POLITICAL CONFLICT COVERAGE: A CASE STUDY OF THE PRINT MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE MOMBASA REPUBLICAN COUNCIL (MRC)

BY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this project is my original work and has not been presented to any University for academic credit:

………………………………   …………………………..

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This research project report has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university supervisor.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my daughters **Laura Kuvuna** and **Sandra Cidie**

For having encouraged me to undertake this academic adventure

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

MRC	Mombasa Republican Council
GK	Government of Kenya
NEP	North Eastern Province
IBEA	Imperial British East Africa Company
EA	East Africa
MUF	Mwambao United Front
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
NLC	National Land Commission
PC	Provincial Commissioner
CS	Coastal Strip
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
KB	Kaya Bombo
MUHURI	Muslim for Human Rights
CC	Carter Commission
KLCR	Kenya Land Commission Report
KCSR	Kenya Coastal Strip Report
GG	Governor-General
AS	Arab School
WWII	World War II
RC	Robertson Commission
CLB	Coast Land Board
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding

PP   Pwani Party

CKC   Chief Kadhi Courts

SFP   Shungwaya Freedom Party

KANU   Kenya African National Union

MPs   Members of Parliament

LHC   Lancaster House Constitution

NCCK   National Council of Churches of Kenya

CIPK   Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya

MYF   Mijikenda Youth Forum

KCA   Kenya Correspondents Association

MPUC   Mombasa Polytechnic University College

RAG   Radio Africa Group

SG   The Standard Group

NMG   Nation Media Group

KNCHR   Kenya National Commission on Human Rights

KCPE   Kenya Certificate of Primary Education

KCSE   Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

IEBC   Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

PM   Prime Minister

ABSTRACT

This study sought to analyses the print media coverage of the Mombasa Republican Council in the period ahead of the March 4, 2013 General Elections. It was an assessment of the effectiveness of the execution of the watchdog role by the print media in reporting about the MRC who were regarded as articulators of Coast people's grievances. The purpose of the study was to investigate the contribution of print media articles in the anxiety and tension experienced especially among the up-country people who had settled in the region. The objectives included: determining if the print media coverage on MRC issues was causing anxiety; establishing if failure to highlight Coastals' problems was leading to the secession call; assess the possibility of having print media focus on historical injustices at the Coast; and determining the impact of print media reports on the MRC issue.

The initial target population was 20 people with direct involvement with the MRC group but only 18 were available. Purposive sampling was used to select respondents: 3 political leaders, 2 government officials, 4 opinion leaders, 5 journalists, 3 top MRC leaders and a representative of MUHURI, a civil society mandated to mediate in the stalemate between MRC and state, for interviews that were to supplement the news content analysis. Two newspapers, The Daily Nation and The Standard were selected for the content analysis. A total of 113 articles on MRC published by the two papers between July 2012 and February 2013 were analysed.

Data was collected by use of guided interviews and newspaper content analysis code sheet. The response rate of the instruments was 90 per cent. Data was analysed through reduction and interpretation for qualitative data while graphs and pie chats were used to analyse the quantitative data from papers. 90 per cent respondents agreed MRC had genuine grievances that missed out in 82 per cent of the articles. Some of the findings are: the media failed to acknowledge MRC grievances, Coast history and influence of Islam and all these were due to MRC lacking a media policy. The researcher recommends that the media should dig into the historical power transitions in Coast, acknowledge influence of Islam as well as focus on the gains promised in the new constitution like devolved governance and constitutional commissions like NLC as a solution to all the MRC grievances and not necessarily through secession.

CHAPTER 1

General introduction

The world over, the media have been known for their educative, instructive, entertainment and society watchdog roles. The need to have the media adequately play all these roles while reporting on the Mombasa Republican Council group in general arises from two aspects. The importance of media within any conflict or controversial issue is clear. It is equally obvious that there will be attempts to influence media coverage of conflicts by parties to any such conflicts. A particularly insidious sort of manipulation has been the systematic and deliberate use of 'disinformation' (Hoile 2005).

First, the fact that there was a general agreement from the people who had taken time to interact with the members of this group that the issues raised by MRC were not only genuine but representative of the aspirations of native Coastal communities; clearly showing that should the media serialize the perceived atrocities and oppressive acts contested by the group then the government would address them by itself or through succumbing to pressure from civil societies and even the international community.

Second, the fact that the group has been calling for secession and boycott of the March 4, 2013 General Elections calls on the media intervention to create awareness to the locals about the consequences, possibilities, strengths and opportunities of the separatist call through the rallying call *Pwani si Kenya (Coast is not part of Kenya).*

As we approached to the general elections, the media held the key to maintaining peace or breaching it in the Coast region as the MRC gospel gained momentum and even became popular among the native Coast communities. There was a challenge in

reporting about MRC owing to the fact that the public saw only secession whenever stories on the group were published.

Kadhi (2012), at the time, argued that nothing, of late, has challenged journalism in Kenya more than the coverage of the mysterious Mombasa Republican Council. Engaging in conveyor-belt reportorial presentation of stories journalists have only been writing about utterances of the organisation's leaders threatening to secede from Kenya and the rebuttals from national leaders expressing their views on how to deal with the situation. The media were an integral part in solving or propagating the stalemate between the group and the state that was, at that time, putting native Coast residents at a cross-road.

1.1. The background to the problem

MRC have been in the media spotlight as police officers intensify raids on their members whether as they attend their weekly meetings or while attending sessions of court cases they have filed protesting their ban at the High Court in Mombasa. The publicity they have been receiving has, however, been criticized as being misinformed as the media have been accused of running shallow publications especially in the country's two main dailies-*The Standard* and *The Daily Nation*- even after poor research on the key issues.

MRC appeared on the media spotlight ever since 2010 after the government arrested some of its suspected members during an alleged oath taking ceremony in Likoni, Mombasa County. It is not surprising that the MRC has frequently been getting in trouble with the law as it was among the 33 groups that were declared 'illegal organized criminal groups' by the Government of Kenya (GK) through a Gazette notice issued in October 2010. These print media reports are yet to highlight what MRC stand for, an issue that gave rise to this research.

1.1.1. The MRC: A voice of the oppressed or a terrorist group?

In analysing the problem there was need to understand who the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) are and get a perspective of the cause they stand for. The MRC is a group based in the Kenyan Coast that was formed with the intention of righting what they believe to be wrongs done to the coastal people. Since its formation in the mid-1990s, the MRC has consolidated the land, marginalization in employment and economic deprivation (by up-country people) grievances' solution to one clear agenda: Secession.

The MRC spokesman Mohamed Rashid Mraja said they formed the movement to liberate the residents of the coastal region from decades' long perceived marginalization by successive governments. Speaking at Masjid Musa mosque in Majengo in June 2012, Mraja said they came together to form MRC because local politicians had failed to deliver us from the problems Coast residents faced for decades including landlessness, unemployment, inadequate education and health facilities among others.

They make eerily similar claims to those brought forward by the *Shifta* (Somali militia) who wanted to secede parts of North Eastern Province (NEP) in the 1960s to be part of a 'Greater Somalia' – the *Shifta* were eventually stamped out in a deadly confrontation that left several people dead.

But unlike the Shifta, the main issue the MRC have is land. The land problems in the coast can be traced back to 1887 when Seyyid Said leased the 16 km (10 mile) wide coastal strip to the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEA), which effectively made the Coastal inhabitants squatters in their own land (Goldsmith 2011).

Goldsmith (2011) observes that in 1895 an agreement was made between the Great Britain and Zanzibar under the supervision of Sultan Seyyid Hemed Bin Twain, Queen Victoria and the British Government in which Mombasa was to remain a protectorate under the British. The Sultan allowed the British Government to administer Mombasa for its Political and Business activities. This agreement stipulated that the sovereignty of the Sultan of Zanzibar would be maintained.

In 1962, just before Kenya got her independence, there were talks on whether or not this 1895 agreement should be altered. It was found that the coastal strip was not economically viable on its own and that the port of Mombasa was very important to Kenya and the East African region in general. So it was recommended that the Sultan be compensated and the region be made officially a part of Kenya. The recommendations also stated that the (then) new constitution recognize religious freedom that would allow the Muslims the right to follow the Sharia Law in matters of religion and personal status. The Sultan was assured that the Sharia or Kadhi Courts would continue to function in Independent Kenya and that the authority of the Chief Kadhi would be preserved for Muslims in matters of personal status. When it came to a case between a Non-Muslim and a Muslim, the general law would apply. So the Sultan agreed to give up his claims to the region.

So in the 1963 Lancaster negotiations between the British and the Kenyans, the deal was sealed and the Coast's hopes for autonomy vanished as well, despite the presence of the Mwambao United Front- a group of local leaders who wanted the option of being able to secede from Kenya and if possible join up with Zanzibar. The clout of this group was, however, weakened when Mijikenda independence leader Ronald Gideon Ngala joined forces with other small tribes' leaders like Masinde Muliro and Daniel Moi from Kenya to form the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) that was to oversee the interests of small tribes against the dominance of bigger tribes.

Ngala and Kadu were against total secession of the Coastal strip from Kenya championed by the MUF but instead championed for Majimbo or federalism. Coast joined Kenya with fear, mistrust and scepticism being high among most of the residents (Goldsmith 2011).

The government has since not revoked this agreement. Instead, after independence, all the land was transferred to the Government, which in turn gave the land to individuals who were not the original area residents. This happened when a law was passed that said that the first legislation of land will be valid and irrevocable regardless of how one acquired the title. So the elite and influential people in government at the time went ahead and registered themselves as the original owners of the land, an act that resulted in the Coastal people becoming squatters in land they considered theirs.

The officials of the MRC even display documents that say that there was another 1963 agreement signed by the then Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta and his Zanzibar counterpart Mohamed Shamte. According to them, the agreement was a 50 year lease, which meant that the government was to return the region to the indigenous people by 2013. The MRC Secretary General, Hamza Randu says this 1963 agreement integrated Mombasa as an independent region in the broader Kenya and that no part of it could be changed without the approval of the people from the protectorate. Randu who spoke at his house in Bombolulu in May, 2012, said based on these agreements, it is clear that Kenya, as a nation, came to existence via a MoU indicating that the Coastal strip was to be protected yet this had never happened.

This point brings us to their ideologies. As a result, the MRC say the coastal strip is not in need of any protection by the Kenya Government that was inherited from Colonial Britain. MRC said it had in place a structured system, complete with a constitution, was ready to govern the seaside region should it be granted autonomy. The MRC officials also add that it is funded by top businessmen and politicians in the

region (Mombasa). The MRC are adamantly pushing for the partitioning of Kenya's territory, raising issues of marginalization, discrimination and neglect of the Coast people. The MRC say it does not support the use of violence. The officials add that the members should not be considered rebels as they are only fighting for what they perceive to be their country – Mombasa. The MRC also say theirs is an inter-religious affair, because it affected all coast people, an assertion that was proven recently when the Pwani Interfaith Church released a statement in support of the MRC cause.

The MRC stated that despite the Coast being a major contributor to the national economy (through the Port of Mombasa and Tourism in general), the coast people are yet to benefit from its resources and so they are under developed as a result.

The MRC were declared unconstitutional because, although Article 36 of the constitution guarantees the freedom of association and assembly for every person, the intent and motive of the association that one is forming is very important so that one does not contravene the spirit of the constitution. The internal security minister, Prof George Saitoti, pronounced MRC's motive to be parallel to the stability and unity of this country.

The desire of the MRC to separate Coast Province from Kenya is unconstitutional and that is why they cannot be allowed to go on with their agenda. Article 3(2) of the constitution outlaws any attempt by anyone to form a government that is not in line with the constitution, which the MRC seek to do. Article 5 of the constitution strictly outlines the Kenyan territory to include territorial waters and territory of Kenya that was there on the effective date(Effective date - is on 27th August 2010 when the constitution came into force as per Article 260). So any attempt to change the territory of Kenya is unconstitutional and will not be allowed.

Under article 60 of the new constitution, there is an attempt to address the past land injustices through the enshrinement of the principles of land policy. It provides that land shall be held, used and managed in a manner that is equitable, efficient, productive and sustainable in accordance to the following principles: equitable access to land; security of land rights amongst others. Article 67 further establishes the National Land Commission (NLC) whose functions, amongst others, includes initiating investigations on its own initiative or on a complaint, into present or historical land injustices, and then recommends appropriate redress.

It is expected that the issues raised by MRC will be duly tackled with the establishment of a devolved government. The constitution, through the county governance, recognizes the right of communities to manage their affairs and further their development.

1.2. Statement of the problem

The core grievances fronted by the MRC are not given prominence in the local print media who continue deliberately or unconsciously running articles with secession featuring prominently that has since resulted to negative attitude towards the group. The fact that secession campaign is a desperate call from a people who perceive themselves as having been oppressed to the advantage of others has not been well captured.

The print media reports provoke the state to use its state machinery on MRC members, through arresting and detaining them, instead of solving the issues tabled. There are many underlying issues that have gone unreported including the influence of Islam on the culture of the native people of Coast who have consciously and unconsciously been subscribing to Islamic laws and way of life. It is worth noting that while other Kenyans shift from their cultures to the Western lifestyle giving rise to the

strong desire to embrace formal education, native Coast residents have been lagging backwards as they continue clinging to *Madras* informal education system that clashes with the acceptable formal education.

The fair reporting and possible resolution to the MRC issue needs an understanding of the influence of Islam owing to the centuries' old rule of the entire Coastal strip by Arab Sultans. The strong influence of Islam and the Sultan rule can unravel the mystery of the Muslim-led MRC grouping.

1.3. The purpose of the study

There seem to be gray areas in the print media reports that can only be addressed if the media research well to understand the real cause for the secession call. There has been an argument that the media are deliberately frustrating Coast residents' efforts to have their cry for justice addressed through deliberately representing MRC's attempts to address Coastal issues negatively. The thesis is, therefore, aimed at verifying if this is effectively the case, the factors associated with the situation and what can be done to redress the situation and ensure that Coast people's grievances are addressed without necessarily having the area secede from the rest of Kenya.

1.4. The objectives of the study

This research was informed by a general objective and four specific objectives.

1.4.1. General objective

To investigate if there was the potential of the print media coverage causing political tension or instability in that period when the country was preparing for a general election set for March, 4, 2013.

1.4.2. Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine if the print media coverage on MRC issues was causing anxiety
2. Establish if failure to highlight Coastals' problems leads to secession call.
3. Assess the possibility of having print media focus on historical injustices.
4. Determine the impact of the print media reports on the MRC issue.

1.5. Research questions

The research questions of this study were:

1. Do print media reports heighten the anxiety among Coast 'settlers'?
2. Can print media be relied to articulate MRC grievances?
3. Can the print media facilitate addressing of MRC grievances?
4. Do print media reports on the two dailies address Coastals' problems?

1.6. Basic assumptions of the study

The basic assumptions of this study were:

1. The respondents will give honest responses in items in the interview.
2. The MRC leaders are advocates of a marginalized lot in the Coast region
3. The print media articulate issues affecting all parties in MRC issue

1.7. Significance of the study

This was not a study of the justification of the MRC cause but an establishment of whether or not the media had been playing its watchdog role in addressing the issues raised by the separatist group. In as much as the group had featured prominently in the print media there was little the publicity done in resolving the stalemate between the group and the state as articles tend to support the government side. The media efforts and impact should also be assessed, but this would broaden excessively the scope of

the thesis. Moreover, this researcher believed that for a sustainable solution to be achieved at the Coast, a deliberate print media policy, to document the historical injustices giving rise to the protest, should be crafted.

From a practical perspective, the results of this research may usefully be implemented in the actual process of addressing historical injustices meted on Coast people from the pre-independence to post-independence era. It, therefore, sought not only objectivity in reporting the issues that arose but also reversing the trend in the media that had seen poorly researched press reports and editorials which led to the propensity to uncritically associate the MRC with armed gangs like the Mungiki elsewhere in Kenya (Goldsmith 2011).Goldsmith (2011) argued the print media reports have been, to a greater extent, delayed positive actions from the powers that be in addressing the problems residents of Coast face as well as the consequences expected from the hard stance taken by both sides-the state and MRC-over the imposed ban.

From a theoretical perspective, the issue of media coverage and political stability has been the debate as the media have been seen as an alternative voice of the oppressed-in this case the people of Coast-whose leadership has failed to articulate these issues at the national level. The agenda setting and gate keeping theories have been seen as the theories at work in ensuring that the voice of the oppressed does not come out clearly. This is to say the body of knowledge related to the position of the media over issues of political movements like the MRC is still under construction with some difficulties due to the fact that involuntary objectivity in reporting as a study itself is still an evolving field (not yet a discipline) and also to the fact that every conflict situation is somehow a peculiar one and no mechanical resolution tools apply to all conflicts. There is a possibility, therefore, that the present research might lead to some

important lessons useful in the development of the academic field of fair conflict reporting studies.

1.8. Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study were:

1. Finances and time: thus the reliance of information given by the respondents in Coast as travelling to Zanzibar and Britain was impractical.

2. The study depended on the cooperation and honesty of respondents which in turn may affect the response rate.

3. Communication barrier between the researcher and respondents as some of them could not express themselves in Kiswahili or English.

4. Lack of documentary evidence in some said agreements between Kenya's leadership, the head of Zanzibar authorities and the Queen of England especially the one MRC claim to be saying Coast and Kenya should separate in 2013.

1.9. Definition of key concepts

According to the Longman Dictionary (1978), concepts of secession, up-country people, vigilante groups, grievances, colony, protectorate, national security, civil society and interest groups bear the following significations:

Civil society A certain area (or arena) of society, the public space between the household, and the state, where groups, constituted at a level beyond family, interact with each other and with the state to pursue their interests. MUHURI are the official mediators between the state and MRC.

Colony A country or area that is under the political control of a more powerful country usually one that is far away. The MRC leadership argue that Kenya was a British colony, and not the Coastal strip that stretched between the Indian Ocean and Sultan Hamud.

Grievances A belief that you have been unfairly treated unfairly, or an unfair situation or event that affects and upsets you. The MRC have gained popularity following the general feeling that they are fearlessly articulating the issues like marginalization in land allocation, unemployment among other sectors that have been affecting Coast residents 50 years after independence.

Interest group also called pressure group is any association of individuals or organizations, usually formally organized, that, on the basis of one or more shared concerns, attempts to influence public policy in its favour.

National security Measures that are taken to protect a place or people within the whole country to ensure that they are safe at all times.

Protectorate A country that is protected and controlled by a more powerful country. MRC claim the Coastal strip that stretched from the Indian Ocean and Sultan Hamud was a British protectorate and was not supposed to be part of the British Colony (Kenya).

Secession Attempts by part of a country to officially stop being part of the larger country or political entity it belongs to and become independent. The rallying call *Pwani si Kenya* has gained momentum after being picked by the print media as they keep on referring to MRC as the Separatist group.

Up-country people A term used in this study to mean people from a place without towns especially in the middle of the country. It has been used derogatory especially in the Kiswahili word *wabara*.

Vigilante group A group that comprises of some people who illegally punishes criminals and tries to prevent crime, usually because they think the police are not doing it effectively. The MRC in this research stands a banned group alongside other thirty groups despite their spirited efforts to challenge their ban in court.

1.11 Organization of the study

This research project report is organized into five chapters. Chapter one provides the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, and basic assumptions of the study, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations and definitions of significant terms. Chapter two presents a review on literature on Political Conflict Coverage: A case study of the print media coverage of the Coast separatist Mombasa Republican Council (MRC). Chapter three covers the research design, target population, sample size and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis methods. Chapter four presents interpretations and discussions of the findings. Chapter five provides a summary, discussions, and conclusions as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviewed literature on political conflict coverage focusing on the underlying causes, challenges the print media face, the theories applicable and a comparative analysis to similar situations in Southern Sudan and Biafra conflict in Nigeria. All these areas were reviewed in comparison with the MRC conflict in particular.

2.1. Political conflict and media coverage

The battle, that occurs between two or more sides with different beliefs. This battle can be either through words or actual war (Goldsmith 2011). The MRC issue as it has been appearing in the media is a typical conflict that requires the application of principles of conflict coverage. Kadhi (2012) argued that reporting MRC, and indeed many other important current events, through expose or simple by engaging in interpretive coverage is a serious professional as well as ethical challenge to Kenyan journalist. Due to its controversial nature the coverage of the MRC is, for all practical purposes, the coverage of conflict. Ethically, journalists in Kenya are required to follow very well defined principles concerning conflict coverage. It is these challenges that led the researcher to undertake this study.

In successive sections, the chapter considers different theories related to the factors at the heart of the central problem of this study. The chapter also tackles the gap appearing in the literature concerning the issues of fair and balanced coverage with a human character, the right approach to uncover the underlying truths as well as the role of media in addressing the plight of people perceiving themselves as oppressed.

2.1. MRC and the historical and political background of the Coast

Commenting on coverage of the Sudanese conflict Hoile (2005) observed that there are many facets of poor journalism in conflict coverage like the inability to get simple but strategically important facts is a clear example of unacceptable weak journalism. Lack of understanding of the Coast's historical and political background that are different from the rest of the country and the fact that at one time there existed, historically, a form of layered sovereignty applied to East Africa's coast that left the region's city-states and communities free to conduct their affairs as long as they remitted taxes and duties to Zanzibar (Goldsmith 2011) can affect coverage of MRC issues.

2.1.1 The integration of the Coastal Strip to the Republic of Kenya

Goldsmith (2011) says that the administration of Coastal affairs, including remittance of taxes, by the Sultan of Zanzibar officially ended in 1963 with the integration of the coastal protectorate into the Republic of Kenya. The coastal leaders supporting the majimbo platform of KADU—adopted in opposition to the Mwambao movement's campaign for independence—saw their hopes for a large degree of self-rule dashed under Kenyatta's centralist government. Even after integration of the Coastal strip, the historical facts, cannot be wished away and need to be mentioned as 'classic justification of their pursuit.' Banner (2008) states that efforts to secure coastal autonomy represent a regionally and historically specific type of sovereignty pursued by Mwambao activists not simply to guard political and material privileges, but more broadly to express a language of political legitimacy that still resonates today.

2.1.2 The re-emergency of the 1963 mistrust

Goldsmith (2011) says that while coastal communities had always nurtured the desire to exert sovereignty over their own affairs, land, and resources, the rise of the MRC

over the past year has imbued the issue with a renewed vibrancy and purpose. The coastal communities' fears over losing control of land and key economic resources in 1963 were realized over the next five decades. This has led to a crisis of state legitimacy. Post-independence social exclusion and regional development rigged in favor of outsiders and local elites has led to a situation where members of the indigenous population now refer to themselves as "Coasterians" and to the non-coastal settlers as "Kenyans". A surprising sense of unity is replacing the acrimony persisting in the wake of the self-governing Mwambao and federalist Majimbo campaigns during the run-up to independence in 1963.

Kadhi (2012) says that the MRC is the unlikely agent of this emergent coast nationalism. A 2008 ban on it remains in effect even after a Kenyan court dismissed charges accusing the MRC of being an armed gang. It is clear that the print media especially the leading dailies publish on the notion that, their rallying cry, "*Pwani si Kenya*," the Coast is not Kenya, is the real threat explaining the state's persecution of its members. Many MRC leaders are awaiting trial, some in jail and others free on bond. They claim the MRC is neither political party nor an NGO, but a social movement. They continue to reiterate the MRC's commitment to peaceful action and legal methods. In the meantime, local support for their "*Pwani si Kenya*" agenda— driven by grievances over alienated land and economic marginalization—has grown exponentially. It is on this basis that among the evidence to persecute MRC members includes newspaper articles that have been produced in court by the state in the ongoing cases facing the group, its leaders and members.

2.2 Distinguishing between issues and personalities

Awoyekun (2013) said, while commenting on media coverage of the Biafran war in Nigeria, a writer should not be an accomplice to lies. Even when thorns infect the land

a writer must embody and defend the perennial destiny of high values and principles. Most publications likened the MRC group with vigilante groups like *Mungiki, Chinkororo* or even *Jeshi la Mzee* without attempting to draw the difference between all these groups. Two factors distinguished MRC from all the outlawed groupings. MRC, since its inception, had been identified with representation of the majority specifically indigenous Coast communities believing that its grievances are genuine a conviction that made them challenge their ban in court unlike the rest of the thirty groups banned alongside them.

Goldsmith (2011) said there is strong support for the MRC and their agenda everywhere we went…there appears to be an unprecedented degree of unity on the issues and grievances identified with the MRC initiative across Swahili, Arab, and Mijikenda segments of the indigenous coast population. The print media had concentrated on MRC personalities either involved in violent acts or reacting to accusations by state officers instead of zeroing on the issues that informed the uprising.

In his report, Goldsmith (2011) said the relatively poor understanding of the MRC phenomenon can be attributed to a combination of assumptions generated by the events precipitated by the Kaya Bombo (KB)raiders in 1997; poorly researched press reports and editorials, which lead to; the propensity to uncritically associate the MRC with armed gangs like the Mungiki elsewhere in Kenya. There was nothing revealed by the research to indicate that the MRC leadership maintains an armed wing, although this may be qualified by unknowns in respect to individuals or actors that may seek shelter underneath the MRC's expanding umbrella. If anything, there was more to suggest settler communities may be arming themselves in anticipation of the kind of turbulence generated by national elections since the return to multi-party

politics in 1992. Several well-placed sources posited that these factors could also explain the government's unyielding position on the MRC.

The conviction that they are fighting for a genuine and justified course touching on land, unemployment and poor representation in the government, informed their move to challenge their ban unlike other groups associated with distinctive sections of the population where *Mungiki* and others operate within as they seem to be standing for the youth (Mwandawiro 2010).

2.3. The impact of the media on the MRC issue

Though, it was clear that the rise of the MRC movement dovetails with global and regional trends reconfiguring the concept of sovereignty, the print media ought to face the challenges. In the face of such a conflict a general feeling that media reports might not balance the two sides usually arises. Kornai (2004) observed that the practices that are most enduring and not particularly influenced by reforms and legislative changes are those based on false reporting. These are fairly universal around the world.

2.3.1 Predetermined and judgmental print media reports

On the print media coverage of the Southern Sudan conflict Hoile (2005), said a conflict of such a nature, is likely to compel the media to go into propaganda. The purpose of propaganda is to encourage people to think in a particular way. This propaganda can be both overt and covert and is very difficult to document cause and effect. Evaluating MRC media coverage, Kadhi (2012) argued that an in-depth expose telling the real story that would answer a number of questions' in Kenyans' minds about the organization is yet to be written.

Goldsmith (2011) observed that several national leaders and coast politicians have urged the government to shift gears and talk to the MRC during the interim, but a series of sensationalist features and negative editorials in Kenya's main dailies, The *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* have probably offset the public impact of their petitions…The national press has yet to take the MRC and issues it raises seriously; there are reporters and editorialists that accept the government position at face value and have demonized the MRC in print. The real issues raised by MRC are just mentioned in passing as the print media concentrates on faulty finding in the method adopted by the group to advocate for redress of the perceived marginalization.

2.3.2 Telling the story in peace-meal

The print media were accused of not telling the real story of MRC. The fact that Kadhi (2012) argued that an in-depth expose telling the real story that would answer a number of questions' in Kenyans' minds about the organization is yet to be written. What is the origin of the shadowy organization calling itself MRC? Who finances it and for what purposes? Is it a political party or a tribal organization? Are its demands genuine or a concoction of politicians out to win the next (March 4, 2013) general elections? The media fully utilized the theory of gate keeping thus fail to report some of the facts revolving around the very incidents they at times decide to publish.

Goldsmith (2011), in his report, cited various raids conducted on MRC gatherings where only the success of state agents including the police officers run as headlines as some facts especially affecting the members of the group or even innocent by-standers go unreported completely. He pointed out raids on two gatherings in Likoni and the adjacent Shika Adabu area on Sunday, October 23, 2011, raised the stakes to a new level. The police descending on the Shika Adabu civic education meeting herded a crowd approaching one thousand people into a small area and launched tear gas

canisters. In the ensuing commotion they beat a woman and shot four young males, killing one. The national press did not mention the report circulating on the street that a three-month old child, dropped when police attacked the mother, had also died in the stampede.

In Likoni, administration police descended on a video hall where local youth were watching a highly anticipated English Premier League match featuring Manchester United vs. Manchester City. The police tear gassed the hall, locked the doors from the outside, and arrested a number of young males, the press reiterating the security spokesman's claim an oath-taking ceremony was in progress. This charge proved false, and the reaction across the coastal political and social spectrum led the Provincial Commissioner, Ernest Munyi, to hold a public meeting in Shika Adabu on Thursday, October 27. The PC who arrived with a full complement of high-ranking security officers and departmental heads apologized for the incident.

2.4. The shunned historical trends fueling MRC

A number of historical issues touching on administration, land, education and the general way of life are distinctive to Coast region. Historical trends of rebellion by Coastal communities yet it is a fact that such resistance, suspicion and fears from the residents over the Nairobi based colonial and later the Kenyatta government have been there all along. The pre-independence Carter Commission reviewed the situation on the coast and reported: "There is a strong feeling on the Coast that the needs of its people have received scant attention from the Government in Nairobi. The coast people complain that land development, communications, social welfare etc. have lagged very much behind their counterparts in the European Highlands and African reserves. Kenya Coastal Strip Report (1963).

The report also referred to "the genuine belief held by Coast peoples of all races that they have a distinctive outlook and way of life which has given them a greater measure of peace, harmony, and regard for each other, and sense of toleration, than has existed elsewhere in Kenya. This was not solely the view of the coastal population. Since the administration of Governor-General Hardinge during the early 20th century, British administrators had displayed a degree of empathy for the culture of the coastal strip inhabitants. The colonial administration introduced a radically different economy and social hierarchy, and G.G Hardinge in particular expressed concern over the state of the coast's vanquished elite. This led to British efforts to bring the children of the former overlords into the new order. Responses to initiatives like the Arab School in Mombasa, however, were poor (Salim 1972).

Mazrui (1998) argued that in any event, such efforts to draft the coastal elite into the colonial experiment were essential token; attention to the issues of the coastal economy and society gradually slipped into the background following the establishment of the colonial state in Nairobi. Brennan (2008) observed that the Coast was after all, a protectorate administered on behalf of the Sultan, and this encouraged non-interference when it came to pro-active involvement in the governance of the Sultan's subjects. The colony's highland communities, in contrast, had embraced the Anglocentric forces of education and agrarian commercialization. World War II had weakened the empire and the *Mau Mau* insurgency signaled the inevitable end of colonial rule.

Goldsmith (2011) stated that the 1961 Robertson Commission anticipated problems of integrating the coastal protectorate into an independent Kenya, and made a number of recommendations intended to safeguard coastal communities. The Commission recommended, "A code of human rights should be 'entrenched' in the Constitution safe-guarding the exercise of all those rights universally regarded as the heritage of all

inhabitants of free and democratic societies." It also advocated the establishment of a Coast Land Board to guide the Government and Legislature on land policy in regard to:

a)   Disposal and use of public lands;

b)   The best use of uncultivated privately owned lands;

c)   The settlement of disputes between landlords and tenants;

d)   Preparation of a code regulating the relations of landowners and their laborers; and,

e)   The transfer of land owned by local coastal people to persons from outside the Strip and to foreigners.

The report stated that one of the greatest fears of the Coastal minorities is that unless their titles are acknowledged and preserved, their lands will be invaded and taken from them by squatters and invaders from up-country. But it rejected the population's desire to preserve a large measure of coastal autonomy on the basis that this was not economically viable—the region did not generate sufficient revenues to pay its own way. Coastal leaders also anticipated the issues and problems that would come with independence.

Goldsmith (2011) further noted that analysis of the numerous submissions presented to the Robertson Commission may challenge this view of coastal economy. Because the same economic argument continues to feature in the marginalization of the coastal peoples, there is a case for pointing out the distinction between "economic viability" and the unharnessed capacity to contribute. The level of revenues collected formed a co-linear relationship with the fact that the British did not invest in the indigenous economic sector nor did they cultivate the population's ability to generate more taxable output. The 1963 Memorandum of Understanding between the Sultan of

Zanzibar and Jomo Kenyatta that formally transferred sovereignty over the coast to independent Kenya retained the outlines of the 1895 agreement in the form of several of the provisions emphasized by the Carter Report and Robertson Commission, namely:

1. Ensure complete freedom of religion, especially for Muslim subjects, and preservation of their religious buildings and institutions;

2. The Chief Kadhi will have jurisdiction over questions of Muslim law relating to personal status (marriage, divorce, inheritance);

3. Administrative officers in Muslim areas should be, "so far as is reasonably practicable:"

4. Muslim children should be instructed in Arabic, "so far as is reasonably practicable;"

5. The freehold titles to land in the coast region that are already registered will at all times be recognized, steps will be taken to ensure the continuation of the procedure for the registration of new freehold titles and rights of freeholders will at all times be preserved save in so far as it may be necessary to acquire freehold land for public purposes, in which event full and prompt compensation will be paid.

The other recommendations for safeguarding human rights and establishing a CLB to protect the stakes of the Province's local communities in what was formally 'Crown' land did not feature in the MoU. Regardless, all the provisions except for the constitutional status of Kadhi courts (their jurisdiction is limited to inheritance and family law) were never observed.

Mazrui (1998) stated that the formation of the Pwani Party and its attempt to advance the Mwambao (i.e. coastal strip) call for the ten-mile strip's independence and/or reunification with Zanzibar, was overtaken by fast-moving events and the strength of

the KADU '*Majimbo*' (i.e. federalism) platform countering the call for coastal autonomy. Prominent Miji Kenda politicians supported the Mwambao cause initially but defected to the pro-*majimbo* KADU at the last moment. The Bajuni, the largest single community in the Lamu region, backed the charismatic politician, Ahmed Mohammed Jeneby, leader of the Shungwaya Freedom Party, which rejected Mwambao from the beginning.

According to Nyamanga (2010) the coast joined independent Kenya with a sense of fear and trepidation about what the future would bring. The Mwambao leaders were ordered to go home and keep quiet or face the consequences. Like Northern Kenya, where a large majority had voted in a 1962 referendum to join Somalia instead of Kenya (the British disregarded the referendum under pressure from the Kenya African National Union or KANU government), the coast became part of the republic under a cloud of suspicion and distrust. The fact that leaders in these groups opposed joining Kenya helps account for why most coastal and pastoralist MPs who followed them have sought to align themselves with the government of the day at the expense of their constituents' interests.

Mwakimoto (2011) concurred that racial and religious identity further encumbered the ability of most Swahili-Arab representatives to speak out against governmental abuses and the treatment meted out to them as second-class citizens. The Mwambao vs. Majimbo divide precluded any attempt to promote coastal political unity. The coastal political arena proved to be so fractious and focused on internal competition that President Kenyatta retreated from political engagement and turned to the Provincial Administration "to get things done" instead (Sandbrooke 1967). Its ascendancy over the political leadership became legally formalized—another case of how federal

provisions in the Lancaster House Constitution were negated—and this reversal was to prove highly disadvantageous for the Coastal population overtime.

2.5 Case study on the people's aspiration and the media's objective

The experience gained in the countries that have experienced secession threats and possible overcome them or seceded to the demands or wishes of the perpetrators notably in Southern Sudan, considers media an integral part. Fick (2010) says such a situation shows that it is not sufficient for the media to focus on the course, perceived to be unconstitutional, taken by such a group of aggrieved people as a means of solving the problem but rather the interests of both parties be taken into account if such tensions are to be dealt with once and for all.

Kadhi (2012) observed that the main stream print media gave the secession call by MRC much prominence than the real problem that gave to its rise as most of the articles published give the separatist call priority and not what triggered the issue. Balancing between the interests of the aggrieved and the objectives of the print media houses especially on the issue of MRC needed a professional doctoring to avoid incitement. There was need to refine both theories and policies for efficient media practices in the mainstream dailies so as to avert a confrontation between the state and the movements even as some if not all the grievances raised were addressed to guarantee long lasting peace in Coast now and in future.

2.6 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is borrowed from the Framing, Priming and Agenda Building theories that are closely related to Agenda setting theory first developed by Prof. Maxwell Mc Combs and Prof. Donald Shaw in their Chapel Hill study (1968)

that indicates that mass media set the agenda for public opinion by highlighting certain issues (link http://www.communicationstudies.com/communication-theories).

2.6.1 Framing theory

The basis of theory is that the media focuses attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. A frame refers to the way media and media gatekeepers organize and present the events and issues they cover, and the way audiences interpret what they are provided. Hoile (2005), argued that the gatekeeper is having its own influence like social, cultural, ethical and political. Based on personal or social influences they let the information to the group. Through this process the unwanted, sensible and controversial information is removed by the gate keeper which helps to control the society or a group and letting them in a right path.

The media draws the public to certain topics, it decides where people think about, and the journalists select the topics. This is the original agenda setting thought. The way in which the news is brought, the frame in which the news is presented, is a choice made by the journalists. Frames influence the perception of news of the audience, this form of agenda setting not only tells what to think about, but how to think about it. The print media have framed MRC as secessionists and convinced the readers to think of the same whenever an article on the group appeared in the newspaper. Print media have been doing this and achieved their objective as framing is a quality of communication that leads others to accept one meaning over another as secession overrides the land, unemployment, and poor education and health facilities articulated by MRC

2.6.2 Priming theory

Under this theory the media provide a context for public discussion of an issue, setting the stage for audience understanding. The amount of time or space that media devote to an issue makes audience receptive and alert to particular themes. The print media

reporting became very strong on MRC towards the March 4, 2013 general election and made it impossible for the audience to ignore the group. Such an aggressive reporting thus created an audience of people at least temporarily interested, at the time, in the undertakings of MRC, even though prior to the reporting many (perhaps most) members of the audience were not keen on the organization. The researcher believes that it is through priming that the MRC gained popularity even outside the Coast region all for the amount of space and strategic positions allocated to the articles related to this group. With the secession calls taking toll on the MRC articles even as they appeared at strategic positions within large space Kenyans were convinced that something needs to be done to the group.

2.6.3 Agenda building theory

In highlighting MRC issues print media seemed to have used Agenda building theory that refers to the process by which news organizations and journalists feature, emphasize, and or select certain events, issues or sources to cover over others. Kadhi (2012) said in news medium, the editor plays vital role. He has to decide what kind of news items to publish and what not to. This theory or focuses on how news coverage both reflects and shapes the priorities of government officials, decision makers and elites. The new agenda therefore here is seen as the list of events or issues that are portrayed in coverage at one time or across time. There was a series of related events regarding MRC that were grouped together that gave rise to the tension that was experienced at the Coast ahead of the March 4, 2013 general elections with secession and violent acts linked to the group over that time.

Independent variables   **Dependent variable**

```
┌──────────────────────┐
│ Print Media owners   │ ──────────────────→│
└──────────────────────┘                    │
                                            │
┌──────────────────────┐                    │
│ Editors and reporters│ ──────────────────→│
└──────────────────────┘                    │        ┌──────────────────────┐
                                            ├───────→│   MRC grievances     │
┌──────────────────────┐                    │    ↑   └──────────────────────┘
│ MRC sympathizes      │ ──────────────────→│    │
└──────────────────────┘                    │    │
                                            │    │
┌──────────────────────┐                    │    │
│ Security Agencies    │ ──────────────────→│    │
└──────────────────────┘                    │    │
                                            │    │
┌──────────────────────┐                    │    │
│ Politicians          │ ──────────────────→│    │
└──────────────────────┘                         │
                                                 │
                    ┌────────────────────────────┴────────┐
                    │ Print Media Policy (Framing, Priming │
                    │ and Agenda building)                 │
                    └──────────────────────────────────────┘
```
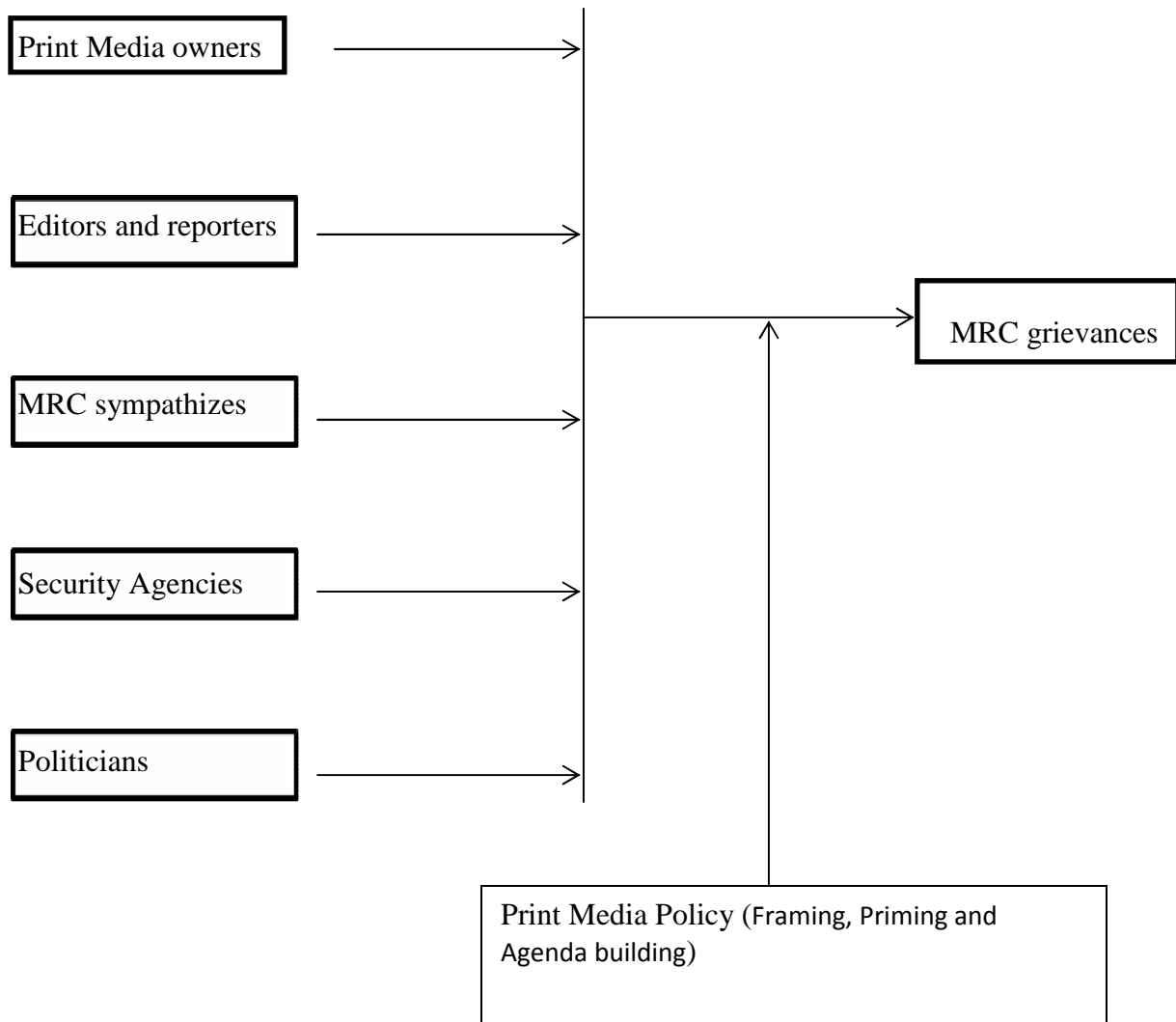
Fig 2.1 Conceptual Framework Moderating variable

2.7. Closing the gaps: fairness and completeness in coverage of MRC.

The literature about coverage of a conflict like the MRC issues by print media was just but a process that examined quite extensively the extent to which this conflict potential subject had been handled and recommended sealing of the possible loopholes that were perceived have existed. However, when it came to determining

to what levels had the whole issue been highlighted and with what expected outcome of such exploration, a lot of questions remained unanswered. Same, concerning the issue of what about the group has been gathered as an in-depth analysis of the MRC to initiate a process of a more fairer and balanced reporting, approaches are not systematic and leave peace researchers with no other option than going article by article (Medan 2011).

Finally, the role of print media and more particularly the national dailies in reconciling the Coast people and the state remained tributary to the ongoing scholarly debates about the relevance of print media in the Kenyan society (Kadhi 2012).

2.7.1. Background information on the rise of MRC uprising

Kadhi (2012) observed that this was precisely where the first gap in the literature was situated. There remained a vacuum between the reports made on incidents involving MRC and the crucial 'why' question in journalism. Critics claimed that there had been prosecution of MRC leaders by the print media through judgmental reports instead of the media remaining a significant channel of communication as the manner in which it executed its duties had a critical impact on events such as political electioneering in Kenya (Nyanjom, 2012).

Kadhi (2012) said this kind of stance was not unreasonable and that was the reason why a number of media practitioners and scholars concluded that the MRC issue had not received a fair attention based on the following three arguments:

a) Generally, the coverage on MRC seriously lacked background information and investigative based facts on historical development, structures and parameters of marginalization and the other activities of the

group as many stories presented only one viewpoint or side of the story instead of presenting a fair and balanced wholesome picture.

b) Principles of conflict sensitive journalism, besides adhering to basic rules of fairness and diverse reporting, were not considered through including in-depth analysis of the Coastal conflicts and possible solutions. Instead, print media reports were only quoting political leaders and their familiar political-mileage-driven demands leaving out the views of elites and the ordinary people.

c) It would be crucial to report the MRC conflict not as consisting of only two opposing sides: instead also other interests and needs which are affected and positive examples of the solutions of similar and local problems should be explored. With MRC areas like sources of financing their court cases and activities across the vast regions as well as hidden or secret support from whichever quarters could not only balance but spice up print media stories.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter spells out the methodology applied in the research. Different perspectives on research methods are explained along with justifications of the specific choices made for the study. It describes the research design adopted, the target population and the location of the study as well as the sampling procedure and the sample size. Research instruments that were employed in data collection and the procedures that were used in data analysis and interpretation are also presented in this chapter.

3.2. Research design

This study employed descriptive research design. This is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho 2003). Interview that was adopted enabled the researcher collect data from individuals conversant with the MRC issue and did a comparative analysis of the content of newspaper articles on MRC and the information from the individuals. The interview guide had been pre-tested on 10 individuals in Kwale, Kilifi Mombasa, Tana River and Lamu counties during between March and August, 2012 and the results were satisfactory. The pre-testing exercise had highlighted the importance of the interviewing technique which offers the interviewee an opportunity to paint a broad picture of his or her understanding of the MRC, state conflict in general and only resort to the interview guide for aspects not covered by the respondent.

Research geographical coverage

The research was conducted in Mombasa after several visits to five counties of Coast region leaving out only Taita/Taveta County regarded as upper Coast. While the research should logically have covered the totality of the regions mentioned, including

Zanzibar and Britain, constraints of time and resources compelled the researcher to limit the scope of the research to the lower Coast. However, the limitation of the territorial coverage does in no way diminish the quality of the research given the fact that the original target population is in its large majority was met in the Kenyan Coast. Indeed, Mombasa is the seat of power; all state parties are based there and Muslim for Human Rights (MUHURI), a civil society organization, have their head office in the town.

3.2. Target Population and Sample

3.2.1. Target Population

In this research, the target population comprised of individuals who had dealt with MRC in different ways was divided into five main groups. The researcher had intended to interview 20 people but managed to get 18. Five government leaders (three political two state personalities) ; four opinion leaders; three MRC leaders, five journalists and a leader of a civil society organization-MUHURI. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) point out of all members of the population have an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample.

3.2.2. Sampling and sampling procedures

Though 20 people had been targeted only eighteen (18) persons (3 political leaders, 2 government officials, 4 opinion leaders, five journalists, a representative of MUHURI the only civil society involved and three MRC leaders) having been selected using purposive sampling technique, were interviewed. This was 90 per cent of the whole sample. In this, the researcher targets a group believed to reliably for the study (Kombo 2011). The target population was determined in order to have the maximum chances of gathering the best possible quality of information about the grievances fronted by MRC for comparison with the content of the print media articles on the

group. In particular, the sample population is made of people whose direct personal implication in the process makes them prime sources of information capable to help solve the research questions.

a)   **Political leaders**

Three (3) political leaders and eight (2) government officials were interviewed. The politicians included personalities accused of having failed to champion the rights of the residents of Coast who included government officials, representatives of the parliament, and representatives of political parties. A total of three local leaders the then cabinet minister and 'Coast king' Chirau Ali Mwakwere long serving Assistant Minister Gonzi Rai and former MP Annania Mwaboza who doubled as MRC lawyer in court) were some of the leaders who had an input to this research.

On the government side, considered were two officials: the immediate former Coast Provincial Commissioner Ernest Munyi, and Coast Provincial Police Officer Aggrey Adoli were interviewed for they had taken part in the efforts to contain the perceived threat paused by MRC.

The ethnic and political criteria were used; meaning that there had to be at least a fair number of interviewees from the Mijikenda, and the Upcountry ethnic groups. Apart from Mwaboza all the leaders mentioned here were serving the government in various capacities.

 b)   **Opinion leaders**

Four (4) opinion leaders include religious leaders especially a representative of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK); a representative of the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK); a representative of Mijikenda Council of Kaya Elders (MCKE), a representative of a youth lobby, Mijikenda Youth Forum

(MYF). All together four opinion leaders were interviewed. By doing this the researcher managed to ascertain that opinions of both religious leaders and young leaders about MRC grievances were representative of Coastal issues in the scope of coverage by print media in MRC-related publications.

c) Civil society organizations

This cluster constitutes the minority of interviewees as focus was only on MUHURI that has been mandated by the state to intervene in seeking a truce between the government and MRC. Only the director of MUHURI Khalid Hussein was interviewed.

d) MRC Leaders

In establishing whether the print media has been championing the grievances raised by the group, the researcher, who had earlier targeted five leaders, manage to interview three top leaders sitting at the governing council which is the official public face organ of MRC. The three were Secretary General Hamza Randu, Spokesman Rashid Mraja who were easily available in Mombasa while Chairman, Hamisi Mwamnuadzi was traced to his home in Kombani location of Kwale.

e) Journalists

The researcher engaged five veteran journalists to get the opinion of the media players in the whole issue of print media coverage of the MRC group. Three of these interviewees were serving as bureau chiefs for national media houses in Mombasa and Eldoret regional bureaus while the fourth one is the editor of a Coast based weekly newspaper, *Pambazuko*, with the fifth one being a political editor of The Star newspaper in Nairobi who had worked in Mombasa for fifteen years for a leading print media house before crossing over to his current media firm.

3.3. Data collection procedures

Primary data (about the grievances of MRC) was collected using in-depth interview schedule conducted in forms of natural one-on-one conversations. The secondary data (on MRC print media coverage) was collected content analysis of newspaper articles, textbooks, journals and the internet.

3.3.1 Interview schedules

Interviews, on the MRC grievances and problems of natives of Coast, were conducted to supplement and offset the limitations of the content analysis. The interviews, informal, were based on the specific guidelines that had been prepared and tested on a few individuals before running it on the overall cluster in order to check its functionality and the way the target population was likely to react or respond. All the key leaders in the groups mentioned were interviewed. The interviews were held at places convenient to the respondents due to the sensitivity and mistrust on the MRC issue in general.

3.3.2 Content analysis

Content analysis, which was the main instrument of assessing MRC newspaper coverage, of print media articles on MRC was done by the aid of a newspaper content analysis code sheet. The code sheet zeroed in on articles that appeared on *The Standard* and *Daily Nation* at least six months prior to the March 2013 general elections and excluded those in the pretesting period. Aspects like date, genre, by-line, prominence, objectivity of the MRC stories were addressed in the code sheet.

3.3.3 Validity of research instruments

The validity of instruments is a key element to an accomplished study as it denotes the extent to which instruments capture what they purport to measure (Kombo

2011). The acceptable level of validity largely depended on logical reasoning and professionalism of the researcher. This was ensured through pre-testing to see whether the instruments would capture the intended information. In the pretesting level of the study the researcher used a few persons from the groups targeted and feedback from this level assisted in revising the interview guides and content analysis code sheet to be specific to the topic in order to cover the objectives of the study. The researcher also sought expert opinion from his supervisor and lecturers.

3.3.4. Reliability of research instruments

Reliability is the ability of a research instrument to consistently measure the characteristics of interest over time. Reliability is influenced by random error which may arise at the time of data collection thus as error increases, reliability decreases. Reliability ensures scientific usefulness of any research work (Kombo 2011). In this study, reliability was achieved by the researcher designing and putting across the simplest and elaborated questions during the interviews and in the code sheet. These were understood and enabled respondents to provide reliable answers.

3.4 Data collection procedures

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction and permission from the University of Nairobi and also wrote a letter of transmittal to the then Coast Provincial Commissioner to request to be allowed to proceed on to the target population in the counties mentioned for data collection. Face to face interviews were conducted to the selected persons of the target groups.

3.4. Data analysis techniques

Data analysis was done in two ways. Qualitative data, including the findings of the views of respondents on a certain issue (Kombo 2011) in this case MRC grievances, was analyzed through narrative report or simple descriptive analysis while the quantitative data dealing with the newspaper articles in the content analysis was done through simple elaborate analysis technique. While a narrative report on findings of MRC grievances was made newspaper content was presented histograms and pie charts. The researcher also analyzed data from interview schedules. With regard to the findings, appropriate conclusions and recommendations were made.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations continue to be important to research that involves aspects on human participants (Kombo 2011). Social scientists concur that research involving human participants should be performed with informed consent of participants. While informed consent is essential whenever participants are exposed to substantial, psychological, privacy or health risks, freedom is a cherished value in most societies. Participants should know that their involvement is voluntary throughout and should receive thorough explanation beforehand about benefits, rights and risks involved. It is for this consideration that the study sought informed consent from key persons in the sampled groups. Respondents, in the process, were informed about the procedures of the research, potential risks, benefits and that they had reserved right to stop interviews at any point in the event that they felt uncomfortable with particular questions.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1. Introduction

The research objective of this study was to investigate the influence of the sample (MRC print media articles) regarding the tension experienced at the Coast in the run up to the March 4, 2013 general elections revolving around the MRC undertakings and find out what could be done to redress the situation. The data are discussed in chapter four with the main objective of answering the research questions which guided the study. This chapter is divided in 4 sections corresponding with the four research objectives and questions.

4.1.1 Background Information

The researcher managed to interview 18, out of the targeted 20, respondents to get information about the grievances of MRC which was compared to the content in the MRC newspaper articles. MRC treasurer and chairman of the council of elders unit declined to be interviewed. The response rate, therefore, stood at 90 per cent and since the 18 agreed that MRC had genuine grievances made the findings be generalized while conducting the newspaper content analysis.

The Standard and Daily Nation published a total of 113 articles on MRC between July 2012 and February 2013. Articles published, within these seven months prior to the general elections held on March 4, 2013 when MRC undertakings and counter-undertakings from the government were at pick, were analyzed. A total of 5,14, 11, 30, 13, 20, 11 and 9 articles were published by the two newspapers in July, August, September, October, November, December, January , and February respectively. The Standard published 2, 8, 7, 17, 8, 8, 6 and 6 while Daily Nation had 3, 6,4, 13, 5, 12,

and 5 in July, August, September, October, November, December, January , and February respectively. These figures put 63 and 50 articles published The Standard and Daily Nation respectively.

Graph for S and DN's July 4 (2,2)August 14 (8,6), September 11(6,5), October 35(19,16), November13 (8,5), December 20(12,8), January 11 (6,5) , and February 9 (5,4) respectively
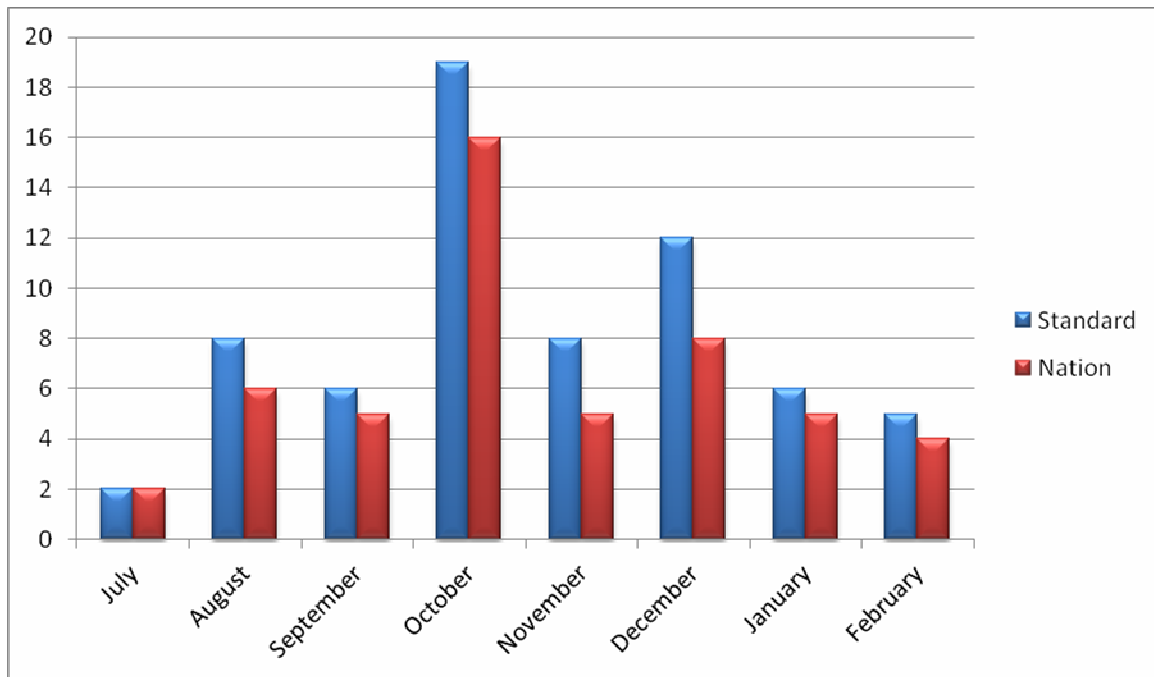

4.2. The print media articles on fuelling MRC-related anxiety

Given the much hyped MRC undertakings by the time of this research, the question that arose was whether print media articles that appeared in *The Standard* and *Daily Nation* were fanning panic among up-country settlers in the Coast. That was the first question the newspaper content analysis attempted to answer.   The content of 113 MRC-related articles published by the two newspapers was analyzed with 81 of them carrying violence-related massage. Newspaper articles code sheets were used to

analyze these articles. This constituted 71.68 per cent of the stories published by the two leading dailies between August and February 2013.This, therefore, shows that only 32 articles or 28.32 per cent of the articles never carried violence related messages.

The 81 articles had stories focusing on MRC allegedly planning an attack on police officers or provincial administration units, accused of executing an attack or MRC leaders denying taking part in such an incident or members taking an oath in readiness for an attack. On October, 4, 2012 an attack on the then fisheries minister Amason Kingi where his body guard was killed and a senatorial hopeful Stewart Madzayo was seriously injured was the headline for the two papers. This attack was blamed on MRC members even before police launched and completed investigations.

Pie chart with 71.68 per cent violent related stories and 28.32 no-violent related

Pie chart

No - violent related 28%

Violent related stories 72%
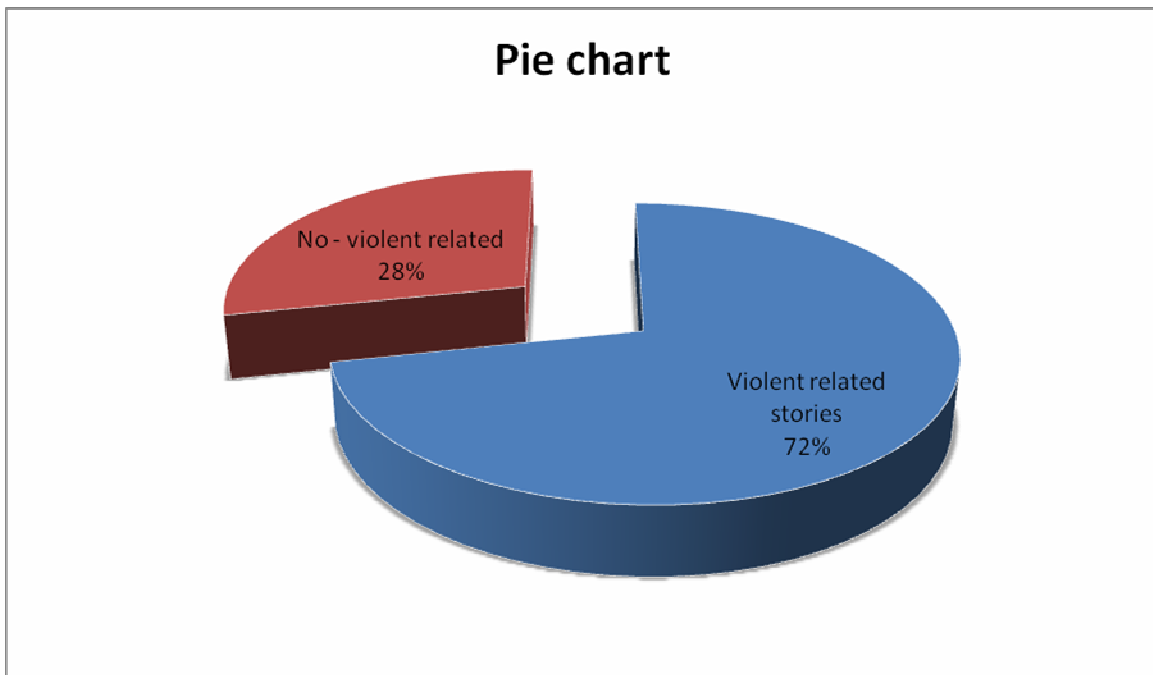
4.3 The Print Media's attempt to address MRC grievances

The content analysis showed that 93 articles focused on security threat and failed short to mention what the MRC stood for as established during the interviews with its top leadership. The issues of land, unemployment, marginalization in education, health and infrastructure areas, as mentioned by the MRC leadership, were missing in most of these articles. These issues, however, were captured by 20 articles including commentaries by columnists. The MRC secession call and how the provincial administrators or security agents would handle the group were two issues that dominated in most of the articles. There was, therefore, a disconnection between what the media reported and what MRC had said they stand for during the interviews with the researcher. The gate keeping theory seemed to be applicable as reporters, the sources of news and editors or media owners were responsible for letting out or not letting out particular information about the group.

Pie chart for 93 articles and 20 articles (82.30 per cent v 17.70 per cent)
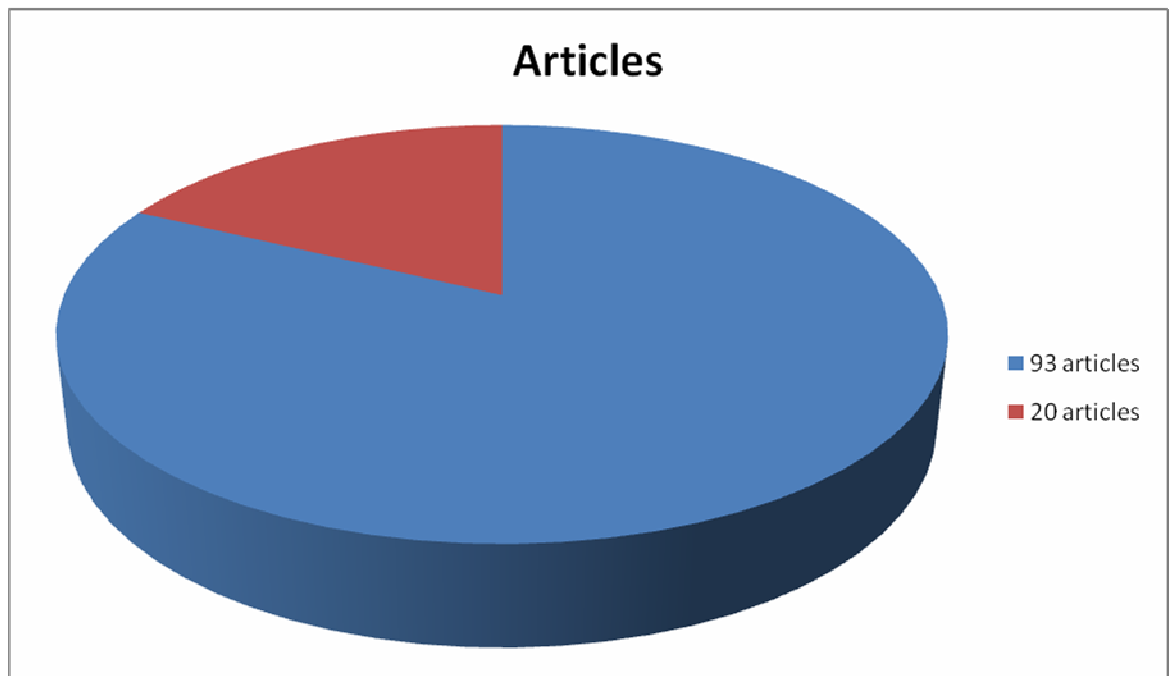
4.3.1 The reporter's influence on MRC story

Coincidentally 93 of the 113 articles on MRC published at the time were done by reporters based at the Coast with only 20 left to writers from the rest of the country. This gives the local reporters 82.30 per cent leaving only 17.70 per cent to those from outside the seaside region. The high number of articles enjoyed by the local scribes could be attributed to the proximity with MRC issues at the expense of their upcountry colleagues. Out of these 93 articles, 51 (45.13 per cent) and 42 (37.16) were written by native Coast reporters and scribes with roots in up-country respectively. The 51 articles by native reporters mostly cited MRC leaders before adding comments from government officials while the reverse was seen with the 42 articles by non-native reporters. Those done by local journalists attempted to bring out the MRC grievances while the ones by non-native reporters were action-on-MRC-based stories.

Pie chart for 45.13 per cent for natives and 37.16 per cent for non-natives
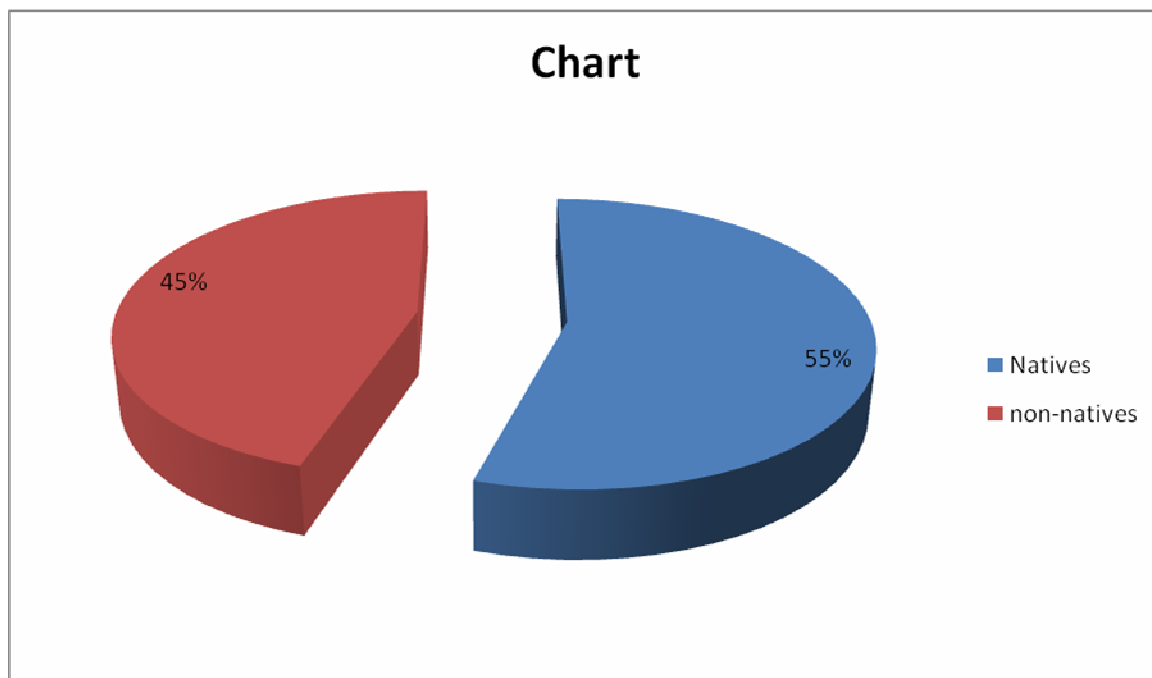
4.3.2 The editor or media owner priming role in MRC article

Most of the 20 articles that tried to highlight the MRC grievances were either letters to the editor on commentaries by columnists like Rasna Wara editor Gitau Warigi among others. This clearly shows that the editor does not only have powers to allow or not to allow what should be published to the public but also could decide where, in the newspaper, a particular article appeared. While articles from reporters were edited, a disclaimer came at the end of column stating that the views in the report were personal to the writer and never reflected the position of the media house on MRC. These articles seemed to have been categorized into two: MRC-grievances-based or action-on-MRC-based stories. Most of the action-on-MRC-based stories that were accompanied with pictures were found on strategic pages like front page while most of the MRC-grievances-based stories lacked pictures and were on county inner pages.

The two papers carried a similar headline and pictures of blood-drenched MRC chairman Omar Mwamnuadzi on October 16, 2012 after he was captured after a bloody fight between his supporters and a contingent of General Service Unit at his Kombani home in Kwale County. '*MRC Chief Arrested After a Bloody Fight*' and '*Two Dead, 38 Arrested as MRC Chief Captured*' screamed *The Standard* and *Daily Nation* respectively on that date. In this 'big' story police chief Adoli accused Mwanuadzi of resisting arrest while accusations of the use of excessive force by civil societies were in the inner pages the following day. From the initial stage of the content analysis of all the stories it was demonstrated clearly that the intent and nature of any MRC publication heavily depended on who gave the story.

The print media seemed to have found themselves between a rock and a hard place as they had to rely on these two ever-opposing sources. In most, if not all, stories published at the time MRC were ever reacting to accusations of wrongdoing from the government in the same story or the following day. Save for two stories when MRC

openly revealed their intentions to take their petition to Queen Elizabeth of England in August and called on for peaceful March 4, 2013 general elections in February, the rest were reactions. These two stories never grabbed headlines but instead found space in the inner county pages.

4.3.3 The source's influence on the reporter's bearing of the MRC reporting

Analyzed from the source perspective, there seemed to be two angles common with MRC print media reports broadly classified under MRC-grievances-based and action-on-MRC-based all that emanated from the origin of the information flowing to the reporter. The first category was attributed to MRC leaders while the second one to the provincial administration or police officers. Most journalists, however, balanced stories with comments from both sides of the MRC story. At least 62 stories of the total 113 articles included comment from all the sides. The rest of the stories were leaning towards one side. These comments were, however, guided within the story subject of the source. Reporters were restricted to seek comment on the issue being raised by the other side thus if a story was on attack on a police post, for instance, the reporter would call MRC or police officials either to confirm or deny. In most of these stories if the source was a security agent then it would be a warning, linking MRC to an incident while MRC would denounce or exonerate themselves from the blame or accusations. This, therefore, ensured that the reporters would only rely on what the source says thus giving particular information and not any other.

Pie chart with 62 (54.86 per cent) balanced and 51 (43.14 per cent) unbalanced
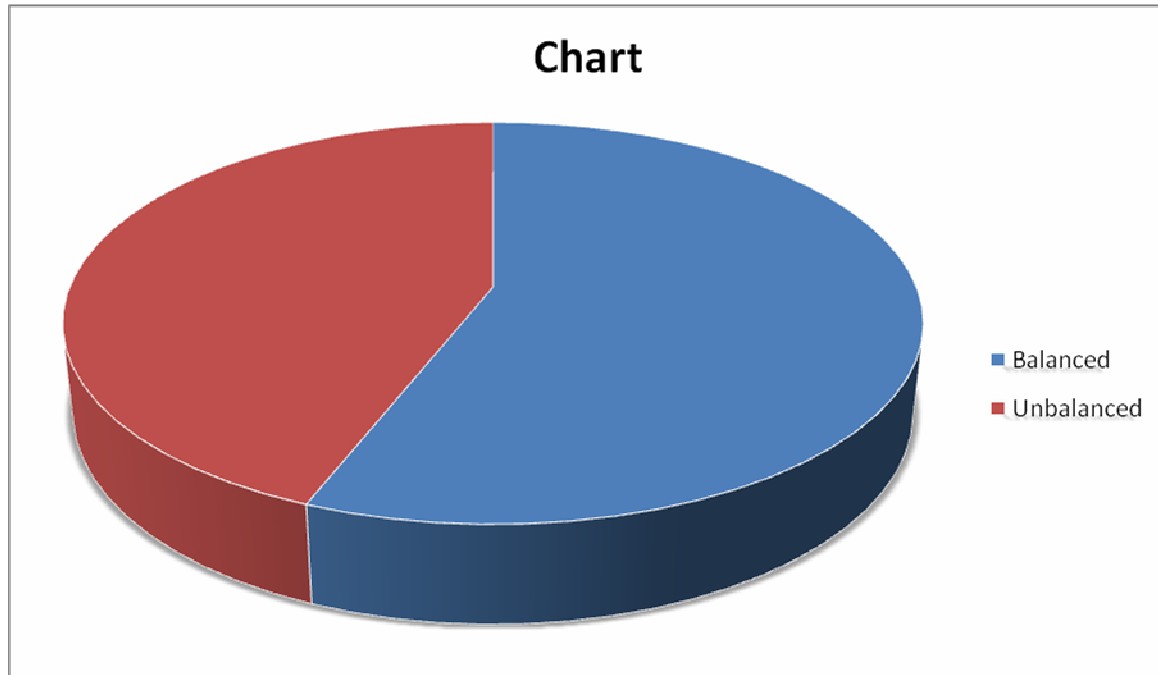
Stories that focused on the grievances of the group were associated with the MRC leadership including Chairman Hamisi Mwamnuadzi, Secretary Hamza Randu and Spokesman Rashid Mraja who consistently advocated, with a passion, for the secession call due to the issues affecting the native Coastal. The stories that were calling for action would be attributed to Coast Provincial Commissioner Samuel Kilele or Coast Police boss Aggrey Adoli would appear on front pages or strategic space with pictures of police officers in action on MRC members. The secession call, however, dominated these stories overshadowing the reasons behind it .These stories from the MRC top brass would be found in the inner or county pages of the two newspapers and would not be accompanied by pictures to illustrate the facts in them.

4.4. Towards addressing Coast people's problems

The content analysis of the MRC articles published within this period by the two newspapers showed an effort by the print media players to address the historical injustices meted on Coast people in general although it was the spectacle of the MRC movement. Unlike other subjects that seemed to be perishable running for several days only, the MRC undertakings were consistently in the media at a time political temperatures were rising ahead of the March 4, 2013 general elections. The fact that even the print media stakeholders, apart from the state and other interested parties, agreed that MRC grievances were genuine made it necessary for a collective solution to be sort as such grievances did not occur in a vacuum but were indeed affecting a large number of Coast residents.

An effort to address the Coastals' plight was demonstrated by the fact that a total of 113 articles were published within this short time and talked about one subject: MRC. Kadhi (2012) agreed that the fact that MRC exists is itself very important news. As earlier discussed in this chapter, the fact that 93 articles were done by reporters based at the Coast showed conscious or unconscious willingness by the scribes to address the problems they encounter in the field. The 20 articles done by editors, columnists among other individuals from up-country demonstrated that various sides were willing to see to it that the Coast people's problems are addressed.

All these articles pointed out that there was a standoff between the MRC and the government following hard stances taken by these two sides. The state categorically stated that it was ready to dialogue with MRC with a view to addressing their grievances only if they dropped the secession call while the organization insisted on their ban to be lifted by the state before going to the negotiation table. This showed that although the media was not pointing out where the problem was the publication clearly indicated that the two sides ought to soften their hard stances. The media was,

without saying, taking notice of the suffering the residents were undergoing from landlessness, unemployment and unequal education opportunities by reporting on this movement associated with them.

Majority of the 30 articles that appeared in October 2012 were emphasizing on the national examinations expected in primary and secondary school at the time, warned MRC against disrupting the 2012 Kenya Certificate of Primary Education, the 2012 Kenya Certificate of Secondary and the March 4,2013 Education educated the Coast people on the importance of taking national exams and participating in elections.

4.4.1 Balancing interests of either side of the conflict

The two newspapers consciously or unconsciously balanced the two sides of the conflict reporting issues of MRC from courts and outside court. In reporting about accusations of violence hurled by the police officials and provincial administration and including MRC leaders' comments, the newspapers suppressed further confrontation. Out of 113 articles 67 articles revolved around confrontational subjects between the government and the MRC group. These included the stories blaming MRC on attacks on police, election officials, civilians, oath taking, threats to disrupt examination and the March 4, 2013 general elections. The remaining 46 publications were either court proceedings or commentaries from columnists.

Pie chart confrontational articles (59.29 per cent) non-confrontational articles (40.71 per cent)
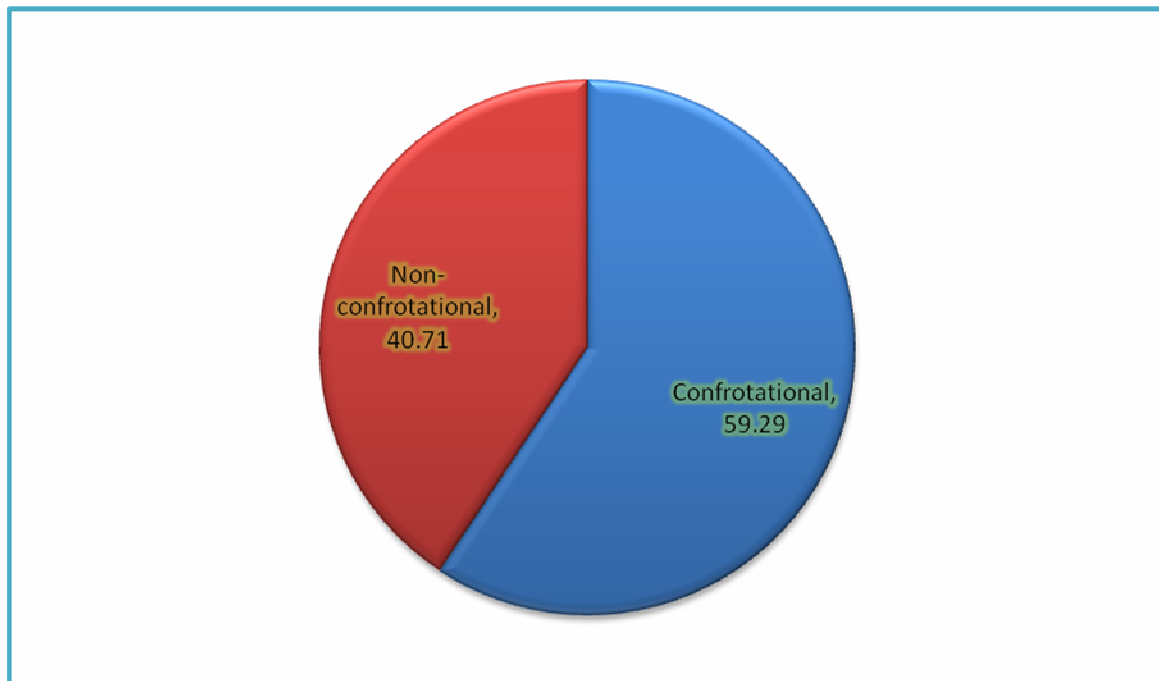
Out of the 67 articles based on confrontational subjects, 53 were carrying comment from the accused side. This number of balanced articles capturing mostly events from outside court put the percentage of journalistic stories on MRC at 59.29 per cent, a commendable high number for a state faced with a political conflict that is challenging according to Hoile (2005).

A notable fact in the data analysis is the determination by the two newspapers to make a consistent follow up of court cases between the state and MRC. This trend highlighted the difference MRC was from the other vigilante groups that had also been banned. It is worth noting that 42 stories published were court proceedings of the said cases and this was a clear indication that the group was determined to challenge its ban, achieve its other missions within the constitutional framework. A case in point

is when a three-judge High Court bench sitting in Mombasa faulted the government decision to ban the group on July 25, 2013 a story that grabbed the headlines of the two papers the following day. On July 26, 2012, *Daily Nation* screamed '*MRC ban lifted*' while *The Standard* read '*Judges: MRC ban unconstitutional*' on the front pages. The lifting of the ban was not only a story from the court but was accompanied by the history of the group, what it stood for as well as its leadership. The MRC stories from court alone constituted 37.16 per cent leaving only 62.84 per cent to other sources.

Pie chart with 37.16 per cent court stories and 62.84 per cent outside court
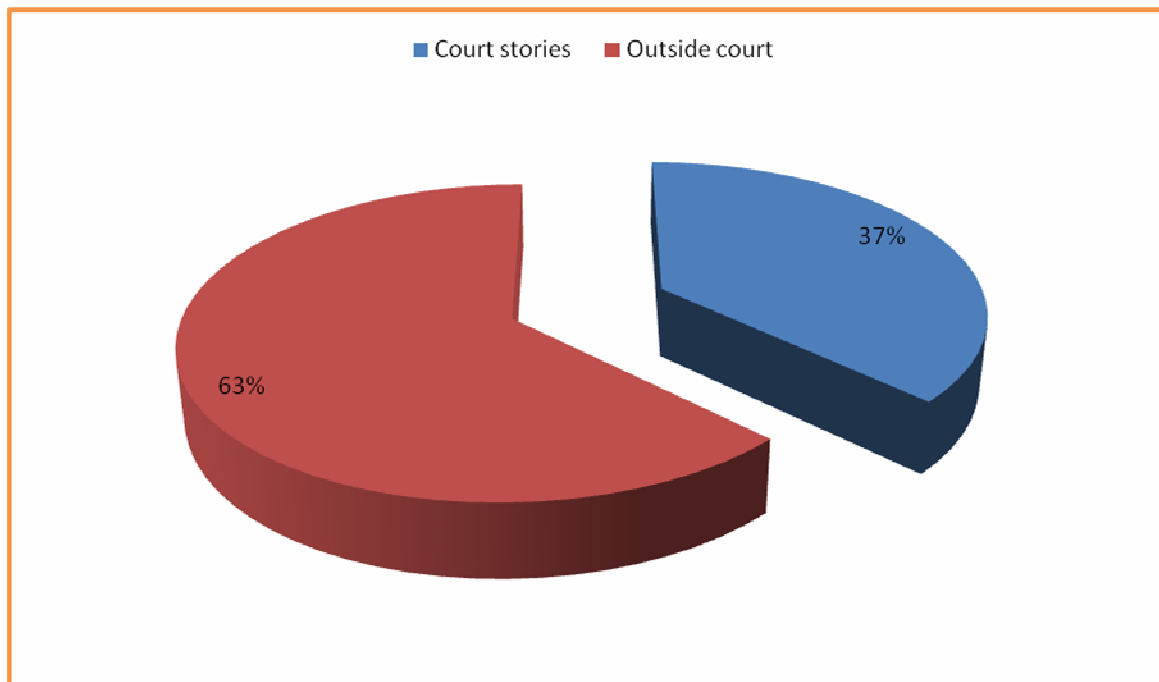

2. **Bringing Coast people's problems to the fore**

The data analysis spoke of one thing in common: the coverage of MRC only shallowly mentioned problems facing Coast residents as presented by the group. Coast had had an unfair share of land, infrastructure, and education, employment issues among other crucial societal concerns by the time of this research. The land

issue that triggered the uprising of the MRC movement was mentioned in passing, in the articles, without details given. Goldsmith (2011) put land ownership, with title deeds, between the settlers and natives at about 85 per cent and 15 per cent respectively. Land was cited as a key element in most of these stories taking a bulk of 70 stories, 22 were on employment, 11 based on education while 10 articles were shared between general issues and infrastructure though were mentioned in passing.

Pie chart land 61.94%, employment 19.46%, education 9.73% and infrastructure and others 8.84%.
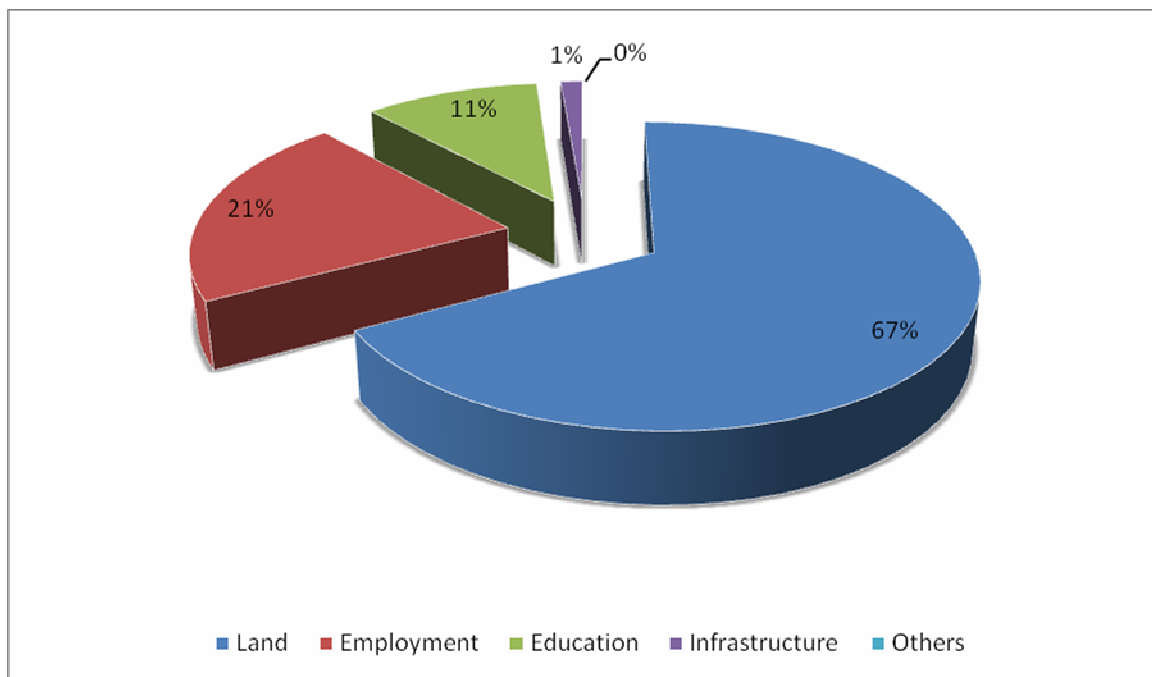
Stories that talked of education involved MRC allegedly threatening to disrupt examination and a few challenging national leaders to equip local schools with facilities and build a full-fledged university in the region. Those mentioning roads fell short of highlighting while roads in other parts of the country are tarmacked only the Nairobi-Mombasa, Mombasa-Lungalunga, Mombasa-Malindi highways and a few roads are passable during rainy season. On employment cases in point involved MRC uprising cited by local leaders in August when the then minister for transport

Amos Kimunya named nine people from Mt Kenya region to the 12-member Kenya Ports Authority board of directors.

4.5.0 Impact of MRC media coverage on Coast people

The impact print media coverage had on MRC was far reaching in Coast and across the country. In as much as some people dismissed the group's demands of secession as unrealistic and unrealizable, it is worth noting that wishing away the MRC proved difficult. The print media played a greater role in publicizing the group more than any entity and compelled leaders to go back to the drawing board to see how best they handle the issues raised by group that was synonymous to native Coast residents.

With most stories quoting the police sources this was an indication that even security agents had been strategizing on the best way to deal with the perceived threat to security. The government by then led by President Mwai Kibaki and his co-principal Prime Minister Raila Odinga among other key leaders were puzzled by this group thus issuing contradicting statements as reported in a cross-section of the articles. On October 21, 2012, *The Standard* and *Daily Nation* reported '*Kibaki pledges to continue crackdown on MRC'* and *'Kibaki praises KDF, rebukes MRC*' respectively. Generally, the MRC coverage drew the attention of the people of Coast, the state, the media and the other citizens of the country.

4.5.1 Creation of 'Coast nationalism' with false hope of independence

The MRC slogan of '*Pwani Si Kenya'* had a greater effect on cushioning the native residents of Coast from the rest of the Kenyans for the second time in history, apart from independence Coast nationalism advocated for by the late KADU leader Ronald Ngala. Leaders, the clergy or residents voiced their support for the MRC grievances in 61 out of the 71 articles on non-court-proceeding stories indicating that the natives of came together bound by a strong perception of marginalization. A mentality of 'we

the Coast natives are marginalized by the others' emerged to propel the desire to push for the 'elusive yet unrealistic independence goal' ahead of the 2013 'year of freedom for the region' as the March 4, 2013 general elections clocked in. The 'Coast nationalism' build a false hope on the natives because for secession to be successful there needs to be an amendment of the constitution apart from assessing the economic viability of the area that normally comes with independence of a region that breaks away from the rest of the country.

Most of the leaders and elites from the region whose comment were included in these non-court-proceeding stories, however, never supported the secession call. In these articles the leaders, clergy and enlightened residents seemed to agree that breaking away' was not the right road to solving the problems Coast residents faced. The fact that many native Coast residents especially the elites did not support the secession call while the rural folks and the illiterate in rural areas were fanatical about the 'much anticipated 2013 independence' indicated that the media reports had great impact on MRC gospel. Most rural dwellers quoted in these articles supported secession. The critics of secession as quoted in most articles seemed to be informed of non-viability of this dream while the proponents rode on ignorance as they were not aware of the difficulty or impossibility of achieving this goal. Widely quoted in these stories, including the MRC top brass, were Muslim clerics and politicians who expressed passion in the break-away idea.

4.5.2 MRC keeps state security agencies on toes

The stories portrayed the state as grappling with the MRC group to an extent of being perceived as not being sure of the best way to handle to group. Articles on MRC challenging their ban in court, speaking openly on their stand and the fact that the grievances represented those of Coast people threw the state and security agents into confusion. Most of the stories, which reported police raids on MRC members, were

followed by others, carrying sharp criticism from leaders, religious and political leaders. Theories of the state security agents' dilemma in handling the group in the best way possible advanced with claims that criminals and even the same security agents were taking advantage of the MRC publicity to cause chaos in the region and heap blame on MRC. MRC Secretary Hamza Randu and Spokesman Rashid Mraja have been quoted in about 75 per cent of the published stories absolving the group from blame with regards to violent incidents.

In the stories attributed to governments agents, ordering crackdowns because MRC was linked to terrorist groups of Al Shabaab and al-Qaida apart from blaming the group on the spate of insecurity that were experienced at the Coast at the time. The security agents also claimed that the group was armed even as the MRC leadership consistently denied any links with the *Al Shabaab* and Al Qaida. On the crack-down ordered by the then President Kibaki as published on October 21, 2012, divided opinion emerged. In his commentary Victor Bude, a political science lecturer at the University of Nairobi, said that even though widespread frustration on the Coast made it a fertile recruiting ground for radical groups, the allegation that MRC is affiliated with *Al-Shabaab* was largely "meant to shore up public support for the crackdown. The crackdown could backfire, winning the group more support and increasing the already worrying levels of violence in the region. Those killed in the crackdowns were regarded as martyrs a matter that was likely to aggravate making MRC more popular than taming it.

4.5.3 MRC as a major source of news for the print media

The fact that 113 articles could be published within just seven months in the two newspapers indicated that MRC was a juicy topic for the media. Most of the stories revolved on allegedly planned or executed violent acts. Stories would be published only a day after running on FM stations. Print media relied on FM stations and social

media networks for updates on MRC related stories. MRC provided action stories as crackdowns on their members intensified ahead of the general elections as well as court proceedings. The fast media response to MRC issues clearly indicated that the subject had an impact on the very media that was publishing the stories. The subject was classified under the conflict areas of journalism and even triggered debates within the media fraternity who were out to find how best to cover it. Media stakeholders like Media Council of Kenya, Kenya Correspondents Association among other organizations convened workshops at the time to discuss how best to cover MRC.

4.5.4 Fear and hatred between natives and up-country citizens

The much hype on the MRC activities brought fear and anxiety among the upcountry people who had settled in the Coastal strip as they perceived themselves as the chief targets on the operations of the group. The '*Pwani si Kenya'* rallying call, associating the group with native Coast people, blaming them for violence that rocked the region, linking them to hate leaflets circulated in parts of the Coast created fear among the settlers. Articles reporting that police officers mostly from up-country were targeted by the spate of attacks associated with this group increased the anxiety among the 'non-natives'. Over 70 per cent of all the articles on MRC mentioned violence in form of planned oath-taking ceremonies, planned attacks on security agents, circulation of leaflets or MRC leadership coming out to dismiss such reports, built fear. Hatred between natives and settlers piled as these papers splashed one MRC story after another.

CHAPTER V:

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This study was undertaken to analyze the topic of political conflict coverage with Coast's MRC as a case study, find out the factors behind the anxiety that arose from the publicity the group had received and recommend the ways of amicably solutions. Fair reporting requires that the interests of the two sides of the MRC conflict are taken into consideration by the media. An attempt to get answers to a series of the FIVE 'Ws' and 'H' questions about the group would have formed the basis for news editors' briefing and debriefing of reporters covering the MRC. That, together with techniques of investigative reporting, could have helped the country understand the many intricacies of the illegal organization. (Kadhi 2012).The media have to engage the MRC group the same way they engage the state on this issue.

5.2. Summary of findings

This chapter discussed the patterns that stand out most particularly with the coverage of MRC accorded by the print media.

5.2.1 Do print media reports heighten anxiety among Coast 'settlers'?

The first research question, whether the print media reports on MRC by *The Daily Nation* and *The Standard* heightened tension between the natives, upcountry people and the state, was analyzed in section 4.2 through content analysis of 113 MRC articles published. This content analysis was done after interviews with eighteen key people to establish the real cause of MRC and it revealed that violence was the subject of most MRC articles published by the two papers at the time. Apart from all the 113 articles giving the '*Pwani si Kenya*' secession call prominence, 81 had violence-related messages while only 31 had non-violence message. Most of the cool articles

were court proceedings or commentaries while the 81 reports amounted to 71.68 per of the total articles. Leaving only 28.32 articles free of violence messages made the public associate MRC with security threats up-country people seeing themselves as the main targets.

5.2.2 Can print media be relied to articulate Coast people's grievances?

While the interviews showed that lack of land, unemployment, marginalization in education, infrastructure, health sectors were the main issues faced by Coast residents and championed by MRC the content analysis showed only 20 articles out of the 113 analyzed just mentioned the issues in passing. Secession call dominated and 93 articles focused on security threat from MRC. The 93 articles revolved around alleged plans by MRC to attack police stations, disrupting the 2012 KCPE and KCSE and March 4, 2013 general elections and abortive oath-taking missions failing to mention the real issues triggering advocacy by the group. Only 20 articles or 17.70 per cent articles just mentioned these issues while 93 stories or 82.30 per cent portrayed MRC as a serious security threat. By failing to focus on these issues in most of the articles the print media thus did not attempt to address the grievances of Coast people.

Priming theory seemed to have worked. Reporters gave prominence to the *Pwani si Kenya* call at the expense of the other grievances focusing on lack of land, unemployment, poor roads, and health and education facilities. The action-on MRC stories found themselves on prime pages within adequate space while the MRC-grievances stories were given little attention, were fewer and were mostly found in the inner pages or county pages. These reporters determined what would be published by focusing on the particular subject and not another while the editors decided what to publish and what not.

Framing as a theory was applied by the print media. The print media seemed to have set an agenda to frustrate the group's hopes of Coast breaking away from the rest of the country. This was done through agenda framing where MRC were framed law breakers by demanding independence for Coast. This was a consistent reminder to the public through inclusion of 'separatist or secessionist' tag in all the stories that were published. Their issues were thus overshadowed by this treasonable call of secession and the notion that 'nothing good can come from MRC' was created and amplified. The group's banned status was used even after the High Court sitting in Mombasa lifted their ban.

Agenda building seemed to have played within the six months before the March 4, 2013 general elections. The media seemed to have piled the agenda of 'tarnishing the name of the group' by ensuring that MRC was linked to attacks on progressive national exercises. Stories that MRC were planning to disrupt the 2012 voter registration exercise, the 2012 KCPE and KCSE national examinations and the March 4, 2013 general elections, piled a negative notion about the group. Denials that MRC was not planning such things, their calls for peaceful general elections in February 2013 were not given prominence like the alleged attack plans.

The trend also revealed that MRC did not have a media policy and were in the media absolving themselves from violence-related accusations by the government agents. This led to the disconnect between what they stood for and what appeared in the newspapers for they never made press releases or conferences and if they did so they were ever defending themselves against accusations of attacks. This denied them an opportunity to articulate the issues that made them intensify the secession call.

5.2.3 Do print media reports have impact on Coast people's welfare?

The impact print media coverage had on MRC was far reaching in Coast and across the country. The MRC group brought Coast people's problems to the limelight because wishing away their problems proved difficulty despite the secession demands being unrealistic and unrealizable. By having 113 articles on one subject within seven months ahead of the general elections it was clear that all was not well at the Coast. Everybody including the then President Mwai Kibaki and his co-principal Prime Minister Raila Odinga directed their attention to this group that was synonymous with native Coast residents. The gospel resonated across the country getting much attention from the media than any subject.

The MRC slogan of '*Pwani Si Kenya*' dismissed by many as unrealistic and unachievable brought native Coast residents together. It gave rise to Coast nationalism four decades after the clamor for federalism by veteran independence Coast politician Ronald Ngala. Even the local elites who dismissed the call supported the grievances of MRC. This Coast nationalism built a false hope of independence that was not achieved.

Security agents and the government were kept on toes as they failed to classify MRC as a criminal gang or not in spite of the ban. The fact that the group enjoyed fanatical support mostly among the Muslim population saw the state associate it with *Al Shaabab* and *Al Qiada* terror networks. The government was seen to be confused on handling members of a banned group who were daring to challenge their outlaw in court as stipulated in the constitution. The July 25, 2012 court victory was a big blow to the executive arm of the government. Crackdowns on MRC members attracted condemnation from civil societies, religious leaders and even politicians including the then Prime Minister Raila Odinga. Secretary Hamza Randu and Spokesman Rashid

Mraja are quoted in over 75 per cent of the 113 articles absolving MRC from violence allegations.

To the media in general, MRC formed the juiciest topic owing to its alleged association with violence. It requires a topic to be hot for 113 articles to be published within just seven months in the two newspapers. The fact that most stories revolved on allegedly planned or executed violent acts or denials of those allegations kept the media going. MRC stories were traced to court and outside court as crackdowns and prosecutions of members intensified ahead of the general elections. Classified under conflict journalism, MRC coverage compelled media stakeholders like Media Council of Kenya, Kenya Correspondents Association among other organizations to convene workshops at the time to discuss how best to cover the group's undertakings.

Kadhi (2012) agreed that coverage of MRC was a conflict-based journalism. The intensification of the '*Pwani si Kenya*' secession call by the group clustered residents into two groups: the natives and the non-natives. MRC was identified with the natives and the violent stories claimed the group was targeting non-locals in their mission, this brought fear and tension between the two categories of residents. That over 70 per cent of all the articles on MRC mentioned violence in form of planned oath-taking ceremonies, planned attacks on security agents, and circulation of leaflets or MRC leadership coming out to dismiss such reports, built fear. Hatred between natives and settlers piled as these papers splashed one MRC story after another.

5.3. Conclusions

The following conclusions were made from the findings:

Articles published by *The Standard* and *Daily Nation* heighted violence ahead of the March 4, 2013 general election as most of them carried violence messages and gave the '*Pwani si Kenya*' secession call prominence. Out of the 113 articles published 81 stories had violence-related messages while only 31 had non-violence message.

Very little attention was given by the print media to MRC grievances of land, unemployment, marginalization in education, infrastructure, and health sectors that were synonymous with the main issues faced by Coast residents. Secession call was in all MRC articles published by *The Standard* and *Daily Nation*.

MRC did not have a media policy and failed to call press conferences or whenever they occasionally did they were only absolving themselves from violence-related accusations by the government agents. Their issues, therefore, never got a fair representation in the print media.

The media lacked historical background information about the social, political and cultural position of native Coastal communities that has an immense influence from Islam. The media failed to probe why MRC's secession call had fanatic following among Muslims facing opposition from their Christian counterparts who only supported the grievances.

The MRC slogan of '*Pwani Si Kenya*' though dismissed by many as unrealistic and unachievable brought native Coast residents together giving rise to Coast nationalism that had been elusive for decades. MRC thus achieved in bringing native residents together beating politicians' efforts that had flopped. This Coast nationalism built a false hope of independence that was not achieved.

 Security agents were kept on toes as they failed to classify MRC as a criminal gang or not in spite of the ban. They handled the group members with a human face doing away with the characteristic extra-judicial killings used to stamp out militant groups banned alongside MRC like *Mungiki*. The fact that MRC were challenging the state in court saw security agents condemned whenever they used excessive force on the members.

MRC's undertakings formed the juiciest topic owing to its alleged association with violence. It was the hottest topic producing hundreds of articles across the media as well as eliciting debates among media stakeholders as they grappled with how best to cover the group.

5.4. Recommendations

This study came up with various recommendations on resolving marginalization of the Coast residents, not particularly through the MRC spectacle, including:

The print media need to probe into the historical distinctiveness of the Coast to bring out the problem facing the residents, not necessarily from the MRC point of view. Highlight the historical background of the Coastal region, which was for many centuries under Arab rulers then under the British colonizers and later the independent Kenya government, will answer the question why there is a huge discrepancy in land allocation, acquisition of education, fair Coastal representation in state appointments and general development.

The print media also need to acknowledge the immense and deeply rooted influence of Islam that left the residents behind at independence especially having been undergoing the Islamic education while their up-country counterparts were educated and cultured in the British way. They should then advocate for a transformation from the Koranic education to formal school as well as the Jihad way of articulating issues to a democratic and civil approach.

The print media ought to identify and consistently highlight the strength of the new constitution whose implementation would guarantee a solution to all the issues raised by the MRC as it entrenches devolution as its key pillar to governance. The fact that powers were decentralized to the six counties of Taita/Taveta, Lamu, Kilifi, Kwale,

Mombasa and Tana River should be good news to the desperate Coastal chaps. This should be seen as dream come true after independence Coastal political kingpin Ronald Ngala fight for *Majimboism* (federalism) soon after independence flopped. This could kill the clamor for self-autonomy through the *Pwani si Kenya* slogan. The formation of constitutional commissions like the NLC among others should be seen as a way towards addressing the land issue in the region among others. The NLC that has mandate to revoke all the irregularly allocated land parcels of land sprawling from Vanga in the South to Kiunga in the North and from Takaungu in the East and Taveta in the West should be viewed as the way out to the landlessness problem faced by thousands of the residents.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Letter of Transmittal

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KALOLENI.
15 TH MARCH, 2012.

THE PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER
COAST PROVINCE
PRIVATE BAG
MOMBASA.

Dear Sir

<u>REF: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANCE</u>

This letter is to kindly request for your assistance in the collection of data for my research on Print Media coverage on the Mombasa Republican Council.

The findings of this research will purely be used for academic purposes and will be submitted to the University of Nairobi, School of Journalism for the award of M.A in Communication Studies.

Your assistance will be highly appreciated.
Thank you in advance.

Yours faithfully

Philip Mbaji Kaulu.

Appendix 2

NEWSPAPER CONTENT ANALYSIS CODE SHEET
SERIAL NUMBER _____

SECTION A: DESCRIPTION

1. Date of Publication:_____

2. Newspaper:
   A] Daily Nation
   B] The Standard

3. Name of Writer:_____

4. Title of Article:

   _____

5. Genre of Story:
   A] Hard News
   B] News Analysis
   C] News Round up
   D] News Brief
   E] Feature Story
   F] Editorial
   G] Commentary
   H] Q & A

6. Que of Story:
   A] Political News
   B] Business News
   C] Social News

SECTION B: MEASURING PROMINENCE LEVEL ACCORDED TO THE MRC BY EACH ARTICLE

7. In what kind of page is the story located?

   A] Prime Page ----a) Page 1 b) Page 2 c) Page 3 d) Back Page

   B] Others, Please Specify_____

8. What is the size of the article regarding the EAI

   A] Full Page

   B] More than One Page

   C] Three Quarters of a Page

   D] Two Thirds of a page

   E] Half of a Page

   F] One Third of a Page

   G] A Quarter of a Page

   H] Other, Please Specify_____

9. Does the story have an editorial supplement?

   A] Yes   B] No

10. If yes, what is it?

   A] Picture

   B] Pictures

   C] Cartoon

   D] Visual-Graphic Tool (Specify) _____

11. Which prominent characters (s) are mentioned in the MRC article?

   A] Head of State/Prime Minister

   B] MRC leaders

   C] Prominent Government Officials

   D] Police Officers

   E] Provincial Administrators

F] Clergymen

H] Other, Please Specify_____

12. What event is covered by the article?

A] Conference

B] Workshop/Seminar/Symposium

C] Court proceedings

D] MRC Meeting

E] Other, Please Specify_____

SECTION C: MEASURING CONSTRUCTIVE FRAMES WHILE REPORTING ON MRC

13. What is the identity concept used to Identify the EAC in the article?

A] Collective Identity

B] Non Collective Identity

14. What tone does that article adopt in representing the MRC?

A] Positive

B] Negative

C] Neutral

SECTION D: MEASURING THE JOURNALISTIC OBJECTIVE FULFILLED WHILE REPORTING ON MRC

15. Does the article fulfill the following journalistic obligations on MRC? Tick as appropriate.

RESPONSIBILITY	YES	NO
Explain grievances of MRC		
Interpret the implications of Secession call		
Reveal Socio-Political and Economic challenges faced by Coast residents		
Explain the alternative ways of addressing MRC grievances		

Provide History and Background Information for Coastal problems		
Discuss merits of the new constitution with regard to resolving Coastal issues		
Recommend solutions to challenges facing the Coast residents		
Encourage participation in March 4, 2013 General Elections		
Encourages dialogue between MRC and the state		
Encourage education among the native Coast residents		

16. What subject/issue is addressed by the article on MRC? Tick as appropriate.

Secession call (*Pwani si Kenya* slogan)	
Violence allegations by the security agents	
Transport and Communication facilities	
Lack of land among Coast residents	
Alleged boycott on the 2012 KCPE and KCSE	
Challenging MRC ban in Mombasa High Court	
Alleged boycott on the March 4, 2013 General Election	

Appendix three: Interview Guide

The nature of MRC in attempting the address the issues affecting Coast residents grievances that have given rise to formation of the MRC group

1. Can MRC be classified as a political party, religious association, a vigilante group or a civil society?
2. Has MRC sought to be registered by the government?

The issues that have given rise to formation of the MRC group

3. Why was it necessary for MRC to be formed?
4. Do you think the secession call *Pwani si Kenya* is justified?
5. If it is not, then:

a. What are the alternative means in the realisation of justice to Coast people?
b. How will these alternative ways be achieved?

The historical leadership transitions Coast underwent to independence

6 How did the Sultan of Zanzibar end up ceding part of his territory to the British colonial government?
7 How did the residents of Coast benefit from this arrangement?
8 Did these benefits last past independence?

MRC and national unity and security

9 How will MRC address these issues without threatening security should the government continue with its hard stances?

10 Do MRC seek licences for their meetings from the police?

MRC working with local politicians

11 Have local politicians been invited to champion this cause?

12 Are there some of these leaders who have approached MRC for assistance?

The source of funding MRC activities

13 How does MRC raise funds to finance some of its expensive undertakings like Court cases?

14 How does MRC sustain its sources of funding?

15 Does MRC have auditing provisions to its finances?

Hope to Coast residents through the state addressing MRC grievances

16 Has the government attempted to reach out to MRC leaders for dialogue?

17 Is the government willing to address the issues MRC has raised?

The situation beyond the secession call

18 What is the next step should the government fail to succumb to the independence pressure?

19 Is there a governance structure should the state grants the Coast region independence?