



Addis Ababa University

Graduate Studies

School of Journalism and Communication

**Western Media Rhetoric on the Armed Conflict News coverage in Tigray region, Ethiopia:
The BBC, AP and Reuters**

By

Behailu Negussie

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in
Journalism and Communication**

Addis Ababa University

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

June, 2021

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The thesis conducted by Behailu Negussie, entitled Western Media Rhetoric on the Armed Conflict News coverage in Tigray region, Ethiopia: The BBC, AP and Reuters and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication complies with the regulations of the University.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis Western Media Rhetoric on the Armed Conflict News coverage in Tigray region, Ethiopia: The BBC, AP and Reuters. It is my own work and I have duly acknowledged the sources of materials I have used.

Name: Behailu Negussie

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Date: June, 2021

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ABSTRACT

Western Media Rhetoric on the Armed Conflict News coverage in Tigray region, Ethiopia

Behailu Negussie

Addis Ababa University, 2021

This study examined how the western media framed the armed conflict which took place between the federal government of Ethiopia and Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF). The government called the armed conflict, a law enforcement operation. The armed conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray state drew the interest and attention of the entire world's media, notably the Western media. Western media coverage on Ethiopia was not studied well. Hence, this study tried to exhibit how the armed conflict was reported and framed in the selected media outlets, BBC, AP and Reuters. Three media theories were selected and studied that could support the analysis. Framing theory, Agenda setting theory and Social responsibility theory were presented. The sample period was from November, 2020 up to January, 2021. Purposive sampling was used to select the media outlets. In order to obtain the essential data and gain a better understanding of the situation, the study used a qualitative approach. The main data collection strategies employed by the researcher were content analysis and key informant interviews. The analysis found that the media sources mostly used a war frame and an ethnic-tension frame, both of which had the potential to aggravate the conflict. They presented the battle as a civil war and full scale war in the Horn of Africa, which had destabilized the region. According to the study's finding, the media focused on narratives that endangered people's peaceful relations. While documenting and reporting the armed conflict, a number of western media failed to adhere to journalistic principles and ethics. It was a lot of skewed, uneven, and unsubstantiated information. They expressed sympathy for the TPLF while overlooking reality on the ground. The finding also revealed the government's inability to provide the proper information to the right media outlets at the appropriate time. The government was also not aggressive in effectively and efficiently dealing with the truth.

Acronyms

AAU- Addis Ababa University

AP- Associated Press

BBC- British Broadcasting Corporation

CPJ- Committee to Protect Journalists

EBA- Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority

ENDF- Ethiopian National Defense Force

ICG- International Crisis Group

MoFA- Ministry of Foreign Affairs

PM- Prime Minister

TPLF- Tigray Peoples Liberation Front

UN- United Nations

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Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Politics and the media are inextricably linked. These days, the media emphasizes more political news. Bad news, in particular, attracts the media's attention.

It's also thought that the audience would rather hear bad news than good news. Vreese, C. H. de (2005) stressed that millions of citizens turn to the news media daily and 'the media' is a cornerstone institution in our democracies. One influential way that the media may shape public opinion is by framing events and issues in particular ways. A communication source frames a problem by presenting and characterizing it. Andresen, K.(2016) stated that different and several voices are invaluable for free speech in democracy and, equally, for a broad understanding of awareness and independence. The media may play a role exclusively in sustaining the peace process, allowing for contribution, discourse and resolution and amplification civil society.

Journalists must maintain objectivity. Journalists must set themselves apart as observers. When reporters in a newsroom just look at one side of a story and compare it to the other, they are unable to think independently. Reporters tend to believe what one side claims about what is going on the other side. Siraj & Durrani (2015) indicated that people rely on media organizations for acquaintance about various occurrences in order to make up one's mind.

Conflicts are given and covered by the media in a different way. The cause, course, and outcome of conflicts are framed and given meaning by them. Framing has recently been a hot topic in journalism. We might claim that framing is the most important tool in conflict news. Scharrer, G. C. (2021) explained the news media have been obliged to a lot of complaints for their political coverage.

Ethiopia is home to a wide mixture of ethno linguistic groups, each with their own history, languages, way of life, and civilization. Ethiopians will, for the first time in their history, look forward to an election that is free and fair with the second filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) reservoir. Both events meant a lot, not only to Ethiopians but also to

our neighbors and mother Africa. In contrast, Ethiopia has been experiencing different conflicts. The armed conflict at Tigray regional state is one of them.

The foreign media's treatment of African crises is a point that needs to be clarified. The Western media has been portraying Africa in a negative light for many years. International relations aren't always fair. They aren't being honest. Despite the continent's recent political and economic growth and development. Oguh (2015) noted that Western media has opted to preserve its centuries-old, colonial depiction of Africa as a defenseless, war-torn, poverty-stricken, and corruption-infested continent.

In the instance of Ethiopia, the government has been conducting a "law enforcement operation" in the Tigray region. However, the TPLF called it an aggression against the Tigray people. The government said that it was forced to carry out the operation due to the TPLF criminal clique's continuing violent behavior, which included an attack on the northern headquarters. The government argued that the operation was compulsory to keep the country's sovereignty intact. Getnet (2019) stated the media can play a developing or diminishing role in the escalation of conflicts in a given country. Researchers examined the harmful roles of the media in developing ethnic wars by investigating the Rwandan and Former Yugoslavian conflicts, which resulted in the deaths of at least one million people in both countries.

It's critical to examine how the armed conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia, was portrayed in the Western media.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The media is seen as a reliable source of information by the general public unless it provides erroneous information and lacks credibility. Thousands of people now have easier access to the media. It's hard to picture a world without the media. They become inextricably linked. "During crisis situations, the press is supposed to act as a catalyst for conflict resolution and peace building in society." (Olugbenga, 2017).

Howard (2009) proposed that the streaming of information should not be suppressed; rather, the media should be given the opportunity to contribute to the dissemination of information and knowledge with the goal of cultivation inclusive knowledge societies.

Fortunato (2005) explored that principally, media organizations operate under broad political, economic, cultural, and social contexts through which media topics unavoidably be shaped. High government groups, elites, and financing organizations depend on the media to apprehend their interest and to get positive image from the public. It is so important to understand news that media researches currently pay attention to framing studies. To study framing well, news is preferred according to various researches.

“News is easily the most prominent discursive site on which communication researchers strive to understand what framing is and how framing works.” (D’Angelo & Kuypers, 2010). As conflict reporting requires more methodical knowledge, in-depth information, and skills to report on it without contributing to further violence and exacerbating tensions for further conflict, how the media frames the conflict can be important.

Lee & Maslog (2005) maintained that the news media is often fascinated by exceptional events like conflicts. Conflicts, due to their contents not only attract the media but also the audience largely. It is heartbreaking to learn from researches that conflict reporting is often sensationalized for the sake of attracting huge market and recordings. The news media is becoming a target for deceitfulness, misuse, and control by those aiming to profit from the deadly combat, due to new-fangled technologies and a larger reach.

As a result, evaluating how the Western media covered the Tigray crisis could be critical to this debate. This study could also benefit scholars working on the subject of media studies. The armed conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region drew international attention and was covered extensively by the Western media. In fact, the issue deserved to be covered by the media. It was a unique form of conflict, and it had political ramifications. Above all, the region is volatile because of its location in Africa's horn.

Willis (2007) concluded that nowhere is the news media's authority more important than in its coverage of war. Journalists are the eyes and ears of viewers and readers when it comes to war and rumors of wars.

Oguh (2015) claimed that by focusing excessively on African disasters, Western media has mostly failed to teach the world about the continent's diversity, distinctiveness, and potential. Interestingly, the researcher has learned that there is not enough recorded research on the framing of international media news on national issues in Ethiopia. It is difficult to find educational study papers on the function of western media in covering internal turmoil. As a result, there is a noteworthy gap in the research regarding conflict reporting trends.

Hence, analyzing these concerns tried to fill up some of the gaps in the literature focused on the way of framing and the type of framing applied by the Western media pertaining to the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia.

1.3 Objectives of the Research

1.3.1 General Objective

This study aspired to examine how the armed conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia was covered & framed by the Western media, in particular BBC, AP and Reuters.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives are to: -

1. Analyze the way the western media frame the armed conflict.
2. Identify the dominant type of framing used during covering the armed conflict stories in the sampled period.
3. Find out the factors that might have influenced the coverage and framing of the media.

1.4. Research Questions

The following are the main research questions:

1. How did the Western media frame the armed conflict?

2. Which frames were frequently used by the western media during covering the armed conflict?
3. What were the factors that might have influenced the media in their framing of the armed conflict?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The framing analysis study of these three media houses visibly investigated the way the armed conflict is enclosed. So, editors and journalists of the selected media houses and others would benefit from this research on how they should report such conflicts in accordance with media ethics to bring peace between parties. It would try to indicate where the genuine journalistic and ethical problems lie so that the concerned bodies can take actions to address them.

The study will add latest knowledge to framing research provided that it is all done with international media outlets. Furthermore, the academic staff would get a starting point for advance research.

1.6 Scope of the Study

There are many media institutions in the world. However, this study focused on the coverage of the BBC, Reuters and Associated Press in their three months' news analysis (4 Nov, 2020-31 Jan, 2021 G.C). At the time of writing, the Ethiopian government has prioritized "law enforcement operations" in Tigray, Ethiopia. The study typically concentrated on the framing of news stories about conflict issues in the Tigray region, Ethiopia.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

This study, like all others, would have limitations. Media outlets were not included which are non- western in the study. This would not be possible due to the study's interests, particularly those of the media, as well as the time constraints. The study's other shortcoming is the paucity of local literature. All the three theories are Western. The study is also limited to qualitative study, purposive sampling. It has also study time limitation; it only covered three months' news analysis.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The research contains five chapters. Chapter one introduced the study and demonstrates the need and the background contexts of the armed conflict in the country, the statement of the problem of the study, the research questions, objectives of the research, significance of the study, scope of the research, and limitations of the research. Chapter two focused on the literature review and theoretical frameworks. It discussed three theories that have strong relation with the research problem. Chapter three dealt with the methods used in the study. It mainly focused on defining the tools used for data gathering and analysis, and shows the reasoning around why and how they will be employed there. Chapter four treats the data presentation and data analysis part of the study. Chapter five described conclusion and recommendation of the study.

Chapter Two

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 News

“News is the very essence of journalism: its heartbeat.” (Harcup, 2021).

News is a product as well as a point of view. Newspapers, news services, news magazines, and other publications, as well as radio, television, and cable stations networks and cables, gather, process, package, and sell it as a product. Computers now transmit news using computer networks such as CompuServe, as clearly explained by (Hough, 2004).

Anderson, k.(2016) confirmed that news isn't essentially journalism, within which interesting information and comment is gathered, filtered, evaluated, edited, and presented in credible and engaging forms, whether the present writing, photography, video, or graphics. In its peak, journalism puts news into context, investigates, verifies, analyzes, explains, and engages. It embodies news judgment minded to the general public interest.

Accuracy is a must for a media. The media through its news must not be involved in propaganda. The ingredients that make up the news should be constructed and transmitted with great caution. If information is presented oppositely, then, strictly speaking, it is not news, although it may still be called ‘news’ by news organizations and journalists. Bennett and Entman (2001) stated the news media is exposed to third party interest of chaos because they can bring large number of audiences. The media should be a space of alternative views through its news reporting.

2.2 Journalistic Principles and Ethics:

Objectivity becomes one of the most renowned quality journalistic strategies is to achieve a version of the truth. Journalists have always recognized the necessity of fairness, the discipline of self-discipline, and the concept that media should not be a representative for any specific political party or religion. Hachten (1998) challenged news reports should not be skewed as much as possible. Journalists should try their best to realize objectivity. The audience should feel secure in accepting the news as true or accurate.

Journalistic objectivity is defined as “a commitment to reporting the truth. As such, journalistic objectivity has been defined as an effort to report the facts without developing or at least without revealing an opinion about them.” (Kinsey, 2001). Cited by (Semere, 2010).

The literature on journalism clearly states that journalists should report without prejudice and moderately, without adhering to outside interests. They should be dedicated to the truth and the public good.

Howard (2009) stated that professional journalists do not set out to reduce conflict. They seek to present accurate and impartial news. But it is often through good reporting that conflict is reduced. To provide reliable information to the public in a time of violent conflict requires additional journalism skills. Correspondents need to be aware of more about what causes conflict, and how conflict develops and ends. Reporters need to know where to look for these causes and solutions. By providing this information, journalism makes the public far more well-informed about the conflict beneath the violence, and can assist in resolving it. Reporters need to be aware of this crucial role that journalism can play in a time of conflict.

Filak (2019) verified that meeting objectivity keeps journalists from being accused of bias. It also keeps their credibility. Whatever the source is, it must be checked from different angles. It is the news media independence and objectivity that gives journalists work credibility and influence in informing the people who must make changes themselves towards peaceful resolution of their conflicts. Burns (2002) believed that journalism is exposed to various interest groups who want to exercise their own advantages. Nowadays the news media is extremely challenged by globalization and business giants.

Waisbord (2013) observed part of the problem stems from gathering, with more powerful people looking out for their own economic interests. Media suits its material to the desires (instead of the necessities) of its audience and the financial interests of advertisers. As to Nygren & Dobek-Ostrowska (2015), private media companies are inclined to put pressure on the news media and create a consumer audience who take all as the media is trusted by many. This is becoming more rampant over the world, with a shift toward commercialized western media. Andresen, K. (2016) made it clear that the media frame news of conflicts contrary to what the core value of journalism teaches.

According to Hoxha and Hanitzsch (2018), western journalists frequently make news on wars by drawing on or starting from other media coverage. They supposed that the BBC is the world's most influential news organization, with the ability to shape the narratives on which following reports by other journalists are based. This means that some political agendas in conflicts (such as military intrusion) for the most part seem to be without alternatives in conventional western media.

For Manning (2001) as cited by (Andresen, K. ,2016) journalists in the mainstream western media have become more reliant on political sources in modern years due to the decreased amount of employed journalists and the mounting of commercialization and the amalgamation of media outlets, which makes the political sources to become dominant in framings of conflicts.

Harcup (2021) discussed that truthfulness, honesty, and fairness are the nuts and bolts of journalism or the ABC of journalism. The media should work to prove the truth, report it honestly and fairly. Reporting violating those basics would convey bad journalism that damages the career.

Hough (2004) stressed that today's journalism is a responsible and ethical profession. The Society of Professional Journalists believes that journalists' primary responsibility is to serve the truth. According to the code of ethics of the society of Professional Journalists, the news media should not converse unofficial charges affecting reputation or moral character without giving the accused an opportunity to respond.

2.3 News Media and Conflict Coverage

According to Mulatu (2017), there is a strong link between the media and conflict. This is especially true for those who feel that “if it bleeds, it leads,” and hence focus their coverage on conflict because it sells a lot of newspapers. Treatment of conflicts makes the news media more influential.

Howard (2009) stated that in a period of deadly conflict, providing trustworthy information to the public necessitates supplementary journalism abilities. Reporters must learn more about the causes of conflict, as well as how it develops and diminishes. Reporters must also be capable of identifying these causes and solutions. Provided that, journalism makes the universal public much more complicated with reference to the conflict to a lower place the violence, and might

assist in partitioning it. Reporters have to be obligated to bear in mind of this major role that journalism will play during an occasion of conflict.

Puddephatt (2006) elaborated that the media, whether or not native or international, can forever face a substantial challenge in making an attempt to hide conflict. There will inevitably be business pressure to specialize in the immediate, most violent or dramatic incidents, at the expense of explaining the background and problems which will underpin the conflict. The role that the media plays during a conflict, as well as in the phases before and after, is determined by a number of factors, including the media's interaction with conflict actors and its independence from dominant groups in society.

According to Galtung (2002), the war journalism has four main qualities as literatures revealed it: it's directed to violence and war, is very influenced by information, it focuses on the opinion of the elites and it focuses on game, that is, one half wins all and therefore the different half loses all. Hoge (1994) as cited by (Balabanova, 2007) argued the bad events are predominant of news coverage: disagreement is documented, but peace is not. According to this logic, modern forms of large-scale conflict are a striking subject for an increasingly global media. Usually the media give much air for conflicts, which regrettably, is followed by mass havoc. That is what one can detect in the international media daily.

Hamelink (2011) highlighted that conflicts are the vital part of human lives and the media are energetic part of any conflict. People use media as sources of information to know about what is going on around the globe. The mass media are vital to all sections of the population through their functions. There is popular recognition that media play substantial functions in different societies by provided that information upon which critical decisions are based.

Mass media often plays a key position in today's divergence. Basically, their role can take two different and opposed forms. Either the media takes an active part in the conflict and has responsibility for enlarged violence, or stays autonomous and out of the conflict, thereby contributing to the declaration of conflict and improvement of violence. (Puddephatt, 2006).

A good example of this is the Rwandan genocide of 1994. The media played a key role in the Rwandan Genocide of 1994, encouraging hate speech on radio stations and in the print media, as indicated by (Getnet, 2019).

Cottle (2006) argued journalists have been accused of disrespecting victims and broadcasting news in favor of one side of the dispute. War journalism frequently includes some propaganda on one side of the battle. In a zero-sum game, war journalism is elite-, violence-propaganda-, and victory-oriented, with a winner and a loser.

Bamidele (2013) conveyed that intensification of conflicts is not a character of a responsible media. Rather work for the social good. A socially accountable media isn't purported to be concerned within the increase of conflicts. A professional journalist will not underscore the concept of objectivity as the expectation of the public is associated with truth, impartiality in it, and coverage of the environment.

2.4 Role of Media in Conflict Situation

Hieber (2001) stated that throughout the course of the 20th century, the media have been crucial players in crisis situations, often disseminating hate propaganda and war mongering, but, increasingly, promoting humanitarian and peace-building objectives. From the early days of radio, when Nazi propaganda swamped the airwaves, to the more recent use of the Internet by Serbian opposition radio, the media provide a vehicle used every day around the world, as either a weapon of war or a tool of peace.

Pegu (2014) contended that the role of media in conflict and crisis areas – particularly broadcast media – is changing. No longer satisfied to remain sovereign outside observers, many media professionals are now developing programs which endeavor to be part of the solution. The reason behind such an approach is that it would involve taking stands in a very conflict in any case, conflicts need an answer that addresses the underlying issues and this implies assessing the burden of the various claims in a very conflict and seeking to resolve them. Media have a major role to play in controlling the spread of conflict by disseminating knowledge to the public with the widest coverage.

Hieber (2001) analyzed there are a number of problems that media projects frequently face. Difficulties in establishing editorial freedom in conflict areas and the possible high risks to independent-minded journalists and broadcasters are among the challenges. The standard of broadcasts or writing has to be constantly big enough to make the expected impact, and the

impact of the media intervention has to be seriously examined in order to make certain that the outcomes are not counterproductive.

Entman (1993) revealed the print media, with its new technologies and wider reach, is progressively a target for information, manipulation or suppression by interests seeking to make the most of the violent conflict. The difference in reporting similar incident is the result of framing styles practiced by the media organizations. Any media organization may deliberately utilize framing techniques which will help it to magnify certain aspects of that particular event over the other(s).

Hieber (2001) explained that regardless of the hypothetical delineation of media role in the conflict, media should take it as its moral responsibility to support for peace-building during a crisis. In the same token, if the media have played an important role in propagation crisis, the outcome will be clear that it is against peace. In different words, if media area unit typically found to support forces that cause violent conflict, they must even have the ability to support the forces of peace.

Hough (2004) stressed that news reporting aspires thorough editing which is one of the basics in journalism. Thus it is easy to understand how conflict reporting is very sensitive and needs great care.

According to Andresen, K. (2016), in spite of the fact that free freelance and ism media provide a setting for dialogue and exchange of information and opinions. Other media houses, the terrible experiences of Rwanda and the Radio Mille Collines which actively provoked ethnic hatred, forcing the Hutu people to kill at least 500,000 Tutsis in 1994, showed that media can also be misused for propaganda purposes, to spread hate speech. Equally media have the potential to increase or decrease the impact of harmful symbols in adjusting community relationships.

“The three pillars of journalism (accuracy, fairness, and impartiality) are among the most important ethical considerations for journalists. Accuracy implies writing and reporting in the most objective and fair manner possible, regardless of personal feelings, beliefs, or attitudes toward the subject.” (White, 2010).

It requires deep insight and most importantly high professional capacity to distinguish the objectivity and subjectivity nature of news. What to include, as well as what to skip should be decided intelligently.

Foreman (2009) believed that despite its comparative objectivity, journalism is still a “subjective art” as its actors are the determinants that are often in charge of deciding which issues deserve more display and which issues less. They make decisions about the news: what facts to use, what facts to highlight in the story and what facts to skip. Grounding in ethics is essential to those in news, as journalists are confronted with choices about stories, interviews, sound bites, rundowns, shot angles, editing, and a host of other potential hazards on a daily basis.

Puddephatt (2006) explained that peace is something more than the absence of war. The dangers of journalists approve in a conflict are obvious – professional independence is impossible to maintain, access to the other sides’ combatants will disappear and journalists will become even more of a target than they already are. Media have a major role to play in controlling the spread of conflict by disseminating information to the public with the widest coverage, by preaching peace bringing very accepted elites to the media.

Wolsfield (2004) indicated that the news media has the potential to play a significant role in promoting peace. They can emphasize the benefits of peace, increase the trustworthiness of peace groups or leaders, and aid in the transformation of images of the opponent. The media, on the other hand, can be damaging in the process.

2.5 Conflict-sensitive reporting

According to Howard (2009), it is founded on firm affection to journalism's key basic criteria, which include accuracy in idealistic, neutrality or just, balance, and accountability or ethical conduct. Howard designed a curriculum for conflict- sensitive reporting with the intention of enhancing the capability of media professionals to report in a detailed, objective and impartial way. By not leading to clash, while there are significant variations in the expression of these standards, should always try best to meet the standards of journalism.

Peace Journalism: Johann Galtung, the founder of peace journalism, is a Norwegian academic who has developed a long career in the field of peace studies. In his famous article —The

Structure of Foreign News, he confirmed that some media contributes to polarize the conflict through some language orientations. He later called this kind of information, war journalism. To counteract this effect there should be another kind of journalism, the peace journalism. (Gavilán, 2011).

Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) cited on (Alankus, 2016) stated that peace journalism is once editors and reporters create decisions – regarding what to report, and the way to report it – that make opportunities for society at large to inspect and to worth non-violent responses to conflict. Peace Journalism may be a relative mode of accountable and conscientious media coverage of conflict that aims at contributive to peace creating, peace keeping, and dynamical the attitudes of media homeowners, advertisers, professionals, and audiences towards war and peace. Howard (2009) confirmed that when ordinary people in a dispute don't have a say in the media, elite and militarized options expand a complete power on mainstream media communication, frequently sacrificing more peaceful stances.

2.6 Theoretical Frameworks

2.6.1 Framing Theory

2.6.1.1 The Concept of Framing

Different researchers and scholars define framing differently. Goffman (1974) indicated that authors in the field of sociology and psychology have given their own definitions to framing but one who appraised the definition of framing to the field of communication is Goffman. Framing, according to Goffman, is a tactic of clarification that allows people to hold easily events or life experiences.

According to Papacharissi and Oliveira (2008), framing has the potential to define how to judge news. It generally sorts out what the substances a news contains. Sociologist Erving Goffman (1974) proposed the framing theory, which proposed that people utilize sets (or frames) of expectations to make sense of their social reality - that is, ordinary life circumstances and the people in them. Based on Goffman's work, Gitlin (1980) defined framing as persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, as well as selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol handlers organize discourse on a regular basis.

de Vreese (2005) contended that framing studies have shown how citizens interpret news stories based on which components of the story are highlighted. Framing is more than just thinking about what issues are covered in the news; it's also about understanding how these topics are covered. In both theoretical and empirical contributions, there is a wide range of definitions of news frames. Chang and Druckman (2007) established framing is more than just thinking about what issues are covered in the news; it's also about understanding how these topics are covered. Framing is the process of organizing everyday reality by providing meaning to expanding events and promoting particular definition and interpretations of political issues. One significant method that the media address the public is by framing occurrences in a special presentation.

“Framing theory is increased its attractiveness in research particularly in media from time to time. Media framing is that the method within which data is conferred to its audiences.” (Scheufele, 1999). Entman (1993) stated framing as a process in which some aspects of certainty are selected, and given greater emphasis or importance, so that the problem is defined, its causes are diagnosed, ethical judgments square measure urged and suitable solutions and actions square measure projected.

D'Angelo & Kuypers (2010) appraised that a media frame is a meaning structure—a core thought, organizing principle, master narrative, macro feature, or theme—that can be implicit or covert in a mediated text but provides discrete, discriminating meaning to words and pictures used to contextualize a topic. A frame's relative potency is predisposed by a number of factors, including its frequency, accessibility, and relevance. The frequency of a frame is defined as the number of times and the number of media enterprises in which it is repeated; the higher the frequency, the stronger the force. The identification of framing devices, which are specialized linguistic structures such as metaphors, visual icons, and catchphrases that communicate frames, is a crucial stage in a framing study. Bias and framing is not the same thing.

People with a low level of political expertise were more influenced by the news frames and were more vulnerable to risk framing, as to (de Vreese, 2005).

2.6.1.2 Types of Frames

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) highlighted five generic frames: ‘conflict’, ‘human interest’, ‘attribution of responsibility’, ‘morality’, and ‘economic consequences’.

Conflict frame is all about conflict and war related issues. Individuals, groups, institutions, or countries are the focus of the conflict frame. **The human interest frame** focuses on stories of people since it catches interest and attention. **The responsibility frame**, on the other hand, magnifies that responsibility should be there for what is happening.

The morality frame examines a situation or issue in light of religious doctrines or moral guidelines. **The economic consequences frame**, finally, presents an event, problem or issue in terms of the economic consequences it will have on an individual, group, institution, region or country (de Vreese, 2005). Different literatures also indicate that there are other kinds of frames used by the news media. The researcher discovered war frame, ethnic-sensitive frame and political frame after thorough reading and understanding of the news stories which were taken for the study. They were dominantly applied.

War journalism is the term coined by Galtung (1986, 1998), Simonis (1986) referring to traditional disagreement coverage and framing that have a value prejudice toward violence and violent groups, stemming from a victory-defeat prototype. He suggested that war journalism is when editors and reporters makes choices of what stories to report, and how to report them, which usually leads audiences to overestimate violent responses to conflict and ignore non-violent alternatives. War journalism was said to have four core distinctiveness: oriented in war or hostility, misinformation, elites and triumph. As cited by (Abera, 2018).

Galtung and Vincent (1992) concluded that peace proposals are frequently hidden by war media before win is achieved. The vocabulary utilized, the focus of concentration, and the language used in war journalism and conflict reporting are all similar.

Entman (2007) identified that the term "framing" is broadly used in the social sciences to illustrate how messages with specific patterns of emphasis and exclusion can persuade the thinking of individuals who encounter them. Metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, moral appeals, visual imagery, and other symbolic elements can all be engaged to establish a frame's character.

Andresen, K. (2016) confirmed that when regular people in conflict are denied a voice in the media, aristocratic and militarized interpretations develop a stronghold on mainstream media discourse, often at the expense of more peaceful viewpoints.

2.6.1.3 The Importance of Framing Theory

This theory helped the researcher to explore how the armed conflict stories were framed in the western media. In the process of identifying the frame of conflicts, Entman's category of framing, for instance, defining the problem, diagnosing the causes, making a moral finding, and suggesting a treatment are pertinent to digging out the frames', and understanding the techniques used in the newspapers (Getnet E, 2019).

Framing is concerned with how the media draws the public's awareness to specific topics, thereby establishing the agenda, and it goes a step further to generate or frame facts in such a way that the audience can comprehend it.

“Framing has been described as a concept, an approach, a theory, a class of media effects, a perspective, an analytical technique, a paradigm, and a multi paradigmatic research program.” (D'Angelo & Kuypers 2010). Framing is, thus, endowment within the mind of the journalist who writes the account, however moreover within the description that he builds, getting the reader through a coding method that's essential to take hold of the account and also the reality to that it refers. (Abreu, 2015) cited by (Getnet E, 2019).

Winter (2008) stressed that political concerns provide themselves well to framing. Frames offer implication to political ideas. Frames lend structure to political issues. From the mass of undifferentiated facts, perspectives and other considerations that might reasonably relate to any political issue, an issue frame constructs a storyline with actors, a plan, and a organization.

(Howard, 2006) claimed that when regular people in a conflict lack a voice in the media, aristocratic and militarized interpretations develop a stronghold on mainstream media discourse, often at the expense of more peaceful viewpoints.

Framing as a Process: - As to Entman (2007), successful political communication requires framing events, subjects, and actions in a way that encourages perspectives and interpretations that benefit one side while hindering the other. There are components crucial to a framing process that comprises of several stages: frame-building, frame-setting, and framing repercussions on an individual and social level.

Frame Building: - “Frame-building refers to the factors that influence the structural qualities of news frames.” (de Vreese, 2005). The interaction between the media content and the receivers ‘prior knowledge of the issue makes the framing in the text more explicable and more consequential. Fortunato, (2005) also defined frame building as the factors that manipulate media institutions or journalists in the process of creating news frames. These factors can be internal or external to journalism. Factors internal to journalism can be journalists’ thought and managerial traditions. Factors external to journalism, for example, the continuous interaction that journalists form with elites may influence journalists’ judgment in constructing frames.

Both frame building and agenda building refer to macroscopic mechanisms that deal with message construction rather than media effects. (Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007).

Frame Setting: - (de Vreese, 2005) defined that frame setting as the interface between media frames and an individual’s preceding acquaintance and tendencies. Frames within the news might have an outcome on learning, version, and investigation of problems and events. The consequences of framing can be conceived on the individual and societal level on the individual level, the consequences may be changed attitudes about an issue based on disclosure to certain frames. On the societal level, frames may contribute to shaping society ‘s political dealings and decision making processes.

2.6.1.4 News Framing

Entman (1991) stated that News frames principally systematize ideas for news, which supplies background and suggests what the issue is through the exercise of selection, weight, omission and amplification. Frames settle measure the main focus, a factor or margin, for discussing a selected event. Frames specialize in what's going to be mentioned, however it'll be mentioned, and specifically, however it'll not be mentioned.

Richardson (2013) confirmed that media framing occurs during the foremost idea of the news stories, the atmosphere of the news and the kind of sources. These days many people catch the news media as a main source of political happenings.

According to de Vreese (2005), there are two approaches that help to categorize frames in the news: inductive and deductive approaches. An inductive approach to analyzing news texts helps generate frames in the course of investigating news texts. This analyzing development allows the researcher to come up with his own comprehensive frames of the data accessible at hand. But, the shortcoming of relying on the inductive system is it requires a tiny amount of data and the frames twisted by this method are difficult to replicate. The deductive approach, on the other hand, works with prior distinct frames that are fashioned and operationalized prior to the investigation.

Taking that into consideration, a researcher is anticipated to denote frames in a news story. Entman (1993) suggested that frames within the news are repeatedly acknowledged by "the presence or absence of bound keywords, stock phrases, dull pictures, sources of data and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of details or judgments. Tankard (2001), as cited in de Vreese (2005), presented more all-inclusive mechanisms or crucial points to spot frames. These are heading, subheads, leads, source selection, and quotes selection.

2.6.2 Agenda setting Theory

There are several media effect theories in the field of mass communication; agenda setting theory is one of them. According to Getnet (2019), McCombs and Donald Shaw are credited with developing the agenda-setting theory in their influential study released in 1972. The agenda setting theory is a theory that discusses how the mass media influences making a certain issue as a public agenda. The agenda setting theory is typically taken as the leading role what to think about. It selects and provides the audience with the more important news by giving extensive coverage and precedence.

McCombs (2007) explained that the recurrence of messages about public issues in the news day after day, along with the esteem of the mass media in our daily lives, make up a major source of journalism's control on the audience. The subordinate nature of this learning, in turn, helps issues to move rather quickly from the media agenda to the public agenda.

Agenda setting refers to the notion that there's a dynamic communication between the stresses that mass media place on bound problems the stress that the general public places on these

topics. The agenda setting theory, according to McCombs and Yuksel, explains how and why the public learns how important a topic is depending on how it is reported in the news (McCombs and Yuksel, 2004).

McCombs (2007) discussed that the media sets the pitch for public argue by establishing a existing agenda. The agenda-setting function of the mass media converges with many other paradigms in the communication field, including framing, priming, gate keeping, cultivation and the spiral of silence. The similarities and differences between agenda setting and framing are currently one of the most discussed of these theoretical connections. Because topics that fail to pass through the news gatekeepers also fail to provide salient cues on the virtual importance of the concerns, news selection is at the consideration of the agenda-setting process. Agenda setting in relation to this study helps the researcher in identifying the main apprehension given to the conflict in preferred time period, and how the media were operational in making the conflict between groups an agenda.

In Agenda setting, the regularity of the topics, the interval of time given to the topic and the issues selected all are noteworthy. Guided by these, the audience understands the more vital news. Getnet E. (2019) asserted that the agenda-setting theory is primarily concerned with the causal relationship between the media and public agendas. Rather than telling the public that one problem is more important than another, the media sets the agenda by giving issues in its coverage greater attention.

According to Watson (2007), when pushing to examine how agendas come about, that is, who decides what goes on the agenda and who prioritizes items on that agenda; the proposition is no longer uncomplicated. There is evidence of the existence of unseen agendas; in other words, the indistinguishable frames of authority and power, because news selection cannot be made without rhyme or reason, and journalism does not exist in blankness. The media are not free from influences on the news selection process. It is hard to say journalists themselves pick the news and report without any interference from inside or outside.

Gilboa (2009) revealed that resource and institutional pressures will have an impact upon news choice. The willpower of an event's news values and connotation cannot be value free. Although the news media filters and shapes news, and journalists may be able to choose what issues and

events they will cover, and how, perhaps how they will cover them, those in the media are rarely utterly free to always do as they please.

By selecting bits and pieces or outstanding issues for their reporting (agenda-setting) and putting them in viewpoint (framing), journalists endeavor to draw public attention and persuade opinion. (Zewge, 2010)

2.6.3 Media Representation Theory

Representation refers to the fabrication of components of reality such as people, places, objects, events, cultural identities, and other abstract notions in any medium (particularly the mass media).

The western media has represented or portrayed Africa in a terrible light. Croteau and Hoynes (2003) argue that media cannot simply put or multiply realities or events as they occur in the actual world. Instead, they are concerned with imbuing reality with a particular meaning or picture that they find appealing. The act of doing so is referred to as representation.

The neglect and/or negative portrayal of Africa by Western media, Africa's contribution to its negative coverage and possible corrective measures, arguing that the immensity of Africa's problems and its potential to affect the Western world politically and economically can no longer be minimized. (Wa’Njoga, 2009).

Negative media coverage in the West has long been a cause of dissatisfaction. Negative media coverage and its consequences have been widely lamented throughout the world, but perhaps nowhere more so than in Africa, where it is widely assumed that foreign media, particularly Western correspondents, have gone to great lengths to portray the continent as the nadir of human civilization.

This dominant representation of Africa in the Western media usually ignores the actualities and specificities of social and economic processes that occur in the continent (Jarosz, 1992). This representation also ignores the many political and economic success stories that have been taking place in the continent, especially in the last three decades. (Oguh, 2015)

Wa’Njoga (2009) stated that the writings of these nineteenth authors prepared the ground for twentieth century Western journalists and academics to continue their negative portrayal of Africa during the colonial and post-colonial era. (Oguh, 2015).

The most important causes for the persistence of negative views of Africa in Western media are the foreign policies of Western countries, as well as the activities of non-governmental organizations and other institutions dedicated to humanitarian help.

Asgede (2000), who looked into the relationship between the American press and the American government on issues relating to Africa, particularly during the decolonization efforts in the 1980s and 1990s, argued that the US media ignores Africa because it is of minor strategic importance to the US government's foreign policy. He stated that Africa only receives media coverage in the U.S. press when the events suit the U.S. government’s foreign policy or strategic interests.

2.7 Empirical Literature

Framing research has become popular in mass communication due to its ability to affect readers, negatively or positively. According to Getnet E. (2019) Francis has studied —Print Media Framing of the Niger Delta Conflict in Two Selected Nigerian Newspapers. Framing techniques, prevailing frame sources, and editorial formats were the target of the study. He used content analysis as a method and found that unreliable frames, centered on specific cases or events, and the sources were dominantly governmental. News report was the editorial format as the survey discovered it. Manian and Miles (2018) as cited by Getnet E, (2019) have studied framing the Syrian Refugee Crisis: A Comparative Analysis of Arabic and English News Sources. The aim of the study was sorting out frames that emerged in news media portrayals of the Syrian refugee crisis and their news sources They employed textual analysis and found that English-language news stories typically framed the Syrian refugee crisis around domestic political, cultural, and economic concerns. Arabic language articles also focused on regional and global political dynamics and trends but more on the consequences of war and conflict for the personal and charitable conditions that the Syrian refugees encountered.

Abera (2018) studied the framing of the 2015/2016 Oromo Protest by Local and International Media. He used text analysis. With the purpose of understanding how narratives influence reader perception, the most commonly used frame types, and how the three newspapers framed the protest. The results came to assure anti-peace frame was highly utilized by the state-owned newspaper, which, rather than influencing their perception, had disappointed the interviewees and pushed them to discontinue detailed reading. The Aljazeera, on the contrary, used an ethnic tension frame that portrayed the case of the Oromo protest as a product of a long dazzling ethnic restlessness.

It becomes common in the contemporary world that national and foreign policy is the preconditions and decisive things for the big media outlets particularly reporting conflicts. Siraj & Durrani, (2015) argued that the U.S media gave favorable coverage to India while coverage regarding Pakistan was unfavorable. The writer argued that the explanations for bad reporting of Asian country and good reporting of Bharat could be understood within the views of its being a Muslim country having nuclear weapons and its robust good relations with China whereas unfriendly relations with Israel.

The coverage of wars and internal conflicts by mass media is often criticized, as in the particular case of the Colombian armed conflict. Journalists' adjust measure blessed for disrespecting victims. The media is usually criticized for its entertainment of conflicts. Not recognizing victims and work to advocate one group is the main accusation on journalists.

For example, Schraeder and Endless (1998) looked at how The New York Times portrayed Africa between 1955 and 1995 and discovered that "73 percent of all pieces gave negative pictures of African politics and society."

2.8 Triggers of the armed conflict

The armed conflict in the Tigray region started in November 2020. It has its own immediate and basic causes. To be precise, the researcher chose to begin with the election problem. The federal government postponed the election from 2020 to 2021, taking the Covid pandemic as a threat. TPLF rejected the postponement of the 2020 election due to the Covid 19-pandemic and held its own regional election in September 2020. No attempt was made by the government to stop the

election, lest that would lead to unnecessary conflict. However, the federal parliament and House of Federation declared the election unconstitutional and illegal.

In October 2020, the TPLF in turn declared the Abiy`s government illegal and unconstitutional and ordered its members to leave their parliamentary seats and different ministerial positions at the federal level. Then they paraded tens of thousands of heavily armed troops and declared that they were ready for war. Worried about the dangerous development, all the top religious` leaders from all denominations, together with traditional leaders and national figures like athlete Haile Gebreselassie, headed for Tigray to beg the TPLF leadership to deescalate the situation and open a door for dialogue, but the TPLF chased them out on the same day and they returned heartbroken. Mrs Maria Munir, head of the non-governmental organization Ethiopians Against Violence on Women, went on her knees begging the TPLF leader, Debretsion Gebremichael, to work for peace and to avoid their call for armed confrontation, but the TPLF scorned them and sent them back.

On the night of Nov 03, 2020, armed forces of TPLF carried out a coordinated strike against several divisions of the Ethiopian National Defense Forces North command which are located in various parts of Tigray state, including those soldiers stationed at the Ethio-Eritrea border to protect the people of Tigray from any attack by Eritrean soldiers across the border. Tigray officials on the BBC and their own media admitted that their forces carried out this pre-emptive attack and even described it as "a thunder-like action." Following that, the TPLF robbed the command's military equipment, detained thousands, and killed hundreds. Then the house of federation ordered the federal government to intervene in the Tigray Regional State and restore the constitutional order. Then came, "a law enforcement operation", as the government of Ethiopia called it.

Chapter Three

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Framing as a Method

Researchers use a range of methodologies when it comes to frame analysis. Framing is generally conceived of as a theory as well as a strategy. It not only explains how frames are altered in a text to provide a specific interpretation, but it also explains how to examine and extract those frames. Abera (2018) insisted that Framing is commonly thought of as both a theory and a method. While it discusses how frames are modified in a text to offer a specific interpretation, it also lays out procedures for studying and extracting those frames.

3.2 Research Design

Kuypers (2009) contended that a very essential instrument in framing research analysis is interpretation, which exceptionally requires understanding of context and implications. However, the quantitative approach does not integrate the context into the existing text, which he believes is the key to determining a frame. As this study most importantly demanded context to be interpreted, the researcher decided to use a qualitative method in analyzing the media conflict framing. (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) indicated over the course of the twentieth century, qualitative research has evolved and a number of different 'schools' have formed.

Azpíroz (2014) argued that when it comes to framing study, using a qualitative method has a lot of advantages. Azproz pointed out that qualitative framing methods (for example, discourse analysis, focus groups, or interviews) have a more realistic and contextualized interpretive look, so they don't overlook the presence of elements with high symbolic content or cultural resonance, or what is evoked without being explicit, or the omissions.

Qualitative research is defined as study that does not aim to quantify its findings by statistical analysis or summary. This current chapter looked at the methodology informing how textual content analysis and in-depth interviews were conducted for this study. The methodology will attempt to justify how the research questions are relevant to the articulated theories of agenda setting, framing theory, and the social responsibility theory respectively. Many academics prefer

to investigate framing through qualitative content analysis, which is a more satisfying type of media frame analysis.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) defined qualitative analysis as “a process of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge”

Ritchie & Lewis (2003) discovered that those who conduct qualitative research have a tendency to emphasize and value the human, interpretative aspects of learning about the social environment, as well as the importance of the investigator's own perceptions and understanding of the topic under investigation. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) are other prominent authors on media content analysis. Shoemaker and Reese categorize content analysis into two traditions – the behaviorist tradition and the humanist tradition. The behaviorist approach to content analysis is primarily concerned with the effects that content produces and this approach is the one pursued by social scientists.

Framing analysis pretty much requires interpretation, particularly when it involves context and implication. Desalegn (2014) noted that qualitative content analysis is one of numerous research methods used to analyze text data through careful reading of documents of various kinds, including media texts. This is because, in mass communication research, qualitative methods rely heavily on researcher readings and interpretation of media texts and are often employed to answer the whys and how's of human behavior, opinion, and experience information that is difficult to obtain through quantitatively oriented methods of data collection. Kuypers (2009) emphasized the importance of qualitative research for media framing because the quantitative approach does not integrate the context" into the existing text, which he believes is essential for determining a frame.

Kothari (2004) stated that qualitative research, on the other hand, is concerned with qualitative circumstance, which incorporates quality or type. When we're looking into the causes for human behavior (why people behave in this way), we most of the time like to examine our motives.

3.3 Research Approach

Qualitative Content Analysis

Content analysis prior to the 1940s was mostly quantitative analysis of documentary materials concerning certain characteristics that could be identified and counted. However, since the 1950s, content analysis has primarily focused on the general import or message of existing documents. (Kothari, 2004). Furthermore, Hallin & Mancini (2004) expressed that comparative media content research does not have to be solely quantitative. Very often, qualitative, interpretive analyses carried out in a systematic way can be of great value, for example, to show differences in characteristic genres of news presentation.

Hijams (1996) discussed that in some news media framing studies, qualitative research technique has certain advantages which can increase a researcher's depth of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Text analysis, narrative analysis, rhetorical analysis, discourse analysis, interpretative analysis, and semiotic analysis are some of the qualitative message analysis approaches applicable to media content analysis, as are some of the techniques used in literary studies such as critical analysis.

3.4 Media Selection

The first step in framing a study is to decide which media channels will be researched. As a result, the researcher has chosen the BBC news media (English), Reuters and The Associated Press, which are the most well-known news organizations in the world. The following is a discussion of why these media channels were chosen.

The first reason was three of the media outlets were English versions, which were free of ambiguity during translation. Second, they were all from the western world. The researcher preferred the western media over other media outlets since they were accessible. Third, the researcher selected the media outlets because they all covered the armed conflict frequently compared to other media. They also have a large number of audiences and a high impact on audiences.

The time frame is also the other determinant factor in framing analysis. The time frame of this study is from November 4, 2020 to January 31, 2021. During this time, Ethiopia has been in armed conflict. The researcher wanted to study in the above mentioned study period because the armed conflict was at its climax.

3.5 Sampling

Even though the sample is believed to be representative of the population, this research has taken all of the news stories that covered the armed conflict covered from 4 Nov, 2020-Jan 31, 2021. This particular period was the time that the conflict started and reached its peak and the media reported a news analysis. To examine how the three media outlets framed the armed conflict in the Tigray region, Ethiopia. There were 29 news stories from The BBC News Media, 21 from Reuters, and 25 from the Associated Press (AP), for a total of 74 news items.

3.6 Sampling Technique

To choose media channels for this study, non-probability sampling approaches were used. Purposive sampling was employed for the study. Purposive sampling's primary premise, according to Deribsa, is that researchers can strategically select adequate instances for an investigation using reasonable judgment about the objective of the inquiry. (Deribsa, 2018).

3.7 Data Sources

The researcher used both primary and secondary data sources because consulting sources of information is crucial. Primary information was gathered in the form of key informant interviews. In the case of this research, key informants interview was used to get first-hand information. So as to get adequate information, the researcher interviewed those who are in different positions and the right people to do analysis. So the researcher decided to remain objective in asking questions and avoid engaging in unending debates on sensitive issues. However, in a few cases the researcher asked interviewees for more details when I felt their feedback lacked balancing or contextual information. Secondary data sources used by the researcher included the news stories, books, journals, articles, newspapers, magazines, expert analysis published and unpublished materials related to the topic of study.

3.8 Procedure and Method of Data Analysis

As Creswell, during the process of research, the investigator may collect qualitative documents that may be public documents (e.g., newspapers, articles, official reports) (Creswell, 2014). At the time of this research, media news obtained from websites was used.

3.8.1 Coding

Earl (2008) presented that data involves coding-classifying or categorizing specific pieces of data coupled with some form of retrieval method in qualitative social research. Coding helps engage in data reduction and simplification. In this study, variables are news headings/topics, wordage, tone, source selection, quote selection and frames.

3.8.2 Unit of analysis

Here, what is being studied as well as what aspects are being studied are treated. The news stories are taken as a unit of analysis.

3.8.3 Key Informants Interview

Key informant interviews are designed to discover underlying motives and desires and are often used in research. Such interviews are held to explore the needs, desires and feelings of respondents. (Kothari, 2004). Due to their occupation and knowledge, the researcher purposefully chose five professionals and experts who are very near to the subject. The interview was conducted to obtain their perspectives on conflict reporting and the western media's portrayal of the Tigray, Ethiopia case.

3.8.4 Transcriptions

Transcription was the last step in the interview process before it was analyzed. The recorded data was transcribed by the researcher. Even though manually transcribing the data was time consuming and difficult, it was done manually. The researcher accomplished a lot of things at the same time when he was transcribing. The researcher understood the concept while listening to the audio recorded information and subsequently wrote it down.

3.8.5 Textual Analysis

Since the purpose of textual analysis is to describe the content, structure, and functions of the messages contained in texts, the researcher used textual analysis. It helped the study to provide in-depth analysis of the stories of the armed conflict. This is a method that is used to describe and interpret the characteristics, the functions, the structure and other elements of a text (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 1999).

McKee (2003) stated that textual analysis is the way in which researchers engage in analyzing text or information, and the way that readers or receivers make sense of the world. It is making an educated guess at some of the most likely simplifications that might be made of that text.

3.8.6 Analysis of Interviews and Documents

The data from the interviews was also interpreted. The researcher began by reading the transcript carefully and taking notes. Then, labeled all the pertinent data from the in-depth interview, including words, sentences, phrases, and actions. This is referred to as indexing or coding. The transcripts were categorized based on the recurrence of comparable labels repeatedly throughout the text.

The researcher also used articles and video documents that discussed the armed conflict. Therefore, it helped to supplement interview analysis that was dominantly used to study how the media framed the armed conflict in the Tigray region. In the process of coding and discussions of the findings, articles will be treated along with the interview data.

3.8.7 Ethical Considerations

Throughout the process of making this research output, the researcher gave attention to respecting basic ethical values, so that it would keep its academic form and essence. Among the ethical considerations, the student-researcher keeps an eye on the following listed ethical values. Plagiarism, healthy communication with research advisor, fair treatment of the research subject, harmless, etc...basically, by respecting these values, this researcher seeks to put himself as an individual who tried to contribute something to the research society.

3.8.8 Overview of the British Broadcasting Corporate (BBC), Reuters and Associated Press (AP)

3.8.8.1 The BBC News

The British Broadcasting Company (BBC) is a publicly sponsored broadcasting system in the United Kingdom that runs under royal charter, according to the British Broadcasting Company British Corporation Britannica, according to the encyclopedia Britannica. It maintained a monopoly on television in the United Kingdom from its founding until 1954, as well as on radio until 1972.

The company's headquarters are in the Greater London borough of Westminster. Commercial enterprises who saw broadcasting as largely point-to-point communications took the first steps in British radio following World War I. The British Broadcasting Company, Ltd. was founded in 1922 as a private company with only British manufacturers allowed to own shares. After a recommendation from a parliamentary committee, the firm was disbanded in 1925 and replaced in 1927 by the British Broadcasting Corporation, a public corporation. Although the BBC has virtually complete freedom in its activities, it is ultimately answerable to Parliament. Members of the BBC Trust, a 12-member independent panel governed by a Royal Charter, are nominated by the BBC.

3.8.8.2 The Reuters

Thomson Reuters, formerly known as Reuters, is a Canadian information services firm. It began as the Reuters news agency in 1851 in the United Kingdom and has since grown to become one of the world's foremost newswire services. The company's headquarters are situated in Toronto.

The agency was formed in 1847 by Paul Julius Reuter, a former bank clerk who later became a partner in Reuter and Stargardt, a Berlin book publishing firm. The company published radical literature at the commencement of the 1848 upheavals, which may have drawn state notice to Reuter. He moved to Paris later that year and worked as a translator for a short time.

The London Morning Advertiser, the agency's first newspaper customer, subscribed to the London Morning Advertiser in 1858. Following it, newspapers became a significant part of the Reuters clientele. The significance of Reuters to newspapers resided not just in the financial

news it delivered, but also in its capacity to be the first to report on major international events, such as the killing of President Abraham Lincoln in 1865. Abraham Lincoln hours before its competitors

Reuter saw the possibilities of the telegraph for news reporting and built up an organization that maintained correspondents throughout the world. The Press Association (PA), an organization representing the provincial press of Great Britain, acquired a majority interest in Reuters in 1925 and full ownership some years later. In 1941 the PA sold half of Reuters to the Newspaper Proprietors' Association, representing Britain's national press, and in 1947 co-ownership was extended to associations representing the daily newspapers of Australia and New Zealand Reuters had become one of the world's major news agencies, supplying text and images to newspapers, other news agencies, and radio and television broadcasters. Directly or through national news agencies, it provided service to most countries, reaching virtually all the world's leading newspapers and many thousands of smaller ones. (encyclopedia Britannica)

3.8.8.3 The Associated Press (AP)

The Associated Press (AP) describes itself as the leading newsgathering organization in the world. Organized as a nonprofit cooperative, AP provides news and graphics to over 1,700 member newspapers in 121 countries around the world. To collect the news and photographs it supplies to its members, AP maintains 242 worldwide news bureaus. AP also provides a broad range of other services including up-to-the-minute financial and sports news; entertainment segments; Freedom of Information issues and updates; and a historic documentation of hundreds of thousands of photos and images.

According to (www.ap.org), the Associated Press is the world's oldest and largest news organization, offering text, audio, video, graphics, and images to 15,000 news outlets with a daily reach of more than one billion people around the world on news, sports, business, weather, entertainment, politics, and technology. Its services are available in over 120 countries via satellite and the Internet.

In early 2005, the Associated Press developed a new website committed to the Freedom of Information Act, in the hopes of encouraging more transparency in the wake of the terrorist

attacks on September 11, 2001. To combat rising government secrecy, the Associated Press joined a group of journalists and newspaper organizations to launch the Sunshine in Government Initiative. By this time, AP had brought its total of Pulitzer Prizes to 48; news writing had garnered 19 prizes, while the remaining 29 were shared by AP photographers.

Chapter Four

4. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussions of Findings

This chapter focused on the presentation and discussions of data obtained from the following media outlets: the BBC (English), Reuters, and the Associated Press. The information gathered from the websites is presented and examined in light of the research questions. The media's coverage of the armed conflict, the sorts of framing used, and their motivations were all examined.

The findings were reviewed in light of the theoretical frameworks chosen for this study as well as the research objectives and questions.

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1.1 Categories of the News based on their themes

4.1.1.1 War dominated news

Having applied the textual analysis technique, the researcher determined what frames were used in the coverage of the Tigray conflict. Analyzing the words and rhetoric of the selected news items allowed a close examination of how journalists and news organizations chose to portray the conflict to the public. By analyzing the language used in the chosen news articles, textual analysis allowed a close study of the way journalists propagated their thoughts about the conflict to the public.

Indicators of the war journalism frame in those selected Western media houses about the Tigray region conflict are: victory-oriented reporting (characterized by the use of military triumphalism language) and propaganda-oriented reporting (characterized by war justifications).

War Frame

Although the government called the operation at Tigray, a law enforcement operation, the western media tend to call it an invasion, a civil war and a full scale war.

"The war has spread to Eritrea, where the Tigrayans have fired rockets, and also affected Somalia, where Ethiopia has disarmed several hundred Tigrayans in a peacekeeping force fighting al Qaeda-linked militants," Reuters reported on November 24/2020. The theme is that

the war is not limited to Ethiopia and it is extended to other neighboring countries like Eritrea and Somalia.

BBC on 4 Nov.2020 stated, "The fear is that any escalation in Tigray could spill over to the rest of Ethiopia and neighboring countries." Here again it is clear that the reporting tried to influence the world that the war would continue and destabilize the whole country and others.

Laurence Freeman, a political economic analyst for Africa, on 29 Nov, 2020, wrote in his article that a war won to preserve the Nation-State. The military conflict was not a civil war, but more precisely, it was a war to preserve the integrity of the Ethiopian nation. PM Abiy launched the military campaign against the leadership of TPLF, not against the people of Tigray.

4.1.1.2 Peace dominated news

Peace journalism advocates believe that peace journalism practices in news media has the potential to lead to peaceful outcomes for the parties involved.

This sub frame was evident in all three publications, in articles categorized under the peace journalism frame, in both time periods. International newspapers used this sub frame in people-oriented reporting, highlighting civilian suffering and painted an insightful picture of the sufferings of the civilian populations. Furthermore, one important characteristic in the international newspapers' use of this frame was the use of non-elite sources in reporting.

People-oriented reporting dominated in the peace dominated news, where humanitarian concerns and issues took center-stage.

There are few news items that focused on peace news aiming peaceful outcomes.

Ethiopia says Tigray conflict to end 'in short time', Reuters on 13 November, 2021.

The news emphasized that the war will end soon, by mentioning Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Demeke Mekonnen. This is one of the few news that took the government as a source and wish for peace.

Tigray region appoints envoy for mediation talks, BBC 27 NOV 2020.

The news stated that the leadership in Ethiopia's Tigray region says it has appointed a representative to discuss with the African Union (AU) and other international bodies an immediate cessation of hostilities with the Ethiopian government. This news is different from others that it covered about peaceful solutions.

4.1.1.3 Anti- government dominated news

There are many news analysis reported against the government of Ethiopia. However, a media never hold sides in their news reporting.

Tigray crisis: Eritrea's role in Ethiopian conflict, BBC in its report of December 28, 2020 used argumentative quote "Abiy started as a peacemaker and a reformer, but he then fell into the trap of seeking revenge against the TPLF, which is what Isaias wanted." The theme here was to show the world how the P.M Abiy did not deserve the noble peace prize.

Reuters in its publication of December 3, 2020 headlined that U.S. senators seek possible sanctions over Ethiopia conflict abuses. Here, the theme seems that the U.S should put sanctions or pressures on the Ethiopian government.

Similarly, BBC reported that Ethiopian and Eritrean forces have waged a "devastating and genocidal war" in Ethiopia's Tigray region, the region's ousted leader has said. This was the first time in more than two months that Mr. Debretsion had spoken in public. An audio recording of his comments, lasting for about 20 minutes, was broadcast on a Facebook account run by a TPLF media outlet. (Jan /31/2021). The theme of the news can be taken as the war is ethnic or genocidal which is against the Tigray people.

4.1.1.4 Pro-TPLF dominated news

There are many news items that covered in favor of TPLF directly or indirectly.

Fugitive ex-leader of Ethiopia's Tigray region vows 'extended resistance' read by Reuters, the media used an audio message purporting to be from its leader, DebreTSION, who accused federal government forces and their allies of rape and looting. One can see from the news that TPLF was in a position defending the government army. It is surprising how a big media took an audio message as a source.

Reuters also reported that Tigrayan peacekeepers in Somalia disarmed by Ethiopian colleagues, sources say. Behind the news it is obvious that the war is against the Tigrayans not only TPLF. On the other hand, the government insisted that they are disarmed due to their involvement in TPLF.

4.1.1.5 Humanitarian aid dominated news

With regard to Humanitarian cases, The AP published that Peace Corps volunteers and US ambassadors asked lawmakers to press for humanitarian aid to all parts of Tigray, urge the United Nations to investigate and advocate for media access to the region “to document human rights abuses. (January, 2021). The theme is not the humanitarian aid case rather, human rights abuse by the government.

Mr Abiy's government has heavily restricted access to Tigray for the media, UN agencies and human rights bodies, making it difficult to verify reports or to investigate allegations of atrocities made against all sides in the conflict - including the shelling of a hospital from Eritrean territory. (Dec 12, 2020). The theme is clearly seen that the government stood against human rights protection. The analysis did not include the part TPLF had on the problem.

The humanitarian affairs in the news depend on one side testimony mostly on the reports.

4.1.2 Identified Dominant Frames

4.1.2.1 War frame

War frame was highly applied by most of the news reported in the three media outlets. This news was a war framed one covered by AP on 25 January, 2021: "Eritrea and Ethiopia recently made peace under Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who was awarded the Noble peace deal in 2019 for his efforts. But Eritrea remains an enemy of the Tigray leaders who dominated Ethiopia's government for nearly 30 years and are now fugitives since fighting began between Ethiopian and Tigray forces in November, the result of growing tension over power. " The report presented the Ethio-Eritrean peace deal as a strategy to attack Tigray without any evidence and mentioned a source.

4.1.2.2 Ethnic- Tension Frame

The media reported the armed conflict as if it was an ethnic conflict.

The BBC read on Nov. 17,2020, "There is also a concern that the conflict could exacerbate ethnic tensions elsewhere in Ethiopia."

"Ethiopia's Tigray crisis: Fears of ethnic profiling stalk conflict," BBC 25 Nov. 2020. The news stated that some Tigrayans in Ethiopia have described to the BBC how they have been harassed, detained, or discriminated against since fighting began in their home region on 4 November.

AP similarly reported that many ethnic Tigrayan refugees have accused ethnic Amhara fighters of targeting them, while survivors of one massacre last month in the town of Mai-Kadra say Tigrayan fighters targeted Amhara. Other attacks followed.

Tigrayans and Amharas have coexisted peacefully for centuries, but the media portrays them as enemies. Such stories endanger people's peaceful relations.

On the same day, Reuters also published this, ETHNIC DISCRIMINATION? The U.N. mission in South Sudan said it was aware of the three soldiers' repatriation. Although Ethiopia is ultimately responsible for the conduct and movement of its 2,000 troops in South Sudan, the statement said, discrimination due to ethnicity could violate international law.

Reuters again on Dec, 2020, reported "...disarming of Tigrayans in Ethiopia's peacekeeping contingency combating al Qaeda-linked militants in Somalia...." The media reported that Tigrayans had been targeted, but the government confirmed that they had been disarmed because of their ties to the TPLF. The story did not include the government's argument.

"Genocidal war waged in Ethiopia region, says ex-leader", reported by BBC on 31 January, 2021. There was, however, no evidence of all these allegations in the news reports.

4.1.2.3 Political frame

Van Dijk (1998) stressed that the political ideology and the political discourse in a given country are processed through texts. The ideological struggle in the media can be revealed in the course of serious and controversial conflict cases.

Reuters in its Dec 2, 2020 news stated that "a month of war is believed to have killed thousands of combatants and civilians." There is no source or evidence mentioned in the story. It is just aimed at giving incorrect information to the global community using its high access. The media and external actors rushed to judgment and they are accusing the Ethiopian government of genocide.

International security professor and director of Canada based Balsillie School of international Affairs, Ann M. Fitz-Gerald (PhD) and Hugh Segal from Global public policy at Canada's Queens University argued that the western media are the main instrument to negatively cast the law enforcement operation and misinterpreted the Ethiopian government's actions through portraying the TPLF as an underdog and being broadly credulous of its messaging. Some external actors have rushed to judgment and they are accusing the Ethiopian government of genocide.

BBC on 6 Dec.2020: Why did Nobel laureate Abiy Ahmed send his troops to battle? The news indicated that Abiy Ahmed received the Noble peace prize less than a year ago-only for him to now wage a military operation in his own country.

The media use of the Noble peace prize has nothing to do with the cause of the armed conflict. Most of the news portrayed the conflict as Abiy versus Tigray.

"Should a Noble Peace Prize winner keep preaching peace when his country's sovereignty is compromised and the major national defense wing is under severe attack?" a political economic analyst for Africa, Laurence Freeman, challenged.

The government claimed that humanitarian supplies would be provided when law enforcement operations were completed, but the media reported that civilians in Tigray were left to starve to

death. The media publicized this charge by relying on the testimony of a single person without seeking confirmation or explanation from the appropriate authorities.

A report on sexual violence was read as the UN warns of 'serious' rape charges in Ethiopia's Tigray January 22, 2021, "The U.N. special representative on sexual violence in conflict says" serious allegations of sexual violence "have emerged in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region, while women and girls face shortages of rape kits and HIV drugs amid restrictions on humanitarian access." But the shortage of pregnancy controlling kits did not necessarily show there is serious sexual violence or rape.

The following news story by the BBC was totally contradicted with the real cause of the conflict. It read Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed announced that he had ordered a military operation to oust the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) from power in Tigray. (BBC, Dec 12/ 2020)

4.1.3 Journalistic Principles and Ethics versus the western media

Lawrence Freeman, a political economic analyst for Africa, has been involved in economic development policies for Africa for over 30 years. In his article, Horn of Africa Endangered by False Media Attacks on Ethiopia, he stated. He called it "a big lie" that the western media most often repeated allegations of 4.5 million Tigrayans in need of immediate lifesaving aid.

AP reported on January 17, 2021 under the headline, Extreme Urgent need: Starvation haunts Ethiopia's Tigray. More than 4.5 million people, nearly the regions entire population, need emergency food according to unnamed source.

Freeman argued that the estimated population living in Tigray region is probably from 5 to 5.5 million. Thus, according to the media, 4.5 million or 82-90% needs emergency assistance. Too implausible to be considered accurate. According to the Ethiopian government 1.8 million Tigrayans were in need of aid prior to the conflict. After the conflict, 700,000 people added, for a total of 2.5 million.

Mitiku Kassa, commissioner of National Disaster Risk Management, told Ethiopian News Agency on 18 April that the report claiming the death of citizens in the northern part of Ethiopia from hunger is false. He also recalled that 1.8 million people in the region were receiving

assistance through the safety net program prior to the law enforcement operation. After getting full access to the Tigray region, the humanitarian aids, they managed to supply is insignificant. Over 70 % of the aids are still provided by the government, the commissioner indicated.

Ethiopians globally denounced fake news and support government in a well-coordinated and meaningful rallies), stressed that no alternative but to enforce the law. They underlined that no matter how strategic and good development partners are, interfering in the internal affairs of each other could by no means allowed.

Bronwyn Bruton of Atlantic Council Africa Center argued that intuitive calls for negotiations endangered the future of Ethiopia. Calling for negotiations, as many are advocating, will only encourage TPLF leaders to believe that violence will permit them to fight their way to a bigger chair at the table.

There are confirmed reports that the TPLF fired missiles across the border into Eritrea and on the Bahir Dar and Gondar airports in Amhara region, Ethiopia. Thus, it is clear that the TPLF posed an immediate danger not only to Ethiopia but to the entire region, and had to be defeated, Brown indicated.

Aregawi Berhe, a former TPLF member and one of the party's founders, claimed on the 46th anniversary of the party's founding that the TPLF junta's major goal over the previous 30 years has been to achieve its own objectives in the name of the public in order to stay in power. He stated that the demise of the TPLF junta is beneficial not just to Ethiopia but also to the rest of the world.

Former P.M Hailemariam Desalegn on his part argued that the key problem is the assumption of moral equivalence, which leads foreign governments to adopt an attitude of false balance and both sidesism.

Global Ethiopian Advocacy Nexus (GLEAN) in a press statement published on the Ethiopian Herald (Feb 11, 2021), Human Rights Watch statement on the law enforcement operation is biased, grossly exaggerated and shameful. Ignoring many cases of human rights abuse including the Mai-Kadra massacre orchestrated by TPLF forces. Human right watch and the western media are aware of the facts but chose not to report on or condemn the act.

MoFA spokesperson Ambassador Dina Mufti in his weekly briefing, 16 mar, 2021 said that fake news actors believed that they will be more benefited if the Ethiopian government law enforcement operation against TPLF was transformed to regional war.

Reuters 6 Dec, 2020: “Abiy’s rapid declaration of victory came as his government sought to soothe concerns at home and abroad that the conflict could destabilize Africa’s second most populous country and the wider Horn of Africa region.”

4.1.3.1 Fake news

The media have a responsibility to report the truth, and should try very hard to avoid presenting hearsay, gossip and politically tainted false news as facts on the ground. The massacre in Axum did not happen, and there is no evidence to back it up. It was a dramatic performance, a clear reflection of the TPLF's desire to gain international attention. The Axum massacre, which was reported to have murdered 750 people on Tuesday, December 15, 2020, was both inaccurate in terms of the date and the circumstances. It was a completely false and fabricated charge.

4.1.3.2 Unverified Sources

The failure to conduct a thorough investigation of sources and information was widely reported in the media. The majority of them are unconfirmed and nameless. They relied too heavily on anonymous sources.

"Hundreds of thousands might starve to death" in Ethiopia's Tigray region, according to a government official quoted in a leaked copy of notes taken at a meeting of humanitarian workers BBC News Jan15,2021. The news was developed by an unknown and weak source (leaked copy notes).

Witnesses: Eritrean soldiers loot, kill in Ethiopia's Tigray (reported by AP on 25 Jan, 2021). The news story was a very detailed analysis about the Eritrean soldiers looting and killing, but it just only took the testimony of one person which was not supported by another source. Pearce wrote in his article, "you find few stories in western media that even bother to ask ordinary Ethiopians what they think."

The outlets used mobile text messages from TPLF and Teshager Shiferaw commented on this, saying, this is less credible as long as news is concerned. He also claimed that the media relied on pro-TPLF sources.

4.1.3.3 Biased, unbalanced and unfair news

The federal government's troops could be met with a sort of guerrilla warfare from the area outside Mekelle. And it could also take longer than the government would like to conclude the offensive. That could mean a worsening of the humanitarian crisis and consequently more international pressure. Nov 27, 2020 BBC.

ICG Ethiopia analyst William Davison says the TPLF may be able to call on more than 200,000 fighters—from militias in villages to Special Forces in the regional government.

"Because of the changed political dynamics over the last two years, there has been significant recruitment and training in Tigray," he told the BBC. Nov 27, 2020

As a resistance movement to cruel dictatorship, it had to adapt to working in the shadows to survive and win. Western media, NGOs, policy makers and parts of academia swallowed the hook of the TPLF propaganda apparatus hook, line and sinker.

As a response, on November 3rd, 2020, the TPLF initiated a nightly sneak attack against its own country's military personnel in a number of locations around Tigray. Hundreds of troops, many of whom were previous comrades in arms, were brutally murdered while sleeping. All bets were off after that, and the government had no choice but to counter-attack and defeat the TPLF totally.

Before November 2020, the Abiy government had offered several occasions to peacefully negotiate the political stalemate, but the TPLF had rejected all these initiatives.

It is impossible to get a proper picture of the situation in Ethiopia just by following the western media.

The Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (currently known as the Ethiopian Mass Media Authority) has the authority to assess the content of all forms of media (domestic and international) and to conduct trend analyses. On the basis of the programs, the authority also provides feedback and collects measures.

The administration took various actions against western media outlets as a result of unprofessional media actions about the armed war. Foreign news companies such as the BBC and Reuters have received remarks and warnings from Ato Abdi Ali's office, according to him.

Reuters was warned and asked to change its correspondent as he was not willing to correct the misinformation the media reported. After returning the license, William Davison has been without a media license for the past three years. He described himself as an Ethiopian affairs analyst.

The lack of publicity given to the PM's historic visit to Mekelle, the restoration of power, telecoms, and internal services, as well as other developments, stems from the Western media's concern with conflict and crises, he added.

According to a renowned novelist and historian, Jeff Pearce, big western media corporations' refusal to report the Mai-Kadra massacre despite the availability of concrete evidence, witnesses and survivors, and unrestricted access to the area is intended to protect the TPLF clique and their narratives on the incident. He emphasized that he has not discovered any stories by major western news organizations.

The international media and humanitarian organizations omitted crucial facts in their analysis of the situation. The following expression from the BBC news report revealed the media's intention well.

"Conflict broke out in November after Mr. Debretsion's forces captured an Ethiopian government military base in Tigray." One can see how they omitted the real known cause, a thunder-like attack as TPLF themselves called it. The media did not want even to mention the clear illegal act.

A political science professor at California State University, Alemayehu Gebremariam in his interview with the Ethiopian Herald newspaper, 13 April, 2021, said "western journalism in distorted an occurrence, exacerbating an already severe situation and re-victimizing individuals who had already been harmed. Peace journalism aims to frame the news in a way to provide a comprehensive understanding of conflict. The analysis revealed the opposite. In terms of the following points, the media also failed in terms of the quality of their news presentation. The researcher thought the points would help to explain the findings.

“Ethiopia is the weaponization of journalism for the purpose of demonization, destabilization, demoralization, and dehumanization of the Ethiopian people and their government.”

Jeff Pearce stressed that Ethiopia does not need human rights groups who do long distance phone calls or interviews at refugee camps with unverified sources.

The western media is accused of relying on members of Samri who just left after the slaughter and sheltered in refugee camps in Sudan for their reports and presenting killers as victims.

PM Abiy said "the media attack is an extended arm to put us under pressure, but our aim is unstoppable."

"The TPLF arrogance, betrayal, and cruelty are all over the internet but the western media is not interested in it and Ethiopians are asking why?" stated in a letter by Ethiopians sent to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The government and many Ethiopians are urging the west to stop meddling in the internal affairs of Ethiopia.

4.2 Analysis of key informants' interview

The interviewees gave their own ideas regarding how the armed conflict framed by the western media. The sources they used, the tone of their language, the motives of the media, the news reports regarding journalistic principles and ethics were the main focus area of the interview. Three of the interviews showed that the western media took a stand against the armed conflict, relying on unconfirmed and anonymous sources for their reporting and allegations. Two foreign

media interviewees, on the other hand, refuted this. They argued that the reporters used sources that were verified.

Tom Gardner, chief of the foreign correspondents' association in Ethiopia, on his part, said that it is imperfect to use anonymous sources but if people trust the media, they would trust the source. He indicated that no press briefings for long time and government did not respond many times, and then the media went to other sources.

On the other hand, all the interviewees agreed that the government was not active enough to respond to the media. It was not effective and efficient. The press release was limited. They underlined that little was done on the media and diplomacy spheres.

Teshager Shiferaw (PhD), lecturer at Journalism and Communication faculty, Addis Ababa University, said that the conflict area was not open to the media and means of communication were blocked so that it made getting sources difficult. He also believed that government bodies, like the fact checking unit, provided limited information for the media. On the other hand, he argued that anonymous sources are not free ride, one needs to have enough reason to use them.

Getachew Dinku (PhD), former director of the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (now called Ethiopian Mass Media Authority, shared the above comment and said that when you have no access to official sources, you go to anonymous sources. The government (PR people) should not be shy about giving information. However, the media must verify the reliability of their sources. It is unethical and inappropriate to report using a cell phone text as a reputable source because it is difficult to determine who sent the text. However, the media did things like that which harmed the news.

Concerning objectivity, three of the participants agreed that the media performed poorly and violated professional ethics. They claimed that the news stories were biased and favored the TPLF. Getachew Dinku (PhD), confirmed that the western media failed the test of objectivity. He went on to say that they would not live up to what they had taught us about journalism principles and ethics. He argued that mentioning the noble peace prize in the news reports was unnecessary and remembered that the media outlets were informed about this issue. Tom

Gardner, chief of the foreign correspondents' association in Ethiopia, did not personally like mentioning the PM's Noble peace prize in the news stories since the PM did not start the war.

According to Teshager Shiferaw (PhD), the stories of the western media are examples of their biases, favored TPLF and they took their words without balancing. He also underlined that truth is sacrificed; unprofessional and biased reporting was there in the first three months of the conflict. Many media outlets anticipated a regional war in the Horn of Africa, which was exaggerated and unprofessional. He added that the western media's low appetite for positive outcomes in the Tigray region is caused by the desire to cast the country as a place of disorder.

Ato Abdu Ali, an expert at the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority, confirmed that the trend analysis done by the Authority showed the western media news stories are biased, unethical, unbalanced, misleading and unprofessional.

The experts did not like the way the media outlets looked and reported the conflict as a civil war. Tom Gardner, however, argued that it has been six months now since the conflict started (when the interview was held) and heavy armed forces were participating so far so that it is a civil war for him.

Regard to the tone, most of the informants agreed it is negative and aimed at deescalating the conflict. However, Robbie, a foreign correspondent argued his media was selective and not try to deescalate the conflict.

4.3 Discussion of Findings

The findings showed the western media failed from the point of view of reporting from the stand point of peace journalism

Peace journalism:

Peace journalism is a proactive reporting that humanizes the other side, gives common people a voice, and explores solutions. The media did not report in support of peace from the perspective of peace journalism. They were more interested in and reliant on war news in order to escalate the battle. The reports were in opposition to the people's harmonizing. By using too many negative tones in its reportage, the western media escalated the conflict. Instead of acting

independently and constructively, they incited chaos. Civil war, ethnic cleansing, genocide, starvation, and other terms were frequently used to fuel the conflict. They did not take the society into considerations.

The media had no involvement in bringing the contentious situation to a resolution. That didn't appeal to it. They failed to develop a positive frame that encourages peace and solidarity while covering the violence. Negativism has taken up all of the available space, leaving no place for positive frames. What to report and what not to report was missing from the reports. They distorted an occurrence, exacerbating an already severe situation and re-victimizing individuals who had already been harmed. Peace journalism aims to frame the news in a way to provide a comprehensive understanding of conflict. The analysis revealed the opposite. In terms of the following points, the media also failed in terms of the quality of their news presentation. The researcher thought the points would help to explain the findings.

1.Accuracy:

They did not treat all parties equally and sided with the TPLF. Journalism's mission is to report on all sides, not to favor one side over another. They refused to report infractions, as they had done in Mai-Kadra. The media avoided using Ethiopian government official sources, instead alluding to the opposite side without providing a precise quote.

Lack of real knowledge of the Ethiopian situation, things started to go towards bias against Ethiopia in a major way. The process of the rule was misunderstood due to the perverted reporting of the western media, while in reality, the Ethiopian defense forces took considerable care of the civilians.

The media entities have been now and again disseminating disinformation and cooking up stories with a view to misleading the international community working hand –in-glove with paid activists.

2.Balance:

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The media did not report in support of peace from the perspective of peace journalism. They were more interested in and reliant on war news in order to escalate the battle. The reports were in opposition to the people's harmonizing. By using too many negative tones in its reportage, the western media escalated the conflict.

Before the law enforcement operation, the Ethiopian government had shown incredible patience in order to avoid any risk of conflict. Surprisingly, the media paid no attention to it. They didn't have a balanced point of view.

No western media condemned the TPLF leaders' open call for civilians to arm themselves and go up against trained soldiers. The media's one-sided and lopsided reporting resulted in unbalanced news analysis.

3. Responsibility:

Being responsible entails not only telling the truth, but also abiding by the law and gathering information in an honest manner. The media was not responsible; many irresponsible reports were seen. Literature on journalism suggests that conflict should not be treated as any ordinary story, but should be handled with due care as it is potentially-damaging and has long-term effects.

By reporting sensitive areas without taking responsibility, it jeopardized people-to-people interactions. Even if the media mentions terms like genocide and ethnic cleansing, it is irresponsible to use them. Before announcing it, the media must confirm it.

The media failed to uphold its responsibilities to investigate sources, causing harm to Ethiopia's reputation in the world community. The media did not treat all sides fairly. When the media favors one side, this idea is shattered. To be credible, the media must accept responsibility for

getting its facts straight. The reports predominantly failed to delve deep, speaking with a variety of people to gather all sides of the story, and double-checking their facts.

4. War-Oriented or Peace-Oriented?

heavy reliance on military triumphalism language and focus on battle reports can be attributed to the foreign readerships' lack of knowledge about the conflict, and the need to capture the attention of an audience with little or no-concern regarding events taking place so far from their homes.

The news stories plainly show that they were aimed at a war-oriented audience rather than a peace-oriented audience. The media speculated that the region will be engulfed in a lengthy regional conflict. They wished for a larger conflict. In general, news frames are laden with words, phrases, and comments referring to the beating of war drums, and the possibility of a civil war is a distinct possibility. They largely focused specifically on war reporting. The media carelessly selected words which are often inflammatory.

They applied victimizing language like destitute, devastated, defenseless, pathetic, tragic, demoralized that tells only what has been done to people. They also applied demonizing language like vicious, cruel, brutal, barbaric, inhuman, tyrant, savage, ruthless, terrorist, etc. Emotive words, like genocide, assassination, massacre, rape were used as well.

TPLF agents have made the entire thing in their ability to deliver apparent lies, keeping in mind the western media's love of conflict and exciting content.

5. Propaganda-Oriented or Truth-Oriented?

The stories tended to be propaganda. In the researcher's analysis, most of the news is against journalistic principles and ethics. Defamation and hostile narratives compromised ethical journalism. The media became pretty opinionated.

The Axum massacre neither occurred nor was substantiated. It was a theatrical drama, a clear manifestation of TPLF's attempt to attract the world's attention. The Axum massacre, said to

have killed 750 people on Tuesday 15 Dec, 2020, was both incorrect both as to the date and the circumstance. It was a totally baseless allegation and fabrication.

The other propaganda was on the noble peace prize. All media outlets mentioned the noble peace prize very frequently in their every news stories unnecessarily. This was done purposely to negatively present the P.M. and the image of the country.

Lack of real knowledge of the Ethiopian situation, things started to go towards bias against Ethiopia in a major way.

Despite the fact that Ethiopia's government has allowed international humanitarian organizations unlimited access, some international media sources have engaged in a smear campaign, ignoring the government's efforts. The TPLF and its paid lobbyists spread venomous international misinformation all over the world.

Literature and experience reveal that international media and organizations make campaigns on those governments that do not go with their interest. They blacken their names. That is what is happening.

Despite all this propaganda, in the present climate, the government has been bringing fugitives to justice, delivering humanitarian assistance and trying to rebuild the Tigray state.

6. Elite-Oriented or People-Oriented?

The media mostly entertained the elite's ideas that favored their stand. They focused on leaders & elites as actors and sources of information. The people on the ground, particularly the neutral ones, were not included. The elites and organizations were selected carefully for their interview. Elites and securitized versions got a monopoly in the media at the expense of peaceful perspectives.

A mere hostility emanating from Ethiopia's courageous move to defeat external aggressors in keeping its sovereignty intact without harming others, countries and groups which have had a close tie with TPLF are now sleepless to disunite Ethiopia.

Western media, NGOs, policy makers and parts of academia are seemingly biased towards Ethiopia, characterized by ignorance of background facts. There were overblown reports by some activists on behalf of elites. In a similar vein, interest groups concocted stories that were disseminated by the media.

7. Victory-Oriented or Solution-Oriented?

The media focused and reported in a victory-oriented manner. They ignored the solution part. They were busy telling how TPLF would be the winner. According to Jeff Pearce, the media framed the narrative of Tigray as a David and Goliath tale of nation versus breakaway region. They focused on winning as the ultimate goal.

The majority of the news, in general, strayed from journalistic ethics and norms. The media lied to the public, jeopardizing their journalistic neutrality and impartiality. All of the TPLF group's diabolical activities have been overlooked, omitted, and ignored by the western media. Not humanitarily, but politically, the accusations bring into question the motivations underlying them.

Chapter Five

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the data, the researcher has drawn the following conclusion.

The western media was biased, focused on an unfounded wave of propaganda, and escalated the conflict in their news framing of war and ethnic tension, endangering people's relations. It looked like a propaganda war being waged against Ethiopia. This would give Ethiopians lots of lessons that must be learned to stand together and show unity.

The Western media confused the global community and portrayed the conflict as a full-scale war by taking the testimonies of one side, TPLF. However, the government insisted "the law enforcement operation" objective was clear, limited and achievable. The western media has largely failed to show the conflict objectively.

Even though they have the right information, some Western countries and international rights groups do not want to stand with the facts on the ground because they have other agendas to weaken Ethiopia. The media neglected the fact and rather served their country's foreign policy.

While reporting on the armed conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray region, major western media outlets have shied away from journalistic objectivity and professional ethics. Almost all the reports did not show professionalism and exhibited unethical performance. The story lacks clear reporting and did not briefly portray the conflict. In this regard the conflict reporting of the media implies that it lacked ethical and responsible reporting of the situation.

Western media's representation of Africa (Ethiopia) has not changed despite recent political and economic developments in the continent. It is not interested to cover the good news or progress of the country. The coverage given for the good and bad news is not totally fair.

Free media neither support nor oppose, or exhibit others' interests. This notion is clearly violated by the western media regarding the situation in Tigray, Ethiopia. It is clearly seen that the reports supported the TPLF and defamed the stands and the actions the government did.

Because of their sources, the media appeared to prefer to use war and ethnic-tension frames. The media's ultimate goal is to serve the public by providing accurate information in a timely manner. However, the media failed to provide accurate information to the public.

The Western media intervened in internal affairs and did not respect the sovereignty of Ethiopia, trying to force the government to sit with TPLF for dialogue, despite the fact that TPLF attacked the national defense of the country. The Western media fabricates bogus accusations in order to smear Ethiopia's image. The bogus claims were created to harm the country's image and did not take the facts into consideration.

The situation is exacerbated by Ethiopia's passive mainstream media, which has difficulties in identifying and revealing forms of deception and conveying verifiable information to the worldwide community. The weak performance of the internal media had played its part for the dominance of unverifiable information regarding the country.

Ethiopia's administration failed to communicate effectively with the international community about critical realities in the Tigray area and failed to take aggressive measures. Similarly, less was done in response to western media and the global community. Web of lies that the news media are unable to tell the public what is true and the government is unable to defend effectively.

5.2 Recommendation

There is a need to enhance the flow of information and bolster Ethiopia's online presence so as to give an accurate picture of the rule of law operation to the global community. Using the digital media is crucial to address a huge number of audiences. In this regard, much effort should be exerted. Even if the reality is there it needs to be discussed and unhide it to the world.

The government, particularly the Prime Minister's Press Secretary, must ensure that international media correspondents receive reliable and sufficient information on a consistent basis, avoiding biased reports. There should be a clear media policy and media strategy in Ethiopia on how to deal with foreign media correspondents in such conflict situations.

Ethiopia's media should be proactive in reporting what is happening in the country and sending verifiable information to local and global audiences and nurturing competent and professionally-equipped Ethiopian media correspondents is essential. The government should also provide the media with the information as fast as possible.

Rehabilitation of the Tigray state as fast as possible will definitely minimize the influence of external bodies. A strong diplomatic campaign including well-known and powerful people as well as the use of social media is also necessary. Foreign nations who have been deceived or lack accurate knowledge about Ethiopia's current circumstances should engage in diplomatic conversations so that they can remain Ethiopia's friends.

Western media should raise up to their responsibilities to inform their audiences about Africa (Ethiopia) by putting its problems and challenges in proper context. In order to provide proper context, news organizations must first grasp the political, economic, historical, and social contexts of the locations, people, and events they cover.

Providing good conditions for foreign media reporters to visit Tigray state may aid them in understanding good changes in the region and in delivering in-depth stories and analysis on the ground. A follow-up is a must to see how they report and monitor to give feedbacks and corrections.

Elites and activists should work with the government to get the right information out to the public. In the same vein, all political forces in Ethiopia, regardless of their differences with the government, should publicly show that they do not accept what is being done against Ethiopia.

Ethiopians living in foreign countries should work tirelessly to oppose the junta's destabilizing operations by disseminating accurate and transparent information about the situation in Tigray

and the government's response. They can influence the international world through various ways as they have the opportunity to do so.

The government has to investigate and prosecute perpetrators of human rights violations, including sexual violations, and bring them to justice. If there is any crime against civilians, the criminals must be stood before the court.

5.3 Implications for Future Studies

However, in order for the findings to be comprehensive in all elements of broadcasted news, the researcher suggests that future research take into account the visuals and videos that were shown with the textual news items in this study. Other media outlets and a different study strategy should be considered in future studies.

They also require the attention of researchers with the exploration and application of additional conceptual frameworks in media and communication research.

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Appendixes

Appendix: I

Interview Guide Questions for the Journalism Professionals and practitioners.

The western media have produced many stories on the law enforcement operation at Tigray, Ethiopia. What is the reason for this?

How do you see the sources the media mostly use? What does it imply for?

What kind of news framing the media applied and why?

How do you evaluate the framing of the news in reporting the cause and consequences of the conflict?

How do you evaluate the news regarding journalistic principles and ethics?

Most stories are against the government of Ethiopia. Why?

From the depth analysis of the news, can we conclude that the western media and TPLF have relationships?

What can we say about the impact of such western media framing on Ethiopia?

Appendix II

Interview Guide Questions for the media Professionals and practitioners

(Western media professionals)

How do you see the sources the western media mostly use? Most of them are anonymous sources or informal sources, what is the reason behind? How much trust do you have on them?

What is the challenge the western media have faced to get the right information about the conflict?

The media tend to choose negative news framing, why?

How do you evaluate the news regarding journalistic principles and ethics? Many question the objectivity of the news?

Most stories are against the government of Ethiopia. Why?

From the depth analysis of the news, many people feel that the western media and TPLF have relationships, what is your comment?

Do any external forces have interest to influence your story?

Is there editorial (external pressure) pressure from your organization or editor?

Appendix III

Identified frames for categorizing the data

Ethnic-Tension Frame

Does the news story present the armed conflict as entire political and economic marginalization of Tigray people?

Does the story mention the expressions that can endanger people's peaceful relation?

Does the story contain ethnic sensitive terminologies?

War Frame

Does the news story portray the armed conflict as a civil war or full scale war?

Does the news story escalates the conflict instead of deescalates it?

Political Frame

Does the news story focus on misinterpretation and misleading sources?

Does the news story cast the government's action negatively?

Does the news story biased for one side and promotes propaganda

Tone of the stories: -

Positive: - reports that cover news with a clearly positive attitude towards the government of Ethiopia and its actions.

Negative: - reports that cover news with a clearly negative attitude towards the government of Ethiopia and its actions.

Neutral: - reports with no clearly discernible attitude

Source:-

Governmental source, Anonymous or informal source, Elites and experts, Victims or others

Appendix iv

Key Informant Interviewees

Informant one:- Getachew Dinku, PhD, lecturer at Addis Ababa University

Informant two:- Teshager Shiferaw lecturer at Addis Ababa University

Informant three:- Abdi Ali, media monitoring expert at Ethiopian Mass Media Authority

Informant four:- Tom Gardner, chief of Association of correspondents of foreign media

Informant five:- Robbie, correspondent for AFP