

Radio Trottoir for Political Communication in Addis Ababa

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Complete understanding of political communication entail looking at the context in which it is functioning. Considering contextual factors is very important to have a proper analysis. In countries like Ethiopia, cultural and historical factors have made radio trottoir consumption superior as alternative means of communication for political communication. Therefore, scholars suggest looking at this alternative spheres to have a complete picture and understanding of the political atmosphere.

In view of that, my research has analyzed the contents of radio trottoir political messages that have been communicated in Addis Ababa since 2005, which address local political issues. To deal with this, the study employed qualitative content analysis research techniques. Data collected through interviews and participant observations. The messages were examined and categorized based on the themes, nature, forms, sources and the network and channels employed to communicate in detail following narrative analysis method.

According to the findings of the study, election and governance are widely discussed political agendas in the radio trottoir communication sphere of Addis Ababa since 2005. Human rights, mainstream media and political parties are also among the important concerns of the public in the arena. Most stories discussed the failure in the political system. In messages about elections, the 2005 and 2010 elections criticized. On the other hand, the absence of good governance is the point of most governance stories. Regarding political parties, opposition and support for their agendas and leaders are in focus. The human rights stories pose violation against human life and lack of freedom of expression as major failures. Similarly, the mainstream media, Ethiopian Television, is criticized for its failure to serve the public and pursue truth on the political issues.

These stories disseminated information, critiques, commentaries, and politically challenging and mobilizing messages within 'secret' and established networks mostly with anonymous sources. Thus, the sources of most messages are not commonly locatable. On the other hand, the channels utilized vary from traditional words-of-mouth communication to new technologies like mobile phone. They appear in narratives as humorous tales, folk poems and popular songs incorporated Menezuma (Zakir), praise and curse verses (mirikatina ergeman), verses in graffiti and couplets.

Generally, the radio trottoir discussions are about perceived and/or real failures of the current political system. Thus it can inform about the panorama of what has gone wrong in the city's political arena. From these the government and different political actors can gain valuable information about a certain part of the society's perceptions on different political affairs of the time.

