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**A Study on Manufacturing Consent in the Coverage of the 2017 Presidential
Elections in Kenya: The Case of Select FM stations**

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K50/82304/2015

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requirements for the award of a degree in Masters in Communication Studies**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this is my original work and has not been presented elsewhere for whatsoever reason.

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved family: my husband, Crispus Yankem; and daughters Stephanie Riziki, Mya Liz, and Samira Zawadi. You have been the source of my inspiration, may God bless you abundantly for your unwavering support. I also dedicate this thesis to my mum, Lucy Nerima, and my late dad, Stephen Ojiambo, for their love and support throughout my life. I would not have made it this far without them.

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at establishing the extent to which manufacturing consent influenced the coverage of the 2017 presidential elections by the three selected FM radio stations in Nairobi: Radio Citizen, Radio Maisha and KBC Radio Taifa. To achieve this, the study formulated four specific objectives derived from the five filters of manufacturing consent first presented by Herman and Chomsky (2012). Therefore study employed qualitative method of inquiry using interview guide for key informants. It relied majorly on manufacturing consent theory. The findings established that media ownership (which manifest vested interests, eliminates independent decision-making by editors, and creates professional dilemma), advertising (which is critical media business), news sourcing (which affects impartiality and objectivity), and flak machines (threats and intimidation to the media), all influenced media coverage during the 2017 presidential election. The findings show media stations are compromised largely due to undue pressure from advertisers and owners, and that it is important for actors and decision-makers in the political communication spaces to allow the media greater freedom and capacity for editorial independence and professionalism. Based on the findings, the study recommends that media owners, the government, and the Media Council of Kenya rethink strategies for future media coverage of elections in Kenya.

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LIST OF ABBEVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AD	Advertising Director
Ad.1	Advertising director 1
Ad.2	Advertising director 2
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
Ed.1	Editor 1
Ed.2	Editor 2
Ed.3	Editor 3
Ed.4	Editor 4
Ed.5	Editor 5
Ed.6	Editor 6
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
ICC	International Criminal Court
MCK	Media Council of Kenya
MD	Managing Director
NASA	National Super Alliance
KNA	Kenya News Agency
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PR	Public Relations

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This section contains the study background, statement of the problem, and objectives, research questions, significance of the study, and the scope and limitations of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

Manufacturing consent, in broader sense, refers to the avenue used by contemporary democratic governments across the world to control the thinking of citizens. They have perfected the art through media capture, courtesy of skewed political messaging that out rightly advance their narrative.

The role of the media in democratisation brings about the propaganda model. As such, the media has generally been used as a mouthpiece for the political elites and cohorts to advance the agenda of the privileged few thus bringing about dominance of the state and local communities, (Mullen, 2015). Furthermore, the effect is felt when the citizens have elected a leader in office. This is due to the influence of groups of people in society. Specifically, they affect who becomes president of a particular state.

The mass media, in any country, serves the purpose of communicating both symbols and messages to the general population. Moreover, they are tasked with amusing, entertaining, and informing the populace. While implementing these functions, media houses are expected to incorporate people with desired codes of behaviour, beliefs, and values that promote their inclusion among the popular recognised edifices of the wider society. However, Herman and

Chomsky (2012) contend “in a world that is concentrated with wealth as well as major conflicts of interests between classes, fulfilling these roles requires systematic propaganda.” Therefore, media houses may use propaganda to drive the agendas of the government, multinational corporations, as well as those who are influential in society because they have their own vested economic gains.

There are certain circumstances under which the media is portrayed as serving the interests of the ruling class in society. For example, Herman and Chomsky (2012) warn that it is easy for the media to serve the ends of the leading elite in countries where power control rests with state bureaucracy, that is, “monopolistic control over the media, which is occasionally reinforced through official censorship.” However, it is not easy to notice the propaganda system at work in cases where private citizens either own the media houses, or there is the absence of formal censorship. Such instances are common where different media groups are actively competing and periodically attacking and exposing both governmental departments and corporate malfeasance. This perception makes them appear to be aggressively acting as spokespersons for freedom of speech and advocates of the interests of the general community. Nonetheless, what people hardly see that always remains hidden in the media relates to the fact that such critiques are limited in nature, the vast inequality in terms of resource commands between private and state wings, as well as the effect of this inequality on accessing private media system, its performance and behaviour. Thfaerefore, the propaganda model by Herman and Chomsky (2012) focuses on this power inequality, wealth and its multilevel effect on interest and mass media choices.

Manufacturing consent arises due to the influence of power and money (Herman & Chomsky, 2012). For instance, resources based on monetary and status gain, it is possible for the elite and governments to mesh out news that are worth printing, marginalise dissenting views, and permit the leadership of the private interests and government to pass/endorse their messages across to the public. Usually, news' raw material undergoes continuous filters thereby leaving only the cleansed residue as fit for printing or broadcasting. Therefore, by fixing the premises that underline interpretation and discourse, as well as the definition of what is newsworthy, to begin with, the government applies manufacturing consent in explaining the basis and operations of what is considered a propaganda campaign.

1.1.1. The Global Perspective

1.1.1.1. The Case of the US

Sufficient evidence is available in recent studies to show the ability and potential of the US government to exploit mainstream media's system-supportive tendencies. Specifically, in justifying overt wars as well as covering-up covert wars, distracting thoughtfulness/attention from their support for right-wing terrorism in different countries, legitimising controversial 'humanitarian' interventions, downplaying genocide cases wherein their government is connected, and manufacturing public approval for economic endorsements that led to the death of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children (Herring & Robinson, 2003). Furthermore, the events following 9/11 attack indicate how a persistent propaganda movement that was waged via the US media role played in persuading a great percentage of the local population that the demolition of Iraq and Afghanistan was both justified and necessary.

Moreover, “angered by press coverage of his presidency, President Nixon at one time barred Washington Post reporters from his press plane.” This is one act that portrayed manufacturing consent in the USA. Additionally, the 2016 presidential race was viewed by political commentators as one that would rewrite the political directory and there was nowhere that this was extra apparent than in the case of marketing and advertising. Ironically, two presidential candidates who dropped out, Republicans Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio, account for about one-third of the season's total. This is money spent at Kantar Media. While Democrats Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders have been profited from one hundred million dollars in advertisement spending together, they used the influence of media to propagate their agenda as politicians. On the other hand, Donald Trump, the Republican presidential candidate: claims he spent a trifling amount in political campaign advertising (Jonathan et al., 2016).

On the other hand, Norris (2009) argues that when authoritarian regimes are totalitarian, media control is simplified because the government owns and operates all mass media, and fully controls their output. Norris goes on to allude that one reason for concern about media control and ownership is expressed in the adage, ‘He who pays the piper, calls the tune’ when governments operate and own major television channels, programming tends to reflect governmental policies, even in democratic countries.

1.1.1.2. Propaganda during the Nazi Regime Led by Hitler

The Nazis applied propaganda in spreading and encouraging the Germans to back up Hitler. They used propaganda themes such as demonising groups of people (religions, races, etc.); to portray Hitler as a strong and powerful leader, and to stress the worth/values of Nazi Germany in promoting the notion of having an Aryan Germany as more superior than all other races and

nations (McDonough, 2014). Such actions were motivated by the desire to be superior and exercise absolute power over other groups. The concerned department was the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda headed by Josef Goebbels who used various regulated avenues to ‘enlighten’ the public, including cinema and music, the press, radio, rallies, literature, sports, and posters.

1.1.2 Regional Context

1.1.2.1. The Case of South Africa

The South African election of 1989 was severely flawed but gained the support of the US’s State Department, thereby increasing favourable treatments by mainstream media (Wanta, Golan, & Lee, 2004). The US thought that supporting the opposition would bring more division and instability in the country, given the tensions that were already building due to the struggle for independence. The NP party won with the aid of unified private media campaigns which drowned opposing voices. Furthermore, with most western officials liking the outcome, the U.S media declared the South African election credible (Wanta et al., 2004). Therefore, manufacturing consent has a straightforward policy: elections benefiting politicians serving the government’s interest are favoured, and their deficiencies ignored, while those legitimising elements that bring hostility to the government are considered dubious in quality.

1.1.2.2. The Case of Nigeria

The Nigeria presidential election of February 2019 was expected to take a new dimension. The poll was seen to be between PDP and APC, and as trap both to the Igbo and the Yoruba ethnic groups (Adibe, 2019). Atiku Abubakar chose an Igbo, Peter Obi, as his running mate, signifying an Igbo would be the president in 2023. In the APC, Boss Mustapha, the then

Secretary to the Federal Government, guaranteed the Igbo a shot at the presidency in the year 2023 if they backed up Muhamadu Buhari's re-election (Adibe, 2019). These political calculations aim at creating ethnic-based formations, which rely on large ethnicities in Nigeria. Whereas Babatunde Fashola, the Minister of Power Works, and Housing, as well as Yemi Osinbajo, the Vice President, both Yoruba, made a similar offer to the Yoruba, they used the elite community to run the agenda.

1.1.2.3. The Case of Rwanda

Herman and Peterson (2014) describe the long-lasting falsehoods and deceptions regarding what occurred in Rwanda as among the greatest success of the propaganda system during the past 20 years. Herman and Peterson (2014) argue that Rwanda's leader, Paul Kagame, has killed above five times as many people as Idi Amin. Expressly, they point to the fact that Kagame invaded Rwanda in 1990, carrying out a conquest war that ended during 1994. Again, they point at his invasion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 1996, and went in and out of that country for years, killing what the U.N. admitted was probably more than 4 million people (Herman & Peterson, 2014). However, like Suharto of Indonesia, Kagame, as Herman and Peterson (2014) put it, is a double-genocides person, and one who finished any social democratic threat in Rwanda, steadfastly associated Rwanda with the West as a client of the U.S, and opened Rwanda's doors to foreign investment.

Interestingly, Kagame has been depicted both in the Western and local mainstream media, for many years as the savior of Rwanda, having purportedly helped to end the genocide that was committed against the Tutsi, his minority ethnic group, by the country's ethnic majority, the Hutu (Herman & Peterson, 2014). Through manufacturing consent, Kagame with his supporters

have for a long time warranted the Rwanda Patriotic Front's armed attacks of the DRC as a simple hunt of the Hutu *genocidaires* who possibly fled Rwanda during the civil war, as well as Kagame's overthrow of the country (Herman & Peterson, 2014). Today, critiques of Kagame have no peace in Rwanda, with the majority of them seeking political asylum abroad.

1.1.3 Kenyan Context

Herman and Chomsky (2011) further argue that TV-radio networks and companies all need government franchises and licenses; they are possibly subject to government harassment or control because if left unchecked, they can gain popularity to threaten governments. This technical lawful reliance has been employed to control the media through the employment of "Flak," machines, which connotes to negative reactions to a media program or statement (Herman & Chomsky, 2011). It may take the form of petitions, phone calls, letters, speeches, lawsuits, as well as bills before parliament. Other modes are punitive action. Standard group's KTN news, Nation media group's NTV, as well as Citizen TV along with the Royal media services' Inooro TV (Kikuyu – language) were forced to go off air on January 30, 2018, after they defied the government's warning, and proceeded to broadcast live the controversial "swearing-in" of Raila Odinga, the opposition leader (Gaitho, 2018).

1.1.4 Understanding the Five Filters

Herman and Chomsky (2011) explain that there are five filters that those who control the media utilise. These filters are media ownership, advertising, "flak" machines, the dependence of media upon government information, as well as anti-communism as a regulatory mechanism. The outlook on mass media is drawn into a symbiotic relationship (Herman and Chomsky, 2011). Media involves authoritative sources of information by political necessity. The press

requires a reliable, incessant, steady, flow of news' raw material. They have imperative news schedules and daily news demands that they must achieve, while they do not have the capacity to afford to have cameras and reporters in all regions and places where crucial stories may break. Another scholar, Norris (2009), says the government may control media by influencing access to news. For example, the government may release publications only to the favoured press, putting the less favoured ones effectively out of business.

About advertising, Herman and Chomsky (2011) are of the view that whoever pays the piper, calls the tune. The elite are the owners of the media business, and so they drive the agenda. According to Chomsky and Herman (2011), the power of advertisers over television programming originates from the mere fact that they purchase and pay for programs. The choices of these patrons significantly affect media's wellbeing, because for the media station to succeed, the requirements and demands of advertisers must be accommodated.

According to Norris (2009), authoritarian societies frequently use treason and sedition laws to control media output. Treason and sedition are usually defined broadly in these countries so that anything critical of the government is potentially treasonable or seditious. Those found guilty of these crimes may be removed from the media business, sentenced to prison or even executed. Such severe punishments are powerful deterrents to publishing stories that attack the government. Accordingly, disobedience is rare.

According to McChesney (1999), media giants have killed journalism. Their main concern is to make journalism profitable directly, and there are various ways that have been proven to do that. First, they lay as many reporters off as possible – the corporate media has been doing this in spurts since the mid-1980s. Second, they concentrate on stories that are less expensive as

well as simple to cover, such as celebrity lifestyle programs/pieces, press briefings, court cases, shootouts, accidents, and crime. Not only are stories like that less expensive to cover and air, but they hardly ever entangle the parent organisation in controversy.

According to Herman and Chomsky (2011), the last filter is ideology of anticommunism. As the ultimate evil, communism has often been the specter, haunting owners of properties since it threatens the very base of their superior status and class position. Herman and Chomsky (2011), goes on to argue that the anti-communist regulatory mechanism reaches via the system to carry out profound influence upon the mass media. That in normal times, as well as in periods of Red scares, issues tend to be framed in terms of a dichotomised world of non-communist and communist powers, with losses and gains allocated to disputing sides, and digging for propaganda model side” regarded as a completely legitimate news practice.

1.1.5 Why the Focus is on Radio

Radio has changed how people communicate, share and promote their ideas, opinions, thoughts, and creations. It does not end there; at times, people use radios as their loyal and enlightening companions as they prepare to access the latest headlines. During World War II, for example, radio was invaluable used to communicate some of the breaking developments on the war front (Horten, 2003). However, radio has evolved over time to change the world in various ways, the most important one being a steadfast means of communication and information sharing. The number of FM radio stations is continuously on the rise in Kenya since the audience requires a variety of broadcasting services.

Besides being a medium of information-sharing, FM radios also participate in different spectra such as promoting economic development, education, socialisation, and entrepreneurship. Moreover, some radio stations have been used to spread political propaganda by the elite. For instance, a study by Stavitsky, Avery, and Vanhala (2001) examined the role of FM radio in modern society and stated that the low power broadcasting media plays a high-powered politics because the market forces are controlling them. The study revealed that mass media has become class media which is used as business management and political propaganda tools of multinational corporations which often control the political economy across the globe, especially in the age of globalisation. The scholars indicated that low power FM radio stations ought instead to play a crucial role in the all-encompassing development of weaker sections of society.

According to the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) (2013), 95% of Kenyans regularly listen to radio. Further, the council acknowledges that radio coverage in Kenya has been made even wider following the introduction of many vernacular FM radio stations which broadcast in local languages thereby allowing even the illiterate to access information. Also, while looking into communicate media in West Africa, Real (1985) underscores radio strength in the public arena. Specifically, the author asserts that, in as much as radio broadcasting is considered relatively uninfluential in many industrialised countries, in West Africa, however, it is the most widespread mass medium. Radio receivers in cars, homes, as well as elsewhere interconnect societal members who lack the mass literacy essential for printed media along with the capital needed for the extensive reception of television. It has hence been established that rulers, public officials, leaders of organisations, and their advisors have often been informed of the

significance of the media in advancing and advocating their standpoints and attacking the positions and arguments of their antagonists (Paletz & Lipinski, 1994).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

According to article 34 of the Kenyan constitution, freedom and independence of the electronic, print and other types of media is guaranteed, and the state shall not exercise control over, or interfere with any person engaged in broadcasting, production or circulation of any publication or the dissemination of information by any medium (LOK, 2010). However, according to Herman and Chomsky (2011), governments, from time immemorial, have continued to control the media. The scholars say governments together with the elite in society employ the use of five filters to accomplish this, and the filters are; media ownership, advertising, “flak” machines, the dependence of media upon government information, and anti-communism as a regulatory mechanism. The scholars add that those in power use manufacturing consent to sway the thinking of the masses through the media, and therefore cloud their judgement during campaigns and election to be re-elected. This according to Herman and Chomsky (2011) has a negative impact on society as the masses end up making wrong choices during elections, resulting to poor leadership. Therefore, it is a subject of interest to test the extent to which manufacturing consent might have influenced coverage of the 2017 presidential elections coverage in Kenya.

The 2017 presidential election was historic. The Supreme Court nullified the announced results declaring Uhuru Kenyatta the legitimate and therefore, duly elected president of the Republic of Kenya for his second term (Ngirachu, Kiplagat, Misiko, Apollo, & Mwere, 2017). The Supreme Court of Kenya held by a majority of four to two judges, that (Kaaba, 2018):

- a) The presidential election held on 8 August 2017 was not conducted in accordance with the Constitution and applicable law, rendering the declared result invalid, null and void;
- b) The irregularities and illegalities in the presidential election were substantial and significant, and affected the integrity of the election;
- c) Uhuru Kenyatta was not validly declared as president elect and that the declaration was invalid, null and void; and
- d) The IEBC should organise and conduct fresh presidential elections in strict conformity with the Constitution and applicable electoral laws within 60 days.

This was unprecedented anywhere in Africa. Following the annulment and an order that a new election should be held within 90 days, the opposition NASA opted to boycott the second round of elections. So, it will be interesting to establish to what extent the ruling party Jubilee applied manufacturing consent even after their main competitor; NASA opted out of the second round of elections.

Previous studies on media relations with either the government or opposition in Kenya fail to capture manufacturing consent, perhaps because no media house has been shut down completely in the past like it happened in 2018 due to political tensions. For instance, Obala (2017), in the thesis titled "*Media censorship in the devolved system of governance in Kenya*" is inclined towards the role of the media in controlling information of already elected leaders such as governors in various Counties. The study does not look at the role of media in the campaign period. However, Norris (2009) argues that the relationship between the government and media is uncommon in the US. This situation arises because the framers of the constitution assume that media, especially in a democracy, must be free from government control, checks and balances within the political system. This would strengthen independent external safeguards provided by news media eager to preserve the people's control over their government. Therefore, for media to play its watchdog role in society, it must be free from government control and interference.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objectives

This study sort to establish the extent to which manufacturing consent influenced the 2017 presidential elections coverage by the three select FM radio stations in Nairobi: Radio Citizen, Radio Maisha and KBC Taifa.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

1. To investigate whether media ownership was a factor of influence in the coverage of the 2017 presidential elections.
2. To evaluate if advertising may have influenced the 2017 presidential elections coverage.
3. To determine if overreliance on news from government as factor affected coverage of the 2017 presidential elections.
4. To establish whether flak machines had an effect on the coverage of the 2017 presidential elections.

1.4 Research Questions

1. Was media ownership a factor of influence in the coverage of the 2017 presidential elections?
2. Did advertising influence the 2017 presidential elections coverage?
3. How did the government's news sources affect the 2017 presidential elections coverage?
4. What influence did flak machines have on the coverage of the 2017 presidential elections?

1.5 Justification of the choice of Swahili FM radio stations

There are three main compelling reasons why Swahili FM radio stations have been selected as practically preferred cases for this study. First, the selected FM stations have countrywide reach and can be listened to by even the most peripheral communities in Kenya. Second, as a national language, Kiswahili is the most preferred language of communication in Kenya as it has a wider audience, but simple to comprehend (Okulo, 2019). Last, for simplicity and intractability purposes made possible by easy accessibility and affordability of transistor radios, but also on mobile phones.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Manufacturing consent is a contemporary aspect. It is eroding the electorate's voice. This is due to the elite influencing elections, and eventually who wins the elections. Thus, there is a great likelihood of voters being misled into choosing a leader who may be inept or corrupt. Therefore, the country is likely to head in the wrong direction (Obura, 2017). In the context of Kenya's electioneering period, for example, reporting by media houses has been biased (Obala, 2017). Instead of acting as faithful servants to all the presidential aspirants they are skewed to one side. To assess whether or not all forms of media outlets were linked to manufacturing consent, the study pursued to find out the nexus between media elite groups and media. This informed the reasons why they would always want to influence presidential outcomes in Kenya.

The study is vital to media managers and the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) in analysing how the media stations influence news coverage in Kenya. This research is of value to scholars as it adds knowledge to the existing reference material in public relations and other related

disciplines. Further, the study forms basis for research from the gaps acknowledged and makes recommendations for further research.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the study

This study looked at the extent to which manufacturing consent influenced the coverage of the 2017 presidential elections. The main focus being the three select FM radio stations in Nairobi: Radio Citizen, Radio Maisha and KBC Radio Taifa. Therefore the study formulated four specific objectives derived from the five filters of manufacturing consent first presented by Herman and Chomsky (2012). From these objectives, interview guides were formulated, and later used to interview 13 key informants who included 6 news editors and 3 advertising managers from the select radio stations, a senior manager at the Media Council of Kenya, and 3 communication experts who in this study are the independent voices.

However, this project faced few drawbacks. Firstly, due to strict editorial and management policies regarding information sharing and confidentiality in a number of media organisations, selected radio stations for research were reserved divulging needed information. Thus, some of the informants felt restricted sharing information they considered not meant for non-members of the organisation. However, the researcher tried to overcome this by promising the informants that the facts collected would be private and decently kept for further academic research.

Secondly, since the researcher is an employee of one of the radio stations being examined (i.e., Radio Citizen) there was a possibility of there being bias in the research findings, and for that reason the researcher consciously avoided bias by supporting findings with facts from the field.

Lastly, given the fact that this field remains under-researched in Kenya, the study was time-consuming, but the researcher went extra mile piecing together information from various sources for complimentary purposes, but also in anticipation of generation of new knowledge that would benefit the public and media stakeholders.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Manufacturing consent: In this study manufacturing consent stands for created systems of control which compel people to comply obediently and unquestionably with systems, structures and policy which direct activities.

Framing: Operationalised in this study, framing focuses attention on certain events then places them within a field of meaning. It assumes that the way something is presented to the audience may influence their choices.

Filters: The means as identified and explained by Herman and Chomsky (2011), which those who control the media use to actualise their agenda, These filters are media ownership, advertising, “flake” as a means of disciplining the media, the reliance of media on government information, and anti-communism as a control mechanism.

Propaganda: It is a press tactic that shapes people’s opinion. People become susceptible to its influence and through the use of stereotypes, it shapes public opinion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter contains literature review on manufacturing consent in FM radio stations. Manufacturing consent is closely related with propaganda, and for that reason, it is important that in this chapter we review what scholars are saying about the use of propaganda in media for political gain. Therefore this chapter focuses on among others, theoretical and conceptual frameworks as well as research gap.

2.1. General Literature

2.1.1. Media Ownership as a Factor in Elections Coverage

The ruling elite first encountered a threat by mass media during media growth in Great Britain. Specifically, Curran and Seaton (2002) analysed the mass media evolution in the UK, with a focus on the 19th century and described how the emergence of essential press reached the national working-class audience. The impact of this alternative press was the reinforcement of the consciousness of class by unifying the workers as it fostered a new perspective of viewing the world by the audience. Importantly, the radical press encouraged increased joint confidence by constantly stressing the potentiality of the working class in bringing change through combining forces and organising actions, a view that was not welcomed by the ruling elite. Therefore, the government enforces limitations on ownership of mass media through aspects such as the imposition of large investment requirements.

Based on such limitations, Brahm Jr. (2006) argues that media houses are artificially or structurally tiered. The top tiers are measured by aspects such as resources, outreach, and

prestige. Typically, it is the top tier that combines with the wire services and the government to define news agenda besides supplying the most substantial chunk of both international and national news to the lower levels, and hence, to the general public (Brahm Jr, 2006).

Whereas the introduction and stabilisation of social media continue to fragment FM radio audiences and slowly erodes the power of different networks and market share, controlling parent companies of popular radio stations still tops the tier of media houses in Kenya. Majority, if not all of the Kenyan population, have continued to suffer from restrictions on the free circulation of information for several years and every election cycle political drama always ensues. Kenya is among those countries that have not been able to surmount the status quo in the media and behind their ownership which constantly determine how the political agenda is set. Brahim (2006) argues that in the scheme of things, top management tiers of media organisations, by use of resources within their powers, could easily set socio-political as well as cultural and economic agendas, which affect the public negatively or positively.

2.1.2. Influence of Advertising on Media Coverage of Elections

Before advertising in mass media became popular, the price of newspapers (in the case of print media, for instance), had to cater for the total cost of carrying out business. However, due to constant growth of advertising, mass media products that attract ads can be produced without necessarily meeting their overall production costs (Klaehn, 2003). This trend endangers media products that lack advertising since their prices would be higher thereby curtailing sales. The net effect of such a scenario is reduced capital to reinvest to boost the stability of the affected media organisations through activities such as promotion, adding features, and introducing attractive formats. Moreover, Herman and Chomsky (2012) stress that an advertisement-based

approach tends to collapse those media houses that rely entirely on revenue from product sales alone. Interestingly, government forms one of the most prominent advertisement providers to media houses. In general, media houses are not just concerned about attracting mere audiences, but rather those with buying power. Accordingly, the media houses have to accommodate the requirements and demands of the government for them to freely operate and succeed.

Over-reliance on advertisement-based approach for running media houses makes media organisations susceptible to editorial distortion in determining and framing news stories (Herman & Chomsky (2012)). This is because of the unpredictability of the qualitative buying and purchasing power dynamics determined by mega advertisers such as governments and multilateral organisations which may change strategy depending on the political conditions on the ground. That advertising is important in the formation of political decisions among the electorate is not in question though, for as Ojekwe (2016) writes, the furtherance of democracy is contingent upon the candidates and political parties providing voters with sufficient information on their parties' visions, policies and vision. This enables them to decide on the basis of full information. Media therefore plays an important part of creating awareness and is an important effect on the electorates view and way of thinking. In other words, through advertising, the media offers a means of shaping and even manipulating public opinion - manufacturing consent. That explains why political parties, and politicians, world overspend a lot of monetary resources on political advertisements to create a positive impression and endear themselves to the electorate.

2.2.3 Government News Sources and Effect on Media Coverage

The nature of mass media business requires media owners to establish a symbiotic relationship with active information sources. This practice arises based on the economic necessities and need to reciprocate interests. At all times, the media will require a stable and reliable flow of news' raw material. They draw daily news schedules thereby creating a constant demand for news that they have to fulfil. However, it is unbearable for them to position reporters and cameras across many venues where essential news break. Furthermore, Lang and Lang (2004) observe that economic forces demand that media houses focus their resources where crucial news often emerge, where attractive rumours and leaks are likely to occur, and where regular press statements and conferences are released or held. As such, they over-rely on state house, government press, and other state departments and ministries to provide them with news activities. Therefore, since the government and its news sources want the merit of being regarded as credible, they go the extra mile to apply manufacturing consent where necessary. This is particularly critical during political conflicts such as highly charged presidential campaigns and elections.

Wolfsfeld (1997) argues that during conflict, news content becomes an important element and actors view the news media as one of the many tools that can be used in achieving their goals. In other words, the media becomes what Mutere and Ugangu (2004) call spaces for confrontation between opposing groups or as Wolfsfeld (1997) further puts it, tools for propaganda to promote violent political agendas. The consequence of lack of editorial autonomy, however, is not only among media professionals, but also to consumers –audience, the reader and listener (McQuail, 2003).

2.1.4. Magnitude of Flak Machines on Electorates' Decision-making

In journalism and mass communication, 'flak' denotes to the negative replies to media programs or statements (Herman & Chomsky, 2012). It takes various forms including threats, punitive actions, shutdown, lawsuits, speeches, direct phone calls or complaints among other ways of registering complaints. The government may use flak in large scale (i.e., because of its influence and resources) to create both costly and uncomfortable situation to media houses. Moreover, the state can defend its position even through the legislature or in courts, something that may harm media houses. Therefore, since media owners fear such consequences which may make advertisers withdraw patronage, they often avoid positions or programs that are likely to elicit flak from the government.

Flak can be properly understood within the context of the five roles of the media which the ruling elite often try to exploit and optimise for their gain. These roles which are well explained by Christian et al (2010) include the monitoring role, which describes the media as a vigilant informer for collecting and publishing potential information interest to the public and the collective role where the media creates partnerships between centres of power in society and journalists, notably states, to advance equally acceptable interests. This is the ideal, the practice is that power dynamics of the government, under authoritarian theory leverages and influences and controls the media over its agenda, failure of which leads to reprimanding of journalists.

2.2. Propaganda and Politics

Political elections are more of propaganda in nature. Where else is the objective of the propagandist clearer than in a political campaign? According to Pedro-Carañana, Broudy, and Klaehn (2018), all election material tends to persuade a voter to cast a ballot one way. Mullen (2015) reinforces this viewpoint by stressing that campaign content is deliberately structured in such a way to influence the electorate to the outcome anticipated – in other words, to vote a candidate into a given office. As a result, elections mainly create a manipulative environment whereby the widely undoubting public becomes prone to influence increasingly. The use of fear, polls, demagoguery, and propaganda are all means of manipulation, to which we are all susceptible.

Both MacKenzie (2017) and Baisa, Herman, and Horák, (2017) concur that for some, the difference between coercing and manipulation lies in outcome. A person is only manipulated if he or she believe short-changed, however persuasion suggests a jointly beneficial resolution. Zollmann (2017) floats critical questions such as who decides and determines this? And what if the target audience has no idea such efforts are taking place? In the end, it might not even matter what it's called; what will matter is how the efforts are perceived, and in turn, how that perception provokes new action (Jowett & O'donnell, 2018).

2.3. Influence by Powerful Foreign Nations

Interestingly, Herman and Chomsky (2012) note that “the elite control of the media and marginalisation of dissenters that results from the operation of filters occurs so logically that media news people, regularly operating with a comprehensive integrity and goodwill, are able to sway themselves that they select and interpret the news ‘objectively’ and on the basis of a

professional news values.” Moreover, whereas the limits of the filter restraints often make news objective, these constraints, are, however, so powerful and fundamentally incorporated into the system to the extent that alternative choices under which news can be selected are barely imaginable.

Similarly, Paletz and Lipinski (1994) argue that other foreign governments have been known to hire American public relations firms to improve their reputation and promote their policies within the U.S. The most blatant and successful contemporary example was perpetrated by the government of Kuwait which employed the Washington, D.C. based Hill and Knowlton before and during the Gulf War between the US-led coalition forces and Iraq.

Advertising too can be politically culturally potent, promoting not just products but such values as individualism, consumerism, sexism (the use of the female body to try to make certain products desirable), and tolerance (by showing members of different ethnic groups working and playing together). When an attempt is being made to bring together a disparate group of peoples as a nation, there must be some method of spreading the idea that everyone is a member of this new entity. People who have not been exposed to the message that they belong together will not have this feeling. In traditional societies, personal communication in villages often produces the only sense of belonging. The mass media might (be used to) change this by emphasising news which involves a national perspective and providing entertainment which develops some idea of a national character.

2.4. Systems of Political Communication

Carranza (2007) argues that political communication, as a system, consists of nine elements. They include political actors, audiences (today there is no uniform audience), organisations investigating audiences, organisations creating content for political communication, organisations disseminating the content of political communication, organisations ensuring dissemination of the content, organisations controlling the process of political communication, organisations regulating the process of political communication and organisations providing storage of political information.

Franklin (1995) lists five points that political communication focuses on:

1. The actors and agencies involved in the production of the political content
2. The political content of the media
3. The impact of political system on the media system
4. The impact of a media system on political system
5. The impact of political media content on the audience and/or policy development

2.5. Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 Propaganda Model

This study utilised the propaganda model as elaborated by Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman in the book '*Manufacturing consent; the political economy of mass media.*' The scholars authored the book in 1988 based on the context of the United States politics and mass media. Their main argument is that, mass media has a role reporting on events objectively as they unfold, enlightening the masses by uncovering hidden information through investigative journalism, as well as playing a watchdog role for checks and balances. However, mass media

has not been able to play these roles effectively. In particular, mass media has allowed the elite, the powerful members of society, advertisers, and media owners' space to control content production.

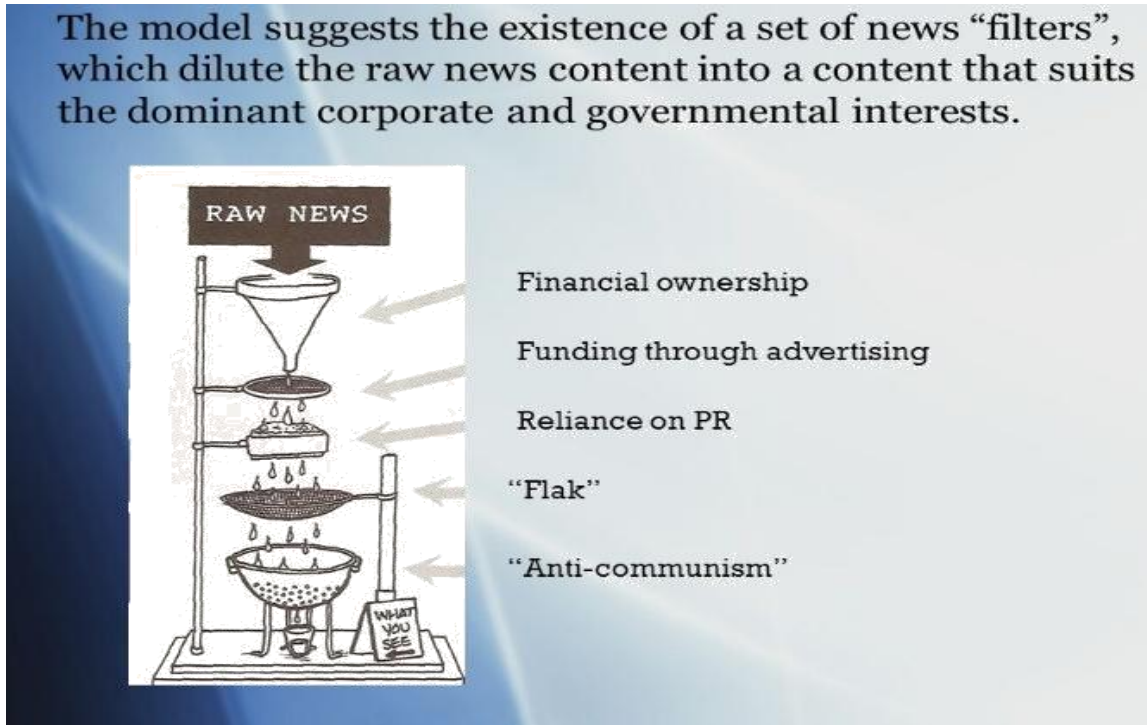


Figure 2.1: Herman and Chomsky’s Propaganda Model

Source: (Herman & Chomsky, 2011)

Chomsky and Herman present five filters that governments utilise to control content production in mass media, with the media being at the centre of manufacturing consent. In their view, leading media firms are relatively large businesses; controlled by very well-off people or directors subject to sharp limitations by owners and other forces of market-profit oriented; and they are closely joined, and have vital common interests, with other major banks, companies, and governments. This filter, Herman and Chomsky (2011) argue, is very powerful in the way it affects news choices.

The second filter is the advertising license to do business. Herman and Chomsky (2011) argue that advertisers will generally want to evade programs with serious intricacies and disturbing disagreements that interfere with the 'buying mood.' They seek programs that will lightly entertain, thus fit in with the spirit of the primary purpose of program purchases. Political bias remains designed into marketing provisions on buying. Therefore, for any mass media to succeed, they have no option but to accommodate the requirements and demands of advertisers.

Sourcing for media news is another filter that Herman and Chomsky (2011) say, those in power use to control mass media news content. The mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information based on economic requirement and mutuality of interest. The media need a reliable, and a steady flow of raw material of news. They have imperative news schedules and daily news demands that they must meet. And because they cannot manage to place news reporters in most places that news may break. Consequently, they depend greatly on the government and its departments for news conferences and statements. Business establishments and trade groups are also credible and regular news sources. Most of these press conferences and statements are just public relations stunts which mass media publish and broadcast using the 'he said; she said' style without questioning or interrogating facts.

The fourth filter is 'flak,' that refers to negative retorts to a media program or statement. It can be in the form of telegram, petitions, speeches, letters, phone calls and bills before Congress (or legislature) and other means of complaint, threats and punitive action. Interestingly, though the flak machines progressively attack the mass media, the later treat them well. They receive

humble attention, and their propagandistic links and role are rarely mentioned or analysed. This reflects the power of sponsors.

The final filter according to Herman and Chomsky (2011) is the philosophy of anticommunism. Socialism has always been the evil poignant to bourgeois. It threatens their class position and superior position. This belief system prepares the people in opposition to the foe, and it very well utilised against anybody upholding strategies that undermine property interests or bolster lodging with socialists and radicalism. Herman and Chomsky (2011) expound on legitimising versus useless third world decisions, where they contend that the last give a magnificent proving ground to the purposeful publicity model. For example, the authors note that some polls are held in approachable client states to legitimise their regimes and rulers, while others are held in disfavoured states to delegitimise their political systems. This natural dichotomisation is reinforced by the fact that elections in responsive states are often kept under U.S. sponsorship, with extensive U.S. management and public relations support. Moreover, Herman and Chomsky (2011) give an example of the elections held in Guatemala in 1984-85 which they argue were supported by the United States for image-enhancing resolutions. It is worth remembering that the Guatemala elections of 1984/1985 were held under conditions of ongoing terror against civilian population. The scholars go on to record that the U.S. government has hired several devices in its sponsored elections to set them in a favourable light. It has also had a distinguishable agenda of matters it wants to be stressed, as well as others it wants to be ignored or downplayed.

Furthermore, according to Herman and Chomsky (2011), the refusal of rebel opposition to participate in the election is portrayed as a rejection of democracy and proof of its anti-

democratic tendencies, although the real plan of the election involves the rebels' exclusion from the ballot. The sponsoring government also seizes upon any rebel statements urging nonparticipation or threatening to disrupt the election.

Official observers are dispatched to the election stations to assure of its public-relations success. The observers' role is to see that the election is "free" and "fair." Their real function, however, is to provide the appearance of fairness by focusing on the government's agenda and by channelling press attention to a reliable source. In other words, they testify fairness on the basis of long queues of voters, smiling faces, no beatings in their presence, and assurances and enthusiasm of the United States and the client-state officials. However, according to Herman and Chomsky (2011), all these trivialities are completely consistent with a staged fraud. They add that official observers in sponsored elections rarely question anything since they perform their public-relations function considering the government picks observers who are dependable supporters and the press gives them respectful attention.

2.5.2 Framing Theory

Encircling is a thought usually used to acknowledge media impacts. It is seen as the expansion of the plan setting hypothesis that organises an issue that makes the group of spectators consider its belongings (Cacciatore, Scheufele, and Iyengar, 2016). Framing is grounded on the idea of how media do place an occurrence or an issue within a particular field of meaning, which plays a vital role in people's decision-making procedure. It is used to represent the communication aspect, which leads to the people's favourite by yielding one meaning to another. According to Lecheler, Keer, Schuck, and Hänggli (2015), framing stimulates decision making process by highlighting particular aspects and eliminating the others. For example, the

newspaper frames the news within a specific viewpoint. This practice can change the perception of the issue among readers.

Confining is a significant feature wherein a specific issue can be stressed with a point of making sense of the occasion. It can control the group of spectators' discernment and furthermore the acknowledgment of a specific significance. As media assumes a basic job in the individuals' observations, Cacciatore et al. (2016) note that the antagonistic encircling can make a huge effect upon the individuals. For example, the delicate issues that do come in the media have been confined strategically by not supporting any standards, and in this way the individuals can settle on their own decisions. Likewise, a one-sided media can outline a subject adversely and that can affect the mass. Understanding and cautious translation of the crowd is unavoidable when confining. Media is a useful asset, and its substance ought to be deliberately surrounded with values since it effect group of spectators.

According to Dainton and Zelley (2017), journalists select the news stories influenced by many factors such as news values, editorial policies, and interaction with the creamy layer of the society. These factors build the frame. With the interaction between the media and the preconceptions of the people, framing plays a vital role in how particular issues are presented before the people and how they are perceived. Whereas framing can be used for effective communication in all fields of media and other organisations, it has been, however, mainly applied in understanding media effects (Dainton & Zelley, 2017). Effective communication among a mass can be done with well-organised framing of meanings and issues. Politicians can frame their vision effectively so that the public can understand its significance and accept it.

2.6. Study Gap

The information from the literature asserts that the government has a strong influence on media practices. Moreover, manufacturing consent exists in contemporary societies and continues to erode the electorates' voice largely due to the framing effect. Effective communication among a mass can be done with well-organised framing of meanings and issues. These framing effects can help us explain in what ways subtle differences in the presentation of a political issue can lead to changes in interpretation, attitudes, emotions and behaviour. Although the nexus between media and elite groups is undisputable, however, it has not been established if media frames, through manufacturing consent, actually impact citizens' understanding of political matters and processes. This concept will inform reasons why they would always want to influence presidential outcomes in Kenya.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

The investigation is based on a calculated premise that shows the connection between the free and wards factors as appeared in Figure 2 underneath.

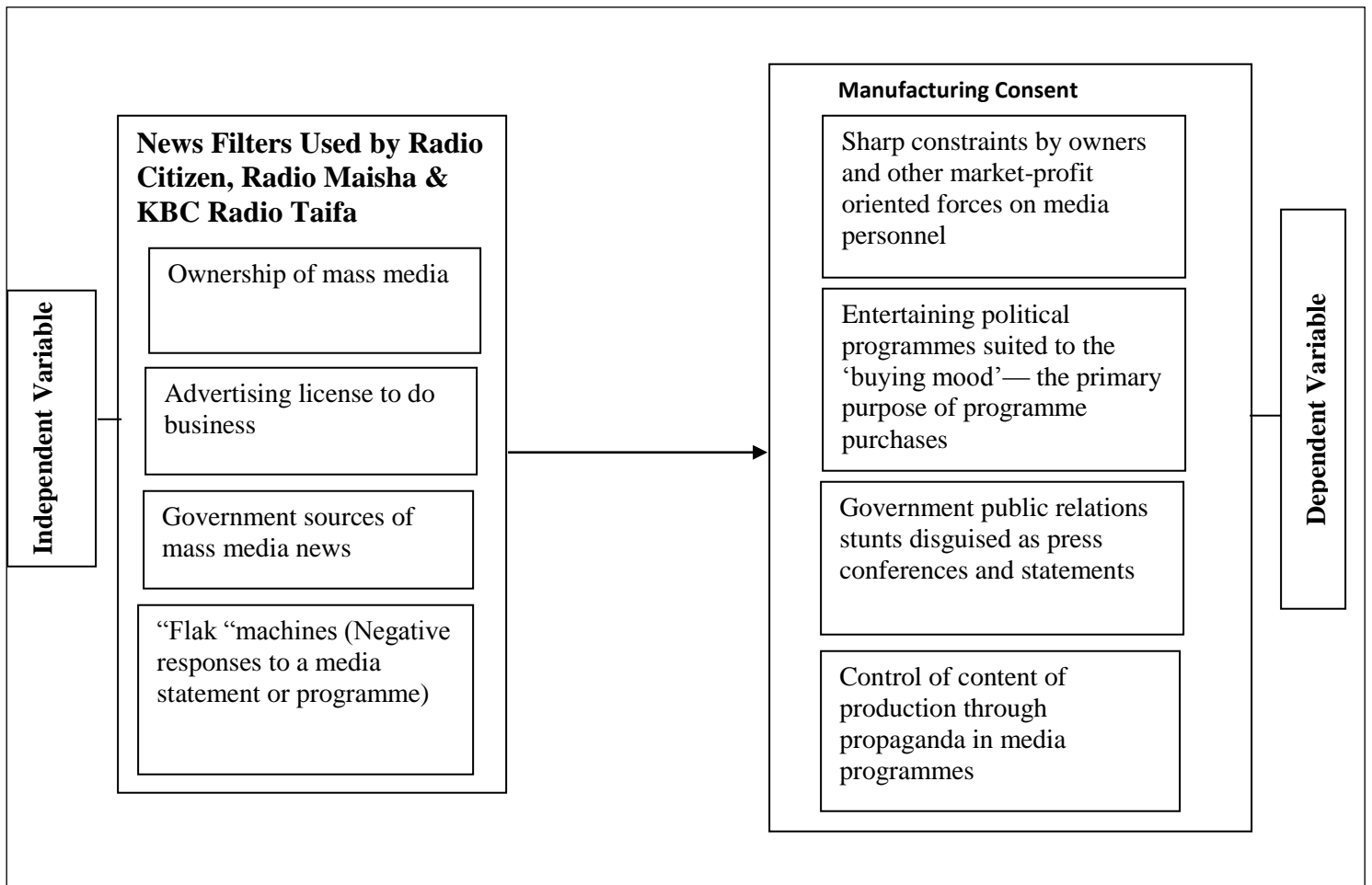


Figure 2.2: Conceptual Framework

2.7.1 Discussion

The conceptual framework in Figure 2 above postulates a relationship between the filters and manufacturing consent in the three select FM radio stations of Citizen, Maisha and KBC. The four filters, namely ownership of mass media, advertising, government sources of mass media new and flak machines lead to manufacturing of consent. These variables reflect the different types of pressure that are often brought to bear on decisions by different radio personnel. Such pressure often plays out in the form of sharp constraints by owners and other market-profit oriented forces on media personnel, entertaining political programs suited to the ‘buying mood’— the primary purpose of program purchases and public relations stunts disguised as press conferences and statements. Additionally, government control and self-oversight brings about falsehood, and twisting of data and purposeful publicity in radio programs especially news programs.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This part contains the exploration configuration, look into technique, unit of investigation, study territory, testing systems, information assortment methods, information examination, legitimacy and unwavering quality, and good contemplations.

3.1 Research Design

The study proposes to adopt a case study research plan of descriptive nature. It is descriptive because it helps provide answers to the questions of “who”, “what”, “when”, “where”, and “how” are associated with a particular research problem. Descriptive research design was used in this study to ascertain whether or not the government applied manufacturing consent on mainstream FM radio stations in reporting the presidential election of 2017. This research design was the most suitable for this study considering that this is an area of great interest as it yields rich data that lead to important conclusions and recommendations. Obala (2017) used descriptive research design to assess media censorship in the devolved system of governance in Kenya.

3.2 Research Approach

The study employed qualitative research method approach, an investigation research process, which uses symbols and words to indicate the presence or absence of phenomena or categorise them into different types. As an observation, qualitative method provides a researcher with particular ways of operationalising and measuring theoretical constructs and practical concepts.

The researcher employed a survey method to solicit information about the scope and level of electronic media performance during 2017 presidential election coverage. This allowed for obtaining more in-depth information about how indicators of Manufacturing Consent were identified and demonstrated by selected FM stations' electoral agenda setting plan during that period. Qualitative interviews of 13 key informants among them: radio news editors, radio advertising managers, a senior manager at the Media Council of Kenya (MCK), and independent voices (communication experts) enriched data collected by using face-to-face interviews.

3.2.1 Qualitative Method

Subjective inquiry shares the hypothetical presumptions of the interpretative worldview, which depends on the idea that social truth is made and supported through the abstract understanding of individuals engaged with correspondence (Morgan, 1980). Subjective analysts are worried in their exploration with endeavoring to precisely depict, disentangle, and decipher the implications of wonders happening in their ordinary social settings (Fryer, 1991). In this situation the specialist working inside the structure of the interpretative worldview is centred on examining the multifaceted nature, realness, contextualisation, shared subjectivity of the scientist and the inquired about, and minimisation of dream (Fryer, 1991).

Qualitative research in general takes place in a natural setting (Denzin, 1971; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1989). This means that topics for study focus on everyday activity as “defined, enacted, smoothed, and made problematic by persons going about their normal routines” (Van Maanen, 1983:255). Based on the fundamental beliefs of the interpretative paradigm, three characteristics of qualitative inquiry emerge. First, qualitative research is the

study of symbolic discourse that consists of the study of texts and conversations. Second, qualitative research is the study of the interpretative principles that people use to make sense of their symbolic activities. Third, qualitative research is the study of contextual principles, such as the roles of the participants, the physical setting, and a set of situational events that guide the interpretation of discourse (Ting-Toomey, 1984). However, as a method of inquiry, qualitative measurement has both strengths and weaknesses.

The qualities of subjective research technique include: acquiring an increasingly reasonable feel of the world that can't be knowledgeable about the numerical information and factual examination utilised in quantitative research; yet in addition its illustrative capacity enables the analyst to gather essential information in an adaptable, non-organised way that permits development of new data and understanding of gathered information, and consequent examination; it further gives an all-encompassing perspective on the marvels under scrutiny (Bogdan and Taylor, 1975; Patton, 1980). With subjective strategy, the analyst can interface with the examination subjects in their own language and all alone terms (Kirk and Miller, 1986). However, some of the notable weaknesses of qualitative method are *inter alia*, departing from the original objectives of the research in response to the changing nature of the context (Cassell & Symon, 1994); arriving at different conclusions based on the same information depending on the personal characteristics of the researcher; its inability to investigate causality between different research phenomena weakness; difficulty in explaining the difference in the quality and quantity of information obtained from different, non-consistent conclusions. Qualitative method requires a high level of experience from the researcher to obtain the targeted information from the informants. It also lacks consistency and reliability because the researcher can employ different probing techniques and the respondent can choose to tell some

particular stories and ignore others. Given these weaknesses, the researcher had to create control mechanisms to ensure data collected is reliable, relevant, and consistent with specified objectives.

3.3 Study Area

This study was conducted in Nairobi which is where many media houses are headquartered; hence it was not very challenging to access content managers, who make the editorial team that determines what the audience consumes.

The Media Council of Kenya (MCK) that is critical too in this study is headquartered in Nairobi as well, and therefore an interview with a senior manager of the council was successfully secured. Moreover, Nairobi County is considered the hub of Kenya's socio-political and economic activities. It not only brings together people from diverse cultures as well as political orientations but it is also considered the single most 'residential' unit with a high concentration of informed masses who consume news media daily.

3.4 Sampling

Kothari (2004) defines sampling as the selection of some part of an aggregate in the process of acquiring data of a total population by investigating only a population, which later helps in concluding a phenomenon. Becker et al. (2012), on the other hand, define sampling as a systematic way of selecting a representative segment of the population being studied in order to investigate. Sampling aims at getting information from the selected population, investigate, and generalise the findings.

3.4.1 Population

A sampling frame is a list of the actual cases from which the sample will be drawn. The sampling frame must be representative of the population. The sampling frame for the study was the list of FM radio personnel (editors and advertising managers) who were on duty during the 2017 presidential elections at Radio Citizen, Radio Maisha and KBC Radio Taifa, a list of officials of the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) media monitoring unit, and a list of communication experts with extensive experience (independent voices).

Table 3.1: Sampling Frame

Sub-Group	Group					Total
	Citizen	Maisha	KBC	MCK	Independent Voices	
Editors	5	2	5			
Advert Managers	1	1	1			
MCK Official				5		
Independent Voices					5	25

3.4.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample is a subgroup of individuals in the population. The study targeted 25 respondents of which 13 key informants were sampled because this figure was easily accessed and adequate time was spent to collect data from this sample size, which represents 52% of the unit of analysis. The thirteen key informants were selected using purposive sampling technique. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), note that judgment or rather a purposive sampling, which falls under non-probability means is useful in selecting participants or studies that entail a specific type of subject. This method would allow the researcher to reach out to informants who not only understand manufacturing consent but also who experienced the 2017 Presidential elections thereby providing the researcher with tangible and reliable data. The selected informants were mostly personalities who were making decisions on the chosen FM radio

stations. Therefore, these informants were those who were either directly or indirectly involved in sending or receiving government directives or complaints on the same from the opposition at that time of the campaigns and elections for the presidential polls.

3.5 Unit of Analysis

The unit of study refers to a group of individuals in a study (Kothari, 2004). In a media-related research, media personnel (both internal and independent voices) make up the unit of study. The unit of analysis is the 9 FM radio personnel (news editors, and advertising managers) who were on duty during the 2017 presidential elections at radio Citizen, radio Maisha and KBC radio Taifa, three independent voices (communication experts) and a manager at the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) in-charge of the media monitoring unit.

The unit of analysis is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Units of Analysis

Sub-Group	Group					Total
	Citizen	Maisha	KBC	MCK	Independent Voices	
Editors	2	2	2			
Advert Managers	1	1	1			
MCK Official				1	3	
Independent Voices						13

The study population were therefore drawn from three groups. The first category of participants involved FM radio personnel at the levels of editors and advertising managers in the select Swahili radio stations; Radio Citizen, Radio Maisha, and the national broadcaster, KBC. The researcher picked on the three Swahili radio stations because according to (KARF) Kenya Audience Research Foundation (2018), Radio Citizen and radio Maisha are the leading Swahili FM stations in terms of listenership numbers at 16% and 8% respectively, while KBC radio

taifa was picked because being a national broadcaster it is interesting to find out to what extent their election coverage was affected by manufacturing consent.

The second category of the study population comprises informants at the level of Managers drawn from the (MCK) Media Council of Kenya (MCK), and last category comprises of communication experts who in this study are the independent voices.

3.6 Data Collection

The study utilised face-to-face interviews of key informants as the primary means of data collection. Permission was sought from the three FM radio stations to collect data from the informants. The researcher by then mentioned overview of work power that was on commitment during the presidential races. Meeting guides were utilised to gather information from News Editors, Advertising Managers, Independent Voices, and a manager at the Media Council of Kenya (MCK). In any case, MCK administrator and the independent voices got and reacted to their particular interview guides through email correspondence. The interview guides contained open finished sort of inquiries. Utilising the letter of authorisation from the college to gather information, the specialist visited the media stations to get consent to gather information from the sources. Lists of officials who were on duty during the presidential elections period were also asked for. The researcher contacted five communication specialists to get independent in the investigation. Out of the five communication experts contacted, three sent their responses via email. As for the radio personnel, the researcher conducted face to face interviews guided by the interview guide, and assisted by a research assistant with a brief on note taking for each of the interviews.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

Information examination is the preparing of information to get answers to the exploration questions (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) alludes to the procedures and methods that are utilised to break down the information and give some level of clarification, comprehension, or understanding. The researcher read and re-read the information, recording impressions, searching for importance and deciding significant topics and themes as indicated by the destinations. The researcher at that point coded the information to distinguish examples and frequencies of terms and expresses, and made associations utilising content investigation. In addition, the subjective information was broken down through reasoning of the implications of ideas assembled. The strategy enabled the analyst to utilise judgment and perception to close inductively (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

The researcher transcribed, organised, coded, and validated qualitative data collected from interviews with 13 key informants who were selected for this study. However, the detailed discussion of the findings of the study was presented according to the respective objectives, and then the applicable findings discussed.

3.8 Reliability and Validity

The exploration instruments were exposed to master examination by the manager who helped in building up their legitimacy and unwavering quality. Expert assessment was crucial in modifying and removing any ambiguous questions, or those which lacked clarity.

3.9 Research Ethics

Research authorisation declaration was gotten from the college to permit information assortment. Correspondence was conveyed to sources to clarify the goals of the examination and develop a positive connection between the researcher and the witnesses. The respondents were guaranteed that the data gathered from them would be for the sole motivation behind the present examination and their personality would stay mysterious. Self-volition formed the basis of selecting the informants. All the informants were interviewed using a standardised interview guide to ensure impartiality.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0. Overview

This chapter focuses on the research findings by presenting, interpreting and analysing them within the parameters of related literature and theoretical frameworks discussed in chapter two.

The findings are based on four specific research objectives formulated as follows:

- To establish whether media ownership was a factor of influence in the coverage of the 2017 presidential elections.
- To assess if advertising may have influenced the 2017 presidential elections coverage.
- To find out if overreliance on news from government as factor affected coverage of the 2017 presidential elections.
- To investigate whether flak machines had an effect on the coverage of the 2017 presidential elections.

The main aim of the study was to establish the scope and level at which manufacturing consent paradigm influenced and determined the 2017 presidential elections coverage by the three selected Swahili FM radio stations in Nairobi: Citizen, Radio Maisha and KBC Radio Taifa. Consequently, interviews with key informants were conducted to understand the perceptions of various media personnel regarding the extent and effects of manufacturing consent in covering the 2017 presidential elections in Kenya. Data from the sampled participants was transcribed, organised in themes, coded, and analysed to test the specific research questions that guided this study. The thirteen (13) key informants (KIs) were interviewed between August and October 2019. This sample constituted representatives from

the editorial and advertisement departments of the select FM stations, as well as a senior manager at the media council body (MCK) and three independent voices.

4.1. General Characteristics of the Sample: Demographic Variables

Informants interviewed comprised male and female participants of different political affiliations, social status and media houses. The age of the participants ranged between 18 years and 51 years old. The researcher initially targeted a sample of 25 research participants, and ended up with 13 key informants (KIs) who were interviewed and responded to the questions independently. These informants constituted management cadre: editors, advertising managers and a senior manager at the Media Council of Kenya (MCK), as illustrated in the summary of key informants, Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Summary of Key Informants

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Within the Media Houses	Editors	6	46.15	46.15
	Advertisement Managers	3	23.08	69.23
Outside the Media Houses	MCK	1	0.08	76.92
	Independent Voices	3	23.08	100.00

4.2 Findings

Table 4.2 below shows a summary of the transcribed, organised, coded, and validated qualitative data collected from interviews with 13 key informants who were selected for this study. However, the detailed discussion of the findings of the study has been presented according to the respective objectives. Therefore, the organisation of this section is such that each objective has been restated and then the applicable findings discussed.

Table 4.2: Manufacturing consent paradigm in covering the 2017 presidential elections in Kenya

Themes	Categories	Codes
Media Ownership	Independent decision-making	There was interference with editorial judgements by the media owners.
	Vested Interests	Besides pursuit for financial gains and the genuine need to inform, educate and entertain the public, media owners ordinarily set up broadcast outlets to safeguard or advance business, political or other interests. Ownership influenced the coverage of the 2017 elections. This was through the promoting rates given to each ideological group on balance and value in treatment of key ideological groups and political competitors.
	Professional dilemma	Accusations of biasness and lack of freedom on running the programs during political season as compared to non-political seasons.
Advertising	Mixed reaction depending on the participants' affiliations	The role of adverts being overplayed since some stations survive without adverts. Even if the impact was there, it was very little in 2017 presidential elections (<i>MCK</i>). Adverts were critical as most media outlets – broadcast and print – private and state owned, partly played ball (in tune with state demands) because of the need to access the advertising cake (<i>Independent Voice 1</i>). There is a lot of financial haemorrhage in the media industry. Being a business just like the others some media owners were out not to offend the powers that be. However there was great improvement. On a scale of 1:10 I would rate it at 6 as opposed to 3 in 2013 (<i>Independent Voice 3</i>). Adverts were influential considering that media houses experienced revenue peak because political parties were focused on marketing their party manifestos, and so media houses looked at business content from that dimension (<i>Advertisement Manager</i>).
Overreliance on News from the Government	Effects on Impartiality and Objectivity	Government capitalised on media houses 'hunger' for news to feed them with news content based on pure PR content (<i>Editor</i>). Reliance on establishment sources has its own shortcomings and being an election year, more so one where the leadership is desperate to earn another term in office, government news sources can be (mis)used as a campaign tool to misinform and offer wrong projects (<i>Independent Voice 1</i>). The Kenyan media must revisit the agenda setting role. They must and deliberately so endeavour to generate its content, assert itself and set the agenda contrary to what is happening now where the political class run the show with the media playing catch-up. This had major implications on the way the 2017 political campaigns and ultimately, how the election was covered (<i>Independent Voice 2</i>). The government's communication machinery was very active during that period for purposes of what was said to be maintaining peace and order and this was witnessed by many statements and briefings to ensure the media did not fuel animosity through competitors. News from government departments was prioritised, and the prioritisation was enhanced proceeding, during and after the elections

		in order to give the government opportunity to convince the nation and the international community of the legitimacy of the results.
	Investigation of Political Stories	Minimal investigations on news from government sources are being conducted by media houses due to lack of sufficient finances and field reporters. So, they rely mostly on the Kenya News Agency-KNA and other correspondents whose stories are mostly skewed to favour either government or the news sources which facilitate their movements.
Flak Machines	Negative Responses	The ‘bias’ tag forced some journalists not to cover political rallies for specific parties (this was applicable both in government and opposition, with the popular remarks of “their names betraying them”).
	Threats and Intimidations	Several cases of threats, intimidation and harassments of journalists were recorded nationally, with some journalists fearing for their lives and the possibility of being arrested. Security personnel took the phones and cameras of some journalists and deleted photos of protests. Stakes were quite high in 2017 with the government of the day flexing its muscle to remain in power. This being the case all tricks in the book was applied with some media personalities lowering the guard in favour of government.
	Cautionary Statements	Even before the elections, the government, through the CS for Communications and the Communication Authority, had released guidelines on media coverage.
	Boycott Directives	Both sides asked their followers to boycott products for the media houses they perceived biased in covering their rallies. NASA against NMG, while Jubilee against RMS in some parts of Mt. Kenya.

4.2 Presentation and Analysis of the Findings

The major findings from the study were based on several questions raised in the interview guides for key informants fewer than four specific objectives are as follows:

4.2.1 Media Ownership

This area presents discoveries on the main explicit goal of the examination. This is done systematically utilising the words dependent on the inquiries as expressed in the information assortment instrument: the interview guides. Informants, in this case largely media personnel, with varied years of working experience in selected radio stations, were required to indicate the

scope and level at which the ownership of the media establishments they worked for determined agenda setting for 2017 presidential election coverage in the context of manufacturing consent paradigm. They were to state whether or not, they may have been instructed by media owners on how to cover and air stories on presidential elections. Responding to the questions, most of the informants confirmed having covered the electoral process under instructions from the media owners through editorial management, hence attesting to the conclusions made by Brahim (2006) that in the scheme of things, top management tiers of media organisations, by use of resources within their powers, could easily set socio-political as well as cultural and economic agendas, which affect the public negatively or positively.

This could well be discussed from an agenda setting theoretical perspective, which holds that the salience of matters conveyed by the news media influence the salience of issues to the public (McCombs & Shaw, 1977). In other words, the issues that are emphasised in news media coverage tend to become the issues that the public thinks are important. Summary of the findings indicate that media ownership influenced the coverage of 2017 presidential election by eliminating independent decision-making by the editors, enhancing their vested interests, thus creating professional dilemma among journalists.

4.2.2 Editorial Independence

There could be several reasons for media ownership issuing instructions to news editors. Those confirming working under such instructions stated that for purposes of peace, fair coverage, objectivity and balance, accuracy and factuality had to be observed to avoid compromising

media law and ethics as well as core editorial policy values of equal airtime allocation for all contesting presidential candidates, as one of the informants stated:

I was instructed to ensure that all political stories that I covered during the political party campaigns were given equal air time on radio. I had to distance myself from party leanings but do stories that cut across the board for purposes of credibility of our media house (Ed.1)

The informants further gave views on editorial policies in their respective radio stations and how the policies ensured sensitivity and objective coverage of contesting political parties, so as to avoid ethnic and tribal overtones that had dominated previous electoral processes. But also another argument for taking instructions from media ownership of selected radios was that editorial teams needed to insulate broadcast content from politicians hate speeches, as well as questions of partiality witnessed especially on the national broadcaster, KBC. This alert is caught by McGoldrick and Lynch (2005) in their talk on harmony news coverage, whereby they guarantee that harmony news coverage approach gives another guide following the associations between writers, their sources, the narratives they spread and the results of their detailing - the morals of journalistic intercession. They make an excellent point that it is the way a story is structured and presented that can cause the most damage.

However, those who denied receiving any instructions from media ownerships on how to cover the 2017 presidential elections argued that it was their responsibility to comply with professional, ethical, moral and legal obligations in ensuring objectivity, impartiality, accuracy and factuality in covering the elections and therefore could not deem such instructions as compelling and of fundamental necessity. A respondent state:

Given a wide range of experience some us journalists have in covering past electoral processes, I did not absolutely need instructions on what constituted my professional responsibility as a political journalist to carry

out my duty diligently. This is not to say I do not value what my media ownership may see as necessary instructions to that effect, but I just feel they should not have too many hands on matters editorial independence in determining how to cover emotive events such as presidential elections in Kenya (Ed.3)

Giving perspectives on this question and without over-emphasising the importance of editorial independence, and without overlooking the inevitable difference and divergent political leanings in the media fraternity, editors from the three selected FM radio stations gave their views consistent with the interview guides. When asked to provide practical indicators of objectivity and impartiality and how that was affected by instructions from media ownership, the editors of the three selected radio stations reiterated performing duty in accordance with the media code of ethics, insisting that the political context at the time could not prevail over their obligation to stick to the right agenda for peace, and that under no circumstances were they instructed by media ownership to set a predetermined political agenda in favour of particular political camps, since that would have set the stage for conflict. This perspective is at variance with the position of Wolfsfeld (1997) and Mutere and Ugangu (2004) of which the main argument is that during conflict, news content becomes an important element and actors view the news media as one of many tools that can be used in achieving their goals. Besides, the news media become tools for propaganda to promote violent political agendas. This position is confirmed by a senior editor at Radio Citizen:

At Radio Citizen, the emphasis has always been professionalism, and that is what gave us the onus to set the right agenda for the country in a context of political uncertainty. With a wide range of programmes focused on fair coverage of the 2017 presidential elections, we were aware of the bitter past and therefore were keen, accurate, factual as well as objective to ensure all contestants got fair and equal coverage in pre, during and post-election periods. This applied to our entire sister vernacular radio stations as well. The only practical instance which was ordered by powers beyond our media ownership, you recall was the directive by the Cabinet Secretary for Internal Security to all media houses banning live coverage of the swearing in of

NASA leader, Raila Odinga at Uhuru Park. This went beyond our editorial policy limits (Ed 1).

But not all of the senior editors in selected radio stations had the same views and position. Private broadcasters like Radio Maisha and Radio Citizen had many similarities and minimal differences in terms of response to external influence. At KBC, the story was different. Being a national broadcaster - state-owned, several issues emerged regarding who and how the political agenda should be set in the 2017 presidential elections. The KBC Act states that there shall be equal coverage of all political players at any given electoral process, but that is the ideal, the practice is that the opposition should not be given much prominence during electoral media coverage. A senior editor at the national broadcaster explains with pessimism how difficult it was avoiding instructions from the government on political coverage and lessons learnt from past elections. The editor states:

Based on 2007 and 2013 lessons, the 2017 general elections coverage, especially presidential, was approached more professionally and cautiously, and if we were to go back to 2013 we would definitely do it differently. This time was slightly different. However, that is not to say that instructions to tailor make the political agenda to benefit the ruling party was avoided. As a matter of fact, more airtime was allocated to Jubilee, assignments of covering political events, campaign rallies were administered on the basis of political party leanings, and even during tallying for presidential results in 2017 vernacular stations were heavily gagged and instructed on what to broadcast. There was a lot of intimidation at KBC headquarters, as selection of who among reporters should cover which political party rallies was determined by political party leaning. This interfered with our editorial freedom, and contributed to tension at KBC. After results were announced, we were instructed to not to cover anything to do with NASA. In fact, KBC was instructed to decline giving prominence to court proceedings on the case at the Supreme Court challenging the validity and legality of the presidential result, filed by NASA (Ed 4.)

The editor also paints a pessimistic view of the role the government of the day played in attempts to create dysfunctional media by dictating terms of how journalists working for the national broadcaster carried out duty. This was the case in the post-nullification of presidential results in 2017, when KBC's agenda setting for the country changed. This in the editor's view had set stage for controversy and conflict between competing political parties, one camp, especially the opposition NASA felt KBC had a biased agenda to favour the Jubilee side, which was determined to use the national broadcaster as its mouthpiece. NASA's feelings of trepidation can be comprehended inside Howard's (2002) structure of media examination when he thinks about media as a twofold edged sword because of the way that media can be both a loathsome weapon of savagery when it engenders messages of narrow mindedness or disinformation that controls open opinion, however it can likewise be the instrument of compromise, when the data it presents is dependable, regards human rights, and speaks to various perspectives. This, in the proof-reader's views was a perfect a long way from the training at KBC, as she expressed:

The post-nullification of presidential results by the Supreme Court in 2017 agenda shifted from peace to conflict again instructed by the ownership of KBC, who happens to be the state but constrained by the administration of the day. The focus in this case was conflict, with NASA as the epicentre. The instructions were that anything to do with discontent, demonstrations, and violence should be tailor made to portray NASA as architect of it all. Even guest speakers and analysts were to be carefully selected for the talk shows, and this made post-nullification of results analyses more problematic, given the partisan position KBC adopted as result of instructions from above. As senior editors, custodians of editorial policy and independence, we were demoralised (Ed.3).

Respondents at the level of editors affirmed that indeed they were reprimanded by media owners for stories aired. The views attest to the fact that some of the presidential candidates in the 2017 general elections, were given preferential treatments as one of the informants said:

I was accused of being biased for refusing to do a story from the government which was in response to an event that had been held by the opposition. I had faulted the sequence of events, considering that the event in question had been outlawed on all radio and Television stations, and here it was the government responding to it. I felt so intimidated for doing what was in line with professionalism, moral integrity and conscientious objection on what I felt was the right thing to do as a journalist despite political circumstantial conditions we found ourselves operating in (Ed.3).

The question arising out of the situation the editor has concerns with has to do with the extent to which journalists covering political issues such as electoral processes were free to carry out duty without duress or self-censorship. Besides, it touches on the scope of their freedom of expression. Since the study digs into how manufacturing consent theory played itself out at different levels of media coverage of the 2017 presidential polls, it is important that the editor's concerns are situated within the context of civil and political rights. The findings are in line with the argument by Morusoi (2016) that freedom of expression and free speech are key indicators of a democratic society whose transformative agenda is to allow citizens the right to use the media to criticise excesses within governments.

They are also consistent with the arguments that freedom of expression facilitates collective decision making in a democracy and facilitates people participation in authorship of law, hence supporting democratic self-governance (Meiklejohn 1948; Post, 2011). Moreover, they corroborate the position that protecting freedom of expression is a recognition of individual autonomy as a premise of liberal political thought enabling people to develop their ability to think more critically about their life decisions (Baker and Scanlon, 2011; Bunker 2001). In addition, they are in line with the argument of Dworkin (1996) that freedom of expression should be protected because of its 'instrumental' and 'constitutive' values. That means the role

of freedom of expression in facilitating democracy and democratic processes such as public debate, elections and so forth, and its importance as a building block of a democratic society.

Another problematic question was whether the media houses had editorial policies at all guiding election coverage. If they did, to what extent were those policies applied to diffuse negative coverage of all political parties whose presidential candidates contested in the 2017 presidential polls. Views on this issue varied. What was common across selected FM radio stations, however, was the affirmation and confirmation by editors and advertising heads of the fact that editorial policies existed and that no media organisation operated without such a policy. However, the point of departure was the scope of application of such a policy in the context of heightened political competition within the framework of desired inclusive democratisation process.

With editorial teams ensuring collegiality in determining broadcast electoral content to avoid bias and negative subjectivism, reporters, and entire news production teams adhered to the policies, guidelines and frameworks provided by the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) on election coverage to keep journalists across the media spectrum in sync. Adherence to those policies, according to the media council was consistent with peace journalism (Lynch, 2005). That is a situation where editors and reporters make choices about what to report, and how to report it.

4.2. 3 Professional Dilemma

Under harmony news coverage, columnists investigate the foundations and settings of contention arrangement, showing causes and alternatives on each side (not simply 'the two sides'), offer voice to the perspectives on all adversary parties, from all levels; offer innovative thoughts for compromise, advancement, harmony making and peacekeeping; uncover lies, conceal endeavours and offenders on all sides, and uncover overabundances submitted by, and enduring exacted on, people groups everything being equal and focus on harmony stories and post-war development. As a respondent from one of the selected radio stations claims, however, editorial policies could be applied selectively, especially where interests of political leanings conflict. He states:

It was partially applied because I know of some stories that were biased but which ended up on air while there were those that deserved airing, but were deliberately flagged. So, much as we talk of editorial policy, we should focus on their application. I believe, editorial policy out to act as a measurement tool for objectivity, integrity as well a legal guide, but I also know that as a state owned broadcaster, KBC ought to serve the public interest, in the case of 2017 presidential polls, it became so pro-government to the point of legitimising majority of the ruling party's political statements at the expense of all the opposition party- NASA's concerns (Ed.4).

The views of the above respondent, a journalist who feels that emphasising the importance of editorial policies is one thing, but operationalising them to serve all parties in a political contest is yet another thing all together. This corroborates the view of Galtung (1986, 1998) that peace journalism acknowledges that there is no one correct version of reality that everyone would agree with. By taking an advocacy, interpretative approach, the peace journalist concentrates on stories that highlight peace initiatives; tore down ethnic and religious overtones, prevent further conflict, and promote conflict resolution. These views are shared by McGoldrick and Lynch (2000) who describe peace journalism as a broader, fairer and more accurate way of framing

stories, drawing on the insights of conflict analysis and transformation. Further, they align with the view that media as a critical catalyst for positive change and its ability to influence processes in conflict situations (Mokua, 2008). The argument goes beyond a specific case study to imply how multidimensional the issue of media coverage remains, since it touches of the fundamentals of good journalism i.e. peace, objectivity, impartiality etc.

The views shared by one of Radio Maisha editors who see media freedom in Kenya seized by the political class during electioneering period. He says:

Coverage of electoral news entails fairness and impartiality for political parties to the contest and in case of disputed news the views of all sides must be considered. The practice in Kenyan media has in the past been problematic as we have tended to override editorial guidelines to serve our political leanings at the expense of the public interest. Free, fair and objective coverage of all presidential electoral candidates in the 2017 presidential contest was a test for most of our media houses. To buttress the importance of editorial independence, fact checking of political statements, avoiding statements that connoted hate speech, vulgar language and personal attacks, and defamatory as well as slanderous statements were all dealt with within our editorial policy framework (Ed.5).

The observations of the above editor and drawing on his concerns, one is brought to another understanding of the fact that, contrary to peace journalism, there is war journalism. War journalism is a format most practiced by today's journalists, and is seen as being oriented in war/violence, propaganda, elitist political victory. The format which is linked to sports journalism, typically sees its object in terms of a zero-sum game where winning is all that matters in any given contest, in this contest of this study, electoral process. In addition, war journalism plays up conflict as an arena where participants are grouped starkly into two opposing sides ('them vs us') in zero-sum game and focuses on visible effects of war (casualties and damage to property) (McGoldrick and Lynch, 2000). As two competing frames,

during the 2017 presidential elections media coverage, peace and war journalism played themselves out at various levels.

As the discourse on media ownership and its role in determining the use and impact of manufacturing consent as well as framing theories influenced the way electorates voted in 2017 presidential polls, the argument on whether or not selected FM radio stations had policies on editorial judgment on stories to air or otherwise, could not be concluded without discussions on whether or not proprietors played any roles in guaranteeing freedom to that effect. Theoretically, peace journalism is supported by framing theory. According to Webel and Galtung (2007), framing means to encode messages with meaning so that they can be efficiently interpreted in relationship to existing beliefs or ideas. As McCombs (2005) explains through framing some aspects of a perceived reality can be selected and make them more salient in a communicating text. In this manner, McCombs (2005) found that media frame can promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. In exploration of media roles, especially during coverage of electoral processes, it is significant to comprehend the environmental conditions which the media function. Because from this analysis one deduces that there are various factors influencing their operations including regimes in power, owners' agenda, state of media freedom, media professionalism as well as the model upon which the media sets the agenda.

4.2.4 Vested Interests

Together with the question of media ownership is the idea of proprietors and their role in determining what is reported and aired. In this case informants were asked to state whether or not proprietors just like any other top tiers in the media, gave free hand to the editorial

gatekeepers in the selection, identification and deciding stories to be aired on the basis of priority order based on objective criteria? Responses to this question varied from one informant to another in the three selected FM radio stations.

Despite divergence of responses, what was common among informants on this issue was acknowledgment of influence by proprietors on editorial independence directly or indirectly adding to the scale of media ownership influence on broadcast stories. The following responses by different informants demonstrate convergence and divergence of views on this issue.

I was not given a free hand given that some stories that I did and satisfactorily felt that were of good quality were flagged without being given a satisfactory reasons. The stories had to be approved by senior editors before airing. Some stories failed to see the light of day depending on the source, but also the reporter's political inclination and suspected leaning (Ed.1).

Another respondent gave a different view:

Yes and no. Yes because there was no interference in the manner editorial judgment regarding stories to be aired, editors and presenters felt supported by the ownership of our media house. But also as long as the news was fair to both sides, there was no issue. This was in-keeping with the fact that a national Broadcaster (KBC), a state funded by the tax payer needed to balance news and ensure objective coverage of the 2017 presidential elections. But no because a major shareholder is an active politician, very influential in determining who should be covered and who should not by our radio station, and thus self-censorship was inevitable from time to time (Ed.4).

These varied positions on the question under discussion underscores not only the critical need for the media in Kenya rethinking strategy for capacity building for media practitioners, but also maintaining high standards of professionalism. In the context under discussion, it was clear that media owned by politicians had different experiences as their editorial judgment depended on the owner's political agenda for the parties they belonged to. Responses varied depending on the media house one worked for during the 2017 presidential polls, but what has played out

is that media proprietors did not dwell much on editorial judgment although some editors and reporters were clearly biased towards certain political formations. This was a clear indicator in the unfolding trend and pattern of the 2017 presidential election media coverage.

This behaviour by the media is buttressed by Wolfsfeld (1997) political contest model. According to him, the political process is more likely to have influence on the news media than the news media are on the political process and the authorities' level of control over the political environment is one of the key variables that determine the role news media plays in political contestations, such as electoral competitions. Another argument in the model points the role of media in any modest political contest, varies over time and circumstance and those authorities have advantages over their challengers in terms of quantitative and qualitative media coverage as witnessed in the 2017 presidential polls when a number of media houses were used as tool for political influence.

Concerns such as these were also noted by the Media Council of Kenya (MCK), which is a statutory body charged with the responsibility to monitor how media behaves in setting agenda for the country, but also regulating such behaviour especially among journalists through various guidelines, such as coverage of electoral processes. And as observed by a manager at MCK, in the 2017 presidential election media coverage, factors such ownership played a key role determining the scope of editorial freedom and independence. He says:

The issue of media ownership is critical to the best journalistic practices globally, and therefore not Kenya specific. However, the difference between media professionalism in Kenya and say Europe and America is determined by exposure and experience of media practitioners. As a council MCK is concerned with the manner the 2017 presidential elections were handled unprofessionally by certain media houses, but noted significant improvement in terms of sobriety in electoral coverage, accessibility to information more especially in the context of social media. Isolating fake news from real was

not and remains a major challenge that requires new strategies for regulation. The council has been working on a range of capacity building for our media fraternity based on lessons learnt from the past on media roles and the electoral processes. We have been able to identify gaps in the media, IEBC and the general public (MCK.1).

The debate around media ownership and the shaping of electoral processes in democratisation process can be attested to by the facts, issues, and questions emerging from a wide range of responses above. The ruling elite in any country would always design strategies to *capture the state* for its own good so that instead of empowering the public to make informed choices, they disempower people using media ownership power relation to set individual political agenda to their own advantage. Media ownership discourse is closely related to how the media, especially the three FM radio stations selected as research subjects through advertising might have influenced and determined media coverage of the 2017 electoral process.

Whereas most of the responses from participants who actively work for these radio stations might not be authoritative, due to their unconscious bias, those from independent voices can be used to verify them. For example, one of the independent voices narrated that:

Vested interests are always alive among owners of media outlets. Anyway, besides pursuit for financial gains and the genuine need to inform, educate and entertain the public, media owners ordinarily set up broadcast outlets to safeguard or advance business, political or other interests. And Radio Citizen, Radio Maisha and KBC Radio Taifa were not spared of these biases either in their coverage of the 2017 presidential elections.

The national broadcaster, KBC Radio, lived up to its tradition of offering favourable coverage to the government of the day, in this instance the candidate from the ruling party, Uhuru Kenyatta, who was seeking a second term in office.

The privately-owned Radio Maisha initially appeared to lean – in its coverage – towards Raila Odinga, the incumbent's main challenger from the opposition's coalition of political parties. This position may have been persuaded by the factor that Baringo County senator, Gideon Moi, whose family (of retired President Daniel Arap Moi) owns majority shares in the Standard Group Limited's Radio Maisha, was locked in local political supremacy battle in Rift Valley region with Kenyatta's running mate, William

Ruto. But Radio Maisha totally shifted allegiance to the Uhuru camp as the campaigns climaxed after Moi's KANU party sealed a pact with Kenyatta's Jubilee, to back the former's presidential bid.

Radio Citizen, on the hand, appeared to offer favourable (sic) coverage to the opposition candidate, Odinga. This is partly attributable to the fact that the former Prime Minister and the owner of Radio Citizen, Samuel Kamau Macharia is personal friends, whose ties date far back in the early 1990s. S.K Macharia, who owns the Royal Media Services (RMS) has publicly confessed to having a bias towards the Odingas, right from 1992, when he backed the presidential bid of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Raila's father. But again, this "appeared to offer favourable" is largely a perception considering that most media outlets rushed to the incumbent's corner and were busy drumming up support for Kenyatta and only Radio Citizen was giving the opposition side airtime and fair coverage. In a way, Radio Citizen was more accommodative – not necessarily objective – of the three radio stations.

4.3 Advertising in Manufacturing Consent

When asked to respond to questions and state whether or not their media companies' revenue collections were affected during the 2017 presidential election, informants held different positions. There were those who responded to the questions stating how advertising influenced and affected the way media behaved during that time. But there were informants who denied the fact that advertising affected presidential elections coverage in any way. There were several reasons to explain this kind of response patterns. First is the argument by Herman and Chomsky (2012), and Ojekwe (2016) that over reliance on advertisement-based approach for running media houses makes media organisations susceptible to editorial distortion in determining and framing news stories. This is because of the unpredictability of the qualitative buying and purchasing power dynamics determined by mega advertisers such as governments and multilateral organisations which may change strategy depending on the political conditions on the ground.

Second, media houses perceived as pro-government were affected in terms of revenue generation because potential advertisers changed strategy and took business to private media houses categorised as impartial in covering presidential electoral politics of 2017. During electioneering period in any country, every business is affected due to the political situation. An Advertising manager of one of the selected FM radio stations (Radio Citizen) affirms:

When political temperatures are high, investors fear for their businesses, and therefore deactivate involvement in advertising business. In the 2017 contest, both the opposition and the government advertised massively in pre-election period because they wanted their agenda for the formation of next government heard. Hence due to high traffic and interest from consumers, revenue for many media houses saw an upward trajectory. But after presidential results were declared, contested and nullified by the Supreme Court on September 10th, 2017, revenues shot down as there was a radical shift in perception and political apathy in the country. Advertising companies generally pulled out, some with arrears to media houses (AD.1)

Some of the key advertisers, the manager further stated, included but not limited to IEBC, government agencies, civil society organisations, human right organisations. Compared with 2013 elections, 2017 was more organised in terms of strategies to respond to business shockers in case expected potential advertising faced a backlash. The manager says:

Unlike in the past when we would witness constant disruption in our programming due to unprecedented conflict between the marketing department and editorial board, in 2017 there was consultation between the various departments to ensure thing ran well to attract more advertisers and hence revenue increase. Another positive thing about 2017 was that unlike 2013 when outstanding arrears were huge, in 2017 we changed strategy to make sure our advertisers paid up-front following a thorough vetting carried out on advertising companies before accepting adverts. We had scenarios where an advert would start running and without warning stopped and pulled out mid-way. This affected us in a big way as planning became problematic due to unpredictability of strategic corporate advertising. But as to whether or not these changing dynamics affected media houses' revenue build-up, the answer is yes because post-nullification period was characterised by political drama and theatrics that were quite unreliable for business (Ad.1)

These observations presented by the above advertising managers have been shared by many scholars who view political advertising as a key component in political communication (Ojeka & Ajakaiye, 2015). The authors presented what they considered a dominant discourse on the scope of political advertising in political communication, the changing dynamics and effects on the electorate and media organisations generally and Nigeria in particular.

The radio Maisha the story was not so different from that of Radio Citizen. Their editorial department planned even before the elections on how they were to cover the elections in a manner that will be perceived impartial to ensure they are not denied business by political parties participating in the election. Radio Maisha advertising manager said:

We were well prepared for business as a station. Even before the elections, we had already identified factors that would deny us business from the political competitors. So we made sure our editorial department gets it right in terms of objectivity, and fair coverage of presidential candidates to just ensure we are not at crossroads with either side. Any time as a station you are perceived to lean towards either side of the political divide during electioneering period, you are likely to lose out on business. (Ad.2)

The above response confirms that media houses during the 2017 presidential election were operating with caution when it comes to coverage of the elections. They were extra careful not to step on anybody's toes for fear of being denied advertisement. Furthermore, the above manager's response confirms the position of Herman and Chomsky (2011) that the media compete for advertisers' patronage. The choices of these patrons significantly affect the welfare of the media. Therefore, for any mass media to succeed, they have no option but to accommodate the requirements and demands of advertisers.

Third, the issue of framing played itself out at various levels based on the shift in agenda setting from heightened political competition to peace, especially in post-nullification of results phase. Civil society organisations, Kenya National human rights Commission, National Anti-Corruption steering Committee together with other advertisers held back advertising due to apathy and therefore relying on political advertising did not yield much revenue for media houses in the second phase of the 2017 presidential elections. However, as two of the selected FM radio stations expressed concerns over the behaviour of advertisers shifting alliance in doing business with during the 2017 presidential polls, the national broadcaster KBC RadioTaifa faced a different situation. When interviewed on the question as to whether or not quantity and quality of revenue were affected in any way due to the prevailing political situation in the country at the time, KBC advertising manager expressed optimism say it was all fine with national broadcaster. He said:

Strategies for political advertising at KBC were different given the fact that the national broadcaster is not limited to government agencies, CSOs or any other institutions wanting to do advertising business with us. We had challenges alright, but not to the point of disrupting the way the corporation operated during the 2017 polls. A fundamental strength central to our confidence during that time was our editorial policy. Unlike in the past when KBC was all KANU and less of the opposition, during 2017 presidential elections, balanced coverage of the presidential electoral process helped KBC get many political adverts from across the political divide. It was interesting to see both Jubilee and NASA compete for space on KBC (AD.3)

However, what might have largely contributed to KBC doing so well during the three phases of the 2017 presidential electoral process? What underlined the confidence and optimism in the midst of political turbulence? The advertising manager identified and listed reasons:

Our programmes and editorial management team ensured balanced news and programming content which actually won the political and CSOs good will. Civic education for the public was continuous with expert guest speakers coming on board to give perspectives on a range of election and peace related issues during the time. KBC's political agenda setting was also determined by

the business community. Corporate companies such as Safaricom determined political advertising agenda setting. But just to provide how our revenue fared on in the three phases of the electoral process is critical in understanding why KBC was doing well during that time: 1) the Pre-election agenda was to attract as many adverts as possible from across the board. So this worked well for the national broadcaster. We experienced revenue peak, because political parties were focused on marketing their party manifestos, and so KBC looked at business content from that dimension; 2) during elections many adverts were stopped and so with only normal commercial with less political and election overtones, revenue dropped; 3) in post-election period with a shift in agenda setting, CSOs focused more on peace following post-nullification of presidential results backlash. The re-run of presidential polls, the government significantly reduced political advertising because the opposition NASA had pulled out of the race, 4) post-run phase following the two swearing in for the head of state and 'the people's president' with the drama accompanying them, surprising revenue at KBC started stabilising with government embarking on massive advertising this time for peace and calm in the country, CSOs and UNDP were now focused on peace; 5) however, social media content surge on a range of post-nullification issues threatened to derail gains made a few weeks into the new government. When for example, parties were invited on talks shows and one of them declined, the party which declined invitation would resort to social media to portray KBC as biased and that would affect revenue flow due to perceived partisanship and apathy from the corporate world (AD.3).

From the above observation, one sees the logic in the optimism expressed by KBC's advertising manager in the context of maximisation of profit, from political advertising in the 2017 presidential polls, which elicited a range of electoral related issues. The issues included disparities and bias in airtime allocation for political party campaigns. This reality is inconsistent with the position of Horatio *et al.* (2014) that to consolidate democracies, dealing with any kind of disparities in electoral advertising is critical.

Again, based on the inconsistencies arising from participants from different radio stations, opinions of the independent voices become crucial. In particular, the three independent voices sampled agree that advertising significantly affects how the media conducts its coverage. One of the participants from this category observed that:

Most media outlets – broadcast and print – were partly playing ball (in tune with state demands) because of the need to access the advertising cake. And many are occasions when the government threatened to withdraw adverts from national papers because of perceived negative publicity of the government (read, the presidential candidate and his running mate of the ruling party).

From the above reactions and talks, one concludes that political publicising very likely assumed a significant job in impacting the 2017 presidential appointive inclusion. Be that as it may, this impact was powerless and could be a cognisant impact or subliminal impact. From this, it is derived that political promotion crusades have little impact on casting a ballot conduct. Also, political advertisement crusades stay unavoidable, which implies they are as yet valuable in the political decision battle process; radio and TV remain the best methods for publicising (Ojekwe, 2016).

4.4 Overreliance on Government News Sources

4.4.1 Impartiality and Objectivity

To obtain data that would answer questions emerging from this objective, informants were asked to state the percentage of information from the government sources which constituted news bulletins through the 2017 presidential media coverage, and responses varied significantly with a number of informants saying government sources of information was skewed and record low. The editorial gatekeepers gave convergent as well as divergent views on this kind of variation in patterns. IEBC was considered one of the key sources of information coming in from the government side, which provided updates on the electoral process, with its critics downplaying and faulting any information it provided. Despite criticisms labelled against it, however, IEBC was pivotal in the provision of any news regarding the electioneering process,

but also to complement what Kenya News Agency (KNA) and the Ministries were providing.

As one of Radio Maisha editors opines:

The government's communication machinery was very active during that period for purposes of what was said -maintaining peace and security and this was witnessed by many statements and briefings to ensure the media did not fuel animosity. Private media organisations such the Standard Media Group was often at odds with a number of government agencies that were too reluctant to divulge information to us, this was unfair and outright bias on the part of government. Information from government related agencies streamed in heavily in pre-election period constituting about 40% of information on campaign trails. But also live talk shows on our radio provided a lot in terms of information to the public as expert guest speakers provided interpretation and analysis on critical issues bedevilling the electoral body IEBC and the entire process (Ed.6).

The views expressed by Radio Maisha editors are shared by one of Radio Citizen Editors who also termed government sources of information quite problematic when it comes to provision of credible and reliable information to serve public interest. He succinctly says:

Information in for various programming and news bulletins from government agencies was very frustrating, disjointed and piecemeal. There is a great deal misconception among government agencies and institution about private media organisation and this has been very damaging and unfortunate on the side of government. There were a number of agencies that out rightly refused to give information, and if they eventually did, one would risk firing if s (he) ever used the information, because it would be distorted and unreliable even with authentic verification mechanism in place, the risk would not be worthy. IEBC provided information which at times turned out to be false and contradictory on the electoral situation, especially in the post-nullification period. Very little information was divulged by the electoral body and this precipitated social media hijacking the situation to compromise the credibility of IEBC body (Ed.2).

The situation at KBC Radio Taifa was different in that there was over-reliance on government news sources. Although there was some form of effort to use news from other sources in an effort to give airtime to other political players in the opposition and other Kenyans, including

the civil society groups, greater importance was given to the government, with more than 50 percent of information coming from there, as one of the editors explained:

Being a government parastatal, it goes without saying that News from government departments is to be given priority. However in the run up to the 2017 general election, the prioritisation was enhanced proceeding, during and after the elections in order to give the President and those alienated to his political party an upper hand in order to convince the nation and the international community of the legitimacy of the results (Ed. 4)

The prioritisation of government news sources in its broadcasts meant that the station could not offer objective, impartial and balanced coverage of the events prior to, during and after the 2017 elections, nor could it be comprehensive. Much as there were attempts to pick only what were relevant to the audience, it was more the exception rather than the rule. This state of affairs was particularly rampant also because of what the editor termed lack of finances and field reporters to do own investigative political stories like many other (private) media Houses. Thus, they had to rely mostly on KNA and other correspondents whose stories are mostly skewed to favour either government, or the news sources which facilitated their movements.

In the context of manufacturing consent therefore, since the government obliged the major source of information to many media houses, through its agencies such as state house, government press, and the ministries, it then becomes clearer why little information would be forthcoming to the other media houses. In the form of information surge, the main aim for providing certain information on the electoral process on the 2017 polls was not only for the common good, but tailor-made to shift the electorate psyche towards voting in a certain manner.

These findings corroborate the view by Shirch and Bratic (2007) who maintain that the most obvious effect of media is in their ability to increase cognitive knowledge (how the public think about issues affecting them such as electoral processes) by supplying people with information. The scholars acknowledge that some well-crafted messages and media formats have been effective in modifying and altering attitudes or the attitudes people hold toward each other.

4.4.2 Capacity to Investigate Political Stories

This then brings us to the question as to whether or not there was capacity built for editorial, programming and continuity teams to be able to interrogate news information coming in from government sources. Responses to this question varied significantly with a number of informants interviewed confirming that capacity building to interrogate news information from government had been always done in-house through editorial and analysis teams for purposes of verification of facts and authenticity of stories to help diffuse propaganda by the government on the 2017 presidential electoral process marred with controversy. The informants were in agreement that interrogation was done for purposes of clarity on contentious issues around the political situation, and especially when government sources were reluctant to respond to challenging questions of national security nature.

Further, the informants were confronted with yet another question which required responses on issues of fake news and propaganda. This was done in a bid to obtain greater insights on the issue of verifiability and authenticity of sources of information, especially as far as those obtained from the government were concerned. Hence when the editors were asked whether or not editorial teams were able to detect fakes news and propaganda among news coming in from political parties, various responses emerged with a significant number confirming editorial

teams' ability to detect fake news and propaganda at all levels of information flow. A Radio Citizen Editor shared his thoughts, emphasising that they were more vigilant this time round more than ever before if lessons from 2007 were to go by. In his view:

The editorial team at Radio Citizen is fundamentally professionalised with the ability and capacity to detect, identify and verify fake news and propaganda over the years. We have a system and mechanisms that enable us fact-checking with existing data through expert views. We always counter-check with other sources. To authenticate our sources of information, calling sources for verification of information, examination of content and sources of news, has always been critical for our teams. This has involved cross-checking facts from official publications or alternative sources thereby corroborating information with parties concerned. All information coming in especially from correspondents was subjected to news values, vetted and verified before transmission. Fake news would be easily detected from their insensitive and inflammatory nature. News from state house would be verified through the government spokesperson and for political parties, especially Jubilee and NASA, Party communications director would be phoned to clarify and verify certain information about the party (Ed.2)

The MCK has put in place several intervention mechanisms to help media houses build capacity for their professional teams through continuous and sustainable in-house capacity building programs through periodical trainings. And as MCK put it, there is more demanded from media houses than from the council. MCK manager explains:

There exist clear intervention mechanisms at the Council on media and election monitoring, training of journalists in electoral reporting, detection of hate speech, media content monitoring and evaluation, editor feedback systems. All these are meant to help build public trust and confidence in the media. In the 2017 presidential election coverage, the Council monitoring team worked well and we were able to identify, list and categorise emerging gaps and a range of associated risk types of those gaps. Time has come for the Kenyan media to start looking at election as a critical national issue to able to set the right agenda around it, because it affects everyone. We are committed to making sure journalists across the board are well prepared beyond 2022 electoral time limits. The medium of radio has far reaching implications for national integration and cohesion, security, peace and human rights (MCK .1).

It is worth noting that considerable agreeableness is evident in the responses by a majority of the KIs. Moreover, the opinions of the independent journalists serve to reinforce the assertions by the rest of the participants. For example, one of the independent voices revealed that:

Reliance on government news did influence coverage of the 2017 presidential election albeit to a very marginal level. Reliance on establishment sources has its own shortcomings and being an election year, more so one where the leadership is desperate to earn another term in office, government news sources can be (mis)used as a campaign tool to misinform and offer wrong projects.

It is evident from the findings that, the government sources of information such as state house, government press, and the ministries provided either scant or less beneficial information. In fact, there was well-directed information surge calculated to create certain impressions and paint a favourable and pro-establishment picture. This charge is levelled against the IEBC as well; much it had been expected to be independent. The general effect of these sources of information was that they denied the listeners important information that they have needed to make informed electoral choices in exercising their democratic prior to, during and after the 2017 elections. The information appears to have been geared towards distortion, misinformation and propaganda.

4.5 Flak Machines

Objective four sought to establish the magnitude that flak machines had on the electorate's ability to make informed choices during the 2017 presidential elections. The questions responded to by research subjects here had to do with 1) what might have been the government's response or reaction to the way selected FM radio stations covered 2017 presidential election; 2) whether or not journalists working in those radio stations were reprimanded by the government over stories aired, 3) whether or not those journalists were at

one time instructed on how to cover political party campaigns in the presidential elections 2017, and 4) whether or not journalists were given free hand by the government to exercise media freedom over stories covered in 2017 presidential elections.

4.5.1 Negative Responses

In response to the question of the government's response or reaction to the way selected FM radio stations covered 2017 presidential election, the findings were varied depending on whether the radio station was state-or private-owned. In the case of state-owned radio stations, the responses showed that there was a deliberate attempt by government agencies and even the IEBC to control what information was disseminated to the public as reflected in the views of an Editor from KBC:

We were ordered to stop airing tallied presidential votes shortly before journalists were kicked out of the IEBC tallying centre. Previously, we used to broadcast our own tallies because we had reporters in all the constituencies (Ed4).

There was divergence of response, however, from informants from private media organisations, the dominant view being that the government response was not felt in any way, at least not in a manner that showed acrimony or attempt to intimidate. This is captured in the views of an editor from Radio Maisha:

From where I sit the government did not have any problem with how we covered the elections. As Radio Maisha we were free to cover every situation freely (Ed 2).

These views are confirmed by an Editor from Radio Citizen:

The government did not have any issues with the way we covered the presidential elections because we had instructions on censoring inflammatory statements from politicians which could have incited the public (Ed2).

The variations in the responses from the key informants reveal the extent of editorial independence in state-owned and private media organisations.

On the question of whether they were at any given time reprimanded by the government over a story they aired, the responses from the private-owned radio stations were largely similar, with the main being that there was no punishment meted out to anyone because of what they aired. The fact that they were able to work on the basis of and followed the laid down regulations on election coverage made it possible to work within the professional limits. They were also guided by media ethics. This is evident in the views of one editor from Radio Maisha:

No, we were not reprimanded as Radio Maisha, as for other outlets I am not aware (Ed1).

The situation at the state-owned own radio station, KBC, was different though. The editors faced intimidation and were reprimanded for their work, as reflected in the views of one of the editors:

"I was at the national tallying centre. There was tension and media was careful not to cause a repeat of 2007. This time round KBC did not send reporters in all the constituencies. Unlike previously, only results on the IEBC portal were announced. Opposition press conferences on tallying of presidential results were pre-recorded and edited. Online was highly restricted. The nullification of the presidential results was to be played down". (Ed 3).

But even as the above respondents, especially those from private sector paint a not so bad picture in relation to negative responses as a theme, the Media Council of Kenya recorded incidences where journalists were actually harassed and intimidated by the state while covering the 2017 presidential elections. MCK manager explains:

We did record 35 cases nationally of threats, intimidation and even harassment targeting journalists during the 2017 presidential elections. One columnist from KBC announced that security staff took his telephone and erased all photographs of fights. Another columnist covering decisions for radio Maisha and Kenya Television Network (KTN) was captured in

Kibra while covering fights. He was taken to Kilimani police headquarters for purportedly wearing a cap, and body covering without permit. In some incidences, political rally crowds turned hostile on reporters from media houses that politicians accused of bias in the coverage of presidential elections. Journalists from certain media houses were forced to retreat in certain political events due to the 'bias' tag.

Journalists reported harassment, especially in Nairobi, where they were denied entry in political venues due to the 'bias' tag. Some of the journalists were openly told their names betrayed them. NASA and Jubilee functions notorious for that. (MCK1)

Responses from independent voices show as well that journalists were threatened.

Most journalists were threatened to just follow announcements from IEBC even when they had been at tallying centre and in some cases they witnessed anomalies but could not say much. The media was a conveyor to a single narrative. (*Independent voice 2*)

In response to the question of being instructed by the government on how to cover political party campaigns in the presidential election, the views were evidently convergent across state-owned to private radio stations. There were orders seeking to bar broadcasting of hatred messages that may cause mayhem in the country. Where there were no direct instructions, however, the government threats to shut down media house believed to be covering opposition functions "seen" to be a threat to national unity showed that the government expected media to ignore the opposition in their favour.

An editor with Radio Maisha spoke as follows:

To some extent yes, for example if an official of especially the "government 's party" agreed to an interview or one on one we were sometimes given questions before hand and we were not allowed to go outside the agreed questions.

The responses from the non-state radio stations are not different from those expressed by the editors from the state-owned KBC Radio Taifa: In fact, the practice of working under the instructions of the ruling party is so ingrained in the daily working of the station that is the rule rather than the exception, as pointed out by one of the editors:

KBC Act (CAP 221) of 1989 requires us to be impartial by giving all political parties and presidential candidates equal coverage. However, the government appoints politically correct board of directors and the Managing, thus they ensure that the ruling party gets the lion share of the airtime. Opposition parties are ignored sometimes. Some managers are also involved directly in political activities of the ruling party. The correspondence is through the management (Ed 2).

4.5.2 Boycott Initiatives and Use of Cautionary Statements

The question on whether or not journalists were given free hand by the government to exercise media freedom over stories covered in 2017 presidential elections, elicited varied responses depending on the ownership of the radio stations. Privately-owned radio stations felt that the government did not provide a free environment for them to cover the stories on the polls. The dominant view being that there was undue pressure to conform to what the government wanted to be aired. There were some instances when government leaders refused to answer questions outside what appeared to a predetermined rulebook. In other instances, the government went as far as demanding for a blackout of certain politicians as captured in the views of one editor from Radio Citizen:

The government did not accord the 100% freedom on the presidential elections coverage. For instance the government had warned on airing some politicians speech live. Some politicians known for reckless speech like former Machakos senator Johnston Muthama and Embakasi East MP Babu Owino were handled with care when airing their speeches live (Ed 2)

The state-owned KBC Radio Taifa was even more affected by overt government pressure and restriction of journalists' freedom to perform their duties. The responses from the editors show there was no freehand to cover stories on the polls. One editor from the station spoke as follows:

We had no free hand because the stories were slanted in favour of the ruling party. Opposition parties complained to IEBC about our bias (Ed3).

Responses to this question across the three radio stations show that there was a systematic effort to control what was aired in relation to the 2017 polls in a bid to ensure that the government agenda was highlighted at the expense of the opposition. Thus, it is apparent that there was undue pressure on the media houses to do the government's bidding.

Media Council of Kenya attests to this:

There were a lot of cautionary statements. Even before the elections, communication CS released guidelines on media coverage, same to Communication Authority. In any case, the degree that radio is concerned, not using any and all means a singular station was killed, yet around four TV stations were killed after they opposed government orders not to air live the questionable "swearing in" of the NASA head Raila Odinga. (MCK1)

Overall, the findings on the question of the magnitude flak machines had on the electorate's ability to make informed choices during the 2017 presidential elections point well-calculated attempts by the government to use intimidation and subtle threats of punishment to make the radio stations do as it wished, that is, to accord it lopsided and biased coverage at the expense of the opposition.

4.5.3 Threats and Intimidation

Moreover, the government sought to set the broadcast agenda for the radio stations by issuing instructions or responding to questions in a manner intended to push a pre-set agenda of gaining advantage over the opposition. That is besides denying freehand to the journalists to perform their role as required within the standards and requirements of the profession and according to their conscience.

Unlike respondents from both side of government-owned and privately-owned media houses, independent voices presented a more clear and unbiased thoughts. When the same questions

were asked, they gave informative and realistic view of what might have really happened.

Some of the clearer responses are indicated below.

Threats and intimidation from government and opposition politicians, doubtlessly influenced media coverage of the presidential elections. The national broadcaster, for instance, was the biggest victim. While KBC is expected to offer positive coverage of the government of the day all through, these demands are higher during election time, and KBC was accordingly stripped of its editorial independence. Radio Maisha suffered a similar bullying from its owners during the campaigns. And because of his soft spot for the opposition candidate, Kenyatta's political allies in Mount Kenya staged campaigns for the boycott of RMS outlets, especially Citizen TV and Radio, in the region. Mr. Kenyatta enjoyed a fanatical following in the region in 2017 and this move was aimed at hurting Macharia's broadcasts and revenue base, a factor that compelled him to change tune. Similarly, the opposition National Super Alliance (NASA) at some point asked supporters countrywide to boycott the SGL products for negative coverage of the opposition. Standard newspaper sales particularly drastically dropped, especially in counties in the western part of Kenya, where Odinga enjoyed fervent political support in 2019.

Again, concerning the impartiality and objectivity ratings for Radio Citizen, Radio Maisha and KBC Radio Taifa during the coverage of 2017 presidential election, they argued that:

The national broadcaster, KBC, was out rightly biased and lacked objectivity in its coverage. Radio Maisha fell casualty of the equivalent, however to a lesser degree, as the battles topped. Radio Citizen was relatively objective, but only because the other two were extremely biased in their coverage.

The discoveries are very reliable with the clarification by Christian et al. (2010) of the five jobs of the media, These jobs incorporate the monitorial job, which depicts the media as a cautious source gathering and distributing data of potential enthusiasm to people in general and the cooperative job where the media makes organisations among writers and focuses of intensity in the public arena, outstandingly the state, to progress commonly adequate interests. This is the ideal, the practice is that power dynamics of the government, under authoritarian theory leverages and influences and controls the media over its agenda, failure which leads to reprimanding of journalists as expressed above from the findings of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This section offers a candid summary of the findings, presents their policy implications, offers recommendations to various stakeholders, provides a conclusion and indicates areas of suggested further study. The results of the study are clear from the preceding chapters. The discussion and conclusion in this chapter therefore, highlight and emphasise the points of concern emerging from both manufacturing consent paradigms and framing.

5.2 Summary

- i. There was a common general acknowledgment of the influence by proprietors on editorial independence directly or indirectly adding to the scale of media ownership influence on broadcast stories. Private broadcasters like Radio Maisha and Radio Citizen had considerably higher in-built capacity to withstand pressure from external influence, not so for KBC Radio Taifa. Being a national, state-owned radio, several issues emerged regarding impartiality and the ability to exercise freedom without pressure from the government to sway the agenda around the 2017 presidential elections.
- ii. Advertising, political or otherwise, almost certainly played a major role in influencing the 2017 presidential electoral coverage. However, this effect was weak and could be a conscious effect or subliminal effect. From this, it is inferred that political advertising campaigns have little effect on voting behaviour.

- iii. The government through its agencies such as state house, government press, and the ministries provided little to no little information, and at time there was information surge, in which case certain information on the electoral process on the 2017 polls was not for the common good, but tailor-made to shift the electorate psyche towards voting in a certain manner.

- iv. To some extent flak machines characterised by government intimidation, threats of being reprimanded, setting the agenda by instructing on what to air as well as restricting the journalists' freedom to operate according to the existing professional standard and personal conscience had the effect of denying the electorate an opportunity to receive and interact with information in a non-biased manner thus hampering their ability to make informed choices during the 2017 presidential elections. This was particularly evident in the state-owned radio station, which as matter of fact was expected to operate on government instructions.

The study established that media ownership is considered as a key factor which determines and influences media agenda setting and operations either positively or negatively during presidential electoral media coverage. The finding further indicates that outlets which enjoy full support of the owners contribute positively and effectively to the presidential electoral media coverage, while those whose ownership reprimand, rebuke journalists and do not fully support editorial as well as programming and advertising gatekeeping, make marginal contribution in covering the 2017 electoral process.

The finding above ties in with Herman & Chomsky (1988) argument that news media are profit making tools, therefore, their editorial bias of news reportage including news typology, which items, and how they are reported is a consequence of the profit motive. Supporting this line of argument, Bratic & Shirch (2007) point out that the position and perspectives by media ownership determines what is covered and aired. That given such a reality, one deduces that without ownership support for journalists, editorial autonomy and programmes management, peace, developmental and electoral related stories may not constitute priority list for media houses. More importantly, with ownership support, journalists are insulated from compromising credibility and professional integrity in pursuit of survival in a competitive media market. Kenya is among countries having not been able to surmount the status quo in the media and behind their ownership which constantly determine how the political agenda is set for the country.

Even though the study findings revealed the three FM radio stations: Radio Citizen, Radio Maisha and KBC Radio Taifa, identify issues for electoral agenda setting differently from one another, however, common determinants include editorial independence, owners support, access to information and powerful editorial policy. These aspects enable editorial teams to perform well during presidential elections coverage. Nevertheless, this performance is often associated with threats such as lack of editorial autonomy and self-censorship which were major problems which affected state owned station KBC Radio Taifa.

Furthermore, common threats to the three stations included: poor economic situation in terms of revenue, which made them susceptible to partisan political advertising. Other issues included tendency of some journalists getting embedded in political interests and lack or low

understanding of the magnitude and scope of electoral related conflicts to the public interest. Another aspect of the findings is that what was aired by the three stations triggered public reaction and issues given prominence about the 2017 electoral process by the stations, were the same aspects which formed the public agenda. Closely related to this finding is the issue of content of stories aired. Questions about content had largely to do with the extent to which content influenced people's decision making as far as choice of presidential candidates in the 2017 polls was concerned, and whether or not people changed opinion and position about those candidates depending on the content of stories and programmes aired.

The findings show that portraying of candidates negatively or positively by some of the media houses dictated by ownership and proprietors, did not affect significantly the electorate's choice during voting of the first phase of 2017 presidential polls.

However, in the post-nullification of presidential results, that changed, especially when a re-run was a one-horse race. Supporters of NASA declined participating in the final re-run after their candidate withdrew from the second presidential race citing poor media coverage of the issues critical to a fair and free re-run directly associated with IEBC's dysfunctionality.

The media did not only play facilitative roles but went beyond peace process and became actors themselves. An actor refers to a player whose presence or action may influence behaviours of other actors in any process, in this case the 2017 presidential electoral media coverage. Due to the electoral related violence in some parts of the capital Nairobi and countryside such as Kisumu, editorial and programming teams of the three selected FM radio stations embarked on

setting *Agenda for Peace*, especially in post-nullification period towards a re-run of the presidential elections.

Additionally, the study established that political advertising certainly plays a major role in influencing presidential electoral coverage. However, this effect was weak and could be a conscious effect or subliminal effect. From this, it is inferred that political ad campaigns have little effect on voting behaviour.

There were some who felt that advertising influenced and affected the way media behaved during that time. Notwithstanding, they are who differ that publicising influenced presidential races inclusion in any capacity. Media houses perceived as pro-government were affected in terms of revenue generation because potential advertisers changed strategy and took business to private media houses categorised as impartial in covering presidential electoral politics of 2017.

The results support the observation by Herman and Chomsky (1988) in their propaganda model where they mention profit making as another factor critical to the analysis of media behaviour. They point out that since corporate owned news media were profit making tools, editorial bias of news reportage including what type of news, which items, and how they are reported is a consequence of the profit motive. They further argued that editorial distortion were a result of news media's dependence upon private and governmental news sources. These scholarly views confirm the study findings in chapter four of this study. When these very factors were cited by informants as having determined how the media covered the 2017 presidential polls.

The majority, if not all of the Kenyan population, have continued to suffer from restrictions on the free circulation of information for several years and every election cycles political drama always ensues. The country has found it hard to overcome the status quo in the media and behind their ownership which constantly determine how the political agenda is set for the country.

The Manufacturing consent plays out its assumptions whenever power relations exist and with the influence of money at the expense of whoever might be affected by effects. In this framework, the media appears not to have played out its role responsibly without interference from either the state or private owners (proprietors). However, in the context of the 2017 presidential elections, the findings negate the claim by many FM radio stations that they operated on the premise of non-state interference except for purposes of offering security. The media thus inadvertently became victims of manufactured consent pushed by the pressure to compromise in order to keep their advertising revenue sources. This was always going to be more than just an assumption as the need of some agency of control may be inevitable, given that a majority of the media outlets are owned by people with particular political leanings.

Furthermore, the government through its agencies such as state house, government press, and the ministries provided little to no little information and at times there was information surge, in which case certain information on the electoral process on the 2017 polls was not for the common good, but tailor-made to shift the electorate psyche towards voting in a certain manner. Information in for various programming and news bulletins from government agencies was often very frustrating, disjointed and piecemeal. A number of agencies simply refused to give information. If they eventually did, however, such information did not help because it

would be distorted and unreliable. Then there was the threat of fake news and propaganda, which either glossed over or was calculated to simply hide the facts.

Having access to appropriate and reliable sources, timely and accurate information as well as the capability of reaching all players involved in the electoral process are also fundamental for radio to be able to operate as structures for objective and non-partisan coverage of elections. Scholars identify issues which media have potential to perform. Galtung (1997) for instance points out that media can play constructive role in setting the right peace and political agenda if journalists illuminated stories in detail from all sides; drew information from diverse sources and restricted overuse of elites as sources. Reaching diverse sources is as important as it is relevant for public trust building in media operations. The findings further show that whatever was given prominence by the three selected FM Radio stations was related to whatever shaped public discourse on the electoral processes in Kenya for the past years, repeating itself over and over again.

Wolfsfeld (2011) specifies political power as a basic factor with colossal effect on the media. His conflict is that political power can have significant ramifications for the news media, since when specialists lose command over the world of politics; they additionally lose authority over the news. This clearly shows how much power politicians and those in authority have over what is broadcast or published in newspapers.

Finally, in terms of intimidation as a response or reaction to how the 2017 elections were covered, the dominant view was that there was little or no intimidation from government side. There was no apparent intent to intimidate, at least not as far as Radio Citizen and Radio

Maisha is concerned. However, in the state-owned radio station, KBC Radio Taifa, there was intimidation and journalists were reprimanded for their work. Such variation in the extent of intimidation—real or perceived—and even punishment reveal the extent of editorial independence in state-owned and private media organisations.

The findings on the question of the magnitude flak machines had on the electorate's ability to make informed choices during the 2017 presidential elections point well-calculated attempts by the government to use intimidation and subtle threats of punishment to make the radio stations do as it wished.

Moreover, the government sought to set the broadcast agenda for the radio stations by issuing instructions or responding to questions in a manner intended to push a pre-set agenda of gaining advantage over the opposition. That is besides denying freehand to the journalists to perform their role as required within the standards and requirements of the profession and according to their conscience.

The results are fairly consistent with what Christian et al. (2010) explain as the five roles of the media. These include the monitorial role, which describes the media as a vigilant informer collecting and publishing information of potential interest to the public and the collaborative role where the media creates partnerships between journalists and centres of power in society, notably the state, to advance mutually acceptable interests. This is the ideal, the practice is that power dynamics of the government, under authoritarian theory leverages and influences and controls the media over its agenda, failure which leads to reprimanding of journalists as expressed above from the findings of this study.

5.3 Recommendations

The favourable response to the issues, challenges and opportunities raised by this study about the role manufacturing consent played in determining media coverage of the 2017 presidential elections, is the basis of the following recommendations aimed at three different sources of responsibility.

5.3.1. For the New Government and Legislators

Parliament needs to enact laws that bar the political class from interfering with the running of the media for political expediency and instead encourage private citizens to initiate community participatory communication initiatives at the grassroots level. This will help build capacity for peripheral communities so that by the time elections are held people are aware of their social and civic responsibility to avoid manipulation by politicians (Mathew, 2001). For any policies or legislation to be effective, however, they require broad consultations, dialogue and research among and by the various stakeholders in the industry: the community, media owners, radio programme managers and educators. This co-ordination and mutual dialogue among the stakeholders are meant to avert any conflicts of interest that would undermine policy implementation.

5.3.2 Media Council of Kenya-MCK

With already red signs ahead of the 2022 elections, the media council must now focus on a developing various capacity building programmes far beyond the obvious election reporting outfits. The council has the onus to censor any media organisations to initiate continuous in-house empowerment and capacity-building programmes to ensure journalists are highly

professionalised and media owners are made more aware of the importance of having independent editorial teams that make decisions without interference.

The council should create synergies with Multinational corporations which have been committed to supporting the local media in critical areas such electoral reporting and advertising.

5.3.3 Media Owners

That media owners must focus not only at maximising profit from their media organisations, but initiate accountability and ethics to ensure the genuine need to inform, educate and entertain the public.

5.4 Need for Further Research and Inquiry

This study is a contribution to the efforts expended towards improved electoral media coverage in Kenya. However, it does not claim to have been exhaustive. There are several research questions still to be raised and answered. It is recommended that more studies be carried out on the role manufacturing consent, media ownership, advertising, etc. play in determining the quality of electoral process and how anomalies always witnessed could be avoided in future. Other areas that need further exploration are: media and human rights, the impact of social media in the electoral process. Such a research agenda should be taken up by inter-media institutions that seem strategically placed to conduct both capital and skills intensive research such as: universities, media councils, Ministries of Information and as well as Education. Journalists must be trained to manage diversity at all levels of their profession and within a global context.

5.5 Conclusions

Manufacturing consent is a reality in the Kenyan media, but it presents itself in varying degrees depending on whether a media establishment is public-or private-owned, as this study reveals. The national broadcaster, KBC Radio Taifa is still government-controlled despite the establishing Act providing for its independence, and from the findings of the study it is most susceptible to manufacturing consent.

Private media, namely Radio Citizen and Radio Maisha, on the other hand, suffer from lack of objectivity because of what Herman and Chomsky refer to as manufacturing consent. The private media, due to over dependence on publicising business, and government being the greatest sponsor, appear to be careful to stay away from the discipline of being denied promoting. This presents a problem for the media is as far balancing commercial interest and public interest in the context of political coverage is concerned.

The fact that there has always been an escalation of political and related conflict in Kenya every election year means there must be a robust strategy to enable the media fraternity set the right agenda for the country by use of radio which has an impact on all social strata especially grassroots communities which become too susceptible to misuse of manufacturing consent by the elite. This is due to the fact that because of its inexpensiveness and simplicity, radio has the capacity to mobilise people to interact directly and dialogue easily.

To effectively carry out this role, radio must strive to have editorial independence from ownership, commercial interest typified by advertiser interest, elite control (particularly government control), pressure and intimidation from external forces. More specifically, having

access to appropriate and reliable sources, timely and accurate information as well as the capability of reaching all players involved in the electoral process are also fundamental for radio to be able to operate as structures for objective and non-partisan coverage of elections.

In recognition of the important role of radio as a constructive tool for dialogue and peace, it must be allowed to operate independently so as to set the right agenda within the limits of acceptable professional and ethical standards.

5.6 Questions for Further Research

It is trusted that the accompanying inquiries rising up out of the discoveries may encourage further research on this question and expand the systems and procedures that have been or should be utilised by different entertainers during the time spent improving constituent media inclusion in Kenya succeed: At what policy point would it be appropriate to address concerns raised and which are making the electoral processes in Kenya immobilised:

1. What factors inhibit and limit the interested groups from pushing the process of improving media electoral coverage in Kenya? What kinds of mobilisation and citizens' actions are necessary to heighten public awareness and greater engagement in the oversight of "stratification" and prioritisation by the need for media sector reforms?

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction

I am a student at the University of Nairobi, pursuing a Master Degree in Communication Studies. As part of the requirements for the fulfilment of this program, I am conducting a study on the manufacturing consent paradigm and the 2017 presidential election coverage: The case of Radio Citizen, Radio Maisha, and KBC Radio Taifa. I hereby request you to help me undertake this study by responding to the listed questions in interview guide. The research is purely academic, hence, the information given will be strictly for that purpose and shall remain confidential.

Thank you in advance.

Ojiambo Christine,
Researcher

Appendix 2: Interview guide for the Media Council of Kenya

- i.** Do you think that media ownership influences coverage of political events? If yes, how was this factor used during the 2017 presidential election coverage?
- ii.** To what extent does advertising opportunities affect pre, during and post-election media coverage?
- iii.** How can you rate the media houses' capacity to verify the news they obtain from the government? Give a brief explanation.
- iv.** Did you receive any reports concerning any radio journalist or radio station that received threats from the government concerning how they covered the 2017 presidential elections?
- v.** What gaps, in terms of media freedom, safety of journalists, and impartial/objective reporting, did the council identify during in the 2017 presidential polls that require immediate attention before 2022?

Appendix 3: Interview guide for Editors

- (i) Provide practical indicators of objectivity and impartiality to show case of performance by your radio station during 2017 presidential elections media coverage.
- (ii) What does your editorial policy say about equal coverage of elections generally and presidential in particular?
- (iii) Would you say that you were given a free hand by your proprietor to exercise your editorial judgment over stories aired during the 2017 presidential election? Please explain
- (iv) What determined your agenda setting for 2017 presidential elections?
- (v) Were you at any given time reprimanded by the government over a story you aired? If yes, what were the reasons?
- (vi) Were you at any given time instructed by the government on how to cover political party campaigns in the presidential election? Give reasons for the instructions
- (vii) Would you say that you were given a free hand by the government to exercise media freedom over stories aired during the 2017 presidential election? Please explain
- (viii) In your news bulletins, what percentage of information was from government? Please explain
- (ix) During the presidential election, did you have the capacity to question and interrogate information coming from the government
- (x) Were you able to determine fake news, PR and propaganda, among the news coming in from political parties? If yes, what means did you use to identify fake news, PR, and propaganda?

Appendix 4: Interview guide for Advertising Managers

- i. Was the company revenue affected during and after the presidential election?
If yes, please give a brief explanation?
- ii. At any given time during the presidential polls, did you receive any warning or threats of commercials/sponsorship withdrawal due to the way your station was covering the campaigns/elections? If yes, please provide a brief explanation.
- iii. Do you by any chance remember any incidence where sponsorship/advertisement was withdrawn/cancelled because of the way your radio covered the polls?
Please provide a brief explanation
- iv. What criteria did your station adopt in allocation of airtime to presidential candidates during the presidential electioneering period in 2017?

Appendix 5: Interview Guide for Independent Voices

- i. How would you rate impartiality and objectivity of Radio Citizen, Radio Maisha and KBC Radio taifa regarding the coverage of 2017 presidential election?
- ii. In your opinion, to what extent did the issue of media ownership influence coverage of the 2017 presidential elections in the select radios? Please explain
- iii. Would you say media advertising/revenue as a factor had any influence on the coverage of the 2017 presidential elections? Please explain
- iv. Studies done around the world show that media relies heavily on government news sources to fill news bulletins and publications. Do you believe this as a factor had any influence on coverage of the 2017 presidential election in the select radios? If Yes, to what extent? A brief explanation, please
- v. To what extent do you believe flak machines (threats & intimidation) influenced coverage of the 2017 presidential elections in the select radio stations?

Appendix 6: Certificate of Fieldwork



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Reg. No: K50/82304/2015

Name: Christine Ojiambo

Title: A study on the Manufacturing Consent

Paradigm in Coverage of the 2017 presidential elections in Kenya: The Case of Mainstream Fm radio Stations

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Appendix 7: Certificate of Originality

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