

**THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE COVERAGE OF
NATIONAL ELECTIONS
IN KENYA**

**THE CASE STUDY, RADIO MAMBO FM
IN WEBUYE TOWN,
KENYA**

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**THIS PROPOSAL IS SUBMITTED AS THE PARTIAL
REQUIREMENT OF THE BACHELOR OF MASS
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DECLARATION

I, Nalika Aggrey, do here by declare that, the work here in is of my own origin and to the best of my knowledge it has never been submitted for any award in and outside Kampala International University.

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APPROVAL

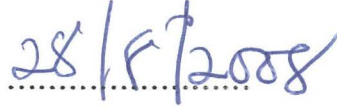
I certify that Nalika Aggrey wrote this report under my supervision as a university supervisor and am sure that this is the work of his efforts.

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Date:



DEDICATION

Special dedication to my beloved parents Charles Nalika Cheloti, Mary Nafula Nalika, all my brothers and sisters who contributed greatly to finance my project. Not to forget my dedication also goes to my girlfriend Abigael Mutile for lots of airtime she bought to me during field work.

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ABSTRACT

The major objective of the study was to examine the role of the media in the coverage of national elections in Webuye District of Kenya. This follows the deep public concern on the need to understand the role of media especially how it guides people during and after elections. The study was conducted in Webuye town. A total of 60 respondents were chosen; 30 were mixture of media practitioners, sponsors and advertisers while the remaining 30 were selected from Webuye town to represent the voice of the community during the study.

The data was collected using tranquilization formulae which involved grouping different methods of collecting data which included structured interview using interview schedule, in-depth interview in form of interview guide, focused group discussion using discussion guide, questionnaires and observation.

The researcher was prompted to find out the role of media particularly the community radio stations, if they really report election events like mobilization of voter registration, influence on choices of parties, holding opinion polls, candidate interviews, and party advertisements during national elections in Kenya.

Conclusions and recommendations were then made after presenting and interpreting the data.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Currently, the role of media in the coverage of national elections is increasingly attracting many players in political arena. Therefore, getting elected means skillful use of the media by the candidates to get their message across in a bid to win the elections. Politicians now employ advertising consultants to convey their message to voters, sometimes spending millions of dollars in the process. The researcher discovered that it is critically important for students, our future voters and leaders learn to understand the role and influence of media in the political process. My research conger with Thomas Jefferson, the once president of America who emphasized, “the vitality of democracy depends upon the education and participation of its citizens, includes becoming informed about issues and voting in elections.”

This research shows that, the media impact on political campaigns and voting was at the center of some of mass communication’s earliest research. It was seen in the two-step flow model on how media influence people in times of change or crisis where by Kenyan media played a vital role of educating voters on how to vote wisely. The model was a product of research conducted on the 1940 USA presidential election championed by Paul Lazars field and his colleagues. The overall conclusion drawn from the early work was that media had little direct impact on campaigns and voting and, when and if they did, that the impact was in form of reinforcement. The research points that media has more direct impact on campaigns and voting by simply mobilizing voters to participate in voting exercise because their vote counts to determine who is the winner and loser in the election race.

In 1960, Kennedy Nixon debates changed the general thinking about media whereby, the research begun to focus on how candidates used media for image building and the subsequent “cheapening” of campaigns as personalities became more important than issues. The other important development in contemporary thinking about media and campaigns was the agenda setting that was introduced after research on the 1968 USA presidential elections. This theory was used to explain how media can influence

campaigns and voting because it helped set issue agenda for the campaign, and that agenda dictated the issue on which many people ultimately based their voting decisions.

Kenya attained independence in 1963, the government ownership and control was seen at KBC television and radio outlet which imported British and American programmes, until the time mzee Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya, promoted Kenyan culture by laying an emphasis on African music and dance.. The programmes were changed to Swahili. The press also begun to focus on African culture, until when president Moi assumed the office and changed the constitution in 1982 to provide a room for one party system, during his leadership, media had no freedom and there was total censorship of news contends before broadcasted or published to the public. The human rights and freedoms were undermined by Moi's authoritarian government, which saw harassment, torture and imprisonment of journalists without trial. All this was due to media challenges which attempted to question the legitimacy of his leadership.

With advent of multi-party democracy in the year 1992, it was part of media struggle against one party system under President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi dictatorship, there was a need for the media to educate and generate awareness of human rights and freedoms alongside making choices of parties and candidates they wish to support. Media has done much since 1992 when the democratic field was opened to everyone to receive and impart information without any interference from the government, but as if such freedom was a myth, the government still undermined the media especially when it focused on issues of national interests during and after elections. In 2006 the President Kibaki inner circle ministers attacked the standard media group and some computers plus the printing press destroyed under the allegation that Kalonzo Musyoka, a key member in opposition party, Orange Democratic Movement-Kenya, arranged a secret meeting with the president. This raised eyebrows among the ODM-K members who accused Kalonzo as a government mole in the opposition party, something that irked the government to attack the media for reporting an alarming report to the public to know what was taking place between the two politicians.

Since that time, this research found that the media is the target point by the politicians who don't want media to expose their weakness even if it is issues of public interests for example this research shows that during last year's elections the Electoral Commission of Kenya disbanded media from disseminating information on presidential election results because they knew that private and community media had no powers to broadcast the presidential winner before given permission by the ECK media centre. Kenya held its general election on December, 27 2007, the ECK announced a delay in vote count until on Sunday December, 30 when its chairman Mr. Samuel Kivuitu eventually announced the election outcome and declared President Kibaki the winner. Immediately, after the announcement, the state erupted in to violence that saw Kenyans killed, others displaced and properties worthy billions of shillings destroyed by rowdy mobs. From that point, the government pointed blame on media as the main culprit that fueled ethnic violence in Kenya. But the question remained unanswered, because the controversy raised a lot of questions over perception and reality. Did the community radio stations fuel the post election violence or not? And if they did, to what extend did it contribute towards ethnic violence visited on various communities in Kenya? And what is the appropriate way of dealing with the errant community media? My research finding shows that some reporters used vernacular language to broadcast ethnic hate speeches, some reported abnormal figures during vote count in the poling stations as compared to other radio stations. To some extend the community media fueled ethnic violence but to a smaller extend, because my research finding shows that, when violence erupted in Kenya, the radio stations launched a campaign for stopping violence and promoting peaceful coexistence among Kenyan communities by persuading them to accept that all of them are Kenyans and should stop killing one another due to tribalism.

1.1.1 Media and Elections in Kenya

Elections can be a key element either in both conflict resolution and conflict escalation. Therefore, free and fair elections are essential for democracy consolidation and conflict prevention. The professionalism of media is crucial during election periods. To promote fair, safe and professional media election coverage, UNESCO supports advocacy to encourage full, fair and efficient disclosure of information to

journalists covering the elections; training to enhance professional election reporting; training on the safety of journalists and their right to work without threat; and the production and distribution of election guidelines reflecting principles of professional reporting during elections, journalists' rights, election processes and safety information, as well as briefing notes on international human rights law with emphasis on freedom of expression. People are often influenced in their political perceptions by what they learn from the media.

“Yet the media can also play a more specific part in enabling full public participation in elections, not only by reporting on the performance of government, but also in a number of other ways like educating the voters on how to exercise their democratic rights, reporting on the development of the election campaign, providing a platform for the political parties to communicate their message to the electorate, allowing the parties to debate with each other, reporting results and monitoring vote counting.”

Two analytical dimensions are central when observing the role of the media in the election process, the degree of media autonomy, in particular their freedom from political or corporate interference. In this framework, three kinds of interrelated rights and complementary duties are considered: the rights of voters, the rights of parties and candidates and the rights of the media themselves.

Voters have the right to be informed about the political alternatives. The actual impact of media coverage on the electorate is a controversial issue as it will always be unclear how far the media can influence the voting patterns of the electorate. People can get their political information and form their political views from a variety of sources complementary to traditional mass media. In addition, particularly in repressive regimes where the media are controlled by the government, voters might mistrust the information they receive from the state-controlled media. Even in developed democracies where television has become the main forum for candidates during the election campaign, it is difficult to clearly isolate the impact of the media on voting behaviour. However, “the media are not the sole source of information for voters, but in a world dominated by mass communications it is increasingly the media that determine the political agenda, even in less technologically developed corners of the globe.” Therefore, independently of the extent to which media can influence the

electorate, voters are to be provided with all the information they need to exercise their right to vote. The right of voters to make an informed choice implies that the media should inform them in a professional and accurate manner on the platforms and views of the different candidates and on the events of the electoral campaign and the electoral process, including vote count and election results. Also, the media should assist in explaining to the electorate how to exercise their right to political participation, particularly how to vote.

1.1.2 Coordination of Kenyan media during election coverage

Parallel to the campaigns run by the political parties, it is essential that non-partisan information is available. To fulfill this fundamental role, the media depends on access to reliable information, as well as on the respect for freedom of expression by all parties. It is only in this way that transparency about the election process is assured and that the future government of a country like Kenya considered elected in truly democratic manner.

To this end, the aim of UN, AU, EU and African Union in Kenya after post election skirmishes that saw 1000 people dead and around 500,000 internally displaced, was to strengthen the capacity of the government, the Electoral Commission and the media to provide fair and balance coverage of electoral activities, as a vital factor for the overall democratization process to take shape.

More precisely, the objectives of Elections project increases confidence in electoral processes and enhance credibility of the election results by; enhancing Kenyan media capacity to monitor, analyze and report on electoral events, processes and results of polls. Promoting public access to information on electoral processes and campaigns on the upcoming Kenyan elections, Promoting engagement and dialogue between the Independent Electoral Commission of Kenya and the increasing awareness among journalists on safety issues related to reporting sensitive and politicized issues such as live elections violence which erupted immediately the presidential poll results were announced on December, 30th 2007.

1.1.3 Media legislation on coverage of elections in Kenya

The starting point of any long-term strategy to achieve structural stability for the media is a law guaranteeing freedom of expression. Any such law should be based upon the relevant international standards to promote media pluralism. Often, in post-conflict countries, media laws are either non-existent or outdated and must be reformed to promote free press and diversity of opinion and ownership. UNESCO often supports the creation of independent regulatory structure, as an independent broadcast regulator is often the body, which allocates wavelengths and undertakes the necessary licensing procedures.

Media independence will only thrive where a genuine private media market can develop. Furthermore, economically viable media is the only way forward to reasonable working conditions for journalists, including livable wages, which in turn is an important guarantor for transparency and anti-corruption among media professionals in Kenya.

In many post conflict societies like Zimbabwe, the market for the media is very weak. The media are frequently supported by powerful groups like parties, factions, and businesses that use it to act as mouthpieces for their own interests. Support for the developing print and broadcast market is crucial in helping to provide economic support for new media outlets: pulling together with start up costs, professional expertise, even equipment and materials, all of which may be beyond the reach of many would-be owners, editors and producers. In addition, it is very important to assess a media market's options for commercial viability and prospects for development as well as identifying areas where targeted investment in research and training can enhance commercial viability and media market advantage.

1.1.4 Support on media professionalism in Kenya.

The study aims to assist in establishing a viable and sustainable training and education system that will address the needs of Kenyan media sector, whose participation support will facilitate a sustainable media training programmes that will ensure independence and national ownership of the development of Kenyan journalism, this will again assist Kenyan media against dissemination of hate speeches that target to

divide the peace loving citizens along tribal lines during and after elections. The communities are to be encouraged to discuss and enhance the professional standards of journalists, and to link with regional and international associations. More so, independent journalists' associations should also be encouraged.

1.1.5 Independence of media in Kenya

The current Kenyan constitution provides freedom of expression and the media that represents a unique opportunity to engage Kenyan decision makers, media professionals and the citizens in contemplating the fundamental aspects of protection of universal rights under the law. However, the researchers will work towards supporting the development and promotion of media legislation and regulatory framework in line with relevant international standards to guarantee media an opportunity to work free from any political intimidations, in its role towards realization of free and fair elections. Currently, Kenyan media has been taken for granted, as in there is a bid among senior politicians to curtail it's freedom and this was evident enough following the last year's media bill which was introduced by the former minister of information Mr. Mutahi Kagwe to force journalists to disclose their sources of information for government scrutiny before published or broadcasted. This research aimed at laying an emphasizing on training and capacity building of public officials to work as election agents who can assist media on the principles of access to public information as fundamental principles to uphold transparency, accountability and credibility in dissemination of update news on election processes rather than undermining its roles through censorship of relevant information to the public.

1.1.6 Media as a vehicle for dialogue and reconciliation in Kenya

National reconciliation through media campaigns and capacity building of it's professionals in joint collaboration with the Electoral Commissioners, the government and the citizens. At a time of increasing sectarian conflict in Kenya during and after December, 2007 elections, media served as a platform for dialogue that promoted reconciliation and peaceful solutions, alongside the Koffi Annan mediation team of eminent persons who managed to engage the President Kibaki and Raila to

compromise over power sharing deal that solved political impasse after elections. Kenyan media sector should be capable of providing pluralistic and inclusive reporting on national election events is a necessary condition for building long-term peace between micro-national groups towards working together as patriotic Kenyans and laying aside their tribal differences.

Towards reconciliation efforts, this study aimed at building the capacities of the local media to develop innovative media programs that can articulate people's needs and create a space for dialogue during and after elections. The researcher targeted to generate awareness to train media professionals on using media to facilitate dialogue, as well as developing program content on issues of democracy, tolerance and reconciliation.

1.2 The Statement of the Problem

Long time ago, the overall conclusion drawn from the early work was that media had little direct impact on campaigns and voting and when and if they did, that the impact was in the form of reinforcement. In 1960, Kennedy- Nixon debate changed the general thinking about media where by research begun to focus how candidates used media for image building and the subsequent "cheapening" of campaigns as personalities became more important than issues.

Initially there was no any community radio station to report local information on elections in Webuye district; people were to wait until information concerning their local elections broadcasts or publishes made on the national and private media organizations in Nairobi. At that time, the community radio to play the role of informing and educating the residents of Webuye, on how to go about choosing their parties and candidates they wish to support was a myth, however, this problem existed. The community was unaware of the real game on the ground, a situation that made it easy for some politicians to rig elections without fear. This was due to absence of public eye to monitor the election process at district level. Currently, there is only one community radio in the district. Radio Mambo, was established the year (2005) in Webuye town. The former assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Enoch Kibunguchi, owners the station. This radio station was launched with a view to address social, economic, cultural and political issues in the district. The researcher

found that, the radio has journalists with low professional standards, and design programmes most in vernacular languages which fail to address the issues of the community with many tribes. In addition to that, people working at this station are paid an average salary of Ksh10, 000. In addition, the station experience the network problems, where by some parts of the district have limited or no broadcast signals at all.

Therefore, the researcher focused on analyzing the role of Radio Mambo in the coverage of national elections in Webuye district to provide a working plan for good programming and professional journalism, which can address issues concerning elections through encouraging citizen participation in political debates, interviews, and discussions. Through this research, the community radio will learn how to participate voters in shaping the agenda for the country during and after elections. In addition to that, the findings made has determined the validity of existing assumption that community media fuelled ethnic violence which, emerged after president Kibaki being declared as the winner of December 27, 2007 general election. If it did, researcher found an alternative way on how media can play its role to observe high journalistic standards during reporting of political events, which happens especially during and after elections. This has to go in line with mass media code of conduct, which holds that Freedom of expression, including the constitutional right to receive and impart information, is a prerequisite for free and fair democratic elections. In order to enable citizens to make informed democratic choices, the Mass Media have a heightened responsibility to provide accurate and impartial information to the public during election periods. For these reasons, the Mass Media shall comply with this Code of Conduct and the regulations issued by the Joint Election Management Body, in accordance with Electoral Law, and other relevant provisions of the Constitution of Kenya and the Law on Mass Media. The Mass Media shall not publish or broadcast any material, which by its content or tone carries a clear and immediate risk of inciting ethnic, religious or gender-based hatred, or which by any reasonable judgment would incite to violence or other disorder that would disrupt the electoral process.

1.3 Objective of the study

1.3.1 General objective

The study was to find out the role of media in the coverage of national elections in Webuye district of Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- To identify media programs designed to encourage citizen participation in decision making that shape the country during and after elections.
- To analyze influence of media to the voters in making informed choices of parties and candidates they wish to support during elections.
- To find out the associative relationship between the media, Electoral Commission and the government of Kenya towards realization of free and fair election.
- To determine constraints that face journalists during elections coverage in Kenya.
- To observe the capacity of the Kenyan media in providing forums for dialogue among conflicting groups to voice concerns during election.
- To correlate media monitoring reports on fair and unfair practices observed during election coverage in Kenya.

1.4 Research Questions

- Why do we use media during elections?
- How do media influence voters during elections?
- Which programs that media design to encourage voters to participate in decision making on issues that shape the agenda for the country during elections?
- How do media coordinate with the Electoral Commissioners and the government towards realization of free and fair elections?

- What constraints that media encountered during elections?
- How do media conduct itself when violence erupt during and after elections?
- What do media report during elections?

1.5 Scope of the study

The study was limited to find out the role of media in the coverage of national elections in Webuye district of Kenya. Webuye is an industrial town located on the main road to Uganda, the town is home to the Pan African Paper Mills, the largest paper factory in the region, as well as a number of heavy chemical and sugar manufacturers. It has a tropical climate, and the heavily populated land around it is mainly used for subsistence agriculture. The area around Webuye is home to the Bukusu tribe. Villages near Webuye include Lugulu and Misikhu. The town is located on the main railway from Mombasa to Uganda.

The research was done at Radio Mambo FM, which is the only community radio located in the Webuye town to serve the local community. According to (1999 census) Webuye town has a total population of 19,600. The sample size was 60 respondents where by 30 came from employees in radio mambo FM, sponsors, and advertisers while the remaining 30 was selected from Webuye town population to represent the whole district. In (2007) elections, the district had a total of 58,365 registered voters in a total of 52 polling stations, three parliamentary candidates, namely Sambu Bernard ODM Party, Wamang'oli Joshua Kanu and Nazi Musikari Kombo Ford-k under the umbrella of PNU.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study analyzed the role of media in the coverage of national elections in Webuye district which is in western province of Kenya. Alongside the fulfilment for the award of a degree in bachelor of social sciences with mass communication, the research is influential to beneficiaries like policy makers particularly the government and the Media Mouncil of Kenya to opening up a forum that can support journalism as a

profession to attain high standards to promote objectivity in the coverage of national elections in Kenya.

The NGO'S and the Kenya Human Rights Commission practitioners can benefit from research finding to compile reports on human rights violation during national elections.

The media can benefit from these findings when revising their role in designing social responsibility programmes that will attract and educate the public on issues of national interests especially during and after elections. The researchers may use this research findings as a foundation upon which to build their study in the future. This research is an advantage to theoreticians interested to analyze the research findings to identity new theories that can be added on existing models.

1.7 Definitions of Key Concepts

Advertising consultants; is an expert who gives advice to the customers in an advertising company.

Agenda setting theory; used to explain how media can influence campaigns and voting because it helped set issue agenda for the campaign, and that agenda dictated the issue on which many people ultimately based their voting decisions.

Censorship- Deleting parts of publications or correspondence or theatrical performances, perceived to expose the secrets of an organization or government.

Concentration of ownership; cooperation of other media organizations in to one Media Empire.

Conflict resolution- solving problems between people.

Democratization process- it is the way of passing through all the principles of strengthening democracy.

Election coverage- monitoring activities during election.

Ethnic violence- tribal chaos, which end up in fights and killings.

Micro national groups- small organized tribes within a state.

Multiparty democracy- many parties with freedom to compete with one another.

Political arena- the field of politics.

Professionalism of the media- qualified practitioners in the media

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The role of media coverage of national elections is very essential in a democratic society like Kenya, it influence voters in many ways especially on issues that guide the society on choosing the parties or candidates to support. George (1992,pg 285) argued that, “reporters cover elections primarily to help people learn enough about the candidates and ballot propositions to make intelligent, informed decisions once they enter the voting booth.” He added, “To do a thorough job, reporters need to dig beneath surface impressions to explore issues, qualifications and motives.”

Media generate political awareness during voter registration processes and monitor all events and records after registrations; this gives the voters an opportunity to identify any irregularities on registration lists. Curtis, (1977, pg 325) observed that, “the total number of voters registration is newsworthy. Crusading editors often investigate abnormally large registrations.” The role of media in coverage of national elections in Kenya has received various criticisms from local and international community with reference to the “2007” elections which pushed the country in to violence that saw about 1000 people dead and almost 500,000 displaced from their homes. The assumption goes that Kenyan media played a role of fuelling ethnic violence by airing and publishing hate speeches which incited the communities to fight one another. It is upon this fallacy on the role of media during post election violence in Kenya that this research will aim to correlate facts and fictions as in what media did during December, 2007 elections alongside themes of study.

2.2 Themes of the Study

My literature review was sectioned under;

2.2.1 Media influence to voters

McQuail (1961) said, "The 'don't knows' were less well informed than consistent voters, appearing uninterested, showing a general lack of information, and not just ignorance of particular policies or policies of one particular party."

Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1940), "The two-step flow theory of communication, based on a study of electoral practices of the citizens of Erie county Ohio This examined the political propaganda prevalent in the media at the time during the campaign period to see whether it plays an integral role in influencing people's voting. In terms of generalizing their results, one should note that there are questions about short term versus long term influence."

Lazarsfeld et al (1944) observed evidence for the Weberian theory of party which identifies certain factors, such as socio-economic circumstances, religious affiliation and area of residence that together determine political orientation. His study claims, "Political propaganda serves to re-affirm the individual's pre-disposed orientation rather than to influence or change one's voting behavior."

The relation of the mass media to contemporary popular culture is commonly conceived in terms of dissemination from the elite to the mass, the long-term consequences of this are significant in conjunction with the continuing concentration of ownership and control of the media, leading to accusations of a 'media elite' having a form of 'cultural dictatorship.'" For example, the UK Observer (March 1st 1998) reported, "the Murdoch-owned HarperCollins' refused to publish Chris Patten's East and West, because of the former Hong Kong Governor's description of the Chinese leadership as "faceless Stalinists" possibly being damaging to Murdoch's Chinese broadcasting interests."

2004-2005, Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) is a publication outlining a series of articles based on the recent history of democratic elections in the region, drawing on the experiences of individual countries that held elections in 2004 - 2005. The primary objective is to focus on those issues essential for successful democratic

elections, including the role of the media in ensuring that voters vote from a well informed position.

The article on Mozambique, authored by Joseph Hanlon, notes that the European Union observer mission found coverage of the (2004) election on the state-owned Radio Mozambique and TV Mozambique to be "reasonably balanced" (EU in Hanlon, 2005, p.90). There were nightly election programmes during the campaign period and, as the EU concluded, "The incumbent party received more coverage, but not to an unusual degree" EU in Hanlon, (2005, pg, 90).

"Research shows that voters get more information on the issues from political ads on TV spots than they get from TV news or the debates," said Lynda Lee Kaid, professor of telecommunications at the University of Florida, quote from news story

"Political advertising is now the major means by which candidates for the presidency communicate their messages to voters," writes Dr. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and Director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center. "As a conduit of this advertising, television attracts both more candidate dollars and more audience attention than radio or print."

Roger Ailes and Richard Nixon (1968) "Television is not a gimmick, and nobody will ever be elected to major office without presenting themselves well on it."

"The buzz about these ads creates more of a furor than do the actual ads themselves," said Zachary White, professor of politics at University San Fran.

Robert McChesney (Aug. 24, 2004) "The thing to remember about these ads is that they cost a fortune, not just these ads, but advertising in general, and it raises the cost of campaigns, and the money comes overwhelmingly from the wealthiest handful of Americans."

"Most of what TV viewers learn about congressional candidates is not from local news but from commercials," says Norman Solomon, author of *The Habits of Highly Deceptive Media*.

When Wisconsin Advertising Project, was interviewed on PBS News hour on (7/19/04), Ken Goldstein, argued, "This presidential election is being concentrated on 19, 20 battleground states. There are 210 media markets in the US and we're seeing advertising in only 93 of those media markets, and that translates into only 40% of Americans being potentially exposed to television advertising."

In Bernard words (Volume 15, Number 4, 1 September, 1998), "the media do not tell us what to think, but they tell us what to think about. Taking an example of data collected on media coverage of the (1992) presidential election from the first nationally representative sample of American newspapers as compared to the issue interests of the American public, we conclude that past claims that the media controls the agenda-setting process have been overstated because candidate messages are well represented in press coverage of the campaign, and coverage is even independent of a newspaper's editorial endorsement. We argue that agenda setting is a transaction process in which elites, the media, and the public converge to a common set of salient issues that define a campaign."

The According to Bernd-Peter (2004), "the "light-touch" regulations of the printed press where only some countries ban paid political advertising, and the broadcast model where regulations govern issues like time and events devoted to coverage of the various parties, Even in the so-called mature democracies of the West, equality and fairness are not to be taken for granted."

The (surveys of the 40s and 50s) using experimental psychology, found significant effects of information on longer-term behavior and attitudes, particularly in areas where most people have little direct experience especially in politics and have a high degree of trust in the source like broadcasting. Hovland observed, "Since class has become a less reliable indicator of party the floating voter today is no longer the apathetic voter, but likely to be more well-informed than the consistent voter mainly through the media."

2.2.2 Media programming during elections

Media programming during elections should capture the attention of voters and politicians in the country like Kenya in order to make them aware of all procedures during elections. Robert, (1995 pg, 82) comments, “media experts coach the candidates on how to make a favorable impression on and off camera during press conferences, interviews, talk shows, speeches, and all other appeasable and how to keep the press corporation happy. Media experts also recommend the best use of all forms of communication, including bill boards and direct mail, as well as television, radio, and newspapers.

2.2.3 Media coordination with the Electoral Commission of Kenya, government and the voters

Abugidainfo.com (March 2008), published “before the campaigns, the radio stations were instrumental in stimulating the registration and political participation. Moreover, owing to their proximity to the grassroots, the community radios were true watchdogs, and vigorously put politicians to task over critical national issues.” Also, “The media were the first to bring to public attention the tallying anomalies of presidential votes that led to the current political crisis in Kenya. They also showed live the sharp political divisions and fights at the ECK media centre, where the results were being read. Political bickering and election fraud were played live in Kenyan sitting rooms and public places. On the day of the General Election, the community media scrutinized the performance of election officials. They broke news of late arrival of election officials and ballot papers. They prompted ECK officials to act.” In addition, “The community radio stations were also the first to report election results because of their proximity to polling stations and knowledge of the ECK officials on the ground. When ECK dragged their feet in releasing results, the community radios filled the gaps through continuous analysis and updates of new results from officials on the ground.

2.2.4 Media constraints during coverage of national elections

The public authorities should refrain from interfering in the activities of media professionals with a view to influencing the elections. Protection against attacks,

intimidation or other unlawful pressures on the media, public authorities should take appropriate measures for the effective protection of media professionals and their premises. However, this protection should not obstruct them in carrying out their work. The Inter American Commission on Human Rights stressed the importance of the protection of journalists and the media. Its Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression pays particular attention to conditions preventing media to carry out their duty in a democratic society. This declaration represents a basic text for interpreting Article (13) of the American Convention on Human Rights. "Its adoption not only serves as an acknowledgment of the importance of safeguarding freedom of expression in the Americas but also, it applies to all democratic states in the world."

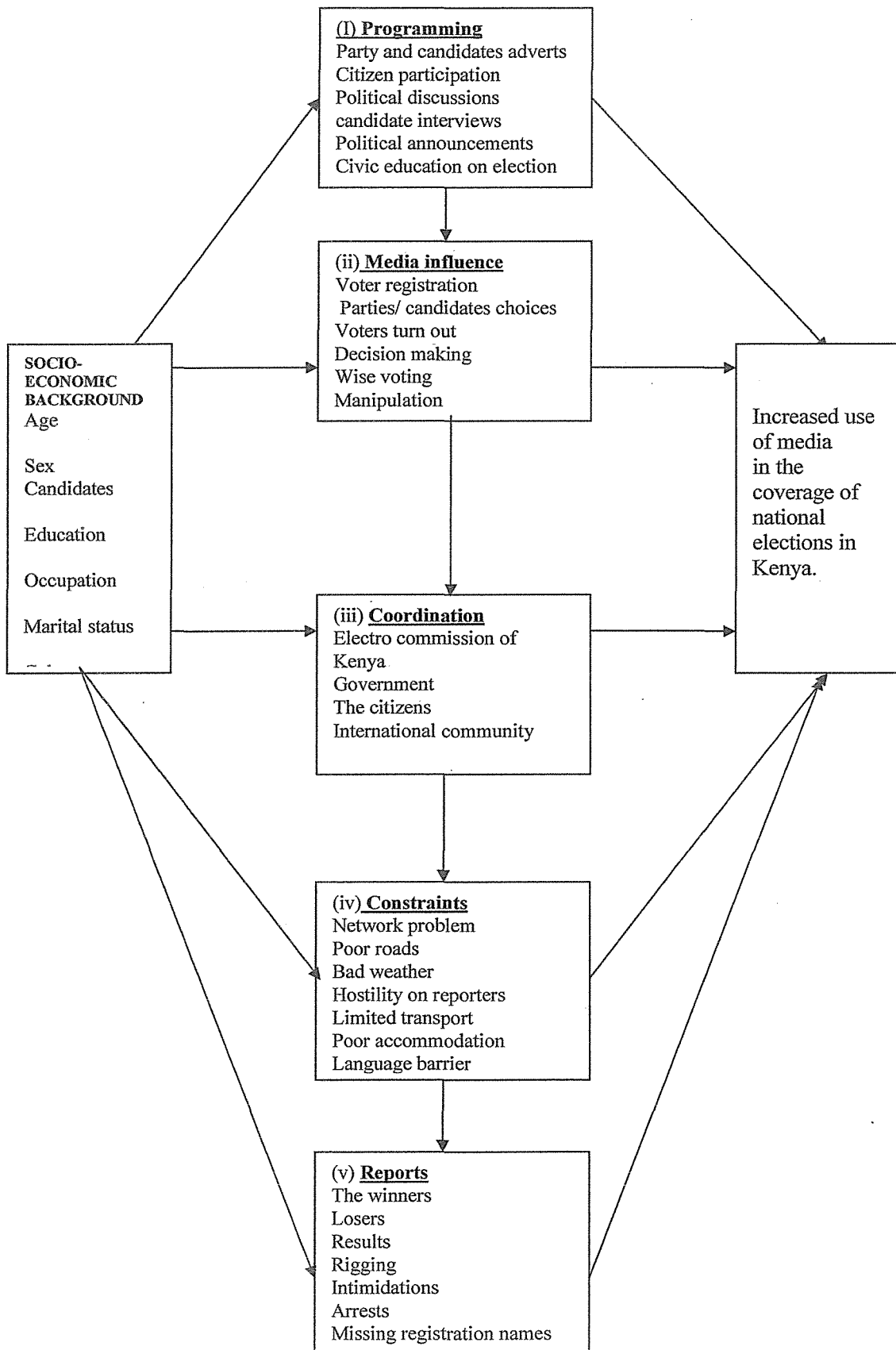
2.2.5 The capacity of Kenyan media in providing forums for dialogue among conflicting groups during election.

Abugidainfo.com (March, 2008) published, "Following the eruption of post-election violence, the community radio stations played important roles in promoting peaceful co-existence. For instance, they supported the "Chagua Amani Zuia Noma" campaign."

2.2.6 Media reports during national elections

The Kenyan media has always raised several reports concerning a wide variety of Potential voting fraud or voter intimidation, as written in (2005) Guidelines on Media Analysis during Election Observation Missions prepared in co-operation between the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Council of Europe's Venice Commission and Directorate General of Human Rights, and the European Commission. There is always cases like Absentee ballot fraud, voter registration fraud, voter intimidation and suppression, deceased voters on voter registration list, multiple voting, felons voting, non-citizens voting, vote buying, Deceptive practices, and Fraud by election officials. Media also make positive reports by announcing final results of the party winners and losers in election race or competition

2.3 Conceptual Frame Work



CHAPTER THREE

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The methodology was sectioned under research design, area and population of study, sample size and selection, data collection and analysis and limitation of the study. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research methods of data collection as in, qualitative method was used to represent more detailed in-depth information that determined experiences of the samples in the field of media and to study some unknown aspects of the research. While quantitative method was used to show statistical figures and percentage of the research findings.

3.2 Research Design

Due to limited time and the choice of the researcher, the cross-sectional design was used during the study. The researcher applied both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection because; numbers, percentages, and statistical taste or in-depth information was used.

3.3 Area and Population of Study

The main study was conducted at Radio Mambo FM which is located within Webuye town in western province of Kenya with a population of 19,600 people. Radio mambo is the only community media in Webuye district. The community media was launched in 2005 to serve as a participatory channel to inform, educates, entertain, and coordinate the community and the government on issues of national interests that aim at uniting and developing different communities in the district to attain peaceful co-exist.

3.4 Sample Selection and Size

The researcher chose to select the sample size from Radio Mambo practitioners which generally included editors, reporters, producers, presenters, sponsors and advertisers who frequent to the media. The other sample came from general population which included people in Webuye town centre selected assuming the sample size represents the entire district of Webuye. The researcher used systematic random and purposive sampling methods, because the study assumed both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Systematic random sampling was the best method of sample selection that saved time and expenditure instead of studying the whole population. The method simply spread throughout the population, no need of listing all the individuals of the population before sampling can start and also most samples selected in the population had knowledge about the study. In addition to that, purposive method was significant when the researcher tried to identify samples having specific characteristics to be studied using structured interview. The researcher selected sample size of 60 respondents which was used to generalize the whole population of study whereby, 30 samples came from media practitioners at Radio Mambo FM including; editors, reporters, producers, presenters plus investors and advertisers, while the remaining 30 went to general public whose people like teachers, preachers, and politicians were selected. This was important while selecting people according to specific characteristics and grouping them together in order to study them as they gave more details according to their experiences with reference to specific themes. By using systematic random sampling, the sample selection was determined by dividing the population size with the sample size to get the sampling interval that was used to determine a number between one and the sample interval by writing numbers between one and the sample interval on small pieces of papers, put in a small container, close the eyes and pick one piece bearing the number which was included as the first sample. The second sample was obtained by adding the value of the first sample to the sample interval then the sum total counted the second participant to be included in the sample. The third was included by again adding the value of the second sample to the sample interval. I did this repeatedly until the required sample size was obtained. In this case, the study population was 300, and sample size 60 where by 300 was divided by 60 and I got the sample interval of five, then wrote numbers between one and five on pieces of paper mixed them and picked

number three, added to an interval of five and got eight. Number eight was the second sample included. The researcher kept adding the total to the interval of five until I got required 60 respondents to represent the population of study.

3.5 Data Collection and Instruments

I chose to use tranquilization formula in data collection by grouping different methods of data collection in order to get true data during the study. This included structured interview using interview schedule, in-depth interview in form of interview guide, focused group discussion using discussion guide, questionnaires and observation.

3.5.1 Research Instruments

I used interview schedule to design structured, pre-determined and standardized questions to ask all respondents the same questions in the same order using same words which made the answer comparable within groups.

The questionnaire was used to ask a set of related questions and instructions by asking the respondents without any assisting them then delivered to people's homes and offices. The questionnaire was important to the study because it was cheap in a sense that it only required an envelope and a stamp to send it, it was sent and returned within a short time, respondents consulted documents and records that gave right answers and they didn't feel embarrassed to answer some sensitive questions as in the interview, also the personal questions was more truly answered. The questionnaire was important because same questions were asked during interviews and discussions. For example; Do media design election programs that encourage citizen participation in decision making during elections? How do media influence voters in making choices of parties and candidates they wish to support during elections? Do media coordinate with Electoral Commission and the government of Kenya during election? What constraints that face journalists during elections coverage in Kenya? Do media provide forums for dialogue among conflicting groups? What do media report during election coverage?

The researcher chose to use the discussion guide to conduct focused group discussions whereby the topic on the role of media in the coverage of national elections was introduced in the panel of ten participants in six selected groups according to specified characteristics of respondents, and this included the researcher himself acting as the facilitator to guide the group during discussion. The questions were the same as those in interview guide. The researcher asked few questions and the answer given led to construction of new questions on new insights or leads that directed the facilitator to follow the direction of something new as suggested in the discussion. The researcher eliminated questions which did not bear new information in the discussion. I chose to use focused group discussion to collect a lot of data within a short time by inviting all respondents at one place. In addition it was good way of getting consensus within the community and it brainstormed the members in group discussions, whereby the information obtained was to be incorporated in further research.

The researcher used observation guide to select behavior by watching and recording how it appeared naturally. It was important to study people who cannot be studied with other methods especially those who felt shy during the discussion program. Even if the researcher decided to use the observation method of data collection, the disadvantages detected during the study were that are that the researcher waited until when the behavior occurred in a particular time, for example the researcher was to wait and observe the media programming during election time. Also there was no room for studying private behaviors which don't have a direct behavior component such as attitudes, beliefs, and value cannot be observed apart from studying from people, because they do not have direct behavioral component and you can't study randomized behavior.

3.5.2 Procedures

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the university then took it to the district commissioner in Webuye town who approved the research to take place without any problem.

3.6 Data Analysis

The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis.

3.6.1 Quantitative method of data analysis involved presenting the findings in pie-charts, or frequency tables.

3.6.2 Qualitative comprised of data obtained from questionnaires and focused group which were coded and edited for inconsistencies and clarity.

3.7 Limitation of the Study

The researcher encountered some practical and methodological problems while conducting the study.

3.7.1 The practical problems included time limitation where by there was no enough time to carry out the entire study in the district. The money was not enough to conduct the study because some people needed bribe in order to release important information. Moreover some respondents refused to answer some questions which involved elections thinking that the researcher had come to investigate the culprits behind the post election skirmishes.

3.7.2 The researcher had a problem when using systematic random sampling technique by not getting enough samples as was initially anticipated and this forced to involve other samples from the population in order to count the required size.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 RESEARCH AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The role of media coverage of national elections is very essential in a democratic society like Kenya, it influence voters in many ways especially on issues that guide the society on choosing the parties or candidates to support. George (1992,pg 285) argued that, “reporters cover elections primarily to help people learn enough about the candidates and ballot propositions to make intelligent, informed decisions once they enter the voting booth.” He added, “To do a thorough job, reporters need to dig beneath surface impressions to explore issues, qualifications and motives.” These arguments were similar to a quote from a politician in Webuye town, Mr. Alfred Wekesa as his answer to a researcher’s questionnaire, who said, “One should not talk about free and fair elections without involving media practitioners in the process.”

This chapter is going to concentrate on the presentation of findings got from the field. During the study, researcher found some findings showing relationships and differences while compared to the existing literature and the data collected in the field when related to the objectives of the study and research questions under the topic the role of media in the coverage of national elections in Kenya. Similar to that, findings of other researchers concerning the study topic have been included in this chapter which is sectioned under the following themes:-

4.2 To identify media programs designed to encourage citizen participation in decision making that shape the country during and after elections.

Media programming during elections should capture the attention of voters and politicians in the country in order to make them aware of all procedures during elections. Robert, (1995 pg, 82) comments, “media experts coach the candidates on how to make a favorable impression on and off camera during press conferences, interviews, talk shows, speeches, and all other appeasable and how to keep the press corporation happy. Media experts also recommend the best use of all forms of communication, including bill boards and direct mail, as well as television, radio, and newspapers.

Media programming during elections is a vital role of the mass media especially in the radio stations. According to the researcher findings was that about 70% of the population in Webuye district switch to the radio stations as the cheapest means of receiving information during elections. The voters in this district rely on the radio stations during and after elections for the purpose which is sectioned under the following sub headings:-

4.2.1 Party and candidates advertisements

"Political advertising is now the major means by which candidates for the presidency communicate their messages to voters," writes Dr. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and Director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center.

Robert McChesney (Aug. 24, 2004) "The thing to remember about these ads is that they cost a fortune, not just these ads, but advertising in general, and it raises the cost of campaigns, and the money comes overwhelmingly from the wealthiest handful of Americans."

Political advertising during elections plays a much bigger role in influencing voters over some issues especially the competition race between parties and candidates owing to the fact that the advertisement promotes the brand image of these actors in political arena and attract the voters towards choosing their favorite candidate. In the area of study the researcher found that political advertising is the major platform where politicians play their level best to influence voters by displaying that they are the only favorite people to be elected in the parliament. The researcher quoted the words of Mr. John Wanyonyi the presenter at Radio Mambo during an interview said, "We receive many political advertisement from parties and candidates and place them in our programs to influence voters to decide on which candidate is the best in Webuye constituency."

4.2.2 Citizen participation

The researcher noted down most answers written by respondents showing many people in Webuye district listen to election programs which involve them on radio because most of them do not have television sets.

Abugidainfo.com (March 2008), published “before the campaigns, the radio stations were instrumental in stimulating the registration and political participation. Moreover, owing to their proximity to the grassroots, the community radios were true watchdogs, and vigorously put politicians to task over critical national issues.”

The views of many respondent shows that political participation programs are inevitable since voters learn to bring politicians answerable to some issues of public interests. This is because voters ask specific questions which demand direct answers from their political candidates and since these contestants wish to be elected, they find themselves trapped to answer such questions during voters participation election programs. Such programs are the best when it comes to finding opinions in fact finding on how voters, parties and their candidates express their feelings during elections especially under issues of national interests. The researcher noted that most questionnaires returned by the respondents shows that Radio Mambo designs citizen participation programs mostly in Bukusu language during elections, but many people in this district are of different tribes which cannot understand this language therefore they opt to switch to other national stations like radio citizen which most of its programs are designed in Kiswahili language. Following an interview with Mr. Yakobo Wamang’oli, the teacher at Pan Paper high school in Webuye town, he said, “People in Webuye district listen to citizen participation programs especially during elections but most of them switch to other stations like Radio Citizen, Nation FM, and KBC because they are more advanced than local Radio Mambo which is dominated by Bukusu language.” Asking a new insight on what should be done to promote citizen participation programs on Radio Mambo during election, Mr. Emanuel Wamalwa, a reporter at the station said, “The power to adjust the programs that can meet public demand is vested in the “pocket” of the media owner because most of us are just employed in this station to do what the media owner wants but we have no powers to dictate what is to be broadcasted.”

The relation of the mass media to contemporary popular culture is commonly conceived in terms of dissemination from the elite to the mass, the long-term consequences of this are significant in conjunction with the continuing concentration of ownership and control of the media, leading to accusations of a 'media elite' having a form of 'cultural dictatorship'." For example, the UK Observer (March 1st 1998) reported, "the Murdoch-owned HarperCollins' refused to publish Chris Patten's East and West, because of the former Hong Kong Governor's description of the Chinese leadership as "faceless Stalinists" possibly being damaging to Murdoch's Chinese broadcasting interests."

4.2.3 Party and candidate interviews

Media programming during elections should capture the attention of voters and politicians in the country in order to make them aware of all procedures during elections. Robert, (1995 pg, 82) comments, "media experts coach the candidates on how to make a favorable impression on and off camera during press conferences, interviews, talk shows, speeches, and all other appeasable and how to keep the press corporation happy. Media experts also recommend the best use of all forms of communication, including bill boards and direct mail, as well as television, radio, and newspapers."

Media interviews are common ways of presenting an individual's personality and reputation to the public; this is done through his or her answering of scheduled questions designed by the interviewer. The public listens to the way an interviewee answers the questions related to elections and this may involve some key personalities such as political analysts, party leaders or anyone perceived to have an experience in elections and how they are done in democratic countries like Kenya.

In conclusion the literature agrees with the study because the researcher noted that most people in Webuye constituency listen to interviews placed on the media but they mainly rely on national radio stations since the local radio Mambo is dominated by Bukusu language. One of the respondents Mrs. Mary Njoroge, a teacher in Webuye District Education Board primary school said, "For me I always listen to Radio Citizen during political interviews because Radio Mambo is a Bukusu Station yet my family is Kikuyu tribe and we do not understand the language." Asking her on what

should be done to the station so that many tribes can understand the language used, she added, “there is only one solution to this station which involves the management to change programs from vernacular to national and official languages like Kiswahili and English which are mostly understood by many people.”

4.3 To analyze influence of media to the voters in making informed choices of parties and candidates they wish to support during elections.

Katz and Lazarsfeld’s (1940), “The two-step flow theory of communication, based on a study of electoral practices of the citizens of Erie county Ohio This examined the political propaganda prevalent in the media at the time during the campaign period to see whether it plays an integral role in influencing people's voting. In terms of generalizing their results, one should note that there are questions about short term versus long term influence.”

Lazarsfeld et al (1944) observed evidence for the Weberian theory of party which identifies certain factors, such as socio-economic circumstances, religious affiliation and area of residence that together determine political orientation. His study claims, “Political propoganda serves to re-affirm the individual's pre-disposed orientation rather than to influence or change one's voting behavior.”

In the research, the researcher found that community radio influenced voters in making choices of parties and candidates so much. Asking most of them questions during focused group discussions, the respondents agreed that they relied on Radio Mambo by listening to their local candidates, how they compete on presenting their manifestoes in interviews and party advertisements. The respondents were asked in which ways that Radio Mambo influenced them in making party and candidate choices and they gave views under the following categories on media influence:-

4.3.1 Voter registration

To prepare for the December general elections, in March the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) initiated nationwide voter registration and this was done using the

media. Registration was slow because many persons lacked national identification cards, especially in districts that border neighboring countries. The slow issuance of identification cards in these districts was due to lengthy vetting of applicants to ensure non-Kenyans were not issued the document, due to Kenyan security concerns. From January until the close of the pre election registration period in November, the ECK registered 1,831,686 voters. Altogether, nearly 14.3 million citizens were registered to vote. The researcher asked most respondents whether Radio Mambo announced voter registration information and one of them in a discussion said, "The first information about registration I heard it from Radio Mambo." However some respondents within Webuye town said they listened to voter registration campaigns from other stations in Nairobi because they don't understand Bukusu language.

4.3.2 Party and candidate choices

2004-2005, Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) is a publication outlining a series of articles based on the recent history of democratic elections in the region, drawing on the experiences of individual countries that held elections in 2004 - 2005. The primary objective is to focus on those issues essential for successful democratic elections, including the role of the media in ensuring that voters vote from a well informed position about their parties and candidates.

The researcher discussed with respondents who were media practitioners on how Radio Mambo influenced voters in making informed choices of parties and candidates and noted that they used advertisements and civic education which persuaded voters to refuse bribes by voting wisely according to personality and leadership qualities. In the questionnaire filled by Mr. Jacob Wanyonyi teacher at Pan Paper Secondary School, wrote, "Radio Mambo was dominated with hate speeches which divided the community to vote along tribal lines, for example I heard a reporter who persuaded the 'Bukusu' tribe not to vote for uncircumcised people and this really changed the attitudes of these voters against the Luo and their parties."

According to observation the researcher listened to Radio Mambo during election time and noticed that this station was a home of Bukusu politicians who used it as a

platform for publicity and mostly used the local language to attract many voters in the district.

4.3.3 Voter turn-out

Media influence voter turnout by persuading the voters to go at different polling stations in large numbers and participate in voting their favorite candidates who can work hard to bring development and represent community interests in the parliament.

According to the Human Rights Report on Election, the researcher noted that voter turnout was approximately 65 percent, the highest level influenced by the media in the Kenyan history. Voting and counting at polling stations was generally conducted in accordance with democratic standards.

In conclusion, the literature agreed because during an interview at Radio Mambo, the researcher discovered that the station really played a much bigger role of influencing voters because most 'Luhya' really listen to the station during elections because they are the majority in the district but those voters who could not understand the language switch to other stations in Nairobi.

4.4 To find out the coordination between the media, Electoral Commission and the government of Kenya towards realization of free and fair election.

The study shows that some radio stations in Kenya provide fair and balanced reporting of the campaigns, policies, meetings, rallies and press conferences of all registered political parties and candidates during the period of campaigning.

According to the respondents at Radio Mambo the researcher noted that some radio stations provided news of the electoral process apart from the final results on presidential race and most radio stations were warned by the electoral commissioner up to the declaration of results on KBC.

The respondents agreed that some radio stations abided by regional codes of conduct in the coverage of elections in liaison with the Commission while others did not. According to Electoral Commission of Zambia, the election (Act No. 12 of 2006) provides that, "All media organizations shall Endeavour to report election news in an accurate manner and not make any abusive editorial comment, incite violence or advocate hatred based on race, ethnicity, tribe, gender, political or religious conviction; and identify any editorial comment they wish to make and separate it from the news. Heads and other senior management staff of public or private media organizations shall not intimidate media practitioners and shall allow them to exercise professional judgment without undue influence.

The researcher asked the respondents in a discussion if they followed the election code of conduct but they gave contradicting answers as in some said the community media fueled ethnic violence by uttering incitement to violence speeches during and after elections, one respondent said a vernacular radio station in Nairobi broadcasted messages to the effect that, "in these elections some weeds should be uprooted."

This is prohibited in media laws on election especially in Webuye district which suffers from such a problem related to language use at Radio Mambo. Hence some argued that other community media employed unqualified practitioners as quoted by the minister of information in Kenya Mr. Samuel Pogisio as saying. Stations recruited 'quacks' as news anchors and editors and he cited a case where a media house broadcast ethnic war songs targeting certain communities.

Responding to the question over the relevant solution to the community media use of language, the respondents said political party shall not buy more than thirty minutes air time in any given one language on public radio in any one week also radio should not schedule any party's political broadcast or other political discussion or interview, opinion poll results or broadcast prediction of the result of polling day until the polls have closed.

They added that media shall disclose accurate election results and shall provide updates on the progress of the vote counting process and shall not speculate election

results but must broadcast confirmed election results as they are announced and published by presiding officers.

In conclusion, the researcher noted that the literature agreed to some extent but some findings were negative from the literature because some radio stations maintained full records of all news bulletins and recordings of all other programmes related to the election, including party political broadcasts and instituted a close and meticulous monitoring system which ensure balance throughout the campaign and up to the close of poll and provided the Commission at any reasonable time with all such records, information and recordings as the Commission may require to fulfill its monitoring role while other vernacular stations did not.

4.5 To determine constraints that face journalists during elections coverage in Kenya.

The constitution of Kenya provides freedom of speech and of the press, but the government sometimes restricted these rights. Sometimes the security forces harass, beat, and arrest members of the media. The government force Journalists to practiced self-censorship on issues of public interests. On December 30, following the announcement of presidential election results, the government banned all live radio and television broadcasts. Under such issue almost every voter was angry about the actions of the government. The researcher asked the respondents to comment on the action of government against the journalists, they all denounced any attack be it from the government, the police force or other electoral officials from intimidating the journalists during their role of monitoring national or any other elections. They said such violation amounts to attack on human rights which include the freedom of the media. In addition, the respondents concluded that Heads and other senior management staff of public or private media organizations shall not intimidate media practitioners and shall allow them to exercise professional judgment without undue influence.

However the researcher noted other physical constraints which face journalists during coverage of elections which includes poor communication network in remote areas,

bad weather conditions with heavy rain, limited transport due to lack of transportation means especially experienced by poor management of community media as in no vehicles assigned to journalists covering election events performing their duties in different polling station. All these problems are experienced by the journalists in elections.

The literature of this study agrees with the findings in a sense that most journalists experience many problems during election coverage events because in most cases many information have been talked about the constraints that face journalists and the answers to such problems will remains until the government plus other private media organizations come to realize the significance of media practitioners in a democratic state like Kenya.

In conclusion, there is a need for the government and other owners of private media to protect journalists and equip them with enough resources that will enable them to cover the elections effectively.

4.6 To observe the capacity of the Radio in providing forums for dialogue among conflicting groups to voice concerns during election in Kenya.

On January 22, 2008, international reports began to appear, claiming that media, and particularly local language (commonly called vernacular) radio stations in Kenya, were responsible for fanning ethnic hatred and fuelling violence. The reports echoed previous such allegations, including around the 2005 referendum campaign in Kenya.

While the mainstream media was praised for trying to calm the situation, the respondents argue that it failed to live up to professional and ethical standards and contributed to the crisis. Other respondents in discussions observed that Abugidainfo.com (March, 2008) published, "Following the eruption of post-election violence, the community radio stations played important roles in promoting peaceful co-existence. For instance, they supported the "Chagua Amani Zuia Noma" campaign." But still the hardliners maintained that community media only realized later that the hate speeches aired contributed to fueling ethnic violence after airing live coverage of post election aftermath either insisting that elections were rigged and after an attack from the government, radio buried their heads in the ground and started

promoting peaceful coexistence campaigns as a bargaining power to calm down the government temperature from attacking their freedom of live coverage of unfolding events.

Samuel Poghiso, Minister of Information was quoted as saying, “Stations recruited ‘quacks’ as news anchors and editors, “ and he cited a case where a media house broadcast ethnic war songs targeting certain communities. The respondents observed that apart from election rigging such hate speeches prompted the government, which carries out its own monitoring of stations, to impose a month long live media ban when the violence started.

The respondents however observed that all radio stations personnel shall conduct interviews with candidates with fairness both in the style of the interview and in the amount of the time given; and refrain from broadcasting their own political opinion, commentary or assessment and where they wish to do so, they shall clearly identify the opinion, commentary or assessment as their own and shall carefully balance it in order to avoid bias.

The researcher observed that part of the literature agrees with the study yet there are other factors which did not rhyme with the literature whereby the study shows that some community media were blamed by the government as sections which spearheaded post election skirmishes through airing hate speeches which incited communities to fight one another. On the other hand, the same stations assumed what they did and started airing peaceful coexistence campaigns after many people losing lives, some suffering from internal and external displacement with more damages to properties worthy billions of shillings.

In conclusion the researcher observed that, since the community media are placed closer to the people, they should put aside their ethnic differences and work in hand with other humanitarian organizations towards designing media programs that can unite communities especially during national crisis like the one experienced in Kenya after December, 27 elections. The respondents viewed that they should do this by laying an emphasis in promoting Kiswahili in programs as the only national language that can fight tribalism in Kenya. President Julius Nyerere applied this formula in Tanzania and succeeded to fight tribalism in that country.

4.7 To correlate media monitoring reports on fair and unfair practices observed during election coverage in Kenya.

There were irregularities in strongholds of both the opposition and progovernment parties. The tallying of the presidential results by the ECK in Webuye district was marked by irregularities which were reported to Radio Mambo. International observers concluded that these irregularities undermined the credibility of the ECK. However, the ECK announced that President Kibaki won the election. After the ECK announcement of the presidential election results on December 30, violent protests ensued. The respondents observed that in Webuye, the Member of Parliament results were free and fair as in no election irregularities were reported by the loser following the last year elections. But in 2002 there was no community media in the district; hence the national media reported that the winner forced the voters to take an oath. The struggle over who gets what, when, and how is largely carried out in the mass media. The arenas of political conflict are the various media of mass communication which from this report involves the radio stations.

The researcher studied on what media reports during its coverage of national elections in Kenya and according to the findings the study was sectioned under the following categories:-

4.7.1 Announcement of Election results

Edmund Burke (1970) argued, "Democratic representatives should serve the interests of the people. The researcher discussed with six groups of the respondents comprising of ten people in each group and asked them to give information on what radio reports during elections. However one of the respondents said, it reports about election results from different constituencies countrywide. Following that answer the researcher then asked an insight question over what happens to areas which have no media network then another respondent answered, "in such areas people rely on mobile phones as means of communication used to update the media on election outcome then the media pass these news to the public."

The information from the respondents agrees with that in the literature, but to some extent following what was observed by the researcher after December 27, 2007 presidential elections in Kenya, the ECK disbanded the media from announcing the

final results, and censored on live coverage of the unfolding events, until the commissioners chairman Mr. Samuel Kivuthu announced on state media that the incumbent president Mwai Kibaki, the presidential winner. This information erupted in to ethnic violence and the media was eventually blamed as the main agents who fueled ethnic violence.

The government has argued that the local language media have a responsibility for the violence that followed the elections. "The violence after the announcement of the polls was due to the polarity in the media, especially vernacular media which were turned into political tools," Samuel Poghiso, Minister of Information is quoted as saying. Stations recruited 'quacks' as news anchors and editors according to Poghiso, and he cited a case where a media house broadcast ethnic war songs targeting certain communities.

It was this coverage which prompted the government, which carries out its own monitoring of stations, to impose a month long live media ban when the violence first started, according Poghiso. "The media had and were likely to inflame passions, if editors did not delay broadcasts," said Poghiso speaking on January 24, 11 "Then, emotions were high and lives were at stake and as someone rightly said desperate times call for desperate measures. Materials that were broadcast before the ban was imposed, especially on a few vernacular FM stations, were actually incitement to murder and mayhem," he said.

Nearly all commentators on the current Kenya crisis strongly resist and resent comparisons to the role of the media in the genocide in Rwanda. From the evidence that the authors of this report have seen, they are right to do so. Broadcasts from Rwanda's Radio Milles Collines urging, "mass murder were part of a carefully orchestrated, systematically planned process of killing, and the political dynamics of Rwanda in 1994 are completely different from those in Kenya in 2008."

However the researcher discussed with respondents as to whether community media fueled ethnic violence and according to the findings the study shows that during the campaigns, voting and tallying of results, the radio stations provided consistent flow

of update information on unfolding events across the country but at long last it was prohibited by the government and the ECK when it started live coverage of violence which erupted after announcing the presidential results.

4.7.2 Media reports on the winners and the losers after elections

Credible media monitoring projects provides the citizens with information on the reporting of the whole election process because it is an acceptable tool which observes elections. The researcher quoted one of the media practitioners during the study interview who said, “on the day of general election, the community media scrutinized the performance of election officials. They broke news of late arrival of election officials and ballot papers and prompted the ECK to act by in order to allow them freedom to disseminate information over the winners and losers in presidential race. The study shows that the community radio stations were the first to report election results because the research findings shows that they were the proximity to the polling stations and knowledge of the ECK officials on the ground. When the ECK dragged their feet in releasing results, the radio stations filled the gaps through analysis and update of news about elections on the ground.

4.7.3 Media reports election rigging complaints

The researcher discussed with the respondents at Radio Mambo under the question of rigging elections and they argued that radio rigorously put the politicians to task over critical national issues and they invested heavily in public education election programming. As public watchdog the respondents viewed, “media brought to public attention the tallying anomalies of presidential votes that led to the current political crisis in Kenya.” Added, “media showed live the sharp political divisions and fights at the ECK media centre, where the results were being read.”

The researcher observed live on KBC television, where the commissioners convened in front of the reporters chosen by the government officials and the ECK chairman Mr. Samuel Kivuthu declared president Mwai Kibaki the winner with 4, 584, 721 votes compared with 4, 352, 993 for Raila Odinga a spread of about two percent. Listening to KBC Radio, the researcher quoted the commissioners who said, “There

were indeed irregularities, but it was not their job to deal with them. “The judicial system provides peaceable avenues to address these complaints,” said the chairman, Samuel Kivuithu.

As for the restriction on the news media, which many journalists said were a severe setback to what had been considered one of the freest media in the world, the researcher observed Mr. Kivuithu on KTN who uttered, “the only thing the president wants to do is to heal this nation, and the media is not part of that process because it has been propagating hate.”

However the researcher noticed that to some extent the findings agreed with the literature since the radio stations played a much bigger role of informing the voters over what was happening to the ground in the polling stations as in updating the citizens with incoming results especially at parliamentary level but coming to the release of final presidential results they did not and the respondents said they were disbanded the ECK. This is the point where the literature fails to agree due to the role of media in updating the citizens with election news until the final release of results.

In conclusion radio stations plays a much bigger role in coverage of national elections alongside other media and the Kenyan government must promote the responsibility of media through supporting quality training to journalists, that upholds high professional code of conduct not only in the coverage of national elections, but launching a powerful peaceful coexistence campaigns that can unite different communities to respect one another as Kenyans united under Swahili national language.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendation for policy and for further research under the role of media in the coverage of national elections. The limitations to the study are also presented in this chapter which is sectioned under the following:

5.1 Summary

Long time ago, the overall conclusion drawn from the early work was that media had little direct impact on coverage of elections and if they did, that the impact was in the form of reinforcement.

Briefly, the radio stations have played a vital role in the coverage of elections in Kenya. Radio stations have designed made programs to encourage citizen participation in decision making that shape the country during and after elections. They have influenced the voters in making informed choices of parties and candidates they wish to support during elections and coordinated with the Electoral Commission and the government of Kenya towards realization of free and fair election despite all the constraints that face journalists in the process.

In addition, the stations played a vital role in providing forums for dialogue among conflicting groups to voice concerns during election and updated the citizens with monitoring reports on fair and unfair practices observed during election coverage in Kenya.

On the other hand, what is confusing however is that the media has both promoted and discouraged violence at the same time, it has fueled ethnic violence in Kenya through dissemination of hate speeches which divided the communities along tribal lines, positive to that it has issued the civic education on voting and peaceful coexistence programs to the society during elections.

The radio station has been blamed for promoting tribalism by concentrating on vernacular language instead of uniting all the tribes under Swahili as the national

language. It has also tarnished the reputation of journalism as a profession by employing unqualified practitioners with no clear professional code of conduct. Under that note, the community radio has failed to monitor the elections up to the final release of presidential results in Kenya. And finally, it has become biased in reporting rigged results due to bribes or support to a candidate from their own tribe.

5.2 Conclusion

The conclusion was made in line with the various themes of the study and is based on the findings of the study as under:-

The first question asked was, “which programs that media design to encourage voters to participate in decision making on issues that shape the agenda for the country during elections?” study conducted came up with the following results that radio programs party and candidates advertisements during elections which plays a much bigger role in influencing voters over some issues especially during the competition race between parties and candidates owing to the fact that they promote the brand image of these actors in political arena and attract the voters towards choosing their favorite candidates.

The findings also indicates that media programs citizen participation programs that are inevitable since voters learn to bring politicians answerable to some issues of public interests. This is because voters ask specific questions which demand direct answers from their political candidates and since these contestants wish to be elected, they find themselves trapped to answer such questions during voters’ participation election programs. Such programs are the best when it comes to finding opinions in fact finding on how voters, parties and their candidates express their feelings during elections especially under issues of national interests.

During the study, the other finding was that media programs interviews on election topics and invite the contestants to present their personalities and reputation to the public and this is done by asking them scheduled questions designed by the interviewer. The public listens to the way an interviewee answers the questions related to elections and this may involve some key personalities such as political analysts, party leaders or anyone perceived to have an experience in elections and how they are done in democratic countries like Kenya.

The second question was, "How do media influence voters during elections?" Answer from the respondents indicated that the mass media announce the date, time and venue of registering voters. The findings also shows that media monitors and inform the citizens over number of people registered as voters, and encourage people to go and register as voters in order to exercise their democratic rights to vote for the favorite candidates of choice.

In addition, the findings also shows media influence voters in making party and candidate choices by using advertisements and civic education which persuaded voters to refuse bribes and vote wisely according to personality leadership qualities and party manifestoes that favor them.

Also the findings provides that Media influence voter turnout by persuading the voters to go at different polling stations in large numbers and participate in voting their favorite candidates who can work hard to bring development and represent community interests in the parliament.

Following the fourth question on how do media coordinate with the Electoral Commissioners and the government towards realization of free and fair elections? The correspondents viewed that some radio stations provide news of the electoral process apart from the final results on presidential race and most radio stations are warned by the electoral commissioner up to the declaration of results. The respondents agreed that some radio stations abide by regional codes of conduct in the coverage of elections in liaison with the Commission while others did not. The respondents discussion that some community media fuel ethnic violence by uttering incitement to violence speeches during and after elections, one respondent said a vernacular radio station in Nairobi broadcasted messages to the effect that, "in these elections some weeds should be uprooted."

The findings under the fifth question, "What constraints that media encountered during elections?" shows that, the constitution of Kenya provides freedom of speech and of the press, but the government sometimes restricted these rights. Sometimes the security forces harass, beat, and arrest members of the media. The government force Journalists to practiced self-censorship on issues of public interests.

However the findings shows other physical constraints which face journalists during coverage of elections and these includes poor communication network in remote areas, bad weather conditions with heavy rain, limited transport due to lack of transportation means especially experienced by poor management of community media as in no vehicles assigned to journalists covering election events performing their duties in different polling station. All these problems are experienced by the journalists during coverage of elections.

The sixth question was, "How does media conduct itself when violence erupt during and after elections" Following the eruption of election violence, the community radio stations should play an important role of promoting campaigns for peaceful co-existence amongst different communities to love one another by staying peacefully. The respondents however observed that all radio stations personnel shall conduct interviews with candidates with fairness both in the style of the interview and in the amount of the time given; and refrain from broadcasting their own political opinion, commentary or assessment and where they wish to do so, they shall clearly identify the opinion, commentary or assessment as their own and shall carefully balance it in order to avoid bias.

The last question was asked, "What do media report during elections?" and the study findings shows that it reports about election results from different constituencies countrywide.

The findings also shows that media reports the information about the winners and the losers in the election competitions. The researcher quoted one of the media practitioners during the study interview who said, "During general elections, the community media scrutinize the performance of election officials. They break news of late arrival of election officials and ballot papers and prompt the ECK to act in order to allow freedom to disseminate information over the winners and losers in presidential race."

Lastly the findings reveal that media reports information on election rigging. However, some radio rigorously put the politicians to task over critical national issues and they invested heavily in public education election programming. As public

watchdog the respondents viewed, “media bring to public attention the tallying anomalies of all votes and showed live the sharp political divisions and fights and they are threatened by denying them much coverage of political events during elections.

.5.3 Recommendation for Policy

The government and the media through the media council of Kenya should work closely to eliminate or significantly reduce breaches of law and public trust by a section of the mass media.

The media council of Kenya should enforce the provisions requiring the professionalization of all media houses and newsrooms across the country with specific attention to community media.

The media council should undertake comprehensive public education to increase public knowledge of human rights and to influence media content in a positive way.

The government must come up with clear guidelines on monitoring media content.

The mass media must initiate and develop new forms of media criticism.

The government should quickly address the issues of media ownership particularly ownership by politicians.

The government should remove a ban on live coverage but take action against those who breach the law and public trust.

The media should increase its social responsibility programming through opinion polling, focused group discussions, in-depth coverage of issues, continuous feedback mechanisms, and timely reactions by experts on sensitive issues.

5.4 Recommendation for Further Research

I suggest that, the government, NGO’s, religious organizations, and media institutions should come out in full support to finance this research in order to be carried out at national level.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I. RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FORMATS

Kampala International University
Department of Mass Communication

Research Topic:

The role of media in the coverage of national elections in Kenya.

Area of study,

Radio Mambo FM in Webuye town, Kenya.

SECTION A: Personal information

Age.....

Sex.....

Marital status.....Married Single

Occupation.....

Education background.....

SECTION B: Media programs designed to encourage citizen participation in decision making that shape the country during elections.

1. Do you listen to radio?

(a)Yes

(b)No

2. If yes, which programs do you tune to during elections? Select your choices and tick in the boxes in front.

(a) Group discussions!

(b) Interviews

(c) Citizen participation through opinions

3. How many days do you listen to radio per week?

(a)One day

(b) Two days

(c)Three days

(d) Every day

4. Do you participate in decision making programs during elections?

(a) Yes

(b) No

5. If yes, in (4) above, why do you participate?

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6. How does radio encourage you to participate in election programs? Briefly describe.....

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7. Does Radio Mambo design election programs for the public participations?

Yes

No

8. If yes, in (6) above, how does it design it? Please write down what you know.....

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SECTION C: Influence of media to voters in making informed choices about parties and candidates they wish to vote.

1. Do you have radio at home?

(a) Yes

(b) No

2. If yes, how does it help you during elections? Briefly explain.....

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3. Did Radio Mambo advertise parties during elections?

(a) Yes

(b) No

4. If yes, what did it teach you about making party choices?

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5. Did politicians use Radio Mambo FM to launch their personal manifestoes?

(a) Yes

(b) No

6. If yes, how did Radio Mambo report about their manifestoes during (2007) general elections?.....

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7. What lesson did you learn from Radio Mambo during (2007) general elections? Choose any that you know by ticking in the boxes in front.

- (a) Mobilizing voters registration
- (b) Educating voters on how to vote
- (c) Fueling ethnic violence
- (d) Advertising parties and candidates
- (e) Dissemination of news
- (f) All of the above

8. Did Radio Mambo play above roles?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

9. Please using few words, comment on your answer from above choices.....

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and show how it played these roles

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SECTION D: the relationship between the media, electoral commissioners and the government during elections.

1. How does media coordinate with the electoral commissioners?

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2. Do media link up with the government during election coverage?

(a) Yes

(b) No

3. If yes, how.....
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4. Is Kenyan media independent during coverage of national elections?

(a) Yes

(b) No

5. In which way is Kenyan media not independent? Briefly describe

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6. And if Kenyan media is independent, how?

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SECTION E: Constraints that face journalists during election coverage in Kenya.

1. Do journalists face constraints during election coverage in Kenya?

(a) Yes

(b) No

2. If yes, what constraints do they encounter during election coverage?

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3. Does Radio Mambo provide a forum for dialogue among conflicting groups during election time?

(a) Yes

(b) No

4. If yes, comment on your answer siding an example from (2007) elections

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5. Which reports does media make during elections?

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APPENDIX II. BUDGET

STATIONARY	UNIT	COST IN KSH	COST IN USH
Printing		500.00	12,500.00
Photocopy papers	3rims	1,500.00	32,500.00
transport		2,000.00	50,000.00
Pocket money		5,000.00	125,000.00
Internet		3,000.00	65,000.00
Pens		50.00	1,250.00
Research proposal typing	20pgs	800.00	20,000.00
Research report typing		2,000.00	50,000.00
Air time		500.00	12,500.00
Research proposal binding		200.00	7,500.00
Research report binding		200.00	7,500.00
Research assistant	1	500.00	12,500.00
miscellaneous		1000.00	25,000.00
total		17,250.00	420,250.00

APPENDIX III. WORK PLAN

TIME/PERIOD	ACTIVITY
October-November (2007)	Topic identification
January-April(2008)	Research proposal writing
February-March(2008)	Data collection
March-April(2008)	Data analysis and interpretation
April to August(2008)	Preparation of report and presentation