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Journalists' safety in Ethiopia:
An inquiry of influences, coping mechanisms,
and the role of professional associations

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Abstract

Hostility against journalists has intensified around the globe, more so in insecure democracies. Different facades of influences on media and journalists mean constraints on journalistic content. Accordingly, this thesis attempts to harness influences and journalists' safety in Ethiopia, thereby what this bears in news production as journalists grapple with diverse influences and hostilities. The thesis also tries to explain the role played by three journalistic associations in putting a wall of protection around journalists. To achieve this, qualitative research is espoused. The thesis adopted purposive sampling in order to catch journalists who encountered hostility. Twenty-three journalists and three professional association presidents were drawn through semi-structured interviews. Participants are varied across media ownership, in which the 23 journalists work under 12 media institutions (state, private, and transnational) and practice journalism in print, broadcast, and online media. While thematic analysis is employed to synthesise and reiterate research questions, conceptual framework, and data, coding is accomplished through MaxQDA.

Results reveal that ethnicity, which mirrors the political setting, influences journalism practice, which stretches to how media institutions assign reporters to cover news stories and curtails investigative reporting. Discriminatory provision of access to information is an added predicament for journalists working in private and transnational media. The war in northern Ethiopia is explained as having an adverse effect on the achievements to media freedom gained after the 2018 political change in the country. A few participants have been through a near-death experience as they faced torture, while several have encountered abduction, arbitrary arrests, and verbal abuse. When journalists get a chance to appear before a court of law, they are often slammed with bogus charges such as "terrorism" and "defilement of the Constitution". Women journalists are especially targeted in digital harassment, and journalists working in transnational media are labelled as "traitors" who "sell" their country for dollars.

For the most part, hostility against journalists is piled up by different bodies of government. The state apparatus goes to great lengths to assault, discredit, and silence journalists, mainly working in private media. The lack of prosecution against attacks and perpetrators of violence creates further insecurity for journalists. Journalists explain that attacks bear the brunt of their personal and financial well-being and professional credibility. This also indicates that attacks

on journalists are formed against what they endeavour to embody and accomplish in their occupation. Journalists practice self-censorship and procrastination with cross-ownership nuances to mitigate hostility toward themselves and their media business. This is true for many participants in this study. While organisational and routine level influence is used in full force to winnow, acquiesce, and silence journalists in state media, assorted hostility committed against journalists in private and transnational media explains submission. However, a few journalists defy hostilities and showed epitomes of resistance against the writing on the wall. Journalistic associations' efforts in organising capacity-building mechanisms, condemning assaults on news workers, and establishing an ombudsman are noble steps, while power dynamics still overwhelm their exertion. Finally, the thesis suggests that studies about journalists' safety in insecure democracies need to investigate the seriousness of hostility factors in spite of enshrined press freedom laws and examine how media resilience can be achieved within this context.

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List of Acronyms

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

CARD – Center for Advancement of Rights and Democracy

CPJ – Committee to Protect Journalists

EBC – Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation

EMA – Ethiopian Media Authority

EMC – Ethiopian Media Council

EMMPA – Ethiopian Mass Media Professionals' Association

EMWA – Ethiopian Media Women's Association

ENA – Ethiopian News Agency

EPA – Ethiopian Press Agency

EPDM – Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement

EPRDF – Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

FBC – Fana Broadcasting Corporate

FDRE – Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

NSD – Norwegian Data Protection Authority

OLF – Oromo Liberation Front

OPDO – Oromo People's Democratic Organisation

RSF – Reporters Without Boarders

TPLF – Tigray People's Liberation Front

UDHR – Universal Declaration on Human Rights

UN – The United Nations

UNESCO – The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation

US – The United States

WJS – Worlds of Journalism Study

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Chapter 1: Introduction

5.1 Introduction

This chapter lays the context of the study: political and media scenery in Ethiopia. In doing so, I will discuss the contemporary political situation and transition in light of press freedom and self-censorship practices during the last three decades by stirring topics related to media regulation and systemic and non-systemic use of forces against journalists. I will also raise the study's questions, scope, and motivation.

5.2 Transitional polity, conflict, and media setting in Ethiopia after 1991

Ethiopia is a nation known for its paradoxical antiques. On one side, it is a nation recognisable for sparkling Axumite civilisation, pertaining to its unique calendar, defeating Italian colonisation, and stimulating Pan-Africanism (Ficquet & Feyissa 2015; Tibebu 1996), and on the other side, the country's name is associated with internal conflict and hunger (Cohen & Pinstrup-Andersen 1999; Hancock 1985). The country is now home to over 120 million inhabitants (UN 2022), making it the second most populous country in the continent after Nigeria.

Ethiopia's off-the-cuff 21st-century trip through imperial, military, and federal republic polity was accomplished through carnage (Van der Beken 2007). Its last emperor, Haile Selassie I, was overthrown by a military coup that ruled the country until 1991. Ignited by the 1974 student revolution (Lemma 1979), the Derg regime pursued the creation of an indigenous institutional structure, drastically reorganising the economic basis of state power and a selective widening of the base for political representation (Clapham 1989, 6).

Post-Derg Ethiopia, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) coalition and its regional fiefdoms Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), and Oromo People's Democratic Organisation (OPDO) anchored self-determination and recognition of "nationalities" to provide political representation (Clapham 1992). After taking power from the Derg regime through armed struggle, twenty years of EPRDF's journey showed intolerance of political pluralism and civil and political rights. Hagmann and Abbink (2012) point out that through "revolutionary democracy", EPRDF provisioned syncretistic political ideology of pre-1991 and post-1991. A

mix of revolutionary and liberal democracy notions resulted in two-footed doctrinal ambiguity but remained a means of struggle against domestic and foreign adversaries (Batch 2012). Underlining an instrumental use of ethnic politics to "divide and rule", Gudina (2012) holds that EPRDF turned into a "new authoritarianism".

Gebeye (2021) argues that federalism logic has played a role in syncretism by accommodating and holding together diverse ethnic groups and religions in Ethiopia. Although ethnic federalism might have changed state-building for good (Abbay 2004), such state formation process is intertwined with state-making and ethno-nationalist movements and conflicts have been evidenced throughout the last decade (Mekonnen 2019). A case in point is a rising quest to form new regional states stirred by ethnic-national self-administration. This linguistic and cultural manifestation of a political setting and ethnoterritorial aspiration has resulted in the tenth regional state of Ethiopia, Sidama (Asnake et al. 2021) besides the nine regional states and two city administrations formed in the 1995 Constitution. The Wolaita people are the latest to submit a request for self-administration at a regional state level (Cochrane & Bekele 2019).

To this great nation, or at least once was, notions of freedom of expression and the press were alien for long. After the demise of monarchy and socialism, Ethiopia ratified international covenants in the 1900s. Hence, the present study's point of departure is the political change of 1991; the underlying factor for such a position is the legal framework for freedom of expression and press as enshrined in the 1995 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution (Timothewos 2010). The liberalisation of freedom of expression was unprecedented (Stremlau 2011). Article 29 of the 1995 FDRE Constitution confers the right of thought, opinion, and expression. In its sub-articles, Article 29 guarantees everyone's right to hold opinions and freedom of expression without interference, regardless of frontiers and media choice. Censorship is prohibited, and access to public interest information, including legal protection for the press, is guaranteed. However, sub-article 6 cites that freedom of expression can be infringed to "protect the youth, and the honour and reputation of individuals" and prohibits "propaganda for war as well as expression of opinion to injure human dignity". Between the lines, limiting freedom of expression is justified for protecting other rights such as Article 24, "right to honour and reputation".

Also relevant for the present study (in view of hostilities some journalists in this study faced) are all human rights enshrined in the Ethiopian Constitution, chapter three (from Article 13 to

28). In addition, the Constitution, under article 9 (4), captures that "all international agreements ratified by Ethiopia are an integral part of the law of the land". This will include international covenants and, most importantly, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (UN Treaty Body Status n.d.), which guarantees international freedom of expression and the press. Article 13 (2) of the Constitution also cherishes human rights, including their scope and application, shall be interpreted in conformity with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) and ICCPR. Therefore, the current study is undertaken in view of this legal scope and guarantees for human rights, freedom of expression, and press freedom.

The EPRDF-led government, through ethnic ideology, brought accomplishments and threats (Abbink 2006; 2011). Donors' money from Western countries and the United States in its security alliance against terrorism in the Horn of Africa backed development in Ethiopia while China's cooperation also contributed to economic and infrastructural growth (Abbink 2017). The tactic, advocated by the late Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, has gained the attention of some of Africa's leaders, whereby media and new communication technologies have been reframed as enablers for achieving accelerated nation-state development (Gagliardone & Stremlau 2015). Following this, the government causes censorship, ensures and reinforces media and communication's provision to developmental goals in what is regarded as a "developmental media system" (Gagliardone 2014).

The resurfacing of "development journalism" as a policy in Ethiopia saw mixed authoritarian and liberal thoughts and a newsroom larded with an ambiguity of the concept and challenged in practice by a "change-agent" journalist (Skjerdal 2011). In line with this, journalists in Ethiopia perceive their role as collaborative of government where both work hand in hand for common national development goals (Hanitzsch & Vos et al. 2019; Skjerdal 2017).

The political context, by and large, has called for ethnic animosity among Ethiopians and, in turn, ensnared ethicised media sphere and has spurred ethnic-based media along with their audiences and causes. Setting aside professionalism, this has divulged media houses to an ethnic drive to be their reporting tenets, giving birth to polarised media and audiences offline and online (Gagliardone et al. 2016; Skjerdal & Moges 2020).

Past and present, safety of journalists is another concern in Ethiopia. In the aftermath of the 2005 election, the then guerrilla fighter turned government EPRDF was engaged in a

crackdown on media and opposition parties and showed intolerance towards opposing views (Aalen & Tronvoll 2009; Human Rights Watch 2005; Stremlau 2018). Media suppression had been facilitated by draconian laws promulgated especially post the election. Using legal covers, the government jailed journalists, including Zone 9 bloggers, forced more than forty journalists into exile, and waylaid the rest to self-censorship (Mengesha 2016). Journalists and newspaper vendors, mainly from the private press, suffered harassment, assault, and jail. While many independent media had been forced to close, self-censorship persisted (Abbink 2017; Gagliardone & Stremlau 2015). Yet again, the non-event 2015 election saw a nearly 100 per cent win for the EPRDF coalition.

In his book "Genocide of Thought", Handiso (2015) writes about how the government in Ethiopia systematically strained and undermined the entire journalism corps by restraining and cancelling licenses, limiting income, and suppressing professional routine. Despite the constitutional backdrop, this has deprived Ethiopians of the fruits of access to impartial, credible, and quality journalism and curtailed the media's role in democratisation and development. Private media are exposed to self-censorship through fear of prosecution, depriving them of financial credits, and incapacitating professional associations. In line with this, journalists in Ethiopia have four options: self-censorship, prison, exile, or reporting government narratives (Handiso 2015, 37). The remaining press works under intimidation, threats, and prosecution. As a result, the media sphere in Ethiopia fails to foster democracy and development.

Since restrictive state politics and the criminalisation of journalistic practice silenced dissent and stifled media freedom, this also has a lessening effect on media plurality. Much of the population outside the cities would not even have access to the few "independent" newspapers whose circulation is limited to the capital.

5.3 Abiy Ahmed's honeymoon in post-EPRDF Ethiopia

Following a government change in 2018, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took ritzy measures such as freeing detained journalists, unblocking websites, welcoming clandestine media, and liberalising telecom services (Collins 2022; RSF 2019). However, a sustainable change appears yet to be substantiated. In addition, old and emerging fundamental challenges and crises have left Ethiopia in an abyss of mayhem. Besides the old saga between nationality and class

questions, decentralised violence, the proliferation of militant youth movements, and internal displacement undermine prospects of peace and transformation (Gebrewahd 2019, 47).

Tossing away EPRDF's "revolutionary democracy," shaping an alternative ideology of "*Medemer*" (Synergy), and creating the "Prosperity Party" could be considered as implements of counter-hegemony (Woldeyesus & Endris 2021). Nevertheless, Woldeyesus and Endris (2021) argue that Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed produced a cosmetic momentum best explained by the Gramscian interregnum concept, signifying a situation where the old regime is dying, but the new is not born. Particularly in the wake of the war in northern Ethiopia, Rachman (2022) argues that Abiy retreated from his political liberalism and became "a despotic strongman ruler" as his government started arresting and torturing journalists and political opposition. The antecedents of the 2005 election and the 2018 political transition resonate in that both presented an evanescent political opening and left to unseized opportunities. The deteriorating positive developments indicate how the new government might have played fast and loose with media freedom.

Moreover, besides political transition, the new conflict which broke out in northern Ethiopia in November 2020 fetched new pressure on journalists. For instance, the Ethiopian National Defence Force released a statement to warn the media, saying, "echoing negative and false information and disseminating the movements of the army through various means of communication consciously or otherwise will not be tolerated," and promising they would face legal actions and "necessary measures" (FBC 2022).

Beyond doubt, these hostile engagements have a chilling effect on the media, including guiding a message to those working in the state media to self-censor. Currently, under the rule of a Nobel Prize winner, several journalists are detained, arrested, and regularly assaulted in relation to reporting the conflict. By 2021, journalists from independent media such as Oromia Media Network, Nabad TV, Ahadu Radio and Television, Oromia News Network, and Nation Media Group were imprisoned (CPJ 2021). The situation became worse in 2022, when there were constant rearrests and rounding off local and foreign journalists from *Los Angeles Times*, *Financial Times*, Associated Press, BBC, Ethiopia Insight, Ethio Forum, Awlo Media and Roha Media, including YouTube-based journalists Gobezie Sisay and Meaza Mohammed (CPJ 2022; RSF 2022a). The northern Ethiopian war and other recurrent conflicts put journalists under duress from many actors, adding fuel to the fire. Reporting this conflict has been nearly

impossible for foreign journalists as combatants aim to control professionals (Matheson 2023). Regardless, research must thoroughly behold the influences on media houses and journalists due to how the new government interacts with and affects journalistic practice considering self-censorship.

Significantly, past and continuing different forms of systemic self-censorship: "development journalism" model, editorial policy, and fear of retribution (Skjerdal 2008; 2011), government public relations (Mohammed 2021), ethnic enthused non-state actors (Workneh 2021), ethnicity and recurrent ethnic conflicts, and proclamations such as "Anti-terrorism" and "Anti-fake news" hem in the Ethiopian media sphere. These personal justifications, in-house practices, and legal and extra-legal external pressures will expose and scoop journalists' practice of self-censorship. Overall, this MA thesis will make an effort to assess past changes and examine new developments.

5.4 Contemporary media setting

In its present state, the regulatory institution – Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA), is responsible for registering and licensing print, broadcast, and online-based media organisations under three forms of ownership: public, commercial, and community media. Apparently, besides the nationwide and oldest media organisations, Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation and Ethiopian Press Agency in the capital, all regional states in the country own media institutions (regarded as "public") which disseminate in regional languages for the most part. The 2021 Media Proclamation disguises "Public service broadcasting" to either national or regional level media, which are wholly or substantially financed by government budget and responsible to the House of Peoples' Representative (National media) and Regional Councils (Regional media) (Proclamation No. 1238/2021). The latest form of media category – besides print and broadcasting – is online, and 38 media institutions are registered under this category (EMA 2022).

Another key development is the proliferation of journalistic associations and the inauguration of the Ethiopian Media Council (2016), which holds 61 media institutions as its members. In its goal, the Council envisages ensuring press freedom and investigating complaints (Ethiopian Media Council Strategic Plan 2021-2026). There are 22 professional associations for journalists in Ethiopia, 17 of which were established post-2018 (Moges 2022). According to a report by Center for the Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD), ten of these

associations curate safety of journalists, and seven of them advocate journalistic rights and autonomy (Moges 2022). The associations are identifiable in their focus on journalistic fields, gender, language, etc.; the professionally anchored ones are the Ethiopian Mass Media Professionals' Association (2020) and the Ethiopian Media Women's Association (1999). Therefore, an attempt will be made to shed light on these professional associations' roles in building some wall of protection for media professionals.

Despite the booming number of licensed media institutions, Ethiopia is amongst the lowest regarding media freedom. In 2022, Freedom House ranked Ethiopia as a "Not Free" nation, scoring 10 on political rights and 11 on civil liberties on a scale of 40 and 60, respectively. Following the war in northern Ethiopia, press freedom went sideways for media workers. Ethiopia is indexed 130th based on RSF's five contextual indicators' evaluation: political context (50.25), legal framework (62.64), economic context (43.14), sociocultural context (43.64), and security (38.82) (RSF 2023). The report also highlights challenges of journalistic independence and media landscape in Ethiopia, which are rationalised by polarised media landscape, problematic conflict and media regulation, circumvention of laws, low pay and corruption thereby testing journalists' integrity, ethnic considerations, and abuse of journalists. Although the legal instruments encourage journalists' safety, many are thrown into arbitrary arrests when they do not suit government narratives. In view of the above-addressed notions on the country's political transitions and press freedom records, the present study raises the following four questions.

5.5 Research questions

RQ1: What are the key influences challenging journalistic reporting in Ethiopia?

RQ2: What can explain the absence of journalists' safety in different media ownership settings in Ethiopia?

RQ3: How do journalists cope with hostility during news production?

RQ4: Which role does professional associations play in protecting the journalists?

5.6 Scope of the study

Influences on journalism practice, safety of journalists, and its impact on journalistic content, or in other words, whether journalists engage in self-censorship, is at the heart of this thesis. Considering the research questions raised and feasibility, the study examines hostilities Ethiopian journalists encounter and coping mechanisms journalists utilise. That being said, the

overriding focus is on hardcore journalism, such as news production and investigative reporting. In sampling, an attempt was made to meet representation by considering differences in media ownership and typology, career experience, and gender. In the end, doing so allowed to nuance disparities across the board. The role of journalistic associations, such as in protecting news workers, advocating journalists' safety, and improving self-regulation mechanisms is also part of the scope of the study.

5.7 Significance and motivation of the study

The study is inspired by the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity and journalism's irreplaceable role in fostering democracy and development on the one hand and, on the other, the rise of hostility against journalists around the globe in general and in insecure democracies (e.g. populist leaders name-calling journalists as "enemy of people" in the global North (Carlson, Robinson & Lewis 2021; Reese 2021; Waisbord 2020), and grave hostility in insecure democracies (Benítez 2020; Hughes et al. 2020; Skjerdal 2010).

In its entirety, the present study is not expected to be a breakthrough in Ethiopia as several studies have already been conducted regarding self-censorship (Moges 2017; Skjerdal 2010) and safety from non-state actors (Workneh 2021). However, doing the study provides a command of new pressure trends in the area. With the new government, transitional polity, and new conflict, the intensity of threats against journalists suggests a need to examine new forces and forms of self-censorship across print, broadcast, and online media. Therefore, while this study will add to the robustness of the study area in the country, it will also shed light on the ever-growing online journalism practice, a new dynamism with its ebbs and flows.

Moreover, even though citizens expect good journalism no matter what, in the last couple of years, there have been numerous reports about continuous arrests and harassment of journalists in Ethiopia and worldwide. In this condition, I believe that the locus of the press in and for democracy is challenged, which is best accomplished when journalists do not work under duress and fear.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will reflect on theories relevant for journalistic safety, with a particular focus on self-censorship and pertinent concepts that help to make sense of its practice, specifically "spiral of silence", "perceived influences", and "hierarchy of influences". In addition, I will discuss how self-censorship is practised and safety of journalists at fairs across the globe, thereby espousing disputations in content, forms, and proportion of safety situations and self-censorship practice. Therefore, the objective of this chapter is to set a broader conceptual context and interlocking explication of models in order to help describe how journalists think, what they experience, and how they act. The reflections also succour to explore research questions and drive the data collection and analysis (Clark et al. 2021). But first, it is necessary to approach professionalism in light of sociology of journalism, and news production during conflict.

2.2 Editorial autonomy and sociology of news

The notion credited to Adolph Ochs of the *New York Times* is that journalists must report "without fear or favour" (McManus 1997; Schudson 2001). For journalism to function good – critical reporting and investigative journalism, journalists need freedom, autonomy, and independence. At the same time, such traditions are deeply rooted in libertarianism, which incarnates the concept of the "fourth estate" and watchdog journalism protecting citizens (Schultz 1998; Slavtcheva-Petkova & Bromley 2019; Waisbord 2013). Whereas this receives a legal backdrop, notably in the First Amendment in the US, most countries in post-communism, post-independence, and new democracies after the 1990s introduced positive legal support for press freedom, e.g., the abolishment of formal censorship (Schimpfössl et al. 2020). With worldwide support for the idea of a free press, journalists need space from arbitrary external interference (Hamada et al. 2019) in their day-to-day professional endeavours. However, there is an interlocked notion that stems from voices of decoloniality. Consistent with this argument, some have made a call for "homegrown" journalism like Ubuntu or "Africology" and contextualism instead of using "American" perspectives of journalism (Hafez 2002; Mano & Milton 2021) despite the increased universalisation of watchdog journalism. Another dimension of such argument calls for collaboration between North and South in theorising and researching journalism as a discipline (Mutsvairo & Orgeret 2023).

Journalism does not operate in a vacuum; news production is considered a social construction of reality. News and its making, from the moment an idea echoes through the mind of a journalist to contacting sources and gathering facts, editing, transmission, and even media effects, is predominantly a socially constructed progression and product (Anderson 2013; Hanitzsch & Ramaprasad, et al. 2019; Schudson 1989; Shoemaker & Reese 2014; Tuchman & Barbara 1978; Tuchman 2002; Waisbord 2014). The impression is that news production is the output and input of political, economic, cultural, technological, and similar facets, which ruffles an array of groups and dynamism. Hence, as a socially constructed reality, news production or journalism practice is as good or bad as its context and influences adjoining its production and consumption.

2.3 News production during conflict

Besides the generic influences mentioned earlier, which will be presented in the conceptual framework, conflict can serve as a novel or additional source of influence. Transitional polity, coup d'état, or/and conflict, besides totalitarianism, seem to extend a higher safety threat to journalists, thereby inducing self-censorship (Balguy-Gallois 2004; Høiby & Ottosen 2019; Lee 1998; Pukallus et al. 2020; Stojarová 2020).

During conflict, media could be used to serve a partisan purpose (Khan 1998). Depending on context, coercion appears effective (Phillips 2011), and journalism is challenged to be exploited in the merit of powerful groups (Donohue et al. 1995). While journalists face bottlenecks such as a dearth of sources, being wary of state and public relations propaganda, and context of suspicion during conflicts (Aharoni & Tenenboim-Weinblatt 2019; Lauk & Harro-Loit 2016; Ouariachi & Paralta 2021; Rogers 2012), they could also compromise professional norms (Lauk & Harro-Loit 2016; Ouariachi & Paralta 2021). Zandberg and Neiger (2016, 132), among other scholars who studied news during conflicts, argue that practising journalism becomes contradictory, leaving journalists an uphill task of mediating "the contradiction between their profession and their cultural-national belonging in times of conflict". Thus, Zandberg and Neiger (2016, 139) argue it should be approached in a new way that embraces the "temporary adoption of patriotic tone".

This is debatable as even in the absence of conflict, journalists and media houses are obliged to operate as government loyalists (Skjerdal 2012). In his PhD dissertation, Skjerdal (2012)

describes Ethiopian journalists' competing loyalties under professional, national, and government allegiances. His proposed model encompasses two central competing commitments: loyalty to the profession and the nation.

Indeed, these arguments can also be espoused under individual, organisational, and political influences (Hanitzsch & Ramaprasad et al. 2019). Nevertheless, it is necessary to address such contradiction, as the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia is a spoiler in the media sphere.

2.4 Self-censorship as a concept and practice

Although self-censorship is not a theory in and of itself, there needs to be more clarity in understanding the concept. As a journalistic phenomenon, self-censorship is routinised; it is taught and experienced implicitly or explicitly through public interest, "official reporting style," editor's instruction, angle selection, and repercussions (Skjerdal 2010; Tapsell 2012). In accord, Skjerdal (2010, 99) defines self-censorship as "the withholding of journalistic material due to felt external pressure" from in-house guides and political environments. On a related note, Jungblut and Hoxha (2017, 272) conceptualise self-censorship as a "perceived influence within news production," juxtaposing the phenomenon with journalists' perception. Moreover, self-censorship also has an ownership influence as it could occur when journalists report on owners' agendas instead of comprehensive coverage of topics (Tapsell 2012). Such fear would emanate from an entity with a vested interest whose title is implicated in a news report.

Self-censorship can broadly be defined as:

> a set of editorial actions ranging from omission, dilution, distortion, change of emphasis, to choice of rhetorical devices by journalists, their organizations, and even the entire media community in anticipation of currying reward and avoiding punishment from the power structure. (Lee 1998, 56)

Self-censorship encompasses in-house editorials, external political economy and technological pressures, and audience and society expectations (Lee & Lin 2006). It looks primarily external and repressive exerted on journalists through various tools and ways. Journalists could also practice self-censorship when they believe the need to complement a national interest or development. Hence, it will be viable to discuss different perceived pressures and hierarchies of influences (Hanitzsch & Ramaprasad, et al. 2019; Reese & Shoemaker 2016).

When it comes to its forms, Cook and Heilmann (2013) establish public and private types of self-censorship. According to their elucidations, public self-censorship is a phenomenon that occurs when journalists practice self-censorship in the face of a public censorship regime. In this regard, journalists commit to self-censorship on an awareness of a public censor's presence. On the other hand, private self-censorship happens as a "suppression by an agent of his or her attitudes where a public censor is either absent or irrelevant" (Cook & Heilmann 2013, 179).

Research on safety challenges and consequences illustrates impact on journalistic production (Westlund, Krøvel & Orgeret 2022), more so on freedom of speech and the press (Waisbord 2020).

The level self-censorship is different across beats or issues of coverage. The nature of media content and self-censorship correlates, and assessing what information journalists self-censor more is worth noting. In Pakistan, a study reveals that critical areas of self-censorship include reporting about religious issues (98%) and military and intelligence-related issues (94%) (Jamil 2020a). In Colombia, self-censorship is prevalent in reporting forced displacement, corruption, illegal mining, murder, drug trafficking, and post-conflict threats (Barrios & Miller 2020). The inauspicious practice of self-censorship and censorship in Ethiopia and Kenya (Bowman & Bowman 2016; Moges 2017; Skjerdal 2010) exhibits a change and choice in media content, such as elastic news editing, avoiding ethnic-conflict news topics. As a case in Ethiopia, Handiso (2015) explores the practical limitations of the local media regarding the dearth of reporting mass displacement (hundreds of thousands) in Gambella region in the name of development. Moreover, studies on conflict reporting divulge that journalists who face safety incidents such as kidnappings or assaults are often exposed to superfluous prudence (Høiby & Ottosen 2019; Jungblut & Hoxha 2017). Furthermore, it is foreseeable that investigative journalists will be targeted as investigative reporting usually exposes misdemeanours and corruption, which naturally involve those in political, military, and economic power.

Moreover, technology adds to the practice of self-censorship on two edges: susceptibility to surveillance and as a facilitator of threat because digital media are generally better surveilled. Female journalists are often reported to receive threats and harassing comments via social media (Fadnes, Krøvel, & Larsen 2020). In line with this, a study on American news workers suggests three forms of online harassment: acute (generalised verbal abuse), chronic (occurs

from time to time from the same social media users), and escalators (personalised and directly threatening) harassment (Holton et al. 2021). Reportedly, females receive a higher amount of the latter two forms of harassment. In addition, because there is a lack of systemic efforts on the part of news organisations to address such harassment, journalists are left searching for preventative and palliative coping mechanisms.

Besides generic influences in journalism, one other definitive cause of self-censorship is safety of journalists. Journalists shape or omit stories, angles, sources, and viewpoints in the news production process out of fear of personal and family safety (Fadnes et al. 2020; Jungblut & Hoxha 2017; Skjerdal 2010). Safety of journalists, placed as 2030 Indicator 16.10.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, is emphasised worldwide because of swelling hostility and impunity against journalists. Based on a mandate to defend freedom of expression and press freedom and with an intent to protect journalists, the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in 2021 adopted a declaration demanding Members States to

> *investigate, prosecute and punish threats and acts of violence, falling within their jurisdiction, committed against journalists and media workers… in particular in the context of fighting corruption and organized criminal activities, including in conflict and post-conflict situations.* (UN 2021, 11)

Sources of safety threats against journalists emanate from state and non-state actors. Institutional actors in the state apparatus are widely considered the primary source of pressure against journalists. In this case, governments, the military, intelligence agencies, and police are both causing and dealing with the safety of journalists. Then, the role of non-state actors presents another threat to journalists, for instance, from economic enterprises and religious and ethnic groups (Fadnes et al. 2020; Iordanidou et al. 2020; Workneh 2021). In Pakistan and India, investigative reporters, minorities and female journalists are more exposed to safety (Jamil & Sohal 2021). Despite this, a threat can also emanate from another journalist. For instance, political commentator Tucker Carlson's attack on the *New York Times* reporter Taylor Lorenz (Armus 2021) is an example where journalists, even if they are not co-workers, can cause harm and attempt to induce self-censorship on another journalist.

2.5 Safety threats and self-censorship practice in the global South vs. North

Research about journalists' safety is inspired by the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity, which cements basic underpinning on building a safer

work environment for journalists by preventing hostility and prosecuting perpetrators. Recently, Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. (2023, 4) defined journalists' safety as "the extent to which journalists can perform their work-related tasks without facing threats to their physical, psychological, digital, and financial integrity and well-being". In dealing with safety consequences, Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. (2023) put forward resistance, submission, and exit as adaptive and maladaptive coping mechanisms of occupational safety.

On the other hand, Westlund, Krøvel, and Orgeret (2022) suggest a sociotechnical approach to studying journalists' safety. Thereupon, they suggest dimensions such as safety and infrastructure, safety in practice, and safety and its consequences in everyday journalistic endeavour. The million-dollar question, as they assert, is whether journalists engage in self-censorship as coping mechanism to decrease or prevent hostility.

Journalistic safety research varies according to the country context. Disclosures of studies on journalists' safety and self-censorship are marked mainly by disproportion in the global South and North (Waisbord 2022); journalists' safety and self-censorship are experienced differently by journalists. The broad-spectrum drawing is that journalists in the South and East receive combined and intensified threats, more so exercise routine caution and self-censorship (see, for example, Nigeria (Ola 2020), Zimbabwe (Munoriyarwa & Chibuwe 2022), Uganda (Waluya & Nassanga 2020), Columbia (Barrios & Miller 2020), Pakistan (Jamil 2020a), Pakistan and India (Jamil & Sohal 2021), and Russia and China (Han & Lin 2021; Repnikova 2020; Schimpfössl & Yablokov 2020)). Accordingly, outside the global North, the intensity of safety and impunity sometimes appears unbearable.

Journalists' safety and self-censorship are positively related to democratic insecurity and lack of freedom (Benítez 2020; Ong 2021; Shen & Truex 2020; Schimpfössl & Yablokov 2020). While governments are the main sources of pressure in democratically insecure countries, pressures are aimed at silencing free speech in two ways: suppression of public information and self-censorship (Clark & Horsley 2020).

Respectively, the publication of the Mohammed cartoons by *Jyllands-Posten* (2005) and the Charlie Hebdo (2015) cases indicate binary socio-cultural differences between West and non-West societies (Greste 2017). Enlightening why the Mohammed caricatures got printed, Rose (2006) considers the West's bearing against censorship and totalitarian submission since the

Cold War. However, even in the global North, such as eastern Europe, Turkey, and Sweden, mild systemic and unsystematic forms of threats are present (Jungblut & Hoxha 2017; Löfgren & Örnebring 2016; Pukallus et al. 2020). Notably, the Balkan wars saw 68 journalists (37 from Serbian media, 14 from Croatia, and 17 from Bosnia) murdered, abducted, and missing (Borissova 2014). In addition, with Russia's offensive in Ukraine, journalists have become victims of a heightened safety threat in Ukraine (RSF 2022b). This indicates that despite differences in proportion and nature of sources of safety and practice of self-censorship, the problem is prevalent globally.

2.6 Theoretical frameworks

2.6.1 Spiral of silence

In an individual's role towards public opinion formation, the spiral of silence locates the decisive pressure a social environment presumes (Noelle-Neumann 1974; 1993). The theory advocates the increasing pressure people feel to conceal their views due to fear of isolation. Hence, the more individuals believe their opinion is part of the consensus or gaining strength or approval, the more they will be willing to speak out, and vice versa. In public opinion formation, an opinion that can be voiced without fear of isolation and sanction will prevail and be taken as public opinion at the expense of a spiraling silence.

Four assumptions are used to test spiral of silence theory:

> 1) society threatens deviant individuals with isolation, 2) individuals experience fear of isolation continuously, 3) because of this fear of isolation, individuals are constantly trying to assess the climate of opinion, 4) the results of this estimate affect behaviour in public, particularly the open expression or concealment of opinions. (Noelle-Neumann 1993, 202)

As a fifth assumption, Neolle-Neumann (1993) addresses the interrelation between the first four assumptions, providing an explanation for the formation, maintenance, and alteration of public opinion.

If we take Ethiopia as an example, studies show that journalists will a priori withhold information because they re-evaluate the chance of its transmission, the editor's approval (Skjerdal 2010), and its probability of causing safety consequences (Moges 2017). The chance of expressing their opinion will be further reduced because whenever they go to their

newsroom, they will find a panoply of pre-decided issues and press releases at their desk (Skjerdal 2010).

Likewise, journalists could get in line with the majority on observation and appraisal of their environment using their guts due to fear of isolation and doubt. Journalists may not cover if they think a particular viewpoint is sectoral or if the issue denotes an idea represented by a minority. In so doing, the media play an indiscreet role of muting the minority in the face of "pluralistic ignorance," which signifies a fallacious thought that everyone thinks like they do (Noelle-Neumann 1993). The notion is that people make an indivisible whole judgment of their perception and media reports.

However, Noelle-Neumann does not settle that everyone will submit to silence. Despite fears, she mainly explains two types of non-silenced groups, *hard-core* and *avant-garde*, who feel enabled to defend their opinion (Griffin 2008; Noelle-Neumann 1993).

Critiques around the theory include factors beyond "fear of isolation" for willingness to speak out, the notion of a captive audience in conducting the experiment, criticism of fear of isolation as the only motivation, and focus on the political environment than influence from reference groups (Griffin 2008; Scheufele & Moy 2000).

2.6.2 Perceived influences in journalism

For decades, political, economic, and social influence premises have lured the attention of a range of studies around the world, especially involving the US and West, the latest being a wave of cross-cultural studies (Hanitzsch & Ramaprasad et al. 2019; Mellado 2021; Reese & Shoemaker 2016; Willnat & Weaver 2012). One model of such studies is the Worlds of Journalism Study (WJS), which lays out political, economic, organisational, procedural, and personal networks as the five prodigious domains of perceived influences on journalists (Hanitzsch & Ramaprasad et al 2019). Aside from that, Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. (2023) outline societal, organisational, and individual factors of risks as posing workplace threats in journalism.

Although the audience is supposedly the notable customer (McQuail & Deuze 2020) in the sense that media content is meant for audience consumption, most immense pressure stems from procedural, organisational, and economic influences (Hanitzsch & Ramaprasad et al.

2019). Procedural influence, minimal access to information, time constraint, and leadership in the newsroom pose thrilling influences across the sixty-seven countries that WJS concentrated on. However, various indicators have cross-national differences, such as political influences. For instance, even though political influence is generally weak, this is typically true only in Europe and developed democracies. While political, economic, and organisational influences arise as strong indicators, they seem fiercer as countries are undeveloped democratically and socioeconomically.

Accordingly, journalists sense strong political influences in areas where press and political freedom is weaker, such as in most African and Asian countries and the Gulf states. Thus, in the global pattern, journalistic culture shows that journalists in non-Western countries tend to perceive political and economic influences as stronger (Hanusch & Hanitzsch 2019). Nevertheless, according to the WJS studies, there is sometimes an intersection between business and political influences.

According to WJS, most Ethiopian journalists say that editorial policy exerts intense influence in the newsroom, followed by ownership influence, managers, supervisors/editors (Skjerdal 2017). Additionally, the political impact is significant, mostly from government officials, politicians, and military/police/security apparatuses. Journalists in Ethiopia pronounce a higher political influence than most countries in the study, and in this respect becomes an outlier in the study. This also correlates with the country's democratic index, one of the lowest, with a score of 3.5 (Fig. 5.3. Hanitzsch & Ramaprasad et al. 2019, 128). A little over fifty per cent of the journalists also rate censorship as a more significant influence while intense for those who work under state media.

Influence	Political	Economic	Organizational	Procedural	Personal networks
Indexes	Politicians, government officials, pressure groups, and business representatives	Profit expectations, advertising considerations, and audience research and data	Managers of news organizations, supervisors and higher editors, owners of news organizations, and editorial policy	Information access, journalism ethics, media laws and regulation, available news-gathering resources, and time limits	Friends, acquaintances and family, colleagues in other media, and peers on the staff

Table 1. Perceived influences, as projected in Hanitzsch & Ramaprasad et al. (2019).

2.6.3   Hierarchy of influences

If one is to investigate newsroom influences, another dependable model is the hierarchy of influences (Shoemaker & Reese 2014; Reese & Shoemaker 2016). The hierarchy of influence model has five factors: individual, routine, organizational, social institutions, and social system. Firstly, the individual level of analysis focuses on the journalists, their demography and professional role, and which news values they cling to. Secondly, the routine analysis spotlights the immediate edifice of newsrooms. This level of analysis embraces patterns of practices and norms such as workflow, audience consideration, and information source requirements. The third level brings another fundamental source of influence, media organizations. Media institutions follow a common goal, corporate identity, and bureaucratic structure. Besides, revenue, expense, advertising, and gatekeeping fall under this category. The influence of social institutions is yet another factor that needs to be scrutinized. In their reflection, Shoemaker and Reese (2014) put this as an "extramedia" influence, everything external to the media institution - audiences, powerful sources, public relations, and technological forces. Media institutions are affected by how they enter "structured dependency relationships with other major systemic players: including the state, public relations, and

advertising" (Reese & Shoemaker 2016, 402). Finally, another level of influence spotlights a macro level of analysis, the social system. This level goes beyond institutional and national boundaries, embracing global forces.

Social
systems

Social
institutions

Media
organizations

Routine
practices
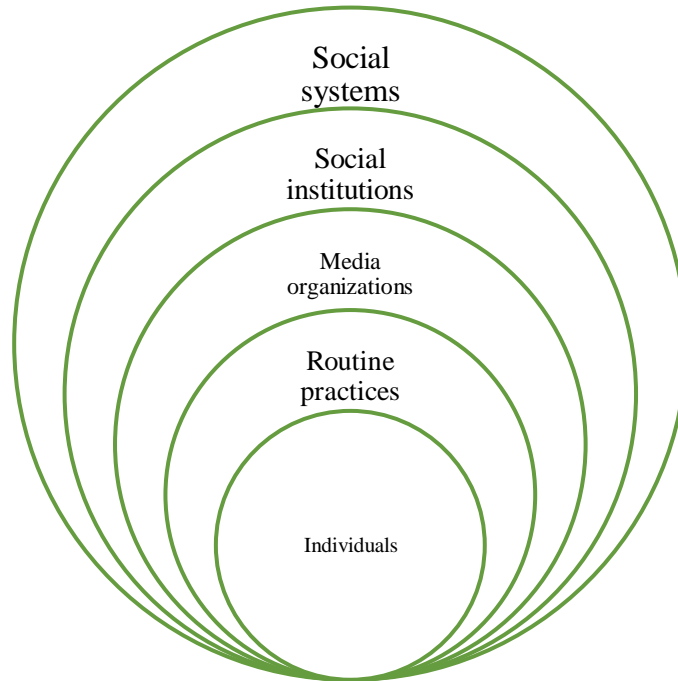
Individuals

Figure 1. Levels of analysis from Reese and Shoemaker's (2014) hierarchical model of influences.

Generally, the theories and concepts presented showcase that individual factors, political and social environment, societal forces, democratic culture, socioeconomic situations, etc., affect the freedom and perception of journalists. While the spiral of silence is sharp on the political environment and fear of isolation, the other two models sync factors from the individual to societal echelons. Additionally, in its delivery of new types of content producers and access, new media has challenged the traditional structure of news production and distribution, including the journalistic role and preventable nature of gatekeeping (Anderson 2013). Hence, understanding journalism also needs an assessment of new features and dynamisms it embraces because journalists and media content endure combined influences. Hanitzsch & Ramaprasad et al. (2019) and Shoemaker and Reese (2014) discuss how various influences interact and grip intersecting characteristics. However, for the most part, both models illustrate how diverse

influences grasp unique attributes in helping fathom every possible factor affecting journalists differently.

In their methodological positions, perceived influences and hierarchy of influences models embrace different approaches. That being the case, perceived influences grow from empirical data based on journalists' experiences, presenting cross-country comparisons, and understanding. On the other hand, the hierarchy of influences advocates a more sociological standpoint, ethnographic take, knotting social structures to mediated content.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter reflects on espoused research methodology, tactics, and strategies utilised. Ensuing snowball and convenience sampling, using semi-structured interviewing, and thematic analysis, the study takes a qualitative stance to learn about journalists' safety in Ethiopia. As a result, in this section, discussions and arguments will be made for methodological decisions and relevant issues such as ethical guidelines, validity, and reliability.

3.2 Research design

This thesis followed a qualitative research methodology to understand journalists' safety in Ethiopia, how journalists cope with safety risks, and whether they engage in self-censorship from the field inductively, presenting a thick description of data.

As a strategy, qualitative research is one that

> usually emphasizes words rather than quantifications in the collection and analysis of data; emphasises an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research … preferring to emphasize how individuals interpret their social world, and views social reality as the constantly shifting creation of individual social actors. (Clark et al. 2021, 31-32)

Regarding ontological considerations, constructionism is embraced with the point that journalists can sense and make meaning, making them capable of expounding personal and distinctive experiences of safety risks and coping mechanisms. Social phenomena are produced through social interaction, and reality is not static (Brinkmann 2014; Clark et al. 2021). Concerning epistemology, the thesis espouses interpretivism to grasp the subjective meaning of journalists' experiences (Bryman 2016; Clark et al. 2021).

Interpretive methods require the researcher to study the social world and human nature,

> to grasp the subjective experience of social action, what these experiences mean in practice, how these experiences and meanings are understood by others, and why they are interpreted in such ways. (Clark et al. 2021, 25)

This, in turn, allows for openly examining various adaptive strategies across different media typologies and demographics in Ethiopia. The method presents a better means to capture journalists' safety experience and coping mechanisms, such as self-censorship, as journalists would typically cognise the conditions that lead them to the practice better than anyone else.

As a personal experience, safety and self-censorship are experienced differently by different journalists (Skjerdal 2010; Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. 2023), so it would mainly be understood using a qualitative method. Therefore, a holistic, open, and interpretive approach enlightens this research, hoping to capture and gain knowledge from journalists who work in different media houses (Wimmer & Dominick 2013).

The present study is cross-sectional qualitative research. Cross-sectional research design is identified for attributes such as gathering data at a single point in time, engaging a sample of cases, and involving variables to detect patterns of association (Bryman 2018). Flick (2004, 148), designating it as "Snapshots", also defines cross-sectional qualitative take as a design entailing "the analysis of state and process at the time of the investigation". In due course of the research, the design emphasises details regarding research procedure and process in constructing the present from the point of view of interviewees.

3.3 Subjects, sampling techniques, and sample size

The sampling technique is purposive per se. Accordingly, the study used a combination of snowball and convenience sampling (Bryman 2016) to get hold of interviewees. First, contacts were made with a few informants whose characteristics are relevant for the research (such as detained journalists). Through the interviewees, more journalists were identified and contacted, also known as "chain referrals" sampling. Snowball sampling is recommended for "getting access to individuals and groups who are hard to reach or where the topic of research is considered private or sensitive" (Clark et al. 2021, 385). Regarding convenience sampling, the student caught a few women journalists (in rare positions such as editors) in newsrooms.

Adopting these techniques allowed reaching journalists who already experienced safety issues and areas where journalists are more prone to risks, such as reporters dealing with politics and investigative journalism, meeting gender balance, and ascertaining variability in terms of media typology (print, broadcast, and digital) and ownership (state, private-local, and private-transnational). Accordingly, the samples encompass twelve media institutions (media ownership - two state-owned, eight private-local, and two private-transnational; typology – four newspapers, three radio stations, three YouTube-based media, two news agencies). It also considers gender (nine women, including the president of EMWA, out of 23 interviewees) and experience (minimum two years, maximum 22 years). As a result, there was considerable

variation in sampling in terms of media ownership, typology, and gender. Jensen (2021) argues that sample variation strengthens the understanding of contexts and perspectives.

Furthermore, the media institutions are not named because doing so would melt the anonymity of the interviewees. In most cases, journalists are few in private media, and country correspondents are one in number in transnational media. Thus, giving away a list of media institutions would mean that the identity of individual journalists was revealed.

Despite taking a qualitative stance, sample size is another relevant research issue. For this study, 23 journalists and three professional association presidents were interviewed (see table 2.). This is decided based on the suggested minimum sample size threshold for a master's thesis (between six and fifteen interviews; Terry et al. 2017)) and data saturation (from 12 to 17 interviews to reach data saturation; Guest et al. 2006, Francis et al. 2010, Coenen et al. 2012 quoted in Guest et al. 2017)).

No.	Role in media house	Typology				Ownership			Total
		Print	Radio/Television	YouTube-based	Transnational news agencies	State	Private-local	Private transnational	Total
1)	Reporter/ columnist	3	6	0	2	10	11	2	23
2)	Editor/Assistant editor	3	3	0	0				
3)	Managing editor, deputy, and/or Media owner	3	0	3	0				

Table 2. Summary of interviewees across typology and ownership

3.4 Method of data collection

The study aims to open up for journalists to share their experience of pressures and safety issues and explain whether meagre journalistic well-being could provoke self-censorship practices and other coping mechanisms. Accordingly, the data is collected through Semi-Structured Interviewing (SSI). The method is among the most common data collection methods in social sciences and enables to grasp production of social knowledge (Brinkmann 2014; Bryman 2016; Harvey-Jordan et al. 2001; Jensen 2021).

As a critical element of SSI is structure, the student devised a few general open-ended interview guide questions but primarily utilised follow-up questions (Brinkmann 2014; Cridland et al. 2015; Kallio 2016). The structure of the interview guide had four aspects: (1) the editorial perspective, everyday journalistic routine, and engagement with news sources; (2) different influences journalists sense and are affected by (Hanitzsch & Ramaprasad et al. 2019; Shoemaker & Reese 2014); (3) experiences of journalists' safety; and (4) how they cope with safety issues during news production (Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. 2023). Conducting SSI this way also supports "funnelling" interviewees, eliciting their general views initially and delving into specific issues (Smith 1995, 15). Therefore, while the thesis is inductive, the interview guide is inspired by theoretical sources such as news sociology, perceived influences, hierarchy of influences, spiral of silence, and occupational safety.

However, one of the challenges in the fieldwork was whether to raise similar questions to journalists who experienced multiple arbitrary arrests and torture and every other participant. Especially when a journalist had experienced torture or multiple arrests, it was necessary not to disrupt the interview to get the whole narrative. In such cases, the student mostly depended on follow-up questions, such as "what happened next?". Because of such factors, the interviews were semi- structured (Jamshed 2014). SSI is convenient in applying guide questions, directing conversations, and catching interviewees' stories (Cridland et al. 2015; Kallio et al. 2016; Rabionet 2011).

Another dimension is the interviewees' demographics, the length of the interview, and improvisions due to unforeseen situations. All the interviewees were adults (men or women). The least experienced was one journalist who had been in the profession for two years, while most had worked between five and twenty-two years. Regarding length, the interviews lasted,

on average, 50 minutes. The shortest was half an hour, but there were interviews which lasted for 90 minutes. Differences in the length of the interviews relate to journalism experience, safety stories, and raising relevant topics to the research questions. The student attempted to check signs of repetition in ideas and how comfortable the informants were with the subject under discussion. Concerning this, the interviews were conducted chiefly outside of journalists' workplaces to provide better freedom to interviewees (Cridland et al. 2015). There were instances where interviewees cried and looked tense talking about abduction and torture experiences. When this was the case, the student asked whether the participant preferred to continue with the interview some other day or place. This has helped a lot, as some interviews were rescheduled or conducted on two separate days.

When it comes to whether this study could have been conducted through methods other than interview, the study finds it challenging to answer the research questions using methods other than interviewing. First, besides the personal and sensitive nature of safety of journalists, reports from CPJ, RSF, etc., tend to be without details (limited to the total number of arrests in a given country or timely calls to release detainees), making it challenging to sort safety experiences of journalists in Ethiopia conclusively. Second, the main question in this study is to comprehend how these safety issues are coped with during news production. If not wholly, the individual journalist has a significant role in recognising and experiencing safety risks and making connections to news stories and newsroom decisions. So, interviewing journalists emerges as demanding and fitting for this type of study.

Upon returning from fieldwork, data was transcribed and translated (interviews were conducted in the Amharic language). Lastly, journalists occasionally showed court cases and official letters to corroborate their interviews. Although document analysis is not used systematically in this study, these documents further elucidate the context of safety experiences. Such documents and reports by international press freedom organisations serve as triangulations.

3.5 Method of data analysis

In a qualitative take, analysing SSI data involves conceptual and literature deliberations, fieldwork experience, and transcribed material synthesis, encompassing an interplay among pre-during and after data collection (Schmidt 2004; Terry et al. 2017). Schmidt's (2004, 254-257) analytical strategy suggests five stages to analyse SSI data, material-oriented formation of categories, assembly of the analytical categories into a guide for coding, coding of the

material, quantifying surveys of material, and detailed case interpretations. Terry et al. (2017, 23-33) recommend a six-phase analytical process for thematic analysis, familiarisation and coding, theme development, reviewing and defining themes, and producing the report.

Accordingly, the data analysis technique adopted in this thesis is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a technique that involves emergent and interactive interpretation of data (Neuendorf 2018). However, qualitative researchers utilise thematic analysis differently for various questions (Terry et al. 2017). Thematic analysis, when inductive, involves theme development and data-led meaning-making (Clark et al. 2021; Terry et al. 2017). To summarise, such thematic analysis of SSI involves significant stages such as transcription, coding, theme development, interpretation, and report writing by approaching data, conceptual frameworks, and questions iteratively and recursively. The thematic analysis in this study was coded and explored using MaxQDA 2022 Pro. The study used steps in MaxQDA to organise the transcribed data and simplify the thematic analysis. The thematic categorisation entails significant steps in MaxQDA (Kuckartz & Rädiker 2019; 2020), including coding text passages, assigning different colours for different codes, grouping (splitting and merging) codes, and retrieving coded segments for the write-up. In addition, three qualitative visualisation tools were used to compare findings (see chapter four). These are Code Map, Profile Comparison Chart, and Document Comparison Chart. The visuals assist in organising how often a code or sub-code is revealed in a single document and across document groups (Kuckartz & Rädiker 2019). To yield this, a document group was created based on participants' media ownership affiliation, state, private and transnational.

3.6 Ethical issues

In this thesis, data is collected entirely from human beings. Journalists' safety, the study topic, naturally calls for extra concern and ethical considerations to be set pre-, during and post-data collection. Ethics in interviewing and reporting social science knowledge is a moral behaviour (Brinkmann & Kvale 2018). When this is the case, it is imperative to design a guideline and obtain ethical clearance (Nygaard 2017), considering requirements set forth by NLA University College and the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees. Some fundamental principles in research ethics and SSI are informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity (Adams 2010; Cridland et al. 2015; Oliver 2010). Hence, the initial effort made was getting the Norwegian Data Protection Authority's (NSD) approval of the project in order to come to terms with ways to protect subjects and utilise data to be gathered. This would include getting

interview consent, granting anonymity to interviewees, and processing data in Norway (or within European Union). Under the circumstance, only the student and the thesis advisor had access to the data and identity of respondents. Accordingly, after the NSD approved the project's methodology, the student went to fieldwork. Thus, every interview started by notifying respondents of their rights, including full ownership of data as laid down by the NSD guideline, and requesting to confirm their oral consent on the record.

Many traces were improvised in the fieldwork concerning participants' conveniences and complying with interviewees' choices. Mostly, it was about time (availability to participate in the interview) and place (their preferred spots), but there was an instance where the student had to show his passport (upon request), which seemed to help to build trust with the respondent in that particular case. There were also a couple of occurrences where interviews were put off due to inconveniences and risks sought by interviewees (two interviewees thought intelligence officers were nearby). As a result, it is safe to say all interviews were conducted at the convenience of interviewees, most of whom preferred to be interviewed outside their workplaces except for three. One journalist who works for a state-owned media outlet chose to be interviewed outside the corridor of his institution's building, and two other journalists who work in private media preferred to be interviewed inside their newsrooms. All interviews were audio recorded using the student's touch ID-protected iPhone, except where one journalist requested to give the interview off-the-record.

Anonymity and confidentiality were granted to all interviewees. Despite these rights, on four occasions, journalists explicitly stated that they do not mind mentioning their names as long as it is for research purposes. However, in consultation with the thesis advisor, it was decided to anonymise all interviews in order to avoid harm. On a different note, the names of the three professional associations' presidents are mentioned due to their institutional leadership roles and following consent. The availability of face-to-face interviews was problematic for the two journalistic associations due to inconvenience in January 2023. Although brief face-to-face discussion was made with both, their interviews were conducted via Zoom (for the EMWA president) and by telephone (for the EMMPA president). In both cases, the student conducted the interview while staying in Norway.

Finally, research funding is often discussed as an ethical dilemma in terms of conflict of interest (Oliver 2010). The student is a NORPART (Norwegian Partnership Programme for Global

Academic Cooperation) scholarship recipient; his travel expenses were covered. However, there was no involvement, requirement or discussion whatsoever regarding the research topic or publication.

3.7 Limitations of the study

In this study, limited access to data can be raised as a limitation, and the findings shall be understood in that sense. Firstly, the student had planned to incorporate a few regional media organisations in addition to media outlets in Addis Ababa, encompassing the ever-growing expansion of such organisations in regional states. More importantly, due to the war involving the Tigray region of Ethiopia, it was necessary to learn about safety encountered by journalists working in the Tigray region. As a result, failing to travel to Tigray region is considered a limitation in this study. It was in the thesis's plan to travel to Mekelle, the Tigray capital, and interview journalists who work for Tigray Mass Media Agency and Dimitsi Woyane Television. Contacts were made, and would-be interviewees also expressed consent over the telephone. However, this was unmanageable due to a lack of access to enter and leave Tigray. During data collection – in January 2023 – road transport was still blocked, and air flights out of Tigray were allowed only for children and elders for medical reasons (CARD 2023a).

Another limitation discovered by the student was a gap in getting women journalists who dealt with torture and rape under custody. Through snowball sampling, the student found two women who had experienced torture and rape, whom he had credible information about from their colleagues. While one had left journalism for good (which would probably be ruled out for this study), the other is still practising journalism. When approached, she, unfortunately, declined to give an interview, although she said she felt blissful that someone was researching the topic. Understandably, the sensitive and personal nature of journalists' safety and such disgraces women journalists go through makes it apparent that not many would come forward to speak about it. Incorporating these limitations in the analysis would have added to the exhaustiveness of the study.

3.8 Discussion on reliability and validity of the study

In a qualitative study such as this, validity "permeates the entire research process … checking, questioning, and theorising throughout an interview investigation" (Steinar & Brinkmann 2018, 143). Reliability is also related to the consistency and trustworthiness of findings, whereby repeatability can be plausible (Bryman 2016; Steinar & Brikmann 2018). Although

dependability is problematic in qualitative stances, thoroughly developing SSI guide questions (Kallio 2016) and a detailed report about the study process and guide questions used (Shenton 2004) help boost validity and reliability. Consequently, this methodology chapter entails exhaustive accounts of research questions, SSI guide questions and theoretical inspirations, the complete interview guide utilised (see Appendix 2.), interviewing experiences, ethics, and analytical steps.

In addition, reporting operational details (Shenton 2004) and reflexivity (Clark et al. 2021) contributes to confirmability. Cresswell and Cresswell (2018) look at reflexivity implicating past experience of an investigator and how this experience shapes interpretations. The student has worked as a journalism and communications lecturer in two universities in Ethiopia since 2010. Because participants were aware of this, they frequently engaged the interviewer by starting their feedback, "you know what this means", "you can imagine what it means in the news business", etc. The student's prior assumptions emerge from the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (also participated in a training on "International Standards on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists", organised by UNESCO and University of Oxford), and the conceptual frameworks discussed, which would bring more significant questions about journalism culture and journalists' roles in different societies. With all these predispositions involved, hardcore journalism and watchdog roles are taken for granted. Nevertheless, questions raised to interviewees were unstructured. These questions were also asked to explain journalists' safety and influences and determine if safety is related to what topics journalists report and how they report it from the point of view of the participating journalists.

Using a qualitative approach, this study is challenged with external validity, or the issue of generalisability. Bryman (2016, 42) states that external validity entails "the question of whether the results of a study can be generalised beyond the specific research context". This is inevitable primarily due to the design and data collection method (Bryman 2016) and, to some extent, to the questions raised and the data unpacked in the thesis. In the first place, the idea was to dig and uncover the various safety risks journalists in Ethiopia encounter and how they cope with various hurdles in their professional endeavours. Although interviewees share a common geography and citizenship, they work under twelve media institutions with diverse editorial policies and journalistic roles. When it comes to professional associations, too, they are unique in their bylaw and merit. Thus, questions aim to comprehend and describe diverse experiences,

and findings reveal journalists and organisational distinctions besides shared patterns instead of generalising, as seen in the analysis chapter. As a result, instead of generalising, the study aims at particularising safety experiences. This means participants' experiences are distinct, from extreme torture, arbitrary arrest, physical and verbal abuse, and digital harassment to perceiving influences. When it comes to how they relate such events to their everyday work, they cope with safety in different ways, i.e., different meanings emerge. Thus, it is difficult to generalise the findings of this study to an undefined population of journalists who faced hostility in Ethiopia. However, some phenomena can be generalised or interpreted within this study by espousing Williams's (2000) *moderatum* generalisation, considering participants share "cultural consistency". In line with this, interpretations of this study are generalised based on gender (for example, receivers of sexual harassment digitally), media ownership (given that hostilities are encountered mainly by journalists in private media institutions), or the intensity of hostility against journalists with that of semi-democratic nations' setting.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter enfolds the presentation and discussion of results. The present study raised questions about influences on journalism practice, safety aspects of journalists in Ethiopia, strategies for negotiating content, and journalistic associations' role as support mechanisms for journalists' safety. The results obtained from the data set are presented through different themes and sub-themes as inspired by different assumptions and theories. The study's data set consists of 26 interviews. The majority, 23, are journalists (10 from state-owned media institutions, 11 from privately owned media institutions, and two from transnational media institutions). The remaining three are presidents of professional associations, specifically the Ethiopian Media Council, the Ethiopian Media Women's Association, and the Ethiopian Mass Media Professionals Association. All three represent firm data sources concerning the council's and associations' efforts in protecting journalists. Accordingly, the data presentation motions results obtained through different themes in line with the research questions. At the same time, MaxQDA visual presentations are displayed to reveal nuances throughout different codes and segments. While the entire coded text display is in Appendix 4, the visual displays are also exploited to organise and summarise data for efficiency and straightforwardness.

4.2 Influences on journalism practice in Ethiopia

As a groundwork for the study, overall influences that immure journalism practice in Ethiopia are assessed. As shown in the interview guide, a set of questions were raised to journalists in order to learn about potential influences, the role of editorial meetings, access to information, and the Northern Ethiopia war. Hence, this section presents data regarding the aforementioned trends as a broader chapter kick-off. This part, which bestows results about influences around journalism practice in Ethiopia, is inspired by findings from Hanitzsch & Ramaprasad et al. (2019), insights from Reese and Shoemaker (2014), and sociology of news theory. Thereupon, journalists underplay influences from friends, families, and colleagues. Most journalists consider such influences positively, seeing the value of support when they are detained or receiving suggestions of change of profession to improve the safety situation and get better pay. On the other hand, the study detects intolerable experiences which journalists encounter from political, economic, technological, and social system influence, resulting in torture, arbitrary arrest, hate speech, and online attacks (as presented in section 4.3.).

4.2.1 Routine level influences

Except for one private print media outlet, which conducts its editorial meeting on Sunday, among the other media institutions, Monday is considered an editorial day where every news topic is raised, discussed, and decided if issues will make it for publication. Their weekly sessions are set off by evaluating last week's publication. However, the style of the editorial briefings depends on media ownership. Journalists who work for state-owned media institutions explain that they have little say in editorial meetings. Therefore, one typical trend in state-owned media is that journalists contribute less to news or program plans than those working in private and transnational media institutions. Mostly, state media journalists encounter the Hobson's choice: accepting and implementing what has been enlisted on the table or leaving work.

In state media, reporters are assigned primarily to cover protocol news. A reporter working on state television says, "there are forced directions from the government as it is a state media. As a result, whether it is news or program agenda, events control the airtime" (State Media Interview 3, January 3, 2023). The role of editorial teams in such processes can sometimes lead to tighter control. A reporter who works for a state newspaper explains the news production process,

> From the News Centre, we plan news ideas and give them to our bosses. They will take it to the editorial, and after a decision is passed, we prepare interview questions that will also be sent to the editorial. They check for something that should not be asked and return it. When you work in state media, you self-censor what you assume the editors will reject. (State Media Interview 8, January 16, 2023)

Journalists working in the state-owned media reflect that they are closely supervised throughout the news production process, and different levels of editorial sessions serve as a filtering mechanism to winnow news and program ideas. Speaking about financial dependence as a challenge to editorial independence, a managing editor of a state print media underlines that, "The government is a powerful agent, and the media should check it. But to do so, the media must be free from the government. We should bring a different financial model where the media's umbilical cord is cut from the government" (State Media Interview 10, January 12, 2023).

Private media institutions, on their part, explain editorial positions that aim to challenge the government in power. In deciding on news plans, private media institutions seem to stand at

the end of the other polar as they often tend to neglect topics or change angles from what the state-owned media reports. A reporter in a private broadcast media argues, "We check where the issue begins. When we monitor, we check if the state media have covered it because we do not want to repeat that or change the angle. For example, if the state media reports a development project's success, we want to start with displaced people in relation to the project. We do not want our media to smell like government" (Private Media Interview 2, January 16, 2023). Recapping this stand, a deputy editor of a private newspaper explains, "We focus on what is relevant to society. Instead of what the government appreciates, we give weight to problems the people face and policy issues so that policymakers realise gaps and correct them. In our news, political and economy columns, or opinion pages, we focus on problems that must be solved" (Private Media Interview 3, January 23, 2023).

An editor of a private print media outlet argues, "Our main target issues are criticisms and gaps, which make the government accountable. We practice investigative journalism; we are identified for it. We bequeath issues such as inaugurations for state-owned media" (Private Media Interview 6, January 21, 2023).

Journalists in private media institutions also speak about their focus on being the voice of the voiceless, and they cling to news topics whose values impact citizens. An editor of a private media outlet underscores, "We base on how much the news will affect and be a voice for people or has an impact; we check if the news has novelty and exclusiveness. We pick our angle by searching for a line that criticises the government" (Private Media Interview 6, January 21, 2023). In congruence with this take, a reporter in a private broadcaster says,

> News projects that are more public relations news; we do not want them. If a journalist says he wants to report about a certain organisation, we do not want that. We want him to focus on private institutions and ordinary people as much as possible. We wish to begin with questions from the people, not with government deeds. (Private Media Interview 2, January 16, 2023)

Journalists' reflections on editorial meetings and everyday newsroom interaction indicate polarisation between the state media and the private media. The state media follow and report on government events and programmes. On the contrary, journalists working in private media institutions describe that they focus on topics and ways of covering news to hold the government in power into account, and approach the news from the public's side, leaving positive coverage of government programmes and achievements.

4.2.2 Ethnicity and politics as dominant influences

One issue that brings all practitioners in state, private, and transnational media in Ethiopia together appears to be the influence of the political setting, which is ethnic-based. Journalists associate deep-rooted influence from ethnicity and religion as pressure from such dynamism makes its way to newsroom decisions.

Ethnicity provokes organisational disciplinary actions against journalists and, more importantly, shakes reporting and reporters. One such challenge is the forced temporary lay-off in the state media following the northern Ethiopia war. A journalist working for state media presents his six-month-long layoff by saying, "This shows how much politics influences the media and how much ethnic politics influences this media. What has happened is entirely ethnic on the grounds of naturalised identity. We did not commit any mistake, we did not purchase our identity, but because of it, we were suspended from work" (State Media Interview 2, January 25, 2023).

A print media columnist who encountered numerous arrests and threats shares similar concerns and looked at Ethiopia's socio-political makeup and the radicalism that grew with it. He explains, "The media practice has been out of ideology since Abiy took office. It is either ethnicity or religion. It is either radical Orthodox, Protestant, or Islam. Otherwise, it is radical Amhara, Oromia, or Tigray. The character of media practice has been indoctrinated by such radicalism. Media houses have become a voice of religiousness and ethnicism" (Private Media Interview 7, January 29, 2023). This journalist also discusses how different labelling such as "anti-Tigray", "anti-Amhara, and "Oromo-phobic" has curtailed his investigation of officials. He also considers the ethnic-nationalist divisions as one squashing apparatus against journalists. This private print media journalist clarifies,

> When you write about Shimelis Abdisa's [Oromia Regional State President] speech obduracy, Oromo activists will say this is "Oromo-phobia". After that, by which morale and gut will you write in the next publication about the wrongdoings of Shimelis or Fano? You can't. The ethnic establishment is a dangerous suppression. (Private Media Interview 7, January 29, 2023)

Besides abstaining from reporting issues and officials who would enflame ethnic influence, journalists also address how ethnicity affect their newsroom regarding assigning reporters and determining news gathering outside the capital city. Threats from ethnicity-instigated mobs

have disturbed how newsrooms assign reporters. Speaking about such decisions after a staffer escaped a mob attack in Oromia region, an editor-in-chief of a private newspaper says,

> After a while, we started to assign reporters based on ethnicity. For example, it could be a straightforward event in Bahir Dar [capital of Amhara region]. If the name looks like Tigrean, I do not want him to take a risk. It is not journalism; it is saving lives. We do not want to take a risk. (Private Media Interview 5, January 23, 2023)

In addition, journalists and media houses say they have limited their reporting to and from the capital city because of hostilities in different regional states. Hence, journalists relate the influence and hostility they encounter to ethnicised politics and radicalised mobs. Whoever they try to investigate or wherever they assign reporters, their decisions are affected by the influence of such factors.

4.2.3 The war in northern Ethiopia: a cusp of journalists' safety

For many journalists working in private and transnational media, the transitional polity opened by Abiy Ahmed's government in 2018 turned to full-time suppression once the first bullet was fired in northern Ethiopia. What followed was continuous harassment, detention, abduction, arrest, and torture of journalists. Reporting conflict in general and the war in northern Ethiopia, particularly, are paused as challenges to shoulder everyday journalistic work. Based on the reflections of most practitioners, the war presented an opportunity for leaders in editorial rank, EMA, and security officers to influence, if not harass, journalists by which the sanctioned state of emergency enabled different government bodies to muscle the press.

Journalists in private media argue that little reporting of the war and other recurrent conflicts comes at a higher price to their personal well-being and media business. In an attempt to explain why their media failed to report about the war, civilian causalities, ethnic profiling, etc., an editor-in-chief of a private print media points out,

> We used to avoid plentiful stories about the war to save ourselves and our lives. We do not report the facts; we never reported the facts about the war… for the whole time. We did not report human rights violations for a single day. Why? It is a scarification paid to advance our media's business. We would have reported it if we were truthful journalists, and our media should have been closed. We never dared to send [staffers] to war-affected areas. Is it because we do not have money? It is not. … because we care about ourselves. (Private Media Interview 5, January 23, 2023)

Journalists also rationalise that news about the war in northern Ethiopia focused on government press releases as they explain that interviewing TPLF leaders or affiliated sources to balance

news stories equalled dissemination of views of terrorists. This also secludes journalists from verifying information by engaging the other side in the war. A reporter working in a private broadcaster points out, "It was challenging to do journalism. The prior broadcast policy does not work during this time; you do not know whom and what you are touching. So, it will make you fear" (Private Media Interview 2, January 16, 2023). Another journalist who works for a private print media outlet says,

> We made phone calls to conflict zones, but it was challenging to publish these stories due to warnings from the EMA. Even if we were interested in balancing the viewpoints of conflicting parties and the public, our information is incomplete. You will also be considered a platform for carrying the viewpoint of a terrorist-designated organisation. Many phone calls are made to our organisation leaders warning that this is your last day. (Private Media Interview 4, January 11, 2023)

One line of inquiry around reporting war is the dilemma journalists are presented with: patriotism (serving national causes) and professionalism (reporting with journalistic principles). This contradiction is another indication that rifts journalists based on media ownership. For most practitioners in the private and transnational media, such a dilemma does not add up. According to remarks made by Private Media Interview 2, 9, and 10, and Transnational Media Interview 1, the war is internal between the Prosperity Party and TPLF, and they would have wanted to report on casualties and displacement. In addition, they argue that such a contradiction would have been a challenge if a foreign country invaded Ethiopia. However, journalists who work for state media argue that they served their country by supporting the government in power. While they remark TPLF's actions as a betrayal, journalists also continuously refer to "national interest" as a justification for standing by the federal government's side. According to their elucidations, journalists accept to practise propaganda and exaggeration as long as reporting serves such interests. They also justify their lack of reporting on civilian casualties, judging that doing so will discourage and incriminate the military. In relation to this, a journalist who works for state television argues, "If you ask me about my allegiance, I support my country for the body that we think will maintain the country. Many reports were transmitted, including propaganda. Using words "junta" and "terrorist" to name TPLF because the PM used the words. It is not professional, but it is a time of war" (State Media Interview 4, January 20, 2023).

Another reporter who works for state television reiterates this argument by saying,

> It is a concern of national interest. There were uncertainties; this country would be dismantled. As a media, the ultimate mission was to report in a manner that motivated

the military and allied forces and reverse the war. The guests who will appear will join to loud national military and history and frame the other side's deed as a betrayal. All media content focused on that. (State Media Interview 3, January 21, 2023)

State media also profited from its close association with the government as their reporters got deployed to war fronts with the military. A ranked editorial member in a state newspaper scoops the position taken by state-owned media, "During the war or now, we practice journalism. Our reporters were deployed to war fronts in collaboration with the military. We do not report issues that expose national interest and public safety. On the use of words, because the TPLF is a terrorist-designated party, we have a responsibility to use it" (State Media Interview 10, January 12, 2023).

While most state media journalists' allegiance with the government is a two-way street, a few practitioners believe there is no choice other than reporting what they are told. Recalling how reporting the war takes work for journalists, a reporter who works for a state newspaper explains how reporting the war in northern Ethiopia has been an unbearable experience, "There was a violation of human rights all over Ethiopia. It is impossible to bring to the attention of the editorial. We know it is impossible; we were propaganda writers of the government. Why would you try an impossible thing? If I try, I will get fired. This is the plain fact" (State Media Interview 8, January 16, 2023).

By and large, journalists in private and transnational media underscore that they try to remain neutral and focused on the impact of the war, reporting on human rights violations and civilian casualties, while some express their despise for not doing enough to report as much as they were supposed to. Journalists also stress that the government's actions towards press freedom changed during the war, with journalists being arrested and their whereabouts unknown. They also discuss the use of terminology, such as referring to the TPLF as a "terrorist-designated party". While this restricted journalists in private media institutions from interviewing people from Tigray and TPLF, journalists in transnational media say they had the resources to interview and quote leaders from the TPLF. On the other hand, journalists in state media elucidate that their coverage aimed to support the government and the military while focusing on exposing crimes committed by the TPLF. However, following the Pretoria and Nairobi agreements, the peace accord signed between the Federal government and the TPLF beckoned some relaxation in the media sphere, and journalists explain that they are focusing on post-conflict issues.

4.2.4 Discriminatory provision of access to information

Lack of access to information is a challenge for journalists working for private and transnational media in Ethiopia. According to the journalists' reflections, many officials do not offer comments, denying them access to official press briefings. A transnational media journalist argues that access to information is difficult by saying, "Starting from the law and its implementation, many institutions think restricting information is a right. They do not think it is their responsibility; they think they are doing you a favour and supporting you" (Transnational Media Interview 1, January 17, 2023). Another journalist who also works for a transnational news agency holds the same perspective. Linking the cusp of media freedom following the 2018 political change, he underscores the shift by saying,

> Initially, there was good information access and continuous press releases. But after a while, they ignored our calls and texts for comment. After a while, they completely blocked us. They do not invite transnational media for a briefing. So, we started to balance our stories by following officials' interviews with state media. (Transnational Media Interview 2, January 29, 2023)

Based on remarks forwarded by journalists working in private media (Private Media Interview 1, 6, and 10), lack of access to information hampers their everyday work. Let alone access to interview officials, journalists working in private and transnational media do not relish official press releases and parliament sessions. An online journalist sheds light on the melee of interviewing officials and the unequal treatment of journalists from private media. He also contextualises how problematic it is to practice journalism online by stressing, "Lack of internet access, continuous shutdown in different parts of the country, targeted cessation of telecom services, you will not be allowed to attend press releases and events, directions will be given for government agencies not to give information for online media. So, our work to gather information is repulsive" (Private Media Interview 10, January 13, 2023). A private broadcast media reporter who is assigned to cover parliament stories doubles down on this argument by bringing her experience as she witnessed, "they selected and called EBC, EPA, and ENA [all are state-owned media institutions]. I was told to go away; the person even told me he was there to ensure we did not enter" (Private Media Interview 1, January 14, 2023).

Such discriminatory access to information provision restrains journalists in private media from meeting balance while writing their news stories. A print private media editor says, "For private media, access to information, particularly from government offices, is closed. Because the

government is a main player, without information about it, our works are inchoate" (Private Media Interview 6, January 21, 2023). Similarly, a private broadcast journalist says, "In relation to conflict, we ask the police and security officers. Often, they do not respond to our requests and calls" (Private Media Interview 1, January 14, 2023).

Nevertheless, access to information does not trouble journalists working in the state media. A reporter who works for a state broadcaster depicts this picture by saying, "When you work for state-owned media, government offices are open. When you call as a state media, you can obtain information by a single phone call" (State Media Interview 5, January 17, 2023).

Although access to information is a fundamental constitutional right in Ethiopia, the access to information law offers public relations officers thirty days' time to comply with or deny information requests (Yusuf 2021). After confirmation of denial, journalists can report to the Ombudsman. This emerges as unacceptable to many journalists where immediacy and deadline drive journalism practice.

4.3 Hostilities formed against journalists in Ethiopia: from confiscation to torture

This study reveals that journalists have encountered personal, legal, digital, and financial safety challenges. The great harm committed against journalists is torture, while damage is also evident in newsroom facilities, such as their media equipment being ransacked. Henceforward, this part grasps the presentation and discussion of results on safety aspects as encountered in the line of journalistic duty.

4.3.1 Personal safety

One of the safety aspects journalists drawn into this study faces falls under personal safety, which grips physical and psychological abuses. While journalists who work under state media seldom encounter personal safety, journalists who work for private and transnational media institutions receive intensified and dangerous hostility in their everyday work. The hostility includes extreme torture, physical and verbal abuse, and bullying. Recollecting on his and his colleagues' forced disappearance, an online journalist who spent a year in a black site and prisons in the space of two years underlines,

> In those times, we were beaten, tortured, and denied food and water, and women journalists were raped, and they fired bullets at us at close range. They forced us to sleep with a corpse for days. They killed individuals in our faces; sometimes, they gave us guns to kill others. (Private Media Interview 10, January 13, 2023)

Another journalist who works for a private broadcaster shares a similar personal safety he encountered,

> I was abducted and taken to an unknown place, out of town, and arrested for over three months. There was no food or water. I was forced to sleep on a cold floor. Different things happened to me, so that I will be mentally and physically damaged. Until now, I have had a health problem. It has shamed me. It damaged my journalistic reputation and credibility. (Private Media Interview 8, January 17, 2023)

Hostilities, such as abduction, forced disappearance, and arbitrary arrests, indicate what journalists go through has nothing to do with regular legal proceedings. The hostilities are not related to detention for probable cause and trial but target to charge journalists with a criminal offence to hinder them from everyday work. A print media columnist who has encountered numerous detentions, arbitrary arrests, and jail time underscores the illegal nature of hostilities under the current leadership argues,

> It is not systemic when the military detains and releases you after a week. The police came to my office, took me, and said I had participated in an organised group. This one is open without being careful about the law. When the military comes to take you; when the police come openly to take you and say that you are Shene [terrorist-designated group]. (Private Media Interview 7, January 29, 2023)

After mentioning she did not appear before a court of law in over a month, an online journalist who was abducted and arrested four times addresses the personal and psychological hostility she went through. She discloses, "My family came to find my whereabouts after a week. The first time, the police who arrested me said, 'Are you not healthy? Don't you love your country?'. Insult is typical, although I was not physically tortured" (Private Media Interview 9, January 24, 2023). Another female journalist in a private print media publication elicits threats she received from state ministers concerning an investigation of investment corruption. She says, "For instance, I called this authority to get a comment on problems investors were facing, and he threatened and told me that it was none of my concern. If he says that, I know what will happen if I report the news. Most are threats and phone calls" (Private Media Interview 3, January 23, 2023).

4.3.2 Legal safety

Legal safety is another aspect where journalists are caught up in lawsuits. Besides showing documents of subpoenas and court verdicts, journalists shed light on accusations when their cases made it to court. Journalists in this study, primarily those who work for private media

institutions, are often slammed with grand criminal charges such as "terrorism", "treason", gun trafficking, and "defilement of the Constitution", while a few lawsuits are accusations of "transmission of fake news".

An online journalist who has faced multiple arrests and abductions says, "The subpoenas and what they tell us are accusations such as defilement of the constitution, violation of territory in collaboration with foreign forces, linkage with terrorism-designated organisations, and divesting government's acceptance. Sometimes, they summon us in different regional states" (Private Media Interview 10, January 13, 2023). Speaking about a similar experience, a journalist who works for a private broadcaster says,

> Unidentified people took me to the central prison. I appeared before the court four times. I was accused of working with Dr Debretsion and Getachew Reda [TPLF leaders designated as terrorists at the time] and organising and training youth and gun trafficking in Addis Ababa. I was linked with terrorism. Then I grieved…I cried. (Private Media Interview 8, January 17, 2023)

Another journalist who has been arrested on three occasions says,

> But the second and third times I appeared in court, I had cases. The accusations were "transmission of fake news, instigating conflict, giving information for TPLF". The third time, I was accused of conveying information to TPLF and transmitting fake news and propaganda to hinder people from participating in the war. (Private Media Interview 9, January 24, 2023)

A columnist of a private media outlet ties legal hostility he encountered with the government's tendency to act as judge, jury, and prosecutor through different bodies, "Government prosecutors and police are the central government playing cards in quashing media. Prosecutors tell the police to detain and link our cases to Fano, Shene, or Junta [names associated with groups in Amhara, Oromia, and Tigray regions]" (Private Media Interview 7, January 29, 2023).

Although it is uncommon for journalists who work for state media to experience legal issues, they are accounted for by institutional administrative measures. One example is the forced temporary layoff of journalists in the Tigrigna section of state media institutions. A journalist who experienced demotion and salary punishment from his state media institution speaks,

> I have been charged and accused of supporting the TPLF by [the media institution]. The fabricated charge was aimed at pushing me away from my position. My salary was deducted for one year, and I got demoted before being suspended from work like everyone [Tigrean journalists]. Many others experienced the same problems as me;

some had also been fired but returned following court decisions. (State Media Interview 2, January 25, 2023)

Journalists working in private media institutions are more endangered to legal safety, and legal accusations expressed by interviewees and statements from subpoenas reveal that the government has weaponised laws to restrain journalists. Journalists who were bogged down with grand accusations such as terrorism argue that by doing so, the government aims at curtailing their rights to bail. If the alleged crime is associated with journalism, they say they will have bail rights and can follow their court case while still shouldering their journalistic work. Administrative measures are also taken against journalists in state media.

4.3.3 Digital safety

Online trolls and mobs, through direct messages and posts, present another safety challenge to journalists. Journalists receive threats through social media and personal telephone. While mobs and political activists are the major culprits of online harassment against journalists in this study, cabinet members seldom join the effort in agitating violence against journalists.

A program producer and reporter in a private news site speak about receiving online harassment. She says,

> With the coming of the new government, what exhausts us is to fight informal groups, too. There is heavy harassment and mob justice. Using social media, mobs instigated our arrest, with messages like kill her, arrest her, crucify her… If I show you my Messenger, you will not comprehend how in the world a person gets insulted this much. Some are linked with my gender, others with my family, my child. Leave the threat and sexual harassment; there are also [messages of] adultery. The job is frightening because of harassment. (Private Media Interview 9, January 24, 2023)

A journalist who works for a transnational media outlet says, "Social media activists inbox us direct threats; they release your personal (location and photo) and false information (for example, misrepresenting me with Tigray rebel leader), and stating that this journalist records and reports for [the media name]; he is linked to the TPLF" (Transnational Media Interview 2, January 29, 2023). Another journalist working in a private broadcaster has experienced similar phone and social media threats. He describes, "Ethnic-affiliated elites and officials send me threats frequently through mobile and social media. You are victimised" (Private Media Interview 8, January 17, 2023).

Digital harassment is often intense for female journalists who experience gender-based misogyny and sexual violence.

4.3.4 Financial safety

Safety is also discussed regarding damage to newsroom infrastructure, revenue, etc. Similar safety issues have manifested in this study as some media houses have experienced hostility, such as security officers confiscating media equipment and personal belongings. At times, journalists' safety (in terms of infrastructure) reported stretches up to harassed landlords of journalists' residences. A critical safety issue is when journalists experience damage to their journalistic equipment and financial sources.

Speaking about government forces' repeated confiscation of media equipment and personal belongings, a private media journalist says, "They [the government] follow you, inspect your office occasionally, confiscate your materials, take your identity card and passport, and they will not be returned. They even took my marriage ring and have yet to return it" (Private Media Interview 10, January 13, 2023). An online journalist stresses that potential advertisers are threatened as well: "Our media has no advertising revenue. Advertisers tell me they are happy to help but say it does not please the government [if we fund your media]; they will receive retributions" (Private Media Interview 9, January 24, 2023). This viewpoint is also proclaimed by a few other journalists in the private media sector who are challenged to generate advertisement income, and magnets telling them they fear to advertise on their media since they are critical to the government in power.

As discussed thus far, journalists in this study explain the hostility they encountered while practising their occupation. To summarise the different themes in different codes, the following code map and profile comparison (based on ownership) are generated from MaxQDA.
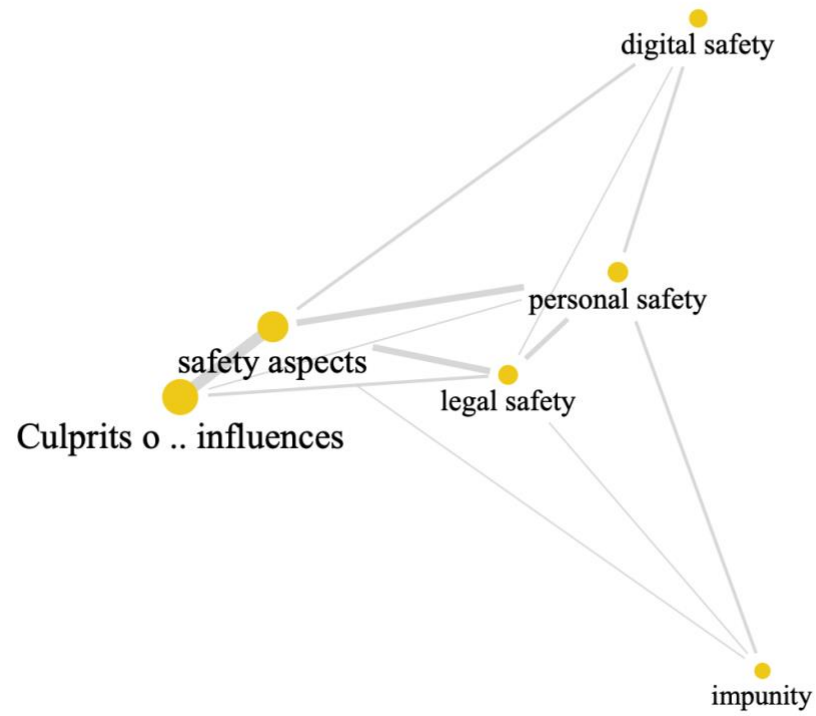
Figure 2. Code map on safety aspects

This code map shows similarities among codes in multiple documents. The thicker the line, the more proximate the codes are. Hence, the code map demonstrates that perpetrators of violence and sources of influence, mainly from state apparatus, also present different hostilities, including legal, personal, digital, and financial.
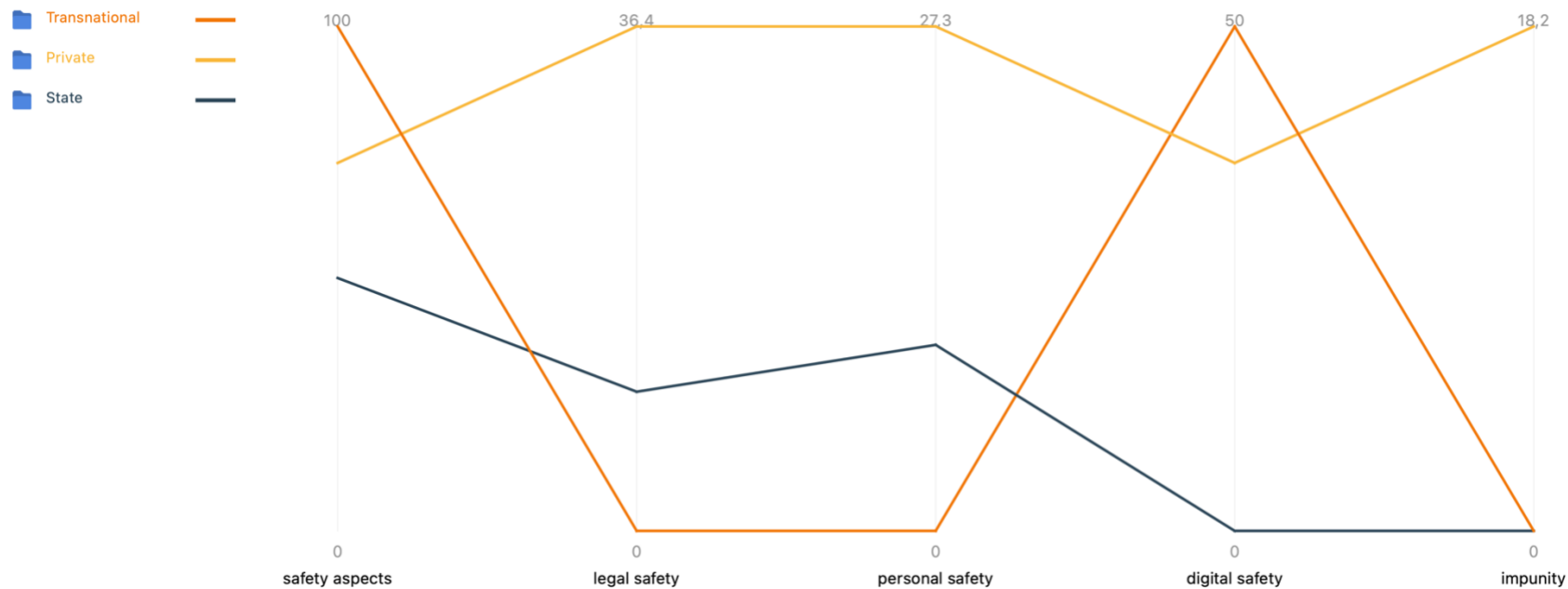
Figure 3. Profile comparison based on media ownership

Profile Comparison Chart in MaxQDA is a qualitative tool that allows us to compare cases in terms of code assignments and variable values in multiple documents. Document group was created in sets as state, private, and transnational. Accordingly, the following graph's profile line shows journalists' safety across the three media ownership schemes. Safety aspects profile comparison based on ownership shows that journalists working in private media institutions encounter legal, personal, and digital violence. At the same time, they are also frustrated by the issue of impunity. Journalists in transnational media receive the highest level of digital harassment. Overall, journalists in the state media experience the least hostility.

4.4 Safety coping mechanisms and sequels: congruence and contrast

How journalists negotiate safety, what strategies they devise to minimise or escape hostility, and what outcomes different coping tactics bear in light of news duty are inquiries that make up the third research question. The study has established that journalists and media houses employ various coping mechanisms when they fear or encounter hostility. These tactics emerge as self-censorship, workplace absentia, and, in some instances, in agreement with the media institution, false bylines, procrastination, and resistance. Diverse safety aspects discussed earlier are at play in adopting those strategies. A subtle difference is also seen in employing different coping mechanisms by journalists who work for private media institutions and their counterparts in state media, stemming from the increased and multifarious hostilities the former battled.

4.4.1 Self-censorship: a wall-to-wall phenomenon

Self-censorship emerges as the most prevalent outcome journalists use to sidestep personal and infrastructural safety. While mundane self-censorship practice is conventional across the board, practitioners justify the phenomenon in relation to types of news topics too hot to touch and level of hostility on the one hand and protecting national interest and respecting media ethics on the other hand. The overriding topic that stimulates self-censorship is conflict reporting, with the northern Ethiopia war commonly used as an example by journalists. Journalists anticipate hostility from the government and mobs if they report conflict stories as they do other topics. An editor-in-chief of a private print media exclaims their reporting about the war in northern Ethiopia and conflicts in other regions,

> When [military] drones rained in Tigray and Oromia, did we dare to report about civilians? No, we did not. We did not even have the heart to report what Amnesty [International] reported. Let alone in Tigray, ethnic profiling was immense here in Addis Ababa. Many people, including those with mental illness, were arrested based on ethnicity. I came across a story about helpless children for six months because their moms and dads were arrested. Did I report it? No. Why? To save myself. I killed a story every day for fear of consequences. I once published a photo of Tigrean and federal military personnel passing on water on the front page. The next day, the media authority called to tell me they were told to shut down our company. We were also asked to appear and explain ourselves. Because we published about peace for once, we faced threats. Afterwards, we started to be very careful. (Private Media Interview 5, January 23, 2023)

Journalists also search for fine margins in practising self-censorship, especially when avoiding the practice is not plausible. A reporter of a private broadcaster explains, "We change the angle

by inviting political experts or researchers to enlighten the topic. For instance, we may shape it by asking how other countries resolve ethnic conflict. We prefer not the event to lead us; we spin it" (Private Media Interview 2, January 16, 2023). Another private media reporter adds, "We toned down and changed the news angle [news about mass killing in Oromia] from what the residents told us; we took out who was responsible. All this is because of fear. It often happens, especially when it comes to conflict" (Private Media Interview 1, January 14, 2023).

Although the war in northern Ethiopia and recurrent conflicts supersede topics that basset self-censorship, journalists also engage in self-censorship on other topics. For instance, economy-related corruption is an area where journalists kill stories. A private media reporter tell about the complications when raising concerns about distribution shortage and corruption in areas such as cement, metal, and other construction materials: "The price you pay for some stories is high, especially economic stories involving a long chain of corruption" (Private Media Interview 4, January 11, 2023). When journalists receive threats and perceive repercussions, they employ different tactics such as changing angles, downplaying, and dodging information.

Another dimension is the scale of self-censorship among journalists depending on the nature of hostility they encounter. The more journalists suffer, the more they omit topics for good. After facing abduction, arrest and torture, a journalist working in a private broadcast media explains,

> It depends on the topic. If it is related to people's dissatisfaction, our caution on the script is equal to suppressing freedom of expression and compromising journalistic principles. There are numerous cases where we withhold information because of safety consequences. We also refrain from reporting displacement, starvation, and issues. Do not even think about investigative reporting. It is dangerous in terms of safety. We have tried to report a few, but in a way that does not expose us to retribution. (Private Media Interview 8, January 17, 2023)

Journalists' safety has become equal to a news criterion for another journalist who has experienced multiple arrests, abduction and torture, among other safety challenges. After an appalling safety experience, he exclaims the extent of self-censorship,

> We take extra caution. I withhold concrete information about massacres, displacement, corruption, etc., to avoid arrest. Not just the arrest but also to avoid killing. Besides, I will not get justice. Because of these, working based on editorial policy is impossible. Now, we decide to transmit news based on its likelihood of getting arrested or killed. We do not check our editorial; we evaluate if it gets us killed, arrested, or gets our equipment confiscated, which will disappoint which bodies. (Private Media Interview 10, January 13, 2023)

On a different note, self-censorship is a norm for journalists who work under state media, and critical news ideas will not even make it to editorial discussions. Reporting criticism is seen as endangering "the political reform" of the current government. Journalists refer to such notions as their employers being government-owned, listening to the heartbeat of the government in power, and any effort to deviate from such directions costs their jobs. However, journalists also seem to have an understanding of public interest information but relate to their inability to raise and discuss such information. After being bullied by his editor, a reporter for a state broadcaster says, "Self-censorship is highly present, mostly political topics that criticise the government. At a thought level, you will censor yourself. You can imagine that if it were politics, the consequence would be far worse. Because of such reasons, news ideas will be numbed at a preliminary stage" (State Media Interview 4, January 20, 2023).

In addition, remarks made by three editorial-level interviewees stretch the level of control in state media to censorship. An editor of a state newspaper says, "There was one point where a story was killed because it criticised the political reform. But we have a general framework based on government direction. If a news story affects national security and interests and exposes people's security, you would kill the story" (State Media Interview 10, January 12, 2023). Explaining why mass killing, displacement, and corruption cases are not reported in state media, an editor of a state broadcasting company points out, "Covering those issues is considered an obstacle to political formation, while our role is to promote it. You could talk [in editorial meetings], but you cannot do anything other than put yourself under scrutiny" (State Media Interview 2, January 25, 2023). The third editor, who works for a state broadcaster, underlines why critical reports would not be disseminated:

> The public says state media lies. State media does not lie but does not tell what it is supposed to. As a journalist, I have never reported what is not said; I did not lie. The significant thing is [we try] not to take a risk; there is a topic that we do not touch. Because you are a state media institution, you listen to the heartbeat of the government. (State Media Interview 1, January 21, 2023)

Research participants from the state media elucidate that government directions and news suggestions on contemporary issues are not up for negotiation; it is dreadful to bring journalistic principles and public interest to the attention of editorial bodies. What editorial teams and journalists discuss is limited to how to cover the suggestions in what formats and by which journalist.

While journalists practice self-censorship in private and state media due to external and internal influences and hostility, some practitioners in private and transnational media are beholden to notions such as national interest and ethical standpoint to justify withholding information. For instance, a private print media journalist who argues that he will not break despite facing multiple arrests, legal as well as personal safety maintains, "There are issues we did not cover because of national interest. I withheld information about the military, national intelligence, immigration, and executives" (Private Media Interview 7, January 29, 2023). An online journalist also relates withholding information to minimise harm to citizens, "When they [people] tell us they are surrounded, we sometimes withhold the information because reporting it could also mean providing information to the attackers" (Private Media Interview 9, January 24, 2023). Justifying self-censorship with journalistic ethics and national interest is also anchored by a journalist working in a transnational media outlet, who says, "I left out reports that put individuals, organisations, or country's security at risk" (Transnational Media Interview 1, January 17, 2023). The journalist also mentions withholding news material about the Great Ethiopian Renaissance Dam: "All people have an attachment to the dam; the reaction will not be easy if [I report] some technical failures of the dam. Other countries have an interest, so they will use it for other causes".

To conclude, self-censorship is common among journalists in this study, irrespective of media ownership differences. The nuances observed are associated with justifications such as journalists' appraisal of influences, experience of hostility, and their role in society.

4.4.2 Procrastination: keeping quiet until it is safe to come out

To circumvent being a safety target, journalists and media institutions employ a deviant tactic, news procrastination, for big news topics they recognise will eventually emerge. This can be understood as an advertent practice of abstaining from reporting a topic (typically ethnic or religious conflicts, mass killings, people's displacement, corruption, etc.) or withholding news material until they are not the centre of attention. This procrastination of news discontinues once officials speak about the feared topic or when foreign or state media start reporting it. It is also good to note that procrastination theme does not consider practices of withholding news materials because of a lack of balance or news projects not ready for publication. However, there is a noteworthy nuance between state and private media in practising and justifying news procrastination.

In the private media environment, procrastinating news occurs mainly because of fear of safety. A reporter of a private broadcaster explains,

> When government pressure intensifies, the editor-in-chief tells us to be more cautious. We are told to hold on to some issues until state media reports them. Instead of leading, we sometimes follow because we fear the risk. We say let us freeze issues such as mass killings in Oromia, and when some things were heard in the war, let us not be the one who breaks the news so that journalists avoid arrest and [the media institution's] reputation is not disparaged by the government. Nobody may look out for you if you get arrested after taking a risk. (Private Media Interview 1, January 14, 2023)

Speaking about a real-time experience, an online journalist affirms,

> Right before I met you today, there was a conflict in Denbidollo. Fighters secured the release of five hundred inmates. I know this is a news story. But I withhold the story. Foreign media are reporting it, so I have posted it. Now, as I am talking to you, I wonder if they [the government] will come to arrest me. (Private Media Interview 10, January 13, 2023)

One observation is that not all topics see the light of day in state or foreign media, making it problematic to follow such a lead. It is acceptable that some news materials can be exclusive in their nature, such as investigative reporting. When this happens, journalists still opt to practise procrastination or withhold publication. One private media journalist refers to a recent story he withheld and later published about corruption and mismanagement in the military. He explains, "I had withheld the information I shared about the military [for over two months], hoping the government would alleviate the problem". However, he decided to publish the news story once he learnt that the problem, he investigated exacerbated. Following the report's publication, government forces arrested the journalist for exposing a "top national secret".

News procrastination takes on a different form for journalists working in the state media. In the state media, the phenomenon is practised in line with the leadership within the media institution or until the "media committee" suggests what contemporary issues to focus on. A reporter who works for the state media says, "Unless the government sets an agenda, you cannot take the lead and cover the story. We wait for the government. The media ignores many dissatisfactions from the public" (State Media Interview 4, January 20, 2023). Another state broadcast media reporter reiterates this line of strategy by explaining, "As a state media, the state broadcaster is responsible for everything. Instead of hurrying and reporting things, it is better to be late" (State Media Interview 5, January 17, 2023).

An editor who works for a state media institution explains the practice between the government, the "media committee", and the media leaders within the state media. He says,

> There are current affairs that the government wants us to focus on. The media leaders are bodies of the government. It is a major one; it can be two or three per week. They will give general directions on these current issues. The media leaders know the idea; they guide you accordingly. (State Media Interview 2, January 25, 2023)

Moreover, as safety coping mechanisms, workplace absentia in state media, using a different by-line in transnational media (instead of the reporter who wrote the news), and moving to a softer journalism stream or changing positions within the media industry in private media are observed and argued for by respondents in this study. These tactics are not discussed in detail because they rarely occur compared to the dominant outcomes addressed.

4.4.3 Marks of resistance: imperturbable against the writing on the wall

So far, the presentation of results on negotiating hostility and content has shown how state suppression and hostility from non-state actors have risen against journalists in Ethiopia. Journalists dwell in abject fear of government retaliation, thereby ensuing submission as a coping mechanism, with nuances among journalists and across media ownership. Nevertheless, quite a few practitioners disregard such suppression. In the following part, discussions will be presented on the manifestations of resistance amid different safety experiences three journalists (also owners of their respective media) had to overcome and rebound upon release from arrests. The journalists in this theme sturdily believe in journalism's role in society when it monitors government. They also emerge to have forethought about the consequences of what they do, how they do it, and their readiness to accept repercussions.

The first journalist is a print media columnist and owner who, with over a decade's experience, saw his six different print media institutions closed forcefully during the EPRDF and now the Prosperity Party government. He served three years of imprisonment, countless detentions and lawsuits, and had his personal safety jeopardised. However, every time his media institution got closed, he started a media institution under a different name because the EPRDF government ensured he would not get his license back. He appraises the current government as undemocratic because it sustained attacks on him as he faced abduction, detention, and arbitrary arrests, on top of different threats. He holds onto an adversarial journalistic role and repercussions that could result in taking on such a stance and embraces the consequences, even if it is his life on the line.

The journalist faced a threat from a four-star army general who, on state television, said he would not bother if an angry soldier acted against the journalist. The journalist explains,

> To expect freedom of expression from this government is like expecting pigeons from a snake clutch. There is no law when a general in a uniform on television threatens that they would take action if I were released. When it comes to being a journalist, I came to sip the hemlock. I will accept death. Every day you get arrested and released, you will continue because you believe there is a new opportunity. (Private Media Interview 7, January 29, 2023)

Speaking about his continuous investigations into the military and political figures and facing countless detrimental hostilities, he stresses,

> We believe each case we cover brings safety concerns. But we will accept whatever the consequences are. For the media, we will pay the price. When we say our journey is unto the Calvary, it is because we understand the government can do to us whatever, whenever. But we say truth is mightier. And we believe that will save our country from wrongdoings; correct and build the government when we are adversarial to it, not when we are seized by it. However, when we fight against it, it is not without thinking about the retribution stick. We did not come thus far by receiving a cheer. Even now, when we return to the media, we know no one to cheer us but to thwack us like a buffalo. But we pay the price for the profession because we believe in supporting our country this way. (Private Media Interview 7, January 29, 2023)

The second and the third journalists base their works on and own YouTube-based media platforms. They have also encountered multiple arrests and altercations with government bodies and intelligence officers. The second journalist elucidates her expectation of hostility from government bodies and relates it to her critical reporting and implicating government accountability for different mass killings. She also elaborates her media would not omit news stories because of hostility from the government. She emphasises,

> I am used to safety risks. Our telephone is wiretapped. They also block our phones. Let alone when they call you by identifying themselves as an intelligence officer. An arrest could be luxuries because it is official that you are under government control. It is a country where they sometimes put on lights and warn you at night. These are not easy, but we expect them from how we work. I know the government is not happy with what I do. When issues that the government wants not to be touched, it gets furious. When there is accountability to the government, they get angry. Or you might get killed; you never know. Personally, I [joined journalism] considering this. Because, as a country, it is not an option to continue like this. This might result in a lack of country to give to our children. We pay the current price because we fear what might come. (Private Media Interview 9, January 24, 2023)

The third practitioner, who has been arrested two times and harassed on many occasions throughout two decades of media experience, argues that,

It is not an attractive environment [for journalists]. I was arrested two times. I have been followed by cars and on foot several times to influence and induce me to fear. Different people are sent after you to spy on you. But because you [the government] do so, I will not stop. I believe situations will change only if I say no. Unless you submit, nobody can take away your freedom for good. You may experience threats and arrests but will be released if you do not break the law. They will arrest you again, and you will be re-released. In my programs, I do not compromise my freedom. I use my free mind. (Private Media Interview 11, January 25, 2023)

The signs of resistance exhibited by a few journalists are not demonstrated merely by their safety encounters and utterances regarding journalistic roles, awareness of consequences, and expressions of assertions to stick to their editorial positions. Assumptions about resistance and media resilience, in general, are tough to establish and even trickier to claim in the face of grave hostilities journalists face in Ethiopia. Despite that, deliberations will be made on other contributing factors that enabled this group of journalists to defy and rebound from state repression in order to show nuances in the interpretation of findings.

As a summary of the second research question on journalists' safety and coping mechanisms, the following two figures, generated from MaxQDA, entail the different coping mechanisms at play across media ownership.
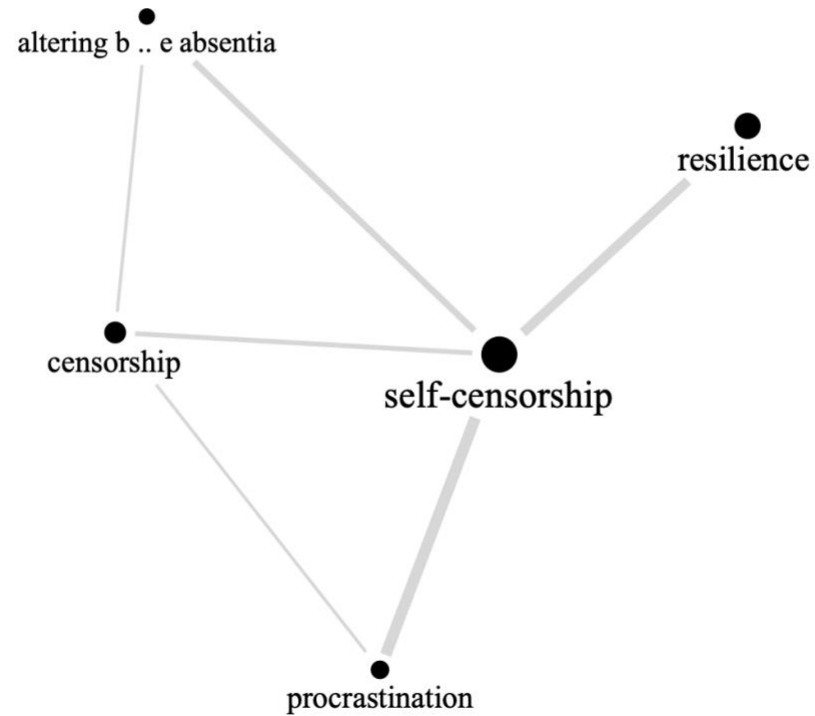
Figure 4. Code map of coping mechanisms

The code map for coping mechanisms at play also demonstrates that self-censorship, procrastination, and resilience come out as the most usually exploited appliances, i.e., close to one another. Additionally, some journalists use workplace absentia and false bylines to duck repercussions.
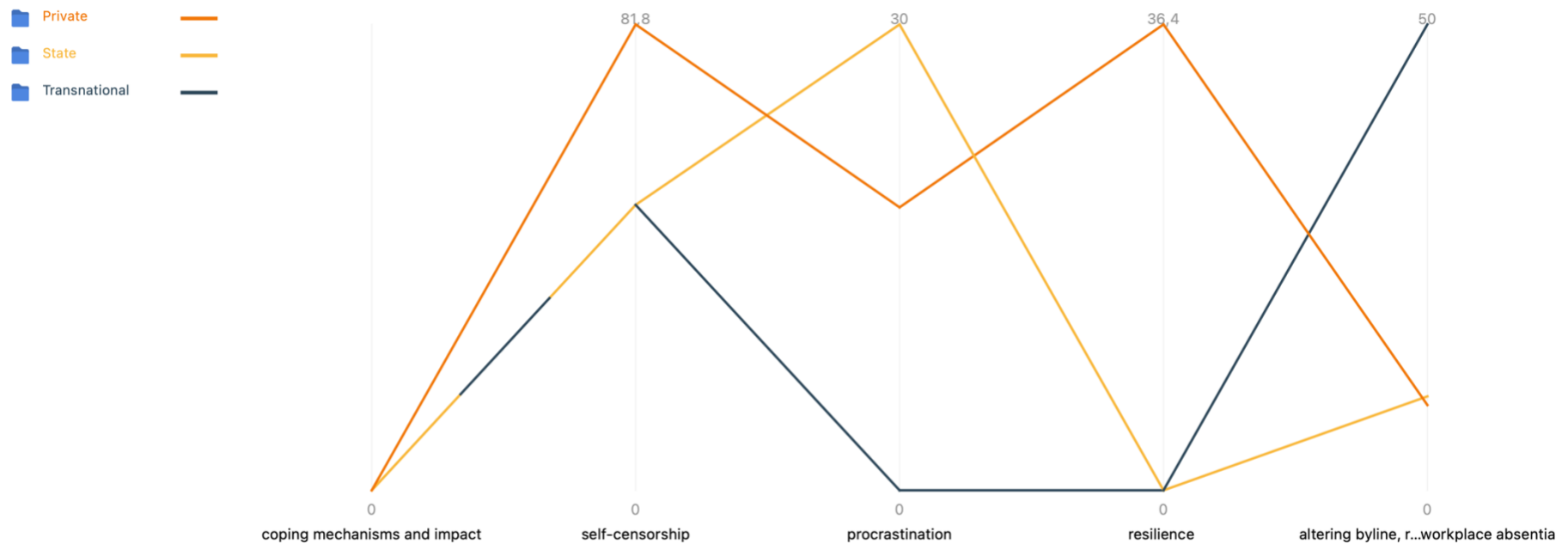
Figure 5. Coping mechanisms' profile comparison based on media ownership

Based on profile comparison, the coping mechanisms are displayed to demonstrate comparisons among media ownership. As a result, self-censorship and procrastination practices appear greater in state and privately-owned media, while such practice is less applicable for journalists in transnational media. This relates to the increased and diverse violence private media journalists face. However, signs of resistance are also seen in the private media; hence, not all submit to hostility.

4.5 Journalistic associations as support structures: EMC, EMWA, and EMMPA

Journalists were asked to provide their viewpoints about the council and associations such as the Ethiopian Media Council (EMC), the Ethiopian Media Women's Association (EMWA), and the Ethiopian Mass Media Professionals Association (EMMPA). The respondents raised uncertainties over the capacity and independence of the associations. While some interviewees recently became members of associations, many say they are not. Speaking about EMWA, a woman interviewee from a private media institution says, "I am not a member. I do not believe they are free." (Private Media Interview 9, January 24, 2023). A private broadcast journalist who has experienced abduction and torture adds, "These associations are means of collecting money; they do not show up when it comes to protecting journalists. They are dependent and incapacitated" (Private Media Interview 8, January 17, 2023). Furthermore, a reporter working in the private media says,

> The associations are not strong. They do not even work together. Instead of establishing one strong institution, they are dispersed, such as sports journalists, business journalists, and editors' associations. When journalists get arrested, they should release statements and challenge the government. Most are silent. (Private Media Interview 4, January 11, 2023)

Commenting on media owners being members of the EMC, an editor of a state media outlet says,

> The media council is a toothless lion. It is a personality platform, but we want it to be diversified by including elders, religious leaders, journalists, and parliamentarians. Journalists get arrested, and the media council says nothing. It is the council that should regulate journalists' when they breach public interest, but now it is the government that is doing this. It is established but not functional. (State Media Interview 10, January 12, 2023)

Journalists' dissatisfaction towards professional associations informs the last question of the study. In this regard, presidents of EMC, EMWA, and EMMPA were interviewed to answer the fourth research question of the study. The understanding from these interviews is that their effort to enhance self-regulation and protect news workers is far from accomplished. Again, their effort falls short in the power dynamics as government attacks overwhelm any exertion professional associations stage to protect journalists.

According to the EMC Chairperson, Amare Aregawi, the need for a self-regulatory media body has been raised over a decade. Despite this, the establishment came to fruition in 2016 with the support of the United Nations. Media members are now 61, mounting from 19 at the time of

establishment. The Chairperson points out, "Without putting press freedom into the bargain, the Ethiopian Media Council strives for ethical media, free from hate speech regarding religion, ethnicity, or gender; media should be based on fact-based accounts" (Amare Aregawi, January 24, 2023).

The council has three bodies, and the first is the leading body, which organises council meetings every two years where media institutions present reports for review. The second is the council's cabinet, which is the executive itself. The third, perhaps significant for the present study, is the ombudsman or arbitrary jury. This body is responsible for hearing and offering verdicts amid complaints about media professionals or institutions. The arbitrary jury comprises 16 members: lawyers, public representatives, judge's association, gender representatives, and scholars from Addis Ababa University. However, filing complaints is not up to expectations. The Chairperson reveals, "Some are unaware because they have filed complaints about residential demolition. Therefore, we are delivering training about this, disseminating advertisements across all media, and calling for complaints. A lot has to be done in this regard" (Amare Aregawi, January 24, 2023). As a result, the press ombudsman body is not up to expectation in its effort of fortifying self-regulation.

One line of inquiry is the effort of EMC in protecting journalists and prosecuting hostilities against journalists. In line with this, the chairperson addresses their communication channel with the government through parliament and engagements with the Ethiopian Media Authority, telling them to halt controlling news workers while the council exists to discharge such responsibility.

> We ask why you let other bodies control [the media] when a self-regulatory body is established. However, as I said, unless measures are taken by the media, the government, civil organisations, and the public, one body cannot solve it. Sometimes, concerned government bodies do not know about the arrest of media members. When we ask the police, they tell us they do not know who was arrested or where he went. When the media council goes to the EMA, they say they do not know. While there is an established law [to protect freedom of expression], enforcing it is another problem. That is why whenever you draft a law, it should be supported by institutions; otherwise, it will be meaningless. (Amare Aregawi, January 24, 2023)

The second professional association drawn in this study is the Ethiopian Media Women's Association. EMWA is one of the oldest journalistic professional associations in Ethiopia, operating for two decades. It also has regional delegates in seven regional states. In recent years, EMWA has offered capacity-building training for women journalists in collaboration

with international organizations. Training topics include COVID-19, trauma and conflict reporting, children, health, and other pressing issues.

While the capacity-building effort is progressive, the president underlines that women journalists in Ethiopia encounter deep-rooted challenges.

> Ethiopia is not conducive for women journalists. There are also ingrained cultural challenges. To this day, women journalists are mainly assigned to cover soft areas such as art and entertainment. Women journalists face workplace harassment. (Ribika Taddesse, April 4, 2023)

Speaking on why EMWA could not assist women journalists in times of need of protection, such as their requests for an attorney, the president emphasizes, "the biggest challenge we have is capacity. We do not have employees, commitment in paying membership fees lacks, and our financial situation is based on and off projects".

The Ethiopian Mass Media Professionals Association is the third association included in this study. The establishment of EMMPA (2020) is relevant to the present study because the association is more or less a restoration of the former Ethiopian Journalists Association, whereby most board members, including its president, were forced into exile. In addition, EMMPA itself has received its fair share of harassment as two active board members have been arrested.

Clarifying how they engage in and follow up hostility against journalists in Ethiopia, the president states,

> We follow attacks on journalists in Ethiopia and families of arrested journalists also contact us. Journalism is in a precarious situation; it has become a protection-less profession. Professionals are being attacked. Their whereabouts are often unknown; we would not find them in days. (Tibebu Belete, August 16, 2023)

However, the president also underscores that their capacity is limited to releasing timely statements by saying, "the association's fighting capacity is releasing pressers about arrested journalists to the public, government, and international organisations".

In conclusion, a brief look at the efforts of the journalistic associations in this study uncovers that their capacity-building training and press releases condemning hostility against journalists are relevant towards protecting journalists and prosecuting violence. The establishment of

EMC, on the other hand, is a breakthrough in the Ethiopian media sphere. Its arbitrary jury could also play a better role when fully operational.

Chapter 5: Interpretation of Findings

5.8 Introduction

The chapter spotlights the interpretation of the findings of the study. This section also attempts to interpret the meaning of the study's findings by contextualising conceptual frameworks and relating the findings with other studies.

5.9 Influences immuring journalism practice in Ethiopia

Organisational influences evolve burlier in state-owned media institutions than in private and transnational media. Journalists in state media explain why economic influence is high. Some suggest a different funding model to sever the media's "umbilical cord" from the state and allow for independent reporting. Journalists in state media elucidate that focusing on protocol news and topics related to women, children, and people with disabilities is safer to report. It is also significant to contextualise this finding in state media, where the government accomplishes funding and appointment of media leaders in power. In discussing organisational influence, Reese and Shoemaker (2016) and Hanitzsch, Ramaprasad et al. (2019) pinch this dimension as how news organisations function within their walls, the influence of media leadership, ownership, and editorial stances. Nonetheless, most journalists in private media relate political influences as they are inclined to emphasise news angles that criticise the government, including publishing societal problems to seeking policy issues and exposing corruption for holding those in power to account. The journalists experience threats from different levels of the political establishment, security apparatus, and government officials, including the EMA.

Ethnicity's influence in state, private, and transnational media is massive and appears as a predicament to practice everyday journalism. In its radical sense, ethnicity is appraised as a suppression apparatus where journalists fear to investigate statements and misdeeds of officials and magnets. Ethnicity has long been an undercurrent in Ethiopia's media sphere (Skjerdal & Moges 2020). One such impact is that editors assign news reporters to their applicable regional states due to fear of ethnically motivated mobs. In line with this finding, Kebede and Tveiten (2023) indicate that Ethiopian media institutions consider the ethnic affiliation of reporters to assign them to their appropriate regional states. While this ethnicised media system can handle access to information by suiting the language and context of regional states (Kebede & Tveiten 2023), the present study suggests that media houses assign reporters to certain areas to mitigate hostility against their news workers. In relation to the ethnic influence on journalists,

Wasserman and Maweu (2014) argue that the "hierarchy of influences" model should incorporate ethnicity as one level of analysis, especially in the African setting where ethnic identity affects journalistic content.

In addition, non-discriminatory access to information observed with the 2018 political change (Skjerdal & Moges 2020) is reversed as journalists in private and transnational media describe lopsided treatment compared with their counterparts in state media. The journalists in this study mention several incidents where they were prevented from entering parliament and other timely press briefings. They are denied information from officials, followed by threats because they are from private or transnational media. Besides, whatever information they obtain occasionally, journalists explain that authorities consider it a favour that they should not necessarily expect. However, a single phone call suffices for journalists working in state media to obtain information from authorities.

Moreover, the war in northern Ethiopia is a reverse gear to the media freedom exhibited during the 2018 political change. Following the war, the declared state of emergency assisted state authorities (military, Ethiopian Media Authority, and executive bodies) in participating in telephone threats, issuing written warnings, and enabling security personnel to detain, arrest, and torture journalists. In this sense, the war in northern Ethiopia changed the face of journalism in Ethiopia to the worse. Even if journalists in state-owned media did not encounter physical abuse in relation to the war, they pronounced the influence it brought to their newsrooms, forcing them to be obedient and collaborative with the government in power. At the same time, they also persuaded that they benefited their country by helping the government in power. Consequently, the war in northern Ethiopia and recurrent conflicts in other regions curtailed journalists from reporting due to fear of consequences from state and non-state actors.

5.10   Journalists' safety in Ethiopia: ally vs. adversary

Studies about journalists' safety focus on harm journalists encounter and approaches news workers employ to prevent repercussions and, to an extent, the effects of mechanisms put into play (Hasan & Wadud 2020; Jamil 2020b; Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. 2023). Accordingly, journalists in Ethiopia encounter hostility by which news workers in private media institutions and correspondents who work in transnational media are recipients of grave and continual attacks. In congruence with this claim, Vos (2023) considers rhetorical or physical attacks against journalists as assaults on journalistic roles. The more journalists are critical of the

government, the more likely they will face hostility. As discussed in chapter five, the findings of this study unpacked personal, legal, digital, and financial safety aspects journalists in Ethiopia battle with. A few interviewees faced torture at the hands of security officers. Because of torture, journalists also disclosed that they still suffer psychological and health-related trauma. Some have been abducted and arrested multiple times. After being slammed with "terrorism" and "treason" lawsuits, journalists describe damages to their professional credibility once they win over court cases or get released at the government's mercy. State media are also a hostile facilitator against journalists as they have broadcast critical documentaries about journalists working in transnational media claiming that they work hand in hand with foreign enemies to dismantle Ethiopia. Threats against journalists through the state media are not a new phenomenon in Ethiopia. As a dividing effect between local media, we are reminded of how the state newspaper Addis Zemen reported threats on would-be exiled editors of Addis Neger in Ethiopia (Skjerdal 2014). Regarding this, the transmission of news and documentaries depicting journalists as "traitors" and "enemies" are interlaced with the harm journalists receive while in government custody, infringement of their right to a fair trial, and susceptibility to mob justice, among other things.

Furthermore, journalists receive threats, misogyny, adultery messages and notice messages that provoke action against them through social media. In line with this, female journalists are more prone to sexual harassment (Jamil 2020b) and have been targeted for online abuse. Digital attacks are mainly committed by non-state actors (political activists and social media influencers), and in a few instances, officials join the effort. In line with this, Workneh (2021) also clarifies emerging threats from non-state actors such as vigilante groups, influential social media personalities, and weaponised media. To escape digital safety, several journalists said they avoid using social media because their attempts to report online abuse went unheard. Koirala (2020) found that female journalists in Nepal avoid social media platforms to mitigate online harassment. However, non-use is not recommended as a viable solution because people rely on these platforms for information (Nidoy 2023). As a lasting peace, Waisbord (2020) suggests that news organisations should engage social media companies by identifying and reporting harassment. Security personnel's attacks do not stop at harming journalists personally, as they are also involved in ransacking newsrooms. Financially, such hostility looks detrimental to private media economically as every time such damage occurs, they must start from scratch to build their media institution.

Putting a face to culprits of violence against journalists is vital. The findings of this study allude to the reality that the state apparatus (military, security, intelligence, executive) remains the primary source of violence against journalists in Ethiopia. The study, thus, maintains the conviction that in semi-authoritarian countries, state apparatuses are seen as leading perpetrators of hostility against journalists (for instance, Ghana (Adjin-Tettey & Briamah 2023) Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe (Moon 2023), Hong Kong (Lee, Tang & Chan 2023). Therefore, perennially, the political establishment in Ethiopia remains the topmost source of hostility against journalists. Journalists also raise the issue of impunity, stating that they never acquired justice for arbitrary arrest and torture since perpetrators were not held accountable. Once again, this is a failure of the government in Ethiopia in its positive obligation to ensure the safety of journalists by denouncing and prosecuting hostility committed against news workers. Additionally, journalists working in private and transnational media are more prone to threats from non-state actors. Because of such hostility, they explain that they are not sure if they make it to their home after the workday is over.

Lastly, although it is handy to examine the personal, legal, digital, financial, and similar safety aspects of journalists discretely, it should also be noted that they often intersect. For instance, journalists accused of terrorism and treason prompt damage to their journalistic and media institution's reputation. Journalists find out about such experiences when they talk to their news sources. Despite success in court, allegations and lawsuits strip journalists of personal, psychological, and financial well-being and professional credibility. As a result, it should be noted that safety aspects are not mutually exclusive as the different hostilities journalists face also distress their credibility and readership. Having said that, diverse threats packed quite a punch on journalists working in private and transnational media, as shall be seen in the coming part, which deals with the outcomes of hostilities against journalists.

5.11 Self-censorship, procrastination, and resistance: a look at content negotiation

The present study deliberates the outcomes of coping mechanisms into self-censorship, procrastination, and resistance. The discovery that journalists practice self-censorship because of hostilities (Iordanidou et al. 2020; Jamil 2020a; Jungblut & Hoxha 2017; Skjerdal 2010) is substantiated. In the same way, this study absorbs that violence against journalists, mainly from the state apparatus, has podded journalists in Ethiopia into self-censorship. Journalists employ self-censorship as a common strategy in the event of awareness of or encountering

repercussions and beholding to "national interest" and ethics. This is established by different actions taken by journalists drawn in this study. As explained in chapter two, self-censorship encompasses actions such as omission, dilution or change of emphasis (Lee 1998) or withholding journalistic material (Skjerdal 2010). Likewise, journalists explain that they modify or kill news materials due to fear of government retaliation and other safety concerns. Journalists often withhold information related to politics, corruption, displacement, and conflict to avoid arrest or harm, including being killed. Sometimes, when they notice that the topic is unavoidable, instead of directly reporting what is happening in Ethiopia, they dally news materials by airing topics in countries where ethnic-related conflict occurs and report how these countries solve their problems. Conflict, as a topic, has also been one major area of basseting self-censorship (Moges 2017).

Journalists in state media also fear losing their jobs if they go outside what they are directed to report. The finding recounts dubious ethical practices and stretchy editing as self-censorship justifications in state media in Ethiopia (Skjerdal 2010) as editorial teams are involved in expunging news material and questions journalists prepare for interviews. Nuances in a scale of self-censorship and explanations relate to ownership differences interviewees work for, hostilities they face, and their ability to withstand threats. The magnitude of self-censorship practice is substantial to most private-media journalists as they are more subject to hostility. When this happens, journalists evaluate not newsworthiness but the likelihood of retaliation to pursue reporting duties.

While studies on self-censorship prevail as a common coping mechanism for safety, news workers also use other atypical strategies to circumvent safety. One coping mechanism revealed in this study is related to a phenomenon in which journalists put off news assignments for a little while to protect themselves and their media institutions, explained in the study as procrastination. Individual journalists sometimes discharge such practice but often in consonance with editorial bodies. The government's threat to private media is evident, and journalists follow state or foreign media's lead to avoid risking their safety. State media's practice of procrastination is rather related to the power dynamics in the country, where the government is more prominent in putting contemporary issues on their news desk and have closer control over the media institutions. Forthwith, state media institutions overlook important news topics until a direction is forwarded from government bodies, usually through media leaders and the governmental "media committee". In relation to this, Moon (2023) found

that journalists may adopt different strategies, such as not reporting the story, adopting extra professional buffers, and negotiating with supervisors and sources. Besides forcing journalists to self-censor, this finding is positively related to indications that safety experience impacts journalists by "curtailing reporting activities" (Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. 2023, 11). Undoubtedly, such procrastination habit comes at the cost of contradicting the rudiments and function of journalism, such as timeliness, breaking news, and agenda-setting authority in general. Notions related to procrastination practices are not well-founded in journalism discourses. For more context, Thomas, Jakubowicz and Norman (2019) explain procrastination as a by-product of the Australian mainstream media's "failure to recognise aboriginal peoples'" aspirations. In addition, deliberating on the US's use of procrastination as a policy tool during the war with Vietnam, Grabers (2003) puts it as an information control tactic, deviating from formal censorship, morsel, and doctored information.

Journalists' role and independence are affected differently depending on the hostilities journalists face and their ability to cope with threats (Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. 2023). This suggestion demonstrates the reality that not all journalists submit to hostilities. However, the question of what would enable journalists not to submit in the face of pressure and hostility is even bigger. Like the problem, the solution would involve individual, organisational, economic, and global factors. For instance, Wasserman (2018) points out that journalism's adaptability to commercial pressures is vital to resilience. Accordingly, while one transnational media had temporarily relocated to Nairobi, Kenya, for safety, one print media outlet that showed resistance relied on its 100 per cent publication sales income. The other two seemed to gain financial independence from the platform where they practice journalism, YouTube. Indeed, journalism is forced to adapt to the digital age amid financial challenges (Wu, Edson & Charles 2019), and the YouTube-based platforms in this study might have saved themselves because of income from relying on online media. Therefore, the more journalists and media houses relish individual, economic, organisational, and similar factors, the more likely they will have a potent to resist hostility. Finally, although the above-discussed details have enabled a few journalists to disregard suppression and influence, it goes without saying that their arrests and safety experience temporarily thwarted their day-to-day work and, in some cases, their entire media institutions were not functional while the journalists were staying behind bars. Hence, it is difficult to determine that media sustainability is realised.

5.12 Journalistic associations as support structures: engagements and challenges

Building professional solidarity and peer networks beyond employer organisations is suggested to create fortitude for journalists who encounter safety, helping them cope with threats (Slavtcheva-Petkova et al. 2023; Tandoc, Sagun & Alvarez 2023). Relying on such notions and professional associations' overall role in journalism practice, interviews were conducted with the president of the Ethiopian Media Council and two other journalistic associations in Ethiopia. Journalists were also asked whether they obtained support from the aforementioned institutions. It was found that most journalists in this study do not acknowledge the associations as their fortresses.

Both associations', EMWA and EMMPA, engagement in organising training is commendable. However, the presidents describe the associations' capacity to come to the defence of journalists under attack is limited to issuing press releases and scarce engagement with and influence on government bodies. A recently published report regarding associations described that professional associations in Ethiopia are challenged in holding regular meetings and assemblies, committing to membership fee payment, and jointly working to protect journalists (CARD 2023b). On the other hand, EMC appears to have channels with the government executive branch, including briefing opportunities in parliament. However, its arbitrary jury is not functional yet due to a lack of submission of complaints. The council president also stresses that government bodies and civil society should support implementing legal backdrops to protect news workers.

Chapter 6: Summary and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

As a last chapter, this section of the thesis summarises the overall study and, in so doing, recaps what stands out and tries to evaluate what has been achieved. It also attempts to forward suggestions for future studies.

6.2 Summary

This thesis raised questions about critical influences on journalism practice in Ethiopia, safety of journalists, coping mechanisms, and the role journalistic associations could play in helping build vigour in journalists who face hostility and protect news workers. To answer these questions, different assumptions and theories were discussed as a general interlocking conceptual framework. In terms of methodology, the study embraced qualitative research, including semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. The thesis also employed MaxQDA to accomplish coding, including visual tools expended in qualitative studies.

The study finds that the government's approach to media policy has a chilling effect on media activity in Ethiopia. While the government uses institutional leadership, editorial ranks, and funding in the case of media institutions under its control, it applies manifold means at its disposal to impede journalistic reporting in private and transnational media institutions. Journalists are traumatised, and their newsroom and occupational roles are compromised due to physical abuse, superfluous legal indictments, verbal threats, and online trolling. Hostilities, in turn, strain journalists and media houses to adopt different submissive practices in their everyday news duties, such as self-censorship, procrastination, and avoidance, i.e., workplace absentia, role shift, and exile. Nevertheless, some journalists defy the impact of such hostility and continue to fight by remaining in the profession and refusing compliance.

The overall study and the context in which it was conducted exhibited accomplishment and constraint. On the triumph side, researching a heated topic like journalists' safety in Ethiopia's current context through fieldwork is not easy. However, the journalists' willingness and valour to participate in this study and the advisor's moral support and guidance uplifted the student's perseverance to accomplish this research. None of the participants in this study submitted a withdrawal request until the date of thesis submission, which is encouraging.

The study would have been more thorough if the researcher had been able to travel to Tigray to encounter journalists working in the Tigray National Regional State of Ethiopia, due to the effect of the northern Ethiopia war on professional practice. Furthermore, a fair number of women journalists who faced hostility participated in this study. Despite this, the despicable experience many women journalists go through and their lack of consent to participate in the study are also not up to the student's desires. Although justifications are discussed for both cases (see chapter three), the findings of the study should be read with these limitations in mind.

6.3 Suggestions for future research

While the present thesis is undertaken to grasp key influences and safety issues, the project also triggers more questions. Accordingly, the following areas are forwarded as suggestions for future investigation.

- A study of journalism curricula in Ethiopia is deemed necessary. To what extent journalists' safety is curated in higher education could be assessed as this plays a significant role in grooming future journalists and their understanding of workplace safety.

- As a new trend, digital media serve as a facilitator of hostility against journalists. A thorough study on digital safety, as well as a study of diverse ways and analysis of content and target of digital harassment, could provide significant outlooks regarding perpetrators and the nature of digital attacks.

- A closer look at media resilience and sustainability, investigating what enables journalists and media institutions to flourish in a hostile environment also needs to be done. In relation to this, future studies could compare local journalists' conditions with the coping mechanisms of journalists who live in exile in the context of a safer environment.

- Another concern regarding journalists' safety, more so around freedom of expression and the press, is the role of continental and worldwide protection regimes. For example, the role of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, which adjudicates allegations of violations of the

African Charter. Explanation of why and how journalists in Ethiopia who face bogus lawsuits for practising their occupation would use such regimes to defend their rights.

- Appraising journalistic associations in Ethiopia with other contexts, for instance, that of Nordic countries, would bring significant contributions as a lesson and empowerment.

Appendices

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Appendix 1: List of interviewees who are identified in the study (journalistic associations)

No.	Name	Council/Association	Position	Date of interview
1	Amare Aregawi	Ethiopian Media Council	Chairperson	January 24, 2023
2	Ribika Tadesse	Ethiopian Media Women's Association	President	April 4, 2023
3	Tibebu Belete	Ethiopian Mass Media Professionals Association	President	August 16, 2023

The remaining 23 interviewees are kept anonymous for safety reasons.

Appendix 2: Interview guide (journalists)

1. What does a typical workday look like? Talk me through your dealings with an assignment editor, sources, editing, feedback about your work, etc.

2. What was work like during the northern Ethiopia war? How do you describe your reports about the war?

3. On what matters do you consult your editorial policy?

4. How would you describe the state of access to information in Ethiopia?

5. What factors do you consider daily at work, such as influences from friends, colleagues, editors, audience, ownership, media market, political environment…. etc.?

6. Was there a scenario in which you felt isolated by your organisation or society because of the topics you covered?

7. To what extent do you consider these factors when you write news?

8. Have you experienced arrest, verbal or physical assault, warning, or safety threats from state apparatus or other groups?

9. How do you cope with hostility?

10. To what depth do you consider these safety issues when you write news?

11. What is your experience covering topics with politicians, the police, or military personnel concerning your work? How do you deal with it?

12. Are you a member of any journalistic association in Ethiopia? In what ways did they support you?

Appendix 3: Interview guide (professional association presidents)

1. What is the objective of your association?
2. Tell me about membership, fees, and meetings in the association.
3. Overall, how do you describe your association's contribution to journalists?
4. What is the state of journalists' safety in Ethiopia?
5. What role do you play in the protection of journalists who encounter hostility?

Appendix 4: Document Comparison Chart
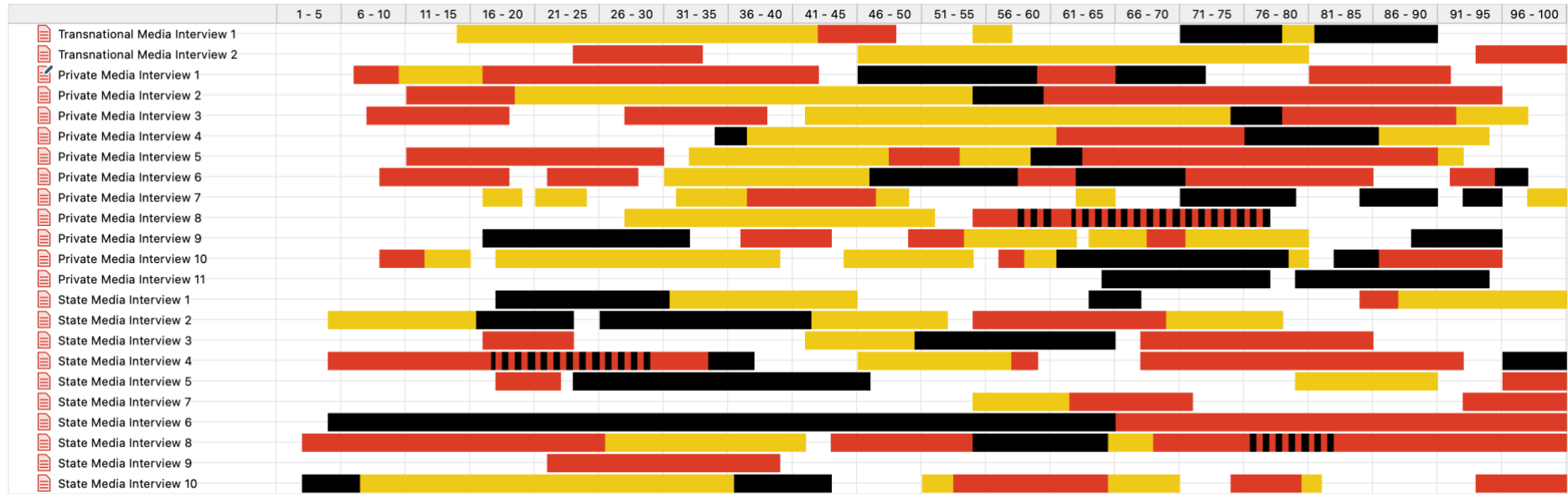
Comparison chart of coded text (Red – key influences, Yellow – safety aspects, and Black – coping mechanisms)

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