

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

INSTITUTE OF DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

ELECTRONIC MEDIA IN ELECTORAL CONFLICT IN KENYA

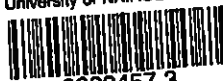
ANNE MAUREEN SYALLOW

R50/70681/07

Project presented in partial fulfillment of the degree of Master of Arts in International Studies at the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies, University of Nairobi

October 2012.

University of NAIROBI Library



0389457 3

Bd 360560

Afr.


JF

1001

K4S94

DECLARATION

I, Maureen Anne Syallow, declare that this project is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of a degree in any other university.

Signed 

Date 7/11/2012

Maureen Anne Syallow.

This Project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

Signed 

Date 9/11/12

Prof. Makumi Mwangi

Professor of Diplomacy and International Conflict Management

University of Nairobi.

DEDICATIONS

This thesis is dedicated to my Parents Dr. & Mrs. Syallow, who taught me that the best kind of knowledge to have is that which is learned for its own sake. It is also dedicated to my siblings Lily, Dolly, Linda, Mbaga and Kizito, who taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time. Finally to my beloved husband Mbugua and dear daughters Njeri & Mukami, who have always been patient with me as I spent lots of time working on my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Prof. Makumi Mwangi has been the ideal thesis supervisor. His sage advice, insightful criticisms, and patient encouragement aided the writing of this thesis in innumerable ways. I would also like to thank my dear friend Joan Mbugua whose steadfast support of this project was greatly needed and deeply appreciated.

ABSTRACT

Ethnic diversity in Kenya has been the most outstanding factor in all the elections since independence. Over 42 tribes and communities that have lived together in happiness and reverence always clash when it comes to the electioneering period. In the wake of this respectful unity between the different communities, threats on issues of resource distribution and political differences cost ethnic differences and this becomes worse during general elections that come every five years. These differences have been recurrent over the years but it sadly reached its climax during the 2007 general elections when the country broke into ethnic fighting after presidential elections results were fiercely disputed. This enhanced the ethnic differences among Kenyans and promoted the destruction of the cultural diversity. Electronic media news source has implications for three entities: the journalists, the organizations that the media houses represent or the involved parties, and the news consumers. Central to the model was the relationship between the involved parties as news source and the reporter. The concept of marketing-driven journalism and the role of public relations in news production lead to the concept of agenda building. In the process of agenda building, public relations practitioners channel information subsidies through the media and subsidize the news reporters' newsgathering. The role of information subsidies in the mass media is termed as "agenda building," and the term represents the relationship between a newsroom and its sources. This study was fundamentally a descriptive survey. It entailed the description of the state of electronic media in Kenya. The description was appropriate for collecting information about electronic media fraternity and people's attitudes, opinions and a variety of issues regarding electronic media and conflict in Kenya for the period April 2007 to April 2008. The target populations were residents of the areas affected by the post election violence, such as the Rift valley, Kibera and Naivasha. From the interviews conducted, it was evident that the general Public received most of the information and developments of the election campaigns and the election process through the leading media houses in Kenya. A majority of the respondents said they knew of the current developments through the radio. The actions by the electronic media were so intense at the peak of the electioneering process and the result was upraising and revolts from all the parts of the country were witnessed. However, the researcher found out that both the electronic media and the general public had a part to play in the violence although it was not quite clear whether these actions were deliberate or not.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATIONS.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
Chapter 1.....	1
Introduction To The Study.....	1
1.1 Statement of the Research Problem	2
Objectives of The Study.....	3
1.3 Literature Review	3
1.4 Theoretical Framework	9
1.5 Research Methodology	11
Research Design and Data Collection.....	11
Sampling.....	11
Data Collection Methods And Tools.....	12
Chapter Outline	12
Chapter 2: Role of Media In Conflict	13
2.1 The Role of Media in Generating and Escalation of Conflict.....	14
2.2 Role of Media in Conflict Management	19
2.3 Role of Media in Political Conflict	22
2.4 Relationship between Media and Different stages of Conflict.	24
Chapter 3 : Electronic Media and Electoral Conflict in Kenya.....	29
3.1 Political and Electoral Conflict in Kenya	29
3.2 Electronic Media in Kenya.....	34
3.4 Electronic Media and Electroral Conflict in Kenya in 2007	36

Chapter 4: Role of Electronic Media in Escalation of Violence in the 2007 Electoral Conflict.....	41
4.1 Electronic Media’s Influence on General Public During The 2007 Post- Election Violence	41
4.2 Electronic Media in Peace Building During the 2007 Post- Election Violence	45
4.3 Editorial Policies on Conflict Reporting and Peace Building.....	46
4.4 Summary of Findings	48
Chapter 5: Conclusion	51
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	lviii
QUESTIONNAIRE.....	lxiii

Chapter 1

Introduction To The Study

Electoral conflict is a situation where two or more individuals or groups try to pursue political goals/positions or ambitions which they believe they cannot share. Electoral Conflict is normal when there is change. Some people want change, but others disagree. If their disagreement or their conflict is managed peacefully, it can be a positive process. But when this conflict is not managed properly, it becomes violent. Violent physical conflict is easily identified and described by the media

The will of the people expressed in genuine, democratic elections is the basis of authority of any democratic government. That authority cannot be established unless voters make a free and informed choice among the political contestants. The mass communications media provide information to most voters, Information which is essential to the choice they exercise at the ballot box. Therefore, proper media conduct towards all political parties and candidates, as well as proper media conduct in the presentation of information that is relevant to electoral choices, are crucial to achieving democratic elections,¹ Individuals or groups in conflict try to hurt or kill each other and there are victims. These are more evident during political elections and propagated by hate speech where by different ethnic or cultural groups openly speak badly of each other. One group blames the other for difficulties or problems it is suffering. Violence is then encouraged to eliminate the blamed group.

All this information is channeled to the public through media. The media is a double-edged sword. It can be a frightful weapon of violence when it propagates messages of intolerance or disinformation that manipulate public sentiment. But there is another aspect to the media. It can be an instrument of conflict resolution, when the information it presents is reliable, respects human rights, and represents diverse views. It is the kind of media that enables a society to make well-informed choices, which is the precursor of democratic governance.

¹ Christopher J. Anderson, Christine A. Guillory (1997). Political Institutions and Satisfaction with Democracy: A Cross-National Analysis of Consensus and Majoritarian Systems. *American Political Science Review*, Vol.91, pp66-81.

It is a media that reduced conflict and fosters human security². The effects of media on conflict can be viewed in terms of the negative repercussions that inadvertent or overt propagandistic or one-sided reporting may have in terms of fuelling tensions and provoking conflict. Conversely, the media may potentially have a positive impact if based upon basic professional standards, combined with diverse access to information, reasonable financial resources and adherence to ethical codes. Such media can contribute to societal reconciliation, alter misperceptions and broaden understanding of the causes and consequences of conflict.

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

Accurate news is the utmost priority of responsible media because it makes it live up to higher values of serving the interests of truth, justice and peace and reconciliation. The media neither start wars, nor can they end them. Communicating media can however have an increasingly positive or negative influence on processes of social communication and societal change. The influence of the media is always multi-causal and long-lasting. It is the media that plays a significant role in inciting conflict and violence or preventing escalation of conflicts and bringing about peace and reconciliation and addressing the root causes of conflict. Thus the objective of the study will seek to find out what part did the electronic media play in the period prior, during and after the post election violence in Kenya.

The basis of this study will be drawn from the gate keeping function of the media and from the idea of how news is treated, representing persistent pattern of selection emphasis, inclusions and exclusions that push a coherent interpretation and evaluation of events during conflicts. Decision and common practices in newsgathering- determining what and how stories are covered contribute towards particular news frames. Out of the myriad ways of describing events in the world, do the electronic media rely upon familiar news frames and upon the interpretation of events offered by credible sources to convey dominant meanings, make sense of the facts, focus the headlines, and the structure of the story line hence setting the agenda which may have a positive or negative impact on the society?

² Ross Howard (2002). *An Operational Framework for Media and Peace building*. KOFF, Swiss Peace (2002), p1

Objectives of The Study

The objectives of this study are to:

- i) Examine whether it is possible to understand the conflicts in Kenya based on the information provided by the media.
- ii) Find out the role of electronic media in conflict situations.
- iii) Find out what mechanisms the electronic media use in fuelling or calming the chaos in the period prior to, during and after the post election violence

1.3 Literature Review

Electronic media can be an instrument of conflict resolution, when the information it presents is reliable, respects human rights, and represents diverse views. It's the kind of media that upholds accountability and exposes malfeasance, one that enables a society to make well-informed choices, which is the precursor of democratic governance. In this quest, propaganda becomes truth, and the search itself becomes rooted in vested interests that often veil and distort reality.

While it is true that journalism must be fair and accurate in reporting the facts, it must also be remembered that in a society riddled with conflict, journalism must engage with the search for alternatives to armed conflict and be guided by a firm and committed desire for peace and democratic governance. Under the guise of objective reporting, many electronic media outlets fail to explore and address alternatives to a given situation, believing falsely that doing so would be contrary to the ethics of good journalism. In fact, in not examining alternatives, writers who merely present the facts may actually exacerbate conflict. Protracted ethno-political conflict deepens and widens societal fault-lines, and if a conscious and concerted effort is not made to bridge differences between ethnic groups and communities, to explore non-violent alternatives to grievances, to critically analyze and explore the reason of violent clashes, to refute stereotypes and break communitarian hagiography, these fault-lines inevitably gives rise to violent armed movements and clashes.

Journalists, from a political standpoint, ought to defend the freedom of society and its constituent members. The entire society suffers when any member is denied the full expression of his or her views. Surprisingly, even the most autocratic regimes and their constitutions will

usually have some phrases that at least pay lip service to the guarantees of free speech and individual liberties. The East African countries which comprise of Kenya Tanzania and Uganda with a recent addition of Rwanda and Burundi are not so left behind in terms of press freedom. but still, they are developing countries whose democratic right of press freedom needs to be looked at.³

The function of the electronic media largely radios, was to provide information utility to politically and economically powerful. The media was put in place to make it possible for the flow of information. The desired position is that the media should ensure that it serves the politically powerful and the authorities together with the public and not for other functions⁴. The other two communication activities are information gathering as well as information transmission.

When assessing the mutual impact of media and conflict there are a number of structural issues that should be taken into consideration. These relate to the manner in which the media outlets and practitioners function and interact, both with one another, as well as the authorities, civil society and general public.

The skills and resources available to electronic media outlets and practitioners, ranging from owners and editors to reporters, have a significant impact on the media's role. If there is an ingrained understanding of the role of the media and the professional standards required, then the media is more likely have a positive impact. Conversely, if these are not present then the potential for inadvertent conflict provocation, as well as purposeful manipulation and abuse, is greater. Likewise, if the media had access to a developed financial and institutional resource this would facilitate best practices and allow media practitioners to perform their work effectively and in accordance with professional standards. Financial self-sustainability also removes dependency on external sources of funding and influence, thereby strengthening the potential for independent media to operate. Media content as described above serves to engender an unsubstantiated belief that pre-emptive action is required for self-defense. Such perceptions are often based on a lack of information and understanding of the intentions and circumstances of

³ Herbet, John. (2001) *Practicing Global Journalism*. Oxford: Focal Press (2001), pp69-72

⁴ Stiglitz, Joseph, (2002) *The Role of Mass Media in Economic Development*. Washington (2002) pp.27-43

the other and a focus on myths and stereotypes, perceived inequalities and injustices, and previous tensions between communities (although the two communities may have a far longer history of cooperation and mutual tolerance). This can create hysteria, drowning out more moderate voices in society. The role of the media in providing balanced and objective information is therefore essential⁵. Although closely linked to the 'pre-emptive action' model, of equal concern is when media content creates an image that the outbreak of conflict or return to conflict is unavoidable. This undermines the collective will of communities to resist the path to conflict, which may be sought only by a small minority. The establishment of such self-fulfilling prophecies is usually achieved through portraying conflict as pattern or ongoing historical process, thereby promoting violence as a normal or acceptable manner in which to pursue grievances or right perceived wrongs⁶

When one hears of responsibility, the other concept that should cross his / her mind is duty or obligation. Responsibility is, therefore, defined either as obligation or duty, albeit contextually. The English philosopher T.H. Green made a useful distinction between obligation and duty. According to Green, obligation may be enforced by law; duty may not. Journalists can therefore fulfill their responsibility (by following orders) by only reporting information that is acceptable to their publisher or government. However, if journalists refuse to report only this kind of information because they find it morally repugnant to do so, they are equally fulfilling their responsibility

Morality is subsumed under law. Thus it is not easy to separate legal (obligatory) responsibility from moral duty. Both freedom and social responsibility have no watertight definitions. Each depends on ethical systems as well as moral values. Journalists cannot report responsibly unless they are free. Gate keeping itself is a death knell for journalists' freedom. This is not to say that journalists are completely "unfree". Journalists like any other human persons have free choice. They may choose to carry out the order given by their media owners. They may

⁵ Ross Howard (2002). *An Operational Framework for Media and Peace building*. Swiss Peace(2002).op.Cit.pp.9-10

⁶ Howard, R. (2008). *Conflict Sensitive Journalism*.Copenhagen,Denmark(2008)pp.13-22

as well be neutral to such order in which case they risk losing their jobs. Worse still, journalists may also decide to make money by collaborating with some politicians in order to propagate a stand. If and when such a thing happens, journalists are always at the defensive for they are said to have been bought. What makes a society of any sort is a community of ideas, not only political ideas but also ideas about the way its members should behave and govern their lives; these latter ideas are its morals.⁷ As a theory, social responsibility is a blend of media practice with some social theories. It may sound as part of situational ethics. One dimension in the use of ethics is application of basic principles of ethics to social life, thus developing social theories. The interface between politics and the media is freedom. Unwarranted oppressiveness interferes with a rational thought of an individual. The reverse of this phenomenon would help the individual to develop intellectually and development would follow automatically. There is a need for a government to be answerable to a constitution, with separated powers whose rulers are limited by their terms of office in a contractual manner. Thus, the freedom of the press ought to be enshrined in the constitution of the country. The basis of media freedom pursues that;

The freedom of the press is usually anchored on the prevailing democratic climate. It is not uncommon to find journalists suffering under an oppressive regime and yet if and when they rise to power they become the oppressors. After becoming the president of America, the same Jefferson who could write the greatest support for a free press could also condemn journalists as misleading liars and argue that they ought to be thrown into prison for what they printed.

Agenda building refers to the process by which news organizations and journalists feature, emphasize, and/or select certain events, issues, or sources to cover over others. A review in the area is closely linked to but distinct from the agenda-setting tradition which examines the connection between the issues portrayed in the news media and the issue priorities of the public.⁸ Agenda-Setting is undoubtedly true that many social, political and religious debates, especially in Africa, originate from the coverage provided by journalists: "Even in an off-election year, people get the topics for interpersonal discussion from what the media cover.

⁷ Odera, O. H. (1990). *Applied Ethics and the Experiential Dimension in African Philosophy* : Nairobi University Press(1990).Chapter 1,p.iv

⁸ McCombs, M. (2004). *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion*. New York(2004.p.18

Many media scholars do agree that the concept of agenda setting is not encountered in journalism only.

The following are the agenda purportedly set by the media: social agenda, political agenda, economic agenda, cultural agenda, and technological agenda, innovation agenda that arises from scholars' works, education agenda, conflicts agenda and tribal / ethnicity agenda. It is, however, important to ask ourselves whether it is the media or the ruling power that set the agenda. One would be convinced that sometimes the ruling power sets the agenda and the media act as conveyor belts on their behalf, thus maintaining the status quo. However, the media are also very powerful and they can also give directions to public debates. Indeed, the media will always set an agenda of interest. Perhaps it is better to summarize the debate by repeating what said "the mass media may not succeed in telling us what to think, rather, they will always succeed in telling us what to think about"⁹.

The media shape what we see and hear about conflict. The perspectives of those who run the media shape stories that are covered. Journalists have opinions and beliefs based on their experiences. Media owners have economic interests; they want to sell their stories and programs to a public who will buy their newspapers or watch their programs. Increasing corporate control over media in some countries also plays a role in controlling the types of stories that get covered and the way stories get framed. Media owners and professionals decide what they think the public or some target audience wants to see and hear. A common journalist principle is this: "If it bleeds, it leads." That means violent conflict will be headline news, not news of cross-cultural dialogue and understanding. The media mostly covers conflict, not peace building. This tendency to cover conflict and violence distorts reality and leads many people to think that conflict is pervasive and peace is abnormal ¹⁰

The role that media needs to play is to inform citizens of what is happening around them. Then educate them as to the meaning and significance of the facts of the conflict. And then to provide a platform for public political discourse that must include the provision of space for the

⁹ Berkowitz, D. (1992). *Who sets the media agenda*. American Elite Press(1992) pp. 81-102.

¹⁰ Wolfsfeld, Gadi (2001). *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.pp.97-113

expression of dissent. In the process of avoiding escalation of issues the media need to give publicity to governmental and political institutions (the watchdog role of journalism), and finally to serve as a channel for the advocacy of political viewpoints. Consequently, the media have a large potential for creating a common basis and thus cultivating conditions for conflict transformation through a variety of activities.

They can serve by securing a free flow of accurate and constructive information, counteracting misperceptions, identifying the interests underlying the issues, and helping to build a consensus¹¹ this may include providing information about human rights as much as about the principles of good governance and parliamentary democracy and democratic election. second, they can further between conflicting parties by fostering communication, generating alternative options to violent conflict, reflecting the ordinary person's desire and need for peace, communicating the process of negotiations to the constituencies involved and providing a forum for on-going dialogue.

Third, they may call on leaders to help ensure long-term accountability, monitor human rights violations and, in a broader sense, provide some early warning on potential escalations of the conflict. The appropriateness and effectiveness of these activities will vary not only according to the type and phase of the conflict, but also according to the role that the media have played within the conflict dynamics. These factors must be analyzed and determined in a pre- project assessment. Since the essence of conflict transformation is the transformation of mentalities, both within the society and the individual, societies have to be involved from the top-down and the bottom-up. The media have the potential to be a gateway through which to reach the largest possible number of people.

Peace building aims at both achieving an agreement between the conflicting parties that stops violent acts and “create conducive conditions for economic reconstruction, development

¹¹ Bratic, V., & Schirch, L. (2007). *Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding*. Amsterdam: European Centre for Conflict Prevention,(2007) pp 8-11.

and democratization”¹² that is, laying the foundations for activities that will tackle the root causes of the former conflict and thus prevent the recurrence of violent outbreaks of the conflict. This includes a variety of activities, ranging from peace negotiations to changing people’s attitudes towards rebuilding confidence and trust, and finding common ground, up to basic work for later structural and political reforms in society.

The actual needs for peace building might differ from one armed conflict to the other, but the requirements of peace building towards the media are very similar to the ones described by conflict theory.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The agenda building framework suggests that a news source has implications for three entities: the journalists, the organizations that the media houses represent or the involved parties, and the news consumers. Central to the model is the relationship between the involved parties as news source and the reporter. The literature on the first domain focused on the mutual assessment and the power dynamics between sources and reporters. The former examines their attitudes toward each other, and the latter on their adversarial relationship in terms of power dynamics. The concept of marketing-driven journalism and the role of public relations in news production lead to the concept of agenda building.¹³ In the process of agenda building, public relations practitioners channel information subsidies through the media and subsidize the news reporters’ newsgathering. The role of information subsidies in the mass media is termed as “agenda building,” and the term represents the relationship between a newsroom and its sources. The agenda building approach argues that the media content is not shaped within the newsroom as much as it is shaped by the sources that provide information to the newsroom. To the extent that the public relations information subsidies are placed in news media, they have the potential

¹² Paffenholz, T., & Spurk, C. (2006). *Civil Society, Civic Engagement and Peacebuilding*. Washington, DC: World Bank, pp.14-25

¹³ Ross Howard (2002). *An Operational Framework for Media and Peace building*. Swiss Peace(2002), op.Cit.p.4

to influence the media agenda. If they can influence public agenda, then they may influence the public opinion and the public agenda.

Based on the conceptions of marketing-driven journalism and agenda building, combining the research topic, a conceptual framework is developed. In this framework, the interaction between source and news media takes place within an environment of laws and regulations, the international system, and technology. The three domains of the source-news media relations are fitted into the environment; they are respectively the mutual assessment between sources and reporters, routines and practices of sources, information subsidy and marketing pressure. Thus the domains constitute following factors: mutual perceptions between news people and public relations professionals, routines and practices of sources, information subsidy, and marketing pressure. The intrinsic dynamic that drives the interactions between the parties is effectiveness. For the public relations professionals, it is successful placement of the clients' messages into news media, and changes of the nature of news coverage of the involved parties. Agenda building refers to the process by which news organizations and journalists feature, emphasize, and/or select certain events, issues, or sources to cover over others. Agenda building is also related to work in political science on policy agenda setting, which focuses on how news coverage both reflects and shapes the priorities of government officials, decision-makers, and elites.

The concept of agenda setting is not encountered in journalism only. Other areas like public relations have their agenda setting roles. Agenda-setting is the ability of the media to influence the public's perception of the important topics and issues of the day. It is, however, important to ask ourselves whether it is the media or the ruling power that set the agenda. One would be convinced that sometimes the ruling power sets the agenda and the media act as conveyor belts on their behalf, thus maintaining the status quo. However, the media are also very powerful and they can also give directions to public debates. Indeed, the media will always set an agenda of interest.

1.5 Research Methodology

Research Design and Data Collection

This study is fundamentally a descriptive survey. This will entail the description of the state of electronic media in Kenya. The description is appropriate for collecting information about electronic media fraternity and people's attitudes, opinions and a variety of issues regarding electronic media and conflict in Kenya for the period April 2007 to April 2008. Both open ended and closed ended Questionnaires and telephone interviews will be used. Anonymity will be guaranteed for respondents who do not want to be identified. The target population will be residents of the areas affected by the post election violence, the electronic media houses that covered the elections and the features prior, during and after the elections, the general public who were getting the news from the electronic media, the police and the administrative officers in the areas that were highly affected by the post election violence.

Sampling

Cluster sampling will be used because the target population is dispersed across the country. Within each cluster, stratified random sampling will be used to reach the various characteristics of the respondents in the population. Stratified sampling will be useful in this effect since it will enhance a representative sample because each group will be represented. The results will therefore be worthy of generalization. The clusters will include the following areas of "epicenters" that were adversely affected by the post election violence; Eldoret, Kibera, and Naivasha and also the various electronic media houses such as KTN, NTV, Change FM and Hope FM. The total sample comprise of 140 respondents, where by the electronic media outlets would consist of 20 respondents divisibly to five persons each to media house while remainder of 120 respondents will be distributed as follows. Each of the three selected areas that were affected by the post election violence will have 40 respondents. Out of the 40 respondents, five (5) will be administrative officers, that is, the chief, police officers and a representative such as a District Officer, District Commissioner and or senior police officer such as Officer Commanding Station or OCPD (Officer Commanding Police Division). Politicians, that is, the councilors of the affected areas will be interviewed.

Data Collection Methods And Tools

The researcher will use both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary sources will include questionnaires which will be administered to some respondents and the respondents will be interviewed. Secondary sources will include documentaries by media houses, magazines or journals and reports such as Commission into Post Election Violence (CIPEV) popularly known as the Waki Report (2008), Judge Kriegler Commission Report (2008), the Akiwumi Commission of Inquiry (1999), reports by Human Rights Watch and Kenya Human Rights Commission and theoretical debates on media.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2: Electronic Media and Electoral Conflict

Chapter 3: Electronic Media and Electoral Conflict in Kenya

Chapter 4: Role of Electronic Media in Escalation of Violence in the 2007 Electoral Conflict

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Chapter 2: Role of Media In Conflict

Conflict is one of the defining features of the modern world. Since the end of the Cold War there have been countless conflicts that have involved the deaths of millions of people and the suffering and displacement of millions more. It is impossible to accurately quantify human suffering due to conflict. To take one indicator – it has been suggested that, in the last ten years, over two million children have died in conflicts, more than one million have been orphaned and more than six million have been disabled or seriously injured.

One striking factor is the growth in the number of conflicts which have fundamentally corroded the ability of the state to care for its citizens. ¹The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) analyzed 59 ‘major’ armed conflicts occurring since the end of the Cold War. In this case ‘major’ means that they involved in excess of 1,000 battle-related deaths in one year. Of these, the majority were intra-state. As a result of these prolonged conflicts many states have effectively collapsed or are very fragile. There is no rule of law, public services and facilities have been wrecked or plundered, and populations displaced. Such conflicts exacerbate poverty, bring massive human suffering, destroy the environment, displace substantial numbers of people and create enormous problems for the international.

Numerous African conflicts of recent times in which millions have died – which include wars in the Congo since 1997, the civil war in Angola, the inter-related conflicts in Sierra Leone, Cote D’Ivoire, Guinea and Liberia – have passed almost without notice under the international radar. The wars in the North and South Caucasus are in a comparable category; several thousands of dead, dwarfing for example the deaths in the second intifada between the Palestinians and Israelis, but with little expressed international concern either from governments or civil society.

Conflicts do not fall into neat typological categories. Normally, it used to be thought that wars between states have a beginning, when war is declared, middle when organized fighting takes place, and an end, when either one side secures victory and imposes its settlement or peace is negotiated. Modern conflicts, including those between states as well as those internal to states, often follow a different pattern. Violence can be intermittent and appear almost random – it

¹ SIPRI Year Book 2004; *Armaments, Disarmaments and International Security*. Oxford University Press(2004) .p6

breaks out, subsides and breaks out again. The presence of international peacekeepers can prevent organized violence, but the potential for violence remains ever present.²

2.1 The Role of Media in Generating and Escalation of Conflict

The will of the people—expressed in genuine, democratic elections—is the basis of authority of any democratic government. The mass communications media provide information to the public. Therefore, proper media conduct towards presentation of information that is relevant to its public, are crucial. No democracy can thrive unless citizens have the information they need to make free and informed choices. The mass even mask the underlying causes. A conflict may erupt over access to scarce resources or political tensions, and polarize along religious or ethnic lines. But Media would describe it as a religious or ethnic war ignoring the underlying economic, social and political factors.

The Rwanda genocide which took place in 1994 has been connected so much to media. It has been estimated that almost 700,000 people lost their lives. The same media has been connected to the conflict that rocked between Australia and Sydney. The power of the media at times tends to be outweighing that of the government in the sense that, the coverage that media has is overwhelming.

A good example is the Vietnam War. During this period the superpowers USSR and the United States extended their control over many countries worldwide by supporting governments that allied with them - or militias in countries that did not - fuelling some of the world's most deadly conflicts. In Yugoslavia, it was noted that media played a big part in its destruction. It was frightening to see how people's lives can be destroyed in the hands of media. The media brought together different participants who had debates and pushed people's opinion to differ to an extent of fueling conflict.

The principal democratic role of the media, according to traditional liberal theory, is to act as a check on the state.³ The media should monitor the full range of state activity, and fearlessly expose abuses of official authority. This watchdog role is said in traditional liberal theory to override in importance all other functions of the media. It is true to say that the media play a crucial role in nurturing and consolidating a democratic ethos and facilitating the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms, one of which is the right to free expression of thoughts and ideas. The

² Andrew Puddephatt, (2006) *Voices of War; Conflict and the Role of Media*. (2006) International Media Support p9

³ Curran, James (2002); *Media and Power*, London & New York: Routledge, p127

media in fulfilling their mandate as the “fourth estate of the realm” check the exercise of power by state agents. In so doing, the media play an important role in fostering respect for the rule of law and promoting accountability in governance as is usually the case in emerging, new and (most certainly) consolidated democracies.

The media can contribute to conflict escalation, either directly or indirectly. Experienced war reporters observe that sometimes the very presence of cameras will prompt the sides to start shooting. Terrorists often rely on the media. Terrorist attacks may be calculated to draw media ⁴ attention, and so draw attention to their cause. In the absence of media coverage, many types of terrorism would be useless

These conceptions underscore the thesis of classical liberalists regarding the democratic role of the media – the watchdog function. Whereas the ‘watchdog’ role of the media is pre-eminent in established or consolidated democracies – such as those of the global north – the function of the media in societies becoming democracies in Africa takes a slight detour from the traditional liberal thesis. In other words, the role of the media in societies in transition does not necessarily entail only offering a check on the actions of government. It also involves playing other, more formidable roles in regard to social engineering and nation-building such as facilitating the processes of political participation and democratization. ⁵These activities were demonstrated by the role of the media in the democratization processes in Benin (1990), South Africa (1994), Nigeria (1999) and Liberia (2005/6). Something valuable to note is the fact that the democratic role of the media in post-conflict environments summarize more than the ‘watchdog’ function.

Video media in particular tend to focus on dramatic and violent events. It was observed that "more than ever in terms of news, war is better than peace, violence is better than non- violence. This tendency to focus on violence and conflict and to further sensationalize violent events can distort the public's perceptions of the situation.

Many people feel that the American press, in particular, failed to adequately investigate the Gulf War, or to report on the causes of the war. Instead the media "became the mouthpiece for the government, it gave up its privilege of free criticism, reinforced the us- versus-them

⁴ Wolfsfeld, Gadi 1997. *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

⁵ Ufo Okeke Uzodike 2005; *The Role of Media in the DRC Elections: Beyond The watchdog Frontier ;Conflict Trends* ;Kinshasa 2006 p39

syndrome. Many participants expressed grave concern that the public seemed quite willing to accept such a "tame" press. Milton Viorst of the New Yorker argued that, as a result of this "Congress didn't obtain, and the American people didn't obtain the information needed to challenge the president on the subject of a war which I believe could have been avoided."⁶

Media response to conflict is shaped, and some say distorted, by a number of factors. Many journalists observed that in the age of video, if there is no picture, there is no story. Situations which cannot be captured on film, or to which photographer cannot get access, tend to be under-reported. Visually dramatic, acute events (such as battles or bombings) receive more coverage, while longer-term, wide-spread situations (such as famine or poverty) get less. A number of participants observed that while the Gulf War got extensive coverage, the deaths of over 140,000 Bangladeshis due to spring flooding went virtually unreported.

Also, the Agenda setting theory asserts that the media have the "ability to set personal, social and communal agendas" with a view to making people think and act in a goal-oriented manner.

⁷In terms of the theory's application to politics, for instance, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw establish a causal relationship between the issues the media focus on and the opinions of undecided voters in the United States. As the media set the agenda regarding what issues are salient, people begin to form opinions and to discuss these issues. In this way, the media can define issues and shape the perceptions that underpin and steer political discourse and action.

The genocide in Rwanda (itself a part of an internal conflict) and the wars in the Balkans that marked the breakup of Yugoslavia escalated quite first due to the media coverage.

In both of these conflicts the media played a pernicious role – directly inciting genocide in the case of some Rwandan media (and organizing it in the case of Radio Mille Collines) while acting as a vehicle for virulent nationalism in former Yugoslavia. This is not just a modern phenomenon – both the Nazis and the Soviet Union used the media to create a hegemonic climate in which they could more easily exercise power. However, policy makers have been slow to understand the importance of media in shaping modern conflict or how, with proper support, it can help create the conditions for peace. Despite the amount of violent conflict in the world there is still

⁶ Curtin, P. M. (1999). *Re-evaluating public relations information subsidies; Market-driven journalism and agenda-building theory and practice*(2009),pp 53-90

⁷ McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). *The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media*, Vol.36 (2), p176.

little common understanding of how modern internal conflicts are triggered. Although there is growing concern among the developed democracies about the problem of failed or fragile states, and the way that conflict areas nurture crime, terrorism, disease and other threats to human security, no-one has mapped the key indicators that signal the onset of violence.⁹

The lack of understanding of how conflict escalates is the relatively inconsistent approach to media coverage of conflicts around the world. It is obvious that the political significance of some conflicts affects the response of the most powerful governments and this in turn affects the media's coverage of conflict. However, it is also the case that the extent to which the media assigns priority to covering one conflict rather than another in turn shapes these escalations.⁹The Balkan conflicts demonstrated the growing recognition of the importance of local media coverage in shaping and developing the conflict on the ground. This has been best documented in Mark Thompson's groundbreaking account of the role of the local media in former Yugoslavia, *Forging War*, which indicates how the media supported in the destruction of Yugoslavia, the rise to power of extreme nationalism and the forging of a conflict between groups of people who had lived together peacefully all their lives. It was a frightening example of how a society can fall apart, how panic can be exploited by the power of a media in the hands of those crooked enough to wield it as a weapon.

War was neither inevitable nor the only means of resolving the conflicts that lay behind the break-up of Yugoslavia, and the local media played an important role in preparing the ground for war, by ensuring public opinion was mobilized behind the different participants. Media campaigns between rival media outlets prefigured the war itself. As regional communist leaderships mutated into nationalists they saw, true to their communist heritage, the various media as important instruments of policy and were prepared to use them.

The intervention of the Western media simply provided another arena for the conflict to be enacted. With coverage guaranteed the so-called war (in reality usually waged by attacks upon unarmed civilians) was conducted with an eye permanently upon how it was portrayed in the

⁹ Andrew Puddephatt.(2006).*Voices of war; Conflict and the role of the media*. International Media Support. Denmark 2006.pp5-7

media. All the participants in the struggle became adept at using the media to generate the political conditions for victory. Publicized attacks on civilians and the purpose of terrorizing those who the combatants wished to target next accelerated the move towards so-called “ethnic cleansing”.

¹⁰Those media who tried to stay outside of this ethnic polarization were either marginalized or retreated into self-censorship (like the federal state’s news agency Tantung) or were subject to tremendous pressure to conform. Few media outlets held out and those that did struggled to maintain an independent perspective. What the wars in former Yugoslavia showed is that the battle for hearts and minds is as important as the battle for territory. The media arena is often where that battle is conducted. The media itself becomes a rallying point for all the combatants and every combatant aspires to control its own media. In the case of Zimbabwe the state media are a direct instrument of government control, constantly attacking members of the opposition as stooges of the British government

¹¹One of the underestimated complications of the Middle East conflict between Palestinians and Israelis is the inflammatory media on both sides. Following the deaths of Israeli soldiers and settlers in the Gaza Strip in May 2004, hawkish commentator Nadia Matar of the Settler radio Arutz- called on for large-scale military action against “the Arab Nazi murderers”. “We should have erased the whole Arab village from which the Nazi murderers who carried out this massacre had come,” she said. Israelis meanwhile can listen to a steady output of anti-Semitism from the official state media of surrounding Arab countries while digesting a claim by Saudi de facto ruler, Crown Prince Abdallah Bin-Abd-al-Aziz, who stated at a gathering of Saudi university professors that “Zionists” were to blame for an attack on the offices of a petrochemical company in the Red Sea port of Yanbu, killing six Westerners and a Saudi citizen.

2.2 Role of Media in Conflict Management

The media can also contribute to conflict de-escalation. The common factor appears to be that the media pays close attention to the concerns of their domestic audience. One consequence

¹⁰ Christopher Young 1991. *The Role of Media in International Conflict*, Working Paper no. 38, Colorado.edu (1991).pp 50 - 62

¹¹ Andrew Puddephatt.(2006).*Voices of war; Conflict and the role of the media*.IMS .Denmark 2006 .pp5-7

is that while some conflicts have acquired global attention through exposure in the media, others have failed to receive significant attention through neglect.

Scores people believe that the media coverage of the conflict played a vital role in turning U.S. public opinion against the war in Vietnam. Need of well-accepted support eventually forced the U.S. to pull out from that conflict. ¹²It was felt that the constant live coverage in the early stages of the Yugoslavian conflict helped to contain that conflict by allowing the parties to publicly declare their emotions and positions. ¹³Another participant observes that the Gulf War "is the first war in the history of humanity where a representative of the other belligerent appeared almost nightly in the homes of the world. Can you imagine interviews with Ho Chi Min in American living- rooms at the height of the Vietnam War?" ¹⁴Probably the most important event in terms of the way conflicts were managed by the media was during the first Gulf conflict when the Kurdish community of northern Iraq rebelled and was attacked by Saddam Hussein's state. As refugees flooded to the border they received blanket and distressing coverage in the international news media. NGOs and civil society called for intervention in the face of apparent indifference by the western governments who had led the prosecution of the war. Having ejected the Iraqis from Kuwait, the dominant coalition members, particularly the United States, Britain and France, had no desire to intervene further in the affairs of Iraq.

¹⁵The displacement of the Kurds was an internal issue for Iraq and the refugee problem was for Turkey to deal with. Under the classic Westphalia principle of state sovereignty there was no mandate for other governments to intervene. However, the power of the media coverage (and the concern it aroused in public opinion) proved stronger than the will of governments. As

¹² George Lardner Jr. and Lois Romano (1999); *At Height of Vietnam, Bush Picks Guards*. Washington Post Staff Writers(1999).p64

¹³ Christopher Young 1991. *The Role of Media in International Conflict*, Canadian Institute for Peace and Security, Working Paper no. 38,(1991)pp50-62

¹⁴ Asia Thematic Reports 2005;*War of Words: Conflict and Freedom of Expression in South Asia- ARTICLE 19*, London 2005

¹⁵ Asia Thematic Reports 2005;*War of Words: Conflict and Freedom of Expression in South Asia- ARTICLE 19*, London 2005pp47-50

international competition between increasingly globalised news corporations grew more intense so the international media began to hunt in packs, seeking the next exclusive. ¹⁶The volume of their coverage aided and abetted by NGOs concerned to avoid an overwhelming humanitarian crisis, forced western governments into a significant U-turn. The sovereignty of Iraq was breached, intervention took place to provide security for the Kurds, leading eventually to the imposition of no-fly zones that removed the Iraqi air force from the region, and finally to significant autonomy for the Kurdish areas of northern Iraq. From this event sprang the subsequent debate about the limits of state sovereignty.

Pressure on western governments to intervene to protect people from gross human rights violations increased. Contrary to those who see imperialist motives at every step, the fact is that western governments have generally only intervened after long and public media campaigns urging them to do so. Where the media spotlight has been absent (as it was in Rwanda for example), they have undergone extraordinary contortions to avoid taking action. Of course there may be powerful geopolitical motives for governments intervening when and where they have – Iraq being an obvious example. ¹⁷ Former hostage and journalist Roger Auque argued that the media should cover hostage- takings. The safety of the hostages depends in part on their being remembered by their own governments and by the broader community. Auque also observed that "Americans have a kind of naive belief in not negotiating with terrorists, but they benefit as much as anyone else. The media often serves as a needed channel of communication between the terrorists and the target government. However, another journalist observed that media sensationalism can escalate a hostage situation. When a U.S. television station ¹⁸described the Iranian hostage situation as "America held hostage," their exaggeration simply puffed up the already inflated self-image of the hostage-takers. ¹⁹The media is a perfect way that serves leaders and between leaders when there is need for a channel of communication. Ted Turner of CNN

¹⁶ Christopher Young 1991. *The Role of Media in International Conflict*, Canadian Institute for Peace and Security, Working Paper no. 38 (1991).pp50-62

¹⁷ Wolfsfeld, Gadi. *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997

¹⁹ Christopher Young 1991. *The Role of Media in International Conflict*, Canadian Institute for Peace and Security, Working Paper no. 38, Colorado.edu (1991). pp50-62

bears in mind that Marcos the Philippine President always appealed to Important U.S. legislators for negotiations through CNN. CNN prepared and informed the appropriate legislators and then ask for their comments after the broadcast. Turner said "when we were doing a follow-up story we would find them quoting each other based on what they had seen on CNN. Many analysts argue that Saddam Hussein's Gulf Crisis speeches and appearances were directed primarily toward developing a stronger Arab constituency.

However, it cannot be denied that the role of the international media has been crucial in shaping the policy response of those governments. Inevitably this raises the question of the responsibility of the international media in such circumstances. The nature of this responsibility came to the fore during the conflict in Bosnia when many journalists found their traditional "objectivity" tested to the limit. As a consequence some felt that it would be irresponsible of them not to use the influence they might possess to secure a particular outcome for the war – especially given the atrocities they were witnessing, which for many European journalists were painful reminders of the continents past.²⁰

²¹Christiane Amanpour, reporting for CNN on the Bosnian conflict said that it was "the war of our generation: this was our Vietnam". This understandable response had the consequence of making the international media an actor in the conflict. When the UK based Independent ²²Television News (IT23N) reported the existence of the Serb detention camps at Omarska and Trnopolie it helped build support for UN Resolution 770, which allowed for "all necessary measures" in the delivery of humanitarian aid. Coverage of the mortar bomb attack on Sarajevo market in February 1994 was instrumental in securing NATO's ultimatum to stop the

²⁰ McCombs, M. (2004). *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion*. New York:2004pp107-110

²¹ Eric Schmitt (1996); *Television Five years later, The Gulf War Story is still being told*; New York Times, 1996

²² McCombs, M. (2004). *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion*. New York:2004op10-14

bombardment of the city. ²⁴Martin Bell, the BBC correspondent, spoke of a journalism of “attachment” and went on to say those journalists “were drawn into this war as something other than witnesses and chroniclers of it. We were also participants”.

The international media can also complicate attempts to resolve conflicts as their actions can engender resentment among local people at the editorial priorities of the media organizations. Modern communities are very sophisticated in their understanding of the media and its potential power. People often find it difficult to understand why they are the intense focus of media attention one day but then disappear of the media horizon the next. While it is understandable that editors and producers must constantly seek new ways to engage their own domestic audiences, their behavior can give rise to all kinds of resentment, suspicion and conspiracy theories.

2.3 Role of Media in Political Conflict

The news media have become the central arena for political conflicts today. It is, therefore, not surprising that the role of the news media in political conflicts has received a good deal of public attention in recent years. Media and Political Conflict provides readers with an understanding of the ways in which news media do and do not become active participants in these conflicts. There is an argument that the Authorities level of control over the political environment is one of the key variables that determine the role of the news media in political conflicts. Political conflicts are characterized by moves and counter moves as each antagonist tries to initiate and control political events, to dominate political discourse about the conflict and to mobilize as many supporters as possible to their side. Those who have success in these areas also enjoy a good deal of success in the news media

²⁵The news media's role in these conflicts is directly affected by the outcomes of such struggles. When Authorities succeed in dominating the political environment, the news media find it difficult to play an independent role. When, on the other hand, the authorities lack or loose control it provides the news media with a much greater array of sources and perspectives from

²⁶ Asia Thematic Reports 2005; *War of Words: Conflict and Freedom of Expression In South Asia*- ARTICLE 19, London 2005

²⁵ Wolfsfeld, G. (1997). *Media and Political conflict: News from the Middle East*,: Cambridge University Press. 1997

which to choose. ²⁶The news presentation of the second Palestinian intifada had to do with the increasingly powerful belief on both sides of this conflict that the struggle over the news media can be just as important as the battle on the ground. Israelis and Palestinians were both very aware that they were playing to an international audience and, as always, there is a major struggle over who should be cast as aggressor and who as victim. The dependence on the international news media was especially strong for the Palestinians. As the weaker side, the media was one of the only means they had of convincing other countries to intervene. One of the most powerful roles the news media plays in such conflicts is when they become “equalizers” by allowing the weaker party to enlist the support of third parties. This was certainly what happened in the first intifada from 1987 in which the Palestinians were extremely successful at placing their plight on the international Agenda. Israel’s major goal on the other hand, is mostly damage control.

Media images of Palestinian dead and wounded are a direct threat to Israel’s relations with the US, Europe, and the rest of the Arab world. The goal for Israel is to convince the world that the Palestinians are using terrorism to obtain what they could not achieve at the bargaining table. Because most Israelis believe that the international press is against them, conventional wisdom holds that no news is good news. Perhaps the most horrid effect of this mutual concern with the media is the ongoing contest for visual supremacy in the presentation and promotion of pain and suffering. The early stages of the second intifada (from 1990) produced two very powerful images. The first was the dramatic pictures of Mohammad al-Durrah being shot and killed as he and his father attempted to shield them from the crossfire.

The second were the scenes of Israeli reserve soldiers being lynched by an angry Palestinian mob in the city of Ramallah. Each of these scenes became powerful icons for the two societies; leaders from both sides attempted to exploit these images in an effort to demonstrate the enemy’s brutality. The Israelis and the Palestinians have set up structures to increase their chances of winning the battle over the news media. The Palestinian Authority brought the always-eloquent Hanan Sahrawi back as a major spokesperson to the western news media. The Palestinian opposition movements – especially Hamas and Islamic Jihad – adopted media tactics employed

²⁶ Wolfsfeld, G.(2001).*The news media and the second Intifada*,Harvard Press,2001,pp6:113-118

by Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon. Filmed interviews with suicide bombers and dramatic footage of attacks on Israel are sent to many journalists soon after the incidents. Revealingly, the Israeli news media also sometimes broadcasts these tapes despite the chilling effect these images have on the audience. Israel has also invested considerable time and resources in finding better ways to win the battle over world opinion. One of the most interesting developments has been the decision to set up a new combat unit composed of "fighting cameramen".

2.4 Relationship between Media and Different stages of Conflict.

²⁷The potential for conflict exists whenever people have different needs, values, or interests; this is the "latent" conflict stage. The conflict may not become apparent until a "triggering event" leads to the emergence or Open Conflict (or beginning) of the obvious conflict. Emergence may be followed quickly by settlement or resolution, or it may be followed by escalation, which can become very destructive. Escalation, however, cannot continue indefinitely. De-escalation can be temporary or can be part of a broader trend toward settlement or resolution. Or escalation may lead to a stalemate, a situation in which neither side can win. ²⁸If the pain of continuing the conflict exceeds that of maintaining the confrontation, the parties are in what Zartman calls a "hurting stalemate," which often presents an ideal opportunity for negotiation and a potential settlement. Finally, if and when an agreement is reached, peace building efforts work to repair damaged relationships with the long-term goal of reconciling former opponents.

Across the globe, media have been used as tools to inflame grievances and accelerate the escalation towards violent conflict. In Rwanda radio was used to lay the groundwork for genocide. In Serbia television was manipulated to stir ethnic tensions prior to civil war. In the former Soviet republic of Georgia territorial disputes were exacerbated by the propagation of nationalist mythology in the media.²⁹

²⁷ Brahm, Eric.2003. *Conflict Stages*. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado. Posted: September 2003 <http://www.beyondintractability.org/bi-essav/conflict_stages/>.

²⁸ William Zartman(1985), *Ripe for Resolution* ,New York: Oxford, 1985.pp1-11

²⁹ McCombs, M. (2004). *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion*. New York: Pollty.2004.p1

At the Latent stage, media plays a vital role in that, the Conventional media – radio, television and newspapers – usually play a positive and informative role in society. However, there are many documented cases of media being manipulated by actors intent on instigating violent conflict. The authors assert that a number of “clues to conflict” can be observed in the media landscape, clues that suggest a society is vulnerable to abuse by actors intent on instigating conflict, or simply that poor journalism may play a role in precipitating conflict.

³⁰These “clues to conflict” are divided into two categories. “Structural indicators” concern media outlets, media professionals or government institutions concerned with media; they can include media variety and plurality, degree of journalist isolation, and the legal environment for media. “Content indicators” concern content designed to create fear (such as a focus on past atrocities and history of ethnic hatred) or content designed to create a sense of inevitability and resignation to conflict (such as discrediting alternatives to conflict).

In regards to these, Four recommendations to the international community are made: media in vulnerable societies should be monitored; there should be greater collaboration between media organizations and conflict resolution organization; media organizations need to build a better case for monitoring and early intervention and encourage appropriate donor support; and a systematic review of media behavior in vulnerable society should be conducted to enhance the international community’s understanding of this important dynamic.

³¹At the Open or Emergence stage, media sources such as the BBC, CNN, al Arabiya, and al Jazeera have global reach, and as such have an “agenda-setting effect.” This effect, as Steven Livingston explained, revolves around the ideological components of political disagreements, and more specifically the way key actors in conflict seek to manipulate public perceptions of the disagreement. That is, actors in any conflict will seek to either minimize or exaggerate the conflict, depending upon their relative position of power. Weak actors will want to “socialize” the conflict—that is, to enlist allies in their cause against a greater power and to increase the perception of suffering. According to Livingston’s research, the assumption that the greater the amount of death and destruction, the more attention the media will pay to the conflict, is false. His data show that no correlation exists between the number of people at risk of dying—an indicator of a pre-conflict scenario—and media attention. The international media seems a very

³⁰ Ibid.pp2-4

³¹ Mcombs, M. (2004). *Setting the Agenda: the mass media and public opinion*, Blackwell Publishing 2004 p1.

haphazard bellwether of conflict and an even more cursory method by which to set international policy agendas.

³²While a substantial amount of analysis has payed attention on the media's capability to support democracy efforts and build sustainable peace, no such effort has been given to scrutinize the role media can play in conflict deterrence, Nor has the media's capacity to spur conflict been sufficiently analyzed and the lessons learned.. The international community would do well to recognize the danger of calibrating its responses to the substance and timing of the information it receives from media reports. Media framing gives a basic image of the other actors, as well as defining the incompatibility and interpreting their behaviour. Framing influences an audience's expectations, which will ultimately determine who or what actions are considered credible and legitimate. In this sense it can enforce and communicates norms. There are, for example, claims that international media influences audiences in other parts of the world by promoting certain norms and expectations.

For example, how the media chooses to frame these issues can result in the media acting as either a catalyst to escalation or de-escalation. It can either magnify the importance of an actor's behavior, giving positive or negative connotations, or vice versa. Media framing can also influence, or is the result of attempts by political actors to manipulate levels of credibility and legitimacy.

³³Through agenda-setting functions and framing, the media can also be a catalyst to reducing or creating a "legitimacy gap" As soon as a large enough percentage of the citizens perceive that they have a right to expect more (or less) from their government, the state will loose legitimacy. Not having access to credible information on important societal and political issues can be an important catalyst to the creation of a legitimacy gap. This explains why certain governments despite obviously heavily censored media and autocratic character continue to make efforts to legitimate their power in public media discourses. The bigger the legitimacy gap

³² United Institute of Peace (2007). *The Role of Media in Conflict*; Washington DC 2007.

³³ Ian Hurd (2003), *Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics*; Online publication 2003, pp379-408

(difference between citizens expectations and behavior of the State), the weaker the state, and easier it is to mobilize against a regime. Escalation is the increase in intensity of a conflict. Perhaps the most destructive conflict dynamic, the cycle of provocation and counter-provocation eventually results in the replacement of substantive debate with increasingly hateful and sometimes violent confrontations directed more at hurting opponents than at advancing interests. This process plays a crucial role in the long slide toward war and the crossing of taboo lines which normally restrain our most inhuman impulses. It can also lead people to take ever more extreme and unjustifiable positions. Escalation alone is sufficiently powerful to transform what should be a tractable dispute into one that is virtually impossible to resolve. In all these media plays a crucial role. Media may decide to retreat from reporting anything that might cause further escalation of this conflict or move on to report each step that would course the conflict to escalate further to the next stage.

³⁴Conflict theorists Dean Pruitt and Jeffrey Rubin list five changes that occur as conflict escalates. First, parties move from light tactics to heavy tactics. Light tactics include such things as persuasive arguments, promises, efforts to please the other side, while heavy tactics include threats, power plays, even violence. Second, the number of issues in contention grows as parties bring up more and more things that are making them annoyed or angry. Third, issues move from specific to general, and the relationship between the parties deteriorates. "What starts out as a small, concrete concern tends, over the painful history of an escalating exchange, to be supplanted by grandiose and all-encompassing positions and by a general intolerance of the other party." Fourth, the number of parties grows from one to many, as more and more people and groups are drawn into the conflict. Fifth, the goal of the parties changes from "doing well" to winning, and finally, to hurting the other. The result of escalation is that a conflict can grow out of control very quickly. Escalated conflicts do cease to be focused on the parties' original problems or goals, nor do they provide a way for those goals to be realized. Rather, they provide only costs and continued conflict, with little benefit for anybody.

³⁴ Dean Pruitt and Jeffrey Rubin (1986) *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement*, New York: Random House, 1986 pp. 88-9.

³⁵Yet, escalated conflicts are very hard to reverse. Once relationships have been broken, once distrust, fear, and hatred grow, and especially, once violence has occurred, it is very difficult to back away from an escalated conflict and resolve it constructively. Rather, people tend to continue the fight, if possible, even escalating it further, as this usually seems less risky than "showing that you are weak" by trying to initiate de-escalation. Despite the dangers of escalation, advocates frequently escalate a conflict intentionally--thinking that they can harness to power of escalation to mobilize support for their side. While this strategy may appear to work well, it is also likely to build support for the opposition. Thus the common result is the intensification of the conflict, not victory.

³⁵ Ibidpp88-90

Chapter 3 : Electronic Media and Electoral Conflict in Kenya

¹ According to Hameso Seyoum, Information has always been a basis for knowledge; and the latter is power. Lack of information contributes to knowledge deficiency, which leads to powerlessness. Therefore, access to information implies a form of empowerment, or better still, it signifies freedom from ignorance, freedom from servitude and ultimately freedom to choose. Freedom of expression is a vital characteristic of liberal democracy. In a weak liberal democracy, citizens have a constitutional right to express themselves freely. Sometimes, however, they get into difficulty when they criticize state officials such as the case of the raid on the *East African Standard* premises in 2006 when the media house suffered from a raid that led to the destruction of its computers and newspapers for the next day, The reason was apparently the fear that that issue of the newspaper contained damaging information on some government officials.

3.1 Political and Electoral Conflict in Kenya

Since independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s most African states have experienced different forms of political conflict which has been rooted in both internal and external factors. The conflict generated by political succession is conflict over control of the state, where conflict is about who governs and does not usually envisage the creation of a new state. Kenya has not been an exception.² Kenya has experienced a number of violent political conflicts since Independence in 1963. Most of these political conflicts have been termed “ethno-cultural conflicts” by the mass media.

Oyugi argues that conflicts have largely been based on the distribution of resources and political power among the 42 ethno-cultural groups in Kenya. These ethnic groups have different cultures and languages which set them apart from each other.

¹ Hameso, S.(1995).*Politics of freedom of information in Africa, in Focus on International and comparative Librarianship*.Vol.26.No.3.pp156-164

² Muhula Raymond (2009).*Horizontal Inequalities and Ethno-regional politics in Kenya. 2009. Kenya Studies Reviews 1:pp85-105*

³Kenya has had only limited experience with competitive multi-party elections; and the experience is confined to the first three years of independence. At independence, a multi-party contest involved the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) — the two parties formed in 1960 in anticipation of independence. Up to that year, countrywide political organizations had been proscribed following the declaration of a state of emergency in October 1952 and the banning of the Kenya African Union (KAU) (intended to contain the Mau Mau revolt). Between 1955 and early 1960 only district based political parties or associations were allowed in non-Mau-Mau areas.

The conflict is relatively restrained and characterized by competition among elites for political power and therefore the conflict is self-containing and within the status quo. The shrinking of political space in Kenya began with the 'merger' of KANU and KADU in the National Assembly. Since the President and the National Assembly constitute the Parliament in Kenya, the growth of executive power affected parliament in its primary functions of lawmaking, public debate and political recruitment. Kenyatta attempted to reduce competition for political recruitment through firstly an internal purge in KANU and secondly control of the electoral process. The roots of conflict in independent Kenya revolved around ideology and policies of the new state. The ideological conflict between Odinga and Kenyatta came to a head in 1966. By the time of the Limuru Conference in 1966 the myth of political unity and the illusion of leadership unity shattered as differences emerged on land, the organization of state power, economic development strategies and so on.

At the height of the Kenyatta - Odinga Conflict in October, 1969, Kenyatta was in Kisumu to open the Russian Hospital, There occurred an open display of hostility by Heckling and booing during the President's speech. The President's Escort reacted to these by opening fire to the crowd. These, plus the assassination of Tom Mboya in July the same year brought about an ethnic rift between the Kikuyu and the Luo. Upon Kenyatta's return to Nairobi, KPU (a newly formed party by Odinga) was proscribed and its leaders arrested and detained. Political recruitment into parliament was now only through KANU in the 1969 general elections. It was

³ Charles N. Mwaura (1997). *Conflict Resolution in the greater Horn of Africa*. Nairobi 1997.p2

against this grim background that the General Elections were held in December 1969. However, the turnout and outcome was impressive with the highest voter turnout registered Central Kenya.

⁴The only avenue of political recruitment to parliament remained through elections which was reduced to one or both to two principles: the principle of choice; and the principle of acclamation. The principle of choice is deeply rooted in the liberal tradition of politics, it confers on the electorate the right to choose/elect between candidates for parliament among alternative political parties, simply put the principle rests on "Let the People decide". The combination of party chairman and the Presidency made Kenyatta ipso facto the president of the country. To additionally shelter this position was the institutionalization of party life membership in KANU, which ended in Kenyatta being declared KANU chairman forever. The President's positions became non-elective and in effect not open to succession either through choice or acclamation. The conflict of political succession, particularly as regards the presidency was mitigated by this emergent electoral system, leadership succession was mitigated by the principle of choice by the electorate, political recruitment rested on both principles while the central recruiting institution remained KANU. To be eligible for candidacy, all aspirants had to be life members of KANU. Former KPU members had to have been members of KANU for a period of three consecutive years from the time of their release from detention. All candidates and in particular former KPU members had to identify themselves with the government and KANU policies.

⁵On realizing that Odinga and some of his KPU associates might qualify KANU stipulated that meeting the conditions would not result in automatic clearance to stand in the elections. Odinga and nine of his KPU associates were not allowed to vie for the 1974 elections.⁶The 1974 elections were the last under Kenyatta's regime and were shaped with irregularities and manipulations in Electoral law. These were manifested by the big number of election petitions. Some results were nullified although Kenyatta and KANU won the 1974 elections the question of political succession to Kenyatta's leadership re-emerged. In 1971 there was a threat to the presidency when the government announced it had prevented an attempted coup d'état Popular

⁴ Walter O.Oyugi (1997). *Ethnicity in the Electoral Process*: Nairobi. 1997 pp41-69

⁵ Karimi S. and Ochieng P. (1980). *The Kenyatta Succession*; Nairobi-Trans-Africa Books, 1980; p3-10

⁶ Walter O.Oyugi (1997), *Ethnicity in the Electoral Process*: Nairobi 1997 pp41-69

politics focused after the elections on land particularly after "the transfer of millions acres of large farms intact to wealthy members of the community - mostly Kikuyu who were closely associated with the President awakened hostile criticism" of the government both within the KANU parliament and outside Parliament. Upon his accession to office - President Moi was unanimously elected president of KANU On October 6, 1978 and became the sole party candidate for the post of President. On October 10, 1978 President Moi was sworn in as Kenya's second president. President Moi's first cabinet increased in size as he attempted to make its representation countrywide while significantly reducing the power of the Kikuyu elite. In a bid to woo the Luo, Odinga was appointed Chairman of the Cotton Lint and Seed Marketing Board and granted life membership to KANU - he was however, denied clearance to compete in the elections. In June 1982 Odinga and George Anyona attempted to register an alternative party – the Kenya African Socialist Alliance (KASA). The government rushed a constitutional amendment to parliament - Amendment Act No. 7 of 1982, resulting in the infamous section 2(a) which constitutionally transformed Kenya from a defacto one-party state into a de jure one-party state.

⁷In August, Moi was nominated as the sole KANU candidate for the General Election on September 16, 1983. By 1986 the witch-hunt had begun with rumors of secret movements aimed at overthrowing the government such as *Mwakenya*; Kenya Revolutionary Movement and Kenya Patriotic Front, all seen as emanating from University graduates and many were arrested and charged with possession of seditious publication notably *Pambana and Mupatanishi*. The 1988 General Election was an embarrassment. Most of the outcomes from the ballot box was an invention of those who were in power. KANU and the then government congratulated themselves for victory but this was not the case. Most Kenyans wondered why they even participated in such an elections full of flaws. It must be reiterated that in both queue-voting and secret ballot, majority of the Kenyans declined to participate

⁸The coming to an end of the cold war in 1990 meant a lot for Kenya. This brought about close analysis of the Moi regime and the political background of one party system. The government's autocratic nature in dealing with criticism, the widespread levels of deep

⁷ Karimi S. and Ochieng P. (1980). *The Kenyatta Succession*; Nairobi-Trans-Africa Books, 1980; op4-7

⁸ Charles N. Mwaura (1997). *Conflict Resolution in the greater Horn of Africa*. Nairobi 1997. pp 5- 17

corruption and the brutal murder of Dr. Robert Ouko Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation in February 1990 crystallized opposition both internally and externally against the Moi government. The Moi era came under a huge barricade. In April 1990 Kenneth Matiba, a Cabinet Minister, resigned and together with Charles Rubia called for the (re)introduction of a multi-party political system, culminating in the July 7, 1990 "Saba Saba" riots. The donor community stated that future aid to Kenya would depend on the government's willingness to implement economic and political liberalization. The government responded with its high handedness and promptly rounded up all multiparty advocates like Mohammed Ibrahim, John Khaminwa, Gitobu Imanyara, Raila Odinga, Kenneth Matiba, and Charles Rubia and detained them.

Kenya went through a very high instability, not because of the electoral and political outcomes but due to clashes in the Rift Valley which the Government unsuccessfully tried to portray as instigated by the Opposition. More accurately as Bertha Amisi notes "they were KANU's efforts to frustrate the efforts of the democratization movement, to prove that multi-party politics can only lead to ethnic conflict and perhaps civil war", this led to "factoring of politico-ethnic conflict into Kenyan politics in such a way that it raises concern over the potential [that] the current political struggles between KANU and the Opposition can degenerate into outright civil war" ⁹The Electoral Commission under the Chairmanship of Justice Zacheus Chesoni was raft with controversy. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) provided equal coverage of all political parties in its broadcasts; the Provincial Administration did not infringe on the campaign licensing process. This marked the beginning of almost an unending struggle of electoral conflict in Kenya.

⁹ AMISI, Bertha Kadenyi (1992) *Development and peacemaking in Africa*. Addis Ababa 2008

3.2 Electronic Media in Kenya

During the one party regime under KANU government, The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) dominated as the only electronic media station which had the government's control and ownership. Before then, it was known as the Voice of Kenya (VoK). The government's control was so much so that, KBC acted like its mouthpiece than a public space where citizens' voices could speak on a range of issues.¹⁰ While Kenyatta's regime from 1963 to 1978 had been characterized by less inflexible control of the media, at least from the President himself, the press in Kenya, under Moi, was very different. But this is not to ignore that the Kenyatta government did not try to control the media. Kenya Press, Media, TV, and Radio (1990). Kenya's media is noteworthy given the continent's history that has had a devastating effect on the industry. At independence most African states had media that could have been developed into vibrant institutions.

The return of multiparty democracy in 1992 opened the way for the licensing of Frequency Modulated (FM) radio stations; increased freedom for the public and other institutions to express themselves through the media, and increased political content. Inevitably, political battles would be fought through the media. The socio-political changes in the country also increased public demand for news and information. Over the past 15 years, the media industry in Kenya has grown exponentially. This growth has also been characterized by the deployment of the latest technological innovations in the field of communication, regional expansion within East Africa, increased number of professional media practitioners and the growth of citizen media. Currently, there are more than 90 FM stations, 14 TV stations in Kenya. They mainly use English as the primary language, with some media houses using Swahili. Use of vernacular languages is commonly used in broadcast media, mostly radio. Kenya's state-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation remains the only broadcaster with countrywide coverage. It broadcasts in English and Swahili plus various vernacular languages. Royal Media Services is the largest private national broadcaster with countrywide coverage. It also broadcasts in English and Swahili plus various vernacular languages. A dozen private radio and television stations have ranges that are

¹⁰ Peter Oriare, Rosemary Okello-Orlale, Wilson Ugangu (2010); *The Media we want; The Kenya Media Vulnerabilities Study*; Nairobi (2010) pp38-40

limited to the Nairobi area. More than 100 applications for radio and television licenses are pending before the Communication Commission of Kenya, which is the independent regulatory authority for the communications industry in Kenya. Its role is to license and regulate telecommunications, radio-communication and postal/courier services in Kenya.

Under the Kibaki government, the media have demonstrated greater editorial independence than in previous years, and the number of press freedom abuses has declined. Still, some media policies and incidents continue to inhibit press freedom, e.g., the need to post a costly bond prior to publication and to register afterward. In 2003 the government invoked a restrictive constitutional provision on court coverage to intimidate journalists reporting on a possible political murder. In March 2006, hooded policemen raided the offices of The Standard newspaper and Kenya Television Network, claiming concerns about internal security

¹¹The media in Kenya is regulated by a statutory body called the Media Council of Kenya. The Media Council of Kenya is an independent national institution established by the Media Act, 2007 as the leading institution in the regulation of media and in the conduct and discipline of journalists. It is mandated amongst other to register and accredit journalists, register media establishments, handle complaints from the public and create and publish yearly media audit on the Media Freedom in Kenya. During accreditation the journalists agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct and Practice of Journalism in Kenya, which was created by media practitioners and stakeholders with the view of making Journalism in Kenya a more professional and respectable field. An unprecedented public debate has been raging in Kenya over the role of the media before, during and after the 2007 General Election. Questions about media conduct continue to rise as the country attempts to define what it considers a desirable media. The manner in which the media reported and portrayed the violence that erupted between various ethnic groups around the country in January 2008 has come under special scrutiny.

Religious organizations, civil society, government departments and foreign missions are some of the interest groups that have spoken out about the role of the media in that period. They have accused the media of incitement, promoting stereotypes, misreporting events and general misrepresentations. Kenya's media are one of the most respected, thriving, sophisticated and

¹¹ Media Council of Kenya Act, 2007

innovative in Africa, according to a policy briefing by the BBC World Service Trust.¹² The report, which records the role of the media and communication in the 2007 General Election and their aftermath, notes that over the past 15 years, the media in Kenya have been increasingly assertive and self-confident. They have played a substantial role in mediating relationships between citizens and state, in shaping the democratic dispensation in the country and have transformed how some of the marginalized people in society access information on issues that shape their lives.

This obviously strong endorsement of the Kenyan media reflects an ideal that ought to be the basis for measuring performance. However, the fervent public debate about the media in Kenya in recent times does not approximate this assessment. During the FES-Media Council of Kenya's monthly public debate series in 2005, in which ordinary citizens spoke directly to media practitioners, the range of opinions expressed strongly indicted the media. Most of those who spoke expressed grave dissatisfaction with the media, questioning why they should continue to listen to radio stations whose interpretation of reality were often misplaced.¹³

With the benefit of hindsight, it seems that the liberalization of the airwaves in the early 1990s created opportunities for a more diverse media playing field. It is in this regard that this research is out to find out what role did the electronic media play during the 2007 post-elections violence in Kenya.

3.4 Electronic Media and Electoral Conflict in Kenya in 2007

Competitive elections in Africa have become common and due to this, their aftermath has also increased the violence experienced during these periods. Elections are intended to facilitate political conflict in a controlled, non-violent way and to legitimate outcomes—whether democratically determined or not. The situation in Africa is that, the states have feeble institutions that the rule of law is frequently diluted, that orderly succession is difficult to achieve and that many states are either engaged in or emerging from war, this process is easily inflamed. Election-related violence is typically systemic and is often an indicator of challenges faced in terms of economic development, nation-building and the consolidation of political power. This

¹² Peter Oriare, Rosemary Okello-Orlale, Wilson Ugangu (2010); *The Media we want; The Kenya Media Vulnerabilities Study*; Nairobi (2010) op38-40

¹³ Charles Nyambuga (2002). *Media and Politics*; Nairobi 2002

has certainly been the case in Kenya, where violence of varying degrees has flared up consistently in elections since 1992, most recently after the 2007 Presidential election where the outcome was deeply contested led to violent protests. ¹⁴Although Kenya is frequently cited as a model for political stability and economic development in Africa, as Anderson and Lochery remind us, the violence in the aftermath of the Kenyan 2007 poll must be seen in the context of the contested nature of land settlement schemes since the 1960s and subsequent political violence.

Violence is a process, not an event. Violent acts may be spontaneous, but they are more often the product of a longer sequence of historical decisions and political actions. Among the many factors that can affect the incidence of violence, the role of the media is surely one of them. ¹⁵Many accounts of election-related disputes in East Africa and elsewhere express a concern about the role of media. Although it is not usually the defining factor in determining whether violence will or will not occur, the role of the media is a significant aspect of the overall context. Violence can be associated with all three or just one of the election phases: the pre-election phase, the day/s of the election, or the immediate post election period. Typically, violence is clustered around the pre- and post-election period; voting day generally—but not always—appears to proceed peacefully. It is the campaigning period and when the results start to emerge that the likelihood of violence increases. The level of competition in an election is a fundamental test for the likelihood of violence.

¹⁶Kenya is representative of a growing trend across Africa whereby multiparty elections are associated with violence. In addition, the most recent elections in both Ethiopia (2005) and Zimbabwe (2008) saw scores killed.

¹⁴ Stephen Brown. (2001). *Authoritarian Leaders and Multiparty Elections in Africa*. Taylor & Francis, Ltd 2001pp 725-739

¹⁵ Ploughman Gerard (2010). *Birth of a Nation: The story of a newspaper in Kenya*. London and New York (2010)

¹⁶ Peter Oriare, Rosemary Okello-Orlale, Wilson Ugangu (2010); *The Media we want: The Kenya Media Vulnerabilities Study*; Nairobi (2010) op38-40

In the post-election context, the media (and particularly new media) can play three roles: that of mirror, amplifier and enabler. As a mirror, the press, in particular, serves as an important reflection of the state and nation building process. It provides insight into political dynamics and the level of dialogue within a society. It suggests the level of polarization in a society, the progress of reconciliation and, in the case of post-election violence, and the possible avenues for the peaceful resolution of disputes.

To understand how the media can be used as a mirror to provide insight into political conflicts, there are four key areas for analysis: historic pathways, media structure, electoral system design and political structure.

In much the same way as the press acts as a mirror, the new technologies employed for the distribution of media serve as an amplifier. Election-related violence is not a new phenomenon, but the use of mobile phones, the proliferation of radio stations, and an increasing ability to connect with like-minded individuals through Facebook and other social networking platforms facilitates and accelerates the spread of messages in a less controllable way.

In short, technology does not necessarily alter the message—rumors and stereotypes that have been propagated for decades are still central in much of the violence— but it speeds up the ways in which such messages penetrate communities and mobilize individuals and groups for action.

In the Kenyan elections of 2007 we saw some of the effects new technology can have on post-election violence. Despite a history of violence associated with elections, these were the first elections where mobile phones and access to vernacular radio stations was widely available. While mobile phones can be used for election monitoring and the verification of results, including obtaining up to- date provisional results, in the case of Kenya, many of these benefits were overshadowed by the role of mobile technology in spreading hate speech, particularly after polls closed.¹⁷ This was opposed by the CEO of Safaricom, a leading mobile phone network operator in Kenya, who argued that chaos would result as phones were also used by displaced people to contact relatives and as part of humanitarian efforts. Another potential policy response was monitoring and filtering SMS messages, but this was complicated by the fact that words used in inflammatory messages were difficult to identify and screen as metaphors were often used.

¹⁷ Tom Odhiambo (2008) *Kenya, Media and Political Crisis*; Nairobi 2008 pp 63-65

Together, the three roles of the media offer a way of thinking about how the media contributes to the stability or instability of post-election periods. The political disputes, and associated violence, are not uniform. Each case has its own underlying causes which are an assemblage of political, economic, historical and cultural factors. These cases also demonstrate the wide array of considerations that must be taken into account—from division in society on the one hand or reconciliation, nation-building and societal functioning on the other. In terms of encouraging violence, radio shows regularly used inflammatory language and campaigns were conducted via SMS and email which promoted intolerance and violence through the dehumanization of groups. Cell phones were key instruments by which misinformation and rumor, key contributory factors to the violence, were spread. However, the media also facilitated calls for democratic participation and peace through voter mobilization and SMS services which informed people about political processes.

The importance of new media forms has an impact on potential regulatory structures and government response to violence. In Kenya, suggested measures to prevent the use of mobile phones to disseminate incitement to violence included closing down mobile phone networks. The media, again, characterized the ODM group as rebellious, bitter and consumed with political and electoral 'revenge'. It was cast as having lost out to a 'cheating', not-to-be-trusted group and its political campaign was associated with a language which spoke of historical injustices, broken promises, betrayed memorandum, a corrupt cabal, the Mount Kenya mafia, the ethnic bloc, and the kitchen cabinet. These terms tended to intensify the differences between the ruling group and the group in 'opposition', with members of the Kikuyu Ethnic group being seen as having unfairly benefited from national opportunities and resources. The circulation of these terms within the public space happened through both formal and informal media networks. The print and electronic media, as well as the new media of the internet and mobile telephony (through SMS, for instance) uncritically circulated these ideas, most of which tended to carry heavy negative or prejudicial connotations against one socio-economic class or ethnic group or region in the country.¹⁸

¹⁸ Makokha, Kwamchetsi (2010). *The Dynamics and the politics of Media in Kenya: The Role and Impact of mainstream Media in the 2007 General Elections*. Nairobi 2010

News reports, analysis and opinions amplified the notion of spitted country, with power, opportunity and resources being said to be ‘unfairly’ distributed across the country. Although studies have consistently shown that Kenya is one of the most socio-economically unequal countries in the world, the media often did not (and still does not) offer empirical evidence to support such claims, often ignoring, for instance, intra-group inequalities even in groups that are perceived to be ‘favored’ by the state.

¹⁹Even after the country started to ‘burn’ with the destruction of property, the killing of more than 1000 Kenyans, the displacement of thousands of people across the country, the mainstream Kenyan media did not appreciate the magnitude of the national crisis and continued to take sides in the political divide between the Party of National Unity (a conglomeration of small parties which had won just about 50 percent of the parliamentary seats) and the Orange Democratic Party (which had won the majority of parliamentary seats but whose candidate had lost the elections to the incumbent, President Mwai Kibaki). The “Daily Nation” and the “Standard”, the two leading daily newspapers, as well as their related electronic media, were seen to be supporting the PNU and ODM respectively. FM radio stations were even more biased.

¹⁹ Ploughman Gerard (2010). *Birth of a Nation; The story of a newspaper in Kenya*. London and New York (2010)

Chapter 4: Role of Electronic Media in Escalation of Violence in the 2007 Electoral Conflict

This chapter aims to connect the original research questions and theoretical framework in presenting the research findings and discussing these findings. The results are put according to the objectives of the study which the researcher was out to investigate. In addition, this chapter puts across characteristic of the study subjects displayed by the qualitative findings. Qualitative data is presented based on the themes that emerged during the analysis. The section also demonstrates how some of the identified factors determined the role of electronic media in the electoral conflict witnessed in Kenya's 2007 Election period.

The instrument used for generation of the data analyzed, which is the questionnaire, was structured in a way to elicit as much responses as possible on the core study areas of examining whether it is possible to understand the conflicts in Kenya based on the information provided by the media, finding out the role of electronic media in conflict situation and the mechanisms the electronic media used in fuelling or calming the chaos in the period prior to, during and after the post election violence. The questionnaires were distributed to Eldoret, Naivasha and Kibera residents, plus media personnel from NTV, KTN, Change FM and Hope FM.

These results presented generalized findings based on the 117 questionnaires. Undoubtedly, within such a big data set, and using qualitative methods, some divergent dissenting views were noted, but these can only be moderately reported in this research. Having extensively tacked the role of electronic media in an election process, earlier on, the researcher decided to have this as a marking scheme for the electronic media and see if it performed as expected.

4.1 Electronic Media's Influence on General Public During The 2007 Post- Election Violence

The general Public received most of the information and developments of the election campaigns and the election process through the leading media houses in Kenya. A majority of the respondents, about 107 out of 117 said they knew of the current developments through the radio. The electronic media kept highlighting instances where politicians kept talking ill of each other while campaigning for themselves, weapons being ferried, and leaflets of hate messages among others. These actions by the electronic media was so intense that at the peak of the

electioneering process, the general public had set their minds on who will win and if not then the results will not be accepted. So each ethnic group had their own mind set and believed nothing else. The result was uprising and revolts from all the parts of the country were witnessed.¹

As observed during the conflict, most participants believed that the Kenyan public took any news coming from the electronic media as gospel truth rather than questioning the information. The way in which the electronic media packaged the information was authoritative and convincing.

Moreover, 72 participants out of 117 agreed that even though some national television and radio stations tried to attenuate their message it was still clear to the audience that the elections were not carried out in a transparent manner. The facial expression and tonal variations of the presenters clearly reflected the stations feelings and attitude. And as a result, these 72 participants were verbatim that the fueling of the violence through the electronic media was not necessarily verbal/transmission of hate messages but it was about the vocal and facial expressions of the anchors. Hence, the electronic media needed to give cautious attention to the vocal and facial aspects of their delivery, which might have comprised above 90% of the passing their message during the conflict.

All the participants agreed that generally, the media especially the FM radio stations promoted hate speech that brought forth ethnic hatred and animosity that burst into open post-election violence.

While a majority of media stations were much more cautious, Ethnic FM radio stations played a big role in fuelling ethnic hatred and hostility through the use of disgusting and nasty language. Reviewers have argued that some FM stations intentionally encouraged ill feelings against other communities by giving extreme airspace to hate mongers who talked ill about other ethnic communities perceived as political enemies.² A participant in Eldoret noted that some radio stations in Kalenjin tribe in the Rift Valley used to call their Kikuyu neighbors Kenyambi (weeds), while a popular Kikuyu radio station often referred to Luos as fishermen. The FM stations siding with ODM encouraged their audiences to keenly participate in mass action called by ODM leadership, however, translated to a negative connotation. Most Kenyans took mass action as a confrontation of the enemy. Mass action characterized what came out to be

¹ Respondents from Eldoret, Kibera and Naivasha on questionnaire filled between 25th July to 15th of August 2011

² Julius Nganga' Kamau, Eldoret 2011; Questionnaire respondent from Eldoret In Uasin Gishu. July 25th 2011

demonstrators fighting on the streets with the police resulting into loss of life and destruction of property. By calling for mass action, electronic media encouraged confrontation between ODM and PNU supporters and the police on one hand.³ A participant from Kibera (slum in Nairobi) said that “we were asked to go and confront our PNU counterparts who had stolen our victory. Therefore, we had to respect this and show that we are ready to take what belongs to us”.

Some FM stations broadcasting in ethnic languages gave plain suggestions to voters on how to deal with their counterparts who were perceived to have stolen votes. When a ban was put on live coverage of what was happening in Kenya from December 30th 2007, most FM radio and TV stations simply reinforced live messages broadcast by BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera that demonstrated violence taking place in various parts of the country. ⁴Naivasha residents clearly indicated that when people saw pictures or heard their tribesmen being killed merely because of their ethnic identity, they did similar things to members of other communities living among them. This made the whole situation unbearable. These international media stations showed real time pictures of burning houses, scared people and people chopped to death. Some electronic media relayed such horrific stories that fueled the post-election violence in unexpected places far from the epicenter of the post-election violence. Certainly, these messages created animosity and fueled revenge attacks in Nairobi, Central, Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western provinces.

⁵ Naivasha residents were vocal enough and informed of how Luos were burnt to death in houses and those traveling using public transport ejected from vehicles, killed and bodies used to blockage roads. “It was quite horrific “one of the said. During these conflicts, Ethnic radio stations fueled vengeance attacks through emotionally reporting the predicaments of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who were returning to their “ancestral homes”. Most community radio such as Change FM and Inooro gave ample airtime discussing the tribulations of IDPs in the

³ Polycarp Omondi, Kibera –Nairobi 2011: Questionnaire respondent from Nairobi’s slum – Kibera. August 3rd 2011

⁴ Naivasha– 2011: 19Questionnaire respondents-Naivasha,29th July 2011

⁵ Naivasha– 2011: 19Questionnaire respondents Naivasha,29th July 2011

hands of perceived ethnic enemies. The collision of these messages was instant and infuriated. On the other hand, Luos destroyed homes and looted property while evicting Kikuyus from all parts of Nyanza province. During the conflict, electronic media stations especially FM radios broadcasting in ethnic languages advised their tribesmen and women to support sides taken by politicians from their ethnic communities. They were actually the mouthpieces of politicians calling for mass action against other communities. The PNU sensitive media also called on their supporters to resist mass action and advised the government to protect Kenyans and their property. While some ethnic stations were explicit and incited audiences to take arms and commit acts of aggression others were contained and sent hate messages through hints.

Soon after the announcement of the presidential results on December 30th 2007, the ethnic-based community radios tended to give lots of time and distinction to the violence through spike and animated descriptions of what was happening. These kinds of reporting fueled post-election violence. ⁶Some of the respondents also indicated that there was perceived mismanagement of the 2007 general elections and this, they came to learn through the media. ⁷They indicated that electronic media showed how electoral process and the composition of the election management team for the 2007 elections were flawed and highly manipulated. The media also broadcasted live how the Electoral Commission of Kenya appeared to mismanage the vote tallying exercise, it only served to confirm the fears of the opposition that the electoral process and supervision was designed to ensure the re-election of the incumbent.

The Hate speech and inciting statements by the political leaders aired live through the electronic media contributed a lot in fueling of the violence. Casual statements of politicians and incitement of the public to hate the antagonist parties and communities, coupled with hate propaganda given expression over especially vernacular radio served to increase the violence.

4.2 Electronic Media in Peace Building During the 2007 Post- Election Violence

A majority of the respondents, about 87 out of the 117 respondents felt that the electronic media played a major role in peace building within the Kenyan society. However bad the media would have fueled the violence, the same media was used to broadcast messages of good will from the international community, Kenyans in the Diaspora and Ambassadors.

⁶ Naivasha– 2011: 19 Questionnaire respondents-Naivasha, 29th July 2011

⁷ KNCHR Report. (2007). *Still behaving badly*. Nairobi 2007

The magic or hypodermic needle theory assumed that media had direct, immediate and powerful effect on their audience with the capability to bring about social change.⁸ The media uniformly shot or injected audiences with appropriate messages that had effect on how they carried out their activities. Therefore, through the electronic media the church was involved in civic education across the country. In the midst of divisive “objective” news coverage of conflict, the most lucid, calm voices rang forth from the editorials, at times calling for cross-ethnic cooperation, tolerance, compromise, forgiveness, and a sense of national unity.

The electronic media aided a lot in conciliation though from varied motives. An initiative of Pamoja FM is a prominent example of electronic media influence in calming the violence. The Media Owners Association (MOA) came together to support peace-building initiatives in the country.⁹ All media houses devoted airtime and space to carry messages of peace and reconciliation. They aired special messages from Partners for Peace, a civil society peace building forum, asking the two principal leaders to call upon their supporters to stop the bloodshed; and calling them to negotiate a settlement. The media mobilized Kenyans to attend the special prayers for peace for the country on Sunday, 6th January, 2008 and dedicated a special day for peace programming. Pamoja FM, broadcasted within a radius of 5Km to the 14 villages in Kibera slums which was the stronghold of post-election violence in Nairobi, organized peace events for youths and aired peace messages urging peaceful co-existence in the area. Radio Umoja conducted live debates to promote peace between January and February in joint venture with the Regional Centre for Stability and Peace in Africa. Several other radio stations like Ramogi FM, Inooro FM, Change FM, and Kass FM called for peaceful co-existence between Luos, Kalenjins and Kikuyus in Nyanza and Rift Valley and mobilized well wishers to provide relief assistance to IDPS countrywide. The Media Council of Kenya (MCK) urged journalists to adhere to ethical standards.

Several media personnel were given awards to honor their peace initiatives during the violence period, such as NTV’s Julie Gichuru and KTN’s Linus Kakai’s Documentary on “Rift in the Valley”. InterNews Network organized a series of workshops to build capacity of journalists and editors to respond to the unfolding conflict. InterNews Network, the International

⁸ Katz, E. Lazarsfeld (1957). *The Two-Step Flow of Communication*. 1957 .New York 1957. pp. 61-78

⁹ Levi Obonyo. 2008; *Peace Journalism as a Media Education Paradigm for East Africa*. 2008

Media Support, Kenya Editors' Guild, the Kenya Union of Journalists, Media Council of Kenya and The Kenya Association of Photographers, Illustrators and Designers and the Kenya Correspondents Association have held workshops to build the capacity of journalists to responsibly address peace-building concerns.

Apart from all this, the media supported the process of initiating mediation efforts between Odinga's ODM and Kibaki's PNU by calling for imperative settlement of the crisis in their editorials and commentaries. The mainstream media provided live coverage of the signing of the power sharing pact by President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga. Since then, the media have monitored and highlighted the negotiations of Agenda 4 (for long term issues) and monitored the implementation of the Independent Review Commission, the Independent Inquiry into Post-Election Violence, the Comprehensive Constitutional Review and the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission.

4.3 Editorial Policies on Conflict Reporting and Peace Building

There seemed to be an absence of professional conduct in most media prior to and during the post-election violence. Most reports were inaccurate and unfair for live coverage. Most of the Electronic media got wrong the precise locations of the violence, the affected number of people and the proper picture of what was really going on the ground. This was due to the competition of who will air the situation first. These were a clear indication that the editorial policies that governed these media streams were not keen on what was being aired. ¹⁰Verification of facts was poor and victims of conflict were treated merely as statistics without identities. The respondents were asked whether the electronic media had elaborate editorial policies on conflict reporting and peace building. Out of 112 respondents 56 of them said yes and the others were for No. This might have been brought about by the respondents' view of the news as there were many stations relaying same news in different styles initially, the media failed to provide background information to the emerging conflict. Analysis of the conflict was inaccurate and this led to a lot of anxiety and confusion countrywide. The media could not identify the fundamental issues and citing the sensitivity of the situation then. The media only referred to "armed youths"

¹⁰ Peter Oriare, Rosemary Okello-Orlale, Wilson Ugangu (2010); *The Media We Want; The Kenya Media Vulnerabilities Study*; Nairobi(2010)pp38-40

Lack of training and experience in conflict reporting was to blame for the initial poor reporting of post-election violence. Many Kenyan journalists were reporting on conflict for the first time in their careers as the country had been relatively peaceful though low level tribal clashes had occurred in 1992, 1997 and 2002.¹¹ It has been noted that Most FM stations rely on DJs and presenters who lack journalism education and experience. Kenyan news media have also failed to invest and develop investigative journalism practice within news rooms and were unable to address the critical issues when the conflict erupted.

The media houses were also very unethical in the style they handled the release of election results. They released varying, piecemeal and speculative results that caused anxiety and confusion among already anxious voters across the country .It galvanized the perception that the election was rigged.¹² The media also fueled the post-election violence by refusing to stand up to the government and release their own versions of the presidential results. Prior to the elections, the media had informed the public that they were investing heavily on monitoring of elections with a view to tally and release results prior to the ECK results.

The respondents gave divergent views on the issue of vernacular stations. About 101 of the 117 respondents said the stations should be encouraged for the enrichment and preservation of culture, entertainment more so the semi illiterate who do not understand neither English nor Swahili. ¹³The remaining respondents felt that the vernacular stations should be discouraged as they tended to be tribal based more than language based and also they do not have proper editorial policies in place. They sent information to one particular community which could be misunderstood as a majority of the listeners are illiterate and the political class used the said media to ethnicize national issues thus created disharmony among Kenyans.

However, respondents from the media houses felt that their policies in a way instigated the post election violence. They said that their views were aimed at various masses who were supporting various parties and groups thus had to air news skewed to be liked by the masses and the support of the candidates and parties was regionalwise. The news that were aired were non

¹¹ Howard, R. (2008).*Conflict Sensitive Journalism*. Denmark; International Media Support2008.pp22-24

¹² Ibid

¹³ Inooro FM station and KTN Television respondents on 25th July 2011 Nairobi Kenya

partisan as they analysed in a way to show the expected outcome which was exaggerated and thus made some people reiterate. Even after the government directive to ban live coverage, some media houses were still airing the happenings. The editorial policies of the media houses had a great impact on the reporting on peace agenda during the post election violence. Tribal background facilitated the collection of the news during the post election period rather than accessibility to news.

4.4 Summary of Findings

The objectives of the study were met but not fully. This is because; the respondents were not open enough to disclose all they knew about the post election violence. Their main worry was victimization. They believed that the findings could be used to take them to court. The media respondents could not disclose their names at all due to what they referred to as loyalty to their employer. However, from the information gathered, 80% of what the researcher was out to find was achieved. Kenya has furthermore amended its constitutions and stipulated clearly various corrections of the press freedom and consequences of spreading hate messages. As the researcher was conducting the interview the constitution had already gone for a national referendum in August 2010, where the public voted for the media amendments among other pertinent national issues. After carrying out the research and having analyzed the findings from all the respondents, it was quite clear that the authenticity of the elections and the whole process was not quite straight forward. This was all evident according to what the media communicated to the public. The media played its role of sharing all the nitty gritty information without any partiality. The first objective of the study was to examine whether it is possible to understand the conflicts in Kenya based on the information provided by the media. This objective was met fully because the respondents were quite clear that 80% of the fights were instigated by what they heard from radio stations and what they saw on television. The acceleration of the conflict was fueled by the government's policy of allowing freedom of press to all media houses to air any kind of news they collected. This enabled these media houses to compete in giving the public any manner of news however harsh it looked like. Lack of the Election body –Election Commission of Kenya (ECK) to be responsible enough and cool the citizens' hot tempers before announcing the final results made everything worse.

Therefore, due to lack of control of the media by the government, one of the hypotheses of the study was confirmed. If the electronic media is given freedom of press, then the conflict

situation will worsen. This is true because, The 2007/2008 election period was worrying compared to the prior election periods that took place in 1997 and 1992 when media was controlled. However, it was difficult to achieve the third objective which was to find out the mechanisms that media houses use to either fuel or calm down chaos. This is because; the media personnel were not so willing to divulge information for fear of victimization. Even after an assurance of anonymity, they could only give precise answers that would not open up much information. However, it was noted that the professionalism of media was on a give and take platform since they allowed the vernacular language to be used in broadcasting hence this could have contributed to fuelling the chaos. This then was perceived that since electronic media in Kenya commands a large audience and it forms the key source of information, it played a major role in persuading the majority of the voters to move in a certain direction. It meant that, the media controlled the citizens' political stand, influence and support towards a certain political leader by the frequency of reporting. It was quite sarcastic to hear that most of the Kenyans were eager to have the ban on live transmission lifted. They all wanted to follow on what was happening real time so that they could match upto the war. We all agree that media has power but there should be certain mechanisms that should be put in place to try and control it. Mechanisms such as a ban on vernacular transmissions and licensing of too many electronic media stations. As they try to control the electronic media, the government should also take care of the print media. It has been noted that other forms of media such as anonymous leaflets and flyers are usually used to push propaganda and graffiti. These are normally forgotten hence it continues to fuel bad taste when the government thinks that all is in control. Therefore, it should be all inclusive. Therefore, the issues that came up during this research finding are all pointing a finger at the media stakeholders, freedom of press and the control from government. The government tries very hard to allow democracy to prevail and to respect human rights. Therefore, a further study on media and government's control would give more insight on how best conflicts can be restrained during elections period.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The Kenyan Electronic media has played a noteworthy role in public discourse since independence. It has been particularly upbeat with the coming to an end of the one party state in 1992, when it was crucial in assembling the voices of opposition to single party rule and the challenge to Nyayo era dictatorship. Since the steering in of multi-party democracy, the electronic media has been at the front position of detecting the excesses of the regimes especially corruption cases. However the media is neither static nor homogeneous, it is both hands-on and responsive to developments in the political and broadcasting systems¹. The media are not immune to the conflicting struggles going in Society. It is in this context that the assumptions of objectivity, balance, accuracy, impartiality, fairness as goals of media service delivery must be viewed. The violence has several backgrounds that can be reduced to about three. This captures the core notion and beliefs that were the root causes of the eventual outbreak of countrywide violence.

The first main notion was the Ideological disparity. The electronic media came out clear about the difference in policies of the two main parties which was ODM and PNU. The electronic media kept informing the general public about this policies and went on to even campaign for the parties they supported. This made it very clear that the public had to side with their favorite party and eventually became charged, which led to the outbreak of the violence when presidential results were announced.

Secondly, there was the ethnicity issue which the main tribes in Kenya have been fighting about since Independence. The politicians from the Luo and Kikuyu tribes campaigned in their strongholds with the same mottos of improving common citizen's life better with the assurance of winning the elctions. Therefore; the Electronic media took the position of informing the public about all these hence they were caught up in the midst of the whole conflict.

Thirdly, the Electronic media was a means used widely in educating voter's on the whole voting process and its consequences. Hence, during the voting process it brought forth any irregularities, occurrences of preferential treatment to any party. The electronic media was also used as a watchdog to supervise the electioneering process. Reckless journalists also failed to

¹ Semetko 2008; *Media Focus on Africa Foundations* ; Comprehensive report on National Integration and Cohesion Netherlands 2009 .p2

desist from defamation, and hatefulness, hence reporting unpleasant news repeatedly sending artificial information to the public that in the end, the message begun to be realistic due to the frequency of reporting. These actions escalated and caused possible harm to the politicians, government and public protest. The 2007 election campaigns, the electronic media became the main arenas in which the political battles between PNU and ODM took place. Monitoring done throughout the campaigns upto the actual voting date in 2007 brought forth several tendencies and patterns in electronic media coverage. The electronic media houses were found to have partiality towards the incumbent President. The KBC a public broadcasting institution was openly biased towards Kibaki and PNU. Citizen TV gave the ODM candidate a lot of negative coverage and positivity and biasness to Kibaki. ²Only 6% of total coverage given to candidates was given to women. Vernacular stations were aligned in their coverage by region and accorded opportunities to callers to air hate speeches especially during live talk shows. This was particularly so with Vernacular FM Radio Stations such as Kass FM (Kalenjin), Radio Lake Victoria (Luo), Inooro (Kikuyu) where callers made inflammatory statements³

All along, the electronic media was unable to report comprehensively on the violence as it unfolded and without much knowledge, promoted this violence through airing of hate speech, plus dramatization of conflict situations. Luckily, media came up with the peace and reconciliation initiatives immediately after the eruption of post-election violence. Due to all these, therefore the electronic media performed poorly in terms of conflict sensitive reporting index.

The vernacular radio stations reported the 2007 presidential results first because of their proximity to the polling stations. This therefore made them seem to have started the whole incitement issue. When the Electoral commission of Kenya gave a pause before releasing the results, the vernacular radios filled the gaps through continuous criticisms and updates of new results from officials on the ground. However, after the eruption of the violence, the vernacular radio stations played important roles in promoting peaceful co-existence. For example, they supported the “*Chagua Amani Zuia Noma*” which means Choose peace avoid conflict campaign.

² Semetko 2008, *Media Focus on Africa Foundations* ; Comprehensive report on National Integration and Cohesion Netherlands 2009 .p8

³ BBC Report; KNCHR Report; Waki Report; International Media Support, January, 2008

In reality, the argument that vernacular media fuelled post-election violence ignored the role played by other mass media such as Internet, mobile phones and satellite communication. As much as the FM stations were deemed to have hastened the violence, it is the short message texts via mobile phones that were more overwhelming. Therefore, as we search for solutions in regards to the electronic media, let us also look at other forms of communication which are quicker in incitement than the electronic media. This way, we shall have curbed several loopholes.

The conduct of media during the 2007 elections and post-election violence revealed poor editorial policies and if they are to conduct responsible role in addressing the challenges of the country, they needed to work on these vital point. These then calls for an urgent need to address the structural and behavioral issues that bring down the positive role the electronic media can play in peace building in Kenya. Some of the issues that need to be addressed include; Enforcement of professional ethics by The Media Council of Kenya which require all Journalists to have gone through the media code of Conduct before being employed in any media houses or news rooms across the country. The electronic media houses should work in enacting progressive media laws which include hate speech and incitement act, broadcasting act, media policy act among others.

The Media Council of Kenya should also embark on conducting a survey of the underlying vulnerabilities of media with aim of addressing each and every issue. The government should also have clear guidelines on monitoring media content. The hate speech law to prohibit politicians and media from airing hate messages should be strengthened. Recently, some politicians were charge in Courts of Kenya for hate speech and I believe this worked well as a lesson to others. Media houses should try to harmonize journalism curriculum in Kenya and improve media training for reporters and editors.

The Media Council of Kenya should also ensure that all vernacular stations have serious hands-on editorial policies and move with speed to identify and discipline errant community radio stations that encourage hate speech. Priority actions to address the challenges identified must include what is seen as moral upright.

The media houses should strictly adhering to the rules set by the several regulating bodies such as the Communication Commission of Kenya, the government of Kenya constitution and the Ministry of Information and Communication set guidelines. The responsibility of setting

editorial policies should include all stakeholders in mind, i.e. the managerial team and the media owners. The media houses should stick to their mission and vision and should not be swayed during emotive issues. Policy formulation by policy makers such as the legislators in regard to media laws such that the laws that will not gag the media but bring about responsible journalism. There is need for capacity building on conflict reporting for journalists with an overall objective of achieving accurate and constructive news coverage and treatment of conflict stories in the region. However, more research on the idea of media literacy and on how media literacy can be improved should be a main concern for those interested in media and development. Nevertheless, how do we put together a critical audience? Awareness should be concurrently put on the two sides of the equation, it should be on the sender and the receiver since for existence of a healthy press, there is need to be scrutinization by a 'Media cultured' population.

Based on what has been said on the system dependency theory further research on what type of media the audience will rely on in times in crisis would be interesting.⁴ In the Kenyan context, It would be more important and interesting to do studies on political ownership of vernacular radio stations which would help shed light on an existing authenticity that remains unknown to the general public . It could also be of significance to ponder and contextualize the criticism leveled at the media by the Politicians. We consider political possession of electronic media to be an alarming reality that is seldom tackled in Kenyan public debate on journalism.

The media play the gate keeping function and it's from the idea of how news is treated, representing persistent pattern of selection emphasis, inclusions and exclusions that push a coherent interpretation and evaluation of events during conflicts. Decision and common practices in newsgathering- determining what and how stories are covered contribute towards particular news frames. The degree to which policy and legislation provides a space within which the media can operate, and the degrees to which the judiciary can regulate and protect that space are crucial. If legislation is used to silence the media or the courts are easily influenced and corrupted, then its function as the 'fourth estate' and its role in conflict prevention and resolution will be significantly hindered. Conversely, if the media policy environment is too loose and legal and self regulatory checks and balances are not in place, this may allow 'rogue' media, whose

⁴ Ball-Rokeach, S. J., & DeFleur, M.L. (1976). *A Dependency Model of Mass Media Effects*. Communication Research, Vol.3, pp3-21.

aim is to disseminate hate speech and/or provoke conflict, to continue their activities without any reasonable recourse to deter or prohibit such action.

After all has been said and done about the electronic media and post-election violence, it remains everyone's duty to guard ourselves against hate speech, tribalism and any other form of propaganda. This is the only way we can know that our country is more important than us. Therefore, the issues that came up during this research finding are all pointing a finger at the media stakeholders, freedom of press and the control from government. The government tries very hard to allow democracy to prevail and to respect human rights. Therefore, a further study on media and government's control would give more insight on how best conflicts can be restrained during elections period.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baumgartner, F., & Jones, B. (1993). *Agendas and Instability in American Politics*. Chicago:

University of Chicago Press.

Bem, D. J. (1990). *Beliefs, Attitudes, and Human Affairs*. Belmont, California: Brooks & Cole.

Berkowitz, D. (1992). *Who Sets the Media Agenda?; The Ability of Policymakers to Determine*

News Decisions. Westport: Praeger.

Bratic, V., & Schirch, L. (2007). *Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding*. Amsterdam: European

Centre for Conflict Prevention.

Curtin, P. M. (1999). *Re-evaluating public relations information subsidies; Market-driven*

journalism and agenda-building theory and practice. *Journal of Public Relations*.

Frohardt, M., & Temin, J. (2003). *Use and Abuse of Media in Vulnerable Societies*. Washington,

D.C: United States Institute of Peace.

Hattotuwa, S. (2002). *Conflict Journalism in Sri Lanka*. Kashmir: Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Howard, R. (2008). *Conflict Sensitive Journalism*. Copenhagen, Denmark: International Media Support.

Ifeanyi, O. (1998). *Journalists In A Developing Economy in Reporting Politics and Public Affairs*. Nairobi: The African Council for Communication Education.

IMPACS. (2002). *An Operational Framework for Media and Peace building*. Vancouver: Ross Howard.

International Communication Association. (2005). *Media Intervention in International Conflict*. New York: ICA.

Karuru, N. (2002). *Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment and Peacebuilding*. Nairobi: The Centre for Conflict Research.

Lund, M. (2002). *Media as an Instrument for Managing Conflicts and Building Peace*.

McCombs, M. (2004). *Setting the Agenda: The Mass Media and Public Opinion*. New York: Polity.

Odera, O. H. (1990). *Ethics*. Nairobi: Nairobi University Press.

Paffenholz, T., & Spurk, C. (2006). *Civil Society, Civic Engagement and Peacebuilding*.

Washington, DC: World Bank.

Paluck, E. L. (2001). Prejudice, Conflict and Media. *Journal of Personality and Social*

Psychology , 18-42.

Walter O.Oyugi (1997), *Ethnicity in the Electoral Process*: Nairobi: Nairobi University Press

Wolfsfeld, G. (2004). *Media and The path to Peace*. New York: Cambridge Univerisity Press.

Wolfsfeld, Gadi (1997). *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

RESPONDENTS

ELDORET

E1- Philip Kipyegon
E2- Andrew Koross
E3 -Yegon Arap Too
E7 - Jonathan
E8 - Wilfred Baraka
E9 - Daniel Musyoka
E11 -John Koech
E12 - Amos Kemboi
E19 - Mary Wanjiru
E21-Kamau Mwangi
E23- Chepkoech Joan
E24- Veronica Tanui
E27 - Jane Nyambura
E28 - Milly
E29 - Matilda Chepto
E4,E5,E6,E10,E13 -18,E20,E22,E25,E26,E30,E31 -
anonymous

NAIVASHA

N1 - Omolo Otieno
N2 - Daniel Kinuthia
N3- Anne Njeri
N4,N6,N7,N9,N15-N18 - Anonymous
N5 - Kamau Wanjohi
N6 - Anonymous
N7 - Anonymous
N8 - Jane Wanjiru
N9 - Anonymous
N10 - Wyclife Mukhwana
N11 -Josephat Karanja
N12 - Rufus Kamau
N13 - Paul Karanja
N14 - Anthony
N15 -Anonymous
N16 - Anonymous
N17 - Anonymous
N18 - Anonymous

KIBERA

K1- K6 Anonymous
K7- Jackson Otieno

K8-William
K9 -Omondi
K10 -Lawrence Otieno
K11 - Leonard Oburu
K12 - Mary Njoki
K13 -K26 Anonymous
K27 - Onyango
K28 - Kariuki
K29 - Omolo Ochieng
K30 - Nyambura wa Njeri
MEDIA PERSONEL
M1 - M27 - Anonymous

QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this study is to establish the role of the electronic media in conflict; a case study of Kenya

Instructions

- Be honest and objective as much as possible.
- Put a tick or a mark adjacent to the question alternatives given.
- Fill in information within the blank spaces given.

Section A; Personal Information

Name Date _ / _ / _ - - -
(dd/mm/yyyy)

Designation; (tick below)

- MP
- Councilor
- Administrative Officer
- Media Personnel
- Civilian

Gender

- Female
- Male

Age bracket

- Below 25 years
- 26-45 years
- Above 45 years

Area of residence-----

SECTION B; RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1. Name of the electronic media.....
- 2. Position held in the media station.....
- 3. Years of experience with the media station
 - Less than 10 years []
 - Between 11-20 years []
 - Over 20 years []
- 4. Did your media house cover and report on post election violence?
 - Yes []
 - No []
- 5. In your opinion did your operating policies instigate post election violence?
 - Yes []
 - No []

If yes, please explain

.....

.....

....

- 6. In your opinion do your operating policies complement and also support peace building initiatives and efforts in the country?
 - Yes []
 - No []

If Yes, Briefly explain how

.....

.....

.....

.....

7. Does your media station have a clear peace building strategic plan that has been agreed, understood, and brought into the media programs?

Yes []

No []

8. Please, briefly explain the key elements of the peace initiating program strategic plan and their critical success factors by your media house

.....
.....
.....
.....

9. How would you rank your editorial policies of peace program in terms of the following in a scale of 1-5 (where 5 is high and 1 is low)?

Educating the public on internal conflict []

Issues of conflict management []

Support for mediation efforts []

Conflict resolution and peace-building []

10. How did the media house collect information for its peace programmes?

Local journalist []

International journalists []

Other media agencies []

11. In your opinion is your peace program broadcast systems aligned with your radio station objectives and needs?

Yes []

No []

12. How would you describe your approach to peace program strategy?

Staff led []

Audience/Public led []

Radio station owner led []

Briefly explain you answer

.....
.....
.....
.....

13. Did you feel that editorial policies hindered you from reporting issues of conflict and peace building in the country?

Yes []

No []

14. Who was responsible of setting the radio's editorial policies?

Radio owners only []

Radio owners and managerial team []

Managerial team only []

Don't know []

15. In your own view, in the period April 2007 and April 2008, what are the factors that influenced or facilitated your work in reporting about the post election conflict?

Financial []

Tribe []

Accessibility to news []

Training in reporting conflict & peace-building []

Others,

Please

specify.....

SECTION C

- 1) How frequently do you listen to radio and watch the television?
 - Daily []
 - Occasionally []
 - Rarely []
 - Never []

- 2) How did you learnt of the current developments in Kenya regarding the post election violence?
 - My colleagues []
 - My friends from Somalia []
 - The Radio []
 - The Television []
 - Don't Know/Remember []

- 3) In your opinion did radio or television increase or decrease conflict?
 - Increases []
 - Decreases []

- 4. In your view, did the electronic media play the role of peace building within the Kenyan society?
 - Yes []
 - No []
 - I don't know []

- 5. Do the electronic media have elaborate editorial policies on conflict reporting and peace-building?
 - Yes []
 - No []

- 4) Did you as a leader any given time engage the media in promoting peace during the post election violence?
 - Yes []
 - No []

- 5. What is your opinion on vernacular stations, should they be encouraged or discouraged

and why?

Encouraged []

Discouraged []

Why.....

6. As of your observation, did the media house adhere to media ethics on reporting the outcomes of post election violence?

Yes []

No []

Some Extent []

Explain.....

.....

.....

....

7. What policies would you suggest to be implemented to promote responsible and non-partisan reporting by electronic media?

.....

.....

THANK YOU.