



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, LANGUAGE STUDIES AND SCHOOL OF
JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS**

UNDER GRADUATE DIVISION

***THE ROLE OF EBC'S POLITICAL NEWS COVERAGE IN BRINGING
CONSENSUS AMONG SOCIETY AND AUDIENCE ATTITUDE TOWARDS IT:
AAU SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS AS CASE STUDY***

BROADCAST UNIT

BY: - TAMENE GIRMA

JUNE, 2015

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to examine the role of Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation's political news coverage in bringing consensus among citizens and political parties. It's intended to examine how EBC's television department covers political news and its role in bringing a sense of national unity among ethnic groups, particularly in higher educational institution of the country. It is obvious that the media, particularly public media have a responsibility to provide sufficient information of current events to raising awareness of various issues in society. However, as researcher's observation, EBC has deficiency in this regard. There is no effective way of open forum for debate and discussion through television on political issues. Due to lack of awareness on current political issues some problems occurs among society, especially in some Universities. Thus, the main objective of this study is to examine EBC's political news coverage in bringing consensus among citizens. It also aimed to understand whether or not EBC's political news coverage is fair, balanced and accurate. To fulfill this aim, it's emphasized on audience attitude towards EBC's political news coverage by taking AAU under graduate division students of journalism and communications as sample of the study. Accordingly, out of the total population of 106 broadcast division students 25 were randomly selected and provided questionnaires.

The finding of the study revealed that EBC's political news coverage has so many deficiencies. As respondents point of view, it doesn't really involve public opinion, doesn't provide open forum for debate and discussion, and there is also limitation in presenting fair, accurate and balanced political news. As a result of this, it couldn't fulfill its audience interest and most of the audience have bad attitude towards EBC's political news coverage.

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CHAPTER ONE

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This study is emphasized on the role of media in bringing consensus among the society on political issues. It's intended to examine the role of EBC's political news coverage in bringing consensus among society in the university by taking television department as case study in reference to AAU school of journalism and communications.

It is by political discussion that the manual labourer, whose employment is a routine, and whose way of life brings him in contact with no variety of impressions, circumstances, or ideas, is taught that remote causes and events which take place far off, have a most sensible effect even on his personal interests; and it is from political discussion, and collective political action, that one whose daily occupations concentrate his interests in a small circle around himself, learns to feel for and with his fellow citizens, and becomes consciously a member of a great community (Mill, 1991 in Frost, 2000:24).

More on this Arntsen (1996 in Fekade 2014) says for the media to contribute to the process of democratization they need to fulfill four fundamental requirements;

- Provide citizens information, analyses and points of view which ensure understanding of political and economic choices that affect their lives;
- Focus on the presents;
- Provide a wide spectrum of interpretation and representations which contribute to citizens debate and public conversation and;
- Encourage that the most points of view possible emerge.

Shively in his book *power and choice* also wrote on the concept of democracy and citizens' involvement in politics as follows:

Democracy requires that citizens do more than just obey the laws the government lays down. Authority in a democracy is a two way street, therefore the citizens must take concrete political actions to exercise their

authority over the government. At the very least, they should vote in elections. Better yet, they should maintain frequent contact with government by writing to their representatives, serving on citizen committees, and so on. If the citizens don't do this, a state simply cannot be a democracy. Its government will have authority over its citizens, but not vice versa (Shively, 1999:140).

Since media used as a device of interaction between political systems and citizens, and almost everything we know about politics come from media, media organizations, especially public media should perform its task effectively and efficiently. It should be used as a bridge between politicians, political parties and citizens to bring harmony and a sense of national unity among them.

In Ethiopia, one of the public media that perform task in behalf of citizens is EBC. Thus, the study emphasized on the topic of the role of EBC's political news coverage in bringing consensus among society by taking EBC with the view to examine the existing situation and to recommend ways how it can do better than now.

This study paper is categorized into five chapters and each chapter contains all the necessary points. The first chapter is background of the study, chapter two is about literature review, chapter three, methodology of the study and chapter four data analyze and presentation. The fifth and the last chapter, contains the conclusion and recommendations that resulted from the study.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The problem to be investigated is concerned with the role of EBC's political news coverage in bringing consensus among society.

The emphasis on the communicative powers of the media directs us to more than just an acknowledgement that the media are a potent influence on modern life - it points us to an understanding of the nature of modern public life itself. The media are not observers on the sidelines, reporting as politics and public life unfold before them. Rather, the media are the sites where politics and public life are played out, the sites where the meaning of public life are generated, debated and evaluated. That is, modern public generally do not directly encounter politicians and public issues but rather encounter media images, representations and stories about those politicians and public issues (Craig, 2007:4) .

The media plays a pivotal role in Keeping the citizenry abreast of current events and raising awareness of various issues in society. It also provides a platform for debate and discussion to build democratic citizens.

However, as the researcher's observation, EBC's political news coverage couldn't fulfill these roles. There is no effective way of open forum of debate and discussion through television with publics and political parties on political issues that would build awareness for citizens. Due to lack of awareness on current issues some problems occurs among society, especially in some universities of the country.

1.3 Hypothesis of the study

Based on background and statement of the problem, the researcher hypothesized as the following:

In order to bring consensus and a sense of national unity among society the media, especially public media have a power as well as responsibility. In this respect, EBC's television department is failed to fulfill its responsibility. It seems that:-

- EBC's television department couldn't satisfy its target audience
- EBC's political news coverage lacks credibility

- There is no mechanism for citizens to influence political agendas

1.4 Research questions

This study tries to provide answers for the following questions.

- Does EBC provide open forum for debate and discussion on political issues?
- Does EBC's political news coverage really involve public opinion and satisfy its audience?
- By what extent EBC educate publics on how to exercise their democratic rights and giving awareness on current political issues?

1.5 Objective of the study

1.5.1 General Objective

The overall objectives of this study were to examine the role of EBC's political news coverage in bringing consensus among society by taking EBC's television department as case study.

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

The following were the specific objective of this study;

- To assess the role of television department in bringing harmony among society
- To find out the extent to which EBC's political news coverage involve the publics
- To recommend ways to correct the deficiency and to suggest ways that will enables to bringing consensus among society.

1.6 Significance of the study

The recommendations that the researcher likely to come up at the end of the study will used to know the role of media in bringing consensus among society and in building a democratic society in general, and at EBC in particular. The study will therefore have some values for

EBC as a reference point for improving its deficiency. It is also valuable for other researchers those who want to study the role of media in politics. Moreover, it is helpful to understand the concept of politics and media as well the strong relationship between the two.

1.7 Method of the study

The study was conducted in a form of survey to investigate the role of EBC's political news coverage in bringing consensus among society. To fulfill this task both primary and secondary data was used. In obtaining data, which are not in published format, the researcher used primary sources of data collection such as personal observation and questionnaire.

Secondary sources such as reference books of related to the study, internal documents and publications of EBC were used.

1.8 Scope and limitation of the study

1.8.1 Scope of the study

Even though there are different types of media and the media play vital role in all social aspects; this study was limited to the role of EBC's television department in bringing consensus among society.

1.8.2 Limitations of the study

There are many factors that may hinder the study to come up with the necessary recommendation and conclusion. Lacks of enough information from the organization was one of the challenges. Because, individuals have no willing to provide the necessary information about the organizations due to different reasons like:-

- Individuals refrain themselves from political issues
- Lack of transparency and clear information about the organizations

The other problems were:-

- Lack of experience of conducting research
- Time constraint
- Cost of transportation and Mobile card expense

CHAPTER TWO

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Introduction of Television concept into Ethiopia

2.1.1. The First Attempt

In Ethiopia, the concept of television was initiated when silver Jubilee Exhibition took place in 1948 E.C. via Telecommunication pavilion near old air port. This Exhibition was carried out by British Broadcasting corporation /BBC/ Television. In order to achieve the required output, the corporation presented two image orthicon cameras, for monitors and televises chain.

By using them in closed circuit system, the required output was obtained. The main objective of the Exhibition was to indicate the existing political, economic and social development of the country during that time. This was the first attempt to introduce the concept and purpose of television into Ethiopia.

2.1.2. The Second Attempt

Dejazemach Daniel Abebe, one of the feudal lords, decided to establish commercial television station in Ethiopia. He submitted proposals to the council of ministers in order to get permission during the reign of Haile Selassie I from 1952 to 1953 E.C. The council of ministers, however, rejected the proposal after they had discussed cover the presented issue) for a long period of time. The main reason they gave was that the establishment of private television station was not allowed to an individual. The television station should be opened by the government if it is necessary according to their decision.

2.1.3. The Third Attempt

Television, one of the new innovations in mass communications, was initially introduced into Ethiopia in 1963/1955 E.C. on the occasion of the founding of the organization of African unity (OAU). It was the temporary closed circuit television system to enable the masses of

people to follow the proceeding of the meeting on monitors fixed on the lobby at the open space in front of African Hall.

2.1.4. The Fourth Attempt

The Ethiopian Telecommunication Authority had dealt with various communicational activities within the country. This governmental organization had a plan to establish commercial television station, but the organization did not implement the stated plan by two main reasons:

1. Lack of permission from the government
2. Hesitation about the profitability of prospective station because the main objective of the organization has based on profit.

2.1.5 The Fifth Attempt

We knew that Radio voice of the Gospel was opened in Ethiopia February 26, 1963. This station has five objectives to be done by it. They were:

- .To proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the scriptures as the only means salvation to the widest possible audience.
- .To strengthens the life of the Christian churches within radio reach by providing programmes that nurture believers in their Christian faith.
- .To promotes education and culture through informational programmes.
- .To assists the churches in follow up work.
- .To trains Radio workers.

The religious organization had desire to establish television station privately and submitted proposal to the council of ministers. Unfortunately, the council of ministers rejected the issues after they had discussed about it. All the attempt of this religious organization therefore, had also faced the same fate like others. The main reason related to the stated failurities was the fact that the government was too suspicious to give permission those who wanted to establish television station privately and it was also very pessimistic with regard to the owner ship of the television by private or commercial organization. To be more clear, the

government had fear of the possibilities of problems that could be encountered in controlling the whole concept of programmes having to be transmitted by the prospective television station.

2.1.6 The Sixth Attempt/the real establishment of ETV/

After the stated failurities, the Ethiopian Government had started to dream about the establishment of television station in Addis Ababa.

The current Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC) was the former Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency. After giving service as Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA) for long years, it becomes known as Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC). Since Saturday, 30 August 2014, it transmits it's all programs by the name of Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (Internal Document and personnel of the corporation).

2.2 What is politics?

As defined by Louw, politics is a process of determining who gets what, how and when. [Politics is] the process of decision making that accommodates the requirements of all those affected by those decisions. A decision making process a struggle over gaining access to the decision making positions; the processes of legitimacy and/or enforcing decisions (Louw, 2005:14 as cited in Dr. Zenebe's **Media and Politics** Course Handout of 2014/15).

2.3 Political communication and propaganda

2.3.1. Political communication

The probably most detailed definition of what political communication actually comes from Franklin. He defined it as the following:

“The field of political communication studies the interactions between media and political systems, locally, nationally, and internationally” (Franklin, 1995:255).

Political communication is an interactive process, concerning the transmission of information among politicians, the news media and the public. The process operates down wards from

governing institutions towards citizens, horizontally in linkages among political actors, and also upwards from public opinion towards authorities (<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/> Acrobat).

The above definitions imply that a political communication is an open forum of discussion among government bodies, media organizations and the public's, and it enables to create a democratic governments and the public's, and it enables to create a democratic government and a democratic societies, whenever the media it used for both government and the public by facilitating the way for communication and discussion.

2.3.2. Propaganda

The final decision reached in public meeting often differs from that of a legislative body because a public meeting is not limited to legislative choices. When public meetings are held within a small geographic area, such as a neighborhood, town, or small country, the meeting participants and their extended social networks can represent a critical mass of local residents. As such, they possess the capability of implementing.

Community wide solutions that rely on social influence and local norms are more than legislative rules and formal enforcement mechanisms. Thus, public meetings often need to “identify both conversational and innovative solutions, including governmental and nongovernmental means of addressing the problem.” In the example of the halfway house, one part of the solution might be raising the level of community awareness about the new facility something that is often better accomplished by resolving to keep each other informed through informal conversation than by legislating an official communication channel. Because of the value of these extra governmental approaches, the best solution may, in the end, draw on multiple approaches that are mutually reinforcing.

A decision that incorporates both official policy and informal social commitments presumes a healthy working relationship between public officials and the larger community. The social process of a deliberative public meeting should strengthen that relationship. In this sense, mutual comprehension and considering other ideas and experiences refer to communication between citizens and public officials. All participants should “Listen with equal care to both

officials and the general public,” but there is greater stress on ensuring that public officials and “experts and officials are hearing the public’s voice” (Gastil, 2008:186).

2.4 Democracy and Deliberation

If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons a like share in the government to the utmost (Aristotle, as cited in Gastil, 2008:3).

Voting is a sacred act in democracy. Whatever its’ virtues, a political system cannot begin to call itself democratic unless its citizens, one and all, have the right to vote. By degrees, many societies have met this basic standard, with each of their citizens empowered to elect representatives or vote directly on policy. But is that enough?

Imagine a country in which all citizens could vote but they could not express themselves, save through marking a ballot. Would it be enough for people to go about their lives in quiet isolation, periodically appearing in public to punch holes next to candidates’ names? Or, even worse, what if citizens could communicate but lacked the ability to think, to reason, to judge for themselves? What kinds of results would elections yield if voters had no concept of whom they were voting for or what a “yes” or “no” vote really meant on a ballot initiative? This hypothetical nation of Zambia-citizens more likely to eat brains than use them, may sound like a made for television science fiction movie, but the living dead have more in common with the living than we might care to notice.

Most U.S citizens shy away from political conversation and rarely attend public meetings of any sort. Even then, only about half of Americans choose to express themselves by voting for their presidents, with far fewer choosing to vote during other elections. Moreover, we often know precious little about whom or what we are voting for. In 2004, for example, a survey shortly before the presidential election found that two thirds of those voting to reelect George W. Bush believed he supported banning nuclear weapons testing and participating in the Kyoto treaty on global warming two politics he openly opposed. A 2003 study of voters in Washington State just a week before Election Day found that very few even know what

issues would appear on their ballot. On most issues, less than one in five Washington voters could make a pro or con argument. A few days later, these people, cast their ballots, endorsing or rejecting laws to which they had given precious little thought (Ibid).

Our primary electoral act, voting, is rather like using a public toilet: we wait in line with a crowd in order to close ourselves up in a small compartment where we can relieve ourselves in solited and in privacy of our burden, pull a level, and then, yielding to the next in line, go silently home (Benjamin Barber in Gastil, 2008:19).

From the above paragraphs one can understand that government bodies, private associations, and the media have a responsibility to give awareness to the public about politics and political election. And a public have a right to know more about political issues to yield a democratic government. Unless and otherwise a political election is meaningless and valueless.

2.4.1. What Deliberation means?

When people deliberate, they carefully examine a problem and arrive at a well reasoned solution after a period of inclusive, respectful consideration of diverse points of view. . . . deliberation has a general significance that transcends a variety of political communication settings.

Deliberation begins when we create a solid information base to make sure we understand the nature of the problem at hand, such as air pollution. Second, we identify and prioritize the key values at stake in an issue . . . Third; we identify abroad range of solutions that might address the problem, including everything from enacting a system of voluntary self regulation. Fourth, we weigh the pros, cons, and tradeoffs of the solutions by systematically applying our knowledge and values to each alternative. Deliberation is not just about the substance of an exchange. Deliberation also refers to the social process of communicating. Foremost, among these considerations is ensuring all participants an adequate opportunity to speak. If, for instance, our hypothetical pollution debate involves two people out of twenty monopolizing the discussion, the process would be less deliberative due to this domineering behavior (Ibid).

2.5. The Media

The media are difficult to capture and define. “The media is a catch all term that includes transitional corporations, communication technologies, policy and regulatory frameworks, the practices of journalists, gossip columns, the nightly television news, blockbuster movies, advertisements, business magazines, music radio, the local newspaper and the Internet. The media are business and yet they are also ascribed a special function in the democratic health of a society; the media are *news* media and function as journalism, but they are also the entertainment media and provide escape from the pressures of everyday life. The phrase ‘the media’ ascribes a singularity to a diverse range of forms of communication. Newspapers, magazines, radio, television film and online media generate such an avalanche of information that selecting and navigating through media output has become a valuable skill. Our first inclination in seeking to understand the significance of the media is to break them up into different categories. Before doing that we should note the generalized character of the media. Our everyday lives involve a fluidity of movement between different media forms and content: we read a newspaper for the latest news, we listen to the latest hits on the radio, we flick through a magazine while waiting for an appointment, we access websites during the word day, we watch a quiz show before catching the evening television news and afterwards settle down to watch a video.

Any discussion of contemporary political communication must consider these contexts of reception. The meanings of politics are partly determined by the everyday situations in which political issues and debates are interpreted. The communicative forms of the media have blurred divisions between the public and the private, between factual and fictional forms of representation, and have broadened and complicate the field of politics (Craig, 2007:3-4).

2.6. Roles of the media in electoral process

It is undoubted that the media play a very critical role in the life of all human societies. The media provide the conduit necessary for all kinds of communication that helps societies exists and function. Contemporary thinking is such that to live in harmony; societies need communication that is beneficial to its constituents. In modern democratic societies; which entail representative governments, the media play the very essential role of ensuring that if

information vital to the existence, survival and development of constituents of such societies is availed to them in a timely, equitable, fair and balanced manner. Thus, at election time, when constituents must elect their representatives, it becomes doubly imperative that the media afford them all information necessary for them to make informed choices about whom to elect and whom not to elect into positions of authority (<http://www.elections.Org.zm/media-role.php>).

2.6.1. Media as watchdog

The media plays the watchdog role when they expose errors of commission or omission by those in power in their pursuit to cling to power at all cost. The media can alert citizens to electoral malpractices so that these may be rectified. The media can expose manipulation of citizens through the distribution of bribes and other illegal niceties during campaign periods (Ibid).

More on this Michael McFaul explained the watchdog role of media as the followings:

In today's politics and society at large, media is essential to the safeguarding transparency of democratic processes. This is often called its 'watchdog' role. Transparency is required on many levels including for access to information, accountability and legitimacy of individual, institutions and processes themselves,; and for rightful participation and public debate (Michael McFaul, 'Transitions from post communism' Journal of Democracy 16 (July 2005):11-12, as cited in compiled handout by Dr. Zenebe, 2014/15).

2.6.2 Media as open forum for Debate and Discussion/public voice

While candidate and party campaigns are of course a form of debate, there are also other voices that are to be heard within public forums. As enshrined in the International covenant on civil and political rights, all people have the right to express opposing ideas and opinions (<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm>).

The role of media in providing this platform for debate and discussion is therefore vital. Media provide a mechanism for regular citizens to be heard and to therefore influence political agendas and campaign platforms, and sometimes garnering support and influencing fellow voters. Forms can include:

- Members of the public, lobby groups, experts with different perspectives, and candidates being interviewed by the media for their views on certain policies;
- Talkback radio and television in which the public air their opinions; Contestants' websites face book pages, and so on, where the public can interact with them directly;
- News reports on press conferences, protests and other events held by interest groups;
- Media surveys of public opinion;
- Citizen journalism;
- Debates on blogs, Twitter, and social media sites;
- Letters to the editor.

This role as a forum for public debate is a complex one in post conflict situations, as the line between debate and conflict needs to be carefully managed by professional media, which is not always present (Ibid).

2.6.3. Media as public Educator

As explained in Electoral commission of Zambia 2015, the media play essential role to educate voter.

- The media can educate citizens through stories that adequately explain the national situation (political, social and economic) so that the citizenry will not only benefit from improved service delivery but will also take part in the development process of the nation
- The media can explain in simple terms specific legal and administrative issues which can be seen to be fundamental for any election undertaken to be free and fair
- The media can adequately encourage eligible persons to register as voters and to actually cast their ballot when elections are due
- The media can provide a platform for all candidates and their parties to present their manifestos to the public
- The media can expose parties and candidates that instigate or have the propensity to cause violence so that the citizenry may be made alert to any such possibility
- The media can expose practices of vote buying or illegal party financing to the electorate

- The media can also expose the proliferation of defamation and hate speech in campaigns aimed at influencing nationals negatively
- The media can expose voter intimidation by party workers, corruption in decision making processes, and the systematic exclusion of certain sector of society
- The media may strive to expose instances where political parties threaten the functioning of democratic systems rather than support them and thus disenfranchise eligible voters
- The media can strive to explain to the electorate, in clear and simple language, national, regional and universal pieces of legislation and other regulations governing the proper conduct of democratic elections
- The media need to explain to the citizenry the importance of their participative involvement in all aspects of governance systems such as voting
- Journalists should try to focus on the issues, by talking to ordinary people, particularly those lacking a strong voice in society, e.g. the elderly and the young , women, the poor, and ethnic and religious minorities
- The media must strive to put citizens. Views to candidates and report their responses back to the citizens that they know and understand their potential governments
- The media, in its agenda setting role, can provide diverse view points and unbiased information, offer human for debate involving citizens and the civil society, mediate in national development projects and contribute to sustainable flow of information (Electoral Commission of Zambia 2015; <http://www.elections.org.zm/media-role.php>).

2.6.4. Media as peace building and conflict resolution

The media can be a tool for fanning violence and conflict if not properly managed. The use of radio during the Rwanda genocide in 1994 in mobilizing the population to participate in violence was a striking example of the power of radio to serve destructive political interests by manipulating hearts and minds. Fortunately, those events also sparked a reflection by many international and local actors to realize how to harness this power of radio towards more positive aims, notably the promotion of peace and reconciliation (Ibid).

2.6.5. Media as a campaign platform

Candidates and parties have an explicit right to provide the electorate information regarding their attributes, political agendas, and proposed plans. Besides meeting directly with members of the electorate, candidates and parties accomplish this task through campaigns via media. It is paramount to democratic electoral processes therefore, that all candidates and parties are provided equal access to media for this Endeavour. Candidates and parties use the mass media for campaigning through sponsored direct access spots, paid political advertising, televised debates, use of social media, and other mechanisms. They also hope the media will voluntarily cover them because of the newsworthiness of their campaign activities. Political parties expend vast human and financial resources on planning and executing mass media campaigns.

The media have several roles in realizing contestants' right to campaign:

To create a level playing field is the first role. This entails equal access to state broadcasters and other state resources: Among the most effective, but least analyzed, means of autocratic survival is an uneven playing field. In countries like Botswana, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal, Singapore, Tanzania, and Venezuela, Democratic competition is undermined less by electoral fraud or repression than by unequal access to state institutions, resources, and the media. An uneven playing field is less evident to outside observers than is electoral fraud or repression, but it can have a devastating impact on democratic competition. Leveling the campaign playing field is one of the main justifications for regulation of media during elections. Another key role of media in campaigning is balanced reporting, ensuring that candidates receive fair coverage. This is one reason why robust media monitoring is so important toward ensuring fair and free elections. Media professionalism and media literacy are also fundamental to this achievement (Ibid).

2.7 The Impact of Television

The first television news cast took place in 1940. By the mid 1960s, sixty million TV sets were in use. Thirty years later, the number exceeded ninety million. TV dramatically changed radio and newspapers. It took much of the entertainment role away from radio and claimed much of the spot, or breaking, news role traditionally held by newspapers. Today,

newspapers put less emphasis on breaking news; it makes no sense for a newspaper to announce breathlessly that an event occurred when most of its readers probably saw an account of it hours earlier on television. Modern newspapers put more emphasis on examining the background of current news events and covering trends and life styles in depth. Early TV pictures were snowy, and transmission facilities were erratic. Today, both color and sound have improved. During a major news event such as the verdict in the O.J. Simpson criminal trial in 1995 the nation stops to watch television. Some events, such as the Olympic Games, are viewed simultaneously around the world. Communications philosopher Marshall McLuhan called this phenomenon the “global village”.

In the 1930s, President Franklin Roosevelt reached the American people through radio with his fireside chats. Today’s presidents come to use in color television through live news conferences, and presidential candidates debate each other as the voters watch. Press conferences also give the public a close up look at news reporters in action (Ferguson, Patten & Wilson, 1998:15).

2.7.1 Interactive Television

Interactive television can be defined as anything that lets the television. Viewer or viewers and the people making the television channel, programme or service engage in dialogue. More specifically, it can be defined a dialogue that takes the viewers beyond the passive experience of watching and lets them make choices and take actions.

Interactive television productions involve and are dependent on a range of technologies including television sets, transmission platforms and set top boxes. The introduction of digital transmission technologies made it easier to distribute interactive television services. The main transmission platform for interactive television are digital cable, digital satellite, digital terrestrial and using digital subscriber line (DSL) technology, the telephone network, The hardware and software in television set top boxes usually control the on screen presentation of interactive television services.

Interactive television services on different transmission platforms often have to created in completely different ways, using different technologies; they are rarely interoperable. This makes multi platform production time consuming and expensive, although the backers of

standards like multimedia home platform are trying to address this issue (Gawlinski, 2003: 2-3).

According to Gawlinski's explanation interactive television is a television production program that involves the audience, participate them and guide and depend on the interest of its viewers.

2.8 News Values

The complexities of gate keeping and agenda setting may at this point seem to be sending us every which way. We sense, however, that somewhere in the scrimmage there is at least a vague set of rules of combat as far as media performance is concerned. Such rules we refer to as *news values* (Watson, 1998:117).

According to Yopp and Haller, news values, or the aspect of an event that make it worth knowing about, carry different weight for different media and also influence the approach a reporter takes on a story. News values also dictate the types of questions a reporter will need to ask (Yoop & Haller, 2005:5).

Donald L.Ferguson, Jim patten and Bradley Wilson also defined news values in their book *Journalism Today* as the following;

It is the journalists' job to evaluate what's "out there" and to select what will interest, inform, educate, amuse, or amaze the audience. Decisions have to be made about what's important and what's not, about balancing what the audience wants against what it needs (Ferguson, patten & Wilson, 1998:61).

Sociologist Herbert Gans studied the "EBS Evening news, "NBC Nightly News," Newsweek, and Time to determine the fundamental news values of some of the leading national news organization today. Gans (1979) Wrote: "The news does not limit itself to reality judgments; it also contains values, or preference statements" (p.39). Gans found six enduring values in news that are rarely explicit something like reading between the lines, he said. After considerable analysis, he listed these "enduring values" in the news:

1. Ethnocentrism: what happens at home is more important than something happening overseas. It borders, he said, on blatant patriotism.
2. Altruistic democracy: with this, Gans said “the news implies that politics should follow a course based on the public interest and public service” (p.43).
3. Responsible capitalism: in looking at the economy in the news, Gans felt journalists have “an optimistic faith that in the good society, businessmen and women will compete with each other in order to create increased prosperity for all, but they will refrain from unreasonable profits and gross exploitation of workers or customers” (p.46).
4. Small town pastoralism: Even 200 years later, the rural and anti industrial values often associated with Thomas Jefferson are often found in the news. Gans explained: “small town pastoralism is ... a specification of two more general values: the desirability of both nature and of smallness perse” (p.49).
5. Individualism: the news media root for the individualist. Gans said, “One of the most important enduring news values is the preservation of the freedom of the individual against the encroachments of nation and society” (p.50).
6. Moderatism: The news media. Gans also included, prefer news that discourages extremism or excess (Garrison, 1990:29&31).

Depending on the above explanation the concept of news values can be summarized as the news worthfulness that incorporated the interest of individuals those consume the news media. It is relate with agenda setting of media organization from which the value of the news can be judged by its audiences.

2.9. Media performance and human rights

2.9.1 Media performance

The “main principles at stake” in media performance, according to McQuail, coincide with the core values of western societies: freedom, equality, and order. The “public interest” is best served when freedom, equality, and order are maximized. Media performance reviews past research about such issues, and suggests lines of future research. McQuail also discusses methods of performance research, nothing that different questions require different methods.

Since so much of media performance is contextual, McQuail favors in depth case studies as a research method. He questions the ability of the more quantitative methods of context analysis and surveys to produce important information.

As mass media change, McQuail believes that normative concerns about media must change as well. He predicts the decline of national media systems, and thinks that the research agenda should focus more on “securing the benefits of information and communication that in preventing harm from communication” (p.307) ([www.cjc.online-ca/home>vol18,No4\(1993\)](http://www.cjc.online-ca/home/vol18,No4(1993))).

2.9.2 Human rights

Human rights are always worth listing and worth repeating, particularly so if we set a condition of media performance that is honor those rights by supporting them, arguing for them, defending them against their abuse. That, at least in my view, would be the chief performance criterion of a media seeking to contribute to the public good (Watson, 1998:100).

According to Watson, media performance and human rights strongly related. As such, a performed media consider human rights of the public and struggle to fulfill interest of the public.

David Robertson in his book a dictionary of Modern politics also defined human rights as the following:

Human rights, one of a family of concepts like civil rights or civil liberties, or natural rights, are those rights and privileges held to belong to any person, regardless of any provision that may or may not exist for them in their legal system, simply because, as a human being, there are certain things which may not be forbidden by any government. Typical elements on any list of basic human rights will be, for example, the right to freedom of speech, religion, the right to family life, the right to fair trial procedures in criminal cases, the right to be protected against inhuman punishment, the right to political liberty, and so on (Robertson, 1993:229).

2.10. Morality and truth

According to Chris Frost, the quality of information offered to consumers is inevitably as variable as the sources from which it comes. A major part of a journalist's work in gathering material for publication or broadcast from a news source is to determine how reliable this information is. The journalist must then take a decision. If the information is known by the journalist to be totally accurate, then there is no problem. If, for instance, a journalist actually saw a politician smash his car into a wall, then that is an accurate fact that can be reported. But, when information comes from another source that is not so reliable, and which cannot be confirmed from sources that are any more reliable, the journalist has to make an assessment about whether to pass this information on to the consumer (Frost, 2000:30).

2.11. Agenda setting and framing

An agenda is a list of items, usually in descending order of importance, meetings have agendas which have to be worked to. If an item is not on the agenda prior to the meeting there is only one place that it can be raised during the meeting under Any other business.

The agenda for a meeting is normally drawn up by the secretary to the meeting in consultation with the meeting's chairperson. This gives them some power to decide what will or will not be discussed at the meeting. As far as the media are concerned one might say that the overt agenda is synonymous with the public agenda; that is, what is of most importance to the public appears top of the media agenda. Yet it has to be acknowledged that wherever there are competing interests, rival ideologies or conflicting priorities, agendas are arenas of struggle... (*Ibid*).

As explained in Gastil's book of **political communication and Deliberation**, the simple premise of the agenda setting research program is that the media may not shape the public's views as much as they shape the public's agenda.

Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw's study of the 1968 presidential election showed that when the media focused on an issue, media influenced the issues that appeared on the agendas of undecided voters. After three decades of research, McCombs and Shaw concluded that the agenda setting theory holds true, and it is most clearly observed for those issues that

“do not directly impact the lives of the majority of the public, such as foreign policy or government scandal” (Gastil, 2008:58).

2.11.1. Setting the agendas of news

Agenda setting describes a very powerful influence of the media the ability to tell us what issues are important. As far back as 1922, the news paper columnist Walter Lippman was concerned that the media had the power to present images to the public. McCombs and Shaw investigated presidential campaigns in 1968, 1972 and 1976. In the research done in 1968 they focused on two elements: awareness and information. Investigating the agenda setting function of the mass media, they attempted to assess the relationship between what voters in one community said were important issues and the actual contents of the media messages used during the campaign. McCombs and Shaw concluded that the mass media exerted a significant influence on what voters considered to be the major issues of the campaign.

Agenda setting is the creation of public awareness and concern of salient issues by the news media. Two basis assumptions underlie most research on agenda setting: (1) the press and the media do not reflect reality's they filter and shape it, (2) media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. One of the most critical aspects in the concept of an agenda setting role of mass communication is the time frame for this phenomenon. In addition, different media have different agenda setting potential. Agenda setting theory seems quite appropriate to help us understand the pervasive role of the media (for example on political communication system)

(<http://www.utwente.nl/cw/theorienorzicht/Theory%2520clusters/Mass%2520media/Agenda-setting>).

2.12 Framing Theory

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

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

CHAPTER THREE

III. METHODS AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1. Methods of the study

It must be stressed at the outset, however, that methods are but a means to an end, important though they are, they are not an end in themselves, nor should they be used, as they have been, to determine the end or define the nature of the problems to be investigated (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold, 1998:10).

This study paper was done based on descriptive statistical methods. A quantitative method based on such type of study helps to analyze results applying tables with figures and percentage to explain findings of the study. To end this aim questionnaire is applied in a form of survey to study the role of EBC's political news coverage in bringing harmony among society and to know the individuals attitudes towards EBC's political news coverage. Qualitative method is also implemented to understand the attitude of respondents towards political news coverage of the organization under the study.

3.2 Methodology of the study

Methodology is a way to systematically examining the proposed study problem and it incorporates the various steps that are generally adopted by the researcher in studying along with the reasons why each method is going to be selected and appropriate for what specific study or methodology.

Accordingly, the primary data collection technique employed in this study paper is a questionnaire to collect a primary data. This is because a primary data collection is more reliable and original in character. In the process, observation technique was also applied in TV room of the school to observe the feeling of the students when they are watching for political news. As such 25 respondents selected by random sampling technique out of 106 undergraduate divisions Broadcast Unit students of school of journalism and communications. Secondary data were also collected from related books, Internet and internal document of the organization under the study.

3.3. Sampling Methods

3.3.1. Simple random sampling

Simple random sampling selects samples by methods that permit each intended sample to have equal probability of being picked. As such it enables each individual in the entire population to have equal chance of being included. Thus, the researcher assumed that simple random sampling method is appropriate for this study and therefore applied it based on random selection. Accordingly, 25 Broadcast students of school of journalism and communications were selected. Selected students are taken as a representative of all first, second and third year students of journalism and communications. The selection of these students as a representative of all students of journalism and communications was to manage the collected data and to minimize the complexity of statistical data of the study. The researcher assumed that it is not possible to get the actual number of respondents, and many of the students have no willing to return the questionnaire back on the scheduled time.

Thus, this sampling technique can minimize the cost of questionnaire paper, and time consumed, as well as the complexity of the information for the readers of this study paper.

CHAPTER FOUR

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

The analysis of respondents point of view towards EBC's television department political news coverage is made from the 25 questionnaires gathered. Respondents primarily were selected from Addis Ababa University School of Journalism and Communications Undergraduate division regular Broadcast Division Students.

The questionnaires specifically were distributed to first, second, and third year Broadcast students who were willing to provide the questions asked. Out of them, 32% were first year students out of whom 12% were females.

Second year students are 40% from whom 12% of them were females. The percent of third year journalism and communications students provided questionnaire for this paper were 28% and out of them 8% were females.

The general percent of female students provided the questionnaire were 32%, whereas 68% were male students.

Year	Respondents in number and in percent			
	Male in number	Male in percent	Female in number	Female in percent
1 st	5	20%	3	12%
2 nd	7	28%	3	12%
3 rd	5	20%	2	8%
Total	17	68%	8	32%

1. Following Political news from EBC's television department.

<i>Individuals response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
Always	4	16
Sometimes	12	48
Never	9	36
Total	25	100

The above data indicates that 12 students (48%) out of 25 students of school of journalism and communications follow EBC's political news sometimes and 9 students (36%) never followed EBC's political news.

The number of students those follow EBC's political news always are only 4 students (16%) out of the total number of 25 (100%) students.

In order to build a democratic country as well as to bring a democratic society, citizens of the country should fully participate on political issues through media. To do so, the media should participate and involve all citizens by keeping their interest of its audience.

2. Reason for never follow EBS's political news

<i>Individuals response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
Lack of interest on politics	1	4
Due to its bias	7	28
Others	1	4
Total	9	36

The above table indicates that 7 students (28%) are refraining themselves from political news of EBC due to its political bias. The number of students those never follow due to their personal interest and those justify other reasons are 2(8%) in general.

From this one can generalize that most of students never follow EBC's political news due to its political bias and as a result they lack awareness on political issues of their own country.

3. Satisfied by EBC's political news coverage

<i>Individuals response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
Yes	5	20
No	20	80
Total	25	100

The response given to question number 3 of the above shows that 80% of the respondents are dissatisfied with political news of EBC. So, in order to keep its credibility EBC should improve its way of covering political news. It should also find out why most of the students don'

4. Provision of platform for political debate and discussion

<i>Individuals response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
Yes	3	12
No	22	88
Total	25	100

Open forum for debate and discussion among publics and political parties through media is one indicator of democracy. However, the above response shows that most almost there is no open forum for debate and discussion through EBC on politics 88% respondents agreed that there is no open forum for debate and discussion on political issues.

5. Really involve public opinion and educate to exercise democratic rights

<i>Individuals response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
Always	2	8
Rarely	3	12
Sometimes	3	12
Never	17	68
Total	25	100

It is obvious that one of the responsibilities of public media is involving public opinion and educates the public to exercise their democratic rights. However, the above response of the audience indicates that EBC couldn't fulfill this responsibility. More than half of the respondents (68%) agreed that there is no public involvement in political news and no way of educating the public to exercise their democratic right. Therefore, EBC should strive to solve this problem for its credibility.

6. Giving awareness on current political issues to bring harmony among society

<i>Individuals response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
Yes, always	2	8
Yes, sometimes	5	20
No, always	5	20
No, sometimes	13	52
Total	25	100

Giving awareness for the audience should be the aim of public media in any democratic country. So, EBC should strive to educate and to give awareness for audience. However, the response of respondents for the above question shows that EBC can't fulfill this responsibility. More

than have of the respondents (52%) said that EBC does not educate the audience and giving awareness on current political issues to bring harmony among society.

7. “Political related conflict that occurs in some universities can be eliminated or minimized if EBC provide sufficient information on political issues.”

<i>Individuals response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
Strong agree	14	56
Agree	7	28
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	2	8
Strong disagree	2	8
Total	25	100

According to respondents point of view the conflict that occurs in some universities among ethnic groups is resulted due to lack of awareness on political issues.

Most of respondents (56%) strongly agreed that if EBC provide sufficient information on political issues those conflicts can be eliminated or minimized.

The number of respondents those disagreed with question number 7 of the above are few. Two respondents (8%) are disagreed and two (8%) of them are strongly disagreed with the idea.

8. Any bias in EBC’s political news coverage

Individuals’ response	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents
Always	12	48
Often	8	32
Sometimes	4	16
Never	1	4
Total	25	100

The above table shows that there is news bias on EBC's political news coverage. Most of the students (48%) said that, political news bias can be observed always and 8 students (32%) of out of the total number observation news bias often. Four (16%) respondents indicated that political news bias in EBC's occurs sometimes, and one respondent says EBC never bias political news.

9. Idea about EBC's political news coverage as a media person

<i>Individuals response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
Completely fair	0	0
Fair	2	8
Completely biased	21	84
Biased	2	8
Total	25	100

The response given to question number 9 of the above indicate that EBC's political news coverage is full of bias. 21 respondents (84%) out 25 students said, EBC's political news coverage is completely biased.

10. Extent to involve public opinion in political news

<i>Individuals response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
Always	2	8
Often	1	4
Sometimes	6	24
Never	16	64
Total	25	100

Public involvement in political discussion and decision is very essential to bring a sense of communality among citizens. However, respondents point of view for question number 10 of the above indicate that EBC's political news not fully involve public opinion in its news

coverage. More than half (64%) out of the total number of respondents said that EBC never involve public opinion in political news coverage. Six (24%) students said that EBC involve public opinion in political news sometimes, 2 students (8%) said that it involve always, and 1 (4) respondent said it involve public opinion often. This indicates that the extent to involve public opinion in political news is very rare.

11. “Imbalance and inaccurate political news coverage may reduce national unity”.

<i>Individuals response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
Strong agree	9	36
Agree	6	24
Neutral	4	16
Strong disagree	4	16
Disagree	2	8
Total	25	100

According to the respondents, the current way of political news coverage by EBC has deficiency.

9 (36%) respondents strongly agreed and 6(24%) respondents agreed on question number 11 of the above. 4(16%) respondents are neutral, and 4(16%) respondents strongly disagreed whereas 2(8%) respondents out of the total number of respondents disagreed with the idea. But, then number of respondents those strongly agreed and slightly agreed with the idea are more than that of strongly disagreed, slightly disagreed and neutral respondents. So, EBC should do its best to bring

12. Audience attitude towards EBC's political news coverage in general

<i>Individuals response</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Percent of respondents</i>
Somewhat good	4	16
Somewhat bad	4	16
Completely good	2	8
Completely Bad	15	60
Total	25	100

No matter how a media organization might be technologically developed and advanced, it is only when the audience interested with its program that it can be fully productive. Audience acceptance can be obtained by presenting the program in balanced, accurate, interesting and attractive way. However, more than half (60%) of respondents provided the questionnaire have bad attitude towards EBC's political news coverage.

CHAPTER FIVE

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Conclusion

Now days we are living in a period where there are dramatic advance in information technology. Media organizations are emerging in fast rate with their better advancement than before. There is strict competition among media organization to survive. On the other hand, the audiences have the right to tune on whatever channels they need to satisfy their interest.

Some of the points that derived from data presentation and analysis of the study are:

- EBC's political news coverage couldn't satisfy its audience. This situation can reduce the creditability and acceptance of EBC from time to time.

Since the productivity and durability of media organization depend on its audience interest, EBC couldn't compete with other media organizations to stay on the market unless it improves its way of covering political news.

- There is no real involvement of public opinion in EBC's political news coverage. EBC has deficiency in providing sufficient information that can eliminate or minimize conflict among ethnic groups and political parties. This is an alarming issue that can result great risk on the life of citizens. Unless public media provide sufficient and balanced information on current political issues, audience may follow other social media as alternative which may presented in biased, inaccurate and distorted way.

The media are the sites where the meaning of public life is generated, debated and evaluated. So, insufficient and unclear information is one of the causes for conflict and disagreement among citizens.

- EBC's television department couldn't provide open forum for debate and discussion with publics and political parties. Media organization should provide open forum for debated and discussion through which the public and political parties engage in.
- Most people have bad attitude towards EBC's political news coverage.

5.2. Recommendations

Depending on the finding of the study, the researcher recommended the following points:

- All media organization may need to be the leading media and want to reach the climax of information technology. To achieve this aim, media should keep its audience interest by presenting its program in an attractive way.
- As shown in the finding, EBC political news coverage doesn't really involve public opinion. Without public involvement it is impossible to bring a democracy and to create democratic citizens. So, EBC should really involve its audience in its political news coverage to get acceptance and to build its credibility.
- As the finding of the study, and as we read and observe from the reality, most people use abroad media and other social media such as face book to access political news. Most of the time social media disseminate distorted information that can result great risk on the life of citizens and properties of the country. To solve such kind of problems EBC has to provide sufficient information for the public by focusing on present political issues. And it should provide balanced and interesting information to bring a sense of national unity among ethnic groups and political parties.
- As revealed in the study, EBC doesn't provide open forum for debate and discussion. It is extremely important for the media providing open forum for debate and discussion. Therefore, in order to develop democracy and to create democratic citizens and to bring consensus among society, EBC should provide open forum for debate and discussion.

To conclude, EBC can compete both nationally and internationally within short period of time if it solve its deficiency. EBC should also recognize that there is no democracy without open forum for debate and discussion among citizens and political parties. And without keeping the interest of its audience media can't build its credibility and acceptance. There are some improvements regarding to involving public opinion on political issues. But, since it is not enough it is good for EBC to correct its deficiency and do its best to bring consensus among society. Besides, it is better for EBC to consider public interest as a center for any decision including its agenda setting.

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Appendix-A
Questionnaire
Addis Ababa University
College of Humanities, Language studies, Journalism and
Communication
School of Journalism and Communication
(Undergraduate Division)

Dear respondents,

This questionnaire is designed for the partial fulfillment of “BA” degree in Broadcast Journalism and Communication.

The response to be supplied by you will be held strictly confidential and used for academic purpose only.

Writing your name is not needed!

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation!

Part One: Demographic Information

Instruction: - Please tick “✓” in the box for each questions provided.

i. Age

From 16-18

from 22-24

From 19-21

from 25-27

ii. Sex

Female

Male

iii. Your year of study

First ye

Second ear

third ear

Part two: General questions

Instruction: - Please tick “✓” in the box provided and fill the space provided where necessary!

1. Do you follow political news that transmits by EBC?

Always

Sometimes

Never

2. If your answer for question number one of the above is “never” what is the reason behind?

Lack of interest on politics

Due to its biases

Others

3. Are you satisfied by EBC’s political news coverage?

Yes No

4. Does EBC provide open forum for debate and discussion with public and political parties?

Yes No

5. Does EBC’s political news coverage really involve public opinion and educate the public to exercise their democratic rights?

Always Sometimes

Rarely Never

6. Does EBC educate the audience and give awareness on current political issues to bring harmony among society?

Yes always No always

Yes sometimes No, sometimes

7. “Political related conflict that occurs in some universities can be eliminated or minimized if sufficient information provided on political issues.”

Strongly agree strongly disagree

Agree Disagree

Neutral

8. Have you observed anything biased in EBC’s political news coverage?

Always Sometimes

Often Never

9. What can you say about EBC’s political news coverage as media person?

Completely Fair Completely biased

Fair Biased

10. By what extent EBC involve public opinion in political news?

Always Sometimes
Often Never

11. "The current way of political news coverage of EBC may reduce a sense of patriotism among citizens and other political parties."

Strongly agree Strongly Disagree
Agree Disagree
Neutral

12. What is your attitude towards EBC's political news coverage in general?

Somewhat good completely good
Somewhat bad Completely Bad

Thank you!!