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A Comparative Analysis of the New York Times [U.S.A.] and the Nation Media Group [Kenya] Presidential Opinion Polls Coverage 90 Days Prior to Election Day

David Okoth

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE *NEW YORK TIMES* [U.S.A] AND
THE *NATION MEDIA GROUP* [KENYA] PRESIDENTIAL OPINION POLLS
COVERAGE 90 DAYS PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY

by

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in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree

MAJ

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DEDICATION

To my motherland, Africa; I know we shall arise to newer glories.

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I extend a hand of gratitude to my family who have never wavered in their admiration of me as I have of them. I am thankful to my academic mentors, Dr. Chris Swindell, Professor Janet Dooley, and Professor Burnis Morris. I appreciate all my professors at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication lead by our Dean, Dr. Corley Dennison; and the Dean of Graduate College, Dr. Leonard Deutsch, for their sound academic guidance. I am humbled and thankful to the Research Committee – Faculty Senate – for providing funds to make this work fit for publication. I thank Dr. Robert Bickel for his assistance and resourcefulness in analyzing the data and to Kate McConnell for tirelessly perusing and proofing the manuscripts to meet academic grammar fidelity. I am also grateful to the following establishments for providing a cool academic atmosphere to enable this study to carry on soundly: The English Department Writing Center; Drinko Library and UCS-Marshall; Cabell County Library; SOJMC Library; COEHS-Statistics Department; Newsstand© representative Travis in Austin, TX. And to all the people whom all power is vested to change the world, *aluta continua!*

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to find out whether there exists a relationship between the *New York Times* (U.S.) and the *Nation Media Group* (Kenya) coverage of presidential opinion poll results 90 days prior to Election Day. One research hypothesis was identified; (H_1) that there is a relationship – of difference – in how the two publications cover presidential opinion poll stories. The study identified 440 presidential opinion poll stories over a 90-day period prior to Election Day. It analyzed election coverage from October-December 2007 for the *Nation* and August-November 2008 for the *Times*.

The study established that the two publications had a marked difference in how they covered the presidential opinion poll stories in relation to two schematics, which are game versus governing; but a striking resemblance on how presidential contenders were portrayed.

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INTRODUCTION

Opinion polling is among the most successful political developments of the last century and according to Warren (2001), has been both praised and maligned in democratic societies. As a pollster, John Zogby stressed once, “people keep insisting that poll results constitute predictions on elections outcomes, but they really don’t because poll results are just snapshots of the race at that moment in time” (Lavrakas, Traugott & Miller, 1995). Many political observers blame the journalistic norm emphasizing professional objectivity for the glut of ‘horse race’ coverage, and, according to Lavrakas et al. (1995), the desire to remain objective steers journalists away from issue-oriented news toward coverage of the strategic aspects of presidential elections. Polls help guide policy by giving decision makers impartial information about what the public wants (Gallup & Rae, 1940). Gallup’s view of elected officials was that in a democracy, most legislators give some attention to public opinion; therefore, politicians ought to be aware that opinion polls are mirrors permitting individuals to understand where they fit in the political system. At the same time, politicians capitalize on media coverage and are wary of the mass media's primacy in providing political information (Graber, 1984). Many complain that the nation's news outlets, in selecting events to cover and issues to emphasize, play an “agenda-setting” role that gives them too much power in guiding voters' decisions. The major concern this research looks at is any existent desire for fresh and exciting stories that may make reporters vulnerable to charges that they stress campaign strategy and controversy over the candidates' policy proposals. ‘Horse-race’ reporting—the coverage of the election campaign as though it were an ongoing athletic contest—and media reliance on public opinion polls is also analyzed.

In drawing their conclusion, Lavrakas, Traugott and Miller (1995) note that logic suggests, and research findings reinforce, the belief that the increase in the use of election polls has had a considerable and growing impact on reporters, editors, and producers in the manner in which they cover election campaigns; it directly affects *what* they choose to report and *how* they report it. In covering opinion poll results, media hopes to tell readers and listeners that their opinions are as important as the opinion of the elite. In democracies, and over the years, poll results are recognized as credible sources for journalists who need those sources for authority and detachment. Accurate reporting of the polls by the media keeps the government honest by not allowing misrepresentation of public opinion (Rubin, 1977). Public opinion polling seems a fixture of politics in a democracy, as Mogeni (1997) reports. Mogeni notes that the democratic urge toward participation and the journalistic desire to ask questions in Kenya has led to extensive polling in the past three years.

In January 2008, preliminary estimates indicate that U.S. daily newspapers used 482,000 metric tons of newsprint, 11.5 percent less than the 545,000 tons used in January 2007 according to a new report by Nielsen/NetRatings for the Newspaper Association of America (2008). Whereas newspaper readership is finding new life online, the transformation remains a highly uncertain business proposition. According to Boedeker (2008) and Stelter (2009), this has left traditional journalism schools playing catch-up whilst media moguls are inventing ways of charging for online newspaper content. Notably, News Corp.'s Rupert Murdoch says news sites will begin charging users as early as 2010 because the newsprint industry is threatened by falling circulations and an advertising slump (Hooper, 2008). Nearly one in three Internet users (29 percent) read an

online newspaper in March 2005, representing a total audience of 44 million people (NAA, 2008). The data, which takes into account both home and work Internet usage, shows a 3.1 percent increase in unique audience in a “march to newspaper websites,” compared with the same period a year ago. With newspaper readership gaining higher indices in many marketing studies conducted yearly, this medium is evolving to become a democratizing institution in its own right (Winograd & Hais, 2008). Boedeker cites a U.N. report saying the global debate on democratization and human rights can be sharpened by paying greater attention to specific problems of political and institutional players (Boedeker, 2008). This research delves into the intricacies involved in how the media embraced the democratization process endeared in electioneering. The main emphasis is on the presidential opinion polls and how two major newspapers have used this item as content. The study will also comparatively analyze the nature of such content.

For many Kenyans who lack information, opinion poll reporting becomes “knowledge” (Mogeni, 1997). The most credible and best documented method of showing how media reporting of presidential opinion polls influences voters is the so called “bandwagon” effect that most research have analyzed. Under this theory, voters abandon a candidate who is “trailing” and jump onto the bandwagon of the “leading” candidate. According to Blumler and Katz (1975) in their uses and gratifications study, the audience or media content recipients may do so because they do not want to waste their vote, or because they feel more comfortable supporting a popular choice, or because they accept the “collective wisdom” of others as the correct thing to do.

Paul F. Lazarsfeld, an election researcher and founder of modern empirical sociology, found evidence for the bandwagon effect in 1944 in his book, *The People's*

Choice: How the Voter Makes up his Mind in a Presidential Campaign (2002), which he co-authored with Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet. The researchers found that measuring public opinion changes public opinion and that electoral behavior is influenced by perceptions of the likely winner. In the bandwagon effect, voters want to be part of the winning team. They want to follow the majoritarian norm. People like to follow the crowd, to associate themselves with the success, to do or believe things because other people do or believe them. This is best known as the herding instinct (as cited in Lazarsfeld, 2002). The bandwagon effect is particularly strong in a “horse-race” schematic where media choose to emphasize who is winning and who is losing. In this manner of coverage, the debate is not on real issues, but who is the winning horse (Lavrakas, Traugott & Miller, 1995). Professor Michael J. Robinson (1983), who has done extensive research on polls and their influence on the public, says that polls influence the quality and character of political campaigns. This research does not intend to find out the effects of the media coverage of presidential opinion polls, but looks at the product itself. As Robinson and Sheehan (1983) discuss in their landmark research, media owners will want to know more about their product rather than their by-product to better their services to society.

The opposite of the bandwagon effect is the underdog effect, which is less well documented through empirical research. Under this theory, people vote out of sympathy for the candidate who is “losing” in the opinion polls. As it was reported more often in his rallies, presidential hopeful Senator John McCain tried to deride his supporters at the height of Senator Barack Obama’s popularity wave during the 2008 Presidential campaign. Senator McCain said he loved this position, “being the underdog, this is exactly where I want to be!” The remark and stance, as cited by O’ Keefe (2008), may

have been in hope that the electorate may vote for the losing candidate as a rebellion against the majority. The most important factor this research analyzes that may directly affect the political choice of the electorate includes the way opinion polls are reported or framed by the media categorized as game or governing schematics.

While opinion polling itself is thus derided by scholars, another oft-criticized aspect of election coverage is what has come to be colloquially known as horse-race coverage. This kind of news story casts election campaigns in terms associated with sports reporting (Gallup & Rae, 1940). Candidates are “favorites” or “underdogs,” they “maintain leads” or “make comebacks,” have “rallies” and “slumps” (Patterson, 1991). These stories treat the campaign as a contest in which voting decisions are made and changed on a daily basis. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze stories and presidential candidate portrayal in all the *New York Times* and the *Nation* dailies 90 days prior to Election Day in light of these key phrases. Critics say the media favor horse-race reporting for its value as entertainment (Warren, 2001). Reich (2000) argues that citizens do flare up in politics, especially when the media carries mesmerizing stories about, say for example, Alaskan Governor Sarah Palin’s wardrobe on the 2008 campaign trail. Governor Palin was Senator McCain’s running mate for the 2008 elections. The implication is that the networks and newspapers attract more viewers and readers with story scoops, charts, multicolored electoral vote maps and predictions from veteran political handicappers than with discussion of the candidates' policy positions (Kovach & Rosentiel, 2001). Critics also say that horse-race reporting creates a perceptual environment that can affect the outcome of a race. For example, Graber (1984) argues that a candidate who is reportedly trailing badly may have difficulty arousing support or

raising funds; a “frontrunner” whose lead in the polls slips is seen as troubled and on the defensive.

Newspeople deny that they ignore the issues citing statistics from researchers who have analyzed the content of election news reports. Professor Michael J. Robinson and Margaret A. Sheehan (1983) of George Washington University found that in 1980 twenty percent of CBS Evening News election reporting dealt with issues, and the proportion of horse-race news to issues coverage in local newspapers (5-to-1) was the same in 1980 as it was in 1960 and 1940. Accordingly, Graber (1984) posits that, “voters who want to base their decisions on the candidates' stands on specific issues can usually find that information.”

The influence of opinion polls on political matters has steadily grown in recent years; indeed, poll results now commonly affect political discourse, impact policy decisions and determine campaign strategies (Rubin, 1977). In their book, *The Elements of Journalism*, Kovach & Rosentiel (2001) elicit the ethical dimension discussing that accurate reporting of the polls by the media keeps the government honest by not allowing misrepresentation of public opinion.

The debate is still contentious as to why many seem to believe that unbalanced or biased reporting by media will directly determine who wins or loses the elections. This research's pivotal question is whether two aspects of the structure, format and editing conventions of the two publications are extremely powerful vehicles that reflect and shape the cognitive processes of their audience. In comparing the reportage on presidential opinion polls produced by the *Times* and the *Nation*, this research found that

a higher percentage of presidential opinion poll coverage is issue based (59% in the *Times*; 52% in *Nation*) compared to game/horse-race scheme.

Organs like *The Economist*, the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* have always exercised editorial discretion for candidates whose programs align with their editorial orientation in one way or another (Morris, 1994). In these serious publications, endorsements are limited to concurrence or sympathy with specific candidate's political platforms and programs. It is arguable whether this is an honorable or an acknowledgement which recognizes and values the intelligence of readers. Such is the case when a tussle arose when Senator McCain's editorial rebuttal was rejected after Senator Obama's op-ed graced the *Times*. Reporter Kate Philips (2009), who runs a caucus forum on the paper's website, discussed extensively why Senator McCain's piece was rejected. The McCain camp did not take the matter lightly accusing the *Times* of bias. *Times* officials said that the decision not to publish McCain's submission should not be considered a total rejection of the article by the presumptive Republican nominee. Rather, David Shipley, editor of the op-ed page, "kicked back the original version" while offering suggestions for changes and revision. In Kenya, the situation is different. The incumbent has a massive presence in the republic's news outlets, whereas the opposition competes markedly to post their party dossiers in alternative and private media. The latter must pay airtime/column spaces at market rates. The situation is more or less a norm since no precedents or legislation have been set in such matters.

Political polls achieve their results by sampling a small number of potential voters rather than the population as a whole. This leads to sampling error which most polling agencies dutifully report. But factors such as non-representative samples, question wording and non-response can produce *non*-sampling errors in statistical computation

(Ramsden, 1997). While pollsters are aware of such errors, they are difficult to quantify and seldom reported. When a polling agency, whether by intention or not, produces results with non-sampling errors that systematically favor one candidate over another, then that agency's poll is biased (Sherif, 1967). This research analyzed polling data for the presidential races in Kenya and the U.S., and though the research methodology does not allow the findings to identify which agencies' polls are biased, it will not be factored into the study. Neither will the agencies be identified.

Arguments against opinion polling have, on the other hand, maintained that polls are subject to manipulation and do not fairly reflect the views of the people, a contention that may be believable in Kenya, just smarting from government information control in the *Nyayo* Era, (President Moi's Administration 1978-2002) according to Ochieng' (2007). Here, however, are two issues; one of intention and the other of science. The research also notes that public opinion is not and should not be viewed as something objective as Gallup commented; it remains a "snapshot." Polls should be seen as tools for probing the complexity of public images, attitudes and behavior and not as ends in themselves when the media cover their results (Warren, 2001). The role of polls in view of the democratic representation of the civil society has been analyzed in starkly different ways. In one extreme, there are ideas of opinion polls as genuine direct democracy (Gallup & Rae, 1940). The opposing view highlights the fact that the development of and increase in opinion polls have, in part, undermined democratic institutions thereby deteriorating media's role as the Fourth Estate (Reich, 2000).

Proponents of political opinion polling argue that coverage by the media as a social responsibility provides a genuine attempt at consulting with the people on issues affecting their daily lives. While congressmen, or Members of Parliament (MPs), and

civic representatives may claim to speak for the people, public opinion polling lets the people speak for themselves (Warren, 2001). Warren argues that reporting and giving deserved coverage to the opinion polls allow the voices of the ordinary citizens to be heard above the clamor of special interests such as the sole modus operandi of media establishments. Through amalgamations and conglomerations, media entities have been accused of fostering more than ever corporate interest, which supersedes governmental or social responsibilities.

That being said, there is no gainsaying in the fact that opinion polling can be manipulated and misused to give credence to unpopular programs and or to legitimize policies that do not have public support (Kovach & Rosentiel, 2001). Such is the investigation of this research. There are cases where particular candidates and parties have attempted to use opinion polling to advance their causes, as Graber (1984) illustrates in terms of getting funding. To what extent is a good question this study posits and further, is the media responsible? Researchers however, label these as aberrations that should not cloud the good work done by professional pollsters (Gallup & Rae, 1940).

The Problem

A recent concern for scholars is the role or impact of the news media upon the electoral process (Blumler & Katz, 1975). Based upon his analysis of the 1992 presidential campaign, Kerbel (1994) argues that media find themselves “brokering the relationship” between candidate and voter to an unprecedented extent. Much of audience based effects research still argues that the mass media influence public opinion in political culture (Graber, 1984). In modern times the most read example of the non-

effects of campaign media is Patterson's *Out of Order*, who argued that media only reinforce, rather than influence political opinion or behavior (Morris, 1994). Clearly others may also counter that media influence the strategic environment in three ways; how news media portrayal impacts candidate actions, issue positions, and the routine struggles for favorable coverage (Winograd & Hais, 2008). Many studies have established that political candidates use paid media in an attempt to position themselves well for the forthcoming primary season or an election (Steger, 2000). Again, both uses of the media were unprecedented in the surfacing period.

In his analysis comparing news and editorial coverage of the 1996 presidential campaign, Steger (2000) shows how presidential candidates' use of polls during a general elections campaign put two centers against each other; the media industry versus the electorate. His conclusion was that the print media's attention to political intrigue is to the detriment of attention to substantive issues, therefore undermining voters' ability to make rational candidate choices. Today, presidential opinion polls are used to monitor candidate status in primary races as well as guide issue and image message formulations (Winograd & Hais, 2008). However, in his analysis of the 1996 general elections, Graff (1997) saw a new strategic use of candidate polls. He cites, for example, Bob Dole's use of "push polls" to preserve a victory in Iowa, countering the intense, negative ad campaign of Steve Forbes. Graff states that push polls are not designed to obtain information; rather, they are designed to use loaded questions to plant negative information in the voter's mind. In this instance, is it possible to conclude that the *Times* or the *Nation* publications may have used the presidential opinion polls in other ways during the three months run-up to the general election? Is this phenomenon a comparable

feature between two geopolitically separated states, Kenya and the U.S.? Journalistic focus is key; Steger (2000) notes that journalists' focus on politics rather than on policy also threatens to undermine public support for the political system. This promotes public mistrust and cynicism about politics and politicians. By portraying campaigns as contests among scheming politicians, all of whom should be viewed with suspicion, the media help bring about that very result (p.73).

Baughman (2006) seems only casually interested in the role media play in redefining notions of civic participation, as is Schudson (1998) in his book *The Good Citizen* where he analyzes media as part of a more general theory of American political culture. Starr (2004) in his book, *The Creation of the Media*, offers credible scholarly overviews of political, economic, and social change in the mass media since World War II and acquiesces to the same train of thought. Reviewers were impressed with how skillfully Baughman (2006) illuminates how political culture moved between media, describing the ways in which television, newspapers, magazines, and popular music changed political discourse in relation to one another.

The current affairs of the previous general elections in the two nations pique great interest for study. The U.S. faced the possibility of having its first Black president whereas Kenya's nationhood almost crumbled in post election violence that claimed over 1,000 lives and internally displaced 300,000 (CIPEV, 2008). Whereas the U.S. media are less likely concerned with a violent aftermath of an election, is it plausible to argue that the Kenyan media will highlight other factors that could give victory to certain candidates on d-day? The U.S. presidential election of 2008 also presented an interesting case for this study due to its immediacy.

According to Wayman (2008), the Bradley effect, less commonly called the Wilder effect, is a theory proposed to explain observed discrepancies between voter opinion polls and election outcomes in some U.S. government elections where a white candidate and a non-white candidate run against each other. Instead of ascribing the results to flawed methodology on the part of the pollster, the theory proposes that some voters tend to tell pollsters that they are undecided or likely to vote for a black candidate, and yet, on Election Day, vote for his/her white opponent. Wayman (2008) argues that the supposition is these voter fear they would exhibit, or reveal, racial prejudice if they told the pollster they were voting for the white candidate. This study will, therefore, not look into questions such as whether there exists a substantial gap between polls and actual voter preference. With regard to the aforementioned inadequacies of opinion polling, this study interest is on how the opinion polls are reported by the two publications. Inherent internal errors in opinion polling figures are beyond its scope.

Kenya's past polls show that in a closely contested race, pre-election opinion polls could be misleading (Ochieng', 2007). The Steadman Group predicted that Mr. Mwai Kibaki would get 67 percent of the vote during the 2002 presidential elections, but he ended up with 64 percent. Steadman also predicted that Mr. Simeon Nyachae (3rd runner up) would get five percent, but he ended up with three percent. The error margin in these cases was probably due not only to pure sampling error, but also to the pre-election "don't-knows" (those who were undecided) and those who changed their voting intentions after the survey according to Ochieng' (2007). Naturally, no pre-election opinion poll can predict election results with total accuracy. Unlike exit polls, pre-election opinion polls only show voting intentions, not actual voting behavior which can only be known on Election Day (Gallup & Rae, 1940). Voting intentions can change in

the 24 hours before voting, in some cases even a few hours before. Pointedly the *Nation* announced that it would stop publishing opinion polls at least 10 days before Election Day, presumably to avoid influencing the outcome.

How trusted are reported opinion polls? The African case may be a different matter when it comes to believability and nature of presidential opinion polling. Mogeni's (1997) concern that a majority of African countries still grapple with democracy in a modern sense is real, even in post-independent Africa. Therefore, in this study, Africa, Kenya in this case and the global environment are to be taken as they are and not as they ought to be. The Democratic paradigm contributes some idea of what they can be. Some may argue that to Africa, it may not be probable to distinguish democracy and economic growth. As Ake (1996) puts it, "democracy is not economic growth" even though economic growth in a large measure determines its possibility. A democratic paradigm cannot therefore be judged merely by its conduciveness to economic growth or media freedom, although this criterion of judgment is not relevant to its validity. In part, the desire for greater openness and accountability is buttressed in what Owusu (1992) terms "news awareness and the linkages between economic development and democratic practices." Ergo, the relationship between democracy and development in Africa has been a problematic one as noted by Frantz (1967). It is now more than four decades since most African countries began to gain independence. While some regions of the continent have witnessed remarkable success in development and democracy, the overall picture is one of dismal failure as with the tendencies in most sub-Saharan states. Examples include; violence that rocked Kenya after the 2007 December general elections (Gettleman, 2008), Zimbabwean clashes after the 2008 March general elections (MacFarquhar & Dugger, 2008) and the Nigerian Plateau state revolt after 2008

November elections (“Death Toll in Nigeria”, 2008). These elections conducted in the spirit of exercising democratic rights have all resulted in deaths and left thousands of IDPs (internally displaced persons). Invariably, their economies slump, and development halts in the face of what ought to have been a democratic practice. A number of explanations have been advanced to account for this sorry state of affairs. They include poor governance policies, mismanagement of national economies, public malfeasance, indiscipline and widespread corruption, and lack of independent scrutinizing media (Ake, 1996). This study seeks to find out whether media use of opinion polling prior to elections can contribute a catharsis effect such that the electorate can easily embrace the projected outcome. Though somewhat a tangent, the study tries to establish whether it can be intimated that the reporting of opinion polling is a contributing factor to the post-election outcomes comparing how the western media and the African media handle presidential opinion polling statistics.

Definition of Terms

Opinion Polling:

Although no consensus has been reached as to the definition of public opinion (see the 50 different definitions in Childs, 1965) since the advent of probability sampling, public opinion has typically been defined as "what public opinion polls poll" (Blumler & Katz, 1975). News organizations commission polls (Winograd, & Hais, 2008) and use them extensively, because these precise, scientific, and seemingly impartial data are thought to capture a "truth" about public opinion. Noelle-Neumann summarizes public

opinion in two concepts. Public opinion as rationality, being instrumental in the process of opinion formation and decision making in a democracy; and Public opinion as a social control, where its role is to promote social integration and to insure that there is a sufficient level of consensus on which actions and decisions may be based (Noelle-Neumann, 1995).

According to the democratic-theoretical concept, opinion is primarily a matter of individual views and arguments. Whereas the concept of public opinion as a social control applies it to a much greater area, it can also be directly defined as a form of expressed conviction. Public opinion can therefore be applied to everything that visibly expresses value-related opinion in public (Sonck & Loosveldt, 2007).

Opinion polling is a survey of opinions from a particular sample. Polls are usually designed to represent the opinions of a population by asking a small number of people, representative of the population, a series of questions and then extrapolating the answers to the larger group within confidence intervals.

Whatever definition one gives to opinion polling, it is generally agreed that it involves the use of scientifically acceptable methods to collect and aggregate opinion of members of the public (for example registered voters in the republic of Kenya) and should clearly state the methods used in sampling, collecting views, the assumptions made, and the degree of accuracy with which the results should be interpreted.

Governing schema:

Governing schema focuses on what the candidates stand for and how well government is working. The electorate seeks information about issues and leader effectiveness to consider "broad questions of governance" (Patterson, 1993, p.59),

Game Schema:

In this scheme of media coverage of presidential opinion polls, candidates are "favorites" or "underdogs." They "maintain leads" or "make comebacks." They have "rallies" and "slumps." These stories treat the campaign as a contest in which voting decisions are made and changed on a daily basis.

Incumbents, Opposition, and Third Leagues:

Governing parties sponsoring presidential candidates will be known as incumbents. The opposition is most basically classified as the second strongest party capable of forming an alternative government also known as the Official Opposition in a democratic dispensation. Third leagues are the third runners up in most of the presidential opinion polls in candidate and party rating and will be referenced in this study as 'other.' Third league presidential contenders mostly have political influence in confined geographical locations and totally lack credence in the whole electoral map.

Candidates:

The presidential contenders for the U.S. elections referenced in this study as the incumbent are Republican Senator for Arizona, John McCain and his running mate, Alaskan Governor Sarah Palin. The opposition presidential candidates for the Democrats are Illinois Senator Barack Obama and his running mate, Delaware Senator Joe Biden.

The presidential contenders for the Kenyan elections referenced in this study as the incumbent is PNU (Party of National Unity) nominee President Mwai Kibaki. The opposition presidential candidate for the ODM (Orange Democratic Movement party) is Raila Odinga.

The third league presidential contenders were numerous and, therefore, were grouped together under the banner name coded “others” for both U.S. and the Kenyan cases.

Publications:

Publications will make references to the two newspapers under the current study, that is the *New York Times* also known as the *Times*, and the *Nation*. Coding for the two publications for statistical identification will be NYT for the *Times* and NTN for the *Nation*.

Background and Rationale

Journalism is for building community, journalism is for citizenship, and journalism is for democracy, according to Kovach and Rosentiel (2001). The two authors argue that it is in the media where millions of people empowered by the free flow of information become “directly involved in creating a new government and new rules for political, social, and economic life of their country” (p.16). Whether one looks over three hundred years, or even three thousand, it is impossible to separate news from community, and over time even more specifically from democratic community (Winograd, & Hais, 2008).

In the 21st Century, political parties have demonstrated reliance on opinion polls to tailor their messages to relatively narrow slices of potential supporters in a bid to get them to the voting booth, a case evidently heavily used by the Obama and Odinga camps in the 2008 and 2007 presidential elections, respectively. Obama effectively targeted the Hispanic demography (Gourney & Zeleny, 2008) while Odinga tirelessly rallied to court the Islamic faction (AllAfrica Global Media, 2007). Humburger and Wallsten (2004), polling experts at the University of Minnesota’s Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, called it a “subterranean strategy” that offsets general turnout patterns and can be very surprising for pollsters,” particularly in close elections (p. 149). Campaigns organized in this manner, the authors add, are targeted and more likely to succeed, putting a premium on the kinds of “below-the-radar tactics” and strategies that outside analysts, including the news media, miss entirely. Political public opinion polls have become an essential element of both campaign management and news coverage. Media technology has increased the types, frequency, and sophistication of opinion polls

(Adams, 1984). There are numerous data collection techniques: phone surveys, door-to-door surveys, mail surveys, dial 900 surveys, and focus groups just to name a few (Selnow, 1991, p.177).

Rubin (1977) identifies six elements crucial to developing an understanding of the presidential campaign process: The strategic environment; Organization; Finance; Public opinion polls; Candidate image, and Media. Each of these functions independently as well as interactively, that is, they have both an independent effect upon the rhetorical strategies and tactics of the candidates as well as an effect on one another. The interaction for the elements establishes clear expectations of any campaign process.

Democracy in Africa has always remained a figment in the imagination of the global scholar, but with the rise of the media and information technology, diversification and freedom, one can say, it is being actualized. Aron (1997) in his work, *The Institutional Foundation of Growth in Africa Now*, notes that Africa's future growth prospects are overwhelmingly circumscribed by its institutional foundations. He posits that there is probably no viable long-term alternative to the oversight problems other than deep-seated constitutional change as touted in Kenya. It is widely thought that institutionalization of the rule of law gives more emphasis to the basic rights of individuals, and improves balance such as the U.S. where freedom and rights are espoused in its First Amendment. Political liberation, then, is perceived as not only contributing to a people's yearning for participation, representativeness, equality, and accountability, but also to their ability to deal more effectively with the economic problems facing them (Ake, 1996). This belies the innate interconnectedness among media, democracy and development.

Is it illogical to draw comparisons between the U.S. and Kenya given the significant civilization admixture and geo-positions in light of elections and media? In his argument for the transformation of a communist society, Karl Marx argued that ‘present day society’ is capitalist society which exists in all civilized countries. Marx argues that since ‘present-day state’ changes with a country’s frontier, the different states of the different civilized countries, in spite of their motley diversity of form, all have this in common; that they are based on modern bourgeois society. They have, therefore, certain essential characteristics in common (as cited in Lenin, 2006). The leading idea of Adam Smith’s *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) is that any civilized community, if men are left at liberty to pursue their own interests in the way they consider best, they will, as a rule, although unintentionally, promote the public good. Therefore, the political economies of both states are equivalent in nature and purpose.

The rationale for this study is that knowing about the content of media (how media present presidential opinion polls in the U.S. versus Kenya) may not prove political effects, but does give important clues to understanding them. In their study of newspaper content, Miller and Lutz (1979) noted that one of the most peculiar results from advanced research indicates that newspapers influence public opinion more than national television. Other investigations such as one on the 1972 campaign (Hofstetter, Zukin, & Bus, 1978) found media to have been practically inconsequential in moving voters’ opinion. But, their methodology is unlike what this study is investigating.

Undergirding theories

Agendas Setting Theory

Explained by McCombs and Shaw (1972), the agenda-setting theory says the media (mainly the news media) are not always successful at telling us what to think, but they are quite successful at telling us what to think about. The two authors posit that the effects of the media's coverage (for example) of the presidential candidates and the impact of that coverage on the voters are the critical questions. It is not unusual for an opposition candidate in Africa, for example, to complain of heavy handedness of incumbents in media coverage because the state agencies control this critical resource. Many-a-times losing contenders habitually blame their downfall on biased or unflattering coverage—or a lack of coverage (Owusu, 1992). To be ignored is fatal to candidates who are not well known nationally early in the campaign. According to Jamieson and Waldman (2003), the effect is that favorites who win will not say they were victims of unrealistic expectations created by the media.

Patterson (1980) give an illustration where in 1948 President Harry S Truman, a decided underdog in his campaign against Republican Thomas E. Dewey, traveled by train across the country to meet the voters. Patterson narrates that the “whistle-stop” campaign enabled thousands of voters to see “Give-'Em-Hell-Harry” in the flesh and helped Truman win the election. Patterson argues that although Truman and his predecessors aimed for newspaper and radio coverage, media considerations were not central to their presidential campaigns positing that only through personal appearances could candidates display their personalities, style and leadership qualities. Through this,

the leaders were able to express regional and demographic sympathies and involve voters in the hoopla of the campaign devoid of media coverage. In Kenya, *Ugutu* (devolved-federalism) versus *Jamhuri* (centralized or unitary government) took heat on the campaign trail so that any mention of the topic was so sensitive it threatened to destroy candidates who stood on either side of the debate. The incumbent made the word *Ugutu* an opposition colloquial fear factor, arguing that citizens may lose their land holdings to “foreigners” from other regions should that system of governance be embraced in a new constitution (“Parties sharply divided,” 2007). The rebuttal was that the incumbent wanted a plutocracy in Kenya and, therefore, was promising the age old “change;” a penchant in most democratic political circles, according to Kalambuka (2007). The media in Kenya gave these issues considerable coverage, and the opposition, lacking the instruments of information at the disposal of the incumbent, set on a “meet-the-people” tour. This was in the hope of moving the debate from the airwaves, screens and Op-Ed pages (“Parties sharply divided,” 2007).

Old-style campaigning has not completely disappeared; campaign rallies still provide colorful pictures for print and television audiences. Indeed, many are carefully orchestrated to maximize media attention. Media have been the prime factor in changing the way presidential candidate’s campaign (Rubin, 1977). Over the past three decades, candidates have come to realize that even a few seconds of coverage on evening news programs can reach millions of potential voters (Nerone, 1994). But the advent of television is not the only cause of the growth of media politics. As geographical and social mobility weakened the influence of local political parties, television, newspapers, magazines and radio replaced them as the main sources of political information for many

voters according to Joslyn (1984). The author posits that the burgeoning expense of paid advertising and travel has also forced candidates to rely as much as possible on “free” media coverage.

George Washington University Professor William C. Adams cited the 1984 Democratic primary campaign as evidence of one agenda-setting function (Adams, 1984). Adams found that national news organizations, unwilling to provide what they saw as disproportionate coverage to dark horses, paid little attention to Sens. Fritz Hollings (S.C.) and Alan Cranston (Calif.) or former Florida Gov. Reuben Askew. Sen. John Glenn (Ohio), long regarded as Walter Mondale's most serious competition, fell so far below media expectations in the campaign's first voting event, the Iowa caucuses, that he was written off as an “also-ran.” Adams had speculated that the media “stardom” accorded Colorado Sen. Gary Hart following his second-place Iowa finish with 15 percent of the vote set the stage for his upset victory in New Hampshire. The front-runner tag nearly became a crushing burden for Mondale. According to Graber, the issues emphasized by news reporters during a presidential campaign may also have an impact on voters. By deciding “what to cover,” the media may directly control what people believe to be the most important question” (Graber, 1984, p.198). For example, daily media coverage of the economic crisis in the last quarter of 2008 was as much of a political liability for the presidential contenders in the U.S. race as was the crisis itself (Phillips, 2008).

The sincerity of presidential candidates may also be challenged when reports note that certain statements or activities are motivated largely out of political considerations. The lead story of the March, 28, *Chicago Tribune* provided an example: “Wright's

sermons fueled by complex mix of culture, religion.” In the third paragraph, reporter Manya A. Brachear wrote that when Wright uttered the three infamous words that have rocked Sen. Barack Obama's presidential campaign,” it seemed Sen. Obama “had abandoned” his “anti-racism rhetoric,” and in the following paragraph questioned whether Obama had “changed his tune” about race in America just before the election (2008, par 3). In such scenarios, it is conclusive as Patterson (2005) views that to simplify their coverage, journalists may create one-dimensional or “simplistic images” of candidates that become pervasive. As political scientist Doris A. Graber wrote, “To conserve their limited time, television newscasters create stereotypes of the various candidates early in the campaign and then build their stories around these stereotypes by merely adding new details to the established image” (Graber, 1984). Graber cited as examples the 1980 images of Reagan portrayed in the media as “an amiable dunce,” Carter as “mean, petty and manipulative,” and independent candidate John B. Anderson as “Don Quixote, battling ...in hopeless struggles.”

Because the candidates spend long months reiterating the same basic positions on issues, journalists spend much of their time searching for new angles to report. Errors of fact, dramatic pronouncements, overstatements, verbal gaffes and hints of scandal often result in the most memorable stories of political campaigns For example, Sen. McCain’s joke about “bomb, bomb, bomb Iran” (Gonyea, 2007), the controversy over Raila Odinga and Barack Obama’s links to radical Islamism and socialistic ideals have been among the most widely reported stories of the two presidential campaigns. The agenda is real and imminent in the coverage of any political campaign.

Spiral of Silence

There are several other ways in which the publication of polls can influence voter's electoral choice and the nature of political campaigns. One worth mentioning is the 'spiral of silence' developed by social psychologist Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann. The Spiral of Silence theory explains why people often feel the need to conceal their opinions/preference/views/etc when they fall within the minority of a group or even the unheard majority at times (Neumann, 1980). Noelle-Neumann theorized that public opinion is a tangible force that controls people's decisions. Neumann (1984) introduced the "spiral of silence" as an attempt to explain in part how public opinion is formed. She wondered why the Germans supported the wrong political positions that led to national defeat, humiliation and ruin in the 1930s-1940s.

The phrase "spiral of silence" refers to how people tend to remain silent when they are in the minority when they fear being isolated (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). In her 1982 book, the *Spiral of Silence*, she further hypothesizes that if a person is exposed to a particular point of view, say in a public opinion poll, long enough he or she adopts that view. Individuals, Noelle-Neumann states, shape their behavior to prevailing attitudes about what is acceptable.

Among the unidentified forces in Noelle-Neumann's theory are extra-governmental. In his journal, Starr (2004) argues that there exists special interest groups (NGOs) within or without other states' borders that force governments to consider domestic public opinion. These organizational networks offer citizens groups unprecedented channels of influence, and Starr (2004) notes that today's powerful non-

state actors are not without precedent. Starr cites history where the British East India Company ran a subcontinent and a few NGOs that go back more than a century. These, may be exceptions that may be setting the agenda for pollsters as well as the media but Starr notes that both in number and in impact, non-state actors have never before approached their true strength. A larger role likely lies ahead.

The political elite and published opinion continue to have just as much intellectual power, regardless of whether they are public opinion or not (Noelle-Neumann, 1980). Noelle-Neumann offers considerable technical advice on “manipulation of stereotypes and control of the “irrational, morally loaded component” in the mass public (p.10). Claims of morality makes messages easier to understand and lead ordinary people to conclude that a person who thinks differently is bad, not stupid. She concludes that it is the moral dimension that makes public opinion strong and feared.

Framing Analysis

Political scientists have long argued that policy problems do not exist in the world as social fact awaiting discovery (Coburn, 2005). Rather, they are socially constructed through interaction and negotiation. The framing analysis theory argues that framing is an incremental and negotiated process between leaders and teachers. The theory posits that school leaders are especially influential in this process, but framing is always contingent upon ability to create resonance with teachers. Debates in the policy world play an indirect role in intra-school framing activities, focusing attention, setting the terms of the debate, and providing a source of ideas, arguments, and scripts that teachers invoke, but reconfigure and recombine in context-specific ways. This is similar to Reich (2000) and his case for democracy versus economic growth.

Framing is an inevitable process of selective influence over the individual's perception of the meanings attributed to words or phrases. According to Scheufele (1999) framing defines the packaging of an element of rhetoric in such a way as to encourage certain interpretations and discourage others. Gurevich and Blumler (1990) describe eight responsibilities of the media in a democratic society insofar as political coverage is concerned. Among them are such noble and laudatory tasks as surveillance of contemporary events, identification and elaboration of key issues, providing forums for advocacy, and so forth (pp.269-289). Such cases are not uncommon in the political arena because they elicit emotional tendencies in the citizenry. For example, Kenya has been on a path toward a new political dispensation for 15 years now. The clamor for a new constitution reached fever pitch on the campaign trail in 2007 and leaders still could not agree on the format the new constitution should comport. Odinga spent the better part of

the campaign explaining ODM party's stance on *Ugutu* (devolved-federalism) that was demonized by his rivals (Kibaki's PNU) as a strong case for dividing the Nation into tribal fiefdoms (Obbo, 2007). PNU favored a traditional strain of *Majiomboism* (unitary-federalism) or better still, maintaining the status quo of a unitary centralized government. Obama was not short of controversies, either. The media 'framed' him as an outsider, more so, through insinuating that his middle name or his association with 1960's radical, William Ayers, was not "American enough" (Farnam, 2008). Henceforth, the topic of patriotism was analyzed far beyond relevance for both opposition candidates. As Lippmann would argue, the audience does not receive a complete image of the political scene; it gets a highly selective series of glimpses instead (Lippman as cited in McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

It is noteworthy to add that these notions make media unable to perform the functions of public enlightenment that democratic theory requires. Fear is solicited in the electorate, leading the proponents of framing analysis to argue that it is the media's social responsibility to provide incentives and information permitting citizens to become active participants in the political process, if only to make intelligent decisions in the voting booth.

The Media and the Message

According to Nietzsche as cited by Ansell-Pearson (1993), there are no facts, only interpretations. Interpretations emerge from perceptions. From a purely biological standpoint the senses are utilized to perceive the world around us and to help us learn about it (Kerby, 1975). Sherif and Cantril (1945) define selective perception as how we view our world to create or justify our own reality. Whereas the authors postulate that this system of framing is basically used by individuals to protect them by confirming their beliefs and interpretations, it would be interesting to investigate how the media employ this theorem to habituate political contenders as winner and loser in the eye of the electorate. It will be intriguing to find out whether presidential opinion polling sets the framework for the electorate by guising lead questions and discussion points or stimuli. Individuals select perceptions at one of two levels – low-level (perceptual vigilance) or high-level (perceptual defense) (Assael, 1985). This selection takes place after receiving stimuli and marks the beginning of the next phase in information processing, i.e., registration. It is during the registration phase that one utilizes past interpretations to help in selecting how to perceive the current stimuli. According to the selective perception theorem, during this phase of information processing, one may determine at which level the stimuli belong and, even more importantly, if it belongs to them at all. Assael argues that high-level perception, or perceptual defense, is more withstanding and long-term and acts as the baseline for interpreting "facts" as may have been presented by, for example, media analysts who break down the pre-poll data.

McLuhan sees not only the message and how it is perceived, but the medium also becomes the message (McLuhan, 1975). Nimmo and Combs (1980) state that the audience's interest needs to be aroused; the media cast political tales as stylized, familiar dramas. This leads the audience to incorporate media-created scenarios and stereotyped characters into their personal or group fantasies about the nature of the political world.

The October 23, 2006 issue of *Time* magazine ran a cover story with Obama's picture and the headline, "Why Barack Obama Could Be The Next President." In the same edition, *Time* magazine named Obama one of "the world's most influential people," and included him on a list of 20 "Leaders and Revolutionaries." These leads led political and reputed media watchdogs to ask, "What's behind the media hype" (Selepak, 2007)?

Nimmo and Combs (1980) describe in their study how candidates typically perform when they enact their parts, saying that the candidates, like the voting public, indulge in their own fantasies. In their study (1983) the two researchers describe how candidates typically perform, citing the following examples: Ronald Reagan played the "prudent leader" who would bring back old values and past glories; and Jimmy Carter used the "anti-Washington outsider" role to capture public approval. The game and the rules have not changed much because the same identifying catch phrases were still used in the 2007 Kenyan elections and 2008 U.S. elections. For Kenya, corruption, land ownership and the new constitution carried much of the day's message whereas the U.S. presidential contenders grappled with the economy, war, and a broken political dispensation in 'Washington.'

The notion of a persuasive press inference is derived from a number of closely related models of media and public opinion that have been established over time as the media being the message itself (McLuhan, 1975). Therefore, political coverage of presidential opinion polls becomes a discourse in itself to the society at large informing political players, the citizenry, and the media pundits.

Research Hypotheses

Many people seem to believe that unbalanced or biased reporting by media will directly determine who wins or loses the elections. My hypothesis is; (H₁) that there is a relationship – of difference – in how the two publications cover presidential opinion poll stories. To illustrate this difference further, the study will test a sub-hypothesis that there is a relationship on how the two publications portray presidential candidates in light of the presidential polls being covered. The study analyzes the aspects of structure, format and editing conventions of the two publications which are extremely powerful vehicles that reflect and shape the cognitive processes of their product to the audience. The study does not delve into the by-product of the coverage though inferences may be made into general effects media have had in other substantial studies in this field.

Polls have been generating media stories from campaigns and other fields of interest in the last quarter century, and only now have researchers initiated studies on their influence in strategy decisions (Winograd & Hais, 2008). In the end, the polls changed very little over the course of the campaign in successive years. Graff in his study identifies how by Labor Day, Bob Dole was behind 10 points noting that no modern

presidential candidates that far behind in the polls had won the presidency. A historical review of polls since 1936 reveals that public standings for the third week in September not only identify the eventual winner, but nearly the precise vote on Election Day (Graff, 1997, p.11).

In tandem, do the media exacerbate opinion polling reporting, therefore, giving the unfair advantage to the presidential candidate whose rating seems to be steadily improving? Do they undermine the democratic process by influencing voter behavior and election results? There are people who say opinion polls do not influence voters. One of them apparently is incumbent President Kibaki. When he addressed an Idd *baraza* (council) at Treasury Square in Mombasa on October 13th, 2007, the President said Kenyans “know what they want” and they will not be influenced by the polls (“Kibaki dismisses polls,” 2007).

However, in countries where the polls have become an established practice, Mwaura (2007) contends that election researchers, sociologists and psychologists have accumulated evidence that show they do influence election behavior. Mwaura argues that scholars have also found evidence that polls do influence political campaigns and that in such countries the evidence has been so overwhelming that major pollsters such as Gallup have begun to worry about the use of polling and its cumulative power in media to influence politics and public opinion. Mwaura’s case is just the other side of the coin as discussed earlier in this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Citing a number of studies in media and public opinion, Graber (1984) notes that in no area of public life have media effects been taken more seriously by politicians and studied more intensively by social scientist than in the area of elections. Graber concurs with Owusu (1992) that political campaign organizations spend a large chunk of their time, effort and money to attract favorable news media attention to candidates at the top levels of electoral office and when their candidates lose, the tone of media coverage or the lack of adequate media coverage, frequently is blamed. Since its inception, public opinion polls have always elicited great debates among scholars and piqued media pundits. A number of studies (e.g., Patterson, 1980; Nimmo & Combs, 1980; Robinson & Sheehan, 1983; Pinkleton, Austin & Fortman, 1998; Adleman & Schilling, 2008) have been conducted to gauge this phenomenon, tackling different angles more so, shedding light on important aspects of media coverage of presidential opinion polling that this study is interested in.

Patterson's (1980) study was based on a massive collection of two types of data – media content and voter's beliefs and attitudes toward electoral news content. Media data came from content analysis of election news in television, newspaper, and news magazine sources that voters used in Erie - Pennsylvania, and Los Angeles - California, during the 1976 presidential campaign. Patterson identifies the dominant focus of campaign coverage as reporters' use of a game schema. In this scheme, reporters evaluate candidates, polls, and events as part of a strategic competition focusing on the horse race and maneuvers the candidates are using to influence the race. His study revealed that voters seek information about issues and leader effectiveness, whereas reporters focus on

who is ahead, who is behind, and what the candidates are doing about their relative placement in the race (p. 59).

Adleman and Schilling (2008) compounded data on the systematic reporting of presidential opinion polling by the five major U.S. media networks. In their study titled “Evidence of Systematic Bias in 2008 Presidential Polling,” the researchers compared polls produced by major television networks with those produced by Gallup and Rasmussen. They found that, taken as a whole, polls produced by the networks were significantly to the left of those produced by Gallup and Rasmussen. Their research used the available data to provide a tentative ordering of the major television network polls from right to left. The order (right to left) was: FOX, CNN, NBC (which partners with the Wall Street Journal), ABC (which partners with the Washington Post), and CBS (which partners with the *New York Times*). The results appear to comport well with the commonly held informal perceptions of the political leanings of these news agencies. After comparing tracking polls produced by Gallup, Rasmussen, Hotline/FD, and the Daily KOS, the researchers found significant evidence of bias even in the poll data producers. Most notably, the Rasmussen and the Gallup polls were significantly to the right of the Daily KOS poll. A detailed analysis of the Gallup and the Rasmussen polls also suggested the likelihood of short-term bias. The researchers point out that their findings are preliminary, but given the importance of polling in America, they make a case for further research into the causes of and remedies for polling bias.

In studying network differences in public opinion coverage during the 1996 presidential campaign, Larson (1999) found that the three networks in her study (ABC, CBS, NBC), differed in important ways on how each covered the public opinion in the general presidential campaign of 1996. NBC had the most public opinion coverage and

used a greater proportion of the views of “people-on-the-street” reports compared to raw data poll reports. Notably, NBC covered the most issues in keeping with a “governing schema.” On the other hand, ABC emphasized a “games schema” more than the other networks in the study. This is evident in the topics discussed (horse race/campaign evaluations) and the extensive use of polling trend data to show the changes in relative placement of the candidates. The third network in the study was CBS. CBS’s public opinion coverage used more raw data polls than “people-on-the-street,” and this network had by far the fewest “people-on-the-street” interviews. It was largely through feature reporting that NBC distinguished itself from the other two networks. By going “Across America” and asking people to “Fix” America, NBC expanded the presence and discussion of individual members of the public in its coverage. Horse race reporting dominated poll coverage for all three networks (ABC, 79%; CBS, 63%; NBC, 64%).

When media are introduced into the equation of polity, Pinkleton, Austin, and Fortman (1998) describe a sharp contrast to public opinion of governance. The authors argue that scholars appear to acknowledge, implicitly if not explicitly, different dimensions of disaffection toward politics among the electorate. Cynicism usually is taken to refer to a lack of confidence and a feeling of distrust toward the political system including political officials and institutions (Bandura, 1986). Pinkleton et al., (1998) continue to explain that the public may be cynical, for example, about the government's ability to effect positive social change regarding poverty or crime, yet these are the very dimension the pollsters present to respondents to answer in presidential opinion polls. Augmenting this claim, Cappella and Jamieson (1997) write that cynicism has been blamed for reducing election involvement, public affairs, media use, and voter turnout.

While investigating relationships of media use and political disaffection to political efficacy and voting behavior, Pinkleton, Austin, and Fortman (1998) set their 4th and 5th hypotheses as; “active use of the media will be positively associated with reported likelihood of voting,” and “perceptions of political efficacy will be positively associated with reported likelihood of voting” respectively. Their study was conducted during the week prior to the November 1994 election. Telephone interviews were conducted with a random sample of 582 registered voters living in Washington State. A response rate of 51% was obtained. Their survey instrument consisted primarily of Likert scale. Items designed to measure different aspects of political disaffection (cynicism and negativism); election information seeking; external (self) efficacy; and different political behaviors. Among the primary questions included: (a) whether the respondent had voted in the last election (yes/no); (b) whether the respondent was registered to vote (yes/no); and (c) the percent likelihood reported by the respondent of voting in the upcoming election (0-100 percent) (Pinkleton et al., 1998). Their findings were that media use is positively related to voting behavior, as predicted by Hypothesis 4. Finally, as predicted by Hypothesis 5, they found that efficacy is positively related to voting behavior and unrelated to cynicism and negativism. Discussed further, the researchers noted that neither negativism toward campaign coverage nor cynicism toward political institutions directly reduced voting behavior (par. 15). Instead, voter turnout was associated with perceived self efficacy and active media use. This illustrates the importance of active media use as a catalyst for political decision making and participation. Voters, in their study, actively used the media in their decision making, and their research data suggest that this use may have been driven to some extent by their levels of political disaffection. Media use also acted as a potential counter balance to political disaffection by

contributing positively to the development of perceived political self efficacy, even though cynicism contributed negatively (Pinkleton et al., 1998). The researchers conclude their study by suggesting further investigation in the field of presidential opinion polls and media use to better understand the complex relationship among political disaffection, media use and political participation. They recommended that future research should more often treat media use as an outcome of individual voter motivations rather than as their cause. According to Wright (1960) functional analysis, to a great extent, is concerned with examining those consequences of social phenomena which affect the normal operation, adaptation, or adjustment of a given system. Therefore, by studying the functions of media in opinion polling, one may avoid the cause/effect or effect/cause conundrum. Coverage of presidential opinion polling falls under what Merton (1957) classifies as one of the “patterned and repetitive items.” He places the media’s function in elections as a cog among social roles, institutional patterns, social norms, and group organization being social structure devices for social control (pp. 32-33).

Page, Shapiro, and Demsey (1987) having examined “one survey to another,” say that news commentators (perhaps reflecting elite national consensus or media biases) have a very strong positive impact, as do experts on citizens’ decisions. The authors cite Page and Shapiro (1983a) who ascertained that recent evidence has indicated that public opinion does in fact have substantial proximate effects upon policy-making. Furthermore, this accounts for the high proportion of aggregate changes in citizens’ political preferences. By examining their finds, this research is not interested in the effects media has had on the electorate so far, but how they have continually prepped the opinion polling landscape to the situation at hand. The three researchers set out to answer the age

old communication theory query as to what moves public opinion. Among the questions they posit are: Does the public react directly to political objectives/events, so that opinion is directly autonomous, or; Do experts/enlightened political leaders educate the public with helpful new information? Do the mass media report relevant information accurately or inaccurately? Page et al. (1987) consider media preferences among alternative public policies to be primarily instrumental. That is, policies are judged in terms of expected costs and benefits for the individual and for his or her family, friends, favored groups, and the nation or world as a whole. The researchers are keenly aware of the curious notion that the contents of the mass media have minimal effect as Noelle-Neumann (1980) posited in her work. The cause/effect debate remains persistent despite findings of an agenda-setting role on perceptions of what is important, as McCombs and Shaw posit in their theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Thus the media's interest in what the electorate is interested in is established as the core factor that drives presidential opinion polling.

With all the evidence presented, it may seem increasingly hard for newspeople to deny that they ignore the issues. But there are proponents who can cite statistics from researchers who have analyzed the content of election news reports to support the antithesis. News organizations can point out that presidential candidates hardly lack an alternative means of reaching voters: "They spend millions of dollars on sophisticated advertising that presents unfiltered messages to the public" (Tannenbaum & Leslie, 1983). In electoral media coverage, both polls and interviews express public opinion in the news. However, poll reports are devoid of actual people, since individual responses are lost in the aggregate and oversimplified by analysis (Sonck & Loosveldt, 2007). In

other words, polls "domesticate" public opinion and distance citizens from their own opinions (Ginsberg, 1989).

In their study, Robinson and Sheehan (1980) compared how the networks and the news wires cover campaign stories. The authors found that network news programming in the U.S. is twice as "presidential" in its news agenda as the national wire, and more than twice as "political"- twice as heavily focused on horse racing, as opposed to real issues about political leaders. While alluding to food, the authors could not conclude whether changing media coverage messages would have a different impact on those who consume them. Their findings show that if political information is subtle with regard to the specific portrayals of candidates in particular ways – "if we are what we eat" – then "we want to know as much as we can about the diet of media coverage we have abandoned and the diet of news we have come to adopt" (p. 148).

Some researchers speculate that during the presidential debates, mostly conducted by media, the post-debate analysis is more significant in shaping voter opinions about who "won" than the debate content itself. Patterson (1984) concluded that reporters' emphasis on Gerald Ford's Eastern Europe gaffe influenced people's perception of the debate outcome; where 53 percent of those interviewed within 12 hours of the debate said Ford had "won," while 58 percent of those interviewed 12–48 hours after the debate said Carter won. This use of victory-related concepts implied a direct relation between performance in the debates and electoral fortune. Where no such relation necessarily exists, Nimmo and Combs (1980) wrote that game schema is heavily engaged adding that the goal, after all, is to present a discussion of the issues and the men themselves. Else wise, it is "not to provoke a discussion of how to win a debate" (p.161).

One key question that researchers in this subject area are asking is: How are the statistics observed in media usage prompting political parties and organizations or the electorate to use media differently? Others sought to answer rhetorics such as: Do the survey experiments show that the "Information Age" – with more media attention toward opinion polling – actually creating disparity in political knowledge to the extent that it is affecting voter turnout (Patterson, 2005)? Within the past decade, the field of public opinion research has been transformed to enormous possibilities. New sampling technique used in market research has been exploited by the American businesses as well as all other disciplines world over, according to Merriam (1984).

Nascent as the field of presidential opinion poll research is, scholars have more often questioned the significance of public opinion polling, among them Kent, Harrison, and Taylor (2006). The authors posit that an opinion polls' original intent would be as a tool for informing public policy but has evolved to its current application as news and entertainment in its own right. In his journal article, Herbst (1990) assesses public opinion in the 1930s-1940s, emphasizing the retrospective views of journalists. According to Herbst, during the 1930s and 1940s, there was a coexistence of both informational techniques for understanding public opinion (letters to the editor, competing news sources, interviews with leaders, etc.) and the development of today's more formal strategies of public opinion measurement using random sampling including statistical predictions (p.49).

Hadley Cantril, Elmo Roper, and George Gallup emerged as the fathers of modern public opinion polling during the 1930s and 1940s (Ginsberg, 1989). Second generation polling theorist Albert Cantril, sees the philosophical underpinnings of

the fathers of polling to have included a belief that polling was a way to convey the popular will of the people to government (Noelle-Neumann, 1995). Thus, newspapers and magazine publishers were quick to sense the news value of reports on what the nation thinks (Cantril, 1991).

Today, polls themselves have become news. Perhaps not as clear to news audiences is the specific rules created to ensure that when journalists report the data from polls, they interpret the data accurately (Steger, 2000). Kent, Harrison, and Taylor (2006) further states that the growth of media use of opinion polls over the years forces the media to carry some responsibility for the way polls have evolved. No doubt, political polling has become a staple of media coverage (p. 57).

More people trust the media than their governments, especially in developing countries, according to a ten-country opinion poll from The Media Center (2006). The data presented show that the media are trusted by an average of 61 percent compared to 52 percent for governments across the countries polled. But the U.S. bucked the trend — with government ahead of media on trust (67% vs. 59%) along with Britain (51% vs. 47%)

Manza, Cook, and Page (2002) identify one vital question in their analysis of public opinion, “Are the views of the public manipulated or used strategically by political mandarins, NGOs and established institutions for economic gains?” While positing their opinion, they speculate whether some view public opinion as creating waves that move the ship of state; others see the waves of public opinion as buffeted by the forces

generated by politicians or other elites; still others are concerned with the instruments used to gauge it in the first place.

A recent United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report presented by Ceasar Handa argues that bad governance is the most important cause of poverty in developing countries (Handa, 2007). Handa reports that most people's examples of bad government would include countries in which public opinion is not heard and has little influence. Similarly, a country where unpopular governments “win” grossly unfair elections or steal them through fraudulent vote counting is repugnant. The report equates a populace without instruments of airing their opinion as governance tools with instability and an inefficient public sector that does not enjoy the confidence of the population. Consequently, it is virtually impossible to uphold the basic rules of political competition on which democracy depends.

In today's globalized world, good governance, according to Ake (1996), cannot be implemented within a closed system. Rather, it is an open process in which all countries in the world are increasingly obliged to adhere to as an emerging set of universal laws. The significant contribution made by the media in the creation, nourishment and development of democracy and good governance is noble, and as Owusu (1992) states, the desire for greater openness and accountability is buttressed by a new awareness of the linkages between economic development and democratic practices.

Developing countries, among them Kenya, have adopted this system of measuring popularity. Opinion polling featured prominently in the 2007 General Election (Handa, 2007). Presidential opinion polls reported in the *Nation*, Kenya's leading national

newsprint, and the *Times* have taken it upon themselves to inform their audiences on the ratings of their leaders in election contests. As testimony to the importance of the issue, the past five years have witnessed the publication of several scholarly texts that describe and critique the American news media's use of information gathered via election surveys (Sonck & Loosveldt, 2007), particularly in presidential elections as presented thus far by this study.

The U.S. First Amendment firmly entrenches freedom of the press whereas, in Kenya, the Fourth Estate merely scrounges for survival and independence (Hachten, 1993). Barely before the end of President Kibaki's first tenure in office, government agencies attacked and pillaged the Standard Media Group offices, and had its day's newspaper burned fresh off the press whereas the groups' affiliate TV station went off air for two hours in queer circumstances (Owuor, n.d.). The government later on and to date defends its motif as being in the interest of national security, a typical line from a tyrant.

Political liberation, then, is perceived as not only contributing to a people's yearning for participation, representativeness, equality, and accountability, but also to their ability to deal more effectively with the economic problems facing them (Ake, 1992). In a quest to measure the relationship between satisfaction with democracy and satisfaction with adjustment, *Afrobarometer* reports that citizen support for democracy increases if they are conceived in procedural rather than substantive terms (*Afrobarometer*, n.d.). The *Afrobarometer* study illustrates how, for instance, 81 percent of those who see democracy as "government by the people" name it as the best form of regime. The comparable figure is 73 percent for those who define democracy as "social

and economic development.” This percentage difference is small but substantially significant.

A core belief under investigation in this study is whether the two news publications are concerned or aware that they are not working hard enough to affect the citizenry's opinions and "judgments" in a useful and positive manner. Yankelovich (1991), in his book *Coming to Public Judgment: Making Democracy Work in a Complex World*, argues the media generally ignore the ways in which the present state of affairs hinders, rather than serves, the workings of democracy in the United States. Ochieng' (2007), a columnist for the *Nation* did not stop short of telling it to the media as it is. He notes that up market newspapers are hemmed in only by “unavoidable objective difficulties and endemic subjective faults,” though they try their best in their pages to mirror their society’s merits and demerits accurately. He adds that whatever the political leaning of each editor, there is no way that he or she can ignore “Mr. Steadman” (pollsters). Since news is the media’s stock-in-trade, nothing can be more newsworthy than polling figures just a few weeks from the General Elections. A commercial newspaper ignores these figures only at its own peril.

Opinion polls in Kenya have been a feature of Kenya politics since 1997 when Strategic Research conducted the first pre-election polls (Kiai, 2007). According to Handa (2007), then as now, criticisms and praises were directed at the poll firms depending on which side of the political divide the polls seemed to favor. No qualms were raised on the manner of reportage by media pundits. Issues have been raised by politicians and academicians alike covering sometimes substantive scientific matters but

also trivialities such as the ethnic or racial background of the pollsters. Such are matters that any pollster would find silly (Mutua, 2007).

Bratton, Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi (2004) argue that Africa is a latecomer to globalization. Even more, African countries have followed rather than led the reform movements that installed democratic and market systems around the world. This has generally subjected African countries to considerable external pressure to liberalize. Apart from this, one should not automatically conclude, however, that the impetus for reform originated from outside Africa rather than from within (Osewe, 2009).

Measures used to gauge public attitudes in Africa have been seen in *Afrobarometer* that employ an original set of data from large-scale, cross national surveys. Their technique is designed systematically to map mass attitudes toward democracy, markets, and civil societies, thereby tracking the evolution of such attitudes toward democratic practices. Bratton, Mattes, and Gyimah-Boadi (2004) report on polls conducted between July 1999 and February 2000 in Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. Their study involved face to face interviews by trained interviewers in local languages with a total of 10,398 respondents using the questionnaire instrument that contained a core of common items. The study indicates that the level of public awareness of democracy ranges from a low of 65 percent in Namibia to a high of 88 percent in Malawi. The authors speculate that the diffusion of political ideas occurs more easily in geographically small countries with high population densities than in large, under populated countries. Given the fact that neither Namibia is highly urbanized or Malawi is densely populated, a new factor that probably helps to increase awareness of democracy

in Ghana (72 percent aware, 36 percent urban) and Nigeria (77 percent aware, 43 percent urban) is literacy level. Arguably, education undoubtedly enables awareness.

In general, voters in Namibia felt they were much better off (34 percent) given the government had done very well in fulfilling its promises. The positive rating for the Namibian government may be partly explained in terms of its newness with the South West African People's Organization coming to power in 1990 from exile (Johnson, 2000).

These issues do not just affect the American or African political process. The Canadian government, for example, recently issued a report on the role of election polls, and opinion polling for that matter, in Canadian news media. The findings suggest that the media relied too heavily on polls to chart the dynamics of the campaign, practicing horse-race journalism at the expense of coverage of substantive campaign issues (Sonck & Loosveldt, 2007). The report noted that polls were typically treated as matters of fact, with their limitations rarely discussed. Seldom was more than scant methodological information provided for polls, inhibiting the public's ability to evaluate their results.

According to Esomar (World Association for Research Professionals) (2005), many other democratic nations in Europe and elsewhere (e.g., Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Great Britain, and South Korea) have placed legal restrictions on their news media to prohibit the release of "horse-race" survey findings -- i.e., those that report which candidate will be the "likely winner" -- within certain time periods prior to and including the country's voting day. There have been legislative attempts during the past

two decades in the United States to limit the release of this type of news, but all have failed the test of constitutionality (Gans, 2003).

This study posits that the two papers' opinion poll reporting of game schema versus governing schema is the main difference in the two publications. The vital question to be answered would then be, "Do the editors and authors of the *New York Times* and the *Nation* share a proactive and positive perspective toward a specific political proclivity?" This researcher will analyze the manner in which presidential opinion polling information is used and disseminated as news, and if so, how it too often falls short of its potential for good; or in some instances, how it hinders the political process in how it portrays presidential candidates/stories.

The broadcast and print media have responded to the public's desire for Internet news and entertainment and have migrated content from broadcast and print sources to the World Wide Web (He & Zhu, 2002). The use of public opinion polls has changed over the last 100 years (Herbst, 1990). The history of the poll has been traced by political scientists and communication scholars since its inception (Nerone, 1994). Modern opinion polling in the 1900s was both optimistic and cautious according to poll expert Gallup (Gallup & Rae, 1940). Nerone identified A. Lawrence Lowell's 1913 book, *Public Opinion and Popular Government*, as the "first major book on public opinion by an American" (p. 54). This book describes the balance between a belief in the common person and a need for experts to guide decision making, thus its importance in the democratization process.

Many countries have banned the publication of political opinion polls in the run-up to elections (Esomar, 2005). The main reason Kauffman (2007) argues, is to protect

the dignity of the democratic electoral process to prevent the polls from influencing voters. The ban ranges from 24 hours to 30 days before the polling day. According to the data compiled by Esomar, Israel has an embargo of one day, Canada two, Macedonia five, Mexico seven, Switzerland 10, Slovakia 14, Greece 15, South Korea 23 and Luxemburg 30. For Kenya, the *Nation* set its own policy that no new opinion polls will be published a week to Election Day. There are also countries such as China that do not allow political opinion polls at all, let alone their publication. Banning the publication and reporting of poll findings raises important issues about rights, including freedom of expression and of the press (Sonck & Loosveldt, 2007). Publishing of poll results is clearly an integral part of press freedom and the basis for modern democratic process which allows citizens to make themselves heard (Selnow, 1991). However, many nations, including Western democracies, embargo the publication of opinion polls in the run-up to elections to shield voters from undue influence as noted above.

A survey by Esomar and Wapor (World Association for Public Opinion Research) report in 2003 showed a 30% upsurge in opinion polling countries. Nearly half of those surveyed – having some kind of restriction on the publication of political polls. “This may be just the tip of the iceberg,” said the survey, which studied 56 countries, including two from Africa – Nigeria and South Africa. The implication of this statement is that many more countries than those surveyed may have restrictions on the pre-election publication of poll findings. In addition, there are many countries which do not have statutory restrictions because they do not need them as they control the media. The Esomar-Wapor survey reveals that 16 of the 30 countries that have pre-elections blackouts in political polls, the results are not allowed to be published at least five days

before an election. However, in 15 of the 56 countries surveyed, restrictions have been liberalized, or even lifted since a survey in 1996. In South Africa, for example, poll results can now be freely published up to the day before an election. Notably, these laws did not prohibit actual opinion polling but try to shield voters from knowing the results. Over the years the law has become more and more inefficient, as people could access poll results from foreign sources and through the Internet (Boczkowski, 2004).

In Kenya, the governments hand in controlling media content has never ceased (Kiai, 2007). The constitutionality of the law has also been questioned such as the passing of the ICT Bill (also known as the Kenya Amendment Media Bill 2008) which has drawn worldwide outrage. Numerous petitions requesting the president not to assent to such a ‘draconian’ law (“Leaders tell Kibaki,” 2009) fell on deaf ears. The Bill was signed into law and published in the official gazette notice. The outcry was that a clause in the Bill would vest the information minister with powers to raid, confiscate and shut down media houses suspected to be about to publish/air material that may prejudice peace and harmony in the nation in times of a state of emergency (Kenya Media Bill, 2007). Concern mainly laid in the fact that “times of state of emergency” was never defined and would rest on an individual’s whims (Osewe, 2009).

The attitude of the Kibaki administration toward media came to a head when in the middle of announcing flawed election results, it banned live broadcasting, and later formed a task force to investigate the conduct of media in elections and post-election violence and threatened to withdraw its support for the Media Council of Kenya (Mbeke, 2008).

The British Broadcasting Corporation has internal guidelines and rules on how to report polls, and most British papers do not publish poll findings on the eve of elections (Sonck & Loosveldt, 2007). The BBC rules requires editors not to lead a program or bulletin with the results of a voting intention or to rely on the interpretation given to a poll result by the organization which commissioned it. The BBC never uses language which gives greater credibility to the polls than they merit (*MediaCenter*, 2008).

Media and Democracy in the U.S.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, as interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court, provides the strongest guarantee of free speech in the world, according to *Anti Essay* (2008). The essay notes that unlike people in many other countries, Americans are free to criticize each other and government officials in language both fair and audacious. Americans are very proud (some foreigners would say inordinately) of their right to free speech; most of them feel that it encourages a strong free press which regularly cleanses corruption out of American government (e.g., Watergate), and thus, ensures its unique stability (McChesney, 2004).

In tracing the history of a free press in the U.S., Winograd & Hais (2008) say that in the early years of the republic, when the U.S. system of checks and balances was devised, a daring journalistic community had already become established. A bold and scrappy press was an influential force in denouncing the rule of an English King and led Colonial America into its revolution against the British Empire (p.13). With journalistic freedom protected in the 1791 Bill of Rights, the press became an assertive force during the first decades of nationhood (Buchanan, 2006).

By the 1920s, liberal magazines like the *Nation* and the *New Republic* began campaigning for accuracy and balance in the newsroom, and the American Society of Newspaper Editors was formed (Wilkins & Brennen, 2004). It was also during this time that the government started regulating the movie and broadcasting industries, thus instilling a fear in newspapers that regulation could hit them if the necessity arose. In order to make the industry seem more professional and without need for regulation, media organizations began adopting codes in the early 1920s (Blanchard, 1998). If editors could “rationalize” and “idealize” their profession by writing codes of ethics, it could strengthen an industry that was mostly identified as a mouthpiece for melodramatic gossip and war promotion (Wilkins & Brennen, 2004, p. 299).

The U.S. media today is frequently known as the Fourth Estate, an appellation that suggests the press shares equal stature with the three branches of government created by the Constitution. Although the press is not established as an institution by the U.S. constitution, today many citizens believe that it constitutes a branch of U.S. government (Miller & Lutz, 1979). Numerous debates still arise regarding the press freedom to act as a watchdog of the American government. Several critical court cases have been landmarks in establishing the rights of the press to pursue information (Rubin, 1977). Reporting presidential opinion poll data in campaign seasons may be a case of the media acting out their long established role in ‘hot pursuit’ of information for its citizens.

Many Americans see newspapers, magazines, radio and especially television as the primary power brokers in politics (Scheufele, 1999). It is the media, Scheufele asserts, that decide which candidates are to be taken seriously, how much and what kind of attention they receive, or how their stands on the issues are publicized. “The medium,” as communications and culture guru, Marshall McLuhan proclaimed, “is the message.”

In their study of the history of newspaper, Miller and Lutz (1979) note that a newspaper that is really worthy of the name is a reflection of both the people who produce it and the people for whom it is produced. This makes it a microcosm of the village, or city, or country that is responsible for its existence. Newspapers have ultimately played a significant role in the lives of the citizens and their continued evolution is seeing them venture into new fields, among them, electioneering (McChesney, 2004).

With their new found niche in opinion polling, this study seeks to draw a comparative analysis of two major newspapers in their niches; i.e., the *New York Times* and the *Nation*. It will examine how they utilize opinion polls, specifically, presidential opinion polls. The study so far has delved into the dynamics involved in presenting past presidential opinion polls in other countries. One can already mark the similarities and differences in how media in other countries handle publication of presidential opinion polls. In a democracy, news is the main source of election information (Robinson & Levy, 1986). Election news must be fair and balanced toward candidates and parties in order to provide complete and unbiased information to facilitate voter decisions (Steger, 2000). Therefore, fairness and balance are the basic requirements that election news reporting must fulfill, while political bias is a violation of journalistic ethics (Joslyn, 1984).

In castigating capitalistic trend in a mature democracy, Reich (2000) points out that there is irony and uncertainty that the third millennium brings. The author notes that at the onset, the world witnessed the fall of communism/socialism and left capitalism and liberal democracy the undisputed victors of the Twentieth century. Ostensibly, the contest between competing economic systems and worldviews or “ideologies” – a contest that

cost millions in lives and dollars, pounds, yen, marks, shilling, and so on – had come to an end. Yet, the author also argues that despite the triumph of the victors, there is little to celebrate. Capitalism – global capitalism – continues to be in crisis, regardless of claims to the contrary, and liberal democracy is increasingly seen as a sham. This is so because many citizens in the established democracies have lost faith in politicians and government bureaucracies (Hans-Dieter & Dieter 1995).

To Reich (2000), free elections have become little more than media sideshows, with sound bites and hard cash the main determinants of election outcomes, to say nothing of the recent fiasco in Kenyan, Zimbabwean (cited earlier in this research) and U.S. 2000/2004 presidential elections mired in conspiracy theories and mystique. Nevertheless, the aim of every democracy is, or ought to be, first to obtain for rulers men who possess the most wisdom to discern, and “most virtue to pursue the common good” of the society; and in the next place, to take the “most effectual precautions for keeping them virtuous” whilst they continue to hold their public trust (Kesavan, 2004). Therefore, according to Kovach and Rosentiel (2001), “what the newspeople should know and the public should expect” is a factual, untainted presentation of electoral events because amidst the left and right wings, there exists non-partisan middle ground, and the U.S. media are maturing toward that goal.

Media Development in Kenya

Hatchen (1993) documents that the first African-owned newspaper in Kenya was *Mwigwithania* (“work and pray” in Kikuyu ethnic language), published in 1928 by the Kikuyu Central Association. It was edited by a young man named Johnstone Kamau, later to be known as Jomo Kenyatta, independent Kenya’s first president. In his book,

The Growth of Media in the Third World: African Failures, Asian Success, Hatchen illustrates how media devolved to their current state in Kenya saying that by the time of the Mau Mau Emergency (liberation struggle) in the 1940s, there were about 40 African vernacular papers. Eventually almost all were suppressed by the colonial British authorities.

The 1950s saw the process of decolonization begin and after independence, the new situation implied drastic change in the political agenda and a new phase in African political thought dawned (Frantz, 1967). It can now be observed that instead of the rather simple issue of political independence, a multitude of problems related to the new order appeared on the agenda, such as nation building, national unity, the role of opposition parties, the true nature of the media, and neo-colonial relations. Mwase (1970) posits that the totality of the colonial system conditioned both the limited scope of political activity and the vocabulary with which ideas were formulated, preventing the creation of a complete political as well as intellectual counter-position.

Today, citizen access to regional and international media sources is not restricted by state authorities making, Kenya a haven of all international media (Burrowes, 2004). The Kenya News Agency (KNA) is government controlled. There are no independent news agencies that gather and disseminate news as their core commercial business in most developing democracies, according to Sommerland (1966). Sommerland decries a dire situation in most emerging democracies describing how newspapers are born in idealism and live in frustration. He identifies quite a number of non-commercial agencies such as the Inter Press Service (IPS) and Africa.com that are promising. The two news agencies services have prospered today and are regarded as fairly adequate. Many local dailies regularly use their stories.

Burrowes (2004) warns how government's indirect influence is more serious. He states that going on past experience, some potential advertisers seem to be afraid of being seen to do business with certain media that are perceived as critical of government. In Kenya, meager political developments have been realized in terms of Media Freedom since 1992, when the first multi-party elections were held. The government has enhanced the space for expression despite the fact that post-independence years had their "dangerous days" (Mutua, 2007). In Moi's regime (1978-2002) when Kenya was a *defacto* (one party) state, alternative media were launched; cartoons and political caricature were somewhat acceptable (Kiai, 2007).

The Kenyan Constitution may have guarantees for freedom of expression (Chap. V, Sec. 71) but the reality on the ground is different. There are various statutes in place that affect the free press (Media Bill, Sec 5A). According to Mutua (2007), who espouses that a free media is a necessity for democracy, the media have also been candid in their exposure of atrocities and corruption in Kenya. Recent developments in the context of political reforms have hardly ameliorated the situation. The Books and Newspaper Act (chap.III) was revised in the run-up to the 2002 general elections. The new Act, now law, introduced harsher conditions for the registration of newspapers, which include raising the security bond to be deposited from 10,000 to an amount of 1 million Kenyan shillings with a bank guarantee. The Law further stipulates elaborate security and administrative processing and the bonding of vendors (Sec. 5B).

But even with a "new" government, in office since 2003, freedom of expression is still limited by official action and legal provisions (Kenya Constitution, Sec.5A). It is no surprise that libel cases against media houses are on the rise, with figures going into the hundreds and causing editors to ask themselves whether it is really worth publishing

certain stories (Owusu, 1992). The effect is that the level and quality of investigative journalism has declined, delimiting news sources and making publication of facts such as released opinion polls fodder for media.

The situation is worsened by the fact that there are too many common interests between media owners and the government (Osewe, 2009). Now that certain media houses are able to do business with the State – a situation that was not possible before – the danger that Burrowes (2004) points out is that they put their business interests above their responsibilities to the public. As a result they do not create the open space citizens would like to have in the media. To this, Burrowes infers that civil society is left with fewer opportunities for expression, and those who can afford it have to buy space in the newspapers or purchase air time. In an apparent stereotype, Miller and Lutz (1979) accuse media houses of having a tradition of seeking to be “politically correct” with existing regimes and changing political re-alignments at the expense of the public good.

In a hearing into the post election violence which shredded the fabric of Kenya’s fledgling democracy, the Commission of Inquiry into the Post Election Violence (*CIPEV*¹) was informed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Information, Dr. Bitange Ndemo, that the media was as culpable as the politicians, individuals, and institutions who stirred negativity into the electorate. The result was a blood-bath when an incongruous presidential winner was declared. In his testimony, Dr. Ndemo is quoted by the *CIPEV* as saying media houses took sides in the run up to the 2007 election, that there were complaints charging “most editors as having been compromised”, and that

¹ The Waki Report charges that Kenyan agencies “failed institutionally” to contain and prevent the 2007 post-election violence. Justice Philip Waki, of the Kenya Court of Appeal, chaired the Commission.

“some media houses became sensational and unnecessarily alarmed their audiences and inflamed their passions” (p. 296).

An Independent Review Commission (IREC²) on the Presidential elections later dubbed as the Kriegler Report (2008) concluded that “the conduct of the 2007 elections was so materially defective that it is impossible -- for IREC or anyone else -- to establish true or reliable results for the presidential and parliamentary elections.” The report says: “Some media houses, unfortunately, did not observe media ethics and standards. They did this understandably to win a larger audience for commercial purposes or for prestige. As a consequence, they ended up not helping Kenyans but “added fuel to the flames.”

A United Nations Development Program funded analysis by Strategic Research presented by Handa³ (2007) shed great light on the Kenyan media coverage landscape just before the general election. Conducted in October, two months before the General Election, the study found that President Kibaki (incumbent) benefited from the most favorable reporting, with television in particular projecting him in a very positive manner. But despite one shameful exception, the advantage Mr. Kibaki enjoyed over Odinga was not overwhelming, and reflected an improvement over the previous month’s coverage according to Strategic Research. The analysis showed also that a secondary beneficiary of the election coverage was the third ranked presidential hopeful, Kalonzo Musyoka, who despite his much smaller support base, frequently garnered almost as much attention as

² The Kriegler Report censured the conduct of some media houses. Chaired by retired South African Judge Johann Kriegler, the Commission investigated the conduct of Kenya’s 2007 General Election.

³ Caesar Handa is chief executive of Strategic Research. His company was contracted by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to monitor the media coverage given to the main political parties in Kenya in the run-up to the 27th December presidential and parliamentary elections.

Odinga (opposition) did. Odinga had emerged “the favorite presidential hopeful in all opinion polls conducted so far.”

Media, Polls, Democracy

The mass-production process is journalism’s everyday reality and its major operational problem of democratization (Gans, 2003). Its theory of democracy is its central political ideal. Gans says as a theory, it is not written down, and as an ideal, it is so widely accepted and, thus, taken for granted that it is rarely discussed. The term democracy itself is only rarely mentioned in the indices of the major journalism texts (p.55). In theory it is assumed that the stories journalists consider newsworthy will turn the people into informed citizens. The media are not very curious about how the news audience becomes informed citizenry, but merely supplying them with information does not make them into informed citizens (UNRISD, Data file).

Other scholars also theorize that media have the potential of being a democratizing tool (Gans, 2003). The theories argue that once citizens are informed, they will feel compelled to participate politically, but it is often not the case. Although audience studies (Pinkleton et al., 1998) indicate that informed people are more likely to participate politically than others, their participation, whether in voting or organizational activity, results from their higher levels of income and education (Gans, 2003, 55). Scholars are still debating what people actually learn from the news. One study concludes that citizens are poorly informed about important public officials and civic facts (Delli-Carpini & Keeter, 1996), while an earlier one indicates that they know enough about the

relevant political facts and issues to make the most of the decisions required of them as citizens (Neuman, Just & Crigler, 1992).

Kiai (2007) observes that in Kenya, dailies cost between 35 and 40 shillings (about 50¢ U.S.) while the average income is about Ksh.16, 000 (Kenya shillings) per person. Readership is also limited by the literacy level, which stands at 76%, but there is usually at least one person in a household who is able to read. The circulation of leading newspapers is estimated at 235,000 copies (*The Nation* 160,000, *The Standard* 75,000), with between 15 and 20 readers per copy. These figures translate into some 4 million readers of dailies in Kenya whose total population including children is 39 million (CIA, July 2009 est.). According to the same report, the Internet is not widely accessible with an estimated total of 400,000 users, especially young people. It is important to note that Internet service is not available in rural areas due to a lack of electricity.

In the U.S., with exit polling data and vote projection analyses in hand, the news media call elections. The process, according to Jamieson and Waldman (2003) is done with exit polling data. With vote projection analyses in hand, the news media call elections through an intricate established system (America.gov, Data file). According to Kauffman (2008) in 2003, ABC News, the Associated Press (AP), CBS News, CNN, Fox News and NBC News created the National Election Pool (NEP), which is the primary source of data behind media predictions on election night. The organization relies on analysts from Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International to conduct and analyze exit polls and make projections. The Edison and Mitofsky analysts, under the supervision of NEP member representatives, assess the exit poll data, make predictions and provide all of their results to the subscribing networks, starting at 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. These results are sequestered for most of the day to prevent any premature release of

information. *America.gov* reports that much of the internal mechanism for network decision-making is a closely held secret because of the fierce competition among networks.

In the developing world, the media is yet to claim its own authority. While covering the 2009 election campaign in Malawi, Mr John Kufuor, head of the Commonwealth mission and Ghana's former president, said in an interim report on the just concluded general election that there was no level playing field for all parties ("Malawi elections credibility in doubt," 2009). Reuters reports of the heavy handedness the incumbent had over other candidates in Malawi – the overwhelming impact of the exploitation of the incumbency advantage, especially the unashamed bias of the state TV and radio – created a markedly unlevel playing field, tarnishing the otherwise democratic character of the campaign ("Malawi president wins, opposition cries foul," 2009).

Is African democracy broken and can there be a solution? Hachten (1993) argues that scholars and agents of democracy tend to focus on ideologically derived answers to the problem that bears no relation to the nature of the problem. It is extremely important to bear this obvious but often neglected point in mind because one of the difficulties of the democratic literature in Kenya is the relation of the problem and solution. Often, problem is unclear, and if so, it cannot have a solution (Hans-Dieter & Dieter 1995). Most African leaders make their leadership styles sacrosanct, deny the masses land holdings, and attempt to turn their republics to empires overnight just like ancient SPQR (Latin initialism for *Senatus Populusque Romanus* meaning "The Senate and the People of Rome") (AncientHistory, n.d.).

METHODOLOGY

Content analysis will be employed in this research, it being the most accepted systematic quantitative analysis of communication content including verbal, visual, print, and electronic communication. Content analysis has been used over the years in a wide array of subject areas in the humanities and social sciences. Krippendorff (1980) defines content analysis as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or data) to a context of their use." That is, it refers to methods for inferring meaning from the text. By analyzing words rather than numbers, this research, in effect, will be using computer searches of key words that will formulate a coded qualitative data fit for analysis. Whereas the op-ed writers and reporters will be analyzing the opinions of the public regarding the presidential race, this study will analyze the manner in which they treat the presidential opinion poll data qualitatively as well as the portrayal of the candidates in the race for presidency. Johnson (1991) in his book, *Public Choice*, asserts that there can be no national will, agenda, or goals apart from the preferences of individuals comprising the nation. He posits that an important task of any democracy is finding an efficient means of transferring the preferences of individual citizens into a single, collective preference and a national program. Although voters have little incentive to vote and to obtain knowledge about issues and candidates, presidential opinion polling is just one among the acceptable alternatives to counting the preferences of those individuals who do vote (p.2). This study seeks to compare the presidential opinion polls discussed in the *New York Times* and the *Nation* newspapers. Careful categories of how the editors, op-ed reporters, political commentators, and letters to the editor portray the

incumbent versus the opposition will be used to gauge bias as negative, positive, or neutral.

Sherif (1967) counsels that “no procedure and no technique for data collection are powerful or effective in their own right.” Therefore, articles will be identified for analysis based on the day presidential opinion polls were released and all stories including commentaries and pictogram slugs in the newsprints will be identified in each publication and graded. This means that of the three months of newsprint available from each publication, only presidential opinion poll related stories will be scrutinized. To identify which day’s paper to scrutinize, each publication will be chosen not based on a systematic configuration of the week, but on the whole array of newspapers off the press from the 1st day to the 90th day prior to Election Day.

Thelwal (2006) comments that a critical but very difficult issue in comprehensive content analysis is how to interpret the results of social science and link it to comparative analyses. He argues that the dynamic nature of newsprint, its lack of standardized quality control, and the online proliferation of copying and imitation mean that methodologies operating within a highly positivist, quantitative framework are somewhat complex and ineffective especially for online news content. To a lesser extent, this may be true of this study due to slight lingual differences. Conversely, the sheer geopolitical variety that predisposes the two publications makes application of qualitative methodologies and pure reason very problematic to large-scale studies such as this.

The time frame for the publications has been set at 90 days before the General Elections exercise. For the *New York Times*, this will be the Fall of 2008. For the *Nation*,

this will be the Fall of 2007. The research will not take an equal number of stories from each publication. The number of cases will be taken counting only presidential poll related stories that have qualified and met set parameters as a case in this subject matter. It may mean that more articles may be presented in any one issue of either publication, but a rationalization will be made to measure the dominant attitude of the entire issue for comparison and analysis.

Nevertheless, past analyses have shown that there may be inherent anomalies in the data. For example, on November 5, 2004, the *Times* published a report that suggested problems of skewed surveying data that led it to withdraw an article it had based its article on, and did not mention the data released by the pollster was preliminary. According to this report (Rutenberg, 2004), the pollster's documentation had theorized that their poll results more frequently overstated support for John Kerry than for President Bush because the Democratic nominee's supporters were more open to pollsters. But the newspapers and the networks could have avoided any major missteps that might have been caused by the flawed data. The episode struck an alarmed tone over the way the information was disseminated without oversight. Millions of people reading the information may not have approached the data with enough skepticism, and as Rutenberg reported, this was because many media pundits did not include specific or detailed caveats that the results were preliminary. The data, therefore, fell within abnormal margins of error. Rutenberg (2004) wrote that The *New York Times* removed an analytical piece about the vote based in part on the Election Day survey from its later editions. The magnitude of such an anomaly was witnessed when then Prime Minister of Britain, Tony Blair said in an interview that he had gone to bed thinking Kerry was the

next president of the United States, only to wake up to learn otherwise (par. 20). In unraveling the anomaly, the polling system engineers, National Election Pool, claimed that such oddities are not uncommon, noting that even critics of the system agree that many of the problems highlighted in the report are typical of such polls, which are devised to correct themselves as more data accrues (Esomar, 2005). This researcher's interest lays not in the data collection methodologies of pollsters but in how it was presented by the two selected publications.

Quantcast, a new media measurement service that lets advertisers view audience reports on millions of websites and services, rates the *New York Times* as having a U.S. reach of 12.6 million users and a ranking of 87 on the World Wide Web. The *Nation* as has a U.S. reach of 48,706; and is ranked close to 36,000 worldwide (*Quantcast*, Data file). With such significant reach, it is appropriate to have selected these two publications with a worldwide audience.

This study considers one optimistic hypothesis: (H_1) that there is a relationship – of difference – in how the two publications cover presidential opinion poll stories. To illustrate this difference further if established, the study will test a sub-hypothesis that there is a relationship in how the two publications portray presidential candidates in light of the presidential polls being covered. The study analyzes the aspects of structure, format and editing conventions of the two publications which are extremely powerful vehicles that reflect and shape the cognitive processes of their product to the audience.

Design

Presidential opinion poll stories were selected for analysis. These stories contained public opinion polling results coverage which was operationally defined as either computed opinions or interviews with members of the general public or stories that made reference to the state of the electioneering process, candidates' ranks in the race, party popularity and issue/policy coverage in light of the presidential hopefuls.

The majority of the research will be conducted in the library. In today's hyper-tech society, the movement of newspaper print edition to the electronic media has reached unprecedented scale (Boczkowski, 2004). Major libraries now provide newsprint and microfilm available in specialized computers. More than 400 university libraries in the United States are currently on-line, making data cross-referencing especially of the release of the presidential opinion polls conducted by other establishments easier, according to data compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) with the U.S. Department of Education (NCES, Data file). The *New York Times*, in conjunction with CBS, conducts its own polls of this nature and, therefore, there is a need to cross-reference and mention irreconcilable disparities that occur if identified in this study. The research has also identified the Council of Social Science Data Archives which may be cited from time to time or used to verify dates of poll releases if deemed necessary as raw data is compiled.

Newsstand© (see software Image in Appendix A) will be used to view past publications of the *Nation* and the *Times* issues. The *Times* is available in microfilm at

the Marshall University Drinko Library and would be a standby alternative should the digital editions downloaded from Newsstand© miss pages or fail to download. For the Kenyan case, the Internet archive portal (web.archive.org) is a quick option for cross references of previous online stories as they were in their respective dates. The Internet archive presents newspaper materials as they appeared at their time of posting and makes an efficient way for electronic keyword search and analysis. Computer search tool can help a great deal in these activities. In fact, computer techniques for handling source material often open up entirely new research opportunities beyond the original scope of the study according to Kent, Harrison and Taylor (2006). This study is not ruling out microfilm or physical print analysis should they be available for the Kenyan publication. An attempt was initially made to get physical newspapers from overseas for the *Nation*, but the task proved tedious, bulky, and cost prohibitive. The notion was abandoned altogether.

In conducting story analysis in Newsstand©, the key search word is 'polls,' which is a derivative for polls, polling and pollsters. During the course of a campaign, the types of polls that will be watched out for include benchmark, follow-up, panel surveys, tracking, and basic data analyses, according to Selnow's list (1991, pp. 177-78).

Parameters

Presidential opinion polls coverage herewith makes reference to any data cited and or published by pollsters in the selected publications. The stories include correspondences of data reported about sponsoring parties or presidential running mates

or allude to the strengths of the presidential candidates. Individual race polls by other candidates for other public offices in contention will not be taken into account, neither will the poll ratings for a sitting president as in the case for the U.S.

Method

To assess patterns of political coverage in news and commentary items, this study analyzes media coverage of the presidential candidates 90-days prior to Election Day during the 2007 presidential campaign for Kenya and 2008 U.S. Presidential elections for the U.S. The national editions chosen are the *Times* and the *Nation*. Although it may be apparent that most people get their information about campaigns from television, a study of newspaper coverage is still useful (Robinson & Sheehan, 1983). Newspaper coverage matters more for primary voters than for the general public, and politically attentive people. Accordingly, this population is more likely to participate in nominating elections and also more likely to read newspapers (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980). As stated in the rationale of this study, newspapers influence public opinion more than does national television (Miller, Goldenberg & Erbring, 1979, pp. 64-84). Analyzing political coverage in the *Times* is particularly useful because it serves as something of a barometer for the national media; other print and broadcast media take cues from the *Times* with respect to what events and stories are important (Hertsgaard, 1989). The *Nation* has wider circulation and is run by the largest media house in Eastern and Central Africa (*Quantcast*, Data file).

Sampling

The research limits the study to these two newspapers because of the substantial time involved in a content analysis of the newspapers. Content analysis was performed manually after an initial identification of presidential opinion poll items. The researcher analyzed candidate coverage from October-December 2007 for the *Nation* and August-November 2008 for the *Times*. By then, all parties had identified presidential candidates.

This study's definition of the subject matter incorporated any story which mentioned presidential opinion polls no matter how tangentially, mentioned any presidential candidate position, ideologically or else, in his campaign role in light of conducted polls, or discussed to a substantial degree any campaign opinion polls lower than the presidential level, even gauging party dossiers. Fully fledged presidential opinion poll stories are easy to identify. The *Times* and the *Nation* almost always used an "Elections 2007/2008" logo to introduce these pieces. For the *Times* the logo is a picture of a ballot box labeled '08' with a suspended card marked by a single star. Just after the logo is the writing: "The 2008 CAMPAIGN" (see Fig. 2 below). For the *Nation*, the logo is a picture of the Kenyan flag with the writings "The Kenya ELECTIONS 2007" (see Fig. 1 below).



Figure 1 The Kenya Elections 2007



Figure 2 The 2008 Campaign (U.S)

Lower level campaign stories were about the vice-presidential election, the congressional (for U.S.) or parliamentary (for Kenya) campaigns, state/provincial politics, or even mayors and councilors' races.

This research also collected the usual housekeeping information for every story; date, page, topic. Some categories were measured word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence, but the researcher considered the headlines and slugs as the most important unit of analysis. Stories were then categorized in summative headlines as markers after analyzing sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph to give total points for all categories. In total 440 stories were analyzed, there were 93 stories identified for analysis in the *Nation*, whereas the *Times* had 347 stories.

Reliability

The rules and definitions followed were not always simple. It is easy to determine the date or headline for a presidential opinion poll story herein marked as “opinion poll proper” but much harder to arrive at a standard when classifying the story. In order to keep the study systematic and make sure all stories and sentences were classified the same way, inter-coder reliability tests were performed. This means this researcher also analyzed how often peers operating independently, classified the same story the same way. The study engaged the Marshall University English Department Writing Center services where graduate assistants majoring in English held sessions for this purpose. If the reliability testing failed to meet minimally accepted standards arbitrarily assigned, this researcher rebuilt a set of definitions that were more reliable.

When the coding was complete, a subsample (basically 30% of the entire body of data) was reanalyzed by two independent coders to calculate the overall inter-coder reliability coefficient. Holsti’s (1969) formula for determining the reliability of nominal data in terms of percentage agreement was used. Thus using the formula:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2M}{N_1 + N_2}$$

where M is the number of coding decisions on which the coders agree, and N₁ and N₂ are the total

number of coding decisions by the first and second coder respectively.

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{2(46)}{57 + 57} \sim .74$$

$$\therefore \text{Reliability} = 74\%$$

The inter-coder reliability test was performed with two independent people and achieved a 74% mark, well above a two-category system (negative or positive portrayal for this study's case) that has 50% reliability simply by chance (Holsti, 1969).

Procedure

A codified table will be utilizing a semantic differential scale to measure the meaning of an object. Among the points to be attributed to an article will be 3-point, tri-polar rating scales such as the following: (a) Fair vs. unfair or neutral/other to the presidential candidates; and (b) Game-schema vs. governing schema or neutral/other for the covered stories. The rating is made according to the articles' perception of the relatedness or association of the adjective to the word concept. Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957) have inferred that three subgroups measure the following three dimensions of attitude: (a) The individual's evaluation of the object or concept being rated, corresponding to the favorable-unfavorable dimension of more traditional attitudes scales; (b) The individual's perception of the potency or power of the object or concept; (c) And finally, the individual's perception of the activity of the object or concept.

The codification of gaming schema vs. governing schema is based on Thomas Patterson's study (1980) which looked at television coverage of political primaries since 1976. His categorization identified the dominant focus of campaign coverage as reporters' use of a "game schema" versus issue driven. According to the game schema, reporters evaluate candidates' polling numbers and events as part of a strategic game focusing on the horse race and what maneuvers the candidates are using to influence the race. The study, therefore, identified language such as reporters focusing on who is ahead, who is behind, and what the candidates are doing about their relative placement in the race. Governing schema related to information about issues and leader effectiveness to consider "broad questions of governance" (Patterson, 1993, p. 59).

Policy and governance debates in articles are assigned governing schema, whereas stories portraying party leaders or the party itself as winner or loser is coded game schema. When there is no mention of either candidates as leading or losing and there is no doubt the story cannot fit either coded categories, then the article is deemed educative or comparative analysis of the days' poll data. Such news items would be considered neutral.

A negative portrayal of candidates receives a negative point, a positive portrayal received a positive point. When two candidates are feted against each other, there will be a winner and loser, a positively portrayed candidate receives a positive point, whereas the latter gets a negative point. Positive party ratings are a positive mark to the party leads. Therefore, a positive or negative point is added to the party's presidential candidate.

Neutrality is given when stories neither shed light on who is winning or losing. For example, headlines such as “Mixed Reaction to Opinion Polls” shows no specific candidate in the lead, neither does it allude to policy or issue of discussion in the presidential elections. Such stories are comparative analysis of the days’ poll data and are therefore, coded as neutral.

DATA ANALYSIS

Wimmer and Dominic (2006) outline four general levels of analysis techniques that are vital for this qualitative research. According to the two authors trace the origins of the “constant comparative technique” as emerging from Glasser and Straus which comprise: (1) Comparative assignments of incidents to categories; (2) Elaboration and refinement of categories; (3) Searching for relationships and themes among categories; and finally (4) Simplifying and integrating data into coherent theoretical structures. This research will utilize the inductive methods in comparing data gathered from the *New York Times* and the *Nation*

This research will also employ computer aided data analysis such as the Statistical Package for Social Science (*SPSS*) due to its availability in all Marshall University Computing labs. With programs that can read text files and produce a variety of outputs ranging from simple diagnostics (e.g., word and alphabetical frequencies) to a summary of the "main ideas" in a text, computer programs such as Nvivo, winMAX or ATLAS/ti, have become very useful tools in content analysis (Page, Shapiro & Dempsey, 1987a). Through such software, uncovering patterns of word usage can produce such outputs as simple word counts and cluster analysis but such was not employed in this study. Mayring (2000) notes that, especially within the last six years, several computer programs had been developed within the framework of qualitative analysis to support (not to replace) steps of text interpretation. Therefore, this study did not underscore human input as well as computer assistance in identifying stories within its parameters. All 440 stories were manually verified after the computerized search. Appreciative of technologies such as *Wonkosphere*, (a web site that tracks over 1200 political blogs and

web sites to provide timely and unbiased analysis of the Presidential race), the research collected and collated raw data through page-by-page perusal, especially for the *Nation* and partly the *Times*. Relevant stories within this study's parameters from the *Times* were cherry-picked for analysis after a key word search was performed in the computer for each day's publication.

This researcher is on the lookout for any resources that may enrich the comparative analysis process of the study. With qualitative content analysis, the study will be able to describe systematic text analysis. Systematic text analysis tries to preserve the strengths of content analysis in communication science as found in other studies such as theory reference, step models, model of communication, category leaded, criteria of validity and reliability (Selnow, 1991).

Findings

This study utilized ANOVA, determined as the most appropriate to test significance. The t -test was considered but then when multiple t -tests are run, one may end up multiplying errors. For example a .05 margin of error would result in getting the right answers 19 out of 20 times. But then given this study's multiple variables, if these variables are compared in a tree of two or more groups by running multiple t -tests, it simply multiplies that error. This, in effect, gives a percentile of getting a result 14 times more often as incorrect (Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum, 1957). That is more than a 5% chance. Thelwal (2006) explains that if one tries to compare five groups, it would result in a 40% chance of getting the wrong answer. These are not very good odds. So it is a given not to run multiple t -tests to compare more than two variables. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) can avoid this.

ANOVA tests the null that there is no significant difference in means of the groups being compared, and it produces a statistic called F , which is the equivalent of the t statistic from the t -test (Mayring, 2000).

One way ANOVA

The ANOVA test is the proper procedure to run if one is to examine the relationship between two or more variables, according to Wimmer and Dominick (2006). In this test, the independent variable, which is categorical, has two values, and a dependent variable which is continuous, and, normally, an interval ratio. The dependent list is coverage of opposition candidates in a positive or negative light as is the case in this analysis. The factor or grouping variable is the two publications, the *Nation* and the

Times. Post hoc tests were not performed for this data set because there are fewer than three groups. In the event that the ANOVA test is statistically significant, the study seeks to find out what data is accounting for the bulk of this significance by making inferences and interpreting the data after running a sub-hypothesis test.

In order to determine whether there was a difference in coverage of presidential opinion poll schema in both publications, a significance test was performed. Because looking at the sample means of each group will not necessarily give a realistic picture of significant differences in how the publications covered governing versus game schema, the study checked the standard deviation to find their variance. When comparing more than two means simultaneously, analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used "to determine whether any differences among two or more means are greater than would be expected by chance" (Walsh 1990, p. 124). The ANOVA test provides data on the "statistical significance of a relationship" by examining the ratios between-group variance or within-group variance, and gives an *F*-score (O'Sullivan 1995, 469).

That is

$$\rho = 0$$

(H₀) = there is no relationship – of difference – in how the two publications cover presidential opinion poll stories.

Whereas the research hypothesis says that

$$\rho \neq 0$$

(H₁) = there is a relationship – of difference – in how the two publications cover presidential opinion poll stories.

Descriptives (SCHEMA)

Schema

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					NTN	153		
NYT	420	.852	1.2035	.0587	.737	.968	.0	5.0
Total	573	.785	1.1083	.0463	.694	.876	.0	5.0

Table 1 Descriptives (SCHEMA)

From Table 1 above, it is found that the means of both publications, the *Nation* (NTN)=.601 and the *Times* (NYT)=.852 are slightly different, showing some kind of significance. There is now a need to find out the cause of this difference between the groups. The study ran a test of how the publications covered the stories based on the dependent variables, game schema, governing schema and neutrality. The following results were found (see Table 2.)

ANOVA (SCHEMA)

Schema

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.070	1	7.070	5.804	.016
Within Groups	695.527	571	1.218		
Total	702.597	572			

Table 2 ANOVA (SCHEMA)

From the results above (Table 2, ANOVA Schema), the mean squares between groups and within groups (i.e., 7.070 & 1.218) are markedly different, showing that there is significance between the groups. The F statistic is officially stated as:

$$F(2,189) = 5.804, \rho < .05.$$

The study, therefore, rejects the null hypothesis that there is no relationship – of difference – in how the two publications cover presidential opinion poll stories.

In order to confirm that the failure to find statistical significance in the two publications is not due to data error or differences in data, the Levene's test for homogeneity of variance was done. This is to prove the assumption that the two groups have approximately equal variance on the dependent variable.

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

opposition_Positive

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
6.501	1	189	.012

Table 3 Test of Homogeneity of Variances

It is the assumption of ANOVA that variances are equal across groups or samples. The Levene test can be used to verify that assumption and show that the data do, in fact, come from a normal, or nearly normal, distribution.

From the table above (Table 3), the Levene Statistic is 6.501. The argument is normally that the larger the F statistic number, the greater the possibility the variances are different. The ρ value is .012. The significance value for homogeneity of variances is less than the critical value ($\rho < .05$), so the variances of the groups are statistically significant. Equality has been demonstrated.

Since this is an assumption of ANOVA, caution is needed in interpreting the outcome of the test. But, then measuring variances are prone to produce Type I error. Therefore, the test was subjected to a further equality test in SPSS.

Robust Tests of Equality of Means (Schema)

Schema

	Statistic ^a	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	8.681	1	425.105	.003
Brown-Forsythe	8.681	1	425.105	.003

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

Table 4 Robust Tests of Equality of Means (Schema)

The Welch and Brown-Forsythe statistic proves that the study can assume equality of means and conclude in confidence that the differences within and between this group is statistically significant. At an α (alpha) level of .05, the Welch and Brown-Forsythe sig. value is .003. Therefore, the study can be 95% certain to reject the null hypothesis (that the groups are not equal) and conclude that the groups are equal on the dependent variable. This is statistically significant.

A complete list of all the variable tests is available in Appendix B. Thus, the study rejects the null hypothesis based on these tests, since the variance difference is significant, it is enough to say that equality of variances are valid based on anything but chance.

In order to determine the possible causal factor in the difference established by the first hypothesis, a sub hypothesis was tested.

The study’s sub- hypothesis is that:

(H₀) that there is no difference on how the two publications portray presidential candidates in light of the presidential polls

(H₁) that there is a difference on how the two publications portray presidential candidates in light of the presidential polls

Statistic Descriptives in Opposition Positive Coverage

opposition_Positive coverage

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					NTN	51		
NYT	140	.993	1.1905	.1006	.794	1.192	.0	4.0
Total	191	.906	1.1057	.0800	.748	1.064	.0	4.0

Table 5 Statistic Descriptives in Opposition Positive Coverage

In the descriptive table 5 above, the sample sizes are different, the N value for the *Nation* is 51, while the NYT is 140. The means are also different, ranging from .667 to .993. Standard deviations show that the NYT seems to produce a higher difference in relationship than the *Nation*. The result is NTN is .7916 against NYT's 1.1905. The NYT seems to produce more positive coverage for the opposition compared to the NTN. This is more variation difference than can be expected from sampling difference alone. A further investigation is needed to check whether there is more variation than can be expected from sampling variation alone or randomness of other factors.

ANOVA Portrayal of Candidates

opposition_Positive coverage

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.977	1	3.977	3.292	.071
Within Groups	228.326	189	1.208		
Total	232.304	190			

Table 6 ANOVA Test for Portrayal of Candidates

This is the main ANOVA result. The significance value comparing the groups (publications) is greater than .05;

$$F(2,189) = 3.292, \rho > .05$$

The study accepts the null hypothesis. The study has established that there is no difference on how the two publications portray presidential candidates in light of the presidential opinion polls coverage.

There is no significant relationship (in the positive or negative direction) on how the two publications portray presidential candidates in light of the presidential polls, $F(2,189) = 3.292, \rho > .05$. This is also true of negative candidate coverage (See Appendix B for more tests of the other variables).

To control and explain if a Type I error is committed, a Post Hoc Tukey's test is used. The dependent variable `opposition_Positive coverage` is used in this test as before (see Table 7 below).

Multiple Comparisons

rating_positve

Tukey HSD

(I) candidate	(J) candidate	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Incumbent	Opposition	-.36*	.092	.000	-.57	-.14
	Other	.20	.091	.067	-.01	.42
Opposition	Incumbent	.36*	.092	.000	.14	.57
	Other	.56*	.092	.000	.34	.77
Other	Incumbent	-.20	.091	.067	-.42	.01
	Opposition	-.56*	.092	.000	-.77	-.34

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square (Error) = .799.

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Table 7 Multiple Comparison of Candidate Coverage

The ρ value for Incumbent and Opposition are both $<.05$ ($\rho = .000$), so the study can assert that the data is statistically significant within groups and maintain the conclusion that there is a relationship in how the *Times* and the *Nation* covered the candidates. This means the relationship is that of equality. The third league candidates show a significance value of $.67$, and this may be due to randomness in the data. However, this result does not tell us which publication is responsible for the assumed lack of difference in the coverage of the presidential candidates.

A graphical representation to prove the indifference shows how relatively similar the coverage of candidates is, as shown in the figure below (see Figure 1, Portrayal of Candidates in both Publications). Inset is the *Nation* demography.

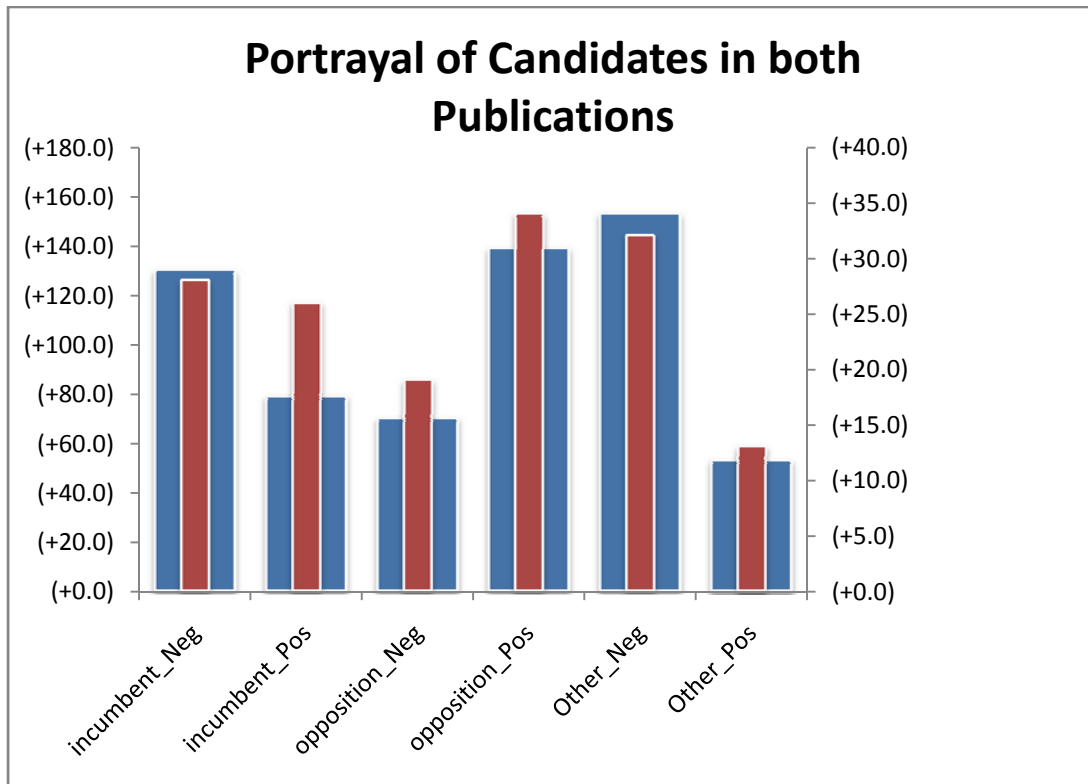


Figure 3 Portrayal of Candidates in Both Publications

The official conclusion of the study is that there is no significant relationship (in the positive or negative direction) on how the two publications portray presidential candidates in light of the presidential polls, $F(2,189) = 3.292, p > .05$. This is also true of negative candidate coverage (See Appendix C for more statistical tests).

Interpretation

A total of 440 stories were analyzed. Of the 440, 93 stories were from the *Nation* whereas 347 stories were from the *Times*. In computing stories cited in the study, 45% of the stories were directly referencing opinion polls data in the *Nation*, and 30% concentrated on the presidential candidates and issues, whereas 25% were lower level mentions of presidential opinion polls (see Table 8 below). The *Times* had 18% of the stories on direct references to opinion polls majorly syndicated by CBS/NYT. 38% concentrated in the presidential candidates and issues, whereas 44% were lower level mentions of presidential opinion polls (see Table 9 below).

Citation (<i>NATION</i>)		%	
Opinion Polls Proper	45	45.00%	
Candidate/Issue	43	30.00%	
Lower Level	35	25.00%	
Total Stories	93	100	

Table 8 All Cited Stories in the *Nation*

Citation (<i>NYT</i>)		%	
Opinion Polls Proper	71	18.00%	
Candidate/Issue	146	38.00%	
Lower Level	169	44.00%	
Total Stories	347	100	

Table 9 All Cited Stories in the *Times*

In computing the data for the schematics used in the study, the *Nation* had a slightly higher percentage of stories on horse races (game schema), with 38%, whereas the *Times* had 36%. Both publications had almost similar proportions of stories concentrating on candidates/issues with the *Times* recording 59% whereas the *Nation* recorded 52%. The neutral stories cited were ten percent for the *Nation*, and five percent for the *Times*, as shown in Figures 4 and 5 below.

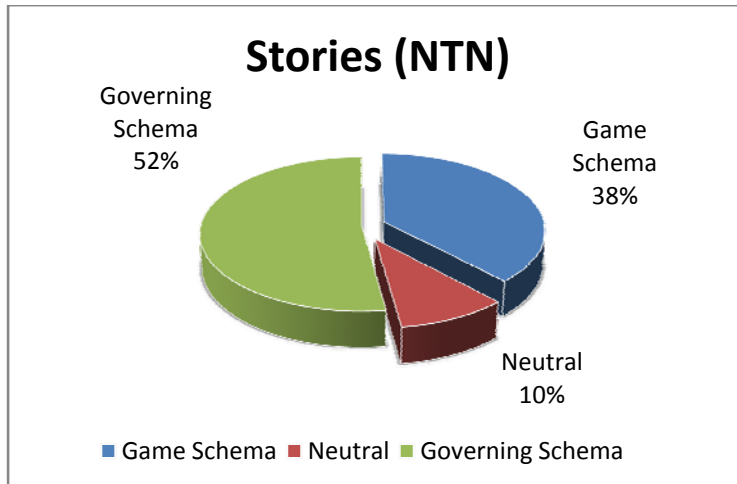


Figure 4 Cited of Stories in the *Nation*

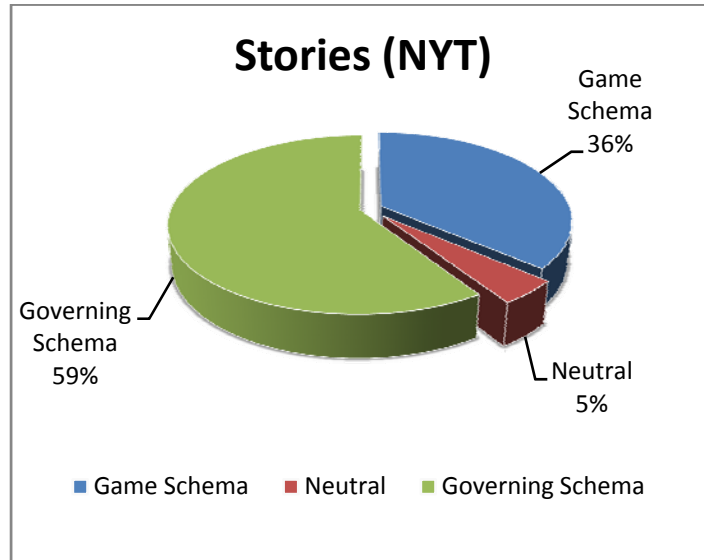


Figure 5 Cited Stories in the *Times*

The study computed the overall positive and negative portrayal accorded to incumbents, opposition and third league presidential contenders. The results were as follows: the *Times* gave equal coverage to all candidates with all analyzed stories showing a 25 percentile share. This illustrates the internal stability of data for computational purposes whereby positive and negative press coverage is consistent in the *Times*. In the *Nation*, a different scenario is portrayed; the incumbent, Kibaki, gets a 28% share of coverage. For the opposition, Odinga, garners 27% whereas the third presidential contender got 23%.

Stories that neither praised nor deprecated candidates were deemed neutral and amounted to 22% in the *Nation*, whereas the *Times* recorded 25%. This data is presented in Figures 6 and 7 below.

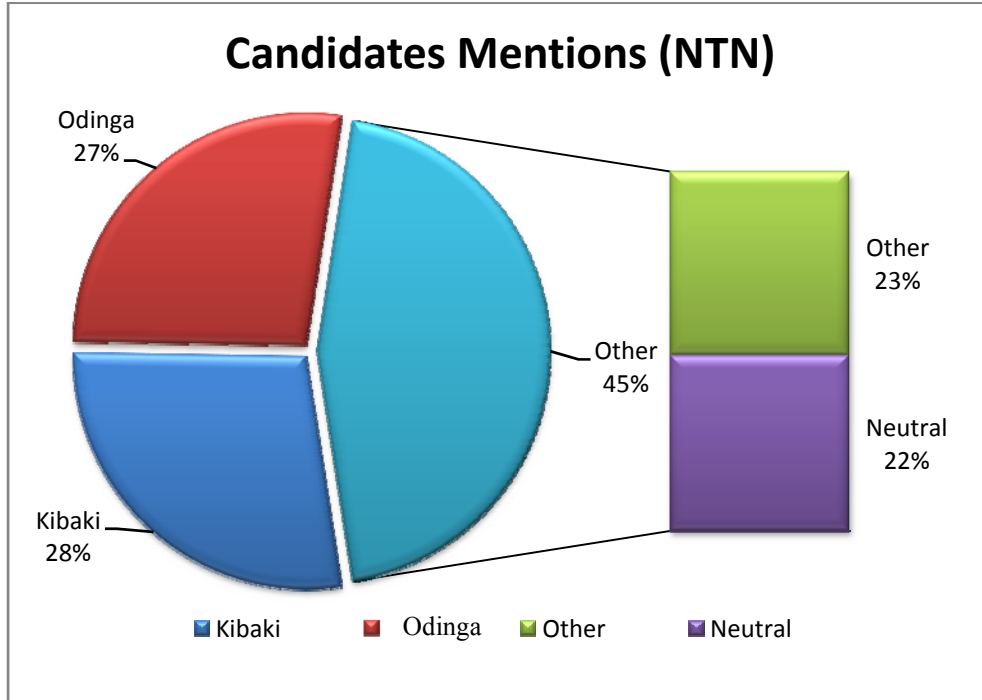


Figure 6 Category of Stories in the *Nation*

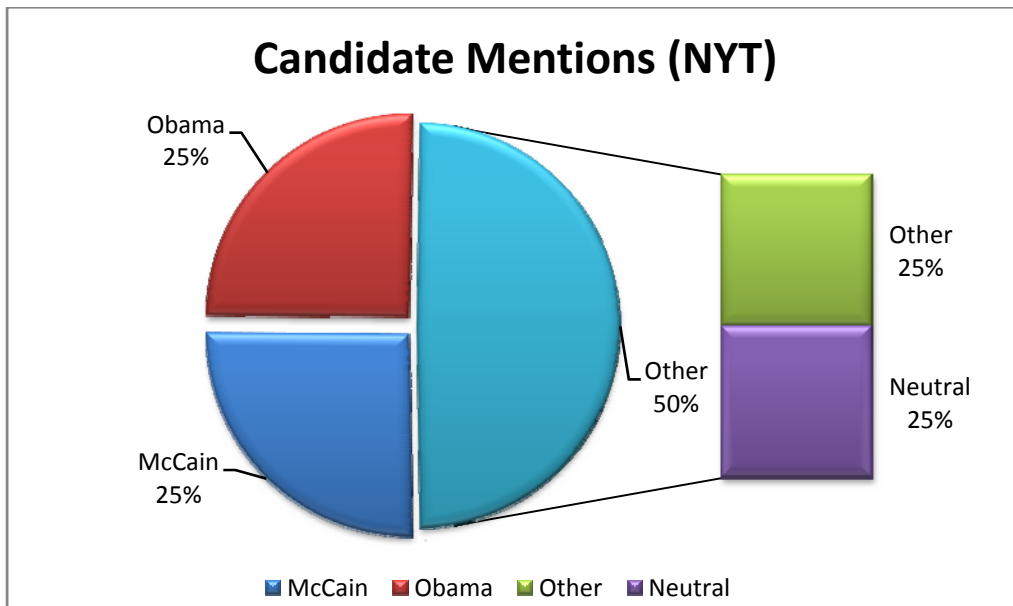


Figure 7 Category of Stories in the *NYT*

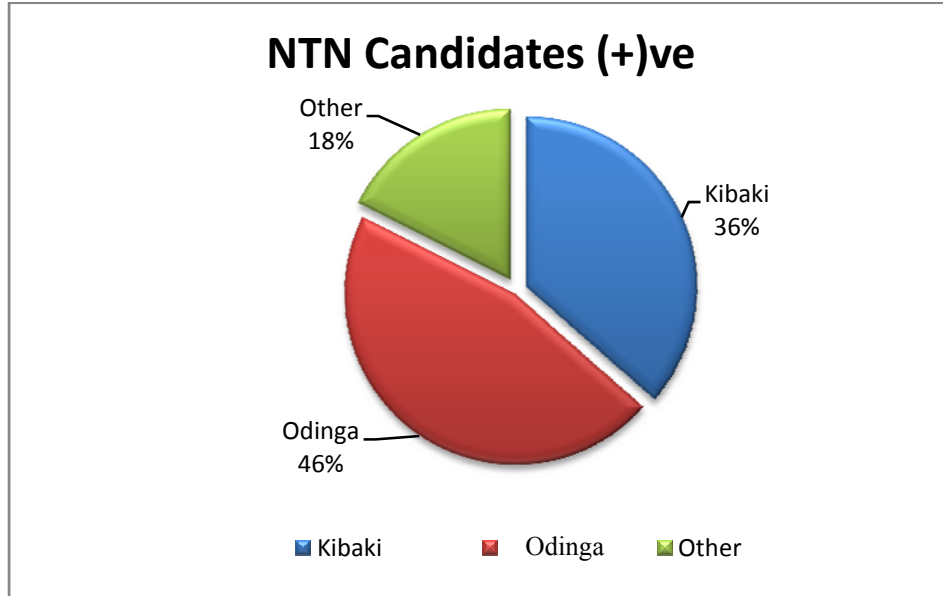


Figure 8 +(ve) Portrayal in the *Nation*

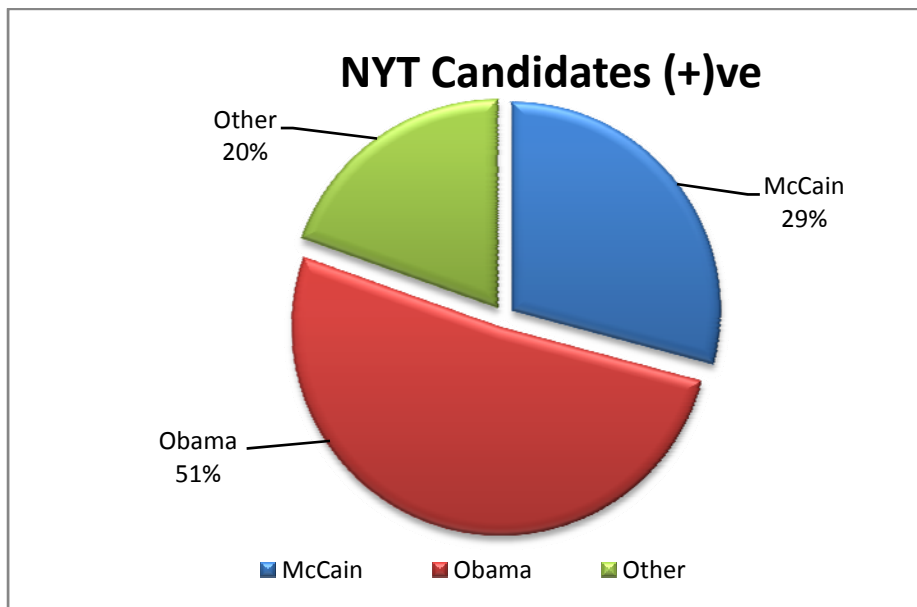


Figure 9 +(ve) Portrayal in the *NYT*

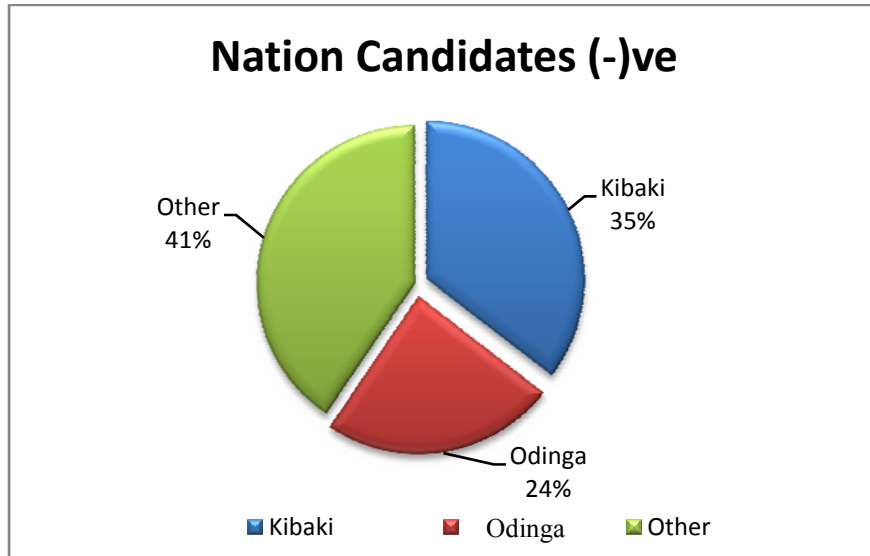


Figure 10 -(ve) Portrayal in the *Nation*

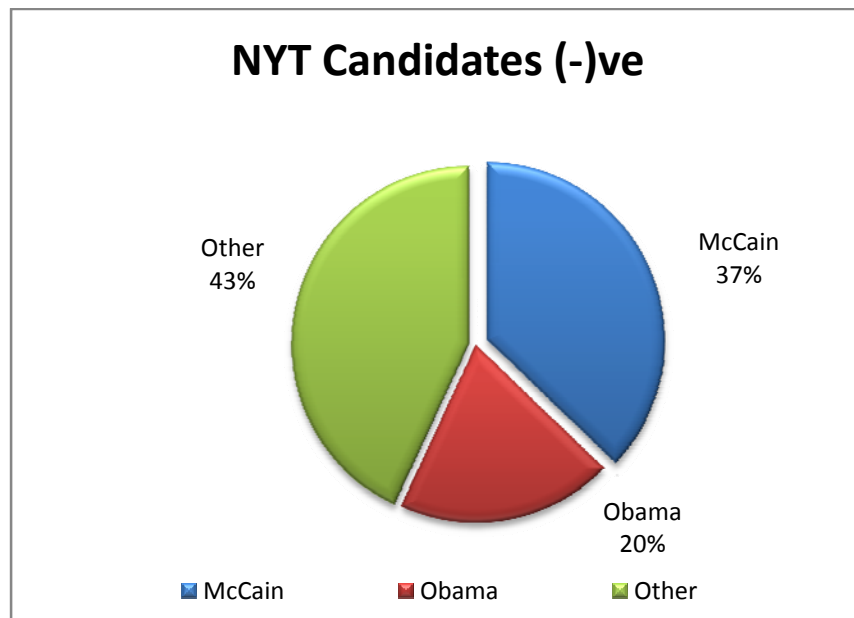


Figure 11 -(ve) Portrayal in the *NYT*

In computing negative coverage among top candidates, data collected revealed that incumbents (governing parties and their presidential nominees) received the most negative coverage. McCain garnered 37%; Obama had a 20% in negative coverage, and third league presidential candidates (marked as other) had the highest negative coverage at 43%. In the *Nation*, Kibaki (incumbent) garnered 35% of negative coverage, whereas Odinga (opposition) had 24%. Other presidential candidates in the *Nation* presidential opinion poll stories received a high negative rating of 41%. The summaries are presented in Table 10 and 11.

Candidates (<i>NYT</i>)						
	(-)ve	%	(+)ve	%	Total	%
McCain	132	37.00%	79	29.00%	211	25.00%
Obama	70	20.00%	139	51.00%	209	25.00%
Other	153	43.00%	53	20.00%	206	25.00%
Neutral					206	25.00%
Total	Stories				347	

Table 10 Candidate Portrayal in the *NYT*

Candidates (<i>Nation</i>)						
	(-)ve %		(+)ve %		Total	%
Kibaki	28	35.00%	27	36.00%	54	28.00%
Odinga	19	24.00%	34	46.00%	53	27.00%
Other	32	41.00%	13	18.00%	45	23.00%
Neutral					43	22.00%
Total Stories					93	

Table 11 Candidate Portrayal in the *Nation*

Opposition candidates received the most positive coverage in both publications. In the *Times*, Obama garnered 51% positive stories, whereas McCain had 29%. Other candidates shared 20% in positive coverage.

For the *Nation*, Odinga garnered 46% of positive coverage with Kibaki getting 36% and the third league presidential contenders having 18%.

DISCUSSION

A total of six research questions were posited in this study (see complete list in Appendix D). One hypothesis was tested to explain the resultant phenomenon. A sub-hypothesis was also tested in order to make a better inference on the meaning and direction of the conclusions drawn from the main hypothesis. Among the list of the research questions posed in this study includes: (1) To what extent has the media/candidates manipulated reported opinion polls? (2) Is there a relationship between the *Times* and the *Nation's* coverage of presidential opinion poll results 90 days prior to Election Day? (3) To what extent was this coverage biased? (4) How often did the coverage include information that drives the public/electorate/audience to certain perceptions? (5) Do the publications merit a comparison given their difference in geopolitical positions? and (6) In covering presidential opinion polls and possibly other societal trends, has the media become a democratizing institution in its own right?

This study established that the two publications had a marked similarity in how they covered the presidential opinion polls. The hypothesis tested rejected the null which states that there is no relationship in how the two publications cover presidential opinion poll stories 90 days to Election Day. The F statistic is officially stated as: $F(2,189) = 5.804, p < .05$. With 189 degree of freedom and 95% confidence, the study can infer that publications have an established structure, format and editing conventions that are extremely powerful vehicles to reflect and shape the cognitive processes of their audience in more or less similar ways despite geopolitical differences.

This result is consistent with Steger's (2000) findings. In his comparison of the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune's* news and editorial coverage of the 1996 Presidential nominating campaign, Steger found that the *Times* included roughly double the candidate coverage of the *Tribune*. The same study with respect to the candidates proved that the *Times* gave relatively more coverage to Bob Dole and Steve Forbes (comparatively opposition candidates in this study's case).

Whereas, neutral coverage benefits rising candidates at least for a while, losing ground coverage gives the same less coverage to incumbents and opposition figures, and that is more unfavorable in the long run (Steger, 2000). In this study, columnists paid attention mainly to the top one or two candidates, and they quickly labeled thirds as "spoilers." This study, therefore, found that incumbents had a big advantage in the way they were portrayed in a positive light and used the statistics and stories as clarion calls that their victory was inevitable. Presidential opinion poll use by candidates is evident when McCain referred to himself as an underdog (O'Keefe, 2008). Obama was shown far too confident when a gaffe was captured in one of the debates saying, "*when* I am president" a position he quickly corrected saying, "*if* I am elected president" (Gourney & Zeleny, 2008). In Kenya, while the opposition was riding the wave of popularity in the polls as reported by the media, Odinga declared that victory was "inevitable," equating his popularity to a "tsunami" (Osewe, 2009).

In most democracies coverage from mainstream media is, and has been, with or without premeditation and design, favorable to one candidate or the other, as also found by Adleman and Schilling (2008). Apart from opinion polling, other favorable references include such ways as camera angles during mass rallies, presented to convey the

impression of vast or minute popular appeal (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003). Partiality, to a lesser extent as can be seen in this study, has also been projected by specific news media. Independently failing to correct false accusations, innuendo and supposition hurled toward one candidate or, demystifying erroneous credits or claims made by the others are invisible tools the media can use in the coverage of campaigns (Handa, 2007). It is most common for reputable mass circulation news media to endorse candidates of preference in presidential general elections. Organs like *The Economist*, the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* have always exercised this editorial discretion for candidates whose programs align with their editorial orientation. In these serious publications, endorsements are limited to concurrence or sympathy with specific candidate's political platform and program. This is honorable and an acknowledgement that such move recognize and values the intelligence of readers (Gourney & Zeleny, 2008). The endorsing media do not become a communications apparatus or propaganda instrument for the endorsed candidates (Wilkins & Brennen, 2004). In fact, such outlets promise, by reason of such choice, a higher level of impartiality and fairness to alternative competing views (Kovach & Rosentiel, 2001).

A side by side comparison of how the media covered the stories reveals that the *Times* was more focused on governing schema, whereas the *Nation* was more toward game schema, as illustrated below (Figure 12 & 13). It is this difference that computed a ρ value of .016 where $F(2,189) = 5.804$, $\rho < .05$. The game schema was not given precedence in the *Times*, whereas the governing schema was almost on par with game schema in the *Nation*.

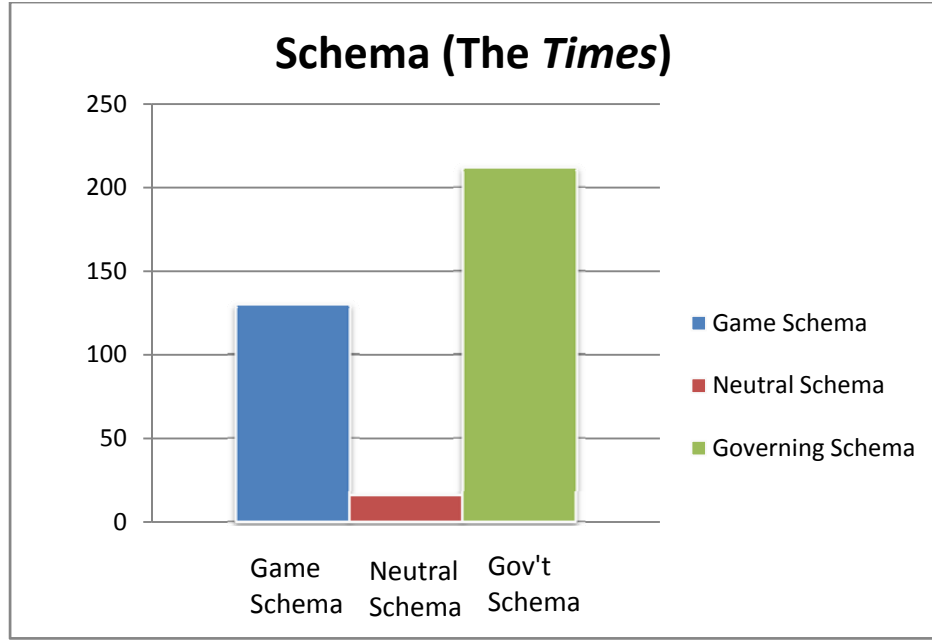


Figure 12 Game Schema in the *NYT*

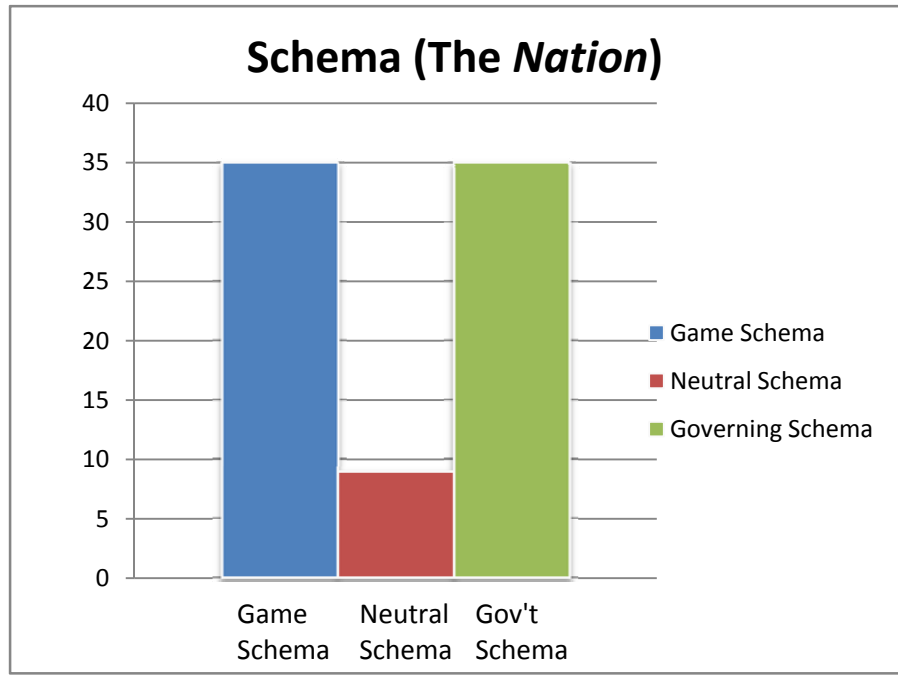


Figure 13 Game Schema in the *Nation*

There is no gainsaying in the fact that opinion polling can be manipulated and misused to give credence to unpopular programs and/or to legitimize policies that do not have public support. Such is the investigation of this research. There are cases where particular candidates and parties have attempted to use opinion polling to advance their causes. To what extent are media responsible? Researchers however, term these as aberrations and should not cloud the good work that has been done by professional pollsters (Blanchard, 1998). It is also arguable whether the media should only provide a neutral forum. The study found that the direction of story emphasis was opposite in the two publications, as illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 14).

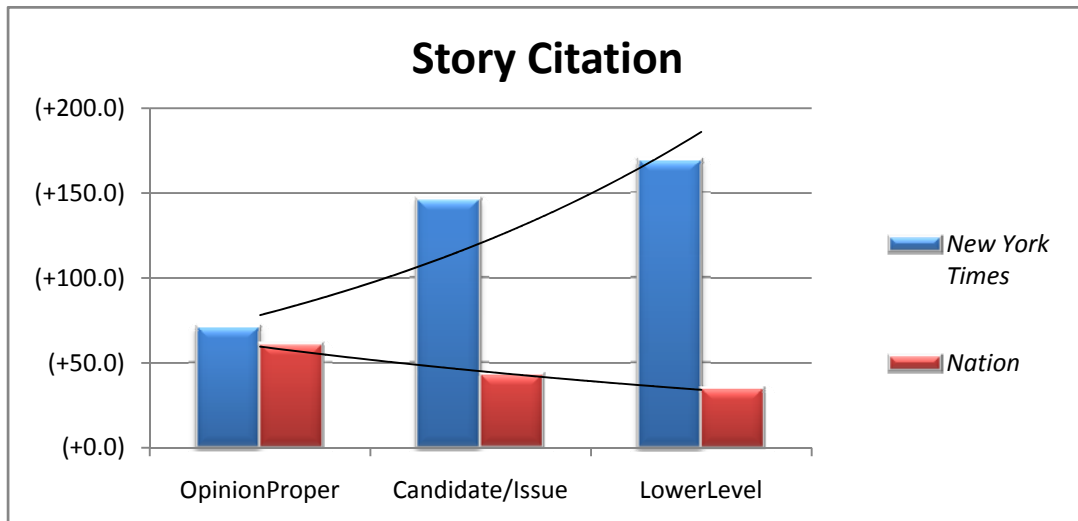


Figure 14 Story Citation in Both Publication

Whereas the *Times* focused on lower level stories, the *Nation's* focus tended toward opinion poll data coverage which showed candidates as gaining or losing. The data shows markedly that the gradients are opposite. Whereas, the *Times* shows a negative gradient toward opinion polls data stories, the *Nation* shows a positive gradient toward the same. It can, therefore, be inferred with 95% confidence that the media may present presidential opinion polling stories in different slants, but there is a seemingly hidden universal code adhered to by journalists.

The need to conduct polls and candidly report results as closely neutral as possible reflect the wishes of the people. This is, thus, crucial to the democratization process in a country such as Kenya. It has been found to propagate media freedom and independence in the established democracies such as the U.S. (Jamieson & Waldman, 2003). Opinion polls, and for this case, presidential opinion poll reporting should be seen outside the narrow perspective of being predictive tools on which candidates are going to win the elections, but also as a means of measuring the pulse and mood of the country. They provide a mouth piece for the millions of citizens who do not have alternative means of making their feelings and opinions known to the ruling elite (Gallup & Rae, 1940).

Further evidence that elucidate the difference in the publications is derived from how they covered issues as shown in the scatter diagram below (Figure 15). Whereas the *Nation* was more prone to report horse-races, the *Times* focused more on the governing schema in the second half of the campaign period. The *Nation* reported evenly on both schemas throughout the campaign while the *Times* coverage exponentially increased as

the D-day approached. Marked differences in the coverage were the miniscule reportage on neutrality for both publications

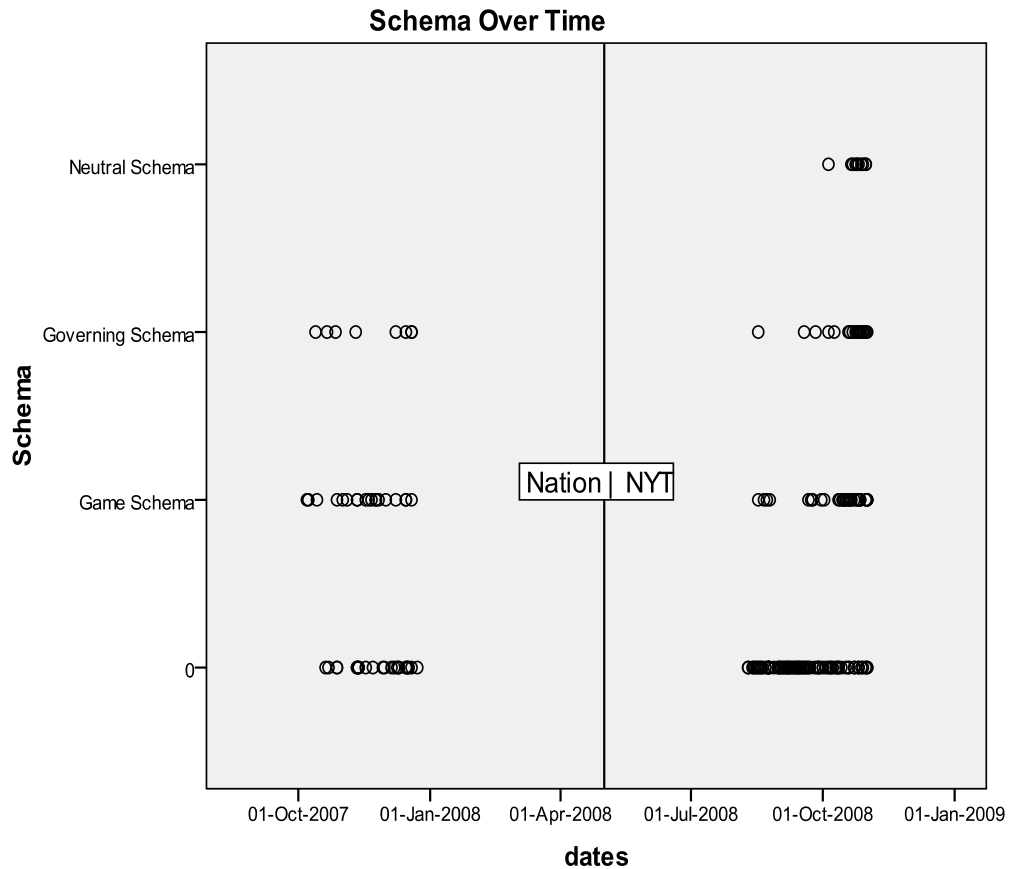


Figure 15 Schema Over Time

It is not possible to imagine modern political democracy without the instrument of opinion polls no matter how the media portray them (Page, Shapiro & Dempsey, 1987). Even so, most people in virtually every country, including those in which they are routinely conducted on almost everything, do not really understand them (Johnson,

1991). An illustration of this is the Bradley effect, which only comes out due to gray areas in opinion polling studies. Dr. Kalambuka, a physics professor at the University of Nairobi remarked that in Kenya, opinion polls are almost valueless because, they hardly tell us anything. In his essay; “Lying with Figures,” Kalambuka (2007) rebukes media use of presidential opinion polls saying that they have become just another tool used by unscrupulous players. He adds that uneducated individuals, be they politicians, journalists or academics, use polls not to gauge what people really want, but to ascertain what they believe. He concludes his essay by urging the media to “come clean” about polls. This, he says can be achieved by taking them off the front pages and sticking them where they belong – back in the horoscope and comic strips.

But political society that is the subject of the polls, assumes certain levels of coherence and agreement on fundamentals (Ake, 1996). Otherwise, a fractured society like Iraq, for example, would only offer the pollster the futility of the exercise, and media in the country will fall to tribal cabal controlling the instruments of information. According to the above argument, Mutua⁴ (2007) says, Kenyans, like many other developing democracies have a low-grade civil inconsonance that is masked by the shallow political rhetoric of national statehood. Therefore, the media is either mirroring the obvious or propagating a different direction in the society at play. This study finds that the media is mirroring the obvious especially the competency and incompetency of the established institutions in which they operate.

⁴ Makau Mutua is SUNY Distinguished Professor and 18th dean of faculty of law at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He is Chair of the Kenya Human Rights Commission and Director, Human Rights Center

CONCLUSION

The objective of social science is to determine the source of the variability witnessed in this study. This study addressed questions like "What is it that 'causes' or accounts for the observed differences between this group of people and that group of people, this individual or that individual" as do many content analyses (Walsh 1990, 125). Steger's (2000) study concludes that the game schema permeated news coverage of the candidates for the 1996 presidential nominations more thoroughly than it did columns and editorials. This study concurs with Steger's findings. It established that the amount and tone of news coverage followed candidates' fortunes in the horse race, even when reporters were not writing about who was ahead or behind. The game schema also framed news coverage of other campaign topics. Ramsden (1997) says that by portraying campaigns as contests among scheming politicians, all of whom should be viewed with suspicion, the media help bring about that very result.

People have been voicing their wishes from time immemorial. A popular opinion does not necessarily mean suppression of the minority report. A case in point is when the people shouted "crucify him" (John 19:6 New King James Version). Were Steadman to conduct a survey and the *Times* or the *Nation* report the data, it could have been found that Christ's disciples in that ancient crowd were the underdog in the group. But the century proved their point when his teachings and apostles' views today form the Judeo-Christian principles that are vastly the roots of media ethics, judicial law, and entire country's value system.

It is no doubt that media is a vital tool in the democratization process with key political players factoring it in their campaign strategies. Media owners invest a

substantial time and money in its development as discussed elsewhere in this study. Opinion polls matter, and the way of covering them matters especially when one wants to espouse relevant policies of government. While wars of democracy are being fought in the middle east, the Obama Administration has noted that media are a key factor in engaging the local populace to develop an avenue that will enable their voices to be heard. One noteworthy objective of the new plan in Afghanistan is the “development of a strategic communications strategy to counter the terror information campaign” (U.S. Department of State, 2008). Obama is also quoted as saying of the U.S. media that their ultimate success is “essential to success of our democracy” before also saying that government without a tough and vibrant media is not an option (“Reliable Sources,” 2009).

It is still a contention that if the masses are the agents of democracy – that is, those with the responsibility to decide what democracy is, what values it is to maximize, and the methods of realizing it – they must also have the prerogative of making public policy at all levels. The masses must not merely participate in the conventional sense of the word; for example, through aggregated public opinion data or a one-time vote process, but they must be the ones who decide on how to proceed with social transformation.

There may be no way of discriminating levels of democracy in different countries when it comes to presidential opinion poll coverage as this study has established. What is true as freedom of choice, the press, assembly, and religion, is true in equal measure in Sydney as it is in Darfur. The world should, in the 21st Century, embrace a new world order (His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 2009). This order is a clarion call for world peace,

where matters are settled in set universal principles that media and state actors adhere to. This would mean that all nations are equal, exercising one order, there being an expectation that if there is to be no citizen torture in the Glorious Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, so shall be in the UK and Kenya. And the media shall reflect so, diverse as the world is today. Just like players in elections set rules of engagement, no doubt the world-over, media have set standards of engagement when they reports opinion polls. There exists innate principles in the way elections are conducted such that the Kenyan 2007 General Elections can be classified as bungled and the U.S. 2008 Election praised as *voix populi, vox dei*, as William of Malmesbur (*Britannica*, n.d.) would put it.

Limitations

The expansive breadth of this study seems to have been at the expense of depth. This research could have factored in the causes of differences by adding a control environment such as a media freedom index or literacy index in the audiences. Such values would have added more reasons for the differences arrived at in a post hoc analysis of data.

At the onset, the study presupposes that the media are independent and social responsibility driven. The *Nation* and the *New York Times* are set as ideals such that corporate interest is minimized so as to enable judgment transferability; however this may be compromised because of threats to validity. There are publications that are openly pro-government in emerging democracies, whereas the developed democracies suffer capitalistic tendencies. Overall, and given the reservations about internal validity, the study is relevant and useful to media owners so that they can improve their product, which is the news.

Language differentiation in both countries played a small part in interpretation at the onset of coding data. However, this language translation barrier was overcome by consulting Marshall University Speech and Writing Center, thesis committee member, Professor Janet Dooley, and thesis Chair, Dr. Chris Swindell.

Whereas there are a different methods of how the pollsters conduct polls, this study notes that the differences in methodological approaches used by pollsters in Kenya and the U.S. are varied due to a number of factors, among them: technological access, literacy level, and urbanization. Nevertheless, appropriate technology used in both

countries served one purpose: to collect one opinion expressed by one citizen aggregated and reported by the chosen publications. Inherent invalidity or validity of the collected and collated data by pollsters is beyond the scope of this study.

Finally this study notes that an analysis is being carried out in two differing democracies, that is, U.S. being developed whereas Kenya is developing. For the sake of the study and as in the media diametric, their concern is not so much to solve the problem on its own terms as to realize an image of themselves to the public.

Recommendations

The ontological study of the two publications is satisfactory enough to present a wider picture of the media situation in both democracies. There is evidence of wide newspaper readership studies, but not of a systematic literature review of recent migration of newsprint and readers to the electronic media. Online papers are publishing more and more content than their hard copy counterparts. An interesting study would be an investigation to find out whether there is a difference in how online coverage of presidential opinion poll news may present a difference since the audience would not be restricted by geographical placement and limitless space in terms of resource.

A study like this seems to have ethical dimensions (assumed responsibility that the media publish facts), but there is no evidence of enforcement of moral or ethical standards in the industry. Future studies may need to factor in the effect of ethics and standardization.

The main finding in this study is that publications have an established structure, format and editing conventions that are extremely powerful vehicles to reflect and shape the cognitive processes of their audience in more or less similar ways despite geopolitical differences. The study also found that the flow and focus of publication coverage of presidential opinion poll stories may vary (game schema versus governing schema). It would be interesting to study neutrality as a major factor in major publications around the world.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Newsstand© Images of Publications

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Appendix B ANOVA Portrayal of Candidates

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (negative candidate coverage)

Dependent Variable: rating_negative

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	39.755 ^a	5	7.951	7.957	.000
Intercept	206.456	1	206.456	206.621	.000
Publication	11.783	1	11.783	11.792	.001
candidate	14.251	2	7.126	7.131	.001
Publication * candidate	2.307	2	1.153	1.154	.316
Error	566.549	567	.999		
Total	932.000	573			
Corrected Total	606.304	572			

a. R Squared = .066 (Adjusted R Squared = .057)

Descriptives Portrayal of Candidates

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					rating_positve			
Nation	152	.47	.718	.058	.36	.59	0	2
NYT	420	.65	.985	.048	.55	.74	0	4
Total	572	.60	.924	.039	.52	.68	0	4
rating_negative								
Nation	153	-.516	.6892	.0557	-.626	-.406	-2.0	.0
NYT	420	-.840	1.1165	.0545	-.948	-.733	-5.0	.0
Total	573	-.754	1.0295	.0430	-.838	-.669	-5.0	.0
rating_neutral								
Nation	51	.843	.7842	.1098	.623	1.064	.0	3.0
NYT	140	1.007	1.1722	.0991	.811	1.203	.0	4.0
Total	191	.963	1.0827	.0783	.809	1.118	.0	4.0

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
rating_positve	Between Groups	3.285	1	3.285	3.868	.050
	Within Groups	484.035	570	.849		
	Total	487.320	571			
rating_negative	Between Groups	11.783	1	11.783	11.316	.001
	Within Groups	594.521	571	1.041		
	Total	606.304	572			
rating_neutral	Between Groups	1.006	1	1.006	.857	.356
	Within Groups	221.738	189	1.173		
	Total	222.743	190			

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
rating_positve	11.908	1	570	.001
rating_negative	27.936	1	571	.000
rating_neutral	13.406	1	189	.000

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Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable:rating_negative

Publication	candidate	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
NTN	Incumbent	-.549	.7298	51
	Opposition	-.373	.6312	51
	Other	-.627	.6917	51
	Total	-.516	.6892	153
NYT	Incumbent	-.929	1.1101	140
	Opposition	-.500	.8608	140
	Other	-1.093	1.2632	140
	Total	-.840	1.1165	420
Total	Incumbent	-.827	1.0344	191
	Opposition	-.466	.8063	191
	Other	-.969	1.1558	191
	Total	-.754	1.0295	573

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable:rating_neutral

Publica tion	candidate	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
NTN	Incumbent	.843	.7842	51
	Total	.843	.7842	51
NYT	Incumbent	1.007	1.1722	140
	Total	1.007	1.1722	140
Total	Incumbent	.963	1.0827	191
	Total	.963	1.0827	191

Levene's Test of Equality of Error

Variances^a

Dependent Variable:rating_neutral

F	df1	df2	Sig.
13.406	1	189	.000

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

Levene's Test of Equality of Error

Variances^a

Dependent Variable:rating_neutral

F	df1	df2	Sig.
13.406	1	189	.000

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + Publication + candidate + Publication * candidate

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

opposition_Pos

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
6.501	1	189	.012

Robust Tests of Equality of Means

opposition_Pos

	Statistic ^a	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	4.748	1	133.682	.031
Brown- Forsythe	4.748	1	133.682	.031

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable:rating_neutral

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1.006 ^a	1	1.006	.857	.356
Intercept	127.979	1	127.979	109.084	.000
Publication	1.006	1	1.006	.857	.356
candidate	.000	0	.	.	.
Publication *	.000	0	.	.	.
candidate					
Error	221.738	189	1.173		
Total	400.000	191			
Corrected Total	222.743	190			

a. R Squared = .005 (Adjusted R Squared = -.001)

1. Publication

Dependent Variable:rating_neutral

Publication	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
NTN	.843	.152	.544	1.142
NYT	1.007	.092	.827	1.188

2. candidate

Dependent Variable:rating_neutral

candidate	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Incumbent	.925	.089	.750	1.100

3. Publication * candidate

Dependent Variable: rating_neutral

Publication	candidate	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
NTN	Incumbent	.843	.152	.544	1.142
NYT	Incumbent	1.007	.092	.827	1.188

Appendix C Oneway ANOVA Candidate Ratings

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
rating_positve	Between Groups	3.285	1	3.285	3.868	.050
	Within Groups	484.035	570	.849		
	Total	487.320	571			
rating_negative	Between Groups	11.783	1	11.783	11.316	.001
	Within Groups	594.521	571	1.041		
	Total	606.304	572			
rating_neutral	Between Groups	1.006	1	1.006	.857	.356
	Within Groups	221.738	189	1.173		
	Total	222.743	190			

Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
						incumbent_ Neg	NTN		
	NYT	140	.929	1.1101	.0938	.743	1.114	.0	4.0
	Total	191	.827	1.0344	.0748	.680	.975	.0	4.0
incumbent_ Pos	NTN	51	.510	.7582	.1062	.297	.723	.0	2.0
	NYT	140	.564	.9230	.0780	.410	.719	.0	4.0
	Total	191	.550	.8804	.0637	.424	.675	.0	4.0
opposition_ Neg	NTN	51	.373	.6312	.0884	.195	.550	.0	2.0
	NYT	140	.500	.8608	.0728	.356	.644	.0	4.0
	Total	191	.466	.8063	.0583	.351	.581	.0	4.0
opposition_ Pos	NTN	51	.667	.7916	.1108	.444	.889	.0	2.0
	NYT	140	.993	1.1905	.1006	.794	1.192	.0	4.0
	Total	191	.906	1.1057	.0800	.748	1.064	.0	4.0
Other_Neg	NTN	51	.627	.6917	.0969	.433	.822	.0	2.0
	NYT	140	1.093	1.2632	.1068	.882	1.304	.0	5.0
	Total	191	.969	1.1558	.0836	.804	1.134	.0	5.0

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Other_Pos	NTN	51	.255	.5232	.0733	.108	.402	.0	2.0
	NYT	140	.379	.6729	.0569	.266	.491	.0	3.0
	Total	191	.346	.6374	.0461	.255	.437	.0	3.0

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
incumbent_Neg	7.390	1	189	.007
incumbent_Pos	.596	1	189	.441
opposition_Neg	3.272	1	189	.072
opposition_Pos	6.501	1	189	.012
Other_Neg	16.857	1	189	.000
Other_Pos	5.670	1	189	.018

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
incumbent_Neg	Between Groups	5.385	1	5.385	5.143	.024
	Within Groups	197.913	189	1.047		
	Total	203.298	190			
incumbent_Pos	Between Groups	.111	1	.111	.143	.706
	Within Groups	147.167	189	.779		
	Total	147.277	190			
opposition_Neg	Between Groups	.607	1	.607	.934	.335
	Within Groups	122.922	189	.650		
	Total	123.529	190			
opposition_Pos	Between Groups	3.977	1	3.977	3.292	.071
	Within Groups	228.326	189	1.208		
	Total	232.304	190			

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Other_Neg	Between	8.097	1	8.097	6.228	.013
	Groups					
	Within Groups	245.714	189	1.300		
	Total	253.812	190			
Other_Pos	Between	.572	1	.572	1.410	.237
	Groups					
	Within Groups	76.622	189	.405		
	Total	77.194	190			

Robust Tests of Equality of Means

		Statistic ^a	df1	df2	Sig.
incumbent_Neg	Welch	7.486	1	135.251	.007
	Brown-Forsythe	7.486	1	135.251	.007
incumbent_Pos	Welch	.171	1	107.306	.680
	Brown-Forsythe	.171	1	107.306	.680
opposition_Neg	Welch	1.239	1	120.762	.268
	Brown-Forsythe	1.239	1	120.762	.268
opposition_Pos	Welch	4.748	1	133.682	.031
	Brown-Forsythe	4.748	1	133.682	.031
Other_Neg	Welch	10.424	1	160.225	.002
	Brown-Forsythe	10.424	1	160.225	.002
Other_Pos	Welch	1.778	1	113.578	.185
	Brown-Forsythe	1.778	1	113.578	.185

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

Appendix D: Research Questions

- i. Is any existent desire for fresh and exciting stories that may make reporters vulnerable to charges that they stress campaign strategy and controversy over the candidates' policy proposals?
- ii. Are the intricacies involved in how the media has embraced the democratization process endeared in electioneering? The main emphasis will be on the presidential opinion polls and how two major newspapers have used this item as a content hitherto comparatively analyzing the nature of such content.
- iii. Is it plausible to argue that the Kenya media will highlight other factors that could give victory to certain candidates on d-day?
- iv. To find out whether media use of opinion polling prior to elections can contribute a catharsis effect such that the electorate can easily embrace the projected outcome.
- v. Is it illogical to draw comparison between U.S. and Kenya given the significant civilization admixture and geo-positions in light of elections and media?
- vi. The study will analyze whether these fantasies then become the realities to which players respond with political action.
- vii. Do the media exacerbate opinion polling reporting therefore giving them unfair advantage to the presidential candidate whose rating seems to be steadily improving? Do they undermine the democratic process by influencing voter behavior and election results
- viii. How are the statistics observed in media usage prompting political parties and organizations or the electorate to use media differently
- ix. Do the editors and authors of the *New York Times* and the *Nation* share a proactive and positive perspective toward a specific political proclivity?

- x. Are the editors and authors of the *New York Times* and the *Nation* share a proactive and positive perspective toward a specific political proclivity?

