ABSTRACT

CORRELATING NEWS MEDIA AGENDA-SETTING TO PUBLIC OPINION IN

KENYA'S 2007 GENERAL ELECTION

by Kioko Ireri

This study examined the agenda-setting function of mass communication in Kenya's 2007 General Election whose outcome plunged the country into a political crisis never witnessed before. It was founded on the media agenda-setting theory which postulates that topics ranked highly in the mass media are accorded similar importance by the audience. Therefore, the study correlated salience of nine campaign issues in three national newspapers, *Daily Nation, The Standard,* and *The People Daily* to Strategic Research's opinion poll. The research also correlated attributes agenda-setting influence of the three newspapers about presidential candidates Mwai Kibaki, Raila Odinga, and Kalonzo Musyoka to another opinion poll by the same poll organization. To establish the level of salience of issues and attributes correlations, the study employed Spearman's Rank Correlation. Results showed no significant evidence of correlations in salience of issues and in candidates' attributes. The three newspapers, therefore, didn't set the agenda in the election.

CORRELATING NEWS MEDIA AGENDA-SETTING TO PUBLIC OPINION IN

KENYA'S 2007 GENERAL ELECTION

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Kioko Ireri

Miami University

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Advisor: _____
    (Dr. Lisa McLaughlin)

Reader: _____
    (Dr. David Sholle)

Reader: _____
    (Dr. Ronald Scott)

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Acknowledgements

CHAPTER ONE

The Research Problem: Correlating News Media Agenda-Setting to Public Opinion in Kenya's 2007 General Election

Introduction

Kenya's December 2007 General Election whose disputed outcome plunged the relatively peaceful country into a political crisis never witnessed before was the most closely-contested election in the country's history of electoral process. Several hotly-contested issues such as the fight against graft, high school education, poverty eradication, and a new constitutional order were at stake, raising the competitiveness of the election, the tenth since the country's independence from Britain in 1963. It was the first time that a sitting president faced the possibility of losing an election. President Mwai Kibaki who was running for the second and the last five-year constitutional term was facing real challenge from Raila Odinga, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) candidate.

Public opinion polls placed Kibaki and Raila neck-and-neck during the primaries and the three-week official campaign period. For example, on December 18, 2007, the U.S.-based Gallup poll put Kibaki leading with a one percent margin ahead of Raila. The poll said that 44 percent of registered voters intended to vote for Kibaki, the Party of National Unity (PNU) candidate, while 43 percent were to vote for Raila. The same day, Steadman Group poll placed Raila ahead with 45 percent and Kibaki 43 percent. Two days later, Strategic Research poll gave 43 and 39 percent to Raila and Kibaki. With less than a week to D-Day, pollsters and political pundits described the election as "too close to call."

The election came barely two years after President Kibaki suffered a humiliating defeat in a national constitutional referendum, a defeat spearheaded by Raila, a senior cabinet minister in his coalition government he formed after winning the 2002 presidential election. Following the defeat in the November 2005 plebiscite, Kibaki fired Raila, and five other cabinet ministers, thus, setting the stage for a renewed political rivalry come the 2007 elections. Kalonzo Musyoka who was among the cabinet ministers relieved of their duties by Kibaki was the other main presidential candidate, running on an Orange Democratic Movement of Kenya (ODM-K) ticket.

Statement of the Problem

   This study examined the agenda-setting function of mass communication in Kenya's 2007 General Election by correlating salience of nine campaign issues on three national newspapers - *Daily Nation, The Standard,* and *The People Daily* to Strategic Research's opinion poll of December 11, 2007. The election took place on December 27. Corruption, education, a new constitution, infrastructure, healthcare, poverty, job creation, economy, and security are the nine issues whose salience was examined. Presidential candidates, Mwai Kibaki of PNU, Raila Odinga, the torchbearer of ODM, and Kalonzo Musyoka of ODM-K campaigned on the platform of the above-mentioned issues.

   In the same vein, the research correlated attributes agenda-setting influence of the news media about the three presidential candidates to another Strategic Research's poll of December 20, 2007. The study was based on the media agenda-setting theory which postulates that topics ranking high in the press are accorded similar weight by the audience. Because the news media have the ability to tell voters "what is important", therefore, in this study, it was assumed that salience of issues on the news agenda of the three leading Kenyan daily newspapers correlated to public opinion. That is why the nexus between the media agenda and the public agenda in the 2007 elections, derived from the theory of agenda-setting in mass communication was important to investigate.

Primary Research Question

How did salience of issues in the *Daily Nation, The Standard,* and *The People Daily* correlate to public opinion during the 2007 Kenyan General Election campaign?

Secondary Research Questions

1. How did attributes salience of presidential candidates in the three newspapers correlate to public opinion?
2. Which of the three newspapers' coverage of the election registered the strongest correlation to public opinion in as far as salience of issues was concerned?
3. Which correlation was strongest? Was it the salience of issues to public opinion, or salience of attributes of presidential candidates to public opinion?
4. Did the way campaign issues were covered in the three newspapers affect the salience of those issues on the public agenda?
5. Did the findings support the view that the news media tell us what is important in the public domain?

6. Was there a major similarity in findings between this study and the 1973 Funkhouser research?

Literature Review

History of Agenda-setting Theory

Since the findings of the 1968 Chapel Hill study on mass media agenda-setting were published in 1972, setting the agenda has become a common phrase within political communication discourse, attracting varying views in every community, from neighborhoods, and institutions of learning to the international arena. Conducted by renowned communication scholars, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, the Chapel Hill study opened floodgates for a plethora of similar studies replicated in different political contexts across the world, examining the power of the news media to tell us what issues are important in public opinion. This is so because the agenda-setting process coalesces around the media agenda, the public agenda, and the policy agenda.

The conventional wisdom about media agenda-setting is that topics which rank highly in the news media are accorded similar importance by people. Thus, by telling the public what issues are important, for example, during a presidential campaign, the media engages in "agenda-setting."

The nerve-center of agenda-setting process, however, rests on the "salience" of issues on the media and the public agendas. An agenda-setting scholar, for instance, can ask: How important is the graft issue on newspapers news? That is, how the graft issue compares with other issues in news coverage. It is the salience of issues on the media agenda that tells news consumers "what issues to think about." This influence of the mass media on people is what is referred to as the "agenda setting function of mass communication."

However, the notion that the press exhibits some power to set an agenda on political issues is not a yesteryear thing; rather, it has been part and parcel of our political life for almost a century now, dating back to 1922 when the idea was first floated by Walter Lippmann in his book *Public Opinion*. The first chapter of Lippmann's book, *The*

World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads explains that it is the "mass media which dominates in the creation of these pictures of public affairs" (McCombs & Shaw, 1977, p. 5). Later, in 1948, Harold Lasswell, a political scientist at the University of Chicago developed a five-part question communication model which states: *Who says what to whom via which channels and with what effect?* Lasswell identified "surveillance" and "correlation" as the two most crucial functions of the mass media in society. He believed that "the media play the critical role in directing our attention to issues" (Dearing & Rogers, 1996, p. 11).

The McCombs-Shaw 1968 Chapel Hill study in North Carolina was the first attempt to empirically verify the agenda-setting function of the mass media during that year's U.S. presidential election. The study "found an almost perfect correlation between the rank order of (a) the five issues on the media agenda and (b) the same five issues on the public agenda" (Dearing & Rogers, 1996, p. 6). For instance, respondents identified foreign policy as the most important issue on the public agenda, which was also given the most attention by the media during the campaign period ahead of the Election Day. A similar study was conducted in Charlotte, North Carolina by the two scholars during the 1972 presidential election. Just like the 1968 study, the Charlotte research also underscored the agenda-setting influence of the news media on voters.

Davie and Maher (2006) say that since the Chapel Hill study, the agenda-setting theory has "engendered more than 400 published studies" (p. 358). Moreover, Walgrave and Aelst (2006) argue that "for three decades, the notion of agenda-setting has provided one of the most influential and fertile paradigms in media and communication research" (p. 88). That is why the power of the news media to set a national agenda on key political issues is today a well-documented fact. Indeed, Davie and Maher (2006) explain that it is the "prevailing wisdom that voters' selective attention to news stories, as cued through social process, would nullify media influence" which motivated McCombs and Shaw to conduct the landmark Chapel Hill study (p. 359).

According to McCombs and Shaw (1977), politicians, aware that the news media constitute a significant social influence, usually do not hesitate to "adapt to the practices and prejudices of the press" (p. 245). This was proved in 1972 U.S. presidential election when President Richard Nixon was re-elected, yet he spent little amount of time on the

campaign trail. Instead, the Republican presidential candidate employed the power of the press to put his message across to voters. He did this through press news, comments, and advertising.

Therefore, through news media, voters acquire vital information about public affairs. This helps them learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of the strength placed on it in the news. In fact, there is a near-consensus among political communication scholars that the electorates with wide exposure of news media are most likely to know where candidates vying for elective positions stand on an issue of national importance. In *The Making of the President, 1972*, Theodore White (1973), an American journalist describes the power of mass communication in agenda-setting of issues of national importance in the U.S. as "an authority that in other nations is reserved for tyrants, priests, parties and mandarins" (p. 245). McCombs and Shaw (1972) highlight two critical questions in agenda-setting research: What constitutes news, and how can something get on the agenda? (p. 100). The first question is answered by Dearing and Rogers (1996), stating that "the potentially conflictual nature of an issue helps make it newsworthy as proponents and opponents of the issue battle it out in the shared 'public arena', which in modern society, is the mass media" (p. 2).

As mentioned above, since the Chapel Hill study many studies have been replicated across the world, examining the agenda-setting power of the media in a political situation such as a presidential election. Asp (1983) says that the influence of the news media was detected in the 1979 Swedish election. In the study, Asp concludes that "the news media are more powerful as agenda setters for the voters than are parties" (p. 333). A study of the 1990 German national election also underscores the mass media influence in an election. Writing about the German election, Schoenbach and Semetko (1992) say: "Whether one recognized a problem or issue as important depended heavily on the amount of information on the issue provided by the media and not necessarily on one's attention to it" (p. 846).

There was news media influence on the choice of the presidential candidate during the 2006 Mexican election. Valenzuela and McCombs (2007) found that "the more covered and favorably presented a candidate was, the higher the percentage of public support" (p. 2). Young Min conducted a study investigating how campaign

agendas of issues were constructed during the 2000 Korean congressional election. The researcher found that "newspapers substantially influenced the civic campaign's issue emphases" (Min, 2004, p. 192).

Against the view that the media may not influence the public about political choices during campaigns, Mercado, Hellweg, Dozier and Hofstetter discount this argument by explaining how the news media influence contributed to ending the 71-year reign of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) during the 2000 Mexican presidential election. Vicente Fox of the National Action Party (PAN) won the presidency over PRI's candidate, Labastida Ochoa. According to Mercado *et al.* (2003), data from the 2000 Mexican presidential election campaign showed "a high correspondence between media content and public perception of issues and candidate traits" (p. 2). Additionally, they say that "coverage of the two presidential debates was illustrative of how effective the media were in setting the agenda for discussion on issues and candidate attributes during the campaign" (Mercado *et al.*, 2003, p. 2).

Between 1975 and 2000, eleven studies were conducted in Mexico to measure empirically news media effects on public opinion formation in an electoral context, according to Gonzales (as cited in Valenzuela & McCombs, 2007). In most cases, Valenzuela and McCombs (2007) write that television coverage "appears to have played a major role in shaping public attitudes towards candidates and political parties" (p. 11). In the 1994 election, for instance, the two researchers write: "Television bias against the center-left PRD party and in favor of the long-ruling PRI party encouraged voters who relied primarily on that medium to favor the ruling party over the leftist alternative" (Valenzuela & McCombs, 2007, p. 11).

Young Son and David Weaver conducted research on whether the agenda of the media influenced public opinion during the 2000 U.S. presidential campaign. In the article *Another Look at What Moves Public Opinion: Media Agenda Setting and Polls in the 2000 US Election,* Son and Weaver (2005) observe:

But the news media are nevertheless important actors in the selection of
certain objects and in the presentation of certain attributes of objects, and

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thus media content not only defines the characteristics of campaign

elections but also has powerful effects on the public. (p. 175).

Though an avalanche of studies on mass media agenda-setting support a positive correlation between the media and the public agendas, some studies discount the hypothesis that issues given prominence by the news media also receive similar consideration by people. The fact that the media does not necessarily set the agenda means that "the press is not always successful in swaying audiences to adopt any particular point of view" (Son & Weaver, 2005, p. 176).

In the Netherlands, for instance, a study found very little media impact on politics. Walgrave and Aelst (2006) explain that the limited agenda-setting power of the media in the Netherlands was due to the short media attention span, a thing that diluted its impact on the slower workings of the democracy (p. 93). And during the 1976 U.S. presidential election, Eyal found no agenda-setting relationship between media content and public opinion on eleven aggregated issues (as cited in Winter, Eyal & Rogers, n.d., p. 2). Young Min's study during the primaries for the 2002 Texas Governor found no significant statistical correlation between the media and the public agendas of each candidate's attributes. Summarizing the findings about the Texas' governor election, Min says "the mass media, including the paid advertising media, newspaper, and television, did not appear to be particularly successful in shaping overall candidate images among the public" (Min, 2003, p. 18). In the same vein, Swalen (1988) says that a study in Canada correlating front-page coverage of several issues in the *Toronto Star* with Gallup opinion polls concluded:

This study provides evidence against the continued treatment of

issues in the aggregate. This suggests that it is no longer adequate

in agenda-setting research to treat issues en-masse, anymore than it

is to lump respondents together, independent of media use patterns

and other contingent conditions. (p. 102).

Salience in Agenda-Setting

Dearing and Rogers (1996) define salience as "the degree to which an issue on the agenda is perceived as relatively important" (p. 8). Therefore, they opine that "salience on the media tells viewers, readers, and listeners 'what issues to think about'" (Dearing & Rogers, 1996, p. 8). So, this means that the number of news stories gauge the relative salience of an issue, for example, economy on the news media agenda.

Because as Lippman argues "news media are a primary source of the pictures in our heads" (as cited in McCombs, 2004, p. 68), then, it means that "agenda-setting is a theory about the transfer of salience from the mass media's pictures of the world to the pictures in our heads" (McCombs, 2004, p. 68). The scholar adds that "elements prominent in the media picture become prominent in the audience's picture" (p. 68). That knowledge about issues of national importance is drawn from news media; also means that anything about political candidates (their ideologies and personalities) is also drawn from the mass media content. McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (1997) draw attention to the fact that there are two levels of agenda-setting. They say:

> The first level of agenda-setting deals with the transfer of object salience
> from the media to the public agenda, whereas the second level involves
> two major hypotheses about attribute salience: (a) The way an issue or
> other object is covered in the media affects the way the public thinks about
> that object, and (b) The way an issue or other object is covered in the
> media affects the salience of that object on the public agenda (McCombs
> *et al.,* 1997, p. 4).

Public Opinion Polls

In the introduction of this chapter, "public agenda" is identified as one of the essential ingredients involved in the agenda-setting process. It is called "public agenda-setting" because "its main dependent variable is the importance of a set of issues on the public agenda" (Dearing & Rogers, 1996, p. 6). Public opinion surveys or opinion polls are used to measure the public agenda. When conducting opinion polls, a sample of individuals can, for example, be asked: "What is the most important problem facing this

country today?" This type of question called the "Most Important Problem" (MIP) was originally designed by George Gallup, the father of opinion polls.

Therefore, it is generally agreed that the aggregated responses to MIP, is an indication where members of the public stand on social, lifestyle and policy issues. So, scholars of public agenda-setting are particularly concerned about what the public think about an issue. That is why Glynn, Herbst, O'Keefe and Shapiro (2004) highlight three reasons why scholars and public officials are concerned about the state of public opinion. The three reasons are: (a) policy in democratic states should rest on public opinion, (b) respect for public opinion is a safeguard against demagoguery, and (c) public opinion provides clues about culture (Glynn *et al.*, 2004, p. 6).

Since the advent of opinion polls in mid 1930s when George Gallup founded the American Institute of Public Opinion (popularly known as the Gallup Poll), public opinion polls have been associated with the electoral process. According to Crespi (1989), centrally, pollsters are about whether they can "accurately predict who will win an election" (p. 15). Underscoring the importance of opinion polls in a free democratic society, Splichal (2001) states that "today, opinion polls have become an almost universally accepted currency for interpreting the public will" (p. 288). The correct prediction by Gallup, Roper and Crossley that Franklin Roosevelt would comfortably win the 1936 presidential election, resulted in the "early acceptance of opinion polls" (Crespi, 1989, p. 15). This prediction contradicted what *Literally Digest*, a then very respected poll had forecast, that Alfred Landon, the Republican nominee would win.

The "central concept of most public opinion research remains the attitude" (Norrander & Wilcox, 2002, p. 3). Agreeing with this assertion, Teer and Spence (1973) argue that "essentially opinion polls are concerned with the measurement of opinions, behavior, beliefs, attitudes and occasionally facts by means of surveys" (p. 9). Crespi (1989) stresses that "interest in pre-election polls is based on the belief that they provide accurate measures of how the electorate is tending in its voting intentions" (p. 16). This can be interpreted to mean that pollsters engage in gauging voter behavioral intentions in relation to issues, personalities and political parties.

Therefore, the purpose of opinion polls is "to make statements about the views and intentions of the whole electorate by reporting their findings from soundings

undertaken in a relatively small, though, scientifically selected, sample" (Teer and Spence, 1973, p. 9). Opinion polls, thus, influence voting patterns, policy actions by governments, and decisions made by political parties when choosing their candidates as well as their stand on a key issue during an election campaign.

Though opinion polls play a major role during an election period by saying what the public think about an issue of national importance or a political candidate, they have at the same time been a source of controversy. In some instances, political candidates performing poorly in public opinion polls often do not hesitate to excoriate such polls as flawed or wedging a negative agenda against them. For example, during the 2007 Kenyan General Election, Kalonzo Musyoka, the ODM-K presidential candidate dismissed Steadman polls as a "mockery of Kenyans' intelligence." The polls indicated that Kalonzo stood a 10 percent chance of winning the presidency. His main rivals for the top job, Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga had a 42 and 46 percent (respectively) chance of winning the hotly-fought election.

Kalonzo, a lawyer by profession said: "The Steadman's opinion poll is not credible since only 2,000 people were interviewed. I am confident I will win this year's presidential race since I believe in God and not in purported results of unreliable polls" (Mwaniki, 2007, p. 6). Whether Kalonzo believed in the polls or not, the truth of the matter is that when the presidential election results were released, he was trailing in third position, garnering less than one million votes, 879, 903. Kibaki was declared the winner by the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK), garnering 4, 584, 721 votes, and Raila came second with 4, 352, 993 votes.

Kalonzo's tirade against Steadman polls encapsulates problems associated with opinion polls during campaigns proper. Splichal (2001) places problems associated with opinion polls under two headings: "problems associated with the quality of public opinion in polls and problems associated with the circumstances of commissioning and publication of polls" (p. 294). The quality of public opinion polls becomes suspect because "it involves members of the electorate who may have very little interest, understanding, or concern about the issues being investigated" (Splichal, 2001, p. 295). Splichal adds that "the fact that those being asked their opinion might be scientifically representative of the population as a whole does not mitigate the problem" associated

with the quality of opinion polls (p. 296). In the same vein, Teer and Spence (1973) say the most common allegation is that "by showing which party is likely to win an election, the polls encourage voters to climb on the winning party's bandwagon (the bandwagon effect)" (p. 129). On the other hand, they say opinion polls can result in "the boomerang effect", which encourage voters to "change sides and support the underdog" (Teer & Spencer, 1973, p. 129).

Content Analysis

Content analysis is defined as "any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (Holsti, 1969, p. 14). According to Dearing and Rogers (1996), "the number of news stories measures relative salience of an issue of study on the media agenda" (p. 18). Measuring issue salience is, therefore, important because the "audience presumably judges the relative importance of an issue on the basis of the number of media messages about the issue to which they are exposed" (Dearing & Rogers, 1996, p. 18). Thus, in correlating the media and the public agendas on an issue, it is generally presumed that the position taken by the media on an issue, also determines the salience of that issue on the public agenda.

Content analysis includes "the careful examination of human interactions; the analysis of character portrayals in TV commercials, films, and novels; the computer-driven investigation of word usage in news releases and political speeches; and so much more" (Neuendorf, 2002, p.1). Within the field of mass communication research, Riffe and Freitag and Yale and Gilly (as cited in Neuendorf, 2002, p. 1) observe that "content analysis has been the fastest-growing technique over the past 20 years or so." Krippendorff (2004) says that the history of content analysis is traced back to "inquisitorial pursuits by the Church in the 17th century" because "the Church became worried about the spread of printed matter of nonreligious nature" (p. 3).

Groth (as cited in Krippendorff, 2004, p. 3) notes that in those early days, the Church "dealt with newspaper content in moralizing terms." The first content analysis of printed matter, according to Krippendorff (2004) took place in 18th century Sweden "as a

result of the publication of *Songs of Zion*, a collection of 90 hymns of unknown authorship" (p. 4). The publication was blamed for "undermining the orthodox clergy of the Swedish state church" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 4).

The commonly used forms of content analysis are rhetorical analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, semiotic analysis, interpretive analysis, conversation analysis and critical analysis. This study employs the interpretive approach which involves observation of messages and the coding of the same messages. Neuendorf (2002) says that interpretive analysis "involves theoretical sampling; analytical categories; cumulative, comparative analysis; and the formulation of types or conceptual categories" (p. 6).

There is, however, a bone of contention when it comes to methodological application of content analysis. Available evidence shows that scholars in this area of mass communication differ on whether content analysis should be quantitative or qualitative. There is also the question of which between the two techniques is feasible.

Proponents of quantitative approach, praise the technique as "more scientific than other methods of documentary analysis and by those who are most critical of content analysis" (Holsti, 1969, p. 5). Supporting this approach, Lasswell, Lerner, and Pool (as cited in Holsti, 1969, p. 5) assert that "there is no reason for content analysis unless the question one wants is quantitative." At the same time, there is view that quantitative technique, mainly relies on frequency (numerical procedure) – that is, measuring frequency with which "symbols or other units appear in each category" (Holsti, 1969, p. 6). Using frequency counts, a researcher might, for example, tabulate how many times the issue of poverty eradication appears on newspapers' coverage of the 2007 Kenyan General Election.

The quantitative technique has, however, been criticized for relying on numerical procedures, which according to Smythe and Barcus (as cited in Holsti, 1969, p. 10) results in a "bias in the selection of problems to be investigated, undue emphasis being placed on precision at the cost of problem significance." In addition, Kracauer (as cited in Holsti, 1969, p. 10) says that there is "the view that one can draw more meaningful inferences by nonquantitative methods" which is qualitative content analysis, defined as the "drawing of inferences on the basis of appearance or nonappearance of attributes in

messages" (Holsti, 1969, p. 10). Qualitative technique, Holsti (1969) says has been defended for its "superior performance in problems of applied social science" (p. 10). Proponents of qualitative techniques, however, have been criticized for "being unsystematic in their uses of texts and impressionistic in their interpretations" (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 87).

Scope of the Study

The 2007 Kenyan General Election was held on December 27. This study, therefore, analyzed the news coverage by three newspapers – *Daily Nation, The Standard,* and *The People Daily* during the three-week campaign period preceding the Election Day. The study also analyzed how attributes of the presidential candidates – Mwai Kibaki, Raila Odinga, and Kalonzo Musyoka were captured in the three newspapers.

The *Daily Nation, The Standard,* and *The People Daily* are the leading English dailies in Kenya, hence attracting high readership across the country. For instance, *Daily Nation* has a daily circulation of 200, 000 copies, according to Friedrich Ebert Stiftung's report of 2001. It is estimated that close to 10 million people read *Daily Nation* in a day. The newspaper is owned by the Nation Media Group (NMG), the largest media conglomerate in Eastern and Central Africa. *The Standard* is the oldest newspaper in Kenya, started in 1902. It is owned by the Standard Group, which also owns Kenya Television Network (KTN). *The People Daily* is the youngest among the three and the third largest newspaper. Owned by the People Limited, it was started in 1993 as a weekly newspaper before transforming into a daily in December of 1998.

The three weeks ahead of the voting day is the official campaign period, allowed under the laws of ECK during which political candidates are on the campaign trail. So, for this particular election, the twenty-one days campaign period started on December 3, 2007, and ended on December 24, two days before the voting day. Though ECK specifies the official campaign period, campaigns – for presidential, parliamentary and civic elections - usually start almost two years before the election date during which primaries take place.

Therefore, this study looked at how the nine issues – corruption, education, healthcare, security, development/economy, job creation, constitutional reforms, poverty, and infrastructure - were covered by the three newspapers. These issues were selected because they were the "most important problems" during the campaign period. Also, presidential candidates and their supporters campaigned on the platform of these issues, promising what their administrations would do for Kenyans upon taking office.

Specifically, the analysis scrutinized news stories on pages 1, 3, 5, and the back page. On the attributes of the presidential candidates, this research looked at the frequency of mentions and their image appearance (e.g. photos) on page 1 only. The reason behind analyzing stories on pages 1, 3, 5 and the back page is that as far as the Kenyan media is concerned, these pages are considered prominent. Thus, news stories appearing on any of the four pages are assumed to attract higher readership compared to stories appearing on other pages. The high readership on these pages, therefore, exposes voters to the most important political content such as campaign issues and attributes of candidates. Then, it is assumed that such exposure influences voters' decisions on issues and candidates.

The frequency of these issues (salience) and the attributes of the presidential candidates were then correlated to the two opinion polls by Strategic Research conducted within the three-week campaign period. The reason why this study focused on the three weeks ahead of the Election Day is because, at this stage of the campaign, voters were thought to have received maximum media exposure on issues which were in contention, as well as developing certain perceptions about the presidential candidates. Therefore, because of this exposure, voters were assumed to make the right judgments when asked by pollsters what is the "most important problem" facing Kenya today or who they would vote for as president.

Methodological Approach

As stated earlier in this chapter, this study employed the 1973 Ray Funkhouser methodology approach where content analysis was used to examine coverage of major issues in three major magazines in the United States: *Time, Newsweek, and U.S News*.

Funkhouser related the news media coverage of fourteen issues to opinion polls by Gallup organization. Likewise, but in a different political context, this study correlated the three newspapers' coverage of nine issues during the 2007 disputed Kenyan General Election to the December 11 Strategic Research poll. At the same time, this study correlated salience attributes of the three presidential candidates to Strategic Research's December 20 poll.

The figures published by Strategic Research about the "most important problems" facing Kenya were assumed to signify the relative importance of each issue in the public domain. Strategic Research poll was commissioned by the Nation Media Group to conduct opinion polls ahead of the 2007 General Election.

According to the December 11 poll, Kenyans wanted the issue of job creation to be given the first priority by the new administration. Of the 2, 405 respondents, 20.5 percent placed the issue of job creation as number one priority. It was followed by education at 12.7 percent. The issue of corruption came in third with 12.5 percent of respondents saying enough has not been done to fight the vice. Other top issues were ranked as follows by potential voters: security (8.1 percent); economy (8.1 percent); poverty (7.3 percent), infrastructure (5.8 percent); a new constitution (3.8 percent); and healthcare (3.0 percent).

The salience of issues and attributes correlations were determined through Spearman's Rank Correlation. This statistical device helped to show whether issues ranked highly in the three newspapers have an effect on what voters thought was the "most important problem." Therefore, the Spearman's Rank Correlation helped to establish the strengths of relationships involving salience of issues in each of the publications to the poll. Also, the tool was utilized to measure the strengths of relationships involving cumulative salience of issues to the same polls. The same procedure was followed to determine the frequency of the images of the three presidential candidates in each of the newspapers as well as cumulatively. Spearman's Rank Correlation was also used to determine correlation strength involving the frequency rank of candidates' images to the opinion poll released on December 20. Spearman rank-order correlation is a nonparametric measure of association based on the ranks of the data values. The formula is:

$$\theta = \frac{\sum_i \left((R_i - \bar{R})(S_i - \bar{S}) \right)}{\sqrt{\sum_i (R_i - \bar{R})^2 \sum (S_i - \bar{S})^2}}$$

In the formula, R_i is the rank of x_i, S_i is the rank of y_i, $\bar{R}$ is the mean of the R_i values, and $\bar{S}$ is the mean of the S_i values. So as to establish strengths of relationships in line with the data provided, that is, as described above, the formula was programmed into packaged software. The software used was SAS version 9.1.

Three newspapers – *Daily Nation, The Standard,* and *The People Daily* – were analyzed by counting the frequency of the nine issues appearing in all election-related articles on pages 1, 3, 5 and the back page of each publication during the official campaign period. For example, the analysis looked at how many times the issue of economy was mentioned on the four pages of each newspaper. Also, the analysis involved counting the frequency of how many times the presidential candidates were mentioned on page one as well as their image appearance on the same page.

By analyzing campaign-related articles in the three newspapers, first, the exercise established how many times an issue – education, for example - appeared in each publication within the three-week campaign period. What followed after scrutinizing all of the election-related articles was ranking the nine issues in order of their frequency in each of the publications. The issue that received the highest mention or frequency count was ranked 1st while that with least appearance/frequency was ranked last, or ninth. From there, each of the newspaper's ranking of the nine issues was compared to the ranking of the same issues by the Strategic Research poll, which strived to identify the "most important problem" facing Kenya. For example, in terms of frequency, corruption ranked 1st in *The Standard*, 2nd in *The People Daily* and 4th in the *Daily Nation.* The same issue was ranked 3rd by Strategic Research.

The tallies for these newspapers were added together to create cumulative frequency of the nine issues and attributes of the presidential candidates. This, then, provided an indication of what issues and candidates' attributes the news media were emphasizing during the period under study. Then, the cumulative tally was compared to opinion polls to give a glimpse of issues or candidates' attributes the newspapers and the polls gave more weight to during the campaign. No attention was paid to the actual space

(length of an article) about an issue or a presidential candidate. An effort was made to avoid counting an issue twice in the same news article. Also, the study didn't analyze editorials and columnists. This is so because editorials and opinion columns don't clearly focus on campaign issues, the central objective of this study.

The first chapter, therefore, captures the history of the agenda-setting theory from 1922 when Walter Lippman first floated the idea of mass media's influence on audience, through the 1948 Harold Lasswell's question communication model, to the findings of the 1968 Chapel Hill study. The chapter also details how content analysis was employed to analyze election news articles from the three newspapers. The chapter also contains a detailed description of how a statistical tool, Spearman's Rank Correlation was employed to measure the degree of correlation between campaign issues covered by the newspapers and what voters identified as the "Most Important Problem" facing Kenya.

Apart from giving the historical background of Kenya, chapter two also details the country's electoral process, tracing its history, right after independence, through the single party era of KANU and President Daniel arap Moi, the ushering in of pluralistic politics in the early 1990s, to the disbandment of the ECK in 2008. ECK was overhauled after mismanaging the 2007 elections, precipitating election fallout between PNU and ODM camps. Because this research is about the 2007 elections, the second chapter also explains the reasons that made the election unique and why it was so closely fought.

To understand Kenya's media growth, chapter three starts by capturing its history from 1963 to the present situation. This is important because, media, like is the case all over the world, is a major source of information for people. In an election, media are able to shape public debate, public opinion, as well as public policy on issues of national importance. Results of the research are also presented in this chapter. Chapter four analyzes and discusses these results, as well as outlining the study limitations. This chapter also spells out the way forward for future research in this area.

Sadly, the 2007 elections ended in a bloodbath as PNU and ODM went for each other's jugular after President Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner. The controversy and violence that greeted the release of the presidential results raise the critical question of "what really went wrong?" in a country which was mirrored as a leading democracy in Africa, especially after the peaceful transfer of power following the vanquishing of

KANU from power in the 2002 General Election. The KANU party was in power for record 40-years since independence in 1963; therefore, its removal from power was historic. The question of "what really went wrong?" leads to another question of "who is to blame?" Is it the politicians who are greedy for power? Is it PNU or ODM stalwarts using their communities as a vehicle for ascending to power? Is it the simmering ethnic rivalry pitting Kikuyus against Luos and Kalenjins? Is then ECK's chairman, Samuel Kivuitu and his team of commissioners to blame? Or, is it the bad electoral laws? What about the media? Some of these questions especially about Kenya's electoral process and the uniqueness of the 2007 elections are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

The Kenyan Electoral Process and the 2007 Elections

Introduction

For many years calls were made to initiate the necessary reforms within the electoral laws of Kenya, so as to ensure political justice for all stakeholders, in terms of free and fair elections. However, the administrations of Presidents Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel arap Moi, and Mwai Kibaki gave such calls a deaf ear, because as people in power, the defective electoral laws guaranteed them to continue enjoying state power and its trappings, to boot. Initiating electoral reforms to create a level-playing ground for all political players has, therefore, not only remained elusive for the last four decades, but is also something that is overdue and cannot be wished away. That it is only through relentless demonstrations by civil rights activists, lawyers, university students, and reform-minded politicians that forced President Moi to agree to some electoral reforms in the early 1990s, encapsulates how the ruling class has remained a stumbling block to electoral reforms in Kenya.

But because the 1990s reforms were just cosmetic, perhaps tailored to appease donors, the need for comprehensive reforms in the management of elections has been a ticking time bomb which exploded in 2007 elections. Therefore, it wasn't a surprise to see Kenya fast-descending into mayhem following the release of the presidential results. When the political storm settled, all accusing fingers pointed at the ECK for mismanaging the polls. To put in place the necessary reforms within the Kenyan electoral laws, ECK was disbanded in 2008. It was replaced with the Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC), whose main mandate is to carry out comprehensive electoral reforms ahead of the 2012 General Election.

History of Kenya

Kenya, twice the size of State of Nevada in the United States is almost bisected by the equator. Its size encompasses 224, 961 sq mi (582, 646 sq km) and the land is located approximately between latitudes 4° 28' South and North, and between 34 and 40 degrees east meridians. Of the 224, 961 sq mi, 5, 172 sq mi (13, 396 sq km) are water surface and about two thirds of the remaining land surface is semi-arid or desert. The surface area includes several lakes such as Lake Victoria (the largest lake in Africa and the second largest in the world), although only 1, 479 sq mi (3,831 sq km) of it forms part of Kenya. Lake Turkana covers 955 sq mi (2, 473 sq km). The smallest lakes are Naivasha (81 sq mi); Baringo (50 sq mi); Bogoria (13 sq mi); Nakuru (20 sq mi); and Elementeita (8 sq mi). Lake Magadi, which lies in the Rift Valley near the Tanzania border, is an important source of soda ash and salt.

The Indian Ocean coastline, stretching from the Somalia border in the north to Tanzania in the South is 378 miles (608 km) long. Described as "the cradle of humanity", Kenya, with a population of 38 million people, borders Somalia to the east, Ethiopia to the north, Tanzania to the south, Uganda to the west, and Sudan to the northwest. Nairobi with a population of approximately 5 million people is the capital city. The port city of Mombasa is the second capital city. Other major cities are Kisumu, Nakuru, and Eldoret.

Internally, the country is divided into eight administrative provinces which in order of size are Rift Valley, Eastern, North Eastern, Coast, Nyanza, Central, Western, and Nairobi. For administrative purposes, a province is headed by a Provincial Commissioner, a presidential appointee. Several districts form a province. A District Commissioner, also a presidential appointee heads a district. Though Swahili (national) and English (official) are the main languages, there are over forty local dialects based on ethnic groups. The largest ethnic group, Kikuyu migrated to the region at the beginning of the 18th century. These ethnic groups are classified into three major linguistic categories, Bantu, Nilotes and Cushites. Bantu is the largest and comprises such tribes as Kikuyu, Kamba, Meru, Embu, Mbeere, Kisii, Mijikenda, Taita, Taveta, Pokomo, and Swahili. The Nilotic group is made up of Luo, Kalenjin, and Maasai tribes, while those forming the Cushitic group are Somali, Rendille, Orma, and Borana.

The country's single largest export earner is the tourism industry which forms a vital foundation for the country's economy. It is highlighted by two most unique features, wildlife and beaches. The country is also a leading producer of coffee, tea, and pyrethrum in the world. Kenya, arguably one of the few most literate societies in Africa enjoys a literacy level of 85 percent.

Kenya, the East African economic powerhouse, became a British Protectorate in 1895, also known as the East African Protectorate. This was the first step towards the creation of a state colony, which was achieved later in 1920. Kenya attained independence in 1963, and that year the Kenya African National Union (KANU) party won with a landslide the first democratic elections with Jomo Kenyatta becoming the Prime Minister. Upon assuming the country's leadership, Kenyatta engineered some constitutional changes which among a raft of other amendments abolished the position of Prime Minister, replacing it with an executive presidency, which he assumed on December 12, 1964 when Kenya became a Republic.

Kenyatta, the founding father of the nation of Kenya ruled until his death on August 22, 1978 at State House, Mombasa. Daniel arap Moi, then Vice President took over in a constitutional succession arrangement and ruled for a record twenty four years until 2002. The country remained a *de facto* one-party state from 1969 to 1982 when KANU made itself the sole legal party. However, on December 2, 1991, in an unprecedented move, President Moi bowed to internal and external pressure for political pluralism when he dramatically announced the repealing of Section 2(a) of the constitution to usher in multi-partism, ahead of the 1992 watershed elections. President Moi stepped down in December 2002 after his constitutional two-term office mandate came to an end following constitutional changes effected in 1991 when the clamor for pluralism reached a crescendo.

The divided opposition failed to dislodge KANU from power in multi-party elections of 1992 and 1997 but did so in 2002 when Uhuru Kenyatta (son of Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta), KANU's presidential candidate lost to Mwai Kibaki who ran as the candidate of the united opposition group, the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). The 2002 elections virtually ended nearly forty years of KANU's leadership. Until the repeal of Section 2(a) of the constitution, the country had only two brief spells of multi-

party politics: 1963-1964 when the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) dissolved voluntarily and joined KANU and between 1966 and 1969 when the KANU government permitted Kenya People's Union (KPU) to operate, before banning it altogether, later.

The NARC coalition government crumbled in 2005 over issues to do with the constitutional reform process. However, at the center of the political storm was a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed before the 2002 elections between Kibaki, the National Alliance Party of Kenya (NAK) chief and Raila Odinga from Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Because the MoU was signed secretly, it is claimed Kibaki agreed that upon taking the country's leadership, he would spearhead constitutional reforms that among other major things would ensure the creation of the position of the Prime Minister.

It was assumed that Raila, the son of Kenya's first vice president Jaramogi Oginga Odinga would assume the Prime Minister portfolio because of the crucial role he played campaigning for Kibaki, especially after the NARC presidential candidate was involved in a road accident three weeks before the Election Day. However, taking the leadership after a landslide victory in the 2002 elections, President Kibaki dishonored the MoU, and that was the genesis of the friction in NARC government. But, questions have always been asked whether such MoU really existed.

So, the fractures in NARC leadership saw some prominent government ministers team up with the opposition, forming a pressure movement, ODM whose clarion call was constitutional reforms and a change from the status quo. ODM was later transformed into a political party. Jostling for ODM supremacy involving Raila and Kalonzo and their followers saw the latter decamp (from ODM) to form a splinter party, ODM-Kenya on whose ticket he vied for presidency on. At this time, Kibaki's leadership was criticized as being comprised of a conservative elite group from Central Kenya opposed to meaningful changes in the management of the country's affairs. Things in NARC took a new twist for the worst when ODM soundly defeated the government-backed draft constitution in a popular national referendum in November of 2005. Professor Makau Mutua in his book, *Kenya's Quest for Democracy* says that the referendum vote "was a rare repudiation of a democratically elected regime in an African country" (2008, p. 229).

Angered by the referendum's humiliating defeat, Kibaki sprung a surprise by dissolving his entire cabinet. When he reconstituted the cabinet, he fired seven cabinet ministers from the LDP wing of the coalition government who opposed the government-backed draft constitution. The cabinet ministers shown the door were Raila (Roads and Public Works), Kalonzo Musyoka (Environment and Natural Resources), Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o (Planning and National Development), Ochillo Ayacko (Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services), Najib Balala (National Heritage), William ole Ntimama (Public Service), and Linah Jebii Kilimo (Immigration).

Kibaki's new-look cabinet was anchored along the line of a Government of National Unity (GNU) by including opposition Members of Parliament in his reconstituted cabinet, a move that helped him see out his first term in office. Kibaki's re-election in December 2007 was controversial as it was bitterly contested by his main rival, Raila who also claimed to have won the presidency. Raila, the ODM candidate claimed that ECK rigged him out in favor of Kibaki. The disputed election resulted in unprecedented violence in some parts of the country especially in the ODM strongholds of Nyanza, Rift Valley, Western, and Coast provinces as well as in the sprawling Kibera slum neighborhood of Nairobi.

The spiraling violence left about 1, 500 people dead and more than half a million internally displaced. To end the post-election violence, the United Nations stepped in, urging the two camps to engage in dialogue so as to solve the political impasse. Kofi Annan, former UN secretary general spearheaded the talks that came up with an agreeable power-sharing accord between the two rivals, bringing in Raila into the government as a Prime Minister, while Kibaki retaining the presidency. The two also agreed to share cabinet slots on a 50-50 basis. The constitution was subsequently amended so as to adopt the new power-structure in the government and accommodate Raila and his ODM troops.

The Kenyan Electoral Process

Since independence, the electoral process in Kenya has been shrouded in controversy, and more so lacking clear-cut legal responsibilities and powers, hence,

making it vulnerable to political manipulation. This is evidenced when ahead of the 1992 elections, then ECK chairman, Justice Zacchaeus Richard Chesoni noted that the commission had no authority to ensure that the media were impartial, and to issue permits for campaign rallies, saying these were the responsibilities of the government (Throup & Hornsby, 1998, p. 244). According to Throup and Hornsby "failure to define the scope of the Commission's authority allowed key decisions to take place in the vacuum of authority between state and Commission, enabling both to deny responsibility (p. 244).

This encapsulates the reason why ECK was disbanded in late 2008, owing to mismanagement of the 2007 disputed elections whose outcome plunged the country into political turmoil. Following the post-election violence that rocked some parts of the country, President Kibaki formed the Independent Review Commission (IREC) to look into the conduct of the 2007 General Election. In its 117-page report handed to the president on September 16, 2008, the commission chaired by South African judge Johann Kriegler recommended major reforms in the country's electoral system.

Kriegler's team also recommended the overhaul of ECK which was roundly condemned by Kenyans for the flawed elections. IREC reported that "widespread bribery, vote-buying, intimidation and ballot-stuffing compounded by defective data tabulation, transmission and tallying – impaired the integrity of the electoral process and irretrievably polluted the results" (Agina & Omanga, 2008, para 7). Following the recommendation to disband ECK, on December 15, 2008, the parliament voted for the overhaul of ECK after 169 Members of Parliament passed the Constitution Amendment Bill (2008), which sought to replace the electoral body with the Interim Independent Electoral Commission. The dramatic move also sent home packing ECK chairman Samuel Kivuitu and his team of twenty one commissioners.

IIEC's mandate includes carrying out wide-ranging electoral reforms, registering voters afresh, and putting in place new systems of vote-tallying, so as to ensure future elections are not only free and fair, but also credible. ECK was created pursuant to Section 41 of the constitution. Section 42A sets out its mandate which is mainly two-pronged: registration of voters and the maintenance of the voter register, as well as directing and supervising presidential, parliamentary and civic elections.

With the introduction of multi-party politics, the Election Laws Amendment Act No. 1 of 1992 abolished the position of Supervisor of Elections; instead putting all powers in the newly-created ECK which was thought to be autonomous and free from government meddling. The previous commission was a shell, more of a marionette whose operations were infiltrated by KANU politicians at will. This is so because the commission was restricted to delineating constituency boundaries, as its other tasks, "including supervising elections, maintaining the register and educating voters had been unconstitutionally transferred to the Provincial Administration and the Supervisor of Elections in the 1960s" (Throup & Hornsby, 1998, p. 244).

One of the major gains from the new electoral system dispensation was that the commission chairman took over the onus of setting the election date, a duty previously a prerogative of the President. However, the president still continues to play the crucial role of dissolving parliament in readiness for a general election. This is something that has been inveighed heavily by opposition politicians, lawyers, and the civil society. The president is pilloried for using the dissolution of parliament as a secret weapon against his opponents because ECK cannot set the election date until parliament is dissolved. Because of this, it is argued that the president dissolves parliament at his pleasure when he knows he is well-prepared for the election, a role which gives him undue advantage over his opponents.

Prior to the re-embracing of multi-party politics in 1991, the 1988 elections were highly abused and remains a blot in the country's electoral history. Needless to say that, the 1988 elections were the most unpopular, encapsulating a typical case of a dead democracy in Africa. The elections were conducted through the much-maligned queue voting system, popularly known in Swahili as *mlolongo.* In queue voting, voters form lines behind their preferred candidate, a system that made voters openly reveal their preferences. In addition, *mlolongo* was characterized by widespread malpractices which included voter intimidation, voter bribery, rigging, as well as open manipulation by members of the Provincial Administration. To capture how abused the *mlolongo* was, candidates with long queues, surprisingly were declared losers in the 1988 elections. According to Mutua (2008) "these electoral malpractices assured Moi a rubber-stamp parliament" (p. 238). The *mlolongo* voting system was largely castigated as undermining

the democratic process, thus, necessitating constitutional reforms for fair competition in the 1992 elections.

The repealing of Section 2 (a) of the constitution saw a proliferation of many parties as the pace for a competitive democratic election gained steam after thirty years of KANU calling the shots on the electoral process. Though more opposition parties were formed following the amendments in the constitution, their registration had to be approved by the Registrar of Societies, a government official, under the Societies Act. Thus, through the Registrar of Societies, the government managed to block registration of parties because of some mundane reasons. Examples of parties that were denied registration by KANU government on flimsy grounds are the Green African Party (GAP), the Kenya Nationalist People's Democratic Party (KNPDP), and the controversial Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) whose registration was denied on the grounds that "its program offended the secular principle of Kenya's constitution" (Throup & Hornsby, 1998, p. 243).

There are 210 constituencies (electoral units) and 2, 402 civic wards. A constituency is represented in the National Assembly (parliament) by an elected Member of Parliament. In addition, there are 12 nominated Members of Parliament and 759 nominated councilors representing interest groups. In total there are 222 Members of Parliament plus the Attorney General who is an ex-official in the National Assembly of Kenya. A civic ward is represented in a county or municipal council by an elected councilor. Electoral boundaries are reviewed every ten years based on a number of factors such as population density and geographical size of an electoral unit that is likely to be carved up to form a new constituency. Section 42 of the constitution requires parliament to review the number of constituencies after every "eight to ten years." The last such exercise took place in 1996, but it never happened in 2006 as parliament failed to pass the Bill meant to pave the way for the amendment of the constitution.

In Kenya, there are three types of elections – presidential, parliamentary and civic – and all of them are held concurrently. These elections are held after every five years. Therefore, on voting day, voters elect a president, a Member of Parliament, and a representative for a civic ward. A by-election is held in case a Member of Parliament or councilor dies, loses his or her seat through a successful election petition, or through

incapacitation caused by illness or insanity, etc. In case a president dies in office or is unable to discharge his duties due to incapacitation reasons, the vice president takes over and within ninety days organizes a presidential election.

The 2007 general election was the tenth since independence. Other previous elections were held in 1963, 1969, 1974, 1979, 1983, 1988, 1992, 1997, and 2002. Until the first multi-party elections in 1992, no presidential ballot had ever been held, because during the single-party era, the sitting president was not subjected to an election. For a presidential candidate to emerge as a winner, he or she must garner the majority of votes cast, plus get at least 25 percent of votes cast in five of the eight provinces. The winning presidential candidate must also be an elected Member of Parliament. Therefore, it becomes null and void if one wins the presidency, but fails to be elected as a Member of Parliament in his or her constituency. In a nutshell, for a candidate to be elected president, he or she must be an elected MP.

In the 2007 elections, for instance, it is rumored that a scheme was afoot to scuttle Raila's bid to become Kenya's forth president, by preventing him from being elected as a Member of Parliament for Lang'ata constituency in Nairobi. No wonder on the Election Day, when Raila went to vote, he got a rude shock as he was turned away from voting because his name was missing from the roll of registered voters in Lang'ata. In the event that there is no outright winner, a run-off is held between the two candidates with the highest number of votes. This requirement is stipulated in section 5(4) of the constitution.

The 2007 Elections

The stage for a bruising battle in the 2007 elections was set in 2005 when the NARC government lost a popular national constitutional referendum 42 percent to 57 percent to the opposition, ODM. The government side, the *Yes Camp*, signified by a banana symbol supported the draft constitution for subsequent implementation if accepted by Kenyans, while the ODM side, the *No Camp,* signified by an orange symbol campaigned against the document. The *No Camp* won in six out of the country's eight

provinces, in Nairobi, Rift Valley, Nyanza, Coast, Western, and North Eastern. The banana group triumphed in Central and Eastern, only.

Executive authority was a key issue in the referendum campaign. It was all about the enormous powers vested in the Head of State (president) by the current Kenyan constitution. So as to reduce the excessive powers enjoyed by the president, the *No Camp* called for the sharing of such powers between the President and the Prime Minister. In doing so, ODM argued that "power needed to be shared out, so that one person could no longer dominate the country as in the past. This, they said, would help fight corruption – a big problem in Kenya" (BBC, 2005, para 4). The *Yes Camp*, however, saw no need to do away with a powerful presidency, as doing so would render the institution of the presidency toothless.

Former Presidents Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi were accused of abusing their powers by making some unilateral decisions (dictatorial), hence, triggering the clamor for trimming powers of a strong presidency, through constitutional reforms. Kenyatta and Moi fought tooth and nail to retain such powers. The final draft constitution which was subjected to the referendum ballot retained a powerful presidency. It watered down clauses hammered out at the National Constitutional Conference (NCC) of 2003-2004 which called for "a strong prime ministerial role but the revised draft retains a strong presidency" (BBC, 2005, para 3). That President Kibaki supported the draft constitution means he was against reduction of presidential powers as was the case with his predecessors.

Religious courts and land reform were other key issues in the draft constitution. The NCC draft constitution sought retention of Islamic courts but protests from Christians saw amendments to it, so as to provide for other types of religious courts, mainly Christian and Hindu. The draft called for radical land reform, especially on land ownership and its re-distribution. It also sought to resolve all pending land disputes in the country.

Losing the referendum begged for extra hard work from Kibaki and his political strategists if he stood any chance of winning a second term in office. On the other hand, winning the referendum so convincingly meant that the ODM camp was energized to work even harder and triumph in the forthcoming polls.

As mentioned above, on losing the referendum, President Kibaki fired seven cabinet ministers who were in the *No Camp* campaigning against the draft document which would have given the country a new constitutional dispensation. Among prominent ministers fired were Raila Odinga and Kalonzo Musyoka, the two gentlemen who ran for presidency in 2007 against Kibaki, their former boss.

Figure 1: A PNU Campaign Rally

When the going gets tough, the tough get going: President Mwai Kibaki who faced a real challenge in the presidential race from Raila Odinga addresses a political rally in Nairobi in the run-up to the 2007 elections. Picture by John Muchene.

Therefore, the November 21, 2005 referendum raised political temperatures as candidates crisscrossed the length and width of the country marketing their campaign agendas. But the battle in the presidential race was between President Kibaki and Raila, a good public orator with a knack of electrifying mammoth crowds in political rallies. President Kibaki aimed at winning the coming election to prove that despite losing the referendum he was the people's choice. Furthermore, Kibaki, a graduate from the reputed London School of Economics had revived the economy from a dismal annual growth of less than 1 percent when he ascended to power in December 2002 to a significant growth of 7 percent in 2007. He also had successfully implemented free primary school

education, a policy which saw 5 million children go back to school. On the other hand, Raila aimed at ensuring that the 2007 election outcome would be a repeat of what played out during the referendum ballot. In a nutshell, the two rivals were all set to settle political scores dating back to the referendum day. Mutua (2008) writes that "the referendum was a proxy for the power struggle between the two men. It was a dress rehearsal for the 2007 elections" (p. 241).

Figure 2: An ODM Campaign Rally

On the campaign trail: ODM presidential candidate Raila Odinga, a good public orator addresses a mammoth crowd when he campaigned for the presidency in 2007 elections. Picture by John Muchene.

Before winning the 2002 elections with a landslide victory of 61 percent, Kibaki had unsuccessfully run for the presidency in the 1992 and 1997 elections. In 1992, running on the Democratic Party (DP) ticket, he came in third after Daniel arap Moi (KANU) and Kenneth Matiba (Ford-Asili). Come the 1997 elections, Kibaki finished second after Moi. Raila first made a stab for presidency in 1997, running on the National Development Party (NDP) ticket. He finished a distant third after Moi and Kibaki in a race which for the first time in the country's history of elections attracted female presidential candidates, Charity Kaluki Ngilu of Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Professor Wangari Maathai of Liberal Party of Kenya (LPK).

Though Ngilu was a formidable candidate whose entry into the presidential race caught many by surprise, sending political shockwaves across the country, Professor Maathai's candidacy was a feeble one and was viewed as playing the role of a spoiler for Ngilu, aimed at splitting the women votes. When the results were released, Ngilu finished fifth, securing 488, 600 votes, while Professor Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Prize winner finished thirteenth with 4, 196 votes in a congested race that attracted fifteen candidates. The 2007 elections were Kalonzo's first attempt for the State House race.

It is such events as the referendum politics that primed the December 20007 election as the most fought in the country's history of electioneering. Several hotly-contested issues were at stake which raised the competitiveness of the election. For example, it was the first time that a sitting president faced the possibility of losing an election. President Mwai Kibaki who was running for the second and the last five-year constitutional term was facing a real challenge from Raila, the ODM candidate. It was also the first time that the public perception about Raila had positively changed from previous years when he was branded as unelectable owing to many reasons, including stereotypical ones such as that he is uncircumcised. He was also branded as a "trouble maker", many times linked with the botched 1982 attempted coup to topple the government of President Moi.

Going by high ratings in public opinion polls and the large crowds he drew whenever he addressed campaign rallies, the argument that Raila was a Luo and therefore unelectable because he is uncircumcised was now a mythical view. Luo is a tribe in Kenya whose traditions require their males not to get circumcised. Public opinion polls placed the two candidates closely during the primaries and the 21-day official campaign period. On December 18, 2007, the U.S.-based Gallup opinion poll put Kibaki leading with a one percent margin ahead of Raila. The poll said that 44 percent of registered voters intended to vote for Kibaki, the PNU candidate, while 43 percent were to vote for Raila. The same day, Steadman Group poll placed Raila ahead with 45 percent and Kibaki 43 percent. Two days later, Strategic Research poll gave 43 percent and 39 percent to Raila and Kibaki, respectively. That is why pollsters and political pundits described the poll as "too-close-to call." Writing about the competitiveness of this election in his book *Kenya's Quest for Democracy*, Mutua (2008) notes:

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Because several polls showed a statistical dead heat between Kibaki and Odinga, it was clear that the election would also be determined by voter turnout. Whichever candidate drove more of his supporters to the polls would most likely win it (p. 243).

Kenya's 2007 General Election was the tenth since the East African country attained independence from Britain in 1963. Thus, on December 27, Kenyans turned out in large numbers to elect not only the president, but also representatives in parliamentary and civic bodies. The poll recorded the highest voter registration since independence, 14.3 million from 10.6 million in 2002. Registered voters in the eight provinces were as follows: Rift Valley (3.4 million); Eastern (2.4 million); Central (2.2 million); Nyanza (2.0 million); Western (1.6 million); Nairobi (1.3 million); Coast (1.2 million); and North Eastern 315, 756.

Figure 3: An ODM-Kenya Campaign Rally

Kalonzo Musyoka, the ODM-Kenya presidential candidate addresses a political rally at Nairobi's Uhuru Park ahead of the 2007 Election Day. He dismissed opinion polls as "a mockery of Kenyans intelligence." Picture by John Muchene.

Though Kibaki, Raila and Kalonzo were the heavyweight candidates, the race for the top job also attracted six other lightweight candidates, namely: Nazlin Umar of Workers Congress Party (WCP); Joseph Ngacha Karani of Kenya Patriotic Trust (KPT); televangelist Pius Muiru (Kenya People's Party - KPP); Kenneth Stanley Matiba (Saba Saba Asili); David Waweru Ng'ethe (Chama Cha Umma - CCU); and Nixon Jeremiah Kukubo of Republican Party of Kenya (RPK). Matiba, who was actively involved in Kenya's second liberation in the 1990s, ran for presidency in 1992 and came in a strong second after president Moi. To date, Matiba bitterly claims that he won the 1992 elections but was rigged out by the KANU political machinery.

When the final presidential results were announced by ECK amid high tension pitting PNU camp against the ODM side, Kibaki was declared the winner of the 2007 presidential election, garnering 4, 584, 721 votes against Raila's 4, 352, 993. Kalonzo came in a distant third with 879, 903 votes. Nazlin Umar, the only woman candidate came in forth with 48, 789 followed by Joseph Karani with 8, 607. Pastor Pius Muiru with 3, 530 was placed sixth, while Matiba (3, 039) and David Ng'ethe (2, 602) were placed seven and eight in that order. Nixon Kukubo was last, managing only 2, 466 votes.

In the parliamentary elections, ODM carried the day, emerging with a lion's share of seats in the National Assembly. Of the 210 contestable parliamentary seats up for grabs, ODM won 99, PNU 43, ODM-K 16, KANU 14, Safina 5, and the following 20 were shared among the fringe parties - NARC-Kenya (4); FORD People (3); NARC (3); New FORD-Kenya (2); CCU (2); PICK (2); DP (2); and Sisi Kwa Sisi (2). The following ten parties each were elected to one seat: MGPK, UDM, PPK, FORD-Asili, KENDA, KADDU, KADU-Asili, FORD-Kenya, NLP, and PDP. There were no immediate results for Wajir North, Kilgoris, and Kamukunji constituencies. KANU and ODM candidates in Wajir North tied. ODM's Mohamed Gabow carried the day in the subsequent by-election. The Kilgoris results were nullified following outbreak of violence. PNU's Gideon Konchella won in the by-election. In Kamukunji, the vote tallying exercise was cancelled following alleged attempts to introduce fresh ballot papers. However, after a recount of the ballot ordered by the High Court, Simon Mbugua of PNU was declared the winner.

The parliamentary results meant that the ODM party would enjoy a numerical strength in parliament, a vital scenario in pushing the legislative agenda. The party used

its numerical advantage to elect its MP to the all-powerful post of the Speaker of the National Assembly on January 15, 2008. Kenneth Marende, the Emuhaya MP in Western province edged out Francis Xavier ole Kaparo by 105 to 101 votes to become the speaker of the tenth parliament. Kaparo, who was the immediate former holder of the position served as the house speaker for fifteen years, between 1993 and 2008. His bid to retain his seat was backed by PNU and its affiliates.

Though the election was closely fought because of a number of reasons, including the credibility of the presidential candidates, the many promises made to Kenyans, the role of the media and opinion polls, and the tribal political alignments and re-alignments, the 2007 election, however, goes to the annals of history as a "bloody election." It will be remembered because of the widespread chaos that engulfed some parts of the country the moment President Kibaki was declared the winner on December 30. Kibaki was sworn in on the lawn of the State House just an hour after ECK declared him the winner. This triggered riots in opposition strongholds with ODM claiming that the government rigged the election.

Different sources, domestic and international reported that the election was marred by serious flaws, especially with the tallying of the presidential ballots. The ODM brigade refused to accept the results, instead asking Kibaki to resign as they felt the election had been stolen (Mutua, 2008, p. 247).

Once the pride of Africa democracy, Kenya was quickly tottering on the brink of collapse. The impossible was proving possible as violence ensued in the western half of the country. However, the intervention by the UN and some western powers such as the United States saved the country from bleeding further as talks were initiated to get a political solution. After weeks of negotiations spearheaded by Kofi Annan, the former UN Secretary General, the two rival camps agreed to a power-sharing deal in form of a grand coalition government. Some key highlights of the deal were the creation of the post of the Prime Minister which was taken by Raila and sharing of the cabinet slots on a 50-50 basis. The deal also saw creation of two positions of deputy Prime Minister, one for ODM, which went to Local Government minister Wycliffe Musalia Mudavadi, Raila's running mate in the 2007 elections. The other went to PNU's Uhuru Kenyatta, currently holding the Treasury docket and a 2002 presidential candidate. The funny thing is that the

three men who bitterly fought for the presidency – Kibaki, Raila, and Kalonzo - are now serving in the same government. Kibaki is the president, Raila, the Prime Minister, and Kalonzo is the vice president but aligned to the PNU wing of the coalition.

This chapter has discussed some of the challenges facing the electoral process in Kenya and issues that made the election a unique one when compared to other past elections. However, discussing these fundamental issues alone isn't enough without factoring in the role of the media in the election. Like in any other part of the world, the Kenyan media play a major role in as far as informing, educating, and entertaining Kenyan citizens is concerned. Therefore, the role of the media in the 2007 elections was important, because in one way or another, the Kenyan media was a major player in the poll which ended in a bloodbath.

It is from the election coverage by different media organizations, newspapers, radio and television that voters were able to get information about the election especially on campaign issues and their preferred candidates. By informing the voters what is happening in the election arena, the Kenyan media was engaging in agenda-setting process. That is why the next chapter details how three dailies, *Daily Nation, The Standard,* and *The People Daily* covered the election and whether their coverage agreed with the public expectations.

CHAPTER THREE

The Kenyan Media and Agenda-Setting in the 2007 Elections

The Kenyan Media

There is no doubt that the media play a major role in society, in terms of dissemination of information, educating the public, and more so in the democratization process. Suffice it to say that the press constitutes an essential element in democratic governance, as noted by Otieno (2007) that "the place of the media in development and indeed in the democratization process cannot be underestimated" (p. 19). This tells us that the role the media play during an electioneering period cannot be overstated. Therefore, in any national or local election in any corner of the world, the news media obviously are a key source of information for voters especially about issues of national importance or candidates running for elective positions. Underscoring this important role of the mass media in an election, Throup and Hornsby (1998) say the news media are "a key electoral weapon for those who control them" (p. 362). Similarly, the Kenyan media plays an important role during national elections by informing people about issues being debated in political campaigns as well as what candidates are saying.

The media in Kenya remained dormant throughout the single-party era until the restoration of pluralistic politics in early 1990s. During the 24-year reign of President Daniel arap Moi, Kenya's second president, press freedom to objurgate the government remained elusive. Prior to 1992 when pluralism was re-embraced the news media in Kenya "worked within an environment of extremely harsh political and legal environment" (Aling'o, 2007, p. 110). This was a very dark period for the media in Kenya, characterized by direct censorship, intimidation, physical threats and attacks, media closures, prosecution and detention of journalists, and confiscation of media materials. This explains why the media remained so docile for many years, thus, inhibiting its ability to play its cardinal role in society, to inform, educate members of the public, promote the growth of democracy in Africa, and act as a public watchdog.

Indeed before 1992, "the media's right to operate and function freely and

independently was circumscribed by limitations and restrictions imposed on its ability to criticize actions or inactions by the government, political parties and individuals, and therefore to operate independently" (Aling'o, 2007, p. 110). For example, Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) says that "between June 1994 and June 1995, fifty six incidents of harassment of journalists, ranging from assault to confiscation of cameras were reported" (1997, p. 31). Further, in 1996, KHRC reports that at least ten journalists were arrested, sixteen assaulted by police, politicians or provincial administration, and twenty one threatened.

However, ushering multi-party politics in 1991 was a new dawn for the Kenyan media, because since then, the media industry has became more diverse and vibrant. According to Moggi and Tessier (2001) "there has been positive growth of the media sector since the restoration of multi-party democracy in 1992" (p. 13). But, a milestone in the media industry was achieved when the airwaves were liberalized in the late 1990s, ending the KANU government monopoly on broadcast media. This paved the way for more radio and television stations to be licensed to operate in a field that over the years was dominated by the state-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) – the only nationwide broadcaster. The Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK), an independent entity is entrusted with the regulatory role of the communication industry. It licenses and regulates telecommunications, radio communications and postal services.

Kenya Broadcasting Corporation

KBC is the largest broadcasting organization in Kenya enjoying nationwide coverage. Though a semi-autonomous entity, it is still state-owned, operating radio and television stations which generally remain uncritical of the government of the day. It is funded from public coffers and operates under the Minister for Information and Broadcasting. KBC Radio provides three services: the National Service which is in Swahili, the English Service, and Vernacular Services. The Media Council of Kenya (MCK) says that the KBC National Service controls the airwaves "with 52 percent of the listening population tuning to the station" (2006, p. 95). KBC was the propaganda mouthpiece for President Moi during the KANU days.

It was formed in 1961 but became Voice of Kenya (VOK) in 1964 when it was nationalized under an Act of Parliament. Another Act of parliament saw it revert to KBC in 1989. It aims at informing, educating and entertaining but more so it strives to communicate the government's agenda on development to members of the public. According to a report by the Commonwealth as cited by Throup and Hornsby (1998) "KBC devoted its news coverage chronicling the comings and going of the president, his ministers and various government functionaries" (p. 365). KBC TV remained the only television station until 1990 when KTN was licensed to broadcast.

Radio

Radio is found and heard everywhere in Kenya, thus, the most influential form of media in the country. It is estimated that 86 percent of the population listen to radio. This estimate, according to MCK, is close to a 2003 survey by CCK - *Universal Access to Communication.* The MCK report observes that the "proportion of the population that listens to radio in the urban and the rural areas are close to each other comprising 88.1% and 84.6% respectively" (MCK, 2006, p. 93). Additionally, the MCK survey shows that there are over thirty radio stations and of these, eleven broadcasts in English, seven in Swahili, seven in indigenous languages, and seven in both English and Swahili. State-owned KBC is still the only radio with nationwide coverage. Capital FM 98.4 was the first private radio station to be licensed in Nairobi. Other pronounced radio stations are Kiss FM, Classic FM, Citizen Radio, Kameme FM, Easy FM, Inooro FM and Metro FM.

Television

The MCK report says that television is a source of information for only 39 percent of the population. There are a number of reasons explaining why a small proportion of the Kenyan population use television as a source of information. One of the major reasons is that "the supply of electricity in the country is not universal to all households" (MCK, 2006, p. 52). The other factor is the cost of television sets where those with meager resources cannot afford to buy a television set.

MCK's report indicates that there are over twenty television stations in Kenya. Among the major television stations are the KBC TV, NTV owned by the NMG, KTN owned by the Standard Group, and Citizen TV owned by business magnate Samuel Macharia who also owns a plethora of radio stations broadcasting in Swahili and various tribal languages. KTN became the first private television station in the country since 1990, thus, breaking KBC's monopoly. Jared Benson Kangwana, a businessman and a former Kenyan Member of Parliament in the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) founded KTN in March 1990. Citizen TV went on air in July of 1999 and NTV followed later that year in December.

Newspapers

Newspapers in Kenya are a source of information, but are only accessible by people who can read. According to a 2006 baseline survey of media in Kenya conducted by MCK, 66 percent of the population is able to read text in English, though the report points out that only 46 percent of this population read newspapers. Those able to read Swahili, the national language are 79 percent. Moreover, the report says that 55 percent of the urban dwellers read newspapers compared to 36 percent in rural Kenya.

There are seven daily newspapers – namely the *Daily Nation, The Standard, The People Daily, Kenya Times, Nairobi Star, Business Daily*, and *Taifa Leo*, a Swahili publication. Also, there are several magazines and other weekly publications including major ones such as the *East African, Sunday Nation,* and the *Sunday Standard*. This study analyzed three newspapers – *Daily Nation, The Standard,* and *The People Daily.* Established in 1960, *Daily Nation* is owned by NMG, a media conglomerate in Eastern Africa listed on the Nairobi Stock Exchange (NSE) and with market interests in neighboring Uganda and Tanzania. It is based at the Nation Center in Nairobi's Central Business District. The NMG also owns NTV, a radio – Easy FM, a regional weekly newspaper – *East African, Business Daily, Sunday Nation,* and *Taifa Leo*. In Tanzania, NMG owns *The Citizen* and *Mwananchi,* while in Uganda the media giant owns *The Daily Monitor.*

Figure 4: The Nation Center and I&M Bank Tower in Nairobi

Above left is Nation Center, the Nation Media Group's head office and on the right is I&M Bank Tower, the Standard Group's headquarters in Nairobi's Central Business District. The Nation Media Group which publishes *Daily Nation* and *Sunday Nation* among other publications also owns NTV. The Standard Group publishes *The Standard* and also runs KTN. Pictures by John Muchene.

The Standard formerly *East African Standard* is the oldest newspaper in the country established in 1902. Headquartered at the I&M Bank Tower in Nairobi, *The Standard* is owned by the Standard Group which also owns KTN, the first private television in the country. *The People Daily* was established in 1993 as a weekly newspaper but was transformed into a daily paper in 1998. Based at Nairobi's Union Towers, the newspaper is owned by veteran politician Kenneth Matiba who contested for presidency in 1992, coming in second after President Moi. The publication made its name because of its radical reporting approach, never shying away from excoriating President Moi's leadership at a time when the freedom of the press was completely muzzled. It was popular for its exclusives about President Moi's so-called "Kitchen Cabinet" during the single-party era. For example, one of its memorable exclusive stories reported that burglars broke into President's Moi's bedroom and stole valuables, including his coveted golden cockerel. This edition sold over 100, 000 copies in a day. The paper's bold reporting is typified by its tagline – *Fair, Frank and Fearless.*

According to a 2001 report, *Media Status Report: Kenya* by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, *Daily Nation* enjoys a daily circulation of 200, 000 copies while *The Standard* has a daily circulation of 54, 000. The report says *The People Daily* has a circulation of 40, 000 copies, daily. Additionally, the MCK report places *Daily Nation* as the most favorable newspaper, read by 80 percent of the population, while half of this figure read *The Standard*. About 7 percent read *The People Daily*. *Taifa Leo* is read by about 29 percent of the population, according to the report. *Sunday Nation* and *Sunday Standard* attract a readership of 25 and 15 percent respectively.

Figure 5: Union Towers in Nairobi

Union Towers along Moi Avenue in Nairobi is *The People Daily's* head office. On the right, a Kenyan catches up with election news in the publication. The issue of corruption which is the main story in this edition was given a lot of prominence by the three newspapers. Pictures by John Muchene.

Therefore, how the three newspapers involved in this study covered the election is important as it helps in understanding, generally whether the Kenyan media influences public decisions. Also, the newspapers' coverage of the poll helped in understanding the media agenda and whether they agreed with the public agenda. Results below indicate that the media and public agendas were in parallel as there wasn't significant evidence of correlations involving the two.

The Current Research: Agenda-Setting in Kenyan Newspapers in the 2007 Elections

Campaign Issues in Newspapers

Daily Nation

Three campaign issues, namely education, infrastructure, and a new constitution recorded the highest frequency in the *Daily Nation* across the four pages under scrutiny between December 3 and 24. Each of the three issues appeared 8 times within the three-week campaign period. This means that these issues were given a lot of prominence in this newspaper during the campaign period. The corruption issue followed closely with a frequency count of 7. Economy, poverty eradication and security issues each received a frequency count of 4 followed by healthcare, 3. Surprisingly, the issue of job creation which was ranked 1st as the MIP facing Kenyans by the Strategic Research poll released on December 11, recorded zero frequency. In the rank order comparison of the nine issues between the *Daily Nation* and the Strategic Research poll, education, infrastructure, and a new constitution, all which ranked 1st in the newspaper, were ranked 2nd, 7th and 8th respectively in the public opinion surveys. The corruption issue which is cumulatively ranked 1st was ranked 4th in this newspaper and was placed 3rd in the opinion polls. See Table 1 for results.

Table 1: *Daily Nation* vs. Opinion Poll on Frequency of Issues

ISSUES	DAILY NATION FREQUENCY	DAILY NATION RANK	STRATEGIC RESEARCH RANK
Education	8	1	2
New Constitution	8	1	8
Infrastructure	8	1	7
Corruption	7	4	3
Economy/Development	4	5	4
Security	4	5	4
Poverty	4	5	6
Health Care	3	8	9
Job Creation	0	9	1

The Standard

The issue which received prominence in *The Standard* was corruption. Its frequency count was 7, and was followed by infrastructure and education with 6 and 5 in that order. Though the issue of security ranked 4th among the nine issues, that is, in terms of frequency, it, however, received low coverage from the newspaper, recording a frequency count of 3. It was followed by healthcare with a frequency of 2. The issue of job creation which was ranked 1st by members of the public was placed 6th in this newspaper with a low frequency of 1. It means that across the four pages of *The Standard* and within the three-week campaign proper period, the job creation issue appeared only once. The issue of economy did not receive any mention. From a comparative perspective, the corruption issue which tops in this newspaper, was ranked 3rd in the opinion poll. The issue of infrastructure which appears 2nd in the newspaper is placed 7th in the opinion poll. Education, ranked 3rd in the publication is placed 2nd by Kenyans. Economy, ranked 9th was placed 4th by Strategic Research. See Table 2 for results.

Table 2: *The Standard* vs. Opinion Poll on Frequency of Issues

ISSUES	STANDARD FREQUENCY	STANDARD RANK	STRATEGIC RESEARCH RANK
Corruption	7	1	3
Infrastructure	6	2	7
Education	5	3	2
Security	3	4	4
Health Care	2	5	9
New Constitution	1	6	6
Poverty	1	6	8
Job Creation	1	6	1
Economy/Development	0	9	4

The People Daily

Economy is the issue which received more coverage in *The People Daily* with a frequency count of 5, thus ranking first in this publication. It was followed closely by a new constitution, education, and corruption each with a frequency count of 4. The security issue came 3rd in the newspaper with a low frequency of 3, followed by infrastructure and poverty with 2 each. Job creation, the issue Kenyans ranked as the "most important problem" they would like to be addressed as a matter of priority by the

new administration received a frequency count of 1, ranking 8th overall. Economy, ranked 1st in the publication, was ranked 4th in opinion polls while the issue of new constitution is ranked 8th in the poll.

The issue of education is placed 2nd, both in the newspaper and by Strategic Research. The issue of healthcare was equally ranked by both sides, as the least important at position 9. The poverty issue also received a balanced ranking on both sides – ranked 6th. Corruption is also ranked highly coming 2nd in the newspaper's coverage and 3rd in the opinion poll. See Table 3 for results.

Table 3: *The People Daily* vs. Opinion Polls on Frequency of Issues

ISSUES	PEOPLE FREQUENCY	PEOPLE RANK	STRATEGIC RESEARCH RANK
Economy/Development	5	1	4
New Constitution	4	2	8
Education	4	2	2
Corruption	4	2	3
Security	3	5	4
Infrastructure	2	6	7
Poverty	2	6	6
Job Creation	1	8	1
Health Care	0	9	9

Cumulative

From a cumulative perspective, the issue of corruption topped, receiving a frequency of 18 on the three newspapers, and thus ranked number 1. Job creation, the issue that topped the wishes of Kenyan voters received very low consideration in the newspapers, a low frequency count of 2 and was ranked 9th overall. Education with a frequency of 17, came in 2nd after corruption and it was also ranked 2nd in the Strategic Research poll. The issue of infrastructure also received a high frequency of 16, thus, ranking 3rd cumulatively, but ranked 7th in the poll.

In aggregate, the new constitution issue received a frequency of 13, thus ranking 4th cumulatively and 8th in polls. It was followed by security with a frequency of 10 and ranked 5th and 4th in aggregate and in polls. The issues of economy, poverty and

healthcare, ranked 6th, 7th, and 8th cumulatively, also ranked 4th, 6th and 9th in the poll conducted by Strategic Research. See Table 4 for results.

Table 4: Cumulative vs. Opinion Polls on Frequency of Issues

ISSUES	CUMULATIVE FREQUENCY	CUMULATIVE RANK	STRATEGIC RESEARCH RANK
Corruption	18	1	3
Education	17	2	2
Infrastructure	16	3	7
New Constitution	13	4	8
Security	10	5	4
Economy/Development	9	6	4
Poverty	7	7	6
Health Care	5	8	9
Job Creation	2	9	1

Candidates' Images in the Newspapers

The Strategic Research poll of December 20 placed ODM candidate Raila Odinga leading with 43 percent. This was based on this question directed to Kenyan voters by the pollster: "If elections were held today, who would you vote for as your president?" In the same poll, Mwai Kibaki, the PNU candidate is placed second with 39 percent followed at a distance by Kalonzo Musyoka of ODM-K, 15 percent.

However, on the frequency of the candidates' images on the front page of the three publications, Kibaki (the incumbent) leads his two rivals – cumulatively and in each newspaper. He is followed by Raila and Kalonzo in that order. Kibaki enjoys a cumulative image frequency of 78 – with 36 appearance in *The Standard*, 26 in the *Daily Nation*, and 16 in *The People Daily*. Raila appears 31 times in *The Standard*, 25 in *Daily Nation* and 14 in *The People Daily* – totaling 70 times. In aggregate, Kalonzo's image graced the front page of the three newspapers 51 times – 28, 16, and 7 in *The Standard, Daily Nation* and *The People Daily* respectively. For correlation purposes, it means the pattern was 1-2-3 for Raila-Kibaki-Kalonzo, while on image frequency; the pattern is reversed to 1-2-3 for Kibaki-Raila-Kalonzo. See Table 5 for results.

Table 5: Candidates' Image Frequency

CANDIDATE	NATION	STANDARD	PEOPLE	CUMULATIVE
KIBAKI	26	36	16	78
RAILA	25	31	14	70
KALONZO	16	28	7	51

Correlation Results

This study's primary research question asked: "How did salience of issues in the *Daily Nation, The Standard,* and *The People Daily* correlate to public opinion during the 2007 Kenyan General Election?" The data analysis based on the Spearman Rank Correlation indicated that the correlation involving salience of issues on the three newspapers to the Strategic Research's poll was weak, that is, there was no significant evidence in correlation. The correlation recorded was 0.12552, a weak one though positive. See Figure 6 for results.

Figure 6: Spearman's Rank Correlation Analysis of Campaign Issues

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        TOP ENTRY:      SPEARMAN CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS, N = 9
        BOTTOM ENTRY:  p-value under HO: TRUE CORRELATION = 0


DAILY NATION           STANDARD            PEOPLE          CUMULATIVE
   -0.13859             0.11065           0.24790           0.12552
    0.7221              0.7769            0.5201            0.7476
```

In regard to secondary question 1: "How did attribute salience of presidential candidates in the three newspapers correlate to public opinion?" The result showed a correlation of 0.50000 which was also weak though positive, meaning that there was little evidence in correlation involving the attributes of the three presidential candidates to the opinion poll. See Figure 7 for results.

Secondary question 2 asked: "Which of the three newspapers' coverage of the election registered the strongest correlation to public opinion in as far as issue salience was concerned?" Among the three newspapers, *The People Daily* registered the strongest correlation of 0.24790 on campaign issues. However, in actual fact, this is a weak-

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positive correlation. But in this scenario where *The Standard* registered a correlation of 0.11065 and the *Daily Nation* -0.138595, *The People Daily's* correlation came out stronger; thus it can be argued that the newspaper registered the strongest correlation.

With respect to secondary question 3: "Which correlation was stronger? Was it the salience of issues to public opinion, or salience of attributes of presidential candidates to public opinion?" The salience of issues correlation was 0.12552 and the salience of attributes correlation was 0.50000. In this case, the salience of attributes was stronger, though in actual sense it was also a weak one.

Figure 7: Spearman's Rank Correlation Analysis of Candidates' Images

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        TOP  ENTRY:        SPEARMAN  CORRELATION  COEFFICIENTS,  N  =  3
         BOTTOM  ENTRY:   p-value under HO: TRUE  CORRELATION  =  0


DAILY  NATION              STANDARD              PEOPLE              CUMULATIVE
   0.50000                  0.50000              0.50000              0.50000
   0.6667                   0.6667               0.6667               0.6667
```

Secondary question 4 asked: "Did the way campaign issues were covered in the three newspapers affect the salience of those issues on the public agenda?" Based on the answer to this research's primary question, it can be concluded that the way the newspapers covered the campaign issues didn't have any influence on what voters thought was "the most important problem" facing Kenya.

Question 5 of the secondary questions asked: "Do the findings support the view that the news media tell us what is important in public domain?" Based on the answers for the primary question and the secondary question 4 above, it can be concluded that the findings discount the notion that the news media tell people what is important. In a nutshell, this rubbishes the conventional wisdom about the mass media agenda-setting theory that what ranks highly in the news media also ranks highly in the public's interests.

Secondary question 6 asked: "Was there a major similarity in findings between this study and the 1973 Funkhouser study?" As noted in chapter one, this study employed the 1973 Ray Funkhouser methodology approach where content analysis was used to

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examine coverage of major issues in three major magazines in the U.S. Funkhouser related the news media coverage of fourteen issues to opinion polls by the Gallup organization. Similarly, this study correlated news media coverage of nine issues during the 2007 Kenyan General Election to the Strategic Research poll. Funkhouser (1973) concluded that "the data cited here suggest that the amount of media attention given to an issue strongly influences its visibility to the public" (p. 74). This means Funkhouser's study supported the hypothesis that topics receiving much attention in the media, also receive similar attention from members of the public. However, because this study found no significant correlation in either salience of issues or attributes in the news media, this means that this research disagrees with Funkhouser's main conclusion (stated above), and thus no major similarity between the two studies. It also disagrees with the hypothesis that news media influence people's opinions.

From the findings presented in this chapter, it can be concluded that both the media and the public had different agendas in the 2007 Kenyan elections. While the media, through its election coverage advocated for the issue of corruption, Kenyan voters put the issue of job creation on top of their election agenda. The job creation issue, however, received the least consideration from the three newspapers as well as cumulatively. It is this contrast in the media agenda and the public agenda that explains the lack of any significant correlation between the two, in as far as issue salience and attributes agenda-setting about the presidential candidates was concerned.

If at all the media sets the agenda on socio, political and economic issues as studies show elsewhere, then, it means there are some reasons why this research denounces the agenda-setting theory in mass communication. This necessitates an exploration of some of the reasons which might have, in one way or another, compromised the news media influence on voters during the Kenya's 2007 elections as discussed in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

Discussion of Results and Conclusions

This research's critical question was how the salience of issues in the *Daily Nation, The Standard,* and *The People Daily* correlated to public opinion in the fiercely-disputed 2007 Kenyan General Election. The question was founded on agenda-setting theory in mass communication, whose hypothesis posits that topics ranked highly in the press are accorded similar importance by news consumers. By telling people what is important within the public sphere, the mass media engage in "agenda setting." The study's central question, therefore, sought to probe the relevance of the agenda-setting theory within a political context of a young democracy such as Kenya. In a nutshell, the question sought to investigate whether Kenyan news media influenced voters' preferences on campaign issues and attributes of presidential candidates Mwai Kibaki, Raila Odinga, and Kalonzo Musyoka.

To do so, a correlation between issues that the three newspapers gave prominence in the election coverage and what voters, through public opinion poll surveys, said were the most pressing problems facing the country was established using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation. The major finding from the study indicates that there was no significant evidence of correlation involving issues given prominence in the media and what voters pointed out as the "most important problem." There was also no significant evidence of correlation in as far as attributes agenda-setting influence of the news media about the three presidential candidates was concerned.

For the salience of issues, the correlation recorded was 0.12552, a very weak one, though positive. A correlation is confined between -1 and +1, and its strength grows moving away from zero point towards the two extreme limits, -1 and +1. So, in this case, the correlation of 0.12552 is very close to the zero point and away from +1, meaning that it is very weak, but in agreement with public opinion. The attributes agenda-setting recorded a correlation of 0.50000 which is evidently moderate but insignificant. Because it is a positive correlation, it means it was in agreement with public opinion, though

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weakly. It is, thus, impossible to conclude that news media influenced voters' preferences on choice of their presidential candidates.

It might be difficult, therefore, to authoritatively state why there was little evidence of correlations on issues and candidates' attributes. This is so because this was a correlation descriptive study as opposed to a statistical test study based on a specific hypothesis. This study didn't have a specific hypothesis but was rather descriptive, finding out the relationship (correlation) between what issues the media were advocating in the election and what issues voters thought were important, requiring immediate government attention. If it was a statistical test study, then, the absence of correlations evidence on issues and candidates' attributes, could have been blamed on the fact that sample sizes used were too small to enable make conclusive findings about any correlations, in line with the stated hypothesis. A larger sample size exhibits more evidence that some correlations exist. This is so because a larger sample size yields better statistical knowledge than a smaller one.

That there was insignificant correlation is not very surprising, because even initial results (before establishing the correlations strength) after conducting content analysis of how the three newspapers covered the election, indicated this huge disparity or contrast. There was least evidence showing that campaigned issues highly propelled by the media received similar attention from voters. What happened is that voters (because of one reason or another) gave preference to issues not advocated for by members of the Fourth Estate.

For instance, as presented in chapter three, corruption emerged as the issue which was given a lot of weight in the newspapers, ranking top with a cumulative frequency of 18. This was a complete contrast from what the December 11 Strategic Research opinion poll reported as the main topic(s) in voters' minds. Through opinion surveys, voters placed the issue of job creation as the MIP which they wished to be given first priority by the new administration. This contrast is further strengthened because the issue of job creation received the lowest consideration in the newspapers' aggregate, ranking 9th overall. The corruption issue, however, was ranked 3rd in the polls, which was close to how it was ranked in the newspapers. This means that this issue was also top in voters' minds. The biggest concern, however, revolves around the issue of job creation, which

was given the lowest consideration by the three newspapers, yet it received thumbs up from voters.

Additionally, more evidence about this contrast is seen when it comes to issues of infrastructure and a new constitution. The infrastructure issue was ranked 3rd in the newspapers but 7th in the poll, whereas the issue of a new constitution was ranked 4th but 8th by Strategic Research. This imbalance between the two sides is further bolstered when comparing coverage of each newspaper to the Strategic Research poll. Whereas the issue of job creation was ranked 1st in the opinion poll, however, it is the issues of education, a new constitution, and infrastructure that ranked 1st in the *Nation*. The issue of job creation was ranked last in the newspaper. In the *Standard*, the corruption issue topped the newspaper's election agenda, while the job creation issue ranked second to last. Economy is the issue which ranked highly in the *People*, but the issue of job creation ranked 8th overall.

That there wasn't significant correlation between issues given prominence in the newspapers and what voters regarded as the MIP, helps in answering secondary questions 4 and 5. Secondary question 4 asked: "Did the way campaign issues were covered in the three newspapers affect the salience of those issues on the public agenda?" Question 5 asked: "Do the findings support the view that news media tell us what is important in the public domain?"

Answering question 4 is straightforward, going by the discussion in the preceding paragraphs revolving around the contrast between what the newspapers propagated as the most important campaign issues and what voters said about the importance of the same issues. This contrast, then, means that the way the issues were covered in the three newspapers didn't affect the salience of those issues on the public agenda. What comes out clear is a contrast of agendas, between the media and the public, meaning that there was little relationship between the media agenda and the public agenda. We can say, for example, the media pushed the agenda of portraying corruption as a big problem in the Kenyan government, which is true anyway if such high profile financial scandals as the Goldenberg and the Anglo-Leasing are anything to go by.

The Goldenberg scandal was a mind-boggling affair and an unprecedented financial rip-off in Kenya's history of graft. The scandal nearly brought Kenya's

economy to its knees in the 1990s. Worse still, the country's economy has never fully recovered from the aftermath of the scandal whose architect was the flamboyant and controversial Nairobi businessman Kamlesh Pattni. The names of top officials in the Government of Kenya involved in the financial rip-off reads as "Who was Who" in the administration of President Daniel arap Moi. The Goldenberg scam involved irregular payments of millions of dollars for fictitious gold and diamond export by Goldenberg International Limited and associated companies. Pattni, who has since then been "born again" (baptized) and named "Paul," "siphoned money in complex foreign exchange transactions to his off-shore accounts, returned it in the form of export earnings and made profits in the form of compensation for alleged gold and diamond jewellery exports" (Ireri, 2004, p. 1).

On the other hand, the public had a different agenda as established through the opinion poll conducted by Strategic Research. The public agenda called for the issue of job creation to be addressed first by the in-coming administration so as to arrest the soaring rate of unemployment, whose ramifications affect the very well-being of millions of Kenyans living below the poverty line.

Therefore, though a plethora of evidence, especially from the West indicates that the media sets the agenda on socio, political and economic issues; however, this was not the case in Kenya, a representation of a growing democracy in the global South. In a nutshell, voters did not reciprocate the media agenda in equal measure, as hypothesized by the agenda-setting theory. Therefore, the findings from this study don't support the notion that the media tell us what issues are important in the public sphere.

Young democracies face inherent problems that might hamper the mass media influence on voters during an electioneering period. Kenya, the focus of this study in investigating the role of mass communication agenda-setting in 2007 election is among young democracies facing several challenges which from time to time nullify the presumed role of the media in the democratization process. This argument explains why the results of this study show that voters were not influenced by news people in making their choices on campaign issues and presidential candidates.

Here, I explore four factors – revenue generation, ethnicity, voter-bribery, and "three-piece" voting system - that might have in one way or another relegated to the

periphery the influence of the news media in the Kenya's 2007 elections. These factors might mitigate the reason why there was no evidence of correlations or associations in regard to what issues journalists promoted while covering the election vis-à-vis what voters felt were the pressing problems troubling them.

The main objective of any media organization is to generate substantial revenue for its survival in the ever-dynamic and competitive media market. In newspapers, therefore, editors must run stories which attract high readership, hence, increased revenue generation through sales and advertisements. There is no doubt that advertisements form the bulk of media revenue. However, advertisers' willingness to place ads, for example, on a certain newspaper depends on whether the publication attracts significant readership, courtesy of good stories.

In covering the 2007 election campaign, *Nation, Standard,* and *People* might have been motivated by the factor of revenue generation, thus, giving prominence to issues which attracted increased readership. This would lead to more sales, a move likely to attract more ads. This might explain why the issue of corruption, a truly sensational topic in Kenya was given more prominence than other issues in the three newspapers. Because graft is endemic within the Kenyan government - resulting in plundering of public resources - is one thing which has troubled Kenyans for many years. Of course, graft involves mismanagement of public coffers – leading to a myriad of problems – such as increased inflation, poor infrastructure, sub-standard healthcare, poor-quality education, unemployment, and a soaring rate of crime. When all these happen, it is taxpayers who bear the brunt of mismanaged public affairs.

News people are aware of audience's inner cravings, especially how they are hurt by problems created by corrupt government officials entrusted with prudent management of public affairs. Aware of these psychological inner problems facing people, news editors don't hesitate to prominently run stories which are thought to solve people's problems such as corruption. In doing so, newspapers' gatekeepers aim at increasing sales, so as to attract more ads, hence revenue generation to support their daily operations and pay their staff as well. So, in giving the issue of corruption more consideration than others, *Nation, Standard,* and *People* might have aimed at making more sales, because they know that graft is a real problem and a hot topic. This, then, might have swayed the

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three newspapers from giving attention to real issues facing Kenyans, hence the contrast in the media agenda and the public agenda.

A headline, for example, in the *Standard* screaming: "Goldenberg Architects to be Charged Afresh, Says Raila" will attract more readership than a top story in the *People* saying: "Economy to Grow by Double Digit – Kibaki." This is so because people like to see those who they consider to be sources of problems facing them punished for their misdeeds. Therefore, editors would not hesitate to give prominence to graft stories because they evoke people's emotions, leading them into buying newspapers to read more about actions being taken against perpetrators of economic crimes.

Obviously, Kenyan voters followed the events of the election campaign on newspapers, television, and radio, so as to remain informed about what their preferred candidates were saying as the political razzmatazz involving PNU, ODM and ODM-K took the center stage of the media attention. However, suffice it to say that as findings of this research have shown, consuming election news did not influence the voting intentions of registered voters.

Yes, the election might have been issue-oriented, but not necessarily based on what issues were being propagated by the media corps. Then, it means that there were other factors which swayed the voting patterns of eligible voters. For instance, PNU strategists argued that the election battle was to be won on the account of development record (issue-oriented), but ODM felt that the election outcome was to be shaped by ethnic considerations. David Murathe, former Gatanga MP was quoted in *The Standard* saying: "Kenyans know better this poll will purely be issue oriented. The people will be voting for a leader they can trust, one who has boosted economic growth and facilitated kitties such as the Constituency Development Fund to the people and not individuals full of empty rhetoric" (Obonyo, 2007, para 11). Murathe's view gives credence to the reason why, perhaps when polled, voters named the issue of job creation as the "most important problem" facing the country as opposed to corruption which was the media's preference.

May it be that the election was issue-oriented; however, the ethnicity factor might have tipped the scale on how Kenyans voted. Dr. Amukowa Anangwe of the ODM secretariat observed that the election would not be issue-oriented but on "more fundamental and practical factors that infringe on people's rights, such as ethnicity"

(Obonyo, 2007, para 12). Supporting Anangwe's view, Mutula Kilonzo, ODM-K Secretary General and the current Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs said: "I am embarrassed to admit the reality, which is that polls will chiefly be decided on grounds of ethnicity" (Obonyo, 2007, para 14).

To understand how the ethnicity factor remains at the core of Kenyan politics, one needs to flash back to the 2005 national constitutional referendum which ODM won by rallying other tribes against President Kibaki's Kikuyu tribe. Whether a Kenyan election is issue-oriented or not is one thing all together, because history shows a past voting pattern dictated by tribal inclinations. People have this strong feeling that by putting a leader from their tribe in the State House they would benefit in terms of sharing the national cake in the form of allocation of more resources and appointments to plum positions in the public service. That is why all major tribes – Kikuyu, Kalenjin, and Luo vote as a bloc for a presidential candidate from their tribe.

Figure 8: An Ethnicity News Article

Source: *Sunday Nation*, 2007: A story carried in the December 16, 2007 edition of *Sunday Nation* captures how ethnicity influences voting patterns in Kenya. Ethnicity qualifies as one of the factors that might have nullified the news media influence on voters during the 2007 Kenyan elections.

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An opinion poll released a few days before the election attests to this fact where major tribes have a tendency of voting as a bloc for "one of their own." The poll showed that President Kibaki enjoyed an overwhelming 91 percent backing in Central province – a region dominated by his Kikuyu tribe – the most populous tribe in Kenya. Raila, a Luo, scored a dismal 8 percent in Central. In Nyanza, largely occupied by the Luos, Raila enjoyed a 78 percent vote in the region. Kalonzo carried the day in the lower zone of Eastern province, occupied by his Kamba people with 45 percent.

Caesar Handa, the Strategic Research chief executive told the *Daily Nation* that "people believe it is only a candidate from their community who will enable them to tap into national resources" (Barasa & Wachira, 2007, para 6). Because they were assured of votes from their tribal backyards, presidential candidates Kibaki and Raila held no serious campaign rallies in Central and Nyanza. Former chairman Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, Maina Kiai said: "Kenya's politics is organized around ethnicity and political parties have no ideological organization" (Barasa & Wachira, 2007, para 16). For instance, ODM's top decision making organ – dubbed "The Pentagon" is comprised of members representing interests of their communities. Raila represents Luos interests, William Ruto for Kalenjins, Joseph Nyagah for Kikuyus and other tribes within the Mt. Kenya region – Embu, Mbeere, Meru, and Tharaka. Mudavadi is there for Luhyas. Najib Balala represents interests of Coast people, while Charity Ngilu who was co-opted to The Pentagon in the last days of the campaign is for Kamba. This was so because "The Pentagon is meant to show that all the main groups are represented at the core of power" (Kanyinga, 2007, para 12).

In reality, however, The Pentagon or other politicians don't represent interests of their communities in government. Instead, politicians represent their own interests and those of their families. But they use their tribes as a springboard to achieve their number one goal, ascending to power. For example, it isn't true that Nyagah represents interests of Central people. Balala purports to represent Coast people in The Pentagon, yet the Coast province isn't homogeneous – Giriama, Pokomo, Taita, Taveta, and Swahili to mention a few – all have different and sometimes competing and conflicting interests. Here is the con game: ODM uses Pentagon as a veneer to show regional balance in the top echelons. That is why during the election, ODM, confidently and comfortably

accused PNU and Kibaki in particular of only representing Central Kenya, the home turf of Kikuyus. It is this ODM's purported regional balance which is one of the reasons why chaos erupted when President Kibaki was declared the winner of the 2007 presidential election, because he was portrayed as lacking the backing of other major tribes.

The other factor which might have watered down the media influence in this election is voter bribery. Millions of Kenyans still live below the poverty line, meaning they are unable to afford such basic needs as food. Such voters are vulnerable to political manipulation, including bribery, a major problem bedeviling the growth of democracy in Africa. A report by Coalition for Accountable Political Financing (CAPF) says that Kajiado North constituency in Rift Valley topped in cases of voter bribery during the 2007 elections. The report, released in April 2008 says that at least 20,190 voters received bribes of about Kenya Shillings 200 ($ 2.50) each from a parliamentary candidate. A further 17, 235 voters pocketed bribes of similar amount from another candidate. Prof. George Saitoti, the current Minister for Internal Security is the MP for Kajiado North. To retain his seat he faced a big challenge from ODM's Moses ole Sakuda.

CAPF's report, titled *Campaign Monitoring Finance and Corruption for 2007 General Elections* says the money that voters got was meant to "influence them to vote for the candidate dishing out the cash" (Wachira, 2007, para 6). A total of 18, 220 voters were bribed in Juja, Central, a constituency represented in parliament by George Thuo, the Government Chief Whip. Other constituencies where voter bribery was reported are Westlands, Makadara and Starehe in Nairobi, Kiambaa in Central province, Kitui Central in Eastern province, Keiyo South and Baringo Central in Rift Valley province, Nyaribari Masaba, Ugenya, Gem, Muhoroni, and Kisumu East in Nyanza province, and Mvita in Coast province. Budalang'i and Webuye in Western province are also in CAPF's list of shame. Another CAPF report released three weeks before the Election Day says that a whooping US$11.3 million (Kshs 900 million) was used to bribe voters during party nominations. University of Nairobi scholar Kithaka Mberia notes that "rich politicians might lure voters in marginalized areas if they conduct hand-to-hand campaigns" (Gekara & Wachira, 2007, para 9).

Figure 9: A Voter-bribery News Article

Source: *Daily Nation*, 2007: Voter bribery was rampant during the 2007 Kenyan elections as reported in the *Daily Nation* edition of December 4, 2007. Therefore, voter bribery is another factor that might have titled voting patterns in the elections and in the process rendering ineffective news media role in agenda-setting during the poll.

Another factor that might have dictated how people voted is what is called "three-piece" voting system. Because in Kenya presidential, parliamentary and civic elections take place concurrently, some voters tend to vote uniformly depending on which party is popular in their respective region. If PNU, for example, is the popular party in Central, a voter might decide to vote for the three PNU candidates – that is for president, Member of Parliament and civic leader. This kind of voting, pegged on a party's popularity in an area is what is referred to as "three-piece." Such a system of voting has seen candidates being elected posthumously because they were in the popular party.

Former cabinet minister Joseph Kamotho, though popular, he twice lost a parliamentary race because he contested on a KANU ticket, a party which was anathema in Central province. So bitter was Kamotho after losing his Kangema parliamentary seat during the 1992 elections because he was in the "wrong party" – KANU instead of FORD-Asili which was the party to beat in Central - that he coined this famous quote: "Even if it was a dog, for as long as it would have contested on Ford-Asili, it would have been elected in this region instead of a KANU candidate" (*The Standard*, 2007, para 18).

Figure 10: A "Three-Piece" Voting System News Article

Source: *The Standard*, 2007: In this story carried in *The Standard* edition of December 21, 2007, Raila Odinga asks his supporters to follow the "three-piece" voting system on the voting day. This voting system might have quashed any chance of the news media influencing people on voting decisions.

The two correlations recorded in this study show that the candidates' attributes (0.50000) is stronger than that of the salience of issues (0.12552). In real sense, however, the two correlations are very weak, hence the reason why there was no significant evidence of correlations. The reason why the attributes correlation appears stronger is because, unlike in the salience of issues where a huge contrast between issues advocated for by the news media and what voters said about the same issues was noticed, there was no such sharp contrast in candidates' attributes. This is so because the items involved in attributes were only three, the three presidential candidates. Kalonzo Musyoka ranked in position three throughout: in image frequency in each newspaper and also cumulatively. For instance, in terms of image frequency, he ranked number three in each newspaper with a frequency of 16, 28, and 7 in *Nation, Standard,* and *People* respectively. He was also ranked number three in the Strategic Research poll of December 20 with 15 percent of voters saying they would vote for him as the next president.

There was no big imbalance when it came to ranking Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga as they exchanged positions one and two in as far as image frequency and opinion poll were concerned. Kibaki retained position one in image frequency followed by Raila. On the other hand, Raila retained position one in the poll with Kibaki ranking second. That the rank pattern was 1-2-3 for Raila-Kibaki-Kalonzo in the poll, and 1-2-3 for Kibaki-Raila-Kalonzo on image frequency explains the 0.50000 correlations consistency in the three newspapers and in aggregate. Each newspaper recorded a correlation of 0.50000. It was the same case in cumulative correlation.

Kibaki's image or mention on page 1 was 26 times in *Nation,* 36 in *Standard,* and 16 in *People*. The reason why Kibaki's image frequented the newspapers' page 1 is because of many reasons associated with an incumbent president. First, the institution of presidency is news in itself. That is why journalists always follow daily activities of a president, may it be that he is meeting an ambassador from another country or he is talking about healthcare.

A study commissioned by UNDP ahead of the 2007 elections says the media portrayed President Kibaki in a more favorable light than other presidential candidates. The study adds that "in the leading daily newspapers, President Kibaki got the most positive coverage, followed by Odinga and lastly Musyoka" (Otieno & Barasa, 2007, para 16). Even when Raila and Kalonzo receive more positive coverage, President Kibaki "still receives more neutral coverage than the two, and the least negative coverage" (Otieno & Barasa, 2007, para 6). The UNDP's report reinforces the reason why Kibaki's image graced page 1 of the three daily newspapers more than other candidates. Obviously, positive coverage is a big boost to any presidential candidate. Thus, the positive coverage accorded to Kibaki might have boosted his image or popularity among voters, making him a formidable candidate, explaining why the presidential race was tightly fought.

But the 0.50000 correlation should be treated with great caution. In reality, it is better to believe in the 0.12552 correlation than the 0.50000. This means that the salience of issues correlation (0.12552) gives a better picture of the relationship involving newspapers coverage of the election and what was in voters' minds in as far as campaign issues and candidates' attributes were concerned. Why so? It is because the 0.12552

correlation was based on more evidence than it was in the 0.50000 correlation. The 0.12552 was based on nine campaign issues as compared to 0.50000 which was based on only three subjects, the three presidential candidates. It means that the 0.12552 is more informative about the media agenda and the public agenda in Kenya's 2007 elections. Therefore, though the 0.50000 correlation appears stronger, in reality it is not because it is based on less evidence, meaning we cannot vouch for it to give a good picture in answering this research's questions.

It emerged that *People* with a correlation of 0.24790, though a weak one was stronger than that of *Nation* (-0.13859), *Standard* (0.11065) and 0.12552 for cumulative. It also means *Nation* was less in line with the public agenda because it recorded a negative correlation. The *Nation* and *People* correlations are very surprising, taking into account that the former is the newspaper with the highest readership in the country, meaning that it is also very influential on readers, yet this was not what came out of this study. On the other hand, *People* recording a stronger correlation is surprising because it is the newspaper with the lowest readership among the three publications used in this study, yet it is in agreement with the public opinion. The *People's* correlation can be attributed to the fact that the publication's reporting on campaign issues didn't deviate a lot from what the Strategic Research poll said were the main problems afflicting Kenyans as established through content analysis. Save for the issues of a new constitution, and job creation which showed a big difference in ranking between the newspaper's coverage of the campaign issues and the opinion poll, the ranking of other issues was very close to what voters said about the importance of the same issues.

The issue of a new constitution ranked 2nd in the newspaper, but 8th in the poll, a huge difference. The job creation issue ranked 1st in the poll was ranked 8th in the publication. This is a huge variation. However, the issues of education, corruption, security, infrastructure, poverty and healthcare were fairly balanced with what voters thought about their importance. The issues of education, poverty, and healthcare were equally ranked by both sides at positions 2, 6, and 9. The issue of corruption was closely ranked by both sides at 2nd position in the newspaper and 3rd in the poll. Also closely ranked were the issues of security and infrastructure. The security issue ranked 5th in the newspaper and 4th in the poll. As far as infrastructure was concerned, it ranked 6th in the

newspaper and 7th in the poll. It is difficult to tell why the newspaper's reporting was more balanced than that of *Nation* and *Standard*. This kind of balanced reporting can qualify the argument that the newspaper was less biased in its election coverage, thus, more objective. Or, it may be its reporting was guided by its foundation as a people's newspaper, hence the name *People.* Maybe it tried to identify with people's concerns.

Study Limitations

The main limitation in this study was the decision to scrutinize only pages 1, 3, 5 and the back page. Scrutinizing all pages carrying election news would have been a better idea in terms of collecting a more informative and reliable data. The weakness in doing content analysis for only four pages was especially exposed on the back pages of the three newspapers. The back pages of the three newspapers were the worst in the election coverage, carrying very little information about the nine campaign issues. It cannot be ruled out that other pages not enlisted for scrutiny in this study must have contained more election campaign information than the back pages. It was established that, mostly the back pages carried news stories not about the election.

In *Nation,* the issues of economy, corruption, and infrastructure were each mentioned once in the newspaper's back page over the three-week period under study. The other six issues were not mentioned at all. There was no mention of any issue in *Standard's* back page. In *People,* there was only one mention for the economy issue, while the other issues were not. Therefore, carrying a content analysis of all the pages containing stories about the election would have yielded better evidence on whether the three newspapers set the agenda in the 2007 elections.

This study carried content analysis of the three newspapers within a span of three weeks ahead of the Election Day. This qualifies as another limitation. Though by the late phase (the last three weeks before voting) of the campaign, voters are fully exposed to media messages to enable them make informed decisions about issues in contention and the choice of their candidates, the three-week period was such a short period to collect enough data. Therefore, expanding the scope of the study to cover a larger period could

have provided more election news materials to analyze, hence, a more informative and reliable data.

Expanding the scope of the study, thus, could have ensured that news about party or presidential candidates launching their manifestos were used in this study. For example, PNU launched its manifesto in early November, almost two months before the voting day. Manifestos contain vital information especially about issues in contention, meaning that they form a fertile ground for news. It could have been beneficial for this study, scrutinizing newspapers materials about PNU or ODM manifestos because such news stories carried more information about the campaign issues under investigation. When a party launches its manifesto, the exercise is greeted with immediate reaction from the opponents, obviously about its shortcomings. This creates more news for the media. When PNU launched its manifesto, ODM's Pentagon reacted sharply, dismissing the rival's blueprint as "an inadequate promise" (*The Standard,* 2007, para 1).

Directions for Future Research

To achieve more reliable statistical information about correlations in examining the agenda-setting function of mass communication in a political context such as Kenya by correlating salience of issues on news media to public opinion polls, future research should cover a larger campaign period. This is so because as mention above, the three-week campaign period used in this study came out as the major stumbling block. The Spearman's Rank Order Correlation should be used, because there was no evidence that the statistical tool had any shortcomings that might have compromised the expected results. However, other statistical tools suitable for this kind of study are also welcome.

Moreover, the problem of generating more data in this study should be addressed by scrutinizing more pages in the newspapers, as opposed to only four pages whose content analysis about the campaign issues was conducted. Therefore, future studies should consider incorporating all pages carrying election-related articles. This would ensure a richer data and therefore, yield more evidence that correlations exist in such a study. This would then help to make a firm conclusion whether or not the news media in

the developing world really influences voters' preferences on campaign issues and the choice of presidential candidates.

This study found little evidence of mass media influence on voters in Kenya's 2007 elections. As argued above, it means that some other factors might have influenced the voting patterns. Revenue generation, ethnicity, voter-bribery, "three-piece" voting system have been pointed out as the possible factors that might have swayed the voters in making their decisions on what issues were important and the candidate they would vote for as their next president. However, save for cases of voter-bribery which were rampant and widely reported in the Kenyan media, there was little evidence to firmly state how the other three factors might have influenced voters' preferences. Therefore, future studies should strive to investigate how these factors nullify the influence of the mass media in an election especially in Africa. A mass media vs. ethnicity in the 2012 Kenya's General Election would be a good idea to ascertain who between the two has much influence on Kenyan voters. The same would be interesting about mass media vs. voter-bribery.

On attributes agenda-setting influence of the mass media, future research should focus more on candidates' position on campaign issues, political ideology, formal qualifications, personality, evaluative judgments and integrity as opposed to just scrutinizing frequency of images of presidential candidates on page 1 which was the case in this study. Addressing specific attributes is a better way to gauge how candidates were presented in the media and whether how they were presented; either positively or negatively influenced voters' likelihood of electing them. Framing theory would be a better foundation to investigate how the candidates were presented in the news media. From there, a correlation can be carried out to establish whether the press influences voters on the choice of their presidential candidates.

With 86 percent of the population listening to radio, it means that radio is the most influential form of media in Kenya. Future studies in this area of mass communication agenda-setting should, therefore, focus on investigating the role of radio in a Kenyan election in as far as agenda-setting is concerned. The study's outcome can be compared to the present research which found that three national newspapers had insignificant influence on voters' preferences on issues in the 2007 elections. Depending

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on the results, one will be able to tell whether radio has more influence on Kenyan voters than newspapers.

Conclusions

The mass media play an important role in society by informing, educating, and entertaining the masses. By playing this cardinal role, the media exerts its influence on audience. In doing so, the media do participate in shaping public debate and opinion. Definitely, by creating a platform where proponents and opponents battle it out as far as contentious issues are concerned, the media help members of the public learn how much importance to attach to a topic on the basis of strength placed on it in the news media. That is why the agenda-setting role of the mass media in an election has become an integral part of political communication scholarship, nowadays.

Of course, an avalanche of studies especially in the West – starting with the 1968 Chapel Hill study – indicate that the news media influences people's preferences on issues they consider important and their candidates of choice. It is on the premise that the mass media sets the agenda, that this study examined the agenda-setting function of mass communication in Kenya's 2007 elections. The study correlated salience of issues on news media to Strategic Research's opinion poll. Also, the study correlated attributes agenda-setting influence of news media about presidential candidates Mwai Kibaki, Raila Odinga, and Kalonzo Musyoka to another poll by the same pollster.

The study found very little evidence that *Daily Nation, The Standard,* and *The People Daily* set the agenda in the December 2007 elections. There was insignificant correlation on salience of issues in the three newspapers to what voters identified as the "Most Important Problems" facing Kenya. In the same vein, there was moderate correlation in as far as attributes agenda-setting influence of the three newspapers about the three presidential candidates was concerned. The findings, thus, rubbishes the hypothesis that topics that rank highly in the media are accorded similar consideration by audience, at least in a political context of a young democracy, such as Kenya.

Though the results discount the media influence on audience, the findings must be interpreted with great caution because of a number of factors such as revenue generation, ethnicity, and voter bribery that might have nullified the news media influence on voters

in the election. Also, the fact that only four pages of the three newspapers were scrutinized means the data collected was not rich enough to make it possible to conclusively declare that there were no correlations. The results, therefore, should be handled with great care. However, the results are important because they reveal that there are some unseen factors that curtail the power of the mass media in setting the agenda in growing democracies. That is why this study recommends an investigation into factors that hamper the influence of the mass media during an electioneering exercise in an African country.

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Appendix A

List of Abbreviations

EALA	- East African Legislative Assembly
ECK	- Electoral Commission of Kenya
CAPF	- Coalition for Accountable Political Financing
CCK	- Communications Commission of Kenya
CCU	- Chama Cha Uzalendo
DP	- Democratic Party
FORD	- Forum for the Restoration of Democracy
FORD-Asili	- Forum for the Restoration of Democracy – Asili
FORD-Kenya	- Forum for the Restoration of Democracy - Kenya
FORD-People	- Forum for the Restoration of Democracy for the People
GAP	- Green African Party
GNU	- Government of National Unity
IIEC	- Interim Independent Electoral Commission
IPK	- Islamic Party of Kenya
IREC	- Independent Review Commission
KADDU	- Kenya African Democratic Development Union
KADDU	- Kenya African Democratic Union
KADU-Asili	- Kenya African Democratic Union-Asili
KANU	- Kenya African National Union
KENDA	- Kenya National Democratic Alliance
KBC	- Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KHRC	- Kenya Human Rights Commission
KNPDP	- Kenya Nationalist Peoples Democratic Party
KPP	- Kenya Peoples Party
KPT	- Kenya Patriotic Trust
KPU	- Kenya's Peoples Union
KTN	- Kenya Television Network
LDP	- Liberal Democratic Party
LPK	- Liberal Party of Kenya
MCK	- Media Council of Kenya
MIP	- Most Important Problem
MGPK	- Mazingira Greens Party of Kenya
MoU	- Memorandum of Understanding
MP	- Member of Parliament
NAK	- National Alliance Party of Kenya
NARC	- National Rainbow Coalition
NARC-Kenya	- National Rainbow Coalition of Kenya
NCC	- National Constitutional Conference
NMG	- Nation Media Group
NDP	- National Development Party

NLP	- National Labor Party
NSE	- Nairobi Stock Exchange
NTV	- Nation Television
ODM	- Orange Democratic Movement
ODM-K	- Orange Democratic Movement of Kenya
PAN	- National Action Party
PICK	- Party of Independent Candidates of Kenya
PDP	- People Democratic Party
PNU	- Party of National Unity
PPK	- People's Party of Kenya
PRI	- Institutional Revolutionary Party
RPK	- Republican Party of Kenya
SDP	- Social Democratic Party
SKS	- Sisi Kwa Sisi
UDM	- United Democratic Movement
UNDP	- United Nations Development Program
VOK	- Voice of Kenya
WCP	- Workers Congress Party

Appendix B

Data Tables

Table 6: Frequency of Issues in the *Daily Nation*: December 3 – 24, 2007

ISSUE	PG 1	PG 3	PG 5	BACK PAGE	TOTAL
Economy/Development	2	0	1	1	4
Corruption	3	1	2	1	7
Education	5	0	3	0	8
Healthcare	0	0	3	0	3
Poverty	4	0	0	0	4
New Constitution	4	0	4	0	8
Job Creation	0	0	0	0	0
Infrastructure	3	0	4	1	8
Security	0	0	4	0	4

Table 7: Frequency of Issues in *The Standard*: December 3 – 24, 2007

ISSUE	PG 1	PG 3	PG 5	BACK PAGE	TOTAL
Economy/Development	0	0	0	0	0
Corruption	2	5	0	0	7
Education	2	3	0	0	5
Healthcare	0	2	0	0	2
Poverty	0	1	0	0	1
New Constitution	1	0	0	0	1
Job Creation	1	0	0	0	1
Infrastructure	1	4	1	0	6
Security	0	3	0	0	3

Table 8: Frequency of Issues in *The People Daily*: December 3 – 24, 2007

ISSUE	PG 1	PG 3	PG 5	BACK PAGE	TOTAL
Economy/Development	1	3	0	1	5
Corruption	2	2	0	0	4
Education	1	3	0	0	4
Healthcare	0	0	0	0	0
Poverty	1	1	0	0	2
New Constitution	2	2	0	0	4
Job Creation	0	1	0	0	1
Infrastructure	0	2	0	0	2
Security	2	1	0	0	3

Table 9: Frequency of Issues in Aggregate

ISSUE	NATION	STANDARD	PEOPLE	TOTAL
Corruption	7	7	4	18
Education	8	5	4	17
Infrastructure	8	6	2	16
New Constitution	8	1	4	13
Security	4	3	3	10
Economy/Development	4	0	5	9
Poverty	4	1	2	7
Healthcare	3	2	0	5
Jobs	0	1	1	2

Table 10: Frequency of Candidates' Attributes in Aggregate

CANDIDATE	NATION	STANDARD	PEOPLE	TOTAL
KIBAKI	26	36	16	78
RAILA	25	31	14	70
KALONZO	16	28	7	51

Table 11: Campaign issues as ranked by Strategic Research

Campaign Issues	Percentage
Job Creation	20.5
Education	12.7
Corruption	12.5
Security	8.1
Economy/Development	8.1
Poverty	7.3
Infrastructure	5.8
New Constitution	3.8
Healthcare	3.0