

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**PUBLISHING PRIVATE DAILY NEWSPAPER IN ADDIS
ABABA: POST-1991 CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS**

BY
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**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa
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Abstract

During the last two decades in Ethiopia a daily private newspaper has not evolved except *Eletawi Addis* (Addis Daily) which lasted practically for a year. The purpose of this study is to find an economic explanation as to why daily private newspapers fail to evolve in Ethiopia. Commodification, an entry-point in the study of a political economy of communication dictates the research.

A decade being the dividing line, two newspapers each are randomly selected from the first and the second decade, and another newspaper, unlike other newspapers which has either stayed for the longest years or remained in the market without interruption from entry-point to the present is part of the study. Hence, the advertising content, the motives and the commercialization throughout the years in the selected five newspapers has been studied from the first year of operation with two years interval till the exit years for the two newspapers of the first decade and till 2009/10 for the rest three. A qualitative in-depth interview has also been conducted with advertising and marketing department heads and editors-in-chief in order to add to the richness of the data available from the quantitative content analysis.

It has been found out that advertising following an increase in the early years has decreased towards the end of the first decade while in the second decade advertising has steadily increased in all the three newspapers. It should be noted that in all the five newspapers with the increasing advertising, news element has always been in a decreasing trend both in the first and second decade. This is a clear indication that the private weekly press throughout the years rather than providing news stories progressively to the public, their concern has shifted to advertising and contents that are not truly news such as entertainment and opinion. Hence, it could be concluded that though the private press beginning from the early years of existence has quickly familiarized itself with commodification, advertising has remained both a challenge as in the case of *Tobiya*, *Tomar*, and *Mesenazeriya* and a prospect for *Reporter* and *Ethio Channel*. In general, advertising that challenged the private newspaper market has significantly contributed for a daily not to evolve.

CHAPTER ONE

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Kovach and Rosenstiel, of all the information newspapers carry on their pages, news is given the most important consideration perhaps due to the fact that “whether one looks back over three hundred years, and even three thousand, it is impossible to separate news from community” (2001:23).

The need for people of the world to come to know each other better and live peacefully through having “better, truer, information about one another” from newspapers which are the main avenue for such information was given emphasis by Lester Markel cited in Merrill and Fisher (1980:5).

And this has given newspapers the popularity and influence they enjoy for centuries as a mass medium that provides the news with the closest range and depth of coverage the community needed, which, in this regard, no other media institution could possibly accomplish (John Vivian, 2002).

Besides, with the ever increasing influences from other competing media, newspapers in most communities cover more news at greater depth where metropolitan daily newspapers like the Washington Post may usually cover 300 items during weekdays and many more on their Sunday editions than any television or radio station in their locality (Vivian, 2002).

However, today’s newspapers are constantly challenged by their “dual role as quasi public institution with special privileges and responsibilities, and free enterprise operation with a need to pay expenses and show profit” (Rayudu, 1998:149).

For instance, beyond paying the expenses Picard indicated that the trend of advertising revenue in America which has showed extraordinary growth has “increased the wealth of many newspaper owners dramatically” (2004:56).

In general, “except for brief downturns in the overall economy and an occasional exceptional situation, daily newspapers have been consistently profitable enterprises through the 20th century” (Vivian, 2002:74).

In fact, the making of profit by media institutions has become a concern for communication scholars. For example, a political economy of communications among others, examines the “working of the profit motive in the hunt for audiences and/or for advertising, and its consequences for media practices and media content” (Boyd-Barrett, 1995:186).

Moreover, the quality of a newspaper and issues of commercialism is summarized as follows: “The amount and types of content in a newspaper are clearly elements of quality . . . it must be recognized that the majority of newspaper content is not editorial material but advertising” (Picard, 2004:60).

Newspaper owners in the course of the private press in Ethiopia, however, have unavoidably considered the economic interest though in the list of motivation, “the ‘making of profit’, as in the case of some publishers, . . . were at the bottom of the list” (Shimelis, 2000:25).

According to James Deane, the liberalization and commercialization of mass media during the 1990s in many parts of the world has resulted in “a much more democratic, dynamic, crowded and complex media landscape” which then opens up new spaces for public discussion and participation (2002:65).

Similarly, in Ethiopia, following the historic press proclamation No.34/1992, weekly private newspapers showed sporadic growth, reaching a record high of 265 during the next five years but later the number dwindled and reached to 40 private titles towards the end of the decade (Shimelis, 2000).

In Ethiopia where there has never been an independent private newspaper until Proclamation No.34/1992 guaranteed for the first time the right to publish in the country, it was only the weekly private newspapers that the system gave birth to in abundance.

Nearly two decades after the proclamation, there are less than 15 general interest weekly private newspapers in the country that are published in Amharic language.

Statement of the Problem

The ever decreasing number of private newspapers in the market would inevitably leave the public with less diversity of information and of opinion that would fail the very foundation mass media are for.

For private newspapers to serve as a venue to the rights and responsibilities guaranteed in the Constitution, the need to have a private newspaper capable of providing the public with the day-to-day account of news events, views and diverse opinion with greater depth and range of coverage together with interpretation and analysis is crucial.

For instance, in Nigeria, according to Ayo Olutokun and Dele Seteolu (2001:1) in a country of close to 120 million people “the Punch, a privately owned newspaper is perhaps the most widely read newspaper and its print run is between 60,000 and 80,000 copies per day. The Guardian, a favorite of the intellectuals and respected for its independent, sober views, had a print run in 1999 of between 50 and 70,000 copies per daily.”

Yet, no one, as far as the researcher’s knowledge is concerned, has anticipated the process that the press in Ethiopia would undergo for a daily private press to evolve. Hence, the researcher attempts to sort out the economic factors that failed private daily newspapers to evolve in Addis Ababa-the hub of the private press.

The economic aspect of the ever decreasing number of private newspaper titles which probably lends itself to the absence of a private daily able to provide the public with the day-to-day account of events could be studied through the political economy of communications in such a way that it could explain the private newspapers’ search for audiences and advertising, and the consequences that followed in the media practice and media content of Ethiopian weekly newspapers.

According to Picard (2004, 1) cited in Adrian Hadland (2007:151), “economic pressures are becoming the primary forces shaping the behavior of American newspaper companies.” What Picard refers to is what political economy theory as a whole comprises where “few other critical paradigms stress more the importance of the underlying economic system in the structuring of the media sector (Hadland, 2007:151).” Hence, a political economy would dictate the research as far as economic issues of the private newspapers and the economic challenges and opportunities are concerned.

The thesis specifically is an attempt to answer such questions: What does commodification look like in the newspapers? To what extent advertising economic factors have posed problems on media practice and media content for a daily not to evolve? To what extent advertising success/failure of the private press has failed to necessitate a daily publication?

II. OBJECTIVES

General Objective

The general objective of the study is to find an economic explanation as to why the process the weekly newspapers have undergone has failed to evolve daily newspapers in Addis Ababa

Specific Objectives

1. To examine the extent to which issues of commodification has been reflected in the weekly newspapers for a daily not to evolve?
2. To find out advertising content contribution to the absence of private daily newspapers
3. To find out whether the newspapers offered more advertising content than editorial elements

III. Research Questions

1. Has advertising content been insignificant in the weekly newspapers of the first two decades after the press proclamation?
2. Did the weekly newspapers provided to the public more advertising content than editorial elements?
3. Did the weekly newspapers provided to the public more editorial in an increasing trend than advertising?

IV. METHODS

In order to meet the objectives set out earlier, a qualitative and a quantitative research method will be employed through in-depth interview to find out present challenges while quantitative content analysis will be used to trace trends.

Data Gathering Techniques

In-Depth Interview

A qualitative research method will be used specifically an individual in-depth interview with private newspaper advertising department heads and editors to gain an understanding of the factors that contributed a daily not to evolve.

Taking into account the relatively few numbers of private newspapers, the researcher will include most of the advertising department heads and editors in the in-depth interview. Furthermore, due to the different point of entry to the newspaper market the inclusion will add to the richness of data that would help trace trends that challenged the evolution of the private daily newspaper.

An individual in-depth will be the ideal research tool to get an optimal insight from the editor-in-chief of the private newspapers under consideration. Issues concerning the editorial section of the newspapers, the availability of news and its incorporation compared to other elements of the editorial section such as entertainment is a concern of this study.

Quantitative Content Analysis

A quantitative content analysis will be incorporated in the study in order to get the editorial and advertising status of each year beginning from the day of circulation or publication to exit-point and till 2009/10 the last year under study. This would help know how stronger or weaker elements and contents of the weekly private newspapers get throughout the years and to a great extent foresee what the future would hold to the industry.

The analysis will basically have three categories with the number of years private press stayed in the market. A decade will be the dividing line for newspapers that stayed for more than 10 years and those having less stay than that.

The increasing/ decreasing number of advertisements within each copy every week will also be a tempting factor that will affect the security/insecurity of private press survival in the market. The study will consider the publications on a yearly basis.

V. APPLICATION OF RESULTS

The outcome of the study would serve as a vital input for the present private newspapers planning to commence publishing daily newspaper for there is possibly no other stakeholder which is the next-door to do so.

Those who would be joining the newspaper industry in the future can refer to the essentials of the outcome of the study to better understand the economic rules of the game before they are engaged in.

The results would hopefully instigate future researchers to dig deep on the economic aspect of journalism rather than the routine political sphere which is not always the most dominant denominator of the world of excellence in journalism.

Last but not least, it is the public who benefits the most out of all if appropriate measures are taken to have well-informed citizen that base its decisions on facts.

VI. Scope of the Study

Trends in generating revenue among the private newspapers both through advertisement and circulation would not be treated in order to compare and contrast where the success/failure of the private press falls since the beginning of publication of the respective private press under study.

This is due to the fact that some of the newspapers have gone out of market years ago and their financial status has gone out reach.

Due to time and financial constraints the research would not include the entry-points of spatialization and structuration identified by Vincent Mosco.

CHAPTER TWO

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Political Economy of Communication

According to Vincent Mosco and David Lavin (2007), two definition of political economy capture the wide range of specific and general approaches to the discipline. In the narrow sense, political economy is “the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources (2007: 2).”

This definition has a certain practical value because it pays attention to how the “communication business operates, for example, how communications products move through a chain of producers , e.g. a Hollywood film studio , wholesalers, retailers, and finally to customers, whose purchases, rentals, and attention are feedback into new processes of production (2007:2).”

A more general and grand definition of political economy is “the study of control and survival in social life”; while control refers “specifically to the internal organization of social group members and the process of adapting to change”, survival means “how people produce what is needed for social reproduction and continuity (Mosco and Lavin, 2007: 2).”

In this interpretation, control processes are “broadly political, in that they constitute the social organization of relationships within a community, and survival processes are mainly economic because they concern processes of production and reproduction (Mosco and Lavin, 2007: 2).”

Foster (2002) cited in Vincent Mosco and David Lavin notes the strength of the above definition in that “it gives political economy the breadth to encompass at least all human activity and, arguably, all living processes (2007:2).” However, its major drawback is that “it can lead you to overlook what distinguishes human political economy, principally

our consciousness or awareness, from general processes of survival and control in nature (Mosco and Lavin, 2007:2).”

According to Boyd-Barrett (1995) cited in Grace (2004:6), “political economy in media research is often associated with macro-questions of media ownership and control, interlocking directorships and other industries, and with political, economic and social elite.” Political economy among others, examines the “working of the profit motive in the hunt for audiences and/or for advertising, and its consequences for media practices and media content (Boyd-Barrett, 1995:186).”

Political economy theorists such as Boyd-Barret (1995) and Golding and Murdock (2000) cited in Grace argue that the “significance of the media goes further than questions of individual effects, uses and gratifications, and has something to do with the relationship of media to other social institutions, the economy and the formation of ideologies (2004:6).” This opposes the classic Marxist position, “which assumed a direct process of media effect and looked at the media as ideological state apparatuses that perpetuated the ideas of the ruling class (2004:6).”

However, according to Garnham (1992) cited in Grace (2004:7), political economy of the media shifts attention from looking at the media as ideological state apparatuses and sees them as economic entities with a direct economic role as creators of surplus value. He notes that:

The media do this through commodity production and exchange, and indirectly through advertising, in the creation of surplus value within other sectors of commodity production. The main function of the media is not to ‘sell’ ideology to consumers but audiences to advertisers (Garnham, 1992:29). The political economy of the media recognizes the fact that media organizations are industrial and commercial institutions which produce and distribute commodities in the name of media products.” Grace (2004:7)

In addition, according to Oliver Boyd-Barrett (1995:186-187) “political economy explanations distrust reductionism and linear causality; they are ‘critical’ in the sense, for example, that they assess knowledge in relation to values (such as participation and equality), and they focus on processes more than institutions.”

According to Oliver Boyd-Barrett, Mosco identifies three fundamental characteristics of political economy. First of all, it “foregrounds the study of social change and historical transformation” why in this sense some of the pioneer economists “studied the transition from agricultural to industrial society, such as Smith, Ricardo and Mill as well as Marx, may be regarded as political economists (1995:186).”

Political economy theories “encompass conservatives, socialists, Marxists, feminists and environmentalists according to whether they give central place to tradition, community, labour, gender or the organic environment (Oliver Boyd-Barrett, 1995:186).”

Secondly, political economy also has “an interest ‘in examining the social whole or the totality of *social relations* that constitute the economic, political, social and cultural fields’ (1995:186).”

Thirdly, political economy is committed to “moral philosophy, having an interest in social values and moral principles (1995:186).”

A fourth feature, suggested by Golding and Murdock (1991) in describing a ‘critical’ political economy is that it includes a “central concern with ‘the balance between capitalist enterprise and public intervention’, although arguably this is subsumed within social praxis as a way of addressing issues of value (1995:186).

According to Rory O’Brien (1998:2), Vincent Mosco in his book *The Political Economy of Communication* (1996), “provides insight into the forces that are shaping the way we communicate” through the analytical method of “trying to understand the political

economy of the evolving information and communications sector (1998:2).” He attempts to uncover the realities in the current situation:

The players, their activities and environments, and their motives and effects. He prefers to study social processes, rather than structures and institutions, and while he realizes that no analysis can encompass the totality of events and relationships, one can focus attention on particular ‘entry points’ in the field to provide a theoretical framework for understanding those social processes.

(Rory O’Brien, 1998:2)

According to O’Brien, Mosco’s three ‘entry points’ for analysis are “commodification, spatialization and structuration (1998:2).”

According to Boyd-Barrett (1995:186), though the “most powerful contributions of political economy to communication studies have been the analysis of media institutions and their contexts”, Mosco’s concepts are “relevant to enquiries across the entire range of media activity, and have the potential to address in one holistic model the entire cycle from production (and its contexts) to reception (and its contexts).”

The ‘entry points’ provide:

A basis on to which can be mapped the identification by Golding and Murdock (1991) of the four historical processes that are central to critical political economy of culture: the growth of the media; the extension of corporate reach; commodification; and the changing role of the state and government intervention, each of which also lends itself to analysis in terms of commodification, spatialization and structuration.

(Oliver Boyd-Barrett, 1995: 186)

2.1.1 Commodification

Mosco (1996: 143-144) quoted in O'Brien (1998:2) defines commodification as "the process of transforming use values into exchange values, of transforming products whose value is determined by their ability to meet individual and social needs into products whose value is set by what they can bring in the marketplace. Commodification is the primary means by which social relations become economic relations."

Schiller (1996a: 18) quoted in O'Brien (1998:2) applies this idea to the exchange of information when he writes:

The spectacularly improved means of producing, organizing, and disseminating information has transformed industrial, political, and cultural practices and processes. Manufacturing, elections, and creative efforts are increasingly dependent on informational inputs. This has conferred great value on some categories of information. The production and sale of information have become major sites of profit making. What had been in large measure a social good has been transformed into a commodity for sale.

2.1.1.1 Commodification of content

According to O'Brien (1998:3), "the commodification of media content involves the transformation of messages into marketable products" where "items produced by a series of creative processes, such as the development of newspaper article are packaged up and distributed to consumers."

O'Brien further explains the process: "the consumers pay directly for the movie tickets and CDs, in others, they pay indirectly through higher costs for general merchandise and service required to reimburse those companies for the expenses of advertising, which in turn pays for the 'free' TV or radio program consumed (1998: 3)."

“Regardless of the processes involved, the commodification of media products are especially important field of research since they are immediately involved in shaping consciousness, both at the individual and collective levels (O’Brien;1998:3).”

Most of the research into communications has focused on how media messages are shaped to reflect the interests of capitalist enterprises. O’Brien further notes:

Though the standard rationale is that the media are just giving people what they want, it is more the case that the media are giving advertisers what their corporate customers want, namely to induce people to buy their products. So, in addition to the ideological role of the communications industry, and that of being a site of commodity production in its own right, it also supports the commodification processes in society as a whole, through the provision of advertising services. (O’Brien; 1998:3)

2.1.1.2 The audience commodity and advertising

Dallas Smyth quoted in O’Brien (2004:4) states:

The capitalist system cultivates the illusion that the three streams of information and things are independent: the advertising merely "supports" or "makes possible" the news, information, and entertainment, which in turn are *separate* from the consumer goods and services we buy. This is untrue. The commercial mass media *are* advertising in their entirety. (Smyth 1981: 7-8)

Dallas Smyth cited in O’Brien (1998;3-4) declared that “though people generally think the purpose of mass media is to serve them with information or entertainment, those in control of the media know their primary function is to sell audiences to advertisers” where the ‘sale’ of “these audiences to advertising companies constitutes the main revenue stream for these media corporations.”

Furthermore, according to Croteau and Hoynes (2001:26) quoted in Grace (2004:15), media businesses in order to “attract a big audience to sell to advertisers, media

companies end up leaning their content to more of entertainment and celebrity news which is popular among consumers though such content might not necessarily create an informed citizenry.”

According to Robert Picard, (2004:56) the extent of the revenue growth from advertising can be seen in the income of the American newspaper industry. According to Newspaper Association of America (2000) cited in Picard, “income grew approximately \$3 billion in 1950 to \$12.2 billion in 1975 and then to \$54.9 billion in 2000.” Picard indicated that the trend of advertising revenue in America that showed “extraordinary growth in revenue increased the wealth of many newspaper owners dramatically (2004:56).”

At the same time, according to Peter Benjaminson (1998) quoted in Picard, “the death of rival newspapers particularly the afternoon ones further left single dominant papers in cities to gather the rewards of the advertising market (2004:56).”

Matthew Ellman and Fabrizio Germano also noted the importance of advertising. According to Baker (1994) and Gabszewicz (2001) cited in Matthew Ellman and Fabrizio Germano (2006:2) mainstream U.S. newspapers generally “earn over 50 and up to 80% of their revenue from advertising, and in Europe, this percentage lies between 40 and 50%.”

According to Albarran (1996) cited in Grace (2004:14), advertising “covers up to between 50-60 percent of the total space in a daily newspaper in the United States and this figure goes slightly higher on Sundays” while according to McManus (1994) it “contributes between 70-90 percent of the gross revenue of newspapers and almost all the income for television networks (Grace; 2004:14).”

According to Matthew Ellman and Fabrizio Germano, advertising revenue in the rosier view, simply enables “newspapers to spend more on producing well-written and accurate news, but several media scholars are skeptical and they suggest that “heavy dependence on advertising leads papers to bend news to the interests of advertisers, generating

misrepresentation on some topics and possibly even a “dumping-down” of general coverage (2006: 2).”

Despite the fact that “the ratio of advertising to editorial content in the developing world is not yet as high as in the developed world, media theorists predict that this will soon change (Amienyi quoted in Grace;2004:14).”

For example, according to Amienyi (1998), advertising takes up between 28 to 35 percent of newspaper content in Nigeria. However, it is important to note that the media in the developing world are getting more and more moulded along capitalist ideals and sooner than later, such ratio is likely to change (Grace;2004:14).”

According to Picard (2004:57), “the primary content of newspapers today is commercialized news and features designed to appeal to broad audiences, to entertain, to be cost effective and to maintain readers whose attention can be sold to advertisers.”

Similarly, Habermas (1989) quoted in Grace (2004:16-17) argues that the “commercialisation of the press -- the emergence of a mass press subsidized by advertising -- has transformed an active, critical, discussing public into a passive, uncritical consuming public.”

The principle of “free and open exchange of ideas and opinions has been replaced with business logic” and this Habermas (1989:184) quoted in Grace (2004:17) notes that:

The advertising business puts financial calculation on whole new business. In a situation of greatly lowered price per copy and a multiplied number of buyers, the publisher could count on selling a correspondingly growing portion of space in his paper for adverts. The paper assumes the character of an enterprise which produces advertising space as a commodity that is made marketable by means of an editorial section.

According to Picard (2004, 1) cited in Adrian Hadland (2007:151), “economic pressures are becoming the primary forces shaping the behavior of American newspaper

companies.” What Picard refers to is what political economy theory as a whole comprises where “few other critical paradigms stress more the importance of the underlying economic system in the structuring of the media sector (Adrian Hadland, 2007:151).”

2.2 Private Press in Africa

According to Grace Rwomushana Agaba (2004: 16) the colonialists introduced the media to most of the African countries which “by the time African countries started agitating for independence from colonialists in the 1950s, the continent had a media worth documenting.”

For example, Bourgault (1995:153) cited in Grace (2004) notes that by 1956, few years before most African countries got their independence; there were 100 daily newspapers on the continent. A decade later it increased to 150 in 1966 and after three years in 1969 it reached 160. However, following the many military coups that took place in Africa in the 1970s, the number of newspapers started declining and reached 116 dailies by 1975-76. By 1980s Bourgault (1995) cited in Grace (2004) observes that the number of dailies increased to 200 by 1988 that showed that the newspaper market was coming back to life.

Grace (2004) stated that in the early 1990s more newspapers hit the streets as many African countries started embracing political pluralism. “Such a diverse media landscape creates a fertile ground to guarantee pluralism of journalistic viewpoints and a competitive marketplace of ideas (Grace: 2004; 18-19).” Bourgault (1995) cited in Grace (2004:19) posits that the “1990s saw the media in Africa, especially print; adjust to a new world order epitomized by Western values of democracy and respect for human rights.”

Similarly, Paul M. Musau states that mass communication in the post-cold-war period, as it was true to the rest part of the world, has also affected the print and electronic media in Africa (1999). Musau further explains that “where, for example, there used to be only one or two newspapers owned by the government or the ruling party post-cold-war period witnessed the overabundance of privately owned competing newspapers (1999:137).”

According to James Deane, the liberalization and commercialization of mass media during that similar period in many parts of the world has resulted in “a much more democratic, dynamic, crowded and complex media landscape” which then opens up new spaces for public discussion and participation (2002:65).

Furthermore, Emmanuel O. Ojo emphasizes that the virtues of mass media across all regions of the world to be to “educate the public on state affairs, disseminate information on the activities of the government – which are most often secretive in Third World countries – expose wrongdoing, including corrupt practices which impact negatively on economic development” to ensure accountability and transparency (2003:822).

Ojo further notes that the role of mass media in a democratic setting is to keep the citizenry well informed. According to Ojo, unless “citizens have adequate and accurate information on all the issues and problems confronting them, they will be unable to take enlightened decisions on them (2003:822).”

Similarly, according to Ojo, the mass media may also “convey to the authorities the grievances, the needs, the problems, the hopes and aspirations of the people, and the responses of the authorities may in turn be conveyed by the media to the people (2003: 822).”

Because the mass media perform the above role, the media can also act as a day-to-day parliament of the people, which may be more effective than the actual parliament. According to Sawant cited in Ojo, “the mass media can thus act as an ombudsman on behalf of the people almost every day (2003: 822).”

Though the print media suffers limited readership, according to Roth cited in James Deane (2002), it has played a critical role in providing internal inspection of governments, and a free press has become increasingly regarded as both a requirement for and major indicator of democracy, effective and sustainable development, and good governance.

According to Deane, the general “trend is of an increasing number of print titles in many countries” though “media freedom remains under constant pressure and attack” and the numbers rise and fall rapidly during election periods, many have been able to sustain themselves financially and have retained a genuine political independence from government (2002:70).

According to the National Media Commission (NMC), Ghana has 11 dailies, 67 weeklies, 23 bi-weeklies and five tri-weeklies. And more than 50% of the newspapers in circulation during 2007 have come into existence in recent years (2007). According to World Press Trend, “most newspapers in Ghana are circulated only in regional capitals, and many of the smaller privately owned newspapers were available only in Accra (2007:340).”

Likewise, Paul Musau emphasizes that “the media in Kenya, like in many other African countries, reflects a pro-urban concentration and bias (1999:140).” Mbaabu cited in Muasu (1999:140) states that “most of the newspapers are published in Nairobi, the capital city, and mainly distributed in the urban centers. Their circulation is also mainly limited to educated people who live in urban areas.”

The private media in the other countries of the continent faced challenges, too. While writing about the re-emergence of the independent media in Uganda, Robins (1997:30) cited in Grace (2004:14) notes that “as the media struggle to build readership and advertising base, they are succumbing to providing less informative content and more entertainment.” She argues that the media in order to promote the people’s right to know, as in the case of the developed world, it should be successful as a business at first.

In Benin, for example, Palmer (1995) cited in Grace (2004) states that about 50 newspapers rushed into print after the multi-party elections in 1991 that saw the end of a Marxist regime. This new-found political freedom gave birth to a private media which raised public criticism, ideas and opinions (Grace: 2004).

However, Palmer (1995) cited in Grace (2004:20) observes that:

Most of these newspapers were affiliated, either directly or indirectly, to political figures, parties or causes on which they depended for financing and were prone to being compromised. This is because there was little advertising through which the newspapers could generate their own revenue and become independent.

According to Curran cited in Grace (2004:18) quoted from a historical journal: “The growth of advertising revenue was the most important single factor in enabling the press to emerge as the Fourth Estate of the realm.”

However, according to Grace, though the “ratio of advertising to editorial content in the developing world is not yet as high as in the developed world, media theorists predict that this will soon change (2004:14).”

According to Amienyi (1998) cited in Grace (2004:14), “advertising takes up between 28 to 35 percent of newspaper content in Nigeria. However, it is important to note that the media in the developing world are getting more and more moulded along capitalist ideals and sooner than later, such ratio is likely to change.”

Jonas Häckner and Sten Nyberg (2000:1) states that media firms such as newspapers function simultaneously in two sub-markets where they sell both their products to readers, viewers or listeners, and an important element which is an advertising space to firms.

Likewise, media businesses, according to Croteau and Hoynes (2001:26) cited in (Grace: 2004, 15-16), operate in a “dual product” market. They further explain that the media businesses sell different types of products to different groups of customers at the same time. The first sets of products are “the media products they produce like newspapers, films or programs for broadcast to sell directly to customers (readers).”

And the second one is:

. . . access to audiences which is sold to advertisers. And to be able to attract a big audience to sell to advertisers, media companies end up leaning their content to more of entertainment and celebrity news which is popular among consumers though such content might not necessarily create an informed citizenry. (Grace: 2004, 15-16)

Similarly, Bagdikian (1997) cited in Grace (2004:55) argues that because of the “drive to dominate the market, newspapers introduce sections such as entertainment, which attract audiences. A newspaper with the biggest audience is easier to sell to advertisers and thus generate revenue for the media company.”

This is what media theorists say of a commercial-oriented media house that is out to maximise profits. According to Dahlgren (1995:8) cited in Grace (2004:65-66), the “increasing prevalence of the mass media, especially where the commercial logic overrides the public interest, transforms public communication into public relations, advertising and entertainment. And as a result, the public loses its social coherence and becomes fragmented.”

Commercialisation, according to Hadland, on the other hand, “contributes to the widening of the media’s function in society by blurring the traditional separation of current affairs, advertising and entertainment (2007:129).”

Though commercialization, Hallin and Mancini (2004, 282) argue, “has in general weakened the ties between the media and the world of organized political actors”, Hadland challenges the assertion and argues that far from weakening “the ties between the media and the political system, commercialisation – in the South African case – has in several ways strengthened them (Adrian Hadland, 2007:129).”

2.3 The Ethiopian Print Medium

2.3.1 Historical Background

The beginning of the print medium in Ethiopia, “sporadic and foreign inspired for the most part, and catering predominantly to religious subject matter, has been traced by some to the mid-nineteenth century, when the first printing press was set up in 1863” at Massawa by a Lazarist missionary known as Father Lorenzo Biancheri (Shimelese Bona,2000:6 G).

In the 1890s a Franciscan missionary called Father Bernard secured Emperor Menelik’s acceptance, and started publishing a weekly French-Amharic newspaper entitled “*Le Semaine d’ Ethiopie*”, planned mainly for campaign against leprosy (Pankhurst, 1962:248;Deneke, 1991:52-54; Ministry of Information, 1966:5 cited in Shimelis,2000:6).

According to Shimelis, “the reign of Emperor Menelik could, indeed be said to have represented a crucial stage in the initiation of an Ethiopian journalism in terms, for instance, of press ownership and issues covered (2000:7).”

Though there is disagreement of which is the first periodical in Ethiopia among Father Bernard’s weekly *Le Semaine D’ Ethiopie*, Blatta Gebre Egziabhe’s handwritten sheets expected every week in the capital, and *A’emro*, the first two papers due to their question of ownership and lack of adequately convincing evidence, *A’emro* appears to be Ethiopia’s first periodical universally accepted with its earliest issues around 1901 having 24 copies of circulation at first and hand written that increased to 200 after a copying machine was imported (Shimelis, 2000: 7).

Following this early period, “the foundation in 1923 of what was called Berhanena Selam printing press and, in 1925, of a weekly, government-owned newspaper named Berhanena Selam, represented a landmark in the history of the Ethiopian press (Shimelis, 2000:7).”

The progress of the Ethiopian press was “interrupted for about five years (1935-1941) as a result of the country’s occupation by Mussolini’s forces” where “printing presses were demolished, as happened in Harar and Jimma, or were into centers for the production and dissemination of Fascist propaganda, as happened to those in Addis Ababa (2000:8).

Nevertheless, “some type of a bi-weekly field paper of the liberation forces, Bandirachin (later re-named Sendeq Alamachin- ‘Our Flag’) was issued” including the “many publications produced in foreign countries to promote the Ethiopian cause” (MOI, 1966:8; Pankhurst, 1962:283 cited in Shimelis: 2000; 8)

According to Shimelis (2000:8), “post-libration period witnessed a comparatively significant expansion in terms of number of periodicals produced and the size of their circulation. Such influential and long-lasting weekly papers as *Addis Zemen* and *The Ethiopian Herald* came onto the scene in 1941 and 1943, respectively” which became dailies in 1958.

According to Tadbabe, (1990 E.C: 20-21) and Wuletaw (1990 E.C:36) cited in Shimelis (2000:9):

The period of military dictatorship from 1974 to 1991 was one of the total government control of the media and the flow of information. This was in line, for instance, with proclamation No 26/1967 E.C, which was issued to regulate the operation of the media (though it failed to specifically stipulate the possibility of establishing a private press), neither did the government’s control of the media ease despite a provision for freedom of expression in the 1987 constitution.

Shimelis (2000:9)

Alongside with the “confiscation of privately-owned papers and the prohibition of establishing new ones, the government proceeded to eliminate any trace of independent exercise in the government-owned print medium (Shimelis, 2000:14).”

According to Shimelis (2000:9-10):

The assumption of power in 1991 by the EPRDF ushered in a period of fundamental transformation in the political economy of the country. As part of the democratization process, the EPRDF-led government conceded freedom of the press. This concession was granted concomitantly with the new government's acceptance of the 1948 Universal Declaration of the United Nations (217 A/11), especially Article 19.

Article 19 states: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" Shimelis (2000:10).

Following the government's recognition, "an incredibly large number of newspapers and other periodicals burgeoned, with ownership ranging from party/government through public and professional associations to the private sector. Of this the share of independently-owned papers and magazines reached 287 by 1997" (1989 E.C) Tedbabe (1990 E.C:32) cited in Shimelis (2000:10).

Furthermore, takeover of power by EPRDF and its "subsequent proclamations related to the press (Proclamations No. 1/1991 and No. 6/1991, Article4 [1] were considered by many as marking the beginning of a new period of openness and democratization in Ethiopia" (Shimelis, 2000; 14).

2.3.2 The Evolution of the Private Press 1991-1999

According to Sommerlad (1966:70) cited in Shimelis (2000:24) it "used to be believed that the motives of would-be publishers, at least initially, were less the making of profits than the influence they sought to exercise, or the prestige they gained by owning a newspaper."

In the Ethiopia, interviews with some publishers on why they joined the profession in general tend to indicate the primacy of “attraction to the profession” (Shimelis, 2000:24).

According to Shimelis (2000:24), “the other explanation for joining the profession is ‘love for the country,’ a claim which could, and in fact, imply opposition to the government in power” which was particularly stated in the editorials of several of the newspapers in the most possible direct ways.” The following is a case in point Tedbabe (1990 E.C:62, 65) quoted in Shimelis (2000:25):

- . . . It will oppose some of the policies of the political establishment;
- . . . It will work for the preservation of the country’s unity and foundation of a democratic system:
- . . . It will not publish any news or article favoring or promoting the policies of the government.

According to Shimelis, “all these show that political motivations rivaled, and in some cases surpassed, professional and economic interests as a rational for establishing a newspaper (2000:25).”

Economic considerations as using the profession towards making profit as in the case of some publishers was at the bottom of the list, Shimelis (2000:25).

It should, however, be noted that there was an “incredible disparity in capital investment in the newspaper business” where with the exception of few, “most of the publishers went into the business with very little initial capital and an insignificant investment in the form of equipment like computer with accessories, camera, tape-recorder, offices and furnishings, necessities which, in most cases, were post-service acquisitions Shimelis (2000:25).”

CHAPTER THREE

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

In order to meet the objectives set out earlier, a quantitative content analysis, and a qualitative research method will be employed through an in-depth interview.

A quantitative content analysis will be employed in this study in order to get and trace trends of advertising content in Ethiopian private newspapers since 1991. In order to find whether the newspapers were short or plenty of advertising, the number of advertising content will be compared and contrasted with other elements such as news and feature stories or the editorial section in general.

According to Hansen (1988) and Alexis (1985) cited in Grace (2004:32), content analysis is well “suited for analyzing and mapping key characteristics of large bodies of text, and it lends itself well to the systematic charting of long-term changes and trends in media coverage.” Wimmer and Dominick (1994) cited in Grace add that “content analysis helps researchers to study patterns or trends in media portrayals and test hypothesis about policies or aims of media producers (2004:32).”

For the sake of simplicity and clarity, I have identified three periods that would be the focus of the study. These are consistent with the data available from Ethiopian Broadcast Authority. The number of newspapers available and registered after the press law proclamation begins in 1992/93 and I have randomly selected two out of nine newspapers from those that stayed in the market for about 10 years until 2003/04.

According to the data from Ethiopian Broadcast Authority, there are only ten general interest newspapers that stayed in the market for a decade. Though many newspapers joined the market after the proclamation, most of them have either returned their license or get their license cancelled in the first two or three years of operation.

Hence, newspapers that stayed in the market from 1993/94 until 2003/04, those that appear in the market beginning from 2004/05 and finally those newspapers that stayed in the market without interruption until the present time will be the focus of the study. It should be noted that newspapers that fall in the last category are only two of which one is randomly selected and included in the study.

Hence, five newspapers are randomly selected for the study: two from 1993/94-2003/04, two from 2004/05 – present time, and one newspaper that does not get interrupted for more than a decade.

All newspapers are randomly selected as far as there is no fundamental reason that dictates the research to employ a purposive sampling method.

These newspapers that are selected are *Tobiya* and *Tomar* for the year 1993/94-2003/04, *Mesenazeriya* and *Ethio Channel* from 2004/05 onwards, and *Reporter*- the uninterrupted one for more than a decade till the present day.

From the 52 weeks within a year 13 copies will be taken as a sample with a sampling interval of 4. Beginning from the first year of operation and first copy, 13 copies will be selected representing each month.

In order to avoid repetitiveness the sample size will not include the newspaper copies of every successive year. The researcher considered, 1993/94, the first year of operation for *Tomar*, for example, and the copies of 1995/96 in two years interval until the exit year in 2003/04. The two years interval beginning from the first year of operation till the exit year as in the case of *Tobiya* and *Tomar*, and till 2009/10 the final year for the rest three newspapers (*Reporter*, *Mesenazeriya* and *Ethio Channel*) is considered as the sample size. Though the publication of *Tobiya* goes till 2005/06 it has not stayed for the whole year hence it is not included in the sample.

The increasing/ decreasing number of advertisements with each copy every month will also be a tempting factor that will affect the security/insecurity of private press survival in the market. The study will consider the publications on a yearly basis. In addition, the increasing/decreasing number of editorials that are published in the newspapers each year within two years interval to exit year and the current situation on a yearly basis will be given due concern.

In general, 104 copies of *Reporter* (1995/96-2009/10), 78 copies each for *Tobiya* and *Tomar* (1993/94-2003/04), 49 copies of *Mesenazeriya* (2006/2007-2009/10) and 24 copies of *Ethio Channel* (2007/08-09/10) with a total number of 333 copies have been thoroughly studied.

Sections in the newspaper are categorized as follows:

Feature content in this study refers to articles such as personal interview and stories having other expert opinions and sources.

Opinions are stories that reflect a one person view about an issue.

Sport stories and puzzles and poems as well are categorized under Entertainment.

News stories as well as news features are categorized under *News* content while letters sent from the audience are given due concern that will be categorized under *Letters to the Editor*(hereafter considered as *Letter*) .

3.2 Data Gathering Techniques

3.2.1 In-Depth Interview

A qualitative research method will be used specifically an individual in-depth interview with private newspaper advertising department heads to gain an understanding of the economic factors that contributed a daily not to evolve.

An individual in-depth will also be the ideal research tool to get an optimal insight from the editor-in-chief of the private newspapers under consideration. The analysis focused on the number of editorial contents and how the different sections are presented vis-à-vis advertising.

Taking into account the relatively few numbers of private newspapers under consideration, the researcher in order to find qualitative data that would support the quantitative content analysis has selected various editors-in-chief and advertising and marketing heads and conducted in-depth interview. Furthermore, due to the different point of entry to the newspaper market the inclusion of the various editors and advertising and marketing heads will add to the richness of the data that would help trace trends that challenged the evolution private daily newspaper.

Hence, the analysis will basically have three categories with the number of years the private press stayed in the market. A decade will be the dividing line for newspapers that stayed for more than 10 years and those having less than and finally newspapers that have showed no interruption.

CHAPTER FOUR

IV. FINDINGS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The research findings will in this chapter be presented and discussed with the relevant theoretical underpinnings of the political economy of communications and some elements of the economic theories of journalism. Hence, 104 copies of *Reporter* (1995/96-2009/10), 78 copies each for *Tobiya* and *Tomar* (1993/94-2003/04), 49 copies of *Mesenazeriya* (2006/2007-2009/10) and 24 copies of *Ethio Channel* (2007/08-09/10) with a total number of 333 copies have been thoroughly studied and the results are presented as follows.

4.1 Annual advertising and editorial sections' content

4.1.1 Annual advertising and editorial sections' content in Reporter

Table 1: Advertising and Editorial content on *Reporter* (1995/96)

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	166	190	66	66	194	37	719
%	23	26	9	9	27	5	100

Table 1 shows that the *Reporter* on its first year of operation provided slightly more entertainment 27% than the news (26%) or advertising content (23%). Though according to John Vivian (2002) newspapers get the popularity and influence they enjoy for centuries as a mass medium that provides the news with the closest range and depth of coverage, the majority of news provided in *Reporter* is *News in Brief* (134 out of 190). It should be noted that the news stories that provide a closer range and depth are only 56 which is 10% of the total content excluding the *News in Brief*. This makes the number of in-depth news stories almost equal to the number of letters sent to the editor that were published.

This is in congruent with Bagdikian (1997) cited in Grace (2004:55) who argues that because of the drive to dominate the market, newspapers introduce sections such as entertainment which attract large audiences.

Table 2: Advertising and Editorial content on Reporter (1997/98)

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	315	202	77	94	163	58	909
%	35	22	9	10	18	6	100

According to the findings in Table 2, advertising content has shown a significant increase from 23% in 1995/96 to 35% in 1997/98. Though the news content has decreased from 26% in 1995/96 to 22% in 1997/98, local coverage has increased from 56 news stories to 83. Next to news content entertainment encompasses more amount than *Opinion*, *Letters to the Editor* and *Feature*.

It should be noted that advertising and entertainment are given significant consideration though news coverage is slightly higher than entertainment. While news coverage and entertainment have witnessed a general decrease than it was two years ago advertisement has shown a significant increase which indicates the gradual increase during the early years of the newspaper.

Table 3: Advertising and Editorial content on Reporter (1999/2000) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	447	70	83	83	44	33	760
%	59	9	11	11	6	4	100

Table 3 shows that advertising constitutes almost 60% of the content which is quite similar to the ratio in developed countries. This shows the ever increasing commercialization of the content. In this particular year with the significant increase in advertising content comes significant decrease of news content making it not worth mentioning and slightly lower than *Letters to the Editor* and *Opinion* coverage.

According to Amienyi (1998) cited in Grace (2004:14), “advertising takes up between 28 to 35 percent of newspaper content in Nigeria. However, it is important to note that the media in the developing world are getting more and more moulded along capitalist ideals and sooner than later, such ratio is likely to change.” The increase from 23% through 35% to 59% in 1995/96, 1997/98 and 1999/2000 respectively clearly shows the changing ratio of advertising to editorial content and the early years of the commodification of content in *Reporter*.

Table 4: Advertising and Editorial content on Reporter (2001/02) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	612	201	84	102	51	74	1124
%	54	18	8	9	5	7	100

Table 4 shows an increase in news content. The decreasing content in entertainment from 27% in 1995/96 through 6% in 1999/2000% to 5% in 2001/02 while the increase in advertising from 23% in 1995/96 to 59% in 1999/2000 and 54% in 2001/02 indicates commodification being established and maintained in *Reporter*.

However, it should be noted that news coverage has doubled from 9% in 1999/2000 to 18% in 2001/02. This indicates the growing concern given to news element in *Reporter* than the other elements such as *Opinion*, *Entertainment* and *Letter to the Editor* which showed no significant change compared to prior years. It does not actually mean that news is given number one priority in *Reporter* except advertising.

Table 5: Advertising and Editorial content on Reporter (2003/04) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	1182	364	85	145	245	132	2153
%	55	17	4	7	11	6	100

According to the findings in Table 5, 17% of the content is given to news while letters to the editor, opinion, and feature remain less than 10%. This, however, does not mean that *Reporter* has given more emphasis to in-depth reporting of news due to the fact that 8% out of the 17% constitutes “news in briefs”. Though John Vivian (2002) asserts that newspapers in most communities cover more news at greater depth . . . than any television or radio station in their locality, the finding shows that news with greater depth in *Reporter* covers only 9%.

Advertising in this particular year has also remained the highest and well above the sum total of all the editorial contents. Except the slight increase in *Entertainment* all the rest editorial elements have shown a decrease.

Table 6: Advertising and Editorial content on Reporter (2005/06) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	977	281	77	107	250	177	1901
%	53	15	4	6	13	9	100

According to the findings in Table 6, entertainment content is the only element that shows an increase from 11% in 2003/04 to 13% in 2005/06. The news content has, however, showed a decrease from 17% in 2003/04 to 15% in 2005/06. This shows the gradual shift of emphasis from serious issues such as news to stories of light reporting.

It should be noted that the *News* content through the years have decreased and reached to 15% in 2005/06 close to *Entertainment* (13%) which is in congruent with Robins (1997:30) cited in Grace (2004:14) who notes that “as the media struggle to build readership and advertising base, they are succumbing to providing less informative content and more entertainment.”

Table 7: Advertising and Editorial content on Reporter (2007/08) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	1369	290	75	92	202	168	2196
%	62	13	3	4	10	8	100

According to Table 7, advertising content has shown a significant increase from 53% in 2005/06 to 62% in 2007/08 and news content has shown a decrease from 15% in 2005/06 to 13% in 2007/08. According to Dahlgren (1995:8) cited in Grace (2004:65-66), “the increasing prevalence of the mass media, especially where the commercial logic overrides the public interest, transforms public communication into public relations, advertising and entertainment. And as a result, the public loses its social coherence and becomes fragmented.” Advertising and entertainment in the above table amounts to 70% which is indicative of the commercial logic that overrides the public one in *Reporter*.

In addition, Napoli (1997) cited in Grace (2004:7) also notes that “economic considerations have an impact on the selection, style and presentation of news content that the public eventually receives as mediated reality.” The high advertising together with the *Entertainment* content which is close to *News* contents in this particular year under study clearly indicate the commodification and economic considerations of *Reporter*.

Table 8: Advertising and Editorial content on Reporter (2009/10) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	1205	264	27	89	157	151	2196
%	64	14	1	5	8	8	100

According to Table 8, advertising content has shown the highest peak from 23% in 1995/96 to 64% in 2009/10 while news content has shown a constant decrease from 26% in 1995/96 to 14% in 2009/10. Dallas Smyth cited in O’Brien (1998:3) declared that

“though people generally think the purpose of mass media is to serve them with information or entertainment, those in control of the media know their primary function is to sell audiences to advertisers.”

The above data is in congruent with Habermas (1989:184) quoted in Grace (2004:16-17) who notes that newspapers that put the advertising and financial calculation at the forefront assume the “character of an enterprise which produces advertising space as a commodity that is made marketable by means of an editorial section.”

According to Ellman and Germano (2006), advertising revenue in the rosiest view, simply enables “newspapers to spend more on producing well-written and accurate news, but several media scholars are skeptical. This doubt comes true while considering the advertising and editorial elements especially the news content in *Reporter* in the sense that though advertising has tremendously increased it has never brought better change in news elements.

4.1.2 Annual advertising and editorial sections’ content in *Tobiya*

Table 9: Advertising and Editorial content on *Tobiya* (1993/94) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	194	134	136	153	67	17	701
%	28	19	19.4	22	9.6	2	100

According to the findings in Table 9, *Tobiya* in its first year of operation has more *Advertising* (28%) than *Opinion* (22%) or *Letters to the Editor* (19.4%).

The feature stories in *Tobiya* should be given a special attention covering only 2% of the total content. This indicates that stories that have at least one or more sources are uncommon which means that the views of different people are not incorporated in the

publication. Moreover, the fact that 22% of the content being *Opinion* indicates that *Tobiya* has not been a forum that entertains different views and perspectives.

We could, however, take the advertising editorial ratio of *Tobiya* as being minimum: advertising being 28% and editorial 72%.

Table 10: Advertising and Editorial content on *Tobiya* (1995/96) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	283	85	141	122	59	14	704
%	40	12	20	17	9	2	100

According to the findings in Table 10, advertising is the single most incorporated content with 40% while 20% goes to *Letters to the Editor*, 17% *Opinion*, 12% *News*, 9% *Entertainment* and 2% *Feature* stories stood in decreasing order.

The fact that 17% of the content is opinion indicates that stories with various sources and perspectives are least used. In addition, 20% of the editorial content being *Letters to the Editor* reassures the statement made by Robert Picard (2004:60) where he notes that in “most papers, three-fourths or more of the material is made up of ...sections that are not truly ‘news’.” This goes in congruent with the findings in *Tobiya* in the year 1995/96 where more than three-fourth of the material (88%) was not truly news.

Table 11: Advertising and Editorial content on *Tobiya* (1997/98) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	314	131	84	71	81	15	696
%	45	19	12	10	12	2	100

According to the finding in table 11, advertising encompass the highest percentage of content (45%) compared to other elements in the newspaper. Almost 20% of the content

has been given to the *News* sections which makes the highest from the editorial section. This helps the newspaper to provide news in abundance than entertainment or opinion.

Feature stories have, however, remained at the bottom with 2% which indicates that stories with various sources and perspectives are least used while stories that reflect an individual's point of view in the *Opinion* (12%) are quite high.

Table 12: Advertising and Editorial content on *Tobiya* (1999/2000) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	478	223	112	117	136	26	1092
%	44	20	10	11	13	2	100

According to the finding in Table 12, advertising content encompasses 44% of the total content while the news and feature contents remain 20% and 2% respectively. It should be noted that though news remains high from the editorial section it is only 10% that encompasses local coverage while the rest 10% covers *News in Brief* which usually takes half a page. This clearly indicates how the commodification of content is creeping in the newspaper under study.

It should also be noted that content under *Feature* section has remained at the bottom from the first year of operation in 1993/94 at 2% to 2% in 1999/2000. This clearly indicates that the newspaper throughout the indicated years has incorporated less personal interviews or has put fewer sources in their stories.

Table 13: Advertising and Editorial content on *Tobiya* (2001/02) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	395	225	135	109	138	47	1049
%	38	21	13	10	13	5	100

According to the findings in Table 13, advertising content has for the first time shown a considerable decrease from 44% in 1999/2000 to 38% in 2001/02. Though content

concerning feature stories has slightly increased from 2% in 1993/94 to 5% in 2001/02 it has remained the least for the particular year under study.

Instead of incorporating 13% of the content to *Letters*, which is a peculiar characteristic of *Tobiya* newspaper that remained well above 10% beginning from the first year of publication, feature stories could have provided more information at a greater depth and coverage that the public needs.

Table 14: Advertising and Editorial content on *Tobiya* (2003/04) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	162	98	46	90	136	42	574
%	28	17	8	16	24	7	100

According to the findings in Table 14, advertising has shown a substantial decrease for the second consecutive period from 38% in 2001/02 to 28% in 2003/04. This might be due to, for instance, a challenge posed by other newspapers like *Reporter* taking 54% and 55% of advertising content in 2001/02 and 2003/04 consecutively.

Next to the largest amount of *Advertising* (28%) comes *Entertainment* (24%) which is a clear indication of the commodification of *Tobiya* in the sense that more coverage has been given which is in congruent with Dahlgren (1995:8) cited in Grace (2004:65-66) who states that when the mass media prioritize commercial logic over the public interest it changes the public communication into advertising and entertainment.

4.1.3 Annual advertising and editorial sections' content in *Tomar*

Table 15: Advertising and Editorial content on *Tomar* (1993/94) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	45	108	13	102	113	17	398
%	13	31	4	29	18	5	100

According to the findings in Table 15, *Tomar* in its first year of operation has given emphasis to news (31%) than any element in the newspaper. Next to news *Opinion* encompasses the highest proportion which indicates that more sections of the editorial content lacks a range of sources while feature stories which are supposed to reflect different views and perspectives encompasses the least (5%) for the period under study.

Table 16: Advertising and Editorial content on *Tomar* (1995/96) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	67	72	7	77	85	27	335
%	20	22	2	23	25	8	100

According to the findings in Table 16, content incorporated under *Opinion* (23%) is the second highest though it has shown a decrease from 29% in 1993/94 to 23% in 1995/96. Similarly, the news content has decreased from 31% in 1993/94 to 22% in 1995/96. This particularly indicates a decrease from news content to an increase in advertisement from 13% in 1993/94 to 20% in 1995/96.

Moreover, *Entertainment* which encompasses the largest content in the particular year under study has increased from 18% in 1993/94 to 25% in 1995/96.

Table 17: Advertising and Editorial content on *Tomar* (1997/98) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	71	55	1	92	51	11	281
%	25	20	0.3	32.7	18	4	100

According to the findings in Table 17, *Opinion* takes in the majority of the content while feature stories remained at the bottom showing a decrease from 7% in 1995/96 to 4% in 1997/98. However, advertising has increased consecutively for the past three consecutive years under study and has reached 25% while news has decreased successively for the same period from 31% in 1993/94 to 24% in 1995/96 and further dropped to 20% in 1997/98.

This indicates that news that provides the public with information about local affairs has gradually gone fewer and fewer while the financial interest in advertising has constantly risen higher and higher.

Opinion which is peculiar to *Tomar* newspaper has remained among the highest contents covered as in the case of 32.7% in 1997/98, 23% in 1995/96 and 29% in 1993/94.

Table 18: Advertising and Editorial content on *Tomar* (1999/2000) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	63	55	23	80	69	23	313
%	20	18	7	26	22	7	100

According to the findings in Table 18, news content has shown decrease from 20% in 1997/98 to 18% in 1999/2000 though elements like *Letters to the Editor* and *Entertainment* has increased from 0.3% in 1997/98 to 7% in 1999/2000 and from 18% to 22% in 1999/2000 respectively.

It should be noted that *Opinion* amounts to 26% of the content which is the highest for the particular year under study. This indicates that emphasis is being given more opinion and a one person point of view than information that the public needs to make informed decision.

Table 19: Advertising and Editorial content on *Tomar* (2001/02) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	151	72	31	94	104	62	514
%	30	14	6	18	20	12	100

According to the findings in Table 19, advertising content has shown a significant increase from 20% in 1999/2000 to 30% in 2001/02. While the amount of news further decreased from 18% in 1999/2000 to 14%, advertising content has increased which indicates that issues of public concern are not given more emphasis.

It should be noted that *Opinion* has showed a decrease from 26% in 1999/2000 to 18% in 2001/02 which is a good indication that more stories are being covered with more sources and different perspectives being entertained in the *Feature* stories that has shown an increase from 7% in 1999/2000 to 12% in 2001/02.

Table 20: Advertising and Editorial content on *Tomar* (2003/04) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	75	85	37	80	415	36	728
%	15	17	7	16	38	7	100

According to the findings in Table 20, advertising content has shown a significant decrease from 30% in 2001/02 to 15% in 2003/04. Such decrease has also been witnessed

in *Tobiya* for the similar period under study. But the significant increase in *Entertainment* content from 22% in 2001/02 to 38% in 2003/04 does confer with the argument that more emphasis is being given to entertainment in order for newspaper to get large audience.

It should be noted that *Feature* stories has remained among the lowest which indicates that stories that covers different perspective and sources has been of little concern for *Tomar*.

In general, one of the characteristics of *Tomar* is that throughout the years under study news has been given lesser consideration than *Opinion*, *Advertising* and *Entertainment* while *Feature* stories have remained among the least.

4.1.4 Annual advertising and editorial sections' content in *Mesenazeriya*

Table 21: Advertising and Editorial content on *Mesenazeriya* (2006/07) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	118	219	18	80	284	73	792
%	15	28	2	10	36	9	100

According to the findings in Table 21, in the first year of operation for *Mesenazeriya* advertising constitutes 15% which constitutes the third highest coverage following *Entertainment* and *News*. Considering the editorial section alone, the finding shows that emphasis is given to entertainment than news stories that constitutes 36% and 28% respectively while the rest *Opinion*, *Feature* stories and *Letters to the Editor* each constitute not more than 10%.

It should be noted that out of the 28% news content 3% is news under the columns *Science and Technology* and *World in Brief*. The rest 25% covers local news in greater depth compared to the *News in Brief*.

This is very encouraging as far as, according to Emmanuel O. Ojo, “the role of mass media in a democratic setting is to keep the citizenry well informed (2003:822).”

Table 22: Advertising and Editorial content on *Mesenazeriya* (2007/08) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	102	158	0	77	176	76	589
%	17	27	0	13	30	13	100

According to the findings in Table 22, while advertising has shown a slight increase from 15% in 2006/07 to 17% in 2007/08, news content has shown a 1% decrease. It should, however, be noted that there is a sharp decrease in local news from 25% in 2006/07 to 5% in 2007/08.

It is to be noted that though news content in 2000 is 27%, a significant number of news (22%) is dedicated to *Science and Tech* and *World in Brief* columns while the remaining 5% constitutes local news. This would definitely leave the citizen with inadequate information that goes in congruent with what Ojo noted: “unless citizens have adequate and accurate information on all the issues and problems confronting them, they will be unable to take enlightened decisions on them” (2003:822).

Table 23: Advertising and Editorial content on *Mesenazeriya* (2009/10) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	120	163	0	94	89	56	522
%	23	31	0	18	17	11	100

According to the finding in Table 23, the news content has increased from 27% in 2007/08 to 31% in 2009/10 the highest percentage for the particular year. It should,

however, be noted that *Mesenazriya* has ultimately decreased the local news coverage throughout the years under study. Local news coverage reached 3% out of 31% of the news content while the remaining 28% constitutes news under columns like *Health, Science and Tech*, and *World News in Brief*.

The gradual decrease in *Entertainment* content from 36% in 2006/07 through 30% in 2007/08 to 17% in 2009/10 and the increase in advertising content from 15% in 2006/07 to 23% in 2009/10 shows the slow rise which indicates that advertising has become a challenge to *Mesenazeriya*.

4.1.5 Annual advertising and editorial sections' content in *Ethio Channel*

Table 24: Advertising and Editorial content on *Ethio Channel* (2007/08) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	203	105	49	43	156	87	643
%	32	16	8	7	24	13	100

According to the findings in Table 24 advertising content in *Ethio Channel* constitutes 32% in the first year of its operation. This percentage is the highest for all newspapers under study in their first year of operation.

While entertainment encompasses 24% of the content, news constitutes 16% and ranks third. It should, however, be noted that 9% out of the 16% is dedicated to *Science and Tech* while local news is 6% which is the least percentage for that particular year. This clearly indicates that information that helps the citizen to make informed decision was the least concern of the newspaper.

Table 25: Advertising and Editorial content on *Ethio Channel* (2009/10) expressed in total counts and percentage

	Advertising	News	Letter	Opinion	Entertainment	Feature	Total
	295	85	0	31	94	99	604
%	49	14	0	5	16	16	100

According to the findings in Table 25, advertising content reaches almost 50% while total editorial content decreases from 68% in 2007/08 to 51% in 2009/10. Though the news content decreases from 16% in 2007/08 to 2009/10, the emphasis given to local news has increased from 6% to 12% while the remaining 2% is given to *Science and Tech* news.

Feature stories has also shown an increase from 13% in 2007/08 to 16% in 2009/10 which indicates that more sources and different views have been incorporated in most of the editorial sections.

4.2 Advertising to Editorial Content Ratio

4.2.1 Advertising to Editorial Content Ratio in *Reporter*

Year	Advertising (%)	Editorial (%)	Total (%)
1995/96	23	77	100
1997/98	35	65	100
1999/00	59	41	100
2001/02	54	46	100
2003/04	55	45	100
2005/06	53	47	100
2007/08	62	38	100
2009/10	64	36	100

Table 26: Advertising to Editorial Content Ratio in *Reporter* (1995/96 - 2009/10)

As presented in Table 26, advertising content has suddenly increased a significant amount from 23% at the first year of operation in 1995/96 to 35% within three years time in 1997/98. Similarly, Amienyi (1998) cited in Grace (2004), notes that in the

developing countries of Africa, for instance, Nigeria, advertising gets between 28 to 35 percent of the newspaper content. Furthermore, according to Amienyi cited in Grace (2004:140) “it is important to note that the media in the developing world are getting more and more moulded along capitalist ideals and sooner than later, such ratio is likely to change.”

As was predicted, the ratio of advertising to editorial content in *Reporter* has increased from 35% in 1997/98 to 59% in 1999/2000. This indicates how fast the newspaper generally gets along with the patterns of the capitalist ideals.

However, as the table shows, advertising content has decreased from 59% in 1999/2000 to 54% in 2001/02 through a slight increase to 55% in 2003/04 and to 53% in 2005/06. This period in particular has witnessed a general decrease in advertising content in three of the newspapers under study during the same period. For example, advertising content in *Tobiya* newspaper from 44% in 1999/2000 through 38% in 2001/02 to 28% in 2003/04 while in *Tomar* newspaper though it increased from 20% in 1999/2000 to 30% in 2001/02 it drastically decreased to 15% in 2003/04 which is near to 13% of the advertising content on its first year of operation 10 years back.

One possible reason could be the fact that many newspapers have been in the market. According to a document from *Ethiopian Broadcast Authority* there was huge number of newspapers that would take their share of the advertising business. It could also be due to the large number of magazines that operate in the market that would also take their share, too.

Another possible reason could be the fact that the newly established FM radios might have shifted advertisers who envisage finding audience who would tune to the new programs.

Advertising content, however, does not continue the decreasing trend for *Reporter*. It significantly increased from 53% in 2005/06 to 62% in 2007/08 (a year Ethiopians

celebrated their new millennium). Advertising content reached its highest peak from 23% in 1995/96 to 64% in 2009/10 while the total editorial content reached its lowest point from 77% in 1995/96 to 36% in 2009/10.

Though advertising has reached 64% in 2009/10, Melaku Demmessie, Editor-in-Chief of *Reporter*, thinks that to begin a daily newspaper at present seems a dream to him. He noted:

Our concern at present is not that of quality. We carry more news than others do. Increasing circulation number is not our agenda. In this surging printing cost from time to time we have decided to forget about circulation increase not even a daily. In such difficult market to think of circulation number is unthinkable.

Personal interview (16/04/2011)

It should be noted that the news element that was presented with a fair depth of coverage in 2009/10 was only 7% while *News in Brief* covered amounted to 5% with a sum total of 12 % of news element while entertainment amounted to 8% and advertising 64% .

According to Tefera Demmesie, Marketing and Finance Head in *Addis Admas* newspaper:

The investment cost is huge for a daily to begin. The working capital is also huge. When one begin a daily you need to stay in the market for the audience to adapt you. Advertisers will not advertise on your paper if you are new in the market. The human power one needs is also huge to begin a daily newspaper. Their cost must be covered and they must be paid as well. The investment is difficult.

Personal interview (14/04/2011)

It is inevitable that with the increase in advertising content comes an increase in advertising revenue.

Though Emmanuel O. Ojo emphasizes that the virtues of mass media across all regions of the world should be to “educate the public on state affairs, disseminate information on the activities of the government” (2003:822), the data in the above table, however, indicates that *Reporter* has given emphasis to *Advertising* than *News* element.

4.2.2 Advertising to Editorial Content Ratio in *Tobiya*

Year	Advertising (%)	Editorial (%)	Total (%)
1993/94	28	72	100
1995/96	40	60	100
1997/98	45	55	100
1999/00	44	56	100
2001/02	38	62	100
2003/04	28	72	100

Table 27: Advertising to Editorial Content Ratio in *Tobiya* (1993/94 - 2003/04)

As shown in the above Table 27, advertising to editorial content in many of the newspapers following the wave of change at the beginning of the 1990s, advertising content has suddenly increased a significant amount from 28% at the first year of operation in 1993/94 to 40% within three years time in 1995/96. Likewise, according to Amienyi (1998) cited in Grace (2004), other African countries such as Nigeria, generally get an advertising content between 28 to 35 percent in their newspaper.

According to Grace (2004:14) “though the ratio of advertising to editorial content in the developing world is not yet as high as in the developed world, media theorists predict that this will soon change.” As predicted, the advertising content further increased from 28% in 1995/96 to 45% in 1997/98.

This figure for advertising content, however, dwindled significantly and successively from 40% in 1999/00 through 38% in 2001/02 to 28% in 2003/04. After 10 years advertising content in *Tobiya* newspaper reached to a level where it has been in the first year of operation: from 28% in 1993/94 to 28% in 2003/04. This must be a real catastrophe for *Tobiya* as far as advertising revenue is concerned.

It should, however, be noted that with the increase in editorial content from 56% in 1999/2000 through 64% in 2001/2002 to 72% in 2003/2004, *News* and *Feature* stories showed a slight decrease and increase respectively while *Opinion* and *Entertainment* content increased from 11% and 13% in 1999/2000 to 16% and 24% in 2003/2004.

This indicates that instead of providing news information they have been selling the audience to advertising content.

Furthermore, according to Amienyi cited in Grace (2004:140 “it is important to note that the media in the developing world are getting more and more moulded along capitalist ideals and sooner than later, such ratio is likely to change.

4.2.3 Advertising to Editorial Content Ratio in *Tomar*

Year	Advertising (%)	Editorial (%)	Total (%)
1993/94	13	87	100
1995/96	22	78	100
1997/98	25	75	100
1999/00	20	80	100
2001/02	30	70	100
2003/04	15	85	100

Table 28: Advertising to Editorial Content Ratio in *Tomar* (1993/94 - 2003/04)

As shown in the above Table 28, advertising content in the first year of operation for *Tomar* newspaper in 1993/94 is the lowest among all the newspapers under study. Within

two years of interval advertising content has suddenly increased a significant amount from 13% at the first year of operation to 22% in 1995/96 and then to 25% in 1997/98 . Following a decrease to 20% in 1999/2000 the amount sharply increased to 30% in 2001/02 and then tremendously decreased to 15% in 2003/04. Likewise, such decrease in the last years of the first decade has also been seen in *Tobiya* newspaper and hence could be taken as defining characteristic to the particular period under study. Though Amienyi cited in Grace (2004:140 noted that advertising in mass media in the “developing world are getting more and more moulded along capitalist ideals and sooner than later, such ratio is likely to change,” advertising in *Tomar* has become more and more of diminishing trend unable to evolve to western ideals.

4.2.4 Advertising to Editorial Content Ratio in *Mesenazeriya*

Year	Advertising (%)	Editorial (%)	Total (%)
2006/07	15	85	100
2007/08	17	83	100
2009/10	23	77	100

Table 29: Advertising to Editorial Content Ratio in *Mesenazeriya* (1999-2002)

According to the findings in Table 29, advertising content in the first year of operation constitutes 15% while editorial content amounts to 85%. Advertising to editorial content is even well below the average in some other African countries like Nigeria where, advertising content generally gets between 28 to 35 percent, according to Amienyi (1998) cited in Grace (2004).

In 2007/08, advertising content has slightly increased from 15% to 17%. Though advertising content has increased from 17% in 2007/08 to 23% in 2009/10 this figure is the smallest amount compared to 64% and 49% of advertising content for the similar period in *Reporter* and *Ethio Channel* respectively.

It is important to note that with the gradual increase in advertising content from 15% in 2006/07 through 17% in 2007/08 to 23% in 2009/10 local news coverage (without

including news in briefs and the technology news) has significantly decreased from 25% in 2006/07 through 5% in 2007/08 to 3% in 2009/10 (see the discussion under table 21, 22 and 23).

Alemayehu Anbessie, Editor-in-Chief of *Mesenazeriya* newspaper for two years is critical of the coverage of local news in particular and the news content in general in the weekly newspapers:

We have a big problem concerning editorial content. Newspapers as news papers should work hard on news. And weekly newspapers should cover events that happened throughout the week in greater depth. But this is not the case. If you take one newspaper and count the number of news would not be more than 3 or 4. Most of the contents are feature, interviews and different analysis. I don't think content has increased from time to time. Even the front page is covered with big pictures but when you read the content in the inside pages it is rather a feature than news. This is all because newspapers have shortage of news.

Personal interview (06/03/2011)

Though Emmanuel O. Ojo (2003:822) emphasizes that the virtues of mass media across all regions of the world should be to “educate the public on state affairs, disseminate information on the activities of the government”, the significant decrease in local news coverage in *Mesenazeriya* does not depict the virtues of mass media.

4.2.5 Advertising to Editorial Content Ratio in *Ethio Channel*

Year	Advertising (%)	Editorial (%)	Total (%)
2007/08	32	68	100
2009/10	49	51	100

Table 30: Advertising to Editorial Content Ratio in *Ethio Channel* (2000-2002)

As presented in Table 26, advertising content in 2007/08 amounted to 32% which is the highest advertising to editorial ratio for the first year of operation for all newspapers

under study. For example, advertising content for the first year of operation was 23%, 28%, 13%, and 15 for *Reporter* in 2005/06, *Tobiya* in 1993/94, *Tomar* in 1993/94, and *Mesenazeriya* in 2006/07 respectively.

As shown in the above table advertising content has significantly increased from 32% in 2007/08 to nearly 50% in 2009/10. Unlike *Mesenazeriya* newspaper where advertising slowly lingered from 15% in 2006/07 through 17% in 2007/08 to 23% in 2009/10 advertising in *Ethio Channel* has significantly increased from 32% in 2007/08 to almost 50% in 2009/10 which indicates the advertising opportunity in the market for the specific period under study.

4.3 Non-news and News Element

4.3.1 Non-news and news element in *Reporter*

Year	Non-news (%)	News (%)	Total(%)
1995/96	74	26	100
1997/98	78	22	100
1999/00	91	9	100
2001/02	82	18	100
2003/04	83	17	100
2005/06	85	15	100
2007/08	87	13	100
2009/10	86	14	100

Table 31 Non-news and news element in *Reporter*

As Table 31 indicates, most of the material in *Reporter* beginning from the first year of operation till the final year under study is non-news element that amount to more than 75% of the total content in the newspaper. And this is in congruent with the assertion made by Picard who states that newspapers in America “most papers, three-fourths or more of the material is made up of reviews, comics, advice columns, puzzles, and automotive, entertainment, lifestyle and other sections that are not truly ‘news’(2004:60).”

It is to be noted that though the private press in Ethiopia has come into existence nearly 20 years back, it has dramatically been commercialized with the economic interest

overriding the public interest taking similar pattern with the capitalist ideals like that of Western countries.

According to Dahlgren (1995:8) cited in Grace (2004:65-66), “the increasing prevalence of the mass media, especially where the commercial logic overrides the public interest, transforms public communication into public relations, advertising and entertainment. And as a result, the public loses its social coherence and becomes fragmented.”

Of particular note is that though there was a general election in 1999/2000, the newspaper has given the least emphasis on news elements as far as the lowest being 9% for news element in 1999/2000 and the highest for non-news element being 91%.

Furthermore, the *Feature* stories in Reporter has remained among the least throughout the years under study ranging from its lowest from 4% in 1997/98 to its highest to 9% in 2005/06. This indicates that stories having different sources and perspectives have been stories among the least that are given emphasis.

4.3.2 Non-news and news element in *Tobiya*

Year	Non-news (%)	News (%)	Total (%)
1993/94	81	19	100
1995/96	88	12	100
1997/98	81	19	100
1999/00	80	20	100
2001/02	79	21	100
2003/04	83	17	100

Table 32 Non-news and news element in *Tobiya*

As Table 32 indicates in the first year of operation for *Tobiya* newspaper, section dedicated to the news element which is 19% compared to all other sections sharply decreases to 12% in two years period. That leaves almost 90% dedicated to elements that

are not news which, in such cases, according to Ojo (2003) the public who will be left with inadequate information would possibly fail to make an informed decision on the issues and problems that confronts them.

However, the figure for news element almost for the coming half a decade slowly rises from 12% in 1995/96 to 21% in 2001/02 though it soon falls to 17% in 2003/04 which is the second lowest percentile for news coverage on *Tobiya* next to 12% back in 1995/96.

The news element that *Tobiya* has provided throughout the decade has not showed constant progress rather it has reached its lowest point in the first years of its operation. This clearly indicates the slight consideration given to the news element in *Tobiya* newspaper.

It should be noted that while the advertising content in *Tobiya* for the decade under study has showed an increase from 28% (the lowest) to 45% (the highest), the news element for the similar period has only increased from 12% (the lowest) to 21% (the highest) which clearly indicates the minimal priority given to increase the news content in the overall coverage. The cumulative at the end of the decade could be summed up to the fact that news element has not prospered and hence should have failed to provide the public with adequate information that could help citizens make an informed decision.

4.3.3 Non-news and news element in *Tomar*

Year	Non-news (%)	News (%)	Total (%)
1993/94	69	31	100
1995/96	76	24	100
1997/98	80	20	100
1999/00	82	18	100
2001/02	86	14	100
2003/04	83	17	100

Table 33 Non-news and news element in *Tomar*

As Table 33 indicates the news element in the first year of operation for *Tomar* has witnessed the highest (31%) for the ten years period. This shows the better priority given

to cover news in the first year of operation in the newspaper unlike *Tobiya* and *Reporter* which amounts to 19% and 26% respectively.

However, for the subsequent years from 1995/96 through 1997/98 to 1999/2000 news element showed a constant decrease to 24%, 20% and 18% consecutively. The amount of news element further drops to 14% - the lowest for the period under study.

The successive decrease in news content throughout the years from 31% in 1993/94 to 14% in 2001/02 for almost a decade is a clear indication of the decreasing priority being given to news in *Tomar*.

4.3.4 Non-news and news element in *Mesenazeriya*

Year	Non-news (%)	News (%)	Total(%)
2006/07	72	28	100
2007/08	71	27	100
2009/10	69	31	100

Table 34 Non-news and news element in *Mesenazeriya*

As Table 34 indicates the news element in *Mesenazeriya* in the first year of operation which is 28% in 2006/07 slightly decreases to 27% in 2007/08 and then increases to 31% in 2009. Unlike the news element for the rest of the newspapers under study which show a successive and/or irregular decrease, the news element in *Mesenazeriya* has witnessed a relative increase from 28% to 31%.

However, it should be noted that news elements that deal with in-depth news stories in *Mesenazeriya* has been 3% out of the 28% in 2006/07, 5% out of the 27% in 2007/08, and 3% out of the 31% in 2009/10 while the rest of the stories are dedicated to *News in Brief* and *Technology News*. This is a clear indication that most of the news stories provided in *Mesenazeriya* were inadequate to the public and the least attention given to the coverage of significant news stories.

4.3.5 Non-news and news element in *Ethio Channel*

Year	Non-news (%)	News (%)	Total (%)
2007/08	84	16	100
2009/10	86	14	100

Table 35 Non-news and news element in *Ethio Channel*

As Table 35 shows the news elements in the first year of operation for *Ethio Channel* has shown a slight decrease from 16% in 2007/08 to 14% in 2009/10. Though the decrease is a slight one it never fails to portray the decreasing consideration being given to news stories in *Ethio Channel* for the specific year under study.

Moreover, it should be noted that the better priorities given to issues such as advertising and entertainment clearly shows the insignificant consideration that is being given to news stories.

It should also be noted that it is *Ethio Channel* that begins with the least amount of news stories among the newspapers under study in its first year of operation which is 16% in 2007/08 and the highest amount of advertising content in its first year of operation.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

In this chapter the findings of the study will be summarized, conclusions will be made and recommendation on further concerns will be forwarded.

5.1 Summary and Conclusion

Five private Amharic general-interest weekly newspapers have randomly been selected and studied beginning from their first year of operation. 78 copies each for *Tobiya* and *Tomar* until 1996, 132 copies of *Reporter*, 49 copies of *Mesenazeriya* and 24 copies of *Ethio Channel* until 2002 respectively with a total number of 461 copies have been thoroughly studied.

It can be summarized that advertising in the first decade from 1993/94 - 2003/04 has shown a constant increase but then it started to decline towards the end of the decade. But non-news element has shown a constant increase with a slight variation while news element for the same period has shown a general decline. Though it can be concluded that advertising content has been in decreasing trend towards the exit year for *Tobiya* and *Tomar* the commercialization of the newspapers has generally been in the rise as far as three-fourths of the material was given to elements that are not news.

However, advertising has almost always been on the increasing trend for *Reporter* which indicates that it has been an opportunity. The assertion that media institution are in their entirety commercial goes in congruent with *Reproter* in that with an increase in advertisement from 23% in 1995/96 to 64% in 2009/10 it has decreased the news element from 26% where it has been at the first year of operation in 1995/96 to 14% in 2009/10.

Advertising content for the third period from 2004/05 onwards has shown a slow rise as in the case of *Mesenazeriya* and a rapid one for *Ethio Channel*. In general, advertising content post 2004/05 period to 2009/10 is of increasing trend for all three newspapers

(*Reporter, Mesenazeriya, and Ethio Channel*) which indicates that advertising had become a prospect for the private newspapers.

It should be noted that both at the time of increase or decrease in advertising what remains constant is a decrease in news content which indicates the ever-presence of commodification in the newspapers of the Ethiopia private media.

In 2009/10, for example, news content has reached 31%, 14%, and 12% for *Mesenazeriya, Ethio Channel* and *Reporter* respectively. However, local and in-depth news coverage reached 3%, 12% and 7% for *Mesenazeriya, Ethio Channel* and *Reporter* respectively.

Hence, it appears more the case that the newspaper institutions in general were less interested to provide the public with more and more information or news. In other words, it could be noted that their motive has been more of making profit than to provide information that the public needed to make an informed decision.

As far as the private newspapers have throughout the years provided fewer and fewer news and information of significant concern to the public in the weekly newspapers, it is unlikely that they would begin a daily newspaper that would cover the daily account of events.

The diminishing numbers of news and information in the weekly newspapers would lead to the conclusion that it is hardly possible to begin a daily newspaper as long as daily newspapers cover more news and information. Such realities coupled with advertising challenge in many of the newspapers under study have ultimately contributed to the absence of a daily.

Though all newspapers attempted to increase their advertising share while decreasing their news content, advertising, in general, has remained a challenge for the private newspaper market which significantly contributed for a daily not to evolve.

5.2 Recommendation

Newspapers should spend huge investment on news in order to provide the public with information that the public needs. Further studies, however, remains to be done on the political economy of the private newspapers based on the theoretical underpinnings of the field of study. A study that incorporates the financial account of the private newspapers i.e. their advertising and circulation revenue would also hopefully help to recognize the subject in greater depth. Furthermore, grand researches on the political economy of communication in Ethiopia in general would help us to gain an understanding into the force that affect the way we communicate through different channels.

The area the researcher covered is a portion of the political economy of communication which is particularly part of an 'entry point' called commercialization. The remaining many more areas including the subject the researcher dealt with can be a fertile field of research for future researchers.

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