journalists do not work to a concrete set of values that are universal to news production around the world. Instead, according to him, decision-making is rational, such that the same event might be news in one part of the world, but not in another.

2.4 Television News

Television’s powerful audio-visual capabilities, when utilized effectively, can arrest the attention of viewers. Most researchers, such as Robinson and Davis (1990) argue that television is a powerful medium for ideology and agenda setting. It is also capable of effectively communicating news, images and information, regardless of audiences’ level of literacy.

With regard to the power of television news, Yorke (2000: 02) says:

... by the 1980s, any one who remained skeptical about the power of television to more public opinion must have had all doubts aside by the astonishing, spontaneous response to the appearance in October 1984 of harrowing pictures of famine in Ethiopia.

As Yorke says television news is so powerful to change the minds of viewers. In other words, viewers may favorably or unfavorably react to a situation after viewing news on television. This happens mainly when the pictures accompanying the story become attention catching. It is also natural that people tend to believe, in most cases, what they see. If it had not been for the help of television news, the 1984 famine in Ethiopia would not have gained that immediate, astonishing and life-saving response from the global community.

Similarly, television news, as stated by Cater (1975) is a powerful, centralizing and democratizing machine if used properly. In its commitment to social unity and intellectual coherence, it can scarcely avoid the historic aspirations of liberalism, pluralism, diversity, localism, privacy and individualism.

2.4.1 Nature of Television News

It is agreeable that news is a product of a team work. This is best observed in the making of television news, which involves different people at different levels. To this effect, the success or failure of television news depends mainly on the activities of the people involved in the making and broadcasting process.

Besides, for television news to get viewers attention, it needs to satisfy certain qualities. Television news requires format consideration which governs both individual stories and the aggregate of stories that constitute the program. Gans (2004) argues that brevity is not entirely a matter of format, for the deadline limits

the amount of information that can be gathered, and the briefness of the program limits that can be presented. Thus, stories which require lengthy descriptions or explanations are therefore sometimes dropped from story lists.

Similarly, certain issues and events happen to receive better news coverage on television (Cook, 1998) mainly because they meet the demands of the medium, which include the search for timely, clear-cut, easily described, vivid, colorful and visible stories.

According to Cook, some news stories may not have chances to be broadcast on television. The medium tends to give priority for certain stories that satisfy its demands.

2.4.2 Priority of Television News for Broadcast

News stories may not have the same weight in the eyes of reporters and editors. Some stories are so significant that they become the day's top news stories. This situation is often observed in the priority given to them for broadcast.

In television news, the day's top stories are often read first. Concerning the order of news stories the Ethiopian Government Mass Media Editorial Policy (2002) states that the government mass media, on the basis of news values, give order of broadcast for news stories. Thus, stories are read, starting with the most, in their level of importance.

With regard to the space and time that the media give to an issue, Miller (2005: 271) says, "The media agenda influences the public agenda not by saying this issue is important in an overt way but by giving more space and time to that issue and by giving it more prominent space and time."

According to Miller, what the media set as an agenda is likely to influence what the public has. When media give more space and time for an issue, the implication is that the issue has become so important in the eyes of the media professionals. Similarly, the media give priority for an issue in space and time. This also makes the public to feel that the issue set by the media is so significant.

In the same way, Fourie (2001), on his part, says that allotting varying amount of space and time to news items leads to the emphasis and de-emphasis of certain news items. In the case of radio and television, according to him, the chronology of events is also important. The main or most important news is always presented first where as the less important events are dealt with later.

2.5 News coverage

2.5.1 National News Coverage

Various issues and events, based on their newsworthiness, often get news coverage. When an event or issue gets news coverage, the implication is that it is, probably, one of the most significant events or issues that the media institution has to broadcast or publish at the time.

Most media in the world, in their news programs, many a time cover both national and foreign issues and events. The emphasis they give to such issues and events, however, may not be the same. This is due to the fact that media institutions, in most cases, have their own national target audiences. More specifically, a national media institution, established to serve the people is supposed to give fair news coverage for newsworthy events and issues that happen in all parts of the country.

Gans (2004) defines national news as news about the nation where the actors in the news could be knowns and unknowns.

Most writers, including Gans, agree that news is often about the knowns such as political, economic and social figures. Gans, however, argues that news is also about the unknowns.

Concerning the way the ordinary people get news coverage, Fowler (1991) cited in Fourie (2001: 459) indicates, "When ordinary people do enter the news arena, they enter it by some other door, for example when they happen to witness an accident or are involved in a court case."

According to Fowler, media mainly focus on the activities of the knowns in their news programs. The news coverage they give to the unknowns, who constitute the majority of nation's population, is so insignificant and indirect. The reason for the existence of such coverage, Gans (2004: 15) says, "The point is obvious, for it is built in the definition."

In a similar way, Rampal (1984) and Aggarwala (1977) cited in Ramaprasad and Kelly (2003) indicate that news in most developing countries mainly focuses on providing a positive picture of their leaders and development efforts made by them. It is apparent that under such circumstances, television stations in developing countries give much news coverage for events and issues that enable the leaders to remain in power.

It is agreeable that a national television station, in its newscast, is supposed to give fair coverage for all regions in the country. Coverage of regions in a news broadcast, among others, does imply giving attention for the activities of the people in the regions.

With regard to this, Gans (2004:19) writes:

Despite the explicit concern with people and their activities, the recurring subjects of the news are nation and society – their persistence, cohesion, and the conflicts and divisions threatening their cohesion ... the news is principally about the nation ... The nation, in turn is operationally defined as the federal government... but it also includes both nationwide and local institutions.

News, as Gans says, focuses on nation and society. This is mainly because nation, as a subject of news, includes events and activities of the federal and regional governments.

In line with this idea, the Ethiopian Television, which is a national institution, is expected to give news coverage for federal and regional activities. It is then that, according to Gans, one can say a national media institution has successfully accomplished its national and regional duties.

It is agreed by most researchers that news about ethnic minorities, when compared with other social groups, is relatively infrequent on television news. Similarly, editorial articles about ethnic affairs occur only infrequently and are not placed prominently. In general, there is relative lack of attention for minorities in the press in terms of news values, ethnic out-group status, and lack of power of minority organizations and of their structured access to news making process. (Dijk, 1988)

2.5.1.1 Compensating the Past

News coverage may not always be viewed in its positive sense as an issue or event covered in news may result in favorable or unfavorable consequence. It is understood that providing access to sources may imply giving chances for them to get across their ideas.

However, because of different factors, sources may have little access to use a medium. With regard to providing access, Price (1995:195) explains:

Providing access can mean creating gateways to sources of information for listeners who have been deprived of such sources in the past or, conversely, providing access for speakers to an audience which has not adequately heard them. Access can also mean, allowing the marginalized to speak to the marginalized through internal communications networks for those who deem themselves otherwise disenfranchised

Price shows that providing access for sources that have been deprived of would reduce the dominance that certain sources have on media. Audiences, as a result, come to have better chances to listen to different sources.

Similarly, access doctrines become an index of ways to reconstruct the mass media so that the predominant mode is no longer the few speaking to the many, but the many speaking to the many. (Ibid)

It becomes hard to say that all have equal access to media when the few talk to the many. When names of a few regions frequently appear on a newscast, the implication is that a few are often talking to a majority.

2.5.1.2 Contributing to the Future

What happens as news at a present may contribute positively to the future of the regions. While contributing in the long term to setting a public agenda (McCombs and Shaw 1972: Cited in Jensen 1998), in the short term the news serves as a source of arguments for interpersonal debate.

According to McCombs and Shaw, events and issues that get news coverage are likely to have short and long-term contributions to the audiences.

Following the news, to a certain degree, the information stays with the audience of their awareness of the world and may become a resource for action beyond the immediate context of viewing in front of the screen. (Ibid)

Most scholars, such as Herman and McChesney (1997) agree that providing news coverage for minorities, apart from servicing sub cultures within larger communities, allows them to see themselves and the world through their own lenses.

Viewed broadly, news is so paramount for a democratic society. Keller (1990) shows that a democratic society requires news and information in order to function adequately. Thus, a free flow of news, information and public affairs need to be available for audiences.

If a country wants to build a democratic society, as indicated by Keller, it needs, among others, to have a free flow of information and news. A fair coverage of different issues and events in a news broadcast is equally important.

It is also axiomatic to say that the constant flow of information from the newsroom can create opportunities for the visibility of other cultures. Clausen (2004) indicates that owing to the dynamic flows of images, texts, sounds and graphics, television news coverage entails an increased awareness of other cultures.

2.5.2 Factors Affecting News Coverage

It is agreeable that most organizations and people often want to have positive news coverage. In relation to this, Herbert (2000) states that news sources are frequently chosen on the basis of availability. Besides, eager sources eventually become regular ones, appearing in the news repeatedly. However, the desire and availability of the sources alone is not enough to get news coverage. The decisive factor is the desire of the media to give them news coverage.

Apart from certain criteria that a media institution regularly follows, there exist other factors that limit news coverage of events and issues. In line with this, Shoemaker et al (2001: 234) indicates:

The more newsworthy the more likely the event is to be covered by the news media. However, if an event requires much expense... or unavailable technology to produce the story, this may work against the passage through the gate.

Shoemaker et al argue that newsworthiness of an event is not the only factor for an event to get media coverage. The argument is clear in the sense that all events do not require the same expense and technology to make news stories out of them. In other words, events that require much expense and an unavailable technology from the media institution may remain uncovered.

In a broader context, media coverage (Shoemaker and Reese: Cited in Malinkina and McLead, 2000), in any system is shaped by the unique combination of features operating at a variety of levels. These features include : (a) individual influences on media content; (b) media routines that constrain individual media workers; (c) organizational influences; (d) extra media forces such as sources of information; (e) ideology, which is defined as a cohesive and integrating force in a society.

News coverage, which is an aspect of media coverage, is liable to all the factors mentioned by Shoemaker and Reese. As the factors arise from different sources, it might be difficult for a media organization to have a full control over them.

In the context of lack of airtime, editors often cut out a negative part, which does not favor the media institution and the government, of a news story. Koltsova (2001) presents evidence about the editor of the national television station, who cut out a negative part of a news story about Chechen refugee children.

In conclusion, as it is difficult to have a full control over the different factors, what seems possible is to try to reduce the influences on the coverage of issues and events in the news broadcast

2.6 Agenda Setting Theory

2.6.1 The Media Agenda

It is believed that media have a number of functions for the public. With the help of media (Berrington and Jemphrey, 2003; Schudson, 1995), people, among others, obtain fair and relevant information; make sound decisions; comprehend the complex political, cultural and economic situations; understand the perspectives of the varied groups in the society; appreciate the situation of other human beings, and hold a forum for dialogue.

Different people have approached to agenda setting theory in different ways. McCombs and Shaw (1972, 1993) cited in McQuail (2000) coined the term agenda setting to describe a phenomenon in the context of election campaigns. According to McCombs and Shaw, media can set an agenda for a candidate who is campaigning for a political election. More specifically, as indicated by Robinson and

Davis (1990), television is a powerful medium for ideology and agenda setting.

The essence of agenda setting hypothesis, according to McQuail (2000), is the causal connection between the various agendas. Concerning the different agendas, Dearing (1987) cited in (Ibid; 456) says, “we need to distinguish clearly between the three different agendas: the priorities of the media, those of the public and those of the policy. These interact in complex ways and may have effects in different directions.”

Dearing (mentioned in the above) indicates that there is interaction among the three agendas. Due to their complex interactions, it becomes sometimes difficult to clearly differentiate whose agenda are the media setting. Sometimes it also becomes impossible to precisely associate a certain effect with a certain agenda type.

With regard to the way the media agenda influences the public agenda, Miller(2005) indicates that the media agenda influences the public agenda not by saying this is important in an overt way but by giving it more space and time for the issue. It also influences the public agenda by giving the issue more prominent space and time.

2.6.2 News as an Agenda

Most scholars agree that news is one of the agendas that media can set for the public. When a television station broadcast news, it means that it is setting different issues and events for the public. However, according to agenda setting theory, media can emphasize some issues and events ignoring others. Issues and events that are emphasized, thus, are likely to get more coverage.

In relation to this, Fourie (2001: 304) says,

Agenda setting thus focuses on what topics the media present to an audience and secondly on how information on the selected topics is presented. It relates to the dynamics of the news coverage: the spectrum of view points, symbols and questions that are selected to construct the news and now they are ranked or accorded legitimacy and priority.

It is indicated by Fourie that agenda setting is also related to various issues of news coverage. It deals, among others, with how news is framed and constructed. To frame news, according to Carragee and Roefs (2004), is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text. Similarly, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) have identified the different types of news frames, which include conflict, human interest, economic, morality and responsibility frames. It is believed that these different frames set parameters for audiences and identify news stories. This shows that agenda setting theory also describes the process of news making and coverage.

In 1990s (Griffin, 2006), almost every article about agenda setting theory indicates that the media aren't successful in telling us what to think, but they are successful in telling us what to think about. In other words, the media make some issues more salient, for instance, in its news casts. This leads the public to think about the issues more and regard them as more important.

However, according to Behr and Iyengar (1985), the media may influence the way the public thinks. By framing news, which includes selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration, the media not only set the agenda for what issues and events, but also transfer the salience of specific attributes belonging to them.

Overall, it is argued by most researchers that the changes in the public agenda may be caused by changes in the media agenda. However, it may be unrealistic to take for granted that the amount of media attention devoted to particular issues determines the degree of public concern for the issues.

In conclusion, it is better to note that the various concepts raised, discussed and analyzed in the chapter have provided a theoretical framework, among others, for the selection of particular methodologies for the study, which is done in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1 Introduction to the Method

As indicated in the first chapter, the study is mainly to discover whether the news coverage of regions on the evening (8pm) Amharic broadcast is proportional.

It is believed that using different methods to gather data would strengthen the reliability of a research. Regarding this, Mason (2002) says using some form of methodological triangulation enhances the quality of the data and strengthens the arguments to be made. On that account, and based on the research objectives and questions, the study used both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Content analysis, which is primarily a quantitative approach to media studies, was employed to gather data for the research. Concerning content analysis, Bell (2001) describes that content analysis is an empirical and objective procedure to quantifying recorded news using reliable, explicitly defined categories. He further indicates that content analysis addresses questions such as frequency, duration, priority and news content categories.

On that understanding, the method, in this study, was used to give an overview of the coverage of regions on the evening (8pm) Amharic newscast. Stated in another way, the method was believed to show whether the Ethiopian Television, a national station, was proportionally covering all regions in the news broadcast.

Apart from content analysis, self-completion questionnaire was used as a research instrument. Two sets of questionnaire were designed and distributed. The questionnaires were supposed to partly answer

the ‘why’ of the research-why the coverage was the way it was discovered using the content analysis.

It is apparent that every method has its own strength and weakness. Like wise, content analysis, as part of its strength, among others, deals with large amount of data, makes use of naturally occurring material and constructs historical data. In contrast, its weakness includes: inaccuracies of interpretations, availability of coders’ influence and inability to answer the ‘why’ of the question (Bauer, 2000).

In conclusion, the study was more of qualitative than quantitative. It was qualitative in the sense that it involved, among others, analyzing the responses obtained using the two sets of questionnaire. On the other hand, the quantitative aspect embraced counting of news stories, measuring of air times, categorizing of news contents and identifying news producers.

3.2 Data Sources

The sources of the data were categorized into two. One category was the evening (8pm) Amharic news stories broadcast on ETV. The data kept under this category were believed to show what the coverage of regions looked like on the news broadcast in the sample time taken. Included under the other category were data obtained from the Editorial Board Members of ETV, and editors and chief-editors of ENA and Walta. The data under this category were assumed to partly answer why the news coverage of regions was the way it was identified using content analysis.

It is evident that different media researchers, on the grounds of their research objectives, use different coding frames to carry out content analysis. Malinkina and McLeord (2000), and the Bell (2001) used, for example, content type and duration as variables for content

analysis of television news coverage. Concerning what to count in a content analysis, Deacon et al (1999), on their part, say that there is no standard list of things that should always be quantified. What to count is, thus, determined by research objectives. However, they indicate that if a unit of analysis of TV news program is each individual item, the size of them in seconds could be one coding unit.

In the study, besides the ones used by Malinkina and McLeod (2000) and Bell (2001), variables such as priority, tone and news producers, which were believed to address the research objectives, were incorporated as coding frames. Hence, each story that referred to a region or regions was analyzed based on name of a region it referred to, airtime, priority, content category, tone and the organization that produced the news.

As the second category of data source, the Editorial Board Members of ETV, and editors and chief-editors of ENA and Walt were incorporated into the study. Two sets of questionnaire, one for the news agencies and the other for the Ethiopian Television, were designed and distributed.

3.3. Data Collection

The news stories, recorded on video between April 1, 2006 and April 30, 2006, were later coded using the coding frames designed. In deciding the recording time, no other factor, except the whole research time, was taken into consideration.

On the basis of the coding frames designed, the sample news stories recorded on video were later coded and analyzed. Two people, who were trained by the researcher for three days- from May 2 to May 5, 2006, did the coding. The coding was done for one week, between

May 6 and 13, 2006. The training & coding time was decided based on the recording time and availability of the coders.

Besides, distributing and collecting questionnaires took one week, from May 19 to May 26, 2006. Concerning data gathering time, Mason (2002) says that deciding when to gather data is important as people; for example, tend to show different experiences and practices at different times such as at coffee breaks, on holidays and in afternoon court sessions. However, for this study, in deciding the time for distributing and collecting the questionnaires, with the exception of the whole research time, no other factor was taken into account.

Concerning the data obtained using the questionnaires, one set, which was distributed to editors and chief-editors of ENA and Walt, was believed to partly result in data that would show the news coverage of regions before the stories broadcast. The other set, distributed to the Editorial Board Members of ETV, was hoped to give an overview of the news selection processes the board members would go through.

3.3.1 Sampling

As indicated in the preceding section, for one month, from April 1 to April 30, 2006 the main evening (8pm) Amharic newscast on national broadcast television channel was recorded on video.

The researcher was interested in news stories broadcast in Amharic language mainly because Amharic newscast seems to take more airtime and cover more issues than newscasts in Tigrigna and Oromifa languages. In addition, as most of the day's news stories, both from the news agencies and the station's reporters are assumed to reach the television station mainly in the afternoons,

the researcher was interested to focus on the evening (8pm) rather than the afternoon (1pm) newscast.

With regard to the two sets of questionnaires designed for the study, one set was distributed to all the five Editorial Board Members of ETV, who involve in the selection of the day's news stories for broadcast.

The other set was filled in by twelve editors and chief-editors of ENA and Walta. Among the six desks and services within the information department of ENA, the questionnaire was distributed to all the seven editors and chief-editor at the regional desk. The decision was made mainly because the regional desk at ENA is responsible to gather news from across all the regions. It is also understood that ENA's correspondents at the 15 main branches and 22 sub branches in the various regions are accountable to the editors as chief-editor at the regional desk.

Concerning Walta, where there are only two desks, the questionnaire was distributed to all the six editors and chief editor at the Amharic desk. It is also understood that correspondents of the news agency, who are at different branches, send news stories to the Amharic desk. Stated in another way, editors and chief-editors of the English desk were not incorporated in filling in the questionnaire for the desk does not directly receive news stories from correspondents at different regions. The English desk, however, receives news from the Amharic desk.

On the whole, with the exception of one questionnaire among the ones distributed to ENA, all the questionnaires were successfully filled in and collected back. Concerning the one questionnaire, it was understood that the editor, who received it to fill in, went out of Addis Ababa for some unspecified days. The researcher, however,

did not have much research time to wait for the editor till he would come back.

3.3.2. Defining Categories

As Bell (2001) says content analysis yields in meaningful evidence relevant to a hypothesis only when categories of content are explicitly and unambiguously defined and employed consistently. In the light of this, for the study, categories, of which some were used as variables, were first defined. Following that, the reliability of the codes was tested. With regard to testing codes, Bauer and Gaskell (2000) claim that testing the reliability of the codes is one of the steps that must be taken by a researcher who uses content analysis.

Having done that, two coders were trained for three days, between May 25 and 18, 2006, to code the news stories recorded on video. As indicated under the data collection section of this chapter, the training time was decided on the basis of coders' availability and the whole research time.

Besides, concerning simple rules regarding the overlap of coverage between cases, Van (2000) says that coverage is not always neat and tidy, and as a result, some simple rules need to be used in coding. He further explains if a disaster strikes more than one country, each stricken country is coded as a separate of a disaster striking a country.

On that account, for this study, a story, which referred to more than a region, was coded as separate stories referring to the regions. However, the airtime the story took, calculated in seconds was equally divided between or among the regions.

Regarding the difficulty of coding, Deacon et al (1999), on their part, say that having implemented a coding frame, some variables are easier than others to be applied. As for overcoming the difficulty,

they further indicate that while some quantitative content analysis studies take specific words as their sampling units to explore themes of news stories, others rely on the coders to recognize certain themes or ideas in the news, and then to allocate this to predetermined categories.

In the content analysis conducted for the study, coding frames such as number of stories, airtime and story producers were easily codified by the coders. On the contrary, content type and tone became a bit challenging for coders. Nonetheless, due to the repetitive practice and examples they were given, the coders, on the whole, came to manage them.

After making a random selection of some news stories, the researcher proved that the coders were effectively classified the news stories into content and tone categories. In addition, examining some sample data that were coded by the two people, the researcher discovered very little difference between the data. This proved that coders' influence on the reliability of data was so little.

Below are given definitions of categories used in the study:

1. Airtime of the story - refers to the amount of time, measured in seconds, a story takes when broadcast.
2. Content type-refers to the dominant issue raised in a news story. This includes categories such as politics, economy, education, science and technology, culture, agriculture, infrastructure, investment, health and others.
3. Number of news stories-refers to the number of news stories broadcast about a region.
4. Priority of news stories -refers to the order of news stories during broadcast.

5. Tone -refers to the general character, which could be positive, negative or neutral, of a news story.
6. Story producer -refers to the organizational body that made the news story.

3.4. Data Processing and Presentation

As the data are both qualitative and quantitative, a distinction was made in presenting them. On one hand, data obtained using content analysis, which are more of quantitative, were presented using coding frames as headings. On the other hand, the qualitative data, mainly obtained using self-completion questionnaires, were organized under different topics.

Following, after the data were organized, statistical tool was identified and used to measure and analyze the news coverage of regions. Hence, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed. More specifically, descriptive statistical techniques such as mean and mode were used. When appeared two or more modes, the lower or least number, designed as a rule for the study, was taken to represent the priority of the news stories during broadcast.

In conclusion, the chapter has attempted to show the methodological procedures designed and followed. This has largely been done in line with the hypothesis, research questions and objectives set in the beginning chapter. Besides, the chapter has based itself on the theoretical frameworks discussed in the literature review chapter. Above all, it has laid a basis for the presentation and analysis of data that has appeared in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, data obtained using content analysis and questionnaires are presented, analyzed, and interpreted. This is largely done in line with the theoretical frameworks discussed in the review chapter. Apart from integrating the preceding three chapters, the chapter, on the whole, lays a strong groundwork for the subsequent one.

By way of introduction, it should be noted that the analysis of the data is divided into two interrelating parts. The first part addresses the findings from the content analysis of the evening (8pm) Amharic news stories broadcast on ETV. This part is believed to show what the news coverage of regions looked like during the sample time taken. More specifically, under this section the news stories, in relation to the different regions, are analyzed using variables such as number of stories, airtime, content category, tone, priority and story producer.

The second part deals with the analysis of the responses obtained using questionnaires. The analysis made under this section is believed to partly answer why the news coverage of regions on the Amharic broadcast is the way it was discovered using content analysis. Included under this part are two complementary sub sections. While one section treats the responses of editors and chief-editors of Walta and ENA, the other expounds the responses of the Editorial Board Members of ETV.

In sum, there are used tables to represent the findings obtained using content analysis. A greater part of the responses obtained using questionnaires is summarized, discussed and presented in paragraphs.

4.2. Data Obtained Using Content Analysis

It is under this section that data obtained using content analysis are presented and analyzed. Besides, an attempt is made to give the data more meanings and interpretations.

Table one: Total number of news stories

Domestic stories		Stories that referred to all regions			
Total No.	Total airtime in seconds	Total No.	%	Total airtime in seconds	%
504	44,819	457	90.67	34,245	76.40

Jensen (1998) says that a first way of describing newscast is to note the total number of news stories examined in the sample. In this respect, table 1 shows the total number of news stories, along with the total airtime, broadcast on the evening (8pm) Amharic newscast during the sample time.

It was discovered using content analysis that during the sample time a total of 504 domestic news stories was broadcast. The stories totally took an airtime of 44,891 seconds. Of the total 504 news items, 457 news stories, which constituted 90.67 percent, referred to regions. This implies that the total number of news stories that referred to regions was bigger than that referred to the nation as a whole.

The findings, thus, entails ETV is focusing on regions rather than on Ethiopia as a whole. This seems to be in congruent with the system, federalism that the country has been following since the coming of the ruling party-EPRDF to power.

Table two: Number and airtime of news stories VS each region

Region	Total No. of News Stories		Total Airtime in Seconds	
	No.	%	No.	%
Addis Ababa	143	31.29	12,243	35.75
SNNP	76	16.63	5,513	16.09
Oromia	73	15.97	4,953	14.46
Amhara	56	12.25	3,967	11.58
Tigray	32	7.00	2,410	7.03
Afar	27	5.90	1,733	5.06
Somali	23	5.03	1,706	4.98
Benshangu/Gumuz	13	2.84	927	2.70
Harari	6	1.31	350	1.02
Dire Dawa	6	1.31	341	0.99
Gambella	2	0.43	102	0.29
Total No.	457	100	34,245	100
Mean	41.54	–	3,113.18	–

As can be seen from table 2, there were disparities between or among regions in the number of news stories and airtime on the evening (8pm) Amharic news broadcast during the sample time. The gap between the highest and the lowest numbers was extremely wide. Of the total 457 news stories, 143 (31.29%) referred to Addis Ababa. To the other extreme, Gambella received only two news items. This was less than 1 percent of the total news stories that referred to all regions.

One interesting point to be made from the table is that there is a direct relationship between the number of stories and airtime that

referred to regions. A region with more number of news stories received more airtime. The clear implication is that the stories, on average, took an equivalent airtime.

When compared with the sample time, Addis Ababa, on average, received four news items a day. While Afar, Somali, Benshangul/Gumuz, Harari, Dire Dawa and Gambella received less than a story, SNNP, Oromia, Amhara and Tigray obtained more than a story a day

Besides, based on the mean value (51.54), which shows the average number of news stories, it becomes feasible to categorize the news coverage of regions into three: high, medium and low. Regions such as Addis Ababa, SNNP and Oromia are considered as regions that received high news coverage. On the contrary, Afar, Somali, Benshangul/Gumuz, Harari, Dire Dawa and Gambella fall under low news coverage. Amhara and Tigriay, which received news stories closer to the mean, are categorized as regions that received medium coverage

What becomes plausible to discover from the table is that the majority of the regions received news stories below the average. This implies that a small number of regions dominated the news scene during the sample time. In other words, the evening (8pm) Amharic news broadcast came to set more number of agendas for a few regions than a majority.

As indicated by Tannock (2001) news organizations attempt to overcome news coverage disparities among regions by placing journalists at major centers of a state. This, however, leads to the news from the pre-selected areas being favored and infrequent coverage of several regions. Tuchman (1978), on his part, says that

there is a reluctance to take the mirror further than a 10-kilometer radius outside the newsroom for fear that the mirror will be broken.

It is understood that ENA and Walta have attempted to place correspondents at major cities of some regions. This, however, led to the news from the prescribed areas being privileged. In sum, the obvious implication of the finding of the content analysis shown in the above table is that more than half of the total number of regions infrequently appeared on the evening (8pm) Amharic news broadcast.

Table three: Number of news stories VS story producers

Region	Sum and % of Total sum	Story Producers			
		ETV	ENA	Walta	Regional Information Bureau
Addis Ababa	Sum % of Total sum	74.00 43.5%	54.00 33.5%	15.00 17.2%	.00% .0%
SNNP	Sum % Total sum	17.00 10.0%	30.00 18.6%	10.00 11.5%	19.00 48.7%
Oromia	Sum % Total sum	20.00 11.8%	25.00 15.5%	22.00 25.3%	11.00 28.2%
Amhara	Sum % Total sum	14.00 8.2%	24.00 14.9%	20.00 23.0%	3.00 7.7%
Tigray	Sum % Total sum	10.00 5.9%	12.00 7.5%	10.00 11.5%	.00 .0%
Afar	Sum % Total sum	10.00 5.9%	4.00 2.5%	2.00 2.3%	1.00 2.6%
Somali	Sum % Total sum	17.00 10.0%	1.00 .6%	5.00 5.7%	.00 . %
Benshangul/Gumuz	Sum % Total sum	3.00 1.8%	8.00 5.0%	1.00 1.1%	1.00 2.6%
Harari	Sum % Total sum	1.00 .6%	1.00 .6%	.00 .0%	2.00 5.1%
Dire Dawa	Sum % Total sum	3.00 1.8%	1.00 .6%	.00% .0%	2.00 5.1%
Gambella	Sum % Total sum	1.00 .6%	1.00 .6%	.00 .0%	.00 . %
Total	Sum Mean	170.00 15.45	161.00 14.63	87.77 7.90	39.00 3.54.
	% of Grand Total sum	37.19%	35.22%	19.03%	8.53%

% of Grand total sum was calculated in relation to the 457 news stories that referred to all regions during the sample time

Table three demonstrates the number of news stories, in relation to each region, produced by ENA, Walta, Regional Information Bureaus and ETV reporters. Of the total 457 news stories that referred to all regions, while ETV reporters made 170 (37.19%) news stories, 161 (35.22%) were produced by ENA. Preceded by ETV and ENA, Walta and Regional Information Bureaus produced 87 (19.03%) and 39 (8.53%) news stories respectively.

On the basis of the data, one can argue that stories produced by ETV reporters got more chances to be broadcast than stories produced by others. In line with this, Tannock (2001) claims that news organizations are more likely to use stories from their internal staff than external sources.

As also shown in the above table, there are disparities in the number of news stories produced about each region by ENA, Walta, Regional Information Bureaus and ETV. Of the total news stories produced by ETV, about half of the news stories, (43.5%), referred to Addis Ababa. What is embedded here is the station's focus of interest to cover events and issues in the metropolis. This is also verified by the findings of the content analysis, which indicate a great number of news stories about SNNP, Oromia, Amhara and Tigray was produced by ENA.

In addition, the mean value, indicated in the table, reveals that most regions received far below the average number of news stories made by each news producer. The very implication is that the news producers, mainly ETV, ENA and Walta, focused on a few regions in covering 'news worthy' events and issues. ETV, for example, produced, on average, 15 stories. However, the majority of regions such as Tigray, Afar, Benshangul/Gumuz, Harari, Dire Dawa and

Gambella had chances to receive news stories far less than the average number of stories produced by ETV.

In the same way, also revealed in the above table, the SNNP's Regional Information Bureau, as compared with other Regional Information Bureaus, produced the biggest number of stories. On the contrary, during the sample time, there were observed no news stories from Regional Information Bureaus of some regions like Tigray, Somali and Gambella. This implies that Regional Information Bureaus of some regions, as compared with others, took less initiative to cover news worthy events of their respect regions.

Overall, the table makes obvious that the news producers poorly covered a majority of the regions. On the basis of the finding, it becomes reasonable to argue then that the news producers gave much more attention to a few regions than a majority.

Table four: Priority of news stories during broadcast VS regions

Regions	Addis Ababa	Oromia	SNNP	Amhara	Tigray	Benshangul/Gumuz	Dire Dawa	Afar	Somali	Harari	Gambella
The most frequent value	2	3	5	6	8	9	9	10	11	12	13
Priority	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th

Table four shows the priority of news stories versus each region during broadcast. It was calculated using story position, which is indicated in the table as the most frequent value. Concerning the priority of news stories, Fourie (2001) elucidates that in the case of television, the chronology of events is important. While the main or most important news is presented first, the less important events are dealt with later. It is also agreed by most researchers that both story position and amount of time allotted to a story show the emphasis given to the story by the news organization

As can be seen from the table, news items about Addis Ababa, Oromia and SNNP were often positioned at the first, second and third orders during broadcast. The obvious implication is that the television station, in its evening (8pm) Amharic news broadcast, for one reason or another, gave priority for events and issues happening in these regions. Most media professionals agree that when stories are read first, the implication becomes they are the most important stories that a media institution has to broadcast at the time.

By extension, it is viable to contend that the priority of news stories implies the emphasis given to the regions by the television station. One can also argue that the television station seems to have associated itself with a few regions that dominated the news scene in general and the first priority during broadcast in particular.

In contrast, news stories about Somali, Harari and Gambella, compared with others, took the eight, ninth and tenth positions respectively during the sample time. Following the same line of argument, the researcher claims that events and issues of these regions failed to regularly meet the criteria of the Editorial Board Members of the television station to frequently get the first priority during broadcast

One remarkable point about this finding is that there is a kind of relationship between story position and number of stories that a region received. In other words, regions that received a limited number of stories did not get their stories positioned at the beginning of the broadcast. The two news stories broadcast about Gambella, for example, got the last priority.

Table five: Number of news stories VS content type

Region		Content Category									
		Politics	Economy	Education	Science & Technology	Culture	Agriculture	Infrastructure	Investments	Health	Others
Addis Ababa	Sum	25.00	17.00	13.00	12.00	3.00	.00	11.00	28.00	16.00	18.00
	% of total sum	30.9%	30.9%	34.2%	57.1%	30.0%	.0%	20.0%	31.8%	45.7%	62.1%
SNNP	Sum	19.00	8.00	10.00	3.00	2.00	8.00	7.00	12.00	2.00	5.00
	% of total sum	23.5%	14.5%	26.3%	14.3%	20.00%	17.8%	12.7%	13.6%	5.7%	17.2%
Oromia	Sum	15.00	7.00	6.00	2.00	4.00	8.00	9.00	11.00	9.00	2.00
	% of total sum	18.5%	12.7%	15.8%	9.5%	40.0%	17.8%	16.4%	12.5%	25.7%	6.9%
Amhara	Sum	12.00	6.00	5.00	.00	.00	7.00	5.00	15.00	3.00	3.00
	% of total sum	14.8%	10.9%	13.2%	.0%	.0%	15.6%	9.1%	17.00%	8.6%	10.3%
Tigray	Sum	2.00	7.00	2.00	.00	.00	9.00	6.00	4.00	2.00	.00
	% of total sum	2.5%	12.7	5.3%	.0%	.0%	20.0%	10.9%	4.5%	5.7%	.0%
Afar	Sum	3.00	6.00	.00	4.00	.00	5.00	7.00	3.00	.00	.00
	% of total sum	3.7	10.9%	.0%	19.0%	.0%	11.1	12.7% %	3.4%	.0%	.0%
Somali	Sum	2.00	2.00	.00	.00	.00	5.00	4.00	8.00	1.00	1.00
	% of total sum	2.5%	3.6%	.0%	.0%	.0%	11.1%	7.3%	8.1%	2.9%	3.4%
Benshangul Gumuz	Sum	2.00	2.00	1.00	.00	.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	.00
	% of total sum	2.5%	3.6%	2.6%	.0%	.0%	6.7%	3.6%	2.3%	2.9%	.0%
Harari	Sum	.00	.00	1.00	.00	.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	.00	.00
	% of total sum	.0%	.0%	2.6%	.0%	.0%	2.2%	1.8%	2.3%	.0%	.0%
Dire Dawa	Sum	1.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	2.00	3.00	.00	.00
	% of total sum	1.2%	.0% %	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	3.6%	3.4%	.0%	.0%
Gambella	Sum	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	1.00	.00	1.00	.00
	% of total sum	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.8%	.0%	2.9%	.0%
Total	Total sum	81	55	38	21	10	45	55	88	35	29
	Mean	7.36	5.00	3.45	1.90	.90	4.09	5.00	8.00	3.18	2.63
	% Grand total	17.72%	12.03%	8.31%	4.59%	2.18%	9.84%	12.03%	19.25%	7.65%	6.34%

% of Grand total was calculated in relation to the 457 news stories that referred to all regions during the sample time

Table five shows the categories of news content in relation to each region. As indicated in the table, news stories about investment, politics, economy and infrastructure dominated the evening (8pm) Amharic news scene during the sample time. Of the total news stories that referred to all regions, while 88 (19.25%) news items were about investment, 81(17.72%) stories were about politics.

It was also revealed that 55(12.03%) news items were about economy and agriculture each. On the contrary, science and technology, and culture were the least focused content categories during the sample time. There were 21 (4.59%) and 10(2.18%) news items about science and technology, and culture respectively.

On the basis of the data, one can argue that there are more similarities than differences between or among regions concerning the number of stories that fell into the different content categories. More specifically, certain content categories became dominant in news stories that referred to most regions. What is implied here is the focus of news producers on certain topics.

In line with that, Ramaprasad and Kelly (2003) indicate the main perspective of most developing countries is that media have an important role in aiding the government efforts. The overemphasis of some issues such as investment, economy and infrastructure over others, as shown in the table, strengthens what Ramaprasad and Kelly have raised.

This also seems, partly, due to a consequence of the monopoly of the state over the television station. As the content analysis shows, most stories were repeatedly structured around the maneuvering of the government in improving the lives of people.

The obvious importance of such news stories for the federal and regional governments becomes clear in the light of consolidating their powers. However, the over repetition of certain topics in news program, as most media researchers agree, may result in limited information and lack of audience interest.

It is also shown in the table that, in comparison with other news content categories, the coverage of some events such as culture was very insignificant. The researches, however, argues that there might exist news worthy events but were devoid of news coverage. In sum, one clear implication of the dominance of a few topics is that the television station considered them very important.

Table six: Number of news stories VS tone

Region	Sum and % of Total sum	Tone		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
Addis Ababa	Sum	109.00	11.00	23.00
	% of Total sum	34.0%	16.7%	32.9%
SNNP	Sum	57.00	9.00	10.00
	% of Total sum	17.8%	13.6%	14.3%
Oromia	Sum	45.00	18.00	10.00
	% of Total sum	14.0%	27.3%	14.3%
Amhara	Sum	39.00	11.00	6.00
	% of Total sum	12.1%	16.7%	8.6%
Tigray	Sum	27.00	2.00	3.00
	% of Total sum	8.4%	3.0%	4.3%
Afar	Sum	15.00	4.00	8.00
	% of Total sum	4.7%	6.1%	11.4%
Somali	Sum	11.00	7.00	5.00
	% of Total sum	3.4%	10.0%	7.1%
Benshangul/Gumuz	Sum	8.00	3.00	2.00
	% of Total sum	2.5%	4.5%	2.9%
Harari	Sum	4.00	1.00	1.00
	% of Total sum	1.2%	1.5%	1.4%
Dire Dawa	Sum	5.00	.00	1.00
	% of Total sum	1.6%	.0%	1.4%
Gambella	Sum	1.00	.00	1.00
	% of Total sum	.3%	.0%	1.4%
Total	Total sum	321.00	66.00	70.00
	Mean	29.18	6.00	6.36
	% of Grand Total sum	70.2%	14.4%	15.3%

% of Grand total was calculated in relation to the 457 news stories that referred to all regions during the sample time

Table six, in relation to each region, shows the tone of news stories, which was coded as positive, neutral or negative.

As can be seen from the table, 321 (70.24%) news items, out of 457, were coded as positive. On the country, 66 (14.4%) and 70 (15.3%) news stories were coded as neutral and negative tones respectively. What is implied here is that a greater percent of the total news stories that referred to all regions were framed from positive angle. This, however, may not become a guarantee for the media to create positive perceptions in the viewers. With regard to this, Golan and Wanta (200) indicate that positive media coverage does not always lead to positive public perception.

Besides, the mean value, indicated in the above table, shows that each region on average received 29 new stories that were coded as positive. In contrast, the average number of stories coded as neutral and negative tones were 6 each. Based on this it becomes possible to argue that the majority of the news stories that referred to each region were constructed from positive angle.

The obvious implication then is that contrary to the commonly accepted news value-negativity, the news stories broadcast during the sample time on the evening (8pm) Amharic newscast were more of positive.

4.3. Data Obtained Using Questionnaires

Treated under this section are two sets of data gathered through self-completion questionnaires. While one is about the responses of the editors and chief- editors of ENA and Walta, the other is about the Editorial Board Members of ETV.

4.3.1 Responses Obtained from Editors and Chief-editors of ENA and Walta

Presented and analyzed under this section are responses obtained from editors and chief-editors of ENA and Walta. As the same type of questionnaire was distributed to the editors and chief-editors of the two news agencies, their responses are presented and analyzed in ways that fit each other. It is also believed that the responses could partly show how the agencies are covering regions in terms of news. More importantly, the responses are believed to, also to some extent, answer why the news coverage of regions was the way it was discovered using the content analysis of the sample evening Amharic news stories taken for a sample time of one month.

4.3.1.1. Quantitative Data

Table 7: Responses of Editors and Chief-editors concerning the number of stories that the news agencies receive from each region each day

Question	Choices	Regions																					
		Amhara		Oromia		Tigray		SNNP		Gambella		Somali		Afar		Benishangul/Gumuz		Arari		Addis Ababa		Dire Dawa	
		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents	
		ENA	Walta	ENA	Walta	ENA	Walta	ENA	Walta	ENA	Walta	ENA	Walta	ENA	Walta	ENA	Walta	ENA	Walta	ENA	Walta	ENA	Walta
On average, how big is the number of news stories you receive from each region each day?	Very big	4	-	4	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-
	Big	1	-	1	-	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	-	-
	Medium	1	4	1	4	2	2	1	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
	Small	-	1	-	2	1	3	-	2	1	-	1	4	2	-	3	4	4	3	-	-	3	-
	Very small	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	2	1	3	-	2	2	2	2	-	-	2	-
	Almost none	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	3	1	-	6	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	6

Table one shows that the number of news stories that reaches ENA and Walta from the different regions differs. As answered by five of the six respondents, the number of stories that reaches Walta from Addis Ababa is very big. In contrast, agreed by all the six respondents, the agency hardly receives any stories from some regions such as Gambella, Afar and Dire Dawa. The content analysis also proves that there was no news story produced about Gambella and Dire Dawa by the news agency. It is also understood that the agency does not have any branch offices in these regions.

Campbell (2004) says that if news organizations have correspondents in place, or perhaps can access agency or local news material, then coverage may follow, but if such sources aren't available then coverage won't follow. On the basis of this, it is possible to argue that the absence or presence of branch offices could be one factor for the existence of disparities among regions in news coverage.

With regard to ENA, as responded by the majority, the number of news stories that reaches the agency from Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Addis Ababa is very big. To the other extreme, also responded by the majority, the agency receives very small number of news stories from regions such as Gambella, Somali and Afar.

It seems possible to find a similarity between the numbers of stories the agencies receive. More concretely, the number of stories that they receive from some regions like Addis Ababa, SNNP, Amhara, and Oromia is big. On the contract, they receive insignificant number of news stories from Gambella, Somali and Afar.

4.3.1.2 Qualitative Data

4.3.1.2.1 Factors for the Differences in the Number of News Stories

By way of introduction, it should be important to note that the factors mentioned by editors and chief-editors of ENA and Walta do have greater similarities than differences.

As indicated by the majority of the respondents the capacity of the correspondents is one factor for the differences in the number of news stories that reaches the agencies from the different regions. In line with this, most researchers indicate that apart from getting professional trainings, journalists need to have nose for news so that events and issues may not mostly remain uncovered.

Besides, the number of correspondents and branch offices in each region, as mentioned by respondents, is another deciding factor. The researcher argues that the distribution of branch offices of ENA across regions is not proportional. As compared to Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and Addis Ababa, the number of branches offices in Gambella, Afar and Benhangul-Gumuz is very limited. More concretely, there is only one branch office in each of these regions. In contract, in Oromia, for example, the number is twelve. This entails that there is a big difference between or among regions in the number of branch offices.

In line with this, Tuchman (1978b) cited in Fourie (2004) says that locations which are covered by reporters naturally get more coverage than those not covered by reporters. Thus, the argument that the number of branch offices and correspondents at regional levels could be one factor really sounds. By extension, it could also be a factor for the disparities observed, using content analysis, on news coverage of regions.

Indicated by the majority of the respondents as a third factor is the socio economic activities of each region. Apparently all regions are not at the same level of development. As such, it is arguable that regions with more development activities are more likely to result in more number of news stories. The researcher, on the basis of the findings of the content analysis, contends that a large number of news stories broadcast on ETV Amharic news cast during the sample time concentrated on development related issues. This also implies how such types of news stories have become the main focus of attention by the television station.

In sum, all these factors, including the availability of infrastructure in each region, have partly become causes for the differences observed in the number of news stores that reaches the news agencies.

4.3.1.2.2 An Overview of How the News Agencies are Working with the Television Station

In order to assess the communication between the news agencies and the television station, the editors and chief-editors of the two news agencies were asked, in the questionnaire, to indicate if the Editorial Board Members of ETV often give them feedback about the stories they produce.

The intension behind the question was mainly to see if the news stories they send to ETV for broadcast are in congruent with the demands of the station. The researcher, however, does not have a stand that the news agencies should produce stories that entirely fit into the needs of the television station for the mere reason of getting them broadcast. Nonetheless, it is agreed by most researchers that there are certain considerations such as writing news for TV format that news producers need to be aware of. This is important to minimize the number of stories that miss the chance of getting broadcast.

It is responded by all the editors and chief-editors that although it is weak, there is communication between the television station and the news agencies. Besides, they mentioned some of the feedback they often receive from the television station concerning the news stories they send for broadcast. As such the feedback demands the reporters of the news agencies to consider points like TV format, source usage, journalistic writing style, clarity, newsworthiness, quality of picture; insertion of sound bite, opinions of beneficiaries and background of the stories .

What is implied here is that, in the eyes of the Editorial Board Members of the television station, some of the news stories produced by the news agencies happen to lack certain qualities of news. Apparently, this results in the exclusion of some of the news stories during the selection process for broadcast.

Also shown by the majority of respondents, for one reason or another, ETV gives very little attention to cover newsworthy events and issues in most regions in its news broadcast. As a result, it is highly concerned with assigning its reports to cover mainly a series of meetings. This, as indicated by the respondents, further results in giving more airtime for officials than beneficiaries of a development activity of a certain region. In line with this, the researcher claims that concentrating on certain issues and limited areas may also become a factor for the disparities observed in news coverage of regions in the Amharic broadcast.

It is also arguable that as a national television, the station does not need to mainly leave the gathering of newsworthy events and issues of most regions to the news agencies alone.

4.3.2 Responses Obtained from Editorial Board Members of ETV

It is under this section that responses obtained from Editorial Board Members of ETV are presented and analyzed. It is also possible to note that the questionnaire resulted in both quantitative and qualitative data. The analysis of the data shows how Editorial Board Members handle news stories that reach the television station from news agencies, regional information bureaus and reporters of the station itself. In addition, it puts on view the news selection criteria the board members often use in deciding stories for broadcast. On the whole, an attempt was made to analyze the data vis-à-vis regions.

4.3.2.1 Quantitative Data

Table 8: Reaction of Editorial Board Members of ETV to whether all regions are getting proportional news coverage on ETV Amharic broadcast

Question	Choices	Number of respondents	Percentage
Do you think that all regions and administrative regions are getting proportional news coverage on ETV Amharic broadcast?	I think so	2	40
	I don't think so	3	60
Total		5	100

As shown in the above table, three of the five board members responded that ETV is not giving proportional news coverage for the regions in its Amharic newscast. This implies that the majority of boarded members do have the belief that ETV is not setting agendas fairly for all regions in its Amharic broadcast.

One important point to be made here is that the majority of the board members have the awareness that the news coverage of regions in Amharic news broadcast is not proportional. Their awareness coincides with the findings of the content analysis that shows disparities between or among regions in news coverage.

Table 9: Responses of Editorial Board Members of ETV concerning the number of news stories that reaches the television station each day.

Question	Choices	Regions																					
		Amhara		Oromia		Tigray		SNNP		Gambella		Somali		Afar		Benishangul/Gumuz		Arari		Addis Ababa		Dire Dawa	
		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents		Respondents	
		No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
How big is the number of news stories that reaches the television station each day about each region before you start selecting for broadcast?	Very big	1	20	1	20	-	-	1	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	80	-	-
	Big	3	60	3	60	3	60	4	80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	20	1	20	2	40
	Medium	1	20	1	20	1	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	60	1	20	-	-	3	60
	Small	-	-	-	-	1	20	-	-	3	60	3	60	5	100	2	40	3	60	-	-	-	-
	Very small	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	40	2	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table two indicates that the number of news stories that reaches the television station from the different regions varies. Three of the five Editorial Board Members responded that the number of stories that reaches the station each day about Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and SNNP is big. In contrast, as responded by four board members, the number is very big for Addis Ababa. The content analysis of the sample news stories also approves this.

One important relation ship to be made between the findings of the data shown in table one and the content analysis is that there is a direct relation ship between the number of stories that reach station and that get broadcast.

4.3.2.2 Qualitative Data

4.4.2.2.1 Reasons for Disparities in News Coverage

As responded by three of the five board members, also approved by the content analysis, there are disparities in the news coverage of regions. Besides, the members raised various reasons for the differences. First, all regional information bureaus do not have the same capacity to produce news stories with quality pictures. What is implied here is that the Editorial Board Members give much attention for stories that have video footage.

It seems also important to quote the response of one board member: “All in all the problem lies on the regions themselves, not on the station.” The implication is that there is reliance of the television station on regional information bureaus to cover news stories about their respective regions. With this regard, Tai (2005) indicates that because of the rising expenses in the production of news, news organizations have decided to have a few

staff reporters stationed in localities. The result is the reliance by most media organizations on a few news producers as purveyors of news.

The researcher, however, argues that the greater part of responsibility in covering regions in news broadcast needs to fall on media institutions. As a national television station, ETV, for example, is responsible for this. In line with this, the station needs to consider that all regions are not at the same development level. They do not have equal resources and infrastructure. It is also possible to claim that heavy reliance on regional information bureaus may diminish the role of the news agencies and the station's reporters.

The other reason, given by two board members is that some regions are far away from the reach of the news agencies and the television station. More specifically, ENA and Walta do not have branch offices in some major cities and towns of some regions. Likewise, because of shortage of logistic and human resources ETV may not be able to regularly cover events and issues in most regions.

Based on the reasons raised, the researcher argues that most regions are getting less news coverage not mainly because of the existence of few or not newsworthy events and issues happening in the regions. Campbell (2004) claims that those who are eager to get news coverage, particularly those with the resources to actively seek news access, may exploit this competitive environment. More specifically, it becomes illogical to argue that the two news stories broadcast about Gambella, identified using the content analysis, were due to the existence of only two events that satisfy the news selection criteria.

4.3.2.2.2 News Selection Criteria often used by Editorial Board Members

All the Editorial Board Members responded that in addition to the rules and regulations of the editorial policy of ETV, they often use news values such as significance and timeliness in selecting news stories for broadcast. Above all, they indicated that priority, during the selection process, is often given for issues related to politics, development and economic.

Similarly, the content analysis shows that such issues dominated the news scene during the sample time. The implication then is that content type is used as a major selection criterion by the board members. The researcher, however, argues that the Editorial Board Members need to consider other issues during the selection process. If the selection often focuses on pre-determined issues, the unexpected ones may remain uncovered. This may lead the news broadcast to miss the most important news stories of a day. This in turn reduces the chances of viewers to get diversity of information.

As indicated by *ibid*, the question of audience interest is so important in journalists' news selection decision; particularly when weighing up stories for broadcast. Besides, it is arguable that focusing on certain issues may ignore other regions from the newscast as all regions may not have equal development and economic activities.

In line with this, in the questionnaire, the board members were asked to define news. The intention behind the question was to assess the basic points they often consider in selecting news stories for broadcast. All of them included timeliness, significance and development related issues in their definitions. Strentz (1989) argues that the way news is defined shapes the news gathering process. He also claims that definitions of news are not static, and news values such as prominence, conflict and

timeliness have been modified in recent years, not always to the benefit of the news audience.

It is a common agreement that news is expected to cover developments, which have consequences for the public. It is also supposed to cover developments that carry implications for cultural traditions beyond the single event. The researcher, however, argues that news should not always cover events with the hope of strengthening the political ideology of the ruling party in power.

As means of improving the news coverage of regions, responded by the board members, the television station is using a mechanism called “project news.” It is facilitated through telephone conversation. The news is often about agriculture, infrastructure, economy and politics.

It is believed that the mechanism can relatively improve the news coverage of regions. The drawbacks, however, are diverse. As the content analysis shows the sources of the “project news” are often officials. The reporter in the newsroom has no means to verify what the officials in the other regions are talking about. Besides, the stories, in most cases, do run without supporting pictures.

It is also understood from the responses of the Editorial Board Members that ENA and Walta often give them feedback about the story selection criteria that the board members go thorough. The news agencies, as the responses of the board members show, raise issues like not giving credit caption and not broadcasting some of the stories produced by the agencies. The researcher argues that a good rapport between the new agencies and television station may improve the news coverage of regions

It is apparent that the news agencies and regional information bureaus get encouraged when the stories they produce are broadcast. It is also arguable that rather than ignoring stories at the first glance, it could be

better if the editorial board members look for ways by which the stories can be edited and get broadcast.

It was also responded by the five members of the board that the stories that are sent to the station from the news agencies and regional information bureaus often get edited after selected for broadcast. They indicated that the criteria they often use for editing include: accuracy, composition, content, flow of ideas, utilization of short sentence and exclusion of controversial issues, connotative meanings and unnecessary repetitions. It is implied here that their prime focus in on editing audio.

The researcher, however, argues that as the quality of television news stories depends on both audio and video, a similar attention needs to be given for video editing as well. More importantly, the researcher supports the idea of editing stories to improve their quality. However, he also argues that in the context of editing, stories should not be always dropped as this may minimum the news coverage of regions

In conclusion, in the chapter, a great attempt has been made to test the hypothesis and respond to the research questions set in the introductory chapter. This has largely been done on the grounds of the theoretical frameworks discussed in the review chapter and of the methodology in chapter three. Besides, the discussions, interpretations and implications made on the data obtained using content analysis and self-completion questionnaires are believed to establish bedrock for the subsequent chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussion, Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The chapter, at the first place, presents discussions on the major findings of the study. The discussions are largely done in relation to the theoretical frameworks raised in the literature review chapter and the analysis of the data in chapter four. Following the discussions appears summary and conclusion section. As a last part, the chapter presents some recommendations made on the basis of the research findings.

5.1 Discussion

In the study, content analysis and self-completion questionnaires were employed to gather data on the news coverage of regions on the evening (8pm) Amharic broadcast. The data were gathered mainly to test the hypothesis set in the introductory chapter. Broadly viewed, the whole attempt of the study has been to discover whether the news coverage of regions on the evening (8pm) Amharic broadcast is proportional.

In a country like Ethiopia, which is characterized by linguistic and cultural diversity, the national television, in its news program, is expected to cover various topics, which foster the different languages and cultures. Similarly, it is understood that various issues and events about minorities come to be viewed and promoted when there is proportional news coverage of regions. With regard to this, Herman and McChesney (1997) argue that providing news coverage for minorities, apart from servicing sub cultures within larger communities, allows them to see themselves and the world through their own lenses.

The content analysis reveals that there are disparities between or among regions in the news coverage. A small number of regions came to dominate the evening (8pm) Amharic news broadcast during the sample

time. The majority of the regions, on the other hand, were infrequently appeared in the news scene. Besides, the gap between the highest and the lowest number of news stories that referred to regions is so wide. Of the total 457 news stories that referred to regions, Addis Ababa received 142 (31.29%) news stories. To the other extreme, Gambella received only two news stories, which is less than one percent.

What is clear from the findings of the content analysis is that most regions were not frequently in the news agenda. Although it is difficult to generalize, people in the regions that received less news coverage are on the disadvantage. Because of limited news coverage of their respective regions, people tend to have fewer chances to view about their development, economic and political activities. Besides, they have limited opportunities to promote social and cultural aspects of their regions. Viewed at a national level, viewers in all regions tend to lose a large volume, possibly variety, of information and news each day for the fact that most regions are kept frequently away from the news agenda.

On the basis of the findings of the content analysis and questionnaires it is possible to argue that the television station and the news agencies-Walta and ENA have ignored most of the regions. In other words, they have considered the issues and events in most regions as having little or no immediate and long lasting relevance to be covered in news. As Price (1995) says, access doctrines become an index of ways to reconstruct the mass media so that the predominant mode is no longer the few speaking to the many, but the many speaking to the many.

Sub article 4 of article 89 of the Constitution indicates that government shall provide special assistance to Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples least advantaged in economic and social development. Apparently, almost all regions that received very little news coverage are, for one reason or another, the least developed ones. At a practical level,

according to GebreAb (2003), the Ministry of Federal Affairs was established at the end of 2001 with a mandate to support the four marginalized and boarder states namely Afar, Benshangul/Gumuz, Gambella and Somali. However, what is promised for the regions in the Constitution and by the Ministry doesn't seem to have happened with regard to news coverage.

In addition, as Strentz (1989) says if problems such as poverty, illiteracy, care of the mental ill, health care crises, drug addition child abuse and the like are to be addressed in meaningful and long term fashion, then news coverage must contribute to the process by keeping the news audiences abreast of the issues. Based on this, it is possible to argue that providing new coverage for regions entails an attempt to address problems that exist in the regions.

Similarly, it is agreed by most scholars that the availability of a diverse range of information is vital for any society living in any region. It ,among others , develops a diverse social, cultural and political environment. Jensen (1998) says that following the news, to a certain degree, the information stays with the audiences; and their awareness of the world may become a resource for action beyond the immediate context of viewing in front of the screen. Keller (1990), on his part, indicates that a free flow of news and information is so paramount to build a democratic society.

It is apparent that Oromia, Tigray and Amhara regions have their own airtime on ETV to broadcast different programs, including news, mainly about their respective regions. As Leykun (2004) says, Oromiffa and Tigrigna, for example, are each given 18.2% of the total weekly airtime of ETV. Concerning Addis Ababa, there is ETV2 channel which presents news and other programs for the residents of Addis Ababa and its surroundings on a daily basis. The content analysis shows that these

regions, including SNNP, received much better news coverage than the majority of the regions. This proves that a few regions are getting double benefit from the station. In other words, the station seems to have continuously favored a few regions. Concerning sharing of political power and resources, Thedieck (2003) says that as federal states can be multi-territorial, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic, power and resources need to be proportionally shared.

One remarkable relationship that has been discovered by the study is that the news coverage of regions is directly related to the priority of news stories during broadcast. Stated in another way, regions that took the first priority had much better news coverage than regions that took the last priority. Similarly, the findings are suggestive of the priority given to each of the eleven regions in Amharic news broadcast. It is also possible to note that the number of news stories about each region suggests a focus of interest around the regions by the station and the news agencies.

5.2 Summary and Conclusion

The different phases in the study have enabled the researcher to effectively test the hypothesis set in the introductory chapter. Similarly, the various concepts raised in the literature review chapter laid a basis for the study. The concepts, among others, provided a theoretical framework and made a selection of particular methodologies and procedures necessary for the study.

The study employed content analysis and self-completion questionnaires to gather data. The evening (8pm) Amharic news broadcast was recorded for a sample time of one month. Later, the stories were coded vis-à-vis each region using coding frames such as number of news stories, airtime, priority, tone, content category, and story producers.

Besides, two sets of questionnaire were distributed. While one was filled in by all Editorial Board Members of ETV, the other was by a sample of editors and chief-editors of ENA and Walta. The objective of the questionnaires was, on the whole, to discover why the news coverage of regions on the evening (8pm) Amharic broadcast was the way it was.

A variety of news coverage studies, according to Jensen (1998), has identified imbalances in terms of the regions and topics covered together with the underlying set of criteria of news. Similarly, this study has found out regional imbalance in news coverage.

The findings conformed to the initial expectation of the researcher. The researcher assumed at the outset of the study that the news coverage of regions in the evening (8pm) Amharic broadcast is not proportional. It was discovered using content analysis that a few regions such as Addis Ababa, SNNP, Oromia, Amharic and Tigray dominated the news broadcast during the sample time. In addition, the findings show that the disparity between the highest and lowest number of news stories that referred to regions is extremely wide. While Addis Ababa received 143 news stories out of the total 457, Gambella received only 2 news stories.

The Obvious conclusion then is that there is regional imbalance in the news coverage on the evening (8pm) Amharic broadcast. What is also possible to conclude is that less attention is normally given by the television station and the news agencies to regions such as Afar, Somali, Benshangul/Gumuz, Harari, Dire Dawa and Gambella.

On the basis of the findings of content analysis one can tentatively conclude that ETV, compared with ENA and Walta, is producing the biggest number of stories that refer to regions. Of the 457 news items that referred to regions, while ETV reporters made 170 (37.19%), ENA produced 161 (35.22%) news stories. This shows that stories produced

by ETV reporters have more chances to be broadcast than stories produced by others. This seems to be in congruence with what Tannock (2000) says. According to Tannock, news organizations are more likely to use stories from their internal staff than external sources.

However, a similar conclusion drawn from the findings of the content analysis shows that the television station focuses on covering events and issues in the metropolis. The finding bears a witness that out of the total number of news stories produced by ETV, about half referred to Addis Ababa.

Besides, the findings show that the number of stories that referred to regions and the priority of broadcast are directly related to each other. Regions such as Addis Ababa, SNNP, Oromia, Amhara and Tigray that received much better news coverage got the first priority during broadcast. On the contrary, Afar, Somali, Benshangul/Gumuz, Harari Dire Dawa and Gambella that received less news coverage had the last priority. The conclusion then is a few regions are getting double benefit. This also entails that the station seems to have associated itself with the few regions and have considered issues and events in the regions so significant. The content analysis, except number differences, however, divulges that all regions share more similarities than differences with regard to news content category and tone.

Although the study did not perform a detailed analysis of each news story, the findings of the content analysis, at the least, show that the news categories were not as such diverse. Investment, politics and agriculture were the highly focused content categories in news stories that referred to almost all regions. This reveals that the amount and variety of information conveyed to viewers about a region was so limited.

More specifically, viewers in regions that received less news coverage obtained limited information about their respective regions. Broadly viewed, the availability of relatively little news coverage of some regions means that certain events and issues may never enter the news agenda. On the basis of this it is possible to conclude that the television station and the news agencies are predominately covering certain specified content categories.

In a similar way, the content analysis shows that the greater percentage (70.24%) of the news stories broadcast about regions was positive. The conclusion is, contrary to the commonly accepted news value-negativity, the news stories broadcast about regions are often framed from positive angle.

On the basis of the findings of the data obtained using questionnaires, it is also possible to conclude that differences in the capacity of journalists; number of branch offices and correspondents; infrastructure and socio-economic activities of each region; logistic and human resources of the television and news agencies have affected the news coverage of regions.

More generally, the content analysis bears out the conclusion that the coverage of specific societies and cultures in the news broadcast was very low. This also shows that stories about some regions are not often on the agenda or available easily.

In sum, as a general conclusion it is possible to note that news coverage of regional issues and events is being driven by operational structure. In other words, the intrinsic news values of events and issues are not often focused on by the news agencies and the television station.

5.3 Recommendations

To ensure comprehensive and proportional news coverage of regions on the evening (8pm) Amharic broadcast, the following recommendations, based on the research findings, are made.

- There should be an overall capacity building of the television station and the news agencies-ENA and Walta both in human resources and logistics.
- Communication, which leads to an exchange of feedback, needs to exist among the television station, news agencies and regional information bureaus.
- The Ethiopia Television needs to have its own correspondents at major cities and towns of all regions. It does not need to heavily rely on the news agencies and regional information bureaus.
- The television station needs to give special attention to Afar, Somali, Benshangul/Gumuz, Harari, Dire Dawa and Gambella regions for they are receiving little news coverage and for they do not have their own regular airtime on ETV to broadcast mainly about their respective regions. More specifically, the station needs to frequently deploy its reporters to these regions.
- ENA and Walta need to make the number of their branch offices and correspondents in regions proportional. Besides, they need to have branch offices in major cities and towns of all regions. Walta, for instance, needs to open branch offices in Gambella, Afar and Dire Dawa regions.
- Trainings on Journalism need to be given at different times for journalists in the news agencies and television station.
- The television station and news agencies do not need to focus only on certain topics. They need to be aware that there are a number of issues and events that are not often in the news agenda.

- Regional States need to strengthen their respective Regional Information Bureaus in both human resources and logistics.
- ETV and the news agencies need to be dictated by intrinsic news values rather than operational structure in covering events and issues of regions.

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Appendix A: Coding frame for Content Analysis

Date	Stories broadcast				Regions													
	National		Foreign		No	Name	Region s (s) in the story	Air time given for the story	No of stories about a region	Priority of news stores	Tone			Content focused	Story producer			
	No.	Time	No.	Time							+	-	0		ETV	Walta	ENA	Others
					1	Tigray												
					2	Afar												
					3	Amhara												
					4	Oromia												
					5	Somali												
					6	Benshangul /Gumuz/												
					7	SNNP												
					8	Gambela												
					9	Harari												
					10	Addis Ababa												
					11	Diredawa												

Appendix-B
Addis Ababa University, Graduate School of Journalism
and Communication

Questionnaire to Be Filled In By Editors and Chief Editors of
Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) and Walta Information Center (Walta)

General Instruction: This Questionnaire is intended to gather data on the news coverage of regions and administrative regions in Ethiopia. The value of the research is directly dependent upon the care and truthfulness with which you answer each item. Since your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence, feel free to answer all the questions frankly. Please, don't leave out any of them. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Instruction I: Preliminary Information. When there are choices, please put a tick (√) in a box in front of your choice.

1. Name of news agency you are working for:

- A. ENA
 B. Walta

2. How long has it been since you started working for the agency?

3. What is your current status in the news agency?

- A. Editor
 B. Chief editor

Instruction II: Please respond to each question carefully. When there are choices, put a tick (√) in a box in front of your choice.

1. Does your agency have reporters and correspondents in all regions and administrative regions?

- A. Yes

B. No

2. If your response to question No.1 is choice B (No), please write names of regions where the agency doesn't have its own reporters or correspondents.

3. Do you receive news stories from all regions and administrative regions each day?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Partly yes

4. On average, how big is the number of news stories you receive from each region each day? Put a tick (√) in front of each region?

Key: 5- Very big
4- Big
3- Medium
2- Small
1- Very small

No	Region	Number of news stories				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Amhara					
2	Oromia					
3	Tigray					
4	SNNP					
5	Gambela					
6	Somali					
7	Afar					
8	Benshangul/Gumuz					
9	Arari					
10	Addis Ababa					

11	Dire Dawa					
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5. What do you think are the factors for the differences in the number of news stories that reach the agency?

6. Do you do any selection of news stories before you send them to ETV for broadcast?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Sometimes

7. If your response to question No 4 is either choice A (Yes) or choice C (Sometimes), what are the selection criteria you use?

8. Do you consider regions as one criterion when you select news stories to be sent to ETV for broadcast?

A. Yes

B. No

9. Do you receive feedback from Ethiopian television about the stories you sent to the station for broadcast ?

A. Yes

B. No

10. If your response to question No. 8 is choice A (yes), what kind of feedback do you receive?

11. What do you think about the quality of the news stories that reach the agency from all regions and administrative regions ? Put a thick (√) against each region.

Key: 5- Excellent
4- Very good
3- Good
2- Poor
1- Very poor

No	Region	Quality of news stories				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Amhara					
2	Oromia					
3	Tigray					
4	SNNP					
5	Gambela					
6	Somali					
7	Afar					
8	Benshangul/Gumuz					
9	Arari					

10	Addis Ababa					
11	Dire Dawa					

12. What do you think are the factors for the differences observed in quality of news stories that reach your news agency from the different regions?

13. What do you think most of the news stories that reach your agency are lacking?

14. Any points you would like to make about the coverage of regions and administrative regions of ETV Amharic news broadcast?

15. Overall, how do you feel you are covering the regions regarding news?

16. Overall, how do you feel ETV is covering the regions regarding news?

Thank you,

Appendix-C

Addis Ababa University, Graduate School of Journalism and Communication

Questionnaire to be filled in by Editorial Board Members of ETV

General Instruction: This Questionnaire is intended to gather data on the news coverage of regions and administrative regions in Ethiopia. The value of the research is directly dependent upon the care and truthfulness with which you answer each item. Since your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence, feel free to answer all the questions frankly. Please, don't leave out any of them. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Instruction I: Preliminary Information

1. Besides being a member of the Editorial Board, what is your current status in the television station? Put a tick (✓) in a box in front of your choice.

A. Reporter

B. Editor

C. Editor-in-chief

D. If other, specify _____

2. How long has it been since you became member of the Editorial Board?

Instruction II: Please respond to each question carefully. Where there are choices, put a tick (√) in a box in front of your choice.

1. Do you think that all regions and administrative regions are getting fair coverage on ETV Amharic news broadcast?

A. I think so

B. I don't think so

2. If your response to question No. 1 is choice A (I think so), how frequently is that happening?

A. Always

B. Usually

C. Sometimes

D. Rarely

E. Never

3. If your response to question No.1 is choice B (I don't think so), what do you think are the reasons?

4. What do you think about the frequency of contents in the Amharic news stories broadcast? Please, tick (√) against each content type specified?

Key: 5- Always

4- Usually

3- Sometimes

2- Rarely

1- Never

	Content type	Frequency				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Politics					
2	Economy					
3	Education					
4	Science					
5	Culture					
6	Sports					
7	Agriculture					
8	Infrastructure					
9	Others					

5. How big is the number of news stories that reach the television station each day about each region before you start selecting for broadcast?

Please ,tick(√)against each region.

- Key :
- 5- Very big
 - 4- Big
 - 3- Medium
 - 2- Small
 - 1- Very small

No	Region	Number of news stories				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Amhara					
2	Oromia					
3	Tigray					
4	SNNP					
5	Gambela					
6	Somali					
7	Afar					
8	Benshangul/ Gumuz					
9	Arari					
10	Addis Ababa					
11	Dire Dawa					

6. In your Editorial Board, what are the criteria you regularly use to select news stories for broadcast?

7. As a member of the Editorial Board, do you think of giving fair news coverage for all regions and administrative regions?

A. Yes

B. No

8. Are there any measures taken by the Editorial Board to improve the news coverage of regions and administrative regions in Amharic news broadcast?

A. Yes

B. No

9. If your response to question No 8 is choice A (Yes), what are the measures taken?

10. What kinds of news stories do you often expect from the news agencies and your own reporters so that the stories get broadcast ?

11. Do the news agencies (Walta and ENA) give you feedback about the story selection processes done by the Editorial Board in which you are the memeber?

A. Yes

B. No

12. If your response to question No 10 is choice A (Yes), what kind of feedback do you often receive for the news agencies when the stories they send to the staction are:

A. not broadcast

B. broadcast

13. How frequently are the news stories that reach the station accompanied by videos?

A. Always

B. Usually

C. Sometimes

D. Rarely

E. Never

14. Which of these elements do you emphasize much in selecting news stories for broadcast?

A. Audio

B. Video

C. Both audio and video

15. Are the news stories, which are sent from the news agencies and selected for broadcast by the Editorial Board, edited before they are put on the air?

A. Yes

B. No

16. If your response to question No. 14 is choice A (yes), where does much of the editing lie?

A. Audio

B. Video

C. Both Audio and video

17. What are the criteria you often use for editing the news stories?

18. To ensure adequate news coverage of key issues and events in all regions, what do you think the institution needs to do ?

19. As an editorial committee member, how do you think it is possible to give accurate, responsible, comprehensive and fair news coverage for all regions and administrative regions?

20. If you are asked to define news, how would you define it?

Thank you,