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This journey to pursue and complete this dissertation project would not have been successful without the support and inspiration of so many people. Firstly, I thank my family for their unconditional love and their enormous support and prayers. I also thank my research assistant who guided me in a difficult environment of Kenya during my primary research. I will also not forget to appreciate journalists, human rights and NGO personnel, and ordinary individuals who agreed to share their thoughts with this study. I would particularly want to thank two people – William Kollie, an alumnus of this University and now working for UNICEF, pushed and inspired me to do this work in Media and International Development, and was always in touch with me on a daily basis to share my moments of sorrow and joy; and Dr. Steve Kariuki was my supervisor and guide along the journey. He always made things appear easy when I felt they were difficult. He guided me from the start to the completion of the dissertation, and this memory will for ever live with me.

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COMMUNITY RADIO AND ETHNIC VIOLENCE IN AFRICA: THE CASE OF KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the nature of community radio in Kenya, the levels at which some community radio stations were involved in the Kenyan post election violence and the impact they had on their audiences. Community radio is now widespread across Africa. Although it has a variety of functions, Zyl (2001) believes that the core concept of community radio station is that, it should be participatory, owned and operated by the community, and the broadcast contents of such stations should match with the needs of the community. Community radio like other media can be very important and useful in the growth and development of the community and country, for example providing health awareness and information. However, community-radio can be a double -edged sword, used for negative developmental purposes that, for example, can undermine social cohesion and encourage violence by propagating messages of intolerance and disinformation that have the tendency to manipulate the public to resort to violence. The complexity of the media landscape in Kenya, coupled with the 2008 ethnic violence, make it quite ideal to carry out a study of community radio and its role in violence. The government has persistently argued that the community radio stations that broadcast in local languages were responsible for the post-election violence in 2008. Other citizens have raised similar allegations.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Ethnic violence is not a new phenomenon, and Africa is not immune to this menace. In the 1990s many African countries including Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi were plunged into bloody ethnic violence that resulted in the death of thousands of people and the displacement of others (Allen and Seaton, 1999; Uvin, 1999). Radio, the widely accessible medium of communication in reaching the majority of the population was involved in the ethnic violence especially in Rwanda (Kellow and Steeves, 1998; Thompson, 2007). Radio Television Libre des Milles Collines (RTLM) was heavily involved in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda in which nearly one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed by the Rwandan Army and the militias of Interahamwe.

Radio outlets like other media can be very important and useful in the growth and development of the community and country, for example providing health awareness and information, education and entertainment. However, it can be a double-edged sword, used for negative purposes that, for instance, can undermine social cohesion and encourage violence by propagating messages of intolerance and disinformation that have the tendency to manipulate the public to resort to violence (Howard, 2002). Kenya, the country of focus for this study, faced similar difficulties with community radios in 2007 during the post-election violence.

Community radio has no single definition. It is widely agreed among scholars that community radio has the following characteristics: non-profit making, independent from government, owned and operated by and in the

community. Its programming is tailored towards the interest and development of the community (Tabing, 2002; Solervicens, 2007; Patridge, 1982; Fraser and Estrada, 2001). This definition clearly excludes commercial radio which is profit-making, but does that mean it should not be considered a community radio? According to the 1992 law and regulations in Australia, for example, community radio includes commercial and community broadcasting services in spite of their different functions (Davis, 2001).

Mrutu (2008) agrees to the critical argument that given the financial constraints that particularly affect African media, some community radio can not survive on their own but have to compete for advertisements with commercial radios, thus negating the concept of being non profit. As a result, he believes that community radio should be an outlet, even if it operates like a commercial radio, that can serve the community on awareness of health, poverty, illiteracy and lay the foundation of democracy, which is needed in Africa. In other words community and commercial radios should fall into one category if they serve as specified 'fundamental' goals and needs of the community.

The sustainability of Community radios is usually daunting because of their non-profit characteristics. NGOs have frequently advance the concept of providing financial support to community radio, but have not been very keen to the realization that very often these stations collapse when their sponsors decide to pull out (Kosama, 1997; Opoku-Mensah, 2000 cited in Fandon and Furniss, 2000).

In Kenya the definition of community radio is unclear. Additionally, there has been no regulation that categorizes radio stations, and this was the case during the post election violence. Community radio is largely deemed commercial (private) or local language or vernacular radio (Githethwa, 2008). A vernacular radio in Kenya means a radio that broadcasts for an ethnic community. This dissertation will as of now use 'community radio'

interchangeably without the change of meaning to refer to commercial (private), local and vernacular radios.

Akinfeleye (2008) states that before the violence in Kenya, the media had good rating as a result of the democratic era together with economic deregulation and advances in civic education by civil society groups; and enhanced media freedom in the country, thereby making the media a more influential and credible mechanism to serve as a watchdog of government action. However the role of the media particularly community radio in the 2007 post election violence that claimed over 1000 lives (BBC World Service Trust, 2008; Ismail and Deane, 2008; Waki, 2008) has raised suspicion as to whether this watchdog can properly perform its social responsibility without being watched itself.

1.2 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

A large body of literature has been written on the way radio has been used to propagate ethnic violence (Price and Thompson, 2002; Metz, 1997; Dale, 2001; Thompson, 2007). However, a detailed study on the underlying factors that prompted journalists, audiences, and authorities to use radio in the dissemination of hate messages against various ethnic communities living in the same neighborhood is yet to be produced, especially in the east African state of Kenya. This dissertation aims to critically explore the levels at which the radio was used by ethnic communities against each other during and after the 2007 elections that caused violent clashes and deaths.

Although the fundamental causes of the violence among these ethnic communities are deep (Waki, 2008), an extensive study of the involvement of the radio would not only highlight the circumstances that prompted their actions, but it would help to establish a better understanding of the potential danger of radio when it is not properly regulated, especially in a volatile and multiethnic environment like Kenya.

The study also sets out some recommendations that would help policy makers, journalists, and audiences improve and run community stations as a development-oriented communication tool.

The research has the following objectives:

- To explore how and why community radio stations got involved in the violence that led to the death of over 1000 Kenyans.
- To explore different social actors' perspectives on the responsibility of community radios for the actions of the audiences, and perceptions that violence was inevitable with or without the radio.
- To describe state regulations on community radio stations during the period of unrest.
- To examine the impact of these state regulations on community radios, and pinpoint the gaps that were exploited by community radios during the violence.
- To consider regulatory measures that could be changed to make community radios more effective in terms of limiting inflammatory broadcasts and hate speech/propaganda.

This study used several research techniques to collect data from a variety of sources. The data collection procedure is discussed under methodology in 1.4.

1.3 ORGANIZATION OF DISSERTATION

This dissertation is divided into six main parts: this chapter sets out the objectives and the methodology employed for data collection along with ethical considerations; chapter two analyzes the media and ethnic violence in Africa in general and Kenya in particular; chapter three explores reasons why community radio stations were actively involved in the violence in Kenya and how; chapter four will critically analyze the deepening ethnic divide through

the lenses of social actors' perspectives, and the impact of the radio on the actions of the audience; chapter five discusses the media Regulatory framework, state mechanisms that are in place, regulatory gaps that were exploited by community radios, and what changes could be helpful in limiting the misuse of the airwaves. It also discusses strategies that could enhance the media landscape of Kenya and avert any radio from participating in future violence. Finally chapter six looks at the conclusion and sets some policy recommendations that could be used by policy makers and media practitioners to improve the media especially community radio for the various ethnic communities in Kenya.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

Primary qualitative data on community radio and ethnic violence have been collected mainly from interviews with respondents in the field. This was supplemented by secondary data. Primary data were collected to capture the feelings and experiences of decision-makers, media practitioners and users of community radio in Kenya. Qualitative methods were used to allow them the opportunities to convey their own realities and values. Qualitative research was viewed to be appropriate to generate understanding of the extent to which community radio was involved in the dissemination of hate messages that caused violence and death during the failed elections in 2007 (Reporters without borders, 2008; Klopp and Kamungi, 2008). The primary data were generated through semi-structured interviews.

Choice of Research Area and Research Procedure

This research was conducted over a period of four weeks in both urban and rural communities in the four provinces that were mainly affected by the post election violence namely: Nairobi city (the capital), Kibera and Mathare in Nairobi province; Limuru in central province; Nakuru in the Rift valley; and Kisumu in Nyanza province. The research locations have been encircled on the map of Kenya in figure 1 on page 9.

Figure 1. MAP OF KENYA showing areas visited.



A month long visit for a preliminary assessment of the terrain was made five months before the research was carried out. It was aimed at understanding the political and cultural dynamics of the country. Therefore these regions were considered in my research as very important and strategic because they make a broader representation of rival groups from across the country.

Data collected from these regions would reflect a diversity of opinions of rural and urban respondents for proper comparative analysis, which will enable me to compare and evaluate (Powell and Renner, 2003) the levels at which community radio participated in the violence in Kenya, and to understand the fashion in which broadcast messages were encoded and decoded, and the impact of these messages on audiences. Additionally, to have a diverse knowledge of the scale at which radio played a role in the election violence, a wide range of respondents were chosen (Morgan, 1996).

Case Study Population

The research used semi-structured interviews with 42 informants. Six Media executives (managers) and practitioners (broadcasters) were interviewed. Interviews were also done with key decision-makers in government and civil society, such as the Deputy Permanent Secretary of Information, the executive director of the Media Council of Kenya, the communications officer of the Communication Commission of Kenya (CCK); two key NGO representatives from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and EcoNews Africa; plus a member of the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC). Audience respondents were comprised of four focus groups selected from Nairobi city, and the Kibera and Matare slums in the suburbs of Nairobi.

In spite of the sensitivity of the topic on ethnic violence, all groups were mixed ethnic communities in order to allow each community to openly talk about their community and also about the activities of the other communities during the violence. The purpose was to reflect diversity, correlate opinions and to stimulate genuine discussions among the participants. All participants were in agreement with the mixed representations. No complaints about security and gender issues were mentioned by the respondents in all groups. All discussions took place at secured locations acceptable to them. Two members of the audience displaced by the violence in rural Kenya were

interviewed in order to obtain a first hand account of the impact of the violence and the broadcast messages they encoded during the process.

Interviewees were given the option to accept or reject to be tape recorded, mentioning their names and organizations. All but one agreed to be recorded and allowed this study to disclose their identities. For the purpose of this dissertation, pseudonyms have been used for comments of individuals used in any part of the chapters.

A Kenyan research assistant was hired to only arrange meetings, travel arrangements, and provide security guidance. The research assistant was exempt from participating in all interviews and meetings in order to allow respondents to speak freely without any suspicion that a state security was spying on them (Wimmer and Dominick, 2005).

Audiences were particularly selected based on ethnic affiliation from both the urban and rural areas of the country. Candidates were recruited on locations, and only upon the arrival of the research team. Local hosts such as NGOs and human rights groups helped the research team to identify credible people who were 18 or above for selection. Almost all respondents identified and chosen could speak comprehensible English, and represented a fair amount of the four biggest ethnic groups –Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, and Kalenji – at the center of the post election violence in Kenya. Guided discussions and information sharing were conducted with respondents of the same gender in private locations that were ideally acceptable to them. This was to safeguard their confidentiality and reduce any security risks. Discussions of respondents have helped to generate the insights into what happened before, during, and after the elections, and who did what and why. They have provided a means for cross-examining information from other sources.

A review of literature such as reports of government and non governmental organizations, internet sources, articles, journals and books on the various aspects of broadcast media particularly community radio and ethnic violence

has been carried out in order to build on concepts and insights of the role of broadcast media in ethnic violence. It aims to supplement and triangulate the primary data (Thurmond, 2001).

Data Analysis

Data collected from the interviews of respondents were recorded and transcribed¹. Every interview was recorded, briefly tried-out to ensure that the recording was done before the end of any meeting. Important concepts, patterns and recurrent themes (Miles and Huberman, 1994) such as vernacular radio, coded and hate messages, incitement, roots of violence, ethnic division, poor regulation, untrained journalists etc. were identified.² This listing was used to analyze and reference the data, drawing on the questions obtained from the research aims and objectives, and scrutinize the relationship between the meaning of the issues, views and information expressed by the respondents and the research questions asked. Key findings and linkages between themes were established and the results used to interpret the research and make recommendations for policy actions.

Ethical Issues

Ethical clearance was obtained from the University's ethics committee to carry out the research. Informed consent was gained from respondents before conducting interviews. Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic involving ethnic violence, care was exercised towards cultural values of the mixed ethnic focus groups who were told to discuss and speak the truth about what they know about the post election violence and the role of the radio (Scheyvens and Storey, 2003; Mikkelsen, 2005). Data collected have been used exclusively for the purpose of this dissertation.

¹ See appendices A and B as examples

² For details of the themes and subthemes as used in this study see appendix C

CHAPTER TWO: THE MEDIA AND ETHNIC VIOLENCE IN AFRICA

2.1 THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE OF AFRICA

The African media were initially the brainchild of colonial masters and so legacies from the era were inherited and nurtured by post - colonial African administrations. The media were primarily established to serve the needs of colonial administrations, and so at independence, African leaders brought them under state control to sing praise songs in the name of national unity and development. And so, until recently, the state has had a firm control of the media, allowing it only to speak in a way that is acceptable to the government in power; using it as an instrument to influence decisions and pass on propaganda to civil society (Espisu and Kariithi, 2002; Eribo and Jong-Ebot, 1997).

Considering the vitality of the media in the exercise of political power, African leaders have always ensured that the use of these outlets should be closely controlled so that they are not to propagate views and promote interests that are at variance with those clearly defined by the national leadership (Ansa, 1998). They back their actions with the argument that state institutions are fragile and criticism may be interpreted as a challenge to the legitimacy of the government, and therefore the media should refrain from every attempt to scrutinize its affairs. However, over the past decades, the wave of democratization, liberalization, and globalization has increasingly impacted on the African media landscape and governance policies, thereby encouraging greater diversity and plurality of broadcasting.

A growing African independent media has broken the myth once held that African dictators were untouchable, and could not be criticised. The media are now criticising them for wrecking their economies, muzzling the press, and not allowing adequate political freedom to their

people (Kasoma, 1995; Duteil and Duteil, 1991). In the face of these considerations and inevitable changes, the time has therefore come for African leaders to come to terms with realities that Africans of the 21st century need access to information, and are henceforth willing and ready to defy authoritarian regimes that block the free flow of that information (De Beer, 2001).

The diversification of radio broadcasting in Africa has enhanced political and economic liberalization with the development of local, community, and commercial radio (Bourgault, 1995; Fardon and Furniss, 2000; Ansah, 1998). However, with the advent of digital technology and the proliferation of radio stations across the continent of Africa, considerable regulatory challenges have arisen. This is because radio is a very effective medium that can be used for various purposes, and some can be considered detrimental to positive development. In the case of radio and its role in ethnic violence, radio can be abused, for instance, and used for propaganda purposes if care is not exercised.

A note on propaganda

One of the ways radio is manipulated is the use of propaganda. Although propaganda has many interpretations as there are many authors, it is widely perceived to have a negative connotation. It is concerned with the management of opinions and collective attitudes by the manipulation of symbols such as images and voices (Lasswell, 1927; Marlin, 2002). Shaw (1996) adds that propaganda is a process of persuasion involving the purposeful selection and omission of accurate information. However, terms that have gained considerable popularity are spin and management, referring to the coordinated strategy to reduce negative information that could be damaging to self interests (Jowett and O'Donnell, 2005). In other words, these scholarly interpretations are all geared towards altering information during the process of production and dissemination as an attempt to make

the audience accept their way of thinking. The implications of these outcomes are mostly detrimental to the receiver.

During World War II, propaganda was used as a fighting tool on all sides, and messages were absolutely calculative and manipulative. For example, Pratkanis and Aronson (1992) claim that in order to convince the people of the United States of America about the moral justification of the war, senior authorities circulated rumors through the media that the Germans boiled the corpses of enemy soldiers to make soup. They suggested that some of the atrocity stories were true but others were gravely exaggerated to arouse the emotion of the citizens into action.

On the other side of the war, the chief propagandist of Hitler's war machine, Joseph Goebbels also circulated rumors in the media in Germany as their forces suffered defeat. He claimed that German scientists were nearing the completion of two new weapons (a U-boat capable of traveling under water at high speed, and an anti-aircraft gun), a strategy used to convince the population that Germany could still win the war (Pratkanis and Aronson, 1992). Both the U.S and Germany gave misleading information to their audiences in order to gain their support and instill fear in their enemies in spite of the death of innocent citizens.

Similarly in Africa, the radios of the white supremacy regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) of the 1970s waged psychological and propaganda warfare against the new independent Zambia in order to stir tribal conflict and violence among various races and ethnic groups. The propaganda campaign was to undermine the policies of the regime because of the suspicion that the Zambian government was harboring dissidents trying to topple their regimes. Persistent radio broadcasts were aimed at arousing fear among Zambia's whites that the government's non-racial policy on tolerance was doomed to failure (McKay, 1971). This propaganda and rumor mongering campaign gained national attention and concern because

the country had already been a victim of espionage and physical sabotage in the past six years when pipelines, coal storage facilities, and offices were destroyed (ibid).

Given the use of the media especially radio to create deceit or to manage information, the question is then asked, what function does the media serve in society? The liberal view sees the media as an independent 'mirror' of the society, reflecting all that takes place, transmitting information that citizens use to make various kinds of democratic and informed decisions. The other, radical view sees the media by which powerful social classes, whether political, economic or ethnic groups maintain their control over society (Steenveld, 2004). It therefore supports the argument that the fundamental battle being fought by these powerful forces is to win the hearts and minds of people in order to exercise authority. However, to achieve this objective, the media have become a social space for these rivals to fight for power (Castells, 2007), a situation that is hampering the power and independence of the media especially the radio stations that operate in volatile environments including Kenya.

2.2 THE MEDIA LANDSCAPE OF KENYA

Media liberalization and the transition period in Kenya started in 1992 following the restoration of multi-party pluralism permitted by former president Daniel Arap Moi of the Kenya African National Union (KANU), the party that remained in power for 39 years after independence gained from Britain in 1963 (Maina, 2006; Wanyande, 1996). President Moi was always reluctant to liberalize the airwaves and to particularly allow radio stations to broadcast in their tribal languages other than English and Kiswahili, the two national languages, fearing the spread of ethnic tension, division, and violence.

Back in 1982, KANU was deeply concerned about the involvement of community radio in encouraging ethnic tensions and violence in Kenya especially on the basis of using a particular tribe to broadcast to a multiethnic community outside the national languages. In fact the first community radio in Africa established by UNESCO in Homa Bay in the Luo heartland of Nyanza province in Kenya was shut down after broadcasting for two and half years (Fraser and Estrada, 2001; Quarmyne, 2006). The government said, the radio was broadcasting contrary to the official policy of making Kiswahili and English, the national languages, but was bent on exalting only the good values of the Luo ethnic community in the mist of other tribes (ibid).

However with the coming of democracy and liberalization, President Moi finally permitted the first private Kikuyu tribal radio station known as Kameme to be inaugurated in 2002, opening the floodgates to the establishment of more tribal stations in the country (Nderitu, 2008). Not satisfied with Kameme's ethnic inclination, Moi established Coro, a parallel Kikuyu station at the state broadcaster to counter its influences on the majority Kikuyu tribe (Kiarie, 2004). Additionally, the coming to power of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government in the same year facilitated the rapid growth of the media particularly the radio sector (Maina, 2006).

According to the Communications Commission of Kenya, CCK (2005), there are over 200 licensed broadcasting services in Kenya including private/commercial, community, religious and international radio stations, but not all are operational. Nearly 40 of these stations are community or vernacular radio stations. The stations are dominated by the state owned Kenya broadcasting corporation (KBC), and two privately owned media groups - the Nation and the Standard. The majority of the Kenyan people rely on broadcast media especially radio for news and information (BBC News, 2008).

2.3 ETHNICITY, VIOLENCE AND THE USE OF RADIO

Ethnicity

Ethnicity has several contextual understandings based on the orientation of individuals and groups. It could encompass the aspects of relationship between individuals who perceive themselves as culturally distinctive from other groups; a group of people with common interests and collective identities; and an ethnic solidarity expressed in linguistic and kin terms (Esman, 2004; Chazan, 1982).

This premise therefore allows us to briefly discuss the sociological/anthropological paradigms of primordialism and instrumentalism within the framework of ethnicity. Espiritu (1992) argues that the primordialists' view is that ethnic cohesion is embedded in the fact that ethnic groups are bound together by a web of sentiment, belief, and practice, suggesting that ethnic identity derives from its birth; it came first. However, primordial ties do not always culminate into ethnic solidarity. For instance, the strained relationship between Canadian-born Chinese and Vietnamese-born Chinese in Canada suggests that groups can share the same ancestry or heritage but they however do not necessarily fraternise (Woon, 1985, Espiritu, 1992).

The instrumentalists' concept is that a population remains ethnic when their ethnicity produces more benefits than other statuses available to them or when identity is constructed to advance elite interests, often through economic and political advantage made through bloc voting (Heilman and Kaiser, 2002; Young, 1983).

From the African context, a logical argument that can widely be acceptable among scholars of ethnicity is the framework put forward by Berman et al (2004). They argue that African ethnicities are not atavistic, primordial survival of archaic cultures, but rather modern products of African encounter

with capitalism and the nation-state in the colonial and post colonial epoch (ibid). It can then be argued that most individuals and groups in these African countries embroiled in ethnic violence including Rwanda and Kenya (Kuperman, 2000; Scott, 2008) use ethnic cleavages and connection to acquire economic wealth and power at the expense of the innocent. In Kenya, ethnic cleavages were used in this way particularly for wider political purposes.

Violence and the Use of Radio

In Africa, ethnic violence is a regular trend and has plagued the continent for decades especially after the period of western colonization. Several countries were plunged into civil wars for various reasons including political and power greed, injustice, and ethnic division. Violence comes in many shapes based on the context and interpretation. Young's (2007) concept of violence is when the action of someone is aimed at inflicting pains on others or killing other human beings. However violence can also have the broader aim- of groups aiming to achieve political goals – with power to become effective so that 'A' can compel 'B' to do things against his will (Lukes, 2005 in Pearce, 2007).

Violence in Kenya, the focus of this study, is not a strange phenomenon, although it enjoyed some relative stability from independence (1963) till the mid 1980s (Gimode, 2001). Kenya has over 42 ethnic groups. It has had protracted political and ethnic clashes. Worse of all, in 1991, 2000 Kenyans were killed in the rift valley as a result ethnic clashes. It is suggested that land scarcity - and its distribution – aggravated by other factors such as the increasing rate of population and land degradation gave rise to the various ethnic clashes (Brown, 2003). Additionally, Apollos (2001) is convinced that most of the debates about the situation in Kenya surround ethnicity, violence, and democracy.

Kenya's political leaders such as presidents Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Arap-Moi sowed the seeds of ethnic violence by mostly putting their kinsmen to political positions since independence, a situation that was also aggravated by the 1991 rift valley ethnic violence (Adar and Munyae, 2001; Kagwanja, 2003). Wamwere (2003), a victim of years of ethnic unrest in his native Kenya, believes that there exist a new phenomenon of ethnicity in Africa, a situation that has caused genocide, violence and civil wars. He suggests that ethnicity is not a negative word but something neutral and harmless that describes ethnic particularity. However he says, negative ethnicity indicates ethnic hatred and bias, a concept he thinks is currently destroying Africa. Such a concept has also surfaced on the airwaves.

With the emergence of more radio stations on the continent, ethnic groups and individuals now use these outlets to promote their interests – the enhancement of unity and social cohesion and a sense of belonging among groups of people. Some use radio to promote peace and not conflict. A positive reference can be drawn on Tanzania where the community radio was used to resolve land conflicts among the Massai herdsman in Arusha. The radio encouraged them to change their lifestyles by living together in permanent settlements, taking their daughters to school, and opening debates on ending genital mutilation among girls. However, some radios create ethnic division, hatred, violence, and bias against other communities and the international community has particularly paid insufficient attention to the use of media especially community radio to encourage violence (Frohardt and Temin, 2007 in Thompson, 2007).

In Kenya for example, community radio is one of the media largely blamed for its involvement in the escalation of the post election turmoil that caused the death and displacement of thousands of people. The next chapter presents findings from the primary research in Kenya and dwells on the role of community radio in violence.

CHAPTER THREE: HOW AND WHY COMMUNITY RADIO GOT INVOLVED IN KENYAN VIOLENCE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The liberalization of the airwaves after 1992 sparked the proliferation of media outlets especially community radio (Ismail and Deane, 2008; Maina, 2006). These radio stations were mostly established to predominantly broadcast in vernacularly languages. This opportunity was seized during the 2007 elections by ethnic groups to disseminate messages that encouraged division and violence (Reporters without borders, 2008; Human Rights Watch, 2008). This chapter presents the primary data on community radios' involvement in the 2007 violence. Several factors underpinned the violence in which the radio stations participated.

3.2 RADIO STATIONS INVOLVEMENT IN THE VIOLENCE

Using message to encourage violence

Audiences, Human Rights Groups, and Media Personnel stated that radios sent ***hate messages*** to ***incite violence***³ across the country. They particularly pointed to the use of coded messages to incite violence and political division, buttressed by an ethnic politics by Journalists and their guests on various community radio stations. Most of the messages were broadcast using idiomatic expressions that could mainly be understood by members of the same ethnic and linguistic group.

The 2007 election was another trigger for the deep seated tribal and political rivalries in Kenya, and community radio stations were mainly used to propagate what some of the respondents called, ***'negative ethnicity'***. For instance, the Kikuyu radios allowed politicians and callers to name opposition leader, ***Raila Odinga a 'Kahil' (an uncircumcised person)*** and reiterated

³ Sub- themes from the qualitative analysis are highlighted in bold and italics.

that such an individual can not lead Kenya. On the other hand the Luo and Kalinjin callers and guest politicians were also telling their audiences on their community radios that ***the election was rigged by the Party of National Unity*** and they needed to act. They were also insinuating that it was now time for the leadership of Kenya to go into the hands of the Luos because they gave power to the Kikuyus in 2002. This is an apparent reference to the past merger between ***Raila Odinga (Luo) and Mwai Kibaki (Kikuyu)*** on the ticket of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) in the 2002 election, in which they won against the entrenched ruling party, KANU of Uhuru Kenyatta.

During the 2007 elections, media audiences were already divided on party lines just like radio stations. There were two leading political parties – ***Party of National Unity (PNU)*** of President Mwai Kibaki and the ***Orange Democratic Movement (ODM)*** of opposition leader, Raila Odinga. It was therefore clear that Kibaki was supported by members of the Kikuyu ethnic group along with about two sub-tribes(Embu and Meru), and Odinga was supported by the Luo, Luhya, Kalenjin, and almost all other ethnic groups in the country. Similarly, the community radios were divided along these ethnic and political lines. However, it was revealed to this study that some Kikuyus supported Raila Odinga in the same way some Luo, Kalinjin and other tribes supported president Kibaki during the election.

The dissemination of ***coded messages*** in tribal languages by influential individuals seriously flared up animosities among the various ethnic communities that will take time to heal. Berlo (1960: 54) adequately coins and simplifies the concept of message as follows:

'When we write, the writing is the message. When we paint, the picture is the message. When we gesture, the movement of our arms, the expression on our faces are the message'.

In other words message takes into account the code and content that are structured and arranged in certain orders that are meaningful to a specific group of people. Berlo's perspective captures and paints the situation that befits Kenya and the way in which community or vernacular radios were used to communicate special messages to various ethnic communities during the ethnic violence.

Audiences, journalists, and government authorities interviewed suggested that the majority of the population prefer receiving their broadcast messages in their ***mother tongue or tribe***. It can be argued that message serves as the epicenter of communication in any media matter, and it comes in different forms – traditional or modern – to accomplish an objective. Centuries ago, early people used drumbeats, fire and smoke signals to communicate special messages such as war, the presence of strangers, and the death of a chief and so on (Sewanyana,1997).

In Kenya, radio messages reflect deeper ***political divisions*** among ethnic groups. This is particularly evident in the slums of Kibera and Mathare, Nairobi suburbs that harbor some of the poorest and illiterate people in Kenya. These slums are prone to violence because politicians largely depend on dwellers in these areas to support them on the basis of tribal connections, an assertion respondents in these slums alluded to.

Politicians in Kenya thrive on ***ethnicity and perceived injustices*** to get power or to enhance their grip on power. ***Politics and access to land resources*** are some of the key drivers of the Kenyan violence according to a respondent of the civil society. One of the respondents added this view:

'We fought over unemployment, land, over corruption etc. Until those issues are addressed, we are going to fight more. For the past 20 years the issue of the constitutional reform should have taken place but to no avail'
(Respondent in Nairobi, 10 May 2009).

Similar observation was made by the Waki report (2008) commissioned by the Kenyan government. The report affirms that there is a feeling among certain ethnic groups of historical marginalization and perceived inequalities regarding the allocation of **land and other natural resources**. This feeling has been persistently tapped by politicians to put forward historical grievances about injustices, a situation underlying the climate of **hate and violence**. This was also exacerbated by the use of community radio to broadcast these grievances that can arouse public emotions. For example, focus group participants in Mathare, indicated that politicians were broadcasting in the Luo language and stating that it was now their turn to be in power in order to balance political **justice that has not been realized for too long**.

This revelation indicates the impact community radios had on the 2007 election and its violent aftermaths. The scale of the Kenyan violence was extremely rapid and brutal to the extent that it is being labeled as ethnic cleansing (Pflanz and Blair, 2008), but some Kenyans link it to the Rwandan genocide including a respondent in Nakuru. He explains why:

'Genocide does not depend on the number of people killed. Our genocide laid more in the intention of the combatants rather than in the quantity of people killed. In Rwanda, we are talking about hundreds of thousands of people killed. Probably one million people killed. Here they say 1333 people killed' (Respondent in Nakuru, 2 May 2009).

As indicated hitherto in chapter one, radio was used to instigate the Hutu ethnic group to kill the Tutsis in Rwanda. This event does not only continue to resonate across the world, but also in Kenya where radio was also used to incite the audience very recently. Many are yet to come to terms with the aftermaths that caused **displacement, forced migration, and severe tribal clashes**.

Audiences in rural and urban areas narrated that politicians encouraged them to resort to violence. Respondents in Nairobi and the Central regions said they were told on radios by their respective leaders to **chase away non-members** of their ethnic groups in the areas of Mombassa, Eldoret, and Kisumu when the ODM lost and the PNU was declared the winner of the 2007 election widely considered rigged. Those affected in that process were the Kikuyus. Retaliatory actions were taken by militias of the Kikuyus known as the Mungiki in the Central region of the country against other tribes as well.

Messages broadcast by these vernacular stations directly affected their audiences. This was clearly demonstrated by one of the audience respondents interviewed in Central province. He believes in the message of the radio particularly when it is spoken in his vernacular. Jomo Samuels was one of the Kikuyu victims of the Rift valley violence where the death toll was the highest. He speaks both Kalenjin and Kikuyu languages because he was born and raised in a predominantly Kalinjin environment. He says the messages sent to them by community radios in these two languages were messages of resilience and **incitement**:

‘You could hear the broadcasters saying, don’t mind them, the Kibaki or Kikuyu leadership will not go away. Those who are `making lots of noise are like the eyes of frogs that can not prevent cows from drinking water’.

The words of Samuels explain that the broadcasters of the Kikuyu radios were resilient and assuring them that President Kibaki will still remain in power and detractors will not prevent him from winning and maintaining the presidency as a Kikuyu. Samuels says, the Kalinjin radios that opposed president Kibaki were also saying the following idioms:

‘They would use the words like ‘Odwa kwe kwe’, meaning remove the weeds. They said, remove the weeds among us. Now when they say such a language to their people, their people know that Odwa kwe kwe is referring to other tribes.

They also used other terms like, 'we don't want spots' on our skins'
(Jomo Samuels, 2 May 2009).

These ***coded expressions*** are messages that are intended to generate actions on the part of the audiences, doing exactly what the politicians and radio presenters want them to do.

Radicalized voices on radio

Another aspect of the involvement of the community radio in encouraging violence was the use of the airwaves to allow '***radicalized voices***' to send ***coded messages*** to their various communities. These communities have become radicalized as a result of continuous ethnic fighting in the country. They are therefore used to listening to radicalized voices. Radicalized voices are individuals that wield excessive powers in their various political parties and ethnic communities. They are so powerful that their tribal communities and political parties find it difficult to reject suggestions they make. In an interview with a NGO respondent, it was made known that the rival ethnic radios were inviting powerful voices as studio guests. For instance, the Kikuyu radios were inviting ***radical politicians*** who were encouraging their ethnic community to remain calm and assured that the Kikuyu president will win and maintain power during the election. On the other hand, the Luo and Kalenjin radios were similarly assuring their communities that they must win, and that it was time for them to be in power. Anything on the contrary could be a denial of their ***right to reign***, and could therefore be tantamount to their inability to co-exist with the Kikuyus in the provinces.

One of the respondents who fled the clashes in Kisumu, lamented that he fled for his life because senior members of the Luo ethnic group were asking their kinsmen via community radio to '***chase away non-members***' of their community. Similar assertion was witnessed by Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2008). HRW says, in the days leading to the elections, local elders and ODM organizers in many rural communities in Kenya declared that an electoral

victory for President Kibaki would give a signal for war against the local Kikuyu ethnic group. These comments were indeed reechoed on the community radios using such idiomatic expressions like, 'people of the milk, you need to **cut the grass** and reclaim our land'. In Kenya, the Kalenjins of the Rift Valley are known to be the 'milk people', and they refer to the Kikuyus as the 'grass'. In other words, they need to **clear the Kikuyus from their Land**.

During the discussions with focus group respondents in Mathare it was disclosed that audiences were aroused by listening to very prominent politicians that they trust and favor. They cited two spokesmen of ODM - **William Ruto, a Kalinjin (MP from Eldoret) and James Orengo, a Luo (MP and now land minister)** - as key figures who were telling them that the election was stolen and rigged, and they needed to react. At the same time, the key spokesperson of the PNU, **Martha Karua, a Kikuyu** was also bent on glorifying the outcome of the disputed election results and saying they represented the popular will of the Kenyan people when Kibaki was declared president. The focus group respondents added that both political camps were keen on transmitting messages in their ethnic languages on the vernacular radios to their audiences. One respondent emphasized that:

'Our anger rose because of the utterances of these leaders on radios' (Focus group respondent in Mathare, 30 April 2009).

The reaction of these audiences was influenced by these powerful voices because the ethnic radios facilitated the connections between the audiences and the politicians in order to obtain the desired results. The power of media effects can be very effective in a place like Kenya where tribal radios are trusted. This can be backed by the following theoretical position:

'The assumption of powerful media effects were consistent with behaviorist tradition and contributed to early models or theories of communication effects that used metaphor such as hypodermic needle or bullet. All one had to do

was to shoot persuasive message (bullet) at the helpless and homogeneous mass audience, and the communication's desired effects would occur' (Riffe et al, 2005:6).

This concept does not only benefit Kenya but other countries like Rwanda and Burundi that have particularly used radio during violence and war to 'shoot' persuasive messages to their audiences (Thompson, 2007).

Motives of radio stations and the journalists

The unprofessional behavior of practicing journalists and media outlets is also an outcome of **poor regulation** in Kenya. Respondents of civil society, government, audiences, and NGOs interviewed by this study, expressed concern about the recruitment of untrained journalists to run these radio stations. Celebrities and disc-jockeys (DJs) are hired by these radio stations to conduct talk-shows on topics that are topical and thought-provoking. Professional and **trained journalists** are quite expensive to be taken on by community radio stations according to media respondents. As a result, proprietors prefer hiring and training their own staff while maintaining a skeletal team of trained editors to provide guidance to the others. The issue of hiring correspondents has also come to the fore. They are sometimes paid 500 shillings, less than eight US dollars for story used. The general grievance of journalists, like any ordinary Kenyan, is that they are **poorly paid**. There needs to be clearly defined regulations that could put into perspectives the minimum wage of a journalist and the criteria for anybody wanting to broadcast especially on a community radio in Kenya.

Considering the positive core concept of community radio, which talks about promoting development and giving access to the marginalized, why would journalists in Kenya want to use their airwaves to **promote violence**? Media respondents from rural and urban Kenya - Kikuyu and Luo- revealed that they **did not see themselves as journalists anymore** during the violence. They saw themselves as *members of ethnic communities*, speaking for their people for a cause. This study found that there were three principal

camps during the violence in which vernacular radios participated – the Kikuyu, Kalenji, and the Luo, although the Luo and Kalenjin were widely together for an ODM win. The atmosphere created was such that each of these radios was pushing for the collective agenda of their ethnic community. This was also in line with the aspirations of the political parties headed by their kinsmen. A respondent who works as a journalist of a Kikuyu radio station in Nairobi summarizes the views of many of his community members as saying:

'It is like a stereotype if you like. It has been very challenging in that the Kikuyu community feels like they have been suppressed, the community feels like the rest of the world is up against them, and therefore, it is very easy as a station to fall prey to that and sing the tribal song. It is our people who are chased out of the Rift valley and it is our people who are wanted out of government' (Respondent in Nairobi, 29 April 2009).

In the face of the violence where rival tribal groups were hacking each other to death, some journalists belonging to these communities became tempted to sympathize and in most instances collaborated by using the radio at their disposal. Most vernacular radio journalists were blind to the responsibility of a journalist in Kenya. As the Kikuyu journalists were trying to identify with their ethnic hegemony, those of the Luo ethnic group were also doing the same thing. One of the Luo respondents, a journalist, who was herself broadcasting during the violence, did not mince her words:

'Most Luos were on the side of ODM. They therefore considered our radio their property, and so the balancing act was not easy. The youths told us to tell the unwanted residents to leave our community'. (Respondent in Kisumu, 2 May 2009).

The assertions by these journalists clearly indicate that ethnic sentiment takes precedence over professional considerations.

Although not all journalists who compromised their professional ethics for ethnic sympathy, many vernacular radio journalists did so for various reasons. The motivations and actions of these journalists and radio stations have mainly been linked to their **kinship**, friendship, and financial connections. During the data collection, a respondent and a senior broadcaster of a popular Luo radio station in Kisumu confirmed he was an economist and a friend of an ODM MP who owns the radio station. The respondent indicated he was an old time friend to the MP in the US during school days, and he was only helping to run the station. It was also disclosed to the research team that one of the leading Kikuyu radio stations visited in Nairobi was largely run by family members. These radio stations among others have largely been blamed for **inciting the audience** to resort to violence in Kenya during the election.

The difference and peculiarity of the Kenyan situation is that there were no pronounced intra-ethnic divisions within the various ethnic groups during the violence – each community was united to support a specific political party. It was a new paradigm of ‘ethnic democracy’ in which journalists were **mobilizing their kinsmen** to ensure that state power is won at the polls. Journalists used radio to broadcast information, which one of the respondents in Nakuru says results in the ‘**Balkanization**’ of the country. He says, the concept of encouraging more vernacular radio stations is to prevent Kenyans from communicating with each other and to **increase their divisions**. Some vernacular radio journalists were giving **inaccurate reports** and **colluding with politicians** especially of their kinship, a situation that caused the dismissal of 10 journalists at the Royal Media Group, which houses several vernacular radio stations in Nairobi. But a human rights respondent suggested that the motives of these journalists to compromise their profession are based on poverty and lack of training, gaps politicians exploit. In her words:

'It takes money to run media houses, it takes contacts to register for a broadcast license in Kenya, and only politicians can easily have the edge to obtain these licenses and radio stations' (Respondent in Nairobi, 15 May 2009).

Most of the community radio stations are owned by politicians and businessmen in Kenya.

CHAPTER FOUR: SOCIAL ACTORS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF COMMUNITY RADIOS FOR THE ACTIONS OF AUDIENCES

Kenya seems to be sitting on bomb according to various social actors in the rural and urban parts of the country. They generally painted a gloomy picture of the country and its journalists. In this chapter the factors that different groups believed were responsible for the actions of the audiences are examined.

4.1 MOBILIZATION OF AUDIENCES

Vernacular radios served as the platform for the mobilization **and coordination of violent activities** by the various ethnic groups. It was due to the failure or inability of journalists/presenters and the state to control talk shows and other phone-in programmes that were especially live. Respondents in the Nairobi focus group discussion agreed that community radios were used **to coordinate meetings** of ethnic groups in the various provinces. 'The radios were telling us where to go for a particular meeting', a respondent emphasized. These radios could allow members of their ethnic groups to call and say things against their rivals, and to also announce meeting sites. Some **callers to the phone-in programmes** could call to exalt their compatriots for their violent activities and/or retaliatory actions without being stopped by the presenter, suggesting that he/she supports whatever is being said. In other cases according to a respondent in Limuru in Central Province, the journalist would reemphasize the caller's comments or the studio guest's comments. The journalist would say for instance:

'As you have heard from our guest, we are now sailing in one boat, now is the time for us to reign as a community'. (Respondent in Limuru, 2 May 2009).

Kenyan audiences particularly trust their vernacular radio stations. Instructions that were broadcast during the 2007 elections were heeded, according to most focus group respondents in Nairobi. If an audience trusts a community radio, it can then be argued that the radio can serve as an effective catalyst to facilitate collective action. In journalism, mass media including radio have the whole people as an audience and this fact makes their social importance apparent (Gerald, 1963).

Considering the power of radio and the believability of the Kenyan audience's receptiveness in this medium, who should then be responsible for the action of the audience? According to Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), the community radio stations played a big role in the actions of the audiences because they mobilized and encouraged them not to accept defeat whenever it arose. On one hand one could argue that the violence was a question of democracy and contestation, and on the other, it was as if everyone else was widely expected to win at all cost, thereby preparing losers to refuse to accept negative election results.

During the violence according to some social actors, various ethnic radios were setting the agenda and making their communities to keep to themselves. Such an affinity being created by the radios is seen by a media respondent as an attempt to keep various ethnic groups apart rather than together.

'If you are a Kikuyu, you listen to a Kikuyu radio station... if you are a Luo, you listen to a Luo radio station... every community is just listening to itself, and people who don't talk to one another are very easy to be incited to war' (Media respondent in Nakuru, 2 May 2009).

Radio is a powerful medium that influences its audiences. It plays a very important role in conflict mitigation, but sometimes it is used by some groups to send messages of incitement (Howard, 2008).

In a contrasting view, a focus group respondent in Mathare attributed the actions of the listeners to themselves, suggesting that community radio stations are not at all responsible for the violence. He argued that the population was already agitated because of the attitudes of their politicians towards the outcome of the election, saying the audience behaved **spontaneously** in reaction to the election results which they deemed rigged. But it can be stated that community radios surely facilitated the views of the listeners to be voiced over the airwaves.

The institutionalization of violence

Violence seems to be a trend in Kenyan elections. Additionally the dominant theme among the majority of respondents interviewed in this study pointed to the fact that **violence was going to happen** with or without the presence of the community radios. In the Mathare focus group discussions, this overwhelming conclusion was pronounced. Joseph Omolo summarizes the views of the majority of the respondents:

'The **violence was meant to take place**. It is like a tradition which happens in every election. You see, the tension was there which was based on tribal sentiment. Without the radios, violence would still take place because in 1991 – 92, it happened; in 1997, it happened; but in 2007, the radios only contributed to the violence' (Joseph Omolo, Mathare slum, 30 April 2009).

In the face of this unprecedented phenomenon, all my respondents, except the government, including members of the civil society, NGOs, media personnel, and audiences believe that Kenya will still get worse before it gets better. They stated that violence will break again very soon unless the fundamental questions regarding **reforms** are carried out in the country. Civil society and focus group respondents outlined some causes of the violence to be the high **unemployment rate, poverty, insecurity arbitrary land-grabbing by the elite, and corruption** in Kenya. According to the Waki report (2008), violence has been institutionalized since the

legalization of the multi-party system in the country; hence, it has become a glaring factor, not just of regular elections, but also in every day life.

During the focus group discussion in the slum of Mathare, it was revealed that violence is being entrenched because of the establishment of **tribal militias**. These gangs do not only fight for their communities, but they also fight for politicians especially during elections.

'There are many **tribal gangs** in Kenya such as Chinkoro for the Kissis, Taliban for the Luos and Mungiki for the Kikuyus. These groups can not be broken down because they are supported by authorities' (Respondent in Mathare, 30 April 2009).

It can therefore be argued that the violence in Kenya is deeply embedded in the various communities and needs urgent intervention.

CHAPTER FIVE: REGULATORY FRAMEWORK: STATE MECHANISM AND GAPS EXPLOITED BY COMMUNITY RADIOS

The government of Kenya has proven that it is interested in the principles of freedom of speech. It allowed the airwaves to be liberalized and permitted the proliferation of radio stations as part of its commitment to the democratization process. The deputy minister of information conceded that the violence in Kenya was as a result of the lack of reforms including electoral laws and constitutional amendments along with the non-existence of the relevant media code. He stated that the ***violence that was fanned by community radio stations*** was unusual, and needs to be addressed through an effective ***regulatory framework***.

The regulation of the media has become a major concern of modern governments, even if they ideologically support deregulation policies because it is potentially an effective public policy instrument that allows the state to pursue its goals and also intervene in protecting the principles of freedom of speech (Thompson, 1997; Humphreys, 1996). This falls within the framework of international law where governments all over the world are permitted to regulate the free flow of information in order to protect certain narrow interests including morals and national security (Goldstein, 1999). This chapter therefore looks at regulations that were in place before the violence and the actions taken by the government afterwards.

5.1 STATE REGULATIONS BEFORE VIOLENCE

Prior to the recent violence, there existed no state regulations on community radio stations that were used to flare up the violence. The state was only bent on providing ***broadcasting licenses*** to individuals without setting workable framework to indicate their limitations and scope of operations. There were sustained bureaucratic processes in securing these licenses by media outlets. The first process required that applicants must be issued

permits by the Ministry of Information allowing them to provide **broadcasting services** to the nation. The second factor obliged the same applicants to go to the Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) in order to be assigned frequencies. No applicant was allowed to broadcast without going through the two formalities of these offices that are far apart in Nairobi. The government lacked **proper guidelines to monitor** the activities of media outlets, and to categorize broadcasting services according to the CCK and the Ministry of Information.

The Kenya Media Council (KMC), which is a government institution, established by an act of parliament, formulated a code of conduct for the practice of journalism. The code which was produced two months before the 2007 elections was a **self-regulatory** framework. It followed the failure of the government and the Kenyan Union of Journalists to jointly produce a handbook that could serve as **a code of conduct for practicing journalists** in the country. According to the code, journalists are to avoid quoting individuals making derogatory remarks based on ethnicity, race, color, creed and sex. But the KMC is somewhat a toothless bulldog because it does not have the mandate to penalize media houses or journalists for any violation – they only document complaints from the audience – a mechanism that did not help to prevent the misuse and abuse of the airwaves during the 2007 election. Therefore, there is a need to change this code of conduct by making it binding, and also penalizing journalists for bad journalism.

Due to the lack of state regulatory framework for community radios, it was easier to exploit loopholes especially during the period of unrest. In essence, a private or commercial radio could label itself community radio or vernacular radio and continue to broadcast with impunity as it is the current situation in Kenya. This implies that the state did not take the necessary legal measures to put in place laws to match with the emergence of the challenges posed by liberalization and globalization. As a result, most of the broadcast licenses

are paid for by private individuals and planted into communities of diverse ethnic groups.

5.2 GOVERNMENT'S ACTION AFTER VIOLENCE

The Kenyan government has embarked on regulatory measures to prevent the recurrence of the 2007 post election violence in which the media played an active role, and this initiative needs to be encouraged. In order to avoid the bureaucracy of securing a broadcast license, the government has now declared the CCK to be the sole authority to grant all broadcast licenses and frequencies. The government has also amended the 2007 media act. This act did not contain anything about community radio stations before. It only emphasized the role of the public broadcasting services provided by the KBC. However, the new act has been labelled, the Kenya Communications Amendment Act (KCAA), 2008 (Parliament of Kenya, 2009). According to the amended Act 46B, broadcasting services shall be classified in the categories of public broadcasting (state broadcaster), private broadcasting (commercial radio), and community broadcasting (community radio).

As a result of this regulatory mechanism, the CCK is now supposed to **monitor programming and content** of various media outlets across the country. Journalists have already condemned this move, suggesting it is to muzzle the press. However, most respondents interviewed suggested that the monitoring of media content by government could prevent journalists from misusing the airwaves for tribal and other reasons. Sousa and Fidalgo (2007) suggest media regulation should not be regarded as a negative construct but as a positive way of enhancing an area of activity to fulfill the basic needs of the public. Government's latest initiatives are a good start in trying to prevent the misuse of the airwaves, but they fail to address some of the fundamental questions being raised. For instance, the government is silent on penalty it should levied against any journalist or radio station that uses radio to instigate ethnic violence and division especially during

elections. This should be a concern to the people of Kenya and the international community considering the legacy of the 2007 election.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 THE WAY FORWARD FOR COMMUNITY RADIO IN KENYA

As a result of secondary and primary data, this dissertation comes to the conclusion that the objectives of this study have been achieved by looking at the levels at which community radios were implicated in the violence in Kenya. It unraveled how and why they were involved. The study also focused on the regulatory measures that could be changed to make community radios more effective in terms of limiting inflammatory broadcast and hate speech/ propaganda in Kenya.

To start with, this study has established that the vernacular radio stations in Kenya facilitated the use of coded or idiomatic expressions that mainly translated into hate messages that incited the public to resort to violence. Radicalized voices were encouraged to make utterances on community radios that brought ***ethnic and political divisions*** in the country. The radios were used by various groups to coordinate meetings that were intended to chase away rival ethnic groups from their communities.

The study also revealed that instead of uniting the various tribes, the community radios were bent on ***keeping each community to itself*** and enhancing strong affinity. These stations were unprofessionally handled during the period of crisis especially by people who were not trained. For instance callers could call and send messages of hate and violence without being stopped by the radio presenters. Above all there was no state regulation regarding community radios that were involved in fanning the tribal feud. These underlying factors were findings among others that produced justifications that community radios participated in the Kenyan violence.

Community radios are still broadcasting in their vernacular languages and lots of them are still owned by politicians. The violence in Kenya has stopped but signs for it recurring are still rife. Journalists who facilitated the misuse of the community radio airwaves are still broadcasting, although not flaring up violence at this time. These factors have given us an insight into understanding the roles audiences, journalists and users of community radio played during and after the violence.

At this moment, measures are now being put in place to improve the regulatory framework after the violence. The government has established the Media Act which will empower it to monitor programs and content of radio stations in the country. The process is an attempt to prevent vernacular radio station from abusing the airwaves as was done during the 2007 elections. However the CCK says, this law will actively come into force in 2010 because some legislative and subsidiary instruments are currently being put together to support the media/communications law. When this begins to function, rules governing the classification of community radios, private and public broadcasting services will be enforced so that commercial /private radio will no longer play the role of a community radio and vice versa.

Additionally, the government will also review the programming code once every two years. This is to tighten loopholes and to ensure that the public is served with the relevant information adequately. At the moment the media are only ***self-regulated*** till the law comes into play. This however implies that the gap does exist for the time being, and the need to finalize the drafting of the relevant media codes is urgent.

The agenda of community radios need to be changed in order to signal the way forward. These stations need transformation to reflect current reality considering that Kenya is a volatile environment. The international community, NGOs, and donors need to help more in building the capacity of community radio stations in the country as was initiated by the United States

Agency for International Development (USAID) after the post election in Kenya. The agency provided studio equipment for Pamoja fm, a community radio station based in Kenya's largest slum, Kibera. The reason given by USAID is that Pamoja helped to reduce the wave of violence, to promote peace, **reconciliation** and **development** for its inhabitants particularly at the height of the post election clashes.

However the radio did not prevent the destruction of lives and property. But its distinctiveness is that it officially broadcasts only in Kiswahili national language, a language understood by the dozens of ethnic groups in the slum unlike other vernacular radios. It focuses on educational programmes such as youth education, environment, child rights, empowerment of women, anti-corruption and good governance. Although most of the vernacular radios were involved in providing platform for dissemination of hate messages among tribes, Pamoja was unique, an initiative that needs to be encouraged nation-wide.

Finally, there is an urgent need for this current peace under the transition government brokered by the former UN secretary general, Kofi Annan to be sustained. The issue of dialogue among all stake holders initiated by Kofi Annan should be encouraged, and that similar initiative should be taken to the village level among various tribal groups. Most importantly, the radio which was used by all sides to fan the violence should equally be used to promote peace, reconciliation and development in Kenya. The radios should encourage ethnic tolerance, nationalism and patriotism in their broadcast messages in order to build a nation of multiethnic languages united to develop one Kenya. This will serve as a turn away from the legacy of ethnic violence that has plague Kenya for years (Waki, 2008). All this can be done with the support of the citizens of Kenya, the government, and the international community.

6.2 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Ethnic violence is not in the interest of Kenya although politicians thrive on it to achieve their goals. The involvement of the radio to facilitate ethnic violence has become worrisome and therefore needs to be addressed before it deteriorates further. The international community, the government of Kenya, and policy makers need to focus more on the implementation of policies and laws that are formulated, including media policies. The reason is clear - the post election violence was based on the failure of various governments to either implement or put in place the relevant frameworks that should address a wide-range of reforms in Kenya. Several reports and regulations have been made on behalf of the government without any action.

The transitional government is working to ensure that the media in Kenya serve the interest of the public. However there are key areas the government needs to pay more attention to. This study hereby makes some necessary recommendations that could be useful to policy makers in the enhancement of the media landscape.

- Vernacular Language policy for broadcasting services: Politicians and other people exploit ethnicity, and also use community radios to exacerbate existing tensions and conflict among various tribes especially during election periods. As a way of minimizing or putting to an end this bad phenomenon, there is a need to have a national conference that will bring together stakeholders, journalists, and policy makers in determining the future of ethnic languages to be used on radio stations in the country.

The conference shall look at various options: for instance, should the government allow the use of an ethnic community radio to broadcast in a multiethnic environment especially in cities like Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret, Mombassa, the slums of Kibera and Mathare etc? Radio

stations that broadcast in several languages should be the only radio stations allowed in multiethnic communities. If this model is used, it could be considered a unique arrangement in Kenya especially after the violence. It is particularly helpful for the country because it seems to be drifting at an ethnically divisive pace and there is a need to urgently intervene.

Musau (1999) and Kiarie (2004) have argued for the establishment of a national media policy that favors indigenous languages and the development of Kiswahili over English in Kenya. This suggests that they are opposed to the use of English, and are encouraging the use of multiple ethnic languages in the media including radio. However this study thinks differently. Given Kenya's recent violent past, it will not be in the interest of the country to promote vernacular radio in the country considering the difficulty involved in monitoring such a medium unless properly regulated.

For the sake of national cohesion, a single language that everyone understands should be encouraged on the airwaves in the country. Similar example has worked in neighboring Tanzania where Kiswahili is the language of the media across the country, a country with over 100 ethnic groups. Putz (1995) confirms that after independence the government declared Kiswahili as the sole medium of communication in order to enhance nationalism, thereby rendering other indigenous languages non-existent in the media.

- 'Specialized training' and support for media practitioners needed: this is beyond the generic and conventional training. It is about development journalism - peace building, turning ethnicity into a positive concept, ***promoting unity, nationalism, and patriotism*** - all encompassing a conflict resolution mechanism. This could be a practical way of healing the wounds of a fragile nation and

encouraging citizens to get involved in national development and refrain from making utterances especially on radio that have the tendency of dividing the country. The training could focus more on the proper use of radio to unite the nation. The government and the international community should facilitate the training of journalists in **conflict resolution** strategies, human rights monitoring and talk shows (Anderson and Spelten, 2000), election and development reporting, and provide financial support that will enhance their work in meeting the needs of the public.

The use of such a mechanism for post conflict healing has been tested elsewhere and proven successful in Africa. In Burundi for example, studio Ijambo was established by the American conflict resolution media group, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) in 1995 following the blood bath between the Tutsi and the Hutu ethnic groups in 1993, and the Rwandan genocide of 1994.

Burundian media did not only reflect the deep ethnic division between the two rival tribes but actively promoted fear and distrust among the groups. Therefore the aim of the studio was to counter hate propaganda which was pervading in the Great Lakes Region at that time, dispel counter rumors of ethnic war, and encourage peace and reconciliation by facilitating dialogues through its conflict resolution based radio programs, a process that yielded positive results (Beyna et al, 2001;Antwi, 2002).

A similar initiative was undertaken by SFCG in collaboration with the governments of Liberia and Sierra Leone after years of brutal civil war in those countries. The organization's 'Talking Drum Studio' facilitated dialogues, promoted existing peace and encouraged reconciliation among old foes/rivals using drama and outreach activities and practical engagements with the people in the towns and villages (ibid).

The models of Studio Ijambo and the Talking Drum Studio could be good lessons for Kenya to learn.

These methods could also be enhanced by the establishment of a system in which the government through the Media Council of Kenya, the union of Kenyan journalists would ensure that conflict resolution Modules are embedded in the curriculum of the relevant institutions that train journalists in the country. These modules would help potential journalists to be au courant with moderating conflict sensitive issues, disputed election matters, and ethnic violence when discussing on radios. Practicing journalists could be encouraged by their outlets to benefit from these courses in order to improve their skills. The CCK and the Media Council of Kenya should obtain legislative powers to enforce these recommendations.

These recommendations are important but have their own challenges.

Journalists need security and protection in carrying out their functions. At the same time, journalists need to be responsible and accountable in the discharge of their duties. **A journalist could be trained** with all the relevant skills needed, but may find it difficult to work in a volatile ethnic environment like Kenya. Therefore the government must provide the security guarantee that will enable journalists to practice without hindrance.

Poor remuneration for journalists is another big problem in most parts of Africa including Kenya. This aspect needs to be considered by institutions, NGOs, and donors that help or intend to assist develop the media in Africa because low wages encourage corruption, and journalists are not exempt from this ugly act. As a result Kenyan journalists in particular could be vulnerable to manipulations by either politicians or businessmen especially during elections. A final challenge any journalist faces in Kenya is **ethnic alliance**. They need to divorce themselves from the deep tribal sentiments in

the discharge of their professional responsibilities. These hurdles, if carried out could help Kenya not in a short run but in a long run.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW WITH A MEDIA RESPONDENT IN NAKURU

SAM: Do you compare the genocide in Rwanda to that of Kenya?

Respondent – Oh yes, genocide does not depend on the number of people killed. Our genocide laid more in the intention of the combatants rather than in the quantity of people killed. Rwanda, we are talking about hundreds of thousands of people killed. Probably one million people killed. Here they say 1333 people killed. Even if we had one thousand people killed, the definition of genocide is more in the intention. People were attacking others purely because they belonged to the enemy community. There were families that were wiped out merely because of their ethnic origin. If you see this plot next this one of mine belonged to a Luo. But now it is now emptied because he had to leave because he was driven out, he was told, 'get out or we kill you'. And there are people who are here because they were chased away from where they used to be. So now they belong to the group of internally displaced persons.

SAM: Do you blame ethnic radio stations for flaring up the violence?

Respondent – Oh yes. They Balkanized the country. For instance if you come in this country, you find that ethnic communities only listen to their radios. They don't bother to listen to radios that use different ethnic ...I mean other vernacular languages. For instance if you are a Kikuyu, you listen to a Kikuyu radio station, if you are a Kalinji, you listen to a Kalinji radio station, if you are Luo, you listen to a Luo radio station. So you find that at the end of the day most of the country is linguistically Balkanized, every community just listening to itself. So there is never conversation. We can not talk to one another, and people who don't talk to one another are very easy to be incited to war. When this problem started during the colonial time, it was invented and very much spread by the British colonialists. Negative ethnicity and tribalism was really an invention of the British... it was developed as a method of divide and rule. In those days, you do not allow communities to mix; people were confined to their areas, to their regions. So radio stations now, especially vernacular radio stations are playing almost a similar role by keeping communities to themselves.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW WITH A VICTIM OF THE VIOLENCE IN LIMURU

Charles Kariuki – You see in this country we have a lot of radio stations and most of them are in vernacular. Now the country by then was divided into two political parties. Each vernacular language was supporting their candidate. Stations of the Kikuyu ethnic group like Kameme, Coro, Inooro were all supporting the PNU. We had the others like, Ramogi (Luo), Kass (Kalinji) fm, Morembe (Luhya) just to mention a few. They were supporting ODM. They could use the opportunity to persuade their people. Now during the general election, they could say, it is time for us to know that we have to back our people who have been left out in politics for a long time, it's now time for us to reign, and we should not accept anybody else to reign. That's what the radios were saying.

SAM: How do you know they were saying these words?

Charles Kariuki? Of course we understand, I understand Kalinji, you see I come from that area, I was brought up in that area although I am Kikuyu. Kass is broadcasting in Rift valley. During cultivation, there is a lot of what we call 'weeds'. Now they were calling us 'weeds' in Kass fm. They used a lot of idiomatic words like 'Odwa kwe kwe', meaning remove the weeds. They said, remove the weeds among us. Now when they say such a language to their people, their people know that Odwa kwe kwe is referring to other tribes. They also used other terms, 'we don't want spots' on our skins. These are spots for example on the skin of a lion. When they say so, the people who belong to that tribe will understand that spot is the other tribes who have occupied their land or whatever, so they do not want to mix with them.

APPENDIX B (CONT.)

SAM: Who was telling you to remove the weeds – politicians or journalists?

Charles Kariuki – I think from Kass fm, it was the politicians. Also the tribal leaders were making lots of calls and making incitement. You could hear someone calling from a distance on phone-in programs when a politician is serving as a studio guest. Somebody could say, me I am a supporter of ODM, and we are vowed that we shall not live with these spots anymore. No spot will remain in this area if they do not deliver the votes on our side. For example William Ruto, the minister of Agriculture who is an MP would say such a thing. The journalists themselves would say for example, 'you have heard from our man for example William Ruto, he was in the station, and you've hear what he said. There is no other way out, now we are sailing in one boat, we are not divided, all that he has said, we are supporting him'. Now that is a journalist. You see, when he says that we are moving in one boat, he shows you that he talking about the boat of oneness, no spot, and one community. Those are the things the journalist used to say. You could hear journalist saying 'now our time has come for us to reign as a community'. That's a journalist. Our time has come for us to reign in this country as a community. You see, it brings a lot of incitement and makes people understand that they should reign at all cost, and we should not be left behind anymore. When they were saying all these things in their own language our radio stations were also saying something on our side. You also tune to your radio to motivate you.

SAM: What were the Kikuyu radios saying to you as well?

Charles Kariuki – you could hear them saying, don't mind, this leadership will not go. By then they knew our president was a Kikuyu. So this thing will not go. Those who are 'making lots of noise are the eyes of frogs that can't prevent animals or cows from drinking water'. So when you hear that, you become encouraged and motivated. If they are calling me a spot and someone else is telling me to not be perturbed, I feel confident. They made us feel confident and feel protected.

APPENDIX C: MANUAL CODING OF TRANSCRIPT

INTERVIEW WITH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Categories of radio stations listened to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National broadcaster • Commercial broadcaster • Private radio • Community radio (now)
Regulatory gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor coordination between CCK and ministry • No binding broadcast codes • No content monitoring • No community radio category • CR and PR used interchangeably • Guidelines not legal • Lack of proper perimeter for licensing • Lack of proper reforms (constitutional and electoral reforms)
Government's action after violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCK now controls licensing • Govt wants to control Programming content • Categories of licensing now in place • Bureaucracy reduced
Essence of regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide guidelines on election reporting • Reporting fairly, objectively, and giving equal access to all • No incitement of public will arise
Challenges of journalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable to media owners • Poor remuneration • Security concerns for safety
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training required for journalists

INTERVIEW WITH HUMAN RIGHTS PERSONNEL

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Broadcasts that affected the election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hate speech • Hate messages • Partisan broadcast by journalists • Incitement of audiences through coded messages
Issues community radio need to address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty, unemployment, insecurity, corruption, violence, and livelihood concerns
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalists need training in non-discrimination, equality, marginalization concepts
Roots of violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land, unemployment, insecurity, poverty

INTERVIEW WITH MEDIA COUNCIL OF KENYA

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Role of media council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve professionalism in media industry • Protect media freedom • Arbitrate between members of public and media • Review journalism curriculum
Shortfalls of media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little knowledge of media ethics • Lack of conflict-sensitive journalism skills • No divorce from social and tribal backgrounds or alliance
Causes of violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulatory flaws • Lack of professionalism by journalists • Poor training of journalists • Poor salary
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include conflict resolution in journalism curriculum • Community radio should encourage inter-tribal marriage • Proper legislation and regulation required

INTERVIEW WITH NGOS

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Role of CR in violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving voices to the most strident in communities • Giving voices to the radicalized individuals • Stations creating balkanized communities • Stations allowed themselves to be abused and embarrassed
Definition of community radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned, operated, and managed by community • Driver of development and voice of the marginalized • Non-profit entity that is of the people and by the people
Radicalized voices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radical voices include: William Ruto and James Orengo of ODM. • Martha Karua of PNU • Opinion leaders and voices that are hard to be oppose by kinsmen
Strength and motivation of community radio and journalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community radios are believed by their communities • Promoted social and tribal cohesion • Promoted strong community and self identity • Creating tribal alliance rather than

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encouraging professionalism • Encouraging tribal competition
Weakness of community radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tribal division • Confusion of identity between Community radio and vernacular radio • Disc jockeys handling talk shows • Community radios lack funding
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalists need emergency toolkit: training in editorial policy, broadcaster trained on conflict mitigation • Refocus the objectives of community radio • Encourage financial support for community radio • Government should provide subsidy for community radio
Pitfalls of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks capacity and technology to implement regulation

INTERVIEW WITH AUDIENCES/FOCUS GROUPS

<u>THEMES</u>	<u>SUB-THEMES</u>
Available and preferred radio stations of audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vernacular radios • Community radios • English and Kiswahili fm stations
Messages broadcast to audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violent messages • Messages of incitement • Messages of tribal division • Messages political division • Negative ethnicity • Tribalism • 'We have been left out of politics for too long' • Tribal leaders were making lots of calls and inciting kinsmen • Journalists were saying, 'it's time for us to reign as a community.' • They would say, 'our community wants you to pack and go' • Politicians were saying: you are being denied what is yours...react.
People and groups involved in violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hooligans moving with machetes • Idlers • Tribal gangs • Youths • Politicians • Tribal leaders
Reason for choice of radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to radio that speaks vernacular

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to community radio for entertainment and politics
How community radio participated in violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed radical voices on air • Preaching negative ethnicity and deep tribal identity • Phone-in calls uncontrolled • Failed to talk more about root cause of violence • Coordinated tribal meeting during violence • Broadcasting hate speech through idioms • Encouraged DJs and untrained journalists on air
Violence was inevitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With or without radios, violence was bound to occur but at a lower magnitude. • Violence occurs at every election in Kenya • Vernacular radio especially flared up the violence
Main rival tribes (Of 42tribes) in Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kikuyu • Luo • Kalenji
Radio ownership in Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Politicians • Businessmen
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close down vernacular radio stations and promote national languages • Promote the independence` of vernacular radios • Encourage the training of journalists • Formulate regulator body • Mobilize for change and positive development • Sensitization on rights and responsibilities of citizens

INTERVIEW WITH VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

<u>THEMES</u>	<u>SUB-THEMES</u>
Impact of radio broadcast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence • Displacement • forced migration • invasion from lands • tribal clashes • burning of properties • looting and destruction • division among vernacular radio stations
Causes of violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of quality journalism training

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of proper regulation • utterances from journalists, callers and politicians • government renegeing on promises • unemployment, land reforms, corruption
Coded messages broadcast to audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it's time for us to reign • we should not accept anybody to rule us • we don't need spots on our skins • don't mind noisy frogs because they can't prevent cows from drinking • fear not, we are with you • Chase non community members
Recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CR should not be politicized • Vernacular radio needs tighter regulation and supervision • Ban live broadcast of elections results • More training needed for journalists

INTERVIEW WITH MEDIA PERSONNEL

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Purpose of radio station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use vernacular language in a unique way • Educate • Entertain • Inform • Promote tribal cohesion • Broadcast to individual communities • Promote patriotism
Topics discussed on radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politics • Issues of negative ethnicity, land issues, ethnic hate, road accident • Programs on youth empowerment, children, cultural practices, inheritance, land, entertainment, traffic, comedy, HIV/AIDS, environment, agriculture, anti-corruption, politics, News and information
Define community radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propagate education and engage in non-commercial activities • Community radio is donor sponsored infrastructure • Commercial but serves as community radio • Voice of the people • Radio serving the community • Hybrid model of community radio means producing contents for community but

	<p>funding/adverts from business community</p>
Impact of violence on radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pushed radio to stereotyping other communities • Increased emotions of journalists • Encouraged journalists to broadcast based on tribal agenda • Radio mobilized for tribal bond and unity • Tribal division • Community were divided • 'It was the rest of Kenya against the Kikuyu because of their association with the presidency'-journalist in Nairobi. • 'Kikuyus were especially bitter, and they especially felt this was an affront against us' - Journalists • In cases where emotions rose journalists used mic, pen to fight for community- Journalist in Nairobi • The Kikuyu agenda is to make Kibaki president. Many Kikuyus feared Raila Odinka to president – journalist in Nairobi. • 'We informed the people where we felt something went wrong' – journalists in Kisumu • 'This radio is owned by an ODM MP' . • The biggest problem is that people are upset, we know that some people are left out, they don't share the national cake'– journalist in Kisumu
Role of vernacular radio in violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraged each community to listen to their own radio • Kikuyu, Luo, and Kalenji radios were encouraging tribal competition • Used lots of idioms that incited their kinsmen to violence • Balkanized the various communities • Helping to keep communities to themselves
Impact of election violence on staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unprofessionalism surfaced • Staff encouraged to support political parties • Tribalism crept on air • Unbalanced reporting • Incitement • Inaccurate reporting colluding with politicians and tribal groups` `
Reaction to post election troubles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcasting unfolding events • Interviewing listeners, politicians, and opinion leaders

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting peace, development, and reconciliation
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using radio to fight tribalism• Logging broadcast programs• Monitoring, policing, and controlling vernacular programs• Putting in place a regulatory framework• Having unbiased monitors to regulate broadcast contents• Discourage vernacular radios• Encourage patriotism• Penalize broadcast violators• Avoid tribalism in politics and development• Proper regulatory framework

