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Exploring the Politics of Intergroup Accommodation in Kenya's Vernacular Radios
During the 2007/08 Conflicts

By

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Cette thèse intitulée:

Exploring the Politics of Intergroup Accommodation in Kenya's Vernacular

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Radios During the 2007/08 Conflicts
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ABSTRACT

For many years, Kenya gave the impression of a relatively stable nation-state within the turbulent sub-Saharan Africa and a suitable hub from which the international community extends its missions to parts of Africa such as the *Great Lakes Region* (Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, DR Congo, Kenya and Tanzania) and the *Horn of Africa* (Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia Djibouti and Uganda). However, the highly disputed presidential elections in 2007 and the upheaval that followed prompted concern about Kenya's stability in the wake of global insecurity. While the healing process is underway, challenges of intergroup accommodation persist, as Kenya counts about forty-two distinct ethno-linguistic groups. Also, the International Criminal Court (ICC) recently brought criminal proceedings against four of the six alleged masterminds of the 2007/08 conflicts, adding to the challenges of intergroup cohesion ahead of the next general elections.

This dissertation examines the politics of intergroup accommodation in Kenya's vernacular radios and how they influenced intergroup relations in the events leading to the 2007/08 conflicts. Considering conflict as a communicative process, it builds on Azar's (1990) theory of *Protracted Social Conflicts* (PSC) by integrating *media framing* not only to unpack the discourses that surrounded the framing of the 2007/08 conflicts, but also to uncover attitudinal shifts that characterized intergroup relations prior to, during, and after this particular conflict. The study mainly borrows from qualitative methods to collect data from three distinct ethno-linguistic regions in Kenya: Nyeri (Kikuyu majority), Kisumu (Luo Majority) and Eldoret (Kalenjin majority).

The central argument of this dissertation is that the framing of conflicts by vernacular radios can either be *differentiated* or *concerted*, and this depends on the stage at which a given conflict manifests itself. While in differentiated framing, media narratives are negotiated in terms of negative competition likely to reinforce divisive or rebellious attitudes, concerted framing underpins the framing process whereby media discourses are articulated in a manner that underlines shared ideals that cut across intergroup allegiances, and thus may strengthen collaborative attitudes. I argue that the shifts in vernacular radio narratives occur when new elements are added to the already existing conflict frames and the kinds of “new meaning” they generate with regard to conflict processes.

I also argue that the shifts from differentiated framing to concerted framing (and vice-versa) also hinge on the degree to which the proposed frames resonate with the appeals and expectations of the target population. Overall, the study argues that the language of broadcast and cultural proximity drive the framing of intergroup relations in Kenya’s vernacular radios, particularly in situations of conflict or competition. The strength of this dissertation lies in the analytical viewpoints that it proposes to locate the shifting perspectives in conflict situations, especially in multiethnic states where the politics of intergroup accommodation are fragile and situational.

Keywords: Kenya, social conflicts, peace-building, ethnicity, media framing, vernacular radio.

RÉSUMÉ

Depuis des années, le Kenya avait donné l'impression d'être un pays relativement stable dans la région d'Afrique sub-saharienne, régulièrement secouée par les conflits, et un « centre » autour duquel la communauté internationale coordonne ses missions vers certains pays d'Afrique comme ceux faisant partie de la *Région des Grandes Lacs* (Burundi, Rwanda, Ouganda, République démocratique du Congo, Kenya et Tanzanie) et ceux de la *Corne de l'Afrique* (Kenya, Somalie, Éthiopie, Djibouti et Ouganda). Toutefois, les élections présidentielles très contestées en 2007 et les conflits qui se sont enchaînés ont entraîné de nombreuses préoccupations en ce qui concerne la stabilité du Kenya à l'ère de l'insécurité globale. Alors que le rétablissement de la paix continue, la coexistence entre groupes est toujours délicate car le Kenya compte au moins quarante-deux ethnies qui sont toutes distinctes les unes par rapport aux autres. Par ailleurs, l'ouverture d'une enquête judiciaire, par la Cour Pénale Internationale (CPI), contre quatre des six personnes présumées être les principaux auteurs des violences postélectorales de 2007/08, s'ajoute aux problèmes liés à la coexistence pacifique entre les différents groupes avant les prochaines élections.

Cette thèse examine les politiques relatives à l'accommodation des différents groupes à travers les radios vernaculaires et comment ces politiques ont influencé les relations entre les groupes lors des conflits de 2007/08 au Kenya. Partant du constat qu'un conflit est un *processus communicatif*, elle intègre le concept d'encadrement médiatique à la théorie de *Protracted Social Conflict* (PSC) définie par Azar (1990) pour tracer non seulement les changements dans les discours d'encadrement de ces conflits, mais aussi pour illustrer les mutations des attitudes à l'égard des relations entre groupes

survenues avant, durant et après ces conflits. Cette étude emploie principalement les méthodes qualitatives pour rassembler les données issues des trois régions au Kenya qui sont ethniquement et linguistiquement divergentes: Nyeri (la majorité Kikuyu), Kisumu (la majorité Luo) et Eldoret (la majorité Kalenjin).

L'argument central de cette thèse est que l'encadrement des relations entre groupes, notamment lors des conflits, est soit *différencié* soit *concerté* dépendamment du stade auquel le conflit se manifeste. Alors que dans l'*encadrement différencié*, les discours médiatiques sont articulés de façon à ce que ceux-ci soient susceptibles d'entraîner une polarisation entre groupes, l'*encadrement concerté* décrit les discours médiatiques négociés de manière à ce que ceux-ci reflètent les valeurs partagées au travers des différents groupes, et donc sont susceptibles d'engendrer une coopération entre groupes. J'argumente que les changements dans le discours des radios vernaculaires prennent effet lorsque de nouveaux éléments sont ajoutés aux discours caractérisant un conflit déjà existant, et les « nouveaux significations » que ces éléments apportent à la compréhension du conflit en question.

J'argumente également que le changement du l'encadrement différenciée à l'encadrement concerté (et vice-versa) dépende du degré de résonance de ces discours avec la population cible. De façon générale, cette étude suggère que le langage de diffusion et la proximité culturelle induisent l'encadrement entre groupes à travers les radios vernaculaires au Kenya. La force de cette thèse se trouve donc dans les perspectives analytiques qu'elle propose pour localiser les discours changeants lors des conflits, plus particulièrement dans les états multiethniques où les politiques

d'accommodation entre les différents groupes demeurent toujours fragiles et conditionnelles.

Mots clés: Kenya, conflits sociaux, construction de la paix, ethnicité, encadrement médiatique, radios vernaculaires

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DEDICATION

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INTRODUCTION

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart” (Nelson Mandela).

Multiethnic societies continue to face new waves of socially protracted conflicts, most of which are intrastate in nature. While the pre-Cold War conflicts were often among and between superpowers (Wolff, 2004; Azam, 2001; Byman, 2002; Callahan, 1998; Fisher, 2001), the literature generally supports that contemporary social conflicts are mainly intrastate (Burton, 1997; Kleiboer, 1994; Lederach, 1997; Steadman, 1991; Ignatieff, 1997), and that their manifestations are often latent and protracted (Callahan, 1998; Sandole, 1999; Azar, 1990; Tir, 2005; Shinar, 2003; Miall et al., 2001). These conflicts continue to drain these societies of their resources, a trend that has prompted a host of scholarship to provide interpretations of such disputes – whether descriptively or analytically.

Some studies emphasize the ambiguity around democratic liberties and perceptions of citizenship and nationalism as the main sources of such conflicts (Anderson, 2005; Ignatieff, 1993, Ignatieff, 1997; Guibernau and Hutchinson, 2001; Bayer, 2010). In this regard, intrastate conflicts are marked by the shifting perceptions surrounding one’s self-determination. Others foresee ethnicity and cultural differences as the sore point of intrastate conflicts (Fisher, 2001; Roeder, 2003; Blanton et al., 2001; Huntington, 1997; Jenkins, 1997). In this view, intrastate conflicts are perceived as “being motivated by ethnic sentiments, as being grounded in deeply-seated hatreds, and

as being virtually inescapable” (Fenton: 2004:1). In other words, cultural allegiances are emphasized as the most pervasive analytical element explaining the competing claims often inherent in such conflict manifestations.

In the “newly” formed nation-states, historical contingencies and colonial legacy that saw the division of various groups along territorial allegiances are often regarded as the *epicentre* of intrastate conflicts (Tir, 2005; Zartman, 1989; Wimmer, 1997; Ulrich and Wolff, 2004; Stedman, 1991; Mitchell, 1993; Brown, 2004; Mamdani, 1996; Milne, 1981; Posner, 2007; Okigbo, 2004; Githongo, 2006). In this view, intrastate conflicts are essentially treated as a matter of historical grievances nurtured during colonial occupation and perpetrated by various local leaders who succeeded these structures.

Apart from differing analytical paths, the literature on intrastate conflicts is also characterized by multiple epistemological approaches. Some have adopted holistic analyses to map out the contours or conditions likely to generate such conflicts (Azar, 1990; Shinar, 2003; Byman, 2002), while others offer presumptive models that, from their view points, explain the transformation of conflict situations into peaceful processes – or vice versa (Burton, 1997; Lederach, 1997; Galtung, 1997; Fisher, 2007; Sandole, 1999; Sandole, 1997).

What is particularly interesting to observe, however, is that despite the rich analytical frameworks advanced by many of these studies, the centrality of *media narratives*, as an essential aspect of socially protracted intrastate conflicts, is often downplayed or neglected. Instead, cultural allegiances (mainly ethnicity) revitalized by political stigmatization remain the most pervasive analytical window embraced by the majority of these studies. There is, however, a growing base of literature that is trying to

move away from this “collective” approach (Wolff, 2004; Shinar, 2003; Tir, 2005; Fenton, 2004).

For instance, Wolff (2004) warns that it may not be that obvious to determine whether a conflict is ethnic-based or not. He thus argues for a three-level ethnic conflict. The first one describes ethnic conflicts that are violent, whose causes and consequences are obviously ethnic (i.e. the crises in Sri Lanka, Kosovo, Cyprus, Middle East or the Basque Country). The second set describes conflicts whose manifestations are far less violent despite the presence of distinct ethnic identities (i.e. the complex intergroup patterns that emerged in post-Apartheid South Africa and religious allegiances characterizing India and Pakistan). Lastly, Wolff supposes that there are conflicts emerging within and among same groups mainly because of incompatible interest structures (i.e. South Tyrol and Catalonia).

Fenton (2004) also infers that “the difficulty in understanding ethnic conflict lies in treating it as primarily ethnic in its cause and nature”. He goes on to suggest that “to analyze ethnic conflict effectively requires meeting two further difficulties: to trace out the possibilities of global comparative analysis and to address the problem of “culture” (p.179-180). Fenton’s assumptions raise two main concerns with regard to the credence of ethnicity as a presumptive explanation of conflicts in multiethnic states.

On the one hand, it suggests that one’s ethnic allegiance hinges on a symbolically constructed sense of belonging, and as many studies have indicated (Jenkins, 2004; Cohen, 1994; Osaghae, 1999), this sense of belonging does shift according to one’s level of ethnic consciousness. On the other hand, ethnicity *per se* cannot explain the lines of tensions between various groups. This is because it is a mode of classification (Hall,

1997). The central problem with this classification arises when the contours relative to such categorization are politicized to generate distrust or hatred.

Given this brief overview, how can one make sense of the 2007/08 conflicts in Kenya? Why did various groups, once co-habiting peacefully, turn against each other? Why did the crisis shift from electoral discourse to embrace ethnicity? Can one really situate the source of this particular conflict with the discrepancies noted during the 2007 presidential vote tallying, and the subsequent announcement of the official results giving Kibaki a second term? Or, were the 2007 elections perceived as an *open window* to address deep-seated socio-political issues that had been long overdue?

Problem Statement

Although Kenya has experienced shaky elections in 1992 and 1997, it has, for a very long time, given the impression of a conflict-free zone and had become one of the beacons of hope in the sub-Saharan Africa as far as regional stability is concerned. However, the general election held on December 27th, 2007, the ninth election since Kenya's independence in 1963, changed this perception. Previously, the country had known only two presidents: Jomo Kenyatta (1963-1978) and Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi (1978-2002). In 2002, Mwai Kibaki emerged victorious under the *National Rainbow Coalition* (NARC) to become the third president, a political breakthrough for Kenya after Moi's 24-year rule.

During the 2007 elections, Kibaki sought re-election under the *Party of National Unity* (PNU) while his major opponent, Raila Odinga, became the flag-bearer of the

Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). The highly contested results announced on December 30, 2007 that gave Kibaki a second term, engulfed Kenya in violent conflicts not witnessed since independence (Somerville, 2009; Jamal and Deane, 2008; Rutten and Owuor, 2009). Most of the violence was blamed on the youth, especially the *Mungiki* uprising and on political elites in various regions (Waki Report, 2008, Rasmussen, 2010).

The 2007 electoral crisis may have started as a mere distrust of the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) when Kibaki decided to appoint 19 out of 22 members of the ECK without consulting the opposition (Brown, 2009; Lynch, 2008). The credibility of the ECK was therefore questioned. During the 2007 presidential vote tallying, both local and international observers declared the electoral process flawed. Equally, the election observers were kicked out of the count room before the last changes were made on the result's lead, which came out at the very last minute. It is this growing mistrust and the alleged discrepancies in vote counting that was reduced to tensions along the two party loyalties, those affiliated to ODM and those allied to PNU.

It did not take long before the tensions transformed into spontaneous violence in various parts of the country, a trend which appeared to force different groups to cling to their supposed "ethnic territories" while chasing "enemies" out of these regions, some of which were now reclaimed as stolen "ancestral lands." In the process, one party affiliates (ODM) claimed to recapture its "stolen victory" while their opponents (PNU) declared their calls as power-hungry and opportunistic based on ethnic chauvinism. In the midst of this chaos, the government decided to impose a temporary ban on all live-media to, supposedly, enforce public order and safety.

Given the magnitude of the violence, which claimed over a thousand lives and internally displaced hundreds of thousands, and the inability of the African Union (AU) to mediate the dialogue between the “big two” (Kibaki and Odinga), the international community saw the need to intervene through the former United Nation’s (UN) Secretary General, Dr. Kofi Annan, to end the mass killings and to ascertain the way forward, through a power-sharing structure, for the country was now perceived as incapable of resolving its internal matters (Lynch, 2008; Anderson and Lochery, 2008; Brown, 2011). The intervention also came amid donor threats, mostly the United States and the European Union, to withdraw or reduce their foreign aid to Kenya (Brown, 2009).

The ramifications of this particular conflict and the intervention strategies that followed were welcomed with mixed feelings. Some nationalists (mostly the local leaders) perceived it as a continued dominance of the “West” tampering with Kenya’s sovereignty (once engulfed in colonial creed), others (such as the civil society, donor agencies and humanitarian organizations) applauded the intervention as a relief given the cessation of violent conflict and the relative reestablishment of social order. The aftermath of the conflicts provided a ground for major reforms such as the adoption of a new Constitution in August 2010.

This study identifies four broad concerns, complementary to one another, that are relative to the events of the 2007/08 conflicts. First, struggles for political supremacy between groups tend to create the perception that control over “state machinery” implies the ability to satisfy a specific group’s needs or interests. Hence, various communities appear to believe that state resources channelled to them are directly linked to whether or not the members from their community are in control of these resources. Second, forging

a national identity without various groups proclaiming their rights to ethnic self-determination is daunting. This may explain why the state's actions are sometime interpreted as protective of a particular group, as witnessed in the events of 2007/08 conflicts when some groups claimed that the state used the police force to contain dissenters from specific ethno-linguistic regions (Lynch, 2008; Lonsdale, 2008). Also, the bid by the Kenyan government to defer International Criminal Court (ICC) proceedings against the alleged masterminds of the 2007/08 conflicts was interpreted by some as the state's desire to protect its "in-group" members¹.

Third, issues around Kenya's sovereignty and its ability to handle internal affairs have become challenging. For the first time in Kenya's post-independence history, the UN mediation team was forced to intervene as the country was on the verge of transforming into civil war. Lastly, it appears that communicating intergroup claims and/or values, especially in vernacular radios, is problematic. All these concerns point to the porosity of intergroup relations, especially in situations of conflict or competition.

Purpose of the Study

This dissertation examines the politics of intergroup accommodation in Kenya's vernacular radios during the 2007/08 conflicts. It poses the following questions: Why (searching for motives) and how (relative to conditions) did the 2007/08 conflicts shift from electoral discourse to embrace ethnicity? How do Kenya's vernacular radios accommodate and/or negotiate intergroup claims in situations of competition and/or

¹See Ndegwa, Alex, 2011. "Kenya's ICC deferral bid in UN stalls." The Standard, March 17. <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/InsidePage.php?id=2000031411&cid=4&>

conflict? What makes different groups choose to act according to the prompts of ethnic allegiances?²

The main objective of this research is not to develop a presumptive model for conflict resolution in multiethnic societies, but rather to propose analytical perspectives that could shed light on the key issues inherent in socially protracted conflicts in many multiethnic states³. Specifically, it seeks to examine the politics of intergroup accommodation in Kenya's vernacular radios during the 2007/08 conflicts. Other objectives aim at a) mapping out the patterns of vernacular radio listenership in the three locations of research; b) determining the dominant vernacular radio stations in the three locations of study; and c) finding out why vernacular radio listenership is important in the lives of those interviewed.

The study is grounded in a cross-theoretical approach building on Azar's (1990) theory of *protracted social conflicts* (PSC) to explore the contours of the 2007/08 conflicts from the perspective of vernacular radio audiences in three distinct ethno-linguistic regions in Kenya: Nyeri (Kikuyu majority), Kisumu (Luo majority) and Eldoret (Kalenjin majority). This provides the basis to unpack the dominant discourses used by these radios to negotiate intergroup relations during this conflict. In terms of data collection, this study hinges primarily on qualitative methods: documentary research, in-depth interviews and observation. Quantitative data is also presented to contextualize the underlying assumptions discussed. Articulating methodology, understood from the perspective of Cultural Studies, is also used to tease the links between the data gathered during fieldwork and documentary research.

²This question was adapted from Fenton, S. (2004). 'Beyond Ethnicity: The Global Comparative Analysis of Ethnic Conflict', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 45(3-4): 179-194.

³ See the discussion in chapter six

Rationale

In the past decade alone Kenya, like many countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa, has witnessed a significant shift in its media landscape, especially the rapid growth of vernacular radios in the late 1990s. While this increase may be applauded as one of the many efforts that the country has made to reinforce democratic liberties, accommodating values cutting across intergroup allegiances has been daunting given the presence of at least 42 different languages and dialects. This is generally due to the fact that most of these radios target specific ethno-linguistic groups and also broadcast in the languages spoken and understood by members of these groups.

The winds of change also brought with them new ways of broadcasting with the growing influence of major advertisers on the media content. This is relatively new in Kenya where the upsurge in privately owned commercial FM radios pose new regulatory concerns. These are some of the changes that continue to inform the patterns of socially protracted conflicts, yet mainstream theories to conflict transformation (and/or peace-building) either ignore or downplay the salience of *media framing*. Often, the emphasis is put on ethnicity, colonial legacy and political processes, without necessarily explaining the mechanisms that transform these processes into overt or covert conflicts.

The strength of this dissertation not only lies in the fact that it acknowledges and reaffirms the centrality of media framing (vernacular radios) as an equally important aspect in understanding socially protracted conflicts, but also demonstrates how such narratives are likely to determine the directions and patterns of intergroup cohesiveness in

situations of conflict or fierce competition. In other words, this study illustrates how vernacular radio narratives are likely to inform attitudinal changes of the groups they serve with respect to intergroup relations. Various studies have demonstrated that people make sense of situations (including their own identity) partly based on how they are framed by the media (Entman, 2010; D’Agnelo, 2011). Equally, “conflict labels” such as ethnic, racial, political, and cultural also emerge from media’s categorization of different phenomena (Hall, 1997).

Past research looking at socially protracted conflicts in Kenya has been marked by an emphasis on ethnicity and how it influences intergroup cohesion in political processes (Makinen and Kuira, 2008; Kalyango, 2008, Jamal and Deane, 2008; Maina, 1995; Kagwanja, 2003; Ndegwa, 1997; Osamba, 2001; Lynch, 2008; Rutten and Owuor, 2009). While it is true that ethnic sensitization is central to intergroup polarization, putting more emphasis on ethnicity as the central attribute of intergroup conflicts often overshadow the efforts towards a constructive understanding of protracted social conflicts. Probably one of the key attempts to deviate from this “collective” approach is the study conducted by Somerville (2009) that critiques the manner in which ethnicity was overly emphasized by the British newspapers during the 2007/08 social unrest in Kenya.

This dissertation is therefore a modest attempt to move away from this “dominant approach” to provide a more elaborate explanation of the 2007/08 conflicts. Ethnicity is thus envisioned as an episodic process that is part of the larger cultural structure affecting intergroup relationships, more so, in situations of competition and/or conflict. In this regard, media frames also become important, as they are likely to determine the perceptions that people hold about the conflict itself. The central argument of this study is

that vernacular radio frames can either be *differentiated* or *concerted* depending on the level at which the conflict manifests itself. In what I call *differentiated framing*, the narratives relative to conflict situations are negotiated in terms of negative competition likely to generate intergroup polarization. Conversely, in *concerted framing*, conflict narratives are articulated in a manner that reinforces positive conflict transformation and by extension, peace-building initiatives.

Equally, the findings support the argument that ethnicity *per se* does not generate conflicts. This is because it is part of the larger *cultural structure* explaining intergroup relations. However, when such *cultural structures* (or cultural allegiances), within which ethnicity is potent, are negatively politicized in situations of fierce competition, they can easily generate intergroup polarization, and conflict along cultural affectivity, such as ethnicity. Other findings point out the significance of vernacular radios as a form of cultural heritage and a vehicle by which various communities sustain their ethnic identity that is weakened by the trends of globalization.

Organization of Chapters

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. **Chapter one** provides the background of the study. I begin by looking at the social, political and economic conditions informing intergroup relations in Kenya. This is followed by a brief overview of the Kenyan people, with more emphasis on the groups that were targeted in this study. I then look at the patterns of the past and present conflicts before contextualizing the 2007/08 conflicts and the kinds of responses that it drew from the state, the civil society

and the international community. The last section of this chapter is dedicated to the media industry in Kenya. Here, I provide an overview of the underlying conditions within which the media (vernacular radios) operate.

Chapter two is mainly concerned with conceptual clarifications. Here, I explain some of the core concepts used in this study and the meaning I attach to them.

Chapter three reviews the literature on media and conflict transformation. It is in this chapter that I also layout my theoretical framework that integrates *media framing*, as a possible fifth cluster, to Azar's (1990) four-cluster theory of *protracted social conflicts* (PSC).

Chapter four presents the methodology of the study and highlights the epistemological orientation that guided the methods of data collection. Essentially, qualitative methods are emphasized: documentary research, in-depth interviews and observation, with special focus on purposive non-probability sampling methods. Articulating methodology is also used to tease out the links between various data.

Chapter five presents the findings of the study. These include the demographic information of participants, patterns of vernacular radio listenership, factors linked to vernacular radio listening, and the narratives relative to the framing of intergroup claims prior, during and after the 2007/08 violent conflicts.

Chapter six discusses the findings in relation to the research questions initially formulated. It examines the links between the fieldwork findings (interviews and observation) and data gathered through documentary research. The discussion is mainly analytical, and proposes some of the angles within which protracted social conflicts can be understood in Kenya.

The **conclusion** illuminates major arguments and contribution of this dissertation while drawing general conclusions on how the revised theory of Protracted Social Conflicts is relevant to the wide-ranging scope of this study. The conclusion also proposes some directions for future research in line with the emerging discourses on the prosecution, by the International Criminal Court (ICC), of four of the six alleged architects of the 2007/08 conflicts.

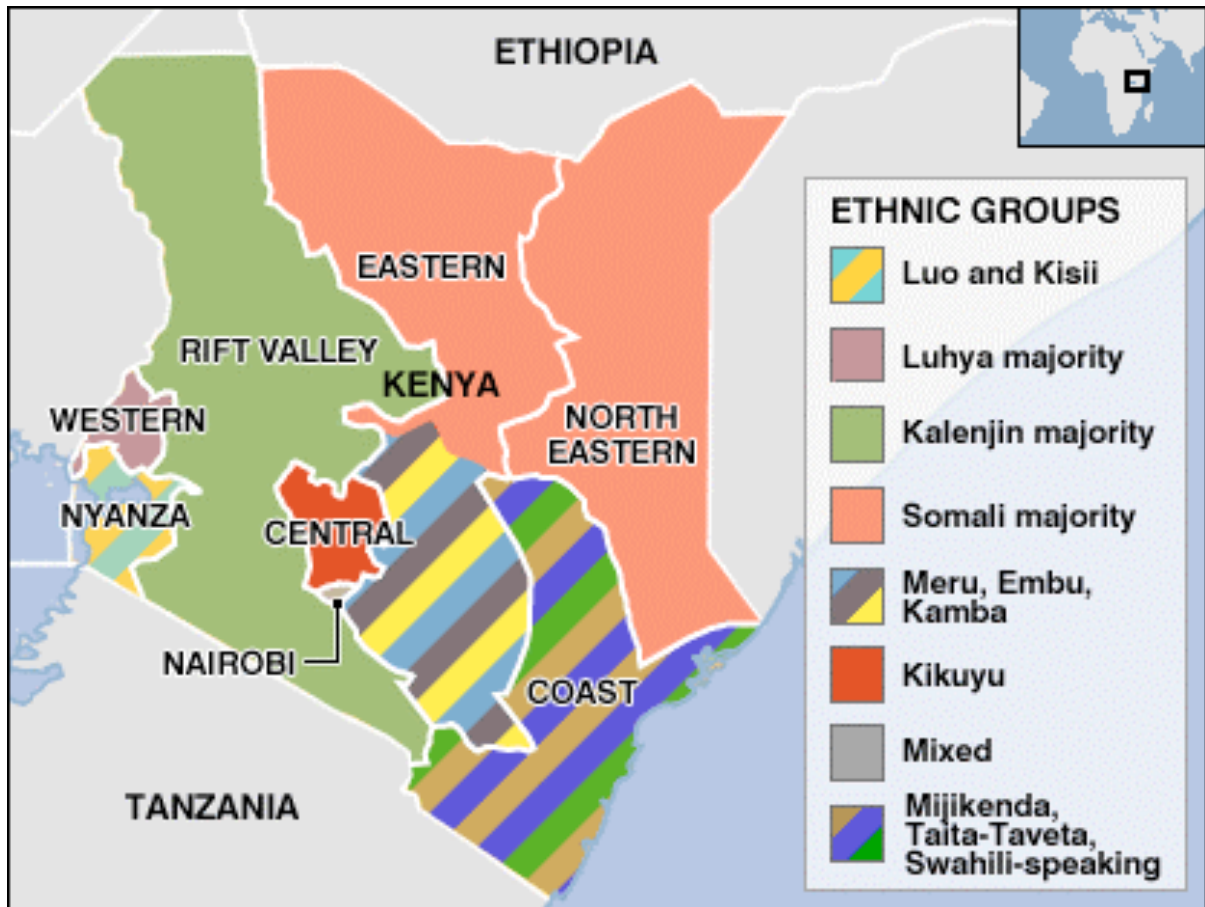
CHAPTER I: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, I take a historical perspective to shed light on some of the processes and conditions that continue to inform intergroup relations while providing, at the same time, the foundation for protracted social conflicts in Kenya. A brief overview of the Kenyan people, with emphasis on the study's target groups (Kikuyu, Luo and Kalenjin), is also provided in this section.

In the second section, I provide a general overview of socially protracted conflicts in Kenya. Here, I focus on the patterns characterizing the past and present conflicts, before contextualizing the 2007/08 conflicts and the kinds of responses that it drew from the state, the civil society and the international community.

The third section focuses on the media industry in Kenya. Here, I provide an overview of the underlying conditions within which the media (vernacular radios in this case) operate. These factors provide the foundation for the underlying discussions developed in this dissertation.

Figure 1. Kenya's administrative boundaries and concentration of ethnic groups⁴



1.1. Social, Political and Economic Conditions

Kenya gained its independence on December 12th, 1963 from the British. The country is located in the Eastern part of Africa and lies astride the equator. It covers a total area of 582,650 square kilometres, including 13,400 square kilometres covered by water. Kenya borders Tanzania to the south, Uganda to the west, Somalia to the east, Ethiopia to the north, and Sudan to the north-west. As Figure 1 illustrates, the country is

⁴ Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7167363.stm> , accessed May 10, 2012.

divided into seven provinces and one area: Rift Valley, Central, Eastern, Coast, North, Western, North Eastern, and Nairobi area. The provinces are further divided into districts and counties⁵.

The major urban settings include Nairobi (country's capital), Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Eldoret. These cities are geographically dispersed within the country and have varying populations depending on workforce demands, business opportunities, educational facilities, etc. English and Swahili remain the official languages despite the rich multiethnic nature of Kenya. Both English and Swahili are used as instructional languages (although the emphasis is often put on English), making them the only means through which ethnic groups can understand one another. These factors influence the social, political and economic conditions relative to intergroup relations.

1.1.1. Social Conditions

Kenya is a multiethnic nation-state with at least 42 ethno-linguistic groups, often regrouped within confined administrative boundaries (see Figure 1). The social co-existence and well-being of these communities therefore hinge on proper access to important resources such as education, land, health, power, etc. The challenge, however, is the increasing demographic pressure leading to fierce competition for the already scarce resources.

According to the 2009 population census⁶, Kenya has about 38.6 million inhabitants, with an estimated growth of 2.8% annually. Out of this number, the Kikuyu

⁵ Since the adoption of the new Constitution in 2010

group represents 22% of the total population (estimated at 6.62 million). The other three major groups include the Luhya (5.35 million), Kalenjin (4.96 million) and Luo totalling 4.04 million. Other groups with significant population include the Kamba (3.89 million), Kenyan Somali (2.38 million), Kisii (2.21 million), Mijikenda (1.96 million), Meru (1.65 million), Turkana (0.99 million), Maasai (0.84 million), Teso (0.33 million) and Embu (0.32 million). The population is quite young, with about 70% under the age of 30.

According to the same census, Rift Valley alone has an estimated 10.1 million inhabitants, shyly followed by the Eastern province with 5.6 million. Nyanza province is estimated at 5.4 million, while Central and Western provinces comprise 4.4 million and 4.3 million respectively. The total population of the Coastal Province is estimated at 3.3 million and Nairobi province accounts for 3.1 million people. North-Eastern province is sparsely populated with 2.3 million people.

The literacy rate, on the other hand, is quite high compared to many African countries. According to the statistics by UNICEF, the adult literacy rate in Kenya between 2005 and 2010 is estimated at 87% (aged 15 and older). The literacy rate of male youth (15-24) is estimated at 92% compared to 94% of the female youth of the same age bracket. Life expectancy at birth improved from 51 (in 2005) to 57 (in 2010)⁷. Although there have been improvements, the same report appears to link the unaging Kenyan population to the increasing infiltration of HIV-AIDS (that accounts for 6.3% of the mortalities in 2009 – age 15-49), poor health facilities and economic stresses induced by weather and poor governance of local resources.

⁶ See Daily Nation and the Standard newspapers, August 31 2010. In Kenya, population census is often taken every ten years.

⁷ See http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/kenya_statistics.html (accessed May 13, 2012).

Globally, the country boasts diverse wildlife reserves that support its tourism sector. In terms of sports, Kenya has produced long-distance marathoners who have dominated the Olympic championships. Kenyans are also well represented in rugby and cricket, with the Kenya National Cricket team reaching semi-finals in the 2003 World Cup series. Many Kenyans also socialize around soccer games, especially when their favorite national teams *Gor Mahia*, *FC Leopards*, and *Harambee Stars*, confront other local or international teams.

1.1.2. Political Conditions

Politically, Kenya is a Republic, which appears to be torn between parliamentary and presidential systems (Gacheru, 2005; Ogot and Okoth, 2000). The president is usually elected for a term of five years. The Constitution sets various conditions for presidential contenders to be declared a winner. For instance, the candidates need to win the majority of the votes, with at least 25% of votes in five of the eight provinces. The president not only acts as the Head of State and of Government, but also as the Commander in Chief of the armed forces, therefore centralizing key powers to the incumbent president (Cottrell and Ghai, 2007; Muigai, 1995). Although the Coalition Government (established after 2007/08 political stalemate) devolved some of the executive powers to the “newly” created premier’s position, the serving president retains control of the key docket within the *state’s machinery*.

Historically, trade unions, religious organizations and *Mau Mau* movements were at the source of political struggles that saw Kenya ascend to independence in 1963 from

the British (Ogot, 1981; Mboya, 1963/1970; Nyinguro, 2005; Wood, 1962; Ross, 1975). As Mboya (1963) notes, these political manifestations were essentially a “triangular struggle.” That is, it comprised the extreme Europeans who fought to maintain their political hegemony within the region; the radical Africans who spread “the doctrine of Africa for the Africans”; and moderate voices *vis-à-vis* the occupation.

The pre-independence politics were marked by a sense of solidarity of the “African voice” to fight a “common enemy,” the occupiers. The challenge was how to structure a workable African government that would account for an ethnically and racially diverse country. As Gacheru (2005) writes, “the Africans found themselves competing with Europeans and Asians who were much better equipped economically, politically, and educationally for the new society [...], [also] the facilities to assist Africans to advance and catch up with Europeans and Asians in the economic life were insufficient” (p.12).

Despite these concerns, the political situation in Kenya had been marked by relative stability within the turbulent sub-Saharan Africa, having known only three presidents between 1963 and 2012. Those were, Jomo Kenyatta (1963-1978), Daniel T. Arap Moi (1978-2002) and Mwai Kibaki (2002-2012) who was re-elected following the controversial 2007 general elections. The next general elections are scheduled for March 2013 when a new fourth president will be elected, as the current Constitution disqualifies the incumbent president from seeking a third term in office.

Although the contentious 2007 general elections remain one of the highly contested presidential elections since independence, Moi’s 24-year regime suppressed oppositional politics and subsequently contained political dissent from transforming into

violence, although the general elections in 1992 and 1997 were somewhat violent. Between 1982 and 1992, Moi transformed Kenya into an authoritarian one *de jure* party state. This followed a foiled coup in 1982.

The growing political uncertainty, especially with the ICC confirming charges against four of the six alleged masterminds of the 2007/08 conflicts, continues to affect the economic growth of the country. Poor governance and graft within the civil service also add to the stagnant economic growth.

1.1.3. Economic Conditions

Agriculture remains the most common economic activity practiced by many people in Kenya. Kenya produces various cash crops such as coffee and tea, which are consumed both locally and internationally. According to historians such as Gacheru (2005) and Ogot (1981), the introduction of cash crops in Kenya can be traced to the Anglo-German Agreement in 1886 that placed Kenya under British rule. This convention introduced capitalist production and *shelter farming* thus replacing household production, previously widespread amongst the African communities. Since then, agriculture has remained the bedrock of Kenya's economy with 80% of the population engaged in agricultural activities (Amisi, 1998; Lonsdale, 2008).

In the past three decades alone, overexploitation of natural resources has reduced forested lands to only 2%, of which an estimated 50 square kilometers are lost annually⁸. The most endangered forests are, among others, Mau Forest and Karura Forest, which the

⁸ See http://www.information.go.ke/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1, accessed May 10, 2012.

late Kenyan Nobel Peace Prize laureate and environmentalist Dr. Wangari Maathai, fought to save from looming real-estate development.

The diverse and rich wildlife, including landscape, also places Kenya among the countries enjoying substantial gains from the tourist industry. For instance, Kenya is “home for the famous Africa “Big Five”’: Lion, Elephant, Rhino, Leopard and Buffalo, as well as “an incredible range of wild habitats, each one with its own unique range of species.”⁹ This makes wildlife and tourism a significant contributor to Kenya’s economic development. However, increasing wildlife poaching for economic purposes continues to threaten Kenya’s vibrant tourism sector. For instance rhinos, elephants and leopards have been particularly endangered.

Regarding the exploitation of natural resources, Kenya has insignificant deposits of gold, garnets, soda rubies, ash, salt, fluor spar, and limestone, which do not form pillars of its economy. In March 2012, however, oil deposits were discovered in Turkana County and the Northern Rift Valley regions, which may add to Kenya’s probable economic activities.¹⁰ Although mineral mining also drives the country’s economic developments, it constitutes a very minor portion of exports, and thus is not an important source of capital.

Kenya’s economy has often been affected by fluctuating weather conditions, especially in the northern and north-eastern parts of the country, which are prone to long-term droughts. Kenya’s stagnant economic growth has always been associated with poor leadership. Indeed, it recorded its worst economic growth in the 1990s due to poor leadership accompanied by weak economic reforms. In 1997 for instance, Kenya failed to

⁹ See the Kenya Ministry of Tourism’s portal, http://www.tourism.go.ke/ministry.nsf/pages/kenyas_wildlife accessed May 12, 2012.

¹⁰ See the Daily Nation and Standard Newspapers, March 26 2012.

meet governance standards imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which led to its funding suspension for a period of three years.

Following Kibaki's first term in office (2002-2007), ambitious economic reforms were established that led to a 5% economic growth. In 2007, the government disclosed *Vision 2030*, an ambitious economic program intended to reposition Kenya's economy among the fastest growing economies. However, the distressing economic situation partly caused by the aftermath of the 2007/08 conflicts and demographic pressures continue to challenge these ambitious economic objectives.

1.2. Kenyan People and the Study's Target Groups

Kenya has at least 42 distinct ethno-linguistic groups. According to historians (Gacheru, 2005; Ogot, 1981; Ng'ang'a, 2008), these groups fall under three major family groups, the Bantu, Nilotes and Cushitic, the first of which are further sub-divided into Western Bantus; Central Bantus and Eastern Bantu. The Western Bantus include the Luyia, Gusii, Suba and Kuria; the Central Bantus are mainly the Kikuyu, Meru, Kamba and Meru.

The Nilotic group is believed to have immigrated into Kenya from areas around the Nile River in Sudan, hence Nilotic (Ng'ang'a, 2008). The Nilotes are sub-divided into three sub-groups: the Western Nilotic (comprising the Luo); Eastern Nilotic (the Teso, Turkana, Maasai, Njemps and Samburu) and the Southern Nilotic (the Oromo-Kalenjin groups – Pokot, Marakwet, Elgeyo, Tugen, Kipsigis and Terik).

The Cushitic group is also divided into two major sub-groups: the Western Cushitic (the Shangala, Burji, Oromo, Somali, El Molo and Rendile) and the Southern Cushitic (the Dahalo). According to Ogot (1981), continued immigration and interaction between the groups has led to a blurred demarcation of intergroup boundaries. Ogot writes,

The Western Kenya societies have evolved as a result of a long and a complex process of interaction between the Cushitic, the Kalenjin, the Bantu Luyia, Gussi and Kuria, and the Nilotic Luo, stretching back to the period before 1000 A. D. [...] In the Rift Valley, we find that the Southern Cushitic who expanded into the area from Southern Ethiopia were assimilated by the Kalenjin and Central Bantu-speakers. [...] When we move to Central Kenya, we find that the pre-colonial history is dominated by the stories of the Kikuyu, Meru and Kamba. [...] In the coastal region, the histories of the Mijikenda and the Swahili predominate. The former comprise the Rabai, Duruma, Kauma, Chonyi, Jibana, Kambe, Digo, Ribe and Gariama (Ogot, 1981: 4-5).

The underlying issues evoked in this assumption are twofold. On the one hand, it suggests that intergroup relations in Kenya continue to experience a shake-up, with various groups losing or gaining a new sense of “their” belongingness. On the other hand, it highlights the centrality of the administrative boundaries with respect to territorial affiliations (see Figure 1). Resettlement schemes are thus a source of vicious ethno-territorial stress.

In this study, only three groups were targeted: the Kikuyu, Luo and Kalenjin. Historically, these groups have had a very turbulent relationship even before Kenya’s independence in 1963. Many scholars link this thorny relationship to power and political struggles (Ogot, 1981; Langley, 1979; Gacheru, 2005; Ross, 1975; Odhiambo and Wanyande, 1989; Middleton and Kershaw, 1965; Mboya, 1963; Wood, 1962). Furthermore, the 2007/08 conflicts were particularly violent in the regions where these communities form the majority group.

1.2.1. *The Kikuyu*

The Kikuyu form the largest group in Kenya, representing about 22% of the total population according to the 2009 census. They also represent the largest group among the Bantu-speaking groups in the country. The Kikuyu speak *Gikuyu*, and live, almost exclusively, in Central province although a number of them resettled in parts of the Rift Valley province during the colonial occupation that saw the eviction of some groups to create room for Settlers in the so-called “White Highlands” (Ogot, 1981; Middleton and Kershaw, 1965) and around Nairobi.

In terms of origin and identity, Middleton and Kershaw (1965:15) believe that the Kikuyu share a belief that they descended from “Gikuyu and his wife Mumbi (the creator) who lived at *Mukuruwe wa Gathanga*, near the present Fort Hall. Mumbi gave birth to nine daughters, from whom have descended the nine Kikuyu clans.” Some historians situate the genesis of the Kikuyu modern developments with the arrival of the missionaries, notably Missionary Krapf who, supposedly, introduced the community to education in the earlier years of colonial occupation (Ogot, 1981; Middleton and Kershaw, 1965). Not only did this early exposure prepare the Kikuyu for political and economic readjustments across time, it facilitated their education compared to that of other communities (Ross; 1975; Odhiambo and Wanyande, 1989).

For instance, while some of them were evicted from their “highlands” to provide room for the European farming settlers, many Kikuyu managed to get jobs at the farms in the southern “white reserves”, maintaining contact with Western culture and thinking. This may be why a number of Kikuyu led various political campaigns, such as the Kikuyu Central Association created in the 1920 (Gacheru, 2005) and *Mau Mau*

movements (Nyinguro, 2005) whose efforts were directed towards Kenya's political independence from the British occupation¹¹.

Since independence, the Kikuyu have been one of the few groups disproportionately represented in the government. Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya and Mwai Kibaki, the third president, are both from the Kikuyu community. Questions continue to be raised as to why other groups cannot take over Kenya's leadership, especially the "overall office." This is one of the concerns raised by other groups such as the Luo, one of the major groups in Kenya.

1.2.2. The Luo

The Luo descended from the Nilotic family group, and are believed to have migrated to Kenya from northern Uganda, south-western Ethiopia and southern Sudan (Ogot, 1981). They inhabit western Kenya, mainly Nyanza province around Lake Victoria. Most of the Luo are fishermen, small-scale farmers or skilled labours in Africa. The Luo speak *dholuo*, and are the fourth largest ethnic group in Kenya after the Kikuyu, the Luhya and the Kalenjins respectively according to the 2009 population census.

Just like the Kikuyu, the Luo have been very present in Kenya's politics since the colonial occupation. In fact, Kenya's first vice president, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, the father to the current Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, was a Luo. Since the colonial period, the Luo have often been associated with opposition politics (Gacheru, 2005; Muigai, 1995; Odhiambo, 2002). For instance, following disagreements between the late Jomo

¹¹ *Mau Mau* was a pro-autonomy movement led by some Kenyan nationalists, mostly the Kikuyu, which took place in the 1950s to press for Kenya's political independence from the British rule.

Kenyatta (the first president) and his late vice president (Oginga Odinga), the latter created the first opposition party in the “independent” Kenya. Also, the foiled coup in 1982 (during Moi’s regime) was linked to dissents from the Kikuyu and Luo groups.

The 2007/08 conflicts erupted following Raila Odinga’s claims of “stolen victory” and fraudulent electoral process that placed him second after Kibaki (Jamal and Deane, 2008; Kalyango, 2008; Lynch, 2008). The strong oppositional politics that appear to be led by the Luo group, especially the Odinga’s dynasty, continue to raise questions in terms of intergroup relations in Kenya, especially in the realms of power. For instance, the 24-year rule by Daniel Moi’s (a Kalenjin) government (1978-2002) consolidated the belief that the Kalenjin group had their share in government, and that it is time for other communities to take over the leadership (Lynch, 2008).

1.2.3. The Kalenjin

The Kalenjin make up about 13% of Kenya’s total population, and is the third largest ethnic group according to the population census taken in 2009. The group comprises a number of communities living in the present Rift Valley province, mainly the Nandi, Pokot, Terik, Tugen, Keiyo, Marakwet, Kipsigis and Saboat (Lynch, 2008). They are believed to have descended from the “Highland” Nilotic family group that entered Kenya through the highlands of Ethiopia (Langley, 1979). Kalenjin groups are also found in eastern Uganda, Sudan and Tanzania (Ogot, 1981).

For many years, the Kalenjin have earned the country’s pride at international athletics. They are hailed as the “kings and queens of marathon.” Many of the Kalenjin

are pastoralists. As such, they still regard land and cattle as forms of wealth (Langley, 1979). The Kalenjin speak several languages that are closely related.

The Kalenjin became very present in Kenya's politics in the course of Moi's 24-year regime (1978-2002). Since Moi's retirement in 2002, the Kalenjin are still very active in politics, especially in 2007 that saw William Ruto, a junior Kalenjin who managed to rally the majority of the Kalenjin community behind Odinga's *Orange Democratic Movement (ODM)* against Moi's appeals that sought for Kibaki's re-election in 2007. These beliefs and/or "established truths" have some resonance with the ways in which inter-group relations are perceived in various communities. The next section looks at some of the past and present conflict patterns in Kenya.

1.3. Understanding Socially Protracted Conflicts in Kenya

In this section, I provide a brief overview of past and present conflicts in Kenya before looking at the 2007/08 conflicts, which form the foundation of this dissertation. I will also embody the historical perspective to highlight the patterns of these conflicts as well as the underlying discourses that have been used to characterize such disputes.

1.3.1. Patterns of Past and Present Conflicts

The patterns of past conflicts in Kenya point out multiple causal factors. These can be grouped under three broad categories: land-related conflicts, cross-border conflicts and ethno-political conflicts.

1.3.1.1. Land-related Conflicts

Land-related conflicts are common among pastoralist groups, who scramble for the scarce grazing fields. As noted earlier, the well-being of many Kenyans is rooted in agricultural activities. Access to land is therefore equated with the access to basic needs. The problem, however, is that the northern and north-eastern parts of the country, often inhabited by pastoralist communities, are prone to long periods of drought forcing many communities to migrate in search of “greener pastures” (Leo, 1984; Lonsdale, 2008).

With the scarcity of lands, increased deforestation, and uncertain weather conditions, these movements have become one source of intergroup conflicts in Kenya. This is because many Kenyans identify themselves with the territory to which they “symbolically” belong. In this view, land tenure has more to offer than just its economic value. Indeed, the competing claims on land, negotiated in terms of identity and welfare, have made it a highly sensitive issue, often politicized to generate intergroup tensions (Amisi, 1998; Oyugi, 2000; Rutten and Owuor, 2009).

Specifically, on land-induced conflicts, historians such as Ogot (1981), Gacheru (2005) and others have noted that the problems of land tenure have roots in the 1904 convention by the British occupation that saw the alienation of Maasai communities from their fertile lands. As a result, the Maasai community were stripped of their lands and relocated to dry lands in parts of Rift Valley (Amisi, 1998; Leo, 1984).

As other land schemes were developed under colonial occupation, groups such as the Kikuyu, Kalenjin and Kamba communities were gradually dispossessed of their lands to allow more room for “White Settlement” on the fertile “Highlands” (Ogot, 1981; Gacheru, 2005; Amisi, 1998; Oyugi, 2000). Given the forceful relocation of these groups in territories they did not necessarily identify with, mutual coexistence between the “relocated” and the “host” groups have remained a thorny issue after independence.

Kenyatta’s (first president) land policies were regarded as benefiting his Kikuyu community at the expense of other groups that were also affected by colonial land policies. This included the sale of expatriate farms that were previously owned by the White Settlers, the “Million-Acre Scheme”. Similarly, Moi’s (second president) government did little to address land-related concerns raised during Kenyatta’s regime. This partly explains why the stability of the Rift Valley province, where many of the resettlement schemes took place, is particularly volatile.

1.3.1.2. Cross-border Conflicts

Cross-border conflicts have evolved to become one of Kenya’s major stability threats. In this category, we can include disputes between the Kenyan government and other neighbouring states as well as the conflicts that are sparked by terrorist activities. Indeed, the growing insecurity along Kenyan borders, especially the Kenya-Somalia frontier, continues to question Kenya’s security. Recent attacks on Kenyan soil by militant groups believed to be linked to Somalia’s Al-Shabaab forced the Kenyan government to take military action against their uprising.

In essence, intermittent conflicts (and Al-Shaabab's insurgency) along Kenya-Somalia borders, also known as the Horn of Africa, is often traced to the creation of the New Republic of Somalia in 1960s after the integration of British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland (Mandani 1996; Oyugi, 2000), a factor that may have "Balkanized" the Somalis into separate entities, mainly in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia. With a dysfunctional government in place, Somalia has become a quasi-lawless state that has not only served to create insecurity off the Somali Coast, but also within the East African Community (EAC) by engaging in activities such as weapon smuggling.¹²

Attacks on the Kenya's Turkana community by the alleged Ethiopia's Merille group are generating tensions along the Kenya-Ethiopia border. Disputes between the Kenyan and Ugandan governments over Migingo Island, on Lake Victoria, are also turning into a diplomatic deadlock between the two nations. Moreover, the growing concerns about terrorist activities from neighbouring Sudan, regarded as a sponsor of terrorism and the uprising of Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), add to the dilemmas of peace in East Africa.

Although the concerns about Kenya becoming a victim of terrorist activities seem to have risen since the 2007/08 conflicts, the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, served as indicators of the worrying security within the EAC. The origins of these attacks were traced by the Clinton administration to Afghanistan and Sudan, Kenya's neighbour to the north that has been in civil war until the 2005 peace deal that saw the creation of South Sudan in 2011. Despite these changes,

¹² See Shiundu, A. (2011). "Smuggled Grenades Kenya's New Security Threat." Daily Nation, March 20 2011.

the Kenya-Sudan border is still worrisome, as Sudan is still considered one of the states sponsoring terrorism¹³.

¹³ US Department of State. 2011. "States Sponsors of Terrorism." Accessed October 28, 2011 <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/c14151.htm>

1.3.1.3. Ethno-political Conflicts

Ethno-political conflicts are characterized by the shifting perceptions of identity and sense of belongingness, often reinforced during political processes such as general elections. This may explain why electoral processes are regarded as a competition between ethnic groups, rather than issue-based competition. Apart from struggles for freedom that characterized the pre-independence era, ethno-political unrests are often situated with the establishment of the *Majimbo Constitution* following the elections in 1963.

The provisions in the 1963 *Majimbo Constitution* were meant to protect minority groups that formed the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) (mainly the Kalenjin, led by Daniel Moi; the Luhya, led by Masinde Muliro; and the Coastal people, led by Ronald Ngala) against dominance by the then major ethnic groups (the Kikuyu and Luo)¹⁴. The major groups formed the Kenya African National Union (KANU), the key political party that led Kenyans to independence. At independence, Jomo Kenyatta (a Kikuyu) became the president and Oginga Odinga (a Luo) became the vice president.

In 1966, Odinga quit the government following disagreement with Kenyatta and formed an opposition party (Kenya People's Union – KPU) attracting other politicians. Further cracks developed within the government and in 1969, a key political figure, Tom Mboya (a Luo), was murdered, plunging the country into a civil turmoil. Five years later, another prominent politician, J.M. Kariuki (a Kikuyu) was also murdered. These deaths were linked to key members of Kenyatta's government.

¹⁴ For detailed information, see the report published on April 2008 by the European Union's *Election Observation Mission* (EOM) in Kenya. Accessed May 11, 2012. www.eueomkenya.org.

The death of Kenyatta in 1978 and ascension to power by Daniel Moi (a Kalenjin) changed the political dynamics, although mysterious deaths of key outstanding politicians continued. That is, Moi shifted power from the Kikuyu that formed major part of the Kenyatta's government to his Kalenjin community. The Kalenjin now held major ministerial positions such as national security, finance, and local government. Moi's regime particularly became authoritarian after a foiled coup in 1982, and by extension, transformed Kenya into a *de jure* one-party state until 1992, when multiparty elections were held again.

Equally, the killings of prominent politicians and witnesses continued. For instance, Dr. Robert Ouko (a Luo) who held the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 1990s was murdered, adding to intergroup tensions that remained latent, although there were instances when they turned violent (i.e. during the 1992 and 1997 general elections that gave Moi more terms in office). Most of the violence was witnessed in the Rift Valley province (where Moi's Kalenjin community remains the majority group) and the bordering territories. The majority of these conflicts (or "ethnic clashes" as was commonly referred to) were mainly due to the restoration of multiparty politics and the determination of the Moi's regime to remain in power despite the new challenges that multiparty politics brought to bear.

In Moi's view, multiparty politics was not suitable for Kenya given its multiethnic nature. Moi even warned on numerous occasions that Kenya was heading towards protracted ethnic conflicts with multiparty politics. Since then, ethno-political conflicts have become widespread, particularly in general elections with the exception of the 2002

general elections where Moi was constitutionally barred from seeking another term due to the limits of two terms in office.

This brief overview of past and present conflicts indicates that Kenya had enjoyed relative stability in an environment characterized by latent intergroup tensions. This stability was reinforced by authoritarian structures that discouraged political dissent, and by extension, social unrest. A different scenario, however, characterized the 2007/08 conflicts. The next section looks at some of the specifics of the 2007/08 conflicts.

1.4. The 2007/08 Conflicts

The complex patterns of the 2007/08 conflicts are a mix of conflict contours outlined above, though induced by a political process – the 2007 general elections. In order to understand the undercurrents of this particular conflict, it is important to journey back to the 2002 general elections, the most peaceful election Kenya has seen since independence.

1.4.1. Context of the 2007/08 Conflicts

The Kenyan general election held December 27th, 2007 was the ninth election since Kenya's independence in 1963. Previously, the country had known only two presidents: Jomo Kenyatta (1963-1978) and Daniel Arap Moi (1978-2002). In the general elections held in 2002, Moi was forced to retire following Constitutional amendments that barred him from seeking further terms. Before this historic election, Raila Odinga (a

Luo) defected from the then-ruling party KANU (led by Moi) to support Kibaki's coalition party, NARC. It is believed that his defection came as a result of Moi choosing Uhuru Kenyatta (son of the first president) as a favourite successor in the 2002 elections, a move strongly opposed by the then-opposition (Lynch, 2008).

In the 2002 elections, Mwai Kibaki (a Kikuyu) emerged victorious, with a whopping 61.7% of the total votes, to become the third president of the Republic of Kenya under the NARC party. This was a political breakthrough for Kenya after Moi's 24-year rule, most of which was characterized by the politics of intimidation, dictatorship, and economic distress. NARC was essentially embraced on grounds of major political reforms that were to create the position of Prime Minister to streamline the excessive executive powers initially held by the incumbent president.

Once Kibaki became the president, he disregarded the changes he had promised; yet these were the changes that saw him elected as president. The alleged betrayal developed major cracks within the coalition government, with his ally now turned foe, Raila Odinga, quitting the government and spearheaded the "no campaign", which voted down the 2005 constitutional referendum with about 58% votes. In the process, Odinga and his allies created an opposition party, the *Orange Democratic Movement* (ODM), ahead of the 2007 general elections. During the 2007 elections, Kibaki sought re-election under the *Party of National Unity* (PNU) while his major opponent, Raila Odinga, became the flag-bearer of the *Orange Democratic Movement* (ODM).

The highly contested results in January 2008 gave Kibaki a second term, engulfing Kenya in violent conflicts not witnessed since independence (Somerville 2009; Jamal and Deane 2008). The conflicts claimed over a thousand lives and displaced

hundreds of thousands, forcing the international community to intervene through former UN's Secretary General Kofi Annan to end mass killings and ascertain the way forward (through a power-sharing deal) for a country that was now perceived incapable of solving its internal matters (Lynch 2008; Anderson and Lochery 2008).

1.4.2. Responses to the Conflict

The 2007/08 conflicts were characterized by a mixed response from the state, the civil society and the international community. The state's response was characterized by a heavy deployment of the police force in areas it believed "posed national security threat." The alleged ODM strongholds where Kibaki's reelection was not recognized (at least during the conflicts) seemed to be the main targets. This included parts of Nyanza (e.g. Kisumu and Migori) and Rift Valley provinces (e.g. Eldoret, Nakuru, and Naivasha).

Equally, the state imposed a temporary ban to all "live-media." The interpretation of this action was twofold. On the one hand, the state's spokesperson, then Dr. Mutua, said the initiative was meant to stop the diffusion of "images of fear" and to reinstate "public order". On the other hand, the local media groups alleged that the ban was a move by the government to mask the killings perpetrated by the police force, especially after the government supposedly authorized the police force to "shoot to kill." This curfew was inconsequential; in fact, the state's orders were now aligned with those of a particular group leading the spillover of attacks and counter-attacks in various parts of the country.

The civil society's response to the conflicts was to step up the pressure for the "big two" (Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga) to put their differences aside and call for the cessation of conflict as the country was gradually transforming into conflict-ridden refugee camps. Leaders from church organizations, human rights groups, community elders, student unions and media groups spearheaded the appeals by the civil society. At the centre of civilian response, was the involvement of humanitarian organizations such as the Red Cross, ACTIONAID, USAID, National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), Care International, and Oxfam. The deteriorating health and sanitation of the displaced populations were at the centre of their concern.

The significance of these appeals is that they created a sense of awareness inside and outside the Kenyan frontiers, most of which condemned the killings and displacement of persons (IDPs). Given the circulation of these images to the outside world, the situation in Kenya came as a surprise to many countries that had, for a very long time, held a very positive image of a country with relative stability within the turbulent sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed, Kenya had been one of the hubs through which the international community extends its missions to parts of Africa, especially within the conflict zones of the Great Lakes Region.

The international community's response to the conflict was also varied. First, the heads of state from various countries did not recognize the re-election of Kibaki. This is because many independent electoral observers (local and international) declared the 2007 electoral process as fraudulent. As a result, the Kenyan government was called upon to accept the "will of the people" and to either recount the votes or conduct fresh elections.

In order to contain the crisis, the international community sent the former United Nation's Secretary General, Kofi Annan, to help find a common ground for the "big two." Annan's initiative led to a power-sharing deal that saw the creation of a coalition government run by both Kibaki (as President) and Odinga (as Prime Minister). The challenge, however, is that Kenya had never had such structures where both the President and Prime Minister shared executive powers.

Equally, key donors such as the United States and the European Union threatened to withdraw or limit funding until the government took substantial measures to oversee political reforms, particularly the thorny Constitutional amendments. Parallel to the "Western" supposed sanctions, the Chinese government, which is growingly becoming a key donor to the African countries, vowed to continue its funding on the grounds that it does not meddle in the affairs of a sovereign state.

This brief background to the 2007/08 conflicts poses a key question: how did Kenyans make sense of this particular dispute (and its consequences) with respect to the multiethnic nature characterizing its people? One way of tackling the question is by looking at the accommodation of intergroup differences in the media. This is because people partly make sense of events in relation to the information they receive through the media. As several studies have demonstrated, news frames disseminate persuasive angles of news interpretation as well as the reasons as to why these frames are important (Tewksbury and Scheufele 2009; Matthes 2012; D'Angelo 2011).

In the next section, I provide an overview of the media industry in Kenya. This sets the foundation for the underlying issues discussed in this dissertation, that is, the accommodation of intergroup relations by various vernacular radios. The rationale is that

media narratives are increasingly becoming key elements of polarization or depolarization of intergroup relations in Kenya. The negotiation of these relations by vernacular radios, therefore, cannot be examined in isolation from the broad processes influencing the media environment in Kenya.

1.5. The Media Industry in Kenya: An Overview

The media sector is one of the fastest growing economies in Kenya, especially since the late 1990s that saw the explosion of FM commercial radios and vernacular radios. In this section, I briefly look at the key media groups in Kenya before and after the 1990s. I then provide an overview of media concentration before looking at some of the regulatory organs that oversee media operations in Kenya.

1.5.1. Key Media Groups

Although the history of the press in Africa is often situated with the coming of European missionaries, immigrants and colonialists (Ochilo, 1993), only a few broadcast and presses existed in Kenya before independence in 1963. The key dailies in this regard were the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard newspapers*, both privately-owned (Ochilo, 1993; Obonyo, 2003; Faringer, 1991). The *Standard newspaper* first published in November 1902 and formerly known as the *East African Standard*, is the oldest press in Kenya (Onyebadi, 2008; Obonyo, 2003; Wanyande, 1995). The Standard Group Limited,

a Kenyan news corporation that now runs radio and television networks, owns the Standard newspaper.

Arguably, the *Daily Nation* newspaper is the leading newspaper in Kenya (Onyebadi, 2008; Wanyande, 1995). It was established in 1960 by British newspapermen Michael Curtis and Charles Hayes, but sold a few years later to the Aga Khan, then a student at Harvard. The newspaper is currently owned by Nation Media Group, which controls most of the media market in Kenya and in the East African region (Onyebadi, 2008; Obonyo, 2003).

In terms of broadcast media, *Kenya Broadcasting Corporation* (KBC), founded in 1928, as an English radio station, was the only broadcast established under the then-British occupation (Faringer, 1991). Before independence, KBC only targeted white audiences who followed news from their countries of origin. Given the nationwide outreach of KBC and its subsidiaries, it still has significant influence over the public in general, especially in the rural areas despite the proliferation of private FM radio stations in the late 1990s.

Before independence, most of the existing media operated in the English language. The press that aired African views was often sanctioned because it criticized colonial occupation (Ochilo, 1993; Mboya, 1963; Gacheru, 2005; Muigai, 1995; Abuoga and Mutere, 1988; Cottrell and Ghai, 2007). As Ochilo, (1993) notes, “after the second world war in particular, many aspiring political leaders used the indigenous press to build and cement political organizations. These were essentially agitational which made them crucial in the realization of independence goals” (p. 24).

Following Kenya's independence in 1963, the media operation was characterized by a pattern similar to what the one witnessed before independence. That is, "governments had full control of the electronic media run under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting headed by a Minister appointed by the President" (Ochilo, 1993). Most of the legislative framework and national policies established during colonial occupation were adopted by their "African" (Kenyan) successors. Unlike in the colonial period, however, most programs targeted the African population and were produced in the Swahili language (Abuoga and Mutere, 1988).

It was during Moi's government (1978-2002) that the media industry stalled. The then-ruling party, *Kenya African National Union* (KANU), which also led Kenya to independence, assumed greater influence in setting national policies. Under Moi's leadership, KANU considered itself, at one time, superior to parliament (Obonyo, 2003). This followed Moi's orders in 1982 (following an attempted coup) that transformed Kenya from a *de facto* one-party state to a *de jure* one-party state until 1992 when multiparty politics were restored due to mounting pressure from the local organizations as well as the international community (Ochilo, 1993; Wanyande, 1995; Muigai, 1995; Cottrell and Ghai, 2007).

In this period, the environment became very restrictive for both the media and grass-roots politics. The state-owned KBC, and its subsidiaries, not only became the government's *mouth-piece* (Obonyo, 2003; Muigai, 1995), but also remained the primary broadcast media in Kenya. This is because many private broadcasters were subjected to restrictive airwaves (Ochilo, 1993; Wanyande, 1995; Ochieng, 1992). Most of the KBC programs were (even to date) offered in English and Swahili as well as in major ethnic

languages. This made KBC the prime source of information available to many citizens until the late 1990s. In 1983, KANU also created a daily newspaper, *Kenya Times*, a daily whose editorial was also influenced by the state (Odhiambo, 2002; Cottrell and Ghai, 2007; Ochieng, 1992).

Although the privately owned media groups, *The Standard* and *Nation Media*, were somewhat autonomous, their editorial independence remained questionable. For instance, during Jomo Kenyatta's government (1963-1978), it is believed that his son-in-law, Udi Gechaga, became Standard Group's chairman. When Moi took over leadership in 1978 following Kenyatta's death, one of his close allies, Mark Too, also took over Standard Group's chairmanship. This "hidden" relationship between the state and media groups continued to influence editorial independence of the supposedly independent media outlets (Odhiambo-Mbai, 2003; Ochieng, 1992).

However, the media landscape has changed considerably since the late 1990s, following the restoration of multiparty politics in 1992. This wave of change saw the explosion of private broadcasts, mainly FM radio stations such as *Capital FM*, the first privately owned radio founded in 1996. Most of these broadcasts have a strong commercial focus.

1.5.2. The Media Environment Since the Late 1990s

The restoration of multiparty democracy in 1992 represents the turning point of the media industry in Kenya. This period saw the proliferation of FM radio stations ranging from vernacular to general-public stations broadcasting in Swahili and English.

Independent newspapers and private TV stations also saw their numbers increase, going hand-in-hand with ‘new’ political dynamics. Equally, the major media groups embraced Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to expand their reach both locally and internationally. Meanwhile, the state kept loosening its monopoly control over media outlets (Odhiambo, 2002; Ochieng, 1992).

During this period, the privately owned *Nation Media* and the *Standard Group* not only expanded their sectors to incorporate radio and TV stations, but also ventured into online media, thereby diversifying the spectrum of their readers worldwide. A former opposition leader, the late Kenneth Matiba, also founded *People Daily* in 1992, another influential independent newspaper during this period. Probably the most noticeable change in this period was the growth of vernacular radios, often traced to the establishment of the first Kikuyu language radio, Kameme FM (Makinen and Kuria, 2008; Wanyande, 1995; Odero and Kamweru, 2000; Kalyango, 2008).

Launched in 1999, Kameme FM was established to reach out to Kenya’s largest ethnic group. Since then, there has been a steady growth of vernacular radios in Kenya. Given their increasing popularity, their programs have been expanded to target both the rural and urban dwellers. Others have linked the growth of vernacular radios to platforms through which “indigenous cultures”, threatened by the homogenizing Culture Industry, are sustained (Gathigi, 2009; Lynch, 2008). It is worth noting that vernacular broadcasting existed before (as subsidiary outlets) through the state-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) that rebroadcast in vernacular languages spoken by Kenya’s major ethnic groups such as Kalenjin, Luo, Kikuyu, Luhya and Kamba. KBC only allocated few hours a week for these rebroadcasts.

Although these radios often serve specific ethno-linguistic groups, their ownership is not confined to territorial or group identity. The best example is Royal Media Services, a private media company established in 1999 by an affluent businessman, Samuel Macharia, who now owns a TV station (Citizen TV) and several FM radio stations such Radio Citizen and Hot 96 FM (broadcasting in English and Swahili), and a number of radios broadcasting in vernacular languages: Inooro FM (Kikuyu), Wimwaro FM (Embu), Mulembe FM (Luhya), Muuga FM (Meru), Musyi FM (Kamba), Bahari FM (Mijikenda), Changei FM (Kalenjin), Egesa FM (Kisii), and Ramogi FM (Luo).

The media in the late 1990s became very critical of the government and exposed major financial scams within the civil service (Moggi and Tessier, 2001; Dixon, 1997). This has often put government on the defensive, sometime trying to control media content. As Ngugi (2008) notes, in 2006 “unknown” men dressed in police uniforms stormed the Standard Group’s offices, vandalized newspaper print equipment, burned newspaper copies that were to be circulated the following day, and made away with newsroom computers. Ngugi also asserts that the Kenya Television Network (KTN), owned by the same media group, was also switched off the same night. It is believed that attacks came amid the allegations that Standard Group was about to publish an issue that criticized the president.

The increasing commercial focus of many of the broadcasts continues to question media content *per se*. This is because of the major advertising companies that continue to “take control” of media contents in Kenya. On this note, Obonyo (2009) claims “advertisers have spread an elaborate network to monitor content. They spread their

money only in media houses that do their bidding and carry content that they agree with. Stories are killed because the big spenders do not like them although they are newsworthy.¹⁵

1.5.3. Media Concentration

In terms of media market concentration, Nation Media Group (NMG) and The Standard Group (SG) control at least 70% of the print media market, with NMG having the largest share estimated at 55% (Onyebadi, 2008). This is because NMG owns various media outlets. Among others, the group owns *The East African* (regional), *The Monitor* (Uganda's daily), *Mwananchi*, *The Citizen* (Tanzania's dailies), *Let's Cook*, *Business Daily*, *The Weekly Advertiser*, *Daily Metro*, *Taifa Leo* (in Swahili).

NMG also owns *Nation TV*, *Nation FM* and *Easy FM*, among others. Given its wide network and solid financial base, the group relies mostly on commercials and private programming for funding. Although the company's shares are publicly traded at the Nairobi Stock Exchange, the annual report published in 2006 by Nation Media Group indicates that the *Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development* (AKFED) remains the key shareholder of NMG, with an estimated 45% of the total shared interests¹⁶. The report shows most of the NMG stakeholders as corporate entities, especially the local banks and insurance companies. In 2006, the company's turnover was estimated at about 6.3 billion Kenyan Shillings, roughly US \$97.2 million (Onyebadi, 2008).

¹⁵ See <http://ebookbrowse.com/levi-obonyo-press-freedom-pdf-d74789212>, accessed May 10, 2012.

¹⁶ Nation Media Annual Report (2006) accessed February 23, 2008.

<http://www.nationmedia.com/dailynation/downloads/NMG-Annual-Report-2006.pdf>

The Standard Group (SG), considered as NMG's main competitor covers only about 25% of the media market. The rest of the print market (13%) is covered by other media groups. The Standard Group owns the *Kenya Television Network* (KTN), the first private television to acquire a broadcast license in 1989. According to Onyebadi (2008), the Standard Group turnover in 2006 was about 2.96 billion Kenyan Shillings, roughly US \$45.7 million. The company's shares are also traded at the Nairobi Stock Exchange. About 69.2% of these shares are owned by the group itself, under S.N.G Holdings Limited (Onyebadi, 2008).

In terms of electronic broadcast, Royal Media Services seem to have the largest electronic media outlets. Royal Media owns about 62 FM frequencies, but only 42 are in use¹⁷. This vibrant growth has positioned Royal Media as one of the key media players in Kenya.

1.5.4. Media Regulations

Three main regulatory bodies oversee media operations in Kenya: the Ministry of Information and Communication, the Communication Commission of Kenya and the Media Council of Kenya. Guided by the legal frameworks amended in the 2010 Constitution, the regulatory bodies also provide provisions within which commercial FM and vernacular radios operate. There are also numerous Acts that guide media functioning in Kenya (see Mbeke, 2008 for detailed information).

In the 2010 Constitution, the clauses relative to freedom of speech and media operation are found in articles 33 through 35. Article 33:1 grants every person the right to

¹⁷ See <http://infoasaid.org/guide/kenya/media-groups>, accessed May 10, 2012.

freedom of expression. This is extended to seeking or receiving information from diverse sources. However, this freedom would be revoked if the said freedom perpetuates “propaganda for war; incitement to violence; hate speech; or advocacy of hatred that constitutes ethnic incitement, vilification of others or incitement to cause harm; or is based on any ground of discrimination, including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth” (33:2).

Article 34 is concerned with the autonomy of the media industry, whether print, broadcast or new media, although this is also limited when it comes to propaganda or messages of incitement. The article also mandates the Parliament to oversee the establishment of regulatory bodies without government or political influence. Article 35 encourages citizens to access the information held by the state (or other person) so long as it is in line with the protection or exercise of fundamental freedom. Before the changes brought by the 2010 Constitution, freedom of speech as well as media freedom were circumvented in section 79, *Protection of Freedom of Expression*, of the old Constitution, which held that,

Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression, that is to say, freedom to hold opinions without interference, freedom to receive ideas and information without interference, freedom to communicate ideas without interference (whether the communication be to the public generally or to any person or class of persons) and freedom from interference with his correspondence (The Constitution of Kenya, 2001).

However, the said freedom was likely to be revoked if (79a) it threatens the

Interests of defense, public safety, public order, public morality or public health” and (79b) for the “purpose of protecting the reputations, rights and freedoms of other persons or private lives of persons concerned in legal proceedings, preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, maintaining the authority and independence of the courts or regulating the technical

administration or the technical operation of telephony, telegraphy, posts, wireless broadcasting or television (Constitution of Kenya, 2001).

Essentially, the previous Constitutions provided room for abuse of the media by those in the higher ranks of the government or private sector. This is because the access to information, whether from government bodies or private sectors was indirectly protected by the Constitution. Scandals orchestrated by senior Civil Servants were also masked under this provision.

This is because journalists could not easily expose such matters to the public due to issues of “privacy.” The 2010 Constitution not only grants every person the right to freedom of expression, but also allows citizens to seek and receive information from diverse sources. This does not mean that media operations will be less affected with new Constitution in place. Indeed, the adoption and the applicability of the new Constitution is still a long process to be determined by the lawmakers.

As for the Ministry of Information and Communication, it assumes the “macro” management of major regulatory bodies such as the CCK and MCK. Before the establishment of CCK and MCK, the Ministry was responsible for drafting media policies that were often passed by the Parliament with little or no consultation with media professionals. For instance, the government created a Task Force of Press in 1993 aimed at providing a legal framework for both print and broadcast media (Moggi and Tessier, 2001; Mbeke, 2008), an initiative that failed due to the pressure from both the local and international media activists. In effect, media professionals, including stakeholders and media training schools, endorsed the Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ) in 1998 to oversee the policies within which the media could operate.

A year later, the Communication Commission of Kenya (CCK) was created following the Kenya Communication Act in 1999, to ensure that customer and operator standards are met before acquiring broadcast license for telecommunication or postal services. In general, the functions of CCK include licensing, regulation of tariffs for monopoly areas, establishment of interconnection principles, approval of communication equipment, management of radio frequency spectrum and implementation of universal service obligations for telecom and postal services¹⁸. Although the Commission identifies itself as ‘independent,’ most of its activities tend to be closely controlled by the government through the Ministry of Information and Communication (Mbeke, 2008).

On the other hand, MCK was established in 2002 (but started operating in 2004) as a self-regulatory body aimed at promoting “press freedom and responsible journalism.¹⁹” In essence, MCK functions as an arbiter between the media, the public and the government. It ensures that the code of conduct and practice of responsible journalism is met by media professionals. It is therefore the body with the mandate to administer complaints by and against the media. Despite this directive, this has not always been the case.

It is believed that the government still influences its Board of Directors (Mbeke, 2008). The raid at the Standard Group in 2006 and the temporary ban of all live media during 2007/08 conflicts indicate that the government still “disciplines” the media without consulting with MCK. The government also threatened to disband MCK

¹⁸ See www.cck.go.ke (accessed March 5 2010)

¹⁹ See www.mediacouncil.or.ke (accessed March 5 2010)

following “their move to establish a taskforce to audit how media houses covered last year’s general elections and the subsequent violence²⁰.”

There are other bodies that guide media regulations in Kenya. They are, among others, the Media Owners Association (MOA), the Kenya Correspondents Association (KCA), the Editors Guild, and the Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ). Most of these organizations provide policy provisions that target media functioning in Kenya.

Chapter Summary

Section one of this chapter provided an overview of the social, political and economic conditions that continue to influence intergroup relations in Kenya. It also gave a short description of the Kenyan people, with more emphasis on the study’s target groups: the Kalenjin, Kikuyu and Luo.

The second section explored the patterns of the past and present conflicts in Kenya before looking at the 2007/08 conflicts and the kinds of responses that it drew from the state, the civil society and the international community. It highlights the fact that the 2007/08 conflicts were a complex process characterized by local, national and international actors.

The last section reviewed the media industry in Kenya, providing the foundation to understand the underlying conditions within which the media operates in Kenya.

The next chapter focuses on the core concepts used in this study.

²⁰ See *Daily Nation*, February 21, 2008

CHAPTER II: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

This chapter clarifies the use of some of the concepts in this study. The goal is to offer comprehensive displays of how some commonly used terms, yet essentially ambiguous, are defined to illuminate the meanings I associate with them all through the dissertation. This includes: ethnicity (and ethnic group), conflict (including ethnic conflict), self-determination (ethnic and national), peace-building, vernacular radios, and media framing.

2.1. Ethnicity

The concept of ethnicity is increasingly becoming central in media and conflict resolution literature. While the definition of ethnicity itself remains ambiguous as it is appropriated in different fields of study (Fenton, 2004; Murphy, 2001; MacRae, 1983; Jenkins, 1997; Wolff, 2004), it is inevitable to talk about conflicts, especially in multiethnic settings, without revisiting the notion of ethnicity. In post-communist societies such as the former Yugoslavia, the notion of ethnicity is often used to characterize the widespread social conflicts that took place following the collapse of the Soviet Union (Guibernau & Rex, 1997).

In this regard, ethnicity can be situated within the wave of immigration that saw the movement of people from post-colonial societies to the so-called “monopoly” states. This movement, according to Guibernau and Rex (1997), consolidated different aspects

of ethnicity, all of which raised concerns about the process of assimilation and accommodation of intergroup values. Looking closely at the authors' assumption, one can argue that notions such as *in-groups* and *out-groups* correlate with ethnic categorization to underscore group differentiation and/or symbolically constructed particularities.

As such, ethnicity is defined here as “a form of false consciousness which would be replaced in due course by a consciousness of shared and opposed interests” (Guibernau and Rex, 1997: 2) and “a decision people make to depict themselves or others symbolically as the bearers of certain cultural identity” (Cohen, 1994: 119). Equally, the study not only acknowledges the fact that the perimeters of ethnicity and/or an ethnic identity are mutational, it also recognizes that ethnicity may prevail in situations of conflict and mutual collaboration. In other words, ethnicity can also be described as the mobilization of ethnic identity and difference to gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict or mutual collaboration (Osaghae, 1999).

If ethnicity underscores both conscious (I see myself) and unconscious (I am seen as) state of one's mind in an event of shared and opposed interests, it remains plausible that ethnicity revolves around subjective and objective perceptions of intergroup relations. While subjective perception of one's relationship with the “cultural other” may create a sense of belongingness relative to blood-ties, objective perception may evaluate the relationship from a macro point of view, emphasizing socio-cultural norms such as creed, customs, culture, and history. According to Guibernau and Rex (1997: 4), “identity is both a psychological and a sociological term. [...] On the one hand, it helps the individual to produce order in his or her own individual life. On the other hand, it helps to

place the individual within a group or involves identification within a collectivity.” In this regard, ethnic identity is not a *sine qua non* of shared past, but a symbolically constructed sense of belongingness.

Scholars such as Dibia (2003) have gone further to assert that, in ethnically heterogeneous societies such as sub-Saharan Africa, the problems of ethnicity are inevitable. The central argument in this kind of assumption is that the politics of ethnicity have either been denied or restricted in those nations for fear of ethnic radicalization. In essence, Dibia (2003) infers that, in ethnically heterogeneous nations, “neither the disappearance nor a significant amelioration of ethnic conflict is possible [because] [...] the stability of these societies [is] threatened not by communalism, but by the failure of national institutions to explicitly recognize and accommodate existing ethnic divisions and interests” (p. 31).

The study therefore uses the notion of ethnicity to mirror the complex relationship between ethnicity and/or ethnic identity that characterize the media landscape in Kenya, particularly vernacular radios that serve specific identity groups. Indeed, previous studies have also pointed out the centrality of ethnicity in Kenya’s political arena (Muigai, 1995; Mandani, 1996; Himbara, 1994; Anderson, 2005), especially following independence in 1963 from the British. According to Mukhongo (2010), identity politics have served to deepen inter-ethnic distrust as dominant ethnic groups continue to form coalitions of allies with other major groups for security and political gains.

2.2. Ethnic group

In this study, ethnic group is envisioned as “a group of people bound together by a belief of common kinship and group distinctiveness, often reinforced by religion, language, and history” (Byman, 2002: 5). It also describes “human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization or migration” (Weber, 1992, cited by Guibernau and Rex, 1997:2).

These definitions not only highlight the porosity of ethnic group boundaries, they also exemplify the subjective and collective perceptions that characterize one’s sense of belongingness. This elasticity in peoples’ perception of themselves is what Jenkins (2004) calls “selfhood” (how you see yourself) and “personhood” (how others see you). In other words, group allegiances may change depending on his/her levels of ethnic consciousness (Osaghae, 1995), adding to the ambiguity surrounding ethnicity as claimed by the people themselves, and that attributed to them by others (Guibernau and Rex, 1997).

As such, individuals in ethnically heterogeneous states may rally behind a given ethnic group not because they share cultural values but rather because of imagined “unity of descent” and security. It is within this lens that the term ethnic group is used in this study. Kenya is one of the many ethnically heterogeneous African states where the politics of cultural hybridism have not been fully successful. The creation of administrative boundaries during the colonial period translated into the “balkanization” of the Kenyan people into imagined ethnic groups and “territorial ancestry.”

This explains why various provinces and counties have been reduced to ethnic territories: Central for Kikuyus, Nyanza for Luos, Rift Valley for Kalenjins, and Western

for Luhyas, etc. However, within the supposed “ethnic territories,” are many other distinct ethno-linguistic groups with different values. The Kalenjin may claim Rift Valley for their people yet there are other groups such as the Kikuyu that call this territory their home. Nyanza may be labelled a Luo territory, yet other communities such as the Gussi and Kuria also call Nyanza home.

The ambiguity surrounding ethnic groups and territorial ancestry continues to threaten intergroup cohesion in Kenya. As explained in Chapter 2, the vicious cycle of conflicts in Kenya, especially in the Rift Valley, stems from this ambiguity. Linking territory to a particular group has harnessed a thorny relationship between different ethnic communities, especially in times of conflict when the perceptions of “in-group” and “out-groups” seem to collide. In this regard, an ethnic group may also describe a form of self-defined community that may be differentiated from other groups through their collective historical memories, proper names, ancestry, differentiating elements of culture, and association with specific homeland (Wolff, 2004).

2.3. Conflict

Conflict is another blanket term used in almost every situation to explain occurrences where two or more people have opposing views. These views may be influenced by behavioural, historical, cultural, and social aspects defining one’s interpretation of the situation. For the majority of psychologists and communication scholars, conflicts can be understood not only by looking at interpersonal relationships in

everyday life situations, but also by examining the challenges involved in maintaining these kinds of connections (Milne, 1981; McRae, 1983; Hachsten, 1993; Hoddie, 2006).

Sociologists such as the renowned French scholar Bourdieu (1977) anchor the understanding of conflicts on socio-cultural struggles that take place between social actors over time. Conflicts are seen as end results of social processes that determine human existence. Conflict, in this regard, is not only inevitable but also a normal occurrence or condition characterizing the progress of a given society. Conflict is also common in environmental discourse highlighting the dilemmas surrounding environmentally induced crises. On the one hand, we have eco-centric perspectives, which emphasize the scarcity of natural resources and the degradation of environment as causes of conflicts (Mathew *et al.*, 2002). On the other hand, economic perspectives refuting environmental regulations maintain that low production may lead to the scarcity of basic needs such as housing or food, all of which may endanger human existence itself (Gowdy, 2004). The competing attitudes with regard to environmental resources are, in this case, envisioned as factors of conflict.

In security studies, conflicts are seen mainly in terms of national and international systems, which may have placed stronger and weaker states on the same level of competition, a factor believed to bolster strategies of exploitation and opportunism (Azar, 1990, Fisher, 2007; Blanton, *et al.*, 2001; Jenkins, 1997; Lederach, 1997; Rothschild, 1997; Baker, 2001; Galtung, 2002). In this perspective, conflicts explain the discordance within and between nation-states, commonly referred to as intra-state and inter-state conflicts.

These assumptions underscore the ambiguity inherent in defining conflict itself. Some consider conflicts as normal, if not essential, processes for socio-political change (Bourdieu, 1997; Hachsten, 1993; Hoddie, 2006; Coser, 1956). In this perspective, conflicts provide a terrain for various social groups to gauge their courses of action and the repercussions that the actions generate. Others seem to focus mainly on the negative implications of conflicts while contending that conflicts generate social disorder (Lederach, 1997; Rothschild, 1997; Baker, 2001; Galtung, 2002).

This study describes conflict as “a situation in which two or more actors, who interact with each other, pursue incompatible goals, are aware of this incompatibility, and claim to be justified in the pursuit of their particular course of action” (Wolff, 2004: 8). In this regard, conflict has both positive and negative connotations. It may characterize both the short-term and long-term polarizations emanating in a given social space, thus creating diverse sentiments in an individual. These sentiments can take several forms such as dissatisfaction, misrepresentation, lack of recognition, inequality, opportunism, reprisal, collaboration, compromise, and survival.

Indeed, Wasmuth (1992) goes further to describe four dimensions within which conflict behaviours may be understood: a) conflict as a social fact that should not be mistaken with its form, b) the analysis of conflicts cannot be limited by narrow evaluation, c) the complexity of conflict stretches beyond contextual characteristics, and d) “cause and effect should not be compounded or interchanged by defining conflicts²¹”. In essence, the author argues that there needs to be a holistic approach to conflict

²¹See Axt, Milososki and Oliver Shwarz (2006). Conflict – a review of literature, accessed June 2, 2011 http://www.europeanization.de/downloads/conflict_review_fin.pdf

situations before providing such occurrences with labels such as political, ethnic or religious for this may narrow the understanding of the conflict *per se*.

The notion of conflict is therefore used in this study to underpin the complex patterns of intergroup relations and the competing attitudes that emerge within these confrontations to generate intergroup distrust and polarization. There is a host of literature that narrows the understanding of intergroup polarization in Kenya to ethno-politics (Muigai, 1995; Zuckerman, 2009; Oyugi, 2000; Anderson and Lochery, 2008; Lynch, 2008; Oucho, 2002). While it may be true that ethnicity is an equally essential variable when seeking to understand the root causes of conflicts, some of these studies fail, in my opinion, to go past such conventional labels.

Other scholars such as Gacheru (2005) have opted for an historical understanding of conflicts in Kenya, suggesting that Kenyan conflicts stem from colonial policies that not only changed the traditional modes of functioning but also fractured intergroup bonds that held many communities together. While this study acknowledges the fact that, in order for a conflict behaviour to prevail, the parties involved must be aware of the incompatibility of their goals or interests, it also argues that conflict behaviours are cognitively constructed through imagined social values and/or interests, all of which may not be necessarily transcendental or hereditary.

2.4. Ethnic conflict

Ethnic conflict is also becoming a mainstream term used by various scholars to describe conflicts in multiethnic societies. While the term may seem straightforward, it has often been used to describe situations in which intergroup cohesion is endangered. For instance, the literature on social identity seems to suggest that ethnicity becomes a source of conflict when the relationship between minority and majority groups are interpreted along the lines of oppressor/oppressed dichotomies (Jenkins, 1997; Hall, 1997; Cohen, 1994; Cohen, 1995).

In this regard, ethnic conflicts become a question of one's sense of belongingness and the defining characteristics of the alleged allegiances. Connor (1994), for instance, describes two aspects of ethnic conflicts: *tangible* (emphasizing the group's uniqueness such as language, culture, and customs) and *non-tangible* aspects (highlighting secondary aspects of one's belongingness such as sharing a region or nation).

Wolf (2004) argues that ethnic conflicts can be understood by looking at three sets of minorities: *external minorities* (living on the territory of one host state, but are the ethnic of another state, usually the neighbouring kin-state); *transnational minorities* (whose homeland is located across several states without forming a titular in any of them); *indigenous minorities* (those living in their ancestral homeland but on the territory of one state that is not the titular nation).

These assumptions highlight the centrality of cultural identity in many ethnic-based conflicts. The perceived identity is often created and perpetrated through myths and historical contingents such as religion, language, and customs. The Greeks and Turks

in Cyprus, the Basques and Catalans in France and Spain, the Hutu-Tutsi in Rwanda, and the Croat-Serbs conflicts in the former Yugoslavia are some of the many examples of ethnic-based conflicts widespread in peace-building literature (Wolf, 2004, Jenkins, 1997, Lederach, 1997; Rothschild, 1997; Galtung, 2002).

If conflict underscores a situation in which two or more people pursue incompatible and opposing goals, the notion of “ethnic conflict” will, in this study, describe “a form of group conflict in which at least one of the parties involved interprets the conflict, its causes, and potential remedies, along an actually existing or perceived discriminating ethnic divide” (Wolff, 2004). In this case, an ethnic conflict may explain opposing forces within the structures of intergroup relations. These forces may occur across time and space and are often subject to change depending on the existing perceptions as well as “new forms” of presumed differences.

There are at least 42 ethnic groups in Kenya. Although these groups share a nation, each group emphasizes various aspects they believe make them unique, such as language, territory, culture, and history. As such, many conflicts in Kenya have often taken the “ethnic label” (Mboya, 1970; Ogot, 1981; Ross, 1975) while downplaying other contingencies that may equally provide a constructive understanding of intergroup conflicts in Kenya.

A host of scholarship suggests that general elections in Kenya have become a terrain within which intergroup differences are negotiated in a manner that generates intergroup polarization (Lynch, 2007; Kalyango, 2008; Onyebadi, 2008; Anderson and Lochery, 2008). Ethnicity becomes the driving force behind “electoral conflicts” as each group strives to have a spot within the top “government machineries”, and this, without

necessarily vetting the candidates of their choice (Ogot, 1981). That is, every community seems to be satisfied by the virtue of having one of their own within the system where major decisions are made (Cohen, 1995). Although the perception of ethnicity itself is not immutable, as discussed in previous sections, it remains one of the defining characteristics of conflicts.

2.5. Self-determination

The notion of self-determination continues to dominate the conflict resolution literature. In Sudan for instance, religion seemed to be one of the main factors that forced the Christian Southerners to separate from the Muslim Northerners in 2011, thus forming a new state of their own. This followed decades of a civil war that is believed to have ended in 2005 following the *Sudan Peace Agreement* protocol (Edozi, 2006; Kaufman, 2006). Specifically, the supposed peace agreement provided the Southern Sudanese with the opportunity to choose between remaining within a united Sudan and forming an independent territory of its own. Although the people of Sudan shared the same territory, various factors such as religious differences, international influence and power discrepancy forced the Sudanese to divide their country along the lines of self-determination.

A similar pattern of conflict has been emerging at the *Horn of Africa* where the Kenyan Somalis and the Somalis from Somalia seem to push for the reunification of their people. Various scholars with extensive understanding of the Kenya-Somali border crisis have also pointed out the centrality of self-determination in the contentious conflict at the

Horn (Himbara, 1994). Some have argued that territorial disintegration during the colonial period that saw the splitting of Somalia into British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland, and then the formation of the New Republic of Somalia that reintegrated the “two Somali lands” generated repulsive forces in terms of self-determination and territorial integrity (Mamdani, 1996).

The growing insecurity along Kenyan borders, especially the Kenya-Somalia frontier, has become one of Kenya’s security dilemmas in the wake of global insecurity (Ng’ang’a, 2006). In fact, recent attacks on Kenyan soil by militant groups believed to be linked to Somalia’s Al-Shabaab forced the Kenyan government to take military action against their uprising²². There have been claims that the Kenyan Somalis have often identified with their counterparts from Somalia, given their history, a factor that is believed to hamper national integration and security missions along the Kenya-Somalia frontier (Mamdani, 1996).

As such, the concept of self-determination is also central in this study. It is used to depict “volitional actions that enable one to act as the primary causal agent in one’s life and to maintain or improve one’s quality of life” (Wehmeyer, 2006: 117). According to Wehmeyer and Field (2007), self-determination is characterized by: a) the ability of an individual to act autonomously, b) the level at which the observed behaviours are self-regulated, c) the ability of an individual to initiate and respond to the presumed events in a psychologically empowered manner, and lastly d) the capacity of a person to act in a self-realizing manner. Self-determination can also exemplify the collective perception of

²² Associated Press, 2011. “Somali, Libya, Uganda: US military increases focus on militants from Africa.” Washington post, October 27. http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/from-western-to-eastern-africa-us-military-increases-focus-on-militant-threats/2011/10/27/gIQA5siYMM_story.html

a group historical, cultural and democratic claim (Murphy, 2001; Freeman, 1999; Slattery, 1995; Milne, 1981).

2.6. Nationalism

Nationalism is regarded as a trigger of conflicts in multiethnic states (Connor, 1994; Ignatieff, 1993; Snyder, 1968). According to Greenfeld (1992), nationalism is a twofold concept. On the one hand, he argues that *civic nationalism* describes a form of nationalism whereby citizenship becomes the defining characteristic. As such, nationalism is perceived as voluntary and can therefore be acquired through the politics of immigration and integration. On the other hand, Greenfeld contends that *ethnic nationalism*, which is more inherent, cannot be obtained, as whoever does not have it cannot acquire it through any means (cited by Guibernau and Rex, 1997: 5). In this case, one's sense of nationalism may be correlated with blood and/or territorial ties.

Fundamentally, the question of nationalism is demystified by one's sense of belongingness, whether through culture, history, blood-ties or acquisition (Callahan, 1998; Guibernau and Hutchinson, 2001; Smith, 1995). While the rise of ethnically described conflicts, after the Cold War, is often correlated with the growing public consciousness with regard to the perceptions they hold about their democratic endeavours (Ulrich and Wolff, 2004), various governments perceive these manifestations as a threat to national or political stability (Ignatieff, 1997, Ignatieff, 1993). This seems to be supported by the events of the "Arab Spring" that heightened in 2011 (and extended in

2012 with the Syrian case) where the superpower structures in the supposed authoritarian Middle Eastern regimes were challenged and sometimes ousted²³.

In this context, the notion of nationalism can be defined loosely as the sense of belongingness that one holds towards his/her nation-state making him/her to defend it despite the consequences that the chosen actions may lead to (Ignatieff, 1993; Jenkins, 1997). It underscores the love for the nation although this love may vary with the problems of inclusion and exclusion across nation-states (Baker, 2001; Blanton *et al.*, 2001). Those who feel included in the system will therefore sometimes defend it regardless of the consequences, while those who feel excluded will often attempt to alter the system in their favour.

In this study, nationalism describes a “form of consciousness by which the individual proclaims his supreme loyalty to the nation” (Snyder, 1968). The definition is broadened by Ignatieff’s (1993) definition that integrates political, cultural and moral domains of nationalism. As a political doctrine, nationalism is the “belief that the world’s peoples are divided into nations, and that each of these nations has the right to self-determination, either as self-governing units within existing nation-states or as nation-states of their own”; as a cultural belief, it is “the claim that while men and women have many identities, it is the nation that provides them with their primary form of belonging”; and as a moral faith, nationalism is “an ethnic of heroic sacrifice, justifying the use of violence in the defence if one’s nation against enemies, internal or external” (Ignatieff, 1993: 5-15).

²³ See Anderson, L. (2011). “Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences Between Tunisia, Egypt and Libya.” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2011. <http://www.ssrresourcecentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Anderson-Demystifying-the-Arab-Spring.pdf> (accessed January 2012).

The claims of nationalism have also been present in Kenya, especially during general elections. Intergroup relations seem to succumb to ill-defined notions of nationalism driven by political elites (Anderson and Lochery, 2008). The case of the “Ocampo Six”, the presumed masterminds of the 2007-08 conflicts in Kenya, is exemplary as it stirred nationalist sentiments during the International Criminal Court (ICC) hearings at The Hague²⁴. While the pre-independence period (in Kenya) seemed to be marked by a collective nationalist dissent towards the British settlers, the post-independence redefined the conception of nationalism.

Before independence, various groups appeared to have a common conception of nationalism because the number one enemy during that period were the colonial occupiers. When the British left, the rhetoric around nationalism changed as dominant groups claim bigger shares of responsibility within the state’s machinery under the umbrella that “their people” sacrificed a lot during colonial occupation. This may explain ferocious fights between major groups in Kenya, especially in general elections that seem to be reduced to “the winner takes all” competition.

Probably one of the good illustrations in this regard is the perceived fight between the Kikuyu and Luo groups to control the state machinery. Others suggest that nationalism, in this regard, has been associated with the group’s level of contribution to the pre-independence political struggles (Ross, 1975). As such, some scholars have claimed that the Luo and Kikuyus were the major groups at the centre of opposition politics before the country attained its independence in 1963 (Ogot, 1981; Mboya, 1970; Gacheru, 2005), a factor that would explain their struggles for political supremacy in the

²⁴ Ndegwa, Alex. 2011. “State requests access to evidence against Ocampo Six.” The Standard, October 7. <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/sports/InsidePage.php?id=2000044360&cid=4>

post-independence era. When the two groups share views, the creation and adoption of various legislations appear to go smoothly. However, when they have differing views, the tensions appear to be heightened within the country. This may explain why some media outlets reduced the 2007-08 conflict to a Kikuyu-Luo conflict, yet many other groups suffered alike (Makinen and Kuria, 2008; Jamal and Deanne, 2008; Zuckerman, 2009; Anderson and Lochery, 2008).

2.7. Peace-building

Peace-building is another central term used in this study. Peace-building has not only become a common discourse in nations engulfed in wars and conflicts, it has also drawn attention within conflict resolution scholarship. Though it emerged before the 1990s, its widespread use is believed to have been spearheaded by the former UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, when he used it to describe the processes and efforts necessary in enforcing sustainable peace in countries or regions experiencing conflicts or wars (Byman, 2002; Knight, 2003; Wimmer, 2004).

Peace-building became a pivotal concept defining UN missions in areas of conflict prevention (preventing conflict behaviours from transforming or relapsing into active conflict) as well as conflict intervention (reinstating peace in conflict situations). Yugoslav civil wars and the Rwandan genocide that occurred in the 1990s, helped reinforce the concept of peace-building within the academic fields.

In this regard, peace-building can be defined as “a complex and multidimensional exercise that encompasses tasks ranging from the disarming of warring factions to the

rebuilding of political, economic, judicial and civil society institutions” Knight (2003: 246). This broad definition captures the most crucial elements deemed necessary in the reconstruction of war-torn or conflict-prone zones. In other words, the politics of peacekeeping or peacemaking, commonly embraced in UN’s peace rhetoric since 1945, were not enough to foresee a stable nation.

Although the concept of peace-building appears to be widespread since the 1990s, Keating and Knight (2004) reminds us that the concept was used by Galtung in the 1970s to characterize “a means of preventing incipient violent conflicts by addressing root causes of poverty, political repression and uneven distribution of resources” (p. 247).

Contemporary literature on peace-building seems to refocus its analyses on pre-emptive and proactive practices believed to bolster sustainable peace (Keating and Knight, 2004; Lederach, 1997; Galtung, 1997). As such, conflict is perceived as a process without clear-cut starting and ending periods. Peace-building in this regard, also becomes a process. Although peace-building as process may sound promising, the divide between theoretical assumptions inherent in peace-building literature and the applicability of the proposed models is still worrisome. Often, successful models have been transposed from one nation to another with less attention given to the different socio-cultural and historic realities of these nations.

In an attempt to go past these challenges, Byman (2002: 6-8) proposes some of the core values by which the success or failure of any peace-building initiative can be evaluated: a) *Saving of human lives from mass killings*: any peace-building process must end the killings or reduce the loss of human lives, failure of which would be regarded as a doomed; b) *Self-determination*: peace-building process must handle the claims for self-

determination with care, as it is one of the values reinforcing ethnic or identity-related conflict. One of the challenges that Byman notes in this regard is the fact that “the international community has shied away from declaring a right to self-determination, preferring instead to emphasize the sovereignty of existing states over the claims of the people within them” (p.7); c) *Sovereignty*: in this regard, the author suggests that “the right and duty of intervention itself” must be thoroughly investigated before drafting any peace-building procedure for this might help in determining the best moment for external intervention; and lastly d) the author presumes that cultural diversity has also instigated different ways of “promoting assimilation and adherence to a common identity [...]” (p. 8). This trend has, according to Byman, prompted tensions between different groups, thus causing ethnic conflicts.

This study therefore embraces peace-building as a process whereby factors of conflict are addressed before, during and after a given conflict in order to reinforce collaborative attitudes and eventual understanding between the parties. That is, it describes a process in which actors involved in a conflict are called upon to bridge or negotiate their differences in a manner likely to strengthen mutual understanding rather than intergroup polarization. Peace-building, in this regard, is not confined to any specific stage of a given conflict as it is a continuous process.

2.8. Vernacular radio

The term vernacular is used in the study to characterize non-official dialects spoken and defended by different groups living in a multiethnic society where cultural

hybridism has not fully been successful (Arnold and Schneider, 2007; Cottle, 2000; Malinowski, 2000; Ojo, 2006). Despite the fact that various groups may share the same nation-state and speak the official languages, in a given national territory, various groups often identify more with their vernacular traits (Riggins, 1992; Caspi et al., 2002; Cutter, 2001), not limited to language and culture. As such, the basis of unity in this kind of setting is not only linked to the articulation, accommodation and integration of values and creed into a shared meaning of nationhood, it also hinges on the acceptance of the presumed differences.

In this context, vernacular radios is used to depict radios that broadcast in languages spoken by specific ethno-linguistic groups that live within a multi-ethnic society where the politics of cultural hybridism is weakened by inter-ethnic interests and/or claims of ethnic essentialism (adapted from Arnold and Schneider 2007; Shi 2009; Neyazi, 2010). Often, vernacular radios broadcast in non-official languages, although some societies are gradually recognizing local dialects as part of the official languages. This is the case of South Africa, where until 1994 Afrikaans and English were the official languages. Today, there are at least eleven official languages in South Africa such as Zulu, Northern Sotho, Ndebele, Sotho, Tsonga, Tswana, Xhosa, Swazi and Venda, most of which operate radios targeting these groups. *Ndebele* radio, also known as *Ikwekwezi FM* since 1996, is a good example of this gradual recognition. As Lekgoathi (2012) notes,

Radio Ndebele flourished because firstly, it met its listeners' desire for broadcasting in their own language, using native speakers; and secondly, the channel came to serve as a medium for ethnic mobilisation as well as for the reinvention of Ndebele traditions, culture and identity (Lekgoathi 2012: 59).

The main particularity of vernacular radios is that they are likely to appropriate and customize news story lines to slant towards the specificities of the groups they serve (Neyazi 2010; Arnold and Schneider 2007; Onguny 2012). In other words, their programs tend to show systematic biases towards the language, values and culture of the groups targeted as opposed to the official-language media. The study by Neyazi (2010) found that vernacular media in India was transforming India's "imperial identity" towards what he calls "vernacular modernity." That is, "while appropriating the content of English-language newspapers, Hindi newspapers customize and reconfigure it, taking into account particularities in local society" (p. 912).

In their quest to understand the functioning of vernacular media, some scholars often use the term "ethnic media" to characterize and emphasize their identity aspects (Malinowski, 2000; Arnold and Schneider, 2007; Guzman, 2006; Cutter, 2001; Caspi *et al.*, 2002; Cottle, 2000; Ojo, 2006), thereby emphasizing ethnicity as the central factor in defining vernacular media. This study embraces the term "vernacular radio" rather than "ethnic radio" to underscore the uniqueness in both the language and identity of the groups served by these kinds of media.

In other words, the shifting boundaries of ethnicity, already discussed, and the complex patterns of intergroup relations in Kenya make it difficult to conceive these media as "ethnic radios." For instance, while the Kalenjins may be considered as an ethnic group, there are at least seven linguistic sub-groups within the Kalenjin dynasty (Tugen, Nandi, Marakwet, Kipsigis, Keiyo, Saboat, and Pokot). As such, a Kalenjin radio is likely to be tuned into by those who speak and share the Kalenjin culture. The same

goes for a Luo or Kikuyu radio. In other words, language, culture and ethnicity are some of the main defining characteristics of a vernacular radio.

Although the term vernacular media is preferred in this study, some scholars have used the term “ethnic media” to underpin the perceived systematic stereotypes in mainstream media (with regard to minority groups) that may have led to the growth of what is believed to be an ethnic identity media (Arnold and Schneider, 2007; Ojo, 2006). In this perspective, Ojo (2006) supposes that ethnic media “provide room for cultural expressions in the sense that cultural folklore and languages are regularly used in reporting and programming. This draws them [minority groups] closer to the community and gives people in the community a sense of belonging” (p. 351).

As such, ethnic media may play on a given group’s deep-seated emotions and cultural identity, stirring a wide range of sentiments. On this note, Arnold and Schneider (2007) write:

Ethnic media cater to cultural identity: they communicate cultural pride, provide a link to home, and provide a platform for collective communication and representation of interest. They provide the basis for a symbolic community throughout the members of an ethnic group on a national level; and they support integration into an ethnic group on a local level by providing information on local policies, events, etc. (Arnold and Schneider, 2007: 120).

While my understanding of vernacular radios is closely related to what has been called “ethnic radio”, much emphasis is put on the uniqueness of the languages of broadcast, target groups, ethnic differences and cultural practices that distinguish one group from another in a multiethnic society where the projects of cultural hybridism are not fully recognized.

Furthermore, vernacular radios, as used in this study, should not be comprehended through the lens of community radio, alternative radio, rural radio, minority radio, or

indigenous radio as developed in many other studies (Pietikäinen, 2008; Gathigi, 2009; Molvaer, 1991; Cutter, 2001; Cottle, 2000; Deuze, 2006; Sinclair, 2009; Moran, 2006; Srinivasan, 2006). While seeking to understand the dynamics and patterns of media outlets in ethnically heterogeneous settings, some scholars embrace the notion of “minority” to draw the differences between the “mainstream” and/or “official” media and the “other” media. For instance, while examining the media used by the *Sami* people inhabiting Russia and northern parts of Scandinavia, Pietikäinen (2008) perceives “minority/indigenous” media as those “made by and targeted on the ethnic minority community, often with a goal of offering alternative media representations, identity positions and participation practices” (p. 174).

While Pietikäinen’s (2008) definition of “minority/indigenous” may be convincing, the term indigenous does not necessarily underscore the same meaning as minority or ethnic media, yet the author seems to use them as synonyms. The fact that the *Sami* people form a linguistic and an ethnic minority block in these regions, in my opinion, may not necessarily characterize their media as minority or indigenous. “Indigenous media” has often been used to characterize locally produced media, especially when differentiating them from international media sources (Anderson, 1991; Riggins, 1992).

The term indigenous or minority media may also be ambiguous in settings where there are more than one ethnic minority or in societies where the borders between ethnic majority and minority are in constant transformation as in some European countries (Brooten, 2006; Georgiou, 2005; Rolston, 2007) or the US where the Hispanic minority is

gradually transforming into an ethnic majority (Moran, 2006; Guzman, 2006; Anderson, 2008; Deuze, 2006).

Equally, vernacular radios are quite different from community radios. A community may be composed of several ethnically diverse groups with linguistic particularities. Also, community radios seem to operate in local or regional languages that are shared by the interveners and residents (not ethnic groups) of that particular locality such as volunteers, professionals, and non-professionals (Jankowski and Prehn, 2002). In this regard, community radios are likely to be non-profit radios targeting a small-scale population for they are designed and run by the community to promote diverse voices in areas such as health, education, and poverty reduction (Deuze, 2006; Jankowski and Prehn, 2002).

Some studies regard community radios as platforms through which civic engagement or “new humanism” is emancipated because they do not narrow their scope to a particular group or ethnicity (McChesney and Nichols, 2002; Balnaves, Mayrhofer, and Shoesmith, 2004). Although vernacular radios may strengthen civic engagement, they do narrow their scope to specific ethno-linguistic groups.

2.9. Media frames

The concept of media framing, detailed in the next chapter, is also central to this study. By definition, the term media is used in the study to underscore “the function in communication that is manifested through a carrier of signs to multi-point destinations”

(Berger, 2002:22). It therefore encompasses all forms of communication whether oral, print, broadcast, audio-visual or online.

As such, a media frame characterizes the kinds of narratives used by the media to negotiate, articulate and accommodate the values of the public while shaping their perceptions on a given object or subject. This implies that media frames include both conventional (print, broadcast, audio-visual, billboard, and online) and non-conventional (literary materials, music, art work, ceremonies, plays, comedies, etc.) media messages.

The public's opinion is thus shaped not only by the way the news is presented to them, but it is also influenced by the degree to which these perceptions are transformed into public agendas (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). This may explain why media narratives have been at the centre of conflict resolution discourses (Simons, 2008; Gitlin, 1980; Pillar, 1983; Pinkely, 1990). In other words, various studies have demonstrated the centrality of media narratives in the escalation or de-escalation of conflicts (Hoddie, 2006; Gower and An, 2009; Zuckerman, 2009). Hoddie (2006) believes that "non-democratic states attempt to employ their monopoly control of the media to their advantage when confronting restive ethnic communities." Media frames would therefore possibly cover the narratives used by all types of media, whether print, broadcast, audiovisual or online media, to represent a given event or subject.

The main question therefore is whether or not the media has the potential to determine the direction and patterns of a given conflict. Probably one of the many interesting studies in this regard is the work by Roth (1992) who examined the media coverage of the First Nations during a land-related dispute involving the Mohawk community and the governments of Quebec and Canada. Her findings suggest that the

public's perceptions on the dispute were essentially a historical and cultural construction "brought to bear on the media analyses by journalists and their representative institutions." In other words, the construction and accommodation of the Mohawk values within the Quebec or Canadian policies were a matter of media narratives. Whether or not these narratives genuinely represented the Mohawk, Quebec or Canadian relations depends on one's positioning with regard to the matter. Sustained misperceptions or misrepresentations may therefore lead to sustained misunderstanding between members of a given community or nation.

Past studies also support the fact that intergroup relations in Kenya are gradually becoming spongy since the late 1990s that saw the rise of vernacular media. Vernacular radios, in particular, seem to become terrains for ethnic solidarity rather than national unity. Vernacular radios have been accused of distorting and circulating false representations of some groups, mainly in the period leading to general elections (Wanyande, 1995; Oyugi, 2000; Odhiambo, 2002; Muigai, 1995).

The case of the 2007-08 conflicts was exemplary as "live media" were at the centre of the government's sanctions to contain the supposed inter-ethnic massacre (Zuckerman, 2009; Jamal and Deanne, 2008; Lynch, 2007; Onyebadi, 2008; Somerville, 2009; Anderson and Lochery, 2008; Makinen and Kuria, 2008). The concept of media framing is central in this study as it is used to explore the kinds of narratives embraced by various vernacular radios to characterize the events leading to the 2007-08 conflicts: prior, during and after the crisis.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided detailed explanations with regard to the use of some terms within the body of this dissertation. As such, it provides the foundation for understanding the meanings attached to them throughout the thesis. That is, ethnicity is understood as a situational sense of belonging that people have of others or of their own identity.

An ethnic group defines a group bound together by beliefs, values and history, which are particular to a given social identity. This sense of identity may shift depending on interests and one's sense belonging in a multiethnic society. A conflict is defined as a situation where different (or same) group members confront each other due to differing views, often reinforced by issues such as power balances, cultural allegiances, religious faith and situational interests.

An ethnic conflict defines a type of conflict where the actors involved locate the source of their divergent views with ethnic affinity. Self-determination is used to refer to the processes by which an individual or a group of people take charge of their lives and destiny. Nationalism underlines the processes by which an individual or group not only proclaims their love for the nation, but also take measures to defend or alter it in their favour.

Peace-building describes a means by which actors involved in a conflict are called upon to bridge their differences in a manner likely to strengthen mutual collaboration for long-term peace processes. Vernacular radios describe the radios that broadcast in non-official languages, often spoken by different identity groups within a given country. Lastly, media frames depict the manner in which news contents are rendered salient to influence audiences' perception of a given occurrence.

The next chapter will review some of the literature on media and audience perceptions, including media and conflict framing. This chapter also presents the analytical framework adopted in the study.

CHAPTER III. LITERATURE REVIEW & ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section traces the theoretical trajectory relative to media and audience perceptions from classical approaches to contemporary paradigms. Section two presents some of the literature relating to media and conflict framing. In the third section, I layout my analytical framework that revises the theory of *Protracted Social Conflicts* proposed by Eduard Azar in the 1990s in an attempt to map out the contours of the 2007/08 conflicts.

This chapter theorises how media frames lead to the escalation or de-escalation of conflicts, as intergroup cohesion or polarization also hinges on the media's rhetorical trends.

3.1. Media and Audience Perceptions

The study of audience perception of different phenomena is not new within media or communication literature. Gripsrud (2002) situates the evolution of media audience studies in the broader context of three epistemologies: the pre-1940s that grounded communication research on powerful and omnipresent media; the period between 1940s and 1970s that emphasized audience selectivity; and lastly, the developments that came after the 1970s that emphasized culture and history, drawing most of its analyses from the German Frankfurt and the British Birmingham Schools of thought.

Prior to the 1940s, Gripsrud (2002) suggests that the media were mainly considered as a constructive medium through which ideas and attitudes were injected into the presumed passive public. Media hegemony was at the centre of media research. In line with this perspective, hypodermic needle theories became widespread within the media literature, where the passivity of audience vis-à-vis media products was often evoked (McLuhan, 1964; Hiersteiner, 1998; Berkowitz, 2010). For instance in 1914, German scholar Emilie Altenloh analyzed statistics on cinematic preferences of Mannheim and Heidelberg residents focusing mainly on “what movies meant to the public” rather than “film’s influence on morality” (Gripsrud, 2002). The far-reaching effects of cinema were explained in terms of the medium’s power to directly influence audience perceptions.

Many studies were therefore centred on how media “inject” attitudes and feelings to the public who presumably changed their consumption patterns (Hiersteiner, 1998; Lowery and DeFleur, 1995). The proponents of the *hypodermic needle theory* professing a strong and immediate effect of media on the public profoundly bolstered this thought. For example, the *Payne Fund Foundation Research* that examined empirical data on the effect of motion pictures on children in the 1930s found that uncontrolled media messages presented a danger to the society as they presumably had far-reaching influence on people’s social behaviour (Hammer and Kellner, 2009; Lowery and DeFleur, 1995).

Although the pre-1940 period were dominated by hypodermic needle theory, Gripsrud (2002) suggests that some studies ran counter to this perspective. For instance, the study conducted by Herta Herzog in 1941, *Classical Study of American Women’s*

Relations to Soap Operas, which according to Gripsrud, highlighted the centrality of media in influencing the choice patterns vis-à-vis political opinions.

Apart from focusing on behavioural changes induced by the media, the scholarship on powerful media also centred on propaganda circulation, especially on how different governments (and elitist groups) control media narratives to win the public's morale and confidence in times of war or national crises (Williams, 2009; Altheide, 2009; Flesher, 1982). Many of these studies borrowed from propaganda effects of the World War I (WWI) and later on, the effects of the World War II (WWII), which saw the rise in rivalry between Britain, Germany and France, among other European nations.

For instance, Fletcher (1982) believes that the British, through its Information Research Department (IRD), was able to control its press and radio services to portray a positive image of itself in the Third World countries where it had significant influence while, at the same time, maintaining a different image in Europe to counter Soviet insurgency. Fletcher states that,

IRD's activities could perhaps be discounted were they not backed by a virtual monopoly of information on what Mayhew called 'communist themes'. The flow of reports from overseas missions and intelligence officers backed by hundreds of researchers and analysts-both British and American-relating to the Soviet orbit which was virtually closed to independent observers, provided an invaluable source of information for academics, politicians and workers in the media (Fletcher, 1982:106).

On the same note, while looking at the US' role in the Cold War and the propagation of its capitalist ideology through cinema, Berkowitz (2010) alleges that the rise in American popular culture is directly linked to the culture industry. According to this author, not only did the culture industry render the American ideology accessible

throughout the world, it also made it resilient to financial challenges such as the Great Depression in the 1930s.

Similarly, Hiersteiner (1998) believes that US popular movies did instil capitalist thinking among cinema audiences. That is, “to groom people to attend movies regularly, the writers and producers not only developed and used conventions and story lines to surprise and dazzle but played to the audience’s strong desire for predictability and need to identify with some film characters and disparage others” (p. 313).

Fundamentally, propaganda messages are increasingly being integrated within the story lines of mainstream media the same way capitalist ideology was instilled to the public through popular culture (Williams, 2009; Berkowitz 2010). For instance, the ambivalences around the “War on Terror” following the aftermath of 9/11 have rejuvenated the debates around media propaganda (Altheide, 2007; Altheide, 2009; Kellner, 2003/2004). Some authors go further to assert that media houses encompass the same tactics exploited during World Wars I and II by governments to gain public confidence when justifying wars (Freedman, 2001; Altheide, 2009).

Reliance on institutionalized, centralized and government-controlled sources of information has particularly been at the epicene of these discussions. In this view, Altheide (2009) alludes that “the evidence for justifying the Iraq War was presented as part of a general feature of a war programming narrative, or the selective use of claims makers/news sources within a normative pattern, which include occasional detractors to give the appearance of debate and considering all sides” (p. 14). Kellner (2003) and Altheide (2007) contend that the American authorities have symbolically represented

certain groups in a manner that they have been branded as “terror suspects” due to their lifestyles and religious beliefs.

These assumptions not only serve to emphasize media hegemony, but also suggest that audiences’ resonance with media messages are somewhat linked to the medium and language used to convey the message itself. In other words, audiences’ resonance with media messages varies depending on the language and forms of media. Determinist acclamation by McLuhan’s (1964) early studies subscribes to this view. McLuhan perceived media as extensions of human faculty hence the famous acclaim prophesying “the medium” as “the message.”

McLuhan argued that individuals do adapt to their environments depending on the way their senses are in congruence with a given communication medium, and that the “medium” *per se* becomes the “message” itself. McLuhan’s prophesies suggest, for instance, that watching a soccer game on a black and white television set would not have the same effects as watching the same game on a coloured television set. Likewise, hearing about a given conflict through the radio will not have the similar effects as hearing or watching the same conflict unfurl on a TV channel.

Between 1940 and 1970, media research shifted from media hegemony to put emphasis on audiences’ activity and selectivity. The focus was on what people do with the media rather than what the media does to people. As such, most of the research conducted in this period reinforced the perception that “the media could not have much of an influence on people unless it played into what people already thought, especially if they did not combine forces with ‘local leaders’ in the immediate environment of audiences” (Gripsrud, 2002: 50). Central to this tradition, were the studies conducted by

Lazarsfeld and Katz that examined the factors that predetermined people's votes, which in turn contributed to the patterns of presidential elections in the 1940s. Their findings suggested that people select and consume media products depending on psychological factors such as areas of interest and the ability of these messages to gratify people's expectations. The functionalist approach as well as the sociology of media served as analytical frameworks to examine the creation or construction of social realities by the media (Lasswell, 1948; Berelson, 1959).

Equally, Katz's (1980) findings on voting trends and the circulation of propaganda and Lasswell's (1971) "5W model" (*Who says What in What channel to Whom with What effect?*) both served to orient media and communication studies to audience and content analyses. Essentially, Lasswell's content analysis on war propaganda pointed out that the likelihood that a propaganda message would shape or influence the public's perception is directly linked to the number of people reached by the message itself. In other words, Lasswell's findings emphasized the importance of message redundancy in shaping audience perceptions.

Lazarsfeld and Katz (1955) also proposed a "Two-step Flow of Communication", emphasizing the role of "opinion leaders" in communication situations. Their findings suggest that media messages pass through "human filters" that, presumably, give more meaning to news stories. The supposed filters are not limited to political elites or administrators who may choose to render some topics more salient than others. Not only do Lazarsfeld and Katz's assertions reflect functionalist sociology of the media, they also claim that the psychological train of thought serves as an intermediary factor influencing media reception. These were some of the voids raised with regard to Lasswell's formula.

That is, they pointed out that media users have differentiated patterns of consumption depending on their tastes, interests, and expectations (Katz, 1980; Berelson, 1959).

Similarly, the proponents of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G) emphasized the choice patterns of media audiences when it comes to consuming media messages (Fisher, 1978; Ronsengren, 1974; Rubin, 2002). While considering audiences as active and goal-oriented, the core assumptions of this approach were to: a) investigate how individuals use media to gratify their needs; b) examine the motives driving their use of a particular media; and c) identify possible circumstances (intended or unintended) emanating from media use (Ronsengren, 1974).

Rubin (2002) goes further on these assumptions by claiming that contemporary U&G theory is a multilevel approach. For Rubin, contemporary U&G “sees communication influence as being socially and psychologically constrained and affected by individual differences and choice” (Rubin, 2002: 51). That is, people have differing expectations, personalities, attitudes, social structure and other conditions that are likely to influence use of media and their messages. In this way, the U&G theory shifted the focus from conceiving media as a powerful tool in shaping audience attitudes to the power detained by audiences in selecting and using media commodities to fulfil their needs. The significance of contextual inferences was thus central when seeking to understand people’s use of media.

With regard to the studies conducted **after the 1970s**, media research focused on culture industries and the remaking of the new world order, especially on how the media plays a critical role in the whole process. Gripsrud (2002) believes that the *agenda-setting* purposes of media, supposing that the salience of media narratives are indirectly

controlled by dominant voices with media corporations. The proponents of the Agenda-Setting Theory believe that the media reinforce public perceptions by selecting and eliminating news stories (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). As such, the salience of social phenomena is highlighted by the time accorded to them and the kinds of narrative used in an attempt to coil these issues within the public agenda (Scheufele, 1999; Gitlin, 1980; McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 1997).

Various theories were also borrowed from different fields of study to understand people's interaction with media messages. For example, the Cultivation Theory hypothesized that media influences people's perception of reality over an extensive period of time (Gerbner et al., 1986), which may involve the cultivation of certain stereotypes for instance. Other theories are the Reinforcement Theory, which supposes that media portrayals strengthen established behaviours that media audiences bring with them while using different media, and that people's backgrounds became crucial in understanding the uses associated with media consumption.

Equally important was the Observational Learning Theory, which claim people may react to certain situations based on what they have learned from media portrayals, as the exposure to media is likely to teach audiences new ways of reading given phenomena. This explains why some of the games kids play involves imitations of the movies or video games they are exposed to.

While it is true that audiences' interaction with media messages may lead to the cultivation, learning and reinforcement of certain perceptions, it is less likely that universal behavioural patterns manifest themselves across different cultures and/or demographics. This is because individuals can also decide what kinds of programs appeal

to them based on their culture, individual character, environment, etc., all of which influence the way an individual is likely to use a given media (Grossberg, 1989; Davies, 1995; Mosco, 1996; Hall et al., 1980). Media analyses were not only centred on texts, but also on the social conditions relative to the production and distribution of these texts.

These perspectives laid the foundation for the critique of ideology, providing suggestions on how to decorticate texts (including media texts) in order to understand the forces that led to dominant classicism and how it was sustained through ideological constructions (Merrigan and Huston, 2004; Wimmer and Dominick, 2006). Most of the studies in this tradition emphasized pragmatism as a constructive conceptual framework for the interpretation of texts. Using constructivist and holistic methodologies, most of these studies confirmed the association between technology, media, culture and history (Mosco, 1996; Grossberg, 1989).

The European Critical School, – also known as the *Frankfurt School*, is poised on this epistemology. The Frankfurt School blends critical and interdisciplinary methods (initially used by neo-Marxist theorists) to critique the culture industry that, according to them, laid the foundation for capitalistic consumerism and homogenized societal needs (Horkheimer, and Adorno, 1972). Their central argument is that technological inventions created room for the reproduction of ideology and cultural artefacts through the mass media, which in turn changed society's modes of social organization (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1972; Mosco, 1996).

Equally, the *British Birmingham School*, whose contributions to media studies are often situated with the arrival of Cultural Studies, largely influenced media research in the 1980s. Like the Frankfurt School, the Birmingham School embraced multidisciplinary

methodology to emphasize the significance of cultural artefacts in understanding media reception and functioning (Davis, 1995; Grossberg, 1997). One of the most cited authors in this regard is Stuart Hall, whose recent works have focused on issues of representation, especially cultural representations and the signifying practices of such representations across societies (Hall and Meeks, 2007; Hall, 1997).

From this perspective, one can argue that mass communication is essentially a channel through which capitalist hegemony is fortified by means of ideology and culture (Grossberg, Cary, and Treichler, 1992; During, 1993; Grossberg, 1989; Davies, 1995; Huntington, 1996). As such, studies in this regard focus on cultural artefacts, especially the sub-cultures, and how they resist to homogeneous dominant cultures. Most of the analyses are drawn from the Marxist theory of society, semiotics, ideology, and cultural hegemony to highlight the degrees of resistance witnessed in media audiences. Most of these approaches associate this resistance with the presence of sub-cultures that render the consumption of media products more challenging and equivocal. In essence, the focus on sub-cultures and their resistance to dominant cultural doctrines constitutes one of the main differences between the Frankfurt School and the Birmingham School.

Although the Frankfurt and Birmingham schools are renowned for introducing a cultural perspective in media literature, contemporary scholars in the critical tradition have often centred their studies on the Political Economy of culture production, emphasizing economic systems within which cultural artefacts are produced and reproduced. By definition, political economy can be defined as “the study of how values of all kinds are produced, distributed, exchanged, and consumed (the economic); how power is produced, distributed, exchanged, and exercised (the political); and how these

aspects of the social world are related at any given place and time in history” (Graham, 2005: 2).

In this view, a political-economic approach to media and communication studies presumes that socio-historical transformation transcends media representations, and that the transformations *per se* not only shape the way media audiences make sense of their personal experiences, but that they also transform the experiences that have already been established as verifiable world views (Manyozo, 2011; Mosco, 1996; Garnham, 2000; McChesney, 2008; Silverstone, 2006; Graham, 2005). This suggests that the political economy of communication as a theory, is on the one hand concerned with mass media industry structures such as media ownership and political systems, as well as with the political structures within which the media functions. On the other hand, it focuses on the conditions of production, distribution and consumption of media as a commodity. This is why some scholarship in this regard emphasizes the significance of the *commodification*²⁵ process of mass communication in that it aids the construction meaning through a series of socio-historical factors (Mosco, 1996).

Given this complex process characterizing media consumption and political-economic conditions of production and distribution, a number of scholars have tried to provide an inclusive definition of the political economy of communication as a theory. The initial definition of the political-economic approach to communication can be traced to the work of Harold Innis when he coined the term “knowledge monopolies” while

²⁵In his book published in 1996, “The political Economy of Communication”, Vincent Mosco describes commodification as “the process of transforming use values into exchange values, of transforming products whose value is determined by their ability to meet individual and social needs into products whose value is set by what they can bring in the marketplace” (p.141).

studying the Canadian culture industry²⁶. Innis argued that some social groups had the privilege, through history, to control information systems. As a result, Innis presumed that the dynamics of social relations were likely to be influenced by media, as they help in maintaining knowledge monopolies.

Other scholars such as Herman and Chomsky (1988) also found that media institutions serve specific corporate interests, especially those of the elite and for-profit corporations, for they organize news according to corporate agendas and elitist views of society. For Herman and Chomsky, media consumption may not only be determined by the legislations put in place, but also a series of what they call “filters” that structure media functioning – ownership, financing and advertising, critical information feeds, corporate agenda, and anti-communist ideology.

Contemporary definitions of political economy, as used in communication research, are often associated with the works of McChesney (2000), Graham (2005), Mosco (1996) and McKinney *et al.* (2005), among others. McChesney (2000) envisions political economy of communication as a twofold process:

First, it addresses the nature of the relationship between media and communication systems on the one hand and the broader social structure of society. In other words, it examines how media and communication systems and content reinforce, challenge or influence existing class and social relations. It does this with a particular interest in how economic factors influence politics and social relations. Second, the political economy of communication looks specifically at how ownership, support mechanisms (e.g. advertising) and government policies influence media behavior and content. This line of inquiry emphasizes structural factors and the labor process in the production, distribution and consumption of communication (McChesney, 2000: 109).

²⁶See Meyer, P. (2003). *Key Thinkers in Critical Media Studies: Harold Innis*.

Recent studies by McChesney (2008) suggest that “monopolistic competition” has been heightened in the past few decades, forcing media institutions to seek friendly advertising policies such as embedding products within news lines to make it impossible for the public to disregard them. For McChesney (2008), these kinds of policies have served to perpetrate false values to the public through media messages.

In retrospect, the theories on media and audience perceptions discussed above not only continue to restructure contemporary thoughts on media consumption as well as reception studies, but they have also influenced the direction of peace-media research that has looked at the centrality of *media framing* in influencing the directions and patterns of a given conflict. Fundamentally, the theories on media and audience perceptions presented above point to the fact that the media narratives are pivotal when seeking to understand audience positioning with regard to world views and/or social phenomena.

The next section looks at some of the literature relative to *media framing*, with emphasis on how media narratives may determine the direction of a conflict. The goal is to present some of the studies highlighting the significance of media narratives in inflaming or containing probable conflicts, depending on the kinds of frames embraced. In other words, peace or conflict also hinges on the kinds of narratives and representations adopted by the media to characterize these situational events.

3.2. Media and Conflict Framing

Framing research continues to dominate peace-media literature while offering a host of analytical viewpoints with regard to the understanding of core issues often inherent in many conflict situations. Early definitions of framing, as a concept, is usually linked to the work of Goffman (1974) who used it to highlight the cognitive structures that assist an individual's interpretation of reality, where daily life experiences not only structure the perceived social order, but also ritualize and organize the representation of self in staged performances.

The underlying assumption in Goffman's argument is that framing is a twofold process: on the one hand, it portrays self as a construct hinged on selective representations of reality, while on the other hand, it mirrors one's interaction with one's immediate environment. In other words, frames reflect both the conscious (because individuals somehow manipulate situational norms to present their self in a controlled manner) and the unconscious (since normalized social order limits the individuals' capacity to freely represent their self) state of mind.

Although framing is a continuous process of sense-making that does not necessarily involve the media, its appropriation has been widespread in the academic literature, and thus has prompted diverse definitions depending on the fields of study. For instance, communication scholars such as Gitlin (1980) define framing as "principles of selection, emphasis and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters" (p. 6). On the other hand, Entman (1993) considers framing as a process whereby people identify "some aspects of a perceived reality and

make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (p.52).

More recently, several researchers have argued for an *integrative* approach to framing, implying that news frames not only disseminate persuasive angles of news interpretation, but also the reasons as to why the circulated frames are of great significance (Tewksbury and Scheufele, 2009; Matthes and Kohring, 2008; Matthes, 2012; D’Angelo 2011; Shah et al., 2009). In addition, scholars such as D’Angelo (2011) see framing process as a dual concept where researchers tend to “bring together” various angles of news analyses to “fit into” a given conceptual frame of analysis. The former (bring together) “strives to slow down the proliferation of conceptual definitions of *frame* and *framing*”, while the latter (fit into) supposes that “a single study or even a whole research agenda accepts certain conceptual definitions of *frame* and *framing* and relies on specified theoretical constructs and mechanisms regarding frame building or framing effects” (D’Angelo, 2011: 356-358).

Despite the conceptual and methodological challenges surrounding the definitions of frames and framing process, a host of scholarship continues to appropriate framing within its body of research. In mediation and negotiation literature, framing is used to underscore the cognitive bargaining processes in which disputants weigh their gains and losses (Putnam and Holmer, 1992). Seen through this lens, framing reflects the way meaning is systematically generated through rationalized social values, underpinning the significance of *social cognition*²⁷. The salience of an occurrence, in this case, hinges on

27 In their book, *Social Cognition*, published in 1991, Fiske and Taylor define social cognition as a metatheoretical approach whose focus is on the mental processes that guide social interaction. Social

what Benford and Snow (2000) call “frame amplification”: this happens when the perceived values or beliefs are idealized, embellished, clarified or invigorated, all of which make certain contents more salient than others.

Frame amplification can also be characterized by a mixture of present and past experiences that people have had with regard to different issues. This may weigh on people’s attitudes and perceptions of a conflict, and what is at stake. On this note, Pinkely (1990) writes,

Conflict situations elicit a well-defined cognitive structure based on past experiences with conflict as well as present concerns and interests. These cognitive structures or interpretations of conflict (referred to here as *dimensions of conflict frame*) may then guide disputant behavior, strategy selection, outcome concerns, and evaluations of the other party (Pinkely, 1990: 117).

Schweitzer, Dechurch, and Gibson (2005) make a similar point by declaring that “competitively framed negotiators tend to perceive their dispute as one in which one party gains at the other’s expense, [while] cooperatively framed negotiators tend to perceive their dispute as an opportunity to create an integrative agreement that benefits both parties” (p. 2124). Not only do these assumptions acclaim the centrality of language as a symbolic representation, they also underscore the challenges of frames as a congruent reflection of social or individual values. In this light, framing is regarded as a communicative and integrative process necessitating a thorough understanding of rhetorical structures.

Generally, media and communication scholars associate framing with the selective processes that accompany the creation and circulation of news content

cognition relates to “how ordinary people think about people and how they think they think about people” (p. 1). In other words, one’s social behavior hinges on motivations and intensions as guided by cognitive processes of perception.

(Dimitrova and Strömbäck, 2005). The notion of *priming* has also been coiled with framing to emphasize the fact both concepts involve the alteration of audience perception with regard to worldviews (Weaver, 2007; McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 1997). This is based on the assumption that media representations are, above all, controlled narratives whose directions are likely to influence the public's opinion in a positive or negative way depending on their representational aptitudes (Simons, 2008; Lecheler and de Vreese, 2012).

Similar argument is raised by the proponents of Cultural Studies such as Hall (1997), who believe that language is not only able to construct meaning because it operates as a representational system, but it also serves as a vehicle by which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in a given culture. The central claim made is that media professionals “construct the symbolic representations of society that members of the public use to make sense of events and issues” (Bronstein, 2005: 785). Factors such as technological advancements, journalistic orientations, financial pressures, institutionalized sources and corporate interests, are indicative of some of the conditions that lead to slanted media frames (Matthes, 2012; D'Angelo, 2011; Entman, 2010; Matthes and Kohring, 2008).

In this light, media frames can broadly be understood as a schema of interpretation socially constructed through news story lines to influence audience perception of a particular event or phenomenon (Price, Tewksbury and Powers, 1997; Tewksbury and Scheufele, 2009). The story lines can take several forms such as texts, audio, video, and image. Framing has also been used in articulation with the *agenda-setting* theory to emphasize the cognitive processes by which the audience interprets and

understands media narratives (McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 1997), and as Hall (1997:3) puts it, “meaning is what gives us a sense of our own identity, of who we are and with whom we belong.”

If media frames influence the perceptions that people have with regard to their understanding of worldviews, then one can argue that social order also hinges on the kinds of narratives adopted by the media to characterize a given occurrence. Studies that examine the relationship between media and social identity seem to lean towards this direction (Volkmer, 2008; Caliendo and McIlwain, 2006). The main argument is that an individual’s social identity is constructed based on his group or collective frames of reference (Avraham and First, 2010; Brummans et al., 2008; Forsberg, 2008), a self-categorization process likely to shift group boundaries depending on situational circumstances (Pietikäinen, 2008; Arnold and Schneider, 2007; Deuze, 2006). The result is that the self-categorization process, as portrayed by the media, informs intergroup interactions whether positively or negatively.

In security studies, for instance, the emphasis is often put on how war or conflict narratives are perceived and/or received by the public (Norris, Kern and Just, 2003; El-Nawawy and Powers, 2010; Gardner, 2001; Mellor, 2009; Hallahan, 1999), and how the narratives in question influence the patterns and directions of conflicts (Roth, 1992; Hamelink, 2008; Galtung, 2002; Wolfsfeld, 2004; Lynch and McGoldrick, 2005; Howard, 2003). Most of these studies seem to collectively agree on the fact that, in ethnically heterogeneous states, media framing is likely to lead to the escalation or de-escalation of social conflicts depending on how the media represent a group or a coalition of groups.

In Europe, the war in the former Yugoslavia was a good example indicating the significance and the likelihood of media narratives, which influenced the direction of intergroup conflict. Scholars such as Ignatieff (1997), Sandole (1999) and Slattery (1994) have argued that media's categorization of the Serbs, Croats and Bosnians as distinct ethnic entities (in and out groups) contributed to the violence between these groups. The case of Indonesia and India are also exemplary. According to Marthoz (2003), communal conflict in Indonesia and religious-based conflicts in India are, to some extent, products of the media's insensitivity with regard to the claims raised by the minority groups.

One event that drew much attention in the past decade, as far as media and conflict framing is concerned, was the coverage of 9/11 and the discourses on "War on Terror" (Simons, 2008; Dimitrova and Strömbäck, 2005; Christie, 2006). The "War on Terror" prompted criticism over the so-called "institutionalized sources", where "military journalists" provided regular briefings on an on-going war, based on the information that the warring states provided (Altheide, 2009; Kellner, 2004; Volkmer, 2008), yet these states were already complicit in that given combat. Altheide (2009), for instance, believes that the invasion of Iraq by the Pentagon was based on a "crime-related discourse of fear", and that American news channels framed 9/11 as assaults on the Americans by the Arabs. This implies that media framing, particularly in situations of conflict, is profoundly influenced by the cultures of proximity, which creates a symbolic community based on intended outcomes (Hemelink, 2008; Kolmer and Semetko, 2009).

This brief literature on media and conflict framing review points to the duality inherent in the media framing process, especially in conflict situations. That is, there is need to understand the intricate relationship between framing as a persuasive discourse

involving strategic intensions of disputants and framing as a communicative processes exemplifying interpretive orientations (Kaufman and Smith, 1999; Benford and Snow, 2000). As an interpretative tool, media framing can serve as mental maps that help people make sense of different situations based on worldviews and their daily life experiences. As such, the framing process provides disputants with the means to negotiate their perceived differences in a manner that reflects their collective ideals.

From a strategic viewpoint, media framing hinges on persuasive discourses aimed at rallying opinions towards a particular cause, whether negative or positive (Kaufman and Smith, 1999). Perceived this way, the media may frame issues based on the interests shared by a particular group of people at the expense of the others. In this regard, the media are essentially a polarizing medium, as it can be seen as a threat given its hegemonic power to blacken or distort one's image for self-serving purposes (El-Nawawy and Powers, 2010). Indeed, "slanted framing results from the interaction of real world developments, cultural norms, and journalistic decision rules with the sometimes proficient and other times maladroit efforts of competing elites to manage the news" Entman (2010: 389).

Despite the rich theoretical and analytical perspectives that the literature on media and conflict framing offers, little attention has been paid to the conditions that lead to attitudinal changes with regard to the audiences of vernacular radios, yet these radios have been at the height of politically driven conflicts in many multiethnic states, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Although there is a host of literature on media and social conflicts in Africa (Tomaselli and Muller, 2001; Posner, 2007; Anderson, 2005; Anderson and Lochery, 2008; Ouchou, 2002; Wimmer, 1997; Okoth and Ogot, 2000), the

majority of these studies emphasize ethno-political stigmatization and how it affects the politics of intergroup cohesion. While it is true that such categorization may lead to the escalation or de-escalation of conflicts, little attention is still paid to the frame-building process and how it impacts intergroup attitudinal shifts in situations of conflict.

In light of the forgoing discussions, the analytical framework guiding this study builds on Azar's (1990) theory of *Protracted Social Conflict* (PSC) by integrating media framing process, perceived as equally essential in the understanding of social conflicts, to unpack the discourses that surrounded the accommodation of intergroup conflicts in the events leading to the 2007/08 conflicts in Kenya. The goal is to illuminate the degree to which intergroup categorization in vernacular radios, coupled with other variables advanced by the PSC model such as lack of economic opportunity, influenced the direction and patterns of this particular conflict as well as the attitudes of the study's target groups.

The next section looks specifically at the proposed theoretical framework guiding this study that integrates media framing, a possible fifth cluster, to Azar's (1990) four-cluster theory of *Protracted Social Conflicts*.

3.3. Proposed Analytical Framework

The proposed analytical framework builds on media research and security studies literature. The blend between these poles of research is aimed at bringing into the open the salience of media narratives in socially protracted conflicts, an aspect that has often

been downplayed or ignored in the mainstream conflict transformation and peace-building approaches (as briefly discussed below). Essentially, my analytical framework builds on Eduard Azar's (1990) four-cluster theory of *Protracted Social Conflicts* (PSC) to integrate media framing as an equally crucial aspect of socially protracted conflicts, especially in multiethnic societies such as Kenya.

3.3.1. Protracted Social Conflicts (PSC)

Essentially, the PSC model posits that the understanding of protracted social conflicts stretches beyond internal and external dichotomies that have emphasized overt conflicts over covert ones, a trend that has, according to Azar, clouded over the underlying forces characterizing such conflicts. In his point of view, protracted social conflicts present unique properties whose manifestations strike at the centre of developmental needs, especially in multiethnic societies where their occurrence is sporadic. Given these patterns of conflict, Azar argues that protracted social conflicts have become the main challenge for national cohesion in developing countries since the end of the Second World War and Cold War. He writes,

Many conflicts currently active in the underdeveloped parts of the world are characterized by a blurred demarcation between internal and external sources and actors. Moreover, there are multiple causal factors and dynamics, reflected in changing goals, actors and targets. Finally, these conflicts do not show clear starting and terminating points...[As such] protracted social conflicts occur when communities are deprived of satisfaction of their basic needs on the basis of the communal identity. However, the deprivation is the result of a complex causal chain involving the role of the state and the pattern of international linkages. Furthermore, initial conditions (colonial legacy, domestic historical setting, and the multi-communal nature of the society) play important roles in shaping the genesis of protracted social conflict (Azar, 1990: 6-12).

This endemic challenge posed by protracted conflicts, according to him, is not only explained by the socio-cultural-ethnic relationships that took shape following the disintegration of colonial ties, but also by the increasing underdevelopment that continues to shrink economic opportunities thus leading to struggles over the limited resources.

Azar and Moon (1986: 395) suggested that social conflicts become protracted when: a) there is a stretch in temporal factor, b) there are fluctuations with regard to the intensity and frequency of a given dispute, c) the conflict spreads from one place to another; d) there is a somewhat partial stability; e) the termination of the conflict becomes uncertain and lastly, f) internal and external sources of the conflict in question become imprecise. Given these conditions, Azar (1990) proposed the PSC approach to map out the key dimensions of such conflicts.

Fundamentally, the PSC model foresees the genesis of social conflicts as a fourfold communicative product of various conditions: communal content, deprivation of human needs, governance and the state's role, and international linkages. First, Azar posits that *communal content* is based on the premise that protracted conflicts are commonly identity-based (ethnicity, race, culture, religion etc.) and that the “disarticulation between the state and society as a whole” explains the rigid correlation between the state and identity groups, especially in multi-communal societies where, according to him, colonial legacy has created a problematic relationship between the state machinery (controlled by a small identity/ethnic group or a coalition of group identities) and other social groups whose needs have been neglected by the state machinery.

In this way, the degree of cultural heterogeneity in a society is likely to influence the manner in which different identity groups accommodate each other, especially in the redistribution of state power. On the one hand, Azar's communal content appears to borrow from social psychology where individual needs and demands are regarded as products of social processes (Kaufman, 2006; Prins, 2005). On the other hand, it draws from social identity research where conflicts are linked to the complexities surrounding the notion of identity (Rothschild and Olson, 2001; Rothman and Olson, 2001; Brown, 1996; Keating and Knight, 2004; McRae, 1983).

The second cluster, *deprivation of human needs*, underscores the fact that protracted conflicts are fanned by need deprivation and the failure, by the incumbent authority, to address these grievances in a responsive manner. In this view, Azar infers that need deprivation fosters collective action for they are "non-negotiable" (where needs are not limited to political access, economic development and cultural recognition). He argues that the ideological apparatus manipulated by political interests and antagonistic group relationships embedded in historic realities may generate mistrust between different communities and thus lead to attacks and counter-attacks. This cluster seems to be grounded on the human need theory assumptions highlighting the centrality of material and non-material satisfactions, and thus supports the studies emphasizing greed and/or fear for the future as key sources of armed conflicts in developing nations (Collier, 2001; Lake and Rothschild, 1996).

Thirdly, Azar argues that *governance and the state's role* are perceived as key elements of contentment or discontentment of individual and communal demands. For him, the state is considered as a body with the mandate to protect, cater to, lead and

govern all groups peacefully or by force. As such, states that fail to provide its citizens with structures deemed necessary for individual and collective emancipation (for reasons not limited to corruption, authoritarianism and ineffectiveness) are likely to face protracted conflicts.

In this perspective, the author presumes that in the newly formed nation-states (mainly post-colonial states), the Western liberal leadership model has failed, and that “dominant identity groups or a coalition of hegemonic groups” have monopolized key political institutions and used the state machinery for their own political gains while leaving the needs of other groups unaddressed. In this regard, protracted conflicts may characterize power struggles between various communities and therefore generate security dilemmas (Posen, 1993; Brown, 1993; Galtung, 1996; Galtung et al., 2002).

Lastly, Azar presumes that *international linkages* describing politico-economic relationships around the globe have put both the stronger and weaker states on the same level of economic competition. This relationship, according to him, has not only created economic dependency, but also redefined military relationships and cross-border interests. Consequently, the sovereignty of weaker states has become more fragile for their socio-political institutions are greatly influenced by the international system.

This suggests that the politics of control or co-optation of various conflicts can be illuminated by looking at the international linkages such as the global economic system. Indeed, Miall et al. (2005) argue that external military intervention in a conflict situation may raise several questions with regard to civil-military relations for there are instances where external actors are perceived as “enemies of the reconstruction process.”

Although the PSC model has well been received in peace-building literature as a relatively comprehensive and inclusive approach given its four clusters that are regarded as preconditions of protracted social conflicts (Wimmer, 2004; Keating and Knight, 2004; Volkmer, 2008; Entman, 2008; Hamelink, 2008; Nyamnjoh, 2005), the model has also been criticized on multiple levels. Cordula Reinmann, a feminist scholar, argues that the model is gender-insensitive as it fails to account for family and/or power-relations that may surface prior, during or after conflicts²⁸. Others have also pointed out the generality of the clusters (Byman, 2002; Galtung, 1996; Galtung et. *al.*, 2002; Lederach, 1997; Sandole, 1999).

As a result, modest attempts to explain prolonged social conflicts continue to emerge. For instance, Galtung (1996) critiques Azar's model on the basis that conflicts are a transformational process with both positive and negative manifestations, which cannot be perceived solely as a negative occurrence. For Galtung, conflict process may take a series of steps: articulation or disarticulation, conscientization or de-conscientization, simplification or complexification, polarization or de-polarization, and escalation or de-escalation. In this view, conflict is regarded as a product of the socio-economic structure and relational properties eminent in these structures. Galtung therefore argues that conflict *per se* is latent in people's behaviours or attitudes, and that by addressing these contradictions (or asymmetric relationships), such conflicts can be mitigated or transformed in a positive manner.

²⁸ Cordula, Reinmann, "Why are Violent, Intra-state Conflicts Protracted? Looking at Azar's Model of Protracted Social Conflict from a Gender-sensitive Perspective." Accessed October 3, 2011. <http://www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk/dl/AZAR.pdf>

Concurrently, Sandole (1997/1999) argues for a conflict theory poised on what he calls a *Three-Pillar Framework* (3PF) that, according to him, provides a deeper understanding of the underlying issues in conflicts. Pillar one identifies the characteristics of any given conflict (elements of conflict such as parties, issues, setting etc.), pillar two locates the causes and conditions of the conflict (individual, societal, international or global level). Pillar three identifies intervention strategies (confrontational or collaborative processes). His approach primarily suggests what transforms conflicts from one stage to another.

Another modest approach to conflict transformation is the work conducted by Lederach (1997). For Lederach, conflict is essentially a pyramidal transformational process involving the shift from war-system to peace-system with structural readjustments at multiple levels: elites and decision-makers, mid-level leaders (such as churches and social organizations), and community leaders. Time consciousness is therefore central to the transformations that occur at all levels. Lederach's approach to conflict transformation is not only analytical but also hermeneutic as it stretches the understanding of conflicts beyond actors directly involved in any conflict situation. This has helped to widen the scope of theories seeking to examine conflict at intervention level.

In this light, Fisher's (2007) *Contingency Model for Third Party Intervention* builds on Interactive Conflict Resolution (Fisher, 1993/2001) and Problem-Solving Workshop (Burton, 1990/1997) models while perceiving conflict as "a mix of objective and subjective elements, with the latter gaining in importance as conflict escalates, and that both aspects must be dealt with to achieve resolution" (p. 313). Essentially, Fisher's

revised contingency model examines conflict in four stages: *discussion* (as conflict escalates direct discussions are replaced by interpretation of deeds), *polarization* (relationships also shift from those built on respect and trust, to those that are disrespectful and untrustworthy), *segregation* (perceived outcomes are negotiated in terms of defensive competitions based on win-loose dynamics), and *destruction* (actions taken are aimed at hurting the other party).

Other scholars who have worked extensively on conflict theories include Wimmer (2004) who perceives post-war conflicts as a product of a “defrosting effect”. This, according to him, implies that the “authoritarian rule that was preserved through superpower rivalry melts away,” a factor that continues to generate intergroup hatred given the competitively articulated claims over self-determination and political autonomy. For instance, Wimmer supposes that the countries initially allied to the former Soviet-bloc are “simply too heterogeneous in ethno-linguistic or ethno-religious terms to function as ‘normal’ nation states²⁹.”

Furthermore, Wimmer (2004) believes that the globalization process has disintegrated geopolitical boundaries, exposing people to foreign structures of socio-political organization that may not necessarily match what they are used to. This assumption forms the foundation of Huntington’s (1996) argument suggesting that the “new” world order is due to the clash of different civilizations, in which religious affiliations define relational bonds across cultures.

²⁹ The author alludes to the idea that the countries initially allied to the Soviet-Bloc have come up with their own path to national self-assertion while attempting to merge various homogenous states. The normal functioning is thus linked to the fact that Western liberal models have often failed to sustain in such settings.

Equally, Byman (2002) infers that contemporary conflict transformation literature can be classified into four broad categories: a) those emphasizing *ethnic security dilemma* (i.e. conflict occurs when certain groups feel threatened), b) those highlighting *status concerns* (i.e. conflicts occur due to fear of subordination or dominance by other groups, in both material and cultural ways), c) those putting emphasis on *hegemonic ambitions* (i.e. conflicts seen as a product of competitive socio-political values, where a group or a coalition of groups pushes their views to the rest of the groups), and lastly d) those underlining *the aspirations of elites* (emphasizing the role of elites who may play on ethnic fears to ascend to or maintain power).

From this brief overview, it is evident that mainstream theories of conflict resolution (and transformation) not only provide a macro perspective with regard to the issues and actors involved in conflict situations, they are also suggestive as to what peace-builders need to take into account before designing intervention strategies. In spite of the rich analytical, interpretative and prescriptive nature of these approaches, they seem to ignore or downplay one key aspect of social conflicts: media narratives. That is, they do not explicitly explain how the perceived differences or incompatibilities, eminent in conflict situations, transform from their latent nature to overt manifestations (and vice versa).

3.3.2. Rationale of Integrating Media Framing Within the PSC Model

The proposed analytical framework of this dissertation is a modest attempt to reaffirm media narratives as an indispensable aspect in understanding protracted social

conflicts, especially in multiethnic societies where vernacular media continue to grow following the competing appeals and demands of different ethno-linguistic groups. The rationale is that social conflicts are a mix of complex elements, and that media narratives are likely to determine the patterns and direction of such conflicts.

This is because “people seek information about the crisis and evaluate the cause of the event and the organizational responsibility for the crisis based on media coverage of the crisis” (Gower and An, 2009: 107). Volkmer (2008) also argues that “for decades, conflict events [have] shaped and reinforced the national public through a particular culture of national proximity” (p. 91). It is this culture of proximity that, according to Forsberg (2008), has been politicized in a manner that polarizes multiethnic societies. He writes,

States characterized by ethnic polarization are confronted with greater uncertainty regarding the relative strength of groups and are, hence, especially susceptible to conflict contagion. [...] Once a group becomes inspired by events in the conflict state, it is more likely to act on this inspiration process if it perceives a reasonable chance of winning a violent confrontation” (Forsberg, 2008: 287).

The question, therefore, is not whether the media can influence the patterns or directions of socially protracted conflicts, but rather, to what extent can they lead to the escalation or de-escalation of such conflicts? In fact, several studies have demonstrated (mainly in a negative manner) how various media have been exploited by different social and political groups to stigmatize intergroup relations (Gathigi, 2009; Anderson, 2008; Harding, 2006; Tehranian, 2002; Jeffres, 2000; Forsberg, 2008; Hamelink, 2008).

In Asia, the case of Burma, characterized by civil wars since the country’s independence in 1948 from the British, is exemplary. The attempt by the opposition

media to rally voices against military rule has only increased intermittent violence in the country (Brooten, 2006; Smith, 1999; Steinberg, 2001). On this note, Brooten (2008) writes,

Burmese opposition media are many and varied yet have in common an opposition to the political landscape in Burma and a desire to oust the military and end the ongoing violence [...] [They] can usefully be divided into two broad categories. The first is composed of a few well-funded, widely read, and increasingly professional independent media that are “unmarked” in terms of ethnic identification. These media include *The Irrawaddy* (in English and recently Burmese) and *New Era Journal* (in Burmese). They cover the activities of a wide variety of groups in Burmese society and address important issues in international news, especially if they concern Burma in any way. The second broad category that has developed, especially since the mid-1990s, are those media identified with the ethnic nationalities, which I will call *ethnic media*. These are produced primarily from locations along the border, although not exclusively, because there are also many ethnic-identified publications printed in Thai cities and by groups in exile, and a myriad of online sources maintained from outside Burma (Brooten, 2006: 361-362).

In the Middle East, the wavering Palestinian-Israeli relationship has been linked to media narratives exploiting identity symbols characterizing the conflict as Arab/Islamic and Israeli/Jewish ideological confrontations (Shinar, 2003). In essence, Shinar argues that the media continue to assume key roles in international relations, whether as catalysts or peace-brokers. He argues: “since late 2000, most explanations given by media about the changes in Palestinian-Israeli relations have dealt with the failure to reconcile rather than with the deeper roots of the conflict” (p. 8).

In Latin America, El Salvador’s *Radio Venceremos* was accused of providing a rebel group with a “voice” to indict the Salvadorian army in the murdering Jesuit priests, sparking civil war. The *Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional* (FMLN), a rebel group is believed to have exploited *Radio Venceremos* to publicly accuse the

Salvadorian army of murdering the six Jesuit priests, a claim that continues to hamper peace processes in that region (Colbert, 2006; Consalvi, 2010).

Europe's Yugoslav civil wars involving the Serbs, Croats and Bosnians were also attributed to media effects (Wimmer et al., 2004). Characterized by sporadic conflicts along the ethnic compositions of the former Yugoslavia, this conflict became one of the worst and complex wars Europe had witnessed since the end of World Wars (Ignatieff, 1997; Sandole, 1999; Miall et al., 2001; Lederach, 1997; Keating and Knight, 2004; Lake and Rothchild, 1998; Wimmer et al., 2004).

In Africa, one of the most cited cases is the 1994 genocide in Rwanda where *Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM) and *Kangura* press called for killings of *Tutsis* and *Hutu moderates* (Frère, 2009; Thomson, 2007; Chrétien, et al., 1996; Karega, 2004; Kuperman, 2000). In DR Congo, *La Voix du Patriote* was circulating hate messages that may have led to the escalation of the conflict into a civil war (Willame, 1999). In Burundi, *Le Témoin-Nyabuserongo* also contributed to the escalation of the conflicts in 1993 (Kaburahe, 2004; Gilboa, 2002).

The civil wars in Uganda's *Acholiland* have also been attributed to media narratives that portray these groups as enemies of the state (Ogenga, 2002; Atkinson, 1999). The case of post-apartheid South Africa also illustrates the significance of media narratives in reinforcing reconciliatory or vengeful messages (Krabill, 2001). The move by the Kenyan government to ban live media, mainly vernacular radios, during 2007-08 conflicts (Zuckerman, 2009; Makinen and Kuira, 2008; Onguny, 2012; Onyebadi, 2008) also illustrates the significant role of media in conflict situations.

Although many of these examples focus on the negative ramifications of media narratives, the media can also transform conflicts from a destructive nature into a constructive dialogue between the adversaries (Hallin, 2006; El-Nawawy and Powers, 2010; Shinar, 2003; Roth, 1992; Lake and Rothchild, 1998; Wolfsfeld, 2004; Tehranian, 2002; Gilboa, 2002; Rothman and Olson, 2001; Kuperman, 2000; Hoddie, 2006; Avraham and First, 2010; Davidson, 1993; Nyamnjoh, 2005; Gardner, 2001; Kadende-Kaiser, and Kaiser, 2003).

In this view, social conflicts can be seen as a product of shifting perceptions inherent in the media framing process. That is, the “negativeness” or “positiveness” of a given conflict situation often hinges on how the competing claims (generating conflicts) are framed (whether in a *differentiated* or *concerted* manner) by the media targeting specific interest or cultural groups (Onguny, 2012).

In this perspective, Shinar (2003) proposes three ways in which media narratives can transform a violent conflict into a peaceful process. That is, a) “as participants-at-large” the media can be involved in the exchanges involving reporters, policymakers, and field personnel engaged in the search for peace, b) the media can also act as a catalyst as they may provide a platform for international dialogue or for shuttle diplomacy [and lastly] c), “as diplomatic brokers, the media conduct and sometimes initiate international mediation, in ways that often blur the distinctions between the roles of reporters and diplomats” (p. 5).

This concurs with Gilboa’s (2002) assumption that the media can serve as diplomatic tools in violent conflicts for they can open structures of communication often blocked by misperceptions and thus de-polarize groups engaged in conflicts. Gilboa cites

the *Station Ijambo* in Burundi that, in 1995, used radio forums as a means through which Hutu-Tutsi misperceptions were “corrected.”

Given these trends, one cannot undermine the centrality of media narratives when seeking to constructively understand the competing claims inherent in socially protracted social conflicts, and more so, in fragile multiethnic societies prone to such conflicts. While Azar’s (1990) PSC model is still one of the most influential theories in peace-building scholarship, the media aspect is still missing, and yet media narratives, as discussed above, are at the centre of many socially protracted conflicts. For this reason, Azar’s PSC model could be substantially strengthened by integrating media narratives as a fifth cluster to explain the emerging trends of socially protracted conflicts in multiethnic states (Onguny, 2012).

This is based on multiple reasons, adapted from the work of Shinar, 2003; Roth, 1992 and Schrich and Bratic, 2007³⁰. First, as *bridge or constituency builders*, the kinds of media narratives adopted may reinforce or weaken relationship bonds that have existed for a long period. This is because the media shapes the audience’s positioning with regard to the “cultural other.” As Hamelink (2008) argues, “many societies maintain levels of stability because they employ rituals, customs and conventions that enable their members to engage in social interactions without having detailed information about who they really are” (p. 79). By condemning violent behaviour and promoting a positive image of other groups, the media may help in constructing positive relationships between the disputing groups, and ultimately reduce the degrees of intergroup polarization (Gripsrud, 2002; El-Nawawy and Powers, 2010; Mellor, 2009; Altheide, 2007).

³⁰<http://www.gppac.net/uploads/File/Programmes/Awareness%20Raising/Issue%20paper%20Media%20and%20Conflict%20Prevention%20-%20final%20version.pdf>, accessed April 30 2009.

Secondly, as *participatory tools or mediators*, some media may choose to embrace frames that privilege or avoid certain ways of engaging with the public. That is, the media can provide a forum for discussion between conflicting parties. However, this must be dealt with carefully because it may lead to the escalation or de-escalation of conflicts depending on the people or parties that choose to participate in these forums (Kellner, 2004; Anderson, 1983; Curtis, 2000; Roth, 1992; Davidson, 1993; Carruthers, 2000; Gardner, 2001; Wolfsfeld, 2004). Other members of the public can also be given a chance to ask questions directly to the opposing parties, a factor that might unblock communication between the disputing parties, and perhaps provide new insights into the root causes of conflicts. In this regard, it might be interesting to look at how audiences react to the voices salient in media narratives.

Thirdly, as *information providers or conduits*, the analyses and documentation of conflicts by the media, whether critically or in a distorted manner, have far-reaching implications on how the public understands an ongoing conflict. As seen in the previous section, the proponents of the U&G theory argued that media audiences are likely to consume media messages that gratify their predetermined needs or appeals (Rubin, 2002). Equally, *agenda-setting* theorists such as McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (1997) claimed that media messages are likely to have influence on the salience of certain phenomena by rendering them more visible to the public. This concurs with other studies emphasizing interpretative properties of media narratives (McChesney, 2008; Hall and Meeks, 2007; Hall, 1997; Campbell, 2000; Rubin, 2002; McQuail, 1994; Williams, 2009; Kellner, 2004; Berkowitz 2010), suggesting that selective reporting often leads to slanted news analysis (Entman, 2010). As such, it may be important to examine the conditions

leading to media bias in an ongoing conflict. An elaborate analysis of such conditions is presented in chapter six.

Lastly, as *policy and diplomatic initiators*, certain ways of solving or mitigating conflict may be privileged or underprivileged by the media. That is, the media may be regarded as third party sources providing information that can be deemed important when designing intervention strategies or peace-building processes in strife-ridden societies. This is particularly true as the media may unearth some of the hidden facts about a conflict. Indeed, a host of scholarship has demonstrated that the kinds of frames used to characterize events have far-reaching effects on the politics of conflict intervention or co-optation (Norris, Kern and Just, 2003; El-Nawawy and Powers, 2010; Gardner, 2001; Mellor, 2009; Avraham and First, 2010; Brummans et al., 2008; Somerville, 2008; Simons, 2008; Pietikäinen, 2008; Arnold and Schneider, 2007; Dimitrova and Strömbäck, 2005; Gibson, 2005).

In this perspective, diplomatic initiatives also hinge on the kinds of narratives embraced by the media in the early stages of intervention, for this may either break the deadlocks or build confidence between the adversaries, or further intergroup polarization. In other words, the coverage of diplomatic sessions and the exchange of this information between the adversaries may help in transforming the conflict from its destructive nature into constructive processes.

The factors highlighted above underscore the significance of media framing in transforming socially protracted conflict situations, whether positively or negatively. The revised theory of *Protracted Social Conflict* is thus used in this study to try and capture

the contours of the 2007/08 conflicts and the accommodation of intergroup claims via vernacular radios in Kenya.

Chapter Summary

This chapter looked at both the classic and contemporary theories that describe individuals' interactions with media products, including in situations of conflict. The chapter began by looking briefly at the classic theories relative to media and audience perceptions, where the debate centred on the notions of media hegemony and audiences' ability to selectively interact with the media messages that mirror their pre-established appeals and expectations. The central argument raised by the theorists examining media and audience perceptions is that the media messages have some influence on public opinion even though media reception can equally be moderated by the scepticism that media audiences have towards certain content.

The second section focused on media and conflict framing. The theories presented in this section imply that media frames can lead to the escalation or de-escalation of a given conflict depending on the kinds of narratives embraced by news organizations to represent a given occurrence. This is because media framing itself is a *communicative process* (since it involves a persuasive discourse intended to convince media audiences to support specific causes with well-envisioned end-results) and an *interpretive tool* (as it serves as vehicle by which audiences make sense of a given conflict, its causes and consequences).

The last section presented the proposed analytical framework guiding this study, where media framing is integrated to Azar's four-cluster theory of *Protracted Social Conflicts (PSC)*. The rationale is that mainstream theories in security studies have either ignored or downplayed the centrality of media narratives as an essential aspect of social conflicts. By integrating *media framing* as a fifth cluster, to Azar's PSC model, this study not only reaffirms the significance of media narratives in conflict processes, but it also emphasizes the need to draw from both the media and conflict theories when seeking to understand the contours and patterns of prolonged social conflicts, especially in multiethnic societies where the claims of cultural identity is very potent.

The next chapter will focus on the procedures and methods of data collection that were embodied in this study. The epistemological stance of this study is also discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I present the procedures that led to the data collection and analyses. The chapter is divided into three sections. First, I present the epistemological orientation of the study to shed light on the sampling procedures and data collection methods that were used. Secondly, I provide detailed descriptions of the methods in question. Lastly, I explain some of the processes related to data organization and management as well as ethnical considerations, all of which will serve to explain the challenges encountered during the fieldwork.

4.1. Epistemological Stance of the Study

Historically, various methods of inquiry have been used to give meaning to different events relating to human existence. Reasoning and logic have therefore been at the centre of many schools of thought investigating the process by which knowledge is generated and shared across time and space. This has often led to interrogations as to whether social realities are intrinsic or extrinsic.

On the one hand, some scholars have opted for *inductive reasoning* as the main path through which social phenomena can be transcended, thereby embracing a logic departing from specific facts to generalized conclusions with respect to the facts examined (Drew et al., 1996). Arguably, studies that subscribe to this epistemological

approach tend to be more flexible as they have less control over their object of study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008).

On the other hand, there are studies emphasizing *deductive reasoning* on grounds that it provides the most accurate means by which social and physical phenomena can be explained. This school of thought is grounded on the assumption that researchers should draw conclusions starting from general accounts to specific facts. Given this epistemological stance, deductive reasoning is believed to increase the researcher's ability to measure or quantify the proposed findings. The researcher holds a greater authority over the facts investigated as he/she can easily manipulate them to disambiguate his/her predetermined hypothesis, as a way of testing the validity of a theory (Marshall and Rossman, 1998).

With these two epistemologies, it can be argued that reasoning and logic are the key components of knowing, or fixing a belief as Kerlinger (1973) calls it. Indeed, Kerlinger breaks down this process into four main perceptions: tenacity, authority, *a priori*, and science. For him, knowing through *tenacity* is not only based on the assumption that beliefs are significant when seeking to generate meaning, but also “something is thought to be true because it has always been true” (cited by Drew et al., 1996). In this perspective, information or knowledge input tends to be minimal as there are pre-established truths about a given phenomenon.

However, fixing beliefs through *authority* emphasizes well-known personalities or entities as the main source of information. As such, the researcher does not have to consider other alternative sources. In other words, knowledge provided in this respect, will depend mainly on the person or the entity providing the information and the method

used by the person collecting the information. The *a priori* approach, on the other hand, emphasizes presumptions, rationalism and intrinsic knowledge, rather than empirical data. Lastly, scientifically generated knowledge relies on objective observation. Knowledge in this regard is externally situated. The person collecting the data needs to design methods that would make him/her access the specific knowledge researched. This requires the use of logic to formulate various propositions in a manner that they explicitly or accurately shed light on the possible alternatives³¹.

In this light, Drew et al. (1996) infer that methodology is intrinsically dependent on the nature of the research problems. For them, the creation of knowledge is twofold. On the one hand, it is based on *rationality* (positivist approach), emphasizing experimental and objective approaches to inquiry. This implies that the descriptions of social worlds follow a rationale based on a chain of causality. On the other hand, the creation of knowledge can be *empirical* (post-positivist approach), perceiving social realities as products of *socio-historic construction* rather than objectively preconceived truths. This also implies that the investigator is expected to gather factual data while measuring the patterns of their occurrence and also to blend the meanings that other human subjects give to these social realities (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009).

This study combines both the rational and empirical processes of knowledge to examine the conditions or production and reproduction of social conflicts in Kenya. In my view, this helps in providing a holistic and hermeneutic understanding of the 2007/08 conflicts. In essence, my epistemological approach to this inquiry was based on the assumptions that the understanding of such conflicts is neither an obvious procedure nor an easy task, but rather a thorough procedure necessitating a cross-methodological

³¹ See Kumar (2008). *Research methodology*. New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation.

approach to data collection and analysis. By virtue of its inclusive nature, mixed methodology takes into account both empiricism and rationalism.

As such, this study asserts that knowledge is not a fixed entity; rather, it is malleable, socially constructed, shared and context-oriented. Embodying this kind of epistemology also implies that the relationship established between the objects of this study and me, as a researcher, was continually interactive. This mutual influence was geared toward providing eclectic analyses rather than confining the results to a causal linearity. The methods adopted here were employed complementarily.

4.1.1. Other Factors that Determined the Choice of Data Collection

This study was not based on an ongoing event but a recent past occurrence. This means that a careful approach to data sampling and collection was necessary to account for the temporal discrepancy. Technically, in order to capture the details and dimensions of protracted conflicts in Kenya, it would have been necessary to study the patterns of such conflicts over a very long period, a factor that was limited by the time frame and resources allocated for this study. However, thorough documentary research was conducted not only to fill this temporal void, but also to understand the historical contingencies that shed light on the undercurrents of such conflicts in Kenya.

Similarly, I refined the scope of this study to emphasize the experiences lived by three distinct ethno-linguistic groups: Kalenjin, Luo and Kikuyu. As such, much of the documentary research also focused on these groups. This data supplemented the in-depth interviews that were conducted in the three locations of study: Eldoret (Kalenjin

majority), Kisumu (Luo majority) and Nyeri (Kikuyu majority). The objective of merging in-depth interviews with documentary research was aimed at overcoming this temporal disconnectedness.

Interviews conducted during the four months of fieldwork became an *organizing* framework for the data relative to documentary research that was already gathered. This explains why small samples were drawn from the three research locations to construct and test the inferences between dominant discourses on social conflicts in Kenya, such as ethnicity, and other underlying factors that are often ignored, such as territorial insecurity³². That is, in order to explore the logical inference between the shifting narratives characterizing the 2007/08 conflicts and the perceptions held by the study's target groups (following the information that they gathered from their respective radios), it was necessary to have direct contact with the human subjects who had been directly or indirectly involved in this conflict.

By selecting small samples from three distinct locations, my intention was to explore other dimensions of the conflict from the standpoint of the *victims*³³, rather than basing my study solely on what had been reported or written about them. This made it easier to tease out the linkages between the meanings generated by the respondents and those that were collected from various documents.

³² See chapter six for detailed analyses.

³³ The term "victim" is used in relation to the 2007/08 conflicts and how the ordinary people from the three locations of research, some of which were highly affected by the dispute, talked about this particular occurrence.

4.1.2. Choice of Research Sites

Although various ethnic groups were affected by the 2007/08 conflicts, the study only targeted three distinct ethno-linguistic groups: the Kalenjin, Luo, and Kikuyu. Various reports and scientific articles support the fact that these three groups were among those highly affected by the 2007/08 conflicts (Jamal and Deanne, 2008; Kalyango, 2008; Lynch, 2008; Somerville, 2009; Onyebadi, 2008). The first step was to identify the provinces in which the targeted groups represented the majority of the overall population. After identifying these provinces, I selected one town from each of the three provinces to represent each of my target groups³⁴. Three distinct ethno-linguistic locations, Kisumu, Nyeri and Eldoret, were purposively selected for this study. There were several reasons for choosing these locations.

Kisumu was appealing because the Luo, one of Kenya's major ethnic groups, remain the majority group. It is also close to Bondo town, home of Raila Odinga (also a Luo) who is the current Prime Minister of Kenya and the presidential contender in the contentious general elections in 2007. Odinga has also declared, once again, to vie for the presidency in the coming general elections (March 2013). Kisumu was also among the worse hit areas by the 2007/08 conflicts, and is often regarded as a base for the opposition politics since the split between Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's first president, and his then-vice president, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga (father of Raila Odinga), in 1966. According to the 2009 population census, Kisumu has an estimated population of 968,909, and is well served by major railway lines, airport, roads, and water, making it one of Kenya's economic hubs.

³⁴ See chapter one for a brief description of the targeted groups

Eldoret was selected because it is home for the majority of the Kalenjin, also one of Kenya's largest ethnic groups. Eldoret is close to Kabarnet, home to the former head of state, Daniel T. Arap Moi (a Kalenjin), who ruled Kenya for 24 years (1978- 2002), a period that saw Eldoret become one of Kenya's major economic footholds, given the creation of an international airport and a public university. Furthermore, Eldoret town was one of the hot spots during the 2007/08 conflicts. This is where the much-hyped footage, during the 2007/08 conflicts, of people burnt alive in a local church, Kenya Assemblies of God Church in Kiambaa, took place. The 2009 population census estimates the total population in Eldoret at 894,179. The town has reliable access to electricity, roads, phone services and Internet connectivity. Most recently, Eldoret North's Member of Parliament, William Ruto (also a Kalenjin) and a presidential hopeful in the coming general elections, has been indicted by the International Criminal Court in the alleged crimes against humanity committed during the 2007/08 conflicts.

Nyeri was suitable because it is located in the Central province, near Mount Kenya in the former *White Highlands*, and is mainly inhabited by the Kikuyu, Kenya's largest ethnic group according to the 2009 census – estimated at 693,558. Nyeri is also close to Othaya, home to Mwai Kibaki, the current President who was re-elected following the controversial elections in 2007. Kibaki hails from the Kikuyu group. The first President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta (also a Kikuyu), came from Gatundu, in Central province, a constituency now represented by his son, Uhuru Kenyatta, a presidential hopeful in the next elections, who is also facing charges of crimes against humanity following the 2007/08 conflicts. The town is well served by public transportation given

its proximity to Nairobi, the nation's capital, and has other reliable communication infrastructures such as phone and Internet services.

4.1.3. Selection of Participants and Sampling Methods

After the selection of research sites, I identified various locations where the respondents could easily be located and solicited for this inquiry. This included churches, schools, markets, and sports events. After introducing myself, I took down the names and contacts of those who were willing to take part in the study in order to arrange for a convenient time when they could be interviewed. Although everyone who was willing to take part in the inquiry was solicited for a possible interview, I embraced a *purposive non-probability* sampling method to further refine my sample size based on convenience and the objectives of the study.

Sampling techniques may fall under two categories: probability and non-probability (Berg, 2007; Babbie, 2002; Rossi, 1994). In probability sampling, respondents or study subjects are selected at random in order to give every subject the opportunity to take part in the inquiry. Conversely, non-probability emphasizes the selection of samples based on convenience and purposeful endeavours. While researchers are able to invoke some levels of judgment, based on knowledge and rationale of the study, to refine their samples in non-probability sampling, randomized selections are conducted in probability sampling to give everyone a fair chance of participating.

Although probability sampling is often believed to be the most unbiased way of choosing participants as it is more representative of the general population (Drew et al.,

1996; Marshall, and Rossman, 1998; Denzin, and Lincoln, 2000), this does not mean that non-probability sampling is flawed. Many studies have indicated the significance of such sampling methods when dealing with topics that require in-depth analyses. Scholars such as Kerlinger (1976) already argued that purposive non-probability sampling can be “necessary and unavoidable [and that] their weaknesses can be mitigated to some extent by using knowledge, expertise and care in selecting sample and by replicating studies with different samples” (p. 129).

Patton (2002) goes further to suggest that purposive non-probability samplings are often chosen because they are information rich and illuminative. As such, they offer “useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest, [as such] sampling are aimed at insight about the phenomenon, not empirical generalization of a sample to a population” (ibid. p. 40). In the same perspective, Merrigan and Huston (2004) point out that “randomization may not be a practical or desirable way to collect evidence about some research questions” (p.43). Essentially, purposeful non-probability sampling helps the researchers generate samples from the population they are interested in studying because it “includes subjects or elements selected for specific characteristics or qualities and eliminates those who fail to meet these criteria” (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006: 91-2).

Given the complexity characterizing social conflicts, the focus of this study, purposeful non-probable sampling was deemed more relevant based on predetermined conditions that reflected the objectives of this research. This means that conflict is envisioned here as a complex process whose contours are multidimensional, and thus can neither be reduced to a few discrete variables nor be understood through linear cause-effect relationships.

This explains why I purposefully chose the three research sites and target groups. This followed defined demographic factors such as gender, age and education level. For instance, not only did all respondents need to have completed at least primary school, they were also required to be between ages 18 and 65. Comprehensive knowledge of English was also necessary given that all the interviews were conducted in English to avoid translated materials that might not necessarily reflect what respondents alluded to “in their own words”.

Regarding the sample size, 60 respondents were targeted for in-depth interviews from the three research sites: 20 respondents per research site (10 men, 10 women). The interviews were then complemented by another set of in-depth interviews with key respondents, selected based on their profession and involvement in the fields of media or peace-building. A total of 12 key respondents were targeted. Before the interviews, an oral consent³⁵ was read to participants so that they could familiarize themselves with the objectives of this research. This provided them with the option to accept or to decline the interview. All the interviews were also recorded to make sure that the information provided was fully captured to increase the accuracy of the analyses.

Regarding the response rate from the three research locations, 50 respondents were interviewed out of the 60 initially targeted. This is because some of the respondents either terminated the interview before addressing all the questions or declined to participate in the inquiry for personal reasons at the very last minute. In addition, some of the unrecorded interviews were discarded because they were unclear or incomplete, often because the respondents were talking too fast thus making it difficult to take notes.

³⁵ See the appendices, item “i”

An unequal number of respondents from each site was also noted: 18 in Kisumu; 17 in Eldoret; and 15 in Nyeri. The response rate of the key participants was relatively high. Out of the 12 initially targeted, 10 managed to complete the interview. Out of the 10, one respondent decided to terminate the interview due to personal reasons. This means that 9 out of 12 interviews were fully integrated in this category.

Overall, 59 interviews were used in this study: 50 participants from the three locations of study and 9 key respondents.

4.2. Methods of Data Collection

As discussed previously, this study relied mostly on qualitative methods of data collection. Although the use of both qualitative and quantitative research can provide a more elaborate understanding of any given event, this study encompasses qualitative methods as it is mostly interested in exploring the perceptions that various groups had on the 2007/08 conflicts in relation to vernacular radio narratives.

According to Paluck (2010:62), “qualitative methods of investigation are best equipped to explore the meanings of the behavior in the context of the study, possible social and political dynamics by which the behavior is produced, ripple effects, and so forth.” In a similar vein, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) believe that qualitative methods are more relevant when used to understand the undercurrents of a given social phenomenon, as there is more emphasis put on the meanings that people bring rather than the researcher’s thoughts *a priori*. In this regard, qualitative research can be seen as a multi-

method involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Patton, 2002; Drew et al. 1998).

It is in this light that I found it worthwhile to explore the perspectives of target groups while inductively assessing possible links with the documentary research data gathered before and during my fieldwork. In addition, my epistemological orientation, discussed in the earlier paragraphs, served to deepen my interest in exploring qualitative methods. I perceive conflicts as a product of *multilevel* interactions involving a complex chain of interdependencies between variables occurring across time. This calls for the immersion into details and specifics of conflict processes to unfurl the patterns of such conflicts.

This not only explains why I opted for cross-methodology, it also exemplifies my strong conviction that understanding such conjectures cannot simply be narrowed to the manipulation of quantifiable measurements; rather, it should be deeply embedded in the interactions between various socio-historical contingents. Qualitative approach to data collection was thus deemed more relevant, although quantitative data was also integrated in the study.

Specifically, documentary research, observation and in-depth interviews were used as part of the qualitative methods. Articulation methodology was equally used within the Cultural Studies' perspective to tease out the linkages between the data gathered through qualitative methods, and by extension, quantitative data. Below is a detailed description of how each method was used in the study.

4.2.1. Documentary Research

This study examined a conflict that was not active at the time of my fieldwork. Conducting a thorough documentary research on the conflict (and past conflicts) was therefore one of the ways in which I mitigated this temporal disconnectedness. This was done in two phases, both involving an extensive research on the existing literature related to ethnic conflicts in Kenya (and sub-Saharan Africa). Various documents such as journals, books, articles, policy briefings, official reports, online documents, websites, statistical data, research and conference report were consulted to obtain related information.

The first round of documentary research was conducted mainly in five libraries in Montreal (Canada): Université de Montréal, Concordia University, University du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), McGill University, and finally Bibliothèque et Archives Nationales du Québec (BANQ). At this stage, I targeted secondary data to contextualize the focus of the study, and to acquaint myself with the existing literature on this particular topic. This also included the exploration of theses and memoirs available online through inter-library loans via the portal of Université de Montréal's library.

The second session involved the collection of information from various libraries in Kenya during the four months of fieldwork. Generally, the majority of documents (published and unpublished) were acquired from Daystar University library. I also gathered information from the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi, most of which were useful in illuminating the background of this study. The information relating to media operations or practices in Kenya was mainly collected from the Nation Media library, the Standard Newspaper library, Daystar University library, the Communication Commission

of Kenya and the Media Council of Kenya. At this stage, I was interested mainly in obtaining locally available materials on my topic of interest, some of which are not easily accessible outside the country.

The choice of documents was based on the dates of publication, authors, target audience, relevancy, type of document, and accessibility. The notes taken during the two phases of this documentary research were regularly organized in sub-topics to allow easy reference during data analysis. Although this study is centred on the 2007/08 conflicts, it was also necessary to journey back in time to integrate documents relative to past conflicts in Kenya. This was done to uncover *new* patterns that would explain such conflicts and to avoid unnecessary repetition of facts already alluded to. In essence, conducting documentary research not only helped me navigate through the common truths about the 2007/08 crises, but also establish a profound background on media and social conflicts in Kenya.

The main challenge that I encountered during documentary research was narrowing focus on the materials that centred on the 2007/08 conflicts. This partly explains the bulk of historical information provided in the study. Against the backdrop of this challenge, I refined the scope of search to materials that would help me analyze the conflict from its pre-event to post-event stages. Equally, accessing some documents was difficult especially those produced by the government and some media houses. There were also instances where quantitative data (statistical) relating to some events mismatched, making it difficult and an overwhelming process to assess to compare and contrast various documents in an attempt to overcome this challenge.

4.2.2. Observation

After the completion of the first stage of my documentary research, I conducted four months of fieldwork in Kenya between June 1, 2010 and October 1, 2010. By definition, fieldwork involves “living with and living like those who are studied [as it] demands the full-time involvement of a researcher over a lengthy period of time (typically unspecified) and consists mostly of ongoing interaction with the human targets of study on their home ground.”³⁶ During this period, observation and interviews were used as a method of data collection to provide deeper insight into the events that led to the 2007/08 conflicts.

Establishing a direct contact with the target populations was necessary to provide a nuanced understanding of the conflict and how this particular conflict manifested itself across distinct ethno-linguistic communities. As a method of inquiry, observation can be defined as an “involvement in the here and now of people’s daily lives [...] [thereby] gaining access to phenomena that are commonly obscured from the standpoint of a non-participant.”³⁷ Observation was not only relevant as a method because of the rich cultural backgrounds that inform the perceptions and the non-verbal cues of the groups targeted, it was also necessary because I needed to provide a broad description of the key features that characterize these groups and their habitats.

As part of my observation method, I attended several conferences, information sessions, and workshops organized by different organizations (and institutions) involved

³⁶ See Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the Field*. Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press.

³⁷ See Jorgensen, D. L. (1989). *Participant observation: Methodology for human studies*. Newbury, CA: Sage.

in peace-building processes in Kenya such as the “Peace Festival Conference” held in Nairobi in September 2010. During these sessions, I listened to and took notes on areas that touched on my topic of interest.

Equally, I had the opportunity, given that I was hosted by Daystar University in Nairobi, to interact with local students. These interactions provided me with new insights on the perceptions that people had regarding the conflict. Notice boards and commercial boards along the roadsides were also useful sources of observable data. Some contained information relative to peace-building processes that were underway. During this process, descriptive notes were kept in order to keep track of my daily personal experiences. I kept notes on conversations I had with people, their perspectives on different issues, as well as the settings where the discussions took place.

Although observing people and the environment in which they lived seemed practical and easy, I did encounter some challenges. Self-disclosure was a major issue. When I mentioned (during informal conversations) that I was conducting research on the conflict, people became very sceptical about the whole conversation, attributing my thoughts to those of a particular group. This was also tainted by the fact that I am a Kenyan national belonging to a specific ethnic group. Using my first name instead of family name mitigated this challenge.

4.2.3. Interviews (in-depth)

Apart from observation, interviews were deemed useful as a follow-up to documentary research. The main purpose for using in-depth interviews was to establish

the general views of the public in the three locations of research about the implications of vernacular radio narratives in the 2007/08 conflicts. Equally, the views of the key participants were collected in an attempt to shed light on the nature and patterns of such conflicts locally. The use of in-depth interviews was also motivated by the fact that this study was based on recalls of the events that lead to the 2007/08 conflicts, an occurrence that required a thorough probing process.

Berger (2000) defines an interview as an interaction between a *researcher* (someone who wishes to gain information about a subject) and an *informant* (someone who presumably has information of interest on the subject). In this perspective, in-depth interviewing is “a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation.³⁸” This kind of interview method appeared to be more relevant for this study because I wanted to obtain detailed information about the perceptions and experiences that my target groups had on the 2007/08 conflicts.

Given the sensitivity of this topic, individual in-depth interviews were conducted in order not to lose potential respondents who might have not been able to talk openly in a group. This is because the in-depth interviews provide room for one-on-one interactions at discrete locations. The data gathered from these interviews were essentially used to complement the data collected through observation and documentary research. This provided me with a broader picture of the conflict.

³⁸ See Boyce, C. & Neale, P. (2006). *Conducting In-depth interviews: A Guide for Designing and Conducting In-depth Interviews for Evaluation Input*. Online. http://www.pathfind.org/site/DocServer/m_e_tool_series_indepth_interviews.pdf?docID=6301 (accessed January 2012)

Before the actual interviews, e-mail follow-ups were sent to the already identified key respondents to confirm the appointments and arrange for suitable interview locations. I also visited the three research sites to familiarize myself with the settings as well as the communities targeted. I then conducted the interviews using open-ended interview templates³⁹ that I had prepared and tested before the actual fieldwork. The purpose of using an open-ended interview guide was to minimize my control or authority over the information that respondents provided. Despite testing the interview guidelines before the actual fieldwork, I still had to modify, during fieldwork, some of the questions that appeared to be ambiguous to respondents.

The first set of in-depth interviews targeting respondents in the three locations of the study started in mid-May 2010 and continued through August 2010. The pre-selection criteria, already explained in the previous paragraphs, were used to identify respondents in these locations. The interviews took about 45 minutes, though there were occasions where they took over an hour, given the probing and the manner in which some respondents developed their answers to these questions.

The second set of interviews, with key respondents, began in August 2010 and continued through the end of September 2010 when I terminated my fieldwork. Nearly all the interviews with key respondents took place in Nairobi, Kenya's capital. Key respondents were purposefully sampled based on their expertise and involvement (directly or indirectly) in media and peace-building in Kenya. Some of the respondents, under this category, were sampled from the Kenya Media Owners Association, Kenya National Council of Human Rights, Law Society of Kenya, National Council of Churches

³⁹ See Appendices

of Kenya, Communications Commission of Kenya, and Media Council of Kenya. A number of locally-based scholars from Daystar University, Nairobi University, Moi University, International Development Research Centre and Amnesty International (branches in Nairobi), and the United States International University (USIU) in Kenya, also took part in the study.

Although an interview guide was initially prepared to collect data, closed-ended questions were avoided in order to allow respondents to express themselves in their own words. This allowed respondents to provide their innermost feelings and perceptions about the conflict. Self-administered questionnaires were also regarded as less applicable in this study because they do not provide room for this kind of interaction between the researcher and the respondent. In addition, it would have been necessary to distribute the questionnaires well in advance to provide ample time for respondents to respond before collecting them. For these reasons, I believe that self-administered questionnaires would have resulted in a low return.

Although a tape recorder was used to collect all the details of the fieldwork interviews (between June 1, 2010 and October 1, 2010), all the transcriptions (interview recordings), coding, and classification of the fieldwork data took place in 2011 because of the quantity of data gathered during the fieldwork. Adequate time for transcription was necessary to facilitate data analysis and dissertation writing. At the same time, follow-up interviews were conducted over the phone with some respondents in 2011 and in early 2012 (between January and April 2012) in order to follow the evolution of the International Criminal Court's (ICC) investigation on the 2007/08 conflicts.

4.2.4. Articulation

Even though the concept of articulation is commonly used in the field of linguistics to underscore the degree to which a given text or speech is clear (unambiguous), articulation was transposed in this study in the context of cultural studies to underpin the “process of creating connections” (Slack, 1996). Articulation can be used both as a method and as a theory (Alhassan, 2003; Grossberg, 1997; Slack, 1996). As a theory, it can be used to examine various conjectures between factual elements.

The parameters of articulation as a methodology is close to those defining the concept of *intersectionality*, which stems from feminist and racial studies to understand the correlation between subjugated identities (Valentine, 2007; Rasmussen, 2010). As a concept, *intersectionality* “conveys how meaning is contextually situated and how meaning should be perceived as emerging through the complex intersection of various categories [...] such as politics, religion, violence and gender” (Rasmussen, 2010: 303). In essence, the intersectional approach recognizes the fluidity between categories as well as “the ways that individuals are actively involved in producing their own lives and so overcomes some of the determinism of previous ways of thinking about identities that often classified individuals into fixed categories as oppressed or oppressor” (Valentine, 2007: 14).

In line with the intersectional strands of identity described above, articulation methodology can be used to overcome deterministic schematization when examining the complex natures of culture and creed (Grossberg, 1997; Slack, 1996). Indeed, articulation is essentially “a matter of contingency” as it involves a meticulous coding

process of knowledge pathways that disgrace preconceptions in any given inquiry (Alhassan, 2003). In other words, articulating methodology does not presume the linkage between various contextual elements, rather, “it involves the production of contexts” across time and space (Grossberg, 1997).

Articulation methodology appeared more relevant in searching dislocated links between fieldwork data and the data generated through documentary research. This method was thus used to examine the possible connections between vernacular radio narratives and the structural causes of the 2007/08 conflicts, often correlated with ethnicity. In other words, it helped expand the understanding of the conflict beyond cultural allegiances such as ethnicity, which seem to form the nexus between conflicts and multiethnic states. Chapter six provides detailed discussion on the interconnections between ethnicity and other attributes of social conflicts.

4.3. Data Organization and Management

All the data collected during fieldwork, including those generated through documentary research, were typed and classified according to various themes. The raw data was classified using specific archival logs following this sequence: date of the activity, location/site, method of data collection, type of informants, and a sequential number. This was done to ensure easy access to all the fieldwork documents as well as to maintain high levels of accuracy when searching for specific topics covered during the activity in question.

Equally, backup copies of recorded tapes were saved on an external hard disc drive to avoid any unexpected loss. Each set of classification was also paired with suggested readings on different topics of the inquiry to allow further research whenever it was deemed necessary. Finally, a data checklist was created to ensure that no documents went missing and to preserve the confidentiality of all the respondents with respect to ethical considerations.

4.3.1. Data Analysis

Following a thorough process of data gathering from different sources, I borrowed from articulation methodology and multilevel analysis to examine the relationships between vernacular radio narratives and the negotiation of intergroup relationships before, during and after the 2007/08 conflicts. Although the study did not conduct regression analysis, often used in multilevel analyses⁴⁰, it borrowed the core assumption behind such analyses supposing that contextual variables can be used alongside individual-level factors to provide a deeper understanding of social phenomena. That is to say, multilevel analysis is essentially a matter of paying close attention to the context and conditions in which human behaviour actually occurs.

Considering social conflicts as a form of human behaviour, this study involved a cross-methodological approach to see if there were any correlations between my initial hypotheses and central questions that guided data collection. Most of the analyses are found in Chapters five and six. General conclusions were then drawn from these findings

⁴⁰ See Bickel, R. (2007). *Multilevel Analysis for Applied Research: It's Just Regression!* NY: The Guilford Press.

by probing some of the dominant discourses that surfaced during the fieldwork process. This enabled me to draw attention to the main causes of the 2007/08 conflicts. This stage was therefore concerned with the interpretation of findings.

4.3.2. General Methodological Challenges

One of the main challenges encountered during this study was linked to the temporal divide. As discussed in the previous paragraphs, the conflict in question had occurred two years prior to this field research. Although it seemed very fresh in many of my respondents' memories, I was somehow obliged to rely on their reflective capacity, as there was no other way of getting this information from them. This explains why I conducted extensive documentary research on the subject. Other locally accessible secondary sources of information (such as newspapers and video footages) were also consulted from local sources to account for this temporal gap.

Accessing some materials was a major challenge. Given the sensitivity of the topic, it was difficult to access certain documents from some sources. For instance, many media professionals, especially the radio hosts, declined my request for an interview, and would not allow me to use the documents that were available at the studios. This was mainly due to the ICC investigations that were underway. This kind of guilt was strengthened by the fact that the then ICC prosecutor, Luis Moreno Ocampo, also deployed individuals to conduct independent investigations with regard to the 2007/08 conflicts. In this regard, my e-mails to media houses remained unanswered. Only two radio presenters agreed to talk to me on condition of anonymity. Some of the stations that

responded to the emails argued that the topic was contentious and sensitive and that they were not sure about the motives of the study.

Language was also a major setback. Given that the study was conducted in English to avoid errors in translating materials, many respondents were technically barred from taking part in the study. Some respondents used Swahili words within their sentences when they were unable to find the equivalent word in English. Given that I am fluent in Swahili, I was able to understand the Swahili words that were interspersed in interview recordings.

Arranging for the interviews also proved to be an uphill task. Many of the key respondents had very busy schedules such that I had to rearrange appointments on several occasions. This prolonged the time allocated for the inquiry and data entry process. Some of the rearranged interviews ended up conflicting with other dates, a factor that became very difficult to manage. In addition, many respondents did not respect the meeting time that had been agreed upon for the interviews.

Some of these challenges were moderated by providing my student identity card to assure suspicious respondents that this inquiry was strictly intended for educational purposes, and that the information they provided was to be kept anonymous. Apart from suspicions, several respondents also became emotional during the interview as they reflected on the conflict. This is because some respondents had lost their loved ones, making it painful to recollect the memories that led to their loss. In such situations, respondents were reminded that they had the option of not answering the questions that made them feel uncomfortable. They were also reminded that they could withdraw from the interview at any time if they wished.

4.3.3. Ethical Considerations

All the data collected followed strict ethical guidelines set by the committee on research ethics at Université de Montréal. An ethics certificate was issued at the beginning of the fieldwork. Here are some of the ethical guidelines that were observed during the period of the field inquiry:

Gender and cultural implications: As already discussed, this study targeted three specific groups (Kalenjin, Luo and Kikuyu) living in three distinct ethno-regional settings (Eldoret, Kisumu and Nyeri respectively). All the respondents were adults aged between 18 and 65. Apart from key respondents whose selection was based on fields of expertise, this study targeted a total of 60 respondents from the three research locations. That is, 30 men and 30 women from the three locations. This was my attempt to balance the *gender equation* and to observe cultural differences that characterize the Kenyan population.

However, among the anticipated 60 respondents (from the three locations of research), 50 in-depth interviews were successfully conducted: 33 men and 17 women. It was particularly challenging to recruit women participants because the majority of them did not seem to be interested in topics focused on politics or social conflicts. This made it difficult to have an equal representation of men's and women's perspectives in the study.

Informed consent of respondents: Before conducting or recording any interviews, informed consent from every participant was solicited. This was done by reading the oral consent form⁴¹ that I had initially prepared and had approved by the ethics committee. Hence, respondents had the choice of doing the interview with or without being recorded.

⁴¹ See Appendices, item "i"

Moreover, participants were informed that their participation in this research was voluntary and that there was no compensation at the end of the interview. As such, every one of them had the choice to participate or decline the interview.

Protection of research participants: All the information collected from participants was considered anonymous as a way of protecting their privacy and confidentiality. I therefore started the interviews with a brief explanation of the underlying objectives of this study, giving participants the opportunity to modify or withdraw statements during the interview. There were only two instances where respondents asked me not to record their statements. The majority of participants also allowed me to identify them by first name whenever they were quoted in this study.

Circulation of the results: A number of the participants requested that the findings from this study be made available to them through publication, as a way of giving back to the community that made this research a success. However, considerable care was taken to avoid breaching participants' confidentiality as discussed previously.

Chapter Summary

The focus of this chapter was on the epistemological stance of the study, the methods of data collection, as well as the challenges encountered during fieldwork. It also emphasized the use and significance of qualitative methods given the context and sensitivity of the topic of interest.

The methods of data collection discussed include: in-depth interviews, documentary research, observation and articulation. These methods were found to be relevant to the scope of the study because of the context of the research topic and the temporal disconnectedness that characterized the study.

The methodological approach of this study also speaks to the complexity of the topic itself, and by extension, acknowledges the fact that conflict is a process that cannot form an all-encompassing unit of analysis. In this light, the methodological limitations of this study can serve to strengthen future research.

The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER V. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the findings of the study. It starts by providing demographic information regarding the study's sample. It then sheds light on the patterns of vernacular radio listening in the three locations where the study was conducted, before focusing on the factors that were linked to vernacular radio listening. The chapter concludes with the discourses that surrounded the accommodation of intergroup claims in the Kalenjin, Luo and Kikuyu radios prior to, during and after the violent conflicts.

5.1. Demographics of the Study's Sample

Demographic trends have always proved to be essential when seeking to explain the dynamics and nature of any given fieldwork results. These are not limited to factors such as race, gender, occupation, education and age, all of which may influence the kinds of perceptions that respondents hold towards a given event of interest. In most cases, demographic information provides accounts on the population under study. As such, they can either be generalized, to reflect the total population of the areas sampled, or adapted to represent the specificities of the population and/or the people sampled.

The demographics of this study subscribe to the latter category. As such, demographic information is used in the study to describe and understand the experiences of respondents in relation to the 2007/08 conflicts. Although the study does not seek to generalize the findings in the traditional sense, the inferences provided are likely to be

widespread in the three locations of the study (Eldoret, Nyeri and Kisumu) by virtue of their linguistic, cultural, and geopolitical nature.

The study initially aimed at conducting in-depth interviews with 12 key participants as well as 60 other respondents purposefully sampled from the three locations of the study. By interviewing these distinct groups, the study aimed at bringing together diverse perspectives on the event of interest. While key respondents provided information from the “expert” point of view (those with the mandate to effect desired changes), participants from the three locations provided information from an “ordinary citizen’s” perspective (those directly affected by the suggested changes).

Among the 72 anticipated participants (12 key respondents and 60 other participants), 59 interviews were successfully recorded. This placed the response rate at 82%, which is a relative success. However, the study recorded an uneven number of men and women participants due to the constraints encountered during fieldwork. These limitations have been detailed in the methodology of the study.

Demographic information used in this study includes: age and gender distribution, education, profession and the ethnicity of participants. Another factor that influenced the perimeters of the study was the respondents’ command of English (comprehensive) given that the study was exclusively conducted in English in an attempt to obtain first hand data without passing through translated scripts and/or interviews. The assumptions behind this approach were twofold. On the one hand, it provided the researcher with the opportunity to objectively engage in the collection of data. On the other hand, translated materials may insensibly reflect participants’ viewpoints, hence the purposive choice of participants to allow them to express their views in their own words.

5.1.1. Gender and Age-distribution

This study aimed at interviewing participants who were at least 18 years old, but not above the age of 65. The choice of this age bracket (18-65) was influenced by the fact that the majority of Kenyans who speak English are under the age of 65, most of whom have at least completed primary education. Tables 1 and 2 show age distributions of male and female respondents from the three locations where the study was conducted. Table 3 shows the gender and age distribution of the key respondents. All the key respondents were interviewed in Nairobi, Kenya's capital, where they were based.

Table 1. Age of male participants interviewed by location of study

Age group	Nyeri	Eldoret	Kisumu
18-23	0	1	1
24-29	2	3	3
30-35	2	4	2
36-41	1	2	2
42-47	1	2	1
48-53	1	0	1
54-59	1	1	1
60-65	0	0	1
Total	8	13	12

A total of 33 men (excluding key participants) were interviewed in Nyeri, Eldoret and Kisumu. The number of male participants also varied from site to site. As table 1 illustrates, the majority of the male participants were aged between 24 and 41, accounting for about 64% of all male participants. There was only one male participant who was at least 60 years of age, but not older than 65. It is important to note that these figures do

not include the information on male participants who were part of the key respondents. The latter is presented in Table 3.

Table 2. Age of female participants interviewed by location of study

Age group	Nyeri	Eldoret	Kisumu
18-23	1	0	0
24-29	2	2	1
30-35	1	1	2
36-41	1	1	1
42-47	1	0	1
48-53	0	0	1
54-59	1	0	0
60-65	0	0	0
Total	7	4	6

Although the study intended to have an equal number of men and women participants from the three locations (i.e. 10 men and 10 women in every location), only a total of 17 women (excluding the key participants) were interviewed. Similar to male participants, the majority of female respondents were between the ages 24 and 41. Table 2 highlights this information.

It was particularly challenging to recruit female participants, as many were not interested in topics oriented towards politics and ethnic conflicts, making it difficult to have an equal representation of men’s and women’s perspectives. Given the above challenge, the study incorporated additional male participants in an attempt to meet the initially targeted sample size from each location (target of 20 participants per location). This explains why in Eldoret and Kisumu, for instance, there are more than 10 male participants (see Table 1).

Table 3. Age and gender of key participants interviewed

Age group	Male	Female
18-23	0	0
24-29	0	0
30-35	0	0
36-41	0	1
42-47	1	0
48-53	2	2
54-59	2	0
60-65	1	1
Total	5	4

A total of 9 in-depth interviews (out of 12 initially targeted) were successfully recorded with key respondents. This sets the response rate of key participants at 75%. Compared to the proportion of men and women in Nyeri, Eldoret and Kisumu, there was not a major disproportion between male and female when it came to key participants. Overall, 59 successful interviews were conducted and integrated in this study. Although this was slightly lower than the sample size that was initially anticipated, the study's overall response rate was about 82%. However, in terms of gender distribution, only 34% of respondents were female.

Nonetheless, an overall return rate of 82% is relatively high given the initial sample size target. The high response rate may be attributed to the fact that the study is based on a small sample size purposively selected to meet the objectives of the dissertation.

5.1.2. Participants' Level of Education

In order to take part in this study, all participants were not only required to have completed at least primary education, they were also expected to have a comprehensive knowledge of English in order to express their views in English. Table 4 illustrates the levels of education among the sampled participants. It presents information relative to the total number of participants with primary, secondary, post-secondary and university (or higher) education. However, Table 4 does not integrate the levels of education of the key participants since all had at least completed a university degree or higher.

Although participants needed to have accomplished primary education (or higher), this was not only deemed necessary in the selection of participants with a comprehensive knowledge of English, but it also adds to the rigor with which the study is constructed. Furthermore, I determined that those with a comprehensive knowledge of English were likely to exploit diverse news outlets, a characteristic that was key to in-depth descriptions of the event of interest.

Table 4. Education level of participants interviewed

Level of education	Total number of participants	Percentage (%)
Primary	5	10%
Secondary	13	26%
Post-secondary – vocational training institutions	23	46%
University degree or higher	9	18%
Total	50	100%

Table 4 illustrates that the majority of participants had either completed secondary education and started working, or had accomplished a vocational training course after

their secondary education. This group constituted about 72% of those who were interviewed (excluding key participants). Despite the fact that some respondents had successfully accomplished post-secondary education (or vocational training), it did not necessarily mean that all of these participants perceived their occupation as a “white-collar” job.

5.1.3. Occupation of Participants

In terms of occupation, white-collar and blue-collar participants seemed to be at par. As indicated in Table 5, those who perceived their profession as a white-collar job constituted 40% of total participants. These were not limited to teaching, administrative work, and management. On the other hand, blue-collar represented 34% of total participants. Given the high costs of university programs, the majority of participants seem to have attended vocational training institutions to further their education with the hope of landing a good career within the competitive Kenyan society.

Equally, 26% of participants did not see their profession as subscribing to the two previous categories. The label “other” was therefore used to characterize these professions. This included participants who juggled between professions (white and blue-collar jobs alike) and those who practiced other professions not limited to housekeeping, street vending and occasional workers.

Table 5. Occupation of participants interviewed

Type of profession	Total number of participants	Percentage (%)
White-collar	20	40%
Blue-collar	17	34%
Other	13	26%
Total	50	100%

Although white-collar workers represented 40% of participants, 60% of participants could not identify themselves as white-collar workers. This group seems to represent the structural base of Kenya's population that is often frustrated in terms of unemployment, one of the many factors that were identified as contributing to a disproportionate representation of intergroup relations. The information provided in Table 5 does not encompass the occupation of the 9 key respondents because they all perceived their profession as white-collar jobs.

5.1.4. Ethnicity

In addition to the demographic information already presented, ethnicity (as defined in the conceptual framework) was used as a controlling factor in the collection of data. This is because the study's target groups were the Kikuyu, Kalenjin and Luo, some of the groups that were significantly affected by the 2007-08 conflicts. Hence the purposive choice of research sites is an attempt to meet this objective: Nyeri (Kikuyu majority), Eldoret (Kalenjin majority) and Kisumu (Luo majority). Although the use of ethnicity as a controlling perimeter can be read as controversial in this study, its strength relies on the depth and richness of the descriptions used by various participants to

characterize the 2007-08 conflict and the ramifications it had on their respective regions and/or community.

In other words, the salience of ethnicity cannot be undermined when seeking to understand the patterns and directions of the 2007-08 conflicts, largely characterized as ethnic-based. The main objective of using ethnicity as a controlling factor is therefore to assess its significance in terms of the narratives embraced by various vernacular radios to depict inter-ethnic relations before, during and after the violent conflict that cost lives and rendered many people homeless. As already explained in the background of this dissertation, inter-ethnic coexistence appears to be marked by historical grievances not limited to land allocations and power discrepancies between various communities.

In this regard, ethnicity provided a means to gauge the differences in terms of dominant vernacular radio narratives in the three locations of study given the linguistic and cultural idiosyncratic nature of these regions. The study presumes that, by virtue of linguistic selectivity, vernacular radios are likely to negotiate their narratives in a manner that augurs well with collective perceptions of its target audiences, especially in conflict situations characterized by divergent interests.

With this in mind, participants were sampled in a manner that reflected ethnic dynamics in the locations of the study. In other words, all participants from Nyeri were from the Kikuyu group, those in Eldoret were from the Kalenjin community and participants from Kisumu were all Luos. Given the sensitivity of this study and the investigations that were undergoing (during fieldwork) to determine the masterminds of the 2007-08 conflicts, participants who did not wish to be identified by name were assured of confidentiality.

Although various groups were also affected during the conflict in question, this study narrowed its analysis to Kikuyu, Luo and Kalenjin groups. This is not to say that the perspectives from other groups were less significant for the study; rather, it would have been unrealistic to have the views by every group represented since there are at least forty-two ethnic groups in Kenya. While ethnicity was observed when sampling participants from the three locations, it was less significant when selecting key participants because profession and knowledge on the topic of interest became pivotal factors.

The next section looks at the patterns of vernacular radio listenership in the three locations of research as well as the patterns of vernacular radio listening among key respondents.

5.2. Patterns of Vernacular Radio Listenership

The patterns of radio listenership are determined by various factors. Among many others, this may include the language of broadcast, the target audience, programming, ownership, broadcast radius, regulatory mechanisms, and political atmosphere. In order to map out the patterns of vernacular radio listenership in the locations of study, respondents were asked questions relative to radio access and ownership, the frequency at which they tuned into these radios, their favourite vernacular radio stations, and if they simultaneously used other media outlets.

By paying close attention to the patterns of vernacular radio listenership, the study aimed at examining the factors that influenced respondents' use of these radios given that

there are various radios that broadcast in Kenya's official languages, English and Swahili. The patterns of vernacular radio listenership also helped determine the penetration, concentration and distribution of vernacular radios in the locations where the research was conducted. The findings of this section highlight quantitative data relative to vernacular radio listening among the Kalenjin, Kikuyu and Luo who took part in the study.

5.2.1. Radio Access and Ownership Among Respondents

This study also aimed at examining the relationship between radio access and ownership among respondents. The goal was to explore the ways in which participants interpreted or made sense of the information they garnered through these radios during the 2007-08 conflicts – whether as an individual or group (through discussions with family, friends or colleagues). In Kenya, radio consumption is still very widespread, especially among rural dwellers given the inadequate infrastructural measures and the costs associated with other forms of media such as television and Internet. Table 6 shows the distribution of radio access and ownership among those who were interviewed in Nyeri, Kisumu and Eldoret.

As indicated in Table 6, all respondents in the three locations had access to radio devices, highlighting the centrality of radio in Kenyan households. The access is not only influenced by the low costs of radio devices, but also by the circulation of cheap radio-enabled cell phones that provided respondents with a means to access various FM

stations without having to buy a radio device⁴². Only 6% of those interviewed did not own a radio device, but had access to radio through family, friends, colleagues, or public transportation.

Table 6. Radio access and ownership among participants interviewed

Research location	Access	Ownership
Nyeri	15	15
Eldoret	17	15
Kisumu	18	17
Total	50	47

Although all respondents had access to radio devices, the broadcast radius of various vernacular radios is still limited to specific regions. In other words, some radios are confined to specific regions while others have extensive nationwide reach. This is the case of state-run radio, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and its affiliated vernacular stations whose signals are received in all parts of the country.

In terms of diversity of stations, it is in Nyeri where respondents had a great variety of choices. This is linked to Nyeri's close geographical proximity to Nairobi, Kenya's capital, where many other public and private stations operate. In other words, while all respondents had access to radio devices, the access radio channels seemed fragmented and geographically imbalanced depending on one's location. Nonetheless, radio access and ownership appeared to be fairly widespread among the respondents of this study. The disparity in access was only pronounced in terms of the variety of choices vis-à-vis radio channels.

⁴² More information about mobile phone usage among respondents is found in Table 7.

5.2.2. Dominant Vernacular Radios by Location of Study

Throughout the locations where the study was conducted, respondents had varying preference in terms of the vernacular radios they accessed. Figures 2, 3 and 4 show the dominant vernacular radios in each of the three locations. The information provided in these figures is relative to the data collected during the interviews in terms of vernacular radio listenership. As such, it does not account for other radio channels that may broadcast within these areas such as the official-language radios, community radios, and youth radios. The goal was to assess and highlight the most popular vernacular radios in the three locations according to the interviews.

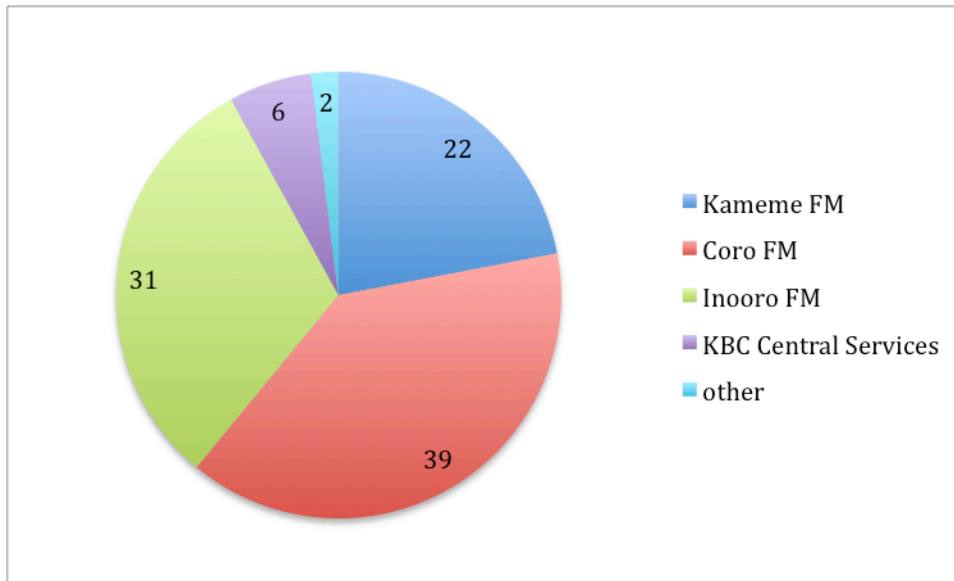
Dominant Vernacular Radios in Nyeri

As mentioned in previous chapters, the majority of Kenyans living in Nyeri town speak Kikuyu. As such, vernacular radios in this region mainly broadcast in Kikuyu language. Figure 2 shows the pattern of vernacular radio listening in Nyeri town. The information presented is drawn from the interviews conducted with participants from Nyeri.

As Figure 2 indicates, Coro FM, a state-run Kikuyu-language station appears to have the widest reach compared to other vernacular radios in this location. Specifically, about 39% of those interviewed in Nyeri mentioned Coro FM as their favourite radio. The station is run through KBC, a state-owned media group. Despite the controversies that have surrounded its ownership, Coro FM remains the most popular vernacular radio in Central Province and in some parts of the Rift Valley Province where a number of

Kikuyu-speakers reside. Initially started in 2000, with a re-launch in 2006, the station has also managed to appeal to the larger Kikuyu group living around the Nairobi area. Although the station broadcasts mainly in Kikuyu dialect, a small percentage of its programs are in English and Kiswahili.

Figure 2. Vernacular radio listening among respondents in Nyeri (%)



The second most listened to vernacular radio among Nyeri respondents was Inooro FM. This is probably one of the fastest growing vernacular radios with an exclusive Kikuyu language programming. The station brands its name as a “sharpening” tool⁴³. About 31% of participants from this region preferred listening to Inooro FM, many of whom were influenced by its programming that tends to be aired exclusively in the Kikuyu language. The station is owned by *Royal Media Services*, a company belonging

⁴³See http://inoorofm.co.ke/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=61, accessed September 14, 2011.

to a Kenyan media mogul, S.K. Macharia, who also owns at least eight other vernacular stations and official-language media such as *Radio Citizen* and *Citizen TV*.

Kameme FM comes third as the preferred vernacular radio among respondents in Nyeri. Licensed in 1999, Kameme FM was the first private radio station to ever operate independently as a vernacular radio station (excluding the state-run KBC vernacular radio services), where it dominated the vernacular radio market for years before its success story prompted many other vernacular radios nationwide. According to the interviews, 22% of participants still prefer listening to Kameme FM instead of the “emerging” stations. As highlighted in its editorial policy⁴⁴, the station targets audiences who are aged between 25 and 45, and aims at encouraging “the pursuit, respect and development of Kenyan culture, highlighting Kikuyu, Embu and Meru cultures in particular and the African culture in general”.

In terms of broadcast format, the station blends music, mainly Kikuyu secular and gospel (60% of the total program) with cultural (30% of program share) and information on business and current affairs (10%). Initially owned by a businesswoman (Rose Kimotho) under *Regional Reach Ltd.* – a company that also owned K24 TV, the company was sold to *TV Africa Holdings Ltd.*, another local media firm believed to have ties with the Kenyatta’s family (Kenya’s first president, whose son, Uhuru Kenyatta aspires to be the next president of Kenya). Kameme FM also blends in a few programs in English and Swahili.

KBC Central Service, which broadcasts in Kikuyu as well as in other languages spoken in Central province, Kamba, Meru, Embu and Maasai, comes fourth in terms of listenership among those who were interviewed. Although KBC’s vernacular services

⁴⁴See <http://www.kameme.co.ke/>, accessed September 14, 2011.

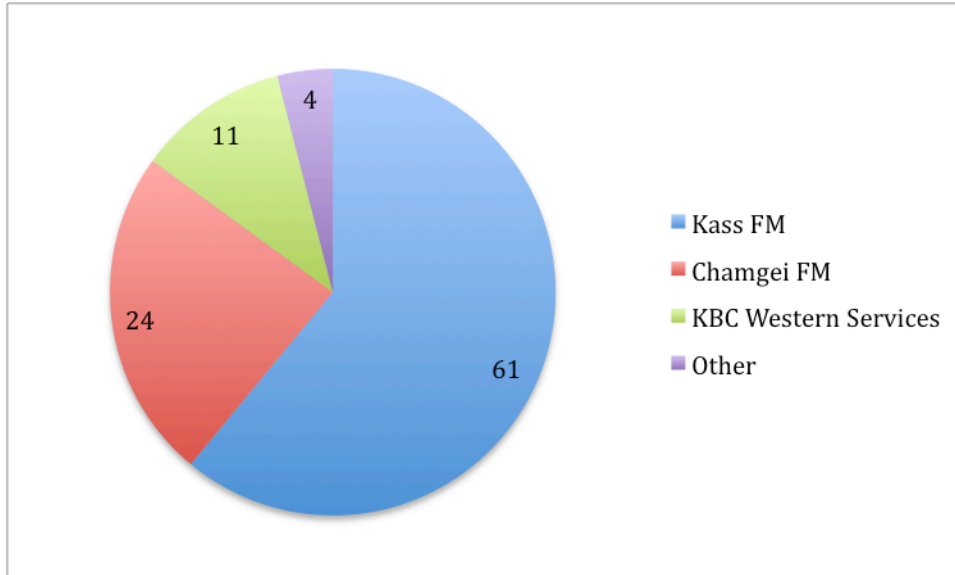
have been in existence since the 1950s, they have faced stiff competition from privately owned vernacular radios since the late 1990s, which saw the proliferation of private stations with a commercial and entertainment focus. Only 6% of those interviewed in Nyeri mentioned KBC Central service as their favourite radio station.

However, it is still fair to note that KBC services remain the most popular among rural dwellers that sometimes have limited access to other stations due to the restricted frequency radius. The rest of the participants (2%) mentioned other stations that were not commonly cited by many respondents, some of which were community radios.

Dominant Vernacular Radios in Eldoret

Unlike in Nyeri where Kikuyu language is common, Kalenjin is widely spoken among the inhabitants of Eldoret town. As such, Eldoret is served by radios broadcasting in Kalenjin. Figure 3 provides information relative to the dominant vernacular radios among participants in Eldoret. As Figure 3 indicates, Kass FM had the widest reach among the Kalenjin speakers who were interviewed in Eldoret. That is, 61% of respondents cited Kass FM as their favorite vernacular station. Equally, 24% of participants also identified with Changei FM, while 11% mentioned KBC Western Services (in Kalenjin). The rest (4%) mentioned listening to other radios such as Sayare FM, which has a Christian focus and broadcasts in English and Swahili, and thus could not be integrated in the study as a vernacular station.

Figure 3. Vernacular radio listening among respondents in Eldoret (%)



Kass FM is probably one of the fastest growing vernacular radios in Kenya, and also the dominant radio in the Rift Valley Province. Launched in 2005, it reaches about 4.5 million listeners per day⁴⁵, making it Kalenjins' favourite radio. The success of Kass FM in Rift Valley (and other parts of the country) is quite remarkable, as it has also opened international offices in Washington DC (US) and London (UK) where it invites Kenyans abroad, especially the Kalenjin diaspora, to share their thoughts on different issues affecting the country. Furthermore, Kass FM is available online for free streaming, a factor that widens its audience reach. Apart from managing the radio, Kass Media Group also publishes a magazine (Kass Magazine) and is in the process of launching Kass TV that will broadcast in Kalenjin⁴⁶. If successfully launched, Kass TV will be the first vernacular TV to ever operate in Kenya.

⁴⁵See <http://www.kassfm.co.ke/kassfm/aboutkassfm> , accessed September 27, 2011.

⁴⁶See <http://kassfm.co.ke/kass-tv/about-kass-tv> , accessed September 27, 2011.

Changei FM also has a considerable following among participants in Eldoret. The station is among the radios owned by Royal Media Group (which owns at least eight vernacular radios). Specifically, 24% of those interviewed in Eldoret preferred listening to Changei FM over the other vernacular stations that were available to them. According to Royal Media's website⁴⁷, Changei FM targets mature audiences, mostly between the ages of 20 and 45. The company also reflects the diverse Kalenjin culture in its programming to appeal to the Kalenjins living in both the urban and rural settings.

The government-run KBC Western Services (in Kalenjin) came third as participants' favourite vernacular radio. 11% of those interviewed enjoyed listening to KBC Western Services (in Kalenjin), while the remaining 4% preferred other stations that were not commonly cited by other respondents.

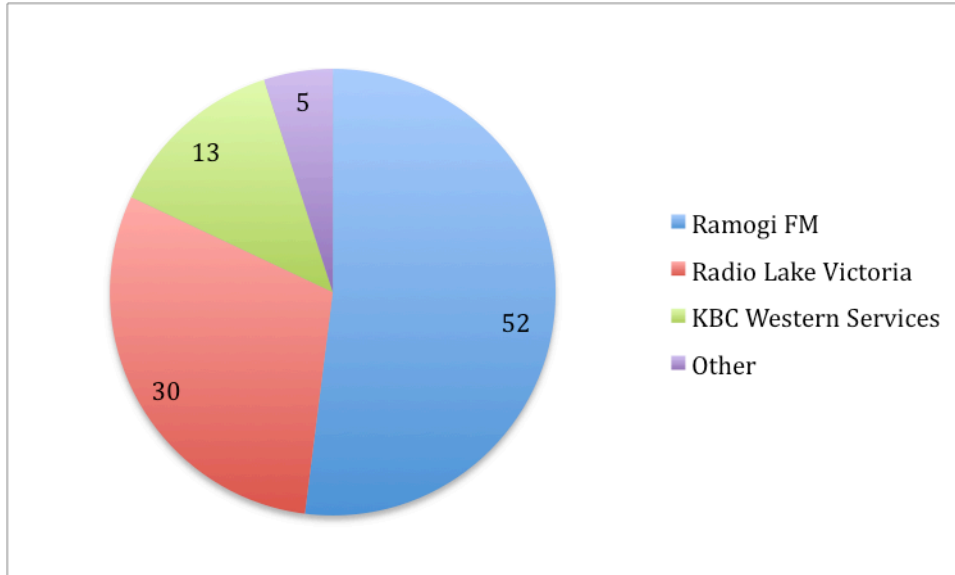
Dominant Vernacular Radios in Kisumu

In Kisumu, Luo remains the language that is widespread. Hence, various radios targeting Kisumu inhabitants broadcast in Luo. Figure 4 provides information relative to vernacular radio listening among those interviewed in Kisumu.

As Figure 4 indicates, the majority of respondents in Kisumu (52%) appeared to like Ramogi FM. This was followed by Radio Lake Victoria at 30% then KBC Western Services (in Dholuo) at 13% and the rest (5%) listened to other radio stations such as Radio Maendeleo, which is one of the many community radios reaching for Kisumu residents, mostly in Bondo District.

⁴⁷See <http://www.royalmediaservices.co.ke/radios/?q=cmg#>, accessed September 26, 2011.

Figure 4. Vernacular radio listening among respondents in Kisumu (%)



Ramogi FM is owned Royal Media Group. According to the station’s website⁴⁸, Ramogi FM essentially targets audiences who are between the ages of 20 and 45. Its programming is tailored towards the representation of the “Luo identity”, whether urban or rural dwellers. The station also blends other informative and entertainment formats to capture audiences living in both rural and urban areas.

Radio Lake Victoria comes second among respondents of this study. The station is run by a non-governmental organization (NGO) called OSIENALA, Osiepe Nam Lolwe (Friends of Lake Victoria), established in 1992 whose vision was to “create awareness locally and internationally about the problems facing Lake Victoria while at the same time creating structures that would support local communities to become responsible custodians of their environment and the lake⁴⁹”. It is believed that Finnish

⁴⁸See http://ramogifm.co.ke/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=61, accessed September 26, 2011.

⁴⁹See <http://www.osienala.org/Our%20history.php>, accessed September 27, 2011.

donors initially funded the project. In the late 2005, the NGO launched its radio station, Radio Lake Victoria, with the aim of administering its objectives more efficiently through an independent communication channel.

The state-run KBC Western Services (in Dholuo) is still somewhat popular among participants in Kisumu, given that 13% of those interviewed still regard it as their favorite station. It is in Kisumu where KBC appeared to have the highest following if compared to Nyeri (6%) and Eldoret (11%).

In sum, the findings suggest that Ramogi FM (in Luo), Kass FM (in Kalenjin) and Coro FM (in Kikuyu) are the most dominant vernacular radios in the three locations where the study was conducted. Nonetheless, participants from Nyeri had an advantage over participants from Eldoret and Kisumu in terms of the choices they had among radio stations. Although KBC vernacular radio services were not commonly cited as favourite stations, their services were still represented in the three locations, with Kisumu recording the highest proportion of listeners in terms of preference.

It is also interesting to note the centrality of *Royal Media Group* (a private-run company) in terms of cross-ownership of vernacular radios, a trend cutting across different ethnic groups and geographical zones. The group owns at least one of the commonly cited vernacular stations in each of the location where the study was conducted: Ramogi FM (for Luos in Kisumu); Inooro FM (for Kikuyus in Nyeri) and finally Changei FM (for Kalenjins in Eldoret).

5.2.3. Frequency in Vernacular Radio Listenership Among Respondents

In an attempt to understand the patterns of vernacular radio listening in the three locations, this study also examined the frequency at which the respondents tuned to their respective vernacular radios. To capture this frequency, respondents were asked if they listened to vernacular radios on a daily basis, every other day, once or twice a week, or if there were other times when they would tune to these stations. Figure 8 highlights the findings of the study by location where the data was collected.

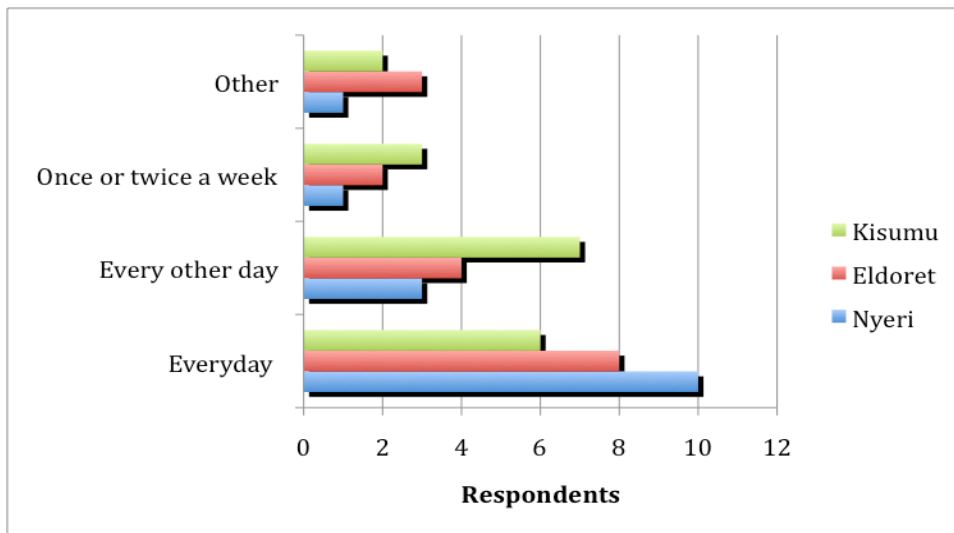
As illustrated in Figure 5, the majority of participants either listened to vernacular radios on a daily basis or tuned to these radios every other day. This was a common pattern in the three locations of the study, although it also emerged that nearly all participants from Nyeri (10 out of 15) listened to vernacular radios on a daily basis. The findings from Kisumu were quite different from the two other locations. That is, there was more or less an equal number of participants who listened to vernacular radios on a daily basis and of those who tuned to these radios every other day (6 and 7 respectively).

Other participants also mentioned listening to vernacular radios depending on their moods or location and could not therefore situate their listening patterns. For instance, some respondents indicated listening to vernacular radios only when visiting upcountry. In this regard, their listening patterns depended on the number of trips they would make upcountry.

Equally, some indicated that they would listen to vernacular radios only at friends' houses whenever they visited them. Given the difficulty in discerning all these

patterns, the category “other” was created to account for some of these listenership dynamics.

Figure 5. Frequency of vernacular radio listenership among respondents by location of study



Although there are differences in terms of listenership patterns, it is worth noting that there were an unequal number of participants in each location due to fieldwork constraints that have been explained in the previous sections (a total of 15 participants in Nyeri, 17 in Eldoret and 18 in Kisumu). The target was to sample and conduct in-depth interviews with 20 participants per location of study. As such, Figure 8 should be read in relation to the total number of interviews conducted per location.

The listenership patterns of vernacular radios by key participants were somewhat different compared to the patterns noted in the three locations of study. Figure 6 provides a close picture of the frequency at which key participants tuned to vernacular radios of their choice.

Figure 6. Frequency of vernacular radio listenership among key respondents

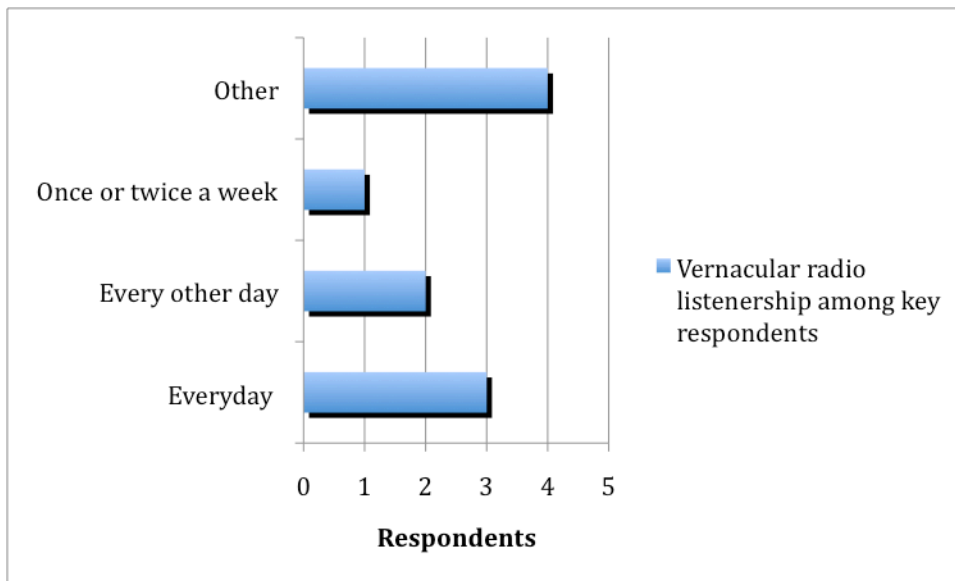


Figure 6 shows that key respondents did not necessarily listen to vernacular radios at specific times. Four out of the nine interviewed mentioned not having specific times or days to tune to vernacular radios, while three indicated listening to these stations on a daily basis. The rest either listened to these radios once or twice a week (1), or every other day (2).

5.2.4. Simultaneous Use of Other Media

Although the study mainly focuses on vernacular radios, participants were also asked if they used other media outlets to supplement the information they gathered while listening to their respective vernacular radios. Table 7 shows some of the media that were commonly cited during the interviews.

Table 7. Simultaneous use of other media by respondents interviewed

Type of media	Number of respondents
Official-language radios	59
TV channels	42
Press	25
Internet	22
Mobile telephony	51
Word of mouth	49

As many as 80% indicated that they simultaneously accessed other sources of media to complement the information they garnered through vernacular radios. This was especially common with the key participants as all mentioned consulting other types of media (print, audiovisual and electronic), to gain more insights on various issues around the country and abroad.

Official-language Radios

As highlighted in Table 7, official-language radios had the most following compared to other types of media. All participants (59) indicated listening to official-language radios, implying that official-language radios are just as important (to participants) as vernacular radios that broadcast in the local languages. This supports the idea that radio not only remains the most accessible source of information, but also the most consumed media. Some of the most popular privately owned radio stations in Kenya are as follows: Citizen FM, Capital FM (went on air in 1996 to become the first private radio in Kenya), Kiss FM, House of Reggae, Easy FM, Classic FM, and Hope FM.

State-run radio stations also have a considerable national and regional following. This includes KBC English Services, KBC Kiswahili services, and KBC Metro FM with entertainment focus. It is also worth noting that KBC radio services are not only popular in rural areas, but they also have the widest reach nationwide. Some respondents also mentioned tuning to international or foreign radios. Some of the radios that were commonly cited are: Radio France International, Voice of America, BBC Africa, Transworld radio, Sound Asia, and China radio. These radios rebroadcast in both English and Swahili, the two official languages in Kenya thus reaching a significant segment of Kenya's population.

TV Channels

Television was also common among respondents as an alternative source of information. Out of the 59 respondents who were interviewed, 42 reported watching TV at least once a week. Unlike radios, TV sets are somewhat expensive and consume a lot of power, meaning that they could not be easily run by means of batteries (although some households used car batteries as a source of power for their TV sets), a factor that limited some respondents from owning a TV set. Nonetheless, some respondents also indicated watching TV at friends' or relatives' homes.

In terms of local TV consumption, Kenya Television Network, KTN (owned by The Standard Group), Citizen TV (owned by Royal Media Services), and Nation TV, NTV (owned by Nation Media Group) appeared to be the most watched TV channels by the respondents of this study. Other privately owned TV stations that were watched by

study's respondents include Family TV, East African TV (based in Tanzania), Classic TV, and Sayere TV. These channels broadcast in both English and Swahili. The state-run Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) and its affiliate channels (mainly KBC Metro TV available through satellite pay-TV) were also commonly watched but appeared to face stiff competition from privately owned channels. The majority of participants indicated their preference for privately owned TV channels supposedly because KBC was less critical of the government.

Respondents also mentioned watching various foreign TV channels, many of which were available through pay-per-view satellite and cable channels, mainly MultiChoice, STV (formerly Stellavision), and Cable Television Network (CTN). Various channels can be accessed through these satellite and cable channels. The channels that were mainly cited by study's respondents include BBC World, CNN and Al-Jazeera English.

Time and locality seemed to be the main factors that explained why some participants watched TV in an attempt to supplement the information they gathered via vernacular radios. Those who watched TV mainly did so in the evening once they got back from work or school. As such, they would have a broader sense of what had happened during the day.

Press

Newspaper readership was relatively low among the respondents of the study. Only 25 out of the 59 people interviewed reported reading newspapers, mainly the key respondents. Those who read newspapers argued that the press provided in-depth

coverage of various issues that were skimmed by on the radios or TV. Equally, some indicated that they read newspapers because they are easily portable.

The most-read private newspapers include the *Daily Nation*, *The Standard*, *The People*, *East African*, and *The Star*. Some respondents also cited the state-run *Kenya Times* as one of their favourite newspapers. Although there are a number of newspapers, past studies have demonstrated that the most dominant newspapers in Kenya remain the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard*, as they control more than 70% of the newspaper readership (Onyebadi, 2008; Gathigi, 2009; Kalyango, 2008).

Nation Media group also publishes *The East Africa*, *Mwananchi* (a Swahili daily in Tanzania), *The Citizen*, *Business Daily*, *Taiifa Leo* (in Swahili) and *The Monitor* (a daily in Uganda). The group also owns some radio stations (*Q-FM*, *Easy FM*, and *K-FM*) and a TV station (*Nation TV*). On the other hand, The Standard Group, which is the oldest newspaper (established in 1902 as a weekly), also runs *Radio Maisha*, *Kenya Television Network* (the first private TV station in Kenya established in 1989) and a distribution agency (Publishers Distribution Services).

Mobile Telephony

Mobile telephony is increasingly becoming a key information outlet, not because of calls that subscribers could make, but because phone companies now offer radio and Internet enabled phones to their subscribers. As Table 7 indicates, an overwhelming majority of respondents (51 out of the 59) used their phones to access different sorts of information, mainly news briefs, radio stations, and Internet. In other words, mobile

phones provided some respondents with the means not only to stay connected with friends and family through phone calls, but also a way through which they would stay informed on what is happening around them via radio and Internet.

According to the data gathered from the Communication Commission of Kenya (CCK), the industry of mobile telephony in Kenya was established in 1992, with only a handful of subscribers due to the expensive analogue telephone system (Extended Total Access Communication System - ETACS) that was in place. Consequently, the cost of a mobile telephone device was as high as Ksh. 250,000 (about \$2940 USD) between 1993 and 1999, with a total estimate of subscribers of less than 20,000 within the same period.

However, the creation of the Kenya Communication Act in 1998 that introduced competition in the cellular phone industry led to an exponential mobile growth of about 60% in 2008. In 2010, CCK estimated the number of mobile subscribers at 22 million, representing about 86% of the total population.

Internet

The Internet recorded the lowest following compared to other types of media. Out of the 59 respondents, only 22 used the Internet. Although there is an increase in the use of mobile phones to access the Internet, 9 out of the 22 had access to Internet at home or through their phones. Others either accessed the Internet at work, school or at nearby cyber cafes. According to a report published by CCK in 2008, only 1.7 million Internet users were recorded in 2007, representing only 5% of the total population.

The report attributes the low Internet penetration to factors such as inadequate infrastructures to support these kinds of communication services, illiteracy in terms of

technology use, and lack of local content that appeal to the users. Alongside these hurdles are issues around policy and regulations. However, the report also advances that the government's initiative to waive import duty on personal computers (PCs) expanded the growth of Internet subscribers to about 22.1% of the population in 2010. The report notes the centrality of mobile operators who control an estimated 98% of the total Internet market share.

Some participants "actively" used the Internet as a means through which they can broaden their understanding of specific issues they deemed important in their lives. In other instances, participants appeared to obtain information "passively" (without necessarily searching for or locating these kinds of information), especially on issues that were not necessarily of interest to them.

Word of Mouth

The study also found that the majority of respondents relied on word of mouth as a source of information. Table 7 shows that 38 respondents still relied on word of mouth to provide or garner information on issues of interest to them. This type of person-to-person communication remains one of the many ways in which the participants acquired and shared information on different topics. On many occasions, participants reported talking to their family members, friends and colleagues at school or work and in the process, they would learn about different issues that were salient.

However, respondents who used this medium, mentioned issues of credibility vis-à-vis some of the information that was exchanged. In other words, trust and one's entourage appeared to serve as filters when it came to consuming or rejecting the

information provided through word of mouth. In some cases, respondents would exploit other media once they became aware of various issues in order to further their understanding with regard to the topics that stirred their curiosity. Joel, a 24-year-old mobile vendor in Eldoret, describes why obtaining information through word of mouth is important to him.

Even though I listen to radios to follow what is going on around me, I think I get a lot of information from my family and friends because we talk all the time. When you sit down with friends, there are so many things that you learn at a time, and this is why I like hanging out with friends in the evenings after I am done at the kiosk. We can talk about politics, business, sports and all other stuff you can name. We make jokes, drink and laugh but in the process we learn about things that actually affect all of us. You know, you can't be aware of everything even if you watch TV or read newspapers everyday. Friends and family therefore become my alternative sources of information.

In essence, the findings suggest that word of mouth was equally central as a means through which respondents were kept informed about various issues that affected their lives and/or environment. By talking to their peers, participants indicated gaining insights on other issues they might have not been aware of. In the process, the information gathered through word of mouth complemented those obtained through other media. The quality and authenticity of such information remained the main concern among participants.

The next section looks at the main factors that were associated with vernacular radio listening in the three locations of the study.

5.3. Main Factors Associated with Vernacular Radio Listening

The findings suggest that respondents tuned to vernacular radios for multiple reasons. Five broad categories are used in an attempt to regroup factors that seemed to be closely linked to one another: information-seeking purposes, socio-cultural factors economic reasons, political causes, and educational forum.

5.3.1. Information-seeking Endeavours

Apart from the official-language media, vernacular radios still remain important sources of information to many Kenyans, especially those with limited command of English and Swahili, the official languages in Kenya. Although the majority of the respondents acknowledged using other sources of media to stay informed about what was happening around them, vernacular radio listenership was mainly linked to individual personalities and education, as well as the curiosity that respondents had with regard to current affairs.

For instance, it appears that those with a secondary degree or higher simultaneously exploited other media outlets such as reading newspapers to supplement the information they gathered via vernacular radios. As such, they would compare information from different sources before drawing a conclusion on any given issue. Location was also an important factor linked to whether or not a respondent listened to vernacular radios. That is, the likelihood that one would tune to vernacular radios to gain

insights into current affairs was linked to whether or not the respondent was at work, school, home, market, driving, taking public transportation, farming, etc.

Another factor that appeared to determine whether or not respondents used vernacular radios as an information-seeking tool was linked to respondents' relationships or contacts with colleagues, family, or with friends at work or school. Although many respondents tuned to vernacular radios for information-seeking purposes when at home with their families, some respondents indicated listening to vernacular radios when alone, especially in the mornings and evenings when driving to school or work.

Those who took public transportation, commonly referred to as the *Matatus*, had no choice but to listen to what the driver tuned to, mostly the official-language radios. That is, while it is common to listen to official-language radios while on board the *Matatus*, some drivers would tune to vernacular radios of their choice despite the fact that some passengers may not necessarily understand the language of the broadcast. This was common in the three locations of research.

Time also appeared to determine whether or not the respondents tuned to vernacular radios for information-seeking reasons. Many respondents only listened to vernacular radios in the mornings when they were getting ready for work, school or other daily activities. For instance, participants who owned TV sets would mostly listen to radios in the morning and watch TV in the evenings to have a recap on what had happened during the day once they were done with their daily routines.

Although respondents listened to different vernacular radios, some radio outlets seemed to enjoy a strong regional following compared to others that targeted the same region and/or group. The regional popularity of the radios was linked to the kinds of

programs that were on-air and radio hosts. In Nyeri for instance, Coro, Inooro and Kameme FM stations, broadcasting in Kikuyu language, were the most popular vernacular radios.

The majority of respondents in this location cited *Coro Matũrainĩ* (Coro at grassroots), a program seeking to give voice to people from the marginalized regions of Nyeri and its surroundings. The popularity of this program was linked to the fact that it pays attention to the issues affecting the common person, whose problems or views are often neglected by the mainstream media. This is what Ruth, a real-estate agent based in Nyeri, had to say about Coro FM's program.

Coro Matũraini is one of my favourite radio programs. The program addresses issues that many media ignore although they may be very distressing to the people they affect. As a woman, sometimes the society does not pay attention to what we have to say or think, especially here in Kenya where politicians seem to control everything. I remember one day during the program when Coro [FM] guys were interviewing a woman who lost some of her land to a politician. No one was willing to listen to her, even the local authorities because she didn't have money to bribe the policemen so that they can do their job. [...] The moment Coro [FM] started making the story visible to the public, a lot of people seemed to be concerned as they offered lots of advice on what the woman could do to address her situation. I was very emotional when I heard the poor woman talk about all the efforts she has made without any success. I am in the real-estate business and I know how it may be difficult to get your property back if you are not well "wired" in the system, more so, when you do not speak Swahili or English. I know some people who have lost their lands after signing documents that they don't even understand because they are easily drawn into these kinds of frauds. Coro [FM] seems to pay attention to these little problems. This may be the reason why people like *Coro Matũraini*.

The interviews in Kisumu also pointed out the significance of vernacular radios as an information-seeking tool. Ramogi FM and Radio Lake Victoria appeared to be the most popular vernacular radios in this regard.

The audiences of these stations had varying reasons as to why they listen to programs aired on these radios. Jacob, a *Boda Boda*⁵⁰ operator in Kisumu, listens to Ramogi FM mostly because it blends news briefs (*Weche Machuok* and *Thuond Weche*) with *Benga music* (a type of Luo music rhythm), he thus stays informed about current affairs while, at the same time, being entertained.

Other respondents in Kisumu listened to vernacular radios because they provided them with information on health and economy. This is the case of Nancy, a tailor and a mother of five children who finds Radio Lake Victoria to be more informative on regional issues affecting Kisumu residents such as health, environmental concerns, politics, and human rights. Although she acknowledges listening to Ramogi FM, she associates the latter with the younger audiences who are more into entertainment.

In Eldoret, Chamagei and Kass FM stations seem to be the most popular vernacular radios. Though there are other stations that were also cited by respondents from this site (such as Sayare FM), Kass FM appeared to command a considerable number of Kalenjin speakers in Rift Valley. One of the factors that contribute to Kass FM's popularity may be attributed to the fact that it is also available for live streaming on the Internet. Also, through *Kass Sports*, a membership club destined solely for Kass FM audiences, the station has managed to demarcate itself as the "voice of Kalenjins" within the Rift Valley province where the Kalenjin community remains the largest ethnic group.

One of the news programs that appeared to be cited by many respondents is the breakfast show *Kass Lene Emet* (Kass' world views at a glance). Many participants mentioned that the program addresses issues such as market prices for local farmers,

⁵⁰ *Boda Boda* is a name given to bikes and bikers who transport goods and people for a living.

human rights issues, and politics. Philip, a college student living in Eldoret puts this in perspective.

Kass FM is very a fun radio station to listen to, especially in the morning and evenings. [...] Though I don't listen to it every day, I especially enjoy the morning breakfast show, *Lene Emet* by Joshua Arap Sang, that provides us with information about everything you would ever want to know, even regarding education which is important to me. The presenter is also a very funny guy, and this makes the show even more interesting, with nonstop calls from people as they head to work. [...] I also listen to other FM stations in Kiswahili and English, but Kalenjin stations keep me posted on what is going on within my community, and that's the main reason why I listen to Kass FM. There is also a comedy program called *Kass Bomori*, which is also fun to listen to.

Though vernacular radios seemed essential when it comes to information-seeking needs of those interviewed, some respondents also mentioned skimming through other media⁵¹ for other topics that appealed to them, especially political information.

Political information seemed to be one of the main topics that stirred a lot of curiosity among the study's participants to an extent that they became, somewhat, "active seekers" of these kinds of information. That is, as many as 63% of those interviewed, excluding the key participants, reported soliciting other sources of information to further their understanding of political issues that they may have initially obtained from vernacular radios.

Unlike the respondents from three locations who talked to their peers, tuned to the official-language radios or watched TV as an "alternative" news to vernacular radios, the study found that key respondents were more likely to exploit a wide-range of online and offline news sources. This may be due to fact that they have the means to access these alternative sources to gauge their perspectives on different issues. Professor Macharia

⁵¹ See Table 7, Simultaneous use of other media

Munene who teaches history and international relations at Nairobi's *United States International University* (USIU) described how he stays informed about current affairs:

I read the newspapers, watch TV, talk to people and brush through the electronic media, just the general ways of keeping in touch. I read what is in the regular media, such as the newspapers that everybody buys two or three of them, and the irregular media, what I call the alternative press that are mainly electronic, which not everyone has access to. [...] I also listen to vernacular FM stations that are said to occasionally indulge in news analysis of some kind, their views of course, as they target particular audiences. So I also listen to them to hear what they are saying, mainly Inooro, Kameme and Coro FM stations because I can understand them. But I also listen to other FM stations in Kiswahili or English such as Radio Citizen, Capital FM, etc. I listen to international radio stations as well, such as BBC, the Deutche Welle, Voice of America, and China Radio. [...] I watch TV in the evenings when I am done work, so I have a recap of everything that happened during the day. I also go online sometimes to read what's out there, mostly the international news.

Despite the fact that some respondents still searched for alternative news in order to complement the information they gathered through vernacular radio listening, both the key respondents and other participants reported considering vernacular radios just as important sources of information as the official-language broadcasts. The only difference pointed out between the two was the language of broadcast. Not only do vernacular radios gauge the attitudes and moods of the groups they serve, they also delineate other groups from understanding what they discuss given the language of broadcast.

5.3.2. Socio-cultural Reasons

Vernacular radios also serve as a means through which respondents fulfilled their socio-cultural needs such as entertainment, language and cultural heritage, companionship, religion and proximity. The majority of respondents perceived

vernacular radios as platforms through which different cultures are maintained and a way by which ethno-cultural norms are passed on to the younger generations who seem to be more comfortable with Swahili and English.

In this regard, respondents reported that vernacular radios have come up with specialized programs that discuss cultural issues relevant to the groups they serve. This included language, creed, customs, values, ceremonies, and interests. Indeed, the interviews indicated that vernacular radios provide respondents with forums for discussing topics or issues that are innate to their cultures or ways of life, some of which were sensitive or considered as taboo.

When I met with Felix, a father of four boys who owns a pub in Kisumu, he told me his insights about the significance of vernacular radios in strengthening cultural cohesion. Felix describes vernacular radios as a replacement of the elders who used to narrate stories to their grandchildren with the aim of teaching them cultural issues that were relative to that particular identity group. He believes that vernacular radios provide a forum for discussing culturally innate issues that may not surface in the official-language radios. This is what he had to say during the interview:

Just like many other Kenyans, people of Kisumu are proud of their culture. I don't think they would like to see this disappear although we are obliged to use the official languages on a day-to-day basis. I am 65 now, when I was young, my dad would tell us stories about my culture, my people and what I needed to observe as a Luo man. Many of our elders have passed away now, so it becomes quite difficult to know one's roots because these kinds of informal education rarely exist in our current society. Vernacular radios have replaced elders. Programs like *Abila* [house of the patriarch] and *Duol Jokanyanam* [Voice of the Luo elders] that are aired on stations such as Ramogi and Radio Victoria have kept the Luo language and culture alive. The members of the Luo Council of Elders, a community of Luo elders, usually present these programs. [...] They talk about many issues such as marriage, burial, property inheritance, giving birth, naming children, family conflicts, traditional dances and ceremonies, religious beliefs, and customs particular to boys-girls relationship that need to be passed on from

generation to generation. I believe other communities have similar programs where they discuss issues that matter to them the most.

This assumption not only affirms vernacular radios as social forums where knowledge on customs are shared amongst people with the same cultural beliefs, but also a platform for group participation and engagement in socio-cultural matters.

Vernacular radios are also regarded as a form of companionship. Some respondents indicated listening to vernacular radios when doing housework, when bored or when they lack someone to talk to. Others reported listening to vernacular radios while performing different activities such as grazing animals or cultivating farms. This is the case of John, a 25-year-old from Eldoret who considers his portable radio as a companion when he is out in the fields with his herds of cows. He states,

I never leave my portable radio behind whenever I am looking after my cows. I can't talk to the animals in the field so my radio becomes my best friend who entertains me in the fields. I love the music they play at Kass FM, so I sing along with the radio. Honestly, I feel like time gets shorter and shorter when I have my radio by my side. You don't see the time go by because it feels like you have someone to keep you company, make jokes, and talk to. When I get sick of one station, or when they talk too much, I just tune to another station, so I basically listen to what I want. I do prefer listening to the Kalenjin Kass FM because the presenters are fun, they don't talk too much, and I also speak Kalenjin so I can easily understand the discussions.

In a similar vein, Irene, a 21-year-old housekeeper in Nyeri town mentioned listening to *Kameme FM* most of the time while cleaning the house, cooking, and laundry. She explains,

I spend most of my time cleaning stuff and taking care of the baby when my employer goes to work, so I cannot sit and watch television. I just turn on the radio and I can hear it from wherever I am in the house. [...] I like listening to Coro FM and Inooro FM because the presenters are funny. It is like having a close friend talking to you and making jokes at the same time. The music is also cool [...]. The days we have blackouts [power rationing] I feel like my day gets longer because I have nothing or no one to keep me company.

Vernacular radios are also regarded as suitable means through which friends and family could stay in contact. In other words, friends, family and relatives could send and receive greetings on-air despite their geographical locations.

In Kisumu, a number of respondents mentioned listening to *Mos* (greetings), a program aired on Ramogi FM and *Budho Mar Odiro* (evening get together), an evening social program aired on *Radio Lake Victoria* that combined music, greetings, and talk shows. During this program, people call to place song requests while sending greetings to their friends, relatives and family within the country or abroad. Radio Lake Victoria is also accessible online, expanding its reach outside the Kenyan frontiers.

In Eldoret, the majority of participants listened to Kass and Chamgei FM stations, where they would also send and receive greetings. For instance, those who listened to Kass FM cited *Kass Lene Emet* and *Kass Nam Nam*, programs that blended greetings, music and discussions on key issues that appealed to the Kalenjin people.

Inooro, Coro and Kameme FM stations, targeting the Kikuyu audiences also had programs served for greetings. Sending and receiving greetings is a common practice among Kenyans, and vernacular radios have embraced this practice in their programming to attract large audiences.

Some participants also indicated that they would listen to vernacular radios to follow church sermons in their own languages or listen to the gospel songs once they got home from church. Going to church is a very common practice in the lives of many Kenyans, sometimes considered as a cultural act. The majority of those interviewed appeared to be Protestants, although there were a number of Catholics as well. Many vernacular radios therefore program church sermons over the weekends. For example,

respondents from Nyeri mentioned listening to Coro FM's *Tuthomere Bibilia*, *Guthathaiya Ngai* and *Ciuria na igeranio cia bibilia* that blended Christian teachings with gospel music mainly on Sundays.

Other respondents from Nyeri listened to Inooro FM's *Hutia Mũndu*, which combined religious teachings with youth sexuality. Another program that was common among Nyeri participants was *Ithaa rĩa kwĩbanga* that was broadcasted by Coro FM, and was mainly listened to by young married couples to gain more insights on religion and their everyday lives. For participants in Kisumu, programs such as *Nyasae Ber*, a breakfast show aired on *Radio Lake Victoria* appeared as favourite religious programs. In Eldoret, Kass FM's *Haleluyah Hour* was one of the common programs that had a religious focus.

5.3.3. Economic Purposes

Vernacular radios are perceived as tools for local and regional development. Nearly all respondents acknowledge the significance of vernacular radio programs in strengthening regional and local development, especially in rural areas and among elderly citizens with poor command of English and Swahili. The majority of respondents indicated their preference in following development-oriented programs in their respective languages. This was associated with the idea that some of the jargons used in those programs were not easily understood in Swahili and English.

Respondents cited several programs, with economic focus, that were aired on vernacular radios to bolster self-sufficiency among the target groups, many of which

were agricultural. As mentioned in Chapter one, agriculture still remains the main source of income for the majority of Kenyans. Often, each household, especially in the upcountry, has a small farm where it grows various crops for consumption. Many respondents thus appreciated farming techniques and the information on various markets, which were passed on on-air through various talk shows, most of which are “personalized” and “regionalized” to reflect the regional realities of the people served.

In Eldoret, the interviews pointed out that farmers acquired useful information through the Kalenjin radios that helped them refocus their farming practices as well as marketing trends. My interview with Robert, a high school teacher and a farmer living in Eldoret, shed light on this aspect. Robert understands the significance of vernacular radio in the region, especially when it comes to agricultural programs. This is how he described it:

Rift Valley is one of Kenya’s agricultural hub, so we do feed many parts of the country, if I may put it that way. Here in Eldoret, we produce a lot of crops, such as tea and maize, which not only serve the people of Eldoret, but also other parts of the country. The problem is that a number of farmers are manual workers who only speak Kalenjin. Some of the agricultural programs aired on Changei [FM] and Kass [FM] have been helpful in providing these farmers with the information to sell their produce. [...] Some farmers may speak Swahili, but speaking to someone in his own language makes things much easier. For instance, there is a season when some sort of a crop disease infected many farms leading a major loss of crops. Thanks to the information that some farmers obtained through these radios, they were able to identify what kinds of chemical to buy so that they can prevent further loss.

This perception concurred with that observed in Nyeri town, where Elizabeth (who owns dairy and poultry farms) described vernacular radios as “village instructors.” Elizabeth believes that vernacular radios provide the rural famers with an array of farming practices and market opportunities. She pointed out Inooro FM’s *Mũgambo wa*

Mũrĩmĩ (Farmers' voice), an educational program with a focus on sustainable agricultural practices. The program not only provides farmers with advice on how to increase their farm produce, it also brings on-air successful farmers to share their "secrets" with regard farming practices. This is how she described why she listens to vernacular radios:

Look, I am a small-scale farmer and I don't have the same amount of money to distribute my produce on a national scale as large-scale farmers do. If I rely on official language broadcasts for these kinds of information, they will inform me about markets that are out of my reach or that are not realistically possible given my means. I live close to Nyeri, if you tell me that there is market for my milk in Mombasa, I will need to equip my farm with very expensive equipment to be able to process my milk and send it Mombasa. I don't have that kind of money, so I distribute my produce within Nyeri, sometime to large-scale farmers within. To be honest with you, since 2006 I managed to penetrate some markets here thanks to the information that I acquired from *Inooro FM's Mũgambo wa Mũrĩmĩ*.

In Kisumu, fish vendors such as Caroline, a single mother of six, whom I had the opportunity to interview in her shop, reported having increased her sales thanks to some of the information she obtained when listening to *Ramogi FM*, one of the radios that broadcast in Luo. Although she could not remember the name of the program or the day and month that it was aired, Caroline recollects that the discussions were about small loans given to small-scale farmers and traders. She goes on to say that the information she received gave her ideas that helped her transform her business from a small local business where she would only target Kisumu clients, to a large-scale production with shops in many parts of the country that sell fish.

Ramogi FM and Radio Lake Victoria have been really helpful in identifying markets for traders here in Kisumu. I never knew that people like me would ever receive a small loan to expand my fish business, but I managed to get some money through a development fund that I identified through a program that was on Ramogi FM. I can't remember the name of the program, but all I know is that it changed my life as well as my business. Now I am able to sell my fish even in Nairobi where I also own few shops. I never used to listen to vernacular radios that much, but now I do listen to them on a regular basis.

This assertion affirms the centrality of vernacular radio programs in overseeing economic empowerment of the populations they serve.

5.3.4. Political Objectives

Vernacular radios are also means by which groups stay informed with regard to political beliefs, and by extension, the political party or parties that represent their cause. They are the “gate-keepers” when it comes to groups’ political ideologies or interests. As already mentioned, each vernacular radio serves a specific ethno-linguistic group with well-defined beliefs, customs, and interests.

Respondents considered vernacular as a forum for exchange and dialogue on the issues that affected their lives as an ethnic group and a means by which they would articulate their political ideologies and policies in a language understood by their communities. Phone-in and talk shows programs were at the centre of many political debates. Often, the presenters of these radios chose very carefully the kinds of music, comedy and commentaries to intertwine with these debates. This led to mixed reactions as to whether or not vernacular radios were agents of intergroup hate and mutilation.

While some respondents praised, “ethnicized political information,” suggesting that they mirror the values and beliefs of the people they represent, others argued that ethnicized politics only generated negative competitive attitudes amongst the Kenyan groups, and compromised national self-determination. This is why some respondents such as Lucy, a High School teacher in Kisumu, disgraced ethnicized political information. Lucy argues that some programs, often accompanied by traditional music,

cut deep into the preconceived stereotypes, in a negative light, that describe intergroup relations in Kenya. Lucy was particularly concerned with the content of some of the Luo *Ohangla*⁵² songs that, despite their controversial political messages, have become one of Kenya's music sensations. This is what she had to say:

Vernacular radios have a special connection with the people they serve because of the language intimacy. They broadcast in the languages used by the groups they serve, they play their kinds of music, and they also support their cultural practices as well as the political views. Just pay attention to the content of the music these [vernacular] stations play and you will understand what I am talking about. I am not saying that all songs are political, but the majority of the songs are, apart from the gospel of course. These guys [radio hosts] know exactly what they are doing because we witnessed what happened during the campaigns of the 2007 presidential race. These guys [radio hosts] only played songs that were very political, some demonizing other political candidates, yet people were just happy listening to them and singing along. [...] *Ohangla* is so popular here [Kisumu] such that at every corner you pass, all you hear is Tony Nyadundo and Onyi Papa Jay's songs in praise of *Tinga*⁵³. [...] I guess what I am trying to say is that vernacular radios play an important role in group's social psychology and I am not surprised that Kenyans will always trust one of their own before welcoming the views of other ethnic groups, especially when it comes to politics.

This assumption shows the significance of vernacular radios in reinforcing collective perceptions, especially when it comes to regional politics. Cultural proximity and language appear to be the main factors render ethnicity more salient in regional politics.

⁵²*Ohangla* is a Luo traditional song, which has become very popular in the past few years, cutting across ethnic groups and urban dwellers given its catchy rhythms and dances. Initially, *Ohangla* was performed during ceremonies such as weddings and funerals, where it was mostly associated with the old. Today, *Ohangla* blends both traditional and contemporary beats thus embraced by both the elderly and the younger generations.

⁵³ *Tinga* is a nickname given to the then-presidential hopeful Raila Odinga, who is currently the Prime Minister of Kenya. Odinga is also a presidential contender in the next general elections in March 2013. Literally, *Tinga* is a Luo term for a tractor.

5.3.5. Educational Uses

As educational platforms, vernacular radios were regarded as an effective means through which health and civic empowerment programs are passed on to the public with limited knowledge of English and Swahili. Health education programs seemed to be appreciated the most by respondents in all of the three locations where the study was carried out. Major health threats such as HIV and AIDS were mainly communicated to vernacular radio audiences mainly in comic formats, talk shows and drama series. These are the main formats that seemed to resonate well with rural dwellers who represent the majority of vernacular radio audiences.

In some rural areas of Kisumu, where wife inheritance is still a common practice, Luo vernacular radios have made a great effort in integrating health-awareness programs in their talk shows or phone-in programs. In this light, Kenya's Ministry of Health in partnership with different health professionals and *Radio Lake Victoria* spearheads Voluntary Male Circumcision (VMC), a health campaign that is often aired on different vernacular radios to reinforce male circumcision while providing other useful information relating to sexually transmitted diseases (STD).

Vernacular radios therefore inform their audiences on various locations where they can find well-trained health experts to attend to their health problems at a relatively low cost or free of charge, mainly for HIV patients. During my visit to Kisumu, I happen to interview a respondent who was HIV positive. The respondent described vernacular radios as "virtual doctors" since they serve as a vehicle by which health awareness programs are channelled "on-air" to help many patients cope with their HIV status. He recounted his distressful fight with the disease, although he says that his life is now better

thanks to the countless pieces of advice that he receives through Radio Lake Victoria's *Duol Jokanyanam*, a program with focus on the issues affecting the residents of Kisumu, such as HIV and AIDS.

Similarly, William, another respondent from Eldoret pointed out that Changei and Kass FM radios air programs on health education, with focus on the youth population. Murtha liked the fact that some of the radio hosts interviewed health workers who encouraged the local residents to visit regional centres that provided free counselling for HIV and AIDS patients, most of which were funded and staffed by the national and international humanitarian organizations.

Vernacular radios were also considered as forums for civic and democratic education, and by extension, a vehicle for social change. In this regard, the essence of vernacular radios seemed to lie in their capacity to speak to and for the groups they serve through basic education on various principles of human rights such as democracy and voting. During my interviews in Nyeri, I had an interesting exchange with a local craftsman who calls himself "officer Kamau." He listens to a number of Kikuyu radios, but prefers Inooro FM supposedly because it is more educational on matters of advocacy and human rights. "Officer Kamau" perceives Inooro FM as a democratizing radio:

I think these [vernacular] radios provide us with information that helps us stay alert on different issues affecting the country. This is why I like Inooro FM because its programs are more educational than other radios such as Kameme and Coro FM that focus on entertainment. Inooro FM provides good information on how to work on the differences that divide our community, especially when it comes to politics or family relations. They [Inooro FM] bring on-air educators from the community to talk about issues that affect our people such as abusive relationships, land grabbing, etc. [...]. They also help people realize when politicians are manipulating them for selfish purposes. These are some of the little things that these guys do to inform many people on ways in which they can protect themselves from abuse or manipulation. Inooro [FM] is a real "eye opener" when it comes to issues of democracy and advocacy in our community.

In Eldoret, Kass FM's *Nengung Kut* appeared to be among the popular programs on civic education. During the program, the audiences call or send Short Message Service (SMS) on-air to radio hosts and share their views on the abuse or neglect of women. In the process, listeners who may have had similar experiences are encouraged to seek help.

Educational programs were more likely to be successful or influential when passed on through comic, drama, or phone-in formats. Regular formats, such as interviewing a health professional, were considered boring and difficult to assimilate in one's own language. Conversely, comic formats were seen as simple and fun. Equally, respondents indicated that educational programs presented by funny, friendly, and well-known radio hosts were more appealing.

As an educational platform, vernacular radio programs offered respondents with information to fight ignorance with regard to matters that affected their daily lives. The ability of these programs to be influential hinged on the kinds of formats chosen and the presenters in the studios.

The next section focuses on the dominant vernacular radio discourses that characterized intergroup relations prior to, during and after the 2007/08 conflicts.

5.4. Framing Intergroup Claims in Kalenjin, Luo and Kikuyu Radios

This section presents the findings relating to the accommodation of intergroup relations by the Kalenjin, Luo and Kikuyu radios in the events of the 2007/08 conflicts. Emphasis is put on how respondents made sense of the conflicts and intergroup relations following the information they received from their respective vernacular radios. The section begins by presenting descriptive accounts relative to the discourses that dominated the pre-conflict phase. It then focuses on the dominant frames that surfaced during the violent conflicts, before concluding with post-conflict (violent) frames.

5.4.1. Dominant Frames Prior to the (violent) Conflict

The findings suggest erratic and dissimilar patterns of frames adopted by the Kalenjin, Luo and Kikuyu vernacular radios prior to the 2007/08 conflicts. At this stage, the radios in the three locations appeared to be relying on deep-seated historical contingencies coupled with intergroup disfigurement to provide their respective audiences with an interpretative framework, most of which served to reinforce divisive attitudes in the events leading to the 2007 general elections.

Kalenjin Radios

The interviews with Eldoret participants indicate that, prior to the 2007 general elections, historical land grievances dominated Kalenjin radios. This was articulated in

terms of the thorny historical relationship that characterize the Kalenjin and the Kikuyu groups that live in the Rift Valley. As discussed in Chapter one, historical resettlement schemes led to the relocation of some groups, mainly the Kikuyu, to various parts of the Rift Valley such as Nakuru and Naivasha. This came amid the need to create room for the White Settlers who occupied the fertile *Highlands*, previously inhabited by the Kikuyu and other groups.

These historical settlements were at the centre of debates, many of which were aired on Kalenjin radios. One of the arguments that surfaced during the interviews is the notion that the first President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, acquired large parcels of land in Rift Valley following the end of colonial rule, and disbursed most of it to the Kikuyu community to which he belonged. Although there are other groups such as the Luo and Luhya who worked on the farms, and acquired land in Rift Valley, the latter did not appear to cause uproar in Kalenjin radio rhetoric.

The negotiation of the Kikuyu-Kalenjin relationship took the form of “foreign-indigenous” discourse. In the process, the narratives of “stolen ancestral lands” dominated the Kalenjin airwaves suggesting that the Kikuyu who lived in Rift Valley illegally occupied Kalenjins’ ancestral lands, and the plight to recapture the supposed stolen lands. The interviews also indicated that the majority of radio presenters in the region provided ODM party members with more time on-air than their PNU counterparts.

The interviews during phone-in and talk shows programs were often conducted with politicians affiliated to the ODM party. Central to these talks was the *Majimbo*⁵⁴ *Constitution*, which generated a lot of confusion amongst the residents of Rift Valley.

⁵⁴ *Majimbo* is a Swahili word for regionalism or devolution.

The meaning of *Majimbo* was two twofold, and depended on whether the speakers supported ODM or PNU as a political party.

On the one hand, the meaning of *Majimbo* was associated with land reforms in the 1990s that generated social unrest in the Rift Valley. This caused panic and fear among different groups living in the Rift Valley. According to the interviews, politicians who pushed for Kibaki's re-election bid, such as the retired President Daniel Arap Moi, perpetrated this view. In the process, the ODM party that campaigned on *Majimbo* Constitution was painted as a vehicle by which intergroup violence and internal displacement would be encouraged.

On the other hand, *Majimbo* was articulated in terms of devolution of national resources to the regional level. This position was mainly held by those who supported the ODM party, suggesting that centralized governance was the root cause of economic disparity between groups in Kenya. The key figure in this regard was William Ruto, a "junior" Kalenjin politician who emerged as the new Kalenjin symbol of hope, and this, despite Moi's plight to belittle his campaigns on ODM's ticket. The majority of the Kalenjin radios thus focused Ruto's campaign and the "fight" between him and the retired Head of State (Moi) to control the Kalenjin dynasty. The conflicting discourses emanating from the proponents of different political parties added to the ambiguity that surrounded the *Majimbo* debates.

Apart from political fights, opinion polls conducted mainly by *Steadman Research* and *Infotrack* also dominated the Kalenjin airwaves. According to the interviews, the polls indicated a strong support for Odinga's ODM in the Rift Valley as well as nationally. The majority of radio audiences thus believed that ODM was bound to

win the 2007 general elections, and that it was unlikely for the Odinga team to lose unless the votes were rigged. The rhetoric of vote rigging thus became central to the radio debates. Whether this was true or not, it had different ramifications on the perceptions of Kalenjin voters who were about to head to the ballot.

Popular and traditional Kalenjin songs were also carefully intertwined within call-in programs, as interludes and signature tunes, to reinforce pre-established intergroup categorizations. Most of the songs were used during the sessions presided by the *Kalenjin Council of Elders*. In this light, the song *Rift Valley* (in Kalenjin) by Keiyo Stars Band that calls the Kalenjin community to “guard and protect Rift Valley from being invaded by wild beasts” dominated the Kalenjin radios. The song enlists the groups forming the Kalenjin family and integrates the Maasai and Turkana as part of the larger “Rift Valley Family”. Other major groups living in Rift Valley such as the Kikuyu, Luhya and Luo are omitted. Respondents believe that such songs resonated with the Kalenjin group mainly because of the territorial insecurity characterizing the inhabitants of the Rift Valley.

It appears that the pre-conflict narratives were fragmented along historical grievances. Land and territorial insecurity remained the force within which the Kalenjin identity was negotiated. In the process, the radios served to purport intergroup categorization based not only on the kinds of people they interviewed, but also on the songs they played. This served to shape voters’ opinions with regard to in-group and out-group members in the period leading to the 2007 general elections, with ODM party and their affiliates becoming the key beneficiaries of these kinds of discourses.

Luo Radios

Unlike in Eldoret where territorial insecurity dominated the Kalenjin radio airwaves, Luo radios seem to have focused on Odinga's (then ODM flag bearer) political profile and personality while branding him as a Luo political enigma⁵⁵ with an inconceivable national command. According to the interviews, Luo radios depicted Odinga as a revolutionist who has risked his life to oversee democratic reforms in Kenya. This negotiation took historical perspectives characterizing the thorny relationships that characterized the Luo and Kikuyu since Kenya's independence in 1963.

On the one hand, Odinga's ODM was framed as a revolutionizing party likely to promote equal opportunity, supposedly because Odinga has a long history of political reforms since he joined the politics. This focus shifted the spotlight from ODM as a political party to Odinga's persona. Much emphasis was put on the struggles that Odinga had gone through in his political career, claiming that he was worth becoming Kenya's next president by virtue of the alleged reforms. ODM party was thus equated with Odinga as a person, a frame that might have weakened ODM's messages in Kisumu but strengthened Odinga's presidential bid based on his popularity.

⁵⁵According to the interviews, Odinga has a strong command of the Luo community since the passing of his father who is believed to have enjoyed the same kind of support from the community. This personality is also attributed to him given his past detentions while fighting for multiparty democracy in the former president Moi's predominant one-party state. His first detention was in 1982 when he was charged with treason and put in prison for six years for allegedly plotting a foiled coup against the former Head of State, Daniel Arap Moi. He was also re-arrested in 1988 and 1990 for supposedly collaborating with advocacy groups that questioned Moi's dictatorship and suppression of politically dissenting views. Odinga's consistent opposition to government's politics has given him various images, ranging from communist to radical. This is also reflected in the kinds of nicknames that have been given to him over the years – "Agwambo" (Luo word for mystery or enigma), "Tinga" (Luo word for farm tractor – implying that he can handle anything and everything).

On the other hand, Odinga's presidential bid was often associated with the footprints of his late father's determination and dream⁵⁶ that remained unfulfilled until his passing in 1994 after a short illness. The Odinga family has been very influential in Luo politics, and one of the key pillars in Kenya's post-independence opposition politics. While Odinga's father was praised as an emblematic figure in Kenya's "First Liberation," Odinga the son, was now hailed as an advocate of the "Fourth Liberation," often associated with youth's deliberation and empowerment. The interviews also indicated that historical grievances that characterized the government of Jomo Kenyatta (first president of Kenya) and his then-vice president, Oginga Odinga, became key angles of news analysis in the Luo radios.

The underlying assumption in this regard was the supposed political supremacy between the Luo and Kikuyu groups. Phone-in programs were often geared towards the divisions that reign within the two communities in terms of power relations. PNU was framed as a "Kikuyu party", often linked to affluent political elites within the Kikuyu community, while ODM rebranded as the party representing the non-Kikuyus. In a similar vein, Kibaki's accession to presidency in 2002, that ended Moi's 24-year rule, was now linked to Odinga's *Kibaki Tosha* (Kibaki is fit) campaign slogan believed to have generated support for Kibaki in 2002, especially among the Luo community.

Odinga's support for Kibaki in 2002 is believed to have been based on the fact that Kibaki promised to deliver a new Constitution during his presidency to address

⁵⁶Odinga's father, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, was a Luo elder and one of the few prominent freedom fighters in the periods leading to Kenya's Independence from the British. After independence in 1963 and the swearing in of Jomo Kenyatta as Kenya's first president, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga also became Kenya's first vice-president. Given his outspoken personality and divisions that emerged between him and Kenyatta, he was detained for two years after which he was only able to return to politics following the death of Kenyatta in 1978. His return to politics was marked by struggles for multiparty politics during Moi's reign, in which political dissent was unlawful. He created and involved in various parties where he unsuccessfully vied for presidency until his death in 1994.

presumed violation of executive powers and fraudulent activities that characterized the previous regime. Equally, Kibaki and Odinga signed a memorandum of understanding to see the creation of the Premiers position that was to go to Raila Odinga. This did not happen during Kibaki's first term as promised. Instead, it is believed that politicians close to Kibaki dismissed the idea of amending the Constitution since Kibaki had different policies compared to those of his predecessors. The failed promise became a sore point between Odinga and Kibaki, with radios framing the issue as a betrayal of the Luo by the Kikuyu. My interview with Patrick, a tailor in Kisumu, puts this into perspective:

[...] There was a sense of betrayal from the Kikuyu once Kibaki became president in 2002. When Odinga campaigned so hard for him in 2002, Kikuyu and Luos were best friends. Once they [Kikuyu] got what they wanted, they decided to turn their backs from the people and disregarded what Odinga and other politicians campaigned for. [...] It was normal for the Luo voters to be reminded about what happened in 2002 so that they are not fooled again.

Central to the radio debates were also the perceptions of foul play by the incumbent Kibaki who, prior to the 2007 general elections, decided to appoint the majority (19 out of 22) of the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) without consulting the opposition, contradicting what Kibaki himself had campaigned for prior to succeeding Moi in 2002. The underlying argument raised by the callers was that in 1997, KANU (the then-ruling party) and the opposition had agreed to share the appointments equally. Kibaki's government was thus associated with corruption and mischief.

In the same perspective, the economic successes of the majority of the Kikuyu group were framed in terms of corruption and marginalization of other groups within Kibaki-led government. The radios alleged that, similar to Kenyatta's government (1963-1978), Kibaki's regime provided the Kikuyu group with more opportunities compared to other groups. Odinga-led ODM was thus cast as a vehicle by which equal opportunities

would be observed. This was backed by the fact that he is the elected Member of Parliament (MP) representing Nairobi's Lang'ata Constituency, which includes Kibera slum, one of Kenya's biggest low-income areas inhabited by unemployed youths.

The narratives about the soaring youth unemployment were coiled with a youth-led campaign, *Vijana Tugutuke Ni Time Yetu*, colloquial Swahili for "wake up youths it is our time". Although the campaign was organized by a coalition of non-governmental organizations at the national level, Luo radios integrated some of the campaign slogans within their programs in a manner that suggested that Kibaki's government had failed to address the worrying youth unemployment.

Equally, the radios focused on the discourses perpetrated by the *Luo Council of Elders* (LCE) and their views on Luo votes. *Abila*, a talk show program aired on Ramogi FM and Radio Lake Victoria, created the platform through which the supposed elders enlightened the Luos on the political aspirations of the community. While some of the talks centred on historical grievances between communities, they also emphasized the need for the Luo group to vote as a block for the Odinga-led ODM party.

Luo traditional songs, often depicting Odinga as a revolutionary selfless hero representing the poor Kenyans, accompanied most of these talk shows. Songs by militant and influential Luo artists such as Toni Nyadundo, Onyi Papa Jey, and Osogo Winyo dominated the Luo radio airwaves. For instance, the songs *Raila Igalagala* (Raila is sturdy) and *Wadinonu* (You've been cornered) by Toni Nyadundo alleged that ODM had already amassed the support it needed to block Kibaki's re-election. The songs created an atmosphere of celebration within the Luo community while the campaigns were still underway. The meaning and symbolic imagination that the songs brought to light prior to

elections were rife with critical messages about the Kikuyu and the alleged killings of the Luo politicians by previous governments.

Unlike in Eldoret where the narratives of territorial insecurity characterized the tensions amongst the residents of the Rift Valley, the interviews in Kisumu pointed out that the discourse surrounding the struggles for political supremacy dominated the airwaves. The Luo were also painted as marginalized groups within the presumed Kikuyu-dominated government.

Kikuyu Radios

While the Kalenjin and Luo radios seemed to direct their attacks against the Kibaki-led PNU party, the narratives of the Kikuyu radios seemed to counter the attacks by painting ODM as an opportunist party rooted on ethnic bigotry and personal interests. As such, territorial insecurity and struggles for political supremacy were all embraced as angles of news analyses by the Kikuyu radios, but with a different approach.

While the discourse on territorial insecurity was characterized by the Kalenjin radios in terms of “foreign occupation”, Kikuyu radios articulated the same issue in terms of planned attacks, creating a sense of fear and panic among the members of the Kikuyu community. Debates around *Majimboism* thus predominated the airwaves, with the latter linked to clashes that emerged in the Rift Valley in the 1990s.

Kikuyu talk shows and phone-in programs dismissed ODM’s *Majimbo* suggesting that it was likely to foment targeted-inter-ethnic conflicts under the guise of federalism. The underlying assumption is that the ODM party, now narrowed to a Luo-Kalenjin

party, was exploiting deep-seated land grievances to amass support within the Rift Valley while putting other communities at risk of planned attacks. The relationship between the Kalenjin and Kikuyu were articulated along these lines.

Historical rivalries between the Kikuyu and Luo groups also surfaced within the narratives of the Kikuyu radios to provide angles of interpretation with regard to Odinga-Kibaki campaigns. ODM's manifesto was equated with Odinga's struggles to become Kenya's president in vain, most of which borrowed from the historical ethnic rivalries between the Luo and the Kikuyu. The split between Jomo Kenyatta (first president, Kikuyu) and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga (first vice-president, Luo) was also evoked to contextualize the deteriorating relationship between the two groups.

At the centre of the Kikuyu radio narratives was also a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) that was reportedly signed by ODM and the Muslim community, claiming that the agreement was partly aimed at adopting *Sharia Law* (Islamic law) in the predominantly Muslim provinces of Kenya, such as Coastal and North Eastern. The interviews indicated that the majority of the guests who were invited during the MoU talks were mainly the Bishops and Church leaders from the Kikuyu community to disclaim the alleged pact, while suggesting that ODM leadership would threaten Kenya's predominant Christian faith. In the process, Odinga's Christian faith was also questioned.

Furthermore, fears that Odinga's presidency would mirror that of the former Uganda's dictator, Idi Amin, also dominated the airwaves. The parallel between Odinga and Idi Amin was often used to suggest that Odinga was, by nature, a dictator who could not be trusted with the governance of the state. Similarly, cultural differences between

the Luo and Kikuyu groups such as the notion of circumcision and the passage to adulthood were also used to represent Odinga's personality in a negative light.

Some callers claimed that an uncircumcised leader could not lead the nation, possibly alleging that Odinga's leadership would be a shame to the country given that his community did not routinely practice circumcision. Phone-in programs moderated by different radio hosts and eminent personalities within the *Kikuyu Council of Elders* (KCE) seem to be the basis from which cultural-based attacks emanated. Most of the attacks belittled Odinga's imagined personality as well as his presidential ambitions.

Kibaki's progressive economic record was also at the centre of radio debates. Unlike the Luo and Kalenjin radios that focused on youth unemployment supposedly under Kibaki's watch, Kikuyu radios emphasized the 5-6% national economic growth that Kenya recorded in the first years of Kibaki's government. Interviews with affluent businesspersons who praised Kibaki's government dominated the airwaves, alluding that Kenya's economy was on the brink of collapsing, following Moi's (Kibaki's predecessor) presumed mismanagement of public funds.

The radios thus emphasized *Kazi Inendelee* (Let the work continue), a campaign slogan by the Kibaki re-election camp that dismissed all the allegations about disproportional resource allocations. *Constituency Development Funds* (CDF) and free primary education (including plans for free secondary education), all of which were initiated by the Kibaki regime, were hailed as Kibaki's positive economic indicators.

While Kikuyu traditional songs were also used as signature tunes and interludes, most of them did not appear to praise Kibaki's persona or his political career, rather, they focused on the oath of honour to the Kikuyu politics and way of life. Some songs

suggested a strong alliance of the groups representing the GEMA⁵⁷ community and their plight to remain united despite episodic political disturbances. Christian and gospel songs also dominated the Kikuyu radios. This played on the emotions of the Kikuyu as a group, creating a feeling of solidarity, as many already believed that they were prime targets in the period leading to the 2007 general elections. The songs by leading Kikuyu artists such as Muigai Wa Njoroge, Ben Githae, Lucy Muthumbi and Sarah Mbogo were among the most played.

In general, it appears that the discourses adopted by the Kikuyu radios to negotiate intergroup relations prior to the 2007 general elections were also disproportionate, just like those that stemmed from the Kalejin and Luo radios. While land and territorial insecurity became the symbolic label of the Kikuyu-Kalenjin contentions, the Luo-Kikuyu disputes were negotiated in terms of power and political supremacy, with Odinga's candidacy being narrowed to "Luo militancy" and an "oppositional career." In the process, the ODM party was associated with arrogance and violence.

5.4.2. Dominant Frames During the Violent Conflicts

While the pre-conflict frames centred on historical contingencies such as the contentious land ownership and political alienation, the period characterized by the active conflict (violent) was framed in terms of intergroup mutilation and cross-victimization. The previous angles of news analysis shifted from electoral discourse to embrace

⁵⁷ GEMA is term used to describe the three-member (Gikuyu, Embu and Meru) community association that was created between 1960 and 1970 by various politicians from Central province to mobilize support for the Kikuyu communities that were resettled in parts of the Rift Valley during colonial period.

ethnicity. In the process, historically situated claims and perceptions with regard to intergroup relations were transformed into the narratives of groups' survival such as invasion and eviction, attacks and counterattacks, and rebellion and revolt.

Kalenjin Radios

When asked about the kinds of issues that dominated the Kalenjin radios during the active (violent) conflict, respondents from Eldoret indicated that the narratives around land requisition remained prevalent. That is, the Kalenjin radios sustained their portrayal of the Kikuyu as “foreigners” inhabiting Kalenjin “ancestral lands.” As a result, call-in programs seemed to be bombarded with calls to clear and protect the perceived Kalenjin territories from “invaders,” who, supposedly had contributed to the shortage of lands and overpopulation in the Rift Valley.

This incited some of the Kalenjin youths to take to the streets to contest the electoral results that gave Kibaki a second term, a move that was now interpreted as PNU's plot to abort the supposed plight of the Kalenjins vis-à-vis land claims. Although land claims were still at the forefront of the debates, the violent conflicts that culminated into targeted attacks were now justified on the grounds of vote rigging, with PNU supporters regarded as the primary triggers of the mayhem.

At the same time, the discourses of suppression by the Kibaki government were emphasized, giving the impression that the that the government had not only failed to address the electoral discrepancies that had sparked the violence, but it had supposedly directed the police to target the alleged ODM strongholds, especially Eldoret, Kisumu

and Nairobi's Kibera slums. My interview with Mary, who runs a grocery store in Eldoret, puts this into perspective:

When the news broke out, I was following the elections over the radio because I couldn't watch TV and attend to my clients at the same time. I don't know if it was through Kass FM or Changei FM, but I remember hearing about some callers saying that the police that had been transported in our villages even before the results were announced. They [callers] said that some of the police were also transported to Kisumu. Why is it that the police were not sent to interfere with the Central people? I think the government already knew that it rigged the elections and the people from these areas were not going to accept the outcome.

Equally, there were allegations that a "gang" associated with the Kikuyu youth identified as *Mungiki*, organized retaliatory attacks within the Rift Valley, killing mainly the Luos and Kalenjins whom they linked to the attacks on the Kikuyu group. The attacks and the counterattacks increased the intensity of the conflicts especially in the Rift Valley. My interview with one of the radio journalists at Kass FM provided deep insights on how journalists of different vernacular radios struggled with their editorial focus during the violent conflicts.

The violence we witnessed in Rift Valley is by far one of the defining moments of my journalism career. As a journalist, we are normally trained to be objective in news reports at all times, but when you see your relatives or cousins being slaughtered or shot in front of you, it becomes very difficult to remain objective [...] I feel that it was normal for our news team to refocus the news content in a manner that our people would become aware of what was on their backyards so that they can be well prepared to fight back. [...] Although we were advised not to take sides on-air, callers who vowed to retaliate the attacks or called upon the community to get out and protect their territories from being invaded by these gangs [Mungiki] were given more airtime so that their messages could be heard. Did you expect us to sit back and watch our people being butchered? Our message was clear, the Kalenjin had to protect themselves from these forms of this brutality.

Whether the allegations raised above were a fallacy or not, it appears that the majority of the Kalenjin radios framed the conflicts in terms of invasion and the right to protect one's self. This might have reinforced a sense of insecurity, leading to the

intimidation and attacks on other groups perceived as PNU proponents, mainly the Kikuyu. Finger pointing and victimization became the central narrative within which the violence and the group's survival were justified in most of the Kalenjin radios.

Luo Radios

In Kisumu, the violence was justified on the basis of a “stolen victory.” Just like Kalenjin radios, call-in programs predominately suggested that the Luos were victims of the government's maltreatment, and that the community had to keep up the fight to protest their supposed “stolen victory.” In the process, PNU supporters were sidelined as the primary beneficiaries of the rigged elections, and by extension, of the fraudulent government that was now discredited. ODM supporters were thus called upon to reject the results and maintain the pressure towards the government with the hope that the Kibaki would step down to allow a recount of the votes.

The discourses on vote manipulation were often backed by the opinion polls that had previously shown Odinga as a consistent frontrunner until the official results of the 2007 general elections showed otherwise. The radios also emphasized the results that were independently reported by various newsrooms that placed Odinga ahead of Kibaki in the majority of polling stations. In this sense, Luo radios created a strong belief that the elections were fraudulent, and that Kisumu voters who backed Odinga's candidacy had to reclaim their victory. Joshua, a real-estate agent in Kisumu, recalls his memories on the moments the violence broke out in Kisumu and the confusion that reigned amongst Kisumu residents:

Kisumu voted for Raila and the surveys also indicated that Raila was the clear frontrunner even during the actual vote tallying. [...] A day before the release of the official results, there was confusion all over, with contradictory messages coming from different journalists. At one point, we hear that Raila had been declared the winner, the next minute we hear that it is actually Kibaki who took it. This is what sparked anger and violence against the PNU members. Everyone went to vote in peace and they started playing around with people's will. [...] You don't expect us to keep quiet and let go our hard-earned victory. It is like stepping on a snake expecting it not to bite back.

In a similar vein, it was alleged that the government had implanted the police force in Kisumu prior to the announcement of the official results, subjecting the residents to police curfew. Whether the assumptions were valid or not, they served to create panic among the residents of Kisumu. Moreover, fear and panic also extended to Nairobi's Kibera slum, which hosts a sizable proportion of the Luo group. Similarly, callers who feared for the arrest of the ODM leader also circulated false rumours about Odinga's arrest, adding to the violence towards PNU supporters in Kisumu.

Equally dominant were the allegations that affluent Kikuyu elites within Kibaki's government had sponsored the *Mungiki* mercenaries to carry out the counterattacks against ODM supports. The interviews indicated that Naivasha and Nakuru towns of the Rift Valley, where the Kikuyu are the majority group, were reported as hubs from where the outlawed *Mungiki* group directed their attacks towards ODM supporters who were narrowed to the Luo, Kalenjin and Luhya groups.

In general, the interviews pointed out that during the violent conflicts, Luo radios reinforced the perception that the elections were rigged, and that it was necessary to reclaim the "stolen victory". The narratives of victimization with an emphasis on police mistreatments became the main angles of news analysis.

In the processes, PNU supporters were sidelined as the key perpetrators of the alleged attacks, a factor that sheds light on the patterns of the attacks and counterattacks. Equally, the radios also strengthened the perception that the conflicts were not primarily mayhem between the Luo and the Kikuyu, but rather Kikuyu versus the “rest of Kenyans.”

Kikuyu Radios

Given the magnitude of the violence that rocked the Rift Valley, in which the Kikuyu seemed to be the target group, some Kikuyu radios adopted narratives of self-defence. In this light, the Eldoret church incident⁵⁸ became the central element in justifying retaliatory attacks in the Rift Valley.

The Kikuyu radios rejected the allegations about vote rigging that seemed to have spread all over the country. Many of the debates suggested that Raila Odinga was a radical politician who would not concede defeat for personal interests. As such, PNU and its supporters were encouraged not to give up their fight to make sure that PNU retained power. The callers claimed that PNU rightfully won the elections and that Kibaki had no reason to succumb to the pressure from the opposition.

Just like the Kalenjin and Luo radios, Kikuyu radios embodied the narratives of cross-victimization and the right to “self-defence”, alleging planned attacks on the members of the Kikuyu group. The attacks were often articulated in parallel with Rwanda’s genocide to supposedly awaken the Kikuyus elsewhere in the country in the

⁵⁸ During the violence in Eldoret some individuals believed to be members of the Kikuyu group were found burned to death while seeking refuge inside a church building.

event of further attacks. The underlying assumption was the fear of decimation by the alleged “gangs of Kalenjin warriors”. Ethnic cleansing, massacre, genocide, and civil war were among the commonly used frames to characterize the perceived atrocities carried out against the Kikuyu group.

Equally, the narratives of group solidarity dominated the phone-in programs, often accompanied by Christian and gospel songs to appease the victims of the violence. My interview with Margaret, a resident of Nyeri who lost a cousin during the violent outbreaks shared her perspectives on how vernacular radios played a significant role in ensuring solidarity among the Kikuyu community.

The first time I heard about the violence, I didn’t know that my community was the one targeted. Properties and houses belonging to the Kikuyu people were being looted and burned down in Eldoret. All the radio stations that I usually listen to talked about us being killed around the country. At this point, I panicked a lot because my cousin and his family lived in Eldoret. [...] The radios were very important because people were calling to console one another and to offer their support to those who were displaced from their homes in various parts of the Rift Valley.

In essence, the findings suggest that the narratives of victimization and finger pointing, which served to reinforce rebellious attitudes among the Kikuyu community, characterized the violent conflict phase. This may have led to the attacks and counterattacks in the guise of self-defence.

5.4.3. Post-conflict (violent) Frames

Given the magnitude of the violence and the inability of the two rival parties to find a common ground, the international community and the civil society, notably the humanitarian organizations and church leaders, intervened in an attempt to quell the

crisis. At the same time, vernacular radios in the three locations shifted their narratives in a manner that renegotiated intergroup relations, with much emphasis put on the intergroup cross-dialogue and co-optation. This shift appeared to have transformed divisive and rebellious attitudes, witnessed prior and during violent conflicts, into collaborative attitudes between and amongst the warring parties.

On the one hand, the negotiations between Odinga and Kibaki that were mediated by the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, were now conveyed through the radios as a means to contain the upheaval. This shifted the narratives from intergroup hostility and victimization to intergroup negotiations. Rather than highlighting the peak of the violence that traumatized and displaced hundreds of thousands from their homes, the focus was put on the press conferences held by both the PNU and the ODM delegates.

An immediate outcome of the negotiations (two months after the announcement of the controversial results and subsequent violence) was a power-sharing deal between the two leaders in form of a “National Accord” that Odinga and Kibaki signed to oversee major political reforms that included the amendment of the Constitution. At the same time, phone-in programs were tailored towards the agreement and how the two leaders were to share the executive powers. This is because the centralized structure that exemplifies Kenya’s politics has always confined the executive powers to the incumbent president.

In the process, efforts towards peace-building and intergroup reconciliation were facilitated by locally based organizations on multiple levels. For instance, local musicians organized free concerts where they called on Kenyans to reunite and condemn

the violence that had claimed the lives of innocent citizens. This proved to be a sizable effort towards breaking communication barriers between various communities.

As mentioned in Chapter one, music, comedy, soccer and worship are some of the common activities that seem to unite different communities irrespective of their cultural allegiances or regional attachment. By calling upon different groups to take part in the activities, the radios appeared to have played a critical role in bridging the communication gaps that had previously characterized various communities.

One of the key voices that dominated the airwaves was that of Eric Wainaina, a well-known Kenyan artist whose songs are composed in English, Swahili and the major languages spoken in Kenya. One of his songs, *Daima Mimi Mkenya* (I will remain true to Kenya) became one of the emblematic songs played in many radios. Other nationalist-driven songs were played repeatedly included: *Kenya Nchi Yangu* (Kenya My Country) by the late music veteran Kakai Kilonzo, which advocated for unity among Kenyans, *Wakenya Pamoja* (united as Kenyans), a song that was composed and sang by a coalition of popular Kenyan artists emanating from various communities.

Rather than playing provocative songs as interludes or signature tunes, radio hosts appeared to choose songs that advocated peace and unity among all groups while appealing to Kenyans' collective pride by reminding them that the images of the conflict jeopardized Safari tourism and the international marathon. The songs also recounted the colonial struggles that brought Kenya to independence while, at the same time, warning that the violence was in the process of reversing all progresses that had been made over the years.

Church leaders also organized mass rallies in their respective regions to encourage prayers for a country that was on the brink of a civil war, and whose stability laid in the hands of the two political rivals. The rallies were also aired live on various media across the country, including vernacular radios. Rather than emphasizing the contentious claims such as land ownership and struggles for political supremacy that had previously taken over the airwaves, radio talk shows were dominated by peace missions carried out by these groups. An informant from the National Council of Churches of Kenya said the following:

Some of the tribal kingpins used the local language radios [vernacular radios] to advance their personal agendas while forgetting that Kenya does not belong to a group or to an individual. [...] Although there are claims that some churches took sides during the conflicts, it was necessary for the Council of Churches to find ways in which it could indirectly take over the radio airwaves to divert the bitterness that had formed between communities. We had several meetings amongst us and agreed to arrange for interviews with various media around the country. This is why the majority of radios were dominated by religious programs so that we can pray for peace between communities.

Media organizations also took initiatives to refocus the messages that were circulated within their affiliated radio outlets, especially in post-conflict reconstruction stages. Probably one of the success stories in this regard has been the *The Churchill Show*, a comic talk show presented by Daniel Ndambuki, a renowned Kenyan comedian who is also a radio and TV host. The show blends popular Kenyan songs with stand-up comedy to provide a forum for discussion on the key issues that continue to challenge peace initiatives as well as intergroup relations in Kenya.

Not only does the show bring together some of the big names in Kenyan politics to embrace humour while discussing ways in which the country can avoid a repeat of the 2007/08 conflicts, it also reunites the best artists in the Kenyan culture industry to

entertain the audiences. The *Churchill Show* has become a sensation for all age groups irrespective of their backgrounds, as it covers, in a comic manner, the sore points of the perceived differences that tore the country apart in the events leading to the 2007/08 disturbances. This is partly because it is highly mediatised, even through vernacular radios, to reach diverse populations. The show is produced to encourage peaceful co-existence between groups, through comedy and music, giving new hopes to redress political opportunism and intergroup mutilation, ahead of the next general elections that are looming.

Fundamentally, post-conflict frames were tailored around transformative relationships between groups. Unlike the pre-conflict and active (violent) conflict stages, where intergroup differentiation was emphasized, post-conflict transformation frames were more collaborative. Radio narratives in the three locations appeared to convey peaceful messages that did cut across the perceived differences. In the process, previously held perceptions on vernacular radios as a liability in the conflict also changed, a shift that could be attributed to various factors such as the editorial influence. They were now regarded as viable assets in conflict management as they helped contain the violence from transforming into a civil war.

Despite their language of broadcast, nationalistic characterization was at the centre of all radio narratives. This highlights the fact that shifting radio discourses are likely to determine the patterns of a latent or an ongoing conflict. They can close or open new spaces for various claims to manifest themselves, especially in situations of stiff intergroup competition. In this case, vernacular radios serve neither as the cause nor the

effect of conflicts, but a vehicle through which claims are idealised to match the expectations or appeals of the groups served.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings of this research, which focused on the demographic information of participants, the patterns of vernacular radio listenership, the factors linked to vernacular radio listening, and the narratives relative to the framing of intergroup claims prior, during and after the 2007/08 violent conflicts.

With regard to demographic information, the study found that male participants were more open to talk about political issues than women respondents. This explains why the majority of participants were male. A sizable proportion of participants were also between the ages 24 and 41. Equally, 60% of participants (excluding key participants) did not identify themselves as white-collar workers, a factor that may explain the salience of the narratives relating to unemployment.

Concerning the patterns of vernacular radio listenership, the study found that access and ownership of radio devices were widespread across all the target groups. Only a fraction (6%) of those interviewed did not own a radio device. The findings also illustrated that Kikuyu's Coro FM (39%), Kalenjin's Kass FM (61%) and Luo's Ramogi FM (52%) were the dominant radios tuned to by the respondents in Nyeri, Eldoret and Kisumu respectively. Although vernacular radios were regarded as important and reliable sources of information, many respondents also used other media to complement the

information they gathered through vernacular radios. For example, 80% listened to the official-language radios as an alternative source of information.

In line with the factors linked to vernacular radio listening, respondents indicated listening to vernacular radios for several reasons: information-seeking, socio-cultural connectedness, economic and developmental familiarity, political positioning and educational awareness. More emphasis was put on the fact that vernacular radios served to maintain cultural diversity, which is characteristic of the Kenyan population.

With respect to the framing of intergroup claims prior, during and after the 2007/08 violent conflicts, the interviews indicated an erratic pattern of frames at different stages of the conflict. Prior to the conflicts, Kalenjin, Luo and Kikuyu radios framed the conflict in terms of historical contingencies that previously shaped people's perception of intergroup relations. This transformed into the narratives of intergroup deformity, while creating fear and despair among different groups in the period leading to the 2007 general elections. In this period, divisive attitudes were at the forefront of vernacular radio narratives.

During the violent conflicts, the narratives shifted from intergroup mutilation to embrace the discourses of survival and the right to self-defence. In this period, the radios appeared to perpetuate the assumption that the groups they served were the primary targets of various kinds of oppression. This transformed into the narratives of cross-victimization and finger pointing. Each group was a victim of something: government mistreatment (Luo radios), "foreign" invasion (Kalenjin radios) and planned eviction (Kikuyu radios). This served to reinforce rebellious attitudes between and amongst different constituents.

After the violent conflicts (conflict transformation stage), the radios shifted their narratives to embrace the discourses of cross-dialogue and peace, often highlighting the mediation processes that were underway. Rather than emphasizing the contentious issues such as land ownership and power incongruity, the radios focused on the activities organized by the local and international organizations to facilitate peace and the negotiation processes that were in progress. As such, intergroup characterization took the form of unity, solidarity and the observation of shared civic ideals. This reinforced collaborative attitudes between different actors.

The next chapter discusses the results of the study in relation to the research questions initially formulated.

CHAPTER VI. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I conduct a cross analysis of the fieldwork findings and documentary research to discuss the variables that helped answer my research questions, which were as follows: Why (searching for motives) and how (relative to conditions) did the 2007/08 conflicts shift from electoral discourse to embrace ethnicity? How do Kenya's vernacular radios accommodate and/or negotiate intergroup claims in situations of competition and/or conflict? What makes different groups choose to act according to the prompts of ethnic allegiances?

As explained in the previous chapters, the objective of this dissertation is not to develop a model for conflict resolution, as conflicts are situational and context-based, or to downplay the centrality of ethnic particularism in the events of the 2007/08 conflicts, but rather to explore and map out the dominant discourses that surrounded the accommodation of intergroup claims in the events leading to this particular conflict. In this light, the study also aimed at: a) mapping out the patterns of vernacular radio listenership in the three locations of research; b) determining the dominant vernacular radio stations; and c) finding out why vernacular radio listenership is important in the lives of those interviewed.

I start the chapter by discussing the significance of vernacular radios in different contexts, and then I look at the accommodation of intergroup claims during the events leading to the 2007/08 conflicts. The last section explains the shifts in media frames and how they influenced intergroup accommodation at different stages of conflict.

6.1. Significance of Vernacular Radios in Kenya

The findings highlight the centrality of vernacular radios in the lives of the study's participants. In general, radio still has the widest geographical reach in Kenya, with about 80% of the population still relying on it as a source of information. Not only does this position radio as a viable medium of communication in Kenya, but also as a suitable tool in conflict transformation, given the fact that radio has the highest number of audiences compared to other media such as TV, newspapers and the Internet.

The majority of vernacular radios are privately owned and most of their programs are commercial oriented. Perhaps the *Royal Media Services*, a private company that runs about 12 radios broadcasting in different ethno-regional languages, serves as an example. Although the state-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) also has radio programs offered in the major vernacular languages, privately owned vernacular radios appear to have a sizeable following in all the locations of the study. Trust in news content was the main factor associated with the low audience of the state-owned vernacular radio services. Nonetheless, *Coro FM*, a state-owned vernacular radio broadcasting in Kikuyu language, had a substantial following in Central Province where Nyeri, one of my research sites, is located.

One of the greatest advantages of radio was linked to the fact that it can be tuned to while performing other activities and moved around from one location to the other because it is portable. In the process, people can entertain themselves, follow news or seek information relating to what is happening around them on a daily basis, whether on sports, religion, health, farming, cooking, relationships, marriages, etc. Other advantages

that radio had over other media were associated with the cost, accessibility, and the oral nature of radio as a medium of communication.

In terms of broadcast formats, drama, music, comedy, lectures, talk-shows, studio discussions, and phone-in programs were some of the formats used by vernacular radio programmers to disseminate different kinds of information. The blend between some of these formats appeared to be very influential because they attract many listeners. For instance, respondents indicated that when health-related programs are produced in comic formats and engaging music, they are more likely to attract huge audiences (mainly the youth) compared to long interviews conducted with health experts.

The findings on listenership patterns indicate that vernacular radios have a strong following in the regions they serve, affirming the assumptions that media audiences are likely to select and use the media that fulfil their needs or expectations (Rubin, 2002; Ronsengren, 1974; Gripsrud, 2002). This was associated with the language of broadcast and the appropriation of news content in a manner that resonated with the values and expectations of the groups served. Access and ownership of radio devices were also widespread. Although 6% of those interviewed did not own a radio device, all respondents had access to at least one radio device, supporting the fact that radio still remains the most accessible medium of communication in Kenya. Indeed, radio-enabled cell phones played a central part in terms of widening radio accessibility.

As developmental tools, vernacular radios served as a vehicle by which development-oriented information, such as farming practices, was channelled to different populations, especially in the rural areas where people often have a poor command of English and Swahili, which are the two official languages in Kenya. The findings indicate

that vernacular radios run different programs that target the groups they serve, most of which are structured in a manner that takes into account the social, economic and political characteristics of these groups.

Culturally, vernacular radios serve to uphold Kenya's diverse languages and cultural identities. As a social and cultural forum, vernacular radios provide their audiences with the means to maintain their cultural particularities by focusing on a group's intrinsic values that were once passed on from community elders to the younger generation through storytelling. This may explain why some respondents found vernacular radios as suitable tools for communicating complex customary issues such as circumcision and how it reduces the chances of men to attract HIV virus, and cross-ethnic marriages and how they foster or challenge intergroup cohesion. Vernacular radios were regarded as the proper means by which such topics can be addressed, given the language and cultural proximity that these radios hold and the communities they serve.

Vernacular radios are essential in reinforcing regional ideologies and politics. Not only do these radios privilege the "voices" of their own, as shown in the selection of people to interview during studio discussions, they also play politically-driven music that is likely to strengthen the ideologies they (programming and editorial board) believe resonate with the groups targeted. This is in line with the earlier studies on media and audience perceptions that implied that media messages pass through "filters" that give more meaning to news stories (Lazersfeld and Katz 1955; Katz 1980).

One implication here, however, is that the supposed "filters" are further facilitated by the linguistic characteristics of vernacular radios that make it easy to use metaphoric characterizations to represent other political candidates in a negative light while

reinforcing the preconceived perceptions of intergroup relations. The power of vernacular music, in this perspective, is expected to build emotional support with regards to the kinds of ideologies advanced.

Thus, the main challenge for vernacular radio content is the accommodation of intergroup claims in times of stiff competition or conflict. This means that the same programs and formats discussed above can also be appropriated in a negative light to generate intergroup polarization, especially in situations of intergroup competition. Consistent with earlier studies on propaganda circulation (Katz, 1980; Lasswell, 1971), this study found that vernacular radio messages also serve as a vehicle through which “communal” propaganda circulates to slant the group’s perception of “others” in situations of conflict. However, the same findings also suggest that the slant in the representation of the “cultural others” changes with the stages of a given conflict.

The next section discusses some of the discourses that surrounded the accommodation of intergroup claims in the period characterized by the 2007/08 conflicts.

6.2. Accommodating Intergroup Claims in Conflict Situations

The findings suggest a high level of interdependence or intersectionality between five broad issues around which intergroup accommodation appeared to be grounded: *cultural allegiances*, *political affiliations*, *economic pressures* and *territorial insecurity*, all of which hinged on *media categorization*, referred to here as media frames (vernacular radio frames).

Using Figure 7 as an illustrative diagram, I indicate the recursive nature of these broad factors and discuss how they interact to aid *sense-making* processes in both covert and overt situations of conflict.

6.2.1. Cultural Allegiances

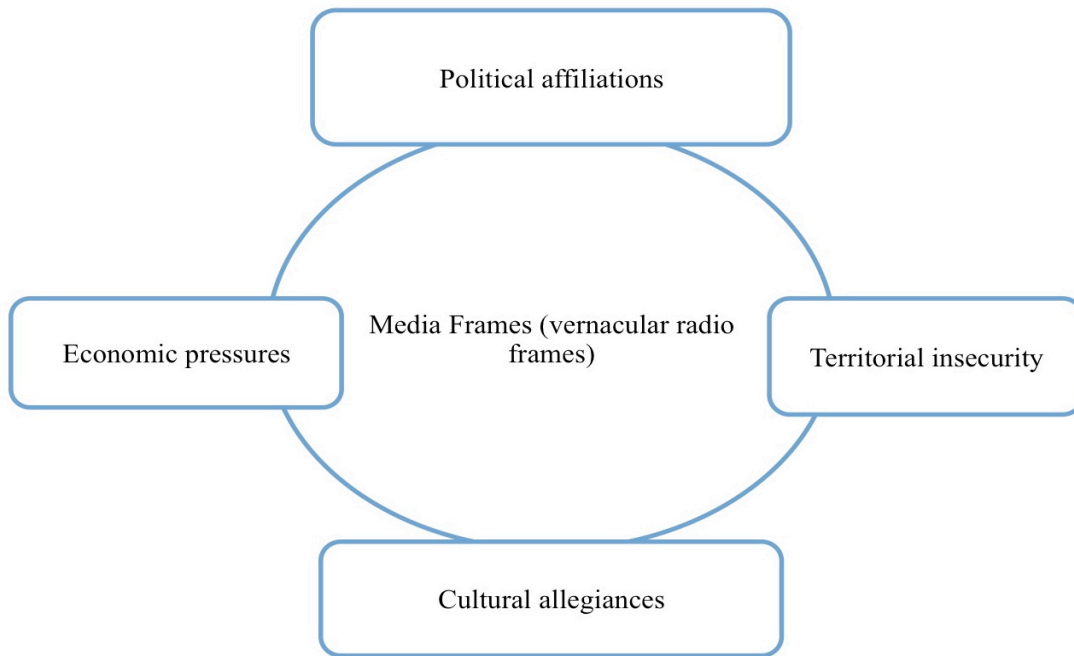
Cultural allegiance is used here to refer to the identity-based social categorization of various social groups. The categorization process can either be “internal” or “external” depending on one’s level of socio-cultural consciousness. Internal explanations of cultural allegiances are mainly concerned with how an individual sees him/herself within a given society; the *selfhood*. External explanations of cultural allegiances, on the other hand, hinge on how others see you; the *personhood*. In other words, how you see or portray yourself may not necessarily concord with how others see or portray you (Jenkins, 2004).

The data gathered through documentary research indicate a strong emphasis on cultural allegiances, especially ethnicity, and how it influences socio-political processes in Kenya (Maina, 1995; Githongo, 2006; Kagwanja, 2003; Ndegwa, 1997; Osamba, 2001). Recent studies that have examined the 2007/08 conflicts also centre on ethnic particularism and political opportunism as the primary causes of the 2007/08 upheaval (Makinen and Kuiru, 2008; Kalyango, 2008, Jamal and Deane, 2008).

While ethnicity is a relatively significant factor in explaining intergroup cohesiveness and/or polarization, the results of this study indicate an erratic pattern of the conflict, including the claims advanced by different communities as sore points of

intergroup relations. This serves to question the centrality of ethnicity *per se* as the starting point in conflict situations.

Figure 7. Dimensions of intergroup accommodation during the 2007/08 conflicts



As an episodic process and a form of group categorization, ethnicity only exemplified around the perceived elements of content and discontent such as land ownership, political associations, economic disturbances and the media's representation of the candidates in a negative or a positive light. As such, ethnicity should be examined with the larger cultural structure explaining intergroup relations.

Probably one of the key attempts to deviate from the "collective" approach, perceiving social conflicts as a unique product of ethnic categorization, is the study conducted by Somerville (2009), which critiques the coverage of the 2007/08 conflicts by the British newspapers. He argues that the emphasis on ethnicity by the British

newspapers overshadowed efforts toward a constructive understanding of the 2007/08 conflicts. Hall (1997) also points out that ethnicity itself is a matter of signifying practices that are situational, depending on one's conditions (cultural, social, economic, political, religious...) and perception of self; the *selfhood* and the *personhood*.

Understanding this intricate interrelationship between the two forces of identity is a major step towards unpacking the discourses embraced by different vernacular radios to categorize intergroup relations as the 2007/08 conflicts unfolded. As explained in the previous chapters, there are about 42 ethno-linguistic groups in Kenya, meaning that mutual understanding between the groups is only possible when national languages, English and Kiswahili, are used. However, not everyone speaks or understands these languages.

This is why vernacular radios are important in the lives of many Kenyans. They are an important means through which distinct socio-cultural groups satisfy their respective needs related to language and cultural heritage. This supports recent studies suggesting that media audiences are likely to incline towards the media that mirror their imagined social, political and cultural values, especially in competitive situations such as elections (Entman, 2010; Matthes, 2012; Mellor, 2009; Avraham and First, 2010; Consalvi, 2010; Onguny, 2012). This may explain why some respondents perceived vernacular radios as a “replacement” of the cultural elders whose mandate was to educate communities on issues of culture.

If ethnicity appeared to be one way of giving meaning to the deteriorating relations between groups in the period leading to the conflicts, it is because the ethno-linguistic fragmentation of the Kenyan people continues to create an environment where

cultural differences such as ethnicity, language, religion, ancestry, and blood kinship still serve as pathways through which people make sense of power relations and social processes. In this view, the negotiation of power relations between groups may partly explain the shifting discourses that characterized vernacular radio narratives prior, during and after the violent conflicts. In the process, ethnicity serves as a vehicle by which power is vested and negotiated along the lines of cultural allegiances.

By taking a close look at the historical power relations that have exemplified intergroup relations in Kenya, one may comprehend why cultural allegiances, within which ethnicity is potent, are regarded as the main building blocks of intergroup relations. This is because they have served to cement certain perceptions with regard to intergroup categorization as well as the sense of self. This reinforces the perception that in states that were previously under colonial rule, ethnic categorization has served as a principle of political solidarity and mobilization in situations of conflict (Ndegwa, 1997; Osamba, 2001; Muigai, 1995; Kagwanja, 2003; Gacheru, 2005; Brown, 2004).

This suggests that various groups are likely to act according to the prompts of cultural allegiances such as ethnicity when faced with situations of intergroup competition and conflict. The negotiation of group relations, in this perspective, hinges on the creation and justification of the perimeters determining one's perception of belonging, usually coiled around the notions of in-group and out-groups. In this way, cultural cues become the "organizing" frames of reference with regard to the perceptions that groups have of each other.

From this point of view, culturally driven jokes such as the issue of circumcision raised by some Kikuyu radios to belittle Odinga's as an unfit leader who has not been

vetted by elders to become an adult, quickly transform into sentiments of misrepresentation, and the appeals by the “misrepresented” group to rectify the images. Furthermore, the portrayal of Odinga as a radical Muslim, negotiated along the lines of the alleged *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) with Kenyan Muslims, also highlights the significance of cultural cues in the creation of meaning. The depiction of Kibaki as a corrupt and opportunist Kikuyu, playing on the stereotypes linking the Kikuyu with thirst for money, also points to this concern.

Whether or not the claims are valid, such frames of reference provide mental maps used by different groups to locate their relationship within a shared space such as a territory. They influence social interactions across communities while marking boundaries between groups. This partly explains why the ODM party was linked to groups emanating from Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western provinces, while PNU was associated mainly with groups from Central province. PNU was no longer regarded as a political party but a “Kikuyu party” as Mwai Kibaki, a Kikuyu, was the party flag-bearer.

Equally, ODM was now associated with the Luos because Odinga, a Luo, was the party leader. In the processes, the Kikuyu who supported ODM were framed as traitors to their own community while Luos in PNU were cast as traitors within their social group. Other party supporters who were neither Luos nor Kikuyus were coined as in-groups or out-groups depending on their party affiliations.

This indicates the fluidity in some aspects of cultural allegiances such as ethnicity that cannot form an all-encompassing unit of analysis explaining the 2007/08 conflicts as advanced in various scholarly materials. Those who were once perceived as “they” in the past could easily be perceived as “we” after some time and vice versa. The 1992 and

1997 electoral landscape and the reconstruction of group identities, support this fact. Luo and Kikuyu seemed to be perceived as the out-groups in Moi's Kalenjin-dominated government.

This transformed into a strong alliance between the Kikuyu and Luo communities, including other groups that perceived Moi's government as favourable to the Kalenjins, in the period leading to the 2002 elections. Once Kibaki became president in 2002, ethnic alliances shifted. The Luos and Kalenjins appeared to perceive Kibaki's government as alienating. As a result, Luo-Kalenjin ethnic alliances formed in the periods leading to the 2007 general elections.

In essence, cultural allegiances and an individual sense of belongingness have weakened the perception that people hold on national identity. This has made it easier for groups to mingle across ethnic boundaries while redefining their identities to fit within the broader views of other groups, a trend that supports the studies indicating that ethnic boundaries are situational (Hall and Meeks, 2007; Osaghae, 1999; Cohen, 1995). This is why focusing on ethnicity alone may provide a skewed understanding of the underlying issues threatening intergroup relations. For this reason, ethnicity serves as one of the reference points used by people to locate the forces and conditions surrounding their habitat and livelihood. In this way, it is part of the larger structure explaining intergroup relations and conflict, as it interacts with other contextual factors that may serve as triggers of social conflicts such as political affiliations.

6.2.2. Political Affiliations

Although several factors contributed to the 2007/08 conflicts, patronage politics and the allegations about vote rigging surrounding the highly contested presidential elections reinforced the perception that political affiliations are also a sore point of intergroup relations. Because Kenya is an ethnically diverse society (with about 42 different groups), once clustered together by colonial authority, post-colonial governance seems unable to resist the forces driven by ethno-regional competition, a trend exploited by vernacular media to reinforce certain perceptions with regard to distribution and redistribution of power between ethnic groups.

In other words, political affiliations serve as the unitary force by which “communal interests” or ethno-regional claims are advanced. Contrast to political mobilizations that led to independence in 1963 where European Settlers were collectively regarded as the sole “enemy” (Muigai, 1995; Nyong’o, 1997), political affiliations in post-colonial Kenya are shattered by ethno-regional struggles to control the state machinery, regarded as the means through which regional interests can be fulfilled. In the process, various groups perceive the state machinery as extraneous to their interests, and by extension, to the interests of the “under-represented” groups. Vernacular radios thus contributed to the cementing of ethno-political perceptions where ethnicity, language and geographical location became crucial elements in the association or dissociation with respect to political processes.

In this light, the political implications of the 2007/08 conflicts can be understood from multiple perspectives. As a multiethnic state where the politics of national

integration have not been fully established, due to claims of ethnic self-determination and an ethno-territorial sense of belonging, categorical politicization of cultural cues in Kenya have prompted divisive, rebellious or collaborative attitudes depending on the stage at which the conflict manifests itself. This is partly because politically driven conflicts not only stem from specific circumstances, but are also socially and historically situated.

The 2007/08 conflicts appeared to be a means through which different groups resort to in an attempt to balance and maintain political superstructures as well as intergroup boundaries. This may explain why the Luo and Kikuyu radios emphasized the thorny historical relationship between the Luo and Kikuyu groups, seen as “organizing frames” of reference to situate the relationship between the two groups. This intricate power relation between groups and the fight to control the state machinery is what Fukui and Markakis (1994) refer to as “ethnocracy⁵⁹”, supposing that “ethnic/tribal identities are essentially political products of specific situations, socially defined and historically determined”(p.6).

For some, the shaky relationship between the two groups can be explained by the fact that the Kikuyu and Luo groups were the most outspoken against colonial occupation, and that it was likely for these groups to fight for the state powers amongst themselves (Ogot, 1981; Mboya, 1970; Muigai, 1995; Ross, 1975). As the findings indicate, the negotiation of the Kikuyu-Luo politics by the Luo and Kikuyu radios was often situated with the split between Kenyatta and his then-vice president,

⁵⁹ Fukui and Markakis (1994) define “ethnocracy” as the monopolization of the state machinery by some groups and the exclusion of others groups. That is, “*the ruling groups have a proprietary attitude towards the state, and what they promote as the ‘national’ identity is the mirror of their own ethnic ego. Consequently, the process of ‘national integration’ promoted by the state verges on assimilation*” (p.8).

Oginga Odinga, with Luo radios suggesting that some groups have turned the state into a “family business” run by few groups.

Although the split between Kenyatta and Oginga Odinga was often framed by Luo and Kikuyu radios as the genesis of ethno-regional fragmentation and patronage politics in Kenya, the beneficiary of this power struggle would be the former president, Daniel Moi (1978-2002) who ascended to the vice presidential position before he succeeded Kenyatta shortly after the latter’s sudden death in 1978. The political landscape shifted considerably. Kenya was transformed into a strict authoritarian leadership where political dissent was to become unlawful. Moi’s authoritarianism can be understood from a number of perspectives. On the one hand, he was dealing with political pressures from Kenyatta’s and Odinga’s camps who saw their roles in government slipping away, given the constant reshuffling of the cabinet that brought the majority of the Kalenjin to take over the main political docket. On the other hand, the failed attempt to overthrow his regime in 1982 eroded trust within the government, transforming Kenya into a *de jure* one-party state (1982-1992). This allowed him to follow state policies very closely while suppressing political dissent in all parts of the country, which has rendered intergroup conflict latent despite the violence witnessed during the 1992 and 1997 election cycles in which Moi still emerged the winner.

Although Moi backed Kibaki’s re-election, some of the radios broadcasting in the Kikuyu language inferred that the Kalenjin had their share of power when Moi ruled the country for over two decades. In this way, the popularity of Odinga-led *Orange Democratic Movement* (ODM) in the Rift valley was portrayed as Odinga’s propaganda directed towards the Kalenjin ethnic block to build his support base while advancing his

personal presidential ambitions. In the process, ODM as a political party became associated with Odinga as a person, correlating his form of leadership with dictatorship and inequity in resource distribution. Equally, the Luo radios portrayed Kibaki-led Party of National Unity (PNU) as a political party whose primary beneficiary were the Kikuyu.

The uncertainty around political affiliations and the 2007/08 conflicts was also evident in the manner in which the radios framed the *Majimbo* debates⁶⁰, especially in Kikuyu and Kalenjin radios. In the Kalenjin radios, the narratives about *Majimbo* were twofold: on the one hand, they point to a devolved system of governance where power and resources were to be decentralized at regional level. On the other hand, they alluded to the conflicts in the 1990s, especially in the Rift Valley. In this way, the Kikuyu radios articulated the *Majimbo* debates along the narratives of “eviction”, suggesting that the ODM camp planned to evict some of their members from the Kalenjin-dominated Rift Valley. This is consistent with the studies indicating that media narratives can have a far-reaching influence on aggregate political attitudes and positioning when the framing is slanted towards regional interests (Entman, 2010; Neyazi, 2010; Matthes, 2012).

In essence, political affiliations serve as negotiating frames with respect to power relations. Often, party flag bearers are regarded as indicators of a regional and/or group supporting base and this is linked to whether or not the candidate is likely to be entrusted with the group’s welfare and resource (material and immaterial) allocation. Political affiliations become a source of conflict if the controlling body fails to exercise fairness in the integration of the opposing parties in decision-making processes. This may explain why the narratives of vote-rigging dominated the Kalenjin and Luo radios during the violent conflicts. The move by the Kibaki’s government to appoint the majority (19 out

⁶⁰ See the findings in Chapter 5

of 22) of the members of the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) prior to the 2007 elections, without consulting the opposition, was marked with suspicion.

The negotiations surrounding political affiliations also cause diplomatic tensions at different levels. For instance, competing political interests at the local level complicate intervention processes because disputants may feel that their respective parties are not the beneficiaries of the initiatives put on the table. Equally, external political pressures emanating from the international community may bring into question the country's political sovereignty. This is what happened with the intervention of the UN-led mediation team, a process that led to the establishment of a power-sharing agreement between the two political party leaders.

While some nationalists argued that Kenya is a sovereign country with a defined set of laws and therefore capable of resolving its internal affairs, the vast majority highly applauded the intervention of the UN-led mediation team to end the mass killings and the abuse of human rights. In this view, external governments/organizations may try to intervene to support a conflict-torn country, but the politics of intervention and control policies may generate another conflict between national political parties, and by extension, between the state and the international community.

Apart from diplomatic tensions, the shifting perceptions that people hold with respect to political affiliations may reflect people's contentment or discontent with the political governance in place. In this view, a government that fails to function within the envisioned structures is likely to generate rebellious attitudes within its frontiers. That is, political governance becomes a process through which parties, groups, individuals, and regions negotiate their respective interests.

Given that political governance is mostly executed at the state level, the adoption of political decisions touching upon the economy, territory, culture, and religion by the politicians representing various regions or groups likely depend on how these decisions and political processes are articulated. Hence, the perceived misuse of political power and the detention of politicians opposed to the regime can be detrimental to intergroup relations in situations of competition and/or conflict.

For instance, the deployment of the police force in some regions during the 2007/08 conflicts was regarded as excessive misuse of power by the state to suppress political dissent that stemmed from the alleged ODM strongholds such as Kisumu. Equally, the perception that the government failed to stop the alleged retaliatory attacks in Naivasha and Nakuru, perpetrated by the *Mungiki* militia group (which supposedly supported the PNU) illustrates that perceived misuse of political power in the managing of public affairs can be detrimental in ethnically heterogeneous states and is likely to create “ungoverned spaces” within which political scores are addressed.

In this view, the negotiation of these perceptions by the media (in this case, vernacular radios) is fundamental in reinforcing rebellious or collaborative attitudes among party affiliates. The same goes for economic pressures and the politicization of ethno-regional economic disparities as demonstrated in the next two sections.

6.2.3. Economic Pressures

The economic dimension of the 2007/08 conflicts was mainly articulated in terms of unequal resource allocation and the narratives of economic marginalization. As

discussed in Chapter 1, administrative boundaries in Kenya are linked to ethnic communities where language, ancestry, and cultural allegiances primarily serve as defining boundaries. This is why the sentiment or perception with regard to unequal resource allocation in different provinces, counties, and districts easily translated into sentiments of disenchantment with the state, regarded as the primary guarantor of the resources. For instance, the claims advanced by the Luo and Kalenjin radios supposing that the Kikuyu were the sole beneficiaries of the Kibaki-led government suggest that the economic emancipation of various regions is still regarded as a sore point when discussing intergroup relations in Kenya.

This is because regional loyalties are often politicized in a manner that evokes deep-seated emotions of disgruntlement already existing between groups and their perceptions of regional economic disparity. In this light, regional economic growth is closely linked to the control of state machinery. Whilst the validity of such claims has yet to be determined, historical analysis of the Kenyan situation seems to confirm, in part, that regional economic growth is linked to the changes in regimes. For example, following Kenya's independence from the British in 1963, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, a Kikuyu, became the first President of the Republic of Kenya (1963-1978).

Although Kenyatta reviewed some colonial policies to reflect the "African leadership" and economic redistribution, the centralized system of governance over which he had control, gave him the power to oversee much of the resource allocation. Kenyatta's regime is mainly criticized for illegal land allocations to his own family, and by extension to his Kikuyu community following the fall of the British occupation (Okoth and Ogot, 2000; Gacheru, 2005; Throup and Hornsby, 1998; Oucho, 2002;

Lynch, 2007) as well as the allocation of public service positions not necessarily on merit but on ethnic affiliation. As a result, all major jobs appeared to be dished out to Kenyatta's allies and his Kikuyu community (Gosh, Gabby and Siddique, 1999; Anderson and Lochery, 2008; Lonsdale, 2008).

Following Kenyatta's death in 1978, Daniel Arap Moi (a Kalenjin) took over the overall office and the focus shifted from Central Province to the Rift Valley Province. During Moi's 24-year reign (1978-2002), Rift Valley became one of the Kenya's economic hub where much of his effort was focused on the transformation of Eldoret town into a major city with a multi-million dollar international airport established in 1995, a project that has been since regarded as a waste given that the two major airports in Kenya (Nairobi and Mombasa) already operate below their capacity (Gosh, Gabby and Siddique, 1999).

Similarly, the public service docket slipped away from the Kikuyu community to Moi's Kalenjin during the 24-year rule, transforming the Kenyan economy and politics into what could be regarded as a Kalenjin dynasty (Lynch, 2008). The changes in ethno-regional economy during Moi's rule serve to reinforce the perceptions eminent in the narratives various vernacular radio suggesting that the economic emancipation of various groups and/or regions is likely to be dependent on whether or not the person in control of the state machinery is from their group.

Following Moi's 24-year rule and the perceived economic marginalization of the other regions, Kibaki (a Kikuyu) ascended to power in 2002 vowing to restore ethno-regional balance with respect to the allocation of state resources. Whilst Kibaki's first two years in office saw a 5% jump in national economic growth as many studies point out

(Lynch, 2008; Zuckerman, 2009), Luo and Kalenjin radios implied that the allocation of public service positions was gradually shifting from the Kalenjin (that dominated during Moi's reign) back to the Kikuyu group (as witnessed during Kenyatta's reign), and that all the major government docket and ministerial positions were now held mainly by members of the Kikuyu community.

The economic and power imbalances that were taking shape during Kibaki's terms and the articulation of these views by some radios, mainly the Luo and the Kalenjin radios, served to cement the perception that the incumbent president failed to promote economic development in some parts of the country with the same kind of enthusiasm as others. In this view, the likelihood that adequate resources will be channelled to a given population is directly linked to whether or not a member of that community controls the state machinery, seen as a guarantor of resources. This is why the debates around *Majimbo Constitution* (devolved Constitution), already discussed, and the manner in which it was translated into "popular language" became highly political as various ethno-regional political elites defined its contours in accordance with the responses and appeals of the groups they represented.

Given the hypothetical categorization of the administrative territories and the circumstances of ethnic competition described in the previous sections, it came as no great surprise to find out that the *Majimbo* debate became highly political. On the one hand, the debates were articulated in terms of devolved governance, with great emphasis on the revision of land tenure policies in Rift Valley to observe the appeals of the "ancestral owners." This rhetoric was mainly prevalent in Eldoret. On the other hand, *Majimboism* was linked to the eviction and displacement of specific identity groups and

the chaos that rocked the Rift Valley province in the 1990s. This was the main discourse observed among Nyeri residents.

Equally, *Majimboism* was linked to the notion that the excessive executive powers held by an incumbent president were to be revised in a manner that regionally elected officials could have more command over regional funds and resources. This interpretation was mainly present among Kisumu constituents. Despite the differences in explanation, the rival political parties and their respective party affiliates maintained that their interpretations of *Majimbo Constitution* were the most legitimate. As a result, the ill-defined *Majimbo* and the discordant nature of narratives surrounding its establishment served as a political tool in drumming up support from various ethno-regional territories. Bowing to the pressures from different “ethnic voting blocks”, a number of politicians disguised their favourable interpretation of *Majimbo* depending on the political parties that they represented.

While it appeared that many people applauded the creation of a new legal structure (new Constitution) observing regionalism and a devolved system of governance, the ambiguity and/or confusion that surrounded the definition of *Majimbo* itself created a window for competitive political interests to foment. Given that Kenya has always been characterized by a centralized system of governance where the president oversees policymaking at all levels, control efforts to foster unity around a shared conception of *Majimbo Constitution* were intricately intertwined with the assumption that winning the 2007 general elections meant controlling these changes, a factor that led to fierce political campaigns and subsequent violence over the alleged vote rigging.

6.2.4. Territorial Insecurity

While land resources, particularly forests and grazing pastures, are still far from being the only catalysts of territorial conflicts in Kenya, this study indicates that they certainly played a key role in the explosion of the 2007/08 conflicts. Unclear land tenure claims, especially in the Rift Valley Province and some parts of the country, mainly forested areas, were some of the salient issues in vernacular radios in the events leading to the 2007/08 conflicts, supporting the *agenda-setting* roles of the media discussed in Chapter 3. That is, vernacular radios focused on the thorny land claims that have served to generate intergroup conflicts for decades, especially in the Rift Valley Province given the post-colonial resettlement schemes that encouraged the settlement of other groups in the Kalenjin-dominated Rift Valley.

Given that successive governments have proved to be incapable or unwilling to address controversial land claims in this part of the country, Rift Valley residents have often resorted to violence as the only remedy to resolve these claims. When elected officials take the lead in such processes as the interviews in the three locations of the study indicated, the perceived claims often transform into personal and/or intergroup accounts, a trend that results in fear, violence and Internal Displacement of Persons (IDPs). In order to understand why territorial insecurity became salient in the narratives of vernacular radios serving the regions where this study was conducted, it is important to journey back in time a little.

The genesis of land-related tensions in Kenya has often been associated with the colonial legacy, believed to have facilitated the disintegration of territories along language and ethnic compositions (Anderson, 2005; Anderson, and Lochery, 2008;

Mamdani, 1996; Muigai, 1995; Klopp, 2001; Somerville, 2009), usually for administrative purposes. Some scholars have suggested that the colonial legacy tactically employed “divide and rule” procedures to bolster ethno-territorial consciousness among various linguistic groups (Bienien, 1974; Okoth and Ogot, 2000; Mboya, 1970), making territory one of the many contentious issues in post-colonial Kenya.

Given this territorial categorization, “African-led” political parties that struggled for independence also embraced territorial identity to amass support from their respective regions. The Kikuyus in Central Province created the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA); the Luos in Nyanza Province established the Young Kavirondo Association; and the Kalenjins in Rift Valley formed the Kalenjin Political Alliance (Mboya, 1970; Leo, 1984; Nyong’o, 1987; Oucho, 2002; Gacheru, 2005).

The displacement of various communities from the fertile agricultural “Highlands” during colonial rule, to create room for colonial Settlers, made land tenure one of the most controversial issues contested by the “African-led” rebellious parties⁶¹, a trend that continued in post-colonial Kenya shortly after independence in 1963 that saw Mzee Jomo Kenyatta as the first Kenyan president. Although the British came up with a formula⁶² (at the eve of independence) to reallocate the lands that were occupied, the expectation was that the lands that were forcefully acquired were to be re-distributed freely. During Kenyatta’s regime (1963-1978) that oversaw much of the resettlement

⁶¹ The *Mau-Mau*, a rebellious and politically-driven group, led to the declaration of state of emergency between 1952 and 1956 by the British. The group was mainly composed of the Kikuyu group that contested the displacement of their communities from Central Province to other parts of the country, mainly the Rift Valley.

⁶² The formula was based on the transfer of lands ranging from major holdings to smallholdings and a loan to purchase the lands to ensure re-distribution across communities, a formula that was intended to discourage free allocation based on group alliances. However, this is exactly what happened because many expected the lands to be redistributed freely since the British forcefully acquired them from the local groups.

schemes in the 1960s and 1970s, land grievances fomented within the Rift Valley mainly between the Kalenjins and the Kikuyus.

The Kalenjins believed that Kenyatta's land allocation policies were alienating them from their own "ancestral lands" while the Kikuyus (Kenyatta's community) and other groups (mainly the Embu and Meru) benefited disproportionately from the same policies (Leo, 1984; Gosh, Gabby and Siddique, 1999; Nyong'o, 1987; Oucho, 2002; Lonsdale, 2008).

This resulted in the Kalenjins rejecting the constitutional referendum in 2005 (under Kibaki's government) that, in their view, would have further enabled "Kikuyu invasion" into the Rift Valley Province. Authors such as Lynch (2008) have written a lot about the contentious land ownership in the Rift Valley, often highlighting the pressure it exerts amongst the people of the Rift Valley. She writes,

A strong local discourse of persecution, state bias, and popular disgruntlement regarding the proportion of businesses under Kikuyu ownership had become intertwined with this notion of 'communal territory' and past injustice, and fomented a common concern with what the Kibaki government would take next. In many cases, suspicions focused on the fertile land of the Rift Valley and a feeling that regime change and devolution was necessary for the protection and promotion of Kalenjin claims to the ownership and control of ethnic territory. Embedded in this discourse of defence also lay promises of action, as an ODM win was linked to a chance to 'right' historical injustices – one reading of which was that an ODM win would be a harbinger of the removal of 'outsiders' and settlement of 'indigenes' (Lynch, 2008: 560).

This echoes the centrality of territorial insecurity in the events leading to the 2007/08 conflicts. That is, while the proponents of Kibaki's PNU pledged to revise land tenure policies along its interpretation of the *Majimbo* Constitution, the Kalenjin community appeared to be sceptical and backed ODM's campaign vehicle that they regarded as more credible in addressing the much anticipated land tenure policies, a belief that was mainly

linked to the reallocation of Rift Valley lands to the Kalenjins. Hence, the stakes invested in ODM party were very high in the Rift Valley, especially among the Kalenjins who supported Odinga's presidential bid.

As the 2007 general elections neared, concerns over territorial insecurity also prompted concerns over a possible eviction of the perceived PNU supporters from Rift Valley. Equally, the narratives of possible vote-rigging increased among ODM supporters claiming that they did not trust Kibaki's government, especially with the appointment of the members of the Electoral Commission of Kenya. The appointments by Kibaki, then head of state, were seen as a plan to establish friendly structures that would foresee his re-election against the ODM party leader.

In this perspective, territorial insecurity was articulated along the lines of cultural allegiances, economic redistribution and political affiliations. The perceptions that people had on these issues, and the shifting discourses that surrounded them were, in part, influenced by the kinds of narratives used by vernacular radio to frame them.

In the next section I discuss how the changes in radio discourses influenced the attitudes of radio listeners and how such attitudinal shifts weighed on the directions and patterns of the 2007/08 conflicts. This is where I discuss how media frames, identified in Figure 7, interact with the other broad dimensions of the 2007/08 conflict such as political affiliations and territorial insecurity.

6.3. Media and Conflict Frames: Between *Differentiated* and *Concerted* Framing

The implications of vernacular radio narratives in the 2007/08 conflicts are associated with the manner in which they negotiated intergroup relations with respect to cultural allegiances, economic pressures, political affiliations and territorial insecurity. In other words, the changing positions that individuals, groups or political parties held on these issues partly hinged on how they were framed at different stages of the conflict.

As the findings suggest, vernacular radio narratives were discordant. Prior to the conflicts, historical grievances with respect to cultural allegiances, economic pressures, territorial insecurity and political affiliations served not only as defining elements of contentment or discontent with the pledges of the rival parties, they also contributed to the escalation of the conflicts. This is because vernacular radios not only serve linguistically definite groups, but they are also likely to “customize” news contents to reflect the views (economic, cultural, political, etc.) of the groups served.

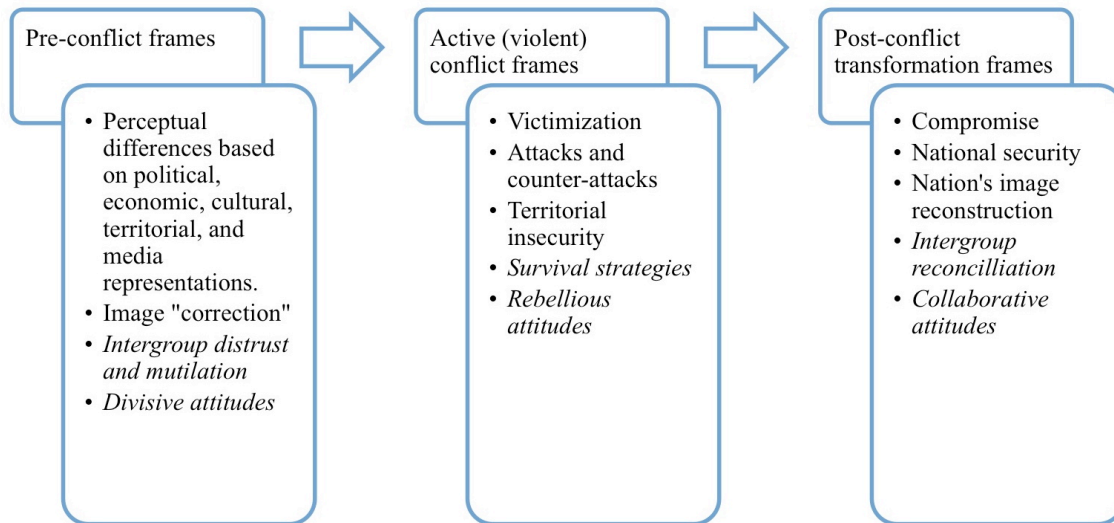
As such, the narratives embraced by these radios speak to these “intimate feelings” that cannot be reached by the official-language radios that use the languages understood by the majority of the population. This is probably well summarized by one of Nelson Mandela’s famous quotes supposing: “if you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart⁶³”. This highlights the significance of vernacular radios in negotiating intergroup relations. Given their language of broadcast, they are likely to evoke innate ethno-cultural sentiments when giving meaning to different phenomena.

⁶³ See Mandela, N. (1995). *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

As a consequence, striking a balance between the interests advanced by distinct socio-cultural groups (appeals of the targeted identity groups) and those relative to public interests (demands cutting across ethnic affiliations) is an uphill task for vernacular radios. Figure 8 shows this shifting narrative with respect to the events of the 2007/08 conflicts. It also highlights sequential changes in attitudes prior, during and after the violent conflicts.

The core argument I make is that the narratives adopted by various vernacular radios not only reinforced divisive and rebellious attitudes prior to and during the conflicts, but they also strengthened collaborative attitudes in post-conflict transformation stages when the country was in search of short and long-term solutions.

Figure 8. Shifting radios frames and attitudinal change during the 2007/08 conflicts



Although Figure 8 appears to suggest linearity in its sequence of frames, it should be understood that post-conflict transformation discourses can fall back to pre-conflict or active-conflict (violent) frames depending on how the perceived differences are

negotiated across time. This is why vernacular radio narratives are likely to contribute in the escalation or de-escalation of conflicts. That is, even in the de-escalation mode, if the narratives of compromise and reconciliation no longer reflect the appeals of the disputants, the conflict may regain its covert nature.

In this view, “another” conflict may take shape from these latent forces, and possibly transform into an active (violent) conflict. This is what happened in the events leading to the 2007/08 conflicts. Prior to the conflicts, two opposing forces dominated the narratives of various vernacular radios. On the one hand, the presenters of these radio narratives appeared to be driven by the conviction that, by encouraging a diversity of views (through phone-in programs and music on-air), they would bolster democratic ideals. On the other hand, encouraging diverse positions also meant balancing the narratives in a manner that would discourage intergroup disfigurement, especially when high ratings become one of the motivating factors.

While the former poses the question of credibility, integrity and autonomy of vernacular radios, the latter is mostly concerned with issues of sensationalism, objectivity and ethnic tolerance with respect to the perceived triggers of the conflict such as political affiliations, cultural allegiances, economic pressures, and territorial insecurity. The results point out that, in the pre-conflict phase, the discourses that surrounded the conflicts were negotiated in a manner that was likely to foster distrust and polarization along ethnic affiliations. These negotiations were articulated around economic, political, cultural and territorial pressures.

Conversely, during active (violent) conflicts, the perceived divisions evolved into violence against the perceived “others”. The main discourse that prevailed at this point

was cross-victimization. Characterized by finger pointing, both parties blamed the other for causing the conflict. In the process, both parties scrambled for self-defence to justify why they resorted to violence. For instance, while ODM party affiliates blamed PNU for stealing their victory and using police force against them, the PNU camp blamed the ODM opponents for starting the violence because their leader would not concede defeat.

The negotiations of these positions by various vernacular radios informed intergroup relations while refining the perimeters of violence. That is, the narratives adopted at this stage are likely to lead to the escalation or de-escalation of violence. Conflicts are likely to escalate if the narratives focus on or encourage groups' defence strategies such as counter-attacks, at the expense of reconciliatory discourses. This is because violence is essentially a matter of social contracts if we consider Jean-Jacques Rousseau's perceptions. He argues, "the strongest is never strong enough to be always the master, unless he transforms strength into right, and obedience into duty. Hence the right of the strongest, which, though to all seeming meant ironically, is really laid down as a fundamental principle⁶⁴".

This concurs with Fukui and Markakis' (1994) assumption that violence is also one of the ways in which people "test their power" and redefine relational and power boundaries. This is why active conflicts may take months, years or even decades because each disputing party seeks to establish its strengths as rights, and no party is willing to see their defeat transform into compliance. Media narratives are therefore central at this stage, as they influence the perceptions that people hold with respect to intervention strategies.

⁶⁴See http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/r/rousseau/jean_jacques/r864s/book1.html, accessed February 2012.

Many studies affirm that media narratives, during an on-going conflict, are likely to shape the directions and levels of violence. In this light, Fisher (2007) sees the escalation phase of an active conflict as fourfold: *discussion* (dealing with firsthand emotions about a conflict with each party seeing a possible need for objective interest but being hesitant on negotiation); *polarization* (involving a shifting attitude towards another party as hostility and negativity intensify); *segregation* (dominated by subjective or individual interests thus leading to mistrust and eventually threats); and lastly, *destruction* (where one party employs all means within reach to destroy the other party for its own survival or to win).

In the post-conflict transformation stage, however, vernacular radios often adopt narratives that cut across intergroup or party loyalties. Unlike the pre-conflict phase where vernacular radio rhetoric may foster divisive attitudes and the active conflicts where they may reinforce rebellious attitudes and polarization based on the preconceived nature of the relations, post-conflict transformation frames may seek to mend the broken ties. Post-conflict transformation narratives are therefore likely to bolster collaborative attitudes between disputants. This is because both parties may resort to short or long-term solutions through compromise or by adopting what Covey (2011) calls the principle of synergy⁶⁵ to “transcend” the conflict, rather than just solving it.

In this regard, vernacular radios (through programs and music on-air) reinforce a collective perception of nationhood, defined along the lines of citizenship or national self-determination rather than intergroup allegiances. Although these kinds of frames

⁶⁵ In his book, *The Third Alternative: Solving World's Most Difficult Problems*, Steven Covey defines the principle of synergy as “what happens when one plus one equals ten or a hundred or even a thousand [because] it’s the mighty result when two or more respectful human beings determine together to go beyond their preconceived ideas to meet a great challenge. It’s all about the passion, the energy, the ingenuity, the excitement of creating a new reality that is far much better than the old reality.” (p. 12)

may not necessarily resolve the deep-seated feelings about the causes and consequences of the conflict, they are likely to alter the direction of conflict from its active (violent) nature to pave the way for peace transformation processes. In this case, the conflict may go back to its latent nature or “transcend” the perceived differences to bolster long-term solutions where both parties feel satisfied with the decisions reached.

In essence, the shifts in vernacular radio narratives occur when new elements are added into the “equation” and the degree of resonance that these new elements have with the target populations. New frames may take different forms such as change in music tone, the kinds of people interviewed and their views about the conflict, and ongoing negotiations such as the National Accord dialogue.

The findings of this study indicate that there are a number of elements that serve to categorize groups while stratifying their relationships according to the already withheld beliefs and perception. According to Mary Douglas, the British anthropologist, the media have the ability to place people where they belong. That is, media narratives may serve to bolster the existing beliefs or help in the contravention of the established order, dirt or “matter out of place” in her parlance. In other words, radios regarded as a “principal means to arrange culture”, have a function in categorizing people using withheld beliefs. This is occurs in the early stages of a conflict process, what I refer here as the pre-conflict phase (maybe a latent stage of a given conflict).

There are also other sets of elements that serve to reinforce the narratives of victimization, especially during an active (violent) conflict process. This stage is mainly characterized by survival strategies, which often lead to attacks and counter-attacks of the perceived enemies. Vernacular radios, in this stage, mobilize narratives such as groups’

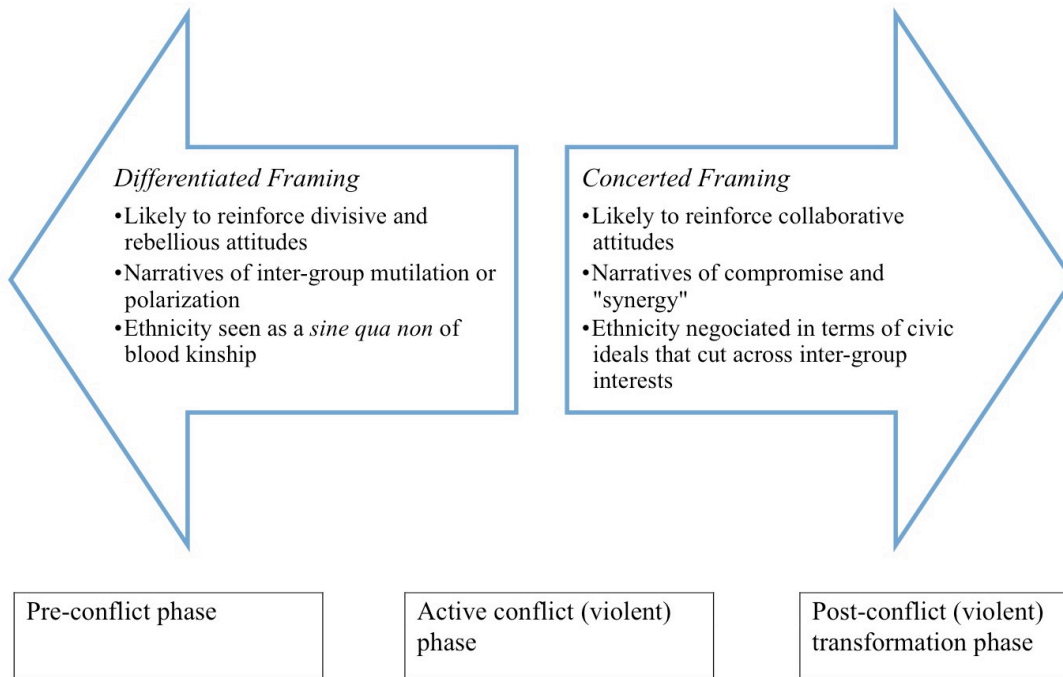
plight to prevent decimation or genocide. These were the kinds of narratives adopted by many Kikuyu-language radios during the violent conflicts in 2007/08. Equally, the radios may adopt narratives of insecurity, especially territorial insecurity, which may force other people out of their homes for fear of attacks or retaliation. These were the kinds of narratives that were adopted by Luo and Kalenjin radios during the violent conflicts in 2007/08.

Lastly, there are elements within radio narratives that serve to re-evaluate conflicts processes, which focus on the pros and cons of conflicts. Depending on the degree of resonance with the target population, these new narratives may lead to positive transformation of conflicts for long-term or short-term solutions. This may take several forms such as negotiations, coercive force, judicial pursuits, power sharing and the intervention of the international community.

These factors explain why the shifts occur. At the centre of these shifts are other factors such as editorial influence, domestic and international pressure, sanctions and censorship. In other words, the direction of conflict also hinges on the salience and the meanings attached to new elements by vernacular radios.

Figure 9 shows the elasticity in radio frames during conflict processes. The framing is likely to reinforce divisive and rebellious attitudes if the narratives focus on intergroup mutilation and cross-victimization. On the other hand, violence is likely to de-escalate if the narratives reinforce collaborative attitudes. This is why vernacular radio framing is also central to understanding protracted social conflicts. It indicates that the negotiation of intergroup relations was split between *fragmented* and *concerted* framing.

Figure 9. Elasticity of vernacular radio frames during conflict processes



6.3.1. Differentiated Framing

Differentiated framing underscores a form of narrative whereby group differences are negotiated in terms of competition. That is, one group is perceived as more likely to gain at the other's expense. In this regard, differentiated framing may be closely associated with negative ethnicity as it is susceptible to generate intergroup polarization. This kind of framing is more likely to be prevalent in pre-conflict situations (and in the early stages of active – violent – conflict) when claims of ethnic essentialism and/or ethnic self-determination become the defining characteristics of nationhood or intergroup relations.

In this case, ethnicity is often defined in terms of blood kinship and common ancestry, regarded as key to the perceptions of one's self or existence. Thus, vernacular radios may choose to adopt certain rhetoric (through programs and music on-air) that lean towards the values or views of the groups they serve for reasons not limited to deprivation, opportunism, historical injustices, and power relations, all of which may negatively impact intergroup relations.

Differentiated framing therefore reinforces exclusivity and competitive attitudes among different groups, especially in multiethnic societies, leaving less room for constructive dialogue or compromise between ethnic groups living within an already-established nation-state. Although differentiated framing may characterize intergroup tensions and subsequent intergroup conflicts, it is also worth noting that intra-group tensions may also stem from this kind of framing, especially when members of the same group are faced with fierce competition *from within*.

6.3.2. *Concerted Framing*

In contrast to differentiated framing, concerted framing underpins the use of narratives often articulated in terms of common values that cut across intergroup interests. In this perspective, vernacular radios may choose to embrace a rhetoric that underlines shared national values such as intergroup reconciliation and/or cohesion, public safety, national integrity, and the rule of law, rather than allegiances to group values. Vernacular radio frames may be concerted in the late stages of prolonged active-conflicts and in post-conflict reconstruction phases. Their narratives may shift from

intergroup competitiveness to embrace commonly shared civic ideals in an attempt to quell intergroup conflicts and restore trust between the groups in dispute.

At this stage, altruism seems to be the main guiding principle. Ethnicity, in this regard, is not articulated as a *sine qua non* of blood kinship or common descent; rather, it is negotiated in terms of citizenship and national self-determination. Thus, different groups are called upon to observe national values and/or interests. Concerted framing may therefore reinforce inclusivity and collaborative attitudes among different groups, thus providing an opportunity to address the perceived differences through constructive dialogue, compromise and synergy.

Chapter Summary

This chapter examined the links between fieldwork findings and documentary research to answer the questions that guided this study. The aim of this chapter was not to focus on whether or not the 2007/08 conflicts were ethnically motivated, but rather to emphasize the levels of interconnectedness or intersectionality between cultural allegiances, within which ethnicity is persuasive, and other forces such as economic pressures, territorial insecurity, political affiliations and media narratives, all of which serve as reference points with regard to the negotiation of intergroup relations during conflict situations.

I argued that in order to understand the claims that were inherent in the 2007/08 conflicts, it is necessary to cut across the existing assumptions that treat this particular conflict as either ethnic or political. The emphasis on ethnicity does not provide a deeper

understanding of the claims leading to inter-ethnic animosity, as ethnicity itself is an element of group categorization. Equally, considering conflict as an end product of political opportunism does not shed light on the conditions within which political power is perceived and articulated as the only means to decipher one's suffering.

The discussion highlighted the centrality of media framing. Apart from informal interactions, it is through the media that people learn about their "constructed" claims, often presented as collective. This explains the shifts in intergroup relations with respect to media framing. While *differentiated* framing is likely to polarize the actors involved given the negotiation of intergroup relations in a negative light, *concerted* framing is likely to bolster intergroup cohesion as it generates collaborative attitudes among the parties involved.

The next chapter concludes the arguments of this dissertation and provides the directions for my future research. It also assesses the relevance of Azar's theory of *Protracted Social Conflict* (revised) within the body of this dissertation.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This dissertation examined the politics of intergroup accommodation in Kenya's vernacular radios during the 2007/08 conflicts. Overall, the strength of this research is twofold. On the one hand, the methodological orientation of this study with regard to media framing is different. Rather than conducting discourse analyses on radio recordings to offer presumptive accounts on framing of the 2007/08 conflicts by vernacular radio, I explored ways in which vernacular radio audiences in the three locations of research made sense of these conflicts. This was influenced by the fact that most "conflict labels" that people have are often obtained from the media. I looked into the discussions advanced by different radio audiences in an attempt to unpack the dominant conflict frames and how they shaped intergroup relations.

Conducting fieldwork in the three ethnically diverse regions became paramount to understanding the conditions and motives that may have led to the explosion of violence along ethnic compositions. Articulation methodology proved useful in examining the links between the perceptions that respondents had of the conflict, following the information they gathered through their respective radios, and the kinds of discourses that were dominant as explanatory references.

I argued that the sources of the 2007/08 conflicts stretch way beyond the notions of ethnic differentiation highlighted in many documents analysed. I contended that the 2007/08 conflicts were a mixture of complex processes characterized by local, national and international forces that interacted recursively. Some of the general parameters of

such forces are explained in Figure 7: cultural allegiances, economic pressures, territorial insecurity, and political affiliation.

The negotiation of these forces by different media, vernacular radios in this case, influenced the manner in which different groups perceived their relationship with the other. On the one hand, vernacular radio frames served as a communicative process in the sense that their narratives were geared towards a well-calculated positioning with regard to the groups they served, with the language of broadcast and ethno-cultural proximity serving as elements of persuasion about the different causes they discussed. On the other hand, vernacular radio frames served as mental maps by operating as reference points used by different radio audiences to make sense of the conflict.

This dissertation is a modest contribution to analytical perspectives with regard to media framing in conflict situations, especially those emanating from multiethnic states. It points out the significance of media narratives in the escalation (differentiated framing) or de-escalation (concerted framing) of socially protracted conflicts depending on the levels at which the conflict manifests itself. The elasticity of frames sheds light on the changing perceptions with regard to intergroup accommodation, and by extension, explains why electoral mayhem may transform into discourses of ethnicity. In this light, groups may choose to act according to the prompts of ethnicity as a way of creating spaces for its solidarity, mobilization and perceived opportunities. Depending on the motives, these spaces often develop into “ungoverned spaces” associated with vicious violence.

Although the findings suggest a common pattern with respect to the framing of the 2007/08 conflicts by vernacular radios, the applicability or transposition of this

research to different regions can be limited due to dissimilarity in group values and contextual differences. With almost 40 million people and at least 42 ethno-linguistic groups, the evaluation of socially protracted conflicts in Kenya cannot form an all-encompassing unit of analysis. There are disparate conditions not limited to social, cultural, political and economic well-being of various groups, which are likely to change the course of socially protracted conflicts on multiple levels.

Against the backdrop of this limitation, general conclusions can still be drawn with regard to the relevance of Azar's PSC model (revised) in mapping out the main factors that contributed to the 2007/08 conflicts as well as the pressing concerns in terms of Kenya's overall security in the future. As discussed, Azar's PSC model argues for a four-cluster condition: communal content, deprivation of human needs, state's role and governance, and international linkages. According to Azar, the four conditions serve to locate the contours of prolonged conflicts in developing countries, mainly multiethnic societies. To these clusters, I added media framing as a possible fifth cluster.

At the heart of communal content, Azar points to the centrality of societal needs, such as groups' security and identity, over which the principles of compromise are less plausible. This explains why the majority of the communities interviewed appeared to read the 2007/08 conflicts with ethnic biases. The findings suggested that past historical contingencies, previously presented as a threat to intergroup coexistence, not only formed the basis of resistance during the 2007/08 conflicts, they also prolonged negotiation processes that were overseen by the former UN Secretary, Dr. Kofi Annan. While Odinga's side claimed to recapture its "stolen victory", Kibaki's side dismissed their calls as power-hungry claims spearheaded by individual ambitions.

The common denominator during the negotiation deadlock is that both parties seemed to use ethno-political struggles that have characterized the Luo-Kikuyu relations since colonial occupation as reference points. The question of accountability and mistrust between groups thus intensified, with both Odinga and Kibaki bearing the greatest responsibility in terms of ethnic alignments. This was mainly due to their ethnic backgrounds as individuals.

With respect to the deprivation of human needs, the 2007/08 conflicts seemed to have opened a *new window* to address the latent social, political and economic disturbances that have characterized intergroup relations in Kenya. This is supported by the change of Constitution that was overwhelmingly voted for during the 2010 constitutional referendum and subsequent promulgation of the new Constitution in August 2010.

Although the new legal framework is supportive of a devolved system of governance, decentralizing power to regional levels, its relevance to Kenya's context is yet to be determined. Contentious land ownership, regarded by many groups as a central source of economic emancipation, is still not very clear in the minds of many communities. The "No Campaign" (opposing the adoption of the new Constitution) led by some leaders such as the former Agriculture and then Education Minister, William Ruto, indicates the validity of this concern.

Consistent with the state's role and governance, this study points out the paramount role of state as a guarantor and protector of all groups, irrespective of their values, claims and well-being. If the 2007/08 conflicts were framed along the lines of ethnicity, it points out that intergroup accommodation in situations of competition is

porous. Many groups still feel disenfranchised from accessing the state's resources on the basis of cultural allegiances.

The unsuccessful bids by Kibaki's government to defer International Criminal Court (ICC) proceedings against the six suspects (now four) who supposedly bore the greatest responsibility during the 2007/08 conflicts, and the contestations it drew from the civil society, further illustrates the significance of the state's role and governance as an indicator of intergroup cohesion. Furthermore, the confirmation of charges against Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, both presidential aspirants in the next general elections, has created new forms of ethno-political pacts ahead of the next general elections⁶⁶. In situations like this, characterized by intergroup fragmentation, the steering ability of the state is often weakened, thus prompting more security concerns.

Equally challenging is the timing of international interventions with respect to regional stability and/or humanitarian endeavours. Since the 2007/08 conflicts and subsequent ICC charges against four of the six alleged architects of the conflicts in question, tensions and diplomatic deadlocks between Kenya and the Western countries, especially Britain, continue to rise. Local nationalists and presidential aspirants such as Uhuru Kenyatta facing charges at the ICC have vowed to contend for the "top seat"

⁶⁶During the 2007 general elections, it seems that the Kalenjin (spearheaded by William Ruto) and Luo (led by Odinga) communities were part of the majority groups represented in the Odinga-led opposition party – *Orange Democratic Movement* (ODM). The Kikuyu group seemed to be the *out-group* then, as they seemed to be the main majority in Kibaki-led *Party of National Unity* (PNU) that was for Kibaki's reelection bid. The current trends scenario paints a different picture. Both the Kalenjin and Kikuyu communities appear to be swayed by Uhuru Kenyatta (a Kikuyu) and William Ruto (a Kalenjin) not to vote for Odinga (a Luo) in the forth-coming general elections. The shifting trends appear to indicate that the former "in-groups" in the period leading to the 2007 elections are now regarded as an "out-groups". Equally, the former "out-groups" are now perceived as "in-groups." Recent political campaigns and the discourses around GEMA and KAMATUSA are particularly exemplary in this regard. These mutations point to the growing challenges facing future intergroup relations in Kenya.

arguing that the international community is threatening Kenya's hard-earned freedom and meddling in its internal affairs.

During the launch of his political party on May 20, 2012, Uhuru lamented Kenya's freedom has to be safeguarded against external influence:

Our sovereignty is core to our beliefs and safeguarding it will be paramount if we are to gain respect and influence. Freedom is never given on a silver platter. It is fought for and earned. Every year, as we honour the men and women who loved this country so much to have laid down their lives for it, we must task the government of the day with the duty of safeguarding this freedom⁶⁷.

Whether this claim is valid or not, it supports Azar's assumption that international linkages are one source of protracted social conflicts. This is because they put both the weak and strong states on the same levels of international economic systems characterized by synchronized patterns of international relations, which are often shaky. This may explain why African states are venturing into "South-South" linkages in an attempt to overcome the enduring Western policies. Against the backdrop of this concern, the People's Republic of China (PRC) is emerging as a key trade partner and donor to the continent. These new linkages are shifting the trends of foreign aid and the patterns of interdependency between the Western and African states.

With regard to media framing, this study shows that peace transformation also hinges on the kinds of narratives adopted by the media such as vernacular radio frames. Since the late 1990s, the media landscape in Africa changed drastically, invoking new challenges of intergroup accommodation. Various conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa such as those witnessed in Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo, and Kenya have been partly

⁶⁷ See Daily Nation newspaper online, accessed May 20, 2012
<http://www.nation.co.ke/News/politics/Pomp+and+colour+at+Uhuru+party+launch+/-/1064/1410060/-/7rh3enz/-/index.html>

exacerbated through *differentiated framing*, where intergroup relations are negotiated in terms of competition likely to generate intergroup polarization.

While vernacular broadcasting is strongly viewed by many groups as a means through which cultural heritage is sustained across generations, the media narratives are a key aspect when seeking to understand socially protracted conflicts in ethnically heterogeneous nation-states. The move by the ICC to indict Kenya's Kass FM radio host, Joshua Arap Sang as a suspect in the orchestration of the 2007/08 conflicts not only highlights the paramount role vernacular radios can play in conflict situations, but also sends a strong signal with regard to the significance of peace-journalism in multiethnic societies.

Overall, the core arguments of this dissertation are as follows: a) vernacular radio narratives are often torn between differentiated and concerted framing, especially in situations of stiff competition between groups or in conflict processes; b) the shifts in vernacular radio frames occur when new elements (narratives) are added into the equation and the degree of resonance with the target population (or the kinds of meanings attached to them by editorial staff); c) ethnicity is neither the cause nor the effect of conflict processes, rather, conflicts do fall along ethnic lines, and in this case, vernacular radios may serve as enablers of conflict along ethnic affinity; lastly d) media framing, both as an interpretive and persuasive discourse, does inform conflict intractability, a gap in Azar's PSC model.

Directions for Future Research

While the ICC course of action is likely to ascertain the direction of political accountability in Kenya, misperceptions surrounding ICC proceedings continue to generate and intensify intergroup tensions, especially in the next general elections where some groups perceive the timing of the proceedings as a direct attack on their communities and a means to block some of their leaders from the presidential race. In this way, the coverage and framing of the proceedings are becoming more political, creating suspicions of foul play by the international community to influence the results of the next general elections. The politicization of the ICC processes as a *selective justice* is such that regional leaders are considering pulling out of the Rome Statute, which is now discredited as serving Western ideals rather reinforcing common justice.

Recently the government of Kenya, in conjunction with the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) once again pushed for the trials of the four suspects at the East African Court of Justice (EACJ), describing “ICC as a neo-colonial court that should not be entrusted to serve justice to the four Kenyans accused of crimes against humanity during post-election violence⁶⁸.”

Future research should examine the implications of Kenya’s ICC cases on the politics of democratization and good governance within the war-ridden Great Lakes Region and how they affect Africa’s regional stability. This may be done by looking at the local reception of the ICC processes in the countries States Parties to the Rome Statute with ongoing cases at the court. This may help unpack why many African

⁶⁸ See The Standard newspaper, online edition, accessed May 22, 2012.
<http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?2000057134=2000057134&4=4&articleID=2000057134>

countries increasingly perceive the ICC processes as a direct attack on the sovereignty of many African states and their leaders, rather than simply perceiving them as legal decisions to redress impunity that many state officials have enjoyed for years.

Equally important is the negotiation of foreign aid in Africa and the role of China as a key player in Africa's development, including peace and security. Since its launch in 2000, the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) has been the pillar of this economic relationship, commonly referred to as "South-South" cooperation. Rather than promoting private sector growth, as has been the case of Western economic policies in developing nations, the Chinese government is particularly advocating for state-to-state bilateral agreements.

This has been supported by their conclusion that underdevelopment is the primary cause of conflicts in Africa. The critics of this approach often question the accountability of some African governments in overseeing such development endeavours as well as addressing insecurity concerns, characterizing many African states, which obstruct economic developments on which China's aid to Africa is poised.

Despite the criticisms, the Sino-Africa relationship in the areas of peace and security is growing. This is often linked to China's principle of non-meddling in the matters of a sovereign state. The underlying assumption is that the principle of good governance cannot be imposed from outside (international community), and that internal conflicts call for domestic solutions.

This has been the position of China on African affairs. The Chinese believe that the international community's intervention in matters within the frontiers of a sovereign state begins by respecting the country's sovereignty. However, the non-interference

policy advocated by China is often criticized, given China's military support (weaponry supply) to fragile states already ravaged by civil wars such as DR Congo, Zimbabwe, and Sudan. The argument raised is that the ruling elite often becomes the primary beneficiary of such policies.

Nonetheless, the Chinese People's Association for Peace and Disarmament (CPAPD), founded in 1985, is gradually shifting the perceptions held toward China (mostly by Western countries) as being indifferent to the pressing conflicts and human suffering in the continent. CPAPD seem to be at the forefront of China's policies on peace and security. For instance, CPAPD organized, in Liaoning Province, a series of peace activities between the 21st and 24th of September 2011 to observe the International Day of Peace in China⁶⁹. Similarly, CPAPD has been vocally active in condemning the insurgence of piracy off the coast of Somalia.

Despite the contradictions surrounding China's relations with Africa, the trends seem to cast the People's Republic of China as a key and strategic ally of the African states, including the observation of peace and security (given that it is also a permanent member of the United Nations' Security Council). It would be interesting to examine how the African media is covering China's increasing role in administering economic and peace missions in Africa, especially in the greater Horn of Africa (Uganda, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi, Djibouti, Eretria, Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia) and the Great Lakes Region (Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia Djibouti and Uganda) that are prone to socially protracted conflicts.

It would be interesting to assess or to conduct a comparative analysis on how various media outlets in sub-Saharan Africa are paiting Sino-Africa relationships and

⁶⁹ See <http://www.cpapd.org.cn/web/NewsInfo.asp?NewsId=320>, accessed May 22, 2012.

how the media constructs around this subject is embraced locally. This may help understand why, despite the sharp criticisms attached to China's aid in Africa, many African leaders are opening up trade partnerships with China while assigning most of their infrastructural development projects to the Chinese companies.

This dissertation is intended to broaden the theoretical and analytical framework of protracted conflicts in multiethnic societies, particularly sub-Saharan Africa overridden by conflicts that are partly contingent upon media's representation of the "ethnic other". It can be useful to various groups such as governments, non-governmental organizations, media groups, human rights and advocacy groups and learning institutions involved in peace-building on multiple broad levels.

That is, this study may not only help identify key uses of vernacular radio, but also the dominant radios in different communities so as to design targeted programs to bolster inter-group peace processes, which should also take into account the formats used by these radio. Given the shifts in radio narratives with the introduction of new elements, groups involved in peace-building may also use the findings of this study to identify and determine stages of conflict maturity for intervention purposes, whether during categorization stage, victimization stage or re-evaluation stage.

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APPENDICES

ORAL CONSENT:

[Read the protocol verbatim before conducting any interview]



IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW TEMPLATES:

Title of the research: Exploring the Politics of Intergroup Accommodation in Kenya's Vernacular Radios During the 2007/08 Conflicts

Principle investigator: Philip Onguny, Université de Montreal, Communications Department

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Micheline Frenette, Université de Montreal, Communications Department

I am currently a Ph.D. candidate in Communications at the University of Montreal, Canada. My concentration is in International Communication and Development. I am conducting a research on the links between vernacular radio narratives and the accommodation of intergroup relations in the events leading to the 2007/08 conflicts.

As such, I would like to interview you to seek your views on the ways in which vernacular radios played a role in shaping the perceptions of different groups with respect to this conflict. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can skip the questions that make you feel uncomfortable. You may also terminate the interview at any time.

Taking part in this study also confirms that you are at least 18 years old, and a member of the study's target groups: Luo, Kikuyu or Kalenjin⁷⁰. Your identity and the information you provide will be treated with confidentiality, unless you wish to be quoted alongside the comments you make. I anticipate that this interview will take no longer than one hour, and will be conducted exclusively in English.

Any questions regarding this inquiry can be addressed directly to me at <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<. You can also contact the *Ombudsman* of the University of Montreal at ombudsman@umontreal.ca or call 1-(514) 343-2100 for more information about your rights as a participant.

If you agree to participate in this study, please let me know by saying YES. **[IF YES]** Thank you. This interview will be tape-recorded to ensure that I accurately capture all the information you provide. The recordings will strictly be used for the purpose of this research. **[If NO]** May I ask you the reason why you prefer not to be tape-recorded?

[Indicate the date and location of the interview:.....]

⁷⁰ Omit the whole sentence if interviewing key respondents

TEMPLATE 1: RESPONDENTS IN KISUMU, ELDORET AND NYERI

SECTION A: INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

To begin, I would like to get to know you a little bit more [*take note of respondent's gender discretely – Male/Female*].

1. So, how long have you been living in Kisumu/Eldoret/Nyeri? [*select depending on the location of inquiry*]
2. Did you grow up here?
3. Could you talk to me briefly about what you do for a living?
 - a. Would you consider this a blue-collar or white-collar job? [*if both or don't know, ask the respondent to explain*]
4. How do you normally follow news in general? [*probe to get an extensive list of media consulted – if radio is not mentioned, ask if the respondent listens to radios in general*]

SECTION B: VERNACULAR RADIO LISTENERSHIP

1. You just mentioned listening to radios as one of the ways in which you keep yourself informed with the current affairs.
 - a. Do you own this radio device, or how do you normally have access to the radio?
2. Which vernacular radio stations do you listen to? [*wait for the respondent to list the radio stations, and ask why*]
 - a. So I presume that you are a Kikuyu/Luo/Kalenjin [*choose depending on the location*], is this correct? [*if not corresponding to location's ethnic majority, ensure that the respondent is a member of the study's target groups*]
3. Among the radios you just mentioned, which one do you listen to the most? [*probe to find out why the respondent finds this station more appealing than others*]
 - a. Have you ever taken part in any of the radio debates on-air (e.g. email, SMS, call-in, etc)? [*if yes, ask in what capacity and how frequently*]
5. How useful are vernacular radios to you as a Kenyan? [*probe to find out the type of content the respondent likes to listen to, including specific programs if any, and why*]

- a. How frequently do you listen to these radios, would you say [everyday] [every other day] [once or twice a week] or [other]? [*ask the respondent to explain if "other"*]
- b. Do you consult any other media even while listening to vernacular radio broadcast?
[**if no**, ask why] [**If yes**, ask if they the same media mentioned previously]

SECTION C: VERNACULAR RADIOS AND THE 2007/08 CONFLICTS:

Now, let us turn to the 2007 presidential elections and the conflicts that followed shortly after the announcement of the official results. I would like you to reflect on how vernacular radios which you mentioned covered the events leading to this particular crisis.

1. According to many reports, the 2007/08 conflicts are, so far, the worst conflicts Kenya has ever witnessed since independence. Do you believe that vernacular radios are partly or entirely to be blamed for this conflict? [*probe to find out why*]
 - a. What struck you the most in how the news was presented in the period leading to the crisis? [*probe for more information if necessary*]
2. What were the main issues covered by these radios prior to the conflict?
 - a. Among the issues you just mentioned, could you tell me which ones dominated the airwaves the most?
 - b. How were the issues covered? (i.e. interview with political leaders, phone-in...) [*probe to get specific answers with regard to the content and formats used*]
3. How about during the violent conflicts, what were the main issues discussed on-air?
 - a. Did you notice any differences/similarities in terms of news coverage? [*probe to get specific answers with regard to the content and formats used*]
4. Was the coverage different or similar after the violent conflicts stopped? [*probe to get specific answers with regard to the content and formats used*]
5. Many believe that the manner in which the elections were coverage sparked hatred between different groups, and thus led to the conflicts. Do you think vernacular radio hosts were tolerant toward other ethnic groups? [*probe to get specific answers with regard to the three stages of the conflict*]
6. Given the information you just provided, do you think vernacular radios directly instigated the 2007/08 conflicts because they serve ethnic interests? [*probe to find out why*]
7. How do you see the future of vernacular radios in Kenya?

[Before we terminate the interview, I will ask you only two more questions and that's it]

- i. Which among the following best describes your highest level of education? [Primary] [Secondary] [Post-secondary - vocational training institutions] [University degree or higher]
- ii. What is your age group among the following age-brackets: [18-23] [24-29] [30-35] [36-41] [42-47] [48-53] [54-59] [60-65].

CONCLUSION:

Thank you for taking time to do this interview. As mentioned earlier, everything you said shall be treated with confidentiality. However, if you want to be quoted alongside the information you provided, I will only use your first name [*pause and wait for the respondent to decide*]. Thank you for your time.

TEMPLATE 2: KEY RESPONDENTS

[Read the oral consent verbatim before the interview]

SECTION A: INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS:

To begin, I would like to get to know you a little bit more [*take note of respondent's gender discretely – Male/Female*].

1. Could you talk to me briefly about your profession?
 - a. Would you say your profession involves peace-building? [*probe to get specific responses e.g. researcher, advocate...*]
2. How do you normally follow news in general? [*probe to get an extensive list of media consulted*]

SECTION B: VERNACULAR RADIO LISTENERSHIP

You just mentioned listening to radios as one of the ways in which you keep yourself informed with the current affairs.

1. How do you find radio broadcasting in Kenya, compared to other media such as newspaper readership?
2. Do you listen to vernacular radios? [***if no, ask why, then proceed to section C; if yes, probe to find out which stations the respondent listens to***]
 - a. Which ones in particular? [*probe to find out which stations the respondent listens to the most and why*]
3. Have you contributed to any of the debates on-air (e.g. email, SMS, call-in, etc)? [*if yes, ask in what capacity and how frequently*]
4. How frequently do you listen to these radios? Would you say (everyday) (every other day) (once or twice a week) or (other – *please specify*)
5. What would be the main difference, apart from the language of broadcast, between vernacular radios and official-language radios?

SECTION C: VERNACULAR RADIOS AND THE 2007/08 CONFLICTS:

Now, let us turn to the 2007 presidential elections and the conflicts that followed shortly after the announcement of the official results. You must have come across several reports indicating that vernacular radios may have facilitated the spread of hate speech between different groups.

1. Do you really think vernacular radios were responsible for this conflict? [*probe to find out why the respondent feels that way*]
 - a. What struck you the most in how the vernacular radio news were presented to the audiences?

2. What were the main issues covered by these radios prior to the conflict?
 - a. Among the issues you just mentioned, could you tell me which ones dominated the airwaves the most?
 - b. How were the issues covered? (e.g. interview with political leaders, phone-in...) [*probe to get specific answers with regard to content and formats used*]
3. And during the violent conflicts, what were the main issues discussed on-air? [*probe to get specific answers with regard to content and formats used*]
4. Was the news coverage any different after the violent conflicts stopped? [*probe to get specific answers with regard to content and formats used*]
5. Many believe that the manner in which the elections were coverage sparked intergroup hatred, which led to the conflicts. Do you think vernacular radio hosts were tolerant toward other ethnic groups? [*probe to get specific answers relating to the three stages of the conflict*]
 - a. Do you think vernacular radios are ethnically divisive compared to the official-language radios? [*probe to find out why*]

[I only have four more questions and we'll be done]

6. If you were a policymaker, which you actually are in many respects, what policy guidelines would you suggest to ensure ethnic tolerance is observed in vernacular radio broadcasts? [*probe to find out what the respondent thought about the temporary ban on live media imposed by the government during the violent conflicts in 2007/08*]
7. How do you see the future of vernacular radios in Kenya, especially with the newly adopted Constitution?
8. Apart from ethno-political interests, what do you think explains the violence that many African countries seem to have during election cycles?
9. What did you make of the intervention of the international community in bridging the differences between the ODM and PNU party leaders?

CONCLUSION:

Thank you for taking time to do this interview. As mentioned earlier, everything you said shall be treated with confidentiality. However, if you want to be quoted alongside the information you provided, I can do that as well [*pause and wait for the respondent to decide*]. Thank you for your time.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AKFED	Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development
AU	African Union
CCK	Communication Commission of Kenya
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CPAPD	Chinese People’s Association for Peace and Disarmament
DR Congo	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
ECK	Electoral Commission of Kenya
FORAC	Forum on China-Africa Co-operation
GEMA	Gikuyu Embu Meru Association
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KAMATUSA	Kalenjin Maasai Turkana and Samburu
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KNHRC	Kenya National Human Rights Commission
KPU	Kenya People’s Union
KTN	Kenya Television Network
KUJ	Kenya Union of Journalists
LSK	Law Society of Kenya
MCK	Media Commission of Kenya
MOA	Media Owners Association
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NCKK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
NMG	Nation Media Group
NTV	Nation Television
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PNU	Party of National Unity
PSC	Protracted Social Conflict
RTL	Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines
SG	Standard Group
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIU	United States International University

