

**COVERAGE OF DEMOCRATIC ISSUES IN ADDIS  
NEGER AND ADDIS ZEMEN**

**BY:  
YONAS TAFESSE**

**FACULTY OF JOURNALISM AND  
COMMUNICATIONS (GRADUATE PROGRAM)  
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

**ADDIS ABABA  
JUNE 2009**



**COVERAGE OF DEMOCRATIC ISSUES IN ADDIS  
NEGER AND ADDIS ZEMEN**

**BY:  
YONAS TAFESSE**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF  
JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS  
(GRADUATE PROGRAM)  
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER  
OF ARTS IN JOURNALISM AND  
COMMUNICATIONS**

**ADDIS ABABA  
JUNE 2009**



# COVERAGE OF DEMOCRATIC ISSUES IN ADDIS NEGER AND ADDIS ZEMEN

**BY:  
YONAS TAFESSE**

**APPROVED BY THE EXAMINING BOARD**

.....  
DEAN, FACULTY OF JOURNALISM  
AND COMMUNICATIONS

.....  
SIGNATURE

*Yacob Arxa*  
.....  
INTERNAL ADVISOR

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
.....  
SIGNATURE

*Abebe Medhin Tessema*  
.....  
INTERNAL EXAMINER

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
.....  
SIGNATURE



## Acknowledgments

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my adviser Yacob Arsano (PhD) for his constructive comments, suggestions and wholehearted guidance and help he rendered me throughout the conduct of this study. Had it not been for his help, this thesis would not have its present form.

I am also indebted to Ato Andualem Belay for his help in analyzing the quantitative data through SPSS. Also, I express my special thanks to all staff of the Faculty of Journalism and Communications (Graduate Program).

In the end, I extend my grateful thanks to all family members and friends who directly or indirectly supported me during the course of this study.



## Table of Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Acknowledgements	i
Table of Contents	ii
List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	iv
List of Appendices	iv
Abstract	v
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study	4
1.3.1 General Objective	4
1.3.2 Specific Objectives	4
1.4 Research Questions	5
1.5 Significance of the Study	5
1.6 Limitations of the Study	6
1.7 Definitions of Important Terms	7
<b>Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 The Concept of Democracy	8
2.2 Democratization	9
2.3 Political Communication and Mass Media	10
2.3.1 Elements of Political Communication	12
2.3.1.1 Political Organizations	12
2.3.1.2 The Audience/Citizens	13
2.3.1.3 The Media	14
2.3.2 Politics and Mass Media	14
2.3.3 Democracy and Mass Media	16
2.3.3.1 The Watchdog Role of the Media – Media as the Fourth Estate	17
2.4 Contemporary African Democratization and Mass Media	18
2.4.1 Good governance and Mass Media in sub-Saharan Africa	18
2.4.2 Human Rights and Mass Media in sub-Saharan Africa	22
2.4.3 Multi-Party Democracy (Political Parties) and Mass Media in sub-Saharan Africa	24
2.4.4 Election and Mass Media in sub-Saharan Africa	27
2.5 Democracy and Mass Media in Ethiopia	29
2.6 Theoretical Frameworks	32
2.6.1 Agenda Setting Theory	32
2.6.2 Gate-Keeping Theory	34

<b>Chapter Three: Research Design</b> .....	<b>36</b>
3.1 Method of the Study .....	36
3.2 Subject of the Study .....	36
3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size .....	37
3.4 Method of Data Collection .....	38
3.4.1 Coding Categories .....	38
3.5 Unit of Analysis .....	41
3.6 Inter-Coder Reliability .....	41
3.7 Data Analysis Method .....	42
<b>Chapter Four: Presentation and Discussion of Findings</b> .....	<b>43</b>
4.1 Presentation of Findings .....	43
4.1.1 Frequency of Stories about Democratic Issues .....	43
4.1.2 The Distribution of Stories about Democratic Issues .....	44
4.1.3 Type of Story .....	46
4.1.4 Theme of Story .....	47
4.1.5 Source of Story .....	49
4.1.6 Origin of Story .....	50
4.1.7 Length of Story .....	51
4.1.8 Placement of Story .....	52
4.2 Discussion of Findings .....	53
4.2.1 The Space Provided for the Coverage of Democratic Issues and Its Extent .....	53
4.2.2 Type of Story .....	55
4.2.3 Theme of Story .....	57
4.2.4 Source of Story .....	59
4.2.5 Origin of Story .....	61
4.2.6 Placement of Story .....	62
<b>Chapter Five: Conclusions</b> .....	<b>67</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>70</b>
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>73</b>



### List of Tables

<b>Table No.</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Frequency of Stories about Democratic Issues	43
2. Length of Story by Newspaper	51

### List of Figures

<b>Figure No.</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Number of Story by Month	44
2. Type of Story by Newspaper	46
3. Theme of Story by Newspaper	47
4. Source of Story by Newspaper	49
5. Origin of Story by Newspaper	50
6. Placement of Story by Newspaper	52

### List of Appendices

<b>Appendix No.</b>	<b>Title of Appendix</b>
One	Coding Sheet and Variables to be coded
Two	Type of Story, Cross Tabulation
Three	Theme of Story, Cross Tabulation
Four	Source of Story, Cross Tabulation
Five	Origin of Story, Cross Tabulation
Six	Placement of Story, Cross Tabulation
Seven	Length of Story, Cross Tabulation
Eight	Number of Story by Month, Cross Tabulation
Nine	Interview Questions for Editors and Reporters
Ten	Inter-Coder Reliability

## Abstract

*This study envisaged to assess and examine the nature and magnitude of the coverage of democratic values/issues in two Ethiopian Amharic language newspapers: Addis Neger and Addis Zemen.*

*Content analysis was used as a main research tool. In-depth interviews were also made with editors and journalists of the two newspapers. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to analyze the data. A chi-square test was also done to see whether there was a significant difference between the two newspapers.*

*For gathering data through content analysis, 48 editions of newspapers (24 from each) ranging from December 2007 to May 2008 were used as samples of the study. All stories that focused on democratic values/issues (election, political parties/multi-party system, good governance and human rights) were coded and their contents analyzed. The analysis was made based on the type, theme, source, origin, placement and length of stories. The data found from the in-depth interviews were used as a back up in the discussion and analysis part of the study.*

*In light of the growing demand and urge for democracy from within and outside, the findings reveal that democratic values/issues were faded away with very little coverage in both newspapers. Also, the contents of the articles/stories were found to be insufficiently comprehensive and thorough to help readers get convenient and significant information. Most stories about democratic values/issues were found to be hard news dealing with political parties/multi-party system and election. Moreover, the sources used were mainly official ones. Above all, the two newspapers failed to give prominence to stories about democratic values/issues. Many of the stories were found to be in the inside pages.*

*In terms of quantity, the chi-square test revealed that there is a significant difference in the distribution of five categories between the two newspapers. No significant difference was found with one category: placement of story. Regarding frequency of coverage, Addis Zemen was better almost in all categories except in the length of story.*

*In general, the results of this study indicate that Addis Neger and Addis Zemen gave limited coverage to democratic values/issues.*

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

*Chapter one treats background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study and definition of important terms.*

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The notions of democracy and democratic values/ideals/issues have evolved before many centuries and are usually thought of, according to many media scholars, as a product of Western Enlightenment. To this end, the rise of democratic theory and practice is linked historically to the invention of printing. Accordingly, the growth of literacy spread ideas that subverted and delegitimated, as Dennis and Snyder (1998: 3) note, the long-established authoritarian political order and that widened the arena of public debate essential to representative government.

Since back in the days, democracy faced many ups and downs to take ground in the government system of nations around the world. Especially in the years since the end of the Cold War, democratic values/ideals have become the order of the day in many former socialist states and other parts of the world. Dennis and Snyder point out that the recent worldwide diffusion of democratic ideals would seem to be a necessary byproduct of mass communications (Ibid.).

This is to mean, as the Cold War ended and the machinery of authoritarian rule and command economies were dismantled in country after country, the rapid evolution of ever more advanced communications technology have fostered the dissemination and exchange of information and ideas about democratic values (good governance, human rights, multi-party system/political parties, democratic election, and so on) in a tolerant spirit.

The African continent is no exception to the quest for democracy and democratic values. Hyden *et al.* (2002: 41) put that during the time of the fight against colonialism, the question of democracy was one of the visions pursued by the then independence leaders. After independence, the question of democracy has been put under the carpet until late 1980s. During the 1990s, according to Gebrezghi (2000: 235), democracy-of-procedure began to be the context of present day African states. More specifically, almost all sub-Saharan countries claim to practice “democratic elections” but they are hardly democratic (Ibid.).

In all these times, it seems that the media have been providing a platform for enhancing civil and political rights that voluntary associations do not. They have particularly an important role to play, therefore, in promoting civic consciousness about democracy. This is to say the communications media have been relatively more influential in shaping the emerging, but fledgling, democratic culture in Africa.

Nowhere are democratic values highly fought for than in sub-Saharan Africa where political turmoil and instability are prevalent and aggressive. Consequently, most of the socio-economic problems of the region are attributable to lack of democracy.

Ethiopia is one of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa which has long strove for democracy. The government of Ethiopia has announced that democracy and democratic values are its major priority areas in a bid to respond to the nations thirst for them. To this end, the government and other bodies are making use of multi-sectoral involvement for the common cause.

In almost all the efforts in the promotion of democracy and democratic ideals, there is a general agreement that information and education remain at the center of the cause. To communicate information, the mass media play a pivotal role. However, whether the Ethiopian media play an important role in disseminating essential information about democracy and democratic values is largely a not-answered issue. It is, therefore, appropriate and important to assess and evaluate the coverage of democratic values/issues

in the Ethiopian print media.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In a mission to promote and communicate democracy and democratic values/ideals/issues, political parties, researchers, different governmental and non-governmental organizations and the mass media have recently brought hands together towards efforts aimed at teaching and informing the public about the benefits of democratic values.

As a potentially powerful communication agent, the mass media have a significant responsibility to shoulder while promoting democracy and mitigating strife which happen due to lack of it. Different forms of media have been popularizing democratic values as they can reach almost many sections of the population with a single stroke.

Emphasizing the role of the media in intensifying the current course of democracy, Dennis and Snyder (1998: 11) argued: "Media are indispensable to a democratic society because they make information available at all social levels and in all its geographic corners. They are essential as critics of government, as investigators of wrongdoing, as advocates of good (as well as not-so-good) causes. . . ." Research findings have also indicated that communities with the highest media penetration show good signs of democratic culture.

However, whether the media are playing their roles effectively remains a subject of scholarly debate. Various commentators have claimed that the media have been an underutilized force in the promotion of democracy and democratic values. Dennis and Snyder, for example, argue: "Mass media can serve democracy only when those who manage them feel a passionate responsibility to create it and maintain it" (Ibid.).

Though there are, it seems, no in-depth local studies to the researcher's knowledge examining media coverage of democratic values (good governance, human rights, multi-

party system/political parties, democratic election and so on), it is likely that the situation of the Ethiopian media is not different from other sub-Saharan countries. The print media in particular have been criticized for having limited effects in creating awareness about democracy and democratic values. Therefore, there are reasons to study media coverage of democracy and democratic values/issues in Ethiopia.

In so doing, this research attempted to examine the coverage of democratic values/issues in the Ethiopian print media. As a result, the thesis specifically focused on two Ethiopian Amharic language newspapers, namely Addis Neger, a private newspaper which mainly circulates in urban areas; and Addis Zemen, a government and national newspaper. It seems that the two newspapers, as to the Ministry of Information [MoI], have the largest circulation in Ethiopia [Addis Neger = 25,000 & Addis Zemen = 11,000 copies on average]. Besides, the two newspapers, seemingly, have frequent and comprehensive coverage of democracy and democratic issues.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

### **1.3.1 General objective**

The general objective of this study was to assess and evaluate the nature and magnitude of the coverage of democratic issues in the two Amharic language Ethiopian newspapers: Addis Neger and Addis Zemen.

### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To assess the nature and magnitude of the coverage of democratic issues in terms of type of story, theme of story, origin of story, placement of story, and amount of space given for the story in the two newspapers;
- To examine the strength, weakness, and gaps in the dissemination of information in

terms of nature and frequency of the coverage of democratic issues in the two newspapers; and

- To check whether there is a quantitative and qualitative difference in the extent and nature of the coverage of democratic issues.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

In the attempt to examine the two newspapers' coverage of democratic issues, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent did the two newspapers cover democratic issues?
2. How much space was given for democratic issues?
3. What types of stories were featured?
4. What aspects or themes of democratic issues were featured?
5. What sources were used in reporting about democratic issues?
6. What origins were used in the coverage of democratic issues?
7. How were stories of democratic issues placed in the newspapers?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Although limited in urban areas, newspapers serve significantly to foster democratic issues. Hence, assessing and evaluating the magnitude and nature of the coverage of democratic issues by newspapers will contribute a lot to the available stock of knowledge on media and democracy. Accordingly, the finding of this study may help:

- Journalists and media organizations to see whether or not they are giving the relevant attention for democratic issues;
- Media organizations, press associations and concerned governmental and non-governmental organizations to be aware of the challenges of journalists in particular and

media in general in communicating democratic issues. On the basis of this, they could take remedial actions. For example, by designing training for journalists, editors, and other stakeholders.

- Different organizations working for democracy in pinpointing the importance of the media in spreading information about democratic issues;
- To remedy the gap of in-depth studies concerning coverage and reporting of democratic issues in the Ethiopian print media; and
- Other researchers as a reference in future studies of media and democracy.

## **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

The research envisaged to study only the Coverage of Democratic Issues in Addis Neger and Addis Zemen: the former a private press and the later a government newspaper. No broadcast media was the focus of the study.

This study in no way attempted to study the role of the print media in promoting democracy in this country. But, a comparative study was made to see the coverage of democratic issues in two local newspapers: one private and the other state.

As democratic values/issues were many, this research dealt only with good governance, human rights, multi-party system/political parties and election. Specifically, stories which dealt only with matters of good governance, human rights, multi-party/political parties and election were coded as democratic issues. No other issues had been studied from the two newspapers.

The samples of publications/issues from the two newspapers included only six months' time as there were many reasons pertaining to this problem. Firstly, the research/study was meant to be a semester project and there was no enough time to add samples.

Secondly, the budget available for the study was far less enough to cover costs for coders, SPSS analysts, transportation and stationeries.

Thirdly, the coding was done only twice (first by the researcher and second by an employed coder) as it was difficult to code the 48 issues (from December 2007 to May 2008) of the two newspapers within a very short research period. Hence, it was almost impossible to add extra samples and redo the coding.

Besides, it was difficult to get books that were related with this research. Credible Internet sources were also few that the review literature part was almost in a big trouble.

## **1.7 Definition of Important Terms**

**Coverage:** Refers to the presentation of stories on democratic values/issues in the media (Anteneh 2006:7).

**Democracy:** This is generally taken to mean the holding of elections, the existence of a multi-party political system and a set of procedures for government (Grugel 2002:6; Lenart 1994:4-5; Zaffiro 2000:88).

**Democratic Values/Issues:** Issues that deal with good governance, human rights, multi-party system/political parties and democratic election (Grugel 2002:12; Hyden *et al.* 2002:31; Mohamed Salih 2001:3).

**Agenda-setting:** The capability of the media to inform the public what topics are important (Anteneh 2006:27; Williams 2003:181).

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

*In this chapter are discussed among others the concept of democracy, political communication and mass media, democratization and mass media in sub-Saharan Africa, Ethiopian democracy and mass media and brief theories that help as frameworks for the reasons and arguments in the discussion sub-part of this research.*

### 2.1 The Concept of Democracy

There are as many definitions of democracy as there are democratic theorists. As Grugel (2002:6) argues the assumption that democracy means liberal democracy was the normative underpinning of most studies of democratization until the mid-1990s. This was generally taken to mean the holding of elections, the existence of a multi-party political system and a set of procedures for government.

Grugel further argues that instead of defining democracy through the trappings of liberalism, it is more useful to adopt Beetham's (1992) approach. He suggests that the core meaning of democracy is straightforward. It is 'a mode of decision-making about collectively binding rules and policies over which the people exercise control' (Ibid.). Democracy is, in its literal sense, rule by the people.

However, confusion arises not over meaning but as a result of normative judgments about how much democracy is appropriate in any given society. The main dispute, as Grugel notes, is between those who insist on a minimal definition of democracy and those who, in contrast, argue that democracy implies not only procedures for government but also substantive rights (Ibid.). The difference between minimal (or formal) and substantive democracy is captured neatly by Grugel:

Formal democracy is a set of rules, procedures and institutions . . . substantive democracy [is] a process that has to be continually reproduced, a way of regulating power relations in such a way as to maximize the opportunities for individuals to influence the conditions in which they live, to participate in and influence debates about the key decisions which affect society (Ibid.).

Democracy can be understood as an ideology, a concept or a theory. The meaning of democracy can be summarized as

A mode of decision-making about collectively binding rules and policies over which the people exercise control, and the most democratic arrangement [is] that where all members of the collectivity enjoy effective equal rights to take part in such decision-making directly – one, that is to say, which realizes to the greatest conceivable degree the principles of popular control and equality in its exercise (Grugel 2002:12).

In sum, democracy can be said to exist when there is popular consent, popular participation, accountability and a practice of rights, tolerance and pluralism. Now, let us see the notion of democratization.

## **2.2 Democratization**

Grugel states that the history of democracy begins in 1776, when the American Revolution took place. He dates democratization from the triumph of the idea of representation, which led to the American Revolution and the creation of the USA (Grugel 2002: 37). But, what is meant by ‘democratization’?

A glance at the vast literature on democratization reveals that, far from consensus, there are significantly different ways of understanding the term. Democratization has been conceptualized as

A discourse, a demand, a set of institutional changes, a form of elite domination, a political system dependent on popular control, an exercise in power politics and a demand for global solidarity – and this is by no means an exhaustive list (Grugel 2002: 4).

From the perspective of political studies, democratization has been understood along a continuum from a minimal to a maximalist position, with most commentators positioning themselves at different points in the middle. According to Grugel (2002:5), the basic

minimalist definition sees democratization as the regular holding of clean elections and the introduction of basic norms (e.g. an absence of intimidation, competition from at least two political parties, and an inclusive suffrage) that make free elections possible.

A slightly more inclusive definition demands the introduction of liberal individual rights (freedom of assembly, religious freedom, a free press, freedom to stand for public office, etc) or the creation of a polyarchic order (Ibid.).

Another way to think of this is as rights-based or 'substantive' democratization, in contrast to 'formal' democratization. As to Grugel, the litmus-test for democracy is not whether rights existed on paper but, rather, whether they have real meaning for people. Inevitably, this implies a redistribution of power (Ibid.).

In practice, many scholars accept that a full democratization can not take place without either socio-economic reform, cultural and social change and a transformation of gender relations. Consequently, democratization is said to be successful due to two factors. As to Grugel (2002:1), first is the emergence of strong, dense and vibrant civil societies that work consistently to democratize politics and to hold the state accountable and second is the existence of a capable and flexible state. With this in mind, it is more accurate to categorize political systems as limited, façade, pseudo or illiberal democratizations (Grugel 2002:5).

To nurture democracy and accelerate democratization processes all over the world, actors of democracy make use of political communication in general and the mass media in particular. In the following part is reviewed the nature and role of political communication and the mass media to facilitate democratization by agents of democracy.

### **2.3 Political Communication and Mass Media**

Communication is a very central element in almost every political activity and premise. Political communication, on its part, makes use of a range of political actors to realize the objectives outlined by politicians and governments. But, what is political communication? The term has proved to be notoriously difficult to define with any

precision, simply because both components of the phrase are themselves open to a variety of definitions, more or less broad.

McNair, for example, provides one definition of political communication as

Pure discussion about the allocation of public resources (revenues), official authority (who is given the power to make legal, legislative and executive decision), and official sanctions (what the state rewards or punishes) (McNair 2003:3).

The above definition includes verbal and written political rhetoric, but not symbolic communication acts which are of growing significance for an understanding of the political process as a whole.

McNair also characterizes political communication in terms of the intentions of its senders to influence the political environment. As he puts it:

The crucial factor that makes communication 'political' is not the source of a message [or, we might add, referring back to their earlier emphasis on 'public discussion', its form], but its content and purpose (McNair 2003: 4).

Political communication can simply be defined as purposeful communication about politics. In McNair's words, this incorporates the following (Ibid.):

1. All forms of communication undertaken by politicians and other political actors for the purpose of achieving specific objectives;
2. Communication addressed to these actors by non-politicians such as voters and newspaper columnists; and
3. Communication about these actors and their activities, as contained in news reports, editorials, and other forms of media discussion of politics.

### **2.3.1 Elements of Political Communication**

The study of political communication directs our attention to the relationship between three elements in the process by which political action is conceived and realized. They are, as to McNair (2003:5) and Lenart (1994:4-5), political organizations, citizens and media.

#### ***2.3.1.1 Political Organizations***

Political organizations are political actors or individuals who aspire, through organizational and institutional means, to influence the decision-making process (McNair 2003:5). They may seek to do this by attaining institutional political power, in government or constituent assemblies, through which preferred policies can be implemented. If in opposition their objectives will be to obstruct existing power-holders, and have them replaced by alternatives (Ibid.).

Political organizations comprise of parties, public organizations, pressure groups, terrorist organizations, and governments. However, we will discuss only about political parties and public organizations. And political parties first.

#### *Political Parties*

This category of political actor includes, according to McNair (2003:3), the aggregates of more or less like-minded individuals, who come together within an agreed organizational and ideological structure to pursue common goals. McNair also notes that the goals will reflect the party's underlying value system, or ideology, such as the British Conservative Party's adherence to 'individual freedom' and the supremacy of the market; or their Labor opponents' preference for 'capitalism with a human face' and the principles of social justice and equality (Ibid.).

It is common knowledge that political parties in modern democracies share, at least in principle, a commitment to constitutional means of advancing their objectives, attempting to convince a population as a whole of their correctness, and putting their policies to the test of periodic elections.

For parties, clearly, the smooth functioning of the political process is dependent primarily on their ability to communicate with those who will vote for and legitimize them. The mass electorate and constituencies can be reached by using various forms of interpersonal communication [public meetings and rallies, aided by newspaper coverage] and mass media.

### *Public Organizations*

If parties are at the constitutional heart of the democratic political process they are not, of course, the only political actors. According to McNair (2003:8), surrounding the established institutions of politics are a host of non-party organizations with political objectives. Some, like the British trade unions, have clear organizational links with one or more of the parties. As to McNair (2003:8) the trade unions, for example, gave birth to the Labor Party as the organized political expression of workers' interests.

Public organizations may include trade unions, consumer groups and professional associations. In such organizations, says McNair, individuals come together to campaign for change or to raise the public profile of a particular problem, often through enlisting the help of elected politicians (Ibid.).

These organizations use techniques to influence the political process, such as 'lobbying', advertising and the organization of public demonstrations.

#### ***2.3.1.2 The Audience/Citizens***

This is the second key element in the political communication process. Without it, no political message can have any relevance. As it is true in any other communication, the audience is the target of persuasion.

McNair (2003:11) states that the audience for a particular political communication may be broad, where the objective is to persuade an entire nation of voters and narrow.

Whatever the size and nature of the audience, however, all political communication is intended to achieve an effect on the receivers of the message.

### **2.3.1.3 The Media**

Media organizations are the third element in the political communication process. In democratic political systems, McNair (2003:12) notes, the media function both as transmitters of political communication which originates outside the media organization itself, and as senders of political messages constructed by journalists. In any way, the role of the media in both respects is crucial.

Most obviously, political actors must use the media in order to have their messages [political programs, policy statements, electoral appeals, pressure group campaigns and acts of terrorism] communicated to the desired audience.

The media are also important in the political process as transmitters of messages from citizens to their political leaders. McNair (2003:14) states: "In their coverage of opinion polls the media may claim to represent 'public opinion', which takes on the status of a real thing by which to understand or evaluate the political situation, often in terms of or admonitory to individual politicians".

Newspapers, on their part, publish readers' letters, providing a forum for public discussion of political issues. McNair notes: "In some newspapers, notably *The Times*, the letters page is likely to be read by politicians as indicative of public opinion (or some portion of it), and may be a significant consideration in policy-making" (Ibid.).

In what follows, the sub-part briefly presents the relationship between politics and the mass media with particular focus on the reporting of politics via the mass media.

### **2.3.2 Politics and Mass Media**

The reporting of political stories through the various communication forms is what seemingly dominated the career of mass communicators. Political coverage, like all news reporting, tells a story. Whether explicitly or implicitly, there is a narrative which connects characters and events.

The political motives of all politicians, Street argues, are understood in terms of their desire to win elections, and their actions are interpreted in relation to this dominant

concern (Street 2001:47). Elections and politicians' activities are, therefore, detrimental to the reporting of politics.

Street further explains: "Elections are typically represented as the culmination of titanic struggles in which leaders battle for supremacy" (Ibid.). Street also states:

The right to rule is secured by the power won as a result of a heroic victory, in which a leader puts his or her rivals to the sword. These rivals are not simply the leaders of other parties. They also inhabit the leaders own party (Ibid.).

As for the electoral struggles among parties, the mass media play a key role in the communication of messages pertaining to that end. Street notes: "Opinion pollsters act as bookies and election day is the winning post" (Ibid.: 47-48). He adds:

Commentary on them (electoral struggles) is driven by poll data and by other estimates of the parties' chance of success; each day's campaigning is seen as an opportunity to comment upon the relative performances of the parties: who is a head, who has just fallen, and so on (Ibid.).

Research (Billig *et al.*, 1993; Deacon *et al.*, 1998) into coverage of the 1992 British general elections revealed that the Conservative leader (John Major) appeared 175 times, his chancellor, Norman Lamont, appeared a mere 62 times [indeed the grand total for appearances by other members of the party was 247] (Street 2001:48). This research clearly underscores that leaders tend to dominate election campaigns.

In their coverage of politics, the media mainly focus on the bureaucracy. Street contends: "The media favor an explanation of political action that follows the formal contours of the bureaucratic hierarchy. He added: "There is a reluctance to attribute behavior to spontaneity or to social forces or processes .... Also ordinary people are essentially passive followers [either portrayed positively as 'supporters' or negatively as 'sheep' or 'dupes'] (Ibid.).

In portraying leaders as the key actors and elections as the key political event, there then comes the question of the motivation: what is it that drives the actors engaged in the election? Street identifies two competing sets of motives: one is marked by a devotion to

some principle which determines what policy is to be offered or advocated, the other by a strategic calculation which produces policies according to their vote-winning potential (Street 2001:50). The next sub-part treats how the media nurtures democracy.

### **2.3.3 Democracy and Mass Media**

Ever since humanity appeared on planet earth, most of its activities, especially political ones, have been dominated by communication. The dynamics of political communication used to be highly dictated by democracy and democratic issues around the globe. Dennis and Snyder (1998:23) claim that democracy is perhaps the most ancient form of government, finding its roots in clans and tribes before the age of dictators.

Over the centuries, democracy came to be seen as an ideal. But all too often it was a fragile plant in those lands where it was allowed to grow.

The new thing about democracy today, according to Dennis and Snyder, is that it is no longer an ideal for many but a reality for only a few. Dennis and Snyder summarize this fact as follows:

Peoples and governments in every part of the globe now are striving to establish the institutions and foster the mentalities which democracy needs in order to flourish. The peoples who now clamor for democratic life are aware that every aspect of human betterment today - social, political, security, environmental and economic - cannot long endure unless guaranteed by democratic processes (Ibid.).

For democracy to flourish, the role of the media is unarguably great. The media today are as important as the branches of government, and have a direct impact on each of them: the executive, the legislature and even the judiciary. Understanding that role Thomas Jefferson famously declared, as Dennis and Snyder state, that he would prefer newspapers without government to a government without newspapers (Ibid.).

### **2.3.3.1 The Watchdog Role of the Media - Media as the Fourth Estate**

The media nurture democracy as they are the watchdog of governments which play their political affairs based on democratic principles. The watchdog conception, according to which, the media is supposed to serve as a controller of government, is one among the oldest main beliefs in journalism. As to Ibrahim (2007), the term 'fourth estate', the press role in being a 'watchdog' that will control the government was reputedly coined by Edmund Burke, in late-eighteenth century in England to refer to the political power possessed by the press of that time, on a same level with the other three 'estates' of power in the British realm: Lords, Church and Commons (<http://rrezja.blogspot.com/2007/01/watchdog-role-of-media.html>).

McQuail (2003:147) also claims that the press, traditionally, are known as a checking device in the Fourth Estate formulation. He further states:

The power of the press arose from its ability to give or withhold publicity and from its informative capacity. The central freedom was to report and comment on the deliberations, assemblies and the acts of governments. This freedom was the cornerstone of representative democracy and of progress (Ibid.).

In countries where democracy is fragile, there is less emphasis on the 'watchdog' role of the media as circumstances dictate. On the other hand, in democratic countries, in the societies with a high level of political culture, the 'watchdog' role of the media is highlighted very strongly.

Media are considered as a 'fourth estate', as a powerful 'watchdog', which is used for revealing mistreatments of state authority, in particular protecting the democratic and constitutional rights of citizens. However, with the slow, but stable, decline of the public's belief in the mass media, it is contentious whether the 'watchdog' role of the media is still undamaged. Ibrahim underscores that media still remains 'watchdog', the 'fourth estate' that, more or less, realizes its responsibilities toward society (<http://rrezja.blogspot.com/2007/01/watchdog-role-of-media.html>).

The media scene of the United States is full of examples where media cover issues in a responsible way; it remains a 'watchdog' that reveals bad behavior of politicians and in this way fulfills its responsibilities to the public. Ibrahimi has argued that Watergate and the Pentagon Papers were issues of national scope in which a more powerful executive branch of government threw its weight against the media's 'watchdog' legacy; although there have been mixed reviews on the media's role in these incidents, most authorities writing on that time identify these challenges as the media's finest exercise of the 'watchdog' function (Ibid.).

In what follows, the study briefly reviews contemporary African democratization and media's role for its realization. For reasons of focus and scope, it only deals with the sub-Saharan African situation and four values/issues of democracy: good governance, human rights, multi-party system (political parties) and election.

## **2.4 Contemporary African Democratization and Mass Media**

Democracy has unfolded gradually across the globe since the nineteenth century. This process has not been linear or uncontested, however. Moreover, the causes of democratization have varied over time and space.

Contemporary democratization (third wave of democratization), as Grugel (2002:33) notes, began with democratization in Portugal in 1974, followed quickly by Greece and Spain. In the 1980s, a number of Latin American countries began to democratize. Democratization began in 1989 in East and Central Europe, the former Soviet Union and parts of Africa (Ibid.).

### **2.4.1 Good Governance and Mass Media in sub-Saharan Africa**

The concept of good governance was first introduced to development discourse by the World Bank's 1989 report *sub-Saharan Africa from Crisis to Sustainable Growth* (Abrahamsen 2000:47). The 1989 report, together with the Bank's study *Governance and Development* still today represent the most rigorous and assertive official pronouncement of current development thinking, the *locus classicus* of the governance literature.

Abrahamsen (2000:48) notes that the World Bank's construction of good governance starts from a rejection of the development models of the past. The 'post-independence development efforts failed', we are told, 'because the strategy was misconceived'. According to the Bank, there is now 'a growing consensus' that these strategies 'pinned too much hope on rapid state-led industrialization' and mistakenly encouraged African governments to make 'a dash for "modernization", copying, but not adapting, Western models' (Ibid.).

Following independence, Africa's governments were grafted on to traditional societies and were often alien to the indigenous cultures. Consequently, Africa's economic, political and social disaster can be blamed on a fundamental flaw in the prevailing development paradigm.

The new development paradigm, according to Abrahamsen (2000:49) recognizes, in the words of the World Bank, that 'far from impeding development, many indigenous African values and institutions can support it'. Good governance does not therefore advocate a 'dash for modernization' but understands instead the need to 'progressively remodel its institutions to be more in tune with the traditions, beliefs, and structures of its component societies'. Accordingly 'each country has to devise institutions which are consonant with its social values' (Abrahamsen 2000:49).

In the good governance discourse, Abrahamsen argues, democracy emerges as the necessary political framework for successful economic development, and within the discourse democracy and economic liberalism are conceptually linked: bad governance equals state intervention, good governance equals democracy and economic liberalism (Ibid.:51).

In most developing countries, colonialism often had the opposite impact in terms of reinforcing centralist tendencies. This, in turn, helps explain the noticeable lack of effective demand from societies for decentralization [and good governance] today. Oxhorn *et al.* explain the problem as follows:

While recent transitions to democracy have been effected by a variety of new social movements, these have not had the same impact on decentralization as the new social movements in older democracies. The primacy of the demand for disposing of the existing authoritarian regimes is one reason, but such movements in developing countries also had very different characteristics than their West European and North American counterparts. Not surprisingly, the tensions between local and national level democracy often tend to be reconciled in favor of the later. If spaces for local participation and democracy are even on the agenda, they may be easily sidestepped by other concerns and interests (Oxhorn *et al.* 2004:19-20).

In dealing with good governance and the mass media in the sub-Saharan Africa context, a good example comes from post-apartheid South Africa. The country has developed a curious propensity for adopting internationally fashionable remedies for purely endogenous reasons. There are many examples, but none is perhaps as striking as the society's current tentative experiment in decentralization.

Oxhorn *et al.* (2004:141) state that the enhanced role of sub-national government appears to stem entirely from the specificities of recent political history, that is, the nature of the fight against apartheid and of the negotiated settlement which ended it. Until recently, domestic politics in South Africa has not seemed hospitable to the decentralization of power. Nevertheless, a set of very particular circumstances steered elites toward at least formal recognition of a need for decentralized governance.

How, then, do we explain that very particular local circumstances produced an outcome so consistent with current world trends? International actors, according to Oxhorn *et al.* who enjoyed credibility among local parties presented decentralization to them as a possible answer to some of the problems with which the elites grappled. After inspecting the product on offer, local elites more often than not decided that troubled them and adopted it (Ibid.: 141-142).

According to Oxhorn *et al.* (2004:158), South Africa's decentralization experiment was not the outcome of a neo-liberal reform project, nor was it an attempt to reduce public attention to specific issues or problems or an effort to respond to demands for greater

accountability to citizens although these factors have played a role in the way in which it has worked in practice. It was a response to specific local political exigencies. And, while this origin may have ensured the creation of a decentralized system, it is also responsible for the lack of elite enthusiasm for decentralization as a means of public participation rather than political and administrative necessity.

Like all democracies, South Africa should be considered democratic not only in a technical way, for example, holding regular elections and counting votes accurately but also in that the spirit of a democratic society should be maintained such that a free media system can operate (Lange and Ward 2004: 82).

The South African media is governed by a set of principles and beliefs that are rooted in a strong libertarian framework. Specifically, the media operates, as Rama underscores, in an environment that is free from restriction and formal government interference ([portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=14898&URL\\_DO=DO\\_PRINTPAGE&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=14898&URL_DO=DO_PRINTPAGE&URL_SECTION=201.html)). Clearly there has been a massive shift from the previous authoritarianism.

More than ever before the media have to be vigilant and exacting in their approach to government, government needs to be constantly held accountable for its actions and future actions. To quote Keyan G. Tomaselli and P. Eric Louw: "Thus communication becomes a matter of politics, of confronting ideology, and ultimately of the redistribution of power to ensure that a broad-based consultative democracy can develop" ([portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=14898&URL\\_DO=DO\\_PRINTPAGE&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=14898&URL_DO=DO_PRINTPAGE&URL_SECTION=201.html)).

Above all, the notion of civic transformation, the realignment of the media and facilitating the involvement of communities in the mainstream media are concepts that the South African media are obliged to grapple with if they are serious about democratisation (and good governance). Issues about human rights and mass media in sub-Saharan Africa are treated in the following sub-section.

#### **2.4.2 Human Rights and Mass Media in sub-Saharan Africa**

African governments began to observe human rights in their respective countries after the cotemporary democratization project has been heralded by international actors.

Mahmoud (2005:19) argues, passing through various degrees a conflict between democratization and the conservative policies and practices of bureaucratic structures, Africa still faces another conflict, namely that occurring between cultures, ethnic relations, and religions, on the one hand, and state bureaucracies on the other. He adds: "The controversy is further expanded by the ongoing national, regional, and international endeavors to ensure the enjoyment of full human rights and civil freedoms to all people of the world, indiscriminately as a global struggle in which Africa is no exception" (Ibid.).

International human rights norms provide for the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms. Some of these, according to Mahmoud, are the right to work and to form trade unions, the right to free expression and assembly, independence of the judiciary, the right to religious beliefs, the right to protect and preserve national wealth, the prohibition of all forms of discrimination, torture, dehumanizing punishment or criminal treatment, and arbitrary arrest, extra-judicial killing, and the denial of the right to defense or a just trial, etc (Ibid.).

The African Charter on Human and People's Rights, Mahmoud notes, was enacted by African leaders at the Lagos Conference on the Rule of Law (1961). In 1981, Mahmoud further explains, African states ratified the Charter at the OAU Summit of the Heads of States, and in 1986 the Charter was fully enforced (Ibid.:20).

The Charter stipulates the establishment of a special committee to supervise the commitment of member states to the Charter. As to Mahmoud, African states party to the Charter has recently exerted much effort to activate the procedure of filing a compliant before the African Commission on Human and People's Rights against violations of human rights (Ibid.).

In 1993, according to Mahmoud, the OAU Annual Summit established a conflict management mechanism in the OAU Secretariat to address both internal and external conflict, which comprised a major breakthrough in OAU doctrine. The mechanism prevents escalation of political tensions in collaboration with the UN (Ibid.). For example, the OAU monitored the situation of war in Burundi, Rwanda, and South Africa. The West African Economic Community (including Nigeria and Ghana among other countries) has played an effective part in making peace in Liberia. The IGAD (Inter-Governmental Authority and Development) is committed to a serious search for peace in the Horn (Somalia) and Sudan.

According to Mahmoud (2005:21), despite these positive aspects of African peace making and human rights activities, extensive bureaucratic procedures inhibit Africans from making use of the African Charter and its Commission.

Regarding the communication of messages about human rights, the mass media provide a bedrock for democratic exchange and respect for human rights. However, the question of raising awareness, improving training and developing skills for the promotion of democracy remains a potent challenge for media professionals and policymakers alike.

A 1999 report by the International Federation of Journalists [IFJ] (1999:3) underlines that the African Charter on Human and People's Rights needs to be more widely known and discussed and needs to be made meaningful to citizens. People need to know what this home grown Charter says, how it can protect them and how they can assert their rights through the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (<http://africa.ifj.org/assets/docs/106/024/74d866a-e7eb518.pdf>). The report further states:

Awareness is key to the promotion of rights. Citizens must be able to celebrate achievements and successes. Media have a role to play in reporting good examples of tolerance, peace and respect for human rights. It is not all bad-news dominated by conflict and strife (Ibid.).

The contribution made by journalists to human rights promotion is clear: by exposing violations of rights media can improve the climate of democratic debate and reduce corruption in public life. At the same time, media sensitive to the importance of human rights provide reliable sources of information through which citizens, human rights groups, private organizations and public authorities can work together to promote development and to eliminate arbitrary abuse.

To quote IFJ's (1999:2) report: "African media are important for people to know their rights: A recent study on the impact of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Ghana showed that the largest source of information for the public on the Convention and what it means for them is the media"(Ibid.). Multi-party democracy and mass media in sub-Saharan Africa is discussed in the next part.

### **2.4.3 Multi-Party Democracy (Political Parties) and Mass Media in sub-Saharan Africa**

Africa is experiencing an impressive transition from one-party states, military rule or civilian dictatorships to various forms of political pluralism. It is clear that after forty years of political independence in Africa, the question and demand for democracy in all aspects of life has come to the center of political stage. Kaya and Wyk (p.138) note that since the late 1980s the demand for democracy or the democratization movement has been characterized by struggles for multi-party political systems ([dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/fichero\\_articulo?codigo=2329355&orden=85771](http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/fichero_articulo?codigo=2329355&orden=85771)).

The struggle for the process of change from one-party into multi-party political systems took different forms in individual African countries. Kaya and Wyk summarize the situation in the Eastern and Southern African Regions as follows:

In Kenya demands and mass demonstrations for multi-party democracy took place despite President Moi's rigid resistance. In March 1991, the government of Tanzania established a presidential commission to study the possibilities of introducing a multi-party system. The commission came out with a recommendation that Tanzania should establish a multi-party political system . . . On 31 October 1991, Zambia held her first election based on multi-partism, and

the result was that the incumbent United Independence Party (UNIP) lost to MMD, a new opposition political party led by Fredrick Chiluba (Ibid.:138-139).

...

Various explanations have been propagated for these developments. These could be categorized into two main arguments, i.e. the external-centered and the internal-centered explanations. According to Kaya and Wyk, the external-centered could further be divided into two parts. One part tends to emphasize the influence of liberal democratic changes in Eastern Europe as the main cause for the new wave of multi-party democratic demands in Africa, whereas the other party tends to emphasize imperialist pressure for multi-partism as conditionality for getting development aid (Ibid.:139). Both parts of the external-centered explanation are upheld by some members of the political leadership in Africa.

The internal-centered explanation, as Kaya and Wyk state, can be divided into three parts. One part is based on the Western theory of political modernization. This dichotomizes the issue of democracy between one-party and multi-party systems. It argues that a one-party system as a common feature in most post-independence African countries is basically dictatorial, whereas the multi-party system as western feature is fundamentally democratic. It is therefore the responsibility of the western countries to spread what is regarded as "genuine pluralist parliamentary democracy" to the developing countries including Africa (Ibid.:139-140).

The second part of the internal-centered explanation may be regard as a "conspiracy" viewpoint. According to Kaya and Wyk, the African masses have decided to demand democracy because the democratization process in Africa was arrested after political independence by the petty-bourgeoisie who consolidated political power through the one-party state. The attempt to arrest the democratization process was due to competition between the different sections of the African petty-bourgeoisie for the monopoly of political power in order to enjoy the fruits of independence at the expense of the African masses (Ibid.:140).

The third part of the internal explanation for the trend to multi-party movement in Africa is based on the crisis of African democracy which includes the one-party system. As Kaya and Wyk, the crisis of African democracy and the one-party system of government in Africa is reflected through two important aspects: the growth of economic crisis and the rise of class contradictions (Ibid.). It is common knowledge that most African countries have been experiencing serious economic problem from the late 1970s and through the whole period of the 1980s. It is due to this situation that the 1980s have been described as the lost decade for Africa.

With this in mind, the African media in the late 1980s ushered in a new hope for the promotion of multi-party politics in the continent. A very good model comes from the South African Region, namely Zambia. According to Phiri (1999:53), Zambia's 1991 transition attracted some attention for several reasons. First, it was one of the first African countries to fully test the multi-party experiment. Second, Kenneth Kaunda, who had ruled the country for 27 years, was a respected figure in African politics. Consequently, the removal of a leader of Kaunda's stature through a competitive electoral process was seen as a strong indicator that similar developments would follow in other African states ([http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/africa\\_today/v046/46.2phiri.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/africa_today/v046/46.2phiri.html)).

Within Zambia, particularly in media circles, the transition was thought to mark the end of the repression of the media and the beginning of an era in which the media would be an autonomous contributor to the country's social, political, and economic life. There was, as Phiri (1999:54) states, optimism that the state-run media (*The Times of Zambia*, *The Daily Mail* and, and the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation) would stop serving as the mouthpiece of the ruling party and become a vibrant forum for the objective discussion of public affairs. The prospects of the independent media, which had been stifled by the intolerant one-party state, also looked bright.

This optimism about the future of state-media relations in Zambia was fueled by statements and publications generated by the leadership of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD), the movement that swept Kenneth Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP) out of power and demolished the one-party state. At their very first public conference, as Phiri notes, leaders of this movement championed

freedom of speech and criticized the one-party state for failing to foster an environment conducive to a free press (Ibid.).

Phiri argues that the independent media also contributed to Africa's transition to multi-party (Ibid.:60). This argument is sustainable to a certain extent. However, Phiri's assertion that "multi-party politics and democracy would not have come to Africa" without the independent media is debatable.

As to Phiri, Zambia's transition to multi-party politics was driven by the mass activation of civil society groups that eventually formed the MMD. The independent press was an outgrowth of this process rather than a causal factor (Ibid.).

The independent media in Zambia came to life during and soon after the transition to plural politics in 1991. According to Phiri, more than two dozen newspapers and magazines were registered in 1991 alone. However, most of the registered papers were either aborted before publication or died soon after the first few issues. Among the handful of private newspapers that survived, only *The Post* has emerged as a strong competitor with the state-run papers for readers and a leading critic of the state. Private efforts in broadcasting have been dismal (Ibid.). The issue of election and media in sub-Saharan Africa follows now.

#### **2.4.4 Election and Mass Media in sub-Saharan Africa**

Academics and politicians agree that Africa was late in getting onto the democratization bandwagon. Grugel contends that talk of Africa joining the third wave of democratization only really dates from the beginning of the 1990s. A trend was discerned when the long-time president of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, stepped down in 1991 (2002:171)

By 1995, pluralistic party systems were in place in more than three-quarters of African states, and in thirteen of them (Benin, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe and Zambia) change of government through the ballot box had actually taken place (Grugel 2002:172).

According to Wondwosen (2009:86), between 1989 and 1994 almost 100 elections had taken place in Africa. Moreover, in the 1990s alone, 42 out of 48 African countries made democratic reforms and held elections. Prior to the 1999 election in Botswana, many political parties failed to use the media efficiently. They used traditional methods of house-to-house campaigns and public rallies. Their heavy dependence on public rallies, though effective in some cases, greatly curtailed their opportunity to reach certain segments of the population particularly the professionals and the elderly (Ibid.:86-87).

In a democracy, as Wondwosen (2009:85) argues, elections have three major functions: First, they serve as a means for people to choose their representatives. This could be exercised in choosing their representatives to legislative or executive offices. Second, they are a means of choosing governments, and third, they give legitimacy to the political systems.

The media serve many functions during elections. According to Wondwosen, the media is necessary to educate voters how to exercise their democratic rights; to give a chance for political parties to debate with each other; to report about the election campaign, and to give the parties a platform to communicate their message to the electorate; to report election results; and to assess the election process (Ibid.).

After the onset of multi-party democracy in Africa in the first half of the 1990s, scholars have attempted to investigate the role of the media in the African democracy and multi-party elections. As Wondwosen (2009:88) noted, “free and fair elections depend to a significant degree upon the ability of the news media to function in an impartial and professional manner.”

In the 1992 election campaign in Kenya, as Wondwosen stated, the ruling party got more coverage than all opposition combined in the state-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) that involves radio and television. The KBC characterized the ruling party positively while presenting the opposition negatively. On the other hand, the privately-owned Kenya Television Network (KTN) covered the opposition more than the

KBC did (Ibid.). In what follows, the issue of democracy and mass media in Ethiopia is discussed in brief.

## **2.5 Democracy and Mass Media in Ethiopia**

Ethiopia began to test the fruits of democracy only in 1991 after the Mengistu regime [1974-91] was dismantled. The struggle against the Mengistu regime culminated in the creation of a coalition called the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Forces (EPRDF). The EPRDF was organized by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and included the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO), and the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Organization (SEPDU).

The triumphant arrival of the TPLF-led Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) forces in Addis Ababa in 1991 was the start of a new era in Ethiopian history. The 1991 Charter, which granted the right of self-determination to nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia, acted as a precursor to the 1994 Constitution. According to Mohamed Salih (2001:195), following the collapse of the Mengistu regime in 1991 representatives of ethnic groups were invited to participate in the Transitional Government. The EPRDF also began to establish People's Democratic Organizations (PDOs) throughout the country.

The 1994 Constitution established the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and adopted a federal system of government. The ethnically based states decreed by the constitution are Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, Benishangul/Gumuz, Southern Nations, Nationalities and People, Gambella and the State of Harari People. According to the Constitution, these ethnic groups must establish their own Regional Governments (as elaborated in Chapter Four, Article 3).

One major implication of ethnic federalism, according to Mohamed Salih, is that ethnic political organizations and not political parties in the strict Western sense, contest

elections for the Regional States Councils as well as the House of People's Representatives (Ibid.:196).

In the 1994 Constitution of Ethiopia are enshrined human and democratic rights in article 10 (Ethiopian Constitution, Chapter Two, Article 10). The article reads:

1. Human rights and freedoms as inherent rights of man are inalienable and inviolable.
2. The human and democratic rights of peoples and citizens shall be protected.

With regard to Freedom of Expression and Opinion, the Constitution clearly stipulates they are democratic rights and are granted without any interference under article 29 (Chapter Three, Article 29). It proclaims:

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without any interference.
2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression without interference. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through other media of his choice.
3. Freedom of the press and mass media as well as freedom of artistic creation is guaranteed. Press freedom shall, in particular, include the rights enumerated hereunder: a) that censorship in any form is prohibited. b) the opportunity to have access to information of interest to the public.
4. The press shall be granted institutional independence and legal protection to enable it to accommodate different opinions and ensure the free flow of information, ideas and opinions that are necessary in a democratic society.
5. Any media financed or controlled by the government shall be organized in a manner suitable for the accommodation of different opinions.
6. Nothing in the foregoing shall absolve anyone of liability arising from laws enacted to protect public morals, peace, human dignity and democratic rights of citizens.

Article 30 of the Constitution also proclaims that Freedom of Assembly, Public Demonstration and Right to Petition are guaranteed. What is more, it grants the right to vote and be elected at genuine periodic elections under article 38.

The Ethiopian political system is emerging democracy and it follows a bicameral Federal Parliamentary Assembly, namely House of Federation [108 seats] and House of People's Representatives [547 seats]. In the former, members are chosen by regional state councils to serve 5-year terms while in the later members are elected by direct popular vote in single-member constituencies using the first-past-the-post (simple majority) system; members serve 5-year terms (<http://africanelections.tripod.com/et.html>). Regarding elections, Ethiopia held multi-party elections four times: in 1994 (Constituent Assembly Election), 1995 (House of People's Representatives Election), 2000 and 2005 (Ibid.).

The results of May 2000 elections for the State Council (SC) and the House of People's Representatives (HPR) produced stunning results with reference to the reconfiguration of Ethiopia's political landscape. The election results show that several ethnic political organizations were not able to maintain any presence in the State Council or the House of People's Representatives (Mohamed Salih 2001:197).

The third and the most competitive multi-party election took place on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2005, both for the Federal Parliament as well as for the nine state councils. The general situation about the general election can be summarized as follows:

The government and the ruling party had created a conducive atmosphere for all political parties to participate. Election laws were revised and a code of conduct for ruling party members issued. International and local election observers were invited. Opposition parties were able to campaign freely throughout the country. The public media was made available and the opposition were allotted 56% of the air-time allocated for campaigning (<http://www.ethioembassy.org.uk/news/press%20releases/Facts%20about%20the%20Recent%20Ethiopian%20Parliamentary%20Elections.htm>).

In the following part, two theoretical frameworks are discussed briefly and precisely.

## 2.6 Theoretical Frameworks

### 2.6.1 Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda setting theory is the result of the assessment of the effects of the media on people and society by scholars. According to Ibrahimi, agenda setting is a highly political process; political actors actively seek to bring issues on top of the agenda if they are looking for a change of policy, or to keep them off the agenda if they want to defend the status quo (Ibid.).

The function of the media in this process is essential since they determine which issues are the most important ones; agenda setting illustrates a very powerful authority of the media – the capability to inform the public what topics are important. The power to push people into thinking about certain kinds of issues became known as ‘agenda setting’.

Ibrahimi argues that two basic assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting: (1) the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it; (2) media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues (Ibid.).

First of all, media do not represent certainty; there are filters inside of the media, which decide what is ‘real’ and what is ‘false’. In other words, every thing passes through the filters of the media and after that it will be presented to the public; agenda setting is the process that lets some information to reach the audience while other information is kept out. Secondly, different forms of the media tell us which issues are worthy of our attention; or, as Bernard Cohen stated: “The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (Ibid.).

While researching the agenda setting power of the media, McCombs and Shaw (1972) developed the hypothesis in researchable form in their examination of the news coverage of the 1968 US presidential election campaign. They examined the content of the political

news of the campaign in the press, news magazines and on television, and conducted a survey of people's views of the importance of particular issues covered in the media. They found a 'high level correspondence between the amount of attention given to a particular issue in the media and the level of importance assigned to that issue by people in the community who were exposed to the media' (Williams 2003:181).

In relation to newspapers, factors such as the number of articles, news types, location in the paper, and length of stories are important to put media agenda issues onto the public agenda (Anteneh 2006: 27).

Media steer readers in this regard to understand the importance of the news issues in different ways. Apart from consistently reporting the issue, newspapers give prominence of the report on the pages. The pages on which the report appears, the use of letterheads and fonts, the size of the report, the use of photographs to support and the period of prolonged reporting are the main ones (Ibid.).

As Williams points out, different issues may influence the agenda setting process in different ways. It is possible to distinguish 'rapid onset news events' such as the US bombing of Libya in 1986 and 'slow onset' items such as the 1984-85 famine in Ethiopia, as well as a 'high salience, short duration' issue such as the hijacking of a TWA airline in 1985 and a 'low salience' issue such as the rise and fall of US employment figures (Williams 2003: 182).

United States is known as a country where media set an agenda; this happens always, especially, during the elections. During these political races, according to Ibrahim, there is rarely evening news that goes by without having something about the city races, congressional races, and the presidential race. Political debates and presidential news has always flooded the headlines and newscasts during the elections. These issues always are essential and everyone talks about the candidates and their programs. It happens like this since the media leads the public to believe that this is important. As McCombs and Shaw stated, "We judge as important what the media judge as important" (Ibid.).

### 2.6.2 Gate-Keeping Theory

In order to go beyond content analysis and find out the factors that influence media content, this study attempted to investigate what is happening in the newsroom. To this end, one theory of the newsroom is discussed briefly: gate-keeping theory.

The concept of gate-keeping was first applied to communication and journalism researches by White (1950). As literatures indicate, White's study implied that news is what the editors/gate-keepers say it is. Barzilai-Nahon defines media gate-keeping as "The process by which numerous messages are filtered and reduced to the few we are offered in our daily media outlets – it is an essential part of the news gathering and dissemination process, because every potential news item can not be gathered, and from among those items gathered, they all can not be disseminated" (Barzilai-Nahon cited in Anteneh 2006: 29).

Barzilai-Nahon underlines that gate-keeping comprises more than a selection process. According to him, gate-keeping is a "process of controlling information as it moves through a gate. Activities include selection, addition, withholding, display, channeling, shaping, manipulation, repetition, timing, localization, integration, disregard and deletion of information" (Ibid.).

The above definitions, in one way or another, illustrate that media content passes through different levels of organizational processing. In this process the original message is filtered in many ways before reaching to the audience. For example, the length may be reduced; the style may be changed; the idea may be censored; and so on.

According to Anteneh, each step in the process can be considered as a gate through which the data must pass on its way to the consumer. Each gate-keeper will have an effect on the content and style of the story. Each person will have added to or subtracted from the original data, and in his or her own way each person will have helped to formulate. Hence, in this process the reporters, copy tasters, sub-editors, editors and, to a lesser extent, media owners are all gate-keepers (Ibid.). This in turn shows that the selection of news items is determined by all these parties. The decision is, therefore, made based on

some set of standard principles of news values, organizational routines, input structure and common sense.

By referring the works of different scholars, this study now discusses the four important areas of gate-keeping in general. They are individual journalists, established media routines, organizational constraints and forces.

**Individual journalists:** The extent to which differing news values of individual journalists affect decisions made in cross-media partnerships. In most cases, journalists' decisions on which stories to run were "highly subjective" and based on their "own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations" of what is news (Anteneh 2006:30).

**Established media routines:** Researches show that journalists need to establish routines in an effort to sift through the hundreds of messages they receive each day and must process in a short period of time. Routines determine which stories will pass through the gates and which elements of the story will be emphasized (Ibid.).

**Organizational constraints:** This is related to the social control theory. According to Breed (1955) social forces within the newsroom influence what becomes news. Although journalists can impose their individual values on their work, researchers suggest organizational forces like policy which are admitted or not affect news selection (Breed cited in Anteneh).

**Forces:** The relative strengths of the different forces that determine whether a news item passes through the gate and reaches the news consumer. Positive and negative forces on either side of a gate determine whether an item passes through the gate. Hence, identifying the strength and conflict of various forces becomes a critical factor in cross-media partnerships in determining which stories will pass through to the audience (Ibid.).

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

*This chapter focuses on the research design, specifically on the method and subject of the study, sampling techniques and sample size, unit of analysis, inter-coder reliability and data collection and analysis methods.*

### **3.1 Method of the Study**

The study on the Coverage of Democratic Issues in Addis Neger and Addis Zemen demanded qualified research methods. In terms of methods, the research employed triangulation technique: content analysis and in-depth interviews. Primarily, content analysis approach was applied as a main research tool. This method was used as it aims at systematic analysis of communication content, which was also the main aim of this study. However, content analysis, by its very nature, has got a shortcoming. It tells only the 'what' of the content studied and leaves out the 'why'. In order to find some of the incomplete data, in-depth interviews were also held with reporters and editors of the selected newspapers.

### **3.2 Subject of the Study**

It was impossible to consider all Ethiopian newspapers in this study. Hence, two newspapers were selected both of which are written in Amharic: Addis Neger and Addis Zemen. The earliest founded in 2007, is a weekly and privately-owned newspaper, whereas the latter, founded in 1941, is a daily and national government newspaper. As there was no daily Amharic private newspaper in Ethiopia during the time of this research, a weekly press was selected. Addis Neger and Addis Zemen were chosen as subjects of the study since they are popular in covering democracy and democratic issues. Furthermore, the two newspapers were selected as they relatively enjoy large circulation and wide geographical coverage in the country.

Contents of the newspapers that treated democratic issues (good governance, human rights, multi-party system/political parties and election) were also the subject of the study.

Further, a total of four persons - two editors and two journalists/reporters, one from each newspaper - were selected as the subject of this study.

### **3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size**

The two newspapers were selected based on purposive sampling technique from the many print media in the country.

In order to select the samples - the duration of time and the number of newspapers - of this study, purposive sampling technique was employed.

Six months' editions spanning from December 2007 to May 2008 of the two newspapers were chosen as samples of this study. The time span was purposively selected because the local and by-elections of 2008 (2000 E.C.) was celebrated during this period; and the Ethiopian print media gave much coverage to democracy and democratic issues around this time. The fairly lengthy duration of time [six months] selected as a sample gave the chance to compare and contrast the coverage of the referred issues at different times.

It was burdensome to cover all issues/editions of the daily Addis Zemen from the selected sample. Hence, in order to make the selection of issues from the two newspapers compatible, only one edition of the daily Addis Zemen was taken from the seven editions of a week. Here, the researcher tried to include all days of the week by selecting Monday in the first week, Tuesday in the second week and so forth. Since Addis Neger is a weekly newspaper, all editions of the given time span were used. Therefore, a total of 48 editions (24 issues from Addis Neger and another 24 issues from Addis Zemen) were used for the purpose of coding democratic issues.

Editors and journalists from the two newspapers were also chosen using purposive sampling technique.

### **3.4 Method of Data Collection**

The contents of individual articles dealing with democratic issues in all the selected editions of the two newspapers were collected and examined. A coding list was prepared to find the extent of the coverage of the referred issues in the newspapers, to detect the types of stories, to classify the themes they featured, to identify the amount of space they gave and the sources and origin they used, and to distinguish the placement of stories.

The coding list/sheet was almost similar to the ones used in a previously undertaken study by Anteneh (Anteneh 2006:32-33). By using the same design, it was attainable to code the contents of democratic issues from the two newspapers. The procedure for coding included: type, themes, source, origin, placement of stories and amount of space given for stories. The researcher and another coder, who is an MA student at the Faculty of Journalism and Communications, did the coding together.

A carefully phrased interview questions were presented to the editors and journalists of the two newspapers to secure the incomplete data from the content analysis through in-depth interviews.

#### **3.4.1 Coding Categories**

The following are brief descriptions of the categories:

*Type of story*: Refers to the genre that the story belongs to. Articles that treated democratic issues were coded as hard news, features, commentaries, editorials, letters advertisements, and others.

*Theme of story*: Refers to the central message or the dominant subject of the story. The

themes of democratic issues were coded under the following categories: good governance, human rights, political parties/multi-party system and election.

**Source of story:** Refers to the dominant source of the story. This was coded as political analysts, political journals/media, government organizations, NGOs, meetings and workshops, research findings, politicians, individuals and others.

**Origin of story:** Refers to the basis of the story. Two categories were used: local and foreign.

**Length of story:** Refers to the amount of space devoted to democratic issues. The length of the articles was measured by square centimeter.

**Placement of story:** Refers to the places in which stories of democratic issues were placed. Two categories were employed: front page and inside page.

The categories under **type of story** are defined as follows:

**Hard news:** Stories which highlight new happenings or events. Such stories answer most of the basic questions: who, what, where, when, why and how.

**Features:** In-depth stories with background information and which tend to be longer and their scope extend beyond that of hard news stories. Besides, stories which are descriptive, often to the point of painting a picture for the reader.

**Commentaries:** Any article which is a criticism, discussion or explanation of ideas, opinions or facts.

**Editorials:** An article which shows the stand of the newspaper. It is written by the editor and has got its own column.

**Letters:** Viewpoints of readers presented in the form of letters to the editor of the newspaper.

**Advertisements:** Announcements in the form of words or pictures that are used to promote a product or service or an organization.

**Others:** Any article which is other than the aforementioned ones or a story which is not clear to categorize under the above categories was coded under this category.

The categories under *theme of story* are defined as follows:

**Good governance:** Stories which dealt purely with managerial and administrative government procedures focusing on efficiency and accountability were coded under this category.

**Human rights:** This category focused on norms that provide for the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms such as the right to work and to form trade unions, the right to free expression and assembly, independence of the judiciary, etc.

**Political parties:** Stories which treated political organizations that are legal and operate in a country for a certain political cause were coded under this category.

**Election:** This category dealt with the holding of free and fair elections in a fixed time interval to ensure competition among political parties.

The categories under *source of story* are defined in the following way:

**Political analysts:** This category was used when stories were sourced from professionals who are capable of analyzing politics.

**Political journals/media:** This category was used when stories were taken from political journals/media.

**Government organizations:** This category focused on all official agencies or public persons other than political analysts and media.

**NGOs:** This category dealt with local and international non-government organizations that pursue democracy.

**Meetings and workshops:** This category was used when stories were coded that were obtained from meetings, seminars and workshops.

**Research findings:** Stories that were sourced from research findings were coded under this category.

**Politicians:** Stories sourced from politicians and MPs/regional council members were coded under this category.

**Individuals:** Stories sourced from individual citizens from different walks of life and who were neither public persons nor politicians.

**Others:** This category was used when a source could not be classified under any of the above categories.

### **3.5 Unit of Analysis**

Individual articles which dealt with democratic issues were the unit of analysis for the study.

### **3.6 Inter-coder Reliability**

Two coders - the researcher and an MA student from the Faculty of Journalism and Communications - did the coding. A thorough explanation was given for the student before the coding. A total of 252 articles were considered for the inter-coder reliability calculation. The 48 editions from the two newspapers produced the 252 articles. One of the most widely used method in media research – holsti formula – was employed to do

the inter-coder reliability check (Wimmer and Dominick 2006:167-169). Overall, 1512 judgments were made. Only 17 disagreements were located and resolved by double coding. The inter-coder reliability coefficient was .97 (97.37%). This result, according to Wimmer and Dominick, is believed to be more than adequate (nearly always acceptable coefficient).

### **3.7 Data Analysis Method**

After coding all articles that dealt with democratic issues by making use of the aforementioned coding categories, critical analysis was made by applying both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. A computer program called SPSS was employed to analyze the quantitative data. What is more, to examine the quantitative difference of the coverage of the referred issues between the two newspapers, a chi-square test (inferential statistics) was conducted.

To depict the coded data, descriptive statistics was used: frequency tables (measure of dispersion) and bar graphs (visual presentation).

The data which were gathered through in-depth interviews were analyzed qualitatively. Besides, narrative techniques were used to integrate the qualitative and quantitative data in the discussion part of this study (See Chapter Four).

## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

*This chapter focuses on the presentation of analyzed data and discussion of study findings. The data are presented by making use of frequency tables and bar graphs. Furthermore, study findings are discussed through narrative techniques.*

### 4.1 Presentation of Findings

#### 4.1.1 Frequency of Stories about Democratic Issues

For this study, a total of 48 newspapers (24 from Addis Neger and 24 from Addis Zemen) covering a time span from December 2007 to May 2008 were collected, carefully coded and examined.

**Table 1: Frequency of Stories about Democratic Issues**

Type of Newspaper	Number of Stories about Democratic Issues	Percentage (%)
Addis Neger	99	39.3%
Addis Zemen	153	60.7%
Total	252	100%

The number and percentage of stories that featured democratic issues (election, political parties/multi-party system, good governance and human rights) are indicated on the above table from Addis Neger and Addis Zemen newspapers. On the whole, 252 stories happen to be dealing with democratic issues from the two newspapers. When seen separately, Addis Neger's stories on democratic issues amount to 99 (39.3%) whereas Addis Zemen's total to 153 (60.7%).

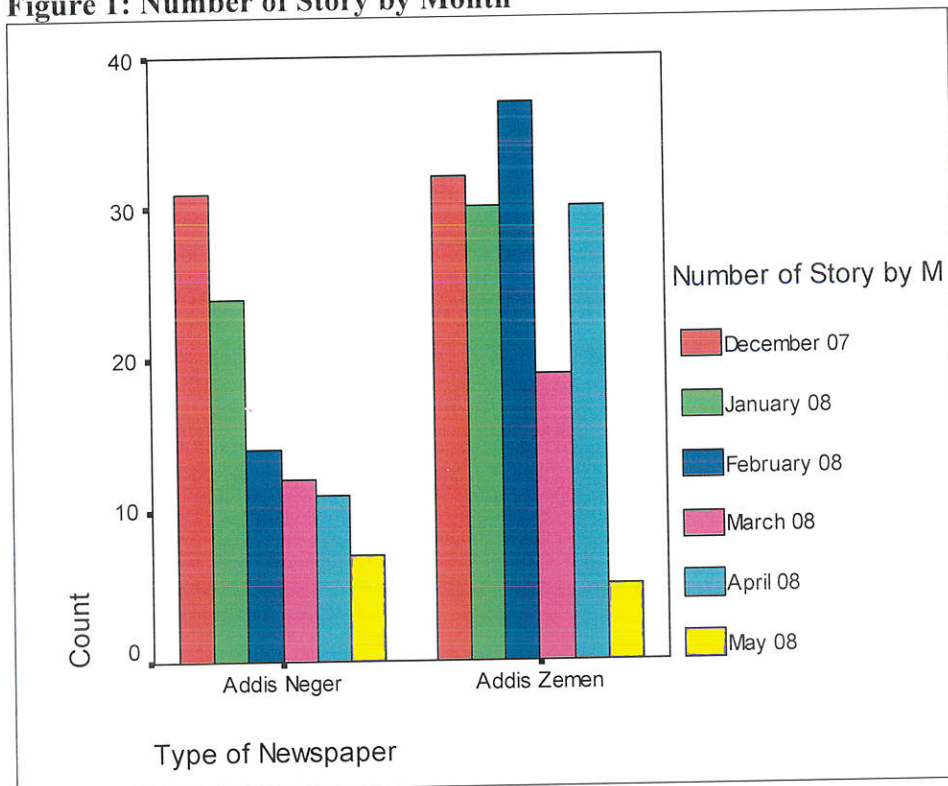
On average, Addis Neger published about 16 stories on democratic issues while Addis Zemen published about 25 stories. Within six months time, Addis Neger's coverage of

democratic issues rose in the month of December 2007 while Addis Zemen did the same in the month of February 2008 (See Appendix Eight).

The 26<sup>th</sup> April 2008 edition of Addis Neger and the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2008 edition of Addis Zemen didn't present a story about democratic issues.

#### 4.1.2 The Distribution of Stories about Democratic Issues by Month

Figure 1: Number of Story by Month



A large number of stories about democratic issues were published in the month of December 2007 by the two newspapers. A total of 63 (25%) stories were produced in this regard. On the part of Addis Neger, it published 31 (12.3%) stories that dealt with democratic issues. Addis Zemen also published stories about democratic issues amounting to 32 (12.7%).

The second large number of stories about democratic issues were produced in the month of January 2008. Overall, the stories from the two newspapers amount to 54 (21.4%).

Out of this, Addis Neger contributed a total of 24 (9.5%) stories about democratic issues in this particular month. Addis Zemen, on its part, was able to produce 30 (11.9%) stories about democratic issues in the month of January.

The month of February 2008 stands in the third position in the publication of stories about democratic issues by Addis Neger and Addis Zemen newspapers. During this month, the two newspapers were able to produce and publish 51 (20.2%) stories on democratic issues. Addis Neger published 14 (5.6%) stories. 37 (14.7%) stories on democratic issues were published by Addis Zemen.

The next large number of stories about democratic issues come from the month of April 2008 and it is in the fourth place. A total of 41 (16.3%) stories on democratic issues were published by the two newspapers. In particular, Addis Neger published 11 (4.4%) stories about democratic issues. On the part of Addis Zemen, 30 (11.9%) stories on democratic issues were published in April 2008.

In the month of March 2008 were published 31 (12.3%) stories about democratic issues by the two newspapers. Addis Neger, in particular, published 12 (4.8%) stories on democratic issues during this month. Also, Addis Zemen was able to publish 19 (7.5%) stories on democratic issues.

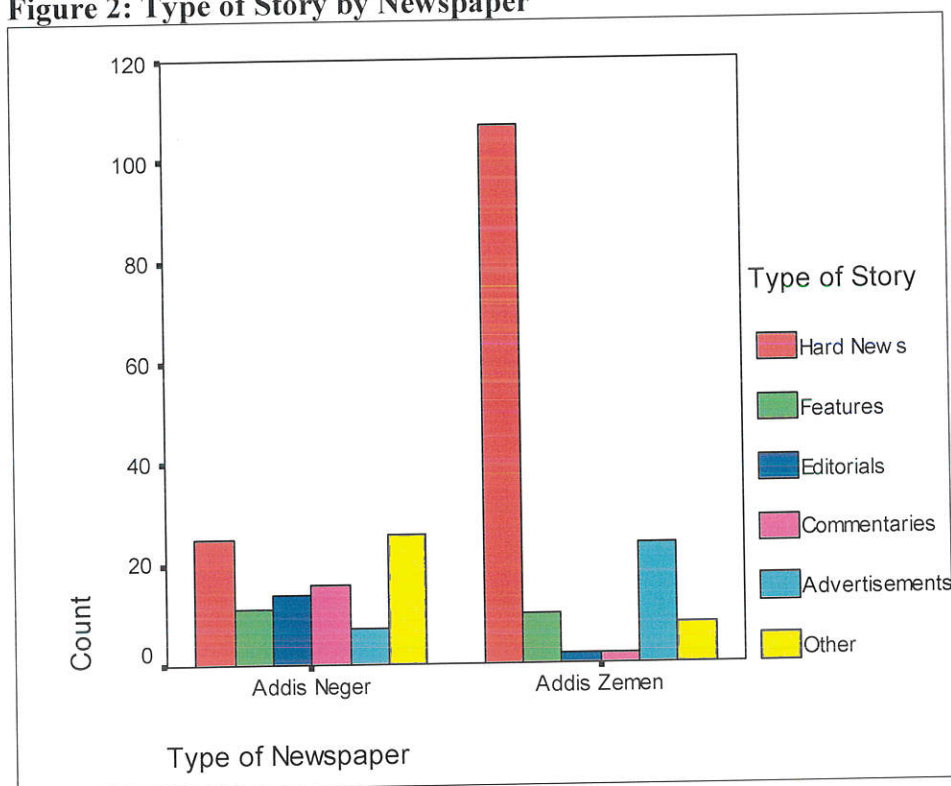
Stories about democratic issues in May 2008 from Addis Neger and Addis Zemen amounted to 12 (4.8%). Addis Neger, on its part, published 7 (2.8%) stories on democratic issues. The 5 (2%) stories about democratic issues in this particular month go to Addis Zemen.

The chi-square test result clearly shows that there is no significant difference in the quantitative distribution of number of story by month between Addis Neger and Addis Zemen (Pearson Chi-square Value=10.694, df=5,  $p > .05$ ).

*In the following section, numbers and percentages of the analyzed data are depicted with the help of bar graphs only showing the count and % within type of newspaper from the two newspapers. The percentages in the explanation (accompanying the bar graphs), however, represent the total figures [% of total] (See Cross tabulation tables).*

#### 4.1.3 Type of Story

**Figure 2: Type of Story by Newspaper**



The number one story type employed to treat democratic issues by the two newspapers is hard news. The hard news takes the lion share of 132 (52.4%). From this, hard news from Addis Neger amount to 25 (9.9%) while Addis Zemen’s is 107 (42.5%) [See Appendix Two].

The second large story type that is used to feature democratic issues by Addis Neger and Addis Zemen is entitled “other”. This story type is different from hard news, features, editorials, commentaries, letters and advertisements. It amounts to 34 (13.5%). Addis Neger’s share with this story type is 26 (10.3%) whereas Addis Zemen’s is 8 (3.2%).

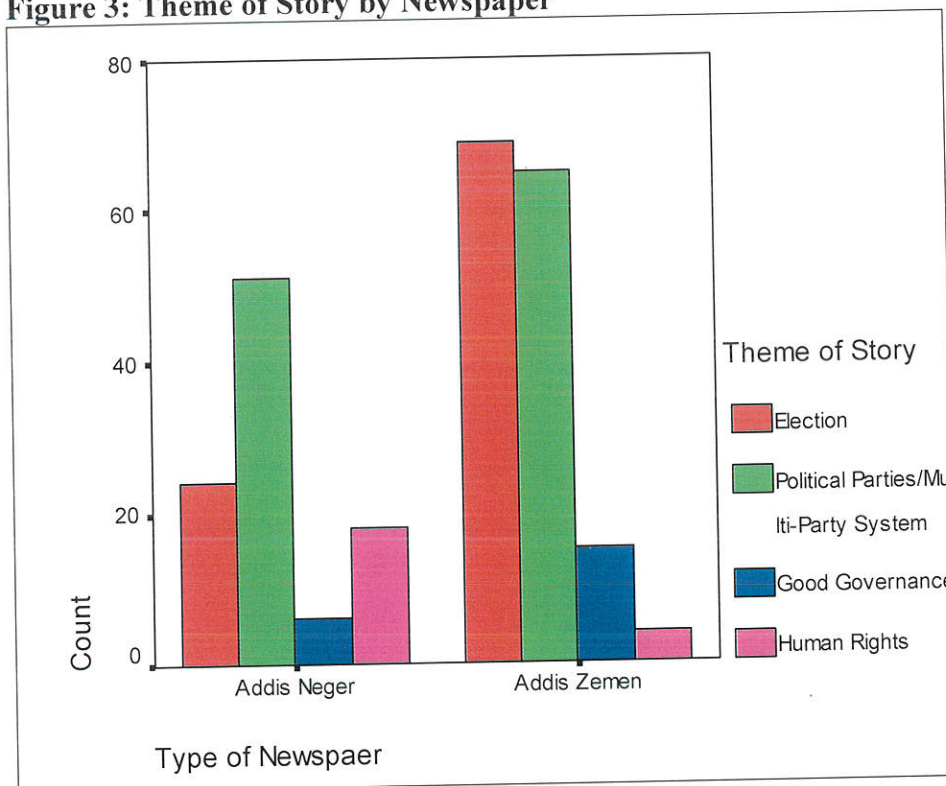
The third large story type employed to tell democratic issues by the two newspapers is advertisements. Totally, they are 31 (12.3%). Of this, Addis Neger takes the share of 7 (2.8%) while Addis Zemen's amounts to 24 (9.5%).

Story types like features, commentaries and editorials are also used to provide readers with democratic issues by Addis Neger and Addis Zemen. Separately, they amount to 21 (8.3%), 18 (7.1%) and 16 (6.3%) respectively.

The chi-square test that was analyzed to find out if there is significant difference between the two newspapers' quantitative distribution of story types shows that the difference is significant in this regard (Pearson Chi-square Value=81.918, df=5,  $p < .05$ ).

#### 4.1.4 Theme of Story

**Figure 3: Theme of Story by Newspaper**



With regard to themes of democratic issues in Addis Neger and Addis Zemen, messages about political parties/multi-party system are the dominantly entertained ones in the newspapers. The overall share is 116 (46.0%). Of these, Addis Neger's amounts to 51 (20.2%) whereas the 65 (25.8%) share goes to Addis Zemen (See Appendix Three).

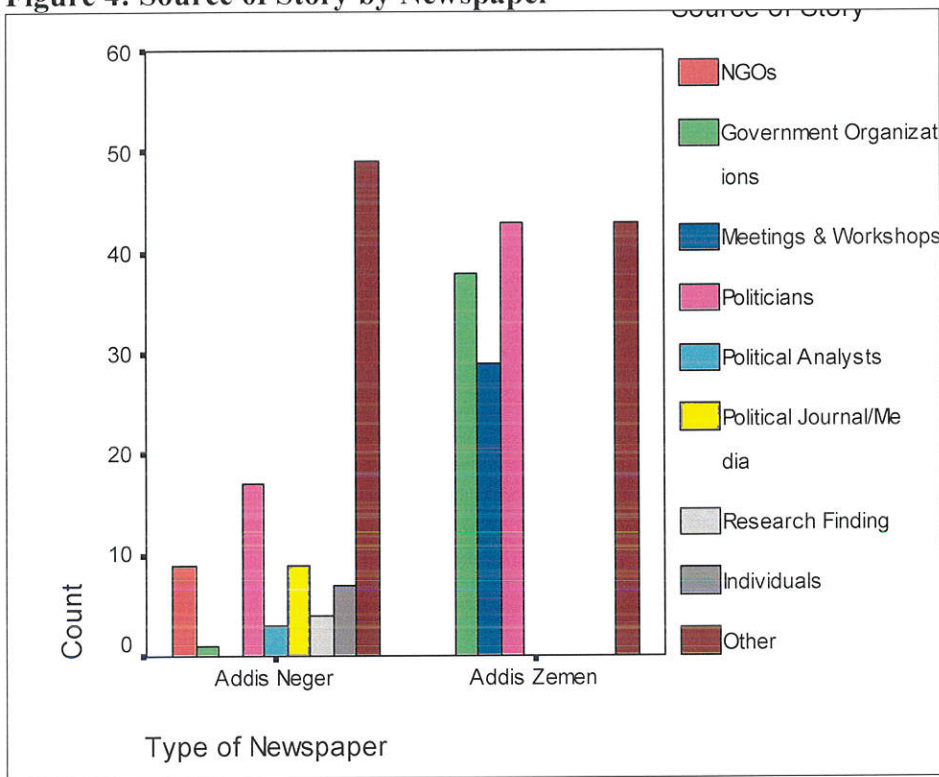
The second highly treated theme of democratic issues in the newspapers is election. In sum, 93 (36.9%) of the messages on democratic issues dealt with election. The separate election messages from Addis Neger and Addis Zemen are found to be 24 (9.5%) and 69 (27.4%) respectively.

Themes of stories on human rights (22/8.7%) and good governance (21/8.3%) take the third and fourth position respectively when the treatment of such messages is seen in light of the two newspapers. Out of these, messages on human rights and good governance from Addis Neger amount to 18 (7.1%) and 6 (2.4%) respectively. Moreover, themes on human rights from Addis Zemen amount to 4 (1.6%) while its share for good governance is 15 (6.0%).

The chi-square test indicates that there is a significant quantitative difference in the coverage of themes of stories between Addis Neger and Addis Zemen newspapers (Pearson Chi-square Value=25.845, df=3,  $p < .05$ ).

#### 4.1.5 Source of Story

**Figure 4: Source of Story by Newspaper**



A large number of stories on democratic issues were mainly accessed from a source entitled “other” (different from NGOs, governmental organizations, meetings & workshops, politicians, political analysts, political journal/media, research finding and individuals). Together, they comprise 92 (36.5%). In terms of newspapers, “other” story sources of Addis Neger consist of 49 (19.4%) while Addis Zemen’s same story sources amounted to 43 (17.1%) [See Appendix Four].

On the second level, stories on democratic issues were located from politicians. This totals 60 (23.8%). On the basis of newspapers, Addis Neger’s stories from politicians amounted to 17 (6.7%) whereas Addis Zemen’s stories from the same source consist of 43 (17.1%).

The third big source of story for democratic issues were government organizations amounting to 39 (15.5%). Out of these, 1 (.4%) was Addis Neger's while 38 (15.1%) were Addis Zemen's.

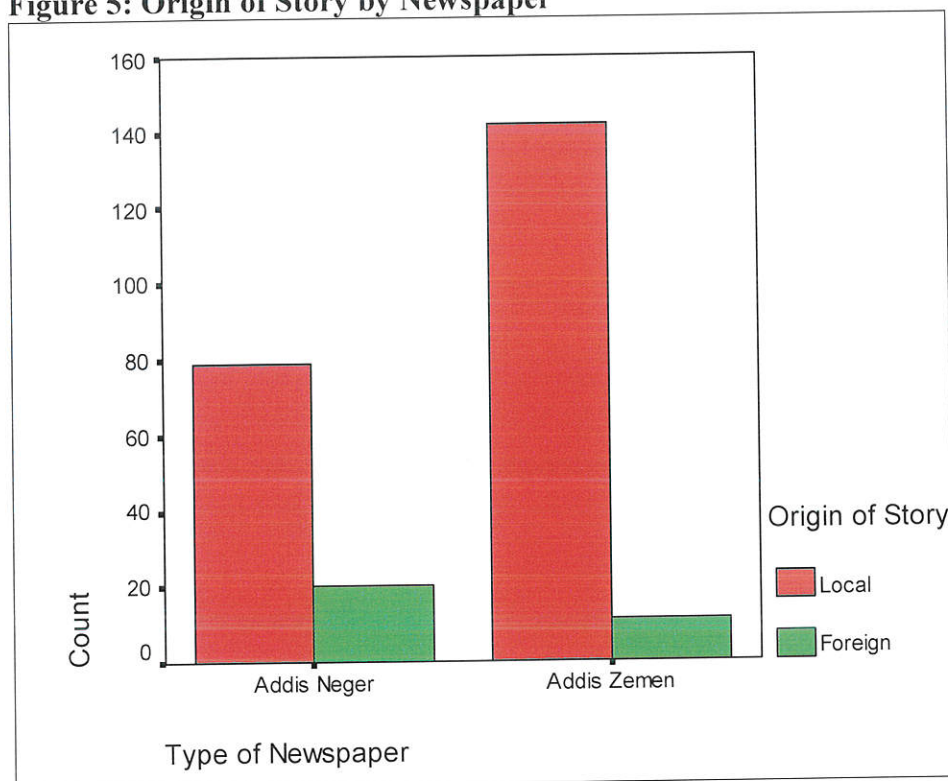
Meetings and workshops were the fourth sources of stories. Totally, they comprise 29 (11.5%). These story sources were only used by Addis Zemen.

Other sources of stories were also employed: political journal/media (9/3.6%), individuals (7/2.8%), research findings (4/1.6%) and political analysts (3/1.2%).

The chi-square test reveals that there is a significant difference in the distribution of sources of stories between Addis Neger and Addis Zemen (Pearson Chi-square Value=100.819, df=8,  $p < .05$ ).

#### 4.1.6 Origin of Story

**Figure 5: Origin of Story by Newspaper**



The origin of the majority of stories about democratic issues was local in nature. Together, they count 221 (87.7%). Separately, Addis Neger and Addis Zemen comprise 79 (31.3%) and 142 (56.3%) respectively (See Appendix Five).

There were also stories with foreign origin. Totally, they were 31 (12.3%). Of these, Addis Neger's were 20 (7.9%) and Addis Zemen's totaled to 11 (4.4%).

The chi-square test shows that there is a significant quantitative difference in the distribution of origin of story between the two newspapers (Pearson Chi-square Value=9.434, df=1, p<.05).

#### 4.1.7 Length of Story

**Table 2: Length of Story by Newspaper**

Type of Newspaper	Space in cm <sup>2</sup>	Mean
Addis Neger	80,679.75	814.95 cm <sup>2</sup>
Addis Zemen	62,933.0	411.33 cm <sup>2</sup>
Total	143,612.75	1226.28 cm <sup>2</sup>

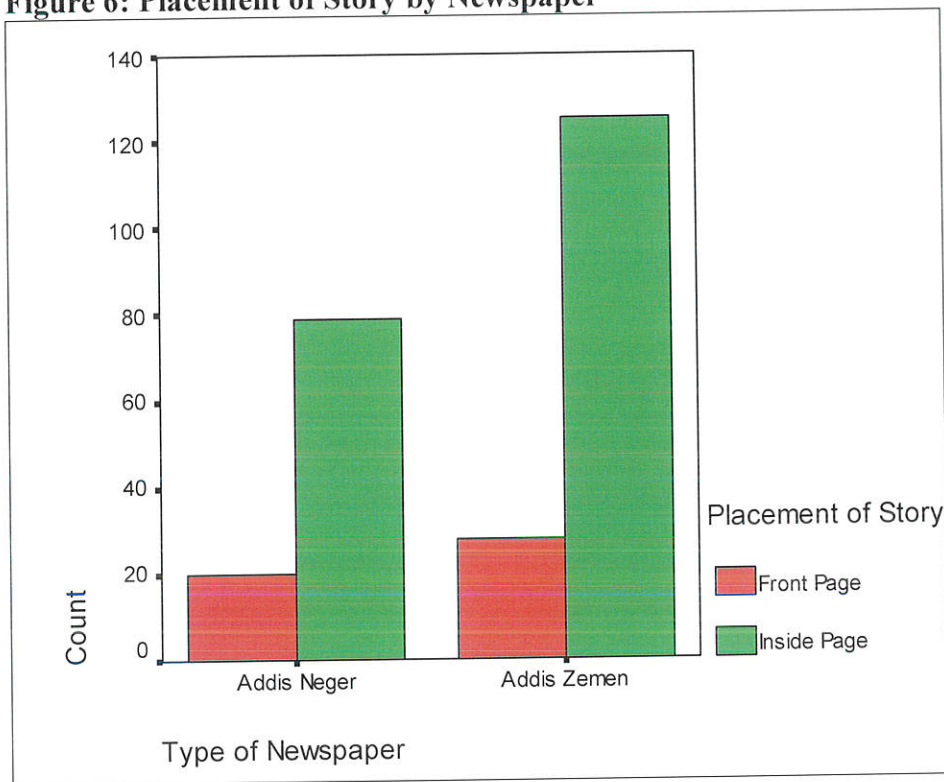
As can be seen from the above table, a total of 143,612.75 centimeter square (cm<sup>2</sup>) space was dedicated to stories on democratic issues by Addis Neger and Addis Zemen newspapers. On individual basis, Addis Neger devoted 80,679.75 centimeter square (cm<sup>2</sup>) space whereas Addis Zemen dedicated 62,933 centimeter square (cm<sup>2</sup>) space for the treatment of stories on democratic issues.

On average, Addis Neger dedicated 814.95 centimeter square (cm<sup>2</sup>) space for one story of democratic issues. Furthermore, Addis Zemen's dedication of average space for the same story is 411.33 centimeter square (cm<sup>2</sup>).

The chi-square test clearly indicates that there is a significant quantitative difference in the distribution of length of story between Addis Neger and Addis Zemen (Pearson Chi-square Value=19.794, df=6, p<.05) [See Appendix Seven].

#### 4.1.8 Placement of Story

**Figure 6: Placement of Story by Newspaper**



As can be clearly seen from the bar graph, stories on democratic issues from Addis Neger and Addis Zemen were predominantly placed in the inside pages of the newspapers. In terms of quantity, this is 204 (81.0%). Out of this, 79 (31.3%) stories on democratic issues from Addis Neger were placed in the inside pages. Moreover, 125 (49.6%) stories of the same genre from Addis Zemen were placed in a similar way (See Appendix Six).

In sum, front page story placement amounts to 48 (19.0%). Of this, 20 (7.9%) Addis Neger stories were placed on the front page. In the same fashion, Addis Zemen positioned stories amounting to 28 (11.1%) on the front page.

However, the chi-square test indicates that there is no significant quantitative difference in the distribution of placement of story between the two newspapers (Pearson Chi-square Value=.141, df=1,  $p>.05$ ).

## 4.2 Discussion of Findings

*In what follows, the research presents and briefly discusses the study findings that were obtained from the quantitative (content analysis) and qualitative (in-depth interviews) data. The findings are discussed by integrating the two data types. Discussion is made based on the categories length, type, theme, source, origin and placement of story.*

### 4.2.1 The Space Provided for the Coverage of Democratic Issues and Its Extent

The 99 stories of Addis Neger about democratic issues were treated on a total space of 80,679.75 cm<sup>2</sup> while Addis Zemen's 153 stories on the same issue were provided a space of 62,933 cm<sup>2</sup> on the whole. The quantitative data vividly shows that Addis Neger newspaper covered less stories with more space (when compared with Addis Zemen). Addis Zemen newspaper, however, had more stories with less space.

On top of this, the length of most of the stories from the two newspapers is found between 1 and 1000 cm<sup>2</sup>. Stories with the referred length are 228 (90.5%). From this, 87 (34.5%) stories of Addis Neger are found in the aforementioned length category whereas 141 (56%) stories of Addis Zemen are found in the same category (See Appendix Seven).

The story length of democratic issues on Addis Zemen newspaper has never gone beyond 3000 cm<sup>2</sup>. On the contrary, story length of same stories on Addis Neger newspaper has gone as far as 6000 cm<sup>2</sup> and beyond. Exceptionally, one story from Addis Neger is found to be in the length category between 9001 and 10,000 cm<sup>2</sup>.

In light of the coverage of democratic issues in Addis Neger, the newspaper did commit much of the available space to feature stories and commentaries. On the part of Addis Zemen, much of its newspaper space for the coverage of stories about democratic issues was taken by hard news and feature stories.

On average, the two newspapers devoted a 1226 cm<sup>2</sup> space for a single story about democratic issues. In comparison, Addis Neger's (814.95 cm<sup>2</sup>) average space devotion for stories of democratic issues is far better than Addis Zemen's (411.33 cm<sup>2</sup>).

As far as the distribution of stories about democratic issues is concerned, the way Addis Neger and Addis Zemen covered stories shows there is difference (when seen from the perspective of each month) across the six months (December 2007 to May 2008). Addis Neger's coverage of the stories was high in December (2007) and January (2008). After these first two months, its coverage of stories about democratic issues was decreasing. However, Addis Zemen's coverage of stories was high during four months time (December 2007, January 2008, February 2008, and April 2008). Specially, Addis Zemen did cover more stories about democratic issues in the month of February 2008.

The coverage of stories about democratic issues by the two newspapers, however, was done irregularly. In other words, the two newspapers' treatment of articles/stories about democratic issues (election, political parties/multi-party system, good governance and human rights) was uneven and unpredictable (See Appendix Eight).

Similar to this study's finding is a research from Zambia. According to Phiri (1999:60), Zambian independent newspapers, namely *The Post*, have covered issues of democracy in an uneven manner.

Hyden *et al.* (2002:48) also argue that *Haske* – the first independent newspaper in Niger – has played a pro-active role in the democratization of that country and literally brought about and helped guide the national constitutional conference in Niger in 1991. This is how political leaders of different persuasion were dependent on its reporting and staying on terms with the editors in ways that gave the newspaper a pivotal role.

Furthermore, as Hyden *et al.* claim, the *Bulawayo Chronicle* in Zimbabwe, the *Post* in Zambia, and the *Guardian* in Nigeria are some of the media that have contributed to

democratization by being outspoken and valiant and thus drawing public attention to what the new political dispensation should be all about in the early 1990's (Hyden *et al.* 2002:48).

Regarding the extent of coverage of democratic issues by the two newspapers, in-depth interview outcomes indicate there is difference between Addis Neger and Addis Zemen. The editor and reporter from Addis Neger newspaper claimed that they have given enough space and attention for stories of democratic issues. They, however, never understated the significance of providing more concern in the future and deal with the coverage of democratic issues on Addis Neger in an organized fashion.

On the contrary, the editor and reporter of Addis Zemen newspaper admitted that they have not given the necessary focus to the coverage of democratic issues because of lack of trained staff and limited finance (budget) on the part of the newspaper.

#### **4.2.2 Type of Story**

With regard to the type of stories employed to communicate democratic issues, the finding of this study clearly indicate that hard news stories were dominantly used by Addis Neger and Addis Zemen. In particular, however, Addis Zemen employed more hard news stories than Addis Neger.

In line with the finding of this study, Anteneh (2006:27) underscores that news types are one of the factors that are important to put media agenda issues onto the public agenda. This is to say that the media agenda of democratic issues were set to the public by hard news stories in Addis Neger and Addis Zemen.

In a similar fashion, editors of the two newspapers stated that they have a hard news story focus when they treat democratic issues on their respective newspapers. Furthermore, the reporter from Addis Zemen newspaper said that there is a tradition of focusing on hard

news stories to impart information about democratic issues. 132 (52.4%) stories from a total of 252 are written in hard news story format and are evidences in this regard.

The category “other” (messages were coded under this category when their story format was different from hard news, features, letters, editorials, commentaries and advertisements) is the second large story type that was employed to communicate information about democratic issues by both newspapers. In this way were coded 34 (13.5%) stories from a total of 252. Addis Neger newspaper stands first in its usage of “other”.

In the third place, Addis Neger and Addis Zemen used advertisements to inform democratic issues to their respective readers. A total of 31 (12.3%) advertisements were employed to treat democratic issues. In this regard, Addis Zemen takes the lead. It used advertisements for four consecutive months: January, February, March and April (of 2008). In contrast, Addis Neger used advertisements for three successive months: February, March and April (of 2008).

The focus of advertisements from Addis Zemen was in promoting voter registration and announcing messages of local political parties. On the contrary, Addis Neger’s advertisements were concerned with the promotion of democratic election and good governance and thereby raise the awareness of the public (especially readers) on the issues. The advertisements were produced by local NGOs that work on democracy advocacy and published by the newspaper.

According to the editor of Addis Zemen, advertisements were used as the local and by-elections were celebrated, voters were needed to be communicated about it and political parties demanded to promote their cause. Addis Neger’s editor also said: “Local NGOs that work on democracy advocacy were buying advertising spaces on the newspaper and promoting issues of democratic election and good governance.”

Next to advertisements, the two newspapers employed feature stories for the communication of democratic issues. From 252 stories about democratic issues, 21 (8.3%) of them were written in feature story style. Editorials and commentaries were also used to address the same issues by the newspapers. Addis Neger takes the lead in treating democratic issues through editorials and commentaries (See Appendix Two).

No single democratic issue was communicated via letters on Addis Neger and Addis Zemen. Editors of the two newspapers argue that no reader has sent them letters that address democratic issues.

#### **4.2.3 Theme of Story**

The leading theme of story that was featured by Addis Neger and Addis Zemen newspapers was political parties/multi-party system. Stories with such theme count 116 (46%) from a total of 252 stories. Addis Zemen is slightly better in covering such themes of democratic issues than Addis Neger.

The finding of this study is directly related to McNair's (2003:3) argument: as one element of political communication, political parties, undoubtedly, get the attention of the mass media when they attempt to convince a population as a whole of their correctness and while they put their policies to the test of periodic elections. What is more, the smooth functioning of the political process, for political parties, is dependent primarily on their ability to communicate with those who will vote for and legitimize them. The mass electorate and constituencies can be reached by using various forms of interpersonal communication (public meetings and rallies, aided by newspaper coverage) and mass media (McNair 2003:4).

In a similar fashion, Street (2001:47-48) argues that the mass media play a key role in the communication of messages pertaining to the electoral struggles among political parties. He further states:

Commentary on them (electoral struggles) is driven by poll data and by other estimates of the parties' chance of success; each day's campaigning is seen as an

opportunity to comment upon the relative performances of the parties: who is a head, who has just fallen, and so on.

Most of the stories from Addis Zemen were dealing with local political parties with the exception of few on foreign ones. They were presented mostly in hard news format/style.

A closely following story theme but second in status is election with 93 (36.9%) stories. Here also Addis Zemen is far better in entertaining and covering election information than Addis Neger. In here, Addis Zemen was giving due concern for local election issues with little attention to foreign election matters.

Similar with the finding of this study is Anteneh's argument in a study during 2006. Anteneh (2006:27) argued that media (newspapers) steer readers in this regard and give prominence of the report by consistently reporting the issue (agenda setting). As a result, the two newspapers were able to set agendas about political parties/multi-party system and election.

In this regard, Street (2001:47) explains: "Elections are typically represented as the culmination of titanic struggles in which leaders battle for supremacy".

Furthermore, Wondwosen (2009:94) underlined the fact that issues of political parties and the election process were highly covered by independent and state media that the May 2005 multi-party/parliamentary election in Ethiopia ended being the most contested in the history of the nation.

Editors and reporters from Addis Neger and Addis Zemen also said that during election period they give due consideration and thereby due coverage particularly to issues of political parties and election. This directly relates to and reinforces what the gate-keeping theory states: in most cases, journalists' decisions on which stories to run were "highly subjective" and based on their "own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations" of what is news (Anteneh 2006:30).

The third theme of story that was entertained by Addis Neger and Addis Zemen was human rights. It consists of 22 (8.7%) stories. In this regard, Addis Neger's coverage is far better than Addis Zemen's. Linked with this is International Federation of Journalists' (IFJ) (1999:2) study that underscores:

African media are important for people to know their rights: A recent study on the impact of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Ghana showed that the largest source of information for the public on the Convention and what it means for them is the media.

Most stories on human rights from Addis Neger were treating local human rights issues with little attention to the issue from abroad. It mostly used hard news stories and editorials to present issues of human rights.

The last but not the least theme of story featured by the two newspapers is good governance with 21 (8.3%) stories. In here, Addis Zemen is on the frontline. Most of the stories on good governance in Addis Zemen were local in origin and sourced mainly from customary/traditional information sources - meetings and workshops and politicians.

#### **4.2.4 Source of Story**

The source of a large number of stories on democratic issues was "other". This is different from other types of source categories: NGOs, government organizations, meetings and workshops, politicians, political analysts, political journal/media, research finding and individuals. Out of the 252 stories on democratic issues from the two newspapers, the "other" type of source category comprises 92 (36.5%) stories. In this regard, Addis Neger is slightly better in its usage of the referred story source than Addis Zemen.

The second source of story employed by the two newspapers was politicians. This totally counts 60 (23.8%). Addis Zemen's dependence on politicians to locate information about

democratic issues is far more than that of Addis Neger. Addis Zemen's stories sourced from politicians amount to 43 (17.1%).

In line with this, Street (2001:47) argues that politicians have political motives when they use the mass media. He explains: "The political motives of all politicians are understood in terms of their desire to win elections, and their actions are interpreted in relation to this dominant concern".

Government organizations were the third source of stories about democratic issues for Addis Neger and Addis Zemen. They consist of 39 (15.5%) stories. In here, Addis Zemen dominantly employed government organizations to access information for stories about democratic issues. In this regard, 38 (15.1%) stories of Addis Zemen were sourced from government organizations. The finding of this study is more or less similar with a study by Anteneh. Anteneh (2006:56) found out that newspapers mainly use official and prominent (customary) information sources when they generally report about stories of high significance.

As sources of stories on democratic issues, meetings and workshops stand in the fourth place. The finding clearly indicates that 29 (11.5%) stories were sourced from meetings and workshops. In this regard, Addis Zemen is the leading newspaper because all of its 29 stories were obtained from meetings and workshops. In the case of Addis Neger, no story was sourced from the referred story source.

The editor and reporter of Addis Zemen said that most of the stories we write about democratic issues were accessed from politicians, government organizations and speeches delivered on meetings and workshops. In other words, the editor and reporter were playing their gate-keeping roles and determined which stories to write and from where to source them.

The finding of this study is similar with what the gate-keeping theory states: "The gate-keeping role of editors and reporters is an essential part of the news gathering and

dissemination process, because every potential news item can not be gathered, and from among those items gathered, they all can not be disseminated” (Anteneh 2006:29).

Stories about democratic issues were also obtained from local NGOs that work on democracy advocacy and political journals/media to a lesser degree. Regarding this, 9 stories from each story source category were registered. In the same vein, stories were also accessed from individuals (7), research findings (4) and political analysts (3).

Addis Neger exploited NGOs, political journals/media, individuals, research findings and political analysts to secure information for stories of democratic issues. In this regard, research findings and NGOs were used as sources for stories on human rights, good governance and election. Moreover, political journals/media were employed as information sources for stories on political parties, human rights and election. Ordinary citizens were also used as sources for stories on political parties and human rights. Also, stories on political parties were accessed from political analysts.

Regarding this, the editor and reporter of Addis Neger said: “A dominant number of our stories about democratic issues almost always come from sources like NGOs, political journals/media, individuals, research findings and political analysts.”

However, no single story on democratic issues was sourced from NGOs, political analysts, political journals/media, research findings and ordinary citizens (individuals) in Addis Zemen. Concerning this, the editor and reporter of Addis Zemen said: “These information sources were not used as our journalists were accustomed to using traditional/customary sources to treat democratic issues on the newspaper.”

#### **4.2.5 Origin of Story**

The findings of this study show that the origin of a large number of stories about democratic issues from the two newspapers is local in nature. From a total of 252 stories, 221 (87.7%) stories have local origin. In this regard, Addis Zemen produced more stories

(142/56.3%) locally than Addis Neger. In contrast to this, Addis Zemen was able to publish a limited number of stories with foreign origin on political parties, human rights and election. No story on good governance was found having a foreign origin.

According to the editor of Addis Zemen, “The stories we produced and published were usually local in origin because the newspaper is largely believed to circulate among the local public.”

Stories with foreign origin were 31 (12.3%) from the two newspapers. In particular, Addis Neger produced more stories with foreign origin amounting to 20 (7.9%). Although they were small in quantity, Addis Neger was able to publish stories from abroad (foreign origin) in all the genres of democratic issues (election, political parties/multi-party system, good governance and human rights).

Regarding this, the editor of Addis Neger said: “We produced stories of local and foreign origin in an organized manner to ensure their balanced distribution throughout the newspaper.”

#### **4.2.6 Placement of Story**

With regard to the placement of stories about democratic issues, this study has found that the majority of stories from Addis Neger and Addis Zemen were placed in the inside pages. Stories that were placed in the inside pages comprise 204 (81%). In comparison, Addis Zemen has placed more stories about democratic issues (125/49.6%) in its inside pages than Addis Neger.

In line with this, editors of Addis Neger and Addis Zemen underlined the fact that stories were most of the time placed in the inside pages unless they were prominent and very significant ones due to the limited space on the first page.

The front pages of the two newspapers were devoted only to 48 (19%) stories. More stories about democratic issues were located on the front pages of Addis Zemen (28/11.1%) than on Addis Neger's.

Addis Zemen placed stories that dealt with good governance, political parties and election on its front page in a limited quantity. It did not place a single story that carried the message of human rights on this particular page. Addis Neger, however, was able to entertain stories about political parties, election, human rights and good governance (democratic values/issues) on its front page though in small numbers.

What editors of Addis Neger and Addis Zemen did was in accordance with principles of the agenda setting and gate-keeping theories. In connection with placement of stories, the agenda setting theory of the press vividly explains that the location of articles/stories in the newspaper is one of the factors that shows the prominence of certain issues that are on the public agenda (Anteneh 2006:60). To put this in simple language, articles displayed on the front page of a newspaper tend to have more prominence and suggest urgency than articles displayed on the inside pages.

Anteneh further states that gate-keepers (editors, reporters, etc.) determine which stories to emphasize more in a newspaper as follows: "Established media routines force gate-keepers determine which stories will pass through the gates and which elements of the story will be emphasized."

Addis Neger placed stories about democratic issues on its front page by making use of hard news and feature stories. In its inside pages, however, it used all type of stories except letters.

On the contrary, Addis Zemen located stories about democratic issues on its front page through hard news stories and advertisements. The inside pages of Addis Zemen, however, employed all story types to communicate stories about democratic issues with the exception of letters.

At last, it can be said that the general picture of the study findings explicitly indicate there was limited effort to cover or report democratic values/issues from many angles by the two newspapers. Concerning this, editors of Addis Neger and Addis Zemen attributed the cause of the problem to lack of short term and refresher trainings on the reporting of politics in general and democratic values/issues in particular to journalists. Moreover, according to the two editors, journalists were not constantly updated about how to produce quality and interesting articles/stories on democratic issues through trainings and workshops.

The editor of Addis Neger states that the newspaper has assigned reporters that have the skill and knowledge for reporting politics and/or democratic issues. Furthermore, Addis Zemen's editor claimed that qualified journalists have been given the responsibility of covering democratic values/issues.

In spite of the claims by the two editors, the stories/articles that dealt with democratic values/issues (election, political parties/multi-party system, good governance and human rights) during the six months time explicitly indicated that they lacked the necessary reporting quality and as a result, were not comprehensive enough to give readers with meaningful and versatile information on democratic values/issues that would help to bring about civic consciousness among the general public. The majority of stories on democratic values/issues were fundamentally hard news and were accessed mainly from single information sources.

Similar to the findings of this study, Street (2001:48) has firmly argued that the media mainly focus on the bureaucracy in their coverage of politics in general and democracy in particular. He further argued that

The media favor an explanation of political action that follows the formal contours of the bureaucratic hierarchy. There is a reluctance to attribute behavior to spontaneity or to social forces or processes.... Also ordinary people are essentially passive followers (either portrayed positively as 'supporters' or negatively as 'sheep' or 'dupes').

The editors of Addis Neger and Addis Zemen, however, underscore that lack of time and resources, manpower shortage, management's reluctance to pronounce the coverage of democratic values/issues, absence of standard editorial policy, unwillingness of different human sources, lack of up-to-date and accurate information and unreliable internet access are among the obstacles that highly hinder effective reporting and coverage of democratic values/issues in the two newspapers.

Regarding the absence of a standard editorial policy (one factor that highly influences the coverage of democratic values/issues) with the two newspapers, editors of Addis Neger and Addis Zemen voiced a relatively similar viewpoint. They said that they have a general editorial policy that has been serving as a guiding principle while reporting democratic values/issues and others.

In contrast to this assertion, the study has found out that editorial policies of the two newspapers make general statements about the roles and responsibilities they share in the reporting and coverage of democracy and democratic values/issues in this nation of emerging democracy. In particular, Addis Neger's editorial policy does not deal with how the coverage of democracy and democratic values/issues is carried out, by which types of reporters and how often in detail. The same is true with Addis Zemen. The lack of standard editorial policies with clearly defined guiding principles, unquestionably, hampered the reporting of well-written stories/articles about democratic values/issues by the two newspapers.

In addition, journalists of the two newspapers admitted that certain newsroom traditions affected their way of reporting democratic values/issues. Addis Neger's reporter, in particular, said that editorials and commentaries have mainly been used (at least at newspaper level) in order to produce stories about democratic values/issues. Addis Zemen's reporter also said that a hard news focus has usually been followed when reporting was done on democratic values/issues. This study explicitly reveals that the decisions of Addis Neger and Addis Zemen's journalists have been influenced by unwritten policies in their respective newsrooms.

Concerning the relationship they had with organizations, the editor and reporter of Addis Neger said: “We used to work in collaboration with two local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that advocate democracy namely – Vision Ethiopian Congress for Democracy and the African Test for the International Democratic Order. These local NGOs were buying newspaper space to run advertisements about democratic election and good governance. The two NGOs were in no way influencing the content of the newspaper.” In contrast, Addis Zemen’s editor and reporter confirmed that they had no such experiences as far as the reporting of democratic values/issues was concerned.

In sum, the two newspapers show significant differences in their frequency of coverage of democratic values/issues. Addis Zemen is found to be taking the lion share in terms of frequency of coverage of stories about democratic values/issues. In terms of large space allocation, Addis Neger is found to be the leading in this regard. With regard to the quality of stories, it is difficult to state that significant difference was observed between the two newspapers. Although the general picture of the coverage of democratic values/issues shows that neither of the newspapers were able to give in-depth and comprehensive coverage for democratic values/issues, instances of some stories/articles in each of the newspapers were found to be giving insights and valuable information about democratic values/issues.

## CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

In order to promote and nurture democracy and democratic values/issues in a country, citizens need to be informed about the importance and value of democracy. In Ethiopia, where citizens do not have much access to a wide range of information about democracy, newspapers can play a pivotal role by disseminating useful and practical information on how to cultivate democracy. However, as far as the researcher's reading is concerned, whether Ethiopian newspapers have been playing a vital role in promoting democratic values was not assessed and evaluated. Moreover, studying the role of the mass media was not the scope of this study. With this in mind, this study sought to examine the magnitude and nature of the coverage of democratic values/issues in two Amharic language Ethiopian newspapers: Addis Neger, a private newspaper and Addis Zemen, a state newspaper.

The fact that democracy is the talk of the day in urban areas of the country might lead one to believe that the issue has been frequently well-covered in Ethiopian newspapers. Nevertheless, this study has found out that the two newspapers under investigation gave uneven attention to the coverage of democratic values/issues (election, political parties/multi-party system, good governance and human rights) over the course of six months time.

In fact, the overall study shows that the two newspapers did make an effort to provide insights about democracy and democratic values to readers. Though they were few in number and irregularly appearing, some of the articles were comprehensive enough to help readers raise their awareness about democracy and democratic values. It must also be understood that the newspapers did not, as far as this study could discern, cover distorted and sensationalized information in relation to the progress of democracy in this nation.

Despite these efforts, the newspapers' potential to advance the promotion of democratic values/issues (election, political parties/multi-party system, good governance and human

rights) has not been utilized well. In light of the growing demand for democracy from within and the urge to democratize from outside, the study revealed that the extent of the two newspapers' coverage of democratic values/issues was limited. The space allocated for such issues was also insufficient. The failure of Addis Neger and Addis Zemen to give consistent coverage and adequate space for the issues also means that readers were not sufficiently and regularly reminded about democratic values/issues.

Furthermore, many of the stories in relation to democratic values/issues (election, political parties/multi-party system, good governance and human rights) were not in-depth enough to help readers get significant information that could help them advance their civic consciousness. Also, for the most part, the stories in relation to democratic values/issues were not reported from broader perspectives. For example, many of the crucial issues that the public demands like rule of law, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly and the like were not covered well.

The newspapers also failed to publish critical stories about public officials and different governmental and non-governmental organizations working on democracy advocacy. They also failed to cast significant light on policy makers to promote decisive actions in relation to nurturing democracy. This suggests that the two newspapers did little to play an advocacy role in the promotion of democratic values/issues (election, political parties/multi-party system, good governance and human rights).

The two newspapers also failed to give prominence for the coverage of democratic values/issues on their pages. Although the editors of Addis Neger and Addis Zemen said that readers didn't send them any letters pertaining to democratic values/issues, the finding (from in-depth interviews) reveals that the newspapers don't have a clear-cut mechanism for entertaining readers' letters, which often is referred to as a forum for versatile opinions. Moreover, though Addis Zemen was better in placing hard news on its front pages, the overall picture from the two newspapers shows that many of the stories about democratic values/issues were relegated to the inside pages. This minimizes,

without any doubt, the readability of the stories. One can, therefore, conclude that the newspapers did little to utilize their agenda setting role in this regard.

The study also reveals that both newspapers gave priority for local stories in spite of the fact that they failed to draw the attention of alternative information sources. Many of the stories were sourced from politicians, government organizations and sources termed as “other”. This clearly shows that journalists in both newspapers did little to produce well-researched and balanced stories from different angles.

All of these inadequacies are attributable to, as reporters and editors of Addis Neger and Addis Zemen pointed out, time, financial and manpower constraints, little access to research findings, unwillingness of different sources, routines and some unwritten traditions in the newsroom contributed to the inefficient reporting on democratic values/issues (election, political parties/multi-party system, good governance and human rights).

In general, this study employed a content analysis research method which allowed a comprehensive look at how the two Ethiopian newspapers cover democratic values/issues (election, political parties/multi-party system, good governance and human rights). In-depth interviews were also conducted to see why the coverage of democratic values/issues was limited and why the newspapers were unable to provide comprehensive and high quality reporting. But the effectiveness of information about democratic values/issues that was published on the two newspapers has not been studied, as its needs an independent study with a focus on readers. Thus, further research can be conducted on this genre to find out how the coverage of democratic values/issues influences readers' perception.

Furthermore, the presentation of democratic values/issues in the broadcast media and a comparative study of the coverage of democratic values/issues between print and electronic media are also potential research topics.

## References

- Abrahamsen, Rita (2000). *Disciplining Democracy: Discourse and Good Governance in Africa*. United Kingdom: Zed Books.
- Anteneh Mekuria (2006). *Analysis of the Nature and Magnitude of HIV/AIDS Coverage in Ethiopian Newspapers: The Case of Addis Admas and Addis Zemen*. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University.
- Dennis, Everette E. and Snyder, Robert W. (eds.) (1998). *Media and Democracy*. USA: Transaction Publishers.
- Elections in Ethiopia*. Retrieved on 24-March-2009, from <http://africanelections.tripod.com/et.html>.
- Ethiopian Embassy in Britain (2005). *Facts about the 2005 Parliamentary Elections*. Retrieved on 27-March-2009, from <http://www.ethioembassy.org.uk/news/press%20releases/Facts%20about%20the%20Recent%20Ethiopian%20Parliamentary%20Elections.htm>.
- Federal Negarit Gazeta (1995). *The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Birhanina Selam Printing Press.
- Gebrezghi, Solomon GG (2000). *Dysfunctional Politics, Mediated Information Systems and Modernization in Africa*. United Kingdom: Liverpool University.
- Grugel, Jean (2002). *Democratization: A Critical Introduction*. China: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hyden, Goran, Leslie, Michael, and Ogundimu, Folu F. (eds.) (2002). *Media and Democracy in Africa*. USA: Transaction Publishers.
- Ibrahimi, Muhamet (2007). *The Watchdog Role of the Media*. Retrieved on 19-February-2009, from <http://rrezja.blogspot.com/2007/01/watchdog-role-of-media.html>.

- International Federation of Journalists (1999). *The Role of Media in Promotion of Human Rights and Democratic Development in Africa*. Retrieved on 13-May-2009, from <http://africa.ifj.org/assets/docs/106/024/74d866a-e7eb518.pdf>.
- Kaya, Hassan O. and Wyk, David van (?). *Multiparty Democracy and the Political Party System in Africa: Cases from East and Southern Africa*. Retrieved on 15-January-2009, from [dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/fichero\\_articulo?codigo=2329355&orden=85771](http://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/fichero_articulo?codigo=2329355&orden=85771).
- Lange, Bernd-Peter and Ward, David (eds.) (2004). *The Media and Elections: A Handbook and Comparative Study*. USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Lenart, Silvo (1994). *Shaping Political Attitudes: The Impact of Interpersonal Communication and Mass Media*. United States of America: SAGE Publications.
- Mahmoud, Mahgoub El-Tigani (2005). *Human Rights in Africa*. USA: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- McNair, Brian (2003). *An Introduction to Political Communication*. London: Routledge.
- McQuail, Dennis (2003). *Mass Communication Theory*. London: Sage.
- Ministry of Information (2008). *Monthly Statistical Report on Press Products*. Addis Ababa: MoI.
- Mohamed Salih, M.A. (2001). *African Democracies and African Politics*. England: Pluto Press.
- Oxhorn, Philip, Tulchin, Joseph S. and Selee, Andrew D. (eds.) (2004). *Decentralization, Democratic Governance, and Civil Society in Comparative Perspective: Africa, Asia, and Latin America*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press.
- Phiri, Isaac (1999). *Media in "Democratic" Zambia: Problems and Prospects*. Retrieved on 15-January-2009, from [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/africa\\_today/v046/46.2phiri.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/africa_today/v046/46.2phiri.html).

Rama, Kubashini (2004). *Promotion of Pluralism and Good Governance through Media Development – Thematic Debates*. Retrieved on 11-May-2009, from [http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=14898&URL\\_DO=DO\\_PRINTPAGE&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=14898&URL_DO=DO_PRINTPAGE&URL_SECTION=201.html).

Street, John (2001). *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*. Great Britain: Palgrave Macmillan.

Williams, Kevin (2003). *Understanding Media Theory*. Great Britain: Arnold.

Wimmer, Roger D. and Dominick, Joseph R. (2006). *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*. USA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Wondwosen Teshome (2009). *Media and Multi-party Elections in Africa: The Case of Ethiopia*. Retrieved on 14-May-2009, from <http://www.insanbilimlari.com/ojs/index.php/uib/article/viewFile/591/336>.

Zaffiro, James J. (2000). *Broadcasting Reform and Democratization in Botswana*. Retrieved on 16-January-2009, from [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/africa\\_today/v047/47.1zaffiro.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/africa_today/v047/47.1zaffiro.html).

## Appendices

### Appendix One: Coding Sheet and Variables to be coded

A coding sheet for the study entitled “Coverage of Democratic Issues in Addis Neger and Addis Zemen

Type of Newspaper: .....

Coder: .....

Date of Publication	Type of Story	Theme of Story	Length of Story	Source of Story	Origin of Story	Placement of Story

Main Categories	Sub-categories to be coded
Type of Story	Hard news, features, letters, editorials, advertisements, commentaries and others
Theme of Story	Election, political parties/multi-party system, good governance and human rights
Source of Story	NGOs, government organizations, meetings and workshops, politicians, political analysts, political journal/media, research findings, individuals and others
Length of Story	Measured by centimeter square (cm <sup>2</sup> )
Origin of Story	Local and foreign
Placement of Story	Front page and inside page

**Appendix Two: Type of Story Cross tabulation**

Type of Newspaper	Type of Story								
		Hard News	Features	Editorials	Commentaries	Advertisements	Other	Total	
Type of Newspaper	Addis Neger	Count	25	11	14	16	7	26	99
		% within type of newspaper	25.3%	11.1%	14.1%	16.2%	7.1%	26.3%	100.0%
		% within type of story	18.9%	52.4%	87.5%	88.9%	22.6%	76.5%	39.3%
		% of Total	9.9%	4.4%	5.6%	6.3%	2.8%	10.3%	39.3%
	Addis Zemen	Count	107	10	2	2	24	8	153
		% within type of newspaper	69.9%	6.5%	1.3%	1.3%	15.7%	5.2%	100.0%
		% within type of story	81.1%	47.6%	12.5%	11.1%	77.4%	23.5%	60.7%
		% of Total	42.5%	4.0%	.8%	.8%	9.5%	3.2%	60.7%
	Total	Count	132	21	16	18	31	34	252
		% within type of newspaper	52.4%	8.3%	6.3%	7.1%	12.3%	13.5%	100.0%
		% within type of story	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	52.4%	8.3%	6.3%	7.1%	12.3%	13.5%	100.0%

**Chi-Square Tests for Type of Story**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	81.918*	5	.000
Likelihood Ratio	85.657	5	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	31.227	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	252		

\*0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.29.

**Appendix Three: Theme of Story Cross tabulation**

Type of Newspaper	Theme of Story						
		Election	Political Parties	Good Governance	Human Rights	Total	
	Addis Neger	Count	24	51	6	18	99
		% within type of newspaper	24.2%	51.5%	6.1%	18.2%	100.0%
		% within theme of story	25.8%	44.0%	28.6%	81.8%	39.3%
		% of Total	9.5%	20.2%	2.4%	7.1%	39.3%
	Addis Zemen	Count	69	65	15	4	153
		% within type of newspaper	45.1%	42.5%	9.8%	2.6%	100.0%
		% within theme of story	74.2%	56.0%	71.4%	18.2%	60.7%
		% of Total	27.4%	25.8%	6.0%	1.6%	60.7%
	Total	Count	93	116	21	22	252
		% within type of newspaper	36.9%	46.0%	8.3%	8.7%	100.0%
		% within theme of story	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	36.9%	46.0%	8.3%	8.7%	100.0%

**Chi-Square Tests for Theme of Story**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.845*	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	26.368	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	17.658	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	252		

\*0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.25.

**Appendix Four: Source of Story Cross tabulation**

		Source of Story										Total
		NGOs	Government organization	Meetings & Workshops	Politicians	Political Analysts	Political Journal/Media	Research Findings	Individuals	Other		
Type of Newspaper	Addis Neger	Count	9	1		17	3	9	4	7	49	99
		% within type of newspaper	9.1%	1.0%		17.2%	3.0%	9.1%	4.0%	7.1%	49.5%	100.0%
		% within source of story	100.0%	2.6%		28.3%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	53.3%	39.3%
		% of Total	3.6%	.4%		6.7%	1.2%	3.6%	1.6%	2.8%	19.4%	39.3%
	Addis Zemen	Count		38	29	43					43	153
		% within type of newspaper		24.8%	19.0%	28.1%					28.1%	100.0%
		% within source of story		97.4%	100.0%	71.7%					46.7%	60.7%
		% of Total		15.1%	11.5%	17.1%					17.1%	60.7%
	Total	Count	9	39	29	60	3	9	4	7	92	252
		% within type of newspaper	3.6%	15.5%	11.5%	23.8%	1.2%	3.6%	1.6%	2.8%	36.5%	100.0%
		% within source of story	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	3.6%	15.5%	11.5%	23.8%	1.2%	3.6%	1.6%	2.8%	36.5%	100.0%

**Chi-Square Tests for Source of Story**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2- sided)
Pearson Chi- Square	100.819*	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	129.707	8	.000
Linear-by- Linear Associatio n	30.209	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	252		

\*8 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.18.

**Appendix Five: Origin of Story Cross tabulation**

Type of Newspaper		Origin of Story			
			Local	Foreign	Total
	Addis Neger	Count	79	20	99
		% within type of newspaper	79.8%	20.2%	100.0%
		% within origin of story	35.7%	64.5%	39.3%
		% of Total	31.3%	7.9%	39.3%
	Addis Zemen	Count	142	11	153
		% within type of newspaper	92.8%	7.2%	100.0%
		% within origin of story	64.3%	35.5%	60.7%
		% of Total	56.3%	4.4%	60.7%
	Total	Count	221	31	252
		% within type of newspaper	87.7%	12.3%	100.0%
		% within origin of story	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	87.7%	12.3%	100.0%

**Chi-Square Tests for Origin of Story**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.434	1	.002		
Continuity Correction	8.266	1	.004		
Likelihood Ratio	9.200	1	.002		
Fisher's Exact Test				.003	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.397	1	.002		
N of Valid Cases	252				

a Computed only for a 2x2 table

b 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 12.18.

**Appendix Six: Placement of Story Cross tabulation**

Type of Newspaper	Placement of Story				
		Front Page	Inside Page	Total	
Type of Newspaper	Addis Neger	Count	20	79	99
		% within type of newspapers	20.2%	79.8%	100.0%
		% within placement of story	41.7%	38.7%	39.3%
		% of Total	7.9%	31.3%	39.3%
	Addis Zemen	Count	28	125	153
		% within type of newspapers	18.3%	81.7%	100.0%
		% within placement of story	58.3%	61.3%	60.7%
		% of Total	11.1%	49.6%	60.7%
	Total	Count	48	204	252
		% within type of newspapers	19.0%	81.0%	100.0%
		% within placement of story	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	19.0%	81.0%	100.0%

**Chi-Square Tests for Placement of Story**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.141	1	.707		
Continuity Correction	.045	1	.833		
Likelihood Ratio	.140	1	.708		
Fisher's Exact Test				.744	.414
Linear-by-Linear Association	.140	1	.708		
N of Valid Cases	252				

a Computed only for a 2x2 table

b 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.86.

**Appendix Seven: Length of Story Cross tabulation**

		Length of Story (cm <sup>2</sup> )								
			1-1000	1001-2000	2001-3000	3001-4000	4001-5000	5001-6000	9001-10000	Total
Type of Newspaper	Addis Neger	Count	87	1	2	5	1	2	1	99
		% within type of newspapers	87.9%	1.0%	2.0%	5.1%	1.0%	2.0%	1.0%	100.0%
		% within length of story	38.2%	8.3%	66.7%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	39.3%
		% of Total	34.5%	.4%	.8%	2.0%	.4%	.8%	.4%	39.3%
	Addis Zemen	Count	141	11	1					153
		% within type of newspapers	92.2%	7.2%	.7%					100.0%
		% within length of story	61.8%	91.7%	33.3%					60.7%
		% of Total	56.0%	4.4%	.4%					60.7%
	Total	Count	228	12	3	5	1	2	1	252
		% within type of newspapers	90.5%	4.8%	1.2%	2.0%	.4%	.8%	.4%	100.0%
		% within length of story	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	90.5%	4.8%	1.2%	2.0%	.4%	.8%	.4%	100.0%

**Chi-Square Tests for Length of Story**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2- sided)
Pearson Chi- Square	19.794*	6	.003
Likelihood Ratio	23.818	6	.001
Linear-by- Linear Associatio n	9.047	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	252		

\*11 cells (78.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .39.

**Appendix Eight: Number of Story by Month Cross tabulation**

		Number of Story by Month							
		December07	January 08	February 08	March 08	April 08	May 08	Total	
Type of Newspaper	Addis Neger	Count	31	24	14	12	11	7	99
		% within Type of Newspaper	31.3%	24.2%	14.1%	12.1%	11.1%	7.1%	100.0%
		% within Number of Story by Month	49.2%	44.4%	27.5%	38.7%	26.8%	58.3%	39.3%
		% of Total	12.3%	9.5%	5.6%	4.8%	4.4%	2.8%	39.3%
	Addis Zemen	Count	32	30	37	19	30	5	153
		% within Type of Newspaper	20.9%	19.6%	24.2%	12.4%	19.6%	3.3%	100.0%
		% within Number of Story by Month	50.8%	55.6%	72.5%	61.3%	73.2%	41.7%	60.7%
		% of Total	12.7%	11.9%	14.7%	7.5%	11.9%	2.0%	60.7%
	Total	Count	63	54	51	31	41	12	252
		% within Type of Newspaper	25.0%	21.4%	20.2%	12.3%	16.3%	4.8%	100.0%
		% within Number of Story by Month	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	25.0%	21.4%	20.2%	12.3%	16.3%	4.8%	100.0%

**Chi-Square Tests for Number of Story by Month**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2- sided)
Pearson Chi- Square	10.694*	5	.058
Likelihood Ratio	10.859	5	.054
Linear-by- Linear Association	2.444	1	.118
N of Valid Cases	252		

\*1 cells (8.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.71.

## Appendix Nine: Interview Questions for Editors and Reporters

The purpose of this interview is to gather information for the study entitled “Coverage of Democratic Issues in Addis Neger and Addis Zemen”.

1. Why were democratic values/issues not presented through letters?
2. Why were stories on democratic issues limited in the front pages?
3. Why were editorials and commentaries that dealt with democratic issues limited?
4. Do you have special reporters who cover democratic issues?
5. Do the reporters get training on how to report democratic issues?
6. Does the skill and training of your journalists affect the coverage of democratic issues on your newspaper? In what ways?
7. What problems do your reporters encounter in covering democratic issues?
8. How are story ideas generated for your newspaper?
9. Why were democratic issues sourced from few main sources?
10. Why did you use very few ordinary citizens (individuals) as information sources for stories about democratic issues?
11. Do your journalists work together with governmental and non-governmental organizations (that work on democracy advocacy)?
12. Do budgetary and staff constraints (having limited staff) affect your editorial decisions in the coverage of democratic issues?
13. Does covering democratic issues affect your circulation? How?
14. Why was the coverage of democratic issues uneven?

If there is any information that you need to add, please write it here.

Thank you so much for your cooperation.

### Appendix Ten: Inter-Coder Reliability

Categories	Number of Coding Decisions	Decisions on which the two coders agree	Decisions on which the two coders disagree	Reliability	
				Percentage of Agreement	
Type of Story	252	245	7	0.93	93.51
Theme of Story	252	248	4	0.96	96.29
Source of Story	252	251	1	0.98	98.14
Origin of Story	252	252	-	1	100
Length of Story	252	247	5	0.95	95.37
Placement of Story	252	252	-	1	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1512</b>	<b>1495</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>97.37</b>

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N_1 + N_2}$$

Where M is the number of coding decisions on which the two coders agree, and N<sub>1</sub> and N<sub>2</sub> refer to the total number of coding decisions by the first and second coder, respectively.