



Research article

Mediatization of development in sub Saharan Africa: insights from Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC), ‘Mahibere Kidusan’ magazine, Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

Development is an important issue for third world Sub-Saharan African countries such as Ethiopia. To enhance development, media have a significant role, but faith-based institutions, like religious media have not been considered significant contributors so far. This paper studies the Hamer, a religious magazine in Ethiopia Orthodox Tewahedo (EOTC) for about 30 years. This research examines the agenda and frames used by the Hamer magazine coverage of development issues (from 2005 -2020) in Ethiopia. The study applies a quantitative content analysis method and examined 308 stories. However, the political development issue was the most scarcely covered development issue as compared to others. Economic, moral, peace and social development issues had a relationship with the year of publication. Sources of economic development stories and dominant frames had impact on the choice of economic development stories. Similarly, dominant frames had impact on the choice of peace development stories. On the contrary, sources, story actors and dominant frames did not have significant impact on social, political, cultural, historical, moral, and natural resource development stories. Finally, the Hamer magazine had significant coverage of development issues although it is difficult to determine the causes of the extent of changes in the coverage. In conclusion, we propose that governmental and nongovernmental organizations should reconsider their communication contexts and can reach disadvantages through religious media while launching development programs.

1. Introduction

This article explores the proxies of development issues in a religious media context in Sub-Saharan Africa, Ethiopia. There were arguments about whether religion enhances or obstacles development as the intersections between religion and development are intriguing. The ties between religions and ideas of wellbeing, health, freedom, and a host of human aspirations remain to be topics of the scholarly conversation. The coming into the equation of media adds further impetus to the scholarship.

The interrelationship between religious media and development is a theme that attracted less attention of scholars across various disciplines around the globe in general and in sub-Saharan African countries in particular. Accordingly, there is little research in Ethiopia addressing the coverage of development issues in religious media prospects. In this study's context, religious media is considered as a vehicle in the

development of promotion efforts. Most of the developing country media have been owned by governments. Those media propagate the governors' success stories. A few private media also worked on business for the owners. Addressing development issues to the grass root publics has been very limited. This might be one of the reasons that poverty sustains. On the contrary, developing country, like Ethiopia, becomes very religious but has development problems and lacks vibrant media outlets. These made the Ethiopian people side cornered to their faith based institution which helps to fill the development and media nexuses. To reach this disadvantages public, religious media might be the right option.

Therefore, it found out the weight of development issue coverage in religious media, *Hamer* magazine, which have been begun by Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church Sunday school of saints since 1993. This assured the religious institutions, media, had a long-time participation within the coverage of economic, social, cultural, historical, and political development of their communities.

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1.1. Background

Religious media and development were the two main concepts of this study. The term development refers to a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of absolute poverty (Todaro and Smith, 2009). This is because development is not solely about economic or technological growth, but it is also importantly about increases in knowledge and skills, growth of new awareness, enhancing the human soul, and the combination of human certainty (Servaes, 1999).

The concept of development has been in constant flux due to changes in society and its passing through various stages of development itself (So, 1990). Because of globalization and its ensuing changes in cultural texture, economy, polity, innovation, and communication viewpoints, the indicators of development are likewise changing, as per the requirements of the particular society (Narula and Duysters, 2004). It is a broadly participatory cycle of coordinated social change in the public arena, expected to achieve both social and material for most of individuals through their dealing with their condition (Singhal and Rogers, 2001). Similarly (Fisher, 2011), looks at development as the material and spiritual quality of human life.

Therefore, though observed from alternate points of view, improvement implies one fundamental thing in all viewpoints and to all individuals - an improvement in the human, social, financial, and political states of the individual and subsequently of the general public. It is not exclusively a matter of innovation or of gross public item; more critically, it involves expanded information and abilities, development of new awareness, expansion of the human mind, the uplifting of the human spirit, and the fusion of human confidence (Burkey, 1993).

In fact, failure and success of most development projects are often determined by two crucial factors, that is, communication and people's involvement (Mefalopulos, 2008). A great deal of scholarly analysis has addressed the way in which development would qualify worldwide democratic communication. Alternately, numerous modern correspondence media were, in themselves, viewed as markers of development communication, and advancement has been seen as a firmly interwoven marvel where one is accepted to ensure the other (Gumucio-Dagron, 2001). This thought unmistakably features the part of development communication and media in accomplishing proposed development objectives. The media in general helps create awareness for development and its possible approach by disseminating information to the society down to the root level.

The mass media are also agents of social change in the service of national development (So, 1990). The change in behavior expected after interacting with media should include changes in attitudes, beliefs, skills, and social norms (Moyer-Gusé, 2008). However, the media can also provoke suspicion, fear, discrimination, and violence by strengthening stereotypes, fostering inter-group tension, and excluding certain groups from public discourse (International Program for the Development of International Programme for the Development of Communication, 2008).

Media are powerful drives for socio-economic transformation in developing countries such as Ethiopia as the country is in critical development problems, one expects the media to supplement and encourage the process of producing informed citizen (Berhanu, and Admasie, 2016). To do so, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) in 1992 (article 4:1) stated that the press stands for the pursuit of fundamental freedom, peace, democracy, justice, equality, and for the acceleration of social and economic development. It continues to provide the people with information critical for making enlightened decisions and choices on socio-economic issues. Its role in nation-building is often linked to a role in promoting socio-economic development on the basis that without national unity it is not possible to mobilize society for national development (Chala, 2012).

In Ethiopia, there has been an obvious gap between the government possessed and private press: more often the government press introduced an image of homogeneity with almost no proof of investigative, critical, or even middle original journalistic activity, while the private press acted as a host of highly variable quality (Amanuel, 2004). Similarly, Moges (2007) conducted the extent of the coverage of development issues on Ethiopian Radio news. He examined the priority Radio Ethiopia gives to development issues. The findings revealed that Ethiopian Radio as an agenda-setter was rather weak. Rural development news items got rather few coverage and occurrence distribution during the selected period.

According to Adamu (2005) most Ethiopians believe government-owned media are likely to forget the development issues by giving a lot of attention to political and propaganda purposes. Chala (2012) also studied the coverage of development issues in government and private newspapers in Ethiopia. The finding revealed that private media covered fewer development issues than government media. The financial advancement was viewed as the most significant part of improvement inclusion in the studied newspapers. Chala (2012) concluded the Ethiopian press, particularly the government-owned one gave little coverage of social, economic, and political issues in the country.

This research filled a gap in covering development issues between private and government media in Ethiopia. Government media gave less emphasis to development activities than to others issues, political, for the progress of the country. Whereas private media gave more emphasis to sensational issues and only pay attention to development issues when they represent failures. So, the researcher inquired to know if religious media played a middle ground for development issues in Ethiopia.

Hence, the aim of this study is to examine the coverage, source, story actors and dominant frames of development contents of Christian print media (Orthodox Tewahido Church – *Hamer* magazine) and their relationship in the years of publication (from 2005 – 2020) in Ethiopia.

2. Theoretical framework

The media are as much influenced by society as society is influenced by the media, and the impact is mutual and continuous (Vilanilam, 2005). Hence, religious organizations devote considerable resources to communication and education designed to show their beliefs and principles to their adherents and to take care of the salience of these beliefs and principles within the daily lives of their followers and even within the lives of a more general population (Rashi and McCombs, 2015).

A useful intellectual tool for describing and analyzing these communication efforts is agenda-setting theory, which examines the connection between the content of the messages distributed by the mass media (McCombs et al., 2014). Agenda-setting theory asserts the existence of a serious link between the prominence given to topics in a very communicator's messages and their perceived importance within the prominence. Topics emphasized within the mass media or other channels are viewed as being more important than those not covered (McCombs and Shaw, 1993). Moreover, the extent of the coverage itself serves to render a selected topic more important than one that has not been the topic of major media attention. Moreover, development priorities might have an influence on religious believers. In short, there is no single rule to say this or that issue must be given priority as different media have their own agendas. To conceptualize these issues, two major theories are proposed: development paradigms, and agenda-setting function.

Agenda-setting theory examines an earlier outcome within the hierarchy of media effects so as to see those topics that are considered the foremost important and merit attention (Watson, 2008). Our specific focus herein is on the religious media agenda which has committed itself to create Christianity and development issues accessible to adherents in every corner of the country and to influence public discourse.

An agenda, first of all, consists of a collection of topics communicated in a hierarchy at a given point in time. The agenda may be put in a hierarchy because the included topics do not all bear identical weight

(Rogers et al., 1993). Some receive considerable attention, others much less. An agenda presented by mass media is compared with the agenda of those same topics created by members of the general public, and considerable research has documented that the media agenda contains a substantive impact on the general public agenda (Zhou et al., 2016). In other words, the media frequently have strong agenda-setting effects on the general public.

The more repeated issues are the likely the media agenda it will be. As development media theory began from the agenda –setting theory which stated that the media tell us not what to think but what to think about (Fonseca, 2020), Agenda setting theory (first and second level) is used as one of the theories of this research. Development paradigms, such as, Modernization, Dependency and Multiplicity are also theories which are used for this investigation.

Modernization is rooted in an exceedingly progressive circumstance of the eighteenth century. Initially evoked by the increase of the enlightenment in Europe, the commercial Revolution within the UK in 1750 was the spot to start of the modernization period (Dickey, 1986). Since then modernization occurred as an important interdependent modification within the political, socio-cultural, economic, and technological levels (Ester et al., 1994).

As indicated by (Inglehart, 2020) the objective of modernization has been the amplification of private prosperity through the financial cycle inside society. With pertinence to the Christian perspective on riches, Man must not be stressed over material flourishing giving security throughout everyday life (Wilson, 1997). God ought to make certain of such issues by promising fulfillment through salvation, particularly for those that are experiencing destitution and wretchedness inside the time of their earthly entity (Wilson, 1997). Hence, one may propose that modernization needed to scale back certain customary qualities and convictions to become what it is today (Schelke, 2000). Having taken the strict estimation of cheapness, for instance, mentioning to be satisfied with what one has, additionally emphatically contrasts from the general thought of mounting prosperity and financial security, which really has been a noteworthy result of the modernization cycle (Ester et al., 1994).

Overall, however, this theoretical approach to development, with its related bag of pragmatic instruments, did not convey the expected results (Servaes and Arnst, 1999). By the end of the 1980s, it became evident that the promises of the modernization paradigm had not appeared successful and that poor peoples' situations everywhere in the world had failed to improve significantly (Mefalopulos, 2008).

The dependency paradigm rose up from the convergence of neo-Marxism and the extensive Latin American debate on development. Thus, in contrast to the modernization paradigm, the dependency world view has first appeared in Latin America (McDuie-Ra and Rees, 2010).

Based on a basic investigation of the global industrialist framework (Servaes and Arnst, 1999), thought about the turn of events and underdevelopment as two appearances of a similar coin, molded by specific historical, economic, and political variables. Hence, neither the causes nor the solutions of underdevelopment ought to be looked for solely, or even generally, inside the poorest countries, but within the broader international scenario and forms of exploitation such as the richest countries' colonial past (Mefalopulos, 2008).

Within the dependency paradigm, the world was isolated into two alliances: the center made out of a couple of rich nations, and the fringe, made out of numerous helpless nations. As indicated by this point of view, center nations exploited their innovative ability, predominant foundation, and monetary capacity to reinforce their lead. The fundamental part of the fringe nations was confined to that of providing crude materials and modest work to the more extravagant ones, making it unthinkable for them to actually make up for a lost time (Landes, 2015; Mefalopulos, 2008).

The dependency paradigm had an impressive effect on the monetary and improvement approaches of various Third World nations, particularly during the 1970s and mid-1980s, bringing about the usage of import-replacement strategies by numerous individuals of those nations

(Escobar, 2014). This system expected to shield public enterprises from outside rivalry by financing them and putting high duties on imported items. The principal thought was to invigorate the development of homegrown industrialization and to diminish or cut off ward attaches with more extravagant nations. In any case, the general consequences of import-replacement approaches have been fairly inadmissible (Landes, 2015).

The concept of alternative development was first expressed in the industrialized countries of Northern Europe. The advocates of alternative development characterized improvement as the issue of government assistance, equity, and popularity-based rights for example advancement implies individuals focused turn of events and in amicability with the earth to improve the odds of confidence and economical asset use (Servaes and Arnst, 1999).

According to (Melkote and Steeves, 2001), the alternative development worldview puts an accentuation on diminishing disparities and on improving the state of the least fortunate of the poor by meeting their fundamental needs. They were additionally promising the dynamic cooperation of the individuals being developed exercises by organizing little, indigenous technology. This theory comprises of incitement of the potential for change inside a network. The idea of grassroots support in the improvement cycle has become a key thought. The function of mass communication here was to limit the information hole between the information-rich and the information poor. Moreover, communication was considered as an impetus for change. The alternative development theorists also stress the cooperation of the individuals at the grassroots (Etana, 2014). Individuals ought to characterize their own issues and attempt to distinguish solutions to them.

3. Research method

Quantitative research is conducted in the tradition of the natural sciences. Therefore, its approach to the study of reality is structured, measured and, to a large extent, replicable. Such measurement facilitates adequacy, consistency, uniformity, comparison, accuracy and precision in describing and assessing concepts (Sarantakos, 2005). Moreover, it offers researchers the opportunity to govern causal relationships in wider social contexts (Bryman, 2006).

Sarantakos (2005) defines content analysis as a documentary method that aims at a quantitative and/or qualitative analysis of the content of texts, pictures, films and other forms of verbal, visual or written communication. According to Weber (2009), this research method uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from such texts. Therefore, content analysis is about making valid inferences from the content of media texts in a quantitative manner.

Content analysis usually yields unobtrusive measures in which neither the sender nor the receiver of the message is aware that it is being analyzed. Hence, there is little danger that the act of measurement itself will act as a force for change that confounds the data (Weber, 2009). Sarantakos (2005) also states the method is non-reactive, transparent, unobtrusive and, what is perhaps most relevant to this study.

3.1. Research setting

Ethiopia is the third-largest Christian population in sub-Saharan Africa, next to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Sahgai and Smith, 2009). It has had a big Christian presence since the establishment of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in the early 4th century. Since that point, the Orthodox Church has remained Ethiopia's most influential religious body, with strong links between church, state, and national identity. The country's Christians signify about 63% of the population. Ethiopia's Christian community traces back to the 4th century when the emperor of the Ethiopian Axumite Kingdom converted to Christianity. After the emperor's conversion, the patriarch of Alexandria in Egypt appointed a bishop to oversee a replacement church in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church which is one of the world's oldest churches has its own liturgical, language and calendar. The overwhelming majority of Ethiopia's Christians have adhered to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church for many of the past 1,700 years (Sahgai and Smith, 2009).

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Sunday school of saints' media department begun producing 'Hamer' magazine since May 1993 as one of the missions that has been given to the holy church is to transfer the word of God in a special way to the Christian people. It also helped to teach theology in religion, to produce a morally sound generation, to preach peace, to keep the whole generation away from evil, to keep the law and order of the Creator, and to inherit the coming heavenly kingdom. It also worked to give an answer to the times in which the teachings of the Church are raised and to expand the ministry of the gospel to the parishioners and the younger generation. It is a monthly magazine and available both print and online.

3.2. Sampling techniques and sample

Sarantakos (2005) states that sampling decisions have to be made on the selection of the medium, selection of the dates of publication, and selection of the parts of the medium to be studied. The population was the print, outdoor, or electronic media (radio and television). However, in Ethiopia, archives for electronic media were poorly managed in many stations and, where available, were not accessible to members of the public, even for research purposes. Therefore, the print medium was selected. Furthermore, the print media is as a reputable source of information (Dearing and Rogers, 1996). The researcher believes that the electronic media for religious purpose have been used recently, but the purpose of this research is used to trace back to study the transition between secularity and post secularity periods.

The period under review for this study was from 2005 - 2020. Hence, it was a useful timeline to see the current trends for understanding how development issues have been reported. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for this study. The first stage of sampling publication type was purposive. 'Hamer' magazine has been identified as highly circulated and utilized by the religious community. The second stage involves simple random sampling which comprised seven years editions of the selected period. Third, from the selected magazines, by using available sampling technique all development issues were used.

3.3. Data collection tool

Document was taken as a data collection tool. Quantitative contents were collected from the selected magazines. To collect documented data, the researcher adapted Xiaoge's (2009) indicators as a codebook for the content analysis of the development agendas. These indicators were used as analytic dimensions for the analysis of the programs. As an adaptation, these indicators were modified to address the questions of this study. In this context, development refers to economic, social, historical, cultural, political and peace building/conflict resolution.

3.4. Inter coder reliability

It is noticed that an examination is dependable when the rehashed estimation of similar material outcomes in comparative choices or ends (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006). Two coders were trained and 15% (46 articles) of the data were coded. Inter-coder Reliability = $2 * m / (N1 + N2)$ where; m is the number of coding decisions on which the two coders agreed; N1 and N2 are the total number of coding decisions by the first and second coder respectively (Holsti, 1969) should be divided by two. The inter-coder reliability result was 0.91. Hence, the coding continued as the reliability coefficient indicated reliable.

3.5. Data analysis

The data which were collected from document were analyzed using descriptive (frequency, percentage and chi-square) and inferential (Binary logistics regression) statistics. The percentage and frequency distribution showed the extent of development issues coverage. The Pearson chi-square test result indicated whether there was relationship between the choices of development issues with years of publication. The Binary logistics regression analysis was used to see if source, development actors, or dominant frames impacted the choices of development stories. Findings were discussed in line with the scholarly works and theories within which the study was situated.

From the documented data, the indicators were used as a starting point of analysis. They helped gain insights into the basic structure in which the development-oriented programs exhibit and narrate in religious media practice. To identify these indicators, the coders carefully read the stories. The first step was to read the whole story to get the general idea of what the story was all about. Coders ensured that the indicators were mutually exclusive and exhaustive, as advised by (Jensen, 2013).

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. Findings

A total of 308 articles were analyzed in this study (N = 308) with 31 from editorial, 65 from opinion editions and 212 from feature articles. The length of paragraphs ranges from one to eight. The data were taken from *Hamer* magazine's seven years publication.

We present the data for cross tabulation analysis. These are selected to show the validity of certain interactions of the data and to highlight certain salient points. We used and compared data from *Hamer* magazine about development issues in the following categorical tables as this perhaps shows the relationship between variables and better statistical validity.

To examine the statistical significance of development issues coverage in *Hamer* magazine, percentage, frequencies and chi-square were used. The results in Table 1, showed that peace development/conflict resolution 80(25.97%) was the most frequently reported issue. The Pearson chi-square test indicated that peace development issues chi-square = 41.66, $p = 0.01$, and $p < 0.05$, two tailed. This indicated that year of publication had relationship with peace development issues coverage in *Hamer* magazine. In contrast, political development issues were the least covered 12(3.89%) issue in the studied magazine. The Pearson chi-square test revealed that political development issues chi-square = 7.82, $p = 0.25$, and $p > 0.05$, two tailed. Hence, years of publication and coverage of political issues did not have any relationship. Historical and moral development issues were covered 38(12.33%) equally. However, they had statistical difference in chi-square test. Historical development issues chi-square = 15.42, $p = 0.21$, and $p > 0.05$, two tailed. It showed that coverage of historical development issues did not have relationship with years of publication.

However, moral development issues chi-square = 52.51, $p = 0.03$, and $p < 0.05$, two tailed. So, years of publication had relationship with the coverage of moral development issues. Similarly, economic development and social development issues were 22(7.14%) for each of them, the chi-square test showed that years of publication had relationships with the coverage of economic and social development issues. Economic development issues chi-square = 31.84, $p = 0.04$, and $p < 0.05$, two tailed. Social development issues chi-square = 21.38, $p = 0.04$, and $p < 0.05$. On the other hand, 29(9.41%) of the articles were dealt cultural development issues. The Pearson chi-square test indicated that cultural development issues chi-square = 7.17, $p = 0.30$, and $p > 0.05$, two tailed. This indicates publication year did not have relationship with cultural development issues in *Hamer* magazine.

Table 1. The coverage of development issues * years of publication.

| Development Issues | Cultural | Economic | Historical | Moral | Peace | Political | Social |
|--------------------|----------|----------|------------|-------|-------|-----------|--------|
| Frequency | 29 | 22 | 38 | 38 | 80 | 12 | 22 |
| percentage | 9.41 | 7.14 | 12.33 | 12.33 | 25.97 | 3.89 | 7.14 |
| Chi-square | 7.17 | 31.84 | 15.42 | 52.51 | 41.66 | 7.82 | 21.38 |
| P-Value | 0.30 | 0.04 | 0.21 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 0.25 | 0.04 |

Table 2. The coverage of social development issues * years of publication.

| Social development | Frequency | Percent | Chi-square | P-value |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|------------|---------|
| Education | 48 | 57.9 | 7.7 | 0.8 |
| Health | 31 | 37.3 | 17.01 | 0.14 |
| Marriage | 3 | 3.6 | 9.67 | 0.13 |
| Extravagance | 1 | 1.2 | 12.37 | 0.54 |

Findings in the [Table 2](#), social development category, showed that education 48(57.9%) was the most frequently reported theme. The chi-square test result depicted (chi-square = 7.7, $p = 0.80$, and $p > 0.05$). Similarly, health 31(37.3%) was the second most frequently presented issue. The chi-square test result showed (chi-square = 17.01, $p = 0.14$, and $p > 0.05$). Marriage 3(3.6%) and extravagance 1(1.2%) issues were scarcely reported development themes. Their chi-square result depicted (chi-square = 9.67, $p = 0.13$, $p > 0.05$ and chi-square = 12.37, $p = 0.54$, $p > 0.05$) marriage and extravagance consecutively.

As the data portrayed in [Table 3](#), the difference in number of peace development/conflict resolution issues were especially evident in five categories. These were inter-religion, inter government, intra religion, human God relation and human intrapersonal relation. From a total of 80 peace development stories, 17(21.3%) of them were dealt inter religion relations. Its chi-square test result indicated that chi-square = 5.76, $p = 0.33$, and $p > 0.05$. On the other hand, the coverage of inter government relation was 16(20%). Pearson chi-square result = 17.06, $p = 0.29$, and $p > 0.05$, two tailed. Intra religion relation issues were 29(36.3%) the most frequently reported conflict resolution issues. Its chi-square result = 10.44, $p = 0.40$, and $p > 0.05$. The coverage of Human-God relation issues was 16(20%) which was the second most frequently reported issues. The Pearson chi-square result = 9.90, $p = 0.78$, and $p > 0.05$. Human intrapersonal issues were 2(2.4%) the least frequently covered issues. In short, years of publication did not have relationship with the coverage of peace development issues.

The result from [Table 4](#) depicted that 38 historical development issues were found. From these, 15(39.5%) of them were church's historical development issues. Similarly, 12(31.6%) of historical development issues were focused on religious leader's biography. On the other hand, country's 6(15.8%) and believers' 5(13.5%) historical development issues were the least frequently covered historical development issues. The Pearson chi-square test indicated (Chi-square = 15.42, $p = 0.21$, and $p > 0.05$).

The results in [Table 5](#) indicated that there were 38 moral development issues in the studied magazine within the selected studied periods. From these, seven moral development themes were found. These were

Table 3. The coverage of peace development/conflict resolution issues * years of publication.

| Categorical variables | Inter religion relation | Inter government relation | Intra religion relation | Human God relation | Human, intrapersonal relation |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Percent | 21.3 | 20.0 | 36.3 | 20.0 | 2.4 |
| Frequency | 17 | 16 | 29 | 16 | 2 |
| Chi-square | 5.76 | 17.06 | 10.44 | 9.90 | - |
| P-value | 0.33 | 0.29 | 0.40 | 0.78 | - |

Table 4. The coverage of historical development issues * years of publication.

| Historical development | Frequency | Percent | Chi-Square | P-Value |
|----------------------------|-----------|---------|------------|---------|
| Country's history | 6 | 15.8 | 15.42 | 0.21 |
| Church's history | 15 | 39.5 | | |
| Religious leaders' history | 12 | 31.6 | | |
| Believers history | 5 | 13.2 | | |
| Total | 38 | 100 | | |

honest, work ethics, humanity, respect, caring and sharing, value of time and forgiving. Promoting honesty 12(31.6%) was the most frequently found moral development theme. The second most frequently existed moral development theme was respect which was counted 10(26.3%). Caring and sharing 8(21.1%) was the third frequently used moral development theme. However, humanity 2(5.3%) and work ethics 4(10.5%) were the second and third least frequently reported moral development themes. Finally, forgiving and value of time 1(2.6%) each were the least frequently presented moral development issues. The Pearson chi-square test result depicted that (chi-square = 52.51, $p = 0.03$, and $p < 0.05$).

Based on the type of frame, the result from [Table 6](#), showed that educative frame 44(31.2%) was the most frequently used frame whereas political frame 4(2.8%) was the least frequently used frame. Similarly, economic frame 5(3.5%) was the second least frequently presented frames. Morality frame 24(17%) was the second most frequently presented frame, next to educative frame. Conflict frame also 16(11.3%) was one of the most frequently used frames next to educative and morality frames in the studied magazine. Responsibility frame 12(8.5%) was the fourth frequently chosen frame. Political power and corruption frames were used 8(5.7%) equally. Human interest 7(5%) and social work 7(5%) frames were one of the least frequently existed frames, next to political and economic frame. Conservative frame also used 6(4.3%) times.

Based on the years of publication, in 2019 the highest numbers of frames 33(23.4%) existed; however, in 2020 has been the least numbers of frames 9(6.3%) were found. In 2005, the second highest numbers of frames 28(19.8%) were found. In 2009 and 2007, 19(13.4%) and 18(12.7%) numbers of frames were existed consecutively. Finally, 17(12.0%) equal numbers of frames were found in 2006 and 2008. The chi-square result indicated (chi-square = 104.83, $p = 0.00$, and $p < 0.05$).

The data in the [Table 7](#), showed that sources of economic development stories and dominant frames had impact on the choice of economic development stories. (Wald = 27.151, DF = 6, and $p = .000$) and (Wald = 22.572, DF = 10, and $P = .012$). However, story actors did not have any impact on the choice of economic development stories. (Wald = 6.102, DF = 5, and $p = .296$). Similarly, dominant frames had impact on the choice of peace development stories. (Wald = 20.880, DF = 10, and $p = .022$). On the contrary, sources, story actors and dominant frames did not have significant impact on social, political, cultural, historical, moral, and natural resource development stories.

4.2. Discussion

The above findings from the content analysis provided necessary prerequisites for supporting previous studies that Agenda-setting theory asserts the existence of a serious link between the prominence given to

Table 5. The coverage of moral development issues * years of publication.

| Moral development | Positive | Neutral | Negative | Total | Percent | Chi-square | P-value |
|--------------------|----------|---------|----------|-------|---------|------------|---------|
| Honest | 8 | 1 | 3 | 12 | 31.6 | 52.51 | 0.03 |
| Work ethics | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 10.5 | | |
| Humanity | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 5.3 | | |
| Respect | 9 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 26.3 | | |
| Caring and Sharing | 8 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 21.1 | | |
| Value of time | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2.6 | | |
| Forgiving | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2.6 | | |

Table 6. Cross Tabulation: Framing of development issues * years of publication.

| Framing types | Years of publication | | | | | | | | Total | % |
|-----------------|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|-------|---|
| | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2019 | 2020 | | | |
| Morality | 4 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 | 24 | 17.0 | |
| Conflict | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 16 | 11.3 | |
| Economic | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 3.5 | |
| Educative | 8 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 44 | 31.2 | |
| Conservative | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 4.3 | |
| Political power | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2.8 | |
| Exclusivist | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 5.7 | |
| Corruption | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 8 | 5.7 | |
| Social work | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 5 | |
| Responsibility | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 12 | 8.5 | |
| Human interest | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 7 | 5 | |
| Total | 28 | 17 | 18 | 17 | 19 | 33 | 9 | 141 | 100 | |

Chi-square 104.83.

P-value 0.00.

Table 7. Assessment of sources, story actors and dominant frames on *Hamer* magazine development stories.

| Types of development | Categorical variables | Wald | df | Sig. |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|----|------|
| Economic development | Sources | 27.151 | 6 | .000 |
| | Story actors | 6.102 | 5 | .296 |
| | Dominant frames | 22.572 | 10 | .012 |
| Social development | Sources | 7.774 | 6 | .255 |
| | Story actors | 7.422 | 5 | .191 |
| | Dominant frames | 17.626 | 10 | .065 |
| Political development | Sources | 2.958 | 6 | .814 |
| | Story actors | 3.194 | 5 | .670 |
| | Dominant frames | 9.402 | 10 | .494 |
| Cultural development | Sources | 8.026 | 6 | .236 |
| | Story actors | 3.665 | 5 | .599 |
| | Dominant frames | 5.829 | 10 | .829 |
| Historical development | Sources | 12.285 | 6 | .056 |
| | Story actors | 3.895 | 5 | .565 |
| | Dominant frames | 16.237 | 10 | .093 |
| Moral development | Sources | 2.163 | 6 | .904 |
| | Story actors | 2.180 | 5 | .824 |
| | Dominant frames | 10.861 | 10 | .365 |
| Peace development | Sources | 10.901 | 6 | .091 |
| | Story actors | 6.293 | 5 | .279 |
| | Dominant frames | 20.880 | 10 | .022 |
| Natural resource development | Sources | 9.304 | 6 | .157 |
| | Story actors | 10.440 | 5 | .064 |
| | Dominant frames | 5.320 | 10 | .869 |

*Significant at 5% level of significance.

topics in a communicator's messages and their perceived importance within the reputation. As the literature review has shown, the role of sources is key to the agenda-setting process, because of their ability to set the agenda by being the right 'who'. Topics emphasized within the mass media or other channels are viewed as being more important than those not covered (McCombs and Shaw, 1993). Hence the result depicted that social development stories were the most prominent issues in the studied magazine.

The study explored the coverage, source, story actors and dominant frames of development issues in the *Hamer* magazine, a religious magazine in Ethiopia. The result identified some significant differences in covering a variety of development issues. Development has different dimensions as every society might define development in its own terms to reflect its underlying culture, assumption, values and goals (Dahl, 1996). Hence, the studied magazine put development from economic, social, political, cultural, moral and peace perspective. For instance, the studied religious magazine, *Hammer*, has significantly covered social development issues like education, health, marriage and demography as every social organization must have agendas to prioritize their concerns and make decisions on where to take a position. The mass media are also agents of social change in the service of national development (So, 1990). The change in behavior expected after interacting with media should include changes in attitudes, beliefs, skills, and social norms (Moyer-Gusé, 2008).

Long marginalized or ignored, issues of spirituality and religion have had a hard time trying to influence development theory and practice. For a long time after World War II, secular worldviews were the foundation of conventional development understandings and policy. Over the long run, in any case, it turned out to be certain that there was no proof to help the view that religion would shrink away because of modernization and monetary turn of events and that novel levelheadedness would wherever overcome primitive notion and in backward religious perspectives.

Similarly, the role of religious media has been neglected from development and research discourse.

Yet, religious beliefs are central to the lives of most people in developing countries (Deneulin, 2013), in Africa while religious teaching and practice have diminished insignificance in the North, they continue to influence the worldview of those living in the poverty-stricken nations of the South, like, Ethiopia. It is thus important to consider the ways in which religion can help as well as poverty alleviation for poor people in the developing world. One of the means is religious media. In numerous countries in the developing countries, power is now fundamentally fragmented, often finding its main expression in social networks, including those expressing various religious ideas through their media. Modernization made a decent move of managing esteems the course of an improvement of human presence within the present world instead of within beyond the world; similarly, the studied magazine covered social and peace development themes significantly.

The consequence is that in some developing countries, development issues, including poverty and hunger alleviation strategies, can usefully be considered in relation to social networks rather than via formal bureaucracies alone. It is important to stress however that policy-makers should not regard societal networks as development panaceas; they are not simply substituted for effective bureaucracies and should in some cases be seen as potentially capable of carrying some developmental responsibilities. This is on the grounds that they are not expert state or improvement organization administrations but rather networks roused by various measures, with various standards, convictions, and qualities, gotten from religious beginnings and establishments. Similarly, the finding confirmed that a national strategy that fails to take into account the Ethiopian church as an important partner in development has been scarcely covered.

Throughout the developing world, various religious entities own land, provide services such as healthcare and education, help poor people in need, care for orphans and disabled people and support income-generating activities by farmers, fisherfolk and slum dwellers (Olsson and Wohlgenuth 2003). Likewise, the finding revealed that a great number of development issues were covered. For instance, monasteries harvested fruits and vegetables; clerical schools contributed a lot to the nation's development; EOTC forests can contribute to carbon trade, etc.

However, governments in many developing countries, like Ethiopia, are unwilling to work closely with religious entities in pursuit of development goals despite the fact that religious institutes, media, often make significant contributions. Similarly, although the finding indicated that the coverage of peace development issues was significant, the inter-government relation was negative. Governments may prefer in some cases to operate with one religious' tradition in preference to others or, alternatively, to adopt a secular agenda that rules out the possibility of working with faith groups at all (WFDD, 1999).

Various religious traditions create obedience or norms in economic activities are one primary way for adherents to acknowledge and demonstrate faith (Malloch, 2003). Dependency worldview is established in a socio-economy and political point of view (Servaes and Malikhaio, 2008; Ghosh, 2019). However, the finding revealed that political and economy development themes were scarcely used themes.

The state and all other sections of civil society must engender a new paradigm of values, which will ensure a greater allotment and co-operation (Murphy, 2012). Similarly, the finding indicated a great number of moral development issues were found. Sharing resources, ideas, values and thoughts were the most frequently frames issues. However, efforts of modernization were necessarily doomed to failure since the approach was to discard but not to fertilize domestic education and cultures (Asgedome, 1989).

Religion plays a central, integrating role in social and cultural life in most developing countries as there are many more religious leaders than health workers (UNICEF, 1995). Religious leaders are in closer and regular contact with all age groups in society and their voice is highly respected. Similarly, religious media are more trusted than secular media

by adherents as religious leaders' voices are heard and respected. In conventional communities, strict pioneers are regularly more powerful than nearby government authorities or mainstream community leaders (UNICEF, 1995).

Christian churches in providing educational services in, for example, the Democratic Republic of Congo, where for years Christian schools have played a definitive role in educational provision (Ellis and Ter Haar, 2005; Haynes, 2007). In the same vein, Negash (1996) stated that the greatest shortcomings of the education system in Africa and in Ethiopia, in particular, is that it is poorly related to and interlinked with the traditions of education which predate the coming of modern education. The major criterion by which the general public evaluates any mass media output is the extent of its influence on society or in other words, its educational value (Nigussie, 2006). Similarly, the study confirmed that educative frame was the most frequently found theme.

Regarding education specifically, Christian mission churches, both Catholic and Protestant were often given control of primary and (if it existed) secondary education during colonial rule in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America (Ellis and Ter Haar, 2005). This enabled churches to acquire not only ideological and material power but also financial resources. However, Ethiopia, not colonized, will have to develop an education system that is closely linked with its indigenous knowledge system which has been the mainstay for the survival of its cultures and societies (Negash, 1996). Hence, the finding indicated that *Hamer* magazine covered the Geez language education significantly as it is considered as indigenous knowledge.

5. Conclusion

The study explored the coverage of development issues, sources of stories, development actors and dominant frames in the *Hamer* magazine, a religious magazine in Ethiopia. The overall consequence is that religious media's coverage of development issue, including poverty alleviation, has been significant as studying the role of religious media for development was invisible so far. In this study, it is concluded that religious media have covered more development issues. Peace development was most frequently covered issue which inferred that the studied magazine played in peace reconciliation of the country. To the contrary, the magazine has been far from political issues coverage due to the mind set of secularization. *Hamer* magazine provides extensive coverage of social issues, like, love, caring, mutual aid, unity, working together, eating together, etc. It preaches to protect generations from immigrant culture and to preserve important cultural values. It is concluded that religious media played a significant role through the coverage of social development and to enhance the social capital of the nation, Ethiopia besides to peace. It is inferred that the religious media have a very significant role for the moral conscience of religious leaders and believers in the Ethiopian society. Sources of economic development stories and dominant frames had impact on the choice of economic development stories. Similarly, dominant frames had impact on the choice of peace development stories. On the contrary, sources, story actors and dominant frames did not have significant impact on social, political, cultural, historical, moral, and natural resource development stories.

Hamer magazine preaches that parishioners should reach their full potential and benefit the church and the country. It does not preach as it is a spectator of the hands of others. The finding depicted that there were no single development paradigms that have been found. Like modernization, top-down communication practice from religious leaders has been found. Similar to the dependency paradigm, context-based development communication was employed; and then, alternative development which gives grassroots communication practice, adherents, and local communities were active participants in the source and story actors of development stories.

In addition, although the methodological strategy here offered an insightful discovery of the patterns of development representation EOTC, it was unmanageable for the researchers to examine the site of

production and the site of audience for the identified manners. For these reasons, the obtained findings obviously invite for researches that can further validate the conclusion and provide reinforcement to the outlined shortcomings. A possible contribution in this regard could be, for instance, to conduct a research covering a variety of religious media (more than one) and proceed qualitative interviews to examine whether, on the one hand, the above-identified patterns and the underlying discourse of representations have on multicultural-political intentions on the site of production. Also, on the other hand, the researchers hope that through a more qualitative and in-depth examination of the audience effect, the expected researches could finalize the circulatory links between the site of production, and audience. To advance for thought for the next step: Religious media needs on attention.

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Author contribution statement

Negesse Belay Gessese, Amanuel Gebru, Biset Nigatu: Conceived and designed the experiments; Performed the experiments; Analyzed and interpreted the data; Wrote the paper.

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