TOWARDS AN EXAMINATION AND EXPANSION
OF THE AGENDA SETTING THEORY:
DID THE MEDIA MATTER IN KENYA'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, 2007?

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by
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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the

dissertation entitled

TOWARDS AN EXAMINATION AND EXPANSION
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Presented by Uche Onyebadi

A candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

And hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance

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…to all who keep it in mind to concretize their academic vision someday - courage

…to all my family and friends, living and deceased - *Chukwu gozie unu*

… to Afamefuna and Yadilichkwu - God's protection as you grow up

...to Kajuju - *Nakupenda sana*

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the usefulness of the agenda setting theory in communications research outside its traditional European and American habitat. It examines Kenya (Africa), with the research question: Did the media matter in Kenya's 2007 presidential election? Furthermore, it examines the media's role just before and after the election in Kenya, to ascertain whether the media anticipated the nation-wide violence that rocked the country, and how that event was subsequently covered.

Research results suggest issues, cognitive and affective media agenda setting influence on the public agenda, and positively answered the research question. Respondents also perceived media influence in their choice of political candidates.

This study also found that the media did not anticipate or point to the possibility of a violent outcome from the election, but deeply resorted to peace journalism when the violence erupted and spread. Content analysis and survey were used in the study.

Overall, this research adds to attempts to universalize the agenda setting theory. It shows that the theory is a learning process that affects decisions, not just showing media influence on what their audiences think about. It also points out the failure of the media in not going beyond horse-race issues in an election. On the other hand, it demonstrates the media's capacity as a force for cohesion and unity in times of national tragedy.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This is a two-in-one dissertation. It is so because of the intervention of history. The original intent was to examine the role of the media in Kenya's 2007 presidential election against the backdrop of the agenda setting theory, and in the process attempt an expansion of the frontiers of the theory. The result of the election however turned highly contentious and violence erupted throughout the country. This unforeseen aftermath necessitated the second segment of this study: an examination of the media and electoral violence in Kenya.

Starting with the original concept, the overarching question is: Do media matter? This has been one of the recurring issues in communications research. To Protess and McCombs (1991) there are tissues of empirical evidence to support the conclusion that media matter. While not casting aspersions at the reasoning that the media have measurable input in the formation and shaping of public discourse, Purvis (2001) cautions that it is quite alluring if not compelling to lavishly exaggerate the role and impact of the media in society.

Both views are pertinent to this research. Overall, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) contend that the relevance of the media essentially lies in their primary function: that of the provision of the information with which citizens govern and structure their daily lives. This broad assertion includes information that runs the entire gamut of decisions on personal, domestic, professional and public life. Such a role for the media is deeply

etched in the philosophy of James Mill who basically saw the media as agitators in the sense of arming citizens with information to make decisions about their governance.

The general watchdog role of the media is hugely articulated by Altschull (1990) who invokes the philosophies of James Mill, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and to an extent Karl Marx in weighing individual needs and the necessity for the media to promote and protect them, against the governing of society by elected rulers in a democratic setting.

In more specific determination of the media's relevance in society, Kennamer (1992), Linsky (2007), Paletz (1998) and Kedrowski (2007) all essentially contend that the process of policy making in any democratic setting would be most arduous if not redundant without factoring in the media. Kennamer (1992) for instance acknowledges that the media serve as the strategic link between policy makers and the people: examining and explaining policies to the citizenry and articulating and channeling feedback to the policy makers.

In this research, the question as to whether the media matter is examined from the perspective of the political process, with specific reference to political campaigns and their attendant elections. McCombs and Shaw (1972) opine that a great deal of voters' political socialization takes place during political campaigns and election time, and that the media can be located at the center of this process. McCombs (2004) puts it more eloquently by asserting that "during election voters frequently learn a great deal about the candidates and their issue positions from the news media and from political advertising.

This learning (process) includes significant adoption of the media agenda in direct relation to the voters' level of need for orientation" (p. 57).

Although Lang and Lang (1981) are largely concerned with the process of agenda building in society, they also concede that the media cannot be excluded in any exercise to determine the various influences on voters as they absorb the information they need to make rational choices with their ballot. And in their study on the setting of the political agenda in times of elections, Walgrave and Van Aelst (2006) reiterate the primacy of the media during this period.

Perhaps the most succinct articulation of the rationale for the use of political electioneering campaign period to measure the level of relevance of the media comes from McCombs and Shaw (1977). The authors argue that "a political campaign is a key place to study mass communication influence because media behavior is intimately connected with how our political environment is perceived, how our agenda of public issues is shaped, and how we cast our votes. In other words, the political agenda of the mass media is highly related to the shape of political power" (p. 150).

A number of studies have addressed the impact of the media in political campaign periods and elections. McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar and Rey (1997) examined municipal elections in Spain and concluded that the media had an impact on how the voters perceived the contestants in the elections. Golan and Wanta (2001) found similar influence in the New Hampshire primary election in the 2000 U.S. presidential elections. And while studying adolescents and political participation in the states of Arizona, Colorado and Florida in the 2004 U.S. elections, Kiousis, McDevitt and Wu (2005) found

evidence of media influence on what the adolescents knew about the elections. On his part, Holbrook (2002) argues that by giving wide publicity to the messages of presidential candidates in an election, the traditional knowledge gap between educated and non educated electorate appears to narrow remarkably.

The structural interconnectedness between most of the studies itemized above lies in their theoretical underpinning: the agenda setting theory of mass communication. As articulated by two of its major proponents, the agenda setting theory assumes that "the priorities of the press to some degree become the priorities of the public. What the press emphasizes is in turn emphasized privately and publicly by the audiences of the press" (McCombs and Shaw, 1977, p. 6).

Lending support to the above is the idea that agenda setting is in reality a form of a social learning process (Wanta, 1997a). He argues that "individuals learn about the relative importance of issues in society through the amount of coverage the issues receive in the news media." (p. 2). Consequently, the more focus on the issues by the media, the more the audiences of the media learn and attach importance to those issues.

What can be gleaned from the discussion so far is that the media, through the instrumentality of the agenda setting theory, have verifiable impact on the information available to the electorate as they decide how to utilize their ballot in an election.

It is against this backdrop that the primary aim of this research shall be understood. The primary purposes of this segment of the study are therefore twofold:

1. To assess whether or not the media were relevant in the 2007 presidential election in Kenya, East Africa. This assessment invariably

involves an investigation into the claims and applicability of the agenda

setting theory in a developing country that Kenya is.

2.   To attempt, based on the evidence from the above political process, an

expansion of the present frontiers of the agenda setting theory by

assessing the viability of a model of the theory that is based on voter

empowerment and outcomes.

The objective in the first purpose above is to use the agenda setting theory to

determine whether the media facilitated social and political issues learning (Wanta,

1997a), and candidate association with issues during the 2007 presidential elections in

Kenya. In other words, since the first level agenda setting deals with the transference of

issues salience from the media to their audiences (Ghanem, 1997), and the second level

with associating candidates with attributes which end up being what the audiences also

attribute to the candidates (Golan and Wanta, 2001), how did the Kenyan media fare on

both scores during the 2007 presidential elections?

In the second purpose, the idea is to take a specific look at the outcome of such

social and political learning in the voters' expression of preference for candidates in the

presidential contest. In other words, to what extent did voters acknowledge and

demonstrate the impact of political issues and messages learned from the media in their

eventual choice of presidential candidates?

The wider scope of both purposes shall be more fully examined in the theory

section of this research.

The logical aftermath in stating the dual purposes of this research is to ask the question: Why investigate the claims of the theory in a developing world, Africa and Kenya in particular? Why push for the expansion of the agenda setting theory from the perspective of the examination of outcomes?

There is historical evidence that agenda setting scholarship is of Western parentage, as can be traced to research in Chapel Hill and Charlotte (both in North Carolina, U.S.A.) by McCombs and Shaw (1972, 1977), which produced the first empirical foundation for the theory. Allusions to the theory as evidenced by the works of Lippmann (1922) and Cohen (1963) still belong to the same hemispheric origin.

Since its "official" inception in the early 1970s, agenda setting theory has been used in multifarious studies virtually across the globe. In *Setting the agenda*, McCombs (2004) expresses a degree of measured delight in noting that studies using the theory had been conducted in areas outside the U.S. A., such as Japan, Spain, Argentina and Germany among others.

Complementing this observation, McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar and Rey (1997, p. 715) assert that "traditional agenda-setting theory and the transfer of issue salience from the media to the public has been documented in numerous countries in Asia, Europe, and North America" despite the existence of oftentimes significant cultural differences among the countries and against the backdrop of their somewhat similar political and media systems.

These observations compel the question: where does Africa fit into the picture? There is a palpable dearth of replicable studies that are informed by the theory in its

contemporary format of first and second level agenda setting in Africa, in contrast to Asia, North and South America and Europe where such studies, some of which command international reputation and attention, have been carried out.

This study will attempt to add to the filling of this void. Theories in whatever field of human enterprise are strengthened if they have the capacity for universal application. Applying agenda setting to an African (Kenyan) setting would add a notch in this strengthening process. Besides, as McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar and Rey (1997) equally argue, "testing the theory in different countries and diverse cultures is important for identifying the common ground in communications research" (p. 715).

This diversity is equally reflected in the fact that Kenya, like many African countries, is a multi-ethnic society with a multi-party system of political participation. This situation is quite different from the US, for instance, where a majority of agenda setting research has been conducted. Therefore, one of the unique elements of this research is to test the theory in an environment that can be considered to be outside the traditional agenda setting habitat.

Even more unique to this study is the relevance of history in human affairs. This relates to the second segment of this study. In the midst of assembling the tools for this research, the 2007 presidential election took place in Kenya but resulted in disputed results by the main opposition party, the Orange Democratic Party (ODM) and its leader, Raila Odinga. Following this rejection of the polling result and the subsequent swearing in of President Mwai Kibaki for his second term of office, the country was thrown into a season of unprecedented violence at the end of which about 1,500 people died and some

600,000 others were displaced from their homes (*British Broadcasting Corporation news online*, April 17, 2008).

This study shall attempt to examine the media's coverage of the violence that followed the disputed election. This is the main reason why, in practical terms, this research is being described as a two-in-one-study.

Another pedestal in the rationale for the focus on Kenya in this research is that unlike other regions of the world, the volume of communications research that is situated in Africa is quite limited. As far back as the 1980s Ugboajah (1985) had pointed out, for instance, that despite the active role of the media in the process of liberation and independence activities in Africa, communications research in the continent as a whole and West Africa and Nigeria in particular, was yet to document what went on in that epoch-making era. This dearth of communications research may not have significantly improved. This study is therefore aimed at contributing to the building of communications research efforts that have Africa as their primary area of investigation.

Why Kenya as the principal focus? First, there is the contemporaneous element. This study was deliberately designed to be conducted as the country was undergoing its 2007 presidential election. Secondly, although much more will be explored about the country in the literature review segment of this research, it is appropriate to state that Kenya is arguably the dominant nation-state in East Africa. It is one of the few African countries that have not been derailed by the fervor of military intervention in African politics and political affairs. Neither has it suffered the tremor of internal rebellion that

inevitably results in intra-national insurgency and rebel activities that in turn cripple many an African nation-state.

Above all, like other places where agenda setting research has been conducted, Kenya is a functioning democratic nation-state, despite the imperfections involved in the country's democratic process. The election violence which erupted after the December 2007 presidential and parliamentary polls is one of the examples of this imperfection. However, it is to their credit that barely one month after the political crisis began, efforts at national reconciliation equally commenced and a power-sharing arrangement between the ruling and opposition parties was agreed upon in February 2008.

Nevertheless, the country has maintained an unbroken chain of democratic governance since multi-party democracy was constitutionally introduced in 1992. Its media industry has within the same time frame grown to enjoy a large measure of independence and freedom. In a Kenya national survey sponsored by the US-based International Republican Institute (IRI) and conducted in September, 2007, 83.7 percent of the respondents rated the media in Kenya as enjoying a large measure of freedom in news reporting. The World Bank development data show that as far back as 2000, Kenya had a 73.6 percent literacy rate among people of fifteen years of age and above.

This aspect of the national statistics is crucial for without an unfettered media environment, fairly high literacy rate and media access, then it is questionable to think about conducting meaningful agenda setting research in such an environment for the basic reason that agenda setting is a continuum that has the media and audience at the beginning and end points respectively.

Two key newspapers in Kenya – the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* as well as their Saturday and Sunday versions – will be used in this study. Both English-language newspapers control more than 70 percent of newspaper circulation in the country and are widely regarded as the most prominent newspapers in Kenya.

As mentioned earlier, a crucial *raison d'etre* for this research is the attempt to expand the frontiers of agenda setting theory. As the theory stands, its concern is with the transference of issue salience and the agenda of attributes, both of which shall be further explored in the body of this study. Little or minimal concern is devoted to the outcome of these two phases or levels of the theory.

In other words having given the audience what issues to think about and linking attributes to contestants for political office, what next? This study suggests that there will be an outcome based on the knowledge gained from the first and second levels of the theory. Voters do not simply arm themselves with crucial information about those seeking political office and stop at that. The next phase of the electioneering campaign process is the act of voting. So, to what extent were the issues and attributes gained from media serve as impetus for electoral outcomes? This is the essence of the focus on outcomes.

McCombs and Shaw (1993) acknowledge that agenda setting has a wide horizon and that with time, communication scholars and researchers shall continue to broaden the scope of the theory. This study is in part a response to this clarion call. Besides, as Shoemaker et al (2004) suggest in *How to build social science theories*, theory building is a continuous process with long-lasting focus.

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This research, in the tradition of agenda setting inquiry, will employ the instruments of survey of registered voters in Nairobi, Kenya's capital city, and the content analysis of the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers in attempting to ascertain whether or not the media were relevant in the 2007 presidential elections in Kenya.

However, a literature review is imperative at this juncture.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Prior to the novelty of television coverage of political debates and campaign during the 1960 presidential election in the U.S., the prevailing research themes among scholars was that political party identification was almost the sole determinant of voter behavior (Holtz-Bacha, 2004). This proposition had been partly sustained by the media's minimal effects theorists as exemplified by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944). Television coverage of the famous Kennedy-Nixon political debate was to challenge this perception about this exclusive connection between political party affiliation and voter behavior.

Contemporary media scholarship in this regard appears to place strong emphasis on the role of the media in democratic elections and voter choices. This idea is strongly articulated by King (1997) who claims that the modern political election is a tripartite affair between candidates for political office, the electorate and the media. The media, he posits, form the bridge between the contestants and voters, stridently facilitating the passage of information from candidates to constituents, and providing feedback from the latter to the former.

The post Kennedy-Nixon era in the U.S. has witnessed even more involvement of the media in the coverage of elections and providing voters with information they need in determining whom to vote for. What used to be ad-hoc media coverage has metamorphosed into very huge attention to elections. For

instance, CNN set up its coverage bureau for the 2008 presidential election in the U.S. twelve months prior to the actual voting. The same station has been involved in hosting political debates and doing profiles on the contestants even at the primaries stage of the presidential ballot. The television networks and other cable television channels are basically doing the same thing. It is instructive in this regard that as of April, 16, 2008, candidates of the Democratic Party had held 21 televised political debates in the U.S.A. According to the US-based Center For Responsive Politics, as at February 2008, candidates for the elections had spent $586.1 million on the primaries alone, with a total funding receipt of $791.8 million. In 1976, the candidates raised $171 million and spent $66.9 million.

Patterson (1980) vividly captures this modern involvement of the media in political elections in his assertion that:

> Today's presidential campaign is essentially a mass media campaign. It is not that the mass media entirely determine what happens in the campaign, for that is far from true. But it is no exaggeration to say that, for the large majority of voters, the campaign has little reality apart from its media version. Without the benefit of direct campaign contact, citizens must rely on the media for nearly all their election information. (p. 3).

Benoit and Hansen (2004) acknowledge this situation when they asserted that "today, few voters learn about presidential candidates from direct (interpersonal) contact with nominees," and noted that the 2003 U.S. Census Bureau figures show that 212 million Americans are eligible voters, thus concluding that voters can only "learn about the candidates through mediated messages" (p. 165) from the candidates.

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Such messages come via advertisements, debates, speeches, or through the media

coverage of the election and through inter-personal discussions.

For this study, Kenya provides the theater for analysis. Therefore, for a more

meaningful understanding of this research work, some attention will be devoted to

vital information about the country.

Kenya: A brief historical and political insight.

Located in East Africa with a land mass of 225,000 square miles or 582,600

square kilometers, modern Kenya is about the size of France (Lonsdale, 1992) and a bit

smaller than the state of Texas in the U.S. Like several African countries, with the

possible exception of Liberia and Ethiopia, Kenya's history is deeply immersed in

colonialism and the indigenous struggle for independence.

Olumwullah (1993) traces the formal entrance of British colonial administration

into Kenya or what was then known as British East Africa Protectorate, to July 1, 1895,

when London terminated the charter granted to the Imperial British East Africa Company

to govern territories that became part of "British sphere of influence" in the wake of an

Anglo-German treaty of 1886.

However, it was not until 1905 that overseeing the affairs of the protectorate was

formally transferred from the British Foreign Office to the Colonial Office in London.

Then in 1920, the territory's protectorate status gave way to that of a full fledged colony

under Britain (Zeleza, 1989).

The year 1915 marked a major milestone in Kenya's history as it witnessed the

passage of the Crown Lands Ordinance and the Native Registration Ordinance by the

colonial administration. The overall import of these pieces of colonial legislation was an increase in, and consolidation of the economic powers of the white (British) settler community in Kenya who were essentially involved in agriculture and trade. Zeleza (1989) notes that white settler land ownership had risen from 368,165 acres in 1905 to 639,640 acres in 1914. In practical terms, the settlers not only controlled most of the fertile land but dominated the trade in coffee and other agricultural produce.

It was this overwhelming occupation of land and the dominance in trade that eventually culminated in the formation of the famous Mau Mau movement which grew into a major challenger of the colonial authority in Kenya. As Nyinguro (2005) argues, the Mau Mau movement, which was predominantly made up of members of the Kikuyu ethnic group who had been dispossessed of their ancestral fertile agricultural land by the white settlers and colonial administration, was an act of collective rebellion aimed at both economic and political emancipation.

Although the Mau Mau rebellion was effectively extinguished by a combination of factors which include superior British colonial war machinery and organizational prowess and the capture of its main military leaders Waruhio Itote in 1954 and later the military mastermind known as Dedan Kimathi in 1956, the Mau Mau's main impact is arguably that it served as an effective catalyst to the process that eventually resulted in Kenya's independence (Nyinguro, 2005).

That process saw the political parties take over the mantle of agitation against colonial rule. Were and Wilson (2006) note that even while the Mau Mau rebellion was in progress, political parties had begun to emerge in the country. However, it was the

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formation of two broad-based political parties in 1960, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) that fired up the agitation for independence.

The two Lancaster Conferences that led to Kenya's independence were held in 1960 and 1962. Later in May 1963, KANU won 83 seats in the elections for internal self-government while their opponents won 41 seats in parliament. KANU's leader Jomo Kenyatta became the prime minister on June 1, 1963. Later on December 12 of the same year, Kenya became a fully independent state.

As Maloba (1989) observes, at no time in the various stages that led to Kenya's independence was "nationalism in Kenya ever socialist or left-wing, in ideas or inspiration" (p. 199) despite the suggestions of some colonial administrators to the contrary, especially when they referred to the Mau Mau rebellion.

Kenya's first President, Jomo Kenyatta, died in 1978 and left the mantle of leadership to his vice president, Daniel Arap Moi.

One of the features of post colonial Kenya appears to be the consolidation of power by the presidency and the resultant crushing of opposition. Odhiambo-Mbai (2003, p.51) contends that "throughout the 1970s and 1980s personal rule by Jomo Kenyatta and his successor Daniel arap Moi promoted repression, abuses of human rights, ethnicity, nepotism, patronage and widespread corruption." Jonyo (2003, p.155) documents what he calls "the centrality of ethnicity in Kenya's political transition." Oyugi (2003, p. 350) characterized the same period as when the country underwent the "deepening legitimacy problem of authoritarianism."

The combination of international pressure and ossifying internal dissent forced the government of President Moi to reintroduce multi-party democracy that had been suspended by his predecessor. Thus the first multi-party elections were held in December, 1992. KANU won the election and despite the apparent expansion of democratic space in the country, Odhiambo-Mbai (2003) opines that President Moi's regime was manifestly autocratic even if in a de-facto manner.

A semblance of political change was to come in July 2002 when President Moi's attempt to appoint a successor, Uhuru Kenyatta, son of the first president under whom Moi served as vice president, was resisted by a dissenting group within his KANU ruling party and among Moi's coalition partners in government. This resulted in the formation of what was called the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) that was made up of several political parties whose principal leaders were Mwai Kibaki, Michael Wamalwa and Raila Odinga.

In the 2002 elections that were to follow, KANU was overwhelmingly defeated by the united opposition and for the first time in Kenya's history since independence, the opposition party came to power under the presidency of Mwai Kibaki who, incidentally had once served as ex-president Moi's vice president and minister of health.

In the controversial and hotly disputed December 2007 election, President Kibaki retained his presidency and, according to a political agreement reached after the post election violence in the country, Raila Odinga, the principal challenger to the president, was sworn in as the country's prime minister.

With a 2006 population estimate of 36.1 million according to the 2007 Kenya

National Bureau of Statistics report, the country is administratively divided into eight

provinces and runs a pseudo parliamentary democracy, with an executive president.

The Bureau puts Kenya's annual economic growth at 6.1 percent, while the World

Bank Development Indicators database (April, 2007) shows the country's gross national

income for 2006 was $20.5 billion in a predominantly agriculture-based economy.

The U.S. State Department Bureau of African Affairs (August, 2007) describes

Kenya as an overwhelmingly Christian country (80 percent). Muslims come a distant

second with 10 percent. Believers in traditional African religions constitute 9 per cent of

the population, while the rest make up the remaining one percent. The same document

shows the ethnic diversity in Kenya to be mainly composed of Kikuyu (22%), Luyia and

Luo, 14% each. The rest are Kalenjin and Kamba (11% each), Kisii (6%) and Meru (5%).

Kenya's multi-party political set-up was amply reflected in the December 2007

elections where the major contesting parties were the Party of National Unity (PNU)

which was in itself a coalition of several political parties, the Orange Democratic Party

(ODM), the Orange Democratic Party-Kenya (ODM-K), Kenya African national Union

(KANU), Safina, and a host of other smaller political parties.

Upon his inauguration in 2002, President Kibaki's government introduced free

primary school education for children up to eight years old. Consequently, primary

school enrolment in 2006 was 3.9 million for boys and 3.7 million for girls, according to

the Kenya Bureau of Statistics. The Kenyan government website (www.kenya.go.ke) as

at October 25th, 2007 shows the country has 6 public and 5 private universities

respectively. English and Kiswahili are the two official languages in Kenya. The U.S.

State Department Bureau of African Affairs (August, 2007) has the Kenya's literacy rate

at 85.1%.

According to the *World Fact Book* (2007) on communication issues, Kenya's use

of land-based telephone lines in 2006 was 293,400 against the use of cellular phones in

the same period (6.5 million). Internet users were 2.8 million with 13, 274 internet

providers (IPs). The country had 24 AM, 18 FM and 6 shortwave radio stations, and 8

television broadcasting stations in 2001. Newspapers are both regional and nationwide,

with the two prominent ones being the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard*. More information

about the newspapers is presented below.

As earlier mentioned, a national poll sponsored by the US-based International

Republican Institute (IRI) in September, 2007 showed that 83.7 percent of Kenyans

believe their media to be free and accurate in carrying out their reports. 80.6 percent of

the respondents also say that they trust their media to fairly and accurately report on

government. In the same study, 35.1 percent say they obtain their political information

from the radio, while 27 percent and 25.7 percent gain such information from the

newspapers and television respectively.

Current World Health Organization's (WHO) statistics show that the 2005 life

expectancy for both male and female is 51 years. Perhaps, one of Kenya's greatest health

issues is HIV-AIDS. WHO notes that in 2005, the prevalence of the dreaded disease

among adults was 6.7%. In the same period more than 1.2 million people were living

with the virus and an estimated 1.6 million children younger than 15 years and representing 3.7% of the population lost their mothers to the disease.

Globally, Kenya is best known for its proliferation of long-distance runners, the most prominent among them arguably being Paul Tergat who, until last October, held the world best time in the marathon race (2:04:55 recorded at the 2003 Berlin Marathon). At the 2007 World Athletics Championships in Osaka, Japan, Kenya won gold medals in the marathon races in both male and female categories.

Daily Nation newspaper

Founded on March, 20 1960, the *Daily Nation* newspaper in Kenya is arguably the "*New York Times*" of Kenya's newspaper industry. It is an independent newspaper in the sense that it is not owned by government. The newspaper is part of the Nation Media Group that has media interests in neighboring Uganda and Tanzania, and owns television and radio stations in Kenya. According to the Group's 2007 annual general meeting, its 2006 report indicate that the Group made a turnover of Kenya Shillings 6.3 billion (approximately $97.2 million) which represents a 13% increase from its activities in 2005. The *Daily Nation* newspaper commands over 55% of the newspaper circulation in Kenya, with about a daily print run of 185,000 copies and 230,000 for the *Sunday Nation*.

The Nation Media Group is a publicly owned limited liability company whose shares are traded in the Nairobi Stock Exchange. The principal shareholder is the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED). It owned 44.73 percents of the shares as at December, 2006.

The Standard

What is today known as *The Standard* newspaper is about the oldest newspaper in Kenya and was first published on November 15, 1902, under the name *African Standard*. The newspaper is the flagship of The Standard Group Limited, a media chain that owns radio and television stations in Kenya. *The Standard* commands over 20% of the Kenyan newspaper circulation and readership with a daily print run of about 70,000 copies. In its 2006 financial report, The Standard Group reported an annual turnover of Kenya Shillings 2.96 billion (approximately $45.7 million) up from a 2005 figure of Kenya Shillings 1.99 billion.

The Standard Group is a limited liability company and a member of the Nairobi Stock Exchange. Its principal shareholder is named in its 2006 annual report as S.N.G. Holdings Limited, a limited liability company based in Kenya. It owns 69.20 percent of the shares in the Group. *The Standard* is an independent medium with no government ownership or control.

The figures above demonstrate the dominance of the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* in the Kenyan newspaper industry.

The media and political elections

The key role which the media play in elections in democracies is acknowledged in McCombs and Bell (1996) who emphasize that by reporting the campaign activities of the candidates for political office, voters' interest in the elections is greatly aroused.

In relation to the theoretical foundation of this research, Protess and McCombs (1991, p.149) unequivocally contend that "nowhere is the agenda-setting influence of the

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media more clearly or consistently shown than in the research on political campaigns. Studies indicate that news coverage of elections often influences what the public and candidates themselves come to view as the important issues of the campaign."

What McCombs and Shaw (1972) did in their breakthrough study of the 1968 elections in the Chapel Hill, North Carolina, area of the U.S. was to establish that there was a positive and substantial correlation between what the media suggested as the main issues of the campaign period, and what undecided voters in the same area considered to be the major issues of the campaign. Their subsequent research in the Charlotte area in the same state of North Carolina further reinforced their earlier findings. This will be more comprehensively discussed in the theory section of this work.

What is essential from the work of both scholars is that the media came to be seen as a facilitator of a learning process, especially during elections. In "What voters learn from media" Weaver (1996) argues that despite the often disparaging remarks that in the coverage of political elections, the media focus on tangential issues of horse races, strategies and the internal wrangles in political camps and among teams that support candidates for political office, voters actually learn from the media during elections coverage. He goes further to contend that the learning has to do with overall issues and policies of the office seekers as well as their personal characteristics.

Weaver, McCombs and Shaw (2004) have documented studies across continents that show that indeed voters learn a great deal from the coverage of elections by the media. Some of these studies are from Japan, Israel, Italy, Taiwan, Spain, Germany and the U.S.A. The present research is aimed at adding Kenya to this list.

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Overall, Weaver (1994) points out that intense media focus on elections enables the voter to decide whether to vote and who to for, and in the process voter engagement and participation in the political process is enhanced, leading to a decrease in voter alienation or apathy.

However, in what specific ways do the media encourage voter learning as a result of coverage of political elections? In other words, what do voters learn in real terms?

The primary and often underplayed result of the coverage of elections by the media is that it leads to name recognition for the candidates, especially those who are relatively new or not too prominent in the political process. Covering the candidates brings them to the fore of public attention. For those contestants that are already in the "public domain", media focus reinforces public attention to them.

Coverage of elections exposes the electorate to the issues involved in the campaign. While not dismissing the fact that some potential voters might have prior knowledge about issues of importance in the elections, Weaver (1996) asserts that media attention throws more floodlight on those issues and they become even more contentious and widely known and debated in society.

The Chapel Hill and Charlotte studies already mentioned, clearly demonstrate that issues raised in the media, ended up being the main issues of discussion by the audiences of the media in that electoral period. Chaffee, Zhao and Leshner (1994) found that watching political debates through television coverage in 1992 increased viewers' knowledge of party positions on issues and a few pieces of information about the candidates.

On their part, Takeshita and Mikami (1995) studied the 1993 general elections in

Japan and came up with the finding that the main issue of national concern as reflected in

the media was political reform. This corroborated the results of their survey of the

populace in the same period. In the 2000 presidential election in the U.S. the major issue

highlighted by the media and widely debated in the country was that of national security.

Aside from issues learning, perhaps a lot more studies on media influence on the

election process have been conducted on the personal attributes or characteristics of

candidates in the competition for public office, as well as issues associated with them.

One of the pioneer studies in this regard was conducted among voters in

Pamplona during the Spanish regional and municipal elections in 1995, by McCombs,

Llamas, Lopez-Escobar and Rey (1997). In it, the researchers hypothesized that the

descriptions of the candidates' personalities as they appeared in the media would

influence how voters viewed them; and that the overall presentation of the candidates in

the media in terms of positive, negative and neutral frames, would equally influence how

the voters would view the candidates. Both hypotheses were upheld.

In another study, Golan and Wanta (2001) examined media coverage of

candidates George Bush and John McCain in the 2000 New Hampshire primary election

for the Republican party in the U.S. Overall, the researchers noted that McCain had more

positive newspaper coverage on issues associated with him (125 paragraphs) to Bush's 71

paragraphs. On positive personal characteristics, again McCain got 157 paragraphs to

Bush's 69. McCain eventually won the primary election and the authors conclude that

"the overwhelmingly positive media coverage he received may have helped his cause" (p. 255).

In yet another study (King, 1997) conducted among voters during the 1994 mayoral election in Taipei (Taiwan), a total of 486 news stories from three major newspapers in the city were content analyzed and 1,002 telephone interviews conducted. The result showed that "all three candidates' image agendas (the attributes emphasized) in the press were significantly correlated with their image agendas (the attributes perceived) in the minds of the voters." (p. 37).

Ordinarily, elections in the U.S. are largely issue-based, consequently media coverage and especially political advertising reflect this emphasis on issues over character (Benoit, 1991). However, it is instructive that media coverage and voter perceptions of candidates across continents may not follow this model. King (1997) for instance discovered that the Taipei voters in 1994 thought more about personal characteristics and party affiliation than issues and policy in the city's mayoral election. Lee and Benoit (2004) discovered that character and issues received about the same amount of attention from the candidates for the 2002 presidential election in South Korea. Interestingly, candidate Roh who stressed character more than issues won the presidency.

Do voters learn an equal amount of information and with the same analytical acumen from the media during elections? Differences in human capacity for learning as well as some environmental factors suggest that they do not. Drew and Weaver (2006) basically agree that voter learning took place in the 2004 U.S. elections, but not on equal pedestal among voters.

In a study they conducted in Indiana during the 2004 presidential election, the authors found that some conditional factors affected what voters learned during the elections. Using regression analysis, they found that overall males and people with higher levels of education were more knowledgeable about issues involved in the elections. In addition, they found that voters with Democratic Party affiliation were more adroit at matching issues with candidates than Republican Party members.

Voter learning during elections is apparently not limited to issues and candidate characteristics. The electorate equally gets to know a few things about the spouses of the candidates. Winfield and Friedman (2003) examined the coverage of spouses of presidential candidates during the 2000 presidential election in the U.S. and found that almost as a rule, the media had semi-permanent frames of coverage of the potential First Ladies.

The researchers assessed the coverage of the First Ladies in the 2000 presidential campaign using the model which had earlier been designed by Winfield. This entails viewing the First Lady "as an escort, accompanying her spouse; in a protocol role as a style setter, leading fashionable society in social and ceremonial events; in a noblesse oblige role, doing charitable, good works; and in a policy role, taking a political role as a policy adviser." (p. 548).

The researchers noted that initially, the fact that the potential First Ladies were all professionals and policy makers in their own right, with the exception of Hadassah Lieberman, presented reporters with a challenge on how to cover the ladies. Nevertheless the "news media perpetuated the previously established coverage frames" and only

deviated in regarding the wives more as indispensable supporters of their husbands' political goals (p. 557).

The focus of the learning process through media coverage of elections notwithstanding, Rogers and Dearing (2007) cite and support the stance of some scholars who contend that the coverage of elections as well as policy and other aspects of society has created what is termed as "media democracy" where the media literally define issues that are regarded as important on the public agenda.

This situation appears to be worrisome in the sense that given the media ownership structure in the U.S. and other societies as well, there might be the likelihood of some element of bias in the coverage of elections. As Gulati, Just and Crigler (2004, p. 237) observe, "given the political stakes in campaigns, the idea that the news media might use their influence to promote the advantage of one side or the other has preoccupied scholars and worried citizens."

The authors argue that this suspicion of bias is made more complex by the fact that election coverage now relies heavily on public opinion polls, many of which are conducted either solely by the news media themselves or in partnership with others. This further derails coverage of substantive issues to matters of election strategy and horse races.

The legitimacy and importance of these concerns appear to be whittled down by the findings from the study conducted by D'Alessio and Allen (2000). In "Media bias in presidential elections: A meta-analysis" the authors acknowledge the criticisms about media bias in elections and set out to:

"Examine the nature of partisan media bias within the specific realm of presidential election campaigns, considering specifically questions such as: Is there systematic partisan media bias in presidential campaigns? What is the magnitude and valence? Is one party covered more extensively than the other, or are the media more negative in tone about one party than the other? Does bias vary from campaign to campaign or from medium to medium?" (p.133)

After a meta-analysis of 59 quantitative studies that date back to 1948 on the issue of media bias in presidential elections, the authors noted in the abstract to their work that "on the whole, no significant biases were found for the newspaper industry. Biases in newsmagazines were virtually zero as well. However, meta-analysis of studies of television network news showed small, measurable, but probably insubstantial coverage and statement biases." (p. 113)

The authors point out that there were only three television networks for most of the period covered in their study. Another observation is that it would not be correct to interpret their study as meaning, for example, that no element of bias was found in the newspaper coverage of presidential elections. However, the point of emphasis is that the few incidents identified in various media outlets counterbalanced themselves.

Another issue of concern in media coverage of presidential elections is what Graber and Weaver (1996) regard as the "missing element" or "performance criteria" in media focus on presidential candidates. The scholars basically criticize such coverage as lacking on the quality index for good candidates. They argue that perhaps the presidency, as important as that position is in the life of a country, appears to be the only job where there is no insistence on the criteria the candidates have to meet for the job.

Consequently, the authors studied former presidents who were adjudged to have been successful and came up with what they called a "performance criteria checklist" which the media ought to examine in their coverage of contenders for the presidency. Items on this checklist are: "background, intellect, motivation, personality, relationships, communication style, leadership skills, political style, decision style and management skills" (p. 12).

Perhaps what is most relevant from this discussion on voter learning through media coverage of political elections is the fact that voters gain valuable information to make reasoned choices in the exercise of their inalienable right to determine those to govern their lives. As Rogers and Dearing (2007) posit, voter learning facilitates more systematic voter evaluation of candidates for political office.

One of the predominant themes in the literature on media and political elections deals with the various inputs of different media in this coverage. The debate here normally revolves around which particular medium contributes more than the rest in terms of the provision of information to voters.

West (2007), and Herrnson and Patterson (2000) agree that political advertisements are effective tools in getting citizens to learn about the policies and characters of candidates for political office. However, Benoit (2001, p. 109) pushes the argument farther with his categorical assertion that "voters obtain substantial amounts of information on the candidates and their policy positions from political advertisements" and gave subsequent citation of studies which go on to claim that such political advertisements offer more information than news on television or newspapers.

Political advertisements, argues Benoit (2001) are essentially used to acclaim a candidate's positive deeds, attack his or her opponents or an instrument used by a candidate for defense against attacks from opponents. His proposition is that these functions apply to policy (issues) and character (image).

Brians and Wattenberg (1996) also support the contention that political advertisements contribute to knowledge acquisition by the electorate and add that in terms of recall the adverts serve better purposes than reading newspapers or watching television news.

In Kaid (2004) on the other hand, we find studies which suggest the opposite: that watching television news and reading newspapers offer greater opportunities for voters to learn about issues and characters of the political office seekers. While not dealing specifically with election coverage but dwelling on the subject of television versus newspaper coverage, Wanta (1997) suggests that television news has immediate impact on viewers while newspapers lead to better recall by readers. McCombs (1977, p. 97) suggests that newspapers have a strong agenda setting influence in the early period of an election schedule but that "TV agenda-setting influence in the final weeks of the campaign" appears to be stronger.

Roberts and McCombs' (1994) position on this is that at the root of the debate is the issue of relative influence a medium has on the audience. Consequently, they assert that all media have an influence on the audience but even more importantly, there is the element of medium-to-medium influence in which political advertisements set off news reports and news reports also influence the content of political advertisements.

There is no doubt therefore that the media provide the citizens with opportunities for learning during an election. This learning process is anchored on the issues pertinent to the election and the character of the contestants. In this process of highlighting what the important issues of the elections are and focusing on the personal traits of the office seekers, the electorate not only have the opportunity to better assess candidates but is also influenced by the media as to what issues are primary in the elections, as well as what attributes the contestants possess.

This underlying influence has to do with the nature of the theoretical foundation of this study. And the big question is: how does it happen that the issues the media place a great deal of emphasis on eventually become what the audiences think are important especially in times of elections? Similarly how is it that the attributes of political office seekers as described by the media often turn out to be what the voters think of the same vote seekers?

These basic questions are tackled in the next chapter which discusses the agenda setting theory of communications inquiry.

Chapter 3

Agenda setting theory: An overview

The commanding appeal of agenda setting theory is perhaps best demonstrated by the findings of Bryant and Miron (2004). They concluded that agenda setting is one of the eight most popular theories of the 21st century as used in six prominent communication journals. In their assessment of twenty-five years of the theory's existence, McCombs and Shaw (1993, p. 60) argue that agenda setting has "provided a common umbrella for a number of research traditions and concepts in communication," a factor that perhaps partly explains its ubiquity in communications research endeavors. On their part, Rogers, Dearing and Bregman (1993) observe that as early as 1990s the use of the theory had been found in over 200 research works.

As a theory, agenda setting has a scholarly pedigree that is traceable to the early works of Lippmann (1922) who has been described as the "intellectual father of the agenda setting idea" (McCombs & Bell, 1996, p. 96). Situating his argument on the notion of "the world outside and the pictures in our heads" Lippmann (1922) basically asserts that the political topography in which people live is so complex and apparently disorganized that it often involves some people making meaning out of the cobweb of activities and events for others to understand the goings-on around them.

McCombs, Danielian and Wanta (1995) say that Lippmann believed that the road-map to the understanding of the complex universe was provided by the media. In essence therefore, the pictures of the world outside that lie in the heads of the audiences are

largely the creations of the media. This thinking laid the foundation for what was later termed "the agenda setting function of mass media" (McCombs and Shaw, 1972, p. 17).

While the foundations of the theory can be attributed to Walter Lippmann, it is quite plausible to argue that agenda setting theory is the product of a spirited reaction to the limited effects proposition of the 1940s that is best exemplified by the works of Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet (1948) and Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948). To them, the media peripherally affected political and voting behavior and decisions, and were only strong in reinforcing prior-held political beliefs and opinions (McCombs & Bell, 1996; Purvis, 2001).

The Chapel Hill study by McCombs and Shaw (1972) which effectively launched the agenda setting theory was partly aimed at challenging the limited or minimal effects model. Rogers, Dearing, and Bregman (1993, p. 73) suggest that the limited effects model "seemed counterintuitive to many researchers, especially those (such as McCombs and Shaw) who had previous mass media experience." They also believe that agenda setting was equally the product of a reaction to an earlier belief that the sole aim of mass communication was the function of passing on information to the audience. In Rogers and Dearing (2007, p. 84) we also find the argument that the major attraction in using agenda setting is because it appears "to offer an alternative approach to the scholarly search for direct media effects, which had seldom been found in early mass communication research."

Perhaps, the unintended consequence of the novel agenda setting research by McCombs and Shaw was to demonstrate that the idea of political parties having a monopoly of political education in society was outmoded.

Although agenda setting theory is frequently associated with issues in the news, there is need to reassert and reiterate the centrality of the individual in the use of the theory. Wanta (1997a, p. 5) categorically states in this regard that "it is the individual who consumes and processes issue information contained in the news media; it is the individual who ultimately displays the agenda-setting effect. Although agenda setting may be a societal effect, the process of agenda-setting takes place within individuals."

This issue is of utmost importance against the backdrop of the notion that in discussing the theory, the big question "do media and news matter?" is often literally interpreted. Burd's (1991, p. 293) assertion appears to lend weight to such interpretation, as the scholar argues that "perhaps the major contribution of agenda-setting research remains the empirical testing of the old common sensical question, 'Does news matter?'" without going further to stress the importance of the recipients of the news.

The focus on the individual ultimately presents agenda setting as a theory that is concerned with a learning process. As Wanta (1997a, p. 5) argues in his book that is subtitled *How people learn about important issues*, "conceptually, agenda setting involves the social learning of the relative importance through the coverage that the issues receive in the news media."

As a form of social learning process therefore, the level of education of the social learners is also imperative in the process of agenda setting. This issue has already

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received more attention in the literature review section of this work. Suffice it to say however that the level of education of the individual is likely to affect his or her depth of understanding of the media messages in the agenda setting process.

Indeed, as Wanta (1997a, p. 102) opines, "individuals most able to understand the significance of the mass media coverage of issues are also most likely to be affected by this coverage" as more highly educated persons are more likely to understand the import of messages in the media. This proposition is in line with the basic tenet of the knowledge-gap hypothesis which talks about differential learning based on peoples' standard of educational attainment (Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1970).

One of the implications of this issue is that in societies with a general low level of formal education, it might not be prudent to expect a high rate of agenda setting effect. Besides, access to the media in such a society is another equally powerful determinant of the success or otherwise of any agenda setting effect.

In addition to all the above, the elements of time frame and source credibility equally play vital roles in the agenda setting process. As McCombs (2006, p. 43) observes, "the old hypodermic (needle) theory viewed media effects as essentially immediate." The flaws in this thinking later became quite apparent. Agenda setting effect appears to go with some time frame. However, what remains problematic is to determine and actually generalize with firm statements on the appropriate time frame for agenda setting to take its effect in a society.

Perhaps, it is safer to argue that agenda setting effects vary from issue to issue (McCombs, 2006). This will generally depend on the nature of the issue and the degree of media attention to it.

But, whatever the issue, the element of source credibility seems imperative for agenda setting effect. Unfortunately, the issue of source credibility has not received commensurate attention in agenda setting research as other aspects of the theory do. Miller and Wanta (1996, p. 393) agree and state that "while the perceived credibility of news media has received relatively little attention from agenda-setting scholars, media exposure is a more traditional factor since the public almost certainly must have access to a media agenda before agenda-setting can take place."

Hovland et al (1953) had noted that sources which individuals adjudge to have the attributes of expertise and trust tend to have more persuasive effects on them. In the same vein, when audiences view a given medium as credible, then that source is likely to have a more agenda setting effect on them than if the opposite had been the case. Indeed, it is arguable that for non credible sources to an audience, the net effect might not be that of agenda setting but agenda resistance.

With this overview this discussion gravitates to the major aspects of agenda setting theory.

<div align="center">Agenda setting: Level 1</div>

The use of agenda setting theory has offered tremendous latitude in communications research. This is exemplified by the multifarious usage of the theory in research efforts that encompass, but are not limited to studies on the media's political

agenda setting power (Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006); the impact of the U.S. president's state of the union address on the media agenda (Wanta, Stephenson, Turk and McCombs, 1989); comparing the impact of local and national media on the public agenda (Hester and Gibson, 2007); an examination of the relationship between the media and public agenda in Israel (Sheafer & Weimann, 2005); agenda setting and its impact on online users (Roberts, Wanta and Dzwo, 2002); the media and agenda setting in mayoral election in Taiwan (King, 1997); media agenda setting and its impact on adolescents in the U.S. states of Arizona, Colorado and Florida in the 2000 elections (Kiousis, McDevitt & Wu, 2002); as well as agenda setting and the U.S. civil rights movement (Winter and Eyal, 1981) et cetera.

All these studies have a common refrain that links them together: the idea that the media affect "our perceptions of what the important topics of the day are" (Weaver et al, 1981, p. 4). This common intellectual legacy had earlier been articulated by Cohen (1963, p. 13.) who crafted the communications mantra that "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about."

As Jeffres (1977) observes nonetheless, it was the research carried out by McCombs and Shaw (1972) that added a layer of empiricism to Cohen's (1963) proposition and coined the term "agenda setting" to mark the "official" arrival of the theory at the warehouse of tools of communications inquiry.

In the study they conducted amongst undecided voters at the Chapel Hill area of North Carolina in the 1968 presidential election in the U.S.A., the researchers, Maxwell

McCombs and Donald Shaw, found that "the correlation between the major item emphasis on the main campaign issues carried by the media and voters' independent judgments of what were the important issues was +.967. Between minor item emphasis on the main campaign issues and voters' judgments, the correlation was +.979" (McCombs and Shaw, 1977, p. 21).

On the basis of their major findings therefore, McCombs and Shaw (1977, p. 21) argued that "the media appear to have exerted a considerable impact on voters' judgments of what they considered the major issues of the campaign." Consequently, the main platform of agenda setting, that of the transference of issue salience from the media to their audiences, was born.

In their analysis of the meaning of issue salience as a cardinal point in traditional agenda setting research, Protess and McCombs (1991, p. 2) concluded that "the audience learns what issues are important from the priorities of the news media and incorporates a similar set of weights in their own personal agendas." Similar explanations are found in McCombs and Ghanem (2001), Takeshita (1997), Soroka (2002) and Jeffres (1977) amongst other scholars of agenda setting.

In his unpublished University of Missouri doctoral dissertation, Megwa (1987) makes the point that the media's transference of issue salience to their audiences presupposes that issues the media ignore hardly make it to the forefront of public discourse. Purvis (2001, p. 77) was even more forthright. He argues that "it is likewise important to recognize that the reverse is also true (in agenda setting): issues or developments that go unreported or receive little attention reflect the media's influence as

well." In their submission regarding this discussion, Rogers and Dearing (2007) observe that "agenda setting influence may consist of the fact that issues and events that are completely ignored by the mass media do not register on the public agendas" (p. 92). McCombs (1977, p. 99) nails in the point in his explication of the "awareness" pedestal of the agenda setting theory, by his assertion that: "the basic, primitive notion of agenda-setting is a truism. If the media tell us nothing about a topic or event, then in most cases it simply will not exist on our personal agenda or in our life space."

It is noteworthy however that this argument is merely a reinforcement of the media's ability to set issue priorities for their audiences. When subjected to proof, it might not be easy to deal with as proving the "effect" of an unpublished work or news item on an audience might be more than a titanic enterprise.

The importance of this impact on public agenda by the media is underscored by yet another research by both originators of the agenda setting theory in its contemporary form. As earlier noted, in a follow-up study at Charlotte, North Carolina, Shaw and McCombs (1977, p.6) reached the same conclusion and stated that "the idea of agenda setting asserts that the priorities of the press to some degree become the priorities of the public. What the press emphasizes is in turn emphasized privately and publicly by the audiences of the press."

In assessing this phase of the agenda setting theory, two key aspects stand out: the terms "salient" and "issue". Entman (1993) is of the opinion that the concept of "salience" is in need of some explication. However, it seems to be the less problematic of the two key components for, as Perloff (1998, p. 209) explains, it means that "the

media select certain aspects of political reality and make these salient for individuals, causing them to stand out and dominate citizens' world view…..for agenda-setting to occur, people must come to believe the issue is more important after exposure to mass media than before."

Although there is recognition of the enormous importance of "issue" in this phase of the theory (Kosicki, 1993; Scheufele, 2000; McCombs & Shaw, 1972), Lang and Lang (1981) question the meaning of the word in the context of the theory since the issues are what affect people. The seriousness they attach to the meaning of "issue" is embedded in their contention that "without a clear definition (of an issue) the concept of agenda-setting becomes so all-embracing as to be rendered practically meaningless" (p. 280). They go on to suggest that an issue is something that "is in contention among a relevant public" (p. 281). This element of contention might be the result of the media's focus on the issue, as agenda setting researchers might suggest.

What might be partly responsible for the problematic nature of "issues" is that oftentimes, there are blurred lines between what constitutes an event and an issue. To clarify this, Shaw (1997) argues that an event could be seen as a constituent part an issue. In other words, there could be a number of events that make up an issue. An illustration could be the contemporary issue of illegal immigration in the U.S.A. The ease or difficulties involved in legitimate border crossings, the nationwide protest marches by groups of aliens in the country, the congressional debates and bills on the matter as well as the various activities of citizens' watch-groups or vigilantes against the existence of

porous borders, all constitute events that have bearing on the larger issue of illegal immigration.

Issues that are emphasized by the media do not all carry equal weights in terms of their level of importance and duration of coverage and subsequent public discourse. Rogers and Dearing (2007) make this point in their analysis of issue salience component of agenda setting. They argue that issues could vary by their duration and level of importance attached to them by the media and public or by their very nature.

A graphic illustration of what Rogers and Dearing (2007) mean might be necessary to explain this argument. According to them, an issue could persist for a reasonably long period (high on duration) yet the importance attached to it might not be considerable (low on salience). For instance, the debate over a need for park beautification in a given rural locality might span across several months or years, yet the issue would not rank high on the public agenda. On the other hand, media reports about a serial killer might elevate the issue to a high level of importance (salience) in a community, and the duration is relatively short lived due to the elaborate manhunt and quick apprehension of the killer.

Perhaps, a good example of an issue that ranks high on salience and high on duration is the on-going US-led war against Islamic fundamentalists in Iraq. The issue is as important as it has lasted for a very long period. The opposite might be the need to appoint a deputy town clerk in a lowly populated city where, although the law stipulates that the position ought to be filled, there is no real importance attached to that position.

So, that inconsequential position (low on salience) is quickly filled (low on duration).

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Salience    High
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   |      /
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   |  /
   |/_____>
 Low        Duration
```
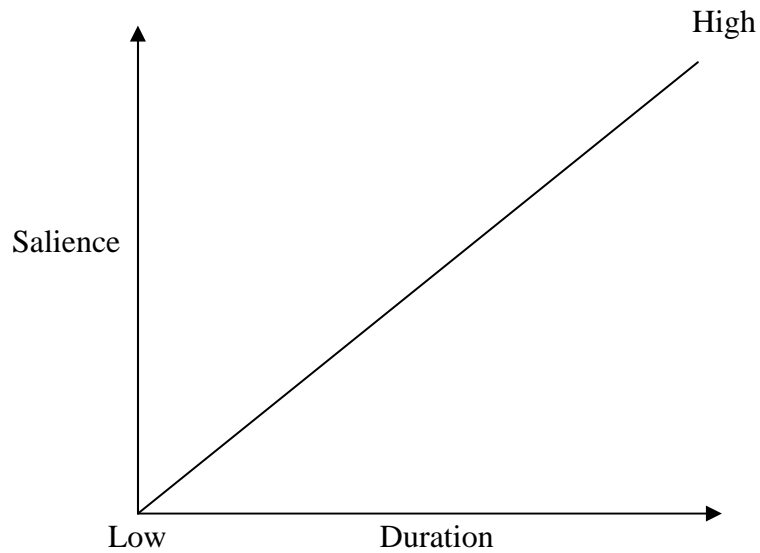
What can be inferred from the above is that the overall salience of an issue combined with its duration on the radar of the media, will to a large extent impact public perception of the issue as being of importance.

How then can the notion of issue salience be measured for research purposes? It is certainly not enough to acclaim that an issue is of some importance and that the media have turned it into a public agenda, without stipulating the measures to support that claim. Kiousis (2004) attempts to attach quantitative meaning to the notion of issue salience against the backdrop of three variables: attention, prominence, and valence.

Attention refers to the number of times the media publish pieces of news items on a given issue. Prominence is a measure of the display of the information in such a manner that it readily attracts attention. Putting the story as the lead on the front page of a

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newspaper or making the item prominent on the story highlights on radio or television would qualify as a measure of prominence. On the other hand, valence deals with how the story is conveyed in positive, negative or neutral terms. As Kiousis (2004, p. 76) recommends, the way to calculate valence would for instance be to "code the number of stories in print or broadcast media that have a positive or negative tone toward the object of a story – the higher the number, the higher the valence."

From the discussion so far, it is apparent that the notion of issue salience is quite fundamental to agenda setting theory as propagated by McCombs and Shaw (1972). It also attempts to complement Cohen's (1963) metaphor about the media giving the public what to think about.

Nevertheless, after several years of use in communications research, agenda setting was bound to exceed the frontiers of its original conceptual format. Indeed McCombs and Shaw (1993) argue that after twenty-five years of rigorous research, agenda setting has been propelled beyond its "original theoretical domain" (p. 59). They point out that the contemporary theoretical landscape for agenda setting goes beyond "the classical assertion that the news tells us what to think about. The news also tells us how to think about it." (p. 62).

How the news accomplishes this is the main focus of the next phase in the life of the theory.

<center>Agenda setting: Level 2</center>

In a sense, agenda setting is a double-barreled theory. It is a process where what to think and how to think about it are largely intertwined (McCombs and Shaw, 1993).

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However, a measure of conceptual distinction in this regard is provided by Wanta, Golan and Lee (2004, p. 367) who put it this way: "while first–level agenda setting suggests media coverage influences what we think about, second-level agenda-setting suggests media coverage influences how we think."

This paradigm shift is captured by Ghanem (1997) as well as McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar and Rey (1997, p. 704) who say that "explicit attention to the second level of agenda setting further suggests that the media also tell us how to think about some objects." With this new emphasis Kosicki (1993, p. 100) believes that agenda setting theory has been moved into a new and more engaging pedestal that is far more instrumental to research than the original "underspecified and constrained stimulus-response approach" that was characteristic of the issue transference vision in the first level of the theory.

In a nutshell, the main distinction between both levels is that the second level incorporates an element of framing.

A few definitions of framing would provide a basic framework for the understanding of the meaning of the second level agenda setting. Reese (2001, p.11) sees frames as the "organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world." Tankard et al (1991, p. 11) opine that framing is "the central organizing idea for news content that supplies context and suggest what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion and elaboration." For Entman (1993) framing involves the selection of reality and its presentation in such prominent way as to draw attention to it. Jeffres (1997) leans on the

use of framing to select and highlight issues and events. Carragee (2003, p. 203) defines frames as the "consistent patterns of interpretation, emphasis, and inclusion that shape journalistic discourse and its definition of issues and events."

A number of observations emerge from the foregoing definitions: (a) framing involves a selection process (b) that process is meant to choose what to highlight or emphasize (c) the rationale for the emphasis is to compel the message decoder to see the issue from the perspective of the encoder

The underlying assumption in framing therefore is the making of concerted moral or professional judgment on how an issue is to be perceived. Thus, this judgmental component in framing is inevitable and therefore raises the issue of objectivity and fairness in the selection process (McQuail, 2002). However, it is noteworthy that how the message receiver decodes the information may not necessarily be how the encoder expected the message to be understood.

In relation to the second level agenda setting therefore, framing is used for the presentation of an object or subject in a given manner such that the audiences of the media are expected to see the issue in question how the media want it to be seen. So, the question is not only the transference of issue salience but ensuring how the issue is seen and appreciated by the audience; not just giving the audience what to think about, but also how to think about it. Maher (2001, p. 89) suggests in this regard that the agenda setting scholar uses framing in a rather restricted sense by ignoring the context of the message or frame and "typically examines the transfer of framing salience between the text (as interpreted by the researcher) and the receiver (public)."

The idea of how an issue should be seen by the public is eloquently captured by

Entman's (1991) examination of two incidents where a South Korean passenger aircraft

was in 1983 shot down by an air force jet belonging to what was then the Soviet Union,

and in 1988 when a U.S. navy ship destroyed an Iranian passenger aircraft. The

researcher concluded that American media "news stories about the U.S. downing of an

Iranian plane called it a technical problem while the Soviet downing of a Korean jet was

portrayed as a moral outrage (p. 6)" The fact that more fatalities occurred in the U.S

incident (290 passengers) than in the Soviet shooting (269 passengers and crew) was

underplayed by the U.S. media.

The framing of the incidents was through the prism of the immorality of the

Soviet action vis-à-vis the genuine operational error of the U.S. navy gunboat. In both

instances the framing principles of selection and emphasis were at play. The audiences of

the U.S. media were persuaded to view the issue on moral terms, not on the basis of the

casualties involved in the gunning down of both passenger aircraft.

One of the few interesting and non typical studies involving the second level

agenda setting was conducted by Wanta, Golan and Lee (2004). In it, the authors found

that the more negative media coverage a nation received in the U.S. the more negatively

the audience thought about the nation. Incidentally, positive coverage had no similar

effect.

Studies on the second level agenda setting most often deal with the image of

political candidates in elections. This research work falls into this category. Others

include: McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar and Rey (1997); King (1997); Kiousis,

Bantimaroudis and Ban (1999); McCombs, Lopez-Escobar, and Llamas (2000); Golan and Wanta (2001); Kiousis (2005); Drew and Weaver (2006).

While the first level agenda setting deals with issues and their salience, the second level involves the agenda of attributes. Ghanem (1997, p. 5) defines these attributes as "the set of perspectives or frames that journalists and the public employ to think about each object." Such attributes are like identifiers that may or may not be unique to each political candidate.

Golan and Wanta (2001, p. 247) explain that these identifier are the "characteristics that the news media link to political figures", and in the process of agenda setting, these same characteristics are in turn linked to the political candidates by the public. In other words, if the "media image" of a certain politician is that of a flip-flopper, with time the public or audiences of the media begin to perceive that politician in the same vein.

According to McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar and Rey (1997), these attributes are basically of two types: cognitive or substantive, and affective. Cognitive attributes refer to the personal qualities or character of the political candidate in addition to the issues the candidate is associated with, or the position he or she has adopted on those issues. On the other hand, affective attributes refer to the overall appeal or image of the candidate. Such image could be positive, negative or even neutral in their presentation in the media.

Should the media repeatedly focus their searchlight on certain attributes of the object, then there would be a "compelling argument" to suggest that the salience of the

object is high in the consideration of the audience (Ghanem, 1997; Kiousis et al, 1999).

For instance, if Candidate A is consistently and over time associated with improvement in

higher education, then the argument would be that the candidate's level of importance

with regard to education would rise in the minds of the electorate.

The essence of this second level agenda setting therefore lies in the "transference

of the salience of attributes" from the media to their audiences (Ghanem, 1997, p. 7).

The same argument is made by McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar, and Rey (1997, p.

69) in their assertion that "the media may not dictate to voters what their opinion will be

about political candidates, but they may well direct, guide, or orient the content of what

the public deems worthy of saying about them to a significant degree."

The implication of mentioning framing in the discussion above is that there exists

a relationship between agenda setting and other theories of mass communication. We

shall examine this relationship further.

Agenda setting: Relationship with framing and priming

Agenda setting is arguably one of the most versatile mass communications

theories in the sense that it has frontiers that readily engage with other theories as

opposed to bearing the insignia of intellectual isolationism. McCombs, Lopez-Escobar,

and Llamas (2000, p. 78) support this contention in their assertion that "one of the

strengths of agenda-setting theory that has prompted its continuing growth over the years

is this compatibility with a variety of other communication concepts and theories."

The authors go on to cite framing as perhaps the closest of all the communications

theories to agenda setting. In support of this contention, McCombs and Ghanem (2001, p.

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69) argue that "explicit attention to the second level, attribute agenda setting, further suggests that the media also tell us how to think about some objects. It is here that agenda setting and framing share common ground." McCombs and Bell (1996, p.106) are even more explicit: they pontificate that "how media frames impact the public agenda is the second dimension of agenda setting."

It is this apparent appropriation of framing that tends to be irksome to framing theorists. Kim, Scheufele and Shanahan (2002) are so vehemently opposed to this linkage and the idea that framing should be called the second level agenda setting that their response is couched as a two-word protest: "we disagree" (p. 8.). They go on to describe agenda setting and priming as "accessibility" theories, while framing is of the "applicability" dimension. In essence, this means that framing "assumes that media coverage has an effect on audiences….in how an issue is described rather than the salience of an issue itself….(while agenda setting and priming) are based on the assumption that only the most salient issues in a person's mind will influence his or her decision making" (p.10). Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007, p. 11) reiterate that framing "is based on the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences."

Scheufele (2000, p. 298) believes that both theories (and also priming) are merely related and should not be seen as one. He argues that they are "different approaches to media effects that cannot be combined into a simple theory for the sake of parsimony." Kosicki (1993) shares the same opinion. On his part, Maher (2001, p. 89) posits that while framing is used to organize and present reality in a given form, "agenda setting

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scholars use the term framing in a narrow, restrictive sense when they discuss frames as attributes of objects."

Despite this scholarly vigilante posturing over theoretical frontiers, it can be argued that both agenda setting and framing share the same objectives in trying to unravel the nature and impact of communication in society. In this regard, Shaw (1998, p. 696) urges scholars to "use the conceptual frameworks we inherited as platforms rather than fences" in communications inquiry. Maher (2001, p. 93) expresses optimism that "despite their differences, framing and agenda setting are coalescing and both will be important platforms to yield answers about the role of media in a republic." McCombs and Ghanem (2001, p.79) are equally instructive on this issue. Their belief is that the "pursuit of isolated redundancy would be terribly wasteful. Both traditions can profit from the explication of a more general theoretical structure describing the frames and attributes that are important to the communication process…there is much to gain from a cooperative effort."

Unlike the arguments over framing, there appears to be fewer disagreements amongst scholars that priming and agenda setting share some affinity. Indeed Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007, p. 11) who are quite vocal about de-linking framing from agenda setting concede that priming "is often understood as an extension of agenda setting." However, in Scheufele (2000), there is a robust argument that both theories need to be separated.

McCombs and Bell (1996) equally see the close relationship between both theories and define priming as "a psychological process whereby media emphasis on

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particular issues not only increases the salience of those issues, but it activates in people's

memories previously acquired information about those issues." The increase in media

focus and its resultant issue salience refer to agenda setting, while the activation of

information about the same issue in memory describes the priming process. In this way,

priming and agenda setting appear to lie on a continuum.

<center>Agenda setting: Criticism</center>

Despite the popularity of its use, agenda setting has attracted quite an avalanche

of criticisms, some of which even question its status as a theory.

At the lower significant end of these criticisms is the point earlier noted that the

theory gives the impression of superfluity in its basic assumptions. Purvis (2001) had

noted that some of the claims concerning the importance of the theory appear to border

on exaggerations. Perloff (1998, p. 219) contends in this regard that "the media are not

omnipotent: They do not always influence the public agenda", and he goes further to

assert that "it should be clear that the common phrase 'the media set the agenda'

oversimplifies matters greatly."

This "oversimplification" is taken up by Lang and Lang (1981, p. 278) who

describe it as "the bland and unqualified statement that the mass media set the agenda for

political campaigns." Their primary concern is that agenda setting is preceded by agenda

building, an issue over which the media have no monopoly in any society.

Gandy (1982), Reese (1990) and Griffin (2003) also share this view that agenda

building deserves much more than the cursory or sometimes cavalier attention paid to it

as it is obvious that the media have limitations over their ability to set the entire gamut of

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the public's agenda. Megwa (1987, p. 70) eloquently makes this case by pointing out that in each society, there are individuals, formal and informal groups, and institutions which contribute to the making of the public agenda and are quite adroit in their ability to "slide through the media gates with ease."

In their study of the role of the U.S. president in the making of the public agenda, Miller and Wanta (1996) even found out that the presidency also contributes to the making of the media agenda. However, they concede that while the president and other political juggernauts use their political speeches and campaign opportunities to contribute to the public agenda, they have to rely on the media to publicize their views.

Outside such high-level officials such as the president, Burd (1991, p. 291) notes that agenda setting tends to give much credence to the media while ignoring the power of inter-personal communication in setting both personal and public agenda. She argues that "informal, interpersonal communication outside of mass media may shape the agendas of journalists and policymakers as well as citizens." She notes that by insisting on the media as the provider of issues on the public agenda, citizens are reduced to being "atomized individuals" who, like raw materials in a factory's production line, are merely waiting to be molded and shipped away like products by the media. She also contends that such individuals socially construct their own realities with or without any meaningful input by the media.

Here, Wanta's (1997a) observation offers another level of insight into the where the individual stands on the agenda setting process. To him, it appears that agenda setting scholars appear to shift emphasis from individuals who are the consumers of media

messages, to the messages themselves. In other words, he contends that the focus of agenda setting in the process of transference of issue salience is not necessarily and solely the news, important as it is to the process, but the individuals who consume the news and consequently adopt the media agenda as theirs.

It is also important to observe that in some cases, the abuse of their agenda setting power might lead the media to create an unrealistic picture of human existence. Perhaps the best example of this "falsification" of reality is found in Ghanem (1997) who reports that her unpublished doctoral degree dissertation (1996) showed a high correlation (.73) between media reports about high crime rate in Texas and what the public thought about crime rates. She quickly adds that in reality, the crime rate had been decreasing in the period of study yet media reports created a contrary and frightening state of affairs to the population.

Kosicki's (1993) criticism is worth mentioning. To him, agenda setting tends to create a monarchical set-up where the media sit at the throne of autocracy and impose on very hapless citizens the agenda they are obliged to discuss. This argument reiterates Burd's (1991) view that the public agenda is not the exclusive preserve of the media.

Beyond this, Kosicki (1993, p. 102) also questions the structural integrity of agenda setting as a theory. He believes that researchers who use the theory do no more than "matching" what the media publish with public opinion in their study. This led him to conclude that far from being a full-fledged theory, "it seems best to refer to agenda setting as a model of media effects."

This scholar is not alone in this viewpoint. Lang and Lang (1981) also wonder about the legitimacy of the findings of some agenda setting research since they believe that such correlations between the media and public agenda might be the result of methodological match-up or classification than real-life results.

While not entirely dismissing the legitimacy of some of these criticisms, it remains a fact that agenda setting is one of the six most frequently used theories of the 21[st] century (Byrant & Miron, 2004). The fact that it has been used across the continents in empirical studies adds yet another layer to its credibility as a theory, while not dismissing the possibility that it harbors some blunt edges.

As stated earlier, the two objectives of this study are to test the validity of the first and second levels of the theory in yet another setting – the African continent and Kenya in particular; and to attempt an expansion of the intellectual horizon of the theory. Doing both successfully would provide further evidence of the integrity of the theory. How this expansion is supposed to take place is the next phase in this discussion on the agenda setting theory.

<center>Agenda setting: Towards an expansion</center>

Theory construction is a continuous process (Shoemaker, Tankard & Lasorsa, 2004). Implicit in this contention is that a reliable and valuable theory shall continue to serve research in the process of exploring, explaining and predicting phenomena. Where a theory becomes incapable of performing the above functions, then it ceases of be of great value in communication as well as other areas of scholarly research.

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The volume of research that followed the initial effort of McCombs and Shaw in the early and later 1970s is perhaps a good testimony to the continued usefulness of agenda setting theory. In their assessment of twenty-five years of existence of the theory they nurtured, both scholars predicted that " the hearty evolution of agenda-setting research in the marketplace of ideas over the past 25 years is itself preview to a robust future of scholarly publication, theoretical integration, and conceptual innovation. There is no question that the literature will grow as scholars continue to expand agenda-setting into new domains" (McCombs and Shaw, 1993, p. 65).

In their assessment of how far agenda setting had fared as a theory of communications research, McCombs and Bell (1996, p. 108) concluded that "agenda-setting theory has opened many doors to reveal the power and ethical responsibility of the news media, and it continues to identify other intellectual doors." Through various studies, the theory has been used to establish two visible levels: that over time, the media agenda have a considerable and verifiable impact on the public agenda through the transference of issue salience (Scheufele, 2000); that in its second level there is an evolution from the mere investigation of what topics the media cover, to how they cover them (Kiousis, 2005). Practically all agenda setting studies have been revolving around these two basic tenets of the theory.

At this juncture, the relevant question to ask is: has agenda setting reached the zenith of its explanatory and predictive power? Is it still a legitimate expectation that embedded in the theory is its capacity to be used in the discovery and opening of other

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intellectual doors as McCombs and Bell (1996) had conjectured or new domains as McCombs and Shaw (1993) described it?

It is instructive to note what Griffin (2003, p. 398) had thought about this issue, in the contention that although the originators of the theory had not explicitly mentioned it, it is somewhat imperative that after telling their audiences what to think about through the transference of issues considered salient, and framing or how to look at those issues, the media might even get involved in suggesting "even what to do about it."

The primary implication of this insight is that agenda setting shall not begin and end with issues to think about and how to think about them, but shall lead to outcomes. After evaluating the nature of agenda setting over the years, McCombs (2004, pp. 119-120) appears to have reached a similar conclusion in his observation that "as the twentieth century came to a close, the ideas coming to the fore in the newest versions of this theoretical map were consequences of the agenda-setting process."

Consequences or outcomes can be used interchangeably in this argument. The crux of the matter is that agenda setting does not cease to be relevant after the transference of both issue and attribute salience. Indeed, it cannot logically end at that point. That process appears to have an inherent dynamism that inevitably leads to something: outcomes. This is the crux of what this study contends.

This element of agenda setting outcome reinforces Wanta's (1997a) argument that the central point in agenda setting is the individual, not the news. It is the individual that imbibes the important issues as suggested by the media; the same individual is exposed to the attributes of candidates for political office. This research therefore stretches the

argument by positing that after cognitively processing the information he or she is literally inundated with by the media during the period of electioneering campaigns, there has to be a consequence or outcome of that learning and processing of information. That outcome is partly expressed in the decision by that individual on how best to utilize his or her ballot, or in some cases, the decision not to vote.

By deemphasizing the individual as several agenda setting studies do, the impression is unwittingly created that once the transfer of issue and attribute salience is over, nothing else happens or matters. When Drew and Weaver (2006) posed the question: did the media matter in the 2004 presidential election in the U.S.; when Protess and McCombs (1991) categorically asserted that media matter; and when the same question was posed at the introductory segment of this study, all make a reference to the fact that agenda setting takes cognizance of the individual and ultimately results in something, not just telling the audiences of the media what to think about or how to think about it.

The overarching argument here is that by exposing the individual to both issue and attribute salience, agenda setting can be viewed as an empowering theory; empowering the individual, through a social learning process (Wanta 1997a), to reach an outcome on the basis of what he or she knows about candidates vying for seats in an election. That outcome is expressed in the voting process.

Therefore, the idea of outcomes, which is muted in many agenda setting research, is an essential focal point of this study. If only what the media do is to show what the important issues are as well as the attributes of candidates for political office, then their

significance in political elections might not be as worthwhile as many studies present it. Media matter to the extent that the individual who learns about the salient issues of the day and attributes of political actors, employs that knowledge in some cognitive decision-making process; and the consequence of such learning and decision-making can be examined and empirically supported.

This idea of a learning process and eventual outcome is graphically represented in the model below.

Expanded model for agenda setting theory

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┌─────────────┐
│             │
│   MEDIA     │
│             │
└─────────────┘
        │
        │      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
        ├─────▶│    Issue     │─────▶│ What To Think│─────▶│    Audience      │
        │      │   Salience   │      │    About     │      │   Empowerment    │
        │      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘      │                  │
        │             │                     │              │   • Issue        │
        │             ▼                     ▼              │   • Attribute    │
        │      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      │   • Framing      │
        ├─────▶│  Attribute   │─────▶│ How To Think │─────▶│   • Learning     │
        │      │   Salience   │      │  About It    │      └──────────────────┘
        │      └──────────────┘      └──────────────┘              │
        │             │                     │                      │
        │             ▼                     ▼                      │
        │      ┌────────────────────────────────────┐             │
        │      │              Audience              │             │
        └─────▶│          Action & Outcome          │◀────────────┘
               │   • Decision to vote (or not)      │
               │   • Choice of candidate/issue      │
               │   • Active and informed            │
               │     political participation        │
               └────────────────────────────────────┘
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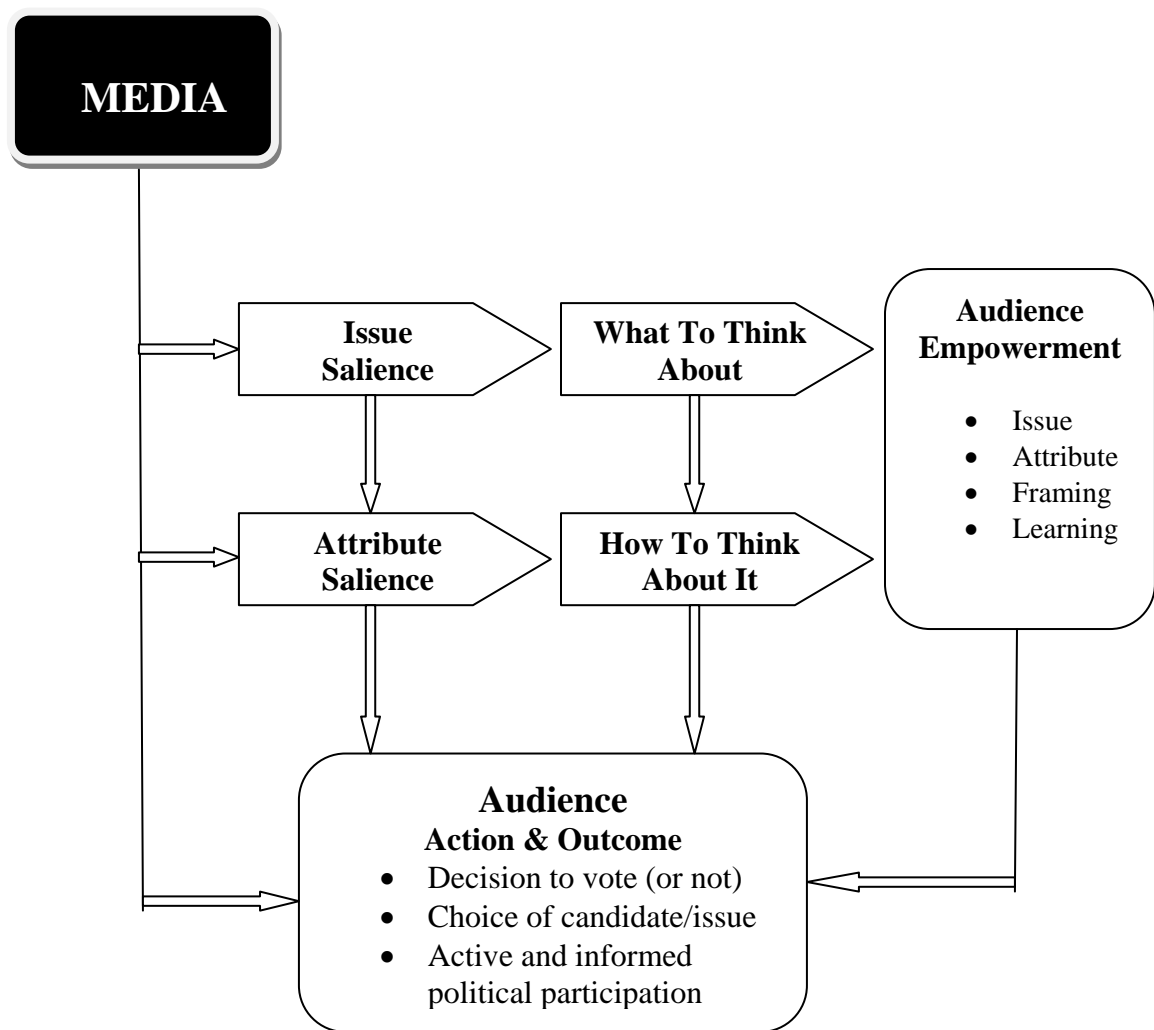
What this model adds to contemporary agenda setting scenario are the elements of audience empowerment and audience action or outcome. At the apex of the diagram are media channels which commence the agenda setting process that result in empowerment.

It is important to explain that in the context of this research, the notion of "empowerment" does not represent a legal granting of power or authority to vote, from the media to their audiences. The media do not have such powers. However, since this discussion is about a political election process, the contention is that whatever information the audiences acquire through the media about issues in the election, as well as the personal characteristics of the contestants, will go a long way towards enabling those audiences make reasoned and rational choices about casting their ballot. Thus, it can be reasonably argued that the acquisition of such knowledge is politically empowering to audiences.

Audience empowerment is therefore a factor of four basic processes: (a) exposure to salient issues or what to think about; (b) exposure to attribute salience or how to think about issues/candidates in a political election; (c) how the issues and attributes are framed and (d) a learning process that follows

Audience empowerment does not assume that audiences are totally ignorant about issues or attributes or are incapable of reasoned and rational thinking, in which case they are subject to being manipulated by their media. It assumes that the learning process, which agenda setting is, results in the acquisition of knowledge which places a person on a more informed pedestal for possible action.

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Audience action and outcome (at the base of the diagram) largely follow the same logic of audience empowerment, and go beyond to place emphasis on the use of the knowledge acquired. Essentially, they deal with the decision to vote (or indeed not to vote), the choice of candidates and issues in the election, all of which lead to an informed and active level of political participation.

This proposition argues that the real purpose of agenda setting lies not in the acquisition of knowledge as an end in itself, but in the use of the knowledge so acquired for informed action. In this case, which is the media-inspired learning in a political electioneering period, the consequence or outcome lies in the voter's rational decision to cast or withhold his or her ballot.

It is noteworthy however that canvassing for the consequence of an agenda setting process does not arrogate to the media the power to make choices for the electorate. It rather dwells on the media arming the electorate with the necessary information to reach decisions and make independent choices.

If the sole purpose of agenda setting is the transference of issue and attribute salience to their various audiences, then such audiences would have been divested of their humanity and reduced to no more than mere robots and reservoirs of information. The idea of empowerment and action or consequence means the audiences' ability to acquire information, process them and make choices on the basis of what they have learnt. Thus, agenda setting can be described as a dynamic learning process which truly revolves around the individual.

The issue of how to measure outcome shall be dealt with in the methods section of this work. Nevertheless, it is worth reiterating that outcomes are based on individual choice as a result of the leaning process that has been facilitated by the media; it is not that the media determine the outcome and then pass it on to their audiences. Besides, outcomes are also conditioned by a variety of factors such as level of education, income and age. In a way therefore, outcomes provide the linkage between theory and research.

Agenda setting: Linking theory with research

In the introduction of this research, it was explained that the overarching objective in carrying out this study is to examine the role of the media in the presidential election in Kenya.

This objective informs the research question for this work. Consequently, the research question is framed this way:

Did the Kenyan media matter in the 2007 presidential election in Kenya?

In terms of the agenda setting theory, what has been demonstrated so far is that with regard to the first level of the theory, the thrust of the theory's contention is that over time, what the public discusses as the salient issues of the day are greatly influenced by the news media. (Roberts, Wanta & Dzwo, 2002).

It is against this backdrop that Hypothesis 1 of this work is framed as follows:

Issues emphasized by the media in Kenya's 2007 presidential election have an influence on issues on the agenda of the Kenyan public in the same period.

As shown in this work, the main plank of the second level agenda setting in relation to elections is that attributes or personal characteristics which the media link to

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candidates for political office influence the attributes or personal characteristics the public subsequently links to the same political figures (Golan & Wanta, 2001).

It is also against this backdrop that Hypothesis 2 of this work is framed as follows: *Personal characteristics linked by the media to candidates in Kenya's 2007 presidential election influenced the personal characteristics the public linked to the same candidates in the same period.*

So far, this study has canvassed for the expansion of the agenda setting theory to include an examination of what the individual does with the influence of first and second levels of the theory. Here, the outcome of such an influence matters.

It is against this position that Hypothesis 3 of this study is framed as follows: *Voters in Kenya's 2007 presidential election perceived themselves to be influenced by the media in their choice of political candidates.*

Having expressed the intention of this study and examined its theoretical base, as well as the research question and hypotheses to be tested, the next phase in this study to take cognizance of a historical reality that created a detour to the original purpose and layout of this research.

Chapter 4

Kenya's 2007 presidential election

Historical imperatives have the power to compel adjustments and restructuring in human affairs. This chapter is a product of this reality. Initially, it was not a part of the structural platforms of this study. Its addition is in response to, and the need to address, the unforeseen consequence necessitated by the vicissitudes of the 2007 presidential election in Kenya: the violence that tainted what was to have been another milestone in the country's democratic history.

On December 27, 2007, presidential and parliamentary elections were simultaneously held in Kenya under the auspices of the country's electoral body, the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK). On December 30, 2007, the ECK chairman, Mr. Samuel Kivuitu, declared that incumbent President Mwai Kibaki had won his re-election bid. Later that evening, President Kibaki was sworn-in to commence his second five-year term of office. According to the *Daily Nation* newspaper (December 31, 2007, p. 2), the vote tally is as follows: President Kibaki (4,584,721), main challenger Raila Odinga (4,352,993) and Kalonzo Musyoka (879,903). The presidency was won by a margin of 231,728 votes.

International response to this declaration of victory was swift and essentially hinged on the contention that what took place on December 27, 2007, was an electoral absurdity and a glaring travesty of justice. The European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) in Kenya, led by Mr. Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, was at the

forefront of pointing out the multi-dimensional chain of electoral malpractices that characterized the polls. In an interview with *The Standard* newspaper in Kenya (January 2, 2008, p. 5) Lambsdorff cited various flaws in the electoral process and concluded that "to enable doubts over the accuracy of the presidential results to be clarified, it is vital that an independent investigation is swiftly conduced and the ECK demonstrates maximum transparency in this period." The US, UK and German governments echoed similar sentiments through their official representatives in Kenya.

Local reaction to the polls and result was vociferous, then violent. The main challenger to the president in the poll, Raila Odinga of the Orange Democratic party (ODM), declared that the elections were massively rigged, argued that his party had actually won, and summed up his reaction in an interview with the Kenyan *Daily Nation* newspaper of January 1, 2008 (back page): "The last 48 hours have been the saddest in the history of this country. We have seen democracy shackled, eventually strangled and buried. The country is in a funeral mood."

A historically unprecedented hurricane of violence engulfed Kenya in the aftermath of the December 2007 presidential election and the subsequent swearing-in of Mwai Kibaki as president. The fact that the opposition ODM political party led by Raila Odinga challenged the results and refused to recognize the legitimacy of Kibaki as president fuelled the rampaging inferno. Although the final tally of deaths resulting from the violence is yet to be officially declared, the *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)* news online *(April 17, 2008)* reported that "Some 1,500 people died and 600,000 fled their homes in violence after a disputed presidential poll in December."

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International and local efforts to halt the post election mayhem in Kenya commenced almost as soon as the violence erupted. The principal participants were the Canadian, U.S.A., Australian, British and German governments, as well as the African Union, the Commonwealth and United Nations. A panel of eminent African personalities consisting of former UN secretary general, Kofi Annan, former South Africa's first lady, Graca Machel-Mandela, and former and current Tanzanian presidents, Benjamin Mkapa and Jakaya Kiwete respectively, was set up to mediate between the contending parties in the crisis and work out an amicable formula to return Kenya to normalcy.

Despite the crisis that threatened the stability of the country and the attendant peace talks spear-headed by Kofi Annan and his team, the Kenyan parliament was sworn-in on January 15, 2008, with a member of the opposition ODM political party, Kenneth Marende, elected to the position of Speaker of the House where his party won 99 seats in the 222-member parliament. President Kibaki's Party of National Unity (PNU) won 43 seats.

On February 18, 2008, US Secretary of State , Condoleezza Rice, flew into Nairobi, Kenya's capital city, to lend weight to the crisis talks and thereafter told reporters that: "What I'm underscoring is that there is need to share power and responsibility. That's what I gathered from all the teams I met. I met President Kibaki, ODM leader Raila Odinga, members of the civil society and business people and what they all want to see is an end to violence and a quick political settlement" (*The Standard* online, February 19, 2008).

On February 28, 2008, two months after the presidential election and its resultant violence, Kofi Annan successfully brokered a deal between the contending parties, and President Kibaki and challenger Odinga signed a pact to return peace to Kenya. The main provision of the deal is the recognition of the presidency of Kibaki by both parties and the creation of the new position of executive prime minister for Mr. Odinga (*British Broadcasting Corporation,* online edition, February 28, 2008). Kenya's constitution was to be subsequently amended to accommodate the new political dispensation.

Perhaps, what can stand as the final testimony that the post-presidential election (2007) political crisis in Kenya has become part of history is the fact that on April 13, 2008, both President Kibaki and Prime Minister-designate Raila Odinga signed a deal in which cabinet positions were shared between their political parties. Four days later, Mr. Odinga was officially sworn in as Kenya's prime minister.

<div align="center">Election aftermath in theoretical perspective</div>

When political violence erupted in Kenya in the wake of its disputed December 2007 presidential election, there was a legitimate proposition and informed suspicion that what took place in the country could be understood from the perspective of social movements. This proposition has an historical antecedent: Kenya's colonial history has an epoch when the Mau Mau indigenous movement fought the British colonial administration. As discussed earlier in this study, the Mau Mau uprising was an organized political and violent agitation which was initially based on opposition to the forced deprivation of arable land by the colonial administration. The movement

effectively served as the forerunner to the nationalistic fervor which challenged colonial rule in Kenya and later culminated in the country gaining independence in 1963.

Can the December 2007 election's aftermath be categorized as another variant of social movement in Kenya albeit against an indigenous political leadership? Perhaps, a brief examination of social movements will help provide an insight to this question.

McAdam and Snow (1997) conceptualize social movements as "a collectivity acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional channels for the purpose of promoting or resisting change in the group, society, or world order of which it is a part" (p. xviii). Tilly (2004) adds weight to this definition by placing emphasis on the twin elements of an organization and sustained campaign as crucial elements in social movements.

On his part, Tarrow (2003) indicates that social movements historically begin as creations of contentious politics, when a group embarks on a systematic challenge of existing elites and structures, and metamorphoses into social movements when mass action is sustained over time and supported by some organization. He ends with an assertion that "contentious collective action is the basis of social movements" (p. 3).

A further examination of the nature of social movements shows that they are basically norm-motivated, such as in a movement to get people lose weight; or value-oriented as exemplified by the U.S. civil rights movement or the Mau Mau uprising in pre-independence Kenya (McAdam & Snow, 1997). Both Tilly (2003) and Skocpol (2005) reiterate the sustained periods of campaign of political violence as of the most

potent instrument employed by social movements in the realization of their objectives. Above all, social movements are not ephemeral creations or phenomena.

Do all the above citations suggest that categorizing the violent aftermath of Kenya's 2007 presidential election as the product of a social movement in Kenya, is a sustainable argument? The traditional view of social movements might not suggest an affirmative response, given the fact that there was no clear evidence of organizational framework and support for the events that took place, other than the fact that the protesters were unified in their condemnation and rejection of the presidential election result and the subsequent enthronement of Mwai Kibaki as the president. Besides, the agitation, though violent, had a life-span of approximately thirty days, the rest of the period before its formal end on February 28, 2000 being when the Kofi Annan group was working out the modalities for their peace initiative.

Apparently strengthening the above argument would be that the call for mass protests and a rejection of the outcome of the election by the opposition ODM political party that lost the election was more of a coincidence and incidental than a concerted leadership of the violence. Not only did the ODM leadership deny instigating violence, and asserted the right to protest the outcome of the elections, on January 8, 2008, the party called off its planned nationwide political rallies in order to "create a conducive atmosphere for negotiations to take place" in response to President Kabiki's invitation to Mr. Odinga (ODM's leader) for a meeting at state house, Nairobi, to seek ways to resolve the political impasse (*Daily Nation,* January 8, 2008, front page). The fact that the newly elected Kenyan parliament, with President Kibaki and ODM's Raila Odinga as elected

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members and in attendance, was sworn in on January 15, 2008 suggests that the country did not disintegrate as a result of the violence.

This argument appears to sideline what Piven and Cloward (1977) call the "consciousness" and "behavior" crucial elements that lie at the bedrock of social movements. In *Poor people's movements: Why they succeed, and how they fail*, the authors basically argue that in the eyes and minds of people involved in such movements: (1) the system being challenged has lost legitimacy; (2) having lost legitimacy in their consideration, they believe it is their duty to assert their rights and demand for change; (3) that the people who hitherto felt powerless now sense a capacity to act and alter their predicament.

The second fundamental platform of what Piven and Cloward (1977) say, challenges the notion of organizational/administrative strength as a sine-qua-non for social movements. They contend that; "the effect of equating movements with movement organizations – and thus requiring that protests have a leader, a constitution, a legislative program, or at least a banner before they are recognized as such – is to divert attention from many forms of political unrest and to consign them by definition to the more shadowy realms of social problems and deviant behavior" (p. 5).

Finally, the authors opine that "the most useful way to think about the effectiveness of protest is to examine the disruptive effects on institutions of different forms of mass defiance, and then to examine the political reverberations of those disruptions" (p. 24).

From this brief literature review it is discernible that: (1) social movements basically arise out of a sense of a rejection of what a given system offers its populace or part of it; (2) such movements use contentious politics – forms of violence - to give some bite to their case; (3) such violent response may or may not have longevity, as that depends on the situation under examination; (4) social movements may come to life independent of organizational structures, although such structures may become necessary later to give more focus and coordination to the movement; (5) the success or failure of such movements can be measured by their disruptive capacity and the depth of the political (or economic etc) consequence of their action.

It appears plausible therefore to argue that while the post election violence in Kenya was more spontaneous and haphazard than organizationally planned and executed, it still had the basic characteristics of a social movement, first in the sense that it erupted out of the consciousness of voters who felt disenfranchised by what they adjudged to be an election whose result was rigged in favor of the incumbent president. This conviction led them to believe that even without the cushion of an organized structure they could still effect a change in a system whose legitimacy they questioned. Although their protest was rather short-lived (it was practically over in one month), the disruptive consequence of their action crippled Kenya, ultimately led to the Kofi Annan's peace committee which in turn worked hard to bring President Kibaki and his main challenger, Raila Odinga, to a conflict resolution process which led to their power sharing agreement for the governance of Kenya.

Comparatively assessed, the Mau Mau movement which challenged colonial British overlords in Kenya was more organized, better equipped and had longer period of contentious political violence than what took place after the 2007 elections in the same country. Nevertheless, viewed from their disruptive capacities, both impacted the political structure and had practical consequences that affected and changed the political terrain. The vital point to note therefore is the impact occasioned by the movement through its contentious political action, not necessarily how long it took it to achieve that objective, with or without organizational back-up.

Consequently, the social movement theory offers some insight in understanding the post electoral violence in Kenya. However, it requires more than a cursory examination to articulate and comprehend the rationale for the spontaneity of that post election mass action in Kenya, or indeed, the role of the media in that affair. To do that requires a full-blown study. What can be reasonably achieved in this dissertation therefore is to provide a reasoned insight into how the media reported events that led to the election and the crisis that resulted thereafter.

It behooves this inquiry therefore to pose the questions: Did the media see it (the violence) coming? Did such a huge and devastating electoral aftermath form part of the media reports prior to the election? How can one objectively assess the role of the media in the entire electoral process? Did the media breach ethical protocols in reporting the post election violence in Kenya? During the crisis, did the media embrace peace journalism or did they fuel the riots? Overall, did the media play the disinterested role of a moral witness to the crisis?

An attempt to answer all or some of these questions will be made in the discussion chapter of this study. However, even when all that is done, what will emerge can only be the provision of the parameters through which one can begin to appreciate what happened in Kenya, not a full investigation into why it took place. Understanding the role of the media in Kenya's electoral fiasco and resultant violence is a legitimate subject of, and indeed merits, another study.

With this insight, it is appropriate move on to the explanation of the research methods employed in this study and how the work was carried out.

Chapter 5

Methodology

Theory provides the intellectual gyroscope for the conduct of research while

methodology offers the *modus operandi* for the actual execution of the study. Having

established agenda setting as the theoretical framework for this research, it is imperative

to state that this is a quantitative study which employs content analysis and survey as the

instruments for its accomplishment.

The use of content analysis and survey for this study has antecedents in several

agenda setting studies, from the initial Chapel Hill research of McCombs and Shaw

(1972) to the Spanish mayoral elections study conducted by the McCombs, Llamas,

Lopez-Escobar and Rey (1997) and similar studies that came afterwards.

Essentially, this research deals with an analysis of the 2007 presidential election

in Kenya, East Africa, where three candidates, including the incumbent president,

contested the presidency of that country. The basic rationales for this analysis are:

- To test the validity of the assumptions of the first and second levels of
  agenda setting theory in an African setting, using Kenya as the study
  focus.
- To go beyond these assumptions and explore the outcome of the agenda
  setting process with a view to expanding the frontiers of the theory.
- To seek a substantiated response, based on the two issues above, to the
  question: did media matter in Kenya's 2007 presidential election?

- To examine the media's role in the post election period in which the
  country experienced political violence and instability.

The reasons for the use of Kenya in this study were enunciated in the introductory
section of this research. Suffice it to note however that Kenya is arguably the most
developed country in East Africa, whose strategic position often complements
international efforts to maintain peace in that region as well as encouraging the sustained
growth of democracy as a preferred system of governance in the modern era. The
violence in the aftermath of the presidential elections has not substantially dented this
contention.

A survey of registered voters in Nairobi, Kenya's capital city was conducted as a
complement to the content analysis, in order to ascertain the extent to which the media
influenced the issues the voters considered salient in the elections as well as their
perception of the personal qualities of the contestants. In this study, the public refers
specifically to the registered voters, while the word "media" is used in the context of the
Daily Nation and *The Standard* newspapers.

<div align="center">Content analysis</div>

Content analysis has been described as possibly the most widely used and fastest
growing tool of quantitative research (Neuendorf, 2002).

Several scholars such as Stempel (1989), Kerlinger (2000), Krippendorff (2004),
Hocking, Stack and McDermott (2003) have offered definitions of content analysis. For
this study, we shall examine more closely the definition of content analysis as provided
by Berelson (1952, p. 18) who conceptualized it as "a research technique for the

objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication." Added to this definition is the contention by Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005) that just describing content is not enough, rather there is need to draw inferences about the meaning of communication.

In this study, two of Kenya's most influential newspapers, the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard*, were content analyzed on issues they promoted during the elections, as well as how they presented the personal characteristics of the three candidates for the presidential position. The justification for the choice of newspapers has already been made in the introduction, the highlight of which is that both newspapers have national circulation coverage and command about 75 percent of the newspaper readership in the country.

Although the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* as well as their weekend editions were used in this study, the coverage period in perspective spans across October and November, 2007. This choice is principally because the nominations for the presidential election were finalized in September and the polling itself was in December, 2007. This length of time compares favorably with other agenda setting studies. In their study, Golan and Wanta (2001) examined newspapers in the month of January, 2000, while McCombs, Llamas, Lopez-Escobar and Rey (1997) examined newspapers and television messages from the 12[th] to the 26[th] of May, 1995. *The Daily Nation* and *The Standard's* January 2008 editions were also examined to ascertain the role of the media during the post election crisis in Kenya.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is an important aspect of content analysis. Stempel (1989) describes it as that which the researcher is actually interested in studying or measuring. For this study, the unit of analysis is the news stories published by the both newspapers. In all, 448 (four hundred and forty-eight) news stories were examined.

The news stories were about: (a) What each candidate said about himself and his campaign issues or programs or policies; (b) What each candidate said about his opponents and their policies or programs. (c) What other people, including opponents, said about each or all the candidates. It is mainly through such stories that issues in the elections as well as the attributes of the candidates will be best established.

Sample/Universe

Sampling is necessitated by the fact that "the universe of available texts is too large to be examined as a whole" (Krippendorff, 2004, p.111). However, in this content analysis the universe is quite limited hence the need to use all stories in the newspapers.

Categories

Content categories are at the heart content analysis, as they are essentially used for the classification of data. Such categories need to be exclusive and exhaustive, and have to relate to the objective of the study (Holsti, 1969). The nature of this study necessitates the creation of two groups of categories: news and attribute categories, both of which will address the main research question.

The news categories are

1. Constitutional Review
2. Health Care
3. Environment.

4. Creating Employment.

5. Tackling Poverty

6. Education.

7. Corruption.

8. Security.

9. Economic Recovery

10. Tribalism/Ethnicity.

11. Infrastructure.

12. Agriculture

13. Political Intolerance.

14. Religious Intolerance

15. Post election violence

16. Other matters not mentioned above.

The attribute categories are:

1. Decisive

2. Trustworthy

3. Compassionate

4. Vision

5. Tribalistic

6. Effectiveness (leadership)

Coding

Two coders, this researcher and a final-year graduate (MA) student of journalism who hails from Kenya and was very familiar with the country's political process and the elections, did the coding for this study. Six sessions of coder training was done in February, while the actual coding took place in the months of March – April, 2008. Wimmer and Dominick (2003) recommend that 10-25% of materials will be sufficient for inter-coder reliability. In this study, 54 stories or 12% of the materials were used to

establish inter-coder reliability. Cohen's *kappa* which corrects for agreement by chance was used in this regard and a figure of .83 was obtained. The coding manual and sheet (see Appendix 2) were designed to provide answers to the research question and hypotheses.

Statistical Procedures

In order to establish an agenda setting influence, the following statistical procedures were used:

1. Major issues of the election identified both in the newspapers through content analysis and survey were rank ordered, then the *Spearman* rank order correlation coefficient was used to establish the relationship between them.

2. The attributes or personal characteristics of the political candidates, as well as issues associated with them, were identified through the newspaper content analysis and survey. They were also rank ordered and the *Spearman* rank order coefficient was used to establish the relationship between them.

3. The tones of coverage of both issues linked to the candidates as well as their personal characteristics were measured to establish how the candidates were presented to potential voters.

4. The tone of media coverage and survey of the candidates' top three characteristics were compared and then a *chi-square* analysis was used to check for significant differences among the candidates on the newspapers' positive tone of their personal characteristics.

All the above were conducted in order to test the claims of the first and second hypotheses of this study, which are about the first and second levels of the agenda setting theory.

Testing the third hypothesis about the voters' perception of media influence on their choice of presidential candidates was based on the survey. Significant questions about the media in Kenya were used to establish the basis for statistical procedures to be applied. These questions were about the voters' perception of the level of media freedom in Kenya, how fair and balanced the media are in their reports, and how the reports affected the voters' perception of the issues in the election, and the candidates' personal characteristics.

The *Pearson* correlation coefficient was used to test results of the survey pertaining to the relationship between the influence of the media on choice of candidates and the frequency of newspaper readership. Thereafter, the controlling variables - age, sex, level of education and income - were used to see if they had any significant influence on that relationship. Furthermore, a regression analysis was carried out to determine if there was a significant difference in the number of times a person read newspapers, and the perceived influence of the media on choice of candidates to support.

<div align="center">Survey</div>

The survey instrument is the other component of the research method for this study. Although scholars such as Creswell (2003), Shoemaker and McCombs (2003), Hocking, Stacks and McDermott (2003) have their versions of the definition of survey, it

is instructive that they basically use the same parameters in their explanation of what a survey means as an instrument of research.

Their various views are fairly represented in Poindexter and McCombs (2000, p. 25) who define a survey as "a research technique that uses a standardized questionnaire to collect information about attitudes, opinion, behaviors, and background and lifestyle characteristics from a sample of respondents."

Essentially therefore, a survey represents what people think about an issue. It lies on the same continuum with a poll, however the main difference between them is that "a poll simply describes how or what participants think and is usually fairly short. It seeks simple answers to simple questions. A survey, on the other hand, is a more in-depth project, seeking to understand why people differ in their descriptions of perceptions of an event" (Hocking, Stacks and McDermott, 2003, p.239).

The survey for this research was conducted among registered voters in Nairobi, Kenya, from the 9[th] to the 11[th] of December, 2007, at the height of the electioneering campaign in the country, with the presidential election being just sixteen days away. It was a cross-sectional survey that involved the face-to-face approach. A total of 562 respondents were contacted, but 510 full results were obtained, giving a response rate of 91%. The survey conductors, who were already familiar with the survey method, were given further training before the commencement of their work.

The questionnaire was designed by this researcher, approved by the campus Institutional Review Board (IRB), University of Missouri, and implemented by the Strategic Public Relations and Research company headed by a lecturer in journalism at

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the University of Nairobi, Kenya. The timing for the survey is important as it

commenced some forty days after the newspapers for the content analysis were obtained.

This is to give room for a possible agenda setting effect. Although there is no precision as

to when such effect can take place, McCombs (2004) suggests that a period of one month

is generally sufficient for an agenda setting effect to be ascertained.

Sample

Nairobi, capital city of Kenya, was chosen as a good place to obtain a fairly

representative sample of the entire Kenyan population. The obtained sample was based

on the Electoral Commission of Kenya's register of voters of May 2007, which was still

current as at the time of the survey.

As already stated, a total of 510 respondents were used in the survey. To obtain

this figure, a multi-stage sampling system was used, where the population was divided

into clusters and a systematic method used to obtain the respondents. This translated into

the use of the 5th household in each sampling point.

<div align="center">Kenya: Indicators of election coverage</div>

In order to gain more insight into the media coverage of the post election violence

in Kenya, an audit of the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers, and their weekend

editions, was undertaken. The period examined was January, 2008 since the election was

conducted in December 2007. In order to assess the coverage before the election, the

same newspapers were examined for the period October to November, 2007.

The foci of this exercise were: the news stories and photograph published on the

front pages of the newspapers, as well as the house editorials they published in the period

of interest. The rationale for the use of the front page is simply that that is where all main and important news stories in newspapers generally appear.

A house editorial performs a useful function in newspapers to the extent that it is an embodiment of the corporate or institutional thinking and position espoused by the editorial board, and at times owners, of the paper. As MacDougall (1973, p. 1) contends, "the anonymous editorial represents the newspaper as an institution." An examination of house editorials in both *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* will provide good insight into the editorial direction of the newspapers with regard to the pre-election coverage and the violence that came in the wake of the disputed presidential polls.

In all, 48 house editorials, 38 front-page news stories and 83 photographs were examined in the January 2008 editions of the *Daily Nation* and its weekend version. For *The Standard*, 30 house editorials were examined alongside 41 front-page stories and 87 photographs also published on the front page of the daily and weekend versions of the newspaper.

Furthermore, a total of 120 house editorials of the *Daily Nation* and 81 for *The Standard* and their weekend editions in October –November, 2007 were examined to ascertain the focus of the newspapers in their pre-election coverage vis-à-vis the violence that came afterwards.

In addition, a total of 105 front page stories appearing in *The Standard* were examined for the same October-November, 2007 period. Out of this figure, 92 front pages stories which specifically dealt with politics and the elections were further examined to establish whether the media literally saw the violent aftermath of the

elections coming. In the same way, 75 front page stories were examined in the *Daily Nation* of the same period above, with further assessment of 71 of those stories with direct bearing on politics and the elections in that period.

<center>Research question and hypotheses</center>

Although the issues of research question and hypotheses have been addressed earlier in this study, they are worth repeating here. Riffe, Lacy and Fico (2005) describe the research question as the main objective of the study, while McCombs (1972, p.5) says that both hypotheses and research question give guidance to the study because "those who start out to look at everything in general and nothing in particular seldom find anything at all."

In this study, the research question is: Did the Kenyan media matter in the 2007 presidential election in Kenya?

The hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Issues emphasized by the media in Kenya's 2007 presidential election have an influence on issues on the agenda of the Kenyan public in the same period.

Hypothesis 2: Personal characteristics linked by the media to candidates in Kenya's 2007 presidential election influenced the personal characteristics the public linked to the same candidates in the same period.

Hypothesis 3: Voters in Kenya's 2007 presidential election perceived themselves to be influenced by the media in their choice of political candidates.

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It is against the background of the research question and hypotheses above that the results from this research will be examined

Chapter 6

Research Findings

The first hypothesis in this study asserts that issues highlighted by the media in Kenya's 2007 presidential election influenced issues on the agenda of the Kenyan public in the same election period. This is in line with the assumption of the first level of the agenda setting theory.

In Table 1, the most salient issues of the election as carried by the media, as well as the most important election issues obtained from the survey for this research, are outlined. The first level of the agenda setting theory suggests a ranked comparison of these issues from the media and survey in order to determine if there is a systematic relationship between them.

Using the *Spearman rho* rank order correlation coefficient to assess this relationship between the media and survey responses on issues, results From Table 1 below show that there is a correlation coefficient of $r_s = +0.88$. . This entails that Hypothesis 1 of this study is supported.

In practical terms, Table 1 suggests that there is a strong, positive relationship between issues emphasized by the media and the issues emphasized by the public in Kenya.

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Table 1.   Most important issues

Issue	Media/Rank		Survey/Rank	
Tackling Poverty	63	2	69	1
Creating Employment	71	1	66	2
Combating Corruption	55	3	60	3
Security	41	5	60	3
Fighting Tribalism	32	7	49	4
Constitutional Review	35	6	43	5
Education	53	4	37	6
Economic Recovery	25	9	32	7
Agriculture	27	8	25	8
Healthcare	24	10	23	9
Infrastructure	22	11	22	10
Total	448		486	

N=11; $r_s = +0.88$.

The second hypothesis of this research assumes that the characteristics linked by the media to the presidential candidates influenced the personal attributes the public associated with the same candidates. This is a second level agenda setting matter and involves both cognitive (issues/characteristics linked with candidates) and affective (how the candidates are generally portrayed) dimensions.

In other words, what is shown in Tables 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c), as well as 3(a), 3(b) and 3(c) is the evidence that what the media published about the personal characteristics of the candidates, and the issues linked to them by the media, had an influence on what the survey respondents thought about the personal qualities of these candidates and the

issues associated with them. This is a cardinal assumption of the second level of the agenda setting theory.

Table 2(a) shows that in terms of cognitive issue linkage, there is a high *Spearman* rank order correlation coefficient between the media and survey on issues linked to presidential candidate Mwai Kibaki. The result is $r_s = + 0.89$.

Table 2(a)   Ranked issue linkage - Kibaki

Issue	Media/Rank		Survey/Rank	
Constitutional Review	3	12	8	11
Healthcare	7	10	22	8
Environment	6	11	11	10
Creating Employment	18	5	35	5
Tackling Poverty	10	8	24	7
Education	33	1	140	1
Combating Corruption	13	7	48	3
Security	21	3	37	4
Economic Recovery	20	2	84	2
Tribalistic/Ethnicity	15	6	37	4
Infrastructure	9	9	12	9
Agriculture	19	4	26	6
Total	174		484	

N=12. $r_s = + 0.89$

Table 2(b) also shows that there is a high positive correlation between issues linked by the media to candidate Odinga and issues the survey respondents associated with him. The *Spearman rho* correlation coefficient for this is $r_s = + 0.81$.

Table 2(b)   Ranked issue linkage - Odinga

Issue	Media/Rank		Survey/Rank	
Constitutional Review	27	1	79	1
Healthcare	6	10	21	8
Environment	3	12	8	10
Creating Employment	16	4	27	7
Tackling Poverty	13	6	32	6
Education	14	5	60	3
Combating Corruption	20	2	78	2
Security	11	7	60	3
Economic Recovery	10	8	15	9
Tribalistic/Ethnicity	8	9	35	5
Infrastructure	18	3	51	4
Agriculture	5	11	6	11
Total	151		472	

N=12. $r_s = +\ 0.81$

Table 2(c) equally demonstrates that issues the media linked to candidate

Musyoka positively correlates with issues the public linked to him in the same period.

The *Spearman rho* coefficient for this is $r_s = +\ 0.84$.

Table 2(c)　　　　　　　Ranked issue linkage - Musyoka

Issue	Media/Rank		Survey/Rank	
Constitutional Review	2	12	14	11
Healthcare	9	6	37	4
Environment	17	2	39	3
Creating Employment	3	11	21	8
Tackling Poverty	4	10	22	7
Education	27	1	117	1
Combating Corruption	8	7	39	3
Security	12	5	32	5
Economic Recovery	6	9	12	10
Tribalistic/Ethnicity	15	3	50	2
Infrastructure	7	8	16	9
Agriculture	13	4	28	6
Total	123		427	

N=12. $r_s = + 0.84$

Results on Table 3(a) show the ranked linkage between the media's portrayal of the candidate and survey respondents on personal characteristics of candidate Kibaki. The *Spearman rho* correlation for this relationship yielded $r_s = + 0.71$

Table 3(a)   Ranked personal characteristics linkage - Kibaki

Issue	Media/Rank		Survey/Rank	
Decisive	35	1	166	1
Trustworthy	30	2	136	4
Compassionate	23	4	128	5
Vision/Plan	18	5	143	3
Tribalistic	10	6	120	6
Effective/Leadership	25	3	147	2
Total	141			

N=6. $r_s = + 0.71$

Results on Table 3(b) show the ranked linkage between how the media portrayed candidate Odinga on personal characteristics and what the survey respondents said about him. The *Spearman rho* rank order correlation coefficient for this relationship yielded $r_s = +0.80$

Table 3(b)   Ranked personal characteristics linkage - Odinga

Issue	Media/Rank		Survey/Rank	
Decisive	33	1	178	1
Trustworthy	21	3	115	2
Compassionate	10	5	99	3
Vision/Plan	25	2	178	1
Tribalistic	13	4	79	4
Effective/Leadership	33	1	178	1
Total	135			

N=6. $r_s = + 0.80$

Results on Table 3(c) show the ranked linkage between the media and survey respondents on the personal characteristics of candidate Musyoka. The *Spearman rho* correlation coefficient for this relationship yielded $r_s = + 0.77$

Table 3(c)　　　Ranked personal characteristics linkage - Musyoka

Issue	Media/Rank		Survey/Rank	
Decisive	24	2	127	1
Trustworthy	19	4	96	4
Compassionate	14	6	95	5
Vision/Plan	15	5	81	6
Tribalistic	28	1	97	3
Effective/Leadership	21	3	101	2
Total	121			

N=6. $r_s = + 0.77$

The tone of the media's linkage of issues to political aspirants and their personal characteristics is another crucial aspect of the second level of agenda setting theory. This is usually referred to as the affective aspect of the theory. Its importance lies in the fact that the tone is indicative of how the media want their audiences to look at those issues and personal characteristics. Tones are therefore couched in positive, negative or neutral terms. Tables 4 (a), (b), (c), 5(a), (b), (c), 6 and 7 deal with these tones.

With regard to this affective (the tone) aspect of the second level agenda setting dimension, the following results were obtained. Table 4(a) shows candidate Kibaki with a total of 174 issue coverage in newspapers, with 65 stories framed positively, while 52 were negatively put. 57 stories had neutral tones. The three major positive tones are on

education (25), economic recovery (14) and security (13). The three major negative tones are on combating corruption (12), creating employment (11) and tackling poverty (9).

Table 4(a)   Tone of issue coverage in newspapers - Kibaki

Issue	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Tackling poverty	1	0	9	10
Creating employment	3	4	11	18
Combating corruption	0	1	12	13
Security	13	6	2	21
Fighting tribalism	1	12	2	15
Constitutional review	3	0	0	3
Education	25	2	6	33
Economic recovery	14	5	1	20
Agriculture	3	13	3	19
Healthcare	2	1	4	7
Infrastructure	0	7	2	9
Environment	0	6	0	6
Total	65	57	52	174

Table 4(b) identifies candidate Odinga as having a total of 151 stories, out of which 93 have positive tones. 26 stories have neutral tones while the negatively framed stories were 32. The three major positively framed stories are on the issues of constitutional review (23), combating corruption (17) and creating employment (12). On the negative side are economic recovery (5), agriculture (5) and fighting tribalism (5).

Table 4(b)   Tone of issue coverage in newspapers - Odinga

Issue	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Tackling poverty	10	1	0	13
Creating employment	12	3	3	16
Combating corruption	17	3	0	20
Security	5	4	2	11
Fighting tribalism	2	1	5	8
Constitutional review	23	0	4	27
Education	9	3	2	14
Economic recovery	4	1	5	10
Agriculture	0	0	5	5
Healthcare	1	2	3	6
Infrastructure	10	5	3	18
Environment	0	3	0	3
Total	93	26	32	151

The tone of newspaper coverage of candidate Musyoka (Table 4c) shows 60 positively framed stories, 25 neutral ones and 38 others crafted negatively, giving a total of 123 stories. The three leading positive frames are on education (18), environment (11) and fighting tribalism (9). On the negative side are combating corruption (7), infrastructure (7) and security/economic recovery (5).

Table 4(c)   Tone of issue coverage in newspapers - Musyoka

Issue	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Tackling poverty	1	2	1	4
Creating employment	2	0	1	3
Combating corruption	1	0	7	8
Security	4	3	5	12
Fighting tribalism	9	3	3	15
Constitutional review	0	2	0	2
Education	18	6	3	27
Economic recovery	1	0	5	6
Agriculture	7	5	1	13
Healthcare	6	1	2	9
Infrastructure	0	0	7	7
Environment	11	3	3	17
Total	60	25	38	123

This study also examined the tone of the newspaper coverage of the three presidential candidates on their personal characteristics. Table 5(a) shows that candidate Kibaki has a total of 141 personal characteristics matters, with 60 of them couched positively, 59 of them put negatively tones, while 22 others were neutral. His leading positive frames are on trustworthy (21), compassionate (14) and effective/leadership (10). On the negative side are decisive (16), vision/plan (12) and effective/leadership (11).

Table 5(a). Tone of personal characteristics coverage in newspapers - Kibaki

Issue	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Decisive	9	10	16	35
Trustworthy	21	0	9	30
Compassionate	14	2	7	23
Vision/plan	2	4	12	18
Tribalistic	4	2	4	10
Effective/Leadership	10	4	11	25
Total	60	22	59	141

The tone of candidate Odinga's personal characteristics is dealt with on Table 5(b). It shows a total of 135 stories, with 74 of them in positive frames, while 19 are neutral. 42 of them are negatively framed. The three major positive ones are decisive (26), effective/leadership (25), and vision/plan (15). The three with most negative frames are trustworthy (12), tribalistic (10), and compassionate (9).

Table 5(b). Tone of personal characteristics coverage in newspapers - Odinga

Issue	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Decisive	26	4	3	33
Trustworthy	5	4	12	21
Compassionate	1	0	9	10
Vision/plan	15	5	5	25
Tribalistic	2	1	10	13
Effective/Leadership	25	5	3	33
Total	74	19	42	135

For candidate Musyoka, the total number of stories on Table 5(c) is 121, with 54 of them in positive frames. The ones that belong to the neutral column are 25, while 42 stories are framed negatively. The three leading positive frames are being non tribalistic (18), decisive (10), and compassionate (9). The main negative frames were on vision/plan (12), trustworthy (10), and effective/leadership (9).

Table 5(c). Tone of personal characteristics coverage in newspapers - Musyoka

Issue	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Total
Decisive	10	9	5	24
Trustworthy	7	2	10	19
Compassionate	9	2	3	14
Vision/plan	3	0	12	15
Tribalistic (non)	18	7	3	28
Effective/Leadership	7	5	9	21
Total	54	25	42	121

How the media framed the top three personal characteristics of the candidates vis-à-vis the survey result on the tone of the same variables also added credence to a second level agenda setting influence. Table 6 below shows that but for the variables of "decisive" and "effective/leadership" in the case of candidate Kibaki, the tone of the other variables registered positively on both the media coverage of the candidates and what the survey respondents said about them.

Table 6. Tone of media coverage/survey of candidates' top 3 characteristics

Candidate	Characteristic	Tone-media	Tone-survey
Kibaki	Decisive	Negative (-7)	Positive (+112)*
	Trustworthy	Positive (+12)	Positive (+90)
	Effective/Leadership	Negative (-1)	Positive (+108)*
Odinga	Decisive	Positive (+23)	Positive (+101)
	Vision/Plan	Positive (+10)	Positive (+140)
	Effective/Leadership	Positive (+22)	Positive (+124)
Musyoka	Decisive	Positive (+5)	Positive (+68)
	Compassionate	Positive (+6)	Positive (+68)
	Tribalistic (non)	Positive (+15)	Positive (+42)

Note: Figure for the tone of media coverage = positive minus negative scores (based on Tables 5a, b and c.) The figure for the tone of survey = number of "strongly agree" minus "strongly disagree" respondents in the survey. * indicates no agenda setting influence.

In order to assess if the scores and differences in the tones in the newspapers for the candidates are of statistical significance, a *chi square* analysis was done, using the positive frames of the candidates as a pointer. Table 7 shows the result of the *chi square* analysis which establishes that the differences are significant at $\chi^2(df=10)=79.6$, $p<.001$

Table 7.   Positive tone for media on candidate's personal characteristics

	Decisive	Trust	Compassionate	Vision/Plan	Tribalistic	Effective/Leadership
Kibaki	9	21	14	2	4	10
Odinga	26	5	1	15	2	25
Musyoka	10	7	9	3	18	7

$\chi^2(df=10)=79.6$, $p<.001$

Overall, results from the issues and personal characteristics linkages between the media and survey on the three presidential candidates, as well as between the tone of the

issues in both media and survey, essentially show a positive relationship and a second level agenda setting effect, thus supporting the second hypothesis in this study.

Hypothesis 3 of this research is about the expansion of the theoretical boundaries of agenda setting theory. It contends that voters in Kenya's 2007 presidential election perceived an influence by the media in their choice of political candidates.

To examine this hypothesis, the following preliminary questions were asked and the respondents indicated their answers in a Likert scale that goes from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree": (a) The media in Kenya enjoy a great deal of freedom in their reports (b) The media in Kenya are fair, balanced and accurate in their reports (c) What I read, watch or listen to from the media affects how I view the main issues in this and other elections, and (d) What I read, watch or listen to from the media affects how I rate the character of the presidential candidates in this and other elections.

The responses from the above survey questions (Table 8) are essential as they lead to the variables being correlated below (Table 9). In other words, the variables establish two crucial points: the nature of the media in Kenya in terms of the latitude of freedom enjoyed by them, and the personal admission of the respondents about the extent of the influence of the media reports read in their decision-making process.

Table 8.   Survey results

Issues	SA/Agree	%	SD/Disagree	%
Media enjoy freedom in Kenya	292	57	169	33
Media are fair and balanced in reports	228	45	232	46
Media reports affect how I see issues in election	354	69	119	23
Media reports affect how view candidate's character	379	74	104	20

Note: "Strongly agree" and "agree" are combined; "Strongly disagree" and "disagree" are combined. "Undecided" are omitted. N=510

Having established the above, the frequency of media consumption was used to look at the choices of political candidates to be made. A *Pearson* correlation coefficient test was performed, using the data obtained from these variables from the survey: "frequency of newspaper readership" and "media influence on candidate choice". The results on Tables 9 and 10 below are as follows: r = .276; sig (2-tailed) = .000; N = 510; correlation is significant at p< .01. When controlling variables were introduced, the results were as follows: Education: r = .279; sig (2-tailed) = .000; N= 507; Age: r = .271; sig (2-tailed) = .000; N= 507; Income (monthly): r = .277; sig (2-tailed) = .000; N= 507; Sex: r = .284; sig (2-tailed) = .000; N= 507.

Table 9 indicates that there is a positive but low relationship (.276), with a high significance level, between frequency of newspaper readership and perceived media influence on the choice of candidates for the presidential poll. Table 10 shows that when the controlling variables were introduced the significance level still remained high. However, the strength of the relationship remained generally low, with the "sex" controlling variable leading to the strongest relationship between the readership and choice of candidate.

Table 9. Results of correlation

Variables	Pearson r	Significance
Reading Frequency/Influence on choice	.276**	.000

N = 510; **p < .01

Table 10. Results of correlation with controlling variables

Variables	Pearson r	Significance
Education	.279	.000
Age	.271	.000
Income (monthly)	.277	.000
Sex	.284	.000

N = 507. Sig is 2-tailed

Although the relationship between media consumption and the choice of candidate has been established (Table 9), a further test was conducted to ascertain whether the number of times newspapers are read in a week has an impact on the choice being made. In other words, does the number of times newspapers are read in a week enhance the perceived influence of the media on the respondents' choice of candidates in the election?

To answer this question, a regression analysis was conducted and the results on Table 11 show there is a significant difference in perception of media influence on choice of candidates among voters, based on the number of days they read newspapers in a week. The combination of Tables 9, 10 and 11 therefore demonstrates media influence on the choice candidates in an election, thereby supporting Hypothesis 3 of this study.

Table 11. Regression analysis

Variables	Beta	Significance
Frequency of readership/choice	.188	.000

Note: Linear R = .276; R-square =.076; Adjusted R-square = .074

Results for Kenya: *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers

(October and November, 2007; January 2008)

This segment of the results (Tables 12 to 21) examines the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers of October and November, 2007, and January 2008, with a view to determining what the dailies published before and after the elections. The rationale is to see if they had focused attention on the possibility of violence erupting after the presidential election and their response to the violence when it finally engulfed Kenya. All results will go to show the role the media played during the 2007 presidential election in that country.

Daily Nation

The *Daily Nation* published 75 front page stories between October and November, 2007. Out of this figure, an overwhelming number of 71 or 95% of the stories were about politics/elections. Other domestic matters accounted for 4 or 5% of the stories. There were no international news stories published on the front page in this period (see Table 12 [a] below).

A further breakdown of the politics/election aspect of the front page stories in this period (see Table 12[b]) shows the following story distribution: party nominations, 21 or 30%; public opinion watch, 6 or 8%; Electoral Commission, 7 or 10%; free/fair election, 2 or 3%; campaign, 20 or 28%; others, 15 or 21%

Table 12(a) *Daily Nation* (Front page stories, October - November, 2007)

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
Front page stories – politics/election	71	95
Front page stories – other domestic issues	4	5
Front page stories – international affairs	0	0
Total	75	100

Table 12(b) *Daily Nation* (Politics/Election unit, October - November, 2007)

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
Party Nomination	21	30
Public opinion watch	6	8
Electoral Commission	7	10
Free/Fair election	2	3
Campaign	20	28
Others	15	21
Total	71	100

The *Daily Nation* also published a total of 120 house editorials in October and November, 2007 in the pre-presidential polling period. According to Table 13 below, 30% or 36 of the house editorials were focused on the election, while 70% or 84 of them were on other issues, especially the nation's economy.

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Table 13   *Daily Nation* (House editorials, October - November, 2007)

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
House editorials - election	36	30
House editorials – others	84	70
Total	120	100

A total of 48 house editorials which appeared in the month of January, 2008 in the *Daily Nation* and its weekend editions were equally examined. The newspaper's January 25[th] edition was not located by this researcher. Table 14 below shows that 71% or 34 of the house editorials were devoted to calls for a peaceful resolution of the political crisis, including the various local and international efforts in this regard. 29% or 14 house editorials were about other issues.

Table 14 *Daily Nation* (House editorials, January, 2008)

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
House editorials - peace	34	71
House editorials – others	14	29
Total	48	100

In terms of the 37 front-page news stories which were published by the newspaper in the same period (see Table 15 below), 43% or 16 of them dealt with matters regarding

the peaceful resolution of the crisis, while 38% or 14 of them were stories about the violence itself. Only 19% or 7 stories were about other national and international issues.

Table 15. *Daily Nation* (Front page stories, January, 2008)

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
Front page stories - peace	16	43
Front page stories - violence	14	38
Front page stories – others	7	19
Total	37	100

Of the total number of 83 photographs on the front page of the *Daily Nation*, Table 16 below shows that 34% or 28 of them were about activities related to finding a peaceful way out of the political crisis the nation faced. 42% or 35 of the photographs depicted the violence itself, while 24% or 20 of them were photographs of other events and activities.

Table 16. *Daily Nation* (Front page photographs, January, 2008)

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
Front page photos - peace	28	34
Front page photos - violence	35	42
Front page photos – others	20	24
Total	83	100

The Standard

From October to November, 2007, *The Standard* published 105 front page stories, 92 or 88% of which dealt with politics/election matters, while 12 or 11% of the stories were about other domestic issues and just one story (one percent) was about an international issue (see Table 17[a] below).

Table 17(a). *The Standard* (Front page stories, October - November, 2007)

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
Front page stories – politics/election	92	88
Front page stories – other domestic issues	12	11
Front page stories – international affairs	1	1
Total	105	100

A further examination of the 92 politics/election stories shows the following story distribution: party nomination, 20 or 22%; public opinion watch, 6 or 6%; Electoral Commission, 14 or 15%; free/fair election, 9 or 10%; campaign, 32 or 35%; others, 11 or 12% (see Table 17[b]).

Table 17 (b). *The Standard* (Politics/Election unit, October - November, 2007)

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
Party Nomination	20	22
Public opinion watch	6	6
Electoral Commission	14	15
Free/Fair election	9	10
Campaign	32	35
Others	11	12
Total	92	100

The Standard also ran 81 house editorials in October and November, 2007. From Table 18 below, 31% or 25 of them were about the election, while 69% or 56 of them were on other issues, especially the economy.

Table 18. *The Standard* (House editorials, October - November, 2007)

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
House editorials - election	25	31
House editorials – others	56	69
Total	81	100

Table 19 below shows that *The Standard* newspaper published 30 house editorials in January, 2008. (House editorials for January 4, 12, and 23 were not located). 77% or 23 of them were about peace in Kenya, while 23% or 7 of them were about other matters.

Table 19. *The Standard* (House editorials, January, 2008)

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
House editorials - peace	23	77
House editorials – others	7	23
Total	30	100

Stories that appeared on the front page of *The Standard* newspaper were 41 in all. 56% or 23 of them dwelt on peace initiatives while 24% or 10 of them were about the violence in the country. 20% or 8 of the stories were on other issues (see Table 20 below).

Table 20. *The Standard* (Front pages stories, January, 2008)

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
Front page stories - peace	23	56
Front page stories - violence	10	24
Front page stories – others	8	20
Total	41	100

Out of the 87 photographs (see Table 21 below) which *The Standard* newspaper splashed on its front page, 49% or 43 of them depicted peace efforts in the country. 35% or 30 of them showed images of violence, while 16% or 14 of them were about other issues.

Table 21. *The Standard* (Front page photographs, January, 2008)

Topic	Frequency	Percentage
Front page photos - peace	43	49
Front page photos - violence	30	35
Front page photos – others	14	16
Total	87	100

In the next chapter, the full implications and import of the information contained in the tables examined will used in discussing the important aspects of this study.

Chapter 7

Discussion

As a tool of communications research, the agenda setting theory has been both rigorously and elaborately applied in the U.S.A., Europe and to some reasonable degree in Asia, since McCombs and Shaw (1972) formally launched the theory.

The primary aim of this study is to situate the theory in an African setting and test its usefulness as an instrument of communications study. More specifically, Kenya in East Africa was chosen for several reasons already marshaled out earlier in this work. The 2007 presidential election in that country offered a veritable event for the study. Another objective in carrying out this research is to attempt an expansion of the theoretical borders of agenda setting.

A fundamental plank of the theory lies in what McCombs and Shaw (1972) called the transference of issue salience from the media to their audiences. This "first level" of the theory thus assumes that the media influence what their audiences consider to be the most important issues of public discussion.

This study examined the salient election issues published by the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers in Kenya in October –November, 2007. A survey of registered voters in Kenya was conducted about two weeks before the election to determine what they considered the main issues of the polls. Both media and survey issues were ranked and correlated, using the *Spearman rho* coefficient statistic. The result was a +0.88

positive relationship between the media and public agenda of salient issues, with tackling

poverty, creating employment and combating corruption as the three leading concerns.

This dominance of economic affairs at the apex of important issues is not

surprising for a developing country like Kenya. Neither is the issue of security since the

country has witnessed ethnic clashes and shares borders with Somalia and Uganda, two

countries that are experiencing internal warfare.

What is rather outstanding is the absence of health issues in this tier. The media

agenda has health as the 10^{th} issue of importance while the public ranked it as the 9^{th}

(Table1). Yet, this is a country where health matters are of significant national concern.

In its 2008 report for instance, the National Aids Control Council of Kenya noted that in

the January 2006 to December 2007 period, adult Aids related deaths were 85,000, down

from 120,000 in 2003.

What is most important for this study however is the indication of a media agenda

setting influence on the public agenda for the 2007 presidential election in Kenya. This

supports the first hypothesis of this study.

The second level of the agenda setting theory assumes both cognitive and

affective forms. Golan and Wanta (2001) explain that the cognitive dimension involves

issues associated with candidates in political elections as well as the public perception of

their character. Here, there is the agenda of attributes, while on the affective front, the

overall portrayal of the candidates is at stake.

What issues were associated with the candidates? From this study, Kibaki and

Musyoka both largely emerge as the "Education" candidates (Table 2a and 2c), while

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Odinga is primarily associated with "Constitutional reform" (Table 2b). It is instructive

that Kibaki, the current president, made education the cardinal policy of his government

in his first term, while Musyoka once served the same administration as the minister for

education. On his part, Odinga has always called for constitutional reforms that would

create the positions of president and prime minister for Kenya. Thus, theoretically

speaking, a compelling argument can be made that Kibaki and Musyoka stand for

education since that is the most visible and prominent issue they are associated with. The

same can be said of Odinga in relation to constitutional reform.

For this study, what is paramount is that the correlation on issue linkage yielded a

coefficient of + 0.89 for Kibaki, + 0.81 for Odinga and + 0.84 for Musyoka. These

figures show high positive correlations and support the second hypothesis in this study.

Further investigation into the issues raised in the election presents some insights.

Table 1 shows that the three top issues in the election are creating employment, tackling

poverty and combating corruption from the system. Candidate Odinga is shown in media

reports and believed by the voters through the survey, to be the best suited to deal with

the issues of tackling poverty and combating corruption in the system, while incumbent

president Kibaki is best linked with creating employment.

Further down the line of important issues is the question of the best candidate to

fight the specter of tribalism in the system. Interestingly, neither the president nor his

main challenger, Odinga, is adjudged by media reports or the survey to be the best

candidate to handle this. The mantle falls on Musyoka who is not from the two major

tribes in Kenya, to which the other two candidates belong.

In this study, six variables of personal characteristics were used: decisive, trustworthy, compassionate vision/plan, tribalistic and effective/leadership, all being qualities a presidential candidate ought to possess. An agenda setting influence was ascertained, using the *Spearman rho* rank order correlation coefficient. Candidate Odinga had the strongest coefficient of + 0.80 (Table 3b), with the qualities of being decisive and effective/leadership coming on top in both media and survey results. Candidate Musyoka's + 0.77 (Table 3c) comes next, with being decisive and non tribalistic ranking topmost in both media and survey. Kibaki's strength of correlation on personal characteristics came next with +. 071 (Table 3a).

From the results, it appears that all three candidates are highly linked with these personal characteristics necessary for ascension onto the presidential seat. However, a comparative assessment of the strength of the linkages and personal characteristics (Tables 2a, 2b, and 2c versus 3a, 3b and 3c) shows that such linkages are stronger for the former. In other words, while the issue associated with Kibaki yielded a + 0.89 strength, that on personal characteristics was + 0.71. For Odinga, the figures are + 0.81 and + 0.80 respectively, while Musyoka ranked + 0.84 and + 0.77.

One implication here is that for the media and the public, what issues the candidates stand for carry more weight than what people think about their personal characteristics. This contrasts with King's (1997) research result about the 1994 mayoral election in Taipei (Taiwan) where the personal qualities of the candidates weighed more than the issues associated with them in the minds of the electorate.

What is further apparent is that the strength of candidate Odinga's associations on issues and personal characteristics are far closer and identical (+ 0.81 and + 0.80) than those of his two competitors in the presidential race. One legitimate interpretation of this scenario is that in both media and among voters, he commands a more clearly defined position on issues in the election, better than his co-contestants.

Nonetheless, it is arguable that issue linkage and personal characteristics portrayal are the necessary but preliminary layer in media exposure and subsequent public perception of where a political contender stands on issues as well as his or her attributes. It is perhaps more important to decipher how those issues and character traits are framed. As argued earlier, framing entails the conscious selection of reality and its presentation so as to compel attention to it (Entman, 1993). In other words, a candidate may be linked to the issue of law and order, for instance, but the presentation is such that the same candidate is perceived as a person who encourages lawlessness among his or her incensed supporters.

So it is imperative to ascertain how the candidates are framed, especially on the issues they are associated with, as well as the main issues of the election. Overall, Table 4(b) shows candidate Odinga with the most positive frames (93) and fewest negative tones. Kibaki's positive frames are next (65) but he also has the highest negative frames (52) as shown on Table 4(a). Musyoka has the least number of positive frames (60), but he has fewer negatives (38) than Kibaki as shown on Table 4(c).

More enlightening is the fact that a comparison between Tables 4(a) and 4(b), shows that on the three topmost issues of the election (tackling poverty, creating

employment, and combating corruption), incumbent president Kibaki was negatively

framed while his opponent, Odinga was positively framed. Interestingly, this includes the

issue of creating employment that is more associated with Kibaki. To the voters

therefore, Odinga is presented as the candidate who is more likely to better handle the

three most important issues of the election. The implication of this finding for the actual

voting can be inferred. Indeed, one of the survey questions asked the respondents to name

their candidate of choice if the elections where held when the survey was being

conducted. Their choice was Odinga (42.7%). Kibaki followed with 35.9% and Musyoka

got 16.3%. This suggests a close electoral race, which was what the actual outcome

became when Kibaki was officially declared the winner with 47% or the votes while

Odinga garnered 44% and Musyoka came third with 9%.

It is also noteworthy that each of the candidates was positively framed on the list

of issues associated with him, that is, "Education" for Kibaki and Musyoka, and

"Constitutional reform" for Odinga.

More specifically, Table 6 shows an agenda setting influence on the tone of media

presentation of the candidates and the survey results on their top three personal

characteristics. Interestingly, there was no agenda setting influence on candidate

Kibaki's qualities of "decisive" and "effective/leadership".

Nonetheless, an examination of the framing of the personal characteristics of the

candidates (Tables 5a, 5b and 5c) shows an interesting trend. Although Kibaki was

linked to being decisive, the framing shows him as the weakest of the candidates on that

score. Odinga is presented as the most decisive, followed by Musyoka. Candidate Odinga

is also presented as the most effective/leader and one with the more vision/plan than his colleagues. However, Kibaki is depicted as the most compassionate and trustworthy, while Odinga scored the least points on both variables. Again, Musyoka is consistent as the most non tribalistic of the three contestants.

For the voter therefore, Odinga is presented as being decisive, has a vision/plan and the most effective/leadership candidate. On the other hand, his trustworthiness and spirit of compassion cannot be relied upon. It is instructive that in relation to his high level of decisiveness, Odinga is locally known as "tinga tinga" – a bulldozer who gets things done. On the other side, bulldozers have little quality of mercy hence candidate Odinga's negative score on "compassion" can be understood in that context.

Incumbent President Kibaki is depicted as an ineffective leader, non decisive and has limited vision/plans for his country. Interestingly, he is often locally caricatured as a "fence sitter" who cannot be relied upon to make decisions. However, in this study the media and respondents give him credit as the most trustworthy and compassionate.

On his part, Musyoka is moderately shown as decisive but high on being the most non tribalistic. However, his level of trustworthiness is almost as low as that of Odinga, while his rating for having a vision/plan is on the same lower scale as that of President Kibaki. With some of these similarities between Kibaki and Musyoka on both issue linkage and personal characteristics, it becomes a bit understandable why and how it was more convenient for both of them to team up to form the government after the disputed presidential election in Kenya.

To further establish the differences among the candidates on these personal characteristics, a *chi-square* (Table 7) test was conducted and the outcome affirmed that indeed statistically significant differences exist among them, with the result $\chi^2(df=10)=79.6, p<.001$.

The essence of this discussion on issue linkage, the personal characterization of the candidates and the tone of the issues and attributes linked to them, is to demonstrate that the second hypothesis of this study is supported.

As earlier argued, agenda setting operates at the first and second levels (Rogers and Dearing, 2007). While not disputing the wisdom of this theoretical structure, the position of this study is that since agenda setting is a learning process, it ultimately results in the acquisition of knowledge for informed action. In this case, the knowledge about issues in the Kenyan election, the association of issues and personal characteristics with candidates and the framing of the same political contenders in positive or negative light, are all geared towards enabling voters make reasoned choices and cast their ballot for the candidate that best represents their interest.

In support of the above, it is noteworthy that Weaver (1996) shows that voters learn a lot about candidates' issues and personal characteristics from the media during electioneering campaigns. However, Rogers and Dearing (2007) add that such learning facilitates a more systematic voter evaluation of the candidates. This makes for a more informed decision on the political candidate to support.

To establish this "agenda of consequences or outcome" of the learning process, this study examined the survey results and ascertained the following (Table 8):

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respondents believe Kenyan media enjoy a good measure of freedom (57%); respondents say on the average that media reports are fair and balanced (45% yes and 46% no); media reports affect respondents' views on issues (69%); media reports affect respondents' character judgment about candidates (74%).

Given the above, the frequency of media consumption was then used to assess an impact on the choice of candidate to vote for. The *Pearson* correlation test resulted in a + 0. 276 association between frequency of weekly newspaper reading and the choice of candidate to vote for (Table 9). When the factors of age, sex, level of education and income were controlled, the association was still within the same range, positive and significant (Table 10).

This *Pearson* coefficient result is an indication, though not too strong, that what people learn from the media through the agenda setting process impact on their decision on who to vote for. It is important to stress that this is not about the media "telling" voters to go out and vote, as that is absolutely within their inalienable rights to decide. What this study contends is that when that decision to support a candidate is being made, then the influence of the learning process comes to play. This is akin to Cohen's (1963) suggestion that the press may not tell audiences what to think, but surely has an influence on what they think about.

Furthermore, the result of the regression analysis (Table 11) not only demonstrates that voters believe some media influence on their decision about the choice of candidates, there is evidence that there is a significant difference in the relationship between the rate of media consumption (newspaper readership) and the making of that

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decision. In other words, with a Beta of +.188, this study shows that the higher the number of days of readership in a week (that is, more media consumption generally), the more the voter perceives media influence on his or decision on the choice of candidate.

Consequently, in line with what McCombs and Shaw (1972) found in their study, this study goes against the minimalist theory which suggests that media effects are mostly indirect and often delayed.

Why the low strength of *Pearson* correlation coefficient of + .276? This study did not specifically address this issue. However, a number of explanations are possible, but the one that serves this discussion is the possibility that there was no effort to discriminate among the respondents in terms of demographics. In other words, the respondents were treated as a unit in looking at the frequency of media consumption and the media influence on the decision about choice of candidates. Perhaps looking at the readers in groups may have told about specific coefficients for each group in terms of age, level of education or income. As Wanta (1997a, p.22) argues, "because of age, education, and income have all been found to influence newspaper usage, logically, agenda-setting effects should be stronger for highly educated, older individuals with high incomes."

This study is more interested in the establishment of the consequence of the agenda setting learning process than in the demonstration of the learning capacities of various demographic groups. The conclusion to be reached therefore is that voters believe that what they learn from the media have a significant influence on their decisions

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regarding their choice of candidates to vote for in an election, thus supporting the third hypothesis in this research.

All discussions above lead to addressing the research question: Did the media matter in the 2007 presidential election in Kenya? So far, this study has provided evidence that the issues highlighted by the media in the election period highly correlated with the issues of public concern in the same period. There is also evidence of the same relationship in terms of issue linkage or association with the three main contenders in the presidential race. The personal characteristics of the candidates followed the same pattern. Finally, there is the factor of the consequence of the learning process from the media, where the survey respondents indicated an influence of what they learnt from the media in their subsequent choice of who to vote for in the elections. Statistical evidence was used to buttress this contention.

It would therefore appear that the research question can be positively answered, that is, the media did matter in the Kenyan presidential elections, 2007.

Kenyan media : pre and post election coverage

The second segment of this study addresses these questions: Did the media in Kenya envision the political violence that erupted after the disputed presidential poll? How did the media respond to the violence once it was unleashed? These are the two most pertinent issues that deserve attention in this discussion. Both will be examined against the backdrop of the coverage of the events by the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* which are the two media channels of focus in this study.

There is ample indication from the results of the survey and content analysis in the previous chapter that both media and populace in Kenya were preoccupied with the main task of seeing that the presidential election held, to such an extent that the possibility of a violent aftermath did not really feature in the media or public discourse.

This contention is buttressed by the focus of the house editorials by the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* in the months of October and November 2007 that immediately preceded the election. Out of the *Daily Nation's* 120 house editorial in this period, only 30 percent or 36 of them dealt with the elections (see to Table 13). For *The Standard*, 31% or 25 of the house editorials were devoted to the election, while 69% or 56 of them addressed other issues of national and international importance, from a total of 81 house editorials (see Table 18).

Among the election-oriented house editorials however, only a few of them touched on the issue of violence. For instance, *The Standard* cautioned that "privatized violence is tomorrow's threat" (October 31, 2007), and that "electoral violence must be fought by all means" (November 18, 2007). On its part, the *Daily Nation* argued that "pledges to keep peace (are) not enough" (November 15, 2007), and urged that "poll violence must be stopped at all costs" (November 28, 2007). All these were in reaction to the process of nominating candidates to determine the political party flag-bearers for parliamentary elections that were to run simultaneously with the presidential polls.

Front page news stories in this period did not feature much reporting on the possibility of violence after the presidential polls. This study found that the *Daily Nation* newspaper, for instance, had published 75 front pages stories in October-November,

2007, out of which 71(95%) of them were on politics/election (Table 12[a]). However, only two stories on "politics/election" had direct bearing on the chances of post election violence (Table 12[b]). One of the stories reported that "Raila, (the ODM presidential candidate) warns over election violence" (*Daily Nation*, October 9, 2007, front page). In contrast, 21 (30%) of the stories were on party nomination exercise, and 20 (28%) on what happened on the campaign trail.

Reports in *The Standard* newspaper followed the same pattern. It published 105 front page stories (October-November, 2007), out of which 92 (88%) were about politics/election (Table 17[a]) Nonetheless, only 9 (10%) of the stories focused on free and fair presidential election (Table 17[b]). For instance, in its edition of November, 4, 2007, *The Standard* reported a "Rigging scare" story on the front page. Two days earlier, it had reported that "Raila alleges fresh plot to rig general election" (*The Standard,* November 2, 2007). However, here is the contrast: 20 (22%) of the front page stories in that period were about party nominations and 32 (35%) was on the coverage of the campaign.

It is quite instructive that news reports about the chaotic and violent nomination process were awash in both newspapers. In one of its reports, *The Standard* called the process a "Rungu (cane) Democracy" (November 17, 2007, front page), while the *Daily Nation* (November 20, 2007, front page) also reported bloody incidents that marred the nomination process. All that happened during the nomination process, despite an earlier warning by the country's Attorney-General, Amos Wako, that any politician who incited

violence will be barred from participating in the polls (*Daily Nation*, November 1, 2007, p. 1).

The puzzle here is why, even in the face of the violence that resulted from the nominations, there were no subsequent and substantial reports in the media about the possibility of the same violence repeating itself in the presidential poll. It should be understood though, that the nomination process was about the parliamentary election that was to run concurrently with the presidential poll.

It is imperative to restate that the media and nation's preoccupation at this point was to have a presidential election *per se*. There were no concerted extrapolations to the possibility of political violence after the presidential ballot. Neither were there investigative media reports alluding to the ethnic pattern that showed up in the violence that followed the presidential polls. At this stage, media reports were tailored towards the need to have a free and fair presidential poll as well as highlighting the issues of poverty alleviation, unemployment, food scarcity, national security, education *et cetera*, as issues that ought to feature in the campaign.

In their article which appeared in *The Standard* (October 5, 2007, p. 13), Egara Kabaji and Bob Mbori (both Kenyans), rather vividly captured the essence and thrust of the preoccupation of the media and the larger public in this period. Titled "poverty, trust, graft to shape presidential battle", the authors argued that the 2007 presidential polls in Kenya would largely be fought on economic issues that greatly impacted the lives of the Kenyan people.

It is therefore fair to assert that Kenyan media reports in the immediate pre-presidential poll months did not dwell on the chances of violence erupting after the elections. Rather, the concentration was on reporting issues and events of the campaign, demanding that the political candidates elucidate their programs and urging that there be a congenial atmosphere for the casting of free and fair presidential ballot.

Besides, and drawing from the social movement theory discussed earlier, the media apparently failed to reckon with the undercurrent of public "consciousness" to assert their rights in the event of an electoral outcome that did not match their idea of the process being fair and free. The mood in Kenya was not the same as it was under President Daniel arap Moi's high-handed regime where freedom was severely curtailed by the state and people felt powerless to challenge the system and had little power to change their electoral fortunes.

Ousting the Moi era in the 2002 presidential election had a liberating effect on the populace which, as the social movement theory would suggest, was now more poised to even use disruptive tactics to challenge whatever they considered objectionable in the system. The outcome of the election offered a veritable opportunity for this assertion of power by the citizens who had largely remained docile under President Daniel arap Moi. Unfortunately, the media did not quite detect or underplayed the power of this mood change.

Why the post election violence?

If the Kenyan media failed to anticipate, underplayed or perfunctorily handled the possibility of post presidential election violence, they amply compensated for that lacuna in their coverage of the violence and canvassing for a return to peace in their country.

But, why the violence? Its immediate catalyst was the feeling of vote rigging by some voters across the country; a feeling that was further aggravated by the announcement of what they considered an unfair polling result that saw the incumbent president being "reelected" to office. Even international election monitoring groups in Kenya questioned the authenticity of the results released by the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK). The European Union observers described the results as being riddled with "serious inconsistencies and anomalies" (*Daily Nation*, January 2, 2008, p. 3).

Nonetheless, it is quite compelling to attribute the violence to ethnic polarization in Kenya. For instance, in its house editorial titled "Ambition and Horror in Kenya" (January 3, 2008), the *New York Times* described the incidents of mayhem as "The murderous tribal violence that has spread through Kenya." Writing under the caption "The tribalism that colours Kenyan life" in the online version of the *London Times* (January 2, 2008), reporters Hannah Fletcher and Nick Wadhams, passed off the post election imbroglio as "the most recent outbreak of ethnic violence" in Kenya. Such characterization might be akin to treating the symptoms of a disease while the fundamental ailment is left to fester.

In *Votes and violence*: *electoral competition and ethnic riots in India*, Wilkinson (2004, p. 236) argues that "violence is far from being an inevitable by-product of

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electoral competition in plural societies….high levels of electoral competition can *reduce* as well as precipitate ethnic violence". In Kenya's 2002 elections, the opposition indeed cut across ethnic lines and united under the umbrella of the political party called the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), in a high-powered electoral competition where they trounced the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) party that had been in power since independence in 1963. That electoral defeat formally dismantled President Daniel arap Moi's era in Kenya's leadership.

In a developing country like Kenya, tribalism or ethnicity can arguably be described as a manifestation of a more deeply etched national malaise. Such samples of "ethnic violence" are often, in real terms, protests against tortuous poverty, unemployment, lack of access to social amenities, endemic corruption that makes basic survival impossible, inadequacy and lack of access to rudimentary health needs, and other allied problems which underprivileged citizens face in their daily lives. There is therefore the tendency to see "voting for our man" (ethnicity as it appears), as the lever to pull someone or a people out of their labyrinth of misery, or being confined to what Frantz Fanon called "The wretched of the earth".

Rasnah Warah (a Kenyan and Editor with the United Nations in Nairobi, Kenya) clearly articulates this thinking in her article titled "Kenyans are fighting inequality, not ethnicity", which was published in the *Daily Nation* (January 14, 2008, p. 10). In it, she argues that:

> "Foreign correspondents, who transmitted the violence in Nairobi's slums for all world to see, were quick to describe what was happening in Kenya as ethnic cleansing….They totally ignored the social, economic and political forces that were plunging Kenya into mayhem.

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"They failed to see that the main reason for the violence and protests around the country was not because one ethnic group wanted to forcibly take over the presidency from another ethnic group, but because Kenyans perceived the elections to be unfair.

"More importantly, they failed to realize that the root causes of the violence had more to do with the economic and political reality of Kenya than it had to do with ethnic chauvinism…..Kenya is one of the most unequal societies in the world. Ten percent of the country's 35 million people control 42 percent of the nation's wealth."

Alluding to this line of thought also, the *Sunday Nation* in its house editorial titled "Tackle poverty to begin recovery" (January 20, 2008), noted that although the political stalemate in Kenya essentially required a political solution, the economy needed urgent attention if the nation was to revert to its peaceful course. It argued that "Ultimately though, any recovery strategy that does not address the poverty issue is doomed to fail in the long term."

Another look at the survey for this research clearly demonstrates the primacy of alleviating poverty in the minds of registered voters in Kenya. The survey which was conducted almost two weeks to the presidential polls showed that the main issue in the minds of the electorate was the question of tackling poverty (13.5%). It was followed by the need to create employment (12.9%, another poverty-related issue). Corruption and national security issues tied at the third position (11.8%), before one finds the question of tribalism or ethnicity at the fourth position (9.6%) on the scale of priorities for the voters.

This argument is not a declaration that ethnicity is a non-issue in Kenya and other developing nations. Rather, it is a caution against the wholesale dressing up of the post election violence in Kenya, and ipso facto conflicts in developing nations, as being inspired by ethnic marginalization or polarization. Ethnicity might be the manifest reason for such conflicts, but the latent concerns are often unsavory economic conditions of

existence and poverty-related agitation. But more important to this study is that for a moment in history, there was a widespread social movement in Kenya which used contentious political agitation to protest the results of a presidential election that was perceived to have been fraudulently rigged.

On the thesis that the violence was a pre-planned idea waiting for execution, this researcher had argued earlier that it is more probable to attribute the violent response to the election result to an impromptu reaction than an orchestrated stratagem. Once the violence erupted, it appeared to take a life of its own. In his reaction to an allegation by *Human Rights Watch*, an international human liberties organization, that his party instigated the violence that ravaged the country, the leader of the main opposition Orange Democratic Party (ODM), Raila Odinga, not only denied the allegation but insisted that "what happened was not premeditated but spontaneous as people reacted to the injustices they suffered after the elections" (*Saturday Nation*, January 26, 2008, back page). The same news report noted that international observers believed the presidential election was fairly peaceful but "the sudden announcement that Mr. Kibaki had won the vote triggered protests and violence throughout the country."

Another trigger which has not been accorded its rightful weight was the pronouncement of the head of the electoral commission, Samuel Kivuitu, just after the president was sworn into office. Not only was it widely acknowledged that his commission's performance was at its nadir and far below local and international expectation, his response to probing media questions appeared to have added fuel to the already state of conflagration in the country. When asked if he was convinced that

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President Mwai Kibaki had indeed won the election, the electoral commission chairman

told a rather bewildered local and foreign press corps that: "I do not know whether

Kibaki won the election" (*The Standard*, January 2, 2008, front page).

He then went on to tell the story about how he acted under a great deal of pressure

in releasing the result, and ended by saying that when he went to state house to present

the certificate of victory to the president, the country's chief justice and top ruling party

chieftains were already waiting to swear in Kibaki as president. He then thought of

resigning his post but held back in order not to be branded a coward.

Coming at the apogee of frayed nerves and discontent among the electorate, such

statements and stories by the chief of the electoral commission literally emptied kegs of

gun-powder into the combustible cauldron of political animosities and may have further

incensed the rampaging protesters. What other incentive did they need to resort to

violence than such bleak statement from the man entrusted with ensuring free and fair

presidential election?

In one of its house editorials of that period titled "ECK failed, disband it", the

Saturday Nation (January 26, 2008) called for the resignation of the entire electoral

commission members and the disbanding of the body after arguing that the organization

had utterly failed in its assigned mission. In its contribution to the examination of the

ECK's electoral debacle, *The Sunday Standard*'s house editorial (January 13, 2008) was

equally critical of the organization and screamed: "Let's fix ECK, it is a national

disgrace."

The core argument in this assessment is that the perceived electoral fraud, the

seething rage sustained by severe economic deprivation, which found expression in

apparent ethnic animosities, coupled with the shoddiness in the job performance of the

Electoral Commission of Kenya, all proved to be lethal combinations that wheeled Kenya

through a period of great hatred, brutalities, killings, political hostilities and turbulence.

Media coverage

Coverage of the election and its violent consequence was extensive and

exhaustive. Here, more attention will be paid to the coverage of the aftermath of the

presidential polling, as we have already established that the media paid little attention to

the chances of violence erupting after the presidential poll, in their pre-polling reports.

Using house editorials, front-page news stories and front-page photographs as the

measures of coverage, this study found that in its January 2008 editions, the *Daily Nation*

and its weekend sister publications had a total of 48 house editorials, 34 or 71% of which

were devoted to peace efforts to end the hostilities in the country, while 14 others dealt

with other matters (Table14). Of the 38 front-page stories in this period, 17 or 45% were

also on peace issues, 14 or 37% on the violence, while only 7 or 18% tackled other issues

(Table 15). In all, the newspaper published 83 photographs on its front page, 28 or 34%

of which were on the peace talks (Table 16). 35 or 42% of them depicted the violence

that was taking place, while 20 or 24% photographs were on other issues.

The Standard's performance on these scores was similar. It published 30 house

editorials, 23 or 77% of which were on peace measures and only 7 or 23% on other

matters (Table19). It had 41 front-pages stories, with 23 or 56% of them on peace issues,

10 or 24% of them on violence, and 8 or 20 of them on other issues (Table 20). A total of

87 photographs were published on the front-page, with 43 or 49% of them on peace

initiatives (Table 21). 30 or 35% of the photographs depicted the violence, and 14 or 16%

were used to reference other issues.

The point of emphasis is that the newspapers not only covered the violence

extensively, but devoted a great deal of their energies towards an agenda for the

restoration of peace in the country. Such undisguised advocacy provides a good example

of peace journalism. Lee and Maslog (2005) opine that peace journalism is aimed at

highlighting peace efforts while underplaying divisive issues that tear the fabrics that

hold a nation together.

The newspapers followed this peace model by framing their stories in this period

in a way that called for the sustenance of the Kenyan corporate identity and togetherness.

The *Daily Nation* for instance, ran front-page house editorials that had peace as their

theme with: "Kibaki and Raila: Stop these senseless slaughter" (January 1, 2008); "Give

peace a chance" (January 2, 2008); "Save our beloved country" (January 3, 2008); and

"Peace talks crucial to nation's survival" (January 9, 2008).

On its part, *The Standard* had these to say with its house editorials: "Let us all in

the push for peace" (January 3, 2008); "Let us all support mediation efforts" (January 7,

2008); "Stop this violence and chaos now before it is too late" (January 29, 2008).

The preponderance of these "peace" house editorials, front-page news stories and

photographs amply suggest that the Kenyan media had an agenda for the restoration of

peace in their country, and they actively canvassed for their various audiences to see the compelling need for a return to normalcy.

Nonetheless, journalists are not always professional "do-gooders", canvassing for what binds society together. In his examination of Michael Ignatieff's pluralistic philosophy for the new-age journalist, Plaisance (2002) describes the modern reporter as the society's moral witness, the philosopher-journalist who is striving to go beneath conflict situations in order to highlight the things that polarize communities with a view to finding solutions to them instead of fueling them to perpetuate such conflicts.

This journalistic model tacitly, to say the least, incorporates Elliot's (1986, p. 33) contention that the "mass media have responsibility to society, no matter what society they may be operating in." Hodges (1986, p.14) explains that "to talk of responsibility is to talk about the content of our moral duties and obligations, about the substance of what we should do. To talk about accountability is to talk about who can or should have power to demand, through persuasion or threat, that we discharge those duties well."

The question therefore is: were the media reporters in Kenya moral witnesses who discharged their responsibility to society with distinction and without equivocation in that period of national calamity?

The answer to this question is mixed. In the March 2008 edition of *Expression Today*, a bi-monthly magazine published in Kenya by the Media Institute, a non-profit organization that monitors the media in East Africa, a group of about ten senior journalists in the country (mostly managing editors) were asked the same question and

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their responses varied. Most of them were of the view that overall, the media performed creditably during and after the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections.

Linus Kaikai, Managing Editor of the privately owned Kenya Television Network (KTN), argued that "as a whole, I think the media did a very, very good job….We had also never seen a race this close before, which made the coverage particularly difficult" (*Expression Today*, March 2008, p. 30). One of the minority and opposing views on this issue is that of Frank Ojiambo, a senior editor at the *Daily Nation* newspaper. He believes that "the media was (sic) very fragmented. A united media should have come out very clearly and stated that either the elections were flawed or they were manipulated or they weren't...We tended to go by what was being said as opposed to what we witnessed. I'm not sure why. We were scared. We were afraid" (*Expression Today*, March 2008, p. 28).

While it is difficult to dispassionately conclude that the media scored high grades in their overall coverage, or dismally failed to do so, it appears that on balance, the media may have come out with no less than a "B" grade in their handling of the polls coverage. Wambui Kiai, Director of the School of Journalism, University of Nairobi, Kenya, alluded to this when she told *Expression Today* (March 2008, p. 32) that "As a whole, I think the media did reasonably well (but) I know a lot of people are a little disappointed."

What appeared not be subject to diametrically opposing views was the role of the so-called vernacular radio stations in the country. Almost to a person, the senior journalists interviewed by *Expression Today* agreed that the major media culprits in the post election violence were those radio stations which, like their counterparts during the infamous 1994 ethnic cleansing and pogrom in Rwanda, broadcast messages which

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tended to fan the ambers of tribal hatred and hostilities. In this regard, Carolyne Mutoko, a presenter of a breakfast show on Kiss FM radio station, accused the vernacular stations of literally taking journalism to the gutter (*Expression Today*, March 2008, pp. 40-41), while Wambui Kiai of the of the Nairobi University's school of journalism in the same magazine edition contended that "All of the vernacular stations broadcast some very bad messages – you know, hate messages" (p. 32).

As far back as November 2007, Maina Kiai, chairman of the Kenyan National Commission on Human Rights, had warned at a press conference that some of the vernacular radio stations had started to show signs of peddling hate speeches against political parties outside their ethnic regions (*Daily Nation*, November 1, 2007, p. 7). The same newspaper (November 19, back page) reported that during the nomination exercise, a vernacular FM radio station hurriedly announced the victory of a candidate for the ODM's nomination ticket when in reality that candidate had lost. That announcement triggered unrest in the Molo district where the contest took place.

While not dismissing the presumption that these community-based radio stations helped sustain the imbroglio, Peter Oriare, a lecturer in journalism at the University of Nairobi and a communications consultant, makes the case that other channels of mass communication may have been used to more serious effect in fanning the crisis. In an article in the *Daily Nation* (29[th] February, 2008, online edition), he contended that "the argument that community media fuelled post-election violence ignored the role played by other mass media such as the internet, mobile phones and satellite communication. And while FM stations may have hastened the current crisis, it is the short message texts via

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mobile phones that were more devastating." Email messages and blogging were also used to spread hate messages during the crisis.

The effect of the short message service (sms) through mobile phones was quite strong that the Internal Security Ministry in Kenya warned subscribers that they risked prosecution if any of their messages were found to be capable of causing public unrest (*The Standard*, January 2, 2008, p. 3).

In summary, it is persuasive to argue that while the media in Kenya may not have focused attention on the possibility of an eruption of violence in the post presidential polling period, they actively supported attempts to return the country to peaceful ways when political violence was ignited and dominated the skyline in Kenya. That violent agitation, uncoordinated as it became, was a powerful movement that cut across ethnic divide in Kenya and eventually spurred national and international action that resulted in the sharing of political power by President Mwai Kibaki and his main rival, Raila Odinga.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

This study has neither re-fabricated nor extensively refurbished the wheels of communications inquiry. It was not intended to do either. Its primary accomplishment is the demonstration that the agenda setting theory has a great deal of utility value in doing communication research in a developing nation, especially in an African setting, Kenya being the theater of study.

Not only has this work added to the scope of available research in communication generally, its focus on Africa is of fundamental value since media-related research about the continent is still quite limited. Besides, the examination of the media's role in the unanticipated violence that followed the 2007 presidential election in Kenya showed the potential of the media as an instrument of national unity in a crisis situation. On the other hand, it demonstrated how the media can ignore symptoms of crisis and focus on horse-race issues in a campaign period.

Results from this research show a media agenda setting influence on both cognitive and affective levels on the public agenda during the 2007 presidential election in Kenya. Another significant result is that issues linked to candidates were more important to the media and the public than the personal characteristics of the political contestants. This study is in agreement with scholars who see the primacy of the individual in the agenda setting process since the theory is implicitly a learning process. As such, one of the important findings of this research is that voters in Kenya have a

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perception of some media influence in their preference or choice of candidates for political office.

This study indicted that the presidential race was not going to be won by a wide margin (43% to 36%). It also showed that that the voters had a preference for candidate Odinga as their choice for the presidency. The first indication came to fruition when the actual vote tally resulted in a 47% to 44% margin of victory. However, the second indicator was not to be, as incumbent President Kibaki was declared the winner. Nevertheless, the fact that the results were disputed, coupled the violence that came later, and the political arrangement that was used to resolve the crisis, all give some credence to the result of this research endeavor.

One glaring issue that came out of this study is the time-tested notion that news coverage often sidelines or fails to anticipate social movements. The fact that the media in Kenya generally failed to "see the violence coming" after the presidential election is an eloquent testimony to this contention. This failure is partly attributable to a failure to read the mood or "consciousness" of the electorate and their determination to use all means available to them to ensure that unlike in past elections, their voices would be heard.

What follows therefore is that social movements also have an agenda setting influence in society, and it behooves the media to reckon with this reality in their news coverage of events and issues for their various audiences.

Some major limitations are embedded in this research. Like most agenda setting studies, this work tends to sideline the impact of inter-personal and inter or intra-group

agenda setting influence during the election. Besides, there was no significant assessment of the factors that might have affected the media agenda.

While the newspapers were effectively examined over a three-month period, the survey was conducted only at a given point in time. Pre and post election surveys might have revealed more about the impact of what the voters learnt in the agenda setting process on what they actually did with their ballot.

Future research can address some of these limitations. There is also the need to examine the role of the radio in the agenda setting process, since in many developing nations, the radio plays a big role in what voters learn, especially voters in poor, rural areas. In this research, it was identified that the vernacular or community-based radio stations in the provinces may have helped fuel the violence that gripped the nation.

Another area that is worth addressing is to determine the media agenda setting effect across demographics in a developing nation, especially in Africa (Kenya) where the income and educational disparities might be quite substantial.

Nonetheless, the limitations and future areas of study cited above do not derail the three fundamental imports of this study: a demonstration of agenda setting as a virile tool of communication research in a "new" territory, Africa (Kenya); the emphasis on agenda setting as a learning process and its evidenced influence on the voters' choice of candidates for political office; and the power of the media in fostering a sense of common national identity and aspirations in times of national tragedies.

Appendix 1

Survey questionnaire

Candidate: Uche Onyebadi (School of Journalism)

Instrument: Survey Questionnaire

Dear Sir/ Madam,

We appreciate this opportunity to seek your views on our survey of registered voters in Kenya. This survey is related to the forthcoming presidential elections and it is designed purely for the doctoral degree research project of our principal investigator at the School of Journalism, University of Missouri-Columbia.

The survey shall take approximately 30 minutes to complete and we promise you that everything you say shall be treated with confidentiality. We shall skip any question you do not feel comfortable answering. We assure you that all the questions here have been reviewed by the University of Missouri-Columbia Institutional Review Board. Please note that participation in this survey is entirely voluntary.

We chose to contact you through a random sampling process involving names of all registered voters in Nairobi. You may contact our principal investigator, Uche Onyebadi for any questions about this project.

Sir/Madam, as Kenya's 2007 presidential elections approach, a number of issues have appeared in the news as matters of concern to the people. Here is a list of some of those issues. Please indicate how concerned you are with each of the issues (circle the number you choose on each issue):

	Extremely Concerned	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	A little Concerned	Not Concerned
1. Constitutional Review	5	4	3	2	1
2. Health Care (HIV/Aids etc)	5	4	3	2	1
3. Environment	5	4	3	2	1
4. Creating Employment	5	4	3	2	1

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5. Tackling Poverty	5	4	3	2	1
6. Education	5	4	3	2	1
7. Corruption	5	4	3	2	1
8. Security	5	4	3	2	1
9. Economic Recovery	5	4	3	2	1
10. Tribalism/Ethnicity	5	4	3	2	1
11. Infrastructure (roads etc)	5	4	3	2	1
12. Agriculture	5	4	3	2	1
13. Political Intolerance	5	4	3	2	1
14. Religious Intolerance	5	4	3	2	1
15. Others	5	4	3	2	1

16. Which three issues from the above would you say are the most important and should be addressed? (1)_____(2)_____(3)_____

17. From the three you mentioned above, which is the MOST important? _____

How would you rate yourself on the following issues of engagement in politics and public affairs?

	Very Frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
18. Read/Watch News	5	4	3	2	1
19. Vote at Elections	5	4	3	2	1
20. Follow Events in Parliament	5	4	3	2	1
21. Attend Political Rallies	5	4	3	2	1
22. Attend Civic Meetings	5	4	3	2	1
23. Political/Civic Discussions	5	4	3	2	1

24. Do you intend to vote in the coming presidential/parliamentary elections? (1) Yes___ (2) No___

Let us turn to the presidential candidates. Which 5 issues on the first page do you closely associate with each of the candidates? Please put the issues in an order of importance.

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25. Mwai Kibaki   (1)_____(2)_____(3)_____

(4)_____(5)_____

26. Raila Odinga   (1)_____(2)_____(3)_____

(4)_____(5)_____

27. Kalonzo Musyoka (1)_____(2)_____(3)_____

(4)_____(5)_____

What is your overall rating of each of the candidates?

	Very Positive	Positive	Undecided	Negative	Very Negative
28. Mwai Kibaki	5	4	3	2	1
29 Raila Odinga	5	4	3	2	1
30. Kalonzo Musyoka	5	4	3	2	1

All three candidates above have different strengths and weaknesses. How would you rate the candidates on the following characteristics? Please tell us if you strongly agree, agree, are undecided, disagree or strongly disagree that the following characteristics describe the individual candidates. Circle your answer

	I Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
31. Kibaki is:					
Decisive:	5	4	3	2	1
Trustworthy	5	4	3	2	1
Compassionate	5	4	3	2	1

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Tribalistic	5	4	3	2	1
Has a Vision (good plan)	5	4	3	2	1
Effective (leadership)	5	4	3	2	1

I	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

32.   Odinga is:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Decisive:	5	4	3	2	1
Trustworthy	5	4	3	2	1
Compassionate	5	4	3	2	1
Tribalistic	5	4	3	2	1
Has a Vision (good plan)	5	4	3	2	1
Effective (leadership)	5	4	3	2	1

I	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

33.   Musyoka   is:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Decisive:	5	4	3	2	1
Trustworthy	5	4	3	2	1
Compassionate	5	4	3	2	1
Tribalistic	5	4	3	2	1
Has a Vision (good plan)	5	4	3	2	1
Effective (leadership)	5	4	3	2	1

34. If elections were held today, who would you vote for? Circle your choice:

(1) Kibaki   (2) Raila   (3) Musyoka

35. On the scale shown below, how would you rate the following as your source of information about politics?

Very Important Important Moderately Important Little Importance Unimportant

36. Television News   5   4   3   2   1

37. Television Adverts 5   4   3   2   1

38. Radio News   5   4   3   2   1

39. Radio Adverts   5   4   3   2   1

40. Newspapers   5   4   3   2   1

41. Newspaper Adverts 5   4   3   2   1

42. Internet   5   4   3   2   1

43. Internet Adverts 5   4   3   2   1

44. Political Meetings   5   4   3   2   1

45. Religious Meetings 5   4   3   2   1

46. Discussions with family, friends and colleagues

                      5   4   3   2   1

47. Which of the above would you consider your three most important sources? Rate them in order of importance: 1_____2_____3_____

48. Among the media sources in the country, please indicate your three preferred choices as the most credible sources of news and information. Name them in order of preference:

1_____2_____3_____

How would you respond to the following statements?

49. What I read, watch or listen to from the media affects how I rate the character of the presidential candidates in this and other elections

I Strongly Agree   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

     5   4   3   2   1

50. What I read, watch or listen to from the media affects what I consider to be the main issues in this and other elections

I Strongly Agree   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

     5   4   3   2   1

51. What I read, watch or listen to from the media affects how I view the main issues in this and other elections.

I Strongly Agree   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

     5   4   3   2   1

52. What I read, watch or listen to from the media affects how and who I will vote for in this and other elections.

I Strongly Agree   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

     5   4   3   2   1

53. The media in Kenya enjoy a great deal of freedom in their reports

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I Strongly Agree   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

     5   4   3   2   1s

54. The media in Kenya are fair, balanced and accurate in the reports

I Strongly Agree   Agree   Undecided   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

     5   4   3   2   1

How many days in a typical week do you do the following:

55. Watch news on television: 7 6 5   4   3   2   1   0   9 (Don't Know)

56. Listen to news on radio: 7 6 5   4   3   2   1   0   9 (Don't Know)

57. Read newspapers: 7   6 5   4   3   2   1   0   9 (Don't Know)

58. Read news on the internet 7 6   5   4   3   2   1   0   9 (Don't Know)

59. How long do you typically stay on the internet each time you use it?

(1) Less than 30 minutes (2) 30 minutes – I hour (3) 1 – 2 hours (4) More than 2 hours (5) Don't know

60. Why do you primarily use the internet?

(1) Entertainment (2) Emails (3) To pass time (4) Buy goods (5) Business (6) Read about sports (7) News

61. How would you rate your ability to use the internet?

(1) Very Good   (2) Good   (3) Moderate   (4) Poor   (5) Very Poor

62. How best would you describe your present educational level?

(1) No formal education (2) Primary (3) Secondary (4) Tertiary (5) University (6) Post Graduate

63. What is your age group?

(1) 18 – 25   (2) 26-35   (3) 36 -45   (4) 46 – 55   (5) 56 or above

64. What is your monthly income (kshs)?

(1) Below 5,000   (2) 5,000 – 10,000   (3)10,001 – 20,000   (4) 20,001 – 30,000   (5) 30,001 – 40,000   (6) 40,001 – 50,000   (7) 50,001 – 150,000   (8) 150,001 or above (9) Don't know

65. Sex: (1) Male   (2) Female

Appendix 2

Coding manual: Overview

This manual is designed to guide coders in the process of classifying and coding the contents of the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers, both of which are published in Kenya. The newspaper editions to be coded are those published from 1st October, 2007 to 30th November, 2007.

The unit of analysis for this coding procedure is the *news story* published in both newspapers, and whose headline directly or indirectly refers to each or all of the three main presidential contenders in the December 27, 2008 election: Mwai Kibaki, Raila Odinga and Kalonzo Musyoka.

The news stories might be about:

(a) What each candidate says about himself and his programs or policies.

(b) What each candidate says about his opponents and their policies or programs.

(c) What other people, including opponents, say about each or all the candidates.

This coding exercise is mainly about:

- Issues: These are presidential campaign issues mentioned in the news reports, the number of times the issues are mentioned, where they are positioned and

- Issue linkage: This refers to the candidate who is mentioned or is associated with the issue in question

- Attributes: These are personal characteristics or attributes linked to each candidate

- Presentation: This refers to how the candidate associated with the issue is portrayed in the news story. Such portrayal can be positive, negative or neutral.

After carefully reading the sentence, the coder will, within the guidelines provided, determine how to do the classification. When dealing with issues, the coder will be mindful of the fact that a story might contain one or more issues. It is up to the coder to determine, in conformity with the provided guidelines below, what the main issue is in the story.

The coder will also scan the sentence for possible attributes of the candidate as well as the overall presentation of the sentence in terms of its tone.

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Explication of Issues in the News Stories

Constitutional Review

- This refers to all news items that deal with suggestions, pledges or concrete efforts at initiating constitutional reforms and the reshaping of the constituency set-up in Kenya. Issues concerning "Majimboism" or federation, decentralization or devolution of power belong here, as well as citizenship matters.

Health Care

- In this group are news items about health care delivery, hospitals and their management, availability and affordability of drugs, doctors, nurses and other medical personnel, public health, child welfare and geriatric concerns.

- Diseases and preventive medicine e.g. HIV-Aids, malaria, drug abuse, narcotics, clinical trials, epidemics and preventive medicine through environmental sanitation.

- Traditional medicines i.e. news about alternative medicines, especially traditional medicine and its practitioners.

Environment.

- This is about the preservation and protection of forests, halting desert encroachment, control of toxic industrial emissions, global warming etc.

Creating Employment.

- This is about specific measures to create jobs and the reduce unemployment

Tackling Poverty

- This refers to the overall measures to deal with the problem of poverty in the country. Creating employment could be a part of this effort.

Education.

- This involves free education, and all effort to step up mass literacy; school enrollment in both private and public schools; scholarships at the elementary and high school levels; school management; examinations and the provision text books; teachers' welfare; matters that relate to higher education at the private and

public universities and polytechnics levels; internet and technological advancements.

Corruption.

- This refers to all efforts to root out corruption and corrupt activities from the system; transparency in the award of contracts and all other government activities.

Security.

- These are issues of national security, all branches of the armed and allied forces, border security, law and order, and all other matters of internal security.

Economic Recovery

- This is a broad range of activities that deal with issues of tourism and trade, development of air and sea ports; taxes, custom and excise regulations, banking and finance, insurance, stock exchange and other players in the financial sector; private business and industry, small-scale businesses and conglomerates and all other forms of measures to stimulate the economy.

Tribalism/Ethnicity.

- This entails that the candidate is perceived as a tribalist or someone who places his or her ethnic concerns over and above those of other ethnic groups in the nation. It could also mean bringing up and discussing the issue in the interest of national unity and cohesion.

Infrastructure.

- This segment deals with all modes of transportation, road construction, electricity, telecommunications, water and energy, housing, provision of portable water etc.

Agriculture

- Matters here relate to livestock, farmers, food, natural resources, lands, food distribution, famine and starvation, drought, etc.

Political Intolerance.

- This deals with accommodating people from different political and ethic persuasions, observance of human rights, press freedom etc.

Religious Intolerance

- In this group are issues related to Christianity, Islam and respect for other forms of religion. Freedom of worship and cultural matters also belong here.

Post election violence

- Included here are issues pertaining to the possibility of post electoral violence

Other matters not mentioned above.

Attribute Category

Decisive

- Here are some words that relate to being decisive: determined, firm, forceful, influential, peremptory, positive, resolute, strong-minded, unequivocal, straight, unambiguous, definite, authoritative, convincing, steadfast, taking decisions

Trustworthy

- These words indicate a measure of trustworthiness: authentic, believable, credible, dependable, ethical, honest, honorable, open, principled, responsible, reliable, truthful, unfailing, upright.

Compassionate

- To determine "compassionate", here are some words that indicate it: kind-hearted, benevolent, charitable, commiserative, forbearing, humane, humanitarian, indulgent, lenient, merciful, pitying, responsive, soft-hearted, sparing, sympathetic, tender, tender-hearted, understanding, warm-hearted, concerned.

Vision

- These are some of the words that may be used to describe having a person with some vision: astuteness, farsightedness, foreknowledge, full of ideas, ideal, imagination, insight, intuition, perception, planner.

Tribalistic

- Some of these words may be used to describe a presidential candidate with tribal sentiments: sectional, partial, ethnic outlook, regional outlook, confined, divisive, limited, narrow-minded, parochial, restricted, sectarian.

Effectiveness (leadership)

- Leaderships consists of some of these attributes: competence, capability, hard-working, clout, efficacy, efficiency, forcefulness, strength, vigor, administrator, authority, command, control, conveyance, direction, foresight, influence, initiative, management, skill, integrity, team player.

Coding Sheet

Each coder shall be availed with a coding sheet for the coding exercise. Coding can also be done on Microsoft Excel. Below are some guidelines for the actual coding.

- All stories to be coded shall be serially numbered, from 1 to X. The letter V stands for variables. In practical terms, this means that :

(i)   Classification V2 deals with story identification number

(ii)   Classification V5 means publication date.

(iii)   Classification V6 is about the section where story is published

(iv)   Classification that comes under V10 (4) indicates that the main issue in the news story is about creating employment

(v)   If a story starts on the front page and continues on the inside page, it will still be deemed to be front page material.

Coding Variables

V1. Coder Identification Number

V2. Story Identification Number

V3. Type of Story

1. Event (time-sensitive happening, typically happened "yesterday" in news stories e.g. a book launch; political rally)

2. Issue (an on-going discussion in the news e.g. an interview, press release on a topic)

Note: if an "issue" was mentioned in an "event", code as event.

V4. Publication or Newspaper:

1.   Nation

2.   Standard

V5. Publication Date: (month-day-year)

V6. Publication Section:

    1.   Front Page

    2.   Inside Page (news pages)

    3.   Back Page

V7. Story Length:

    1.   Less than 100 words

    2.   101 – 300 words

    3.   301 or more words

V8. Story Headline is mainly:

    1.   About candidate Kibaki

    2.   About candidate Odinga

    3.   About candidate Musyoka

V.9 Tone of headline

    1.   Positive (puts the mentioned candidate in good light)

    2.   Negative (puts the mentioned candidate in bad light)

    3.   Neutral (does neither of the above)

V10. Main issue in news story (this will be determined by what is mentioned in the caption/headline, lead, and supported by the recurring angle/theme in the body of the story)

    1.   Constitutional Review/Reform

    2.   Health/HealthCare

    3.   Environment

    4.   Creating Employment

    5.   Tackling Poverty

    6.   Education

    7.   Corruption

    8.   Security

    9.   Economic Recovery

    10.   Tribalism/Ethnicity

11.   Infrastructure

12.   Agriculture

13.   Political Intolerance

14.   Religious Intolerance

15.   Post election violence

16.   Others

V11. Which candidate is associated with main issue?

1.   Kabaki

2.   Odinga

3.   Musyoka

V12. How is the main issue framed?

1. Positive

2. Negative

3. Neutral

V13. Attribute of candidate linked with main issue?

1.   Decisive

2.   Trustworthy

3.   Compassionate

4.   Vision/Plan

5.   Tribalistic

6.   Effective/Leadership

7.   Other

V14. How is the attribute framed?

1.   Positive

2.   Negative

3.   Neutral

V15. What is the main subsidiary issue? (see issues list in #10)

V16. Candidate associated with subsidiary issue?

1.   Kibaki

2.   Raila

3.   Musyoka

V17. How is the subsidiary issue framed?

1.   Positive

2.   Negative

3.   Neutral

V18. Attribute of candidate linked with subsidiary issue.

1.   Decisive

2.   Trustworthy

3.   Compassionate

4.   Vision/Plan

5.   Tribalistic

6.   Effective/Leadership

7.   Other

V19. How is the attribute framed?

1.   Positive

2.   Negaive

3.   Neutral

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VITA

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