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**THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND MEDIA CONFLICT IN WAR:
A CASE OF THE KENYAN 2007/2008 ELECTION VIOLENCE**

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Acronyms and abbreviations

CNN – Cable News Network

DEC – December

ECK – Electoral Commission of Kenya

IDP's - Internally Displaced Persons

JAN- January

KBC - Kenya Broadcasting Corporation

KTN - Kenya Television Network

KICC- Kenya International Conference Center

NGO - Non Governmental Organizations

NTV - Nation Television

ODM - Orange Democratic Movement

PNU - Party of National Unity

UN – United Nations

Abstract

Kenya as a country is known for its ethnic diversity and boasts of over 42 ethnic/tribes communities that for many years have lived together in harmony and respect for each other. In the face of this harmonious cohesion between the different communities, there have been sporadic threats on issues of resource distribution and political differences that have cultivated ethnic/tribal hatred and fighting especially during general elections that come every five years. This political/ ethnicity animosity has simmered in the country over the years but reached its climax in Dec 2007- Feb 2008 when the country broke into ethnic fighting after a disputed presidential election involving candidates from two major ethnic communities in the country. This deepened the ethnic differences among Kenyans and further destroyed the cultural diversity that out to have been viewed as strength more than a dividing factor. Though the violence was quelled and calm within two months of violence, the ethnic difference remained deep among the Kenyans (Nyukuri, 2009: 4).

Historically, Kenya gained her independence in 1963 and it was not until 1992 that Kenya became a democratic state after many years of fighting for democracy. With the realization of democracy, various institutions such as the media gained freedom and rights of expression, speech among others (Ibid, 6-7). The Kenyan media also became commercial which meant that there was more than one avenue for media expression apart from the state owned media, Kenya Broadcasting Cooperation. Since then there are over 100 media outlets in print and broadcast media (Eken, 1996: 70-73). The advent of new media such as Facebook, Twitter has also given the Kenya audience diverse avenues for expression and gathering information.

In a country that both the media and the government feel they have authority to pass information, influence decisions, set agenda, it is almost unlikely to avoid conflict between these two powers. It was unfortunate that the Kenyan public was caught up in the middle of this fight. The government claimed the media was mostly responsible for spreading hate messages, lacked objectivity and took sides in coverage of political campaigns. On their defense media practitioners held that they are responsible for public information and that the public believes in the media than the government. The decisions and rebellion that followed this media-government wrangle resulted in over 1,650 deaths, over 600, 000 displace persons, and property worth

millions of shillings destroyed. To date the country is still healing from the devastating effects of this conflict (Nyukuri, 2009: 15-16).

It is observable today that the media plays a key role (positive or negative) in the world's affairs, conflict, policy making and humanitarian response among others matters. The main goal of this study was to find out the role of the conflict between the government and the media's reporting during the election violence that hit Kenya 2007 following disputed election results that birthed Kenya's worst nationwide conflict.

The research also looked into the development and sequence of events that surrounded media coverage at that time. These included, sudden licensing of many vernacular radio station before the election, transmission of hate messages during political campaigns, the ban of live broadcast and the riots against the ban and eventually the full blown conflict (Kobia, 1984: 33-34).

Notably, over the recent years there has been much scholarly debate on the various roles of the media reporting during war. Most of these studies have focused on effects of exposure to war images on children's psychology, policy change, and future predication among others (Signorielli 2005:12). This research will therefore build on this question by uniquely centering on the accounts of government officials verses media practitioners.

The purpose of this study, therefore, was to explore and highlight the major occurrences that led to the conflict. The researcher found out that there is a blame game with the government asserting that the Kenyan media played a big role in the conflict, while the Kenyan media practitioners continue to defend their position as the 4th estate that are empowered by the citizen to pass information. The data that informed this was collected using qualitative research methods which included observations, key-informants interviews and questionnaires. Findings show that the government was responsible for the issuing various licenses to vernacular radio stations before the elections. These media channels could have possibly fueled the conflict. Actions such as banning of the media, the government believed was in the interest of national security of the country to put out the fire of hate messages that was quickly spreading throughout the country. The findings also reveal that the media practitioners believed they were responsible

for passing information to the public; hence they acted in the interest of the public. The violence that broke after media ban is therefore not owned by either of the parties but has done too much damage. The researcher however concluded that both the media and government had a responsibility in the violence even though it wasn't clear whether these actions were intended or unintended.

Key Words: Media, Government, Conflict, Kenya

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Whenever two bulls fight, the victim of their cruel is the grass beneath them,” Swahili saying

1.0: Background

The main goal of this study was to find out the role of wrangles between the Kenyan government and the Kenyan media the pre and post election period in 2007. These wrangles fueled violence Kenya following a disputed election as well birthed Kenya’s worst nationwide conflict. The research also looked into the development and sequence of events that surrounded government-media relations at that time.

Themes of fighting for democracy, violation of freedom of press, medias’ responsibility to inform and protecting citizens from media influence are discussed through the chapters of this research.

The author has likened the scenario to two bulls fighting, that is the media and the government, and the grass below their fighting ground is the Kenyan citizens who resorted to violence.

1.1.0: Historical Situation Context

Kenya held general election in 2007. The incumbent political party in power before this election was PNU while the major opposition party was ODM. The Kenyan media was also conspicuous, at the live center stage, highlighting the developments of the electioneering process and irregular vote counting among other anomalies (Kobia, 1984: 33-34).

The d-day for the voting exercise was 27th Dec 2007 and all polling stations were to be closed by 1700hr same day. As stated in the constitution, vote counting by the ECK would take place within the next 24 hours. This meant that by 30th Dec 2007 latest, Kenyans would have known which political party was going to lead Kenya for the next five years (Ibid: 38). But as witnessed

this was not the case since the election results were later released on 5th of January 2008. Anxiety and tension grew in the country as vote tally and announcement of results was delayed; different results were being reported from various polling stations. The government was notably silent on the developments of the election with most of the information often coming from the commercial (not state owned) media who reported the growing public anxiety, few episodes of violence, apparent loop holes in the voting exercise and vote rigging. The public therefore found the commercial media as the only source of updated information (Ibid 41-42).

From nowhere and unexpectedly, the commercial media stations ran announcements that the government had banned live broadcasting or coverage of the election. For a country struggling to achieve democracy banning of the media was indeed a set back to the many decades of fighting for press freedom (Ibid: 44).

To its defense, the government officials have continued to say that the only authoritative voice for announcing the results of the election was the government owned TV and radio station KBC. The Kenyan public that had been relying on the commercial media (supposedly perceived to be free from government control) for updates therefore found itself without diverse avenues of getting information. The state media as expected was highlighting the success of the incumbent president (Joinet, 2008: 27-29).

The Kenyan opposition supporters were therefore succumbed to getting their information from the one media outlet that they neither supported nor viewed as free from government control. As witnessed, the violence suddenly escalated with the media insisting on broadcasting and the government warning of prosecuting them in the court of law for perpetuating violence in Kenya (Ibid: 30).

1.1.1 : Fundamental Roles of the Media

The media can be defined as a channel through which messages are passed to an audience. The intention of passing this message is always to inform, persuade, or provoke response among others (Willey, 1998: 15). In addition, the power of the media has been recognized, perhaps

leading to areas of study such as media literacy and censoring, commercialization among others (Ibid: 17).

Moreover, it is observable today that the media plays a key role, positive or negative, in the world's affairs such as conflict, policy making and humanitarian response. That is to mean, the media's power can put forth a critical pressure whether destructive or constructive in any given situation. Bernard Kouchner, a renowned United Nations High Representative in Kosovo, also commented on his humanitarian efforts that: "In situations of conflict, without the media you can do nothing."

1.1.2: Role of Government in Electioneering Process

Government officials should carry out the electioneering process professionally. In order to set an example to their opposition parties, these officials should refrain from inflaming voter's emotions and inciting. The government through arms such as the police, judiciary, and electoral commission should ensure the elections are conducted in a fair way that upholds democracy (Joinet, 2008: 36). As a tool that carries democracy deserves the government support in their endeavors.

1.2: Statement of the Problem

Kenya as a nation has been viewed as an exemplary democracy in Africa and has on many occasions been described as an island of peace in Africa. The over 42 ethnic communities that make up the country have co existed relatively well since attaining independence in 1963 (Amutabi, 2009: 3).

Kenya also boasts of practicing free media. Free media enables the voters to be well informed and make wise decision. In addition, in a democratic state the media ought to be reliable, trustworthy and share diverse unbiased information. In essence most media houses in Kenya have standards, code of conducts, and editorial ethics that underline and promote these values. In some cases however where the media is controls by the government or the rich in the society this standards are not observed to the letter (Ibid, 2009: 3).

These codes of conducts call for every Kenyan journalist to be responsible for the news they share. This means they have an obligation to their audiences. They also have the responsibility to protect their audiences, especially their sources of sensitive information or reputation of spreading hate messages (Amutabi, 2009: 3). In addition, the media has a monumental responsibility in today's world and especially in the 20 century where it has emerged as the key channel for disseminating information during conflict in our neighborhoods as well as the distant lands (Smith 1991:23-29).

The statement of this study is therefore “The Role of Wrangles between the Government and the Media in War: A Study of the Kenyan 2007/2008 Election Violence”. This will include an in-depth look into the role of the media in communication and information gathering and dissemination as well as its role in conflict escalation, mitigation, management, prevention and resolution. In addition this research will look at the impact of the government banning and restricting press freedom.

It's interesting to note that the media is a powerful tool during unrest from Joseph Goebbels, who observed that the media is a mind control apparatus, to former UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, who noted that the CNN was “the sixteenth member of the United Nations Security Council”, to doubting Thomas' who condemn media influence on foreign policy — there are many advances to defining the role of the media.

1.3: Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study was to find out how the conflict between the Kenyan media and government caused or escalated violence in Kenya. This will lead to an exploration into this cold war in matters such as freedom of the expression, right to information, media censorship, national security, and conflict resolution all in the context of press freedom. The research will also be able to discuss several specific cases relating to the Kenyan government actions. Was the media purely a tool of propaganda by politicians or innocently performing their duty? Did the government practice too much power to control the deviant commercial media?

1.5: Research Questions

- Should the media have a responsibility for the impact of their information to their audience?
- Should the media practice their code of conduct to the letter or should they modify these rules to suite conflict circumstances?
- Does giving the media press freedom warranty room for misuse?
- Should the government restrict press freedom during matters of national security?
- Should the government limit the fast growing commercial media ownership/licensing?
- Should the government and the media coexist or one should be abolished?
- Should the government be the sole source of information during conflict?

1.6: Significance of the Study

The outcome of this research will therefore explain the various facets of government and media participation and consequences, prior to and through past electioneering period. This research will also inform stakeholders who wish to have basic knowledge on using the media in conflict intervention.

Lastly, an analytical perspective that this research seeks to share will add to the body of knowledge in setting precedence on who is the credible source of information during conflict. This will especially, be useful to law makers who will be guided on what clauses to include or remove in the constitutional clause that permits press freedom and media licensing.

1.7: Limitations

Almost everyone has an opinion on the role of the government and the media in the Kenyan conflict, hence putting aside preconceptions, prejudices, emotions and analysis was a challenge.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

“The power of media in warfare is formidable. It can be a mediator or an interpreter or even a facilitator of conflict. If only by editing away facts that do not fit the demands of air time or print space, many wars would be avoided,”

Elizabeth Rehan

2.0: Introduction

Kenya witnessed post election violence in a magnitude that shocked many who depend on Kenya for tourism, education, export and import of goods and services etc. Above all, the lives lost and property destroyed has left many baffled to date. In once considered to be the most politically secure society, the aftermath of a blamable election in Kenya did more harm than just a fight between ethnic groups, media and public institutions that hold different political stands. This ignited the long hidden ethnic tensions, resulting in violence, (Amutabi, 2009: 19).

Fundamentally, the human process of collecting information, analyzing it, making decisions, and acting upon these decisions, based on media exposure, remains a dynamic complex subject of study and comprehension (Kiraitu, 1995: 38-41). The 24/7 news live coverage has kept the public informed of events as they unfold (Livingstone & Steven 1997: 24). Having noted this principle, the general questions this research sort to answer were in relation to; whether the media can be blamed for the effects of the message it passes across to their audience; is the media to blame they discover alternative ways of informing their audience despite the ban from the government to air information?; Is it inciting/ethical for the media to frequently inform the public that the government has placed a ban on the media? Is the media to blame when their audience becomes agitated by the government banning the media? Could this ban and sudden lack of information fuel violence?

The following literature highlights other scholars contribution to the subject of government verses media disagreement in fighting for democracy, inclusion, justice, fight for freedoms and rights during conflict.

2.1: Role of the Media in Political Campaigns

In a democratic electioneering process, rivaling politicians must enjoy their freedom of media campaign exposure as they try to lure voters. Failure to exercising this freedom then their ideologies will not be heard. In some cases undemocratic the ruling political can inhibit directly or indirectly the avenues for this free expression by rival parties (Rutherford, 1994: 102-104). Having noted the importance of exposure, politicians or government officials must appreciate and respect the media as they perform this function indiscriminately.

So for a larger degree of satisfaction with the election process, the government/politicians and the media must have rules that govern them as well as measures in place to counter any attempts to bar their respective freedoms. These rules must be availed to both the government and the media as well as respected and adhered to. The body that can possibly keep both of these sides in check is the judicial system (Ibid; 111).

This leads to the point of independency of the judicial bodies that are free from influence of either the media or the government. It is the duty of the judiciary to ensure there are no loop holes in the rules and ensure they protect the citizens and the media from unfair trial or elections results. These rules should also be well spelt out for perpetrators of violence; such as repercussion of spreading hate speech or incorrect information through the state owned media or commercial media. This will help keep at bay any election malfunction and violence (Ibid; 112). If the media practitioners are aware of possible prosecution, then the journalist will be compelled to report objectively without prejudices.

Voters should not be forced to vote for or support a particular agenda, in the event of this happening then the elections fails to be transparent and the voters feel cheated. The persuasion venues such as the government officials or the media should therefore avoid such election

malpractice. This feeling often results in election violence as a way of expressing their dissatisfaction and sometime they try to establish their own government with their chosen leader. All in all these actions deter growth and realization of democracy. The voters therefore appreciate transparency and being informed by the media through non-partisan context (Ibid; 127, 129).

The media can also act as a gatekeeper that holds both the government and politicians accountable to fulfill their promises to the public. Investigative journalism complements the questions in the society that the voters might need in order to make sound election judgments (Ibid: 129).

A comparison of the governments practical work verses their manifestation can be an agenda of the media. This would inform the voter on how to vote which means that the media should have the freedom to do this investigative and comparison reports without fear of the government. They should be able to blow whistles in areas where things are not right such as corruption. In other words the media should look at the governments promised to build schools, roads, and 5 years down the lane, the media can look at this and see if these promises were kept. Therefore a journalist ought to look at this and report on the politician's response.

2.2: Role of the Media in Electioneering Process

Elections tend to be events that citizens look forward to most of the time. Some look forward to this time to have change, or to have politicians running to support their communities with free gifts, or change of regime (Leo, 1984: 93).

Emotions are often high as divergent views are exchanged during this period. Verbal exchanges and competitions are also common with rival parties promising to do better than each other. For these reasons clarity of mind and fairness must be upheld by the media, government officials/politicians and the voters (Ibid: 86, 91, 97).

The Kenya election commission was faced with tough decisions to make in order to ensure that all the candidates are fair treated to date the Chairman of the Electoral Commission of Kenya

admits that he doesn't know who won the election. It's ironical however that on the 5th of January he announcement of the presidential candidates as the president. This commission had the responsibility of making fair rules that protect the candidates and the voters from scorn, dispute or harm. It also emerged that the commissioner were election by the president without consulting the parliament which makes the decision on who is to be appointed. The media therefore scrutinized and often termed the commission as sympathizers of the incumbent president (Amutabi, 2009: 27).

As expected politics are likely to do all they can to win elections. Government bodies such as the Electoral Commission, the Judiciary, and the Police can be overwhelmed by these politicians' tricks of winning elections. These efforts by the politicians can be extreme to that they undermine efforts for achieving democracy and abusing human rights at times. However, since genuine voters demand for free, honest and fair elections, the media comes in to play as a watchdog. The media can also best perform this function due to their wide and ability to reach a wide audience (Amutabi, 2009: 30-31).

The media therefore informs the public of illegal activities and corruption, violation of human rights and rules of the election process. In the event the media works for the politicians, then they cannot expose these mishaps. The media therefore must be familiar with election process, and be able to anticipate any possible mishaps as well as mitigate them by exposing these activities to public criticism.

2.3: Role of the Media in Persuasion and Influence Social Behavior

As new forms of media evolve, new questions are posed as to their effect on social behavior (Meyrowitz 1985: 93). Kenya's media fraternity has not only seen growth, but it has also gone through growth to an extent that now Kenya enjoys press freedom. With the evolution various forms of media have come up and licensing has been made easier. This is to say; virtually every Kenyan can access at least one form of the media. The social behavior has on the other hand been modified with the western culture, pop culture, and universal human rights being known by this population. In other words, if the media does have an influence on its audience, then the

Kenyan audience is not immune. By exposing the governments' failures to this public, the media voluntarily or involuntarily causes the public to revolt or oppose the government on account of their failure.

To show this causal-effect relation of the media and its audience, Chouliaraki, (2006: 1) explores the nature of the relationship between television images and those affected by conflict. She says, news coverage of conflict or war often appeals to emotions hence the questions such as what do we do when we receive media words or images. Do we put off the television set, cry, get angered, complain or even provoke war and genocide when exposed to the media? These questions tackle the role that media exposure has on its audiences.

In addition, Chouliaraki (Ibid; 66) discusses the role of media contents and notes that the media makes spectators feel that they operate generously on their own and are endowed with spontaneous civic or humanitarian feelings that makes them react. In other words the media when used unethically can be used to create an uprising against the government or various authorities.

Joshua Meyrowitz in his analysis of 'the impact of media on social situations' also notes that exposure to the media can alter the receivers perception (Meyrowitz, 1985: 93). This, he says, is created by an amalgamation of the personal and public spheres hence there is no clear separation of the two spheres in an individual's internal process of thinking and decision making (Ibid; 107). In other words as a result of this merge, an audience watching a video clip of the government spokes person justifying banning the media, find himself (personal sphere) in touch with the war/tension (public sphere) that is ongoing in the government offices and media houses. The resultant amalgamation is the action of agreement or revolting, demonstrating or fighting.

2.4: Media's Role in Influencing Peace or War

In order for news to have an impulsive response that causes the audience to react, there has to be vivid stories of those suffering or injustice brought to the sitting rooms of the audience (Turkle 1997: 25). These stories become the back bone and origin of conflict, a war of words whose play ground is the media and its supporters or disapprovers are the public. Notably, for these stories to have an impact they have to explicitly appeal to spectators, steer up reaction, bringing up the

questions of how they can respond to alleviate the injustice or suffering by merely provoking audiences to rise and stop the conflict (Chouliaraki 2006: 66).

The matchless nature of media coverage of conflict makes all people caught up in conflict has one thing in common; an element or wish for change and often the call for action (Chouliaraki 2006; 118). This is especially true since conflict news normally leads to diverse visualization of those caught up in conflict. This gives rise to a blend and handy domination of various emotional feelings during conflict (Ibid: 119). This implies that viewers are led to react, possibly through violent actions in my opinion.

2.5: Role of the Media in Perpetuating Politics of the Suffering

The amount of emotions that the media arouses and influences audiences to act has also been termed as politics. Hence the role of media coverage is not always out of good heart, but a political means to arrive at vested interest (Chouliaraki, 2006: 151). News of various conflicts is but politics of ideologies or emotions that features concern as a main premise of the representation of those caught up in conflict. In addition the common use of the terms such as ‘emergency’, ‘deadly’, ‘mounted tension’ among others are insightful, dominant, media induced perceptions about those caught in a conflict (Ibid: 151). In other words, the media can be used to fuel politics by the government. When a particular media house doesn’t support the politics of the government then the government is likely to have different political interests with them. This automatically sets a ground of animosity unless sanity rules.

The media therefore optimizes on reporting on the any infringement on their freedom to share information, and possible effects this would have on their audience. This they do in order to influence their audiences. This unique feature gives rise to an exemplary manifestation of media politics that appeal for sympathy from their audiences and mostly win their hearts (Ibid: 119). The media therefore uses any aggression toward the media as an act that oppose realization of democracy. Of course most citizens would reject to any threat on democracy to thrive hence, these messages to gang up against the government are mostly fruitful.

2.6: The Role of the Media in Creation of Unintended Reaction

This is a different effect from the majority of the response. It occurs when the media's attempt to provoke their audience to rally with them, fails to take place. Instead their audience chooses to be indifferent and not to part of a conflict (Turkle & Sherry 1997:10). In such cases the different parties using the media as a fighting ground fail since there none or minimum effect of their messages on their audience.

Turkle (Ibid: 34) also noted a tendency on the reaction of media audiences or the role that the media has on its audiences reaction. This, he refers to as compassion fatigue, a 'syndrome' that is symptomized by boredom of the audience of receiving repeated war or conflict or dreadful events from the media to an extent that they become indifferent to the messages.

This constant exposure to differences, war, injustice, conflict, corpses, and sufferings causes exhaustion to an extent that the audience feels they can do nothing to help the situation. The audience gets reserved to the thought that "after all, conflict is bound to continue, more people will die". Eventually the audience is left unmoved, unshaken and non responsive to the media messages (Ibid:35). In this case if the media is preaching hate messages to perpetuate violence, the audience remains unmoved and the plot to create violence is thwarted.

2.8: Conclusion

Having looked at this literature the author believes that the media can be used positively or negatively in an electioneering process. The Kenyan situation is a good example of this scenario; especially on how exposure to the media can shape the audiences decisions, reaction and impact on social behaviour.

The media moreover intentionally or unintentionally creates identities and offers avenues for different views to be showcased. This as seen in the above literature can be used as a political tool. The media has a duty to expose the politicians, their parties, and manifestos to the public in order for the public to make sound judgments on which candidate to vote for. In other words, failure to expose or bias by the media to give a true representation of the political parties, can influence undemocratic voting patterns. Therefore the media can be used as positive avenue for exchange of political ideologies and visions for the country.

The following chapter looks at the methods used to answer the various questions on the onset of this research in order to find convergent or divergent information as informed by the literature review.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0: Introduction

This topic “The role of wrangles between the government and media during war,” and answering the research questions will be tackled in this chapter. This chapter therefore intends to discuss the study design, the study population, sampling method and sample size, criteria of inclusion in the study, data collection methods, instruments that were used for data collection, data quality control methods , processing , entry and analysis methods and ethical consideration for the study.

3.1: Study Design

Since the study’s’ intention was to investigate the role of the conflict between the government and the media in electioneering process, it adopted qualitative data collection methods. This method enabled gathering of in depth data that aim to explain human actions and the rationale behind these behaviours, the when, what, where, why and how verdicts are made. In other words, qualitative data was collected to validate certain background variables and to obtain information on knowledge, attitudes and perceptions (Berg 1989: 14) with regards to involvement in conflict, in discussion as well as effect on the audiences. The author therefore combined both descriptive and exploratory designs. The two methods helped to minimise biasness in that each method will triangulate the other (Marvasti 2004:12).

The author also adopted an inquisitorial method in gathering the information (Ibid: 12). The nature of the research dictated the choice of this method since this would unearth the precision of the role of the media in the conflict.

Specifically the qualitative data collection methods used, were the combination of the observations, questionnaires and unstructured in-depth interviews to key informant (Burgess 1984: 178). This helped to meet the objectives of this study by combing findings from the different methods for the purpose of validation of findings hence minimising biases in a single

method (Ibid:14). The hub of this study was the accounts of the government officials and media practitioner, with most of the data centring on their account of events that transpired before, during and after the elections. This choice was backed by advantage that qualitative methods permit the researcher to partake in and appreciate the insight of resourceful informants as well as discover informants' worldview (Berg 1989: 5-7).

3.2: Study Population and Inclusion Criteria

The study targeted Kenyan Government officials. These included officials from the Ministry of Information and Communications, Ministry of Internal Security, and the Attorney General Office as well as media practitioners in Kenya. In this respect, the author zeroed in to specific individuals as a study subject who had to meet the following criterion:

- *They must consent to participate*
- *They must be a voice of the authority/office that they represent*
- *They must have been in Kenya before, during and after the conflicts*
- *Respondents must have influenced, interacted, or worked with the media or government during the conflict*

3.3: The Sampling Method and Sample Size

In the beginning the study used the non-probability sampling methods to select respondents from the target population. Non-probability sampling refers to the selection of sample elements not based on known probabilities (Fisher et al 1983:98) by so doing the author asked various government offices and media practitioners association to propose informants for the research.

The author then did convenient sampling where by the selection of the informants was on the first come first served basis. In other words, the volunteers/ first top names given to the researcher were the chosen informants hence cutting off others who wanted to share their views

(Oso & Onen 2005:58). In this was the study population purposively consisted of Kenya Government officials who are civil servants and that were likely to be involved in one way or another in the conflict with the media.

Five officials were conveniently selected from the long list served to the author by the government offices and four media practitioners were randomly identified from the telephone directory of the media association after contacting 17 media houses in total. These two sets represented of predetermined clusters which were used to inform this study.

In order to investigate the role of the media in the Kenyan conflict, it was essential to have an array of sources of information. This informed the selection of two varying groups, where nine participants in total were interviewed. They were also selected on the basis of their experience with the media relations and laws of Kenya. They also had a long-standing expertise in this area having served in their respective posts for over five years.

Moreover, each participant volunteered information of their involvement in the conflict as much as they possible recalled. This allowed a variety of responsibility issues to be investigated within the broad framework of their role in the government- media in the conflict. The concern of the research was to collect multiple sources of evidence that would validate common findings and exclude any one-sided bias that might arise (Berg 1989: 37).

The research gained from this sample since each participant had been involved in the decision made during the conflict. This allowed the researcher to focus in-depth on the experiences of each informant (Ibid: 48). This was principally important because the research focus is in a research area of which there is minute accessible data in Kenya. All participants had a handy understanding of the events that led to the conflict and their observations were considered to be representative and knowledgeable practitioners.

3.4: Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The methods of data collection included in-depth key-informant interview where guided general questions were developed and primarily uncontrolled. A total of 17 interviews to 9 interviewees were conducted to assess the role of, knowledge about and attitude of the interviewees on the conflict between the government and the media during the contended election results. The

researcher took notes and audio voice recorders were used to store the data collected during the interview sessions (Burgess 1984: 209).

The utilization of interviews also allowed the author to expound few areas of inquiry which were vague to participants. It also enabled clarification of meaning of questions as well as provided the chance to introduce the researcher intentions, research topic and objective. This also motivated honesty in the part of the respondents. Moreover, the author utilized this opportunity to explore themes and classify them into categories which made data analysis easier (Marvasti 2004: 27).

Using a semi-structured questionnaire with open ended rather than closed ended questions provided a high degree of flexibility during the interviews. A questionnaire was firstly piloted on three (Two government officials and one media practitioner) random to guarantee that it met the objectives of identifying the participants who had knowledge of the conflict (Marvasti 2004: 24).

Face-to-face interviews facilitated probing of responses to investigate and ensure that each participant gave full answers. Attitudes, passions, perceptions were also easy to gauge following the face to face interviews (Ibid: 38).

The endeavor of the study was to congregate multiple sources of proof that would validate the broad findings and omit any prejudiced that might arise from differences. It was therefore indispensable to take on concepts and research techniques that were understood in similar ways in both groups. The search for divergence verses equivalence was therefore established to be the most important methodological aspect of two sided research (Berg 1989: 89) in this case, the government vs. the media.

3.5: Data Processing, Quality, Entry and Analysis Methods

The Key Informants Interviews data were checked for consistency of the notes with the recordings and later transcribed before data analyses were done. The qualitative data was analyzed manually to come up with clear understanding of how some of the variables describe the factors that determine role of the government-media wrangle on Kenyan conflict.

The information gathered through interviews were interpreted to extract themes relevant to the research questions (Shaw2001: 87; Lavie & Willig 2005: 45) by reading and rereading the transcripts of the interviews and getting familiarized with the data. Interesting and significant information was marked according to emerging themes or categories.

The data was then grouped in themes to help the researcher to come up with important information regarding the respondent's knowledge, attitudes, motivations, decisions and practices regarding their involvement in the conflict. The researcher then made a list of master themes and sub-titles become sub-themes which we clustered under several headings (Shaw 2001: 90). Although the data analysis stage was conducted after the fieldwork data collection stage, the data analysis stage was in progress during the data collection phase rather than as a final stage in a linear model (Lavie & Willig 2005: 44). This led the researcher to have second interviews with some informants which produced comparisons of positions held by the participants. In addition, the author was also able to trace connections and thoughts; explore recurring patterns and phenomena's during whole process of data analysis (Ibid: 49). Preliminary and subsequent notions and thoughts were recorded in detail, thus highlighting the organic nature of this method for data analysis (Ibid 52-53).

During data analysis, more details emerged and called for further analysis. Since the researcher had already created some theoretical categories in the course of theoretical reflections, and used these for the first coding purposes, enlightening and enlarging the categories became an ongoing process during analysis (Shaw 2001: 92-95). In some cases, particular themes would fall into more than one category, but this seemed to point out the unity and connectivity of themes rather than a fault in coding, for example the power of the media to influence social behaviours. The author intentionally sought unlike views to disprove some preliminary theoretical constructs. Working categories were developed that explained the role of the media in conflict.

Subsequent to the creation of categories, was the narrative presentation of the data that was supported by confirmations from the statements recorded while conducting the interview as well as making theoretical references as applicable (Shaw 2001: 108).

In order to ensure that the objective of the research was fulfilled, the author looked at each topic and inserted the significant interview extracts. The analysis continued until data had been synthesized thoroughly to permit conclusions to be drawn from the collected data.

The findings are presented in the following chapter, where fitting descriptive quotations drawn from the transcribed interview records have been used to put across participants outlook.

3.6: Ethical Considerations

In order to conform to the standards of conduct of the various government ministries official involved in the research, a permission letter to carry out the study in was obtained from their respective bosses. Verbal consents were obtained from the informants.

They were also informed of the study objectives, methods and its relevance were assured of confidentiality. No person was forced into participating in the study.

At the same time, the author ensured that the entire informants were treated with respect and their privacy observed. The researcher used the data from various respondents to compliment the final findings and analysis to avoid any unfair accusations or bias. This check was further enhanced by the researchers choice to hold the interviews in private talks that gave the informants confidence and alleviated the fear accusations.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0: Introduction

This chapter aims to link the original research questions and theoretical framework in presenting the research findings and discussing these findings. The results are presented according to the objectives of the study which reflect the research questions that the researcher set out to answer.

In addition, this chapter presents characteristic of the study subjects displayed by the qualitative findings. Qualitative data is presented based on the themes that emerged during the analysis. The section also demonstrates how some of the identified factors determined the role of the conflict between the government and the media of Kenya's electioneering process in 2007.

Key dimensions of difference in opinion and points of agreement on the role of the media during the Kenyan conflict were used to collate the main attributes deemed to be the most vital for resultant war. These results presented generalized findings based on the 17 interviews of nine interviewees. Undoubtedly, within such a big data set, and using qualitative methods, some divergent dissenting views were noted, but these can only be moderately reported in this research.

This research was informed by information from Kenya Government employees attached to the Ministry of Information and Communication (2 informants, labeled as A, B), Ministry of Internal Security (1 informant, labeled as C) and the Attorney General's Office (2 informants, labeled as D, E), representatives from the Kenya Editors Association/Media practitioners (4 informants, labeled as F,G,H,I).

Having extensively tacked the functions of the media in an electioneering process, earlier on, the researcher decided to have this as a marking scheme for the media and see if the Kenyan media performed as expected.

In addition, having outlined the role of the government, the researcher also sort to find out if the government bodies such as the Judiciary (through the office of the Attorney General) had an active role in shaping the events that followed the election.

Notably, preliminary findings show that the Kenyan judiciary is a body that falls under the government's docket. The president had reshuffled the judiciary just two months before the election. One is tempted to assume that the judiciary officials were the choice of the president. In addition, the president was sworn in the middle of the night in a less than 10minutes ceremony on 6th Jan 2008 by this very judiciary system despite the elections being termed undemocratic. A ceremony that has 12 invited guests among who were the president's family members unlike the past when the swearing ceremony was a public event in a stadium. The 10 minutes ceremony took place at the president's back yard with all media houses locked out except the state ran TV station.

In a country where there is freedom of movement, the media was also caught up in the ban from accessing the Kenya International Conference Center (KICC), in Nairobi where election results were being announced. The only media allowed into the central center during these events was the government owned station – Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). To counter this, other media houses had sent their reporters to various polling stations across the country to confirm if what was sent to KICC was gospel truth. It was however disappointing when the results from the government and the other media houses was different. The non-state owned media houses then announced these different results. According to the state owned media the winner of the election was the incumbent president but according to the other stations the opposition leader had won the election. In the midst of this uncertainty the government banned all other media house and only permitted KBC to air their coverage. This, the author believed led to public uproar that birthed the worst war in Kenya.

4.1: Media's Intended and Unintended Influence

Way before the election campaigns, the government was using most of the leading media houses in Kenya to campaign. It ironic however, then this relationship however went sour when the media either became objective and started broadcasting the opposition parties (alongside the incumbent government) or was convinced that the government was not what they said they were. Slowly government campaigns were anti media and while the opposition parties kept thriving

when this cold war escalating. Opinion polls also kept highlighting the decreasing public approval and support of the government.

Through investigative journalism, the media also kept highlighting instances where government vehicles were being used to ferry weapons, leaflets of hate messages among others. These actions by the media target the government actions so much that at the peak of the electioneering process, the government banned media coverage. The result was uprising and revolts from all the parts of the country.

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

Media Practitioner- Participant F noted that,

“The media through live coverage of government cars ferrying weapons, bloody conflict, pieces of property in flames, was very convincing to the public that the government was preparing for war if the incumbent president was defeated in the elections.”

Moreover, six participants (5 Government officials and 1 media practitioner) agreed that even though some national television and radio stations tried to dilute their message (make it sound less biased) it was still clear to the audience that they were anti government. The tonal variations and facial expression of the news casters or anchors would clearly reflect the stations feelings and attitude. And as Mehrabian (1998: 43), notes after his work on the influence of non verbal and verbal communication, the overall message influence on the listener is 38% vocal, 7% verbal, and 55% facial expression.

Consequently, these six participants felt that the fueling of the violence through the media was not necessarily verbal/transmission of hate messages but it was mostly the vocal and facial expressions of the media. As a result, the media needed to pay vigilant attention to the vocal and facial aspects of their delivery, which may comprised 93 % of the passing their message during the conflict.

All the participants agreed that divergent views of the between the government and the media were active pre – election, during and post election period. They also acknowledged the power

that the media had over the government to influence the public. However there was a variation in the negative role of the media in regard to the conflict.

All nine participants believed that the media played a big role in shaping Kenyan history during the 2007 elections. These they said was a praise to the media for reporting from all the parts of the country, reporting in a timely manners, interviewing different politicians on their views, and investigating the politicians. They also believe that the proper utilization of mass media is a great tool that can be used to at a robust level for the good of the citizens of Kenya.

Media Practitioner- Participant G said,

“The Kenyan media has been given power by the citizen. People believe everything the media says as gospel truth.”

4.2: Media, Free Press and Democracy Promotion

On 30th of December the Kenyan government officially banned live broadcasts or any anti-government coverage. This meant news would only be reported once it was a past tense. With lack of radio and TV updates, the cell phones came in handy as information or rumours of war were being spread all over the country. The newspapers also took advantage on the live broadcast and started printing newspaper in almost two hours intervals.

Six participants felt that the ban on live broadcasting not only caused anxiety but also sparked the conflict that saw about thousands of Kenyan dead and another half a million displaced.

Media Practitioner - Participant I said,

“The Kenyan government was solely responsible for fueling the conflict after banning live broadcast. There was need for the government to explain their decision to the public instead of announcing the ban than keeping mum. When suspense rules, human beings are bound to look for excuses and they blamed for hiding some vital information hence the ban. ”

Most of the participants also believed that the rise of democracy in Kenya via the media must have made the citizens trust the media more than the government officials. Seven participants blamed failure of the government to contain the violence on previous government regimes that gave the media ‘too much power’. In other words, they believe the government had the sole

responsibility to control the media and in the case violence erupted from the media messages, the blame laid fully on the government for failing to tame an institution they had created and even constitutionalised. The media had become uncontrollable; the fault belonged to the government. Most participants believe that when the Kenyan media licensing rules are less stringent and ‘funny’ tribal characters found their way into owing the media.

Media Practitioner, Participant H said,

“The Kenyan media has evolved over years. In the 1930’s till the mid 1990’s (which saw the rise of multiparty system) the ruling political party KANU suppressed the media. The era after this, that gave room for saw the rise and sudden expansion and suppression of the media especially through torture, imprisonments, and threats to the media that aimed to suppress it. Self censorship was therefore entrenched into the media fraternity for fear of falling on the wrong books of the state”.

Media Practitioner, Participant F said,

“When the Kenya became a democratic state and the ruling party since independence was defeated in the 2002 election. Press freedom was full actualized in 2002 when NARCK party took power and preached press freedom which gave way to cropping up of new radio and TV stations, issuance of more licenses, and expansion of frequencies. This move was a positive one but also had a negative move whose fruits were reaped in after the 2007 elections”.

4.3 : Localized Media and Influence in National War

The biggest province of Kenya, Rift Valley, was the most hit by the election violence. And all the government officials’ participants noted that the media in Rift Valley was mostly responsible for the massacres. The massacres whose victims were the incumbent presidents tribe mates was said to have escalated after the media ban by the government. The situation was as grave as the public attacking the office of the state owned media house in Rift Valley.

However the government still defended itself that the citizen’s reaction to burn property and massacre their fellow Kenyans was a result of the media inciting the public. All government participants believed that even after the ban, the media still got loop holes and sent hate messages. Leaflets and fliers were daily sources of news in such a province from anonymous sources.

Government Official-Participant D added that,

“ In the start of acrimoniously disputed elections, violence exploded and rival factions openly fought on the residential areas and on the streets. A number of vernacular radio stations continued to air hate messages in delicately disguised metaphors. Rift Valley Province KASS FM, a local vernacular radio station of Kalenjin tribe particularly spread hateful inciting messages. The radio station often incited its listeners to evacuate people from the Kikuyu tribe who were living in their province since time immemorial. This propagated ethnic tension, and perhaps was the reason why the government banned the media from going in air.”

4.4: Censored and Uncensored War Coverage

The relationship between the media and the government has always been fond especially when both parties are benefiting. The democratic revolution and increase in the powers of the media, flourished in the absence of reviewed legislative and less stringent regulatory structure, hence the rise on uncontrolled media that was free anyone to venture into.

Government Participant A noted that,

“Some media houses therefore optimized the ‘free’ opportunity and were irresponsible in the content they aired. Recklessness was present since some media houses lacked signed codes of conduct for their reporters, often hiring untrained journalists who were witnessed as lacking objectivity and were not non partisan during the 2007 elections. They were often biased, sensational, compromised and unnecessarily alarmed their audiences with messages of fear, inciting them against the government,”

Media Practitioner-Participant E added that,

“Banning the media after announcing that President Kibaki won the election triggered the violence. The day the bloodshed begun we had various listeners calling in and narrating what was happening and saying the government was out to kill and silence its opposition. They said their houses were on fire. They were asking us to contact the NGO’s and not the police to come to their rescue. From the station one could hear the panic and fear in the listener’s voices. As the media we did our part to alert the police on where to go. So on the contrary to dividing, the media stepped in to control the violence”.

Six participants attributed the mounting tension among Kenya to the live broadcast of opinion polls and vote tallying by the media and the government releasing their own opinion polls. As government participant C observed,

“Eventually the government (through the Ministry of Information and Communication) found it fit to ban live broadcast. I agree with this move, because the media was getting out of control. I believe the Kenya media could have done better to forestall the stalemate”.

One participant armed with Kenya constitutional (from the Attorney General's Office) knowledge condemned the government's move to ban live broadcast sitting it as illegal. Participant D, who represented the government, said that,

“Most Kenyans think the move to ban the media was from the Attorney Generals Office. This was not the case. Indeed the ban was illegal and led to anxiety to Kenyans. Anxious Kenyans, locked out information therefore resorted to lawlessness”.

Government Respondent (From the Attorney General's office) - Participant E added that,

“The Attorney General has always held the position that the move to ban the media was unconstitutional hence illegal. The Office of the Attorney General has also investigated this events and the case has been handed over to the parliament for deliberations. In addition, no one sincerely believes that the Kenyan Judicial system can dispassionately tackle the presidential election row. Especially not after the incumbent president had appointed new judges just a couple of days before the elections. The media has to step in as the fourth estate and save the country from disarray”.

In addition, Media Practitioner Participant G said,

“At that time the government was unyielding to lift the ban. It condemned the radio FM stations which he termed as “Uncontrollable and responsible for spreading hate messages throughout Kenya. The government believed that the violence that increased after the banning was just a few rebellious people who had other agendas. By no means did the action of the media bring the violence”.

4.5: Independence of Media in Time of War

With the ban on the other forms of media the print media through anonymous leaflets, flyer and newspapers flourished and countered the lack of information flow. Participant I, as a media practitioner noted that,

“The ban was counterproductive because the print media was consistent in criticizing the government over the decision to ban their counterparts in broadcast media. Newspapers took centre stage in fighting the ban with some printing three copies of their papers per day,”

Moreover, all nine participants agreed that for the time the ban on TV and Radio broadcasting was counterproductive, violence increased and finally the government lifted and gave in. the government said their actions were misunderstood since the ban was put across as a national security matter and not to bar democracy.

Media Practitioner- Participant F argued that the government was torn between banning the media for fueling violence and suppressing the media which was increasing spreading anti government messages. As the participants said,

“The government must have found itself between a rock and a hard place. Besides, over the years, successive opinion polls have proved that Kenyans esteem the media as the most reliable institution. It was therefore no surprise when the public took sides and support the media in this government and media row.”

All the participants were also for the opinion that the number and range of media outlets worsened the case since virtually every one could access the information which had become anti government by the end of the electioneering process. This they blamed the government for licensing ‘every Tom dick and Harry’ to own the media. The media, a tool they said had the say in what happens in Kenya.

Five of the participants (four from the media side and one from the Attorney General office) also supported media coverage during the violence. This position was informed by the view that government were anti the media. Media Practitioner, Participant G argued that,

“The government wanted the leading media houses to support them while forgetting that the media should be non partisan. The politicians and Kenyan Government officials should be in fact be grateful to the media. The media practiced self censorships. Were it not for this censorship the voters would have know the government for who they are; selfish persons who wanted to use the media to spread their interest. But the government failed terribly since the media maintained its objectivity,”

This was contrary to what government officials- participant A and B said,

“The media was actually biased and its position that put Kenya into that mess. The media ought to have appreciated the magnitude of the row instead of reducing it to a government-dictatorship vs. media- democracy battle.”

When the author inquired from Media Practitioner - Participant F, on his views on the effect of these actions, he said,

“Trouble in Kenya came in when the government owned station was reporting different results from the other media houses. This is what sparked the violence. The ban on the media was simply reinforcing the public doubt on the governments’ transparency.”

Six participants admitted that this confusion led to public unrest, informed the governments ban from live broadcast as well as restricted entry of other media houses to the main report center, the KICC.

Kenya is made up of 42 tribes. Of the 42 tribes, 33 have vernacular radio stations and 7 vernacular news papers that serve the respective tribes besides the 12 English/Swahili TV stations etc . The local tribes are in mostly different from the one another such that listeners not intended to get a particular message are complexly cut off. Being a tribal state as well as a democratic state, these vernacular stations were claimed to tend to be sympathetic to political leaders from their respective tribes. As expected politicians also come from different tribal lines and they used these divergent media to oppose the government. The government also boasted of owning the state media and used this to undermine other politicians and the other media houses.

In addition, most code of conduct of these media houses state that the respective journalist will report fairly and respect all their news subjects. This stops them from being tribalism, racists, and sexists or have religious bias. However when vernacular stations went tribal there was concern over the professionalism of the media.

All participants agreed that same local vernacular radio stations that broadcasted messages of alarm, antipathy, and dreadfulness against the incumbent president fueled the violence and deserved to be named in efforts to seek justice.

Government Official - Participant B added that,

“This radio stations aimed to reach a particular audience who would understand the language of broadcast hence cut off all other rival tribes. This radio stations had an aroma of hate. They broadcasted messages of ethnic cleansing and ultimately insisted the listeners to take up their weapon and fight. In particular, the hate messages targeted in the incumbent presidents’ tribe. This sparked the conflict and warranted the government to place a ban on all media. Initially it was a war of word between the politicians via the media and in the end the war was brought to our door steps”.

4.7: Summary of Findings

In conclusion legitimacy of an electioneering process calls for the following:

- a) The media sharing the information without bias
- b) The government issuing press freedom to the media to share news
- c) The judiciary body to keep a check on both the media and the government to ensure the election rules are adhered to
- d) Voters education through various media

In the Kenyan case, it was difficult to achieve the above requirements hence the elections cannot be termed as democratic. This is because, firstly, the professionalism of the media was compromised when vernacular radio and newspapers went not nonpartisan. The media being a key source of information, one can not dispute that the majority of the voters were influenced by the stand of the media. The media in other words influences our political stand, support, especially by the frequency of reporting on politicians. Professional journalism calls for the media to offer all and unbiased news on how they should vote.

It was however ironical to the author that all the participants praised the government's decision to lift the ban on the media. They also agreed that calm was restored when the ban was lifted.

Government Official – Participant C praised the work of the media saying,

“The media was very instrumental after the violence had ended. The media also rallied conflicting politicians and starting a peace campaign later one when there was order was restored. I believe this brought normalcy to the country”.

Though not convincingly conclusive, the author believed that the government official appreciate the power of the media. They also take blame for licensing many radio stations which had not been checked properly. This radio stations are believed to have spread hate messages against other tribes, the incumbent president and the governments. The role of the media after the violence was noted as very important by the government officials. The media through music, arts, avenue of dialogue ensured the public had an avenue to express any pent up emotions.

It has been also most two years after this government and media was erupted. The after effects are still visible. The blame game is still on. At an international level, Kenya's election violence is one of the countries being investigated by the International Court Criminals (ICC). The various

Kenya media houses and various government officials are also under investigations. At the writing of this thesis paper, the prosecution from ICC is currently collecting similar evidence on what really transpired during the election violence.

Since 2007, Kenya has also revised her constitutions and clearly stipulated various amendments of the press freedom and consequences of spreading hate messages. At the writing of this research, the constitution is heading for a national referendum in August 2010, where the public will vote for or against the media amendments among other pertinent national issues.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1: Introduction

At the onset of this research the author sought to find the role of the conflict between the government and the media in the Kenyan 2008 election violence. Most of the questions that this researched explored were answered. However, some of the answer were one sided. This means that the media practitioners believed they had a positive role in the conflict of mainly exposing the governments' negative plots. This plots ranged from equipping their local communities for war as well as using state resources to favour the incumbent campaigns.

5.2: Background of violence

The violence background can be divided into four areas. This will capture the underlying concepts, ideologies, emotions, suspension, support and the eventual outbreak of national wide violence. This will look at the role of the media and the government and their contribution to this process:

- a) The rival politicians: As expected all politicians campaigned with the same ideological slogan that is involved with making the lives of the voters better. And they did so in the Kenya election with hopes to be leaders of government business when the results were announced. The politicians moreover came from different tribes; some of the tribes have not been friendly to each other since time back. It was therefore the duty of the media to highlight all the stands they hold.
- b) Ideological difference: The professional media houses in Kenya highlighted the differences in policies and manifesto. They are tried to inform the public on what the voter should expect from the politicians if they worn the elections. They also probed and asked the politicians what the policies meant to the voters.
- c) The voting process: The media was also used in sharing how the voters can vote, new changes, news voting rules, length of registration and campaigns, penalties of election misconduct. During this process the media highlighted any irregularities, incidences of

favoritism to any party. The media also monitored the electioneering process and acted as a watchdog to the governments activities. Irresponsible journalist also failed to refrain from defamation, twisting facts, derivative, malicious, reporting offensive inciting news, malice, corruption, or repeatedly sending false information to the public that in the end, the message begun to be 'factual' due to the frequency of reporting. These actions escalated and caused possible harm to the politicians, government and public protest.

5.3: Democracy, National Security and Press Freedom

The government has continued to blame the media for live coverage and using their resources to preach hate messages. This question was answered partly since it was verified that most vernacular radio stations were clear in their support or opposition of certain tribes and politicians or incumbent government. The government officials therefore answered affirmative the questions that the media should take responsibility for impact of their information on their audiences.

All the media houses interviewed said that they have code of conducts that their journalist ought to sign before employment. However they could not confirm that all the staff in their media houses have signed the code of conduct that should guard against irresponsible journalism. The government officials also believed that the media should employ professional journalist on their academic and professional merit as opposed to talent since most of them did not have journalistic ethics of guarding their audiences by vetting information.

It was also found out that the media after the election was used as a peace building avenue, with them preaching reunion, forgiveness. In agreement with Hudson et. al (1998: 206) the media was therefore used in preventing any greater explosion of the conflict.

As to whether the media practiced too much freedom in its coverage, the author believed that the vernacular stations over used their freedom to preach hate messages hence creating national

insecurity. They were also biased in their coverage by often promoting politicians of their tribe while undermining their opposition.

The direction of the conflict was also shaped by circumstances surrounding the media. For instance the government's move to ban live coverage sparked the onset of country wide violence. This, the author believed media was a victim of circumstances since they didn't foresee bans eventually consequence. The media's role also posed as a challenge to conflict resolution and mitigation since it took sides and failed to be objective. The media therefore reinforced tribal stereotypes hence created national insecurity.

Peter Stoler (1986:57), noted an inevitable war against the press by government bodies, and the Kenyan case was a good example. The author also noted that matters of national security superseded press freedom or freedom of expression in Kenya. The extent of the power of the media over the government interests was also found to be minimal. This was because the government had the final word on who was to air what, when, where and how. The only media channel that however proved to have some sort of power was the print media, since it continued informing the public throughout the conflict.

The government also came in handy to stop spread of hate messages, in this way national security was promoted while thwarting attempts to undermine member of other tribes.

5.4 : Media monitoring election reporting

The print media in particular played a role in shaping the Kenya politics by stepping in to inform the citizens on what was happening in various parts of the country. The print media also engaged in frequent production of their papers, to even five times daily. This could have either increased or reduced the effect of the conflict hence remains an answered question whether it was a positive or negative action. The dilemma is created by whether the media would have used it tools to spread more peace or more war.

The researcher also concluded that the media mostly just tracked events but failed to explain what led to those events. For instance the Kenyan media failed to explain the government's

decision to ban live coverage. They therefore focused on appalling news hence became problem-focused.

In addition, the author observed that Kenyan government and the media had appreciably enhanced their rapport since the days of single ruling party system in Kenya till the 2007 election. On the side of the government, the author observed a suddenly lack of appreciation of the media and no foreseeing or planning to counter the effects of expansion of the media and issuing of various licenses to biased media owners. Certainly, resistance between the government and the media is not about to end. If the Kenyan society must uphold democracy and practice the various freedoms and rights stipulated in the constitution then the two sides need to take up a sympathetic view of each other's role and social responsibility.

5.5: Recommendations

Despite this inevitable friction, strategic government officials must increase the power of the media as a tool that can be useful in executing commands as well as an avenue for relaying information.

There is need for a legislative framework governing the media while it still respects media freedom and autonomy. The legislative framework will perhaps entail details on when the government has the right to ban media coverage. In other words, the government should harness the power of the media as a powerful tool and hedge against any public aggression. The government should also be strict on issuance of license or veto media ownership. This will mitigate media ownership by the media by politicians who end up using the media for their political interest that harm the public.

The ideal situation in a peaceful government-media relationship should be a natural coexistence with clear responsibilities spelled out. This means the responsibility of the media is to provide the public with information while the government should issues licenses as well as commission an agreed constitution clauses that governs media freedom in a democratic manner.

The new issues that emerged in this study are mainly to do with dilemma of media ownership, media freedom, verses government control in a country which boasts of practicing democracy and respecting human rights. As a direction or suggestion for further related research on the Kenyan election conflict, an examination of the Kenyan media audience as the primary subject of study, as opposed to the media and government officials as this research did, would give a bigger picture on the role of the media.

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