THE EFFECT OF MAINSTREAM MEDIA IN AGGRAVATING CONFLICT; THE CASE OF ETHIOPIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATE AND FANA BROADCASTING CORPORATION

BY;

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A THESIS SUBMITTEED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OF ST.MARY'S UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ACONFLICT D OF THE MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK (MSM)

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF MAINSTREAM MEDIA IN AGGRAVATING CONFLICT; THE CASE OF TELEVSION MEDIAS IN ETHIOPIA

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis entitled "The contribution of mainstream media in aggravating conflict; the case of television medias in Ethiopia" submitted by me for the partial fulfillment of Master in social work to St. Mary's university is my original work and has not been presented for any degree in this or any other university, and all sources of materials used for the thesis has been duly acknowledged.

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Endorsement

This is to certify that **Fana Negash**, a student of **Master of Social work** from St. Mary's University was working under my supervision and guidance throughout her thesis work. Her thesis work entitled "The contribution of mainstream media in aggravating conflict; the case of television medias in Ethiopia" is her genuine and original work. This thesis has been submitted to St. Mary's University, School of Graduate Studies for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

_____ _____

Advisor **Signature**

St. Mary's University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia **June 2024 G.C**

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Acronyms

EBC   Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporate

FBC   Fana Broadcasting Corporate

OLA   Oromo Liberation Army

TPLF   Tigray People Liberation Front

Glossary

'Fano'   reference given to combatants of Amhara region

'Junta'   reference given to Tigray officials, armed forces and later to anyone from the region

'Shene'   reference given to combatants of Oromia region

'Tsinfegna' reference given to Amhara region's oppositions, armed forces and anyone opposes the ruling party

Abstract

This study has shown the effect of mainstream media in aggravating conflict especially by considering televisions in Ethiopia. Content Analysis research design and qualitative approach was used for the research strategy. The data sources were both primary and secondary data sources. For this study, two television Medias in Ethiopia; Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporate and Fana Broadcasting Corporations' programs and news reporting are analyzed their contents. In addition to that a total of 32 participants response for depth interview have participated. Thick description methodologies have been used to analyze participants' responds. The major finding of this study reveals the effect of mainstream media in aggravating conflict in Ethiopia. The study recommends establishing an independent media regulatory body to monitor, investigate, and enforce guidelines on the use of sensationalized, emotionally charged, or biased language in news reporting, while also ensuring balanced and diverse representation of perspectives, transparency in sourcing and verification of information, and mandatory training programs for media professionals on ethical reporting practices and recognizing implicit biases.

Key Words*: Divisive Rhetoric, Balanced Coverage, Victim-Attacker Portrayal, Conflict Escalation, Media Influence, Responsible Journalism*

Chapter-One

1.1 Background

Newspapers, television news networks, cable news, and radio are generally considered mainstream media outlets. Based on the definition of international media institutions, big companies under corporate umbrellas with trained journalists and vast resources that report on news stories and disseminate stories through a variety of channels, from print to podcast, are mainstream Media (Bhashin, 2023).

Broadcast media is one outlet of mainstream media. It may be audible only, as in radio, or visual or a combination of both, as in television. In this sense sound broadcasting may be said to have started about 1920, while television broadcasting began in the 1930s (Camacho and Manvell, 2023). With the advent of cable television in the early 1950s and the use of satellites for broadcasting beginning in the early 1960s, television reception improved and the number of programs receivable increased dramatically (Armstrong, 2007).

In this regard broadcasting media is the inclusion of different mediums that are used for communicating, transmitting, and broadcasting to the public or masses. Besides it uses a wide range of audio-visual materials as well as electronic or electro-magnetic mediums to share news, information, entertainment, ads, etc. with the target audiences or general public (Bhashin, 2023).

As well the media's role in either promoting peace or exacerbating tensions has been a subject of extensive scholarly debate. As a result investigating the impact of television media on conflict escalation in Ethiopia will provide valuable insights into the dynamics of media influence in a country that has experienced various conflicts in recent years.

Media plays a crucial role in conflicts because the public, policymakers, and even the conflicting parties assess gravity through the news. It also creates perceptions among the masses regarding the oppressor or terrorist and the victim. The Israel-Palestine conflict is taken as an example to show the media's impact. The way media represents Israel-Palestine conflict and the parties involved has a direct impact on public perception (Deprez and Raeymaeckers, 2019).

Having this thought in Ethiopia, a country with a complex socio-political landscape, understanding the contribution of mainstream media, particularly television, in aggravating conflicts has a huge impact. Especially after prosperity party came to power over five thousand conflicts and two major conflict s has happened (Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 2023). So this study conducted what the role of the television Medias were on aggravating Ethiopian civil conflict. It also analyzed contents of two state sponsored Medias in Ethiopia.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ever since media was introduced in Ethiopia, it remained under the sole monopoly of the government. This monopoly needed to controlling the narrative and shaping the perception of people. That is why during military coups the army always goes to the palaces and the radio station at the same time. It is to control over the channels that influence public opinion.

Over the last five years, journals like (Tofa & Kifle, 2022) have been dedicated to exploring the influence of media in the conflict between the federal government and the TPLF during the conflict. Tofa, & Kifle (2022) have explained on their study how the Medias were biased to their reporting. The journal explains how the international journalists either partially or completely ignored the historical context of the conflict. On the other hand, domestic Ethiopian media (state sponsored Medias) largely disregarded the violations that were committed by the federal government and were overly focused on debunking the claims that were made by the TPLF. Overall, the study concluded that there was a systematic pattern of local media biased to conflict narrative of the federal government, whereas the international media were generally biased to conflict ds the narrative of the TPLF. As a result, the voice of the people who suffered the brunt of the fighting became the "casualty" of misinformation, disinformation and biased reporting.

On the other hand Dessie, (2022) stated that the on-going violence in the country is fuelled by community-based media in a state-sponsored manner, primarily by people who are in the government structure deliberately working against the interests of the government to fasten the disintegration among various ethnic communities in the country. He claims that community-based media often propagate ethnic nationalism to erode the national unity and solidarity of the people by reporting fake news. Therefore, the study concluded that the key constraints causing Ethiopia's

nation-building process and state integration to weaken over the last few years are the absence of media law to shape the media's behavior pattern, weak leadership, the absence of credible independent civic associations, a lack of political determination to maintain law and order in the country, and the presence of poor media ethics. The researcher recommended that Media law shall be effectively applied to make community-based media's contribution to nation building and state integration positive as well as to make them accountable for their deeds.

However Moges (2021) argues that journalists who work at state sponsored Medias censored themselves for the sake of their safety. Also, journalists showed high interests in selecting government sources by ignoring other relevant sources. This can be described that the Ethiopian journalists self-censor when they select sources of the story: it is not how the sources are relevant, rather it is how his/her position is and how it protects the journalists. The study explains how the state media journalists report in the favor of the government.

The institute of Ethiopian Studies (2023) study pointed out how conflicts escalate in Ethiopia in the past five years. The study concluded, though Ethiopia has been experiencing different conflicts in history, in the past ten years the structure and way of the conflict has been changed. Especially in the past five years the mainstream media has been advanced. A number of televisions have started broadcasting their news and programs to the audience. This has brought its own negative impact. The new media development hasn't been studied (Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 2023).
In order to use media for peace and stability, journalists need to have a lot of study on building national interest and social fabric. On this regard there are limited studies in Ethiopia on what television Medias' contribution should be.

Until now there are studies discover the role of Medias on escalating conflict. But these are journals or articles focus on specific events. The journals take general sample of Media in Ethiopia and or on international Medias.
As mentioned previously there are Studies from Ethiopia and around the global how television media contents could aggravate conflict. But literatures that have studied on this area are tended to focus on limited areas, regional base media. They are also either about the content or the audience.

The study focused across the country but mainly at three (Amhara, Oromia and Tigray) regions where many conflicts were occurred. There aren't specific studies on state sponsored television media, while actually they address (cover) large part of the country and have a diverse audience.

This study also takes a data of the television media's contents and the audience perception to examine the contribution of the Media in aggravating conflict. It also analyzed the contents of the two Medias' programs to identify their role on conflicts happened in the country.

Moreover despite the fundamental role of mainstream media in shaping public opinion and perceptions, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the extent to which mainstream media coverage intensifies conflicts and contributes to the escalation of conflict.

This study aimed to address this gap by examining the specific ways in which mainstream media reporting influences public perceptions, and the dynamics of conflict, with the goal of identifying potential biases, misinformation, and ethical considerations in media coverage during times of conflict.

1.3 Research Question

The research paper answered the following questions. The main research question of the study is "asking the major effect of mainstream media in aggravating conflict in Ethiopia."

The specific research questions are:

1. How languages and imagery used by mainstream media to provoke conflicts?

2. How do television channels contribute to the polarization of different ethnic or social groups' conflict in the context of Ethiopian?

3. How do television media in Ethiopia shape public perception and understanding of conflicts?

4. What were contents of selected television media conflict related productions?

1.4 Objective of the Study

This research has the following general and specific objectives.

1.4.1 General Objective of The study

The general objective is to explore the contribution of EBC and FBC television Medias in Ethiopia in aggravating conflict.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

➢ To identify how languages and imagery are used in the medias

➢ To analyze contents of selected television media conflict related productions

➢ To find out the way state sponsored television medias form their programs towards aggravating conflict

➢ To explore the modals that television medias apply in propaganda and conflict reporting

1.5 Significance of the Study

Now a day's number of television media in Ethiopia is growing so fast. In this term the impact of the media is huge. But studies on the role and impact of this mainstream Medias are so limited. The number of the Medias and studies isn't going in parallel. The Medias play a vital role on shaping the societies perception. This study is expected to have three major significances. It will be used as an input for peace and security literatures.

This study will provide additional path to scholars and researchers with a deeper understanding of the role played by mainstream media in exacerbating conflicts and escalating conflict s. It will shed light on how media coverage influences public opinions, government actions, diplomatic efforts, and the overall dynamics of conflict.

The study can help raise conflict ends among media professionals, government officials, and the general public about the harmful effects of biased reporting and misinformation on conflict dynamics. This conflict ends can lead to increased accountability and ethical standards within the media industry.

The findings of the study are expected to inform the design and implementation of media literacy programs and training for journalists to promote responsible and balanced reporting practices. This

can help build a more informed and critically engaged public that is less susceptible to the divisive narratives propagated by the media.

Generally the study is expected to have the potential to contribute to a more peaceful and inclusive society in Ethiopia by addressing the negative impacts of mainstream media on conflict dynamics and promoting more constructive approaches to communication and dialogue.

1.6 Scope of the Study

It's important to note that the scope of the study has depend on the specific objectives, resources, and limitations of the research project. As such, it is necessary to define the boundaries and focus of the study to ensure coherence and feasibility. The study has focused on selected television programs. Based on this, the study took two state sponsored Media which are Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporate (EBC) and Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC). Though FBC is stated as a share company but the government has assured repeated times it's owned by the government. Director of the media is assigned by the Prime or Vice minister office. It is funded by the government too. The researcher has taken two programs from both media and analyzed their contents broadcasted across the country Ethiopia. These two programs are the Red Line (Key Mesmer) from EBC and News of FBC which is broadcasted at 7:00 pm Local time. The researcher focused on the contents of the Medias which are broadcasted for the past five years (2020-2024) where conflict in Ethiopia was aggravated.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The study faced some limitations. Since the research work on the content analysis, it could be challenged getting important data of the televisions'. This has limited the research to have full picture and reach on accurate conclusion. Since the issue of the study is sensitive, the sample target group could be biased when they give the information.

1.8 Operational Definition

- **Mainstream Medias**; in this study this phrase used to Governmental or non-governmental television Medias which broadcast programs and news to the society.

- **Conflict**; it refers when a state uses its power to defend or defeat a certain group. It involves political power, diplomacy intervention and military alliance.

Chapter-Two

Review of Related Literature

2.1 Definition and Conceptualization

2.1.1 The Term Mainstream Media

The term is used differently by different people and in different contexts. In the global literature, for the most part, the name tends to refer to widely distributed and common media outlets representing middle-of-the-road content, as opposed to alternative media which present a different perspective by challenging the majority view. However, on other occasions 'mainstream media' is employed rather as a generic term to signify a media platform other than online media (i.e.newspapers, radio and television). The latter usage is similar to 'legacy media', which is yet another increasingly appearing phrase (cf. 'traditional media')

As per Mary Ville University of journalism reference mainstream media, often abbreviated as MSM, refers to the large, well-established media organizations that reach a broad audience and are generally considered reliable sources of news and information. These organizations typically include:

Traditional media: Newspapers, television networks, radio stations, major news websites.
News aggregators: Platforms that gather and present news stories from various sources.

The university characterizes mainstream Medias as they have a large audience and are accessible to a significant portion of the population. It also describes that they are established organizations. They have a long history and are often seen as legitimate and credible sources of information. They also employ professional journalists who adhere to ethical standards like fact-checking and verifying information before publishing. The University states that it is important to note that the term "mainstream media" is not without its criticisms: and some of the criticisms are that they are concentration of ownership. In which concerns exist about the increasing concentration of media ownership in a few large corporations, potentially leading to homogenization of viewpoints. They are also accused of their biasness. They are often leveled against mainstream media, with claims that they favor certain viewpoints or agendas.

One of the primary functions of the mass media is to provide information and news to the public. News media outlets, such as newspapers, television, and radio, play a vital role in reporting on current events, political issues, and social problems. The media serves as a bridge between the government and the people, by keeping the public informed about what is happening in their country and around the world. As Robinson (2017) notes, "The media is an essential institution of democracy, which plays a vital role in shaping public opinion and holding those in power accountable for their actions."

Moreover, the mass media also provides entertainment to its audience. Television, movies, and music are some of the popular forms of entertainment media that play a crucial role in shaping cultural norms and values. Through entertainment media, individuals can learn about different cultures, lifestyles, and beliefs, which can help promote diversity and tolerance. Entertainment media can also serve as a form of escapism, allowing individuals to take a break from their daily lives and enjoy themselves (Robinson, 2017).

However, the media's role in society is not without controversy. Some critics argue that the media can promote false or misleading information, which can lead to harmful consequences. For example, the media can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and biases, leading to discrimination and social inequality. Additionally, some media outlets prioritize profit over public service, which can lead to sensationalism and biased reporting (Robinson, 2017).

Since the emergence of mass media technologies, various theoretical perspectives have developed to explain and understand the influence of media on audiences. Media Effects theories further influence how researchers view the relationship and interactions between the media and audiences, including various different perspectives about the degree of mass media's power. These perspectives can be broadly divided into direct effects and indirect effects theories. While the Direct Effects Theory argues that mass media influences its audiences directly, the Indirect Effects Theory views the interaction as being more complex and multilayered. The Direct Effects Theory sees the audiences as passive users who do not challenge the messages and information received by the media. In contrast, the Indirect Effects Theory recognizes the diversity among the audience, as well as their agency to question or challenge the media messages ((Boaten, 2000).

2.1.2 Medias and Conflict

There are many countries in the world where media organizations have to operate in a conflict situation. It is essential that they can continue to do their job as the media can play an important role in conflict resolution. People become easy to manipulate if they do not have access to neutral and independent information. The media can provide people with information that can keep them safe and help them make informed decisions.

The United States Institute of Peace has stated on its journal that International media sources such as the BBC, CNN, al Arabiya, and al Jazeera have global reach, and as such have an "agenda-setting effect." This effect revolves around the ideological components of political disagreements, and more specifically the way key actors in conflict seek to manipulate public perceptions of the disagreement. That is, actors in any conflict will seek to either minimize or exaggerate the conflict, depending upon their relative position of power. Weak actors will want to "socialize" the conflict—that is, to enlist allies in their cause against a greater power and to increase the perception of suffering (Papagiannis, 2020)

Actors in positions of dominance seek to "privatize" the conflict and limit attention to end the conflict. Those who are weak will seek to draw media coverage to the conflict while those who in power will seek to minimize the extent of the problems. (Longlious, 2020) also describe the assumption that the greater the amount of death and destruction, the more attention the media will pay to the conflict, is false. His data show that no correlation exists between the number of people at risk of dying—an indicator of a pre-conflict scenario—and media attention. The international media seems a very haphazard bellwether of conflict and an even more cursory method by which to set international policy agendas. Media, and the way in which it selects material to report, is simply not a reliable catalyst for policy change. The international community would do well to recognize the danger of calibrating its responses to the substance and timing of the information it receives from media reports.

Whereas international media giants are juggernauts in the policy-setting arena, local media plays a different role in conflict prevention. Often, local media can contribute to peace merely by restoring levels of trust and self-worth in a population on the brink of or emerging from violence. Papagiannis (2020)' work in Chad speaks to the ability of local media to give voice to those who were previously silenced by conflict. Papagiannis (2020) shared his impressions of running local

stations in refugee camps in Chad. "Genocide is about silencing a people. So when you give someone a microphone and ask them to tell you something, it is like giving something back." The goal of the radio station was purely non-political; the aim of these stations was to put the focus on the voices of local community and to relay the tales of those who were recovering after the violence. The airwaves became a forum for witness and testimony. The community members told stories of where they were when attacks happened, described previous and current relationships with their neighbors, and gave other personal yet socially relevant information (Papagiannis, 2020)

2.1.3 Mainstream Medias in Ethiopian Context

(Skjerdal, 2020) explains that throughout the different regimes, ethnic interests have played an important role as a motivator for daily reporting, and the media have been used by the authorities to propagate political as well as ethnic causes. This is only to be expected in a society where, ever since the first print publications came on the market in the early 1900s, media have been used for national and strategic purposes. During the Ethiopian Empire, Haile Selassie treated the media as a mouthpiece for Ethiopian unity based on Amhara supremacy. This was reflected in for example the language policy of the media, which meant that Amharic became widely dominant both in the print and broadcasting media. Foreign languages, however, were never a threat to the empire and have a long history in various print publications (such as English,French and Swahili). The research has referred that the Medias at the Derg Regime were restricted to the languages they use to broadcast their program.

The Derg regime (1974–91) continued to view the media as a potential battleground for ethnic conflict. A one-language policy was enforced in the state media in favor of Amharic (Menychle, 2020). The use of other languages was seen as a vehicle for regional separatism, and Tigrigna in particular faded from the official media scene. For at least two decades, ETV and later EBC had a special role in promoting ethnic federalism and multi ethnicity for the population-on. Journalists in the Ethiopian media, both state and private, have developed a fine Journalists in the Ethiopian media, both state and private; have developed a fine judgment in relation to potentially sensitive content. Stories dealing with religion and ethnicity require particularly careful treatment (Mulatu, 2017).

2.2 Theoretical Perspective

2.2.1 Symbolic Interactionism

States that the self is derived from and develops through human interaction. This means the way someone or something act to conflict is based on the meaning you have for a person or thing. To effectively communicate, people use symbols with shared cultural meanings (Carter and Fuller, 2015). Symbols can be constructed from just about anything, including material goods, education, or even the way people talk. Consequentially, these symbols are instrumental in the development of the self.

This theory helps media researchers better understand the field because of the important role the media plays in creating and propagating shared symbols. Because of the media's power, it can construct symbols on its own. By using symbolic interactionism theory, researchers can look at the ways media affects a society's shared symbols and, in turn, the influence of those symbols on the individual (Jansson-Boyd, 2010).

One of the ways the media creates and uses cultural symbols to affect an individual's sense of self is advertising. Advertisers work to give certain products a shared cultural meaning to make them desirable. Media also propagate other noncommercial symbols. National and state flags, religious images, and celebrities gain shared symbolic meanings through their representation in the media (Mead and Weber, 1863–1931).

Symbolic Interactionism emphasizes the role of symbolic communication and the co-construction of meaning within social interactions. This perspective is particularly well-suited to examining how the symbolic representations and linguistic choices made by television journalists can shape public perceptions and responses to conflict.

From a Symbolic Interactionist lens, the media can be seen as a key site of symbolic interaction, where various actors (journalists, sources, audiences) engage in the dynamic process of meaning-making. The ways in which conflict events are framed, contextualized, and narrated through television news can profoundly influence how individuals and communities interpret and make

sense of these complex social phenomena. For instance, the study explored how the use of certain metaphors, labels, or visual cues by journalists can invoke particular emotional responses or social categorizations among viewers. This, in turn, can affect their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors towards the conflict and the parties involved. A symbolic Interactionist approach would encourage a collaborative, participatory research design that actively involves diverse stakeholders (e.g., media professionals, conflict resolution experts, community members) in the co-creation of knowledge. This ensures that the study's findings and recommendations resonate with and are ultimately actionable for the communities most impacted by the issues at hand.

2.2.2 The Functionalist Perspective

Functionalists believe that mass media contributes to the benefit of society. (Charles Wright, 1975) identified several ways in which mass media contributes to creating equilibrium in society. He claims the media coordinate and correlate information that is valuable to the culture. The media are powerful agents of socialization. Through the media, culture is communicated to the masses. Serving society through social control, the media act as stress relievers which keep social conflicts to a minimum. The functionalists' idea of equilibrium is evident in news broadcast as well as late night drama programs. In both instances, all human acts lacking morality are reinforced by showing them as unacceptable and wrong. Crimes, such as murder, robberies, and abuse are shown as deviant behavior. Mass media make our world smaller. People gather in groups to watch, they talk about what they see, and they share the sense that they are watching something special (Schudson 1986).

Functionalists view mass media as an important function in society. Mass media can influence social uniformity on scale broader than ever before. The internet reaches more individuals in most social groups more often than television or radio. Mass media has been accused of creating dysfunction. (Postman, 1989) argued that popular media culture undermines the educational system. Claims have been made that there is a link between television viewing and poor physical health among children.

In this view, the media can be understood as a crucial social institution that serves important functional roles, such as informing the public, shaping public opinion, and facilitating social

integration and cohesion. Within the context of the researcher's study, the functional perspective helps how the media's coverage of conflicts may either support or undermine these broader societal functions. The functional perspective encourages a systems-level analysis, recognizing the interdependence between the media and other key social institutions, such as the political system, the legal system, and various civil society organizations. This holistic approach could yield insights into how the media's coverage of conflicts may interact with and influence the functioning of these other institutions.

2.2.3 The Conflict Perspective

At the core of the conflict perspective is the recognition that society is not a harmonious, well-integrated whole, but rather a site of ongoing struggles and competition for scarce resources, power, and influence among different social groups and interests. This lens allows researchers to critically examine how the media's representation of conflicts can both reflect and perpetuate these underlying power asymmetries and structural inequalities (Blumer, 1969).

From this standpoint, the study explored several key aspects:

I. Framing and agenda-setting: The conflict perspective would encourage a close examination of how the media's framing of conflicts, and the issues it chooses to prioritize or marginalize, may serve the interests of certain social, political, or economic elite groups over others. This could reveal the ways in which media coverage can reinforce existing power structures and maintain the status quo.

II. Representation and marginalization: The study investigated how the media's portrayal of different parties involved in the conflicts (e.g., perpetrators, victims, authorities) may perpetuate or challenge dominant social stereotypes and hierarchies. This could shed light on how certain voices and perspectives are amplified or silenced in the media's narratives.

III. Mobilization and collective action: The research explore how the media's coverage of conflicts may shape the mobilization of different social movements and activist groups, either by providing visibility and legitimacy or by undermining their efforts and discrediting their causes. The conflict perspective prompt an analysis of how the media's framing of conflicts, and the ways

in which it portrays the dynamics of escalation and de-escalation, can influence the trajectories and outcomes of these conflicts, potentially hindering or facilitating effective conflict resolution.

2.3 Empirical Review

The World Bank stated that during 2010, an estimated 363 armed conflicts took place around the world. These conflicts are not uniform and range from all-out interstate conflict s to low-intensity conflicts over resources or succession. The organization calculates that conflict in some way affects more than 45 countries and the lives of more than 500 million individuals.

The ability to impart and share information in real time, twenty-four hours a day, both globally and locally via multiple communication channels, has expanded the media's role in precipitating, amending, and discouraging conflict (Heyman, 2001).

UNICEF on its 2012 report has stated media platforms provide a platform for dialogue among disagreeing parties, and a critical source for information about available services and potential threats. For example, in 2006–09, every day at eight a.m. and eight p.m., thirteen Sudanese journalists broadcast Darfur Lifeline via shortwave radio. The one-hour program featured critical information on health and human services available for displaced persons in Darfur. UNICEF estimates that the number of people participating in National Immunization Day doubled as a result of these broadcasts.

Conversely, when misappropriated, the media may intensify conflict and further encourage violence, instability, and fragmentation, as was the case in the 1990s when Slobodan Milošević nationalized the most popular media outlets in Yugoslavia and used them as a platform to call for ethnic nationalism and violence (Blue and Eriksson, 2011).

As (Hoconflict d, 2003) stated on his study recognizing media's heightened importance in conflict environments, governmental organizations, NGOs, multilateral organizations, broadcasters, and community activists have expanded their efforts to use the media to prevent, manage, and reconcile conflicts. Just as conflict environments are heterogeneous, so, too, are these media interventions. They vary from context to context and are differentiated by function (e.g., peace building, election monitoring, nation building), form (e.g., radio, television, new media), and audience.

The world claims that Rwanda's genocide is a good example to show the contribution of mass media on aggravating conflict.

The country had been wracked by a low-level civil conflict from 1990 to 1993 between the government, controlled by the Hutu majority, and a rebel force comprised mainly of Tutsi. Though a minority, the Tutsi had ruled until the late 1950s when the Hutu took power and forced many Tutsi to flee as refugees. Conflict continued through the next three decades, so upon the outbreak of genocide on April 6, 1994, Western correspondents reported the initial burst of violence in the capital Kigali as resumption of a bloody civil conflict (Rummel, 2003).

By April 13, Paris Radio France International reported that "the fall of Kigali seems imminent." On April 14, Le Monde and The London Times reported that it was now the Hutu who feared vengeance from Tutsi rebels who had gained the upper hand in Kigali.

Violence was then reported on the wane when in fact it was mounting. On April 11, just four days after the fighting had started; The New York Times reported that fighting in Rwanda had "diminished in intensity." Three days later, Le Monde said that "a strange calm reigns in downtown" Kigali. On April 15, it reported this calm spreading to the capital's suburbs, allowing "humanitarian organizations to cautiously resume their activities." Only on April 18 did Brussels La Une Radio Network question this consensus by explaining that the decline in reports of violence was because "most foreigners have left, including journalists."

The exodus of reporters was so thorough that it virtually halted Western press coverage. European newspapers that had been providing daily coverage of the violence in Kigali stopped cold on April 18, for four days in France's Le Monde and seven in Britain's Guardian. Ironically, this was when the slaughter reached its peak.

On April 10, three days into the killing, The New York Times quoted estimates of 8,000 or "tens of thousands" dead in Kigali. However, during the second week media estimates did not rise at all. The estimates did not rise to levels that commonly would be considered "genocidal" for a country of 8 million people with 650,000 Tutsi. On April 16, the Guardian still reported only an "estimated 20,000 deaths." Two days later, The New York Times repeated this same statistic, underestimating the actual massacre at that point by about ten-fold. In the case of Ethiopia mainstream Media's

analysis on the media historical development in relation to media and ethnicity, noted that ethnicity has always been an ever-present undercurrent in Ethiopian media and journalism and said the difference today is its scale and scope.

2.3.1 Mainstream Medias and Conflicts in Ethiopia

Ethnic belonging and identity politics are gaining significance as central frames of reference in the current Ethiopian media discourse. The report points to the tendency of journalists to frame issues in a way that aligns with their ethnic background (Alemayehu and Tereje, 2021). The data points to conflict as more pluralistic (and more polarized) media society. The authors say the polarization is fuelled by ethno-nationalistic media of different origin and ownership, and by pan-Ethiopianist channels. Journalists are starting to form alliances along regional and ethnic fault lines, as illustrated by launching ethnic based Medias (Alemayehu and Tereje, 2021). The authors stated that they are highly inclined to use sources that support their own ideological interest and avoid quoting sources from other ethnicities which could balance the story.

(Makeke, 2020) explains how Medias aggravate internal conflicts in Ethiopia. Censorship of the media, harassment of journalists and abuse of media for propaganda purposes can have a devastating impact. And as a result he compares the impact with role of media controlled by the genocidal forces in Rwanda. He said in 1994 civil society organizations, including independent media; provide important channels for expressing discontent in society. They also provide basic services in many situations where state provides services are inadequate or non-existence, civil society organizations can also help to build bridges between divided and disaffected communities and are essential for the promotion of accountability and inclusive government.

Mekeke's on his research stated that Ethiopia has settled into a conflict cycle in which regions move from low level crisis or open conflict into long term and protracted conflict and then back to low level crisis. Often the greatest risks occur when a fragile peace is not properly consolidated.

2.3.2 Framing Stories of Mainstream Medias in Ethiopia
One can observe different opinions/stances and reflections based on people's political or ethnic affiliation when sensitive political and economic issues arise in the country. These differences and taking sides with respect to the aforementioned affiliations are reflected in the media which are

used by political parties or groups to get across their stances and political ideologies to their supporters as well as their opponents (VanDijk, 1998). VanDijik underscores that ideological struggle in the media can be reflected during the rise of serious and controversial conflict cases.

Today, sensitive political issues are narrated and discussed on television channels owned by diverse groups. (Moges, 2020) has explained on his research that he took sample data both from regional and federal media outlets; they are both privately owned and state-owned; and they deal with diverse political inclinations in relation to ethnic identity. Most of the outlets have vibrant online editions too. Hence, although the studied content is derived from television broadcasts and print publications, most of the content is distributed online as well.

For instance, framing theory, which is vastly used in analyzing texts, could help the study in structuring the meaning of the text by taking into account sources, texts, audiences, and cultures, as framing can be produced in all these aspects (De Vreese, 2005). Also, framing is an understanding of the perceived reality of a text (Entman, 1993). Similarly, the theory of otherness (othering) is an important frame work to assess the interplay of media and ethnicity. In the theory of otherness, one can focus on highlighting how the media play a role in the creation of otherness, which consists of two different groups – 'Us' vs. 'Them' (Staszak, 2008; Said, 1978). Using otherness as a backdrop has help the study to capitalize on how the media categorize ideas in a form of 'Us' and 'Them', how the media use sources to strengthen their ideas, and how meaning and identity are constructed.

In assessing the dichotomy of 'Us' and 'Them' and the overall framing of the stories posted in the sampled media outlets, the study looked at four important parts of the text. (Entman, 1993) proposes that where framing is processed, the narration tends to focus on how the problem is reported, how the causes are identified, what moral judgment is given, and which solutions and Medias are suggested. These four framing approaches are important for the study by systematically discussing 'Us' and 'Them' in particular, and media and ethnicity in general. Also, the 'ideological square' has been used to analyze the media texts in defining or categorizing 'Us' and 'Them'. The four elements of the ideological square are: express/emphasize information that is positive about 'Us'; express/emphasize that is negative about 'Them'; suppress/de-emphasize information that is positive about 'Them'; and, suppress/de-emphasize information that is negative about 'Us' (VanDijk, 1998, p. 268). The researcher (Moges, 2020) has stated on his research that News which

are broadcasted in the Medias represent the interests of both sources, reporters and owners, and it has potentially high influence on audiences.

I.   Silence (omission)/Blurring

Silence is one of the techniques that the media can use to ignore important aspects of an ethnic or political group which is perceived as an enemy. Silence is also used to protect either its side from criticism or ignore the other's positive achievements. (Moges, 2020) explains that he consider televisions such as OBN, Amhara MassMedia and Tigray Television in his research.

The study has taken different contents for its analysis. He explained that the case of the Qimant conflict was silenced in media. The clashes between Qimant and Amhara people in the first week of October 2019 in Central Gondar zone claimed the lives of many people on both sides. Journalistically speaking, the issue was definitely worth reporting. However, EBC was silent. As a national medium, it can be reasoned out that the station has many issues which can be more newsworthy for the channel than this one. Nevertheless, taking the sensitivity of the issue, and the number of people affected by this conflict, including the death toll, by any criteria, the case would be a priority for the station. Unlike other media, such as OMN, DW and Tigray Television, which arguably reported the case with exaggeration, EBC shied away (Moges 2020).

The technique of blurring, as well as silencing, is used mainly to hide negative aspects of a story. This is, according to Van Dijk(1998), a technique employed by the media to suppress negative information of 'Us'. The same is true for the sampled media in that they attempted to either conceal or oblique the negative sides of their own ethnic group. This can be related to either the interests of the media in maintaining the tension or fear of inciting further tension and conflict among the communities. Instead of dealing with the issues and bring solutions for the cases by identifying causes and conflict lines, the state media prefer to silence the circumstances (Mulatu, 2017).

Chapter-Three

Research Method

3.1 Description of the Study Area

Ethiopia is located in the north-eastern part of Africa commonly known as the Horn of Africa. It is bordered by the Sudan in the west, Somalia and Djibouti in the east, Eritrea in the north and Kenya in the south. The country covers 472,000 square miles) making it roughly as large as France and Spain combined and is five times the size of the UK.

With estimated population of 120 million, Ethiopia represents a melting pot of ancient cultures with Middle Eastern and African cultures evident in the religious, ethnic and language composition of its Semitic, Cushitic, Omotic and Nilotic peoples. The Ethiopian people comprise about eighty nationalities of which the Amhara and the Oromo constitute the majority, with about 60 percent of the total population. Ethiopia is a Federal Democratic Republic composed of 13 National Regional States and two administrative councils.

It has greatly expanded the reach and influence of the media in society. With the increase of cable news channels, social media platforms, and other forms of online media, individuals have more options than ever before when it comes to consuming news and information.

However, this increase in media diversity has also brought about its own set of challenges. With so many sources of information available, it can be difficult for individuals to discern what is accurate and reliable. Additionally, the rise of fake news and misinformation has made it increasingly important for media consumers to critically evaluate the information they are being presented with.

The right to media broadcasts also raises questions about the responsibility of media organizations and journalists. While the freedom of the press is a fundamental aspect of a democratic society, it is important for media outlets to uphold ethical standards and provide balanced and accurate reporting. The power of the media to shape public opinion and influence political decisions makes it crucial that media organizations act responsibly and in the public interest.

3.2 Research Paradigm

3.2.1 Constructivist paradigm

The constructive paradigm is a philosophical approach that emphasizes the importance of actively engaging with and shaping the world around us. In the field of social sciences and research, the constructive paradigm views knowledge as subjective and socially constructed, meaning that our understanding of the world is influenced by our own experiences, beliefs, and social context (Charmaz, 2014). In contrast to traditional positivist approaches that aim to discover objective truths, the constructive paradigm focuses on understanding the multiple perspectives and interpretations that exist within a particular phenomenon. This perspective recognizes the importance of individual and collective experiences in shaping our understanding of reality.

Mass communication, all of the components of the media circuit – production, content, and reception – are potent sites of meaning production. Whereas early studies of media production focused on the decision-making for filtering events or presenting the news, constructivist studies look at how organizational routines and workers' practices actually create – or "manufacture" – the news product. Tuchman (1978) is an early and important exemplar of this kind of research. Also, some authors see the news value of news factors as a tool for journalists to apply in order to construct social reality (Schulz, 1976). Recent studies stress the interdependency of media with other institutional entities in the co-construction of media products.

Another stream of media research concerns the construction of social representations. Traditionally, content was given essentialist meanings, such as news, entertainment, advertising, pornography. Constructivists, however, regard media content as texts laden with hegemonic, ambiguous, or contested signifiers, which can be activated in various ways depending on the reception context. News is often conceptualized as a discourse that organizes story elements in such a way as to suggest the existence of a social problem, or to "frame" conflicts in moralistic or ideological terms. (Yar, 2005) analyzed that the media industries promoted the social construction of widespread copyright violation in order to exaggerate the dimensions of the problem and encourage intensified policing.

The constructivist paradigm offers valuable insights that can enhance the exploration of the relationship between media coverage and conflict dynamics in the proposed study.

At the core of the constructivist perspective is the understanding that social reality is not an objective, pre-existing entity, but rather a subjective, inter subjectively constructed phenomenon. This means that individuals and groups actively create, negotiate, and interpret the meanings and understandings that shape their experiences of the social world.

Applied to the study of media and conflict, the constructivist paradigm would encourage the researcher to focus on how the various actors involved in the conflict mainly on the point of media. This perspective constructs and communicates respective understandings, frames, and narratives surrounding media versus conflict.

3.3 Research Design

3.3.1 Longitudinal Survey

In longitudinal studies, researchers do not manipulate any variables or interfere with the environment. Instead, they simply conduct observations on the same group of subjects over a period of time. This type of research study can last as short as a week or as long as multiple years or even decades (Simuks, 2023). By employing a longitudinal survey design, the researcher captured the dynamic, evolving nature of the media-conflict relationship over time, rather than relying on a single, static snapshot. This can provide valuable insights into the ways in which media coverage and public perceptions shift in response to the unfolding of the conflict, as well as how these changes influence the courses and outcomes of the conflict itself.

Ultimately, the longitudinal survey data, combined with qualitative method, can contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between media and conflict, eventually informing more effective strategies for media engagement and conflict resolution.

3.4 Research Approach

Based on research analytics research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This plan involves several decisions, and they need not be taken in the order in which they make sense to me and the order of their presentation here. The overall decision involves which approach should be used to study a topic.

In this research qualitative approach is selected. Qualitative research is a methodological approach used to explore and understand phenomena from a subjective perspective. It involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data, such as interviews, observations, and textual analysis, to gain insights into the meanings, experiences, and social contexts of the participants (Danzin, 2019).

The researcher determined the sampling strategy. In the study contents and participants are selected according to the topic of the study. Moreover having the purposeful sampling, which is appropriate to the qualitative research contents and participants were chosen and included in the study.

Plus interviews were part of the data collection. To create a guide or protocol that outlines the research topics and areas of interest to explore with participants. This guide is flexible enough to allow for spontaneous exploration while ensuring consistency across data collection. The researcher analyzed selected contents of the television programs and interview some target groups.

3.5. Sampling Technique

For the sampling technique the researcher used purposive sampling technique. In purposive sampling, researchers deliberately select individuals or cases that are specifically chosen based on certain criteria or characteristics relevant to the research question. This technique is often used in qualitative research where deep understanding of specific cases is sought.

Having the definition of purposive sampling, in the study two from listed Medias has been chosen. From the mentioned Medias Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC) and Ethiopian Broadcast Corporate (EBC) are selected in the research. Because these two Medias are highly sponsored by the government and their administration is highly interfere by the government. Whenever there is a change of regime in the country, their productions would prioritize the active authority.

Furthermore respondents of in- depth interview have participated on this study.

3.5.1 Population

Population refers to the set or group of all the units on which the findings of the research are to be applied. Referring to the definition of population, it can be said that it consists of all the units on which the findings of research can be applied. In other words, population is a set of all the units which possess variable characteristic under study and for which findings of research can be generalized (Shukla, 2020). Based on Shukla, unites of population could be either homogenous or heterogeneous. In this study the selected population would be heterogeneous. Only the one component would make them the same. That they have to be audience of the selected two television programs. The researcher took representative from each three opposite parties, religious people and audiences of the television media. The opposite parties are selected based on the people they claim they represent. So, representatives from each parties of Oromo Federalist Party, Amhara nationalist Party and Tigray Independence party participated in the study.

3.5.2 Sampling Frame

In Ethiopia there are 14 state sponsored television Medias and some of them are declared are they are owned by the government. These Medias are Ethiopian Broadcast Corporate (EBC), Fana Broad Casting Corporate (FBC), Oromia Broadcast Network (OBN), Amhara Media Corporation (AMC), Addis Tv, Tigray TV, Harari TV, Somali Region TV (SRTV), Debub TV, Dire TV, Gambela TV, Afar TV, Wolaita TV, Benishangul Gumuz Media (BGM).

3.5.3 Sample Size Determination

Different researchers have explained that the sample size determination is the process of choosing the right number of observations or people from a larger group to use in a sample. The goal of figuring out the sample size is to ensure that the sample is big enough to give statistically valid results and accurate estimates of population parameters but small enough to be manageable and cost-effective.

For this study, the size of the population is determined on how precise results the researcher is looking for, how confident the result is expected to be, how heterogeneous the selected population is likely to be, also the money and time the researcher is going to invest. Based on these criteria the researcher analyzed Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporate "Red Line" program and Fana Broadcasting Corporates news which is transmitted on 7 O'clock local time.

For this study, the televisions are chosen based on the similar characteristics they have, which is both are state sponsored television Medias.

3.7 Methods of data collection

In the study primary and secondary source of data has been collected. As a primary data the researcher used live broadcasted programs from purposively chosen television Medias. As a secondary data the researcher collected downloaded and saved by other parties. Websites and social Medias of the television programs used as secondary tool of data collection.

➤ **Documentation: -** the study basically used document to analyzed contents of the television media production. It identified the portrayal of conflict, violence, and controversial issues in both of the Medias. The researcher analyzed the themes, narratives, language, and visual elements used in television programs to assess how conflicts are portrayed and whether they contribute to aggravating tensions. The purposively selected television media programs are analyzed their content.

This study analyzed the role of mainstream media, specifically television, in exacerbating conflict. The research investigated the various ways in which television content affected to the escalation of conflicts and the potential consequences. Through a content analysis approach, the study examined the portrayal of conflicts in television programs, news coverage, and the impact of sensationalism, biased reporting, and the amplification of divisive narratives. The findings shed light on the potential negative implications of mainstream media's effect in aggravating conflict and provide insights for media practitioners, policymakers, and the general public.

➤ **Interview:** Researcher explained that using interview as a tool of data collection method helped the researcher to have in-depth exploration, contextual understanding and rich qualitative data that can be analyzed using various qualitative analysis techniques. In this

regard the researcher interviewed some influential people from diverse directions. Those are political parties (opposition parties), religious people and ordinary audiences who follow news and program of the selected televisions. These are chosen based on the influence they have on the society. The representatives of the political parties watch and reflect their understanding not only their point of view but also point of people they claim they represent. Having the understanding of the political parties benefited the researcher reach on a tangible conclusion. The opposition parties are selected from Amhara, Tigray and Oromia regions. These regions were some from which pass through a lot of conflicts and major conflict in the past five years. Moreover religious people have also participated in the study. In addition to this audiences of the television programs were also part of this study. For this kind of interview researcher has used data saturation interview methodology. the data saturation approach, as based on the notion of informational redundancy it is clear that saturation can be identified at an early stage in the process, as from this perspective saturation is often seen as separate from, and preceding, formal analysis. Decisions about when further data collection is unnecessary are commonly based on the researcher's sense of what they are hearing within interviews, and this decision can therefore be made prior to coding and category development (Saunders, 2018).

3.8 Method of data Analysis

3.8.1 Qualitative Analysis

In the study the collected data analyzed using thematic method. Thematic analysis is **a** method of analyzing qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of texts, such as an interview or transcripts. The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes – topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. The study used language usage, video and image representations, interview transcripts and program and news framing. These are explained through data analysis as a group; the researcher seeks to identify patterns in the collected data.

3.8.1.1. Critical Analysis

Researchers used content analysis to find out about the purposes, messages, and effects of communication content. They can also make inferences about the producers and audience of the texts they analyze. Critical analysis can be used to quantify the occurrence of certain words, phrases, subjects or concepts in a set of historical or contemporary texts (Luo, 2023). Qualitative content analysis is broadly used on media studies. Based on the research question, the researcher chose media contents to analyze their contents. Then they are coded based on their context, character and their presentation. After the coding was finalized the collected data is examined to find patterns and draw conclusions in response to the researchers research questions.

Critical analysis goes beyond surface-level interpretation and seeks to uncover underlying assumptions, biases, and discursive practices that shape the production and reception of messages. The Researcher examined how power is exercised, negotiated, and contested through language, symbolism, and discursive strategies, and how messages reflect and reproduce existing power structures and hierarchies in the televisions.

3.8.1.2.   Thick Description

This is a detailed and thorough description of details, the setting, and quotes from participants in the research. Qualitative description research strives for in-depth understanding but with emphasis first on literal description (Sandelowski, 2010) and then on the understanding of human phenomena through analysis and interpretation of meaning people ascribe to events. This method of analysis let the researcher use the interviewees' point of views and quote their descriptions.

3.9 Quality Assurance

Trustworthiness of a research study is important to evaluating its worth. Trustworthiness involves establishing credibility, dependability and conformability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The authors stated that a research needs to have confidence in the 'truth' of the findings. The findings have to be applicable and have to be consistent and could be repeated. The findings of a study are shaped by the respondents not the researcher. The researcher used these points to evaluate the collected data. Also the study is evaluated up on.

To ensure credibility the researcher gathered information from multiple and diverse sources, such as news articles, reports, interviews and content analysis of the Medias' coverage. This helps to triangulate findings and reduce bias. By utilizing a robust research design which is methodologically sound can help to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, dependability is ensured. This involves using techniques to minimize bias and confounding variables. The researcher should be mindful of its own biases and assumptions throughout the research process. Reflecting on how its own perspectives may influence the study. So being free of personal reflections can help ensure that the findings are objective and unbiased. In this way the study assured its conformability.

3.10 Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations in research are a set of principles that guide the research designs and practices. These principles include voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, potential for harm, and results communication. The researcher considered this concept throughout the study. The researcher must be conflict e of its personal own biases and strive to maintain objectivity in their research. The researcher also should be mindful of potential biases in the mainstream media sources she is studying.

The Researcher must obtain informed consent from individuals before using personal information in the research. Privacy of sources and subjects involved in the study should be protected. In the study potential harm that the research may cause to individuals or communities should be consider seriously.

Also the Researcher should disclose any potential conflicts of interest that could bias findings. The study is expected to accurately represent the perspectives and experiences of all relevant participants of the research. And accountability is another major point the researcher is expected to consider. The researcher should be open to feedback and criticism to address any concerns raised about the ethics of the research.

Chapter – Four

Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Analysis

The researcher has selected two television programs broadcasted on FBC and EBC. The 7O'clock FBC's news reporting and Red-Line EBC's program have been broadcasted for the past five years continually on the television channels.

To analyze the contents of the Medias, the content analysis model by Lee and Maslog (2020) is used. Contents of the television Medias are categorized on four broad categories. These are Theme, Coverage, Presentation also program and news framing. Each broad category contained nine sub sections.

The two tables' content analysis of each EBC's Red-Line program and FBC's 7 O'clock news report are attached in the Appendix. The selected programs and news broadcasted on these two television Medias were analyzed according to the four parameters explained above.

4.1.1. Biasness and Sensationalism

As the content analysis of the Media attached in Appendix Table 1; shows the selected television Medias have made conflict as their main agenda various times. They have invited guests that could describe conflicts, Use image that shows the current situation of the country and they have presented by having worn a military uniform. August 12, 2022 EBC Red-Line program has broadcasted a program titled 'I am a soldier too'. The journalists and invited guests wore a defense force's uniform and discussed for 49:30 about the issue.

Citizen mobilization, inquiries about responsibilities, and the promotion of the prime minister's presence are crucial aspects of the war effort were the core ideas of the program. The program explained how building a strong governmental army and countering the presence of a terrorist group are essential for ensuring national security. Additionally, the marching of political leaders, commanders, and famous individuals demonstrates unity and support for the government's actions. By actively engaging citizens and garnering widespread support, the government aims to strengthen its position and successfully address the challenges posed by the conflict. In this

program only government officials have been invited. Plus no suggestions or comments of the other party have included.

This is also expressed by R 02 that the red- line have broadcasting programs that calls a military march. "Officials suggested that Tigrayans could secede according to the constitution, a dangerous narrative that threatened national unity. This rhetoric, disseminated by state-owned media programs designed by the ruling party, failed to distinguish between the people and the party, exacerbating ethnic tensions."

Participants believe that biased and sensitive issues covered by the television Medias have an impact on the Tigray people. Perceived bias and lack of objectivity in television coverage against the TPLF led the people's trust to erode towards mainstream media outlets as credible sources of information.

This drove the Tigrayan population to seek alternative and potentially less reliable, sources of information, further contributing to the spread of misinformation and the polarization of public discourse. R07 explains said;

> *By highlighting the negative emotional, psychological, and societal impacts that the biased media coverage has had on the Tigrayan population, the statement reinforces a strong narrative of victimhood. This narrative also used by the TPLF and Tigrayan supporters to justify more confrontational or retaliatory actions, as they may feel that their community is being unfairly targeted and marginalized. The statement suggests that the Tigrayan people feel that the media is biased and is not holding the perpetrators of the conflict accountable. This perception of injustice and lack of accountability led to a deepening of grievances and reluctance to engage in constructive dialogue or compromise.*

On September 7, 2023 FBC has broadcasted 3:15 minutes length news with headline 'What Fano's Combatant desire?'. The detail of the news referred that motivations and objectives of Fano may vary, but they are generally driven by their ideological stance or perceived grievances.

On the news reporting rape, looting, and forcing residents to displace were covered. The news characterized the group as Extremist Group or Labeled as 'Tsinfegna'. The news portrayed as Fano does not represent the broader society. This implies that their goals and actions may not align with the interests and aspirations of the wider population. This lack of representation raises questions about the legitimacy and inclusivity of Fano's objectives. The news uses selected audiences and videos depicting armed forces in Amhara cities suggest a deliberate effort to shape public opinion or convey a specific narrative.

The news has explained that the government has taken action against Fano in response to their perceived threat to governmental power. This indicates that the government views Fano's activities as a challenge to its authority and seeks to address it through appropriate measures. The government's response is aimed at maintaining stability and ensuring the continuity of governmental power. In the other hand the news never include suggestions of which claimed as 'Fano'. In our in-depth interview with R 04 it is explained that the FBC news time have broadcast one sided reports. "State-sponsored media, such as the 7 O'clock Fana News often deliver messages that would be difficult for the ruling party to release directly. These media outlets function more as tools of the government rather than as public service providers. Their primary aim is to persuade the public that the government is acting correctly, especially in conflict situations."

The respondents have explained that the state sponsored television Medias sensationalize events, they frame one side as the victim and the other as the aggressor, thereby escalating conflicts between ethnic groups. This approach not only undermines efforts at peace-building but also deepens societal divisions, making reconciliation more difficult

4.1.2. Portraying Conflicts and Groups

In the In-depth interview interviewees explained that some groups were presented as victims and others as attackers in the television Medias. Respondents of this study have explained that when the media consistently frames specific groups as "attackers" while portraying others as "victims," it reinforces a binary, adversarial narrative that casts the conflict as a struggle between two opposing sides.

This narrative can then be internalized by the public, leading to the hardening of identities, increased hostility, and reluctance to find common ground. R 15 explained that in Oromia region when some people from some areas consider as attackers others were portrayed as victims.

> *Example party elitist narrate the conflict to escalate than solving in peace way example the narrative for Shewa, Wollega and Jimma is totally different Jimma and Shewa framed as pro government patriotism and they respect their country rule of law whereas the Wollega people framed as terrorist supporter an area mainly generate terrorist and evils this is also one way of escalating war between society so, those medias are source for conflict than peace building and it creates polarization between society, one ethnic group rises against the other, when peoples civilians killed by government they narrate in news reporting as OLA killed civilians. This image was portrayed both in FBC 7 O'clock news and EBC's Red-Line program.*

On December 28, 2023 FBC reported news with headline 'The government has taken Action on Fano'. The2:58 minutes length news focus on how the Fano is alleged to have intentions to dismantle the government and seize power by force. The claim of Fano's hidden mission to dismantle the government indicates a perceived threat to the established order. Also on this news Fano is categorized as an extremist group, often referred to as 'Tsinfegna'. The characterization further underscores the concerns about Fano's intentions and the potential impact on the stability of the government and society as a whole.

'The government has taken action on armed groups found in Oromia' was a headline of FBC broadcasted on May 7, 2023. The 3:17 minutes news reporting explains that the government has taken action against armed groups found in Oromia. This response is driven by concerns that these groups are disrupting the peace and stability of the region. And how the government aims to restore peace and maintain a secure environment for the residents of Oromia.

The news reported that the armed group is alleged to have a hidden mission of disturbing the peace in the Oromia region. This suggests that the activity aimed at creating instability and insecurity, potentially with the goal of undermining the government or advancing its own interests.

The group characterized as Terrorist Group in the news. As an input the news used videos depicting individuals in military uniforms and the identification of people with braided and curly hair are mentioned. These visual cues may help in identifying members of these armed groups or distinguishing them from the general population.

On table 5; Participants were asked to rank their perception on EBC's Red-Line program. They have been given to grade their view towards the program from strongly agree to disagree.

4.1.3. Conflict Escalation and De-escalation

The other point was to explore the contribution of the television Medias on either to escalate or de-escalate conflicts in Ethiopia. On December 14, 2021 EBC's Red Line has broadcasted a program titled 'Why does the terrorist group TPLF need to demolish private own capitals?'

The Political Message of the discussion was demolishing private-owned capitals can serve as a means for the TPLF to send a political message. By targeting symbols of wealth and power, the group may seek to challenge the authority of the government and establish themselves as a force to be reckoned with. The destruction of private property can generate fear and uncertainty among the population, potentially swaying public opinion in favor of the TPLF's cause.

On the discussion which was on air for 41:52 minutes, the invited guest was also calling for everyone to join the Military Campaign. The call for everyone to join the military campaign against the TPLF suggests a need for increased manpower to counter the group's activities. It is clearly explained that by mobilizing a larger force, the government aims to strengthen its position and suppress the TPLF's influence. This call also reflects the urgency and severity of the situation, as perceived by the government, necessitating broad-based support.

The call to join the military campaign also serves as a rallying cry for national unity and solidarity. By urging citizens to stand together against a common threat, the government aims to foster a sense of patriotism and collective responsibility. This appeal may resonate with individuals who believe in the importance of maintaining peace and stability within the country. The discussion also includes about the demolition of historical and religious social capitals by the TPLF can be seen as an attempt to erase cultural and historical identities. By targeting these significant sites,

the group may seek to undermine the collective memory and heritage of the affected communities. Alleged Abuses Faced by the Tigrian People:

On January 3, 2021 the television has broadcasted on the title 'Tempted Army' which was about how the government's army has achieved significant victories against the TPLF forces in the war fronts. This indicates successful military operations and strategic planning by the government. The 48:50 programs highlighted that the defeat of the TPLF demonstrates the effectiveness of the government's military campaign and its ability to overcome the insurgency. EBC paraphrases how the surprising visit of the prime minister to the war front carries symbolic significance. And also how it demonstrates the government's commitment to the military campaign and boosts the morale of the troops. The program underlines the prime minister's presence on the frontlines also signifies his direct involvement and dedication to ensuring a successful outcome.

The invited guest has explained that the alleged abuse faced by the Tigrian people, involving coercion to join the war, points to potential manipulation by the TPLF. The program continues to have discussions with similar content. On July 18, 2022 EBC on its weekly Red-Line program under the title 'OLA's 'Shene' as 'Trojan horse' has explained that the Oromian party is against the party from Tigray. The 29:31 minutes discussion focuses on the opposition of the Oromian people to aligning with the TPLF. The discussion highlights the sentiments and concerns of the Oromian people regarding the TPLF's intentions and the idea of the TPLF coming to Addis Ababa. It also explores the perception of OLA's 'Shene' as a 'Trojan Horse' and emphasizes the Oromian people's refusal to fight alongside the TPLF. Additionally, it addresses the Oromian people's opposition to the Tigrian people, sovereignty concerns, and the characterization of the TPLF as a terrorist group.

On March 9, 2022 'Sidama People Backbone of the government's Army' titled 56:28 minutes length program highlighted the participation of Sidama's Special Force in the war zone, the alignment of the Sidama people with the government, and their shared goals. Additionally, it addresses the characterization of the opposing force as a junta and a terrorist group, the significance of Ethiopianism in the context of the conflict, and the belief in a solution through the Prime Minister. The discussion also includes insights from a Sidama Party representative obtained through a one-on-one interview.

The support of the Sidama people for the government's army showcases their active participation and alignment with the government's goals were also another topic of the discussion. The involvement of Sidama's Special Force in the war zone exemplifies the commitment to defending the nation.

FBC also was on the same media content. On its 7 O'clock news reporting that the society is in danger, so everyone should be alert to protect its environment. On April 21, 2024 FBC come to the screen with3:45 minutes length news headlined 'Shene's and Fano armed forced were about to attack Addis Ababa'. The news indicates how both groups planned to be a threat to the city's security and stability. The intention of the news was showing the mission of both groups on creating chaos and undermine the government's control. On the news both Shene and Fano armed forces are characterized as terrorist groups. This designation suggests that their actions involve violence, intimidation, and pose a serious threat to the peace and security of the country. The characterization underscores the severity of the situation and the need for decisive action.

Participants of the in- depth interview and questionnaire participants also believe that those two media contents has big impact on escalating conflicts. They explained that the content of these programs is meticulously framed to align with government agendas, often escalating conflicts. By using powerful and emotive language, as well as impactful videos, photos, and documentaries, these programs aim to incite participation in military campaigns. They frequently label armed groups opposing the government as criminals, terrorists, and rapists, which exacerbates societal divisions and intensifies conflicts.

Interviewee R 06 says these Medias were powerful to affect the people's attitude and this results to escalate conflicts in the country.

> *These media outlets tend to portray one side as the victim and the other as the aggressor. For example, the federal government's actions against the Western Gojam armed group were framed in a way that clearly depicted the group as the aggressors, reinforcing a victim-attacker narrative. A notable example of this bias is the recent incident in Merhawi, where civilians were subjected to extrajudicial killings. Despite reports from the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and Amnesty International, state-owned media denied these*

incidents, offering false and misleading narratives. Programs like the Fana 7
O'clock news provide distorted accounts that do not reflect the reality on the
ground, further perpetuating misinformation and public manipulation.

As per the respondents' point of view, most individuals interviewed by researchers on the portrayal of current Ethiopian conflicts by state-owned media have expressed consistent perspectives across various regional states. They commonly view that state-owned media, such as Fana Broadcasting Corporation's 7 O'clock news and the EBC programs like Key Mesimer (Red Line), have significantly contributed to aggravating conflicts in the Tigray, Amhara, and Oromia regions.

These media outlets are seen as instrumental in escalating tensions by delivering biased and manipulative reporting. Instead of fostering peace, they amplify divisions and misunderstandings between different societal groups, further inflaming ongoing conflicts. The interviewed individuals highlighted the detrimental impact of such reporting on the social and political landscape of the country. Interviewee R 13 explains specifically how the situation are designed by the Medias.

State-sponsored television Medias often obscure the real events occurring on the
ground. For example, during the ongoing conflict in the Amhara region between
the federal government and Fano non-state militants, there are significant human
rights violations and civilian casualties. However, state-owned media minimize
these atrocities and amplify the government's military actions, creating an unfair
and imbalanced narrative. They influence public perception by portraying the
government as the winner and painting the armed groups negatively, suggesting
that these groups only care about their own interests and have no regard for the
public. A significant issue is that state media reports do not clearly differentiate
between armed groups and civilians. Atrocities committed by the government are
often framed as actions taken by armed groups. This misrepresentation influences
public perception, leading the audience to believe in the government's
righteousness and the illegitimacy of the opposing armed groups.

Another point was raised by the participants. State-owned media programs, such as the Red Line program, consistently deliver information with clear bias and lack balance. For instance, the Red Line program exclusively promotes pro-government perspectives, without entertaining alternative

viewpoints. This one-sided approach contributes to a skewed public perception. Interviewee R 11 specified the idea like below;

> *State-Sponsored television media often function as tools of government propaganda, particularly against opposition groups. For instance, during conflict reporting on the 7 O'clock news, clashes between the federal government and the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), referred to as "Shene" by the government, are portrayed in a heavily biased manner. The media label the OLA as terrorists and criminals, while denying any crimes committed by the federal government in the Oromia region.*

These outlets consistently frame armed groups opposing the government as threats, using sensationalist language and imagery to support this narrative. This approach suggests that the government is the only viable option for maintaining peace and stability, which clearly demonstrates media bias in favor of the government. For example, the 7 O'clock news focuses on propaganda related to conflicts in areas like Wollega, Guji, and central Ethiopia.

In the conversation the researcher had with the participants, they have explained how the program were designed. Programs such as the Red Line program illustrate this bias further. The timing and naming of the Red line program, launched after the war in Northern Ethiopia's Tigray region, raise questions about its intent. In Ethiopia, the line between the government and the ruling party is often blurred, and media guidelines reflect this complexity. State media serve government interests rather than public service, portraying one side as virtuous and the other as villainous. For instance, in a Red Line program, a general described Wollega Horugudru as a breeding ground for terrorists like "Shene." This kind of reporting targets armed groups and civilians indiscriminately, blaming entire communities and exacerbating conflicts.

The interviewees generalize that both State sponsored television media in Ethiopia have played a significant role in escalating conflicts. R 12 said;

> *For example, Fana Broadcasting Corporation's news reports have often disseminated disinformation, portraying legitimate regional ruling parties, such as the TPLF (before it was labeled a terrorist organization), as evil and terrorist entities. This portrayal ignored the TPLF's contributions to the country's*

development over 27 years and instead focused solely on negative aspects, fueling public hatred and targeting ethnic groups associated with the TPLF, particularly the Tigray people.

Another respondent adds another idea towards the contribution of "Red-Line," program in aggravating conflict between the Federal government and TPLF forces.

Officials frequently labeled individuals as terrorists and enemies of Ethiopia, casting the Tigray ethnic group as an external enemy. Officials suggested that Tigrayans could secede according to the constitution, a dangerous narrative that threatened national unity. This rhetoric, disseminated by state-owned media programs designed by the ruling party, failed to distinguish between the people and the party, exacerbating ethnic tensions.

In addition during the interview it is mentioned that EBC's Red-Line program and FBC 7 O'clock news used inflammatory language, videos, and pictures that manipulate public opinion and encourage participation in the war, often with slogans like "I am on the side of the defense force," had a negative impact also aggravate the conflict between the federal government and TPLF forces.

4.2. Discussion

In this part of the paper, major findings of the study are discussed in line with theoretical frameworks (perspectives) stated in chapter two- review of literature and research questions posed in the previous sections. All through the discussion, the researcher have analyzed the contribution of both selected television Medias in aggravating conflict in Ethiopia. It parallel comparisons with the findings of previous research studies conducted by others regarding the role of Medias in conflict. In the chapter the researcher discussed the languages and imagery used in the medias, contents of the selected television medias and their conflict related production, the way the medias frame their programs and how the medias apply in propaganda and conflict reporting.

4.2.1 Framing Programs and News

FBC's and EBC's conflict framed programs had a negative impact on the audience. Participants proof this in interview and questionnaire. Both television Medias had news and programs, conflict-driven stories that are visually compelling and emotionally stirring. Thus by recognizing and addressing these potential framing issues, the result of the study show television media can play a more constructive role in reporting on and potentially resolving conflicts. This proofs theory of Deverse (2018). Journalistic news frames play a transformative role vis- à - vis other frames that are sponsored by various stakeholders, such as political elites. Journalistic news frames take a starting point in journalists' discretion and autonomy; these frames help journalists and news media organizations shape their selected topics in their own particular manner and style; and journalistic news frames are used in the adaptation and modification of frames from elites (Deverse , 2018). Entman, (1993) strengthen the idea of the authors. touches on this interaction, too, by noting that framing is the central process by which government officials and journalists exercise political influence over each other and over the public (Entman, 2004). He developed the idea of "cascading activation" to describe how different actors on different levels (including political elites, media organizations, and the public) each contribute to the mix and few of ideas. Despite its inclusive perspective, the cascading model offers too little room for assessing the impact of newsrooms, journalism, and journalists on the shaping of news frames and, ultimately, on framing effect processes. Even though Entman's cascading model state that news frames has little room for impact, the researcher result proofs this wrong.

This had a big impact on the public's perception. The public perception indicates a significant level of agreement that television media has contributed to aggravating conflict in Ethiopia. There is a perception of biases, sensationalism, and conflict portrayal in the media, as well as an acknowledgment of the media's influence on attitudes and conflict escalation.

4.2.2 Contents of the television Medias

The finding of the researcher shows that contents of both television selected programs were selectively reporting on certain events or aspects of a conflict while ignoring or downplaying others, leading to an incomplete or biased portrayal of the situation. The framing of the conflict, the language used, and the emphasis placed on particular elements had a negative impact on public perceptions and attitudes in ways that fuel further escalation. The symbolic Interactionism theory explains how important role the media plays in creating and propagating shared symbols. Because of the media's power, it can construct symbols on its own. By using symbolic interactionism theory, researchers can look at the ways media affects a society's shared symbols and, in turn, the influence of those symbols on the individual (Jansson-Boyd, 2010). The researcher of this study also proofs this theory. Contents of the television Medias were influential in affecting the audience.

Comparing the role of the media and a mediator in conflict reveals similarities and differences between them. What is similar is that they both bring the parties together to discuss their relationships, which allows the parties to hear the opponent's perspective and to be heard themselves. Glasar (2020) stated in the article that what journalists' role should be. The writer said that there are important differences: journalists do not have a goal of helping the parties to resolve their disagreement; rather they focus on the parties' differences. However, the media can encourage communication between conflicting sides.

From the functionalists perspective mass media contributes to the benefit of society. (Charles Wright, 1975) identified several ways in which mass media contributes to creating equilibrium in society. If Medias have to take part in any conflicts, it should be as neutral or a mediator. But the

finding of this study shows the reverse. The television Medias were voice of the government. Their contents weren't inclusive and open to all parties and ethnic groups.

Throughout the coverage, the television Medias presented interviews with media scholars, journalists, conflict resolution experts, and individuals directly affected by the conflicts. This multifaceted approach aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between mainstream media and the aggravation of conflicts.

The ultimate goal would be to raise awareness, foster critical thinking, and inspire constructive dialogues on the role of media in both contributing to and potentially resolving conflicts.

In the other hand the contents in which television media selectively highlight the actions or characteristics of certain parties involved in the conflict, were casting them in a negative or villainous light. Skjerdal, (2020) raises similar idea to the finding of this study. Throughout the different regimes, ethnic interests have played an important role as a motivator for daily reporting, and the media have been used by the authorities to propagate political as well as ethnic causes. This is only to be expected in a society where, ever since the first print publications came on the market in the early 1900s, media have been used for national and strategic purposes.

4.2.3. Polarization

The two television media, polarization can manifest in various ways. Either they were influenced by biased reporting, sensationalism, or the framing of information that reinforces existing beliefs and encourages an "us versus them" mentality. Television media can amplify polarization by presenting one-sided perspectives, promoting divisive rhetoric, or failing to provide balanced and nuanced coverage of complex issues (Longlious, 2020).

Polarization refers to the process or state of dividing or grouping people into distinct and opposing positions or ideologies. It often occurs in society when individuals or groups develop extreme or divergent views on certain issues, leading to increased tension, conflict, and a lack of common ground (Longlious, 2020). Longlious (2020) in his journal adds that however, it's important to note that polarization is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various factors even in television media, such as political, social, and economic dynamics. While television media can contribute to

polarization, it is just one piece of a larger puzzle. Thus the researcher also found that the television Medias were portraying some group as victim and others as attackers. This portraying has a negative impact and it was a factor to aggravate conflict in Ethiopia.

4.2.4. Presentation

The television Medias were utilizing a range of presentation techniques to effectively communicate the key insights and encourage critical thinking among the audience.

The public perception indicates a significant level of agreement that television media's presentation is characterized by disturbing images and visual presentations, biased language usage portraying ethnic groups, purposively selected guests with biased stands, and biased content favoring the government's interest. They were Emphasizing on simplistic or binary narratives rather than prioritizing the importance of nuanced and complex understanding of the issues. Their contents and presentation didn't provide a platform for diverse voices and perspectives to be heard, ensuring that the coverage reflects the complexity of the issues. In addition to this they weren't careful to effective data visualizations, such as images, videos footages, and when, presenting empirical evidence and statistical data related to the media's role in conflict escalation (Mosas, 2023).

4.2.5. Language Usage and Imagery

The data of the researcher shows that the television Medias presentation was unbalanced and they weren't avoiding the use of sensationalized or emotive language that could contribute to the problem being examined.

The media plays a crucial role in informing and educating the public about world events. However, what often goes unnoticed is the extent to which subtle linguistic cues can shape our perception and evaluation. Boroditsky and Fausey (2009) explain how these cues can significantly influence our understanding and attribution of blame, as exemplified in legal cases and news articles.

Motivated by Allen et al.'s (1994) work on "The Media and the Gulf War: Framing, Priming, and the Spiral of Silence," focused on how the American media has influenced readers and viewers in their interpretation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Allen et al. discovered that media coverage

leading up to the 1990 Gulf War overwhelmingly supported the U.S. government's claims and actions, creating a narrative that was uncritically accepted by authority figures despite its lack of complete accuracy. Throughout the conflict, both government spokespeople and a significant portion of the mass media used language that downplayed the U.S.'s actions, emphasizing the precision of American technology and implying that only intended targets would be affected, while innocent lives would be spared.

When examining linguistic cues in media reporting, (Mosas, 2023) categorize them into three distinct types. The first category, which I refer to as "emphasis," primarily relates to how the message is delivered. Media platforms have the power to omit or downplay certain stories or facts, relegating them to the back page, or conversely, featuring them as continuous front-page news.

The second category, labeled "agency," pertains to the use of active or passive voice in sentence structure. Active voice assigns blame or responsibility, while passive voice avoids association, involvement, or accountability. For instance, a sentence like "The Russian army bombed the apartment building" carries more weight and assigns responsibility compared to "The building was hit with heavy bombardment." Further weight can be attributed by attributing the action to a specific individual, as in the example, "Putin attacks over a dozen Ukrainian cities in 'retaliation' for bridge explosion" (Yahoo News, 2022).

The third linguistic cue, referred to as "emotion," involves the use of language that is either emotionally charged or desensitized. This phenomenon aligns with the findings of Loftus and Palmer (1974), who observed that individuals were more likely to remember higher speeds and increased damage when questions about car crashes were framed using words like "crashed" as opposed to "bumped." Verbs such as "slaughtered" carry greater emotional weight than "killed" or "lost." In some cases, suffering or loss of life may be downplayed or omitted with verbs like "fought." Justification for violent actions may be included using verbs like "responded." The same military action can be portrayed as "overthrowing," implying aggression and illegitimacy, or "freeing the country," implying justification. Adjectives and adverbs may be employed to indicate culpability, such as "brutally," "savagely," or "unprovoked." When reporting on the violent actions of the supported side in the conflict, the news report may resort to military terms that minimize emotional response, such as referring to injuries or loss of life as "casualties."

The researcher proofs this on her study. Phrases like; demolished, raped, killed and damaged were used repeatedly on the news and program reporting of the television Medias. These words and phrases were used when the issue is about the opposition parties.

There were also pronouns given by the government officials and also used by the Medias. These language usages had a big impact on avoiding, judging and abusing parties, fighters and societies in general. This indicates a strong perception among the participants that television media uses language that portrays certain ethnic groups in a particular manner.

Chapter – Five

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Summary

This study attempted to investigate "The contribution of mainstream media in aggravating conflict; the case of television medias in Ethiopia". Generally, four major thematic areas were identified in line with the objectives of the study: languages and imagery are used in the medias, conflict related content productions of EBC's Red-Line and FBC's 7O'clock news reporting, content frames of both television medias towards aggravating conflict and the possibility that television medias apply conflict reporting.

To achieve the intended objectives of the study both primary and secondary data were collected, analyzed and interpreted. To collect the primary data, the researcher has used In-depth interview and questionnaire data collection tools. Among study participants, 32 interviewees have participated in the in-depth interview. But when information has started to repeat the researcher chooses to use responds of 15 participants. In addition to this a content analysis was used as a main tool for the research. The researcher has selected two television programs broadcasted on FBC and EBC. The 7O'clock FBC's news reporting and Red-Line EBC's program have been broadcasted for the past five years continually on the television channels.

When summarizing the finding the following major points could be identified.

> ➤ The study found that the conflict-framed programs of the FBC and EBC selected programs had a negative impact on the audience. Participants in interviews and questionnaires confirmed this impact. Both television media outlets aired news and programs with conflict-driven stories that were visually compelling and emotionally stirring. In addition to this the television Medias have contributed to aggravating conflicts in Ethiopia. There is a perception of biases, sensationalism, and conflict portrayal in the media, as well as an acknowledgment of the media's influence on attitudes and the escalation of conflicts.
> ➤ The study found that the television media outlets selectively reported on certain events or aspects of the conflicts, leading to an incomplete or biased portrayal of the situations. The framing, language, and emphasis used had a negative impact, fueling further conflict

escalation. The study found that the television media selectively highlighted certain parties involved in the conflict in a negative or villainous light. This aligns with the idea that ethnic interests have historically played a role in media reporting, used by authorities to propagate their causes.

➢ The two television media outlets displayed polarization in their coverage through biased reporting, sensationalism, or framing of information that reinforced existing beliefs and promoted an "us versus them" mentality. The television media outlets portrayed some groups as victims and others as attackers. This type of portrayal had a negative impact and was a factor that aggravated conflicts in Ethiopia. The television media's tendency to present one-sided perspectives which is pro the federal government, fail to provide balanced and nuanced coverage of complex issues amplified polarization in society.

➢ The public perception indicated a significant level of agreement that the television media's presentation was characterized by: Disturbing images and visual presentations, Biased language usage portraying ethnic groups, purposively selected guests with biased stands, Biased content favoring the federal government's interests. The television media emphasized simplistic or binary narratives rather than prioritizing the importance of complex understanding of the issues. In addition to this the television Medias' content and presentation did not provide a platform for diverse voices and perspectives to be heard, failing to reflect the complexity of the issues. In this regard both television media were not careful in their use of effective data visualizations, such as images, video footage, and empirical evidence or statistical data related to the media's role in conflict escalation.

➢ The language usage by government officials and the media had a significant impact on how societies were portrayed, judged, and treated.

5.2. Conclusion

This study has shed light on the critical role that television media plays in shaping public perceptions, narratives, and attitudes, particularly in the context of social conflicts. The analysis of media coverage techniques and linguistic patterns has revealed concerning trends of sensationalism, biased framing, and the amplification of emotionally charged language - factors that can significantly contribute to the escalation and perpetuation of social conflicts.

The study's insights into the media's affect in shaping perceptions and potentially escalating conflicts can inform strategies for effective conflict resolution and peace building. The study found that the two television media outlets displayed polarization in their coverage, manifested through biased reporting, sensationalism, or framing that reinforced existing beliefs and an "us vs. them" mentality. Television media can amplify polarization by presenting one-sided perspectives, promoting divisive rhetoric, or failing to provide balanced and nuanced coverage of complex issues.

The key findings from this study demonstrate how the television media outlets covered the conflict in a polarizing manner, reinforcing divisions and exacerbating tensions through biased, sensationalized, and one-sided reporting. This aligns with the broader theoretical understanding of how media can contribute to societal polarization, even if it is just one aspect of a multifaceted phenomenon. Finally, the study highlights the need for more balanced, nuanced, and responsible media coverage when reporting on complex social and political conflicts, in order to avoid further escalation and encourage constructive dialogue. The researcher's conclusion that the media's portrayal of victims and attackers had a negative impact on the conflict in Ethiopia underscores the significant influence media can wield, for better or for worse, in such fragile situations.

5.3. Recommendation

By implementing the following recommendations, television media can contribute to de-escalating conflicts by promoting balanced and responsible reporting, fostering dialogue and understanding, and empowering viewers to critically engage with media content.

I. Recommendation for Policy Makers

To establish an independent media regulatory body with the authority to monitor, investigate, and enforce guidelines on the use of sensationalized, emotionally charged, or biased language in news reporting. To have balanced and diverse representation of perspectives in media coverage, transparency in the sourcing and verification of information is needed.

Implement mandatory training programs for media professionals on ethical reporting practices and recognizing implicit biases. Having such policies and initiatives will help ensure greater diversity and representation among media professionals, including in leadership roles. It also encourages media organizations to actively seek out and amplify marginalized voices and perspectives in their coverage. By implementing these policy recommendations, policymakers can work towards creating a more transparent, accountable, and ethically responsible media landscape that serves the public interest and promotes informed decision-making.

II. Recommendation for Social Work Practice

The study recommends integrating media literacy education into social work interventions and programs, especially those serving vulnerable or marginalized communities. Empower clients to critically analyze media content, recognize biases, and understand the potential psychological and behavioral impacts of media framing and language.

Social workers can advocate for more responsible and balanced media coverage of issues relevant to their client populations. This also includes collaborating with media literacy organizations to develop and disseminate educational resources tailored to the needs of diverse client groups.

This study has recommend in interdisciplinary research and knowledge-sharing with communication scholars, linguists, psychologists, and other relevant professionals to deepen the understanding of the dynamic relationship between media, language, and social work practice.

III. Recommendation for Social Work Education

social work education can equip future professionals with the knowledge, skills, and critical thinking tools necessary to navigate the complex interplay between media, language, and the diverse communities they serve, ultimately enhancing the social work profession's impact and responsiveness.

Students shall be engaged with community-based media initiatives, such as local news outlets, community radio, or social media channels, to understand the role of media in shaping community narratives. Social work faculty and students has to conduct research on the intersections of media, language, and social work practice, contributing to the broader academic discourse. This includes supporting the publication of scholarly articles, case studies, and innovative approaches that address the implications of media representation and linguistic manipulation for social work education and practice.

IV. Recommendation for future Research

Future research could explore the specific instances and examples of conflict portrayal, biases, and sensationalism in television media, as well as the impact of these factors on public attitudes, social cohesion, and the formation of group identities. Additionally, investigating the relationship between television media and other societal factors, such as political dynamics, social divisions, and economic disparities, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of conflict aggravation and polarization in Ethiopia.

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Appendices

Table 1: EBC Red-Line ('Key Mesmer') program

Theme of the program		Coverage		Presentation			Program and news framing	
Title	Delivered message (Context of the program)	Transmitted Date	Length of the program	Language	Invited Guests (Participants)	Image and visual videos	Program representation	Shaping public perception
Why does the terrorist group TPLF need to demolish private own capitals?	** Let everyone Join the military Campaign to dismiss the group **TPLF has demolish historical and religious social capitals ** Let's Stand with the prime minister	December 14, 2021	41:52	* Combatant * Join the military Campaign * The groups based ethnic has looted fabric * The Tigrian people is abused with drag to join the war	Manager of Midroc Investment group	One to One interview	**Pro government movement and military campaign	** Be aware of the TPLF's group is helping the Tigray people to looting and demolishing private and governmental capitals.
Tempted Army	** Victory of War fronts of the	January 3, 2021	48:50	** Enemy ** Weyane ** Defeated	Comrade	** One to one	** The government is	** The war front between

	government's army ** Descriptions of how the war is going			** winning ** Surprising visit of prime minister at the war front.		interview ** Victory showing maps **Government army in picture	fully armed ** The prime minister is directly involved in the war ** The leadership of government officials is going perfectly	the government's arm and TPLF's army. ** TPLF is defeated in war fronts
' I am a Soldier too'	** Everyone should march to the war ** citizens should ask what their role is ** Promoting the prime minister's presence at the war zone	August 12, 2022	49:30 29:31	** Building strong governmental Army ** Terrorist group **Sovereignty	** Invited Journalists ** Representative of OromiaLi	Discussion	** Marching of political leaders and Commanders to war fronts	** Marching Famous people and politicians shows how right the government is

					berty Party	** One to one interview		
OLA's 'Shene' as 'Trojan Horse'	** Oromian people will never fight alongside TPLF ** Oromia people oppose the Tigrian people	July 18, 2022		** TPLF will never be any use of Oromia ** Addis Ababa doesn't belong to Tigray people ** Terrorist Group TPLF ** Weyane			** Oromia people should never side to TPLF	** Oromian people isn't allying with the people of Tigray ** Oromian people should't let the TPLF think of Coming to Addis Ababa
Sidama People Backbone of the government's Army	** Sidama's Special force has marched to the war zone	March 9, 2022	56:28 minutes	** Junta ** Terrorist group ** Destroy Nation	** Sidama Party Representative	** One to One Interview	**Sidama people should aim the same goal as the	** Junta is against Ethiopian nation Building

	Sidama people is on the side of the government			** Ethiopianism is sweat after the war broke out ** God has a solution through the Prime minister			government

On December 14, 2021 EBC's Red Line has broadcasted a program titled 'Why does the terrorist group TPLF need to demolish private own capitals?'

The Political Message of the discussion was demolishing private-owned capitals can serve as a means for the TPLF to send a political message. By targeting symbols of wealth and power, the group may seek to challenge the authority of the government and establish themselves as a force to be reckoned with. The destruction of private property can generate fear and uncertainty among the population, potentially swaying public opinion in favor of the TPLF's cause.

On the discussion which was on air for 41:52 minutes, the invited guest was also calling for everyone to join the Military Campaign. The call for everyone to join the military campaign against the TPLF suggests a need for increased manpower to counter the group's activities. It is clearly explained that by mobilizing a larger force, the government aims to strengthen its position and suppress the TPLF's influence. This call also reflects the urgency and severity of the situation, as perceived by the government, necessitating broad-based support.

The call to join the military campaign also serves as a rallying cry for national unity and solidarity. By urging citizens to stand together against a common threat, the government aims to foster a sense of patriotism and collective responsibility. This appeal may resonate with individuals who believe in the importance of maintaining peace and stability within the country.

The discussion also includes about the demolition of historical and religious social capitals by the TPLF can be seen as an attempt to erase cultural and historical identities. By targeting these significant sites, the group may seek to undermine the collective memory and heritage of the affected communities. Alleged Abuses Faced by the Tigrian People:

The invited guest has explained that the alleged abuse faced by the Tigrian people, involving coercion to join the war, points to potential manipulation by the TPLF.

On January 3, 2021 the television has broadcasted on the title 'Tempted Army' which was about how the government's army has achieved significant victories against the TPLF forces in the war fronts. This indicates successful military operations and strategic planning by the government. The 48:50 program highlighted that the defeat of the TPLF demonstrates the effectiveness of the government's military campaign and its ability to overcome the insurgency. EBC paraphrases how the surprising visit of the prime minister to the war front carries symbolic significance. And also how it demonstrates the government's commitment to the military campaign and boosts the morale of the troops. The program underlines the prime minister's presence on the frontlines also signifies his direct involvement and dedication to ensuring a successful outcome.

August 12, 2022 EBC Red-Line program has broadcasted a program titled 'I am a soldier too'. The journalists and invited guests wore a defense force's uniform and discussed for 49:30 about the issue.

Citizen mobilization, inquiries about responsibilities, and the promotion of the prime minister's presence are crucial aspects of the war effort were the core ideas of the program. The program explained how building a strong governmental army and countering the presence of a terrorist group are essential for ensuring national security. Additionally, the marching of political leaders, commanders, and famous individuals demonstrates unity and support for the government's actions. By actively engaging citizens and garnering widespread support, the government aims to strengthen its position and successfully address the challenges posed by the conflict.

On July 18, 2022 EBC on its weekly Red-Line program under the title 'OLA's 'Shene' as 'Trojan horse' has explained that the Oromian party is against the party from Tigray. The 29:31 minutes discussion focuses on the opposition of the Oromian people to aligning with the TPLF. The

discussion highlights the sentiments and concerns of the Oromian people regarding the TPLF's intentions and the idea of the TPLF coming to Addis Ababa. It also explores the perception of OLA's 'Shene' as a 'Trojan Horse' and emphasizes the Oromian people's refusal to fight alongside the TPLF. Additionally, it addresses the Oromian people's opposition to the Tigrian people, sovereignty concerns, and the characterization of the TPLF as a terrorist group.

On March 9, 2022 'Sidama People Backbone of the government's Army' titled 56:28 minutes length program highlighted the participation of Sidama's Special Force in the war zone, the alignment of the Sidama people with the government, and their shared goals. Additionally, it addresses the characterization of the opposing force as a junta and a terrorist group, the significance of Ethiopianism in the context of the conflict, and the belief in a solution through the Prime Minister. The discussion also includes insights from a Sidama Party representative obtained through a one-on-one interview.

The support of the Sidama people for the government's army showcases their active participation and alignment with the government's goals were also another topic of the discussion. The involvement of Sidama's Special Force in the war zone exemplifies the commitment to defending the nation.

Table 2: FBC 7O'clock News

Theme of the program		Coverage		Presentation				Program and news framing	
Title	Delivered message (Context of the	Transmitted Date	Length of the	Language (words, phrases	Invited Guests (Participa	Image and visual videos	Program represent ation		shaping public
What is Fano's Combatant desire?	The armed force is raping women, looting material and forcing residents to displace	September 7, 2023	3:15 minutes	** Fano ** Extremist (Tsinfegna)	** Selected audience	** Videos of Amhara cities with armed forces	** Fano doesn't represent the society		** the group is fighting for its own good not for the people
The government has taken Action on Fano	The Fano's Combatant was trying to dismantle the governmental's power and take it on force	December 28, 2023	2:58 minutes	** Hidden mission ** Extremist (Tsinfegna) ** Condemn	** presentatio n	** photos of Armed people which the governme nt claim surrender them	Fano is planning to dismental the governme nt		**The group will never survive again.

The government has taken action on armed groups found in oromia	The groups has hidden mission of disturbing peace of Oromia region	May 7, 2023	3:17 minutes	** Terrorost group ** OLA Shene ** Groups with hidden mission	** Oromian government official	** videos of People with military uniform ** people with Braided and curly hair	** The groups target are innocent citizens	** The government is rescuing citizens from the group's attack
Shene's and Fano armed forced were about to attack Addis Ababa	The two groups are aiming to attack the Capital of Ethiopia	April 21, 2024	3:45 minutes	** Terrorist groups ** Extremists ** Action of terrorist	** peace and security offical	** map of Addis Ababa ** Video of peace and security offical	**The plan to open gun shot in Addis Ababa has failed	The groups are attacking innocent people and cities

On September 7, 2023 FBC has broadcasted 3:15 minutes length news with headline 'What Fano's Combatant desire?'. The detail of the news referred that motivations and objectives of Fano may vary, but they are generally driven by their ideological stance or perceived grievances.

On the news reporting rape, looting, and forcing residents to displace were covered. The news characterized the group as Extremist Group or Labeled as 'Tsinfegna'. The news portrayed as Fano does not represent the broader society. This implies that their goals and actions may not align with the interests and aspirations of the wider population. This lack of representation raises questions about the legitimacy and inclusivity of Fano's objectives. The news uses selected audiences and videos depicting armed forces in Amhara cities suggest a deliberate effort to shape public opinion or convey a specific narrative.

The government has taken action against Fano in response to their perceived threat to governmental power. This indicates that the government views Fano's activities as a challenge to its authority and seeks to address it through appropriate measures. The government's response is aimed at maintaining stability and ensuring the continuity of governmental power.

On December 28, 2023 FBC reported news with headline 'The government has taken Action on Fano'. The2:58 minutes length news focus on how the Fano is alleged to have intentions to dismantle the government and seize power by force. The claim of Fano's hidden mission to dismantle the government indicates a perceived threat to the established order. Also on this news Fano is categorized as an extremist group, often referred to as 'Tsinfegna'. The characterization further underscores the concerns about Fano's intentions and the potential impact on the stability of the government and society as a whole.

'The government has taken action on armed groups found in oromia' was a headline of FBC broadcasted on May 7, 2023. The 3:17 minutes news reporting explains that the government has taken action against armed groups found in Oromia. This response is driven by concerns that these groups are disrupting the peace and stability of the region. And how the government aims to restore peace and maintain a secure environment for the residents of Oromia.

The news reported that the armed group is alleged to have a hidden mission of disturbing the peace in the Oromia region. This suggests that the activity aimed at creating instability and insecurity, potentially with the goal of undermining the government or advancing its own interests.

The group characterized as Terrorist Group in the news. As an input the news used videos depicting individuals in military uniforms and the identification of people with braided and curly hair are mentioned. These visual cues may help in identifying members of these armed groups or distinguishing them from the general population.

On April 21, 2024 FBC come to the screen with3:45 minutes length news headlined 'Shene's and Fano armed forced were about to attack Addis Ababa'. The news indicates how both groups planned to be a threat to the city's security and stability. The intention of the news was showing the mission of both groups on creating chaos and undermine the government's control.

On the news both Shene and Fano armed forces are characterized as terrorist groups. This designation suggests that their actions involve violence, intimidation, and pose a serious threat to the peace and security of the country. The characterization underscores the severity of the situation and the need for decisive action.

The following check list will used to analyze productions of the television programs on four broad categories. These are Theme, Coverage, Presentation and program and news framing. Each broad category will contain nine sub sections. Based on those criteria EBC's Red- Line (key mesmer) and FBC's 7 O'clock news transmitted for the last four years will be analyzed their content. The researcher used the checklist for both of the television Medias.

Theme of the program		Coverage		Presentation			Program and news framing	
Title	Delivered message (Context of the program)	Transmitted Date	Length of the program	Language	Invited Guests(Participants)	Image and visual videos	Audience representation	shaping public perception

Appendix-2: Informed Consent Form for the Participants

My name is Fana Negash, currently a Master of Social Work student in the graduate program of St Marry University. I am here hoping to collect data for my research titled "The contribution of mainstream media in aggravating conflict; the case of television medias in Ethiopia".

The study will provide a significant knowledge in understanding the role of selected television Media on aggravating conflict in Ethiopia. Hence, I am kindly requesting you to participate in the study.

If you decided to participate in the study, you will be asked questions whose answers will be input to the study. Finally I will be thankful if you could participate in the study.

Signature of the participant: _____

Date: _____

Name of the Interviewer: Fana Negash

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix - 3: Informed Consent Form for the Researcher

I, Fana Negash, a postgraduate student at St Marry University, as a researcher of the study, have informed the study participants about the nature, purpose, risks, benefits and procedures of the study. I have also explained the ethical guidelines to be followed in the process. The issue of confidentiality, privacy, anonymity and participant's self-determination were given due emphasis in the introduction session. My signature below signifies that I have provided the above information for the study participants.

Name of the Researcher: Fana Negash

The Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

The researcher will continue to interview participants until she believes she gets adequate responses and stop when responses start to be repeated. But participants will be selected from diverse groups/ institutions. Yet this groups/ institutions aren't formed for the sake of this study. Interviewees will be from opposition parties (these parties are base at three regions from which conflict widely occurred in the past four-five years). Also religious institutions and ordinary people who will be selected on purpose will participate in the study. This method will be carried out face to face.

Demographic Information

- Code_____
- Age_____
- Sex_____
- Educational status _____
- Status_____

Interview Questions

1. Can you describe how conflicts are portrayed in Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC) television news?
2. Can you describe how conflicts are portrayed in Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporate (EBC) Red Cross 'Key Mesmer' program?
3. How the television Medias does influences your attitude towards conflicts?
   FBC – 7 o'clock News
   EBC – Key Mesmer
4. How do you describe the biasness and sensationalism?
5. Have you noticed any biases or sensationalism in the reporting of conflicts by the television Medias?
   FBC – 7 o'clock News
   EBC – Key Mesmer

6. How do you believe the framing of conflicts by television channels contributes to the escalation or de-escalation of tensions?

        FBC – 7 o'clock News

        EBC – Key Mesmer

7. Do you think mainstream media tends to portray certain parties or groups as victims or aggressors in conflicts?

        FBC – 7 o'clock News

        EBC – Key Mesmer

✓ If so, how does this impact the perception of those parties or groups?

        FBC – 7 o'clock News

        EBC – Key Mesmer

7. Are there any specific incidents or events where you believe the television Medias' coverage worsened or exacerbated a conflict?

        FBC – 7 o'clock News

        EBC – Key Mesmer

✓ Can you elaborate on those instances?

        FBC – 7 o'clock News

        EBC – Key Mesmer

8. What sources of information do you think the media relies on when reporting conflicts?

        FBC – 7 o'clock News

        EBC – Key Mesmer

✓ Do you perceive these sources as reliable or biased?

        FBC – 7 o'clock News

        EBC – Key Mesmer

9. How do you think the television Medias' coverage of conflicts affects public understanding and awareness of the underlying issues?

        FBC – 7 o'clock News

        EBC – Key Mesmer

✓ Does it facilitate or hinder conflict resolution efforts?

This section presents a description of the background characteristics of the study participants.

Table 3: Socio-demographic information of In-Depth Interviewees

N.B 'R_' refers to participant's code

Participant's code	Age	Sex	Educational status	Position
R 01	45	M	Degree	Member of Political party
R 02	50	M	Master's Degree	Member of Political party
R 03	35	F	Degree	Member of Political party
R 04	38	M	Master's Degree	Member of Political party
R 05	48	M	Degree	Member of Political party
R 06	49	M	Master's Degree	Member of political party
R 07	55	M	Degree	Member of Political party
R 08	57	M	Ph.D.	Member of Political party
R 09	59	M	Degree	Religious
R 10	49	M	Diploma	Religious
R 11	36	M	10th Grade	Religious
R 12	44	M	Degree	Religious
R 13	39	F	Degree	Audience
R 14	31	M	Master's Degree	Audience
R 15	38	M	Degree	Audience

The background information is supposed to elucidate the current status of study participants. Some of the chosen background characteristics (sex, age, religion, educational background and political stand) are illustrated below. Among study participants, 32 interviewees have participated in the in-depth interview. But using data saturation the researcher choose to use responds of 15 participants, in this term in this study descriptions of the 15 participants are listed in the above.