

**Photography as a Medium of Mass Communication in Conflict
Situations: A Case Study of the Picha Mtaani Photograph
Exhibitions.**

By

Josephine Adeya

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project is my original work and has not been submitted, either wholly or partially, to any other university or examining body for the award of any Degree or Diploma.

JOSEPHINE ADEYA

Signature

Date

This is to certify that this project was undertaken independently by Josephine Adeya, under my supervision.

EDWIN NYUTHO

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to Martin Deporess Michael; you are my guardian angel.

ABSTRACT

The media plays an important role of disseminating peace and reconciliatory messages in conflict situations. It does this using various forms such as radio, television and newspapers. This research project looked at photography as a different form of media that has, over time, not been fully exploited when informing, educating and communicating with audiences.

This study focused on Kenya's 2007-2008 post-election violence that erupted after disputed presidential results as well as Picha Mtaani, photograph exhibitions that were aimed at encouraging peace and reconciliation among the victims and perpetrators of the violence.

The study was conducted in Nairobi which was one of the areas that were worst hit by the violence and also a beneficiary of two Picha Mtaani exhibitions. Questionnaires and interviews were administered to collect the necessary data from the organizers and audiences of the Picha Mtaani photograph exhibitions. The data collected was analyzed, presented and conclusions drawn from the results.

The study concluded that as much as photography can successfully be used to pass across the intended messages of peace and reconciliation during conflict, caution needs to be exercised in order to ensure that the audience is not negatively affected by the images they are exposed to.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The media is a very important institution in every society. It is an institution without which people would be left in isolation from other people, governments and basically the rest of the world.

The media, through such media forms as television, newspapers, radio and photographs, plays very important roles among them ensuring the interpretation of information to the members of society; the media breaks down information by answering the questions who, what, where, why and how. This ensures that the media audiences get only the necessary information that is already sieved for their consumption.

The media acts as a watchdog of the people by ensuring that the authority's or government's activities are known to the people and by so doing holds the government accountable for all its actions since these actions affect the subjects of these governments.

The media also ensures that information flows within and across different societies. The media plays the role of informing, educating and ensuring that there is communication. It provides the channels through which information is passed. Through these roles, the media is able to effect change which in turn ensures development of the society especially through the introduction and adoption of new technologies. The Media thus performs these roles with its effectiveness mirrored in the resultant effects elicited from

the recipient audience which broadly constitutes the general public. But probably the most extreme and concerning of the audience reaction is media-instigated conflict such as Kenya's 2007-2008 post-election violence, which led to the death of 1,300 people and displacement of 600,000 others.¹ There was also destruction of property in the affected areas.

Over the years, broadcasting media in particular has often been used to play the above mentioned roles. A good example is where the radio was used to pass across information in the 2007/2008 post-election violence in Kenya; many Television Stations also broadcasted sensitive video footages that set in motion the violence that erupted.²

The media contributed negatively by inviting elders and callers in some of the local language radio stations that specialized in peddling hate speech against the Kikuyu community and other non-Kalenjin communities such as the Kisii. *Kass FM* and *Radio Injili* have been mentioned in this regard.³ *Kass FM* which broadcasts in the *Kalenjin* language has one of its reporters, Joshua Sang, among the three Kenyans who have cases pending at the International Criminal Court (ICC) for allegedly inciting listeners to engage in violence against other ethnic groups. In the aftermath radio and TV

¹ Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation < <http://www.dialoguekenya.org/>> (Accessed 20th April 2013).

² Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (August 2008) *On the Brink of the Precipice: A Human Rights Account of Kenya's Post-2007 Election Violence* (Accessed 14th April 2013)

³ Ibid P.58

communication were regarded as having incited violence amongst different ethnic groups.⁴

⁴ Oriare, P, Okello-Orlale, R and Ugangu, Wilson (2010) *The media we want: The Kenya Media Vulnerabilities Study* Nairobi, FES

Andreas, J in a report on the post- election violence supports the fact that the media played a part in instigating the violence;

“Voices of the top politicians, transmitted via the media, were interpreted by slum-dwellers as their 'big men' lending authoritative social support for inter-ethnic violence. This should be clarified: While both of these politicians (albeit with some delay) condemned acts of ethnic violence, the same cannot be said for the use of political violence. Odinga's calls for mass protests against the Kibaki regime directly appealed to ODM-supporting slum-dwellers in his strongholds. Having pledged tribal allegiance, and having been motivated by the political call for change, the slum-dwellers took to the streets in great numbers.

The same applies to the Kibaki supporters. From their perspective, Kibaki did everything he could to protect his fellow Kikuyu against the Luo-led attackers, e.g. by sending police forces to escort the IDPs out of the slums...Ethnic ties were perceived to link his political survival with the fate of the Kikuyu community as a whole, and additionally, the Kikuyu slum-dwellers, who had already suffered much in the first weeks of January 2008, would have been spared far worse if Kibaki could only stay in power. Along with hear-say and communication via cell phones/text messages, radio and television were the slum dwellers' other main sources for information.”⁵

After the violence, different stakeholders behind the peace and reconciliation process for Kenyans used radio as the main medium of passing across the peace messages.

However, a group of young men and women, under the leadership of Boniface Mwangi, came up with a project which used a different form of media to advocate for peace and help with the healing process as well as prevent future cases of post-election violence; photography exhibitions known as Picha Mtaani. Boniface Mwangi, the director of Picha Mtaani, believes that a picture is a strong medium that captures reality in a genuine and

⁵ Jacobs, A. (2011) *Nairobi Burning - Kenya's post-election violence from the perspective of the urban poor* Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) p.28

unbiased manner, and is therefore an appropriate tool for reflection, dialogue and peace building.⁶

Picha Mtaani, Swahili for ‘street exhibition’, is a youth-led peace initiative that primarily seeks to create space for young people to reconcile and become agents of reconciliation to their respective communities. Picha Mtaani aims at providing a platform for national reflection and building local reconstruction consensus through photo exhibitions and conversation. This project aims at organizing target communities to play their part in the reconciliation and reconstruction process.⁷

These exhibitions were perhaps a reflection of Michael Langford’s words; “photography is thought of as evidence, identification, a kind of diagram of a happening”⁸ since they showcased photos, some very gruesome, that had never been seen before, that were taken by Boniface Mwangi during the post-election violence. According to Robert Munuku, the project co-ordinator of Picha Mtaani, the purpose of these photographs was to remind Kenyans what they had done to each other in a bid to stop any future violence of such magnitude.

Five years after the violence, the 2013 general elections were not marred by violence despite allegations of irregularities by some candidates thereby presenting an opportunity

⁶ UNDP Kenya Annual Report (2009) *Road to 2015: Driving the MDGs*. p.27

⁷ www.pawa254.org (accessed May 2013)

⁸ Andrews, P., Langford, M. (2005) *Langford's Starting Photography: The guide to creating great images* (6th ed.) Sawdon, Fox Publishers. P.2

to show that the peace efforts made by initiatives such as Picha Mtaani yielded fruits. This was further demonstrated through Boniface Mwangi's interview with the Cable News Network (CNN) where he compared the 2007/2008 post election violence to the March 2013 peaceful elections in Kenya.⁹

This study sought to find out how photography can be used to effectively pass information to the audiences in conflict situations by looking at the Picha Mtaani exhibitions which were showcased in parts of the country that were most affected by the post-election violence, and their effectiveness in the peace process in an attempt to assess if photography is an effective medium of communication probably even with greater impact than the rest of the media.

Although the exhibitions took place in different parts of the country, this study focused on the capital city, Nairobi. The study aimed at bringing out the participation of photography in the Kenyan peace process that followed the 2007/2008 post-election violence and how the government, media and stakeholders should, if need be, take note of photography as a process of sending messages during conflict since the potential of this form of communication has not yet been fully exploited.

1.2 Problem Statement

The media is an important tool for development but without a peaceful environment development is unachievable. The media has often been accused of fuelling and sustaining conflict and there is a lot of literature to support this. The phrase "when it

⁹ Edition.cnn.com/video/world/2013/03/07

bleeds it leads" is usually used to describe the primacy of conflict, specifically violence, in the media.

That the media gives prominence to issues of violence is no news. However, the role of the media in peace building has not been talked about as much and this leads to the popular belief that the media is used to promote violence more than peace. Yet it may be demonstrated that simple still photographs, also a medium of communication, can have as much resounding effect in bringing about peace rather than violence because photographs are a means of making "real" (or "more real") matters that the privileged and the merely safe might prefer to ignore.¹⁰

Probably appreciating that no still photography without rich wording was blamed on the 2007-2008 post-election violence and that Picha Mtaani's photography exhibitions elicited peace rather than violence is an indicator that the potency of still photography is way underestimated and overlooked. At least no war erupted-blamed on Picha Mtaani's photo exhibitions-in Kenya after Picha Mtaani embarked on its peace campaigns.

Documentation on the use of photography for communication has basically been given very little consideration and literature on the topic has been slow in coming since most literature focuses on the broadcast media especially concerning the issue of conflict and peace building; this is despite the many opportunities available for studies to be carried out that can come up with the required information.

This study therefore utilized the opportunity presented by the 2007/2008 post-election violence in Kenya to assess the initiative undertaken by Picha Mtaani in using

¹⁰ Sontag, S. (2003)*Regarding The Pain Of Others* Picador, New York P.5

photography to reconcile the country and promote peace. The study will be important to stakeholders and Kenyans generally in looking at photography as an important and effective tool in the peace process.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study sought to understand the contribution of Picha Mtaani's photographs to the Kenyan peace process in the period following the post-election violence (2008-2013) and assessing the effectiveness of photography as a medium for communication. The objectives of the study therefore were:

- i. To assess the effectiveness of the Picha Mtaani exhibitions in the healing and peace building process in Kenya following the 2007/2008 post-election violence.
- ii. To investigate the limitations of Picha Mtaani initiative in the Nairobi case exhibitions.
- iii. To determine the extent to which other peace stakeholders and organizations were engaged in Picha Mtaani's activities.
- iv. To establish how the Picha Mtaani experience can be used to promote the use of photography in informing, educating and communicating with audiences.

1.4 Hypotheses

This study will test the following hypotheses:

- i) Photography is an effective medium of mass communication.
- ii) Picha Mtaani exhibitions made significant contribution to Kenya's peace building process (2008-2013).

1.5 Justification of the study

Communication relies on different media for it to be efficient. The most common media for communication in Kenya are television, radio and newspapers. These media tend to put more emphasis on words as the main means of passing across messages.

Many communicators tend to use photography as a supporting medium of communication where a lot of wording is presented with few, if any, photographs added. Most forms of communication use words to inform and educate their audience and do not give prominence to photographs.

This is so despite the fact that photographs are more efficient for communication and especially in conflict situations as Susan Sontag points out; “ever since cameras were invented in 1839, photography has kept company with death. Because an image produced with a camera is, literally, a trace of something brought before the lens, photographs were superior to any painting as a memento of the vanished past and the dear departed. To seize death in the making was another matter: the camera's reach remained limited as long as it had to be lugged about, set down, and steadied. But once the camera was emancipated from the tripod, truly portable, and equipped with a range finder and a variety of lenses that permitted unprecedented feats of close observation from a distant vantage point, picture taking acquired an immediacy and authority greater than any verbal account in conveying the horror of mass-produced death.”¹¹

¹¹ Ibid. p.2

This study sought to focus on photography as a form of communication which has been given the back seat by many communicators when passing information to the audiences.

Communication, according to McQuail and Windahl (1981), implies a sender, a channel, a message, a receiver, a relationship between sender and receiver, an effect, a context in which communication occurs and a range of things to which the term “message” refers.¹²

Based on this definition of communication, the Picha Mtaani exhibitions were a form of communication to the Kenyan society and this study sought to determine the effectiveness of the medium used. The study will also expose to stakeholders the potential of photography that is yet to be fully exploited in the country.

Apart from contributing fresh knowledge to the fields of peace and communication, this study will encourage stakeholders in the two fields to adjust their policy for optimum result.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study appreciates that no medium of communication, media system or society operates under one theory. However, it also realizes the importance of adopting a specific framework for operation.

¹² McQuail, D and Windahl, S (1981)*Communication Models for the Study of Mass Communication*. New York, Longman Inc. P.2

This study was therefore anchored on the theory of social change, specifically Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism theory. This theory focuses on the ways in which societies maintain order¹³.

Building on the idea that society is like a living organism, Parsons argued that a change in one part of the social system produces changes in all other parts of the system. This occurs because a social system, like a living organism, always attempts to maintain stability or a state of equilibrium. When stability is disrupted by change in one part of the system, the other parts of the system adjust to the degree needed to bring the system back into balance, or equilibrium. Although order is restored after this, the new system is slightly different from the old one, thus social change has taken place.

During the period that followed the 2007 general election in Kenya, a change from the norm, which was in form of disputed presidential election results, led to unrest and eventually the post-election violence. This further led the media and other stakeholders to preach peace messages in a bid to end the chaos and "maintain the equilibrium."

McQuail (1981) states that "Wherever the media exert influence they also cause change"¹⁴ this is particularly right with the case of the Picha Mtaani photo exhibitions where the main aim was to use photographs to influence people to change their attitude and behavior towards each other so as to end the violence.

¹³ Class notes (2012) *Theories of Social Change*.

¹⁴ McQuail, D. (2005) *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, 5th ed. London, Sage Publications Ltd. P.91

This theory of social change was therefore useful especially in analyzing the effects of the exhibitions as well as the content of the Picha Mtaani exhibitions and the idea behind the concept. It is important to understand why Picha Mtaani used photographs from the post-election violence to make peace its agenda and how effective this was especially since the country was experiencing chaos at that time and there was therefore need for people to change their behavior to ensure that such violence never happens again.

1.7 Scope and Limitation

This study operated on the assumption that the Picha Mtaani exhibitions played a very important role in ensuring that peace was realized after the 2007/2008 post-election violence and maintained in the 2013 general elections; the study therefore focused on the effect of the Picha Mtaani exhibitions within the period between November 2008 when the street exhibitions started to the 5th of March, 2013 (a day after the last general elections). Research was conducted at the Picha Mtaani offices as well as other areas in Nairobi where Picha Mtaani audiences could be found.

Limitations of this study included inability to get information from all the areas that hosted the Picha Mtaani exhibitions due to limited resources. The researcher nonetheless conducted purposive sampling to select Nairobi as the area to be studied since it is the country's capital city and therefore contains a heterogeneous audience.

Most of the Picha Mtaani crew was hesitant to share information concerning the project with most of them not being available for interviews. This therefore raised questions about the objectivity of some of the information shared by the Picha Mtaani crew. To counter this, the researcher used the information from the Picha Mtaani audience and

other sources of literature such as the internet, books and journals to countercheck any inconsistency.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review was divided into three parts; the first part reviewed literature useful in understanding media and communication while the second part focused on communication as a medium for communication. The third part looked at the Kenyan scenario of photography and communication.

2.1 Media and Communication

The Collins English Dictionary defines Communication as the act of imparting or exchange of information, ideas or feelings.¹⁵ It goes further to define media as the plural of medium, which is a means of communication that reaches large numbers of people such as television, newspapers and radio.

According to Janowitz (1968), mass communications comprise the institutions and techniques by which specialized groups employ technological devices (press, radio, films, etc) to disseminate symbolic content to large, heterogeneous and widely dispersed audiences.

Theodorson and Theodorson (1969)¹⁶ define communication as the transmission of information, ideas, attitudes or emotion from one person or group to another (or others)

¹⁵ Collins English Dictionary (2007) 9th ed. Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers. P.343

¹⁶ Theodorson, S.A and Theodorson, A.G (1969) *A Modern dictionary of Sociology*. New York: Cassell Education Limited. P.6

primarily through symbols while Gerbner (1967) states that communication may be defined as social interaction through messages.¹⁷

In their attempt at defining communication, McQuail and Windahl (1981)¹⁸ state that “in the most general terms, communication implies a sender, a channel, a message, a receiver, a relationship between sender and receiver, an effect, a context in which communication occurs and a range of things to which “message” refer. Sometimes, but not always, there is an intention or purpose to communicate or to receive. Communication can be any or all of the following: an action on others; an interaction with others; an interaction with others and a reaction to others.”

Shannon and Weaver (1949) defined communication as all of the procedures by which one mind may affect the other.¹⁹ They also came up with what they called the Mathematical Model of communication which describes communication as a linear, one way process comprising of the source, sending a message through a transmitter to the receiver enabling it to get to the destination in the absence of noise.²⁰ Later DeFleur (1966)²¹ developed the Mathematical Model of Communication by allowing for feedback

¹⁷ Gerbner, G (1967) *Human Communication Theory*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. P.112

¹⁸ McQuail, D and Windahl, S (1981) *Communication Models for the Study of Mass Communication*. New York: Longman Inc. pg 2

¹⁹ Shannon, C and Weaver, W (1949) *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. P.9

²⁰ Ibid p.13

²¹ DeFleur, M.L (1966) *Theories of Mass Communication*. New York: David McKay. P.67

which is an indication that the message has reached the intended audience and whether or not it has been understood as intended.

Mass communication is a process in which professional communicators design and use media to disseminate messages widely, rapidly and continuously in order to arouse intended meanings in large, diverse and selectively attending audiences in attempts to influence them in a variety of ways.²²

2.2 Photography as a medium of Communication in the American Wars

Photography is a method of recording permanent images by the action of light projected by a lens in a camera onto a film or other light-sensitive material.²³ Photographs serve different functions; according to Susan Sontag (1977) “photographs furnish evidence. Something we hear about, but doubt, seems proven when we’re shown a photograph of it.”²⁴ It is for this reason that perhaps photography was a very important tool in war since it was used to either build alliances or enmity.

During the Vietnam War (1954-1975),²⁵ journalists had almost unlimited access to troops and battlegrounds. They were in a position to show the world everything about the war as it was but instead they concentrated on human suffering and rarely showed

²² DeFleur, D (2002) *Understanding Mass Communication: A Liberal Arts Perspective*. 7th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. P.18

²³ www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/photography (accessed 20th June 2013)

²⁴ Sontag, S (1977) *On Photography*. New York: Noonday Press. P.175

²⁵ [wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam War](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam_War) (accessed 20th June 2013)

“sensational and demoralizing images of military and civilian casualties.”²⁶ Photographs of this war that were published led Americans and their allies to believe that the war could be won and they kept sending troops towards this cause. Public support for the war was evident since the people had no idea what the real situation of the war was and it was only after it was clear that the war could not be won by Americans (and South Vietnamese fighters) that the war’s actual face in terms of photographs got to be published and the American public openly spoke against the war.

Griffin (2010) supports this by saying that although journalists and photographers on the ground in Vietnam operated with relative freedom compared to their World War II counterparts, their reports were woven into a narrative consistent with the national frame. The visual icons we now associate with the war – the pictures produced by the likes of Larry Burrows, Philip Jones Griffiths and Don McCullin – were either rejected by the US media, published after the event or simply unrepresentative of most coverage.²⁷

Control over what photojournalists could and could not show their audiences continued during World War II. In the early years of this war, the U.S. government restricted publication of material that could be “used as propaganda against the war effort” and buried gory photographs in the Pentagon’s secret “Chamber of Horrors”. Toward the end of the war, however, the government encouraged the media to show America’s fallen

²⁶ Griffin, M. (2010). *Media Images of War: Media, War & Conflict*, Vol.3 New York: Sage Publications. P.20-21

²⁷ Griffin, M. (2001) *Media Images of War: Media, War and Conflict* Vol.3 p.7

heroes in order to revive public support.²⁸ Photographs are a strong tool for propaganda. Zelizer (2005) says, “we have long been told that a picture is worth a thousand words. But it reflects only those words that fit the larger climate of opinion.”²⁹ For a long time the American media was not allowed to show photographs of Americans suffering. The case was different after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre. Photographs of these attacks were shown over and over on American media because the government needed a strong basis for support of its war on terrorism. By the time the Iraq and Afghanistan wars were taking place, Americans felt that it was the right thing for the government to do since the terrorists had to be stopped before they caused more destruction and loss of innocent lives.³⁰

During this so called US military’s ‘War on Terrorism’, the photographs that the audiences expected to see were not shown by the media. Instead of “looking” at the war where the fight was taking place, people getting killed, wounded, displaced or relocated, people all over the world were treated to America’s display of power. Most of the

²⁸ Ibid. p.10

²⁹ Zelizer, B. (2005) *Death in Wartime: Photographs and the “Other War” in Afghanistan* University of Pennsylvania. P.38

³⁰ Jamieson, K. H. and P. Waldman (2003) *The Press Effect: Politicians, Journalists, and the Stories that Shape the World*. New York: Oxford University Press. p. 51

photographs showed US convoys of battle vehicles full of sophisticated weapons driving around Iraq and entering Baghdad.³¹

Lately, however, journalists practice what is referred to as embedding which involves journalists linking up with military units so they can report from the front line during conflict.³²

Embedding formally began with the American invasion of Iraq after around 700 journalists agreed to follow the US Public Affairs Guidance or Ministry of Defense “Green Book” and around 130 journalists were embedded with the British forces.³³ Journalists get the privilege of being on the front line of war and getting the story first hand but what part of the story and what story the public gets to know depends entirely on the military.³⁴

During this war on Iraq, the Bush administration banned photos showing coffins of dead military officers and the argument was that this was justified on the basis that showing the coffins was insensitive to the dead soldiers' families.³⁵ A year later in 2004, gruesome images of the mutilation of four U.S. contractors in Fallujah, Iraq, were published. Most

³¹ *Ibid* p.393-398

³² Katovsky, B and Carlson, T (2003) *Embedded the Media at War in Iraq* Guildford CT: The Lyons Press. P. xvi

³³ Paul, C and Kim, J. J (2004) *Reporters on the Battlefield: The Embedded Press System in Historical Context*. Santa Monica CA: Rand Corporation. P. 54-55

³⁴ Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies (2004) *Too Close for Comfort? The Role of Embedded Reporting During the 2003 Iraq War: Summary Report*. Cardiff University. P. 12

³⁵ Rorty, R. (1981) *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press P.12

of the American population felt that these images should not have been shown while a small percentage of about seven percent supported the idea of showing even more gruesome photographs.³⁶

News organizations had for a long time refrained from showing grisly images of their countrymen. The media would rather show images of people in other countries than those of their own countrymen especially in war and similar hostile situations. According to Zerbisias (2004), "there's never any debate over whether we will show the blood-spattered body of a murder victim. . . . We just don't do it. . . .If the victims are not one of us, if they live far away or have no names or cultural commonalities, they're fair game.

Hence, it's perfectly acceptable, if not mundane, to show piles of skulls in Rwanda or a skeletal and swollen-bellied African baby on the verge of death."³⁷ Nowadays journalists are showing more of these photos since the public needs to know about situations as they occur as long as they are warned in advance if the images are too graphic so that they can chose whether or not they still want to see them.

As Perlmutter (1999) observed, "More than ever, the news that really matters is what is visually prominent"³⁸ This means that the media will at all times seek to inform its audience of what is of interest to them and affecting them at that particular moment and although they strive to do this, they sometimes fail due to inadequate skill.

³⁶ Ibid P.8-16

³⁷ Zerbisias, A. "Humanity Is First Casualty of War," Toronto Star, Apr. 4, 2004:D10.

³⁸ Perlmutter, D. D. (1999). *Visions of war: Picturing warfare from the Stone Age to the cyber age*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press. P.178

For a long time the question of whether or not journalists play their part in passing across information has been the topic of discussion especially among media critics and this is echoed by Zelizer (2005) when she says,

“Journalists practicing all types of journalism, not just war journalism, remain unclear about what to do with images. From their earliest uses, images have been looked at as the fluff of news, material that is secondary and adjunct to the words at their side. Even today, in an age of still photos, television and cable images, and the interactive displays of the Internet, there are no standards regarding how to use images in news: where to put an image, how to title an image, how to caption an image, and how to position an image alongside words all remain generally unarticulated in the journalistic community.”³⁹

As photojournalists go about doing their work, they use different photographs to pass across different messages. For instance, photographs of children are used to attract attention and empathy (Moeller, 2002). Wells (2007) also states that “during wars, many media outlets did not show dead or wounded children, for example, because they might “offend the sensibilities of readers.” In fact, “the representation of violent acts or events is somehow taken to be more obscene than the event itself.”⁴⁰

³⁹ Zelizer, B. (2005) *Death in Wartime: Photographs and the “Other War” in Afghanistan*

University of Pennsylvania. P.3

⁴⁰ Wells, K. (2007). *Narratives of liberation and narratives of innocent suffering: The rhetorical use of images of Iraqi children in the British press. Visual Communication, vol 6* doi:10.1177/1470357207071465 p.55-57

The American war in Somalia (1993)⁴¹ came about as a result of photographs that showed the Somalis in clashes that led to the suffering of mostly women and children. The American government felt the need to send its soldiers to Somalia to assist in ensuring peace in that East African country. During that time, however, an American soldier was captured by Somali militia men and dragged around the streets of Mogadishu where he was beaten and rebuked by the locals even after it was evident that he was dead. Photographs of this incident made the American government recall its soldiers for fear of more brutal treatment from the militia.

2.3 Photography and communication in Kenya

Kenya has always been a peaceful country since it gained independence from the British in 1963. Although the country has experienced some tribal clashes, nothing could be compared to the 2007/2008 post election violence that took place after a disputed presidential election.

Following this outbreak of violence, International Media Support (IMS) together with Article 19 and Reporters Without Borders carried out a mission to Kenya in the early days of January 2008 to assess the needs for support to the Kenyan media community.⁴²

The findings were summarized in a handbook by Ross Howard in which he states that the violence erupted because the media failed to report the news as it was especially the

⁴¹ iconicphotos.wordpress.com/2010/03/10/u-s-marine-dragged-through-mogadishu/ (accessed 25th June 2013)

⁴² Howard, R. (2008) *My Tribe is Journalism: Conflict sensitive Journalism*. Copenhagen: International Media Support. P.4

political crisis that majorly contributed to the eruption of the violence that led to the deaths and displacement of many Kenyans. Howard goes on to say “that the media did, in fact, add fuel to the fire. This is an opinion shared by the authorities. In the days following President Mwai Kibaki’s disputed re-election on 27 December 2007, the government accused some vernacular radio stations of inciting ethnic unrest and imposed a ban on live broadcasts.”⁴³

According to this handbook, journalists in Kenya lacked the necessary skills needed for reporting conflict issues. They reported about conflict without considering the impact it would have on its audiences and there was therefore need for conflict sensitive journalism in Kenya since it “empowers reporters to report conflicts professionally without feeding the flames. It enables journalists to report conflicts in depth, to cover all sides and ventilate issues related to the conflict. The approaches and methods of conflict sensitive journalism, as opposed to traditional journalism, would have empowered the Kenyan media to inform the public more completely, objectively and accurately.”⁴⁴

Although it was evident that Kenyan journalists helped fuel the 2007/2008 post-election violence, one thing was clear, photographs had to be used to pass across the information about the conflict; the problem was how the photographs were used.

According to Schwalbe, Silcock and Keith (2008), one of the most vivid ways journalism reports war to the world is through images: photographs, video, graphics, icons, and

⁴³ Ibid p.8

⁴⁴ Ibid p.54

maps.⁴⁵ These reports, through messages, help audiences understand the war and their reaction to the war depends on how the information (images) is presented to them. Domke, Perlmutter and Spratt (2002) go ahead to say, “even scholars who reject visual determinism—the idea that “images often drive public opinion”—concede that “such visual influence has the potential to occur.”⁴⁶

The Kenya National Human Rights Commission (KNHCR) in its report on the post-election violence supports the belief that journalists played a big role in the outbreak of violence in the country; “while the media on some occasions criticized negative ethnicity in its editorials, in its newsgathering and in its programming, it failed to aggressively hold political leaders to account for their actions and utterances. Instead, in the closing days of the election, the media covered the goings-on as they would an electrifying football match.”⁴⁷

Violence brings about uncertainty and anytime there is uncertainty, the people affected need reassurance that everything will be okay or that someone is working on making things better.

⁴⁵ Schwalbe, B. C, Silcock, W and Keith, S. (2008) Visual Framing of the Early Weeks of the U.S.-Led Invasion of Iraq: Applying the Master War Narrative to Electronic and Print Images. P.448

⁴⁶ Domke, D., Perlmutter, D., & Spratt, M. (2002). The primes of our times? An examination of the “power” of visual images. Journalism 3, p.136

⁴⁷ KNHCR (2008) On the Brink of Precipice: A Human Rights Account of Kenya’s Post 2007 Election Violence. P. 29-30

Edelman (1971) says, “People who are anxious and confused are eager to be supplied with an organized political order – including simple explanations of the threats they fear – and with reassurance that the threats are being countered”⁴⁸ This role is mainly played by the journalists, using images to support their stories.

The Seville Statement on Violence states that: War is not a fatality determined by genes, violent brains, human nature or instincts, but is rather a social invention. Therefore, the same species that invented war is capable of inventing peace.⁴⁹ This means that although journalists are often accused of fuelling violence, they are also credited with quelling the same violence and this can be effectively achieved by creating a culture of peace. Given that the violence and war is a product of culture, through a modification of basic cultural mindsets mankind can work towards creating a culture of peace. We must strive to build a culture which consists of values, attitudes and behaviors that reject violence, one that attempts to prevent conflict by addressing its root causes with a new view to solving problems: through dialogue and negotiation between individuals, groups and nations.⁵⁰

2.3.1 The Case of Picha Mtaani

The 2007-2008 post election violence in Kenya was marred by ethnic conflict where the youth mercilessly attacked members of different tribes. The Nairobi slums were particularly affected since people knew what ethnic tribes their neighbours belonged to

⁴⁸ Edelman, Murray (1971) *Politics as Symbolic Action: Mass Arousal and Quiescence*. Chicago: Markham. P. 65

⁴⁹ UNESCO. *The Seville Statement for Peace* 1986.

⁵⁰ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. *Mainstreaming a Culture of Peace*.

hence it was easy to flush them out. The only way one would survive such attacks was if they had a friend from the attackers' tribe. Angela, a Kikuyu, narrates how her neighbour Arleen, a Luo, protected her by offering a hiding place from rioting Luo groups in Mathare:

“She had to protect me outside there. Then they discovered there is a Kikuyu living here they come, kill you and burn everything. [...] Most of the people here they don't know my tribe. They think this one is married to a Kisii, they think I am a Kisii. I think that was their idea.”⁵¹

Andreas, J in his report titled “Nairobi Burning” goes on to say, “Recognizing that members of other ethnic communities were equally singled out for attack and victimization, the report will now turn to the targeting of members of the Kikuyu community. Perpetrator groups identified members of the Kikuyu as relying on several strategies: Firstly, in the densely populated slums, voting was by no means a secret affair. People showed their political colours during the pre-election campaigns and their ethnic identity could reliably be assumed. Secondly, local leaders with knowledge of the ethnic composition of their neighbourhoods were said to have supported selective targeting. Thirdly, physical appearance is generally assumed to vary from tribe to tribe, yet it is not considered a reliable indicator of a potential target's ethnic identity. Finally, the native language of potential targets (or the respective accent in English/Swahili) and the victim's native name were taken as the most obvious identifiers.”⁵²

⁵¹ Jacobs, A. (2011) *Nairobi Burning - Kenya's post-election violence from the perspective of the urban poor* Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) P.25

⁵² Ibid. p.26

The happenings during the Kenyan Post-election violence led to different parties coming up with ways to ensure that the same never happens again. The GoDown Arts Centre in Nairobi was one such organization which decided to use photograph exhibitions titled Kenya Burning, based on the book “Kenya Burning: Never Forget, Never Again,” to present an opportunity for Kenyans to remember and reflect on the tragic post-election events in a bid to hopefully reinforce sentiments already expressed by ordinary citizens across the country that the violence should never happen again.⁵³

The exhibitions and book contained a collection of one hundred graphic photographs from Kenya’s contested December 2007 elections and the violence that followed.⁵⁴ The exhibitions which were funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) attracted thousands of people and took place at the GoDown Arts Centre in Nairobi’s Industrial Area as well as Mombasa, Kisumu and Eldoret.

The book and exhibitions have been widely publicized and reviewed in the local media. The GoDown Arts Centre published an initial 1,500 copies of the book, while the USAID’s OTI (Office of Transition Initiatives) funded the production of an additional 3,000 copies that the arts center distributed to key stakeholders, including Members of Parliament, universities, libraries, and civil society leaders.⁵⁵

⁵³ www.thegodownartscentre.com/kenya-burning/uchaguzi

⁵⁴ Mboya, J, Ogana, J and Kahora, B. (2008) *Kenya Burning: Never Forget, Never Again*. Kwani Trust, Nairobi.

⁵⁵ http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADP421.pdf

According to the GoDown's Executive Director, Joy Mboya, "The general feeling is that the book and exhibition need to be seen by as many people as possible because Kenya should never go down that path again." She goes further to say, "Perhaps most people will agree that knowledge and reflection provided by the images are a prerequisite to healing,"⁵⁶

The photos were taken by Yasuyoshi Chiba and Boniface Mwangi and were perhaps what motivated the latter to come up with the Picha Mtaani photograph exhibitions.

Boniface Mwangi, a photojournalist and human rights activist is the project director of Picha Mtaani and worked alongside David Mutua, Robert Munuku, David Mwangi, Peter Mudamba, Sasha Kinney (among others) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the Picha Mtaani project.⁵⁷

Picha Mtaani is a project that used street photography as a platform for peace building, national healing and unity where Kenyans who were either perpetrators or victims of the violence were given a chance to look at what had happened with a view of avoiding a repeat of the same in future. The 'peace caravan', as was known, toured seven towns – Nairobi, Molo, Rumuruti, Mombasa, Bomet, Naivasha – that were worst hit by the post-election violence."⁵⁸

According to Robert Munuku, the project co-ordinator for Picha Mtaani, the project was launched in November 2009 and took place in two phases: the first phase was in

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ <http://pichamtaani.org/about/the-team/>

⁵⁸ UNDP Kenya Annual Report (2009) *Road to 2015: Driving the MDGs- Peace Building and Conflict Prevention* p. 27

November 2009 while the second one took place in November 2012 and was called the Amani Peace Tour. This second project was meant to remind Kenyans to be peaceful during the general elections in March 2013.

In Nairobi, both phases lasted for five working days and were showcased within the Central Business District outside the Hilton hotel. This location was selected to target the many people who either carry out their activities around the area or pass there when going to their places of work or heading home after work.

The exhibitions, according to Munuku, targeted mostly the youth since they were the main perpetrators of the 2007-2008 post election violence. This is because the Kenyan youth, most of whom are unemployed were easily convinced to carry out the violence in exchange for money.

The Picha Mtaani initiative is a good example of peace journalism since it was designed to encourage the youth to tell the truth about their role in the post-election violence in a bid to enhance and promote peace as a way of supporting the healing process.

Peace journalism, according to Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) is when editors and reporters make choices, about what to report and how to report it, which creates opportunities for society at large to consider and to value non-violent developmental responses to conflict.⁵⁹

Boniface Mwangi, the director of Picha Mtaani, believes that a picture is a strong medium that captures reality in a genuine and unbiased manner, and is therefore an

⁵⁹ Lynch, J and McGoldrick, A (2005) *Peace Journalism* Stroud: Hawthorn Press p. 3

appropriate tool for reflection, dialogue and peace building.⁶⁰ This is why, together with his colleagues, he decided to use photographs to promote peace in a country that had gone through violence.

Peace journalism is people oriented in the sense that it focuses on the victims (often civilian casualties) and thus gives a voice to the voiceless⁶¹ and Picha Mtaani covered this aspect since the exhibitions took place in the areas that were most affected by the violence and were open for viewing to all Kenyans.

The photo exhibitions were also a reflection of conflict-sensitive reporting which is rooted in the belief that the news media in many societies can be a powerful force to reduce the causes of conflict and to enable a conflict-stressed society to better pursue conflict resolution.⁶²

The importance of photographs in news is stressed by Ottosen (2007) who says that sometimes the absence of pictures is also a problem, since modern journalism...depends on pictures to tell a story.⁶³ This means that without photographs there will be dissatisfied audiences since Kenyans want a media that supports efforts to promote professionalism in journalism practice in the country; and gather and provide accurate, fair, balanced and

⁶⁰ www.pawa254.org (accessed 23 May 2013)

⁶¹ Galtung Johan (2002) *Peace Journalism- A Challenge*. Gothenburg: Nordicom. P. 267

⁶² Howard, S. (2009) *Conflict Sensitive Reporting: State of the Art- A Course for Journalists and Journalism Educators*. Paris: UNESCO Pg 12

⁶³ Ottosen, R. (2007) *Emphasizing Images in Peace Journalism: Theory and Practice in the Case of Norway's Biggest Newspaper*. www.cco.regener-online.de p.3

impartial information, education and entertainment to all Kenyans.⁶⁴ This would be impossible to achieve if the news presented by journalists cannot be relied on or proven to be true and this is the main function of photographs.

Boniface Mwangi's work also represents the kind of media that Kenyans want; "Kenyans desire a free, independent, assertive, vibrant and responsible media that would effectively advance democracy, human rights, good governance and socioeconomic transformation. Such media would provide platforms for campaigning against the culture of impunity that is a key challenge to Kenya's political and socio-economic transformation."⁶⁵

Photography is a better means of passing on information since "broadcasting can incite because over a period of time, it plants the idea that a particular group is a threat to the community, is unpatriotic, is sub human, and that action needs to be taken to deal with it. This sort of message incites hatred against a particular section of the community and in time makes violence a possibility. This can be done in any language, including English and Swahili."⁶⁶

As journalists go about their work, they should always remember that they have a responsibility to those who contribute to or merely consume the finished product,

⁶⁴ Oriare, P, Okello-Orlale, R and Ugangu, W. (2010) *The Media We Want: The Kenya Media Vulnerabilities Study* Nairobi: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) P.9

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ EcoNews Africa, BBC World Service Trust and UNESCO *Proceedings of the national seminar held in the way forward for community radios in Kenya* Nairobi 25 - 26th June 2008 p.7

precisely because all forms of mass communication are constructions.⁶⁷ That nowadays the primacy of the image's emotional content is a practical consideration both in the production and editorial selection of news photographs.⁶⁸

They should adhere to be fair and accurate because “the worst professional offence a journalist can commit is knowingly and deliberately publish fiction as fact...journalism should be a process of searching for the truth. Once that process is poisoned the bond of trust between programme maker and viewer is broken.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Berry, D. (2005) *Ethics and Media Culture - Practices and Representations*. Oxford: Focal Press. P.289

⁶⁸ Ibid p.200

⁶⁹ Guardian header comment, Friday, 8 may 1998

The Picha Mtaani photograph exhibitions



The Picha Mtaani Photographs



Men bleeding from cuts sustained during the 2008-2009 post-election violence



Policemen walk past the body of a man beaten to death by angry youth near the Mathare slums in Nairobi



People saving the little they could after their property was set ablaze



Property worth millions of shillings was destroyed in different parts of the country



Bodies of people killed during the violence lying by the roadside



A man is beaten and doused in petrol by angry youth who wanted to burn him alive. International journalists intervened and rescued him.



Some of the injured victims of the post-election violence in hospital



Bodies of people killed during the violence



Victims of the Kiambaa church fire; these people sought refuge in a church during the clashes and were burnt alive by people from a different tribe.



The police worsened the situation by harassing and even killing civilians.



A policeman manhandles a civilian



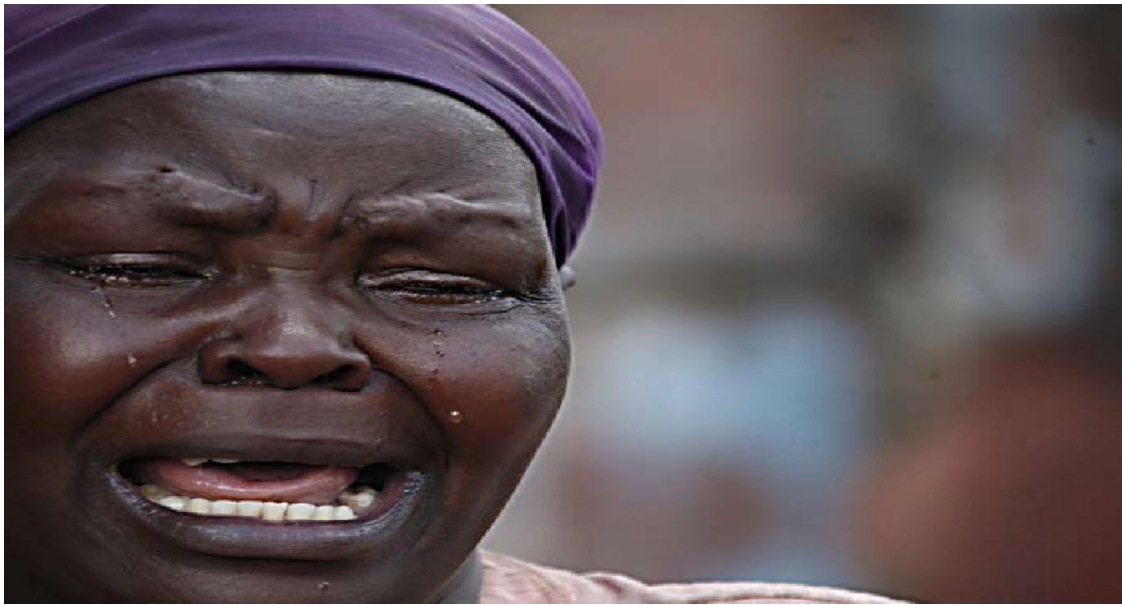
The police watch as a man flees from an abandoned building



Policemen beating and chasing away rowdy youth



Policemen shooting at civilians



Mourners at the funerals of victims of the post-election violence



A woman closes the eyes of a child killed during the violence



A woman weeps by the roadside as fires burn down buildings and property.



A man's hand that was chopped off during the violence



A man lies in hospital after an attack



Policemen standing next to burning property



Rowdy youth destroy property during the violence



Internally displaced victims of the post-election violence



Children whose homes were destroyed during the violence



The handshake between Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga that brought an end to the post-election violence

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the University of Nairobi, School of journalism and media studies for her identification at the various places that the respondents were approached.

3.1 Sampling Procedures

The respondents (N=44) were identified through random sampling survey at the Picha Mtaani offices, Multimedia University College, Kenya Institute of Mass Communication and Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, all being highly cosmopolitan institutions. Approached subjects were then asked if they had been involved in the Picha Mtaani exhibitions in one of the three possible capacities namely audience, artist or as a stakeholder to establish their relevance before they were engaged in the exercise.

3.2 Data Gathering Techniques

Questionnaires and/or accompanying interviews were designed into an introductory question of the respondent's role followed by lumped questions specific to assessing the corresponding four objectives (see appendix 1).

Questions 2-6 addressed the respondent's media preference in comparison to other media communication tools as an indicator of effectiveness of photography as a relevant communication tool including Picha Mtaani exhibitions.

Question 7 looked into limitations of photographs in successfully conveying the peace and reconciliation message in the Picha Mtaani initiative as well as inferential information on stakeholder involvement.

Question 8 sought recommendations to promote photography for the case of Picha Mtaani to improve on conveying the peace message and the last two questions (9 and 10) investigated the overall study's aim of photography's potential as an effective communication tool in conflict situations with the case of peace message conveyance in Picha Mtaani.

3.3 Research Design

This is a *post-facto*-Comparative study that seeks to compare virtual, existent data (pre-formed perceptions of the public following the post-election violence) collated through questionnaires from the public on effectiveness of photography as a media communication tool in reference to the case of Picha Mtaani exhibitions. The data was collected through random sampling targeting the artists, stakeholders and the audience; artists and stakeholders constituted Picha Mtaani organizers, partners and funders while the audience were the general public and consumers of the exhibits.

3.4 Data analysis and Presentation

Data collected through questionnaires and interviews was analyzed using Excel[®] and subjected to quantitative analysis with resulting responses presented in column graphs and tables.

Effectiveness of the Picha Mtaani exhibitions and photographs generally in media communication were determined by use of percentages in the frequencies obtained using

Excel Spreadsheet. Limitations of Picha Mtaani initiative in addressing the 2007/2008 post-election violence were likewise calculated as percentages from frequencies of various shortcomings identified by the respondents and presented in Excel Spreadsheet. Stakeholder involvement and Picha Mtaani's experience as a model photography communication tool were inferred from respective, resultant representative frequencies and percentages calculated from respondent suggestions and opinions.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 RESULTS

A total of 50 Semi-structured questionnaires and/or accompanying interviews were administered of which 6 had to be nullified following failure by the respondents to return them by the deadline of the fieldwork exercise on 30th September 2013 and failure by the interviewee to establish contact by the deviant respondents. The following results are therefore based on responses from a sample size of N=44.

Out of the 44 people to whom the questionnaire/interviews were administered, 43 (97.7%) constituted the audience while only 1 (2.3%) was an artist. No stakeholder (0%) was involved in the interview or questionnaire exercise.

Television was the most favourite media amongst the respondents preferred by 35 (79.5%) respondents followed by national newspaper (n=6, 13.6%), radio (n=2, 4.5%) and the least preferred was gutter press (n=1, 2.3%).

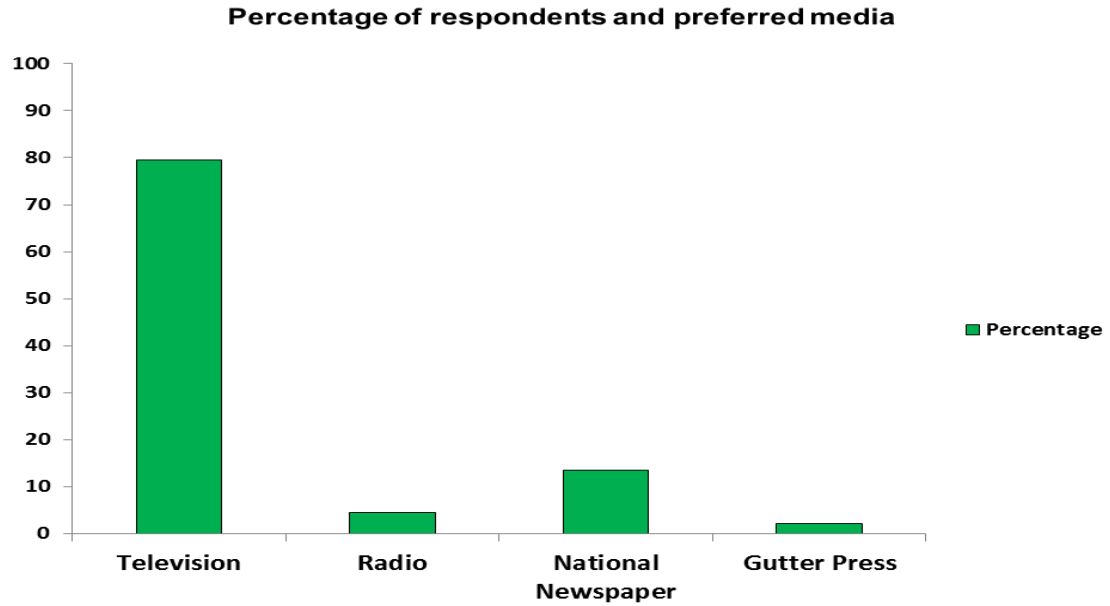


Figure 1: Preferred media by respondents

The various respondents' preference to the above media was attributed to predisposed inclination to various media features. 30 (68%) respondents were inclined to images or pictures, 8 (18.2%) were drawn to the presenter, 4 (9.1%) fancied the wording while 2 (4.5%) were not sure of the reason for their preference of a particular type of media.

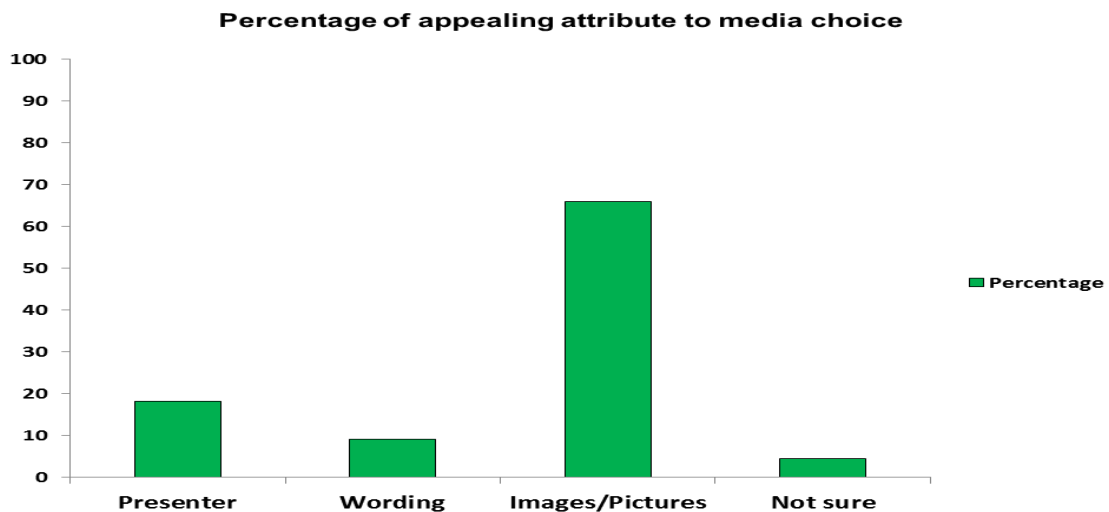


Figure 2: Appealing attributes of media to the respondents

38 (86.4%) respondents indicated that Picha Mtaani exhibitions were successful in the peace and reconciliation process. 5 (11.4%) interviewees indicated that Picha Mtaani exhibitions were not successful. 1 respondent did not indicate what he/she thought about the success of the exhibitions.

Majority of respondents who acknowledged that Picha Mtaani attained success attributed it mostly to clarity (n=21, 47.7%). 16 (36.4%) respondents attributed the initiative's success to its graphic nature, 2 (4.6%) persons thought it was because the exhibitions were readily accessible to the public while only 1 (2.3%) person felt the exhibits were integrated. No respondent indicated that the exhibitions were attractive.

The most memorable Picha Mtaani exhibits to the respondents were those of burning/burnt victims at Kiambaa church (n=12, 27.3%), overall images of murder scenes other than at the Kiambaa church (n=10, 22.7%), clashes or police and/or mob brutality exhibits (n=6, 13.6%), burning property and looting scenes (n=4, 9.1%), whereas 1 (2.3%) respondent each recalled images of someone being run down by public transport vehicle in Naivasha, vultures as a symbolic representation of what the society had become, exhibits illustrating fires on road or road blocks, policemen trying to restore order and lastly, shaking of hands by the two rivals that were to become the two principles. 4 (9.1%) respondents had no recollection of any particular exhibit.

Table 1: Memorable photograph scenes by respondents

Exhibit	Frequency	Percentage%
burning/burnt victims at Kiambaa church	12	27.3
murder scenes and victims overall other than at the Kiambaa church	10	22.7
clashes or police and/or mob brutality exhibits	6	13.6
burning property and looting scenes	4	9.1
someone being run down by public transport vehicle in Naivasha	1	2.3
vultures as a symbolic representation of what the society had become	1	2.3
fires on road or road blocks	1	2.3
policemen trying to restore order	1	2.3
shaking of hands by rivals that were to become the two principles	1	2.3
Can't remember	4	9.1

Shortcomings of the Picha Mtaani exhibits included inaccessibility to majority of population (n=30, 68.2%), disturbing graphic content (n=9, 20.5%), incoherence (n=5, 11.4%), hectic exhibits with limited portability (n=3, 6.9%) whereas 2 (4.6%) respondents each indicated that they were irrelevant and they were an expensive process.

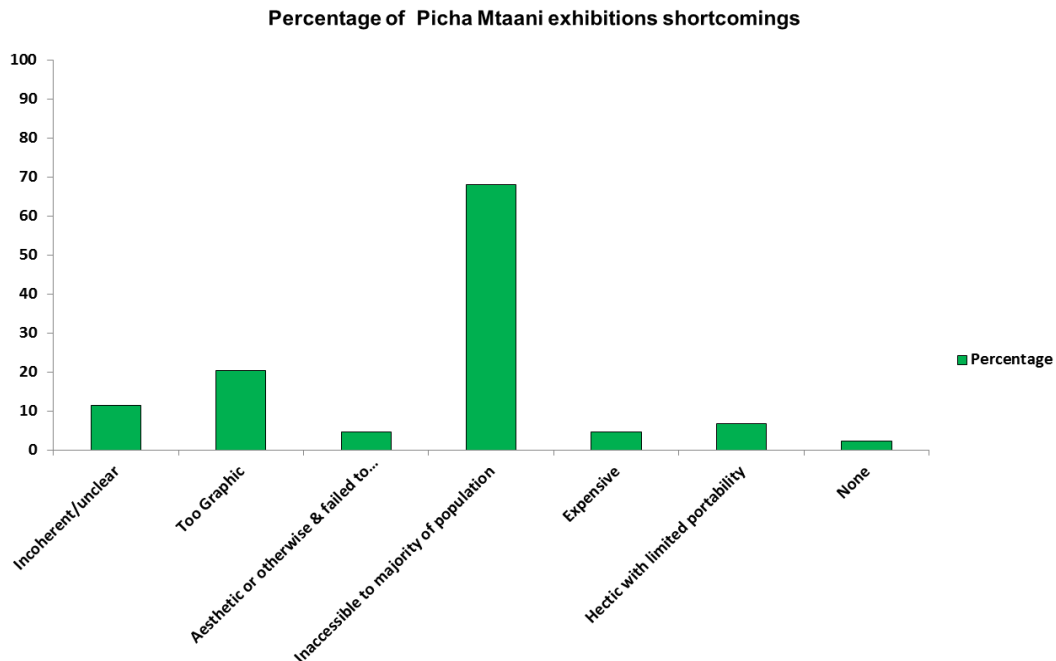


Figure 3: Limitations of Picha Mtaani exhibitions

Suggestions for improvement of Picha Mtaani by respondents ranked as follows in order of declining prominence: increase workforce/coverage including rural areas as well as effectively publicizing their work (n=25, 56.8%), include accompanying captions or explanations-verbal or otherwise (n=11, 25.0%), not to include irrelevant images including exhibiting tribalism as well as very graphic images (n=8, 18.2%), incorporate motion pictures (n=5, 11.4%), exhibiting outside of conflict times (n=4, 9.1%) use of words from leaders that elicit peace and unity (n=2, 4.6%), upload on-line images (n=1, 2.3%) and including drawings/graffiti (n=1, 2.3%).

Table 2: Respondents' recommendations for Picha Mtaani exhibitions

Suggestions for Picha Mtaani exhibitions	Frequency	Percentage%
increase workforce/coverage including rural areas as well as effectively publicizing their work	25	56.8
include accompanying captions or explanation-verbal or otherwise	11	25.0
not to include irrelevant images including exhibiting tribalism as well as very graphic images	8	18.2
incorporate motion pictures	5	11.4
exhibiting outside of conflict times	4	9.1
use of words from leaders that elicit peace and unity	2	4.6
upload on-line images	1	2.3
Including drawings and graffiti	1	2.3

Overall relevance and effectiveness of photographs in media communication was indicated by most respondents as being very important (n=33, 75%). A few indicated that they are important (n=9, 20.5%) and none indicated that images were not important in media communication.

Most respondents (n=29, 69.9%) were of the opinion that Picha Mtaani was effective in addressing peace and reconciliation. 10 (22.7%) indicated that they were very successful, 3 (6.8%) indicated that the exhibitions were unsuccessful while 2 (4.6%) did not know to classify the exhibitions' effectiveness.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 DISCUSSION

This study found out that television, followed by newspapers, comprise the two most popular forms of media in this sample survey. Television and newspapers are constituted of photographs in their content which possibly contribute to successfully and effectively conveying of the message to the public. Indeed images emerged as the leading (68%) overall appealing attribute of media to the majority of the respondents in this study. Further, 86.4% of the respondents ranked Picha Mtaani initiative as overall successful, in conveying peace and reconciliation after 2007/2008 Kenya's post-election violence.

However only 65.9% of the same respondents rate the effectiveness of Picha Mtaani initiative as successful and not very successful (only 22.7%) with another 6.8% of the respondents stating it was unsuccessful while 4.6% were not sure. Thus Picha Mtaani's photograph exhibitions were highly successful but not effective enough in promoting peace and reconciliation or just that their full potential was not realized. 75% of the respondents rate photographs generally as a relevant and effective media communication tool but the percentage reduces when the respondents are asked to rate effectiveness of the specific case of Picha Mtaani as a photography media communication tool.

Regarding the success of Picha Mtaani, 47.7% of the respondents, who constituted the majority, attributed this to the concise nature of the exhibits. An almost equally large (36.4%) proportion of respondents attributed the success to the graphic nature of the exhibits. It is however likely that these two attributes could have both elicited

psychologically traumatic experiences in the public audience, largely represented by the interviewed sample.

This is because either of these two leading attributes could have depicted the scenes of violence that were characteristic of the post-election ‘violence’ as the event was rightfully coined and therefore a painful and harsh reminder to the audience. Then again the initiative was conveniently carried out at a time when the public that had lived the ordeal was trying to get back to their feet and erase their memories of an experience they had survived, and were still struggling with the trauma.

The data from this study is in support of this and indicates that the most remembered exhibits were those related to the most extreme violence such as the case of burnt victims at Kiambaa church in Eldoret and images of murdered people and the resultant destitute cases. In fact the memories of a few good incidences that may have been depicted by the exhibitions such as shaking of hands by the two rivals (Kibaki and Raila) that became the two national principles and policemen trying to restore order are only remembered by single respondents.

It is therefore likely that overall, there were more images depicting violence as they were at the time of the skirmishes than there were those depicting good deeds or encouraging situations. Subsequently, Picha Mtaani’s graphic exhibitions may have further depressed the already traumatized audience with the favourable end result from crudely rubbing in the message that ‘this horrific and painful situation will recur if you fight each other so you better stop’.

Data from this study further indicates that the negative aspect of graphic images was the second highest (20.5%) shortcoming of Picha Mtaani exhibitions after limited accessibility (68% of the respondents) to the bulk of the population. This controversial case where limited accessibility was a more prominent shortcoming than graphic nature of images, may be interpreted to mean that the public audience acknowledged the relevance of Picha Mtaani exhibitions but likely within certain limits or with certain modifications to the approach.

Concurrently, the respondents recommend highly (56%) that the Picha Mtaani exhibitions should have been widely advertised followed by countrywide exhibitions. The second most (supported by 25% of the respondents) prime suggestion was that the images should have an explanation either as captions, brochures or verbally narrated. Amongst the effects of any explanation is that it eases the disturbed state of the mind supporting further the possible traumatic effect of the exhibits without explanations. In support of this possibility is the third (18.2%) ranked recommendation that exhibitions illustrating tribalism including of graphic violent manifestations should not be exhibited. This further stresses the prominence of disturbing graphic images displayed by Picha Mtaani. The rest of the suggestions were made by smaller numbers of respondents but all hint to less depiction of violence or methods to reduce the effects of a violent theme. They include exhibiting outside of conflict times, including viewer discretion warning as well as using peace and unity slogans from leaders. The suggestions on use of social media for online photo uploads and use of motion pictures are in line with suggesting

broader coverage hence respondents' acknowledgement that images are a relevant media communication tool that can be very effective.

Inferentially, stakeholder involvement may not have been adequate especially given the fact that the data shows the leading shortcoming may have well been overcome through stakeholder funding and support. The shortfall of limited exhibition areas/centres and advertisement would have been overcome with adequate donor funding which should have been a key stakeholder role. Anecdotal information from the Picha Mtaani project co-ordinator suggests that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were involved at this level but ended up pulling out. Neither was any other stakeholders mentioned nor was their contribution suggested from the feedback of the respondents.

Photography is therefore generally highlighted by the findings of this study as favoured or accorded high regard by the consumer audience if only the complains and suggestions arising from the case of Picha Mtaani exhibitions can be carefully reviewed and upon refinement applied towards making photography an outstanding tool for peace and reconciliation, as well as education, information and communication.

5.1 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study reveals that photographs are yet to be fully exploited, either independently, or in association with other forms of media as the complementary link in effective communication.

The initiative that employed photographs to bring about peace, reconciliation and healing was overall effective according to this study. More precisely however, the data shows

that the initiative may have attained peace and reconciliation however via an overall scary approach, but did not facilitate the healing process.

Picha Mtaani's exhibitions, even though overall effective were quite expensive, limited in coverage, exhibited violently graphic images and to a few respondents may have been incoherent and irrelevant,

Other than short-term involvement of UNDP, stakeholder involvement in support of Picha Mtaani initiative was poor.

Picha Mtaani's experience in promotion of photography as a communication tool brings out a classic case of caution on what and how photographs should be displayed or broadcasted especially as concerns graphic images of violence.

From this study's findings the resultant recommendations include:

1. Need for cautious censorship in employing photographs as a communication tool.
2. Appropriate advocacy in support of photographs as a communication tool.
3. Explore the possibility of a national 'photopaper' to complement newspapers given the large number of fans that enjoy images or photos even though embedded in other media.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

PICHA MTAANI Exhibitions Audience/Artist/Stakeholder questionnaire

Instructions

- i. *Please be honest in answering the following questions.*
- ii. *Tick ONLY ONE answer inside the provided forms/boxes unless where instructed otherwise*

1. What role did you play in Picha Mtaani exhibitions?
 - a) Audience ☐
 - b) Artist ☐
 - c) Stakeholder ☐
2. Which is your favourite media?
 - a) Television ☐
 - b) Radio ☐
 - c) National newspaper ☐
 - d) Gutter press ☐
3. What is the MOST appealing feature of your media preference?
 - a) The presenter ☐
 - b) Wording ☐
 - c) Images/Pictures ☐
 - d) Not sure ☐
4. i) Do you think Picha Mtaani played an outstanding role resolving 2007/2008 post-election violence?
 - a) Yes ☐
 - b) No ☐
5. If **yes in 4 above**, what would you attribute to the success of PICHA MTAANI? You may choose more than one indicating numerical order of priority in provided boxes.

- a) Concise/clear summary ☐
- b) Graphic ☐
- c) Attractive ☐
- d) Accessible ☐
- e) Integrated
6. From your recollection and in a few words, which particular exhibit made the greatest impact to you concerning the 2007/2008 post-election violence and what reaction or feeling did it elicit from you?
- _____
- _____
- _____
7. What were the limitations of the Picha Mtaani exhibitions? Tick appropriately the answer that suits your role as the audience, artist or stakeholder.
- a) Incoherent/too brief/unclear ☐
- b) Too Graphic ☐
- c) Aesthetic that they failed to communicate the intended theme ☐
- d) Inaccessible to majority of the population ☐
- e) Expensive ☐
- f) Hectic to lay out with limited portability ☐
- g) Other (please specify)
8. In your opinion what 2 suggestions for improvement would you propose to Picha Mtaani to maximize their effectiveness as tools for peace advocacy?
- i. _____
- ii. _____
9. How would you generally rate the relevance and effectiveness of images/pictures in conveying the message alongside other forms of media communication?
- a) Very important ☐

b) Important ☐

c) Not important ☐

10. In your opinion, how effective were Picha Mtaani exhibitions in the peace and reconciliation process following the 2007/2008 post-election violence in Kenya?

a) Very successful ☐

b) A failure ☐

c) I do not know ☐

Thank you for taking your time and providing the above responses

Appendix 2: Summary of frequencies and percentages to questionnaire responses

Assessed parameters	Total	Percentage
Role		
Audience	43	97.72727273
Artist	1	2.272727273
Stakeholder	0	0
Favourite Media		
Television	35	79.54545455
Radio	2	4.545454545
National Newspaper	6	13.63636364
Gutter Press	1	2.272727273
appealing attribute of media		
Presenter	8	18.18181818
Wording	4	9.090909091
Images/Pictures	30	68.18181818
Not sure	2	4.545454545
Success of Picha Mtaani in reconciliation		
Yes	38	86.36363636
No	5	11.36363636
Leading success attribute		
Coincise/clear	21	47.72727273
Graphic	16	36.36363636
Attractive	0	0
Accessible	2	4.545454545
Integrated	1	2.272727273
Highest impact photo		

Can't remember	4	9.090909091
Person run down by Matatu in Naivasha	1	2.272727273
Brutally -police & civilian alike-fighting, mob justice & injured people in Naivasha & elsewhere	6	13.63636364
Burning & looting of houses including in Turbo, Eldoret, Kisumu	4	9.090909091
Vultures????	1	2.272727273
Fires on roads/road blocks	1	2.272727273
burning/burnt victims at Kiambaa church	12	27.27272727
Policemen trying to restore order	1	2.272727273
Images of murdered people & prostitutes/policemen in Kibera, Naivasha & elsewhere	10	22.72727273
Shaking hands by the 2 principles	1	2.272727273
Incoherent/unclear	5	11.36363636
Too Graphic	9	20.45454545
Aesthetic or otherwise & failed to communicate/irrelevant	2	4.545454545
Inaccessible to majority of population	30	68.18181818
Expensive	2	4.545454545
Hectic with limited portability	3	6.818181818
None	1	2.272727273
Recommendation for betterment of Picha Mtaani		
Include viewer discretion warning	3	6.818181818
Accompanying brochures/explanation-verbal or otherwise-explaining captions etc	11	25
On-line images	1	2.272727273
Motion pictures	5	11.36363636
Do not portray pictures exhibiting tribalism; also very graphic	8	18.18181818
Use words such as from leaders that promote unity & peace	2	4.545454545
Include drawings-graffiti	1	2.272727273
Increase workforce/coverage including in rural areas & publicize work	25	56.81818182
Exhibit outside of conflict times	4	9.090909091
Relevance & effectiveness of photos, generally		

Very important	33	75
Important	9	20.45454545
Not Important	0	0
Effectiveness of Picha Mtaani		
Very Successful	10	22.72727273
Successful	29	65.90909091
Unsuccessful	3	6.818181818
I do not know	2	4.545454545