

MASTERS RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE IMPACT OF OWNERSHIP ON MEDIA CONTENT: AN
EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF NATION MEDIA GROUP AND
STANDARD NEWSPAPER GROUP; KENYA.**

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**Research presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Masters of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies, Graduate
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Declaration

I, _____ declare that this research report is my own authentic work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Media studies at the University of the Witwatersrand – Johannesburg.

I certify that it has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university.

Signed

Date

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Dedication

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Abstract

Media ownership has remained an intriguing factor in understanding the news production process. Various studies have proven that ownership influence do affect how journalists cover stories. The said influence takes various forms including direct censorship and coercion of editorial staff. This study critically examines how media ownership patterns, shape content in the Kenyan media.

The researcher employs the use of thematic content analysis and coding of raw data retrieved from the internet sites of two leading Kenyan newspapers as outlined in the research methodology and findings chapters. The data retrieved from the internet sites of the two newspapers is then analysed to prove how ownership patterns influence daily news coverage. Of note is also the use of two case studies – *The Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers to analyse 905 articles written during the 2002 multiparty Kenyan elections.

It emerges that ownership indeed influenced news coverage in the 2002 Kenyan elections. The emerging winner in the elections was also the candidate with the most coverage in the two newspapers. Also emergent is the factor that the election was widely personality driven.

The implications of the research findings is that objectivity though practiced in some instances, was widely affected by the editorial line of the said newspapers. The editorial line was largely pegged to ownership influences in most cases.

List of Abbreviations

- **KBC** – Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
- **NMG** – Nation Media Group
- **SNG** – Standard Newspaper Group
- **IRI** – International Republican Institute
- **NARC** – National Rainbow Coalition Party
- **KANU** – Kenya African National Union party
- **Ford – P** - Ford People Party
- **SDP** - Social Democratic Party
- **CCU** – Chama Cha Uma Party
- **KSC** – Kenya Social Congress party
- **KTN** – Kenya Television Network
- **NCKK** - National Council of Churches of Kenya
- **ECK** – Electoral Commission of Kenya
- **DDG** - Democratic Development Group
- **CNN** – Cable News Network
- **GDP** – Gross Domestic Product
- **KNUT** – Kenya National Union of Teachers Association
- **FIDA** – Federation of Kenyan Women Lawyers Association
- **KEC** – Kenya Episcopal Conference

Chapter 1

1.0 Introduction

In the media today, a number of issues have emerged as critical outside the journalists' or journalistic work. A key focus is on issues surrounding ownership. Globally, there seems to be a connection between ownership and the editorial stance of both state run and privately owned media. Critical political economy of media studies reveal the emergence of concentration of ownership and that of monolithic media corporations like Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, Time Warner, Bertelsmann, Viacom among others. Similar patterns are developing in the Kenyan media. Of significant enquiry is the top two leading media organisations namely; *Nation Media Group (NMG)* and *Standard Newspapers Group (SNG)* which continue to expand rapidly.

Over the past 40 years the relationship between the Kenyan government and the media has been turbulent. Up until the year 2000, broadcasting media for example have been wholly controlled by the Kenyan government through the *Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC)*. This scenario has changed rapidly with the emergence of several newspapers, radio and TV stations. With this liberalisation of broadcasting, factors of cross ownership and concentration have emerged. Tycoons like the Aga Khan, the majority shareholder of *NMG* and Mr. C.K. Macharia owner of the *Citizen Media Group*, since the late 90's have acquired vast interests across both broadcasting and print media. The latter, in early 2000 brought to the newspaper industry *The Citizen Newspaper*, while *NMG* has increased its newspaper titles through *Coast Express* which has since folded up, *The Weekly Advertiser*, *The East African* and the East African editions of *True Love* and *Drum magazines*. Private owners have as a result been castigated by the government for directly or indirectly influencing the direction their media outlets take in relation to the news and programming delivered. The

Kenyan government has on many occasions voiced concerns over the increasing cross media ownership patterns (Winsbury, 2000:252-256).

In a bid to control these patterns of ownership and their influence on media messages, the former President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi's regime had on numerous occasions been heavy handed in its attempts to coerce private media into giving it favourable coverage. Media coercion has also affected the current regime of President Mwai Kibaki. Given the importance of the fourth estate as a pillar of democracy, this is a worrying trend for the young Kenyan democracy. This situation is however not unique to Kenya. Critical political economy of the media has demonstrated that factors like ownership and advertising are important in influencing media messages. Media on their part shape public opinion and the political direction by holding politicians accountable. This is however not the case the world over, with emerging evidence in studies of the British press that media sometimes can lean to a particular direction with the aim of furthering their expansionist economic interests. In other words, the market can give rise not to independent watchdogs serving the public interest but to corporate mercenaries that adjust their critical scrutiny to suit their private purpose. (Curran, 2000:124).

These assertions form very rich grounds on ownership influence of media that this research explores. *Standard Newspaper Group (SNG)* is largely owned by individuals from the former President Daniel Moi's regime, and was viewed as pro government before the 2002 elections by the then opposition parties, mainly National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), which has since taken over the reigns of power in Kenya. However since 2003, the SNG newspapers changed its tone and it is now viewed as a serious opposition newspaper by the current NARC government. On the other hand *NMG* with its flagship newspaper *The Nation*

was viewed as an opposition newspaper by the Kenya African National Union (KANU) government before the 2002 elections. This has now changed with recent disquiet from various KANU parliamentarians and politicians in a recent press conference that *The Nation* has become a pro-government newspaper after the change of guard to NARC. Its editorial line has changed several times depending on issues of the day with its editors maintaining their stance of being independent and fair in their news coverage.

Also, Studies from a critical political economy of the media perspective point to other lesser factors that affect and shape media messages. These include professional ethics and biases amongst news gatherers and producers, and internal processes of censorship within reporters themselves” (Curran, 2000:123). Critical political economy theory also raises questions of how internal reporting structures within the newsroom are not democratic enough to allow for the free determination of what really makes the news (Bagdikian, 1997; Curran, 2000; Curran & Seaton, 1997; Golding & Murdock, 1994; Hollingsworth, 1986). This study explores these aspects. It is noteworthy that extensive studies have been done in the area of critical political economy and on how media ownership affects media messages and discourses, and how these messages shape *interalia* public opinion (Curran & Seaton, 2000; Golding & Murdock, 2000).

This research critically examines how media ownership patterns shape content in the Kenyan media. This is tackled in four main chapters. Chapter two covers the literature review. The literature review Chapter involves the analysis and definition of the theory of critical political economy of the media, the main theoretical approach used in this study. Of note is the use of critical political economy of the media from the British school perspective. The British School perspective studies the media empires of tycoons like Rupert Murdock and

the late Robert Maxwell. This chapter also posits questions on the role of media in a democracy and outlines why media is useful in a society. Also in this chapter, the researcher argues that indeed ownership of media matters because it affects the way in which the media industry is able to manage the resources available for media provision. A global overview of media ownership patterns is also discussed in this theoretical framework. The researcher also traces the development of media conglomeration at the turn of the 20th century both in Kenya and abroad. In so doing, the Big Five media organisations (Viacom, Time Warner, News Corp Bertelsmann and Disney) as mentioned earlier are studied to shed light on how ownership patterns affect or influence media messages.

Chapter 3 on the other hand covers the methodology employed in this study. The study uses triangulation which involves the use of a range of methods combined to achieve the intended results. The researcher uses thematic content analysis, coding and discourse analysis to look at both *The Nation* and *The Standard* archive material used as a source of data for this research. Of particular interest in this study is the 2002 electioneering period in Kenya, and a content analysis of all the articles published during this period is done. The research also uses coding. Articles are coded to various groups for easy analysis. The researcher also delves into the websites of the two newspapers to retrieve pertinent information and raw data used in the study. Noteworthy in the use of the two websites is the fact that both media organisations directly upload articles from their sister hard newspaper copies' to their respective websites, hence a true reflection of the content of the hard copy versions of the said newspapers.

Chapter 4 covers the research findings and analysis. These findings are derived from data collected from the two newspapers websites. The researcher also answers outstanding

research questions as will be revealed later in the chapter to prove that indeed ownership of media is important and influences media messages, and that this was the case as exemplified by the data from articles covered during the pre 2002 multiparty Kenyan elections. This chapter also reveals that the Kenyan election was mainly personality based rather than issues driven, a worrying trend that points to deficiencies in the role of media in a democracy. Personality driven elections are more prone to ownership influence on coverage depending on which personalities the said owners look at favourably.

Chapter 5 is the concluding chapter: It revisits existent theories to determine if the research findings have achieved the set objectives as planned at the beginning of the study. It will also discuss the way forward for future research in this area of media ownership. Also covered in this section are pointers to the future, particularly on how both editorial and reporting staff can go about their work to avoid ownership pressure and influence in the course of their work.

Chapter 2

2.0 Literature Review

The impact of media ownership on output has been a major subject of research over the past four decades. Golding and Murdock (1974; 1989; 2000) offer the seminal works in this area, and argue that media proprietors do determine the editorial line and cultural stance of the newspapers and broadcast stations they own (Golding & Murdock, 2000:74). They operate within structures that constrain as well as facilitate their said influence, imposing limits as well as offering opportunities for editorial control. Analysing the nature and sources of these limits is a key task for critical political economy of culture (Golding & Murdock, 2000:74).

Golding and Murdock (2000:78) further argue that the steadily increasing amount of cultural production accounted for by large corporations has long been a source of concern to theorists of democracy.¹ They see a fundamental contradiction between the ideal that public media should operate as a public sphere and the reality of concentrated private ownership (Golding & Murdock, 2000:78). They argue that proprietors used their property rights to restrict the flow of information and open debate on which the vitality of democracy depended. These concerns, they argue, are fuelled by the rise of the great press barons at the turn of the 20th century. Not only did proprietors like Pulitzer and Hearst in the United States and Northcliffe in England own chains of newspapers with large circulations, they clearly had no

¹ The BBC is one of the largest culture-producing institutions in Britain, and through its national television and radio networks and its regional and local studios, its products reach most members of the population on most days of the year (Murdock, 1986:120). However, it is misleading to see the BBC as an equal or countervailing force to the leading communications conglomerates. On the contrary, their activities and goals are determinant and exercise a significant influence on the corporation's general allocative policies. There have been cases of political interference in programme making and on the growth of internal controls on production as a mechanism for forestalling further intervention (Murdock, 1986:121). Rather less attention has been given to the government's potential influence over policy through its control of the compulsory licence fee which finances the corporation's activities (Murdock, 1986:121).

qualms about using them to promote their pet political causes or to denigrate positions and people they disagreed with (Golding & Murdock, 2000:78).

Golding and Murdock (1989:215) argue that ownership patterns and control of media in Britain for example, indicates that there is ownership concentration with the five leading companies in each sector accounting for 69% or more of the market. Concentration of ownership, they argue, is most marked in the national press with the “Big Five” accounting for well over 80% of the circulation of both the national dailies and the Sundays. What then is concentration of ownership? Doyle (2002:13a) argues that concentration of ownership involves the owning of several media outlets and means of communication by few rather than many different owners. Doyle (2002:13a) argues that in whatever form they take, media concentrations imply that the supply of media is dominated by a handful of people rather than various individuals. She argues that concentration of media ownership may involve a number of alternative configurations. Mono Media concentration (Horizontal), which refers to concentrated ownership within a single sector of activity, e.g. newspaper publishing, radio or television broadcasting. Cross-media concentrations – sometimes referred to as ‘multimedia’ concentration – reflect either vertical or diagonal integration or both (Doyle, 2002:13a). ‘Vertical integration’ refers to common ownership across different phases in the supply chain for a media product, e.g. television programme – making (production) and television broadcasting (distribution). ‘Diagonal integration’ means common ownership between different media sectors e.g. television and newspapers, or newspapers and radio (Doyle, 2002:13a).

Doyle (2002:13a) further argues that concentration of ownership interferes with pluralism. Pluralism she argues, is generally associated with diversity in the media; the presence of a

number of different and independent voices, and of differing political opinions and representations of culture within the media (Doyle, 2002:11a). The main perceived danger is that excessive concentration of media ownership can lead to overrepresentation of certain political viewpoints or values of certain forms of cultural output (i.e. those favoured by dominant media owners, whether on commercial or ideological grounds) at the expense of others (Doyle, 2002:13a). The reason why diversity of ownership is important for pluralism is because media ownership can translate into media power (Meier & Trappel, 1998:39). Since it is difficult to monitor the intentions of media owners, or to fully regulate their conduct in respect of editorial matters, the single most effective way of ensuring a healthy diversity of voices in the media is to prevent media power from being monopolised i.e. by ensuring that the supply of media involves a range of autonomous and independent organisations (Doyle, 2002:19a).

As far as Britain is concerned, some owners of national newspapers have clearly used their titles to further their own political or commercial aims at the expense of balanced and responsible journalism (Curran & Seaton, 1997:72-7). Previous studies have chronicled the tendency of at least some owners e.g. Victor Mathews (Owner of the *Express* titles from 1977 to 1985), the late Robert Maxwell (owner of the *Mirror* titles from 1984 until 1991) and Rupert Murdoch (Current owner of the *Sun*, *The News of the World* and the *Times*) – to intervene in editorial decisions in such a way as to dictate and standardise the political lines of their newspapers (Doyle, 2002:19-20a). Doyle argues that editorial interference by owners has frequently been indirect, for example through the selection of key personnel, or through the establishment of a culture of obedience and self censorship as well as direct censorship i.e. through literally rewriting editorial leaders (Doyle, 2002:19-20a).

Research carried out in relation to other European countries such as France, Germany and Italy confirms that the practice of direct and indirect editorial interference by media owners, with detrimental consequences for media diversity, is by no means confined to the newspaper industry or UK media proprietors (Doyle, 2002:20a). For example, the tendency of Robert Hersant (owner of the second largest media company in France and with additional media interests in Belgium and elsewhere) to intervene and standardise news and editorial content across many of the titles within his control for political or commercial reasons has been highlighted by several writers (Coleridge, 1993; Tunstall & Palmer, 1991).

An especially good example of the damage which concentrated media ownership may inflict on political pluralism and on democracy more generally is provided by the case of Silvio Berlusconi using his three TV stations reaching 40 percent of the Italian audience to give unremitting support to his own political party in Italy during the March 1994 elections (Graham & Davies, 1997:32). Subsequent research has revealed not only that there was a bigger swing to the right (3.5 percent more) among Berlusconi viewers than the (Italian) electorate in general, but also that this swing could not be explained by the fact that viewers of the Berlusconi channels were already more right wing (Doyle, 2002:20a). Viewers of these channels were found to be at middle of the road and only shifted their voting after watching the Berlusconi channels. Doyle (2002:20a) argues that the Berlusconi case provides compelling evidence of a casual connection between concentrated media ownership and an undesirable narrowing in the diversity of political opinions available to the public via the media.

Curran (2000:123) argues that a number of media organisations like Time Warner, the largest in the world, Viacom, Rupert Murdoch's News Corp, Bertelsmann and Disney noted

as the “Big Five”, have also grown into huge leisure conglomerates that are among the largest corporations in the world. A conglomerate is a large company that consists of divisions of seemingly unrelated businesses (Branston & Stafford, 2003:445). Bagdikian (2004:27-54) points to the “Big Five” as good examples of conglomeration arguing that they are simultaneously engaged in both print and electronic media, movie production and making toys related to movies, music business and even the manufacturing industry like General electric (owner of NBC) (McChesney, 1998:12). The issue is no longer simply that the media are compromised by their links to big business: the media are big business (McChesney, 1998:1-25). The conglomeration of news media mostly took place during the last three decades. It sometimes gave rise to no-go areas where journalists were reluctant to tread for fear of stepping on the corporate toes of parent or sister companies (Bagdikian 1997; Curran & Seaton 1997; Hollingsworth, 1986). It is also claimed plausibly that the media are in general less vigilant in relation to corporate than public bureaucracy abuse because they are part of the corporate business (McChesney, 1998:1-25). He argues that the government may rise as a big censor of media not as government *per se* but as a big business player.

Doyle (2002:173b) argues that ownership of media matters because it affects the way in which the media industry is able to manage the resources available for media provision. The economic and financial performance of the industry is, at least partly, dependent on the market structures in which media firms operate and on media ownership configurations. Restrictions on ownership could, for example, result in replication of resources which prevents the industry from capitalising on all potential economies of scale (Doyle, 2002:173b).

A focal question for critical political economy of communications is therefore to investigate how changes in the array of forces that exercise control over cultural production and distribution limit or liberate the public sphere (Golding & Murdock, 2000:78). Hence, it is essential to analyse ownership patterns using a critical political economic perspective (Golding & Murdock, 2000:78). These postulates therefore necessitate the definition of critical political economy to understand what factors influence and determine media ownership patterns. Branston and Stafford (2003:445) define critical political economy as a theoretical approach which emphasises the importance of combining political and economic analysis in understanding media text. Golding and Murdock (2000:78) argue that critical political economy differs from mainstream economics in four main respects: first it is holistic; this focuses on six interrelated aspects like the institutional roles of the media and their freedoms to exercise these freedoms, media ownership, management, production and producers. They argue that it also looks at the funding and financing of media institutions, content, audiences and audiences' access to media and communication policy and regulation (Golding & Murdock, 2000:78). Second it is historical; it traces changes in media and society over time since the emergence of the media as a key means of communication. Third, it is centrally concerned with the balance between capitalist enterprise and public intervention; and, finally – and perhaps most importantly of all – it goes beyond technical issues of efficiency to engage with basic moral questions of justice, equity and the public good (Golding & Murdock, 2000:78-80).

Critical political economy in the case of ownership of cultural industries is thus concerned with tracing the impact of economic dynamics on the range and diversity of public cultural expression, and its availability to different social groups. Taking a Marxist approach to political economy analysis, Golding and Murdock (1974:210-17) also argue that the

relationship between the material interests controlling the media and the cultural products they provide is a complex one. It is not explicable in terms of conspiracy or conscious intent. Golding and Murdock (1974:215) argue that the part played by the media in cementing the consensus in capitalist society is only occasionally characterised by overt suppression or deliberate distortion. If they are to explain why, in an egalitarian society, many of those receiving least of the rewards available are willing to accept and even actually support the system which maintains their subordination. The role of the media in legitimating that system therefore must be explored. To do that requires investigating not only isolated instances of malignity but also the routines of practice in the media industries (Golding & Murdock, 1974:210-17).

McQuail (2005:77) argues that critical political economic theory focuses primarily on the relation between the economic structure and dynamics of media industries and the media's ideological content. He further argues that it directs research attention to the empirical analysis of the structure of ownership and control of media and to the way media market forces operates. Lending voice to the school of critical political economy of the media is McChesney (1998:3) who argues that political economy of communication entails two dimensions. He argues that first; it addresses the nature of relationship of media and communication systems to the broader structure of society. In other words, it examines how media (and communication) systems and content reinforce, challenge, or influence existing class and social relations. Second, the political economy of communication looks specifically at how ownership, support mechanisms (e.g. advertising), and government policies influence media behaviour and content (McChesney, 1998:3-4): this line of enquiry emphasises structural factors and the labour process in the production, distribution, and consumption of communication (McChesney, 1998:3-4).

The political economy of communication is closely related to the traditional or classical study of political economy that blossomed in the nineteenth century and is associated with figures ranging from David Ricardo to John Stuart Mill and, most important, Karl Marx (McChesney, 1998:4). Classical political economy of communication views capitalism as a historical process and one in which specific economic issues cannot and should not be separated from related social and political phenomena (McChesney, 1998:4). He argues that classical political economists were interested in the relationship of the economy to social classes. McChesney (1998: 4-5) argues that this is in distinct contrast to the modern field of contemporary economics, which tends to view modern-day capitalism as history's final and highest possible destination and to regard all phenomena not directly related to market transactions as external to its purview. The issue of social class, in particular, is banished from the range of legitimate enquiry. The structural inequality between capitalists and workers is simply presented as a given, and the implications of this striking admission thereafter ignored (McChesney, 1998:5)

Research in areas of critical political economy of the media therefore attest to three emergent patterns; first, media has been seen to influence the political direction of the society. Bagdikian (2004:28-9) argues that political leaders and parties know that the news media control how those politicians are depicted to the voting public; the more powerful the leading media, the more powerful their influence over politicians and national policy. He argues that prudent politicians treat the desires of all large corporations with care. But politicians treat the country's most powerful media corporations with something approaching reverence (Bagdikian, 2004:28-9). Negrine (1994:70) also argues that people receive and interpret media messages eventually leading to the choices they make politically. For example, in

political communication an election broadcast or a staged political event is constructed in such a way as to elicit a pre-determined and desired response. He argues that this fact is evidenced by the careful ‘packaging’ of Mrs. Thatcher by Gordon Reece from the mid - 1970’s onwards which was designed to create a different image of her in the minds of the public, an image which was intended to elicit more positive response on the part of the public. That which was known to be disliked – for example, the voice – was changed to one which was softer and not shrill (Negrine, 1994:70-85).

These assertions and arguments tend to lead us to question the role of media in a democracy and why media is particularly useful in a society. McChesney (1998:24-5) argues that the message is increasingly clear; without democratic media, there can be no democracy. Similarly, Baker, (2002); Curran, (2000) argue that the principle role of the media, according to liberal theory, is to act as a check on the state. The media should monitor the full range of state activities, and fearlessly expose abuses of official authority. This watchdog role is said to override the importance of all other functions of the media (Curran, 2000:121). Snyder and Everette (1998: xi) argue that the role and function of the mass media in a democracy is to ensure the free flow of information and the interplay of opinion. And of course, to guarantee citizens the full rights of free “expression”. They assume that both the issuer of communication (that is the press or media system) and the consumer (the citizen or the public) enjoy these rights (Snyder & Everette, 1998: xi). Baker (2002:155) also argues that the press in a democracy has a political role of providing information. He argues that the role of the press is to enlighten the public so that it is capable of self governance. This conception of the press, Baker (2002:155) argues, implicitly assumes that what a properly functioning democracy needs most from the media is “information”. The press he argues should present the day’s events, a picture of all elements of society, and the day’s intelligence.

Thus, in 1953, Norman Isaacs, the president of the US Associated Press Managing Editors Association, explained: “The one function we have that supersedes everything is to convey information. Presumably, wise politics and wise decisions will follow” (Baker, 2002:155). The media’s role, Baker (2002:155) argues, is primarily as an educator; to enlighten the public. A professed commitment to performing this educational responsibility he argues, was evidenced by the media’s own “codes of performance”, which urge the media to respect accepted values and to portray the traditional values. Baker (2002:155) further points to the Hutchings commission’s study which took place in the context of an increasing concentration of mass media. The long trend toward media monopolies, regularly in the news in the 1990’s, was clearly observable in the 1940’s, and the commission advocated some government policies to promote pluralism and competition (Baker, 2002:155). Rather than dwell on objections to the inevitable, the commission treated this apparently irreversible trend primarily as evidence that the media must be responsible. Baker, (2002:155) argues that a press characterised by bigness, fewness, and costliness in effect holds freedom of the press in trust for the entire population” (Baker, 2002:155). The commission’s emphasis on “responsibility” Baker (2002:155) argues, can be understood to be a pragmatic response that makes the most of the fact of largeness and monopoly. This argument also derives from the observation that a press that is licensed, franchised or regulated is subject to political pressures when it deals with issues affecting the interests of those in power (Kelley & Donway, 1990:97). This reservation is restated by the centrist political theorist, Stephen Holmes, as a rhetorical question: ‘Doesn’t every regulation converting the media into a “neutral forum” lessen its capacity to act as a partisan gadfly, investigating and criticising government in an aggressive way?’ (Curran, 2000:122). The traditional public watchdog definition of the media thus legitimises the case for broadcasting reform, and strengthens the

defence of free market press. At first glance, this approach appears to have much to commend it. After all, critical surveillance of government is clearly an important aspect of the democratic functioning of the media. However this argument is not as clear cut as it seems. While the watchdog role of the media is important, it is perhaps quixotic to argue that it should be paramount (Curran, 2000:122-23). This conventional view derives from the eighteenth century when the principal 'media' were public affairs-oriented newspapers. By contrast, media systems in the early twenty-first century are given overly large entertainment. Even many, so called 'news media' allocate only a small part of their content to public affairs – and a tiny amount to disclosure of official wrong-doing. In effect, the liberal orthodoxy defines the main democratic purpose and organisational principle of the media in terms of what they do not do most of the time (Curran, 2000:122).

Curran, (2000:122) also argues that the watchdog argument also appears to be time-worn in another way. Traditionally, liberal theory holds that the government is the sole object of press vigilance. This derives from a period when government was commonly thought to be the 'seat' of power and main source of oppression. However, this traditional view takes no account of the exercise of economic authority by shareholders. A revised conception is needed in which the media are conceived as being a check on both public and private power. Also, in analysing the role of media in a democracy, it is important to discuss the freedom of the media. There can be no democracy without the inherent freedoms that accompany it. Freedom has an obvious claim to be considered as the basic principle of any theory of public communication, from which other benefits should flow (McQuail, 2005:192).

McQuail (2005:193-4) argues that freedom of communication has a dual aspect: offering a wide range of voices and responding to wide-ranging demands or needs. For the benefits of

freedom of expression and publication to be realized, certain conditions are called for. There must be access to channels of expression and also opportunities to receive diverse kinds of information. The main structural conditions for effective media freedom are as follows: firstly, is the real independence from excessive control and interference by owners and outside political or economic interests. Secondly is the competitiveness of the system, with limits to media concentration and cross ownership (McQuail, 2005:192). These conditions of structure leave many issues unresolved. There are several potential conflicts and inconsistencies embedded in these requirements. First of all, freedom of public communication can never be absolute but has to recognize limits sometimes set by the private interests of others or by the higher collective good of a society. In practice, a 'higher good' is usually defined by the state or other power holders, especially in time of war or crisis. Secondly, there is a potential conflict of interest between owners and controllers of media channels and those who might want access to the channels but have no power (or legal right) to secure it (either as senders or receivers). Thirdly, the conditions as stated, place control of freedom in the hands of those who own the media of publication and do not recognize the rights and freedom of those who work in the media (e.g. journalists and producers). Fourthly, there may be an imbalance between what communicators want to say and what others want to hear: the freedom of one to send may not coincide with the freedom of another to choose. Finally, it may be necessary for government or public power to intervene in the media structure to secure some freedoms that are not, in practice, delivered by the unfettered system (for instance, by setting up public broadcasting or regulating ownership).

A number of the problems indicated are dealt with by adopting rules of conduct and conventions that are not matters of obligation or right (McQuail, 2005:194).² The intervention of government on issues of regulating the media does not mean that the media and government cannot work hand in hand to further both their interests. McNair (1994:1-50) argues that media and government can also work in a symbiotic manner. He argues that they make trade-offs such that all their needs are mutually catered for at the expense of not only their watchdog role, but also their news output. He argues that Rupert Murdoch and a new generation of press barons with the exception of Robert Maxwell attest to this pattern of owning media that were leaning well to the right-of-centre in their political views. Media, he argues, lend their support from the late 1970s onwards to the Conservative Party and its leader, Margaret Thatcher (McNair, 1994:1-50). In return for services rendered in 1979 and subsequent general elections, several of them (and their editors) received honours from the Conservative Government. The Thatcher Government also assisted the building of their empires by consistently refusing to use the Monopolies and Mergers Commission as a means of preventing excessive concentration of ownership (McNair, 1994:1-50). The most obvious beneficiary of this *laissez-faire* approach was Rupert Murdoch. On the eve of the Wapping dispute at the end of 1985, he had acquired four national titles and 33% of total national circulation (McNair, 1994:1-50).

Curran (2000:124) lends credence to the above assertion by arguing that leading media corporations became much bigger, more dominant and more profitable depending, in part, on political and bureaucratic consent. For example, when media in the UK sensed the change in political tide in favour of the Labour government, the widely right wing-centred media

² Free media should not be unduly conformist and should be marked by diversity of opinion and information. They should carry out an investigative and watchdog role on behalf of the public. A free media system is characterized by innovation and independence. Conditions of freedom should lead to originality, creativity and great diversity. Free media will be prepared, when necessary, to offend the powerful, express controversial views and deviate from convention and from the commonplace (McQuail, 2005:194).

entered a number of non-aggression pacts typified by the tacit understanding that was reached between Tony Blair, as leader of the Labour opposition in Britain, and Rupert Murdoch in the mid 1990's (Curran, 2000:124). Tabloid hounds pursuing Labour were called to heel in return for very strong signals that a new Labour government would not attack Murdoch's monopolistic empire (Curran and Leys, 2000:124).

As a pointer to the fact that media messages influence the political direction of society, Seaton (1978:125), argues that politicians are usually concerned with immediate problems in the performance of the media. This arises from the belief that the press and broadcasting are capable of decisively affecting their careers. Unlike politicians, civil servants have been required to review industries during those periodic crises. They have tended to see media – accurately enough – at a particular moment subject to determined pressures and opportunities (Seaton, 1978:125).

In an atmosphere where profit is increasingly dictating the decisions and editorial directions newspapers take, owners are increasingly interfering with internal editorial decision - making processes meant to be the preserve of editors. This view is summed up by Ascherson (1978) when he argues that editorial independence, the old image of the captain of the ship, is obsolescent. The central point is that the editor's formal sovereignty as an individual is being transformed into his fatal weakness (cf. Golding & Murdoch, 2002:76-91). By himself, the editor is less and less able to defend the contents of a newspaper against the direct or indirect pressure of the ownership, itself often under forms of economic pressure which were not apparent fifty years ago (Golding & Murdoch, 2000:76-91).

In analysing this position Golding and Murdock (2000:76-91) take it for granted that there is a relationship between ownership and control; and in exploring the nature and consequences of this relationship they focus on three positions. First is the control over the production and distribution of ideas concentrated in the hands of the capitalist owners of the means of production. As a result, their views receive constant publicity and come to dominate the thinking of subordinate groups; and finally this ideological domination plays a key role in maintaining class inequalities as discussed earlier (Golding & Murdock, 2000:76-91). The evidence for arguing that newspaper – and media – ownership is concentrated in a few hands is fairly abundant but Mc Nair (1994) and Negrine (1994), argue that this does not in itself provide material for analysing the extent to which this potential for control is actually realised in practice, how exactly it operates and in whose ultimate interest (it is). Nevertheless, Negrine (1994) also argues that it is probable that ownership does not contain within it the potential for direct and indirect control – Messrs Murdock, ‘Tiny’ Rowland, and the late Robert Maxwell, amongst others, are known to have attempted to exercise control over editorial content. It is also notable that proprietors do appoint editors and chief executives; they decide budgets and manning levels and they put their imprint on the total organisation. Therefore, editors (and journalists) work within already defined structures and processes (McNair, 1994; Negrine, 1994).

Media control and ownership can also be defined separately. Control in itself can also be divided into two types. Murdock (1986:122-3) argues that there are two levels of control – the allocative and operational. Allocative control consists of the power to define the overall goals and scope of the corporation and determine the general way it deploys its productive resources. It therefore covers four main areas of corporate activity: Firstly, is the formulation of overall policy and strategy. Secondly, are decisions on whether to expand (through mergers and acquisitions or the development of new markets) and when and how to cut back

by selling off parts of the enterprise or laying-off labour. Thirdly, is the development of basic financial policy, such as when to launch a new share issue and whether to seek major loan, from whom and on what terms. Lastly, is control over the distribution of profits, including the size of the dividends paid out to shareholders and the level of remuneration paid to directors and key executives.

Operational control on the other hand, works at a lower level and is confined to decisions about the effective use of resources already allocated and the implementation of policies already decided upon at the allocative level. This does not mean that operational controllers have no creative elbow-room or effective choices to make. On the contrary, at the level of control over immediate production they are likely to have a good deal of autonomy. Nevertheless, their range of options is still limited by the goals of the organizations they work for and the level of resources they have been allocated. This distinction between operational and allocative control allows us to replace the ambiguous question of ‘who controls the media corporations?’ (Murdock, 1986:122-3).

On the other hand there are two levels of ownership: legal ownership and economic ownership. This distinction draws attention to the fact that not all shareholders are equal and that owning shares does not necessarily confer any influence or control over its activities and policies. For legal ownership to become economic ownership, two conditions have to be met. First, the shares held need to be ‘voting’ shares entitling the holder to vote in the elections to the board of directors – the company’s central decision-making forum. Second, holders must be able to translate their voting power into effective representation on the board or that subsection of it responsible for key allocative decisions (since each share usually carries one vote, the largest holders are normally in the strongest position to enforce their wishes). As a

result, economic ownership in large corporations is typically structured like a pyramid with the largest and best organized voting shareholders determining the composition of the executive board who formulate policy on behalf of the mass of small investors who make up the company's capital base.

Finally, studies of political economy of the media reveal that advertising is increasingly having influence on media messages. Advertisers are interfering with publications editorial line and on occasion even threaten to pull out their advertisements all together should their wishes not be adhered to. Given the continued dependence of media largely on advertising revenue, this factor cannot be ignored in studies of critical political economy as explained earlier. Negrine (1994:70-85) agrees with the theory of media dependence on the advertising factor arguing that though advertising revenue freed the press from direct political control, it introduced its own form of constraints on an expanding press in the 20th century. He argues that in effect, without the support of advertisers, the British media would be in poorer and much truncated form. Advertising revenue, he argues accounts for some 40% of the popular press' total revenue, and some 70% of the qualities' total revenue. Advertising revenue also finances the commercial television channels, countless commercial radio channels, and a sizeable proportion of the new cable and satellite channels. Without this extensive support, Negrine (1994:70-85) argues that many of our newspapers, for example, would either cost much, much more or cease to exist. This shows the rather near fatal dependence of media on advertising, echoing the argument of the marked influence of advertisement in studies of critical political economy of the media (Negrine, 1994:70-85).

Adding another dimension to the above arguments McNair (1994:1-50) argues that politico-economic approach add to the constraints placed on journalistic content because of the need

to attract and retain advertising revenue. The significance of the advertising factor, he argues, should not be overstated, however, since it is also true that the commercial logic requires companies to advertise in popular media outlets, regardless of their political complexion. These three major factors collectively constitute the three main bases of the study of critical political economy. The British media ownership trends are akin to media ownership trends in Africa in general and Kenya in particular. The Kenyan case is even more interesting given the government's heavy handed approach lately in trying to control media through police and other state apparatus. This heavy handed approach by the government lends credence to my argument that media is viewed at least by a large number of people, politicians especially, as a big influence in the shaping of public opinion and mobilising electoral support.

A brief History of the Kenyan newspaper industry reveals the existence of several newspapers. The mainstream newspapers; *The Nation* and its sister *Sunday Nation*, *The Standard* and its sister publication the *Sunday Standard*, *The People Daily*, *The Citizen*, *Kenya Times* and the *East African*. These are all published in tabloid size. All these newspapers are written in English. There are also several tabloid and vernacular newspapers. In the mid 1980's Kenya had three competing national newspapers, of which two were independent of the government (Winsbury, 2000:251-2). First, there was *The Standard*. Founded in the 1920's, this had been the newspaper of the white (mainly British, but also South African) settlers in pre-independence days, and was for long the only newspaper in Kenya (Winsbury, 2000:251-2). By the 1980's however, it was owned by the multi-national company Lonrho. Lonrho had extensive business interests in Kenya and all over Africa, in hotels, the motor trade, agriculture, mining and elsewhere, under its charismatic and

controversial founder and boss ‘Tiny’ Rowland who, just like an African chief, ran the company as a personal fiefdom (Winsbury, 2000:251-2).

Secondly there was *The Kenya Times* newspaper which was a government owned venture in the hands of, probably, Kenya’s best-known journalist, Hilary N’gweni, but had not prospered (Winsbury, 2000:251-2). However, it was taken over by KANU, the ruling and sole political party, and became in the 1980’s a mouthpiece for both the party and the government (Winsbury, 2000:251-2).

Third, was *The Nation* newspaper. This was founded by the Aga Khan (leader of the Ismailia community) in the 1960’s, around the time of Kenya’s independence but initially with white staff recruited from Britain, as a gift to the newly independent Kenya, to give the newly enfranchised African population its own voice, and as a contribution to the country’s political and social development (Winsbury, 2000:252). The Aga Khan had and has other extensive interests in Kenya, such as hotels, manufacturing enterprises, hospitals, schools, banking and insurance. Winsbury (2000:252) argues that the founding of *The Nation* was also said by many to have been a shrewd move to protect these interests and the substantial interests of the Ismaili community in Kenya, by demonstrating its commitment to the country and to its progress (Winsbury, 2000:252).

Chapter 3

3.0 Methodology

The researcher uses quantitative content analysis, qualitative content analysis and thematic content analysis in this study. Krippendorff (2004:20-50) defines content analysis as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use. He argues that content analysis has its own approach to analysing data that stems largely from how the object of analysis, content, is conceived. Content analysis therefore entails a systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessarily from an author's or user's perspective (Krippendorff, 2004:20-50).³ Also furthering this definition of content analysis is Babbie *et al.*, (2001:491) who argue that content analysis is a research method that examines words or phrases within a wide range of texts, including books, book chapters, essays, interviews and speeches as well as informal conversation and headlines. By examining the presence or repetition of certain words and phrases in these texts, a researcher is able to make inferences about the philosophical assumptions a writer, a written piece, the audience for which a piece is written, and even the culture and time in which the text is embedded (Babbie *et al.*, 2001:491). They

³ Berelson (1952:18) also defines content analysis as “a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication”. He further argues that content analysis can also be defined as any technique for the classification of sign-vehicles. These sign vehicles, Berelson (1952:18) argues; rely solely upon the judgments—which, theoretically, may range from perceptual discriminations to sheer guesses – of an analyst or group of analysts as to which sign vehicles fall into which categories. These categories can be formulated on the basis of explicitly formulated rules provided that the analyst's judgments are regarded as the reports of a scientific observer (Berelson, 1952:15). He argues that content analysis is a research technique that attempts to characterize the meanings in a given body of discourse in a systematic and quantitative fashion. Berelson (1952:14-15) also argues that there are three assumptions that the above definition of content analysis implies. First, content analysis assumes that inferences about the relationship between intent and content or between content and effect can validly be made, or the actual relationships established. The term ‘inferences’ is used because most studies utilizing content analysis have been limited to inferences; there have been extremely few studies which correctly demonstrate the nature or the extent of the relationship between communication content, on the one hand, and intentions and effects, on the other (Berelson (1952:15).

further argue that traditionally, content analysis is usually divided into two types, namely conceptual analysis and relational analysis. Conceptual analysis is also known as thematic analysis (Babbie *et al.*, 2001:492).

Altheide (1996:15-16) offers the seminal works in this area of content analysis, and is used in this study as an authority in this area. Firstly, he argues that quantitative content analysis originates in positivistic assumptions about objectivity. This research method provides a way of obtaining data to measure the frequency and extent, if not the meaning, of messages (Altheide, 1996:15). Following a serial progression of category construction - sampling - data collection - data analysis - data coding -interpretation, quantitative content analysis has been used as a method to determine the objective content of messages of written and electronic documents by collecting quantitative data about predefined and usually pre-coded categories or variables (Altheide, 1996:15). He also argues that the major tact of quantitative content analysis is to verify or confirm hypothesised relationships rather than discover new or emergent patterns. Indeed, the protocols are usually constructed through operational definitions of concepts to obtain enumerative data for purposes of measurements (Altheide, 1996:16).

Secondly, Altheide (1996:42) argues that qualitative or thematic content analysis on the other hand seeks to understand the process and character of social life and to arrive at meaning and process. He argues that qualitative content analysis seeks to understand types, organisational characteristics, and organisational aspects of the documents or data being analysed as social products in their own right, as well as what they claim to represent (Altheide, 1996:16). He further argues that the goal of qualitative or thematic content analysis is to understand the process, to see the process in the types and meanings of the

documents under investigation, and to be able to associate the documents with conceptual and theoretical issues.⁴

Bertrand and Hughes (2005:184) argue that the advantages of using content analysis are first: “that it is inexpensive when applied to found text”. This is exemplified by the use of internet archive stories from both *NMG* and *SNG*. Secondly; it is comparatively easy to get archive material. This is easier for press analysis, as complete archives exist which this study used. Thirdly it is unobtrusive, does not interfere with people’s lives, and so it entails few ethical problems. They argue that it can deal equally easily with current events or past events or both (provided the evidence has survived), that is, it does not depend upon fallible memory. For example, the election pledges category can be analysed in the context of currently unfolding events and government operations to ascertain if the government has indeed fulfilled its pre election promises. It is excellent for managing large amounts of data which can then be quantified and compared with statistics about the real world (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005:184). Several studies on election coverage have employed the use of content analysis. Of note was the study conducted by Sulkin and Evans (2006:505-534) in which they examined patterns in campaign agendas for a sample of 1,141 House and Senate candidates in the 1984 to 1996 US elections, using a content analysis of coverage of their campaigns in *CQ Weekly Report's* "Special Election Issue" to extract each candidate's priority issues and how different media covered these issues and to what extent the media houses influenced coverage of these issues (Sulkin & Evans, 2006:505-534). Content analysis was also used in a study of the US 1992 presidential election by Russell *et al.*,

⁴ Berelson (1952:14-15) argues that content analysis assumes that study of the manifest content is meaningful. This assumption he argues, requires that the content be accepted as a “common meeting ground” for the communicator, the audience, and the analyst. That is, the content analyst assumes that the “meanings” which he ascribes to the content, by assigning it to certain categories, correspond to the “meanings” intended by the communicator and/or understood by the audience (Berelson, 1952:15).

(1998:463-481). They challenged the conventional wisdom in political communications research that the media play a dominant role in defining the agenda of elections. They argued 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 (Russell *et al.*, 1998:463-481).

This study through the use of thematic content analysis has analysed 492 internet archive articles from *The Nation* website and 413 articles from *The Standard's* website in the electioneering period of December 2002 till the swearing in of the presidential candidate in January 2003. This number of articles and time period is derived from research by Brookes *et al.*, (2004:65) in their study of television news coverage of the 2001 British elections. The choice of these dates also covers the pre election period till the swearing in of the new president – Mwai Kibaki in Kenya.

Table 1: Overall coverage of 2002 Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Kenya by *Nation* and *Standard* newspapers.

Category	<i>Nation Newspaper</i>		<i>Standard Newspaper</i>	
	No. of Articles	% of Total	No. of Articles	% of Total
Voter Education	27	5.48%	41	9.92%
Election Violence	40	8.13%	30	7.26%
Election Pledges	49	10%	37	8.96%
Election Candidates	282	57.31%	202	48.9%
Editorials	30	6.08%	28	6.77%
Interest Groups	41	8.3%	54	13%
Others	23	4.7%	21	5.19%
TOTAL	492	100%	413	100%

As discussed earlier, this study has also employed thematic content analysis in the classification of articles into seven categories shown in Table 1 above. These categories were also formulated on the basis of their themes. These categories are: first, **voter education** which was also used by Druckman (2005:463-81) in his study of the 2000 U.S. presidential elections and on how newspapers and television news covered campaigns and influenced voters, this category was also used by Drew and Weaver (2006:25-42) to analyse the 2004 U.S. presidential election. Second is the category of **election violence**, this category was used by Matthias *et al.*, (2004:12-25) in their study of the 2004 Sri Lankan election whose

focus was on the neglected area of electoral violence, and the moral role of money and vote buying. Similarly Baker *et al.*, (2006:382-99) also used this category in their study of the 2002 Brazilian elections. Third is the category of **election pledges**, a category used by Kalogeropoulou (1989:289) in analysing the elections promises made by the Greek government in the 1981 election. It also looked at the PASOK party's fulfilment of its 1981 election pledges. Fourth, is the coverage of **election candidates'** category. This category was used by Fico *et al.*, (2006:43) in their research of nine US newspapers covering US senate races in 2004 in which they focused on the space and prominence given to candidates. This category was also used by Weaver in analysing the 2000 US presidential elections. The other categories are those of **editorials and opinion pieces**, and articles on elections as seen through the perspective of **interest groups** which include women's groups, the clergy and the electoral commission. The last category is the **"others"** category. This category analyses articles which cover general elections news that could not be fitted in the other five categories as discussed above.

Given the empirical nature of this dissertation, the case study approach has also been used. Yin (1996:20) argues that the importance of this approach is the fact that it facilitates detailed study of social phenomena, using a variety of sources. He further argues that the unique strength of this approach is its ability to deal with full variety of evidence-documents, artefacts, interviews, and observations (Yin, 1996:20). In the case of this study, the case studies are *Nation newspaper*, the leading Media Group in Kenya and the largest in East and Central Africa, and the *Standard Newspaper*, the second largest circulating newspaper in Kenya.

Considerable care was taken in coding the raw data. Lampert and Ervin-Tripp (1993:169) argue that the classification and labelling of events into discrete categories is a central part of

most research in the social sciences. It allows investigators to identify and group similar instances of a phenomenon together for systematic study and is essential to any quantitative analysis. The process of classification and labelling is commonly referred to as “coding”. Fraenckel and Wallen (2001:415) define a code as a system of words, letters, numbers or symbols, used to represent others for brevity, manipulation or secrecy. Coding therefore, is converting the first system into the code system. A chart or table setting out how the items from the first system are mapped onto the symbols used by the code can be called a *Coding Frame* or a *Coding Key*. Coding can also be defined as the process of converting information obtained on a subject or unit into coded values (typically numeric) for the purpose of data storage, management, and analysis (Fraenckel & Wallen, 2001:415).

Coding, Lampert and Ervin-Tripp (1993:169) argues, appears to be a relatively simple task on the surface: firstly, identify the information that the researcher wishes to study, secondly, select mnemonic abbreviations or numbers as codes to represent that information and finally, do it – match codes to actual cases in your data base (Lampert & Ervin-Tripp, 1993:169). They argue that coding frequently requires the development of a highly structured and hierarchically arranged system that can be used not only to relate variables to one another but also to generate and test hypotheses. Lampert and Ervin-Tripp (1993:170) argue that there are four interrelated steps in the coding process: construction, implementation, evaluation, and application. The first of these, they argue, deals with the initial step of designing the system; the second involves the business of doing coding, including the development of techniques and making objective coding decisions and training coders; the third focuses on the adequacy of the system and the reliability of coded data, and the fourth deals with how best to organise coded data in order to do meaningful comparisons and statistical analyses (Lampert & Ervin-Tripp, 1993:170). Coding therefore involves the understanding of stories

and applying those rules of classification consistently (Riffe *et al.*, 1998:22). They also argue that coding can be done using qualitative labels, themes or entire news stories.

Fraenckel and Wallen (2001:415) argue that in doing a content analysis, a researcher can code either (or both) the manifest and latent content of a communication. The manifest content of a communication refers to the obvious, surface content – the words, pictures and images that are accessible to the naked eye. Coding the manifest content of a document has the advantage of ease of coding and reliability. Another researcher is likely to arrive at the same number of words or phrases counted. It also allows the reader of the researcher’s report know exactly how the term “thinking” for example, was measured. On the other hand, it would be somewhat suspect in terms of validity – just counting the number of times the word “thinking” appears in the outline for a course would not indicate all the ways by which this skill is to be developed in that course, nor would it necessarily indicate “critical” thinking (Fraenckel & Wallen, 2001:415).

Coding the latent content of a document has the advantage of getting at the underlying meaning of what is written or shown, but it comes at some cost in reliability. It is likely that two different researchers may come to a different assessment as to the degree to which following a particular course outline is likely to develop critical thinking. An activity or assignment judged by one researcher as especially likely to encourage critical thinking in students might be seen by a second researcher as ineffective. A commonly used criterion is 80% agreement. Even if a single researcher does all of the coding, there is no guarantee that he or she will remain constant in the judgments made or the standards used. Furthermore, the reader of the research’s report would likely be uncertain as to exactly how the overall judgment was made (Fraenckel & Wallen, 2001:415).

This study coded certain recurrent phrases into two categories. These were positive and the negative phrases. These phrases were used variedly when referring to various incidents or personalities during the elections. The positive phrases included the use of words like “voter education”, and “empowering voters”. Negative phrases were mainly used to condemn politicians who are described using phrases like “unscrupulous”, “hooligans” and “vote buyers”. Categorisations of words used in the various stories were therefore classified into either the negative category or the positive category. The researcher then coded the phrases for existence or for frequency (Babbie et al., 2001:492). Coding for existence involves looking at each part of your data to ascertain where each code occurs. On the other hand coding for frequency involves noting how many times a word or phrase appears in your data (Babbie et al., 2001:492).

Apart from the coding method discussed above, this study also used the internet as a crucial source of information since all articles analysed were found on the websites of the said newspapers. Of particular interest was the use of internet resources available on *The Nation* and *The Standard's* websites. The researcher looked at the archive material of newspaper articles during the pre-electioneering period of 2002. Lusoli and Ward (2005:71-97) used the internet in their study of the 2004 European parliament election in Britain and project it as a reliable source of information. The researcher only used articles uploaded by *The Nation's* editorial division as mirror copies of what was published in the hard edition. Internet enthusiasts and experts have criticised this method as a form of a transmission belt that limits creativity in terms of tailoring articles specifically for the internet. They have termed articles uploaded in this manner as “shovel ware”. The internet updating process in both these papers' websites is such that updates are only made after articles in the hard copy

are done. The only exception to this system of uploading articles is whenever there was breaking news which was carried immediately on the internet as opposed to the hard copy only produced the following day. One such case was that of the article on the accident suffered by the then leading opposition candidate Mr. Mwai Kibaki while returning to Nairobi from a campaign trail. The internet therefore allows for immediacy and breaking of news which gave the researcher immediate access to information relevant to the research (Lusoli & Ward, 2005:71-97). The internet unlike print media also allows for the use of multiple links that show related articles or news items, giving the researcher more information on secondary and related data. Both *The Standard* and *The Nation* employed this function when they were reporting on the accident involving the leading candidate. They also had breaking news when election results were trickling in. This included hourly updates of election results. These attributes makes the internet a very important tool of this research (Lusoli & Ward, 2005:71-97).

The electronic stories were however disadvantageous to this study which needed to know the leading article or categorise articles according to pagination i.e. how they appeared in the actual pages of a newspaper. This is important given the categorisation of articles depending on whichever page they appeared on. Pagination is used to determine the importance and prominence attached to an article by the news organisation. However, *The Standard* website highlights its leading article in a red box to lend it prominence. The rest of the articles are all given the same weight. In contrast *The Nation* newspapers website has no such distinction. The study therefore assumed that the first article was the leading story.

3.1 Research Questions:

- 1.) To what extent is the Kenyan media concentrated?
- 2.) How does ownership concentration affect media messages and news coverage in Kenya, if at all?
- 3.) To what extent has *The Nation* and *The Standard* played a critical role in the democratic process in Kenya?

Chapter 4

4.0 Findings and Analysis

A rich and complex picture emerged from the internet newspaper articles analysed. As the election process unfolded in the run up to the 2002 Kenyan multi-party elections, the coverage of both *Standard* and *Nation* newspapers was both complicated and contradictory in terms of their allegiances as influenced by ownership patterns. Key stakeholder groupings and major political parties often included divergent views within their ranks. This led to a split in the ruling party KANU which led to the formation of the loose coalition NARC. NARC which was formed from a coalition of KANU party defectors and National Alliance of Kenya (NAK) eventually won the election dislodging KANU from power after four decades. NAK was itself a smaller coalition formed by Mr. Musikari Kombo's Ford-Kenya, Mr. Mwai Kibaki's Democratic Party (DP) and Mrs. Charity Ngilu's National Party of Kenya (NPK). The two newspapers operated as the main conduits of election news. Ownership patterns of the two dailies were key in influencing the political direction and decision making process of the public. This chapter therefore examines the extent to which ownership patterns of the two newspapers influenced the political dispensation prior to the elections by analysing selected internet newspaper articles.

The stories analysed form all the seven categories in both *The Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers as summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Overall coverage of 2002 Presidential and Parliamentary elections in Kenya by *Nation* and *Standard* newspapers.

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Interest Groups	41	8.3%	54	13%
Others	23	4.7%	21	5.19%
TOTAL	492	100%	413	100%

4.1 Voter Education in the *Nation* and *Standard* Newspapers

As mentioned earlier in chapter three, the researcher used content analysis to analyse a total of 492 articles from *The Nation* website. Of the 492 articles, Voter Education had a total of 27 articles representing 5.48% as shown on Table 1 above. Comparatively, a total of 413 articles was analysed from *The Standard's* website of which 41 articles representing 9.92% covered voter education. This was nearly double the coverage of *The Nation*. The researcher then randomly picked four articles that reflected this category for comparative analysis (Van Dijk, 2001:21-63).

“Kibaki heads for election triumph says opinion poll” (The Nation - December 10, 2002)

“Catholics to intensify poll civic education campaign” (The Nation- December 9, 2002)

The Nation newspaper covered the article – “*Kibaki heads for election triumph says opinion poll*”. As did *The Standard*, they had only one source. However, their source was a neutral source namely the resident International Republican Institute (IRI) programme director Mr. Paul Fegan. IRI is an advocacy group that conducted the opinion poll. *The Nation* simply laid out the facts as published in the poll results and went further by publishing parliamentary opinion poll results which also projected NARC as the leading party with 65.8% against KANU’s 22.7%. This article was more detailed and informative on all issues polled on by IRI. The article lacked depth in coverage and did not provide interpretation of the facts that were provided for easy digestion by the audience. The article favoured NARC and it did not strive to breakdown these facts and figures and its implications to the readers. Views from opposition and ruling party KANU politicians were not published.

The second article – “*Catholics to intensify poll civic education campaign*” was covered from an ideological point of view. The lead of the article starts thus: “The Catholic Church will intensify its civic education to ensure that voters make an informed decision during the elections...” This statement implies that previously there may have been instances where voters made decisions without the right information, leading to misinformed choices.⁵ The article quotes the chairman of the Kenya Episcopal Conference (KEC), Archbishop John Njue as a source. Considering that KEC is the highest ruling organ in the Catholic Church in

⁵ Van Dijk (2001:24-25) argues that the main social function of ideologies is the *co-ordination* of the social practices of group members for the effective realisation of the goals of a social group, and the protection of its interests. This applies both to group-internal social practices as well as to interaction with members of other groups. Given this general function of ideologies, it is of course true that many ideologies develop precisely in order to sustain, legitimise or manage group conflicts, as well as relationships of power and dominance (Van Dijk, 2001:24). Media owners indeed use similar ideologies to achieve the same goals Van Dijk argues ideologies are meant to achieve.

Kenya, it shows the authenticity and seriousness of the promise by the Church to conduct voter education. The article also quotes the Archbishop as saying that the Church was determined to ensure unscrupulous politicians did not take advantage of people's ignorance during the electioneering period. This was read by the researcher to be an attack on parties that have previously used money to buy votes, a tactic that has numerous times been used by KANU in previous elections (See article – "*Kanu fined over Gachoka poll Violence*" below). The Archbishop also said in the article that his life had been threatened but fell short of mentioning by whom. He said he would continue to comment on politics which he said was "the art of good governance". The article was concluded on a neutral note saying the Church would not campaign for any candidate. No views from opposition and KANU politicians were published.

The Standard published the following articles:

"Opinion poll: Kibaki is ahead of the others" (December 10, 2002)

"Methodists Bishops advice voters" (December 9, 2002)

The first article – "*Opinion Poll: Kibaki is ahead of others*", was published by both newspapers. *The Standard* article also had a single source, the KANU director of elections and Minister of Home Affairs in the incumbent KANU government – Mr. William Ruto. The newspaper gave statistics as released by IRI and then gave an opposing view from Mr. William Ruto who roundly dismissed the opinion polls as a sham fabricated to mislead the public into "voting in a certain way" (*The Standard*, 2002, December 10).⁶ The article omitted parliamentary poll results released in the same survey. Similarly the article lacked further interpretation of the results and figures published and how they impacted on the

⁶ The poll had shown that Mr. Mwai Kibaki, the opposition candidate, was leading with a wide margin of 68.2% against the KANU candidate Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta with 21.4%. The pollsters also asserted that only Mr. Mwai Kibaki was able to garner at least 25% of the vote from at least six of the eight provinces of Kenya as required by the constitution.

public and forthcoming elections. Notably, the single source for *The Standard* article was from KANU. No views were published from opposition politicians.⁷

The next article was “*Methodist Bishops advice voters*”. This article was a call on voters to end the culture of sycophancy, hand outs and economic looting, factors that had tainted the incumbent KANU government. The researcher therefore infers that it was a thinly veiled attack on the KANU government by the Methodist Bishop, Prof. Zablon Nthamburi and the chairman of National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) – Rev. Mutava Musyimi. The two clergymen were quoted as advising the electorate to vote for leaders who were development conscious; “The two clergymen were also opposed to the clamour for a new constitution because it had clauses allowing legalisation of homosexuality and abortion rights” (*The Standard*, 2002, December 9). The article portrayed the draft constitution as promoting the two vices hence the need to reject it wholesale.⁸ The article used the two clergy sources as authoritative voices that would influence voters on grounds of moral authority. The two clergymen were quoted out of context to mislead readers. This article supports Golding and Murdock’s (2000:78) argument that media can sometimes sustain systems of domination. This argument will be discussed further later in the chapter. A reading of articles from this category revealed some degree of inclination to certain political parties by both newspapers as determined by ownership patterns. This was done sometimes by omission of facts.

Research in cultural studies is particularly concerned with analysing the structure of media texts and tracing their role in sustaining systems of domination (Golding & Murdock,

⁷ *The Standard* was owned by KANU politicians at the time. Interestingly, the eventual winner Mr. Mwai Kibaki garnered over 60% of the vote according to results released from the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) as had been projected by IRI.

⁸ At the time, KANU was not only fighting for its survival in the election but also stalling the constitution making process which was largely aimed at trimming the excessive presidential powers by introducing the office of a powerful prime minister.

2000:84). The articles analysed from *The Standard* were largely representative of KANU views which strove to maintain the political dominance of a party that had ruled Kenya since independence. *The Standard* is owned by politicians from KANU and was viewed by the public as a pro KANU newspaper. As argued in chapter two, there is a fundamental contradiction between the ideal that public media should operate as a public sphere and the reality of concentrated private ownership. A closer look at articles from *The Nation* also discloses a different outcome. Articles from *The Nation* were also inclined to the opposition NARC party. A closer look at the articles revealed a subtle slant either by omission or embellishment of facts for or against the opposition NARC party.

4.1.1 Media as voice of the people – Liberal theory

Findings from the internet newspaper articles analysed above vindicate Curran's (2000:129) argument that representing people to authority is, in liberal theory, a key democratic function of the media. He argues that the introduction of opinion polls as those analysed in the article "*Opinion poll: Kibaki is ahead of the others*" took some wind out of this 'fourth estate' argument. More often now, the claim is made simply that the media speak for the people, and represent their views and interests in the public domain. The results published from the above articles on opinion polls discloses a different outcome to the assumption that: 'the broad shape and nature of the press is ultimately determined by readers because the press must respond in a competitive market-place to what people want, and express their views and interests (Curran, 2000:129). As a consequence the privately owned press, and by extension, the privately owned broadcasting system – speak up for the people. This argument is so frequently advanced that it is necessary to explain why it is fundamentally flawed. In the first place, it invokes an idealised view of market competition. In reality, most media markets have developed in ways that weaken consumer influence (Curran, 2000:129). An

analysis of data from the articles in this category vindicates Curran's argument of a weakened consumer influence.

4.2 Election Violence category

In the opinion poll conducted by IRI mentioned earlier in this chapter, 80.3% of the respondents' surveyed admitted to have experienced election violence in one form or another. This was a very high and worrying trend considering the percentages of election violence articles covered by the two major newspapers. As shown in Table 1 above, *The Nation* led in coverage of election violence with 40 articles, a paltry 8.3% of the total articles it published. Comparatively, *The Standard* had 30 articles on election violence, accounting for 7.26% of the articles covered. This was considerably a low percentage given the widespread violence that occurred during the elections. The following articles were sampled from *The Nation* for further analysis;

"Now Choge denies role in rally death" (December 6, 2002)

"Police battle KANU youths at NARC rally" (December 16, 2002)

The first article "*Choge denies role in rally death*" was a follow up on a previous article in which a civic candidate was fatally ran over by a parliamentary candidate's vehicle.⁹ The article was vague by generalising accounts from "several eye witnesses". It did not quote a single eye witness. The angle of the article was such that it blamed Mr. Kiptum Choge for having angered the crowd by attending his younger brother's rally. This did not justify the violence as the candidate exercised his democratic right of freedom of movement and association. He was a KANU candidate while his brother was in Ford-People. The article also implies that Mr. Kiptum Choge had called a press conference to correct the impression

⁹ Mr. Kiptum Choge, the accused, was fleeing from a rowdy mob that stoned him. One of the cars in his entourage allegedly ran over the said victim in the ensuing melee.

that he was driving the car which is in no way related to the violence. This portrayed him in a negative light as not caring about the violence *per se* but looked to exonerating himself from blame.¹⁰ The article also had a statement from police in which they were looking for Mr. Kiptum Choge to record a statement. This also cast Mr. Choge in a negative light implying that he had been avoiding talking to the police. Even though several accounts from witnesses were sought, views from other opposition candidates involved in the incident were not published. This article was read by the researcher to be slanted against Mr. Choge.

The second article “*Police battle KANU youths at NARC rally*” involved the coverage of a NARC rally in North Eastern province town of Moyale, a KANU stronghold. Some KANU youths apparently turned violent as they were being repulsed by police following their attempt to disrupt the opposition party NARC’s public rally. The lead of the article started thus:

“Police yesterday signified their determination to stamp out election violence when they repulsed Kanu youths throwing stones...”

The lead of this article evaluatively uses the phrase “signified their determination” which in lexicon terms suggests that there was a break in tradition of an ongoing trend in election violence.¹¹ The article also stressed the fact that the NARC rally attracted a record crowd never seen before at the border town. It did not articulate the issues addressed at the rally and therefore gave more weight to side shows than focus on issues. Notably, no comments from Kanu politicians were published.

¹⁰ He issued a statement denying that one of his vehicles ran over the victim and pointed out that the victim had no fractures normally associated with car crash victims. He claimed that the candidate had been killed in the violence as he was fleeing the rowdy mob.

¹¹ In the past police would watch helplessly as Kanu youths caused mayhem to disrupt opposition rallies. On the other hand, they used brute force to disperse any opposition youths who tried to do the same during Kanu rallies. The 2002 elections witnessed a change in many trends since many arms of government were aware that the much feared President Moi was retiring.

The researcher analysed the following articles from *The Standard*:

“Kanu fined over Gachoka poll violence” (December 23, 2002)

“Cases of rigging, violence worries donors” (December 3, 2002)

“Raila, Nyagah hit by poll violence” (December 2, 2002)

The first article *“Kanu fined over Gachoka poll violence”* stated in its lead that Kanu had been fined Shs. 100,000 over election violence incidents the previous week. The second paragraph jumps to new details about a NARC candidate – Mr. Raphael Wanjala being fined Shs. 50,000. This in journalistic lexicon is called “leap frogging”. Leap frogging occurs where the writer gives new and totally unrelated information in the second paragraph from the lead of the article. The article also reports that the outgoing internal security minister, Mr. Julius Sunkuli was accused of using the provincial administration to conduct campaigns. He was accused of using chiefs to buy votes with a promise of more money to voters. The article is generally disjointed and lacks continuity as it jumps from one story to another in bits and pieces. The writer tries to cover many different incidents of violence at once. This compromises the depth of the articles.

In the second article *“Cases of rigging, violence worries donors”* the Democratic Development Group (DDG) petitioned ECK chairman on the continued violence and vote buying activities in the run up to the elections. DDG, an umbrella body representing 25 members from donor countries was represented by the US and UK ambassadors. They also petitioned the attorney general and police commissioner to take the necessary steps to curb election violence. The two diplomats noted that the levels of violence were worrying but had improved compared to the 1992 and 1997 elections. The donor group also castigated the biased coverage of the national broadcaster *KBC* for favouring the government. They lauded

the “balanced” and “fair” coverage by the other media namely *The Nation* and *The Standard* and their sister broadcasting stations, *Nation TV* and *KTN*. The donors were quick to castigate *KBC* which was out-rightly biased. Incidentally they exonerated *The Nation* and *The Standard* whose coverage was also problematic as shown in the analysis of the above articles.

The third article “*Raila, Nyagah hit by poll violence*” involved two prominent opposition politicians caught up in separate violent incidents. In the first confrontation Mr. Raila Odinga was attacked by over 1000 youths chanting pro Ford-People presidential candidate Mr. Simeon Nyachae’s name.¹² Notably, the article used words like “hooliganism” when referring to Ford-P youths but did not do the same for Kanu youths who engaged in the same violence. In that instance, it was hard to separate the two groups during the mayhem so as to single a separate group as engaging in “hooliganism” while the others were exonerated from blame. In the other incident involving Mr. Joseph Nyagah, 20 people were injured after they were attacked using poisoned arrows. Windscreens of several cars belonging to the opposition candidate were also smashed during the violence. The article balanced as views from all the parties concerned were published.

4.2.1 State control of the media, A Neo Liberal approach

In the article “*Cases of rigging, violence worries donors*” the Democratic Development Group (DDG) was widely quoted as castigating the national broadcaster *KBC* as being out-rightly biased in favour of government in its coverage. Curran (2000:125) argues that such development arises from the fact that public broadcasters have been censored by restrictive

¹² The attack took place next to a police station. Police dispersed the crowd but blamed Mr. Raila Odinga for failing to notify them so they could provide security. The article said Mr. Odinga was attacked by a combined group of Kanu and Ford-P youths who then looted goods from surrounding businesses.

laws and regulations; undermined by being packed with government supporters; squeezed by refusals to increase public funding; intimidated by public and private criticism; and crushed through sackings of staff and threat of privatisation. This was indeed the case in the run up to elections as *KBC* was packed with pro government administrators.¹³ As media magnate, Rupert Murdoch succinctly put it: “public service broadcasters in this country [Britain] have paid the price for their state sponsored privileges. That price has been their freedom’ (cf. Curran, 2000:121). Indeed *KBC* has suffered under some of the factors mentioned by Curran. By pointing towards their satisfaction with *The Nation* and *The Standard*’s balanced coverage, the DDG’s view also taps into the liberal theorists’ argument that media can also be viewed in a more expansive way, in liberal theory, as an agency of information and debate that facilitates the functioning of democracy (Curran, 2000:127).

4.3 Analysis of the Election Pledges category

A key issue of most elections has been the promises made by various political candidates to sell themselves and win various positions. In a developing country like Kenya, these promises involve development issues such as road construction (infrastructure); stamping out vices like corruption which is widespread and rampant; reviving failed agricultural activities - the mainstay of Kenya’s economy; issues of land which have been thorny given the widespread vice of land grabbing; the downturn of the economy generally, and creation of employment given the high unemployment rates (Orengo, *The Nation*, 2002, December 5). Ansolabehere *et al.*, (1993:167) argued that US Elections research stipulated that electoral victory depends upon both the number of people who vote (turnout) and the number of voters who support particular candidates (preference).

¹³ The director of *KBC* is a direct appointee of the president who would sack them over the then infamous 1 o’clock radio news bulletin if they failed to tow the line.

As shown in Table 1 above this was the second largest category covered by *The Nation* with 49 articles. *The Standard* on the other hand had 37 articles representing 8.96% of articles published. The following articles from *The Nation* were randomly selected and analysed:

“NARC promises 500,000 jobs every year” (December 5, 2002)

“We shall free the airwaves, says NARC” (December 6, 2002)

The two articles capture the essence of political pledges by Kenyan politicians at crucial election times. The pledges represented pressing issues affecting Kenyans. The first article *“NARC promises 500,000 jobs every year”* reports a major election pledge by NARC. This pledge was made by Mr. Mwai Kibaki’s running mate Mr. Kijana Wamalwa. The lead of the article describes this plan as an “ambitious employment policy”. This is an evaluative phrase which suggested that the plan was a tall order for NARC to achieve. Indeed NARC has failed to achieve this target to date. Mr. Kijana Wamalwa said NARC would employ professional managers, and not “cronies” to ensure this pledge was achieved. This can be read as an attack on the incumbent KANU government and President Daniel Moi who employed his cronies to key government positions. The notion created by Mr. Kijana Wamalwa is an axiomatic position of US versus THEM. The article quoted Mr. Wamalwa as taking a factual position of not tolerating corruption that was generally likened by the public to the KANU government. He said they would not squander taxes like the KANU government. The creation of more jobs, he said, would reduce crime and increase the tax revenue base. Mr. Kijana Wamalwa said NARC would improve the economy’s management, and set aside funds for investment in labour-intensive public works such as road construction, and building of dams and bridges. The article was a true reflection of the headline. It also explained how the creation of the promised jobs would be done and was

therefore informative. However, no views were published from other opposition politicians. Expert opinion was also not sought on the possibility and success of such an undertaking. The article was slanted favourably to NARC.

The last article “*We shall free the airwaves, says NARC*” was of particular interest to all media houses that had been stifled under President Moi’s regime, with only the public broadcaster *KBC* given country wide frequencies. Other news organisations like *NMG* the parent company of *The Nation* for example, had been issued with broadcasting licenses restricted to Nairobi, a province the KANU government considered an opposition stronghold and therefore of no consequence to their strategy. The pledge was symbolically made during the launch of the NARC manifesto. The article directly quotes *NMG* as one of the companies denied frequencies. The NARC manifesto said that denying of broadcast licenses to media houses was “discriminatory” and “primitive”. This brought a lot of hope to media owners and journalists. While KANU’s strategy of denying licenses was discriminatory, it could hardly be described as primitive. It was a deliberate tactic of stopping the free flow of information to the public. The article employed ideological strategies of positive “self-presentation” and negative “other-presentation” in its sentence sequences (See van Dijk, 2001:38-9). That such phrase reflects partisan positions and ideologies may be concluded from the same examples. The article quoted Prof. George Saitoti as the only source. Views from other politicians were not published. Also of note, all the articles picked for further analysis from *The Nation* incidentally highlighted election pledges from NARC and not the other parties including its main challenger KANU.

The articles randomly selected and analysed from *The Standard* include:

“*KANU will not rig polls, assure Biwott, Sunkuli*” (December 16, 2002)

“*NARC to recover Shs. 160b ‘stashed away abroad’*” (December 18, 2002)

The first article “*KANU will not rig polls, assure Biwott, Sunkuli*” was a pledge by two government ministers that KANU would not manipulate election results as was suspected in past elections. The article uses the word “suspected” to ease the negative depiction of KANU as a party that had rigged previous elections. Vote buying by KANU candidates was evident in the 2002 elections and was also used by KANU in previous elections. Prior to this article, some NARC politicians claimed that KANU had sensed defeat and were preparing to rig the elections. The two ministers assured the electorate of a peaceful transition. They revisited the opinion poll results that were covered earlier in this chapter in the article “*Opinion poll: Kibaki is ahead of the others*”. They criticised the opinion poll as being biased and assured their supporters they would soon release an independent opinion poll. This position is taken by the two KANU politicians purely on the grounds that the opinion polls depicted KANU in a losing position. They also criticised some candidates who had apparently defected to the opposition. Views from other opposition politicians were not sought in this article.

The other article analysed was “*NARC to recover Shs. 160b ‘stashed away abroad’*”. The article was on the sensitive issue of corruption. Two NARC leaders were assuring the electorate that all money looted from the country and banked overseas would be recovered. In this article the two leaders also warned politicians from Safina Party, an opposition party not affiliated to NARC, from using the NARC presidential candidate’s posters to campaign for parliamentary posts. The two leaders were quoted as saying that NARC would win by an 80% margin. The 80% margin figure is given prominence in the article to expose the overconfidence of the two politicians. The article was inadequate as it did not address how the leaders would go about achieving their promise to recover the stolen money. Expert opinion was also not sought on the possibilities of such an undertaking making the article vague. A reading of articles from this category revealed a negative depiction of NARC and the softening of negative news on matters involving KANU.

4.4 Election Candidates Category

Ansolabehere *et al.*, (1993:57-58) studied campaign journalism during the US elections in the late 80's and they discovered that news invariably focuses on campaign as a contest or race. News reports on the candidates' standing in public opinion polls, their advertising strategies, the size of the crowd at their appearances, their fund-raising efforts, and their electoral prospects far surpass coverage detailing their issue positions, ideology, prior experience, or decision making style. Instead of educating the public on the serious matters of the candidates' qualifications, aspirations, and platforms, television stations "devote most of their election news coverage to the trivia of political campaigning" (Ansolabehere *et al.*, 1993:57-58). This study takes a closer look at how these assertions affected news coverage of *The Nation* and *The Standard* under ownership influence.

The principal category covered of all the seven categories was that of elections candidates. As represented in Table 1 above, *The Nation* was the leading in the coverage of candidates with 282 articles, a 57.31% representing more than half of the total number of articles covered during the whole electioneering period. Similarly, *The Standard* had coverage of candidates as the largest category with 202 articles, representing a substantial 48.9%.¹⁴ A critical analysis of this category and the articles published exhibited a characteristic of two-way race in which most articles were of the leading two candidates – Mr. Mwai Kibaki of NARC and Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta of KANU. While some recent analyses have shown that media critics have exaggerated the dominance of horse - race coverage, there can be no doubt that it accounts for a large share of campaign news as pointed out by Robinson and

¹⁴ The candidates' category shows that the 2002 Kenyan multiparty elections was widely personality driven rather than issues based as compared to the 2000 Ghanaian elections which was issues based. The Kenyan elections focused on candidates largely due to media ownership influence. For example *The Standard Newspaper Group* is owned by KANU politician hence the subtle link between coverage of candidates as may be influenced by ownership patterns. Contrastingly, in the 2000 Ghanaian elections, focus was on the role of media in highlighting the various campaign issues. However this is outside the scope of this study.

Sheehan (1980:148). “Horse - race coverage permeates almost everything the press does in covering elections and candidates.” (Robinson & Sheehan, 1980:148).

This category was further analysed by the researcher on a case by case basis with each presidential candidate being analysed separately. The coverage of the presidential and parliamentary candidates’ in both *The Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers is represented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: *Nation* and *Standard* Newspapers Coverage of Election Candidates

Candidates	<i>Nation Newspaper</i>		<i>Standard Newspaper</i>	
	No. of Articles	% of Total	No. of Articles	% of Total
Kibaki	44	15.6%	50	24.75%
Uhuru	23	8.2%	50	24.75%
Nyachae	23	8.2%	21	10.39%
Other NARCCandidates	103	36.5%	48	23.76%
Other KANU Candidates	49	17.3%	22	10.89%
Others Independents	28	9.9%	8	3.96%
Others	12	4.3%	3	1.5%
TOTAL	282	100%	202	100%

4.4.1 *The Nation* and *Standard* Coverage of Presidential Candidates:

4.4.2 Analysis of Mwai Kibaki articles

According to Table 2 above Mr. Mwai Kibaki was the most covered candidate in the two newspapers. *The Nation* published the following articles:

“Kibaki team shut out of Govt club” (December 3, 2002)

“Kibaki injured, two killed in smash up with Taxi” (December 4, 2002)

The first article *“Kibaki team shut out of Govt club”* was about several hiccups faced by Mr. Mwai Kibaki’s entourage in their campaign trail in North Eastern. The article was written with a sympathetic tone to Mr. Kibaki’s team. They were denied entry to a civil servants club where they had stopped to have breakfast before proceeding to campaign. The article portrayed the apprehension by government civil servants in dealing with the opposition for fear of repercussions and victimisation. This was illustrated by the hotel management who claimed they had no prior notification about the visit. This may have been factual given that notice may be needed to patronise an exclusive membership government civil servants club. The article did not outline this fact. Similarly, the story also highlighted an incident at the Garissa military airstrip where the team were supposed to board their flight back to Nairobi after campaigning. They were denied the use of the airstrip. That was the only place they could use to board a chartered flight back to Nairobi. According to the article, NARC supporters viewed all this happenings to be the design of the KANU government to frustrate the NARC campaign team. The article had three sources. Two sources were from NARC and one from the hotel management. Even though views from other politicians were not published, the article was balanced.

The second article “*Kibaki injured, two killed in smash up with Taxi*” was a headliner that captured the interest of Kenyans. Mr. Mwai Kibaki was involved in a serious multiple car accident in which two people died. He was returning to Nairobi from a campaign trail in Machakos. The article was a straight news story that reported the facts as was. Expert opinion was also sought when Mr. Mwai Kibaki’s physician said that he suffered a fracture on the upper right arm and dislocated an ankle. The article practised some sobriety by allaying fears of foul play in the accident. The high number of articles covering Mr. Mwai Kibaki as a presidential candidate can also be attributed to this incident. There were several follow up articles after this incident until the elections. This article had five sources, including Mr. Kibaki, his security detail, two NARC politicians, and the comments of his personal physician. Follow up articles revealed that Mr. Kibaki had to be transferred to Britain for observation where it was discovered he had suffered a hairline fracture during the accident. This incident may have well succeeded in giving him a lot of sympathy votes.

On the other hand *The Standard* published the following articles on Kibaki:

“*Kibaki Unveils power transfer plan*” (December 7, 2002)

“*Kibaki’s sons attack cameramen*” (December 5, 2002)

The first article “*Kibaki Unveils power transfer plan*” was about a letter that Mr. Mwai Kibaki wrote to outgoing President Daniel Moi over his concerns on lack of proper arrangements to hand over power. Mr. Mwai Kibaki was addressing an international press conference in which he said some “mischievous characters” were planning to rig elections. The word “mischievous” was used in a derogatory manner in the article. The use of the word “mischief” was trivial as NARC had already won the elections. Mr. Kibaki said that KANU “had already lost the elections and had no business staying in power but should go home”.

While Mr. Kibaki sought the formation of a power handover committee, he said NARC would takeover government anyway. The article amounted to a chest thumping episode in which Mr. Kibaki exuded a lot of confidence. The article covered his first public function after his return from the UK following the road accident. The article had only one source – Mr. Mwai Kibaki and views from other opposition and KANU politicians were not published. To achieve balance in news articles it is important that views of all parties concerned is represented. In this way a complete picture is given to the readers who only then are in a position to formulate their own opinions on the matter.

The second article “*Kibaki’s sons attack cameramen*” was published after Mr Mwai Kibaki’s accident. Even though *The Standard* also published several articles on Mr. Mwai Kibaki’s accident, they carried an article on this incident unlike *The Nation* which was silent. In this article, Mr. Kibaki’s sons apparently roughed up *The Standard* newspaper camera man trying to cover Mr. Kibaki’s arrival at the Nairobi Hospital shortly after the road accident.¹⁵ This article was not balanced as it had no sources and neither was comment sought from Mr. Kibaki’s sons or his aides on the issue. Mr. Kibaki’s sons were also not mentioned by name. The article was vague though it highlighted the plight of all media houses cameramen during the incident. Mr. Kibaki’s two sons apparently broke several cameras of other media organisations as well. Readings of articles published by *The Nation* were more positive on Mr. Mwai Kibaki as compared to *The Standard* which had a lot of unfavourable coverage.

¹⁵ *The Nation* was curiously silent on the same issue which infringes on press freedom, one of their pet subjects that normally see them unite in solidarity with other rival media groups.

4.4.3. Analysis of articles on Uhuru Kenyatta

This study analyses three articles from this category. *The Nation* had the following article:

“Uhuru urges voters to ignore critics” (December 9, 2002)

The article was about Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta reacting to the criticism that he was President Moi’s puppet and that he was inexperienced to lead the country. The article’s headline as well as the rest of the text emphasised this fact considerably. Structurally, the importance of Mr. Kenyatta is emphasised by his name’s appearance in the title. Mr. Kenyatta dismissed claims that he was inexperienced and said that experienced leaders were to blame for Kenya’s economic woes and ruin. The article dwelt on his lack of experience as a major factor. The rally was also addressed by Mr. Nicholas Biwott, a senior KANU politician, who said the claims laid against Mr. Kenyatta by the opposition were malicious and that the opposition were panicking as they had sensed defeat. The article quoted Mr. Biwott as alleging that Mr. Kenyatta would be unduly influenced by the same people who ruined the economy. The article did not publish views from opposition politicians.

The Standard published the following articles:

“I won’t govern by proxy, Uhuru assures” (December 3, 2002)

“Uhuru ends western tour” (December 8, 2002)

The first article sampled in *The Nation* suggests in its headline and the rest of the text that Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta is the main subject. Structurally, the importance of Mr. Kenyatta is emphasised by his appearance in the title. Unlike the previous article it tries to mitigate accusations against Mr. Kenyatta that he is President Moi’s puppet. In the article he assured

voters that he was his own man contrary to widespread talk that he was President Moi's puppet. The article takes a different angle from the one published by *The Nation*. He asked voters if two people could sit in one chair at the same time in reference to the possibility of him being controlled by retiring president Moi. He dismissed the claims on the grounds that the Kenyan constitution did not allow for such an arrangement. Mr. Kenyatta tries to exonerate himself from the accusations by using metaphors and legal provisions in the constitution. Views from other politicians were not published. This leaves a lot of room for debate because *The Standard* did not give alternative or supporting views from other quarters. The article therefore comes across as Mr. Kenyatta's individual opinion unsupported by other legitimate views.

The second article "*Uhuru ends western tour*" was a declaration by Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta of a breakthrough in the opposition stronghold of Western Province. The article was also covered from a morale boosting perspective. It emphasised the success of Mr. Kenyatta in a region considered an opposition stranglehold.¹⁶ The article stressed the successful tour by Mr. Kenyatta and reiterated that he was his own man contrary to media reports. Like the rest, it did not publish views from opposition politicians. Readings of the articles published on Mr. Kenyatta by both papers disclose that he was viewed as President Moi's "puppet" although *The Standard* presented a more favourable view. This may be because of its ownership connections with the then government.

¹⁶ The article was published at a time when Mr. Kenyatta was struggling to stand alone as an independent candidate. This was after dropping President Moi's company during campaigns. Mr. Kenyatta pointed to the warm welcome he received in the area during his campaign as a positive sign in his presidential bid.

4.4.4 Analysis of articles on Simeon Nyachae

Mr. Simeon Nyachae was the torch bearer for Ford-People party. He emerged as the third candidate overall after Mr. Mwai Kibaki and Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta in the polls. The following article was analysed from *The Nation*:

“Let President retire in peace, pleads Nyachae” (December 16, 2002)

The article’s headline as well as the text takes a reconciliatory tone towards the retiring President Moi. This is inferred from the title by the use of the word “plead”. The text of the article suggests that indeed President Moi had committed economic crimes that saw the country’s economy “go to the dogs”. The article quotes Mr. Nyachae as admitting that the President was a friend and business partner since 1969. His appeal seems to point towards President Moi’s forgiveness on the basis that they were “friends”. The article described and evaluated events from the point of view of the speaker. This perspective was social, cultural, personal and situational and applied to all levels and dimensions of discourse in the article.

The article was analysed by the researcher from a cultural standpoint deduced from the following sentence: *“On President Moi’s scheduled visit to Bomet district tomorrow, Mr. Nyachae urged the Kipsigis community to give him a warm welcome and listen to what he would tell them as a sign of respect but urged them not to buy his ideas...”* This was interpreted as a cultural perspective by the fact that elderly people should be shown respect regardless of their wrongs in African culture. Mr. Nyachae can be credited for practising mature politics from the context of the article. The article was generally one sided since other views from opposition politicians were not published. The article also seemed to portray Mr. Nyachae as pleading for President Moi’s forgiveness on the grounds that they were “long time friends and business partners”.

The Standard newspaper published the following article:

“Tell Kenyans why you were sacked as VP, Nyachae tells Kibaki” (December 7, 2002)

Even though *The Standard* had many articles on Mr. Mwai Kibaki as a presidential candidate most of them had a negative slant as revealed by this article. The headline of the article suggests that the story is an attack by Mr. Nyachae on Mr. Mwai Kibaki. He challenged Mr. Kibaki to tell Kenyans why he had been sacked as Moi’s vice-president. The article uses the word “sacked” in its headline to give a negative picture of Mr. Kibaki’s candidature. The text of the article on the other hand fails to out rightly state why Mr. Kibaki was sacked. It only suggests that the sacking was done during Mr. Kibaki’s tenure as finance minister in President Moi’s regime. This, Mr. Nyachae said, was because of the “economic mess” he put Kenya in. The use of the term “economic mess” was ambiguous and contradictory. The article was vague as it did not give details of how the said “mess” occurred. Neither Mr. Kibaki’s views nor those of opposition politicians on the matter were published. This makes the article one sided. Mr. Nyachae also attacked the “political experience” of Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta saying he was a political novice incapable of leading the country. Similarly, he said Mr. James Orengo, the SDP presidential aspirant, could not lead the country on his experience as a successful lawyer. The article was therefore negative towards all the other presidential candidates. As mentioned earlier, views from other presidential candidates in their defence were not published and neither was comment sought from them.

4.4.5. Analysis of articles on “other” NARC candidates

This category had the highest coverage in the candidates category combined. *The Nation* had the most coverage of NARC candidates as a party, a factor that subtly alluded to their

political inclination. It covered 103 articles for NARC as compared to the 49 articles for KANU. *The Nation* published the following article from this category:

“NARC wants ‘three-piece suit’ votes (December 10, 2002)

The article “*NARC wants ‘three-piece suit’ votes*” dwelt on NARC’s campaign strategy. The use of “three piece suit” phrase in the headline was a descriptive term to illustrate completeness in the suggested voting pattern. The article was an appeal to all voters to reject parliamentary and civic aspirants from KANU and other opposition parties outside the NARC umbrella. They were asked to vote for NARC from the president down to the civic aspirants in a ‘three-piece suit’ style. Other opposition parties outside the NARC coalition had apparently been going round asking voters to vote for Mr. Mwai Kibaki as the presidential aspirant and vote for them in the parliamentary and civic polls. Views from all the three parties in the article were sought and published. The “three-piece suit” phrase also outlines the use of various popular phrases by NARC in the main text of the article to popularise their candidates. Positive or negative opinions about OUR (NARC) and THEIR (Other parties) actions in the article followed an evaluative logic based on the construction of what NARC’s best interests were.

The Standard published the following article:

“Assistant Minister sacked after defecting to NARC” (December 2, 2002)

The Standard highlighted the plight of an assistant minister who was sacked after defecting from KANU to NARC. The text of the article said the reasons for the assistant minister’s dismissal “was not immediately explained”. The writer avoids the use of negative information by saying the reason “was not immediately explained”. It then speculates that the reason was because Mr. Laban Rotich had defected from KANU to NARC but still

continued to hold his ministerial position. He vied for the Kipkelion constituency seat on a NARC ticket. The article however failed to categorically state that he was sacked by outgoing President Moi with no reasons. His defection was a secondary factor since President Moi had previously co-opted politicians from other parties outside KANU.¹⁷ The article could also be viewed as a witch hunt since the said minister's indiscretion on using the ministry's resources went unreported for six years until the time of his defection. The article also highlighted the fact that he did not contribute to any debates in parliament from 1997 until 2001, four years after his election as a legislator. This was viewed as an attempt to question Mr. Rotich's performance as a legislator in parliament. It therefore selectively invoked the history of Mr. Rotich. The article had no sources to support or deny the claims that were made in the text of the article. Mr. Rotich's views were not published.

4.4.6 Analysis of articles on “other” KANU candidates

The data analysed discloses a different outcome from the common notion that the incumbent party - KANU would have had more coverage in both newspapers. Generally, KANU candidates had less coverage in both newspapers as shown on Table 2 above. *The Nation* incidentally covered more KANU parliamentary candidates than *The Standard*. Notably *The Standard* had several versions of the same article. It published three versions of the following article:

“Unopposed Gideon Moi is MP already” (December 2, 2002)

The article suggests in its headline and the rest of the text that Mr. Gideon Moi was the main subject. Structurally, the importance of Mr. Moi is emphasised by his appearance in the title.

The lead of the article mentions that Mr. Gideon Moi is President Moi's son and that he has

¹⁷ The article used negative depiction of the candidate after his defection. It reported on how the candidate had previously used departmental resources at the ministry of works, to repair roads in his constituency leading to his election to parliament unopposed.

been elected unopposed to inherit his father's seat. The story had four different versions that were published in *The Standard*. Mr. Moi's challenger withdrew from the race at the "last minute". Mr. Isaiah Cherutich withdrew his candidature and also resolved to support Mr. Moi "for the sake of unity", "harmony and well being" of the entire constituency. The choice of the words "for the sake of unity", "harmony and well being" of the constituency suggest that there was a certain amount of pressure or coercion on Mr. Cherutich to withdraw his candidacy. The prominence given to this article under the different headlines; "*Gideon Moi declared Baringo central MP*" and "*ECK now declares Gideon Moi MP*", shows the significance attributed to this article as influenced by the ownership of the newspaper. When analysed, the articles had very little new information. Views from other politicians were not published. All these articles could have been merged into one.

The Nation published the following article:

"Moi son takes father's seat as rivals back out" (December 5, 2002)

The Nation published the same story about President Moi's son in a single article unlike *The Standard* that covered it in four different articles. The title of the article clearly emphasises the "who" and "what". The phrase "takes fathers seat" suggests that it was inevitable that Mr. Gideon Moi would win the election. The relationship between Mr. Gideon Moi and his father was given prominence right from the headline to the body of the text. Furthermore, the text of the article hints that the candidates that had challenged Mr. Moi were coerced to "back out" of the race to pave way for Mr. Moi. The article had a single neutral source – the ECK chairman Mr. Samuel Kivuitu. Views from other opposition politicians were not published. A reading of articles in this category revealed that favourable coverage was given to NARC candidates by *The Nation* on one hand. On the other hand, *The Standard* covered KANU candidates more favourably. The article also lacked depth as it only mentioned the

facts and did not analyse the implication of Mr. Moi's win prior to the commencement of elections.

4.4.7 Analysis of articles on “other” Independent candidates

This section analysed articles on candidates from other parties including those vying for parliamentary seats independently. Notably *The Nation* had 20 more articles in this category representing 9.9% of overall coverage compared to 3.96% for *The Standard* as shown on Table 2 above. *The Nation* published the following articles:

“It was a lonely presidential rally” (December 1, 2002)

This article was a grim depiction of Chama Cha Uma (CCU) party presidential candidate Mr. Waweru Ng'ethe's chances at the presidency. This was depicted in the headline of the article by the use of the word “lonely”. The article gave the exact number of people in attendance which was a paltry 126 people, 12 of who were parliamentary and civic candidates from the same party. The numbers were used to reinforce the lack of any serious challenge to the presidency by Mr. Ng'ethe and his entire party. The article further contrasted the attendance to that of major candidates to emphasise the negative picture of desolation for this candidate. It was mentioned in the article that people working nearby the famous Kamukunji grounds continued to go about their business as usual despite the rally. This illustrated the lack of interest in the candidate by the electorate to underpin the image of his slim chance at the presidency. The article had only one source – Mr. Waweru Ng'ethe who was quoted as dismissing other presidential contenders as “being fronted by foreign forces”. Views from other politicians were not published. The article was written in a straight news format where facts were reported as is without any further analysis or interpretative reporting.

The Standard published the following article:

“Orengo rebuffs Raila’s mole claims” (December 10, 2002)

The article was about the war of words between a NARC leading light Mr. Raila Odinga and the SDP presidential candidate Mr. James Orengo. Analysis of the headline would implicitly imply the conflict between the two leaders. The conflict is also alluded to by the choice of the word “rebuff” in the headline. Mr. Orengo was dismissing claims by Mr. Raila Odinga that he was a KANU mole sent to divide opposition votes. He dismissed these claims on the grounds that he had tried to pass a vote of no confidence on President Moi’s government several years ago. In this article Mr. Orengo’s prediction that no party will have a clear majority and that party alliances would be the order of the day came to pass. As a seasoned politician, he was a favourite subject of coverage of both *The Nation* and *The Standard*. He got 40% coverage of all articles in this category. This article had one source and did not have views from other politicians. A reading of articles from this category also revealed mixed fortunes for different candidates. Amongst candidates with no real chance at the presidency, Mr. Orengo was the darling of the press. Both *The Nation* and *The Standard* had very favourable coverage of Mr. Orengo. While *The Nation* had very negative coverage of Mr. Waweru Ng’ethe, *The Standard* did not cover Mr. Ng’ethe at all. These examples portray the mixed fortunes different independent candidates had.

4.4.8 Analysis of the “Others” category

This category carried articles about candidates which could not be classified into any of the other six candidates’ categories. *The Nation* published the following article:

“Ford-P wave could sweep out Anyona” (December 9, 2002)

The lead of this article started thus: “*Fiery politician George Moseti Anyona would have been expected to retain the Kitutu Masaba seat*”. This lead was incomplete and suggested that Mr. Anyona did not retain his seat. In fact the lead conflicts with the main text of the article which speculates on whether Mr. Anyona still had what it took to defend his parliamentary seat. The text of the article also refers to Mr. Anyona as the “chairman-general” and the sole MP of his party, Kenya Social Congress (KSC). This attribution puts Mr. Anyona in a position of high esteem from the writer’s perspective. The article also alludes to Mr. Anyona’s changing stand over the years. It cites his change from a fiery government critic and fighter for human rights and democracy to a defender of the much demonised President Moi’s regime. This, the writer suggests, is confusing to the electorate. The article speculates that Mr. Anyona’s failing health may hamper his chances of defending his parliamentary seat. According to the article, Mr. Anyona’s stronghold of 10 years was apparently threatened by the wave of popularity of Ford-P party in Kisii town. This article was a break in traditional coverage by *The Nation* to cover an independent candidate with an impressive political record stipulating his achievements and tribulations. The article like others had a single source with no views from other politicians. It did not give an all round picture and opinions of others on Mr. Anyona, though it was very analytical. It analysed the chances of Mr. Anyona *vis a vis* the other opposing candidates in the changing political atmosphere dominated by Ford – P party.

The Standard on the other hand published the following article:

“*Saitoti failed as vice-president – Moi*” (December 18, 2002)

The first article was an attack on Prof. George Saitoti by the retiring President Moi. Prof. Saitoti had defected to the opposition party NARC. President Moi said Prof. Saitoti was “unfit” to rule and was even playing “second fiddle” to junior politicians in NARC.

President Moi's claims contradict in the text of the article in the sense that he considers Prof. Saitoti a senior politician yet he is "unfit" to rule. Seniority according to the article is not synonymous to fitness in ruling the country.¹⁸ This article had a negative inkling towards the opposition party NARC. In the same story, President Moi attacked several NARC leaders including Mr. William Ole Ntimama. The then President Moi attacked Mr. Ntimama who had resigned his ministerial post and apparently used his ministerial flag to wipe his nose in defiance of President Moi's government (*The Standard*, 2002, December 18). President Moi asked whether NARC had existed in the 39 years the KANU government had built Kenya. President Moi's assertion had no basis given that KANU was being judged at the time based on its performance record in the 39 years it ruled Kenya. The article's length and pitch clearly pointed to some inclination by *The Standard*. No views from opposition politicians were published.

4.4.9 Role of the Media in shaping different views on Election Candidates

The "candidates" category was the largest and widest covered group of all the categories analysed in this study. Candidates were covered with certain biases as the above analyses show. Independent candidates were given far less coverage most of which was negative. *The Standard* in its article "*Saitoti failed as vice-president – Moi*" for example gives very lengthy and one-sided coverage of President Moi's views on the opposition and its candidates. The article does not give a chance to the people criticised by President Moi to respond. It also shows the bias of this newspaper towards certain parties and views. On the other hand, coverage of articles about Mr. James Orengo depicts how media, despite the various biases, sometimes challenge the social order by giving coverage to smaller

¹⁸ Incidentally Prof. Saitoti had been President Moi's deputy for over 10 years. President Moi made these comments while campaigning for his preferred successor Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta. The political experience of Prof. Saitoti and that of Mr. Kenyatta is not comparable as Prof. Saitoti is much more experienced.

contenders. A reading of articles from this category shows elements of ownership influence in the articles covered.

4.5 Analysis of Editorials and Opinions from the *Nation* and *Standard* newspapers

Research by political scientists has found out that there is a marked relationship between editorial content and candidate preferences. Candidates who are given positive editorial endorsements fare better than those with negative coverage (Combs, 1981; Robinson, 1974). They argue that voting patterns have been documented to have a direct relationship with newspaper endorsements in the US. *The Nation* website published 30 editorials and opinion pieces during the entire election period. This constituted 6.08% of the total number of articles published. They had opinion pieces by all presidential candidates except Mr. Mwai Kibaki. All other candidates wrote opinion pieces articulating their agenda for Kenya. Apparently, Mr. Mwai Kibaki did not forward an opinion piece as requested by the newspaper. Prior to the elections there had been concerns from other KANU politicians like Mr. William Ruto that Mr. Mwai Kibaki is a fence sitter. *The Standard* on the other hand published 28 opinion and editorial pieces representing 6.77% of the articles published.¹⁹ The editorials analysed from both newspapers gave a clear picture and stand of the writers and by extension the allegiances of both papers as determined by ownership patterns. The editorials were more direct in their favour of one party or the other and expressed positions more openly.

The following editorial was analysed from *The Nation*:

“Why acrimonious nominations may be beyond legal reproach” (December 8, 2002)

¹⁹ As is the case globally, editorials and op-ed articles in the press are generally expected to express opinions. (Op-ed articles are opinion pieces published on the page opposite the editorials.) Depending on the type and stance of the newspaper, these opinions may vary considerably in their ideological presuppositions (van Dijk, 2001:21).

The headline of this editorial like its text seems to mitigate the acrimonious nominations by the various parties including KANU and NARC. The lead of the editorial by Mr. Lee Muthoga suggests that there was “some bickering”. This phrase and combination of words in Mr. Muthoga’s opinion was trivial and bereft of legal backing. He said that the irregular and acrimonious nomination process “had been termed as an abuse of democracy in some cases and an exercise of tyranny by others”. The editorial therefore modified the propositions “abuse of democracy” and an “exercise of tyranny” by suggesting that it had been termed so in “certain quarters”. The propositional structure of the statement itself expresses opinion. Therefore Mr. Muthoga de-emphasises the acrimony and irregularity of the nomination exercise conducted by political parties especially NARC. He therefore mitigates OUR (NARC’s) bad actions. He further tried to give legal backing to the chaotic nomination process by stating that Section 17 of the National Assembly and Presidential Election Act provides that: “a person shall be deemed to be nominated by a political party for election as a member of the National assembly if he is selected in a manner provided for in the Constitution or rules of the political party concerned”. This claim had no basis since party constitutions were blatantly violated in the nomination exercises. Some candidates were denied nomination certificates after emerging clear winners. Others were given certificates which were then nullified in favour of rival candidates.

Whilst Mr. Muthoga suggests in the editorial’s text that the bickering generated by the nomination be addressed rather than swept under the carpet, he said it was necessary to remember that the nominations was a process of “selection” not election. He argues that the principle considerations are not to select the most popular contestant amongst the members. It is to select the most “vote-getting candidate both in the constituency and nationally”. These assertions seem to negate the principles of democracy whereby the most popular candidate is elected through an open, free and fair voting process. Mr. Muthoga seemed to

contradict democratic principles by saying that it is a “selection” and not an election process. His argument of “the most vote getting candidate” is erroneous since this would only apply to presidential candidates vying for both constituency and national positions. Voting patterns in Kenya suggest that the electorate would normally vote for a popular candidate and the presidential contender from the same party.

The writer therefore admonishes “selection” when it is used by some parties but excuses it when it applies to NARC. In this way the act of “selection” appears to be good when applied by OUR people as the primary actors, and considered bad when used by THEIR people. This strategy of polarisation – positive in-group description and negative out-group description is used to mitigate OUR bad actions and demonise the same actions when used by THEM (see e.g. Fowler, 1991; van Dijk, 1991). Mr. Muthoga further mitigates the chaotic NARC nomination exercise by stating that the selection board had the final word. He argued that as long as parties’ constitutions and rules permit direct nominations, or have power to overrule the result of a primary, then the nominations of candidates was valid. This editorial’s opinion was clearly inclined towards NARC after a chaotic nominations exercise that resulted in last minute defections by candidates denied nomination certificates.

The Standard contrastingly published the following editorial:

“Responsible handling of media critical to parties” (December 19, 2002)

The editorial stated that NARC candidates were not happy with the label “turncoats”. The haunting refrain depicting a crop of politicians who defected to the other side was made by Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta. He also alleged that the defectors were “old timers” recycling themselves with nothing new to offer. These statements by Mr. Kenyatta demonise the defectors from his party to NARC. It attributes the phrase “turncoats” to the defectors but

fails to highlight their reasons for defecting. The mass defections as analysed in the first editorial, was because Mr. Kenyatta was imposed on other candidates as President Moi's preferred successor. The defections came after Mr. Kenyatta was "selected" by President Moi. Mr. Absalom Mutere who authored the editorial also suggests that the phrase "turncoats" was "haunting" NARC politicians. This assertion enhanced in several stylistic and rhetorical ways Mr. Kenyatta's opinion. The use of "haunting" was inferred to be a meta-opinion (opinions can be opinions about other opinions) (van Dijk, 2001:29-31).

The writer therefore mitigates Mr. Kenyatta's labelling of opposition politicians as turncoats but demonises the advertisement NARC published in the Nation to answer him. In a rejoinder to Mr. Kenyatta's statements, he was described as "untried", "untested, unelected and inexperienced". These assertions were based on facts and the writer did not criticise the allegations but questioned their use in an advertisement. His strategy was therefore based on an ideological square whereby OUR good actions and THEIR bad ones will in general tend to be described at a lower, more specific level, with many (detailed) propositions (see van Dijk, 2001:35). The opposite will be true for OUR bad actions and THEIR good ones, which, if described at all, will both be described in rather general, abstract and hence 'distanced' terms, without giving much details (van Dijk, 2001:35). Mr. Mutere demonises advertising as "an element which dictated the truth to the media in a manner that no other entity can approximate" (*The Standard*, 2002, December 19). Even though the writer acknowledges the importance of advertising as the backbone of media revenue, being fond of profits is viewed negatively here – not, of course, because this is out of line with the basic tenets of capitalism, but rather because it means doing business with the enemy. Mr. Mutere further demonises advertising by saying that truth becomes a tricky commodity when dealing with advertisers who specialise in telling you what they think you ought to hear (*The Standard*, 2002, December 19).

He compares NARC's propaganda and advertising strategy to that of "Adolf Hitler which led to the mass extermination of Jews". The writer therefore applies the ideological square to this comparison. He describes NARC's advertisement at a lower more specific level, with many (detailed) propositions. The editorial therefore used Adolf Hitler's example to evaluatively castigate NARC's advertising strategy as extremist. This editorial was therefore postured in favour of Mr. Kenyatta as the above analysis shows. It also pointed out to the general fact that business through advertisements has emerged as a major controller of media content with the leverage of pulling out advertisements which media outlets depend on for survival. This editorial brought to the fore critical political economy of the media analyses on how media is influenced, influences power relations and the exercise of power. A reading of both editorials clearly points us to the allegiance of both newspapers as influenced by ownership patterns.²⁰

4.6 Analysis of Interest Groups category

The presidential and parliamentary elections of 2002 were undoubtedly influenced by interest groups in terms of voter turnout, candidate endorsements, and campaign contributions (see first article below). Commonly termed "interest groups," these

²⁰ Traditional liberal theorists hold that government is the sole object of press vigilance. This derives from a period when government was commonly thought to be the 'seat' of power (Curran, 2000:122). However this argument is time worn as it takes no account of the exercise of economic authority by shareholders and advertisers (Curran, 2000:122) (See Chapter 2). The editorial "*Responsible handling of media critical to parties*" from *The Standard* suggests that critical political economy of the media is concerned with the balance between 'capitalist enterprise and public intervention'. The writer of this editorial was concerned that a rival competitor – *The Nation* was more inclined to its capitalist enterprise more than its public role as a watchdog and champion of the truth. This was unfair criticism since *The Standard* is also largely a capitalist enterprise rather than a champion of the public's rights. Without this extensive support, Negrine (1994:70-85) argues that many of our newspapers, for example, would either cost much, much more or cease to exist. This shows the rather near fatal dependence of media on advertising, lending credence to the argument of the marked influence of advertisement in studies of political economy of the media (Negrine, 1994:70-85).

associations are also referred to as pressure groups, lobbies, special interests, and organized interests (Roberts, 2004:25-40).

According to Table 1 above, *The Standard* had the most number of articles on interest groups. They published the following article:

“Women threaten to resort to mass action” (December 24, 2002)

The lead of the article begins thus: “Women will resort to mass action if the General Election is rigged...” (*The Standard*, 2002, December 24). This statement alluded to the fact that previous elections had been rigged and that women would not tolerate it anymore. Mrs Martha Koome, chairlady of Federation of Women Lawyers – Kenya (FIDA) expressed fears that confusion by ECK over who was eligible to vote was a precursor to rigging the elections. She said this amounted to “shifting goal posts”. This phrase suggested that women through their representatives foresaw the change of the voters register as a deliberate attempt to pave way for rigging.

Mrs. Koome was accompanied by a powerful delegation including NARC Women Congress chairperson, Mrs. Ida Odinga, the wife of Mr. Raila Odinga. This portrayed where the interests of FIDA lay. The closing comments of the article suggested that the election of Mr. Gideon Moi unopposed was a sign of plots by KANU to rig the elections. The article had a single source and views from other opposition and KANU politicians or the ECK chairman were not sought.

The Nation published the following article:

“Stick to issues, prelate urges candidates” (December 2, 2002)

Traditionally the Kenyan society has always held statements and opinions of prelates in high esteem and moral ground hence their coverage as authoritative sources in news articles. “*Stick to issues, prelate urges candidates*” was an article where parliamentary and presidential candidates were urged by the chairman of the Kenyan Episcopal conference, Archbishop John Njue to stop personal attacks on each other and address issues. The urge to stick to issues was given prominence in the headline and subsequent text. The Archbishop was given prominence as an authoritative source since he is the chairman of KEC.

The Archbishop is quoted in the text as urging voters to decide on their destiny by voting wisely to mark the end of “bad governance”. The statement riles the outgoing President Moi’s government as having run down the country through bad governance. The article had one source and views from other politicians were not published.

4.7 Analysis of Other Candidates Category

This section carried articles that could not be classified into the other categories. *The Nation* newspaper had the following article:

“President’s pledge on transition welcomed” (December 13, 2002)

The “*President’s pledge on transition welcomed*” article was covered on the backdrop of fears that outgoing President Moi would cling to power. President Moi was quoted during his last public holiday rally as promising to hand over power to the eventual winner of the election. The text of the article quoted Prof. George Saitoti as warning President Moi that any attempts to cling onto power may result in strife. The article was well written with 8 sources giving differing views on President Moi’s last public address. Diplomats were also pleased by President Moi’s pledge. Mr. William Brencick, US deputy head of mission,

lauded President Moi for having publicly declared he would voluntarily retire at the end of his tenure. The article therefore carried elements of social responsibility by *The Nation*.

The Standard published the following article:

"Bush hails Moi over transition" (December 7, 2002)

The headline of this article as well as its text depicts the main subjects of the story. The article was not balanced and was written by the presidential press service. The article quoted US president George Bush as praising President Moi as a "strong and stable" leader. The leaders were meeting to seek ways of curbing "terrorist" attacks, after an Israeli owned plane and Hotel in Mombasa were bombed. The word "terrorists" was used by President George Bush to contextually express US values and norms, and was therefore used to express a value judgement. President Bush had called the Kenyan president to discuss "terrorist" matters. In this article President Bush seemed to apply the notion that the enemy of our enemy is our friend. He seemed to adopt a new strategy of rallying countries that neighboured Somalia to clamp down and pursue "terrorists" believed to have bases in Somalia.

Incidentally, Somalia has been a US foreign policy demon which saw several of their soldiers killed during their excursion into Somalia in pursuit of "terrorists". This forced the Clinton administration to withdraw unconditionally. The article widely quoted both President Moi and President Bush as depicted in the headline of the article. No views were sought from other candidates. Articles covered in this category showed mixed results as far as ownership is concerned. *The Nation* article did not point towards any ownership influence generally. On the other hand the *Standard* article clearly pointed to ownership influence. The article was covered by the Presidential press service and published in *The Standard*.

Following the analysis of all articles in this chapter, this study finds that the Kenyan media is indeed concentrated. This is because of the fact that *Nation newspaper* and *Standard newspaper* dominated election news coverage throughout the election period. Readers relied mainly on these two newspapers for election news. As a result, ownership patterns of the two newspapers were important in influencing the public opinion. This was evident in the slant of the news articles covered by both newspapers. Indeed the slanted newspaper articles suggest that ownership concentration had an effect on news coverage. Even though news coverage was slanted in favour of certain political parties and candidates, both *The Nation newspaper* and *The Standard newspaper* played a critical role in the democratic process that led to a successful and peaceful transition from one regime to the next. This was done by the coverage of voter education news stories, exposure of plans to rig elections and condemnation of politicians who engaged in vices like election violence. Also going by the number of election pledges stories covered, the media endeavoured to inform voters on the promises made by politicians so that the electorate could in future judge politicians on the basis of these promises.

Chapter 5

5.0 Conclusion

This study looked at data from two major Kenyan newspapers to determine that media ownership patterns are not only manifest, but are indeed an important influence in the shaping of media messages. Findings from the preceding chapters show four important elements; first, is the increasingly important role of media in a democracy. This fact is traceable in the Kenyan media' inclination to the coverage of candidates rather than on issues hence the personality driven elections that were witnessed in Kenya. Similarly, empirical evidence point to the fact that Mr. Mwai Kibaki was given more coverage overall in both newspapers and emerged as the eventual election winner. This led to the conclusion that media do certainly influence public opinion and therefore democratic choice of citizens. This result attests to the fact that both newspapers, *The Nation* and *The Standard* have certainly played a major role in the democratic process in Kenya as was raised in the research questions. The researcher also determined that the role of media in a democracy is to entertain, educate and inform as discussed in previous chapters. Though done in varying degree, albeit unsatisfactorily, both newspapers had a fair share of articles on voter education, election violence, interest groups and election pledges. This was viewed by the researcher as an attempt by the newspapers to even out coverage on different issues.

The second emergent factor as discussed earlier is the discovery that ownership patterns do indeed influence media messages in Kenya. Of particular note was the fact that both newspapers' editorials were considerably slanted in favour of views preferred by the newspapers' owners. It is evident that *The Nation* was more inclined to the opposition NARC party, with *The Standard* vouching for the then ruling party KANU. Coverage of

both newspapers therefore gave more articles to candidates from their parties of choice, and when covering an opposing candidate, in most cases, they resorted to negative coverage. Also related to the factor of ownership was the relationship between media owners and the polity in Kenya. The media as witnessed in the case of Britain in previous chapters gave coverage to top political figures in the hope that when they assume positions of power, several concessions would be given in return to their thriving businesses. The emergent winner NARC party indeed gave several concessions in terms of an enabling business environment to *NMG* after the 2002 elections. They were given licenses to broadcast countrywide, a feat they had unsuccessfully sought under the disposed KANU regime for several years. As such this has enabled the media organisation to rapidly expand both its radio and television franchise to all parts of the country, formerly a preserve of the government controlled national broadcaster - *KBC*.

Also emergent from this research is the issue of concentration of media ownership as mentioned above. Globally there have been similar trends in growth of media conglomerates like Rupert Murdoch's News Corp and Ted Turner's AOL Time Warner that present the foremost examples of this trend. Given the awarding of broadcast licenses to *NMG*, it has had an aggressive expansion of its media franchise across radio, television and magazine interests. This has seen them bring into existence *Nation TV (NTV)*, *Nation Radio (Easy FM)* that previously broadcasted in Nairobi only. They can now be heard country wide, and recently they have re-launched the East African edition of both *Drum* and *True Love* magazines in collaboration with the giant Media 24 of South Africa. Media 24 is considered the proverbial 800 pound gorilla of South African Media. *NMG* has also acquired vast interests in both Tanzania and Uganda. They have acquired interests in newspaper and Radio business and are now establishing a TV station in Uganda. They own the leading daily

newspaper – *Monitor* and *K-FM* radio. In Tanzania they own the recently re-launched English newspaper – *The Citizen* and *Radio Uhuru*, hence their aggressive regional expansion. This has brought about both cross and mono media concentration patterns in the ownership of media (see discussion in chapter 2). The reverse has been true for *SNG*. While they had been awarded a TV license during the KANU era, the NARC government gave them the TV license to broadcast in major towns only, and has since denied them a radio broadcasting license according to their former CEO Mr Tom Mshindi.

The fourth emergent factor was the issue of resource distribution in the coverage of articles. As exhibited by the two media groups, resources were allocated to cover major election contenders. Other candidates considered as “making the numbers” were given little or no coverage at all. This factor was manifest in the articles published on both Mr. Mwai Kibaki – the eventual winner and his leading challenger – Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta. This brings to the fore the question of how internal editorial processes within *The Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers organisations work in tandem to ensure a fair and balanced coverage of all issues depending on the basic journalistic facet of newsworthiness. Having worked for the *NMG* the researcher observed that more reporters and other news coverage machinery were allocated to the leading candidates during electioneering periods. Also manifest was the fact that the two media houses concentrated on major events in Nairobi and its environs, giving little or no coverage to stories from the provinces or remote parts of the country.

This research like any other study experienced certain difficulties and handicaps. Of note was the need to have data expansion. This could have been done through additional time to conduct a more comprehensive study of media ownership and how it is apparent in Kenya. There was also a need to actually interview leading editors of the two news organisations to

pick their thoughts on difficulties experienced during the course of their work. Similarly it was important to find out if indeed they receive calls or other manner of coercion from media owners to cover or to drop certain news articles. This characteristic is not new as it has happened from the early 18th century which saw the press barons directly pressurising editors to cover or drop certain news articles (Curran, 2000; Murdock, 1994). This happening has also occurred in large news conglomerates like News Corp with Rupert Murdock even firing editors that have failed to “tow the line” (Murdock, 1994:3-6). This research could have furthermore extended its scope to cover the electronic media. Both radio and television sector in Kenya have indeed shown a manifestation of ownership influence and control that could have shed more light on how ownership influence is apparent in the Kenyan media industry. Moreover, various countries could have been covered to demonstrate the emerging ownership influence on media. This could have shed light on the different factors influencing this trend in different contexts. As has been studied in the British media, it was of interest to discover how ownership influence is evident in the various political contexts of African countries that are slowly embracing democracy and how media has enabled this democratic process as discussed earlier in this chapter.

This research certainly helps in understanding the factors that influence media messages in portraying issues as they do. The researcher determined how ownership patterns do affect media messages in total disregard to established editorial policies and other industry best practices. It also shows how professionalism of journalists is increasingly waning in light of ownership and business interests as attested to by studies of critical political economy of the media – the main theory used in this study. Ownership control and interference makes the future of journalists quite bleak. This uncertain future is further compounded by newspapers

increasing use of syndicated articles across their titles to minimise production costs and maximise revenue.

Recommendations of this research are that editors should adhere to formulated editorial policies which essentially cover issues on how news should be covered and how journalists should professionally go about their work. This may also help editors avert undue ownership influence of their work. However, it is a difficult feat to achieve as some owners are aggressive towards editors who fail to adhere to their whims. Editors the world over have had to resign or are forcefully dismissed when they stick to their professional inclinations which makes the adherence to professional values a bit tricky.

Another factor that could help achieve balanced news coverage is the employment of professional journalists with formal journalistic training. This has not been the case in Kenya. The current crop of journalists are people with no formal journalistic qualifications. These journalists thrive on the fact that they have gained valuable “experience” in the course of writing news stories. They have also used the need of work experience to technically eliminate fresh graduates from various schools of journalism from available jobs.

The government should also enact laws that will regulate unhealthy cross media ownership trends that may eventually stifle diversity in news coverage. This can be done by enacting laws that create an enabling business environment with few barriers to new entrants and availing a level playing field to all business people. This scenario will create competition which ensures that news coverage is balanced and fair and that there are wider opinions, views and perspectives that the greater public may use to arrive at important decisions. It has been notable that while media puts pressure on governments to embrace democratic

principles, their internal structures are quite rigid and undemocratic, hence the need to commission a study of how the internal news gathering processes can be revitalised to ensure balanced and accurate news coverage.

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