A CLASH OF NARRATIVES:

NATIONAL IDENTITY AND VIOLENT CONFLICT IN ETHIOPIA

ABOUT THE REPORT

A project of Global Voices, the Civic Media Observatory is a method to investigate and decode how people understand information and create knowledge in complex and seemingly chaotic media ecosystems.

To see our methods and learn more about this project, see: https://global-voices.org/special/observatory/

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PRIMED
PROTECTING INDEPENDENT MEDIA
FOR EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study aims to identify and analyze features and patterns of Ethiopia's media ecosystem during two research phases—the first in the first half of 2020, and the second from the end of 2020 through March 2021.

The study employs research methods based on qualitative analysis of narrative themes and trends in mainstream media, social media, other online media, and offline media. The research does not employ statistical methods nor is the data statistically representative; quantitative statements about the data refer only to the material in the set.

Key observations emerging from this research include the shifting of narratives in response to events of significance, the fragility and dependence of the Ethiopian media infrastructure upon governmental authority, the influence of media created by individuals and organizations in the Ethiopian diaspora, and rapid shifts in narratives around the Tigray conflict.

The data set contains 336 items drawn from 91 media sources, including editorial media, social media, other online media, and offline media. Media sources also include a range of popular and important broadcasters, news outlets, and prominent social media channels. The data set is publicly available at: https://airtable.com/shrtOopxJTMCKi1Xm

THEME AND NARRATIVE FRAME SCORE BREAKDOWN

Researchers identified 47 themes (events, trends or phenomena) and 59 narrative frames (how people and media discuss themes) during this investigation. To better identify patterns and enhance accessibility, the research also presents themes and narrative frames organized under higher-level categories:

TABLE I: THEMES

OVERARCHING THEMES	NUMBER OF THEMES	PERCENTAGE OF ITEMS REFERENCING THEME*
National and ethnic identity	9	46%
Tigray conflict and TPLF	5	44%
Political system	7	23%
Human rights	8	13%
International relations	4	7%
Domestic issues and economy	7	7%
COVID-19 pandemic	5	5%
Public discourse	2	4%

Percentages do not total 100% as a media item can be associated with multiple themes

TABLE II: NARRATIVE FRAMES

OVERARCHING NARRATIVE FRAMES	NUMBER OF FRAMES	PERCENTAGE OF ITEMS ASSERTING FRAMES*
Anti-Prosperity Party	5	26%
The Ethiopian government is vicious	5	24%
Ethnic nationalism is a threat	5	18%
Pro-human rights	9	13%
Other countries are out to get Ethiopia	4	11%
Pro-ethnic nationalism/federalism	7	10%
Anti-Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF)/Tigray	2	7%
Pro-Prosperity Party	2	7%
The Ethiopian government is incompetent	6	4%
The Ethiopian economy is a mess	3	4%
Ethiopia needs a sound foreign politcy	3	4%
Civics and good governance	2	4%
Anti-Ethiopian state government	2	2%
Ethiopia needs the GERD	1	1.5%
Traditional values should be upheld	2	0.9%
COVID-19 is a genuine threat	1	0.6%

Percentages do not total 100% as a media item can be associated with multiple narrative frames.

Notably, themes surrounding "National and ethnic identity" and the "Tigray conflict and TPLF" were a key focus of the analysis. For example, the June 29, 2020 assasination of Oromo singer and activist Hachalu Hundessa dominated Ethiopian news and conversation, and resulted in a two-week internet shutdown. Similarly, modes of opposition to the Tigray conflict can been seen in narratives that oppose the ruling Prosperity Party, and discuss ethnic nationalism as a threat to the Ethiopian state

While themes and narrative frames help us understand the focus and import of media items in our selection, themes and frames alone do not allow us to fully unpack a media item's civic impact, or potential benefit or harm in civic discourse. Within a single frame or theme, items may be true or false, popular or unpopular, useful or harmful.

For example, of the media items asserting "Anti-Prosperity Party" narratives, 45% were assigned a negative civic impact score, presenting biased, mis/disinforming, and/or included hateful or harmful speech; 8% contained no substantive information; and 47% were assigned a positive civic impact score.

Among items belonging to the narrative frame grouping "The Ethiopian government is vicious," 51% were assigned a negative civic impact score, 10% of material contained no substantive information, and 39% were assigned a positive civic impact score (see Figure III in the themes and frames section of the report for the complete table of narrative frames and civic impact score).

While these percentages offer a useful overview of what the data set contains, readers and researchers should focus on the descriptive and contextual explanations of items to fully understand the effect that narrative framing has on how ideas are presented and discussed in Ethiopia's media ecosystem.

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

This study provides baseline research and a method for integrating analysis of civic impact of media items and narrative frames into other forms of analysis of media value and impact. This study:

✔ Highlights the interconnectedness of media forms, as media outlets deploy multiple channels to disseminate their work, and as new outlets take shape in online spaces

✔ Tracks stories and narratives as they move across different mediums and outlets, allowing for rich comparison of data

✔ Demonstrates how narratives shift in response to events of significance, and provides a method to compare responses across information providers

✔ Points to the effects of key narratives, and suggests interesting trends and implications that are a starting point for further research

✔ Captures the fragility and dependence of the Ethiopian media infrastructure upon governmental authority, as internet and communications shutdowns and mass media closures affect information access to varied effect. While shutdowns may slow the movement of rumor, hate speech and misinformation, and remove potential mechanisms for the organization of communal protest and violence, the same channels may also be used to positively inform and share accurate information, provide access to necessary—and sometimes life-saving—knowledge about access to resources, and provide space for dialogue

✔ Demonstrates the speed by which narratives promoted by government-aligned media can shift from relatively balanced to propagandistic perspectives that include denial of potential war crimes, and vilification of human rights reporting and documentation

✔ Exposes the continuing ethnic, political and linguistic divides underneath the relative calm of the prior few years

✔ Highlights the importance of diaspora media in influencing narratives, and both providing Ethiopians with both accurate information and as a source of unaccountable mis/disinformation. Diaspora media, including on social media, appear to have a significant impact on media in Ethiopia in the following ways:

  · Provides more open, alternative spaces that cannot easily be shut down by the Ethiopian government

  · Has created a political economy for diasporic perspectives and interests in domestic Ethiopian politics and power relations

  · Creates resilience and diversity outside of controlled spaces

  · Can be far removed from real-life scenarios, may misinterpret, or even inflame tensions

  · Creates space for networks, collectives, individuals, and other non-mass media civic action and dialogue

  · Drives and propagates a range of themes and narratives, both among the diaspora and domestically

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
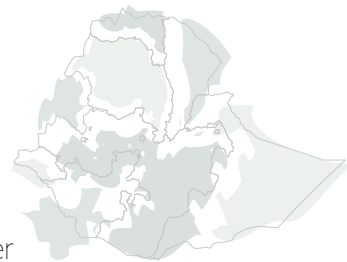
Global Voices is working with BBC Media Action to run Global Voices' Civic Media Observatory in the context of the PRIMED media development programme, to apply a "network vision" approach in Ethiopia, as part of planned media mapping activities under the formative research stage of the programme's co-creation process and baseline research.[1]

Civic Media Observatory (CMO) research explores the civic impact of media items, offers insight into the effect of "narrative frames" on audiences' understanding of information, and identifies priority public interest themes. It offers a range of media development recommendations to inform programme design, on the following topics:

→ Where and how content of civic value is actually produced and shared, whether it comes from mass media, social media, the open internet, or elsewhere
→ How information and journalism produced outside of organizations, and especially in social media and on the open internet, may affect public understanding of issues

The CMO research approach aims to supplement traditional indicators of civic value employed by the media development sector, including:

→ Legal, regulatory and ownership indicators of the civic value of media, which usually focus on the viability and influence of community media, public media and independent commercial media
→ Public opinion polling, which explores the media preference of citizens, availability of media sources and types, and other opinions about the value of media
→ More recently, dis/misinformation research, which tends to focus on the facticity of individual media items, rather than considering the narrative contexts in which those items are created and shared

A NOTE ABOUT DISRUPTIONS TO THE STUDY AND LIMITATIONS ON ANALYSIS

This project has been subject to multiple disruptions beyond the control of the research team, which have had consequences for the focus and comprehensiveness of the outputs.

We originally envisioned the research as taking place in March-April 2020, including an intensive in-person workshop in Addis Ababa focused on research methods, discovery, analysis and civic impact scoring.

The global crisis engendered by the COVID-19 pandemic significantly delayed implementation and required us to cancel in-person collaboration with our research partners in Ethiopia. COVID-19 also shifted media attention away from the expected themes of research, as the Ethiopian government postponed elections in response to the pandemic.

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[1] This research is in support of PRIMED's OUTCOME 3: Enhanced evidence and learning within and beyond the programme, together with strong networking and policy engagement to facilitate (and contribute to) more coherent international support to media freedom.

We launched the research in June 2020, conducting a virtual workshop to train the researchers. Before we could complete the training, the assassination of the popular Oromo musician and activist Hachalu Hundessa led to a government shutdown of the internet and most telecommunications channels in Ethiopia for more than two weeks. This tragedy once again significantly shifted the narratives and themes of research. It also interfered with our training and impeded our research in Ethiopia for several weeks.

In response, we expanded our research team to include more people outside of Ethiopia who could conduct historical research and track diaspora media. These events, however, diminished our capacity[2] to conduct local media analysis, including mass media, and limited our ability to do research in all intended languages, including Afan Oromo, Amharic, English, Sidama, Somali, and Tigrinya.[3]

In early November 2020, the Tigray conflict commenced, resulting in numerous information access and communications restrictions across the country, and particularly in the Tigray region. The conflict is also driving realignments of political interests in Ethiopia, creating shifts in narratives about the war, and about regionalism and centralization of authority.

We launched a second nine-week research phase of the Observatory in February and March of 2021, with a major focus on the Tigray conflict. During the two research phases, researchers completed media items in Afan Oromo (10.4% of items), Amharic (50.3%), English (24.1%), Tigrinya (9.82%), Sidama (4.76%), and Somali (0.6%). The COVID-19 pandemic, Hachalu Hundessa's assassination, and the Tigray conflict mark 2020 and 2021 as a hugely significant period in Ethiopia's recent history. The Observatory serves to track shifts in narrative in response to these consequential events, and more broadly, as an exploration of how media respond in times of crises, and under stress.

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[2] Diminished capacity related to our local researchers' ability to perform analysis on more media items and on a wider range of themes and frames. Lack of access to communications technologies reduced their ability to conduct robust research. This, however, does not directly affect the set of media sources, except that further research would have, over time, identified additional media sources and items to be included in the set.

[3] While research surfaced media items in Amharic, Afan Oromo, Tigrinya, Somali, Sidama, and English, significant analysis was not conducted in all of the six originally intended languages because of the internet shutdown. These six languages were initially selected as they are the most important in terms of size, politics and cultural influence; however, there are many more languages in Ethiopia.

ANALYSIS

The following examples offer an overview of the kind of scrutiny and analysis we apply to media items in the context of the Civic Media Observatory method.

The four items featured below respond in various ways to the conflict triggered by the assassination of Oromo singer and activist Hachalu Hundessa on July 29, 2020. Global Voices also published analysis of the events and trends following the assassination in a two-part series called How the murder of musician Hachalu Hundessa incited violence in Ethiopia.

Description In this Twitter thread, the author challenges the singular framing of Oromos in the recent killings that targeted ethnic minorities in the Oromia regional state. He denounces the targeting of non-Oromo individuals and the calls to kill them, but also reminds his followers of the role played by communities in protecting their neighbors and fellow community members.

Context The violence referred to in the thread was in response to the the June 29, 2020 assassination of Oromo singer and activist Hachalu Hundessa.

The writer of the thread, Alemayehu Gemeda, is based in United States. He is a founder of EthioTube and a leading figure in a movement known as Network Against Hate Speech (@NetAgainstHate), that is based in United States.

Possible impacts This thread stands out for its nuanced presentation of the role of Oromo communities in the recent violence that erupted in the Oromia regional state. It represents a complex, peace-oriented approach to discussing issues in the Ethiopian social media space, which is increasingly characterized by hateful language, partisanship, and misinformation.

Theme/s
Ethnic/communal violence

Narrative frame/s
Ethnic minorities are being targeted in Oromia

Media source
Twitter (@AlemayehuGK)

Publication date
July 9, 2020

Popularity
84 retweets and 218 likes. The tweet author has 16.3K followers.

Civic impact 2

ET_39 ሁለቱ ኦሮሞዎች (The two Oromos)

ET_9 Label of genocide and the comparison of Oromia with Nazi Germany disgraceful, utterly callous & ahistorical

Description The author of this tweet vehemently rejects the killings of people in Oromia after the assassination of Hachalu Hundessa as genocidal. He notes, because the majority of the people killed are Oromo, per the government's announcement, labels of genocide are false and politically motivated.

Context This tweet was posted in response to the killings of hundreds of individuals in the Oromia regional state after the June 29, 2020 assassination of singer and activist Hachalu Hundesa. The targeting and killing of ethnic minorities in the Oromia regional state by organized youth groups has occurred repeatedly over the past two years. Condemnation of these atrocities often has an ethnic/identity divide in the digital sphere. Several online Oromo nationalism public figures have been accused of downplaying, ignoring, or at times justifying these acts. Condemnation of or silence over violent acts in Ethiopia often occurs along ethnic/religious belonging.

Possible impacts Although the tweet may not have widespread impact, it is dangerous because it attempts to obscure, and offer a misleadingly sophisticated defense of violence. This tweet downplays evidence of genocidal intent. Given the individual's claim of advocating human rights, this tweet may be interpreted by some as an encouragement to downplay genocidal intent.

Theme/s
Ethnic/communal violence

Narrative frame/s
Language, culture and identity rights are being dismantled

Media source
Twitter (@awolallo)

Publication date
July 13, 2020

Popularity
367 retweets and 239 likes

Civic impact -2

Description This interview posted on YouTube recounts the story of Fekade Dejene, a former resident of Arsi Negele, whose school--along with many other people's property--was burned down by organized groups who targeted him and others whom the groups identified as "settlers" and "outsiders," referring to non-Oromos residing in the region. This violence arose in the aftermath of the assassination of renowned Oromo musician and activist Hachalu Hundesa.

Context Although the immediate cause of the current violence is related to youth anger in the aftermath of the June 29, 2020 assassination of singer and activist Hachalu Hundesa, this violence fits a similar pattern of targeting ethnic minorities and Oromos of different political/religious affiliations over the past two years.

Possible impacts This story adds an original insight into the targeted violence against ethnic minorities' businesses by presenting first-hand account of a victim. Very impactful as it is rich in context and originality. Likely to impact discussions on police accountability and victims' reconciliation/ compensation schemes.

Theme/s
Ethnic/communal violence

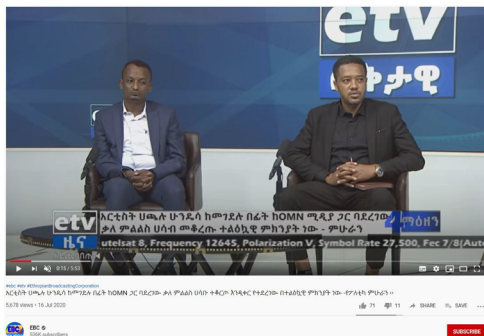**Narrative frame/s**
Ethnic minorities are being targeted in Oromia

Media source
YouTube, EthioInfo

Publication date
July 15, 2020

Popularity
97,618 views, 1.8K likes and 82 dislikes; EthioInfo has 320K YouTube subscribers

Civic impact 2

ET_14 ያልተሰማው የአርሲ ኔጌሌ ሰቆቃናቃጠሎ (The unheard story of Arsi Negele's agony and burning)

Description YouTube video of a panel discussion held by broadcaster EBC about the June 29, 2020 assassination of renowned Oromo musician and activist Hachalu Hundessa. The analysts on the panel connect the assassination with a plot involving coordinated efforts by TPLF and Oromia Media Network.

Context Although this segment was aired in response to Hachalu Hundessa's assassination, its overarching context is informed by growing tensions between the federal government and alleged coordinated opposition from the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and some Oromo nationalist public figures.

Possible impacts Although the theme of the discussion is timely and relevant, the propaganda-style questioning and framing fits a pattern of EBC's being the mouthpiece of the government. It harms EBC's independence and asserts the struggle it has experienced in trying to escape government influence.

The role of state broadcasters in Ethiopia, especially given their increased presence in the past few years both at a state and federal level, needs to be explored in relation to their commitment to public service.

Theme/s
Ethnic/communal violence

Narrative frame/s
Political assassinations are done to foment ethnic violence

Media source
YouTube, Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC)

Publication date
July 16, 2020

Popularity
5,665 views; EBC has 529K YouTube subscribers

Civic impact -1

ET_37 እርቲስት ሀጫሉ ሁንዴሳ ከመገደሉ በፊት ከOMN ጋር ባደረገው ቃለ ምልልስ ሀሳቡ ተቆርጦ እንዲቀር የተደረገው በተልዕኳዊ ምክንያት ነው - የፖለቲካ ምሁራን (There was a mission behind parts of Hachalu Hundessa's OMN interview that were left out)

BASELINE FEBRUARY-MARCH 2021: ANALYSIS OF NOTABLE TRENDS IN ETHIOPIA'S MEDIA ECOSYSTEM

The dataset makes evident a number of important trends relating to the use and effects of media in Ethiopian public life, such as strong disagreements over ethnic and religious divides, the centralization or decentralization of government power, and the influence of international actors on Ethiopia's domestic scene. Below, we analyse two key trends that were especially potent in 2020-2021: the contested framings of war in Tigray and hyper-partisan media in-group mobilisation.

CONTESTED FRAMINGS OF THE CONFLICT IN TIGRAY

The armed conflict between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian Defense Forces (EDF) has been a dominant talking point in the Ethiopian media ecosystem during the period of this study. A notable trend in discourse about the armed conflict involves the perception that TPLF supporters are engaged in widespread and organized mis/disinformation campaigns aimed at tainting Ethiopia's image internationally. Primarily projected by Ethiopianist groups and pro-government individuals, and also reflected in the statements of some government officials and on state media, this view posits that TPLF supporters are running an insidious social media campaign that includes journalists in major international media outlets, human rights organizations, and academics, among others.

Under this overarching claim, frequently expressed narratives portray the TPLF as the root cause of Ethiopia's ongoing ethnic tensions and conflicts; blame the TPLF for starting the war against the federal government; characterize humanitarian crisis reports as inaccurate, incomplete, or malicious; and accuse foreign experts, journalists and academics sympathetic to TPLF causes and/or critical of the Ethiopian government as mercenaries.

Description News story discussing the detrimental effects of foreign interference in the domestic Ethiopian political landscape. By focusing on Egypt's alleged attempt to destabilize Ethiopia by supporting groups that cause conflicts, the author warns this approach will not be helpful for Egypt's long-term interests, especially as it relates to disputes over the use of the Nile river.

Context This story is written against the backdrop of the armed conflict between the federal government and TPLF as well as several reports of targeted ethnic massacres in the Benishangul-Gumuz regional state. The story rests upon the widely held belief in Ethiopia that Egypt is financing perpetrators of these conflicts to destabilize Ethiopia in order to incapacitate the latter over the dam it is building on the Nile river.

One of the assumptions held by the author in this article is the attempt to externalize the causes of perpetual violence in Ethiopia, which is consistent with the government's characterization of some of the recent conflicts that took place in the country. Most anti-government groups who raise arms are characterized as "mercenaries" bought by foreign actors, including Egypt.

The author fails to discuss serious and verifiable instances of internal causes of conflicts that emerge both from members of the ruling party as well as non-state actors.

Possible impacts The essay lacks evidence and makes unsupported claims about foreign intervention as a cause to state fragility in Ethiopia. Most of these arguments resemble the Ethiopian government's talking points and give the impression of bias.

Theme/s
The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)

Narrative frame/s
External pressure on the Ethiopian government about the situation in Tigray is aimed primarily at destabilizing the country

Media source
Middle East Monitor

Publication date
January 30, 2021

Popularity
209 interactions on Facebook and Twitter (at Feb 12, acc to CrowdTangle)

Civic impact -1

ET_106 Foreign meddling as a source of state fragility in Ethiopia

The perception that TPLF supporters are working in concert with international partners to destabilize Ethiopia has also helped resurface a formerly latent but now increasingly popular belief among Ethiopianist groups that external forces are plotting to destroy Ethiopia's stability, prosperity, and security.

As evidence of external forces' alleged desire to harm Ethiopia, these groups cite the following: the European Union's suspension of financial aid to Ethiopia in relation to the armed conflict in Tigray; the US government's support of Sudan and Egypt with regard to disputes over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and penalizing Ethiopia through withholding of development assistance; Sudan's military advances in disputed territories in the Ethio-Sudanese border; the Arab League's condemnation of Ethiopia's effort to build the GERD.

Description By singling out Ethiopia's internal polarized ethnic politics as a danger to the interests of the republic and its people, the author calls for all Ethiopians to united to fend off external threats posed by adversaries. The author cites Sudan's invasion of Ethiopian farmlands as an opportunistic aggression that shows how Ethiopians need to stay vigilant. By condemning The Arab League's support of Sudan's aggression and the African Union's silence on the incident, the author suggests Ethiopia is encircled from outside with adversity but can triumph if its people come together to defend their interests.

Context Historically, the Arab League and its members are perceived in Ethiopia as entities that continue to undermine Ethiopia's interests. This is particularly the case in relation to Egypt's outsized role in the organization. Egypt has historically been depicted in Ethiopian politics discourses as a country that has attempted to destabilize Ethiopia.

Possible impacts The article provides some important insights, but fails to back up some of its major claims such as "coordinated negative international campaign" with evidence.

Theme/s
Ethnic/communal violence
International relations

Narrative frame/s
Ethiopia is surrounded by powerful external forces working against the country's interests

Media source
East-Africanist

Publication date
February 9, 2021

Popularity
8 interactions on Twitter

Civic impact 1

ET_175 Despite facing a coordinated negative international campaign, Ethiopia Shall Prevail.

Description The author offers a critique of Western media's one-dimensional, ethnocentric, and flat coverage of Ethiopia. The author argues Western news outlets fail to take into consideration the complexities of politics, society, and livelihoods of Ethiopian when they cover the country, and notes how this often translates into misguided policy, and, even worse, loss of lives.

Context There is notable increase in the coverage of Ethiopia by Western media outlets after the armed conflict in Tigray. Although inter-ethnic violence and hostilities were very common prior to the conflict in Tigray, international media covered these events sparingly. There is a perception amongst certain activist and academic circles in Ethiopia that the coverage of Ethiopia by Western media is driven by special interests rather than newsworthiness.

Probably not important for the purpose of this story but one thing the author could have mentioned is how the Ethiopian government's actions might have contributed to misinformation and misguided reporting (lack of access privileges for journalists, e.g.)

Possible impacts The article offers an insightful critique regarding the challenges of foreign reporting in Ethiopia. It is largely accurate and evidence-based. Could have been more impactful if it has found the right outlets to share and repost the article.

Theme/s
Ethnic/communal violence

Narrative frame/s
Media partisanship is causing instability and conflict in Ethiopia

Media source
Addis Insight

Publication date
August 31, 2020

Popularity
8 interactions on Twitter

Civic impact 2

ET_183 How Western Media is Failing Ethiopia

While not all pro-Tigray messages are necessarily pro-TPLF, discourse in Tigrayan circles is nearly unanimous in its condemnation of the federal government and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. Criticism of the TPLF in these circles has been minimal. Groups that have known affiliation with the TPLF, especially those who identify themselves as "Digital Woyane," have consistently promoted the view that Ethiopia is the enemy of Tigray and advocate for the secession of Tigray from the Ethiopian federation. A notable aspect of this sentiment is the alliance Tigrayan nationalists have formed with Oromo nationalists in their rejection of the Ethiopian state, which they view as an empire forged under the influence of Amhara hegemony.[4]

Description In this tweet, the author attacks Ethiopians as "filth" in what he characterizes as hypocritical behavior. He accuses Ethiopians' contradictory actions of telling Tigrayans they are free from the oppression of TPLF rule while at the same time calling for help for Tigrayans who are suffering now.

Context Alula Solomon is a known US-based TPLF supporter in the diaspora who is known for his inflammatory and provocative remarks. He is an ardent critic of the Ethiopian government and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. He is a key figure of the self-described "Digital Woyane," a loosely organized group of Tigrayan activists that employs various campaigns to champion Tigrayan causes and exert pressure on the Ethiopian federal government. The current text is a reaction to Tamagne Beyene, a renowned Ethiopian activist who set up a "GoFundMe" crowdfunding page for the crisis in Tigray.

While the author is accusing other Ethiopians' help in the Tigray crisis of being hypocritical, the subtext here is that this act of solidarity is counterproductive to radical TPLF supporters' message that the rest of Ethiopians see Tigrayans as enemies.

Possible impacts Consistent with his previous messaging about perceived critics of TPLF, offensive, hateful, and spiteful speech.

Theme/s
Tigray conflict
Diaspora and
Ethiopian politics

Narrative frame/s
The Ethiopian state
should be dismantled

Media source
Twitter

Publication date
February 14, 2021

Popularity
229 Retweets; 7 Quote
Tweets; 689 Likes as
of 03/02/2021

Civic impact -3

ET_190 ጦቢያዊ መግማግት : ጦቢያዊ መሽተት!
[Ethiopian filth; Ethiopian stink]

These highly polarized positions with regard to the Tigray conflict, and specifically pro-government positions, exert a strong influence on narratives about the reasons for the conflict the possibility that the Ethiopian military and their Eritrean allies committed atrocities, and other, often documented, claims.

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[4] Digital Woyane is a term often used to refer to the TPLF's online army, which employs campaigns to champion Tigrayan causes and exert pressure on the Ethiopian federal government. The term "Woyane" refers to the 1943 Woyane Rebellion of Tigrayan farmers who revolted against Emperor Haile Selassie. It was later embraced by the TPLF, the nucleus organization of the EPRDF coalition that ruled Ethiopia after 1991. When the term is used by non-Tigrayan Ethiopians, it often has a negative connotation that associates TPLF's rule with authoritarianism. When the term is used by Tigrayans, it has a more positive connotation of revolution, as demonstrated in this piece from the Aiga Forum, a media source that is pro-TPLF and very pro-Tigrayan nationalism. Although broadcast TPLF/pro-TPLF narratives were amply captured and analyzed in the research, an important facet of those narratives was the social outreach of the "Digital Woyane" campaign, on Twitter, Facebook and other social media platforms. We recommend that future research analyze this campaign in more detail.

These narratives are often characterized by the following:

→ uncritical assessment/acceptance of government narratives over the Tigray conflict, omitting, or overlooking, mention of reports of atrocities in contexts where this is merited

→ uncritical acceptance of partisan characterization of international human rights NGOs reporting on the Tigray conflict, including the minimizing of testimonies and reporting on possible war crimes, and crimes against humanity

→ downplaying events that might be embarrassing to the government (for example, dismissing the validity of testimonies amplified by an international humanitarian aid NGO, citing difficulty in verifying them)

→ repeatedly stating, out of context, that the trigger for the conflict was the TPLF's attack on a federal military barracks

→ conflating opposition to the conflict with pro-TPLF narratives or perceiving/presenting it as naive western interventionism

Overall, the framing of the Tigray conflict largely demonstrates blanket in-group advocacy and extreme out-group aversion. Pro-government messages typically ignore, challenge, or outright dismiss such widely reported issues as the Ethiopian government's restriction of humanitarian access in Tigray or atrocities committed by Eritrean soldiers on civilians. Instead, they focus on the TPLF's attack on the EDF and other crimes committed by the former ruling party.

Pro-TPLF groups, on the other hand, singularly blame the federal government, the Amhara militia, and Eritrean soldiers for casualties and damages in Tigray while downplaying, omitting, or obscuring the TPLF's role in the conflict.

MEDIA PARTISANSHIP AND OPINION FORMATION

Ethiopian political elites such as politicians and personalities with large followings on social media perceive the media in much the same way as successive authoritarian Ethiopian regimes—as a means of controlling public opinion. Journalists, pundits and media activists are often complicit in using media to mobilize the public for the benefit of ethnic or religious groups with whom they identify.

This performs an in-group mobilization function, in which members of a single ethnic or religious group amplify and reinforce each other's views. In conjunction with these relatively closed media environments, there are also social media spaces where key influencers from different ethnic or religious groups clash, mirroring the real-life fighting among Ethiopian political and ethnic groups on the ground.

Ethiopia's hyper-partisan media networks, segmented along ethnic and to some degree religious lines, resemble a similar phenomenon found in many government institutions. Except for a few pan-Ethiopian—or "Ethiopianist"—media outlets, a large number of media and prominent social media pages cater to ethnically segmented audiences. This is the backdrop against which the current Ethiopian government, beginning in 2018, freed political prisoners, including journalists and bloggers, ended the blocking of international and Ethiopian diaspora/exile media websites, significantly reduced surveillance and harassment of journalists, and allowed diaspora/exile media to return home and open offices in the country. Additionally, in February 2021 the Ethiopian

parliament passed a new liberal media law.

These positive and encouraging signs for media freedoms, however, have been in a holding pattern since the assassination of the Oromo singer and activist Hachalu Hundessa in June 2020, as the Abiy government has embarked on arrests of political groups and internet blocking. But regardless of these recent setbacks, these changes have enlivened and complicated Ethiopia's media ecosystem, with a rich selection of broadcast news and print media, digital news outlets and blogs, and pundits, politicians, and personalities attracting large followings on social media.

This media ecosystem has also fostered diametrically opposed interpretations of the same events. This clash of narratives is especially visible with regard to the conflict in Tigray, as discussed in the previous section. Other significant themes in Ethiopia's civic discourse, such as the 2021 election, disputes over the role of Addis Ababa in national life, protest and rebel activities in Oromia, the humanitarian crisis in Tigray, and the role of Ethiopian diaspora communities are also marked by significant disagreement, with various political and economic failures and success presented by opposing groups within the media ecosystem to support certain narratives and downgrade others.

METHODS

This Ethiopian media ecosystem analysis is a project of the Global Voices' Civic Media Observatory, which offers a research method deployable in relation to key events and trends to find, assess, describe and analyze information, grounded in the following:

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE — clarifies subtext and context

EDITORIAL RIGOR — serves as a method to ensure that research analysis is impartial

CIVIC IMPACT SCORE — evaluates material based on potential benefit or harm to civic discourse, in accordance with international human rights norms

SUGGESTED ACTIONS — recommends a range of tactics to inform journalistic coverage, support content moderation and platform governance strategies, and help frame research, to promote the protection of human rights within the media environment

The core of the Civic Media Observatory is the INVESTIGATION — the focus of the research in a given instance. Investigations focus on THEMES — events, trends or phenomena.

The researchers working on an Investigation classify, analyze and assign a measure of civic impact to MEDIA ITEMS — social and other online media, mainstream media and offline content — and suggest further ACTIONS to be taken.

Researchers also identify NARRATIVE FRAMES — the dominant narratives used to debate themes. This is an iterative process, in which an initial set of narratives are identified and defined at the beginning of the research, and then refined in response to events.

Researchers work in AIRTABLE, a relational database, which allows for rich interlinking of media sources, themes, narrative frames, media items, and languages, as well as granular analysis of dozens of metadata fields we use to describe media items. This approach helps us to build consistent responses to questions about the accuracy, truthfulness, verifiability, and ideological leaning underlying media items, as well as deeper analysis of context, subtext, when warranted.

Researchers work together to discuss and edit their analysis, and every item is reviewed by at least two researchers.

This study employs research methods based on qualitative analysis of narrative themes and trends in mainstream media, social media, other online media, and other offline media. The research does not employ statistical methods and is not meant as a representative sample; all quantitative statements about the data refer only to the material in the set. For example, relatively few items in the dataset focus on COVID-19: that lack is not meant as a reflection of the relative importance of COVID-19, but a decision by the research team to focus on a relatively narrow set of themes that, during the research period, were sources of contention, urgency and national importance.

Please see Appendix A for more detail about the CMO research method.

FIGURE I: CMO WORKFLOW

Discover → Capture → Describe → Analyze → Score —→ Action

Discover	Capture	Describe	Action
Media item collected.	Full text and screenshots entered into platform; item assigned to researcher with local knowledge.	Researcher annotates item with metadata, describes and analyzes meaning, and assigns it a theme, a media frame, and a civic impact score.	Analysis may trigger actions such as writing a story, reporting item to moderators, or more research.

CIVIC IMPACT SCORE

The civic impact score is a mechanism to help researchers evaluate the possible effects of a media item on civic discourse. The score serves as an indicator or guide based on researcher knowledge, rather than as a calculated score based on a summation of other factors. Scores need to be supported by analysis and recommended actions. To guide assignment of the civic impact score, researchers answer all CMO method questions that are relevant to a particular item and discuss why they assigned that particular civic impact score.[5]

> The **civic impact score** is a normative evaluation to categorize media items by potential benefit or harm to civic discourse, in accordance with international human rights norms. It is supported by analysis based on methodology questions.

FIGURE II: CIVIC IMPACT SCORE GUIDE

SCORING

−3 hateful, inciting, illegal, disinforming or otherwise harmful material, with a large audience, coordinated activity and likely to result in harm

−2 hateful, inciting, illegal, disinforming or otherwise harmful material without mass audience or coordinated activity; or false or misinforming material with a mass audience

−1 false, misinforming, inaccurate or biased material

0 material containing no substantive information/ knowledge

+1 generally accurate material with little influence or importance

+2 accurate, original material that has value and importance

+3 accurate, highly original material that expands understanding and deserves a wide audience

Graphic: scoring by Eucalyp from the Noun Project

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[5] A coordinating editor (who is usually not part of the local research team), will check the analysis for logical consistency and will question a score that does not accord with the logic of the other questions. For example, if a researcher applies a positive civic score to an item that makes claims unsupported by evidence (an objective measure), that score will be questioned by the reviewer.

NOTE ABOUT HOW TO USE THE AIRTABLE DATABASE FOR ANALYSIS

The dataset offers numerous points of entry for curious readers and researchers interested in exploring relationships within the data.
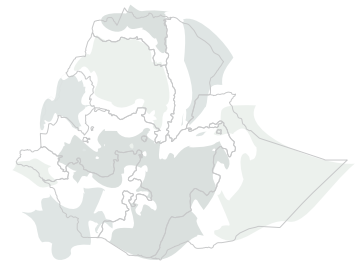
To begin, note that the Airtable has six interrelated tables: Items, Media Sources, Themes, Narrative Frames, Locations, and Related Items. Any of these tables can be a starting point for inquiry. It is useful to begin with an overview of the data in order to familiarize yourself with the possibilities for search. Media Sources, Themes, Narrative Frames are all excellent starting points.

Media Sources

The Media Sources table has 172 entries, each of which is categorized as one of the following: editorial media, social media, online other, and offline other. Researchers interested in exploring items on YouTube, for example, will find that there are 132 linked Items in the dataset, and that at least 22 media outlets use YouTube as a vehicle to broadcast their content. This quick search tells us that YouTube is an important platform for Ethiopian civic life.

Themes

Themes, or topics that researchers have found to be of significant interest in Ethiopia's public discourse during the period of research, can also be searched by looking at "parent themes" such as Human Rights or Political System. Researchers interested in understanding discussions about the upcoming elections, for example, could start with the theme "2021 Ethiopian national elections" and find 24 items to explore.

Narrative Frames

Narrative frames, or the underlying assumptions and attitudes that people use to understand themes, are a powerful way of navigating the dataset. Users interested in exploring, for example, the role that state media plays in propaganda, will find a narrative frame called: State media is a source of propaganda. Within that narrative frame, there are seven media items that use a version of the argument that the Ethiopian government is using state media for propaganda purposes.

Filters

Airtable has a filter function, a flexible and powerful tool that allows users to sort the data according to their varied interests. Filters may be applied to any of the tables. Importantly, users may apply multiple filters in order to refine results.
For example, a user may wish to explore television stations in the Media Source table. Using the filter called "Media Source Channel(s)" will bring up the option to select "Television" as a filter, resulting in a set of 49 records. Applying a second filter, "Ownership," for example, reveals that there are at least 10 private commercial stations in the data set. Applying a third filter, "Languages," reveals that at least seven private commercial stations in the data set broadcast in Amharic.

Similarly, users interested in the factuality of the data set could, in the Media items table, use the filter called "Are the key claims in the media item true?" Selecting for this field reveals 152 items that are true, 40 items that are false, and 144 items for which

the researchers were unable to ascertain whether the claims were true or not. Adding a second filter, "Civic impact", reveals that 17 of those false items were assigned negative (-2) or highly negative (-3) ratings, suggesting that they are in some way harmful as well as false.

Advanced tools

Airtable offers other powerful tools for sorting and comparing data. These include:

→ Views, which allow users to create multiple selections of the data, in order to compare results or to present the data in other forms such as Gantt charts or Kanban boards, groups, field sorting, and color codes.

→ Groups, which allow users to, within a view, organize media items by specific fields. Like filters, users can add multiple nested groupings to view data in different ways.

Users can also download the data as a CSV file.

Explore the public Airtable data set here: https://airtable.com/shrtOopxJTMCKi1Xm
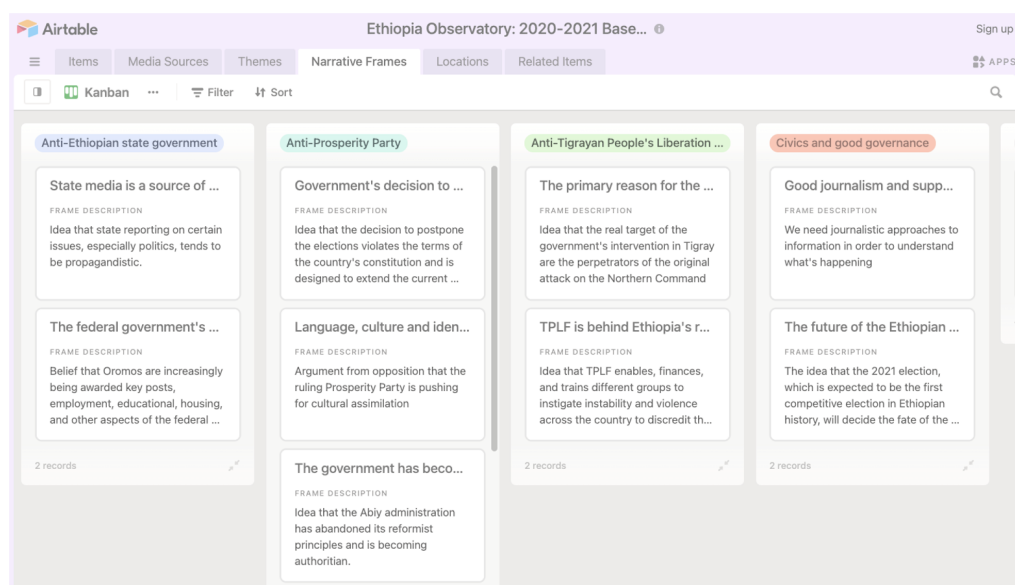
Click image to explore

DOMINANT THEMES AND FRAMES

DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA SET

Researchers identified 47 themes (events, trends or phenomena) and 59 narrative frames (how people/media debate themes) in this investigation.[6] The full list of themes and narratives frames, including theme and frame descriptions, are available in the database. To better identify patterns and aid with accessibility, the research also presents themes and narrative frames organized under higher-level categories:

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[6] In the themes and frames phase of the research, we identified those that we wanted to explore or expected to encounter. During the two periods of research, some themes/frames were more visible than others due to the topical dominance of ethnic and political violence.

TABLE III: THEMES

OVERARCHING THEMES	NUMBER OF THEMES	PERCENTAGE OF ITEMS REFERENCING THEME*
National and ethnic identity	9	46%
Themes: Addis Ababa **|** Commemoration of the Adwa Victory **|** Diaspora and Ethiopian politics **|** Ethiopian history (historical figures, events and commemorations) **|** Ethnic/communal violence **|** Protests in Oromia region **|** Rebel activities in Oromia region **|** Religion and ethnic identity **|** Sidama politics		
Tigray conflict and TPLF	5	44%
Themes: Politics in Tigray **|** Tigray conflict **|** Tigray region's TPLF and Federal government tension **|** Tigray-Eritrea relations **|** Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF)		
Political system	7	23%
Themes: 2021 Ethiopian national elections **|** Constitution and constitutional crisis **|** Ethiopia's federal structure **|** Legal Reforms **|** National election postponement **|** Open political space: The rise of civil society & media **|** Regional autonomy and self-determination		
Human rights	8	13%
Themes: Censorship and other information restrictions **|** Ethiopia's treatment of political dissent **|** Female genital mutilation (FGM) **|** Homosexuality in Ethiopia **|** Human rights **|** Internet shutdown **|** Religious freedom **|** Women's rights		
International relations	4	7%
Themes: American influence in politics and economics **|** Ethio-Eritrean relations **|** International relations **|** The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD)		
Domestic issues and economy	7	7%
Themes: Cost of living **|** Employment and labour **|** Environmental degradation **|** Food security **|** Infrastructural development **|** State media and community trust **|** The economy		
COVID-19 pandemic	5	5%
Themes: COVID-19 information campaigns **|** Education and COVID-19 **|** Government's response to COVID-19 **|** Politics and pandemic response **|** State of emergency (COVID-19)		
Public discourse	2	4%
Themes: Mis/dis/mal - information **|** Social media		

Percentages do not total to 100% as a media item can be associated with multiple themes.

TABLE IV: NARRATIVE FRAMES

OVERARCHING NARRATIVE FRAMES	NUMBER OF FRAMES	PERCENTAGE OF ITEMS ASSERTING FRAMES*
Anti-Prosperity Party	5	26%
Frames: Government's decision to postpone elections is illegal **|** Language, culture and identity rights are being dismantled **|** The government has become dictatorial **|** The government's claim that the conflict in Tigray resulted in limited causalities is false **|** The Prosperity Party really wants to postpone the election to stay in power		
The Ethiopian government is vicious	5	24%
Frames: Human rights are being violated by security forces **|** Political assassinations are done to foment ethnic violence **|** The ethnic attack against Tegaru was carried out deliberately by the government **|** The government is genocidal **|** The government's so-called law enforcement operation has resulted in massive human rights violations in Tigray		
Ethnic nationalism is a threat	5	18%
Frames: Attacks against ethnic Amhara people are part of the ongoing campaign of persecution of this group in certain regions **|** Ethnic nationalism is the greatest threat to the Ethiopian state **|** Media partisanship is causing instability and conflict in Ethiopia **|** There is an ethnic and religious cleansing being waged against Orthodox followers **|** Violence, resulting from political polarization, is a major threat to peace and stability in Ethiopia		
Pro-human rights	9	13%
Frames: Ethnic minorities are being targeted in Oromia **|** Female Genital Mutilation must be eradicated **|** Media blocking is a means to silence idea diversity **|** Religion and state should be separate **|** Structural inequality is exacerbating the impact of the pandemic **|** The internet shutdown is a violation of human and constitutional rights **|** The true casualties of the violence in Tigray are the ordinary people who live there **|** Those who don't boldly oppose the killings of Tigrayans have blood on their hands **|** Women continue to be marginal actors in Ethiopian politics		
Other countries are out to get Ethiopia	4	11%
Frames: Despite claims to the contrary, Eritrea has been a direct participant in the Tigray conflict **|** Eritrea's involvement in Ethiopian politics is dangerous and destabilizing **|** Ethiopia is surrounded by powerful external forces working against the country's interests **|** External pressure on the Ethiopian government about the situation in Tigray is aimed primarily at destabilizing the country		
Pro-ethnic nationalism/federalism	7	10%
Frames: Abyssinian, especially Amhara, hegemony is the root enemy of a multiethnic federation **|** Addis Ababa really belongs to Oromos **|** Legitimate grievances of the Oromo people are being hijacked by self-interested Oromo elites **|** The Ethiopian state should be dismantled **|** The federal structure is being dismantled **|** The TPLF is not only the liberator of the people of Tigray—by introducing ethnic-based federalism it has also liberated other ethnic groups in Ethiopia **|** Tigray's decision to hold its sixth election is feasible and constitutional		

Percentages do not total to 100% as a media item can be associated with multiple narrative frames

Anti-Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF)/Tigray	2	7%

Frames: The primary reason for the government's military intervention in Tigray is to hunt down the TPLF members who led the initial attack **|** TPLF is behind Ethiopia's recent inter-ethnic conflicts and other political crises

Pro-Prosperity Party	2	7%

Frames: The Prosperity Party (PP) was good for the cause of Sidama statehood **|** The trigger for the Tigray conflict was the TPLF's attack on the Northern Command military base

The Ethiopian government is incompetent	6	4%

Frames: Ethiopia's COVID-19 education response leaves many behind **|** Postponing the election triggered the war in Tigray **|** The crisis facing Ethiopia, including the war on Tigray, is due to the government's mismanagement of the transition **|** The government failed to prepare the healthcare system to handle a pandemic **|** The government is doing a terrible job of managing the economy **|** The government's decision to devalue the Birr was a bad one

The Ethiopian economy is a mess	3	4%

Frames: Increasing inflation in Ethiopia is a threat to public safety **|** The Ethiopian economy will not recover due to the pandemic and war **|** Youth unemployment is causing ethnic radicalization and increasing drug addiction

Ethiopia needs a sound foreign policy	3	4%

Frames: Ethio-Eritrean relations must be properly normalized **|** The international community needs to intervene in the Tigray conflict **|** The Tigray conflict is having an adverse effect on Ethiopia's present and future relations with western powers

Civics and good governance	2	4%

Frames: Good journalism and support for impartial facts are essential **|** The future of the Ethiopian state hangs on the outcome of the 2021 election

Anti-Ethiopian state government	2	2%

Frames: State media is a source of propaganda **|** The federal government's employment, housing, and other policies favor Oromo people

Ethiopia needs the GERD*	1	1.5%

Frames: Ethiopia should stand firm on defending its interests on GERD negotiations

*Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam

Traditional values should be upheld	2	0.9%

Frames: Feminism is a western import and women's rights are not an issue in Ethiopia **|** Homosexuality is a foreign import and goes against Ethiopians' values

COVID-19 is a genuine threat	1	0.6%

Frames: COVID-19 is a genuine threat

DOMINANT THEMES AND NARRATIVES DURING INVESTIGATION PERIOD

During the research period, analysts focused on media items about ethnic and communal violence and protests. The media items chosen for analysis are dominated by the news related to the communal strife in July-August 2020 and by the Tigray War and related effects, from November 2020-March 2021.

The themes and narrative frames highlighted in the lists below (Tables V and VI) are a subset of a broader selection of important topics and perspectives in Ethiopian public discourse.[7] Highlighting these particular themes serves as an entry point for those exploring the analysis to better understand the focus areas the researchers explored.

TABLE V: KEY THEMES

THEMES JUL-AUG 2020	ITEMS	THEMES FEB-MAR 2021	ITEMS
Ethnic/communal violence	23	Tigray Conflict	73
Protests in Oromia region	9	Ethnic/communal violence	39
Diaspora and Ethiopian politics	8	Tigray region's TPLF and Federal government tensions	30
Regional autonomy and self-determination	7	Ethiopia's federal structure	26
Ethiopian history (historical figures, events and commemorations)	6	2021 Ethiopian national elections	23

KEY THEMES ALL RESEARCH TO DATE	ITEMS
Ethnic/communal violence	73
Protests in Oromia region	62
Diaspora and Ethiopian politics	35
Regional autonomy and self-determination	31
Ethiopian history (historical figures, events and commemorations)	23

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[7] Item selection is guided by theme selection. Themes and narrative frames are created through a tightly controlled editorial process. Items which fall outside of existing themes and frames are outside of the scope of research. If a researcher finds an item that is outside the scope, before they select it for analysis they have to make the case for an expanded scope of research and an addition of a new theme and frames. This is an iterative process that occurs over time, as news narratives and themes evolve in response to events.

TABLE VI: KEY NARRATIVE FRAMES

NARRATIVE FRAMES JUL-AUG 2020	ITEMS	NARRATIVE FRAMES FEB-MAR 2021	ITEMS
Language, culture and identity rights are being dismantled	18	Ethnic nationalism is the greatest threat to the Ethiopian state	29
Political assassinations are done to foment ethnic violence	12	Human rights are being violated by security forces	24
Ethnic minorities are being targeted in Oromia	12	The government's claim that the conflict in Tigray resulted in limited casualties is false	23
The government has become dictatorial	6	The government has become dictatorial	22
The government is genocidal	3	TPLF is behind Ethiopia's recent inter-ethnic conflicts and other political crises	19
Media partisanship is causing instability and conflict in Ethiopia	3	Despite claims to the contrary, Eritrea has been a direct participant in the Tigray conflict	16

KEY NARRATIVE FRAMES ALL RESEARCH TO DATE	ITEMS
Language, culture and identity rights are being dismantled	29
Ethnic nationalism is the greatest threat to the Ethiopian state	29
The government has become dictatorial	28
Human rights are being violated by security forces	26
The government's claim that the conflict in Tigray resulted in limited casualties is false	23

ANALYSIS OF CIVIC IMPACT SCORES FOR THEMES AND NARRATIVE FRAMES

While themes and narrative frames help us understand the focus and import of media items in our selection, themes and frames alone do not allow us to fully explain a media item's civic impact, or potential benefit or harm in civic discourse. Within a single frame or theme, items may be true or false, popular or unpopular, useful or harmful. The following charts show the theme and narrative frame groupings.

While these percentages offer a useful sense of what the data set contains, readers and researchers should focus on the descriptive and contextual explanations of items to fully understand the effect that narrative framing has on how ideas are presented and discussed in Ethiopia's media ecosystem. This analysis may also be a starting point for other kinds of research, including quantitative analysis to gauge the scale and spread of positions on social media platforms and in data sets of news and information sources.

FIGURE III: THEMES AND CIVIC IMPACT SCORE
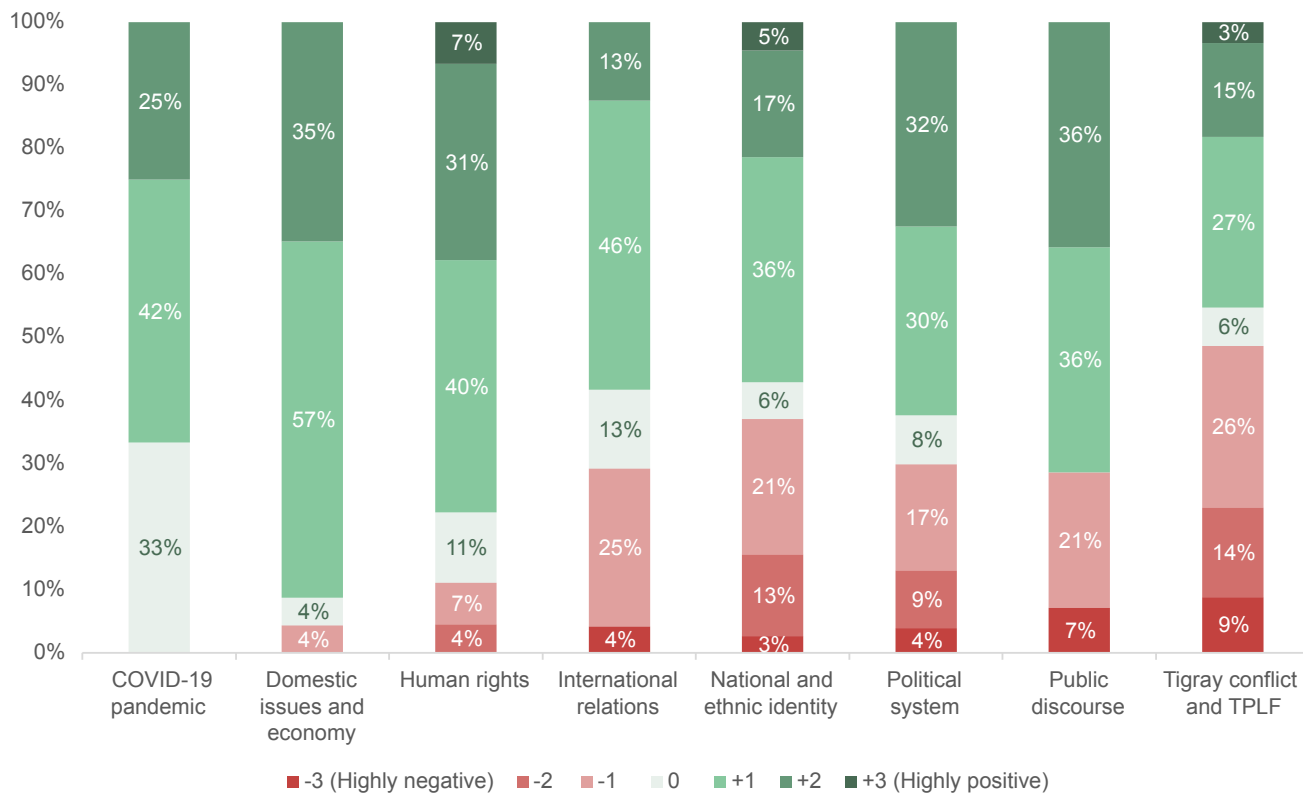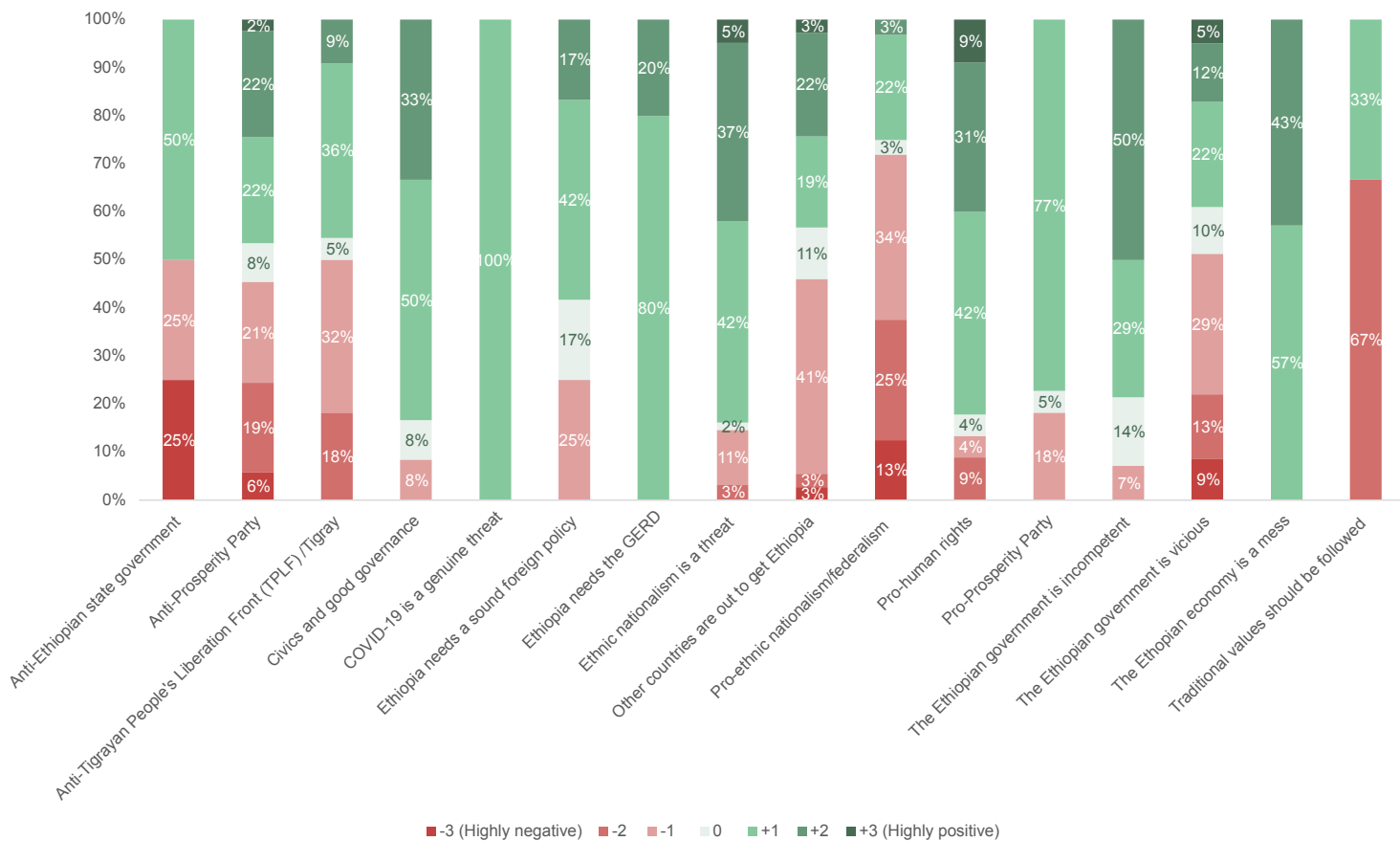

Legend: ■ -3 (Highly negative) ■ -2 ■ -1 □ 0 ■ +1 ■ +2 ■ +3 (Highly positive)

FIGURE IV: NARRATIVE FRAMES AND CIVIC IMPACT SCORE

Legend: ■ -3 (Highly negative) ■ -2 ■ -1 □ 0 ■ +1 ■ +2 ■ +3 (Highly positive)

MEDIA ECOSYSTEM ANALYSIS

DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA SET

The media sources data set includes 172 media sources representing 18 languages. Our list of media sources includes platforms (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Telegram) and, importantly, maps the Ethiopia media ecosystem across media source types (editorial media, social media, online other, offline other) and distribution channels (online, print, television, radio, social media). Media sources were included on the basis of the following criteria:

→ Mass media, newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations based in Ethiopia, or targeted towards Ethiopians, with significant reach and influence. Reach and influence is determined by researcher knowledge of Ethiopia's media ecosystem[8]

→ The most popular social media platforms in Ethiopia, including popular social media pages or channels

→ Influential, popular or characteristic online or offline media sources

While the data set does not capture every media source created in Ethiopia, or available to Ethiopians, it does aim to capture significant and popular sources, and also offers a sampling of characteristic sources that might be less influential.[9] The researchers have not selected media items from every media source in the data set for analysis.

Analysis includes a brief description of sources and evaluation of the sources' biases, leanings, and political connections. Researchers use local knowledge of media ecosystems and desk research to complete analysis. Classification of media sources, especially ownership and location information, is based on publicly available information and local knowledge.

Continued research into media themes and trends over time would surface additional relevant media sources. The sources identified here are those likely to be influential with regard to the study's themes and narrative frames.

MEDIA TYPES AND CHANNELS

Analysis categorizes media sources as broad media source types (see Table VII) and as media distribution channels[10] (see Table VIII).

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[8] Additional research could integrate completed public opinion polling and other quantitative indicators of media popularity to refine and expand the media source data set.

[9] Please note that the media source table is a secondary data set, meant to inform understanding of the media items. We seed the research with media sources we know to be important because of their scale, popularity, and influence. Our method is open to other media sources that become important in the context of specific themes and frames. Media ecosystems are dynamic and new sources appear in the context of new discussions.

[10] Distribution channels refer to channels used for disseminating content. We break out social media as a separate distribution channel because social media platforms have both significant influence in public discourse and determine rules of engagement, participation and expression for their users.
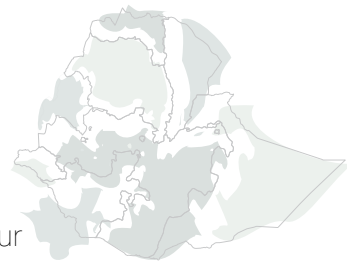
Understanding terms: A media item is any discrete piece of media that can be construed to have meaning and is worthy of analysis. A media source is the 'entity' that produces that media item (or hosts it in the case of a platform).

TABLE VII: MEDIA SOURCE TYPE

MEDIA SOURCE TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES OF SOURCES	NUMBER OF MEDIA SOURCES
Editorial media	Any media source with some form of editorial process. It includes both online and offline publications (newspapers, magazines, television stations, radio stations), as well as large and small media outlets.	Addis Zemen, BBC Amharic, Ethiopia Insight, OBN (Oromia Broadcasting Network), Sheger 102.1 FM	118
Social media	Social media platforms (YouTube, Telegram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other media sources that only have a social media presence (e.g. sources that are only YouTube channels or Facebook pages that have no other offline or online presence).	Facebook, Anole Global Media (AGM), Qaanqee Show, The Finfinne Intercept, Rara Media	30
Other: online	Non-social media and non-editorial online content. This includes media aggregators, forums, blog networks, commerce, educational and NGO websites.	Ethio360 Media, Sheger Times, Yeneta Tube	9
Other: offline	All media that are found offline, including books and other publications, posters, graffiti, images, merchandise, advertisements. The category also includes mass media that have primarily an offline presence, such as religious television channels.	Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church TV (EOTC), Marsil TV, Harima TV, Jesus Wonderful TV	15

Note: The table represents 172 and includes four social media platforms: Facebook, Telegram, Twitter and YouTube.

TABLE VIII: MEDIA SOURCE DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES OF SOURCES	NUMBER OF MEDIA SOURCES UTILIZING CHANNEL TYPE
Other online	Any media source that has a website or some form of online presence independent from social media platforms.	Addis Ababa Mass Media Agency, OMN, ONN, Aiga Forum, The Reporter/Reporter	93
Print	Media sources with print newspapers, magazines, etc.	Weyin Newspaper, Feteh, The Reporter/Reporter	31
Radio	Media sources with radio stations, online radio presence, or media agencies/broadcasting corporations that have radio stations.	Addis Ababa Mass Media Agency, Jigjiga FM, DW Amharic	30
Social media	Media sources with a social media presence (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Telegram).	ONN, OMN, The Reporter/Reporter, Awramba Times, Rara Media, ART TV	119
Television	Media sources with broadcast, cable or satellite television stations.	Addis Ababa Mass Media Agency, ONN, OMN	51

Note: Many media sources use multiple channels (e.g. have social media presence and television station or have print and online content). The table represents 168 and does not include the social media platforms themselves, but considers them as distribution mechanisms.

LANGUAGES

While the internet shutdown diminished our ability to analyze media items in all intended languages, this data set does include media sources in 18 languages. Thirty-nine media sources produce content in multiple languages. The top five languages represented in the data set include: Amharic (93 media sources), Afan Oromo (35 media sources), English (32 media sources), Tigrinya (16 media sources) and Somali (14 media sources). See Figure IV for all languages represented in the media source ecosystem analysis.

MEDIA OWNERSHIP AND REGIONAL REACH

Analysis categorizes media source ownership into the following ownership categories: Community, Political Party, Private (commercial), Private (non-profit), Public, and State (see Table IX).

For privately owned media, if known, the full data set identifies owners by name or organization. For state media, the full data set identifies whether the media source is owned by a federal, regional or local governmental entity.

TABLE IX: MEDIA OWNERSHIP

MEDIA OWNERSHIP TYPE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLES OF SOURCES	NUMBER OF MEDIA SOURCES
Community[11]	Media source owned by a community and having received a community broadcast license.	Momona FM 96.4 Mekelle	2
Political party	Media sources owned by a political party; does not include media sources that may be biased towards a party or sources considered party mouthpieces.	Weyin Newspaper	1
Private (commercial)[12]	Media sources are for-profit businesses.	Horn Affairs, OBS, Ethiopia Insight	37
Private (non-profit)	Media sources are non-profit organizations.	Kello Media, Oromo Diaspora Media, OMN	16
Private (TBD)	Media sources that have not yet been identified as commercial or non-profit.	Addis Standard, GNN, LTV, ONN	74
Public	Media source is funded by a state and/or citizenry, and has clear legal separation from the state, editorial and administrative independence, and a publicly available charter.	BBC Afan Oromo, BBC Amharic, DW Amharic[13]	5
State	Media sources owned by the state (federal, regional or local) or operated by agencies run by the state.	EBC, ETV, Tigray Mass Media Agency, OBN	37

Note: The table represents 172 and includes four social media platforms (Facebook, Telegram, Twitter and YouTube).

See Figure V to view media source ownership by media source type to highlight the media ownership media type distributions.

The data set also identifies, when possible, where the media sources are owned, are registered or operate.

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[11] Community media are usually also non-profit organizations, and have additional rules requiring community ownership, community-specific broadcast licenses, and other restrictions.

[12] Private (commercial) and Private (non-profit) ownership was determined based on available public records and may be refined based on further research. Private (TBD) was used to categorize private ownership we could not categorize into commercial or non-profit.

[13] All public media sources studied are foreign owned.

Of the 172 media sources:

→ 60 media sources are owned, are registered or operate within Ethiopia

→ 61 media sources are owned, are registered or operate outside of Ethiopia. Most of these media sources are diaspora owned or operated. Of these media sources, 40 are based in Canada and the US, 12 in the UK, 4 in MENA, 3 in the EU, and 4 elsewhere (Kenya, Australia)[14]

→ 9 media sources are owned, are registered or operate both outside of Ethiopia (US, Sweden, Finland, Afghanistan, Kenya) and within Ethiopia

→ 42 media sources require further research to identify ownership and location of registration and operation

BIASES AND LEANINGS[15]

Media sources in the data set present a range of biases and ideological leanings. Within the Media Source Table, readers will find researcher descriptions of these leanings. Most media sources encompass multiple ideological leanings and biases, and those leanings may also be variably represented within individual narratives, or even stories. Readers should take it as suggestive of the media source leanings at the time of analysis, rather than as determined and unchangeable positions. The rigorous measuring of ideology as a concept requires methods beyond the scope of current research. We can, based on our research, state that ethnic identity currently plays an important role in constructing overarching narratives for many Ethiopian media outlets. See "The ethnification of Ethiopian media", Skjerdal and Alemayehu (2020).

FIGURE V: LANGUAGES REPRESENTED IN MEDIA SOURCE ANALYSIS

- Amharic (42.7%)
- English (20.2%)
- Afan Oromo (14.5%)
- Tigrinya (7.3%)
- Somali (6.5%)
- Sidama (1.6%)
- Afar (1.2%)
- Saho (0.8%)
- Kunamigna (0.8%)
- Harari (0.8%)
- Arabic (0.8%)
- Welayta (0.4%)
- Other minority languages (0.4%)
- Tembaro (0.4%)
- Kambaata (0.4%)
- Gurage (0.4%)
- Gedeo (0.4%)
- Gamo (0.4%)
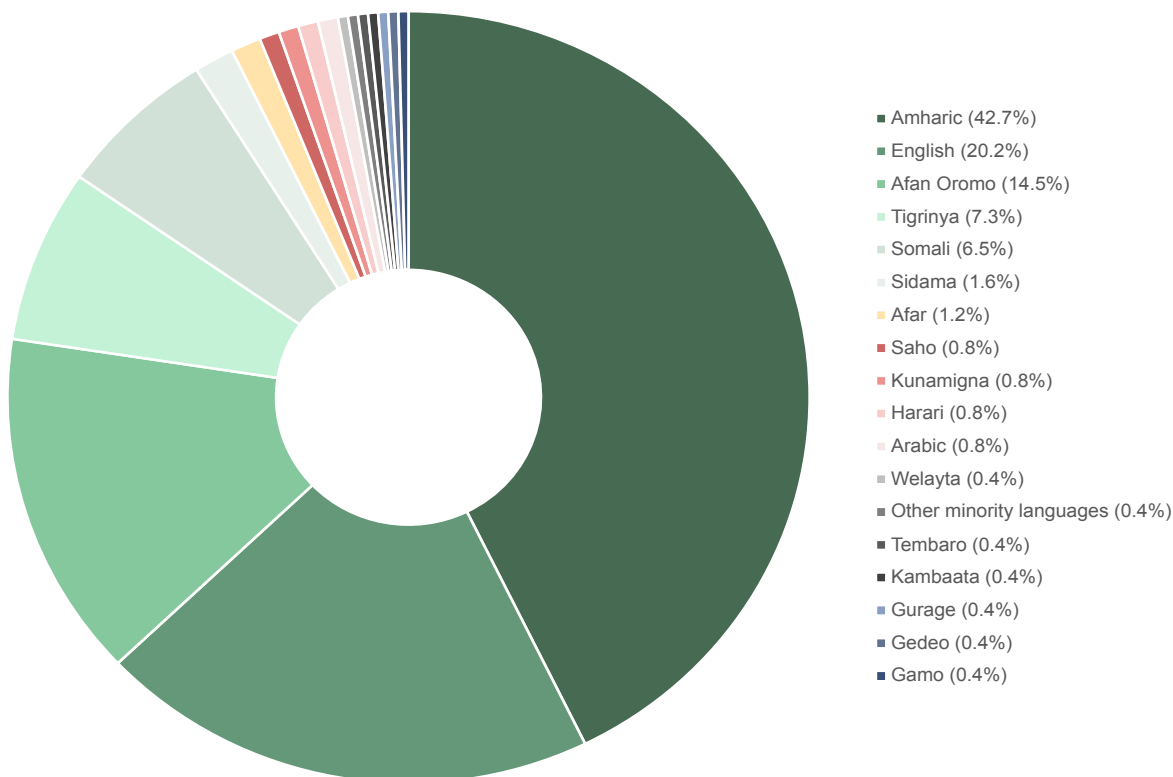
[14] The location of one foreign-based source is unknown. Some sources are owned/registered/operated by multiple foreign countries.

[15] See Appendix B for glossary for explanation of terms used for biases and ideological leanings.

FIGURE VI: MEDIA SOURCE BY OWNERSHIP TYPE AND MEDIA SOURCE TYPE
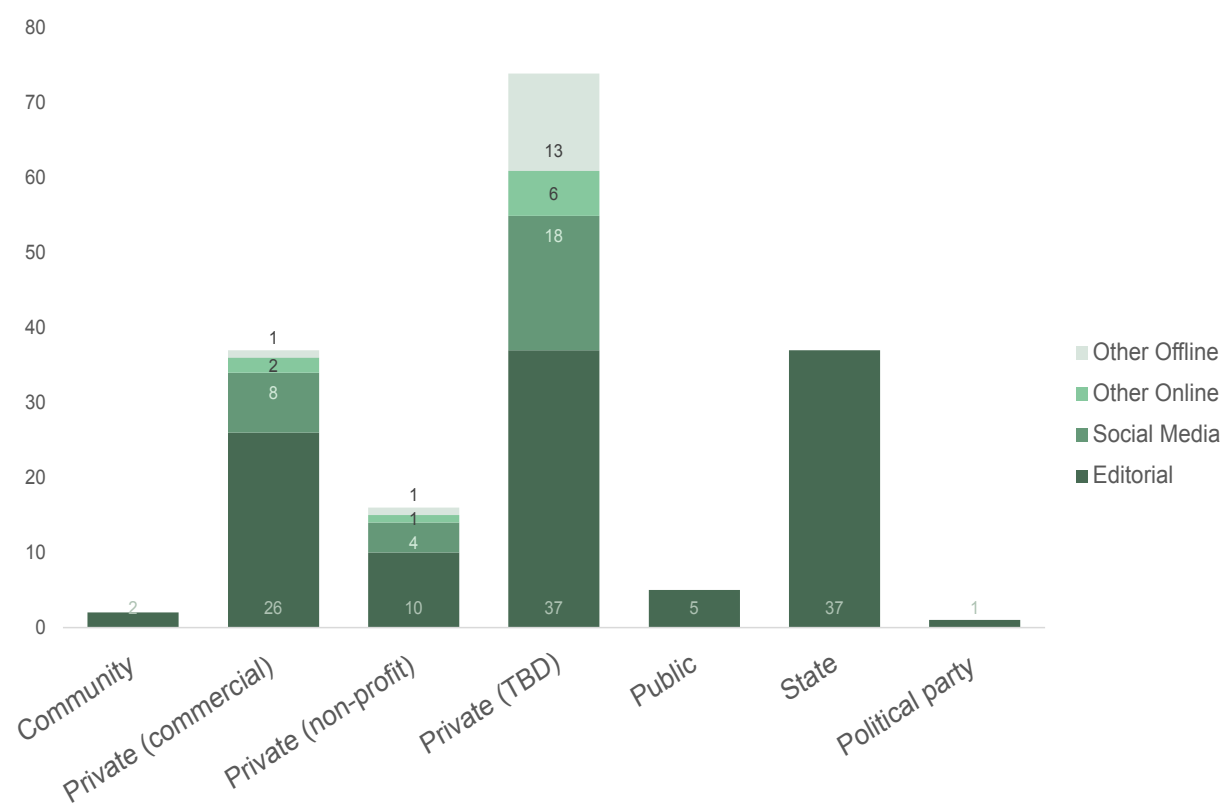
WHO IS SHARING CONTENT WITH HIGH CIVIC IMPACT

Understanding the civic value of media is a key feature of our research. Because we assess the civic value of individual media items, there are limitations on the claims we make about the larger civic impact of the creators of media, such as newspapers, television stations, or YouTube channels. We are able to make statements, however, about the accuracy, bias, professionalism and underlying motives of individual media items and in many cases, these items will be typical of the tenor and approach of that media outlet, source, or individual. This analysis may be a starting point for further research, including the possible application of quantitative methods.

Of the 21 media sources for which we analyzed five or more media items, sources assigned over 75% positive civic impact scores included Voice of America Amharic, ARTS TV, BBC Amharic, Deutsche Welle Amharic, Asham TV, Addis Fortune, The Reporter/Reporter, and Addis Maleda. The chart (Figure VII) below displays the percentage of highly negative, negative, no impact, positive, and highly positive civic impact scoring media items for these 21 media sources.

Looking at social platforms, YouTube had more highly positive (+2 and +3) scoring media items, with 20.8%, than Twitter with 14.3% and Facebook with only 4.0% (Figure VIII).[16] Overall, however, 52% of items on Facebook from our dataset received a positive

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[16] Our research included 125 media items on YouTube, 50 media items on Facebook and14 items on Twitter. Media items analyzed on YouTube and Facebook included items shared or produced by editorial media sources, however, media items on Twitter were created by individuals or non-editorial entities. Due to the small number of Twitter items selected, do not recommend reading conclusive claims about positive and negative civic impact scores on that platform. We would recommend additional research focused on Twitter and key narratives.

civic impact score, compared to 46.4% for YouTube and 42.9% from Twitter items from our dataset.

FIGURE VII: MEDIA SOURCES AND CIVIC IMPACT SCORE
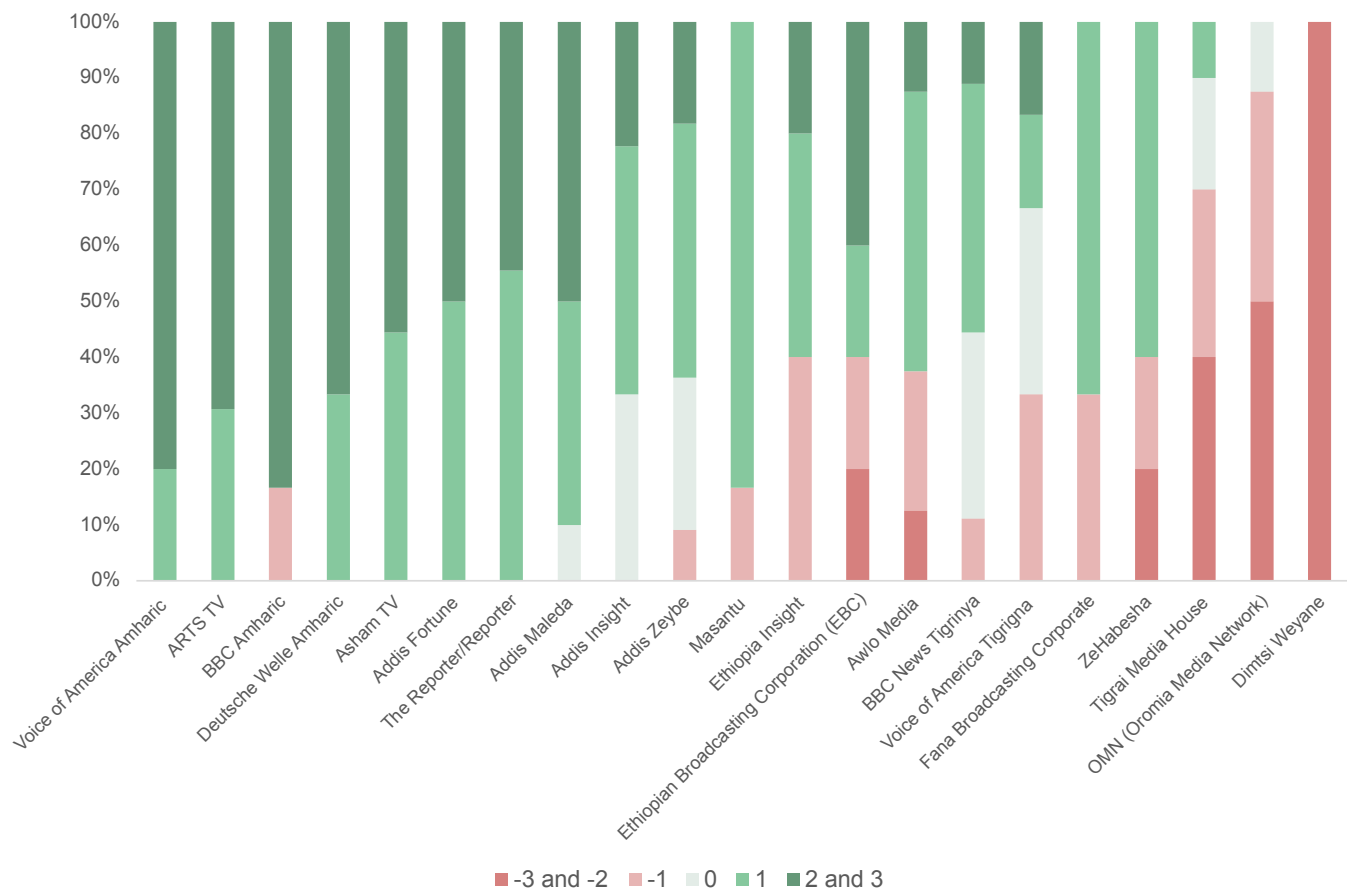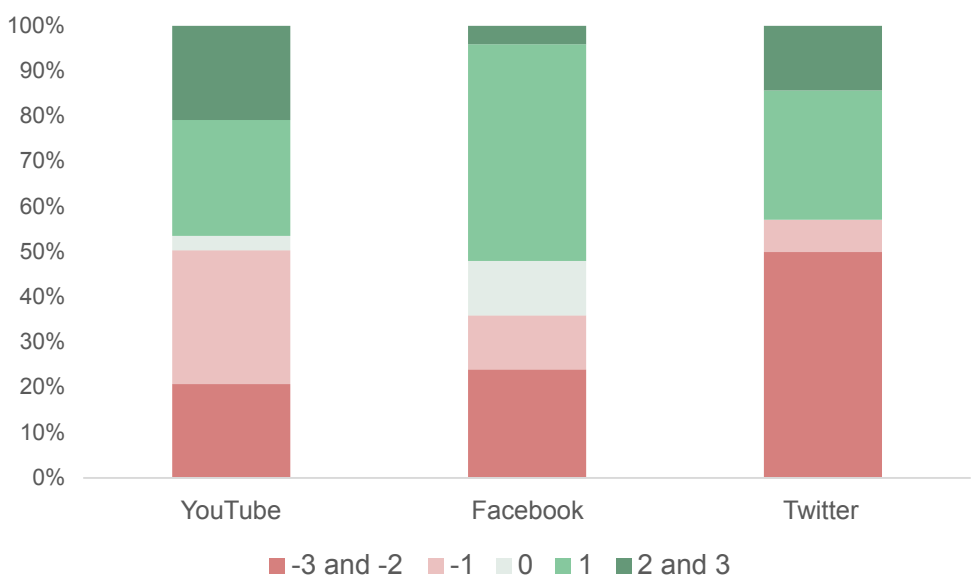(for sources with 5+ Media Items)

-3 and -2 -1 0 1 2 and 3

FIGURE VIII: SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND CIVIC IMPACT SCORES

-3 and -2 -1 0 1 2 and 3

PRIMED PARTNER CONTENT: CIVIC IMPACT, THEMES, AND FRAME

[Protecting Independent Media for Effective Development](#) (PRIMED) is a consortium led by BBC Media action that aims to support public interest media in Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Sierra Leone.

Our media source data set includes four PRIMED media partners in Ethiopia. Our media source data includes four PRIME media partners in Ethiopia: Addis Maleda, ARTS TV, Asham TV and Addis Zeybe. Our baseline analysis includes the following:

TABLE X: PRIMED PARTNERS OVERVIEW

MEDIA SOURCE	NUMBER OF ITEMS	LANGUAGE OF MEDIA ITEMS IN SELECTION	% ITEMS POSITIVE CIVIC IMPACT SCORE	% ITEMS ZERO CIVIC IMPACT SCORE	% ITEMS NEGATIVE CIVIC IMPACT SCORE
Addis Maleda	5	Amharic (100%)	90%	10%	0%
ARTS TV	5	Amharic (100%)	100%	0%	0%
Asham TV	5	Amharic (100%)	100%	0%	0%
Addis Zeybe	9	English (82%) Amharic (18%)	64%	27%	9%

Compared to other media sources with multiple media items analyzed, overall, all PRIMED partners had a high percentage of items receiving a positive civic score, with ARTS TV, and Asham TV, all having 100% positive civic scoring items (one third of media sources with 100% positive civic impact items were PRIMED partners).

Outlets that garnered predominantly negative scores were mostly identity-focused ethnic nationalist diaspora media, perceived as exacerbating ethnic tensions. Some of them have been targeted by the government with broadcast jamming and site blocking, or even taken off the air. Examples include:

→ OMN, an Oromo diaspora outlet based in the US, affiliated with the opposition Oromo Federalist Congress, which draws a lot of controversy because of its grievance-oriented reporting and political programming (for instance, over the killing of singer and activist Hachalu Hundessa)

→ ZeHabesha, a US-based diaspora news aggregator prone to sensationalist, pro-Amhara, and often misleading and incomplete analysis, and geared to exploit YouTube clickbait tactics

→ Tigrai Media House, a Tigrayan diaspora outlet based in the US, affiliated with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), seen by researchers as prone to disseminating disinformation and conspiracy theories, exacerbating mistrust, attacking PM Abiy, and fomenting the escalation of tensions in the lead-up to the Tigray conflict

→ Dimtsi Weyane, an openly militant TPLF affiliated outlet known as "the only fully accessible media in all of Tigray," extensively criticized for perpetuating a siege mentality over the Tigray conflict, inflaming ethnic tensions with genocide rhetoric, and parroting bellicose TPLF rhetoric

It must be noted again that there are limitations to the claims we can make about the overall civic impact of media sources. Our civic impact scoring is specific to media items, and we selected a relatively small number of media items from each media outlet.

Figure IX illustrates the percentage of media items for each civic impact score for the PRIMED media partners:

FIGURE IX: PRIMED PARTNERS CIVIC IMPACT SCORE
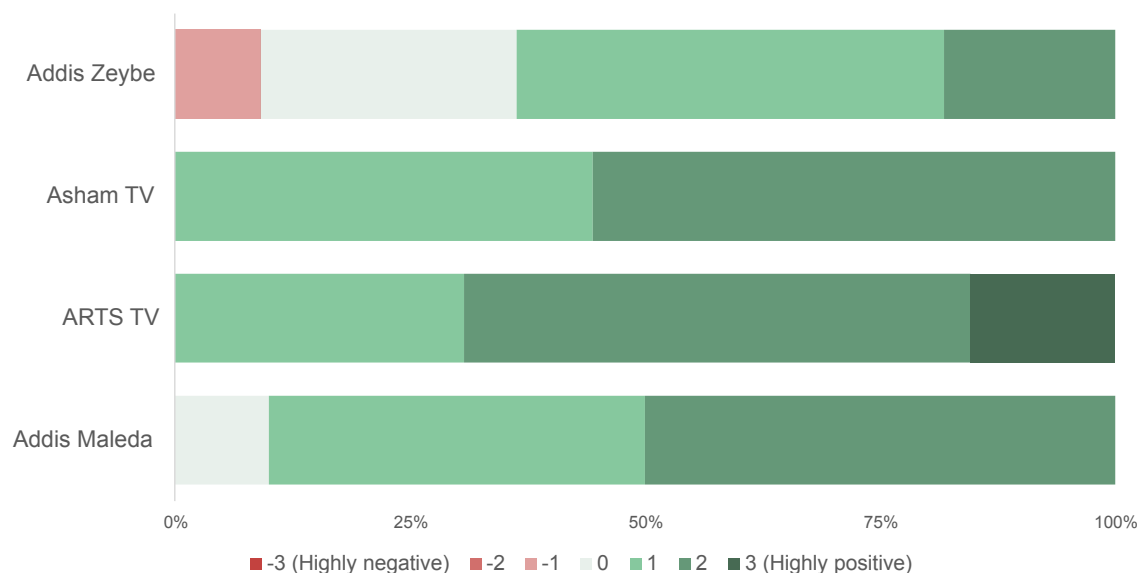
Regarding the gender analysis, 23.1% of the PRIMED partner media items analyzed highlighted gender issues.[17] Of the items included in the gender analysis, most were from ARTS TV and Asham TV, with 45.5% and 44.4%, respectively, of their media items highlighting gender issues in a positive manner. These two sources also had the highest percentage of items that interviewed or quoted women (ARTS TV 45.5%, Asham TV 55.6%), and the highest percentage of items in which women subjects were interviewed for their knowledge or expertise (ARTS TV 45.5%, Asham TV 55.6%). Across all PRIMED partner sources, 17.9% of journalists or reporters identified as women.[18] This analysis represents only a fraction of total media items produced by these sources, so we do not make broader claims about their overall focus on gender.

PRIMED media partner content featured on the list of themes and narrative frames of focus. As the number of media items analyzed from each media source is small, we do not make overarching judgments about the civic impact of the media outlet as a whole. Figures X and XI show the frequency of PRIMED partner media items attached to focus themes and narratives.

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[17] Two items from ARTS TV, one item from Addis Maleda, and one item from Addis Zeybe were not included in the gender analysis as they were researched during summer 2020.

[18] 61.5% of the authors were only men, for 15.4% of the sample researchers were unable to identify the gender, and in 5.13% items this question was not applicable.

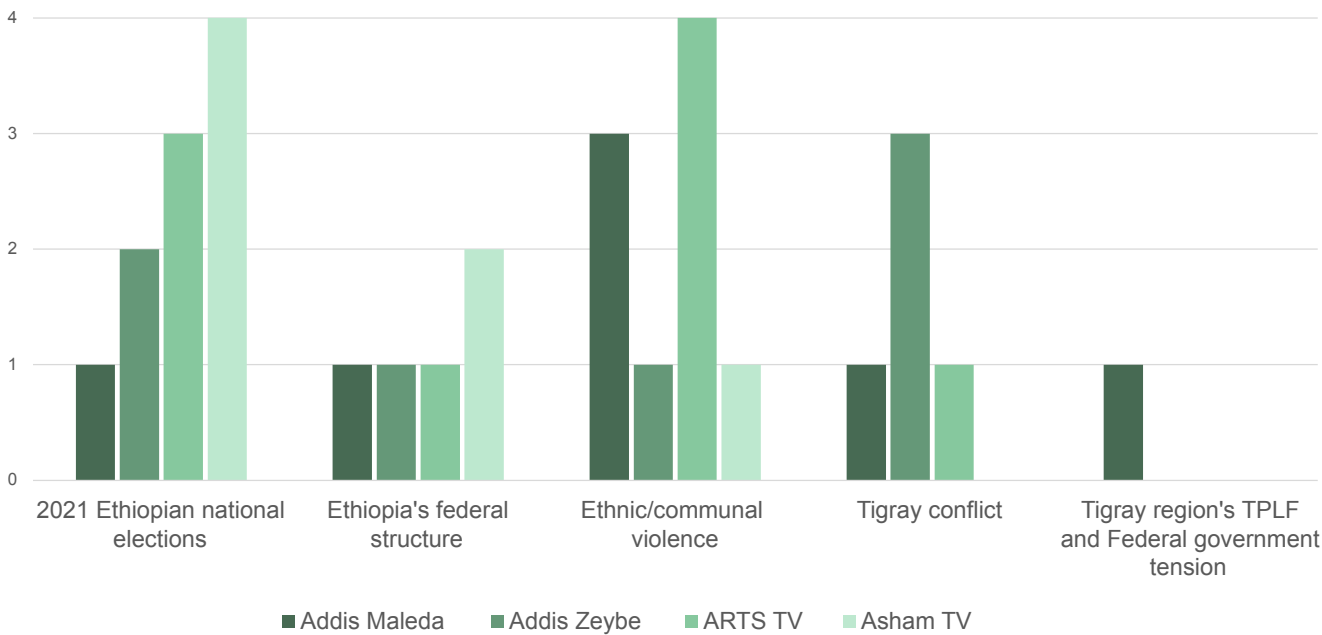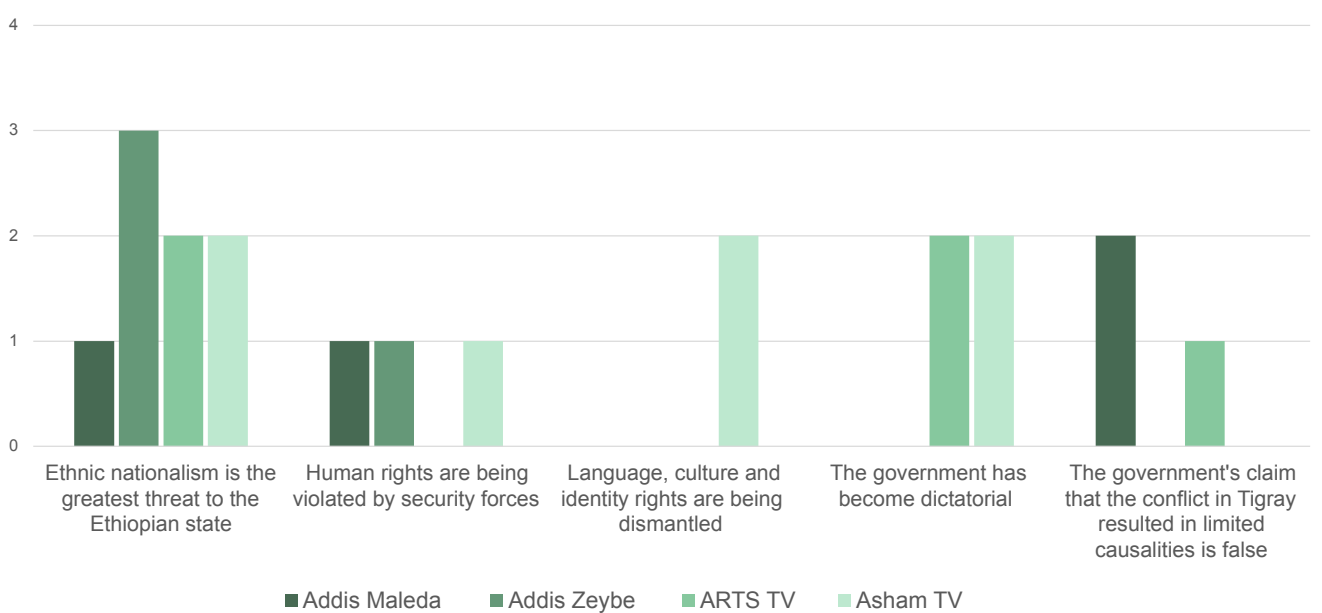# FIGURE X: FREQUENCY OF PRIMED PARTNER ITEMS FOR KEY THEMES

Legend: Addis Maleda, Addis Zeybe, ARTS TV, Asham TV

FIGURE XI: FREQUENCY OF PRIMED PARTNER ITEMS FOR KEY NARRATIVES

Legend: Addis Maleda, Addis Zeybe, ARTS TV, Asham TV

REFLECTIONS ON PRIMED MEDIA PARTNERS

The following are our reflections on these PRIMED partners, based on our research:

ARTS TV: ARTS TV stands out as a consistent producer of quality content. In a media ecosystem where partisan and sensational media attract the most followers, the popularity and the positive civic scores assigned to the ARTS TV news items analyzed in this study show that credible, ethical, balanced, and professional journalism is attractive to Ethiopians. With flagship programs such as Dereje Haile's Benegerachin Laay and Melaku Birhanu's Abiy Guday, ARTS TV is one of the few television stations that is successfully demonstrating the possibilities of civil discourse in an otherwise hostile political climate.

Asham TV: Items analyzed from Asham TV were consistently assigned high civic impact scores. The television station is particularly notable for its progressive outlook on societal issues, including women's empowerment. Compared to its peers, however, Asham TV's YouTube channel appears to garner a significantly smaller following. While its programs are highly rated, one key element observed in the segments analyzed in the study is that the language deployed in some of the discussions may be construed as "elitist" or "academic," which may be one factor contributing to the relatively modest following of the television station's productions.

Addis Zeybe:[19] Addis Zeybe is the only PRIMED media partner which had a media item receiving a negative civic impact score (the item had poorly constructed arguments which lacked solid supporting evidence). Some items analyzed did demonstrate more in-depth analysis, but many items in the dataset were not very sophisticated and simply reported on a topic without much investigation. In addition to reporting on current affairs, Addis Zeybe provides original fact-checking articles which do a good job of showcasing supporting evidence.

Addis Maleda: Items analyzed from Addis Maleda comprised incisive, comprehensive, well-researched, evidence-based reporting as well as more perfunctory reports on specific events, with a focus on bringing under-reported topics to public attention and seeking official accountability. Over-reliance on elite sourcing, and a lack of victim testimonies in conflict-related media items analyzed somewhat marred the integrity of this coverage. The Addis Maleda items analyzed also had very limited interactions on social media, despite their overall quality.

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[19] Most items researched from Addis Zeybe were English language articles, with two items in Amharic. Further research could investigate whether there are any significant differences between the English and Amharic content.

MEDIA ITEMS

DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA SET

The 336 items, representing 91 media sources in the data set, are clarifying examples that help users to understand the Ethiopian media ecosystem. The media item dataset is primarily composed of Amharic, English, Afam Oromo and Tigrinya items (see Figure XII).
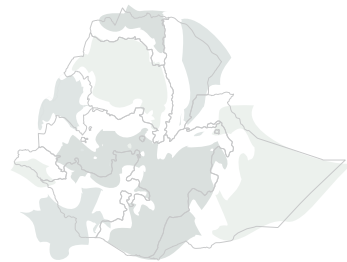
FIGURE XII: LANGUAGES REPRESENTED IN MEDIA ITEMS

- Amharic 50.3%)
- English (24.1%)
- Afan Oromo (10.4%)
- Tigrinya (9.8%)
- Sidama (4.8%)
- Somali (0.6%)
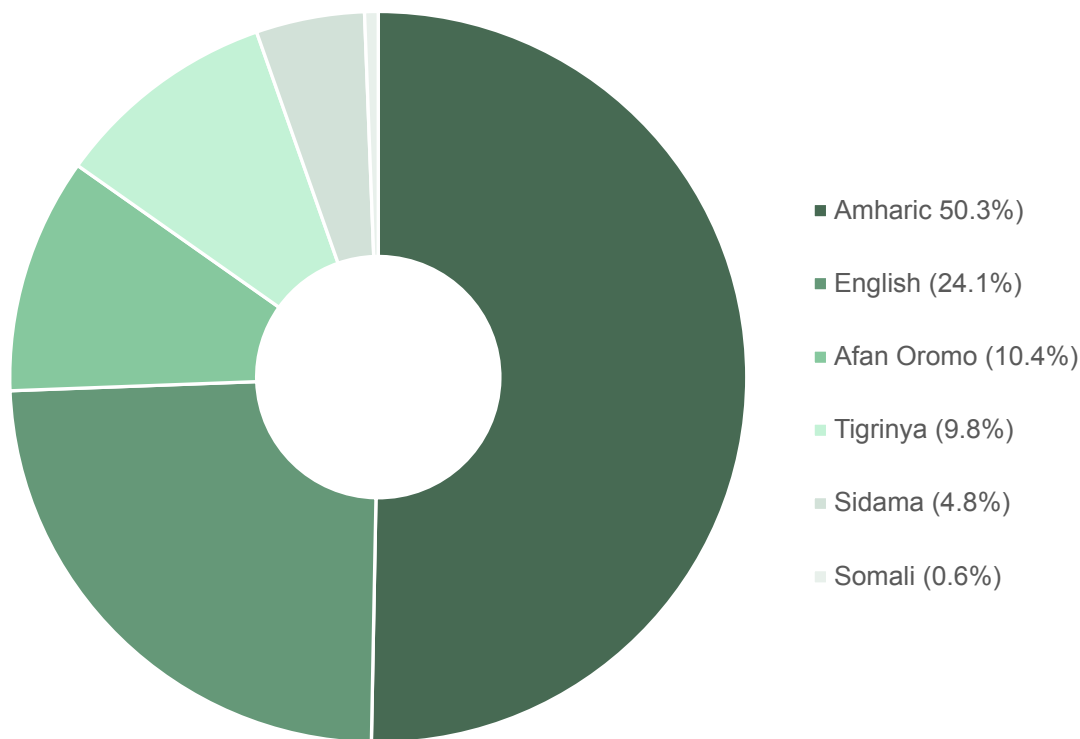
PORTRAYAL OF GENDER IN THE DATASET

A gender analysis component was added to the research scope during the February-March 2021 research period.[20] Questions were adapted from indicators for gender content monitoring from the Global Media Monitoring Project.

For each media item, researchers responded to the following seven prompts:
→ Does the story highlight gender issues?
→ Are women interviewed or quoted in the story?
→ Are women subjects interviewed for their knowledge and expertise in the story?
→ Are women treated as experts when the story's subject is not about women's and children's issues?
→ Are the subjects of the story described in terms of family relationships?
→ In images, video, and other graphics, how are women depicted?
→ What is the gender of the journalist/reporter/author of this media item?

[20] This gender analysis was requested by the BBC Media Action team after the first June to August 2020 research was completed.

Please note that the gender analysis was ancillary and not the primary focus of analysis. Of the complete data set, we completed gender analysis on 262 items. Following is a breakdown of findings:

→ 13.7% of journalists or reporters identified as women,[21] 59.2% of the authors were men, and for 22.9% of the items, researchers were unable to identify the gender of the creator. In the remaining 4.2% of items this question was not applicable

→ In 8% of the media items, the subjects of the story were described in terms of family relationships. This question was not applicable for 25.6% of items[22]

→ Of the 39 items that featured images of women, 69.2% of the women were described as professional or expert

→ 13.8% of the total number of items interview or quote a woman

→ 19.5% of the media items analyzed focused on gender issues. Of those 51 items, 49.0% interview or quote a woman. Of the 211 items that did not focus on gender issues, only 5.2% interview or quote a woman

→ In the 36 items in which a woman was quoted or interviewed, 80.6% of the time women subjects were interviewed for their knowledge or expertise. When the story's subject was not about women's and children's issues, women were treated as experts 72.2% of the time

While this selection should not be taken as a comprehensive gender analysis, it does highlight the gaps in female representation both as authors and interviewees within the dataset. Additionally, this analysis, following the methods of the Global Media Monitoring Project, does not attempt analysis of other gender descriptors. Global Voices recommends that any in-depth gender analysis include methods for parsing representation of non-binary gender identities.

CIVIC IMPACT SCORE AND MEDIA ITEMS

In the dataset, 3.6% of items were assigned a -3 civic impact score; 11.3% a -2 score; 18.8% a -1 score; 7.7% a 0 score; 34.5% a +1 score; 20.8% a +2 score; and 3.3% a +3 score (see Figure XIII).

95.2% of items analyzed were either editorial or social media items, with 129 editorial items and 191 social media items.[23] Fourteen "Other: online" and two "Other: offline" items were selected for analysis (see Appendix B for term definitions). Across media item type, researchers tended to score editorial media items more positively than social media items. Social media items had the highest percentage of negatively scored items

(Figure XIV). 73.6% of all editorial items received a +1, +2 or +3 score, compared to 47.6% for social media items, and 47.1% of all social media items scored either a -1, -2

---

[21] If a media item had multiple authors and one was identified as a woman, we classed the media item as having a woman author. Our analysis only allowed for a single select dropdown.

[22] This also included male subjects referred to in terms of family relationships as well as female subjects.

[23] Media item type is determined by where (platform, website, source) the media item is found. For example, editorial media items are items produced by an editorial media source and published on an editorial media sources own platform whether that be a newspaper, website, broadcast channel. While social media items are found on social media platforms, they could be authored by editorial sources.

or -3, compared to only 13.2% of all editorial media items. While suggestive, this discrepancy is a only a starting point for further analysis, and not conclusive evidence that social media are "worse" than editorial media. This is especially true because broadcast media items are, in the data set, often captured in the social media category, when they are distributed or shared on Facebook and YouTube.[24]

A plurality of the items in the June-August 2020 data set respond to the June 29, 2020 assassination of Oromo singer and activist Hachalu Hundessa. The items illustrate events both immediately prior to, and during and after the assassination. Researchers analyzed media items at a time of heightened tension/violence in Ethiopia.

The context of an item also influences judgments about its civic impact score. Researchers consider reach and popularity, the specificity of language, use of images and the context in which they appear. Seemingly innocuous ideas, words and images may produce highly negative effects in specific contexts.

FIGURE XIII: CIVIC IMPACT SCORE PERCENTAGE ALL ITEMS

| 4% | 11% | 19% | 8% | 35% | 21% | 3% |

■ -3 Highly negative   ■ -2   ■ -1   □ 0   ■ 1   ■ 2   ■ 3 Highly positive
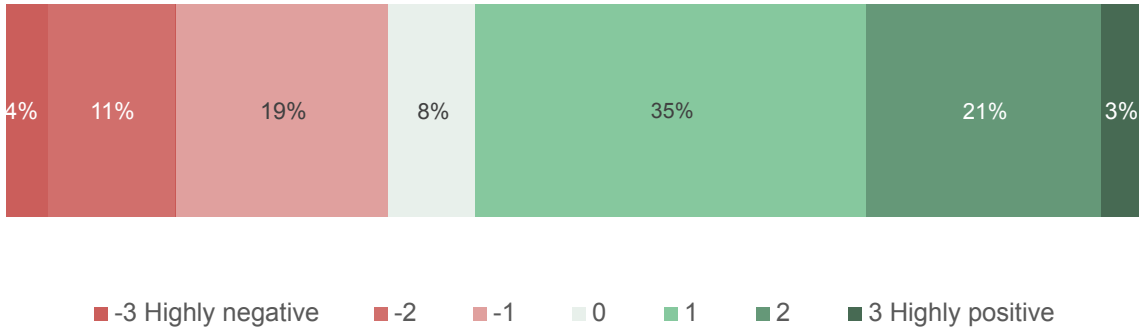
FIGURE XIV: MEDIA ITEM TYPE AND CIVIC IMPACT SCORE

Editorial media: 2% | 12% | 13% | 39% | 30% | 5%
Social media: 5% | 18% | 24% | 5% | 31% | 15% | 2%
Other: online: 21% | 14% | 36% | 21% | 7%
Other: offline: 100%

■ -3 Highly negative   ■ -2   ■ -1   □ 0   ■ 1   ■ 2   ■ 3 Highly positive

_____

[24] While 100% of Other: offline items scored a +1, there were only two items classified as such so we cannot make any broad claims about this item type category.

GlobalVoices
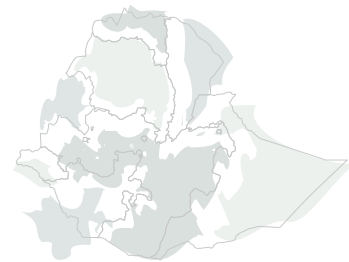
Civic Media Observatory: Ethiopia 2021 Submission Form

The following form allows you to submit a full analysis of an item to the observatory.

Your name *

Your e-mail address *

Title or headline of item in original language *

Translation of title or headline into English

What type of item is this?

○ Editorial media

○ Social media

○ Other: online

○ Other: offline

URL

If this item is online, please give the full web link for it.

[   ]

Screenshot or attachment

📎 **Attach file**

⊕ Drop files here

Author or creator

Use this field to identify the real name of the author or creator.

[   ]

Alias or online identity

Use this field to identify corporate authors/creators such as "Reuters" or "BBC," social media identities such as Twitter handles, avatar names, pseudonyms or similar.

[   ]

Which media source is it found in?

If the media source is not listed here, please add a 'NEW MEDIA SOURCE' note in the box above describing this source and providing the URL. The observatory team will then add it.

+ Add

Primary media item language

State the main language used in this item. If multiple languages are in use, include this in the description.

[▾]

Does this item relate to a specific location?

This field refers to any location that is meaningful in order to understand the item. It may include both the location of events described, and a dateline.

+ Add

On what date was it published or created?

mm/dd/yyyy

How did you find this item?

State the process by which you found the item, such as "in my newsfeed," "Google search", "Crowdtangle search," "Shared on Twitter." For searches, please share the search term used.

English-language summary description of the media item. *

Please provide a short English-language summary description of the item. For example: "This is a mainstream media story about X, using tone Y" or "This is a poster found in Z on date A focussed on B." Assume the reader has only general knowledge of the subject.

Non-English language item description

Field for analysts working in languages other than English.

Please provide a short summary description of the item. For example: "This is a mainstream media story about X, using tone Y" or "This is a poster found in Z on date A focussed on B." Assume the reader has only general knowledge of the subject.

Please set a priority level for this item. *

High priority = complete form and take action as soon as possible.

Normal = complete as part of normal work process.

Low priority = option to archive after completion of metadata fields

- ○ High priority
- ○ Normal
- ○ Low priority

Is there a specific member of the observatory team who should look at this next?

If you are part of the observatory team, you can assign to yourself.

[▾]

What do you want them to do?

[▾]

=== Analysis Section ===

The following questions will ask you to provide an assessment of the item, drawing where relevant, on your contextual knowledge and local expertise.

☐

What are the themes represented by the item?

If the theme you require is not here, or if no theme is appropriate, either the item is not in the scope of research, or suggest a new theme to the project lead/editor.

[+ Add]

Which narrative frames are in use in this item?

Select a narrative frame from the predefined list. If no frame is appropriate, either the item is not in the scope of research, or suggest a new frame to the project lead/editor.

[+ Add]

How familiar are you with the themes or events referred to in this item?

The following questions will ask you to provide an assessment of the item, drawing where relevant, on your contextual knowledge and local expertise.

○ Not at all

○ Somewhat

○ Very

Are you analysing this item as an example of a wider cultural phenomenon?

A cultural phenomenon may take the form of a widely distributed meme, image, or trope. If your analysis looks at the phenomenon and how it has spread, rather than the person or media source sharing it, then the answer is Yes.

[▾]

If there is contextual information about this item that a general reader would miss, please describe it.

Contextual information is historical, social and other related information that deepens our understanding of the item.

It also includes the external layout/environment in which the item is found. For example, the item may be presented alongside other items that have a different message, such as links to other stories, photographs or graphics. Do the comments on the item affect the impact it might have on its audience? Is the timing of publication significant in a way that changes the surface meaning of the item?

[   ]

If there is subtextual information in this item that a general reader would miss, please describe it.

Subtextual information is implicit or implied information that emerges in framing and rhetoric. Metaphoric or coded meanings and messages are almost always present in language and images.

[   ]

How clearly does the author or creator indicate their values?

This analysis is most applicable for social media items. Look at creator profile texts, linked profiles and followed profiles or pages.

○ Not at all

○ Somewhat

○ Very

Is the item consistent with the author or creator's values, and/or with other items from this author or creator?

If the answer to the previous question "How clearly does the author or creator indicate its values?" is very, please answer whether this item is consistent with those values.

If the answer to the previous question is somewhat or not at all, please answer whether the item is consistent with other items from the author or creator.

○ Not at all

○ Somewhat

○ Very

Is the creator's intent clear?

Use your knowledge about the item's context and subtext, which may not be evident to a general audience.

○ No

○ Unable to judge

○ Yes

Are the claims made in the item supported?

A "claim" is an assertion of truth or factuality. Claims should be supported with evidence. This question asks only if evidence for a claim is present, not whether that evidence is correct.

Look for quotes, photos, links, evidence, and other supporting materials.

○ No

○ Unable to judge

○ Yes

How clearly does the author or creator indicate their values?

This analysis is most applicable for social media items. Look at creator profile texts, linked profiles and followed profiles or pages.

- ○ Not at all
- ○ Somewhat
- ○ Very

Is the item consistent with the author or creator's values, and/or with other items from this author or creator?

If the answer to the previous question "How clearly does the author or creator indicate its values?" is very, please answer whether this item is consistent with those values.

If the answer to the previous question is somewhat or not at all, please answer whether the item is consistent with other items from the author or creator.

- ○ Not at all
- ○ Somewhat
- ○ Very

Is the creator's intent clear?

Use your knowledge about the item's context and subtext, which may not be evident to a general audience.

- ○ No
- ○ Unable to judge
- ○ Yes

Are the claims made in the item supported?

A "claim" is an assertion of truth or factuality. Claims should be supported with evidence. This question asks only if evidence for a claim is present, not whether that evidence is correct.

Look for quotes, photos, links, evidence, and other supporting materials.

- ○ No
- ○ Unable to judge
- ○ Yes

Are the key claims made in the item true?

This question addresses the factuality and accuracy of claims.

Use your contextual knowledge to answer. This question does not require you to carry out a full fact–check.

- ○ No
- ○ Unable to judge
- ○ Yes

What trends are related to this item?

Trends are phenomena related to how items are created or shared, to the use of symbols, trending language, memes, or similar behaviors.

+ Add

Related Items

This field is for links to related media items that help to build context. We do not expect to analyze them. This is also a space to link to related Global Voices stories.

+ Add

How would you assess the civic impact of this item?

Ratings at either end of the scale are more likely to require action.

- ○ -3 Highly negative
- ○ -2
- ○ -1
- ○ 0
- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3 Highly positive

Please describe why you've assigned this Civic Impact score and any possible impact/s this media item could have.

Describe why this item deserves the Civic Impact score you've assigned. For example, if an item is a -3, what harm may it cause? If an item is a -2, what is harmful or what impacts will the misinforming material have on society?

When discussing the possible impact/s of the media item, describe what the effects of the item may be. For items that have not yet had real-world impact, use your contextual and local knowledge to imagine what the impact would be. Be sure to describe the impact of the media item not the impact of the topic/what the item discusses.

It may be helpful to begins sentences with "This item is likely to…" or "This item bolsters the idea that…."

BBC Gender: Does the story highlight gender issues?

○ Yes

○ No

BBC Gender: Are women interviewed or quoted in the story?

○ Yes

○ No

BBC Gender: Are women subjects interviewed for their knowledge and expertise in the story?

For example, are women being quoted or interviewed as experts on a certain topic to add to the understanding of said topic

○ Yes

○ No

○ Not applicable

BBC Gender: Are women treated as experts when the story's subject is not about women's and children's issues?

For example, are women being treated as experts on topics not about childcare, gender-based violence, women's health, gender divides, etc

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not applicable

BBC Gender: Are the subjects of the story described in terms of family relationships? (e.g. wife, husband, daughter, son, aunt, uncles, grandmother, grandfather, etc)

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Not applicable

BBC Gender: In images, video, and other graphics, how are women depicted?

You may select multiple options

- ☐ Traditional family roles
- ☐ Sexualized
- ☐ Professional/expert
- ☐ Not applicable

BBC Gender: What is the gender of the journalist/reporter/author of this media item?

- ◯ Woman
- ◯ Man
- ◯ Other
- ◯ Do not know
- ◯ Not applicable

What forms of action should we consider for this item?

- Archive it: this means you aren't planning more research on the item
- Strategic silence: you might keep following this creator/author, but you aren't planning to share or write a story about it
- Use within a data visualization: please suggest what kind of visualization you imagine. Otherwise don't use this one
- Carry out further research: you are going to do more work on the topic, theme, frame, media source, author or other significant element of the story. Maybe create a trend in the Trend table
- Pass to a partner: suggest which partner. This is a good one if you want the item included in a report, for example
- Pass to an authority: state which authority, and why
- Share it: Say how you will share
- Write a story: enter a story into the Story table, or attach the item to an existing story. ONLY choose this if you will work on a story

Select an option

Please provide a description of any recommended actions.

Describe what you plan to do. Suggested actions require follow-through. For example, if the recommendation is to write a story, then include this item in the "Stories" database. If the recommendation is to conduct more research, then the item should be a research priority.

Included in stories

If the suggested action is to write a story, or if this item should be linked to one or more draft or completed stories, please fill out this field.

+ Add

If you do a deep reading and annotation of the item, record your observations here.

If you do a deep reading and annotation of the item, record your observations here. A deep reading will involve close textual or image analysis.

This may be based on a deep reading using hypothes.is, or may be your reactions as an expert observer. Think about how you would explain this item to someone who does not know the context.

Are there any other notes you would like the observatory team
to consider in relation to this item?

Use this field to record any notes that may help researchers to interpret
this item, or understand the research process underway or undertaken.

Full text (English)

Full text (Media item language)

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Civic impact score   A normative measure based on qualitative evaluation, to categorize media items by potential benefit or harm to civic discourse, in accordance with international human rights norms.

Editorial media   Any media source with some form of editorial process. It includes both online and offline publications (newspapers, magazines, television stations, radio stations), as well as large and small media outlets.

Media item or item   Social and other online media, editorial media and offline content researchers are analysing and collecting data on (article, tweet, video, blog post, etc.). It is referred to as the media item or item.

Media source   For the purposes of the CMO, a media source is the medium in which researchers found the item. Media sources include but are not limited to: social media platforms (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Weibo, Reddit), online editorial media, print editorial media, and blogs.

Narrative frame   Narrative frames are dominant narratives used to describe and debate themes, meant to help analyze ongoing events. Frames are contextual and may evolve. How people and sources are discussing themes.

Other: offline   All media that are found offline, including books and other publications, posters, graffiti, images, merchandise, advertisements. The category also includes mass media that have only an offline presence, such as religious television channels.

Other: online   Non-social media and non-editorial online content. This includes media aggregators, forums, blog networks, commerce, educational and NGO websites.

Social media   Social media platforms (YouTube, Telegram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and other media sources that provide a platform function and forums for expression and dialogue.

Theme   Themes are events, subjects, or phenomena that guide the scope of the observatory investigations. What people and sources are discussing.

BIAS AND IDEOLOGICAL LEANING TERMS

Amhara leaning
Supporting ideas of pro-Amhara opposition political groups that are associated with Amhara nationalism. Amhara leaning is sometimes aligned with Ethiopianist ideology.

Ethiopianist leaning
Supporting ideas of Ethiopianists, also called the pro-unity camp. Ethiopianists emphasize the importance of unity and peaceful harmony in Ethiopia and are accused by the Federalist camp of being assimilationist.

Federalist leaning
Supporting the ideas of Federalist ideology within Ethiopia. Federalists advocate for greater regional autonomy and are accused of weakening the federal government by fomenting inter-ethnic rivalries. They are also criticized for disenfranchising ethnic and religious minorities who live in the autonomous region of Ethiopia.

Journalistic integrity
Allegiance to epistemic knowledge based on sound journalistic practice.

Neutral tone
Absence, in a media item, of any strong underlying ideology or bias.

Oromo leaning
Supporting ideas of Oromo nationalism and, in some cases, Oromo opposition groups/parties, including the OLF and OFC. Oromo learning is sometimes aligned with more Federalist ideologies of greater regional autonomy.

Prosperity Party leaning
Supporting ideas of the currently ruling Prosperity Party. Prosperity Party leaning is pro-government and can sometimes also include an Ethiopianist ideology.

Religious angle
Supporting religious ideologies, including religious sources that have an Islamic foundation. Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church content, or content that leans towards the teachings of prosperity gospel, which emphasizes that the financial blessing and physical well-being of Protestant Christians are always due to the will of God.

TPLF leaning
Supports ideas of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). This TPLF leaning is often aligned with more Federalist ideologies of greater regional autonomy.

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