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The Role of Media in Electoral Conflict Management
Case Study of Kenyan 1992-2007

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this project is my original work and has not been submitted for any other university.

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

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Signature Date

Dedication

I wish to dedicate this work to my father, Mr. Henry Asego, my mother Mrs. Leah Asego, my wife Mrs. Marion Asego, my son Master Nathan Asego, the little one yet to come and to all my siblings for their support during the duration of my studies.

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ABSTRACT

For years, Kenya has been known as an “an Isle of peace”. However this image has changed with time due to the marred election process that culminated to the 2007/8 election crisis which left more than 1,200 people dead and over half a million internally displaced. Other serious human rights, including freedom of movement, assembly and opinion were violated. The Commission of Inquiry set to investigate the violence has attributed the crisis to unresolved historical grievances. However, the government and international agencies blame some sections of the media, for inflaming violence and ethnic hatred among Kenyans (KNCHR, 2008). Although Kenya remains East Africans’ economic hub, its system of governance is riddled with rampant corruption, impunity and ethnic divisionism. The media is one of the most vibrant institutions. It is vocal on political and socio-economic developments. In so far, much has been written on the role of the media in the conflict, but little on their role in peace-building. Yet, peace remains a human rights concern locally and internationally. This study investigates the role the media plays in electoral conflicts and the management of these conflicts in Kenya. Specifically, it will examine the role of media in conflict and conflict management, investigate the impact of media in electoral processes and explore the linkages between media and electoral conflicts.

The study is grounded within media theories hereunder; the normative roles of the media as agents of order, public sphere, and mobiliser. It employs the *Agenda setting theory* on how the media reinforces public discourses on political processes, to explain concepts. The agenda setting role provides a theoretical assumption of the responsibility of the media in preserving rights and freedoms. The study looks at the 1992, 1997, 2002 and 2007 General Elections in Kenya with an aim of seeing how the changes in the media have influenced electoral conflicts. Kenyan electoral campaigns have been characterized by voting along ethnic lines and the political elite take advantage of these divisions to advance personal political interests. Politicians have managed to create an impression that elections are a contest of “us” versus “them.” The electoral processes have in most instances been marred by instances of post-election violence.

However, politicians need an avenue to communicate en masse to their supporters. The media is a key avenue through which people express their opinions on issues of the day. The media decides which issues are to be talked about on a particular day and in so doing sets the agenda of discussion in the public light. Media can be used as a conflict management tool and serve as a tool for development rather than a tool for raising tensions and animosity amongst different ethnic groups. Kenyan media has experienced developmental changes in the past two decades ever since the onset of multiparty politics in 1992. From the era of state controlled media to liberalization of print and electronic media, to the new digital media, the avenues for communication have indeed grown.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	Cable News Network
KANU	Kenya National African Union
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
CCK	Communications Commission of Kenya
RAG	Radio Africa Group
VOA	Voice of America
UNCHR	United Nations Commission for Human Rights
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UN	United Nations
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
ICT	Information Communication and Telecommunication
SMS	Short Message Service
PNU	Party of National Unity
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
ICC	International Criminal Court
ID	Identification
ECK	Electoral Commission of Kenya
KTN	Kenya Television Network
NCIC	National Cohesion and Integration Commission
IEBC	Independent Elections and Boundary Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Chapter One

Introduction to Media in Conflict Management and Electoral Processes

Conflict is a struggle between individuals or groups over power and resources. Electoral processes are emotive events which divide a people depending on how the process is handled than the outcome. Post-election conflicts emerge from a struggle for power, with each party pursuing an agenda that would bring it closer to controlling resources. Resolving these conflicts require concerted efforts from all actors, be it human rights, civil society, multinational corporations, the state and even the media. Media is a key player in conflict and conflict management. The media can be powerful individually or/and collectively, but it can also be subject to manipulation.

The media shape what is seen and heard about conflict. A media owner might skew news in favor of one side. Journalists too have opinions and beliefs based on their personal preferences and experiences. Media owners have economic interests; they seek to sell stories via print media and television programs to a public. Increasing corporate control over media in some countries also plays a role in controlling the types of stories that get covered and the way stories get framed. However the onset of digital media has greatly influenced coverage of electoral processes and taken away the monopoly of control of information from the state. Digital media has given the people more liberal avenues to be active participants in the electoral debates and processes and an event taking place in one corner of the state can go viral in a matter of minutes, thus increasing the number of actors. This could however serve either as a deterrent to mismanagement of electoral process or an incitement tool against perceived electoral injustices that could then fuel conflict.

Statement of the Research Study

The media plays an important role in political processes. The use of the media for political communication means that the media are being utilized to communicate to widely dispersed people in the hope of involving them or making them aware of events around them. All these activities engage the audience and involves them in the political process. The period before, during and after elections is a period that is marked by politicians attempting to communicate with the electorate, in a bid to sell their agendas and manifestos with the hope of garnering votes to win the elections. The media is a central feature in this communication process. A media that is not free of government control can affect the information disseminated to the public. This information may be skewed in favor on one ideology over the other. In Kenyan elections for instance, the early 90s were marked by media control by the state and the incumbent government used the national broadcaster in selling the ruling party ideologies while demonizing the then opposition. Liberalized media without specified checks and balances have also played a role in electoral conflicts by irresponsible journalism. In Kenya the term hate speech was included in the new constitution after the media was accused of contributing to the post-election violence in the 2007/2008 period. The media has power to influence governments and their electorates and in turn determine the fate of politicians and political causes depending on how information is presented. Electoral conflicts are made worse if the public does not receive the correct information at the right time. This makes them susceptible to easy manipulation and propaganda. In Kenyan for instance, the announcement of the presidential results of the 2007 general elections sparked violent reactions from some areas and the subsequent banning of live broadcast by the government deprived people of information on the events taking place across the nation. The populace depended on hearsay and information

disseminated via other media outlets for instance social network sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

While mainstream media might experience checks and balances from government institutions, the emergence of digital media opens up electoral and political processes to wider criticisms. Save for regulating broadcast content and tracking text messages from individual cellphones, controlling the content that goes onto the digital platform is a task that the Kenyan government is not yet equipped to handle. As such, the digital platform as a source of propaganda and political manipulation is still out of complete government control. Until such a time as the government institutions are ready to handle hate speech and incitement cases on digital media, the government needs to have an avenue where it can counter propaganda by presenting the correct information to the public. Tracing back from 1992 to 2007 the Kenyan media has experienced changes, both from policy decision making to technological with the onset of the digital platform for communication. This study seeks to analyze the role of the media in conflict management and electoral processes in Kenya from 1992 to 2007 and whether if the liberalization and technological advancements in the media have had an impact on the electoral conflict and management.

Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to analyze the role of media in conflict management and electoral process in Kenya. The secondary objectives of the study are to examine the role of media in conflict and conflict management, investigate the impact of media in electoral processes and finally to explore the linkages between media and electoral conflicts.

Literature Review

This section reviews literature informing media, conflict, conflict management and electoral processes in the international system. It looks at the nexus between media and conflict and thereafter it examines digital media as a new strand of media that is becoming a key factor in communication. Finally this section examines role of mass communication in political processes and thereafter presents a conclusion.

Goodhand and Humle define conflict as a struggle between individuals and collectives, over values or claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aims of the conflicting parties are to assert their values or claims over those of others¹. These attempted assertions of status, power and scarce resources are what lead to break out or escalation of conflicts because certain values are not negotiable and individuals or collectives are not ready to give up the status, power or scarce resources. The Machiavellian perception of conflict contends that conflicts do arise as a result of human desire for self-preservation and power. This power is maintained through periodical electoral processes that could either be transparent and properly carried out thus promoting peace, or thoroughly flawed or shrouded in controversy and injustice which can lead to animosity that could eventually manifest itself in terms of physical confrontations between competing parties. These confrontations can be either spontaneous or sanctioned by one party against another.

Electoral conflict as defined by Fischer is an act that is used to harm, intimidate, exploit, disrupt, determine, hasten, delay or reverse electoral processes or outcomes, and an act that occur

¹ Goodland J. and Humle D., "From Wars to Complex Political Emergencies: Understanding Conflicts and Peace building in the New World Disorder," *The Third World Quarterly*, Vol:20 no.1 1999:p13-26

between the registration of a voter and the inauguration of a political regime.² Goodland and Humle's definition of conflict as a struggle for power by individuals or collectives, one of the said individuals must accept defeat seeing as not all individuals or collectives can hold the instruments of power. However, for the individual or collective to accept outcomes of electoral processes, they must get some sense of satisfaction that the process was just and fair, if not then there is a likelihood of retaliation. If neither side is willing to give up the fight for power, then a middle ground has to be reached to assist in managing the conflicts. The middle ground could be power sharing, a concept that was adapted by Kenya and Zimbabwe during contested polls.

As the term suggests, conflict management is aimed at managing conflicts so that they do not worsen. Mwangi asserts that conflict management as a term should be used to refer to any management process by which parties to conflict are encouraged to come together and do something about their conflict³. Several tools have been used to help in conflict resolution and management, ranging from arbitration, judicial settlements, negotiations, mediations. Galtung argues that conflict management is about neutralizing the evil party and rewarding the victimized good side⁴. Successful conflict management requires early warning with diagnosis, early listening with prognosis and early action with treatment. Genuine conflict management cannot accommodate personal interests and in an ideal situation, conflict management should be done by actors who have no ulterior interests in a particular outcome of a conflict other than peace. Conflict management processes that give priority to military threats and ignores 'peace by

² Fischer, J. "Electoral Conflict and Violence: A strategy for Study and Prevention 3". 2002:p3

³ Mwangi, M. "Conflict, Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management." 2000: p43

⁴ Galtung, J. "Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies." Routledge, Park Square, Milton Park Abingdon:2007:p27-32

peaceful means' as well as the peace potential of civil societies in the conflict zone is bound to fail⁵.

Jones et al assert that conflict can be functionally resolved through compromise or by collaboration between the parties involved; they have maintained that conflict management strategies focused on the individuals include increasing awareness of the sources of conflict, increasing diversity awareness and skills, practicing job rotation or temporary assignments and using permanent transfers or dismissals when necessary; strategies focused on the whole organization include changing an organization structure or culture and altering the source of conflict.⁶ When conflict is recognized, acknowledged, and managed in a proper manner, personal and organizational benefits will result.⁷ Even though some managers see conflict as something that should be avoided at all costs, others see conflict as presenting exciting possibilities if managed in a positive, constructive fashion. Effective manager seeks not to avoid but to manage conflict within the organization.⁸

Mass media has over the years evolved and given people across the globe more and more opportunities to interact faster and on a wider platform. Digital media, in the form of mobile phones, personal computers, and software applications, had a significant impact in the systems of political communications. Mobile phone cameras for instance became small, personal weapons against authoritarian rule.⁹ Images beamed from personal gadgets onto social networks would be beamed across the globe via sites like Facebook, twitter, Instagram, you tube and as such an

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Jones, G.R., Gorge, J.M., Hill, C.W.L. "Contemporary Management," McGraw-Hill, Boston, MA, 2000

⁷ Silverthorne, C.P. "Organizational Psychology in Cross-Cultural Perspective," New York University Press, New York, NY, 2005:p738-740

⁸ Rahim M.A., Antonioni, D., Psenicka, C. "A structural equations model of leader power, subordinates' styles of handling conflict, and job performance" International Journal of Conflict Management, Vol. 12 No.3, 200:p191-211.

⁹ Howard N.P. and Hussain M.M "Democracy's Fourth Wave? – Digital Media and the Arab Spring". 2013;pg733

internal conflict can take an international outlook thus increase the number of actors on a particular issue of concern. The conflicts in Burundi and Rwanda become known as they unfold, as do famine in Sudan. Because of the ubiquity of modern electronic media, the effects and brutality of conflict are known instantaneously (or almost instantaneously) in different parts of the world.¹⁰ This could have a positive effect to the extent that the populace can put pressure on the incumbent governments and can influence their nation's policies resulting to potential desired effect on a conflict. Successive evolutions in communication technologies have significantly altered the conduct of conflict, warfare and conflict resolution¹¹.

Cohen and Gilboa assert that the media perform several functions in conflict resolution, known mostly as "media diplomacy" and media broker diplomacy."¹²The aim of media diplomacy is the restoration of confidence in institutions by giving the parties directly involved in a conflict a platform to tackle the contentious issues in a civil manner. The media also offers a platform for opposing sides to address each other without necessarily meeting face to face. Larson in Bercovitch, Kremenyuk and Zartman, states that television for instance provides an interactive channel for diplomacy which is instantaneous and timely and in which journalists frequently assume an equal role with officials in the negotiation.¹³ The media can choose to highlight peace agreements and treaties instead of focusing on negative elements of conflicts. It serves as a platform for policy makers to build national and international support for peace efforts during conflict situation.

¹⁰ Howard N.P. and Hussain M.M "Democracy's Fourth Wave? – Digital Media and the Arab Spring". 2013; pg67

¹¹Gilboa, Etyan. "Media and Conflict Resolution: A Framework for Analysis." *Marquette Law Review* , 2009: 87

¹² Bercovitch J, Kremenyuk V., Zartman W.I "The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Etyan Gilboa – Media and Conflict Resolution" : 2009; p461

¹³ Ibid p462

However constant and repetitive highlighting images of war and chaos bring about what Kats and Liebes in Bercovitch et al termed as disaster marathon¹⁴. The continuing broadcast, which sometimes last for a few days raises doubts about peace prospects and the value of negotiations. This in turn makes people skeptical about the leadership's capacity to handle the conflict and the opposition can take advantage of such situations to demand for regime change. Gilboa in Bercovitch et al identifies five levels of media by geopolitical criteria: local, national, regional, international and global. Local media includes newspapers, television and local radio stations. Regional media operate in a region identified by culture, tradition, values, language or religion for example the Dubai based *Al-Arabia* that broadcasts primarily in the Middle East.¹⁵ International media include broadcast and print media used or sponsored by states to operate across international borders for example *BBC*, *Al-Jazeera*. Global media include privately owned commercial networks such as *CNN international* and print media such as the *International Herald Tribune* and *The Economist*.¹⁶

Digital media has brought in a new domain to be considered when it comes to conflict and conflict resolution. Reporting is no longer the reserve of journalists alone as the internet has opened up avenues for citizen type reporting. This type of reporting, uncensored and immediate can draw different reactions depending on how the information is presented. Mohammed Bouazizi, a young vegetable merchant set himself ablaze in Tunisia in protest of the government in December 2010 and his story was one of several stories told and retold on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in ways that inspired dissidents to organize protests, criticize their governments,

¹⁴ Ibid p468

¹⁵ Bercovitch J, Kremenyuk V., Zartman W.I "The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Etyan Gilboa – Media and Conflict Resolution" : 2009; p268

¹⁶ Ibid

and spread ideas about democracy¹⁷. Dunn in Howard and Hussain, states that Facebook became the information infrastructure that supported political organizing independent not only of the state, but independent of other political parties. Digital media in this instant started a revolution that spread Northern Africa and the Middle East in what has come to be known as the Arab Spring.

Main stream media, that is print and electronic media, have also joined the digital media networks as an addition to their mainstream reporting. They have created blogs, news portals or journalistic entities that exist solely online.¹⁸ Activists, bloggers, celebrities, researchers, and other individuals with global influence have also adopted digital media as a tool for communicating with the populace in an attempt to add their voices to particular course. As such digital media can indeed be used to effect change in conflict situations both positively or negatively. Dictatorial regimes are put under the spot light on an international platform as was the case with Egypt, where people communicated real time events of the dictatorship going on in the country. This resulted in mounting international and local pressure forcing, Mubarak's resignation. In this context social media was used to effect revolutionary change from dictatorial regimes to democratic regimes. During the protests, YouTube and other video archiving centers allowed citizen journalists, using mobile phone cameras and consumer electronics, to broadcast stories that the mainstream media could not or did not want to cover.¹⁹

While digital media use can build solidarity and offer a platform for unity, misuse can have a negative effect on a larger scale. Issues of hate speech and incitement via social networks can cause a snowballing effect that might prove difficult to manage or control. Shutting off the

¹⁷ Howard N.P. and Hussain M.M “Democracy’s Fourth Wave? – Digital Media and the Arab Spring”. 2013;pg777

¹⁸ Howard N.P. and Hussain M.M “Democracy’s Fourth Wave? – Digital Media and the Arab Spring”. 2013;pg777

¹⁹ Ibid p1078

digital media access is one way of controlling content going out on social media but it also impacts on the capacity of the state to respond to crisis. In any case, most civil societies will always find ways to circumvent the blocked social media signal.²⁰

Mass Communication in Political Processes.

The growth in mass communication and advancement of communication technology over the years has indeed changed the face of international conflict and conflict resolution mechanisms. Traditional media platforms have previously witnessed government interference but modern communications technology has given the public more freedom to pursue information. Gilboa observes that governments have lost much of the monopoly on information and non-state actors and individuals have become more active and significant participants in world affairs, both in warfare and conflict resolution²¹. The internet has opened a portal of information and one can no longer be confined local perceptions on information but can find out from a wider audience the reality on the ground. The digital platform has provided new avenues for collective action. Since the commercialization of digital media, information infrastructure has become a formative space for nurturing and organizing social action.²²

Howard argues that the internet has provided a platform for political debates, which were not happening before, to take place online.²³ There is involvement of multiple actors, there is participation from more than just the locals of a particular geographical location and this increases the number of actors and interests in a particular political process. Digital media is one such avenue that offers a platform for multiple actors to actively participate in such processes. It

²⁰ Howard N.P. and Hussain M.M “Democracy’s Fourth Wave? – Digital Media and the Arab Spring”. 2013; p1219

²¹ Gilboa, Etyan. "Media and Conflict Resolution: A Framework for Analysis." *Marquette Law Review* , 2009: 87

²² Howard N.P. and Hussain M.M “Democracy’s Fourth Wave? – Digital Media and the Arab Spring”. 2013; 607

²³ Ibid

allows people to express themselves on key political processes of interest far from state control and censorship. Print and electronic media are indeed considered the key media outlets but social media has gained great popularity as a major strand of media that greatly influences political process. In Bahrain for instance, BahrainOnline.com accused the prime minister for corruption. This website gave people a forum to discuss the issue without government control. By 2005 more other social media outlets like You Tube, Facebook, Twitter became portals via which politicized content could be shared, forcing the government to completely block access to entire services²⁴. The Arab spring demonstrated the magnitude to which the digital media platform has had massive influence on the political process. Electoral processes draw a lot of public attention. Politicians and political campaigns do dominate much the news broadcasts as people gear up for the voting exercise. The media are the communicators of the candidates' messages either through coverage of rallies, televising political debates and interviews. Given the amount of interest political processes draws, mismanagement of this process could easily lead to conflicts between competing parties. Such mismanagement could either be highlighted or ignored by the media. The media can select what issue to highlight, which candidate to give more coverage, whether or not to highlight the shortcomings of one candidate and as such and in so doing set the agenda for public debate.

Wolfsed summed the relationship between the media and politics as P-M-P, Politics-Media-Politics principle.²⁵ Wolfsed argues that the influence of the news media on conflicts and peace process is best seen in terms of a cycle which, changes in the political environment lead to changes in media performance which can lead to further changes in the political environment.

²⁴ Howard N.P. and Hussain M.M "Democracy's Fourth Wave? – Digital Media and the Arab Spring". 2013:p626

²⁵ Wolfsed. G, "The Role of the News Media in Conflict and Peace: Towards a More General Theory", *Department of Political Science, Department of Communication, University of Jerusalem*. 2005: 1-2

However politics always comes first.²⁶ This is to say that the media will in most instances favor the ideologies of the regime that is in power and such regimes will use the media to sell their agenda, which in most instances are aimed at helping them maintain political power as was the case with retired President Moi's party KANU (Kenya African National Union) and the national broadcaster KBC (Kenya Broadcasting Corporation).

Electronic media do need financial backing for survival and the main source of revenue is a large audience which translates into advertising which translates into revenue. For audiences to stay tuned to a particular media, they must derive interest from it, and this is why most journalists covering election processes for instance are interested in the "game strategy" rather than the substance of the elections. Game theory seeks to determine mathematically and logically the actions the parties have to take to secure the best outcomes for themselves.²⁷ It looks at the possible strategies that political parties would adapt in order to clinch victory in electoral processes. Khadhi and Rutten in Rutten et al argue that like any other game, elections have a winner and loser and the exciting story of how the race was taking place and how contestants were struggling to take over leadership from each other has always been of great interest to Kenyan readers.²⁸

Coverage of international conflicts has inspired normative and ethical debates on types of journalism; "bystander journalism" versus "journalism of attachment." Bell argued that media neutrality and explained that "bystander journalism" concerns itself more with the circumstances of violence such as military formations, weapons, strategies, maneuvers, and tactics, while

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Rutten M., Mazrui A. Grignon F., "Out for the Count – The 1997 General elections and Prospects for Democracy in Kenya; The Kenyan Media in the 1997 General Elections – A Look at the Watchdogs" by Joe Khadi, Marcel Rutten: 2001; p253

²⁸ Ibid

“journalism of attachment” concerns itself more with people – those who provoke wars, those who fight them, and those who suffer from them.²⁹ If you understand the history of a conflict, then you can present the facts as they are giving both parties a fair analysis of the facts, but you don’t have to be neutral. “Journalism of attachment” is about taking a stand, not sitting back in the face of wrong for the sake of neutrality. However Garret boldly asserts that, generally the media’s role in politics is to mainly mislead the public.³⁰ This could either be for the sake of avoiding the spread of unnecessary panic to the masses due to isolated instances of malpractice or for the sake of presenting misleading broadcasts so as to get ones candidates of choice elected into office.

Electronic media is the most accessible mass media in most developing nations. However this subject to government control in states where democracy and press freedom are yet to be fully attained. Modern technology has however taken away monopoly of information from governments because other actors, be they institutions or individuals, can post stories or images of violent activities and these can be beamed to a wider audience. Larson argues that digital media provides non-state actors with access to people around the world and, consequently, with endless opportunities to exchange and debate events and processes both inside and outside political entities.³¹ Social media is claiming its place as a great influence on political processes. In so far as social media has opened up the space to allow for more interaction from various actors, abuse of the same can be detrimental to peace and reconciliation efforts.

²⁹ Bell, M. “T.V News, How Far Should We Go?, *British Journalism Review* Vol. 8 no 1 1997:p 7

³⁰ Garret, J. “Role of Media in Politics.” Retrieved April 24, 2014
www.comparativepoliticseconomies.com/roleofmediainpolitics

³¹ Larson, J.F, “The Internet and Foreign Policy” 2004: p48-49

Conclusion

The literature reviewed has revealed media can play a major role in causing, escalating or resolving conflicts. The media can be used to advance policies that could bring about desired change to achieve peace. Media owners also have interests in the goings-on in society and advance their own agenda at the expense of the general good. Political interference can affect press freedom and hence affect the quality of news disseminated which could have adverse impacts on conflict resolution and peace initiatives. Print and electronic media have in the past experienced direct interference from political regimes that have the aim of advancing personal political agendas. Digital media on the other hand, has offered a new avenue for social expression on issues affecting the populace and has minimal direct government control. With such liberty comes great responsibility and it is up to the individual to exercise restraint so as not to incite people to violence via digital media platforms.

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the Agenda setting role of the media. The agenda setting theory is propounded by McCombs and Shaw and it emerged in 1972. The theory states that the first level of agenda setting is focused on the relative salience (usually operationally defined as perceived importance) of issues or subjects and the second level examines the relative salience of attributes of issues. Interests are mainly on the effects of media setting the agenda on public opinion and government policy³². The focus on the consequences of agenda setting for public opinion can be traced back at least to Weaver, McCombs, and Spellman who speculated in their study of the

³² McCombs, M. "A look at agenda-setting: Past, present and future, *Journalism Studies*," 6:2005; p543–557.

effects of Watergate news coverage that the media may suggest which issues to use in evaluating political actors, but who did not use the term priming to describe this process³³.

The perspectives and frames that journalists employ draw attention to certain attributes of the objects of news coverage, as well as to the objects themselves, and some of these perspectives can be very general.³⁴ Tankard et al have described media frame as the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration.³⁵ The media has the power to set a nation's agenda and to focus public attention on key public issues.³⁶ Not only do people acquire factual information about public affairs from the news media, readers and viewers also learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the emphasis placed on it in the news. Newspapers provide a host of cues about the salience of the topics in the daily news – lead story on page one, other front page display, large headlines, etc. Television news also offers numerous cues about salience – the opening story on the newscast, length of time devoted to the story, etc. These cues repeated day after day effectively communicate the importance of each topic. In other words, the news media can set the agenda for the public's attention to that small group of issues around which public opinion forms.

McCombs argues that the media might not be able to tell people what to think, but they can tell them what to think about. The media holds the key to deciding which issues are priority

³³ Weaver, D. H., McCombs, M. E., & Spellman, C. "Watergate and the media: A case study of agenda-setting. *American Politics Quarterly*," 3, 1975; 458–472

³⁴ Ghanem, S. "Filling in the tapestry: The second level of agenda setting." In M. McCombs, D. L. Shaw, & D. Weaver (Eds.), "Communication and democracy Mahwah," NJ: Erlbaum: 1997; p. 3–14.

³⁵ Tankard, J., Hendrickson, L., Silberman, J., Bliss, K., & Ghanem, S. "Media frames: Approaches to conceptualization and measurement." Paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Boston, MA. August, 1991

³⁶ McCombs, M. "The Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion Journalism Studies," 2:2002; 231–286.

issues on a daily basis.³⁷ The media can present certain issues in a particular way to give them more importance than others. As such, in reference to electoral processes, the media can present a candidate in one way or another and this could influence the electorate's decision in the long run, whether in a positive or negative way. By generating discussions on peace-building for instance, journalists and policy makers can collectively shape the public agenda to more constructive dialogues.

Justification of Study

This study will be beneficial to policy makers and decision makers because the nature of electoral conflicts in Kenya appears repetitive. A look into the root causes of the conflicts can help policy makers to frame policies with long term view of greatly minimizing if not completely eradicating electoral conflicts. The media can help the populace grasp the issues that lead to conflicts and with the aid of structured civic education mechanisms, the media can actively participate in conflict management. Achieving this requires a knowledge of the issues leading to electoral conflicts and that is what this paper seeks to address.

This study will can also serve as a departure point for further study looking into the lessons learnt from the role the media played in previous electoral processes. With technological advancements, there is some lacuna in the literature informing the role of the new media in electoral based conflicts in Kenya. Understanding the emerging media is a starting point in ensuring that the new media can be used positively in order to prevent future conflicts. Electoral processes are usually events of great interests to the populace. An academic understanding of the

³⁷ McCombs, M. "New frontiers in agenda setting: Agendas of attributes and frames. *Mass Communication Review*," 24 (1&2): 1997; 32–52.

roles and influences of the different media platforms helps scholars grasp the power of emerging media on future electoral processes.

Hypotheses

This study will seek to test the following hypotheses. First, if the media is under government control then the cases of electoral conflicts are minimal. Secondly if broadcast media content is regulated during electoral processes then there will be reduced electoral conflict and finally if access to digital media was controlled then cases of electoral conflicts would be reduced to a minimum.

Research Methodology

This study will utilize both secondary and primary data collection methods. The primary data will be collected through interviews of the key informants. Interviews will be undertaken by the researcher. Among the interviewees will be journalists from Radio Africa Group (R.A.G), a privately owned media house. This would be of interest to the study to find out the degree of influence from the state during electoral processes. Another key informant is the former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Communication. During the 2007 post election violence, the government banned live broadcast and it would be of interest to find out the reasons behind the ban and its effect to the violence that ensued. The Communications Authority of Kenya, (C.A.K), formerly Communications Commission of Kenya is also of interest to the study. The Authority is tasked with regulating broadcast content and it would be of interest to find out how the commission carried out its mandate in the periods before, during and after

elections. A focus group discussion with some members of the fourth estate will also offer further insight to the study. These are the people who disseminate the information to the masses.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

Interviews have several advantages. The respondents are given time and opportunities to develop their answers and the respondents have the opportunity to take control, to define properties and probe the interview into areas which they see as interesting and significant.³⁸ This can trigger new and important insights for the researcher. If respondent feel free in the interview, they are more probable to open up and say what they really mean. They are more probable to provide valid data. The researcher has more chance to pursue a topic, to investigate with any further questions, and ask the interviewee to qualify and develop their answers. Interview data therefore can have a lot more depth than the information obtained from questionnaires.³⁹ The study will also gather data from focus group discussions. Focus group discussions allows for interactive debate from several parties who have the chance to defend their point of view and listen to other varied perspectives on the same thought.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is the Kenyan electoral process from 1992 to 2007. The study will cover the major stakeholders in the media industry (journalists and managers of the media houses) as well as case studies.

³⁸Kothari, C.R. *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. New Age International (P) Limited, New Delhi, India. 2004

³⁹ Ibid

Sampling Method and Sample Size

The target population will be stakeholders in the Kenyan communication sector. The study will use purposive sampling to select the respondents. Purposive sampling is appropriate when the key informants have a specific type of knowledge or skill required in the study, when the researcher has adopted a case study research design and when the population is too small for a random sample.⁴⁰ The primary and secondary data will be qualitative in nature. Content analysis will be used to analyze the data. Content analysis is a methodology in social sciences for studying the content of communication.⁴¹ Content analysis determines the presence of certain words on concepts within texts or sets of texts. Researchers quantify and analyze the presence, meaning and relationships of such word and concepts, then make inference about the messages within the text.

Chapter Outline

Chapter one introduces the subject of study which media in conflicts management and electoral processes. It also gives the statement of research study and the objectives of the study. It also presents literature informing the role of media in conflict. This chapter also states the theoretical framework, justification of study as well as the hypothesis to be tested. Finally it presents the methodology to be used in carrying out the research.

⁴⁰ Dolisca, F., McDaniel J. M. & Teeter L.D. Farmers' perceptions towards forests: A case study from Haiti. *Forest Policy and Economics*, 9, 2007:p704-712.

⁴¹ Baxter, P & Jack, S. "Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13 (4),"2008:p96-98

Chapter two examines the role of media in international issues. The chapter puts emphasis on the role of media in diplomacy, international relations, human rights and propaganda.

Chapter three investigates the nature of conflicts in the international system. It also looks at the media as a key agent of internationalization of conflict. This chapter also looks at conflict management as well as the nexus between conflict management and the role the media plays.

Chapter four is the case study chapter and it looks at the role of media in conflict and electoral processes in Kenya: 1992 – 2007. This chapter presents arguments presented by different sources based on interviews, reports and focus group discussions.

Chapter five is the critical analysis chapter and it presents the findings of the research. It will look at the role of media in conflict management, in electoral processes and in electoral conflicts.

Chapter six will give a summary of the key findings of the research, conclusion of the study and give recommendations.

Chapter Two

Emergence and development of Media in the international system.

Introduction

Chapter one examined the literature informing media, conflict, conflict management and electoral processes in the international system. It reviewed the link between media; electronic, print and digital media, and conflict. Chapter two investigates the role and conduct of media in dealing with international issues. A proper understanding of the scope of influence the media has on international issue will provide an insight on the role media plays in conflict and conflict resolution in electoral processes across the globe. The chapter looks at the role of media in international relations, as a tool for propaganda, the role of media in diplomacy and finally the role of media in human rights before presenting a conclusion.

The word media is defined as the communication channels through which news, entertainment, education, data, or promotional messages are disseminated. Media includes every broadcasting and narrowcasting medium such as newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, billboards, direct mail, telephone, fax, and internet.⁴²Taylor notes that the term communication, which comes from a Latin word '*share*,' involves the active transmission and reception of something. That something is invariably a signal or message containing information and that information can take the form of words or sounds or images, or a combination of these, now also presented in other forms such as digital data. So media is the avenue that is used to communicate a desired message to a person or groups of persons in one geographical area or even outside the said geographical location. International communication is communication

⁴² Oxford English Dictionary

between two or more parties (people, governments, organizations) who are located in different geographical regions.⁴³The conduct of governments engaging with each other at the international platform is closely linked to international relations.

Omotoso argues that media is also referred to as the fourth estate because the surveillance functions of the media mandates them to monitor, scrutinize and report the activities of the other realms, and in particular the three arms of government (estates) – namely the executive, legislature and judiciary.⁴⁴By informing the populace of the goings on in government business, the media promotes government accountability and helps the public scrutinize policy makers and leaders. The media highlights issues of public concern and this can translate into public pressure, thus forcing the leaders to take action on a particular issue. By so doing, they constantly keep in check those in authority and even key players in civil society at large.

The media perform their major role of agenda setting, raising issues for stakeholders to think about, debate and take action upon for the benefit of the citizenry. Gilboa states that developing nations might have a setback in challenging the government on adopted policies, but the media can serve as the go between in highlighting to the people issues arising by using objective critiques, editorials, features, special reports, interviews, debates, opinion surveys among others in order to promote general public interest.⁴⁵ Media coverage can constrain or limit the freedom and independence of governments. Many scholars have regarded the media as an

⁴³ Taylor P.M, “Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media since 1945” Routledge Publications: London: 1997:p22

⁴⁴ Omotoso, F. “The Role of Media in International Relations: A new opportunity for the Media in Maryland, USA and Ondo State – Nigeria, Sister-States Program.” Department of Political Science, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. 2012.

⁴⁵ Gilboa, E. “The CNN Effect: The Search for a Communication Theory of International Relations. Political Communication.” 2005: 22, 27 -44.

adversary to government policies in areas like humanitarian intervention and international negotiation.⁴⁶

The media being a business will always look for news that sells. War provides such an avenue as the media has the task of reporting the goings on in a conflict and more so, the aftermath of a conflict.⁴⁷ Taylor argues that the modern media had proved to be considerable allies in selling of war and sustaining public support for it.⁴⁸ Media can also opt to focus on one aspect of the conflict and not the other so as to solicit public reaction on a particular situation. Media can also serve as a tool of communication for parties involved in a conflict. The Cuban missile crisis is reported as one that benefited from the absence of media scrutiny. Seeing as it took place before commercial satellites, it was possible to keep from the public the news that Soviet missiles were actually already on Cuban soil, thus avoiding hysteria. Given that the television networks had access to commercial satellites, it was is likely that they would have discovered this at about the same time as the government. This would have put extra pressures on decision-making process in Washington. Moreover, it was taking about eight hours to send messages from Moscow to Washington through the normal diplomatic channels, and to speed things up Khrushchev resorted again to using Radio Moscow.⁴⁹ Given that the Voice of America Radio (VOA) was jammed at the time, commercial radio stations were prepared to lose advertising expenditure so as to convey messages that could be picked up in Cuba.⁵⁰ This can be

⁴⁶ Gilboa, E. "The CNN Effect: The Search for a Communication Theory of International Relations. Political Communication." 2005: p22, 27 -44.

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Ibid p59

⁴⁹ Ibid p41

⁵⁰ Taylor P.M, "Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media since 1945" Routledge Publications: London: 1997:p30

seen either as another example of the degree to which the media were prepared to cooperate with government when necessary in the national interest.⁵¹

National interests come first in the international system. States will pursue their interests while dealing with other states. International relations is the conduct of states to conduct official relations with other states within the international system.⁵² However the nations are static entities, occupying immovable geographical regions. As such the safety of a state is dependent on the behavior of its people particularly those holding office as well as those involved in international transactions such as trade.⁵³ After the First World War, the need for an avenue an institution that would serve the purpose of creating law and order at the international level.

Olatunde argues that when the atomic weapons dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, it heralded the arrival of a completely new era in international relations in which the framework of political decision-making about issues of war and peace was to be radically different from any period which went before it.⁵⁴ This brought about the need to have meaningful discussion in the face of adversity for the sake of humanity. The move to create the United Nations was prompted by among other reasons, the failure of the League of Nations to stop the First World War. Political decision-making frameworks were built of fear of the atomic bomb and the Taylor argues that regardless of what had been said about it in the past, one message of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was that henceforth public opinion really would matter. How, therefore,

⁵¹ Taylor P.M, "Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media since 1945" Routledge Publications: London: 1997: p41

⁵² Olatunde J.C.B., Orwa D.K. Utete C.M.B. "African International Relations" Longman Publisher:London:1985:p2

⁵³ Ibid p3

⁵⁴ Ibid p27

events were reported and perceived became a critical consideration for politicians, diplomats and soldiers as they went about their business under increasing public scrutiny.⁵⁵

The development in communication technology greatly affected international relations in that an event that took place in one corner of the globe could become public knowledge faster than it used to. Leaders might discover events unraveling at the same time at the masses and this influences how they react to such information, which previously would be divulged to the public over time and only when deemed necessary. As Taylor notes, if a statesman wants to make a public statement or send a message across the world, he has the option of doing so on CNN rather than through traditional diplomatic channels. As a result, the burning issues of the day appear to be reported 'as they happen', while international affairs are conducted in the full glare of global publicity for a world-wide audience⁵⁶. This makes global media efficient providers of information that even world leaders rely on for communication with not only their respective constituents, but also other world leaders.

The CNN effect, a term that will be addressed in detail later, has given every citizen the opportunity of not only knowing what is taking place where, but also providing information on what is happening where thanks to digital media. During the abortive Soviet coup in August 1991, the footage of demonstrators throwing Molotov cocktails at tanks outside the Russian parliament was shot by an amateur photographer and sent by courier to CNN's bureau before it was transmitted around the world, including back into Russia itself.⁵⁷ Global media can report events that push governments to react prematurely due to public opinions and pressures. Reports of atrocities in Somalia for instance made Americans rush into Somalia without complete

⁵⁵Taylor P.M, "Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media since 1945" Routledge Publications: London: 1997:p27

⁵⁶ Ibid p58

⁵⁷ Ibid p20

knowledge of the situation on the ground and this marked one of the U.S.A's unpopular moments in their military history. The new phenomenon of global instantaneous news reporting, particularly by television, has distorted the foreign policies of the western countries in the aftermath of the Cold War by forcing military intervention in such areas as former Yugoslavia, Somalia or Cambodia, while at the same time preventing that intervention from becoming effective by imposing arbitrary constraints on the level of force used, and on the willingness to risk taking casualties and inflicting them.⁵⁸

According to Taylor, the advent of satellite TV and 24 -hour news cycle brings greater challenge to the government officials on foreign policy making, as they cannot afford the luxury of careful policy deliberation.⁵⁹ Media pervasiveness requires president and the government to respond and react quickly to foreign affairs; otherwise, it will probably lose control, or at least influence on public opinion, and this is not only about a domestic audience, but also public opinion on a global scale, as was proved by "CNN effect".⁶⁰ According to Hoge, capabilities of modern media to be immediate, sensational, and pervasive are unsettling the conduct of foreign affairs. Media serve as a catalyst when a persuasive government policy or strategy is absent⁶¹. As the digital media landscape gets more complex and participatory, the networked population is not only obtaining access to information, but also more chances to get involved in public discourse and an enhanced ability to mobilize collective action.⁶²

⁵⁸Taylor P.M. "Global Communications, International Affairs and the Media since 1945" Routledge Publications: London: 1997: p2

⁵⁹ Livingston, S. & Eachus, T. "Humanitarian Crises and U.S. Foreign Policy: Somalia and the CNN Effect Reconsidered. *Political Communication*, 12,"1995:p413-429.

⁶⁰ Hoge, J. F. "Media Pervasiveness. *Foreign Affairs*. 73(4),"1994:p136-144.

⁶¹ *Ibid* p136-144

⁶² Shirky, C. *The Political Power of Social Media*. *Foreign Affairs*, 90(1): 2011

The CNN Effect theory as fronted by several scholars, key among them Gilboa, describes how dominant global television coverage has become in world affairs, especially in acute international conflicts.⁶³ Robinson states that compelling television images, especially those in humanitarian crisis, cause U.S. policymakers to intervene in a situation when that situation would normally not be in the interest of the U.S.⁶⁴ It displays the important power of the mass media. In WWII, mass media became an important part of the war efforts. The war could be easily broadcast throughout the world and major television broadcast companies quickly became forefront runners of broadcasting. NBC, BBC, and CNN became some of the most influential broadcasters of the war activities.⁶⁵

The CNN theory states that television coverage can have three different effects on humanitarian military interventions. The first effect is self-titled the “CNN Effect,” where images of suffering push governments into intervention; the second is the “body bags effect,” where images of casualties pull governments away from the conflict; the final effect is the “bullying effect,” where the use of excessive force risks draining away public support for intervention.⁶⁶ As will be shown, despite the great ability the media have to influence policies, they experienced challenges in the genocide of Rwanda and Darfur. The CNN Effect states that mass media have an effect over policy makers. It argues that if the media shows horrific images and tells compelling stories of humanitarian disaster, policy makers will be forced to deal with

⁶³ Bercovitch J, Kremenyuk V, and Zartman W.I. The SAGE handbook of Conflict Resolution, SAGE Publications, 2009 p455

⁶⁴ Robinson, P. The CNN effect: Can the news media drive foreign policy? *Review of International Studies*, 1999: p25, 301-309.

⁶⁵ Gilboa, E. The CNN effect: The search for a communication theory of international relations. *Political Communication*, 2005: p 22, 27-44.

⁶⁶ *Ibid* p.29-30

the situation more effectively than if the event had not been covered.⁶⁷ The clear lack of effort by policy makers to quickly or effectively deal with the genocide in Rwanda strongly suggests that either mass media failed to adequately cover the story, or that policy makers function at their own pace, completely unaffected by the media.⁶⁸

The Media and Propaganda

Lasswell defines propaganda as the management of collective attitudes by the manipulations of significant symbols.⁶⁹ The linguistic definition of propaganda makes reference to information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.⁷⁰ There are numerous types of propaganda that Lasswell divides into two broad streams depending on whether they produce direct incitement or indirect incitement. Direct incitement is that by which the propagandist himself acts, becomes involved, and demonstrates his conviction, belief and good faith. He commits himself to the course of action that he proposes and supports, and in order to obtain a similar action, he solicits a corresponding response from the masses; for instance democratic propaganda where a politician extends a hand to the citizen. Indirect incitement is that which rests on a difference between the statesman, who takes action, and the public, which is limited to passive acceptance and compliance. There is a coercive influence and there is obedience as is the case of authoritarian propaganda.⁷¹

Propaganda can manifest itself in various ways. It could be political, sociological. During electoral processes, politicians can use either political Propaganda and/or sociological

⁶⁷Robinson, P. "The CNN effect: the myth of news, foreign policy, and intervention." : Routledge Publications: London:2002

⁶⁸ Jakobsen, P. V. Focus on the CNN effect misses the point: The real media impact on conflict management is invisible and indirect. *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(2), 2000: p131-143.

⁶⁹ Lasswell H.D "The Theory of Political Propaganda » published by *The American Political Science Review*. Vol. 21, No.3 August" 1927:p627-631

⁷⁰ Oxford English Dictionary

⁷¹ Ellul J. "Propaganda; The formation of Men's Attitude." Random House Inc. New York 1973:p62-65

Propaganda. Political propaganda involves techniques of influence employed by a government or a party, an administration, a pressure group, with a view to changing the behavior of the public.⁷²The bottom line for political propaganda is maintaining or getting power. Sociological propaganda is based on the premise of unification of a societal group through patterns of behavior, shared lifestyle among others.⁷³ The propagandist plays on the emotions of a group of people rallying them behind a shared history for instance. In political processes this could be unification of voters via their ethnic background so as they can support a particular candidate that they consider to represent their group interests. Another distinction that can be made with regards to propaganda is differentiating between propaganda of agitation and propaganda of integration. Propaganda of agitation is often characterized by either one party seeking to destroy a government or an established order as it seeks rebellion or war. All revolutionary movements, all popular wars have been nourished by such propaganda of agitation. Spartacus relied on this kind of propaganda, as did the communes, the Crusades and the French movement of 1793⁷⁴. In situations of national concern for example war, a government will use propaganda of agitation to rally people behind a common united front, thus justifying their actions against the aggressors.

Propaganda unlike information is addressed to feelings and passions and not reason, facts and truths. However, propagandists can include some elements of half-truths so as to legitimize actions taken. Hitler's most Inflammatory speeches always contained some facts which served as base or pretext. It is unusual nowadays to find a frenzied propaganda composed solely of claims without relation to reality.⁷⁵The "propaganda model" argues that the media serve mainly as a supportive arm of the state and dominant elites, focusing heavily on themes serviceable to

⁷² Ellul J. "Propaganda; The formation of Men's Attitude." Random House Inc. New York 1973:p62-65

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Ellul J. "Propaganda; The formation of Men's Attitude." Random House Inc. New York 1973:p62-65

them, and debating and exposing within accepted frames of reference. Propagandist activities rose considerably in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the growth of mass media and improved transportation led to the development of mass audiences for propaganda.⁷⁶ Garth and O'Donnell argue that each of the mass media - print, the movies, radio, and then television—contributed its unique qualities to new techniques of propaganda. Radio in particular brought into existence the possibility of continuous international propaganda, whereas television and other forms of popular culture have increased the problem of “cultural imperialism,” in which one nation’s culture is imposed on another nation’s. By imposing ideals on another nation, you’re spreading your own degree of propaganda to that nation.

In the early 19th century, most forms of media had not developed much and information was passed on from orators to a listening public.⁷⁷ This had the handicap of presenting information to a limited number of people. Public oratory, though important, also had the inherent handicaps of a limited audience and irreproducibility. The result was that rumor and gossip continued to be an important means of maintaining communication links between groups and individuals wishing to circulate specific messages.⁷⁸ Newspaper publications marked the large scale publication and dissemination of information to a wider audience. Crouthamel in Garth and O'Donnell states that with the introduction of the *New York Sun* on September 3, 1833, the era of the “penny press” was begun, and the entire shape of news was altered. The penny press was not so much a revolutionary development but rather the inevitable result of the gradual shift away from selling newspapers only through monthly or annual subscriptions. Founders of the penny press, such as Benjamin Day of the *Sun* and James Gordon Bennett of the

⁷⁶ Garth S.J and O'Donnell V.J “Propaganda and Persuasion” SAGE Publications London; 2012;p97

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Ibid

New York Herald, recognized that a growing audience of middle- and working-class readers was willing to pay for a newspaper on a daily basis.⁷⁹

There was little competition then and so the newspaper filled an information gap that the masses quickly adopted as a viable and trustworthy source of information.⁸⁰ The newspapers made no pretense about political correctness because they appealed directly to the biases of their readers and given that the average working-class or middle-class citizen did not have the time or the organization at his or her disposal to keep up with political or economic developments, they were forced to rely on the news-gathering abilities of the newspaper.⁸¹ This meant that the newspaper became a very powerful tool for disseminating information and could easily sway public opinion in favor of one course or another. Wallas in Garth and O'Donnell stated that men were not entirely governed by reason but often acted on "affection and instinct" and that these could be deliberately aroused and directed in a way that would eventually lead to some course of action desired by the manipulator⁸². The onset of democracy brought about some degree of concern with regards to the power that mass media had on the people.

The invention of the radio widened the scope of information dissemination to give it an international outlook.⁸³ News from one corner could be heard across the frontiers and thus became even more powerful than the newspaper. The emergence of CNN during the Gulf War heralded a new way of reporting that offered the public a closer look into events unfolding as journalists covered live proceedings of the war itself. CNN was criticized by some politicians and members of the public for playing into the hands of enemy propaganda, but on the whole,

⁷⁹ Garth S.J and O'Donnell V.J "Propaganda and Persuasion" SAGE Publications London; 2012:p97

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Ibid p100

⁸² Ibid p102

⁸³ Ibid

these broadcasts were well received and widely viewed. The question of CNN's unwitting role in "giving aid and comfort to the enemy" by showing the damage to civilian life within Iraq was widely debated at the time⁸⁴. During the Gulf War (1990–1991), the emergence of Cable News Network (CNN) and the invaluable role it played as the major disseminator of news throughout the world took many people by surprise. The Gulf War was the first major conflict of a global nature since the introduction of worldwide television satellite services, and the potential of these systems was dramatically illustrated by the instantaneous broadcasts of events from the embattled area.

Digital media is now the new face of media propaganda and its reach is even more global with every passing year. Digital media plays an important role in electoral processes where information about candidates can be presented and vetted online and these politicians put through uncensored public scrutiny. Unlike other forms where the government could control propaganda disseminated, the digital platform is freer than its classic counterparts. Now, on a daily and sometimes even an hourly basis, the actions of politicians are scrutinized, evaluated, commented on, and either praised or ridiculed. There are continuous updates on news websites, or "blogs" (personal columns written by anyone who wishes to act as a journalist on the democratic Internet), which are avidly read by a younger generation attuned to getting their news by reading screens rather than pieces of paper. The potential for propaganda in such a climate is infinite. Anyone can spread a message, true or false, or manipulate information or even alter a picture to suit his or her own ends.⁸⁵ Digital media offers a platform where anyone with internet access can post information, whether verified or not, online and have a snowballing effect that could be detrimental to the targeted party.

⁸⁴ Garth S.J and O'Donnell V.J "Propaganda and Persuasion" SAGE Publications London; 2012;p134

⁸⁵ Ibid p149

The role of media in Diplomacy

Berridge defines diplomacy as the conduct of relations between sovereign states through the medium of officials based at home or abroad. It is the principle means by which states communicate with each other, enabling them to have regular and complex relations. It is the communications system of the international society.⁸⁶ Diplomacy is the conduct of official business by trained personnel representing governments. The purpose of diplomacy is to reach agreement within a framework of policy.⁸⁷ Diplomatic missions are expected to protect the sending state in the receiving state. This may be carried out in various ways. The missions exercise vigilance on the many happenings in the host country in order to ensure that no action or situation could possibly have an adverse effect on the sending state. They can attempt to retain a constant level of harmony between the sending state and the receiving state by taking the necessary precautions to avoid any source of conflict between the countries or remedy any uncomfortable situations should they arise. This function goes hand in hand with another function; to act as a source of information to the home country. The Information may consist of details of the political, commercial, economic or cultural environment of the host country, together with developments and changes.⁸⁸ The task of negotiation and representation of the sending state to the receiving state is vested in the diplomat. The diplomat's role is to provide information and to negotiate.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Berridge, G. R. and James, A. "A dictionary of diplomacy," Palgrave Macmillan: 2003

⁸⁷ Briggs E. "Anatomy of Diplomacy : The Origin and Execution of American Foreign Policy" New York: 1968 :p.202

⁸⁸ Nweke, E. N. "Diplomacy in Era of Digital Governance: Theory and Impact. Information and Knowledge Management," Vol. 2, No.3, 2012. ISSN 2224-5758 (Paper) ISSN 2224-896X 2012.

⁸⁹ Christodoulides, N. The Internet and Diplomacy. USA: American Diplomacy.2005. Available at: http://www.unc.edu/depts/diplomat/item/2005/0103/chri/christo_net.html

Diplomatic relations can be carried out via official and formal channels and this is referred to as track one diplomacy, or via unofficial channels, track two diplomacy. Track one diplomacy is the kind practiced by states and international organizations and is characterized by formal rules and international standards by which states abide.⁹⁰ Track two diplomacy is diplomacy practiced by other actors other than the state and internationally recognized organizations. This method is not bound by bureaucratic structures like states and as such not guided or influenced by formal structures.⁹¹ The media is considered as an actor in track two diplomacy because of the influence it has at the international level.

Within Political Communication literature, there has been a growing realization that the media have an impact on the practice of diplomacy. This has largely led to theoretical discussions including modeling and categorizations of the different ways in which the media can affect diplomatic activity, either supporting or preventing negotiation.⁹² Gilboa distinguishes three models of uses and effects about the way the media are used as a tool of foreign policy and international negotiation: public diplomacy where state and non-state actors use the media to influence public opinion abroad; media diplomacy where officials use the media to communicate with actors and promote conflict resolution; media-broker diplomacy where journalists serve as temporary mediators in international negotiations.⁹³ For instance President Clinton's administration established Radio Free Asia primarily to promote democracy and protection of

⁹⁰ Mwangi M. "Conflict- Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management" Watermark Publications. Nairobi 2000: p123

⁹¹ Ibid p128-129

⁹² Gilboa E. "Mass Communication and Diplomacy: A Theoretical Framework, Communication Theory" 10(3): 275-309; Naveh, Chanah (2002) The Role of the Media in Foreign Policy Decision-Making: A Theoretical Framework, Conflict and Communication Online 1(2) 2000, available at:

http://www.cco.regeneronline.de/2002_2/pdf_2002_2/naveh.pdf

⁹³ Gilboa. E. "Diplomacy in the Media Age: Three Models of Uses and Effects, Diplomacy and Statecraft" 12(2) 2001: 1-28.

human rights in China and Radio Free Iraq to undermine the Saddam Hussein administration.⁹⁴ The reasoning was that by exposing the Chinese population to world democracies, it would inspire some public unrest and this in turn would encourage democratic change.

The multiplicity of actors on the international stage and the growing influence of public opinion as a real and formidable impediment to governmental action necessitate the combination of direct force and alternative means of persuasion. Mass media technology has indeed become an indispensable new weapon in today's wars of influence. Recent years have witnessed the development of an increasingly sophisticated version of state-to-foreign population diplomacy based on the use of the latest communication technologies. This has acquired a central position within a number of foreign affairs systems.⁹⁵ The media also offers an avenue via which disputing parties can communicate without necessarily meeting face to face. During the Gulf conflict, the US Secretary of State James Baker delivered an ultimatum to Saddam Hussein via CNN and not via the US ambassador to Iraq.⁹⁶ Television was used as a medium to communicate a message.

Media can also be directly involved in track two diplomatic processes where journalists take up the role of mediators. Guverith in Gilboa gives the example of a CBS journalist Walter Cronkite who helped arrange President Sadat's first visit to Jerusalem and this set the tone for Israeli-Egyptian peace process.⁹⁷ Cronkite, while interviewing Sadat, asked what it would take for Sadat to travel to Jerusalem to seek peace of which the latter responded that all it would take

⁹⁴ Ibid

⁹⁵ Pahlavi, P. Understanding Iran's Media Diplomacy. *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* VI: 2 (2012). Available at israelcfr.com/documents/6-2/6-2-3-PierrePahlavi.pdf 2012

⁹⁶ Gilboa E., "Diplomacy in the Media Age: Three Models of Uses and Effects, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*" 12(2) 2001: p1-28

⁹⁷ Gilboa E., "Diplomacy in the Media Age: Three Models of Uses and Effects, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*" 12(2) 2001: p1-28

was an invitation from Israel. Cronkite delivered this message to Israel and the Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin instructed Cronkite to inform Sadat that he was invited to Israel.⁹⁸ The journalist was directly involved in the mediation process, and managed to get the communication process between the two disputing states. As such the media can be directly involved in mediation processes where the journalists temporarily take the role of mediators and by pass the rigid processes that come with track one diplomacy.

The media and human rights

The United Nations Commission of Human Rights defines human rights as rights that are inherent to all human beings, whatever the nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. Everyone is entitled to these rights without discrimination and they are often expressed and guaranteed by law, in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles and other sources of international law.⁹⁹ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights that was declared by the United Nations in 1948 protects the rights of all humans across the globe. Article 19 of the declaration states that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ <http://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/pages/whatarehumanrights.aspx>

¹⁰⁰ The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights available at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#a19> accessed on 09/09/14 10:50

Role of media in human rights

International Council on Human Rights asserts that a free press is also a human right and the two paradigms are intertwined.¹⁰¹ The other overlap between the concerns of human rights campaigners and journalists is in the subject matter. The violations of rights that are of concern to the former may often be the scoops or hidden scandals that preoccupy the latter.¹⁰² The media is considered as the fourth estate because it is meant to hold the other three arms or ‘estates’ of government accountable for their actions and in order to do that, they need to enjoy their freedom. The right to press freedom warrants the media the right to determine the form which their programs will assume, as well as the appropriate form of reporting.¹⁰³ The press, apart from being autonomous and independent of government (in most democratic countries) is often not free from interference by corporate powers, advertisers, civil press groups, publishers and editors, and these are seldom taken into account.¹⁰⁴

Although the media could be seen to be entitled to the right to freedom of expression, in reality, this right is not totally free. In the case of censorship by government, authoritarian regimes characteristically tighten their control in monitoring media contents. Contents which question their policies are often removed. Media outfits may either be owned or subsidized by the government whereby the government has to approve content before it is published. In some cases, they are involved in the appointment of the editorial board of media organizations. For instance, in China, the communist party owns the media which serve as its “mouthpiece”. Only

¹⁰¹ International Council on Human Rights Policy, « Journalism, Media and the Challenge of Human Rights Reporting » Versoix, Switzerland :2002

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Jacobsen, A. “Human rights monitoring: Field mission manual, Leiden,” Martinus-Nijhoff Publishers: 2008

¹⁰⁴ Apodaca, C. The whole world could be watching: Human rights and the media, Journal of Human rights, 6: 2007: p147-164

positive stories are free to be published.¹⁰⁵ As a result of the tight control of the media, some journalists lost their jobs. In self-censorship, media outfits on their own decide to publish or broadcast their news stories depending on how the contents might impact on their survival as organizations.¹⁰⁶

Political instability and economic consideration can limit the exercise of press freedom. The concentration of media into groups as a result of the influence of elites whose economic and political interests displace those of the public and the society at large also infringes on press freedom. Any constraint on press freedom is a constraint on human rights, except in cases where such freedom might violate human rights. According to Cohen, the values of not harming others and respecting others should play a prominent part in the consideration of journalists.¹⁰⁷ This could be achieved by the media if due consideration is given to media ethics. The media can decide to act ethically or not. It is imperative for the media to exercise caution and restraint in their method of information gathering and dissemination to avoid unintentional violation of human rights.

Conclusion

The media is indeed an active participant in current global issues and trends and whether print, electronic or digital media, they have great influence on global matters. The media can help and hinder peace efforts in equal measure. If subjected to stringent and tough regulations by

¹⁰⁵ Hong, Z. Chinese press freedom proves an illusion Guardian [internet] 10 October. 2008 Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/oct/10/china?INTCMP=ILCNETTX> T3487

¹⁰⁶ Branigan, T. China tightens grip on press freedom, Guardian [internet] 27 January 2011. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jan/27/china-press-freedom>

¹⁰⁷ Cohen A. Research methods in education, New York: Routledge: 2007

governments then the media is reduced to a propaganda tool or mouthpiece for the powers in government. Press freedom is a key factor in promoting democracy and development but this freedom should come with professionalism on the part of the journalists. The media need to understand that they have great power to influence the masses, but with great power come great responsibility. These responsibilities are shaped in the form of honest and impartial reporting of events, showing restraint in times of crisis and also looking towards promotion of peace efforts with a view to change negative attitudes that could lead to disturbance of peace. The media should strive to promote what Galtung refers to as “positive peace” while shunning “negative peace.” Negative peace refers to the absence of violence, while positive peace refers to the building of new relations in many relevant areas between former enemies, including open borders, trade, tourism and cultural ties.¹⁰⁸

The next chapter looks at the nature and types of conflict. It will look at the contentious issues that lead to conflict and how to manage and resolve such conflicts.

¹⁰⁸ Gilboa E. “Media and Conflict Resolution” in Bercovitch J, Kremenyuk V, and Zartman W.I. The SAGE handbook of Conflict Resolution, SAGE Publications, 2009: p467

Chapter Three

Media in Conflict and Conflict Management

Introduction

Chapter two examined the role and conduct of media in dealing with international issues. The chapter further reviewed the role of media in international relations, as a tool for propaganda, the role of media in diplomacy and finally the role of media in human rights before presenting a conclusion. Chapter three investigate the role of media in conflict management. The chapter looks into the nature of conflict as well as the agents the internationalize conflicts in developing nations.

Background to the nature of Conflict in Africa

The word conflict is derived from the Latin word *confligere* meaning to strike together.¹⁰⁹ A conflict is a clash between ideas or interests with a person(s), groups or states pursuing mutually incompatible goals¹¹⁰. Machiavelli defines conflict as a consequence of human desire for self-preservation and power. A group that shares the same beliefs and value systems may feel the need to strike together against another group that is perceived as suppressing these beliefs and values. Conflict arise due to non-negotiable ideals for example territorial integrity, religious beliefs, cultural practices, class and identity, rights, resources among others. From a Marxist perspective, the existence of different social classes is the continuous source of inevitable conflict. These differences in classes give rise to social tensions and they can generate into conflict if they are not addressed in time and effectively.

¹⁰⁹ Wright Q. in Burton J., Dukes Frank, “*Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution*,” Macmillan Publishers 1990: p16

¹¹⁰ Berghof Foundation (ed.) “*Berghof Glossary on Conflict Transformation: 20 notions for theory and practice*”, BERLIN; Berghof Foundation 2012: p10

Social tensions are defined as the conditions arising from inconsistencies among initiatives in the structure of society.¹¹¹ Social tensions could arise due to factors like injustices against a particular group or outright suppression of that group. These injustices could take the form of lack of political representation, lack of social amenities and unequal distribution of resources, unaddressed historical injustices among others. The intensity of tension tends to increase with the decrease of social distance between groups and with increases in the amount of energy behind them.¹¹² So the more efforts are put in bridging the distance between social groups, the higher the likelihood of reduced instances of conflicts. Conflicts may be carried on by methods of coercion, which normally involves violence or by persuasion which need not involve violence though violence may be utilized as a method of persuasion. Persuasion is mostly in the lines of political, ideological and legal conflict.¹¹³

The nature of conflict among developing nations.

Olatunde et al argue that a list of the causes of conflict in Africa include ideology, personality, internal power struggles, ethnicity, decolonization, territorial disputes, refugee problems among others.¹¹⁴ Ideologies could be religious or cultural. This chapter looks at religion, territory, ethnicity, resources and electoral processes as causes of conflict.

¹¹¹ Berghof Foundation (ed.) *“Berghof Glossary on Conflict Transformation: 20 notions for theory and practice”*, BERLIN; Berghof Foundation 2012:p18

¹¹² Wright Q. in Burton J., Dukes Frank, *“Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution,”* Macmillan Publishers 1990: p18

¹¹³ Ibid p25

¹¹⁴ Olatunde J.C.B., Orwa D.K. Utete C.M.B. *“African International Relations”* Longman Publisher:London:1985:p130

Religion and Conflict

Conflicts do arise from differences in perceptions and societal values that one feels cannot make compromises on. Values of religion and religious beliefs are examples of such perceptions that making compromises on proves difficult. Where such differences have existed, instances of violent conflicts have been evident. Kadayifci-Orellana defines religion as systems of beliefs and practices relating to the sacred.¹¹⁵ Sacred practices have over the years become realities that people live by and trivializing another's beliefs can lead to conflict. Religious feelings can mobilize people faster than any other elements of their identity.¹¹⁶ Religion is a strong motivator because each religion holds beliefs that their selected path is the true path, and this is a belief that is difficult to alter.

Religious leaders can employ sacred texts, religious myths and images to invoke emotions of violence.¹¹⁷ Religious conflicts refer to conflicts that erupt between parties which are divided along religious lines.¹¹⁸ When parties don't share religious values and one party attempts to impose its beliefs on the other party, this difference in perception might result in physical confrontation. Religious beliefs are usually subject to interpretation and the believers in a particular religion places the duty of interpretation to religious leaders. These religious leaders interpret the beliefs and preach the message to the people. Kadayifci-Orellana argues that religious traditions contains interpretations in regards to war and peace and these interpretations range from justifying violence to promotion of nonviolence. The Islamic faith for instance allows

¹¹⁵ Kadayifci-Orellana S.A "Ethno-Religious Conflicts: Exploring the role of religion in Conflict Resolution" in "": in Bercovitch J., Kremenjuk V. and Zartman W.I: SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution; SAGE Publications:2009:p267

¹¹⁶ Ibid

¹¹⁷ Ibid

¹¹⁸ Ibid p265

for defensive use of violence only when attacked or offensive use of violence to bring non-Muslim communities under Muslim control.¹¹⁹

Islam began a career of conquests in the seventeenth century with the thesis that it was the only true faith and was necessarily in conflict with all other religions. This was represented in the doctrines of the *Jihad*, or “perpetual war” of the world on Islam with the “world of war”, which basically meant that in theory the believers were always at war with the unbelievers.¹²⁰ This led to continuous attacks by the Arabs on the Roman Empire and Christians. Christendom, however, reacted militantly in the Crusades of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries turning on Islam with the doctrine of papal sovereignty of the world.¹²¹ Much later, the Christians and the Protestants also embarked on a religious war due to differences in ideologies. The Protestants were a breakaway group from the mainstream catholic faith and the differences in doctrines led to conflict in the sixteenth and part of the seventeenth century. This conflict was ended by the Peace of Westphalia which recognized the sovereignty of territorial states and the authority of the temporal monarch to determine the religion of his people if he wished. Since the Protestants and Catholic states have found it possible to co-exist peacefully.¹²²

Religious conflicts are still a common feature in the modern world. Some acts of terrorism are propagated by extremists groups in the name of jihad or crusade. Religious justifications are made for conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, interreligious rivalries in Iraq between Shia and Sunni Muslim, tribal warfare in India between Muslim and Hindu, and

¹¹⁹ I Kadayifci-Orellana S.A “Ethno-Religious Conflicts: Exploring the role of religion in Conflict Resolution” in ”: in Bercovitch J., Kremenjuk V. and Zartman W.I: SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution; SAGE Publications:2009:p269

¹²⁰ Ibid p16

¹²¹ Ibid

¹²²Wright Q. in Burton J., Dukes Frank, “*Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution,*” Macmillan Publishers 1990: p17

Buddhists and Hindus in Sri Lanka, and sections of the US Christian Right claim between Christians and Muslims in Iraq.¹²³ The intertwining of these security and religion issues is played out in the media with newspapers and broadcasters competing with each other to produce the most dramatic pictures or most sensationalist headlines in order to both inform and to sell newspapers and attract advertising revenue.¹²⁴

Abu Nimer in Bercovitch et al states five characteristics of religiously motivated conflicts resolution methods. The first one is based on spirituality. Religious peace building focuses on the spiritual aspects of human existence. Humans are spiritual beings and one should recognize the emotional, psychological and spiritual needs of a person.¹²⁵ Appealing to a person's spirituality and his/her good nature is a key element in religious conflict transformation. A second characteristic is religious values and vocabulary. The focus here is using approaches integrated in religious values of forgiveness, personal accountability, belief in the truth, love, patience, compassion among others.¹²⁶ Finding a link between the actual conflict and a relating it to a religious belief give the people some guidance while reminding them of the greater divine good and purpose of their peaceful efforts. Sacred texts also are used in religious conflict resolution. Quoting holy books like the Bible, the Quran or recounting tales of religious background provide a level of "certainty" and "truth."¹²⁷ These can also serve as a guiding tool for the people. Religious rituals such as mediation, prayer and others can help the individual get through difficult times during a conflict. When believers observe their religious values, it is easier to

¹²³ M. Lee and Savigny H. "Media, Religion and Conflict" 2008:p10-11

¹²⁴ Ibid

¹²⁵ AbuNimer M in I Kadayifci-Orellana S.A "Ethno-Religious Conflicts: Exploring the role of religion in Conflict Resolution" in Bercovitch J., Kremenyuk V. and Zartman W.I: SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution; SAGE Publications:2009:p276

¹²⁶ Ibid

¹²⁷ Ibid

approach them for peace talks. Finally, AbuNimer believes that involving faith-based actors in the peace process can promote lasting peace.¹²⁸ These actors could be religious groups or individuals known by everyone can indeed help with the realization of lasting peace because they uphold societal values and religious virtues.

Religious leaders and faith-based organizations are legitimate and credible actors because they are committed to peace and serve as a motivation, factors which are critical for resolving conflicts and building peace.¹²⁹ Religious leaders are highly respected in society and given the fact that they represent religious values, they have the advantage that people are willing to listen to them. They can act as mediators in a conflict for instance Pope John Paul II was able to successfully mediate between Chile and Argentina during the Beagle Channel Conflict. The Vatican was the only mediator both governments could agree to, as it possessed moral power and seeing as both nations were predominantly catholic, the Pope's moral authority greatly influenced the public opinion.¹³⁰

Ethnic conflicts in developing state

Eriksen defines ethnicity as an aspect of relationship between people or group whose members believe that is it culturally distinctive.¹³¹ They share a common history, practices and beliefs. An ethnic group suggests organized activities by people who are linked by a consciousness of special identity, who jointly seek to maximize on the corporate political,

¹²⁸ AbuNimer M in I Kadayifci-Orellana S.A "Ethno-Religious Conflicts: Exploring the role of religion in Conflict Resolution" in Bercovitch J., Kremenyuk V. and Zartman W.I: SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution; SAGE Publications:2009:p276

¹²⁹ I Kadayifci-Orellana S.A "Ethno-Religious Conflicts: Exploring the role of religion in Conflict Resolution" in Bercovitch J., Kremenyuk V. and Zartman W.I: SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution; SAGE Publications:2009:p277

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹Eriksen T.H. "Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology"London: Pluto Press:1995

economic and social interests.¹³² Ethnic divisions and identities in Africa are credited to the colonial authoritarian management style that emphasized on differences rather than similarities between groups with the purpose of preventing mobilization of the populace for united political action.¹³³ These differences in the long run were manifested negatively and contributed to the ethnic animosity as witnessed in some parts of the continent. In Burundi a side effect of the Tutsi repression of 1972, a sense of shared fate emerged among the organizationally distinct Hutu of the North-center, uniting them with the Hutu of the South-Imbo.¹³⁴

Ethnic conflict since the early 1990s has been posing challenges since it is rapidly transforming to armed combat. Sadowski highlights six claims that negated contending arguments during that period over the causes of ethnic conflict and the violence it engulfed the world in. First, militarized conflict rose dramatically at the end of the Cold War. Secondly, these conflicts are historically deep-rooted. Thirdly, ethnic conflict led to the disintegration of USSR a super power. Fourth, militarization of ethnic conflict has become more savage and genocidal than conventional warfare. Fifth, globalization exacerbates these conflicts. Lastly, fanaticism makes it hard to terminate militarized ethnic conflict.¹³⁵

The term 'militarization' does not refer only to rule by the gun, or to military conflicts and the arms suppliers that keep them going. Militarism refers to the pervasiveness in society of symbols, values and discourses validating military power and preparation for war. Militarization refers to a multidimensional process through which a number of elements such as military coups and regimes, authoritarian government, the dominance of patriarchy, powerful military and

¹³² Rothchild D. "*Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa; Pressures and Incentives for cooperation.*" Brookings Institution press, Washington DC 1997: p4

¹³³ Ibid:p8

¹³⁴ Ibid

¹³⁵ Yahya M. Sadowski, '*Ethnic Conflict*', Foreign Policy No.111, Summer 1998 pp12-23

repressive state apparatuses, war and armed conflict, rising military spending and arms imports, and external military intervention-become dynamically linked, both to each other and more widely, to capital accumulation and projects for national and international hegemony.¹³⁶

Horowitz argues that ethnicity is primordial, in that it is based on things that that people cannot live without coupled with a spirit of self-consciousness.¹³⁷ This leads into a spill over into conflict especially by smaller communities for fear of marginalization and exclusion or for purposes of retaliation. This encourages the small ethnic identities to seek ways of protecting their perceived democratic space and arming themselves is one such method as they demand a share of the democratic space and equal distribution of resources as was witnessed in the Congo in 2004 by the ostracized Banyamulenges. Ethnic conflicts are common particularly in the political spheres as the smaller ethnic communities seek to have a share of the political space. The way a state addresses these ethnic demands can determine the outcome.

Rothchild states two approaches that the state can adopt in trying to sort out ethnic demands. Firstly the hegemonic approach, where the regime in power consolidates power at the political center where it not only inhibits free expression represses any opposition.¹³⁸ This is however dependent on the presence of a dominant political elite with more ethnic numbers than the rest. As such the policy mechanisms that can be used to control the other ethnic groups include subjection, isolation, cultural assimilation, avoidance and displacement. Subjection is use of coercive measures to assure the self-determination of the dominant majority without making too many political concessions as was the case in apartheid South Africa. Isolation involves

¹³⁶ Luckham R. *The Military, Militarization and Democratization in Africa: A Survey of Literature and Issues*: JSTOR African Studies Review, Vol. 37, No. 2 (Sep., 1994), pp. 13-75Published by: African Studies Association

¹³⁷ Horowitz D – 1988: “*Paper on -Structure and Strategy in Ethnic Conflict*”

¹³⁸ Rothchild D. “*Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa; Pressures and Incentives for cooperation.*” Brookings Institution press, Washington DC 1997:p41

separation of contending groups into distinct political systems for example Eritrea's separation from Ethiopia via a referendum. Cultural assimilation is absorption of weaker ethnic groups into the core culture for example in former Sudan. Avoidance involves containing ethnic conflict by insulating the state from direct confrontation with ethnic groups either by imposing a no party or one party state system as with Ghana and Kenya before multiparty politics. Finally displacement involves moving one ethnic group from one geographical location to another in what can be termed as ethnic cleansing or assisted migrations.¹³⁹ Secondly, the political elite can adopt the power sharing approach.¹⁴⁰ In this approach the political elite represent their ethnic groups and opt to preserve stability of the state so as to advance their power agendas under the guise of doing what is best for their ethnic communities. The great disadvantage is that the population will always identify itself by their ethnic background first before their national identity.

Resources and Conflict

Ownership of natural resources are areas of great contention among states in the international system. Every state seeks to control valuable resources. Lack of access to resources and the quest to acquire them at all costs can lead to conflicts. Degradation of the environment, climate changes, rise in population are among some of the causes of resource based conflicts. The unequal distribution of resources and the deprivation of the masses from accessing basic necessities is indeed a recipe for conflict. Karl Marx class theory talks of the impact of inequalities which could eventually lead to rebellions. The more a group is able to come together if they share a common fate and a feeling of deprivation the more chances of conflict to acquire what they deem is rightfully theirs. Randal Collins in *Le Billon* narrowed down conflict to

¹³⁹ Rothchild D. "*Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa; Pressures and Incentives for cooperation.*" Brookings Institution press, Washington DC 1997:p41

¹⁴⁰ Ibid p42

unequal distribution of resources. The unequal distribution of each scarce resource produces potential conflict between those who control it and those who don't. The concept of relative deprivation by Ted Gurr in *Le Billon* linked economic disparities and political violence and this initiated a systematic analysis of the role of inequality in conflicts.¹⁴¹

Le Billon argues that most conflicts usually erupt in poorer developing countries because of two reasons. First, that high cost of conflicts increases poverty especially if the conflict is taking place within the borders, Secondly, poverty weakens a state's capacity to resolve conflict and curtail any escalation of violence.¹⁴² However poverty cannot be singled out as the sole source of conflict, other factors might also play a role such as low literacy levels, dictatorial regimes who want to control everything coupled by low civic education among others. Abundance of resources can also provoke conflict. Critical resources like water and oil, minerals, fishing areas among others have been at the center of some conflicts across the globe. Control of these resources has been a prime concern for western powers since the 17th century. Since sea power rested on access to timber, naval timber supply became a major preoccupation of major European powers from the 17th century, a situation comparable to oil in the 20th century.¹⁴³ The scramble for Africa by western powers was based on the quest for control of resources that were unexploited in the continent. The age of industrialization further enhanced the need to control key resources and the growing populations put pressure on the existing resources thus sparking a quest for more. Resource war results from a combination of population and economic growth leading to expansion in demand or raw materials, expected resource shortages and contested

¹⁴¹ Le Billon P. "*Economic and Resource Causes of Conflict*" in Bercovitch J., Kremenyuk V. and Zartman W.I: SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution; SAGE Publications:2009: p212

¹⁴² Ibid p213

¹⁴³ Ibid

resource ownership.¹⁴⁴ Oil and other mineral resources like diamonds are key causes of conflicts in Africa. The Democratic Republic of Congo boasts of numerous minerals, rare timber but is plagued by incessant inter and intra-state conflicts.

The Nile water is also a key resource among the Nile riparian states and its water is a potential source of interstate conflict. Since the coming of the socialist government in Ethiopia, Egypt has on several occasions declared that it would go to war with Ethiopia if it interfered with the flow of the Blue Nile which originates from the Ethiopian Highlands.¹⁴⁵ However, despite Ethiopia's construction of a dam on the Blue Nile has not been met by the aggression purported by Egypt. States fight for control of resources and from a realist perspective, power play determines who controls what resources. However idealists view this control from a cooperation perspective where states depend on each other and share the available resources and this could be one of the reasons why Egypt has not followed through on their initial threat of military action against Ethiopia.

Boundary disputes and territorial disagreements have also been sources of conflicts from time immemorial. Even when they pose no danger of war, these issues can linger for years as they did in the El Chamizal dispute between the USA and Mexico.¹⁴⁶ However, most territorial disputes have a high likelihood of going to war. From a realist perspective, sovereignty is a key issue when considering territorial integrity. While territory is both tangible and divisible, the disagreements arising from territorial conflict could be long lasting. Vasquez and Heneham state that states with territorial disputes are likely to become enduring rivals and could possibly have six or

¹⁴⁴ Le Billon P. "Economic and Resource Causes of Conflict" in Bercovitch J., Kremenyuk V. and Zartman W.I: SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution; SAGE Publications:2009: p214

¹⁴⁵ Olatunde J.C.B., Orwa D.K., Utete C.B.M "African International Relations." Longman Publishers:1985:p136

¹⁴⁶ Vasquez J.A and Valeriano B.: "Territory as a Source of Conflict and Road to Peace": in Bercovitch J., Kremenyuk V. and Zartman W.I: SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution; SAGE Publications:2009:p193

more militarized interstate disputes within a twenty year period¹⁴⁷. They also argued that disputes between bordering states are mostly due to territorial claims and that territorial disputes have a higher likelihood of escalating into war than any other disputes.¹⁴⁸ This is mainly due to power politics where one state attempts to assert its sovereignty over the other, using force to get the other side to give in to its territorial demands.

Borders serve two functions. First of all, with the norm of self-determination, they serve the purpose of offering identity. Secondly, they delimit what constitute a state. This constitutive function originates with national sovereignty and is institutionalized in the Peace of Westphalia and International Law, which recognizes that states alone have political sovereignty over a specific piece of territory.¹⁴⁹ Altering these borders denies a state of its sovereignty and this, from the state's perspective, is nonnegotiable. Olatunde et al argue that territorial conflicts in Africa arise when the legality of the colonial boundaries are challenged.¹⁵⁰ Such territorial boundaries have been the source of conflicts in Africa since the postcolonial era. Territorial disputes are based on the premise of one state claiming ownership of a part of another state. Colonial governments did not take into account certain ethnic or religious factors in the creation of boundaries. Modern territorial or boundary disputes in Africa have their origins in colonialism. These boundaries were drawn to suit European interests.¹⁵¹ A classic example is the divisions in the horn of Africa where almost all the eastern African states have a certain percentage of Somali speakers. Ethnic relations were ignored and the Somali-speaking people

¹⁴⁷ Vasquez J.A and Valeriano B. "*Territory as a Source of Conflict and Road to Peace*": in Bercovitch J., Kremenjuk V. and Zartman W.I: SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution; SAGE Publications:2009: p195-196

¹⁴⁸ Ibid

¹⁴⁹ Ibid p200

¹⁵⁰ Olatunde J.C.B., Orwa D.K., Utete C.B.M "*African International Relations.*" Longman Publishers:1985:p135-136

¹⁵¹ Ibid

can be found in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.¹⁵² This led to claims by Somalia on territories in Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti. In 1961, Somalia put claim on the whole of Kenya's North-Eastern Provinces and three-quarters of Eastern and Coast Provinces, the Ethiopian Ogaden and the State of Djibouti.¹⁵³

Electoral Processes and Conflicts.

Liberal democracy privileges elections as the only means by which popular consent can be granted or obtained.¹⁵⁴ Elections give the populace a chance to select leaders to represent their interests via popular consent. Citizens vote in order to choose both representatives and policies and subsequently, make replacements when and where it is necessary.¹⁵⁵ Electoral processes are thus the legitimate way citizens can influence the choice of decision makers and popular consent gives the government legitimacy to rule. Electoral processes usually draw a lot of public interest across the globe and are more often than not very emotive events. The clamor for political power in a context where the winner emerges are the sole controller of all resources, politicians will do almost anything to access power. Instances of voter bribery are usually rampant, especially in emerging democracies, where politicians buy votes and in return, most voters, both individuals and as ethnic communities expect material reward from the political and ethnic patrons who benefit from their vote.¹⁵⁶ This then negates the concept of a government elected by popular consent because in the long run it is a case of who can pay more to get votes.

¹⁵²Olatunde J.C.B., Orwa D.K., Utete C.B.M "African International Relations." Longman Publishers:1985:p135-136

¹⁵³ Ibid

¹⁵⁴ Chweya L. "Western Modernity , African Indigene, and Political Order: Interrogating the Liberal Democratic Orthodoxy" in Ludeki C. "Electoral Politics in Kenya" Claripress; Nairobi 2002:p5

¹⁵⁵ Ibid 5-6

¹⁵⁶ Ibid p7

Electoral processes can be marred by violence due to perceived electoral malpractices either on the part of the electoral body conducting the elections or the government in place at the time of the elections. Riots, demonstrations and strikes often arise and political instability is in many cases, greater in the immediate post-elections period than in the period before.¹⁵⁷

Democracy relies on elections and opposition parties as a means of controlling the party in power – the government.¹⁵⁸ Electoral processes by constantly scrutinizing performance and replacing officials during electoral processes. Opposition parties are also meant to question the state on issues deemed inappropriate or spot failures in government business for correction. However the former process takes place after the five year term of presidency and the latter can be subject to abuse or perceived as witch-hunt by the “losers” in the electoral process. Some of the processes of recalling leaders deemed unfit to hold public office are at times long and tedious. The media is also tasked with this duty of keeping the other three “Estates” in check (the Executive, the Judiciary and the Legislature).

During electoral processes, mainstream media have been the official medium tasked with dissemination of information during electoral processes. However, depending on how the media handles information it receives the results might either lead to peaceful transitions or outbreak of conflict. An irresponsible media can easily incite populations into acts of violence in the guise of protests against perceived electoral injustices. The print and electronic media can be controlled by the State mechanism. Technological advancements, particularly the internet have given rise to a new media that has widened the scope of dissemination of information. Access to the internet has greatly popularized social sites for example Facebook, Twitter, Instagram among others as

¹⁵⁷ Chweya L. “Western Modernity , African Indigene, and Political Order: Interrogating the Liberal Democratic Orthodoxy” in Ludeki C. “Electoral Politics in Kenya” Claripress; Nairobi 2002:p6

¹⁵⁸ Ibid p22

well as blogs and these have claimed an important stake in influencing public opinion and shaping the public debate on key issues affecting the populace. These mediums, which can offer anonymity to the authors, are in most instances unedited and even uncensored and this could have adverse effects on peace.

States can easily control the information disseminated by what is considered main stream media, especially if it is considered as hate speech, but controlling the virtual world is indeed difficult. In as much as social media can be used negatively in inciting people to violence during electoral processes, they can also serve as tools for managing conflicts if appropriately managed. Social media is indeed turning out to be an active player in modern day electoral processes. Inpolitical conflicts, particularly in the third world, the causes of conflicts include illegitimacy of governments and regimes, and conflicts of constitutionalism.¹⁵⁹

Conflict management

Mwagiru defines conflict management as any management process by which parties to the conflict are encouraged to come together and do something about their conflict.¹⁶⁰ They can do so on their own or invite a third part to help in striking a deal. These third parties could range from nation-states, state coalitions, regional or international organizations and individuals¹⁶¹. These third parties who either offer their services or are often invited by the disputants usually make efforts to have talks and interact with the warring factions with the aim of reaching a middle ground. Sigmund and Molly in Bercovitch et al argue that the nature of conflict

¹⁵⁹ Mwagiru M. "The Constitution as a Source of Crisis: A Conflict Analysis of Democracy and Presidential Power in Kenya in L. Chweya (ed) Constitutional Politics and the Challenge of Democracy in Kenya" SAREAT, Nairobi 1999:p173.

¹⁶⁰ Mwagiru M. "Conflict- Theory, Processes and Institutions of management," Watermark Publications Nairobi 2000: p43

¹⁶¹ Dixon W.J. "Third Party Techniques for Preventing Conflict Escalation and Promoting Peaceful Settlement." International organization 50 (4): 1996: p653-681

management process affects the durability of the agreements. The different methods of conflict management may work together, as more than one method is used in the same conflict.¹⁶² Negotiation is one such method. This is a direct conflict management between the disputants without third party assistance, where they seek a mutually acceptable agreement through compromise. Economic sanctions is another method and this involves formalizing intermediary demands by limiting financial interactions with disputants. Mediation is also an effective method of conflict management and this involves third party assistance in finding a mutually acceptable agreement. States can also be enticed by positive inducements. This involves economic and military aid, support in international organizations, and assistance with civil administration. If the above methods fail, the conflicting parties can seek adjudication or arbitration. This involves the international legal system to manage a conflict by generating a binding decision to which the disputants must adhere. Other methods that have been adopted, particularly when violent conflict escalates to the levels that cause great suffering to the populace, the immediate response is to protect the population by sending in non-combatant troops. The troops to act as peacekeepers, humanitarian protectors, military observers. However if the conflict shows no sign of subsiding, then there is the option of direct military intervention where troops are sent across the border with the intent to stop ongoing conflict. Vocalization is also a method that has been propagated by the media in managing conflicts. Vocalization involves public third party appeals or demands for disputants to negotiate, agree to a ceasefire, or withdraw troops.¹⁶³ Vocalization is a common reaction from the international community to a dispute and can be further fuelled by pressure from the media.

¹⁶² Sigmund S.G and Molly M.M, “*Assessing Outcomes: Conflict Management and the Durability of Peace*” in Bercovitch J. Kremenjuk V. and Zartman W.I – *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution*; SAGE Publications, London 2009: p568

¹⁶³ Ibid

Agents of Internationalization of Conflict in Africa

Mwagiru identifies five main agents of internationalization of internal conflicts; interdependence, human rights, the idea that international conflict has domestic sources, ethnicity and the media.¹⁶⁴

Interdependence

States and other actors in the international system depend on each other for one reason or another. For instance Kenya and Uganda depend on each other as trade partners. Uganda is a landlocked country and depends on the Kenyan port for goods going to Uganda. Kenya offers passage of goods to Uganda and the trade partnership benefits both state. A conflict that takes place in Kenya could affect the economy of Uganda should the transit of goods be disrupted. This means that the internal conflict in Kenya has an international impact on Uganda. This interdependence of states then makes it difficult to draw a fast line between domestic and international.¹⁶⁵

Domestic sources of International Conflict

International conflicts can also be as a result of domestic sources as such events that happen within a country's borders could be of interest to other states since the outcome of these events might affect the international system as a whole. With regards to global commons, especially with particular concern to environmental degradation, might lead to international conflict. For instance, the Nile serves many countries in Africa. Egypt has on occasion made

¹⁶⁴ Mwagiru M. "Conflict- Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management" Watermark Publications, Nairobi: 2000: p62

¹⁶⁵ Ibid

threats of war against Ethiopia should they interfere with the flow of the Nile since this is a major source of livelihood to the Egyptians.

Internationalization of Human Rights

Human rights are rights that are inherent to all human beings, whatever the nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. Everyone is entitled to these rights without discrimination by international law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights that was declared by the United Nations in 1948 protects the rights of all humans across the globe. This means that any injustices happening in one state can be questioned by individuals or organizations from another state. Before the 1948 declaration, states claimed sovereignty with regards to issues taking place within their borders. However, after the Second World War, the Nazi massacre of six million Jews by Hitler raised questions whether the international community should keep quiet in the face of human rights violations of that magnitude.¹⁶⁶

Ethnicity and Ethnic Relations

This can be traced back to the colonial era where the colonial powers created borders in Africa without consideration of the ethnic relations in the region. The divisions were mainly made for personal colonial interests and this resulted in the separation of ethnic groups in different countries. Asiwaju in Mwangiri argues that virtually every border in Africa divides an ethnic community, often between two or more states. The Somali community for instance is not

¹⁶⁶ Mwangiri M. "Conflict- Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management" Watermark Publications, Nairobi: 2000: p64

only found in Somalia, but also in Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia.¹⁶⁷ Africans inherited colonial heritage that did not favor unity and speaking with a common voice. The principle of divide and rule was an easy administrative strategy to keep Africans from speaking with a common voice. The long-term effects of this however were far-reaching than anticipated. In Nigeria, the insulation of the relatively disadvantaged northern region from the economic, political and social progress that marked the more developed southern territory, a phenomenon that created severe problems for subsequent regimes¹⁶⁸. After African states obtained their independence, the artificial and poorly demarcated borders of many countries were considered the most potent source of conflict and political instability. Africa's 53 sovereign states are divided by over 165 borders, making it one of the most bisected continents in the world.¹⁶⁹

The Media

Historically, information technology advances have influenced the strategy of leaders, and the way in which wars have been fought.¹⁷⁰ Previous research suggests that democracies may be uniquely sensitive to international audience perceptions in conflict.¹⁷¹ By increasing the speed and dissemination information (to both troops and international and domestic audiences), technology influences the strategies and constraints of leaders that is central to the bargaining models of international conflict.¹⁷² The increasing use of digital media by states and the general public affords state actors and leader's new abilities to more precisely and quickly communicate,

¹⁶⁷ Mwangi M. "Conflict- Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management" Watermark Publications, Nairobi: 2000: p64

¹⁶⁸ Rothchild D. "*Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa; Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation.*" Brookings Institution press, Washington DC 1997: p7-8

¹⁶⁹ Nana-Sinkam, SC (2000). *The sources of conflict, paper presented at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) training program to enhance conflict prevention and peace building in Africa*, Dakar, Senegal, Goree Institute, 9–20 October 2000, 7.

¹⁷⁰ Van Creveld M. "*Technology and War: From 2000 B.C. to the Present.*" 1st Ed: Free Press: 1989.

¹⁷¹ Fearon, James D. "Rationalist explanations for war. " *International Organization*" 49(03): 1995: p379- 414.

¹⁷² Fearon, James D. "Signaling Foreign Policy Interests Tying Hands versus Sinking Costs". *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41(1):1997: 68-90.

and respond to international audiences during conflict. The innovation of the current study is to use social media data to construct new, more disaggregated data to examine how states respond to changes in public support, and mediator behavior during conflict.

The 2012 Gaza Conflict demonstrates how international audiences influence conflict, as both Hamas and Israel used social media extensively to try to shape the information about the conflict, and engaged with international audiences on social media. On November 14, 2012, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) launched a series of airstrikes against Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip in response to increased rocket fire from the Gaza Strip.¹⁷³ The fighting continued until a mediated cease fire, brokered by Egypt and the United States (US), with United Nations (UN) oversight, took effect on November 21, 2012. The escalation of conflict mirrored past hostilities between Israel and Hamas (notably the 2008-2009 Gaza Conflict), with Israel launching airstrikes and Hamas responding with inaccurate rocket fire. Yet, the extensive use of digital media, specifically Twitter, by both sides in the 2012 Gaza Conflict was unprecedented. Twitter is a social media platform for rapid, public, and concise messages to be shared among networked followers. The IDF used the @IDFSpokesperson Twitter account to announced its campaign on Twitter (see excerpt above), and both the IDF and Hamas, via its @AlQassamBrigade, also engaged each other over social media.¹⁷⁴ Each side used social media to attempt to put their own actions in a better context, and denigrate the opposition. While the use of social media during the conflict is interesting, what is of greater interest to scholars of international relations, is what social media (and the data constructed from it) reveals about how actors' strategies are constrained (or not) by international audiences. The present study uses social media to construct

¹⁷³ Borger, Julian (2012). Israel and Hamas deploy Twitter feeds in media war. The Guardian.

URL:<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/nov/15/israel-hamas-twitter-media-war>

¹⁷⁴ Al Qassam Brigades. (2012). The Official Twitter Feed of Hamas's Armed Wing.

URL:<https://twitter.com/AlqassamBrigade>

extremely disaggregated (hourly-level) data on public support for each actor during the 2012 Gaza Conflict.

Media coverage of international conflict has inspired heated normative and ethical debates on types of journalism. The most well-known are debates about bystander journalism versus journalism of attachment, and war/conflict journalism versus peace journalism. Bell's TV News: "How Far Should We Go?" criticized conflict coverage by distinguishing between bystanders' journalism and journalism of attachment. He criticized media neutrality and explained that bystanders' journalism concerns itself more with the circumstances of violence such as military formations, weapons, strategies, maneuvers, and tactics, while journalism of attachment concerns itself more with people; those who provoke wars, those who fight them, and those who suffer from them. Bell argued that journalism of attachment is aware of its responsibilities; and will not stand neutral between good and evil, right and wrong, the victim and the oppressor.¹⁷⁵

Mass media often plays a key role in today's conflict. Basically, their role can take two different and opposed forms. Either the media takes an active part in the conflict and has responsibility for increased violence, or stays independent and out of the conflict, thereby contributing to the resolution of conflict and alleviation of violence.¹⁷⁶ Which role the media takes in a given conflict, and in the phases before and after, depends on a complex set of factors, including the relationship the media has to actors in the conflict and the independence the media has to the power holders in society.

¹⁷⁵Martin Bell, "TV News: How Far Should We Go?" 8 BRIT. JOURNALISM REV. 7,"1997: 8. See also Nel Ruigrok, "Journalism of Attachment and Objectivity" Dutch Journalists and the Bosnian War, 1 Media, War & Conflict: 2008: p293.

¹⁷⁶Puddephatt, A. "Voices of war: Conflict and the role of the media." A report for International Media Support (IMS): 2006

For victims of conflict the need for reliable and useful information is very important. Frequently, they are separated from their families, lack shelter and adequate food, and are scared and confused by the events occurring around them. Media programming tailored to the needs of such people can provide an essential information lifeline. At the same time, the media can play a role in efforts to actively prevent and resolve conflicts, and support post conflict peace-building.¹⁷⁷ Mass media can help to deliver a flow of objective and accurate news and comment to people caught up in conflicts. This provides communities with a basis on which to take decisions in response to the crisis affecting them. Objective reporting can also counter propaganda and hate messages which fuel conflict. Access to objective and balanced reporting can be enhanced through support to both local and international media.¹⁷⁸

The Arab Spring upheaval in the Middle East and North Africa in early 2011 has stirred interests among scholars for more rigorous research into the current and potential roles that media—and, increasingly, digital media—can play in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. Protesters in countries across the region relied to varying degrees on social media to organize protests against incumbent regimes and leveraged international news organizations such as Al Jazeera English to solicit international support.¹⁷⁹ Recognizing the power of the media, those in power made asserting control over media platforms a top priority. Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak shut down all access to Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Google in the first few days of the protests before essentially shutting down the Internet on January 28. Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi's security forces detained journalists, jammed the frequencies of international

¹⁷⁷ Adam, G. & Hieber, L. "Strengthening Lifeline Media in Regions of Conflict," Summary Report, Media Action International, Geneva. 1998

¹⁷⁸ Manoff, R. "Role Plays; Potential media roles in conflict prevention and management in Track Two," December Centre for Conflict Resolution, Rondebosch, South Africa: 1998

¹⁷⁹ Al-Hurra is an Arabic-language news and information service produced by the United States Broadcasting Board of Governors. See Committee to Protect Journalists, "Journalists Detained and Broadcasts Jammed in Libya," March 1, 2011.

broadcasters such as Al Jazeera and Alhurra, and blocked all Internet traffic in and out of the country.¹⁸⁰ In response, the international community redirected funds toward programs aimed at strengthening media in the Middle East–North Africa region, to provide conduits between governing bodies and potential voters, information sources for those needing medical or humanitarian aid, and platforms for discussion and debate on how to structure and implement reforms.¹⁸¹

With Egypt and Tunisia moving toward democratic reform, fighting still engulfing Libya, and resolution still unclear in Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen, the final outcomes of the Arab Spring remain uncertain. While there is consensus that the media played and will continue to play a role, considerable debate surrounds precisely what credit properly goes to the media compared with other factors in precipitating this wave of political unrest.¹⁸² Most importantly for stakeholders involved in media-related activities in conflict environments, there is equal disagreement about what role the media can play in helping Egypt and Tunisia reach full democratic transitions, ameliorating civil war in Libya, and avoiding full-blown conflicts in Bahrain, Yemen, and other countries under stress across the region.

Conclusion

Conflicts arise due to varied reasons. Intolerance to varied religious beliefs and faiths can lead to religious conflicts where one religious group seeks to impose its beliefs on the other.

¹⁸⁰ Al-Hurra is an Arabic-language news and information service produced by the United States Broadcasting Board of Governors. See Committee to Protect Journalists, “Journalists Detained and Broadcasts Jammed in Libya,” March 1, 2011,

¹⁸¹ UNESCO HQ, IPDC Secretariat, “Assessing National Media Landscapes in the Mena Region Using UNESCO’s MDIs” (project no. IPDC/55 RAB/03),

¹⁸² Sina Odugbemi “The Arab Spring: Welcome to the Explanation Olympics” (CommGAP blog, March 3, 2011), Also Clay Shirky. The Political Power of Social Media,” Foreign Affairs 90, no.1: 2011:p28-41.

Ethnicity is also another factor that could lead to ethnic conflict. Dominant ethnic communities that seek to impose their rule over the weaker ethnic communities could lead to ethnic conflict where the smaller ethnic groups seek equal distribution of resources and power. Control of resources is also a key source of conflict. Valuable resources like oil, water, minerals, territory among others are a major source of global interstate and intrastate conflicts. Internal conflicts take an international nature due to agents such as interdependence among states, internationalization of human rights, historical ethnic as well as the media. These agents transform national conflicts to issues of international concern and increases the number of actors involved in helping with the resolution and management of the conflicts.

Chapter Four

A case study of the role of media in conflict and electoral process in Kenya 1992-2007

Introduction

Chapter three analyzed the role of media in the management of conflicts. It looked into the nature of conflict as well as the agents the internationalize conflicts in developing nations. The chapter finally looked at the media as an internationalization agent of conflict at the role of media in conflict and conflict management. This chapter looks at the role of media in electoral conflict management with particular emphasis on the Kenyan Presidential elections since 1992 to 2007. It looks at the origins of the Kenyan media and thereafter look at the electoral processes from 1992 to 2007. It will then present the findings from interviews, focus group discussions and report from various surveys and studies.

Background to Kenya.

Kenya is a country geographically situated in East Africa and lies on the equator. Kenya is bordered by Somalia to the north-east, Uganda to the west, Tanzania to the south, Ethiopia to the North, South Sudan to the north-west. This former British colony covers a surface area of 582,650 square kilometers and has an approximate population of over forty two million people. The main economic activities in Kenya are agriculture and tourism and the currency is the Kenyan shilling. One dollar is equivalent to eighty eight shillings as at the time of research.¹⁸³

Kenya holds its general elections every four years and up till the promulgation of the new constitution that paved way for devolution, was a state that was divided into eight provinces (now 47 counties): Eastern, North Eastern, Western, Nairobi, Rift Valley, Central, Coast and

¹⁸³<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Kenya.pdf>

Nyanza provinces. Kenya is home to 42 ethnic groups and in as much as these ethnic groups are spread out across the country, a huge percentage still lives in what they term as their home. For instance the Luo and Kisii originally hail from Nyanza province, the Luhya, Maragoli, Idaho among others originally hail from Western province. The Mijikenda, Taita, Taveta among others originally hail from the coast province. The Kikuyu, Meru and Embu hail from Central province, the Kalenjins, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu originally hail from the Rift valley and so on and so forth. These ethnic diversities play an integral part in Kenya's political life especially during electoral processes. While no ethnic group constitutes a majority of Kenya's citizens, the largest ethnic group, the Kikuyu, makes up only 20% of the nation's total population. The five largest – Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya, Kamba and Kalenjin – account for 70%.¹⁸⁴ As such electoral processes in Kenya are characterized by coalitions based on ethnic allegiances so that a particular party can garner majority support.

In Kenya the transition from colonial rule to self-rule saw two dominant political parties take center stage from 1956, which are KANU and KADU. However KANU was dominated by Kikuyu and Luo ethnic communities and KADU was majorly led by a minority group under the stewardship of Daniel Moi¹⁸⁵. At independence in 1963 KANU won the elections easily and KADU leadership was offered positions in the KANU government, marking the decline of opposition politics for the years to follow. Ethnic allegiances remained intact though as the government led by Jomo Kenyatta maintained close ties with the former colonial rulers. In 1965, two key Luo political figures, Tom Mboya and Jaramogi Odinga, parted ways with the incumbent after they accused Kenyatta leadership of elitist ideals that served to benefit a select

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.kpmg.com/Africa/en/KPMG-in-Africa/Documents/Kenya.pdf>

¹⁸⁵ Report by IRI International Republican Institute "Kenya, The December 29, 1992 Elections" 1992; p 5 available at www.iri.orgp

group of privileged Kenyans allied to the President. Former opposition leader Daniel Moi who had joined the government side was given Jaramogi Odinga's former position as Vice President and this marked the era of single party rule.

In 1969 Tom Mboya was assassinated, fuelling violent conflict between the Kikuyus and the Luos, culminating in the arrest of Jaramogi Odinga. President Kenyatta won in the subsequent elections unopposed seeing as only KANU was allowed to contest¹⁸⁶. Politics became a very emotive issue that was immensely conducted along tribal rivalries and allegiances. The political domination of Luos and Kikuyus ended when Daniel Moi took over leadership. His presidency was also under a one party system and elections appeared as mere formalities. This era was marked by student riots and political unrest from disgruntled political leaders. One such leader who was part of the KANU government was Kenneth Matiba who criticized the electoral processes and was relieved of his duties as Minister of Transport and Communications.¹⁸⁷ Ethnicity was one key feature in president Moi's rule and this saw a rise in Kalenjin dominance of government and civil service postings and these ethnic divisions kept manifesting themselves during the electoral processes.

The murder of Robert Ouko brought about violent confrontations between the Luo and Kalenjin and this created a political gap in the Luo and Kalenjin leadership. International pressure mounted against Moi's regime particularly with issues of violation of human rights and aid was suspended until certain terms were adhered to by the Moi government. One of those terms was calls for political reforms, and this marked the repeal of the constitutional clause 2 (a) on the existence of only one political party and adopting of a multiparty system for the first time

¹⁸⁶ Report by IRI International Republican Institute "Kenya, The December 29, 1992 Elections" 1992; p 5 available at www.iri.orgp

¹⁸⁷ Ibid

in 26 years.¹⁸⁸ The new political scene saw the emergence of numerous political parties, willing to sell their agendas to the people and oust the incumbent from power. Reports of unprovoked attacks were reported resulting in deaths of hundreds and displacement of thousands in Molo and Kisii-Kericho border of the Rift Valley Province, in the Sondu area in Nyanza Province and in the Mount Elgon area in Western Province. Separate investigations into “tribal” unrest by the national Council of Churches and a special parliamentary committee claimed that the violent confrontation were instigated by high-ranking government ministers and key figures in KANU to discredit the calls for multiparty politics.¹⁸⁹

Kenyan Media

Until the mid-1980s, the press in Kenya was among the most liberal in Africa; nevertheless self-censorship, intimidation and repression by the government curtailed the free flow of information. The penal code allowed the government to ban any publication in the interest of public order and national security.¹⁹⁰ The period following the attempted coup of 1982 saw the detention, imprisonment or exile of university lecturers for allegedly being part of an underground movement to oust President Moi.¹⁹¹ Any criticism of the government was met by stern government action from detention to torture and the international community’s watchful eye was no deterrent. Media coverage was still under a lot of control and the government prohibited the importation of any publication depicting or containing any symbol, emblem, device, colors, slogan, motto, words or letters signifying any association with or support for a political object of political organization. In 1986 the Weekly Review was seized and there

¹⁸⁸ Report by IRI International Republican Institute “Kenya, The December 29, 1992 Elections” 1992; p 5 available at www.iri.orgp

¹⁸⁹ Ibid

¹⁹⁰ Ibid

¹⁹¹ Report by Kenya Human Rights Commission, “Shackled Messengers-The media in multiparty Kenya.”1997:p2-3

followed a barrage of detainment and harassment of journalists by the dictatorial regime.¹⁹² In 1988, *Beyond*, a publication of the National Council of Churches of Kenya was banned for exposing fraud in the general election and the editor jailed for alleged failure to remit returns to the Registrar of Book and Newspaper.¹⁹³ Under such circumstances, self-censorship seemed the only option if one hoped to continue doing business in such a controlled environment.

The Kenyan Broadcasting Corporation act came into effect in 1989, replacing Voice of Kenya which had operated since 1967, and it was mainly a political tool for government to spread government propaganda to the populace. The KBC Act came into being at a time when KANU, the government and the broadcasting station were inseparable. The signature tune for the station's radio news bulletin was an adaptation "KANU yajenga nchi" (KANU is building the nation), the party's anthem.¹⁹⁴ News bulletins were awash with news of the President's daily events and this took center stage both on radio and television. Presidential news came directly from the State-House based Presidential Press Unit and editors at the Broadcasting house were obliged to run in its entirety.¹⁹⁵ Any other news was secondary and some important global issues took a backseat in broadcast media. The era of multiparty politics marked an important change for the media scene in Kenya. The media industry experienced some growth with new broadcast and print media being established.

Role of Media in the First Multiparty General Elections

¹⁹² Report by IRI International Republican Institute "Kenya, The December 29, 1992 Elections" 1992; p 7 available at www.iri.orgp

¹⁹³ Report by Kenya Human Rights Commission, "Shackled Messengers-The media in multiparty Kenya." 1997:p3

¹⁹⁴ Kenya Human Rights Commission & Article 19, « Media Censorship in a Plural Context : A Report on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation » : 1998; p14

¹⁹⁵ Ibid p15

The introduction of multiparty democracy in 1991 after a long stretch as a single party dictatorship heralded a major opportunity for the media. The ownership base expanded and media content became bolder. The influx of independent press and most publications openly addressed sensitive issues that were perceived as taboo pre 1991. The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation Act came into effect in February 1989, creating a broadcasting authority that replaced the Voice of Kenya that operated as a government department under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.¹⁹⁶ KBC is the only the only government owned media paid for by the tax payers, but ironically, was used as a government propaganda tool. The head of KBC is a presidential appointee making it difficult to delink the appointment with government interests. Government appointees end up oozing their allegiance to the political establishment.¹⁹⁷

The 1992 era marked the turning point for press freedom, or so it seemed. KBC was still a government propaganda tool, and the introduction of new radio and television media was meant to herald a new beginning, at least on paper. The launch of KTN, Kenya Television Network seemed promising at first but given that the owners were majorly government officials, the management didn't have a free hand in the running of the station. After the 1992 elections, a frustrated management seemed to say that if it could not control the news that came out of KTN they would scrap local programming all together seeing as KBC did a lot of that already.¹⁹⁸ By the time of the 1992 multiparty elections, KBC hadn't changed content and its perspective with regards to fairness in coverage. The opposition was clamoring for positive and equal coverage in the press. Ford Kenya leader, Jaramogi Odinga, along with the Democratic Party leader Mwai Kibaki went to court asking that KBC be compelled to give equal airtime to all presidential

¹⁹⁶ Kenya Human Rights Commission & Article 19, « Media Censorship in a Plural Context : A Report on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation » : 1998: p11

¹⁹⁷ Ibid p13

¹⁹⁸ Ibid p18-19

candidates but this was dismissed by the court. The then Information Minister Burudi Nabwera, promised that all candidates would get equal coverage but this did not happen.¹⁹⁹

The 1992 general election was marked with recurrent acts of politically motivated violence, especially by the infamous “Youth for KANU 92” group.²⁰⁰ As in the 1992 elections KBC was usually silent on many incidents of political violence that flared up in several spots throughout the nation in the 1997 elections period. Indeed; in its objective to intimidate the violence was itself complementing the KBC, serving as an instrument of censorship against free expression; instilling fear in dissenting voices and interfering with the exercise of free choice in the electoral process²⁰¹. Most Kenyan homes have a radio set, making it the most accessible media in Kenya. A survey carried out in 1994 claimed that there were approximately six million radio sets and six hundred thousand televisions sets in the country.²⁰² That translates to 70 to 80 percent of Kenyan homes are covered by KBC radio, which is a national broadcaster paid for by the taxpayers. Against the backdrop of Kenya’s high rate of illiteracy, especially in the rural areas, the pervasiveness of the radio renders KBC a highly potent instrument of information and propaganda, and a large section of the country’s population captive to its messages.²⁰³ The multiparty era might have marked the beginning of a new era for media, but the freedom they enjoyed was still subject to government control. The media in 1992 did not necessarily contribute directly to the violence after the elections because the only media then was state owned KBC and KTN. Media was still under government control and there were stories that

¹⁹⁹ Kenya Human Rights Commission & Article 19, « Media Censorship in a Plural Context : A Report on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation » : 1998: p18-19

²⁰⁰ Ibid p3

²⁰¹ Ibid p4

²⁰² Ibid p6

²⁰³ Ibid

were not allowed to be aired for fear of victimization. However the media could have help in the aftermath by participating actively in positive reporting²⁰⁴

Role of Media in Second General Elections

The 1997 general elections was an improvement from the 1992 elections with regards to civic education and opening up of the electoral process as well as some degree of press freedom. Ethnicity still played a key role in the violence that occasionally erupted with opposition leaders seeking to oust the Kalenjin dominated politics and civil service. Daniel Moi's regime only accepted multiparty politics due to mounting domestic and international pressure but his government was keen on maintaining power through intimidation and frustration of the opposition. The opposition was also divided and this gave the KANU government a clear path to electoral victory. However the KANU government is accused of intimidation using youth allied to the ruling party under the banner KANU Youth Wingers whose work was to move around spreading KANU propaganda with some degree of intimidation.²⁰⁵

The media's role in the 1997 general elections was under close scrutiny both nationally and internationally. After the 1992 general elections, the airwaves were opened up and Kenya witnessed a growth in print and electronic media that enjoyed more freedom than their pre 1992 era. KBC being is a state owned media had been used in the previous elections to spread KANU propaganda and discredit opposition demands. KANU and Moi always received positive coverage in all their activities while about 97% of Opposition coverage was of a negative

²⁰⁴ Interview with Carol Radul, Digital Content Manager at Radio Africa Group carried out 2/09/14

²⁰⁵ Views expressed by focus group members 27/07/14

orientation.²⁰⁶ The main aim was to paint a negative image of Opposition politics so as to convince the populace of how bad the multiparty ideology was.

KBC being the national broadcaster had more reach than other media outlets but they only focused on KANU propaganda, never reporting the reform demonstrations by opposition leaders. Any media reports perceived to be anti-KANU were met with threats and strict action by the state. In February 1997, for instance, Susan Mosoke, a photographer, was assaulted by an administration policeman when covering a story on the deliberate delay in the issuance of identity cards so that people would not be able to register for voting.²⁰⁷ Media's coverage of the 1997 elections was still marred by intimidation by government officials. The period leading to the elections was marked by numerous instances of detention and arrests of journalists under the guise of defamation and publishing false news. In the first three months of 1997, at least eleven cases of assaults of journalists were reported.²⁰⁸ Media freedom still had a long way to go and as Bitange Ndemo argues, nobody expected KANU to lose the 1997 general elections, as such the media was careful on what they reported for fear of being on the wrong side of the government.²⁰⁹

Role of Media in the Third Multiparty Elections

The 2002 General elections marked the end of Daniel's Moi 26 year political regime after being ousted by a united front mounted by opposition leaders who for the first time in their political careers put their personal ambitions aside. In 2002, opposition leaders led by Mwai

²⁰⁶ Kenya Human Rights Commission & Article 19, « Media Censorship in a Plural Context : A Report on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation » : 1998;p33

²⁰⁷ Amnesty International Kenya Annual Report for 1997, (Amnesty International, 1998).

²⁰⁸ Report by Kenya Human Rights Commission, "Shackled Messengers-The media in multiparty Kenya." 1997:p31

²⁰⁹ Interview by Bitange Ndemo, former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology 02/07/14

Kibaki and Raila Odinga formed an alliance and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a move that saw Mwai Kibaki clinch the presidency from their opponent Uhuru Kenyatta who President Moi's preferred successor. Many saw Uhuru as inexperienced and the alliance that had been formed by the opposition marked a new chapter in Kenyan politics, one without Moi who had held the reigns for over two and a half decades. The media scene by this time had experienced some degree of liberalization and there were more media outlets available to the populace than the previous elections.

The end of the Moi era was perceived as a positive move for democracy and media houses pushed the democratic transformation agenda most. The key message from the media was urging people to "vote wisely."²¹⁰ Uhuru Kenyatta, Daniel Moi's preferred successor, suffered an overwhelming defeat in the hands of a united opposition that saw Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga among other key political figures join forces in the NARC The National Rainbow Coalition. However Mwai Kibaki was accused of refusing to honor the MOU as agreed and this served as a key talking point for Mr. Odinga during his campaigns and the push for a new constitution was also a test of political influence in the country. News media were focused on the political tensions between the two parties with constant reminders of the MOU.

The year 2000 marked the emergence of the first vernacular stations that changed the media landscape. They targeted ethnic communities in the different districts across the country and most people in the rural areas could easily relate to them since the language barrier was broken. Millions of anxious and excited Kenyans who for years had been only passive listeners to one state-owned radio station could now access a wide choice of radio stations including those

²¹⁰ Interview by Bitange Ndemo, former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology 02/07/14

that broadcast in their respective home languages.²¹¹The first vernacular station to be licensed to operate was Kameme FM in 2000 amidst fears that this would polarize the people and encourage ethnicity. However, a new law was passed in 2004, further liberalizing media and this paved the way for more local language stations targeting listeners from the main ethnic communities: Kikuyus in Central Province, Luos in West, Kalenjins in Northwest, Kambas in Southeast, and Kisiis in Southeast²¹² Vernacular radio stations attracted large audiences and by 2007 had 27 per cent of the radio market (compared with 33% held by mainstream radios.)²¹³

Liberalization of the media was declared under the Kibaki government but this happened without setting up regulatory mechanisms. As such journalists could get away with reckless reporting and the ICT Ministry, save for revoking the operation license, could not prosecute because there was no law to back such a move.²¹⁴Prior to 2009, there was no body mandated with regulation of broadcast content and as such, the airwaves were left to the discretion of the journalists. The Communication Commission of Kenya was established in 1999 by the Kenya Communication Act (KCA) of 1998 and its initial mandate was regulation of the telecommunications and postal/courier sub-sectors, and the management of the country's radiofrequency spectrum.²¹⁵ With regards to broadcast, the commission was tasked with monitoring the country's frequency distribution as well as licensing institutions looking to start up broadcast services.²¹⁶ The Commission up till 2009 did not have any broadcast content

²¹¹ The Independent Review Committee (IREC) alias The Kriegler Commission (2008). The commission was tasked to examine the 2007 elections. IREC was appointed by president Kibaki under the Commissions of Inquiry Act (Cap. 102). Its formation was formally gazetted through a Gazette Notice 1983, Kenya Gazette of 14th March 2008.

²¹² BBC World Trust Service Report "The Kenyan 2007 elections and their aftermath: The role of the media and communication." 2008: p4

²¹³ Ibid

²¹⁴ Interview with Bitange Ndemo, former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology 02/07/14

²¹⁵ <http://www.website.co.ke/directory/news-information/400-communications-commission-of-kenya-cck>

²¹⁶ Ibid

regulatory powers since before the year 2009, there was no law in Kenya regulating broadcast content in the media. Media houses had a free hand to air any content they so desired without any dire legal consequences. The only regulation that existed was with regards to licensing. The Communications Commission of Kenya was only tasked with issuing licenses to institutions that managed to acquire the government permit to operate. Being a state owned institution, it was controlled by the state and issues of hiring and dismissal were dependent on the government of the day. This was an avenue that could be used by politicians to further their personal interests with regards to who get a license to operate or not.²¹⁷

In 2002 the mobile phone was becoming more and more a widely spread communication tool. The mobile phone as a campaign tool worked very well and the communication was effective with regards to a push of vote wisely and the message was with regards to removing the incumbent from power. In 2002, mobile phones were accessible to many Kenyans and the use of bulk SMS platform ensured widespread of messages in a short time. In 2007, in so far as internet access still remained elusive for a large chunk of the population, the SMS platform presented an even bigger headache for the government with regards to tracking the people responsible for spreading hate messages among the population. There was no registration of SIM cards so it was very difficult to know the identity of the person sending out the hate messages²¹⁸. The bulk SMS platform when used for negative motives is very dangerous because you can access one million people at once and not being able to trace the source of the message means it is difficult to charge those responsible.

Role of Media in the Fourth Multiparty Elections

²¹⁷ Interview with Christopher Wambua, Assistant Director-Multi Media Content and Innovation, Multi Media Services Department Communications Authority of Kenya 14/07/14

²¹⁸ Ibid

Kenyans went to the ballot on the 27th of December 2007 and the two main presidential contenders were Mwai Kibaki of The Party of National Unity (PNU) and Raila Odinga of Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). ODM appeared to be leading the count by close to one million votes but the final hours of vote tallying saw the results reversed in favor of PNU and Kibaki was announced the winner and sworn in as president late evening amidst calls for rigging. A few days later riots broke out in ODM's strongholds and instances of murder and forced evictions were reported in the so called hot spots in the country. Approximately one thousand three hundred people were reported dead and over 600,000 displaced from their homes, marking one of the worst electoral conflicts of Kenya's history. Supporters of the ODM from the Rift Valley, majorly Kalenjins, launched an eviction exercise of Kikuyus who had settled there in the 1960s.²¹⁹ The rise of ethnic militias aggravated the situation as the latter planned revenge attacks. Allegations of political leadership sponsoring some of these attacks and incitement to violence by some section of the media are still under investigation by the International Criminal Court.

The role of the media in the violence has come into question with regards to incitement to violence and spreading of hate speech that only aggravated an already dire situation. Out of the four people facing charges at the International Criminal Court (ICC) as bearing the greatest responsibility in the killings that ensued, is one radio journalist Joshua Arap Sang. He is accused of having used his media influence in his radio station that broadcasts in vernacular language, to spread hate messages and using coded language to encourage one ethnic community to evacuate another ethnic community from the Rift Valley.

Liberalization of the media opened avenues for abuse of journalistic powers and the lack of a regulatory mechanism contributed heavily to the electoral violence witnessed in 2007.

²¹⁹ Focus group discussion findings 28/07/14

Claims of incitement and hate speech against some communities were rife. Hate speech as a terminology emerged in Kenya under the premise of expressions used by individuals to elicit negative response against another group. Hate speech was propagated on SMS, on digital media via social network sites like Facebook and twitter. By 2007, digital media was significantly present in Kenya and there were an estimated 3 million Internet users as in Kenya. The prohibitive costs of internet connections and acquisition of a computer were still considered as obstacle for most homes. However access to mobile data, that is access of internet via mobile phones, makes up 99% of Kenya's internet subscriptions²²⁰. Technological advancements like the 3G connectivity and smart phones are giving Kenyans a chance to access internet on their mobile phones and they are no longer limited to access to a computer as the only option.

Reports have it that instances of hate speech and incitement played a key role in the violence between ethnic communities in Kenya. Short Message Services (SMS) were used to send bulk messages to particular groups, the use of digital media also help spread animosity and regulation of the two was difficult. According to the National Commission on Human Rights report, *On the Brink of a Precipice*, summarized:

“The entire electioneering period was characterized by hate speech and incitement to violence. One thing that is memorable about the 2007 elections is the role played by all manner of information from all manner of sources, unsolicited and solicited- SMS, blogs, emails, newsletter, leaflets, not to mention the newspapers, TV and radio sources.”²²¹

²²⁰Institute for Human Rights and Business – “Digital Dangers: Corporate Responses to Hate Speech in the 2013 Kenya Presidential Elections, Case Study Safaricom” 2013 available at <http://www.ihrb.org/news/2013/digital-dangers-case-study-safaricom.html> accessed on 24/08/14 10:15

²²¹Ibid

SMS messages were circulated with clear messages of violent action against certain communities, some of which read,

“Fellow Kenyans, the Kikuyus [Kenyan tribe] have stolen our children’s future. Hope of removing them through the ballot has been stolen. We must deal with them the way they understand, violence. We must dominate them.”

“We say no more innocent Kikuyu blood will be shed. We will slaughter them right here in the capital city. For justice, compile a list of Luos and Kalenjin you know at work or in your estates, or elsewhere in Nairobi, plus where and how their children go to school. We will give you numbers to text this information.”

Investigations would later reveal that bulk SMS bundles were being bought from outside Kenya and used to spread hate speech. Safaricom, a mobile telecommunication company in Kenya, identified that political parties and aspirants were buying bulk SMS bundles from overseas operators, which could be sent to mobile phones over the Internet, which were being received in Kenya without an identity number or Caller ID, which would determine the origin of the message and allow it to be traced.²²² The government later on ordered a blackout on mainstream media in a move that kept the population in the dark on what was going on. However they could not control the digital media outlets where bloggers and other social network sites provided information on what was going on. Citizen journalism took center stage as people across the country who had access to mobile phones could easily update what was going on where they were. The authenticity of such information could however not be verified and in the

²²²Institute for Human Rights and Business – “Digital Dangers: Corporate Responses to Hate Speech in the 2013 Kenya Presidential Elections, Case Study Safaricom” 2013 available at <http://www.ihrb.org/news/2013/digital-dangers-case-study-safaricom.html> accessed on 24/08/14 10:15

absence of proper information from mainstream media, the populace depended on these unconfirmed sources and international media like CNN, BBC among others.

The blackout of mainstream media by the government could have participated in further fuelling the conflict. “Indeed the information blackout, engrafted onto the ECK’s [Electoral Commission of Kenya] lamentable failure to keep the people of Kenya informed, could well be seen as a direct link in the chain of causation that led to the tragedy.”²²³ While government could regulate mainstream media, lack of capacity and technical knowhow could have hindered efforts at combating digital hate speech and incitement.

An estimated four million Kenyans use social media. 3.8million users are on Facebook while six hundred and fifty thousand are on Twitter. The largest social media platform in Kenya is Facebook with 3.8 million users, followed by LinkedIn with over one million users and third is twitter with fewer than seven hundred thousand. A huge chunk of social media users are concentrated in the cities that have access to information technology. The use of the social media platform in Kenya started in 2007 with maximum use of twitter peaking in 2013.²²⁴ If digital media grew in prominence after the 2007 general elections, then suffice to say that its influence in electoral conflicts over the period of 1992-2007 is minimal. Secondly, the areas that experienced the most instances of electoral violence were not in the major cities but more in the rural areas. These areas did not have access to digital media at the time and as such, if cases of incitement were indeed reported, then they would be from other media outlets or from direct political influence.

²²³Institute for Human Rights and Business – “Digital Dangers: Corporate Responses to Hate Speech in the 2013 Kenya Presidential Elections, Case Study Safaricom” 2013 available at <http://www.ihrb.org/news/2013/digital-dangers-case-study-safaricom.html> accessed on 24/08/14 10:15

²²⁴Digital Rand “State of Social Media in Kenya, Report A002” available at <http://digitalrand.com/resources/reports/A002.pdf> accessed on 22nd August 2014 at 22:07

Radul, who has been in the media industry for over 20years, working as a Correspondent for Reuters, then Producer for BBC East Africa, then as Head of radio news at Radio Africa Group and Digital Content Manager, confirms that technological advancements have indeed changed the scope of journalism in Kenya. News is delivered faster and wider and what used to take almost 24hours now takes minutes to reach a wider populations. She states that the Kenyan media is not yet completely neutral when it comes to delivery of content. There is a lot of bias not only politically, but also tribally and with regard to gender. She gives an example of covering the 2007 General Elections, her reporters from across the countries often leaned towards giving more coverage of the popular candidate in their geographical location. As such getting balanced stories was difficult because they could not divorce their tribal or political affiliations to covering news fairly²²⁵.

Modern technology has given rise of citizen journalism where everybody with access to the internet and a means of recording events going on, feels that they can become journalists. Journalism is a reflection of society, relaying what's happening around you and someone who can do this well can call him/herself a journalist²²⁶. However there are a set of codes of conduct that mainstream journalists adhere to in reporting events. Citizen journalists are not bound by codes of conduct as such might relay stories without thinking of consequences. Digital media has given citizen journalism a platform to air their stories and at times gruesome images make it to the headlines. The problem is that anyone with a smart phone and has an opinion becomes an expert and their proximity to the news item gives them more credibility than a reporter sitting in studio miles away. Gone are the days when people used to believe any story that was told by the two main broadcasting houses of the 90s KBC and KTN. Digital media has allowed everyone to

²²⁵ Interview with Carol Radul, Digital Content Manager at Radio Africa Group carried out 2/09/14

²²⁶ Ibid

tell the stories around them, and the closer one is to the event itself the more believable they are by the public²²⁷.

Asked if she thought that Digital Media has played a role in electoral violence in Kenya, she says yes. However she is quick to add that the 2007/08 post- election violence was of a smaller magnitude given that digital media was still not as vibrant as it is today. There is almost no accountability with regards to content on social media and most accounts that fan hate speech and incite people are from anonymous untraceable accounts²²⁸. As such, digital media can be very dangerous especially in a country that is politically and tribally fragile as Kenya. Limited access to internet doesn't stop people from accessing information because those who have access to internet relay the stories verbally to their friends and relatives who don't have access and word spreads fast. At times stories are taken out of context and this aggravates the situation.

Conclusion

The past two decades have witnessed liberalization of media in Kenya. The early 90s was an era marked by intimidation and detention of members of the fourth estate who dared criticize the government. The era of multiparty politics heralded a new era for Kenyan media as both print and electronic media grew in number. The political elites used the press to advance their political agendas during the electoral processes and the ruling party KANU used the state owned media to spread government propaganda. The liberalization of the Kenyan press saw a more establishment press that were more critical of the government. However there was no regulatory body to control broadcast content and this was an avenue exploited by some journalists and politicians to incite the public against each other along ethnic lines particularly during election period that led

²²⁷ Interview with Carol Radul, Digital Content Manager at Radio Africa Group carried out 2/09/14

²²⁸ Ibid

to violent conflict in the 2007 general elections. Only after the violence of 2007/08 did the government set up a regulatory authority to make media houses accountable for content that is transmitted to the people and made hate speech a punishable offense by law. The onset of digital media however opened up more avenues of expression and communication that were not directly under government control. This proved another headache for policy makers with regards to incitement and hate speech. The penalties for hate speech and incitement are high but digital media still proves a challenge to the regulatory authority. More proactive approaches need to be adopted to try and change people's attitudes and perceptions towards other ethnic groups.

Chapter Five

Critical Analysis of the role of media in electoral conflict in Kenya

Introduction

Chapter four focused on the case study of the role of media in conflict and electoral processes in Kenya from 1992 to 2007. It looked at findings informing the role of mainstream and digital media in conflict during the Kenyan elections. From findings in chapter two, three and four, this chapter will look at the key thematic debates arising from both primary and secondary data with regard to media and conflict during electoral processes in Kenya. These debates will be related to electoral conflicts and electoral conflict management, the media's role in electoral processes and the emerging issue of ethnicity in the media.

The Media

Kenyan media has gone through numerous changes in the past three decades, ranging from authoritarian state control. The post-independence era was marked by threats and intimidation by the government of the few media outlets. Any media that spoke against perceived government injustices were threatened with closure. For instance in 1970, Karim Hudani launched a news weekly magazine, *Kenya Mirror*, where he openly criticized the government was threatened with closure and found himself charged in court with sedition, forcing him to shut down his paper. He later attempted another newspaper in 1975 known as *Mambo*, but was forced to put his pen down by authorities in 1975.²²⁹ Many other publications faced legal suits, confiscations, bans, harassments or detentions of its journalists and editors.

²²⁹ Abuoga J.B, and Mutere A.A, *The History of the Press in Kenya*; First Edition: 1988: p49

These included *Target* and its Kiswahili sister *Lengo* run in the 1970s by the Anglican Church, *Jitegemee* and *Watchman* by Kikuyu Christian Publications, *The Nairobi Law Monthly* started in 1987 by lawyer Gitobu Imanyara.²³⁰ Foreign journalists were barred from covering political events and even four Western journalists were arrested for covering the students' unrest that were a common feature during Moi's era. This control of the media continued in subsequent governments remained tight. With the repeal of section 2A of the Kenyan Constitution opened up not only the political space but the print and electronic media as well. More privately owned newspapers, radio and television stations were established and they offered more variety. However media in the 90s were still under government intimidation. The few other media outlets were either owned by allies of the ruling party KANU or too intimidated to do much against an oppressive regime. KANU wanted to maintain monopoly on broadcast during the electoral period and the government used its control by selectively granting licenses to pro-KANU broadcasters and denying license to opposition applicants and finally that when licenses were issued to the opposition sympathizers, they were prohibited from covering news.²³¹

The 1997 elections were also the first in Kenya to be covered on the internet.²³² However questions are raised over the number of persons actively influenced by digital media at the time. Only a small minority of elites had access to internet because in Kenya, both computers and telephone lines were the preserve of a small group of affluent members of society.²³³ Given the minority who had access to the internet, mainstream media still had major influence on the information received by the populace as such, the political elite tried to maintain a complete hold

²³⁰ Rutten M., Mazrui A. Grignon F., *Out for the Count – The 1997 General elections and Prospects for Democracy in Kenya*; *The Kenyan Media in the 1997 General Elections – A Look at the Watchdogs* by Joe Khadi, Marcel Rutten: 2001; p243

²³¹ *Ibid* p261

²³² Otenyo E.E. « Internet and Democratization in Kenya : The Impact of a New Information Technology on Multiparty Election » in Ludeki C. « Electoral Politics in Kenya » Claripress Nairobi :2002; p156

²³³ *Ibid* p157

of these mediums particularly the transistor radio, television and newspapers. However the advent of digital media in Kenya, even if it was at a small scale, took away government control on information. Access to the internet is not open to government control despite attempts by some governments to limit access to certain sites only. In Kenya, the KANU Government tried to manipulate this “dangerous” information media by acquiring the service providers but to no avail.²³⁴

The internet provides space for people to read divergent views of issues affecting them, to read about other democracies that experienced more or less the same issues and decide for themselves if adoptions of certain steps are beneficial to their own democracy. However those who contributed to the political debates in Kenya during the 1997 era were very few and Otenyo attributes this to the fact that the rural population in Kenya is relatively poor, less educated and with no access to internet and as such digital media’s influence on the populace at the time was very minimal.²³⁵ As such the influence of digital media in the 1997 general elections was minimal, but it opened an avenue that the state couldn’t censor or control and with time this proved a key factor in civic education for those who could access it.

Media liberalization came in the year 2002 when the political space was more tolerant of divergent views and this gave rise to the emergence of more broadcast and print media. However, the liberalization came before mechanisms were put in place to regulate media content. The Communications Commission of Kenya was only mandated with issuance of licenses and was under the Ministry of Information and Telecommunications. The Commission was a state run institution thus subject to state interference. One could be ordered to shut down

²³⁴ Otenyo E.E. « Internet and Democratization in Kenya : The Impact of a New Information Technology on Multiparty Election » in Ludeki C. « Electoral Politics in Kenya » Claripress Nairobi :2002:p158

²³⁵ Ibid p157

the frequency of a particular station that was deemed anti-government or pro-opposition.²³⁶ However the Communication Commission of Kenya was transformed into Communication Authority of Kenya in 2009 and this made it to become an independent body that run its own affairs without political interference or commercial interests. The Authority also got new powers with regards to regulation of content on broadcast media. The Authority now is mandated to issue licenses and with this mandate comes stiff penalties for abuse of the frequencies. The new law provides for penalties for contravention of license conditions ranging from 500,000 shilling to up to 0.2% of the Annual Gross Turnover of the offending licensee in the preceding year for every year or part thereof in which the offence is continuing.²³⁷ As such, the electronic media in Kenya did not have any regulation on content aired since 1992 up till 2009. The new law encompasses regulation of hate speech as well as statements considered inflammatory and could lead to incitement to violence of discrimination of one section of society against the other. The law also obliges telecommunication companies to register all SIM cards issued so as to be able to track the owners. This was in a move to try and regulate SMS content laden with hate messages meant to incite the population to acts of violence against each other. This condition was not existent before 2009 and as such politicians would use bulk messages to pass whatever information they wanted to a huge number of people in one go.

Digital media on the other hand is a bit more difficult to regulate. Social network sites like Facebook, twitter and Instagram are avenues used to by a large group of people and the advent of modern technology gives any person with a smart phone and 3G connectivity access to the sites. Some of these sites have anonymous accounts set up with the aim of passing some

²³⁶ Interview with Christopher Wambua, Assistant Director-Multi Media Content and Innovation, Multi Media Services Department Communications Authority of Kenya: 27/08/14

²³⁷ Key Changes in the ICT Sector Law, Francis Wangusi Director General of the Communications Authority of Kenya available at www.cck.go.ke

messages and the lack of technical knowhow by law enforcement authorities still presents a challenge on bringing culprits of misuse of this platform to book. Mainstream media might be easily controllable by government institutions, but the new media will require more time before law enforcement agencies can be able to control hate speech and incitement on the internet. The media directly contributed to the post-election violence that erupted after the announcements of the presidential results. Electoral processes in Kenya are very emotive events that usually take an ethnic dimension. Kenyans vote as tribal blocks, with each voter giving consideration to a candidate hailing from their ethnic background. Politicians are aware of this and capitalize on this during the electoral campaigns²³⁸. Seeing as no single ethnic group has the numerical advantage to win election on their own, the electoral period is marked by alliances and agreements between/among political leaders whose main aim is to find the winning formula to clinch power.

Kenyan elections are usually marred by allegations of vote rigging, bribery claims and these eventually culminate into violence if one party feels cheated. Civic education exercise is a key ingredient in attempting to educate the population on the voting process, as well as the need to vote wisely for development minded leaders. In the 90s, civic education was difficult, especially in the KANU strongholds since the government capitalized on the people's ignorance for the longest time so as to maintain power. NGOs worked hard to give civic education to the populace, however, as Peters asserts, the civic education workshops were always in danger of

²³⁸ Key Changes in the ICT Sector Law, Francis Wangusi Director General of the Communications Authority of Kenya available at www.cck.go.ke

being cancelled by the district administration allegedly for creating disorder and as such the NGOs had an easier time in the opposition strongholds than KANU dominated regions.²³⁹

These vigilante groups appeared to operate with a free hand and the KANU government did nothing about the attacks. The emergence of a vigilante group, “Jeshi la Mzee” (the old man’s army), purportedly President Moi’s youth army that was not part of the state security system, surfaced in Kenya’s main towns and their role was to hunt down “anti-party” elements, monitor and punish public dissent through indiscriminate violence, theft and extortion.²⁴⁰ The 2002 General election was one whose main objective was to dislodge the long time ruling party KANU from power and opposition leaders joined forces to this end. The 2007 General Elections saw the tribal blocks again join forces and amidst protests of vote tampering, violence broke out after disputed presidential results were announced.

The Kenyan Media in Electoral Processes

Kenya's media, particularly the community-based radio stations, played critical roles before and after the 2007 Kenya's general elections. While in some cases they provided important information on the election, in other cases, they have been charged with inciting violence through the dissemination of hate speech. During the 2007 election, hate speech played a crucial role in inciting deadly violence. As the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Communications, Bitange Ndemo, argued, “according to intelligence reports, the political violence that engulfed various parts of the country in 2007 and early 2008 was

²³⁹ Peters RM. “Civil Society and the Election Year 1997 in Kenya” in Rutten M., Mazrui A. Grignon F., “Out for the Count – The 1997 General elections and Prospects for Democracy in Kenya; The Kenyan Media in the 1997 General Elections”;2001; p35

²⁴⁰ Kagwanja P.M. “Politics of Marionettes: Extra-legal Violence and the 1997 Elections in Kenya” in in Rutten M., Mazrui A. Grignon F., “Out for the Count – The 1997 General elections and Prospects for Democracy in Kenya; The Kenyan Media in the 1997 General Elections”;2001;p85

largely a result of the use of irresponsible and inflammatory language in the run up to and immediate aftermath of the elections.”²⁴¹

Digital media also played a role as well in spreading generating an environment of tension.

There were bulk messages sent via Short Message Services inciting people to violence and tribal profiling. “No more innocent Kikuyu blood will be shed. We will slaughter them right here in the capital city. For justice, compile a list of Luos you know.”²⁴² Faced with a torrent of SMS hate messages, Kenya’s telecommunications companies banded together to send SMS messages of peace.²⁴³ On 30 December the government also imposed a month-long ban on live media broadcasts.²⁴⁴

In the aftermath of the violence, the Waki and Kriegler Commissions both called for reforms of the media’s regulatory framework as a means of curbing future hate speech. In keeping with agenda item 4 of the National Dialogue and Reconciliation Agreement, in February 2008 the Kenyan parliament passed the National Cohesion and Integration Act. The Act established laws on ethnic and religious discrimination and created penalties for hate speech. To monitor compliance with the Act, in September 2009 the government established the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) with a mandate to facilitate and promote equality

²⁴¹ Rajab Ramah, “Kenya to tamp down hate speech as elections near,” Sabahi Online, 25 October 2012, available at: http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/10/25/feature-01.

²⁴² Joshua Goldstein, “When SMS messages incite violence in Kenya,” In an African Minute, available at: <http://inanafricanminute.blogspot.com/2008/02/sms-messages-inciting-violence-in-kenya.html>

²⁴³ Fred Mukinda, “Phone firms block 300,000 hate texts daily, says Ndemo” Daily Nation, 21 March 2013, available at: <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/Phone-firms-block-300-000-hate-texts-daily-says-Ndemo/-/1056/1726172/-/43sv7d/-/index.html>.

²⁴⁴ “How far to go?” Kenya’s media caught in the turmoil of a failed election,” Joint Press Release from Article 19, International Media Support and Reporters Sans Frontieres, 4 March 2008, available at: <http://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/373/en/kenya:-how-far-to-go>.

of opportunity, good relations, harmony and peaceful coexistence between persons of different ethnic and racial backgrounds.²⁴⁵

To tackle the problem of SMS messaging being used to incite or organize violence, the government partnered with mobile service providers to monitor SMS messages and block offensive material.²⁴⁶ The ability to monitor SMS was facilitated by the Communications Commission of Kenya requiring all mobile phone users to register their SIM cards between June 2010 and November 2012.²⁴⁷ Politicians were required to submit their SMS messages for vetting two days before they were to be released and all mass SMS messages had to be released between 8:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. in Swahili or English, not in local vernacular languages.²⁴⁸ Recognizing that by 2013 hate speech had migrated online to social platforms like Twitter, Facebook and internet message boards, the NCIC also developed guidelines for social media use and closely monitored various platforms. These steps helped inhibit hate speech and constrain its dissemination. There were occasional reports during the 2013 elections of inflammatory speech at local political rallies, on vernacular radio stations and by musicians, but it was on a much lower scale than in 2007.²⁴⁹ The most common venue for hate speech was online, where bloggers and individuals on Facebook and Twitter used “derogatory metaphors” to incite conflict between supporters of Odinga and Kenyatta.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁵ National Cohesion and Integration Commission, “Commission mandate,” available at: <http://www.cohesion.or.ke/index.php/about-us/mandate>

²⁴⁶ Fred Mukinda, “Phone firms block 300,000 hate texts daily, says Ndemo.”

²⁴⁷ Freedom House, “Kenya: Freedom on the Net 2012,” available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Kenya%202012.pdf>.

²⁴⁸ Rajab Ramah, “Kenya to tamp down hate speech as elections near.”

²⁴⁹ Anthony Kariuki, “Tobiko warns politicians over hate speech,” Daily Nation, 14 April 2012, available at: <http://www.nation.co.ke/news/politics/Tobikowarns-politicians-over-hate-speech/-/1064/1386760/-/view/printVersion/-/12gwoyz/-/index.html>.

²⁵⁰ Mike Pflanz, “In Kenya, social media hate speech rises as nation awaits election ruling,” Christian Science Monitor, 21 March 2013, available at: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2013/0321/In-Kenya-social-media-hate-speech-rises-as-nation-awaits-election-ruling>; Macharia Gaitho, “The demented postings on social media must

Role of Media in the management of electoral conflict

Media play a very critical role in the life of all human societies. The media provide the conduit necessary for all kinds of communication that helps societies exist and function. To live in harmony, societies need communication that is beneficial to its constituents. In modern democratic societies, which entail representative governments, the media play the very essential role of ensuring that information vital to the existence, survival and development of constituents of such societies is availed to them in a timely, equitable, fair and balanced manner. Thus at election time, it is imperative that the media afford public all information necessary in a manner that avoid conflicts. The media participated in the management of electoral conflict by acting as a watchdog and through voter education.

The media plays the watch dog role when they expose errors of commission or omission by those in power in their pursuit to cling to power at all cost. The media can alert citizens to electoral malpractices so that these may be rectified. The media can expose schemes to disadvantage those outside the corridors of power. The media can expose manipulation of citizens through the distribution of bribes and other illegal niceties during campaign periods. The media was the main channel used by election body, Independent Elections and Boundary Commission in voter education. IEBC Voter education is particularly important for explaining the new, complex ballot and educating Kenyans about the post-election phase of devolution.

The media has the opportunity to inform the public of principles of free and fair elections. The media can educate citizens through stories that adequately explain the national situation (political, social and economic) so that the citizenry will not only benefit from improved service

stop before blood flows,” Daily Nation, 18 March 2013, available at: <http://www.nation.co.ke/blogs/-/446672/1723754/-/format/xhtml/-/gyu918z/-/index.html>.

delivery but will also take part in the development processes of the nation. The media can explain in simple terms specific legal and administrative issues which can be seen to be fundamental for any election undertaken to be free and fair. The media can adequately encourage eligible persons to register as voters and to actually cast their ballot when elections are due and provide a platform for all candidates and their parties to present their manifestos to the public. During voter education, the media can expose parties and candidates that instigate or have the propensity to cause violence so that the citizenry may be made alert to any such possibility; expose practices of vote-buying or illegal party financing to the electorate; expose the proliferation of defamation and hate speech in campaigns aimed at influencing nationals negatively; expose voter intimidation by party workers, corruption in decision-making processes, and the systematic exclusion of certain sectors of society and; expose instances where political parties threaten the functioning of democratic systems rather than support them and thus disenfranchise eligible voters.

The media has the ability to explain to the electorate, in clear and simple language, national, regional and universal pieces of legislation and other regulations governing the proper conduct of democratic elections. Therefore, the media need to explain to the citizenry the importance of their participative involvement in all aspects of governance systems such as voting. Journalists should try to focus on the issues, by talking to ordinary people, particularly those lacking a strong voice in society e.g. the elderly and the young, women, the poor, and ethnic and religious minorities. The media, in its agenda-setting role, can provide diverse view points and unbiased information, offer forum for debate involving citizens and the civil society, mediate in national development projects and contribute to sustainable flow of information. The

media put citizens' views to candidates and report their responses back to the citizens so that they know and understand their potential governors.

Vernacular Radio stations, Ethnicity and Electoral conflicts in Kenya

The existence of vernacular radio stations was a factor that contributed to 2007/2008 electoral conflict in Kenya. Local radio stations and other vernacular media bore particular responsibility for inciting violence through broadcasts that included the playing of ethnic war songs. One of the four indicted by the ICC is Joshua Arap Sang, a radio presenter and head of operations at Kass FM, a Kalenjin-language station, who is charged with having contributed to the commission of crimes against humanity.²⁵¹ The Waki Commission found that a few days before the election Kass-FM announced that there would be rigging and in some of their open forums encouraged people to use the radio to incite people.²⁵² Many people spoke on Kass-FM to announce that Kikuyu would be expelled from Rift Valley. One of Kass-FM's journalists, Joshua Sang, is currently facing crimes against humanity charges before the ICC.²⁵³

Ethnicity is a lever used by politicians to mobilize supporters in pursuit of power, wealth, and resources. Ethnicity became an issue in Kenya's elections because of a political power struggle that found it useful to fan passions to mobilize support. The politicians communicate their ethnic agenda through local radio stations. Ethnicity remains a principal political organizing platform that appears to have thrived in Kenyan electoral process. Ethnicity was, however, not an autonomous driver of post-electoral violence. While Daniel Arap Moi's 25 years in power governing through an ethnic minority-based patronage network did imprint group identity on

²⁵¹ "Pre-trial Situation in the Republic of Kenya", ICC-01/09, at www.icc-cpi.int

²⁵² CIPEV, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence," 67.

²⁵³ International Criminal Court, "The Prosecutor v. William Samoei Ruto and Joshua Arap Sang, Case no ICC-01/09-01/11," available at: <http://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/PIDS/publications/RutoKosgeySangEng.pdf>

Kenyan politics, there are many instances of intergroup cooperation. Most prominent of these were the formation of the Kenya African National Union by the Kikuyus and Luos in the 1960s to fight for independence and the creation of the National Rainbow Coalition to break the one-party stranglehold on power in 2002.²⁵⁴ Intergroup cooperation is the norm rather than the exception. Inter-marriage is common, and many of Kenya's youth, especially in urban areas, grew up identifying as Kenyans first, followed by ethnic affiliation. This is not to suggest that ethnically based tensions do not persist—rather, that the post-election bloodshed in 2007–2008 was not an inevitable outburst of sectarian hatred.

Elections on their own do not necessarily lay the foundation for stability. On the contrary, they can be a source of ethnic tensions and violence. The practice of winner-takes-all electoral outcomes in a multiethnic and underdeveloped state where the government controls the bulk of resources in a society makes winning an election a life-and-death issue. Accordingly, it is important that electoral systems are independent of political control. Preventing ethnic tensions from escalating out of control requires a rapid response capacity within the security sector to respond when intergroup clashes occur. As most ethnic violence occurs at a local level - along a fault-line bordering neighboring communities - the value of a rapid response through local media before other triggers are tripped is vital. The local nature of these ethnic triggers also points to the need for broad-based practice among local media houses. The local media should inform the audience about ways to prevent these impulses from becoming polarized and turning violent.

Ethnic tolerance is still lacking in Kenya and this might be the tool that curbs future clashes during general elections. Also civic education and developmental ideologies can make people focus more on the bigger picture than individualistic tribal spat by a section of politicians

²⁵⁴ Walter Oyugi, "Politicized Ethnic Conflict in Kenya: A Periodic Phenomenon," Government of Kenya, 2002

who reap the benefits of negative ethnicity. A key factor in combatting electoral ethnic violence is urbanization, where the bridging of the gap between middle class and the poor who live below the poverty line. Violence patterns in Kenya are highly motivated by poverty²⁵⁵.

Ethnicity is a tool that is used by political figures to gain mileage by ensuring that citizens consider themselves as ethnic communities first, rather than as one unit. However, poverty knows not tribe. Urbanization brings about challenges of unequal distribution of resources but if resources are equally distributed, then issues of ethnic conflict would reduce considerably. The violence of 2007 broke in areas like Kibera, where the majority of the habitants living in the slum areas, but there was no violence in the neighboring Ngei Estate which is a middle class area²⁵⁶. The residents of these estate are from different tribes but they came together to protect what they have.

Media houses also are agenda setters in society. The economic drive to ensure maximum sales might blind the common national good. Reporting peace was not economically beneficial during the 2007 postelection violence. War sells and since everybody is fighting for viewership, they spice up info and provide raw stories and in the process violate ethics.²⁵⁷ However, when the violence gets to extremes, then even the target audience of the various media houses are affected and if they cannot access the services provided, the media houses suffer. That is one of the reasons why after the violence of 2007/08, media houses started having common headlines preaching peace. The media do things for economic gain. An example of Royal Media Services, is home to several vernacular stations that accommodate Luos, Kikuyus, and Luhyas among other communities. Economic development supersedes ethnic boundaries and it contributes to

²⁵⁵ Walter Oyugi, "Politicized Ethnic Conflict in Kenya: A Periodic Phenomenon," Government of Kenya, 2002

²⁵⁶ Interview with Bitange Ndemo, Former Permanent Secretary Ministry of Information Communications and Technology

²⁵⁷ Ibid

conflict management because no broadcaster benefits from a dead or terrorized population. Economic development also helps break the artificial tribal barriers. In Eldoret, the Kalenjins kicked out the Kikuyus only to later realize that there was nobody to bring fertilizer for them to grow their crops. The interdependence helps with economic growth and this helps fight ethnic animosity.

Conclusion

Media influences the opinion that the population has on societal issues. The media sets the agenda for discussion and provides information necessary to the public to form the basis for this discussion. This great power the media has can be used positively or negatively. Electoral processes in emerging democracies are still a competition where the winner takes all and the quest for power is at all costs. The General Election offers an opportunity for the people to get to select the leaders that they want to lead them and mismanagement of this process voluntarily or otherwise is likely to bring chaos. The media's role to present information fairly and they should be free from political interference if they are to carry out their mandate accordingly. However, media also needs to be responsible in carrying out their mandate. In Kenya ethnicity plays a major role in the country's electoral process and until the day people divorce themselves from tribal leadership and focus on developmental leadership, electoral conflicts might still recur. Poverty is also another key factor when it comes to electoral conflicts. The clamor for power and the voting along tribal lines is in the hope that the person that gets to power will bring development to people of his/her ethnic background. Development could help curb instances of electoral conflicts. If the population does not have to worry about basic needs, then the electoral discourse will surely change.

Chapter Six

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations.

The study has established that elections are the hallmark of representative democracy, allowing the people's regular input on their preferred choice of leadership and policy and yet they are also competitive processes, unleashing conflict and tensions that, if not constructively managed, could potentially destabilize the fabric of societies. It is essential, therefore, that the media play an active role in ensuring that such tensions and conflict are minimized or eliminated. The media can do this by, among other things, sensitizing the electorate and the rest of the citizenry on the proper conduct of elections as well as conducting civic education. During electoral processes, the media in its agenda setting role, can decide on what to focus on. The media can choose to focus on the development issues that candidates present and present debates in a non-ethnic manner so that focus is more on issues than personalities.

The study concludes that Kenyan media has contributed to instances of electoral conflict especially in the 2007 general elections. The failure of the media to provide the much needed information on electoral malpractices in the 1992 and 1997 elections also facilitated electoral violence in subsequent elections because the issues remained unsolved. This could have been due to state control but the effects of remaining silent on electoral malpractices and injustices are just as dangerous as inciting a section of the community to violence. The media is often used as a tool for propaganda during elections. Politicians and government officials use the media propaganda to influence electoral choices of the public. News organizations, editors, and reporters are often accused of political bias in their coverage of elections. In the early 90s, the Kenyan media was very much under government control. Liberalization of the press saw an

emergence of media houses and the firm grip the government had on the fourth estate loosened. However, lack of a regulatory body with regards to broadcast content, gave broadcasters a free hand that was abused on several instances and this led to incitement to violence by one section of society against another. The media in the pre-2009 era did not have stringent regulations on the content they broadcasted and journalists got away with what were regarded as inflammatory statements.

In the 2007 election the banning of live coverage after the announcement of presidential results, for instance, was perceived as suspicious, wrong and provocatively high-handed. Equally controversial was the official announcement of the presidential results via KBC, which was and still is considered to be under state control. The swearing-in of the president, also aired live by KBC, was unacceptable to some Kenyans. Much of the criticism of KBC has arisen not just from its former monopoly status but also because of its strategic position as the only broadcaster covering virtually the entire country and its failure to make a clean break with the past.

Digital media is the new media that is slowly gaining notoriety in Kenya and more people are gaining access to internet and as such access to online content. Tracking perpetrators of hate speech on digital media is quite a task and the police force is ill equipped to deal with incitement and hate speech from the new media. Social media sites offer anonymity that is hard to track. However with regard to SMS content, the government under the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology and with the cooperation of mobile telecommunication providers can now track perpetrators of hate speech against others. The launch of an initiative to register all SIM cards in Kenya was aimed at having information on the owner of a particular number so that in the event that bulk hate messages are sent out, they can track the source.

Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations for policy development:

A media and elections policy should be developed, to include guidelines for verifying data before going on air, vetting of live broadcasts and screening of paid-for advertisements, responsibility to announce accurate results and training of journalists on the basic tenets of good journalism. A policy should be formulated to control Electoral Code of Conduct and elections reporting and the manner of reporting on opinion polls. A substantive Act prohibiting hate speech should also be drafted and enacted. The study recommends that KBC Act be amended to provide the ECK with the commensurate power to compel KBC to act in accordance with the law, mechanisms should be set up to ensure the independence and public accountability of KBC, access to KBC by the Presidential Press Service should be reviewed, particularly in an election year and the key provisions in the KBC Act pertaining to free access slots for party political broadcasts be clarified and precisely defined as to the rights of the parties and candidates in the legal framework. Being the only national media that is funded by the tax payer's money, it should be impartial and independent.

The media at both at international and local levels can facilitate elimination of electoral violence by reporting issues which may be the catalyst for further instability with sensitivity, journalists integrating notions of community-building and consensus-building into their own practice, short term exchange programs of journalists working in large metropolitan media organizations exchanging positions with journalists from regional media to provide much greater understanding of each other's society and professional practices. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission, the Media Council of Kenya and the Communications Authority of

Kenya should be adequately financed and equipped to efficiently and effectively fulfil their respective mandates. Adherence to guidelines for responsible and ethical coverage of elections should be maintained and strengthened in the period before and after the elections.

To mitigate electoral conflict in Kenya the media can help build unifying institutional structures. At the core of ethnic conflicts is the relationship between ethnic groups and the state in the search for security, identity, and recognition. How the state negotiates these interests and needs will determine the level of identity conflicts. Media coverage that respects minority rights, protects minorities from the abuse of state power, and ensures that their grievances are taken seriously will reduce opportunities for ethnic mobilization. The media can be a unifying institution, creating bonds between ethnic groups, helping to forge a national identity for all ethnicities, providing youth an opportunity interact throughout the nation, and allowing minorities to advance to positions of leadership through merit. Secondly, the media can help by reinforcing positive social norms. Over the medium to long term, diffusing the potency of ethnicity for political ends requires reorientation of cultural norms. Social marketing campaigns that promote national unity, intergroup cooperation, and “strength through diversity” themes can help frame the ethnic narrative in a positive light, thereby making it more difficult for divisive politicians to play on differences to mobilize support. Such a communications strategy should be complemented by a country-wide, community-level outreach media campaign reinforcing messages of unity and tolerance for other groups, and nonviolent conflict resolution. Another approach the media can use is to encourage early response. The media should help underscore the importance of government officials taking expressed grievances by groups seriously (for example, claims of discrimination, denigration, or abuse of rights) and addressing them promptly. This, presupposes that the government is competent and willing to deal with these conflicts and

is not a party to the grievance in the first place. Belief that there is a systematic means by which one's grievances can be fairly addressed reduces the likelihood that individuals will feel the need to take corrective measures through violent means. This means that the media highlights issues before they reach manifest into violent confrontations.

Finally conflict transformation should be the focus if sustainable peace is to be attained. Conflict transformation is a long term approach to conflicts and it starts with understanding the underlying conflicting issues that exist between conflicting parties. In order for conflict transformation to take root, a systematic, deliberate process of addressing the deep rooted perceptions should be analyzed.²⁵⁸ Stella Sabiiti in Mbaine identifies 3 categories of media that further divide into five stages that are geared towards conflict transformation, which is more sustainable than resolution. The first category (traditional journalism) has two stages. Stage one is conventional journalism which is characterized by unprofessional journalistic conduct and state controlled media institutions. Secondly there is responsive journalism which strives to achieve accuracy, balance and fair reporting. There is a great degree of independence and freedom from state intimidation. The second category (transitional journalism) has stage three of media evolution and it is called sustained peace journalism. This stage basically considers the consequence of one's reporting. The last category (Transformational Media) has stages four and five which are Intervention media and Intended outcome media respectively. Intervention media is proactive reporting in situations of conflict. It can be used to counter hate speech for instance; it is set up by international peacekeeping forces or an NGO and it goes beyond commercial and competitive advantage. It offers practical information to victims of conflicts for instance, on how to find help or trace loved ones. Stage five is more about reshaping attitudes and promoting

²⁵⁸ Apollon A. "Conflict Transformation" Centre for Conflict Resolution – Kenya: Nakuru: 2012:p158

reconciliation.²⁵⁹ The preamble of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) constitution states that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed”²⁶⁰ Conflict transformation is a long term process that involves attempts at changing the attitudes and perceptions of a people. If the media can be able to achieve this via their broadcasts, then a peaceful end is a viable achievement.

Area for further study

The Kenyan media was accused of directly contributing to the violence that erupted after the 2007 general elections. In the subsequent election of 2013, the media opted to stay clear of any controversial issues arising during the electoral process. Allegations of gross electoral malpractices were reported by a section of civil society as well as members of the opposition party ODM. However the media focused on the message of peace and unity and is accused of not being interested in the truth for fear of having a repeat of the violence that broke out in the previous elections. Most people took to digital media to express their opinions on the matter but mainstream media opted to stay clear of the issue. This begs the question whether the message of peace that was propounded by the media is more important than addressing perceived electoral malpractices.

²⁵⁹ Sabiiti S.M “What Role should the Media Play in Conflict Transformation and Peace-Building?” in Mbaine E.A « Media in Situations of Conflict : Roles, Challenges and Responsibilities » Fountain Publishers : Kampala : 2006 :p.128-129

²⁶⁰ Ibid p17

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