Stabilizing the Contours of Democracy in Kenya: An Analysis of Audiences' Perceptions of Radio Contents in 2007 and 2013 Political Cycles.

Mwangi, M. Kamau[1]

1. School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Nairobi, Kenya. P.O. Box 7624 - 00100
Nairobi, Kenya. Email: drmwangikamau@gmail.com

Abstract

The paper argues that the understanding of the social construction of the practice of democracy is expanded when relevant social groups such as mass media and voters are analyzed to see how 'interpretative flexibility' and 'closure' occurs. The paper focuses on the coverage of the presidential candidates by vernacular radio in the 2007 and 2013 general elections in Kenya. The two political cycles present what the author calls the '*dilatory* and *cogent* waves of media operations in Kenya. The two political cycles are used in the analyses of mass media operations for two major reasons; First, they provide what Nigel and Mulkay (1984) called 'Rhetorical Repertoire' through which audience give their interpretation of a process as well as their application in terms of their actions. And second, they are used as an analytical tools of comparison. The media terrain is explored by analyzing both *Inooro* and *Kass* FM audiences' perceptions about how the two stations covered the key presidential candidates in the two general elections. It concludes that, a cogent mass media wave can be used to break the audiences' intercultural barriers which stand in the way of a community's strength and mutual benefits.

Keywords: Democracy, vernacular radio, audience, perception, mass media coverage

1. Introduction

The new world is roaring about us in an amazing way. For instance, In less than 100 years after the 2nd world war, the engines of change have continued to throttle in relentless accelerations, leaving in their wake, devastating changes; sometimes frightful and sometimes appealing changes. Within those short years, communism disintegrated (signaling the end of bipolar world); capitalist surged as the star issue; and globalization of the economy became complete. Consequently, communism was swept aside and cold war ended. Similarly, in those short years the white rule in Africa ended. It was then that, millions in Eastern Europe and in third world came to believe that their best chance for better life lay in democratic societies, and largely controlled by the market forces.

The net effect of these (above belief) is that the concept of democracy has been elevated to super status in the contemporary society and has become a defining feature of the new world order. Democracy as it were, has become synonymous with free people, free society and what is generally called free world. Ironically, these ideals sometimes lead to the waging of war: the Iraq War; the Libyan War; the Arab revolts and currently the Syrian conflicts and in Kenya there was the near genocidal 2008 post-poll violence.

In Africa, losers in democratic process (presidential elections) hardly accept defeat. As a result, democracy has become a costly principle in many third world countries due to the resultant conflicts and political turmoil. In Kenya for instance, different general elections have resulted in diverse and interesting scenarios in terms of how the Kenyans react to their outcomes. These scenarios are rich sight for scholarly investigations.

The paper focuses on the coverage of the presidential candidates by vernacular radio in the 2007 and 2013 general election in Kenya. The two general elections present what I call the '*dilatory* wave cycle and *cogent* wave cycle' scenarios of media operation in Kenya in relation to the Kenya's democratic process. These two terms are used in order to help in focusing and directing the paper's scholarly gaze.

All phenomenon are defined by their moments. Consequently, '*dilatory* wave and *cogent* waves are used to refer to bad media practice and good media practice respectively. This is in line with Martin Luther King's Jr. position that, 'the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of change and controversy'. The same thought are identifiable in Milton's argument that, 'good and evil of this world grow up together almost inseparable…sometimes we know good through understanding evil.' Where then did mass media stand when Kenya as a country had swang to the lowest democratic web (2007) and where did they stand when kenya swang to the higher pedestal of democracy (2013)?

In my opinion, both the 2007 and 2013 general elections - (dilatory wave and cogent waves) capture important but diametrically opposed political cycles from which lessons of democracy and the role played by mass media in nurturing it, will forever be learnt. This is close to what Mody (2000) refer to as 'intelligibility is a function of difference' or what those in semiotic and philosophy of language calls *diff'erance. Diff'erance* is

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[1] Dr. Mwangi, M. Kamau is a Lecturer at School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Nairobi. He is a specialist in Communication theory, Communication Research and Public Relations. He is also, interested in governance, democracy and application of mass media in social transformation.

building meaning through distinctiveness and differences. The two cycles it is argued give at least in narrative formats audiences' evaluative outcome of mass media behaviour in relation to democracy (presidential coverage). The audience's responses become important anchor points upon which good practice and bad practice of mass media may be distinguished. The two political cycles are illustrative of how media contents can sometimes alter the contours of democracy leading to derailment and societal turmoil as well as be used as stabilizing levers leading to societal stability and equilibrium.

Historically, a *cogent-wave* cycle of mass media operations and practice in Africa and in Kenya in particular can be identified during the period of independent struggles in Africa. During these struggles, there existed a positive correlation between African mass media operations and the drive for political independence or what the paper calls 'African awakening'. Hachten (1983) capture this phenomenon as follows: As independence neared, African politics and newspaper became closely entwined. Major political figures successfully rose to political power on the back of advocacy journalism.

In Kenya for instance, the first owned newspaper in Kenya was *Mwigwithania* published in Kikuyu language by Kikuyu Central Organization. It was edited by Johnstone Kamau, later to be known as Jomo Kenyatta, independent Kenya's first president. Such a development was repeated elsewhere in Africa: Kwame Nkruma of Ghana, Nyerere of Tanzania, Madiba (Mandela) in South Africa and Obote in Uganda – just to mention but a few.

Indeed, in British-ruled-Africa as well as in the entire British Empire, there is an established pattern that, in the struggles for independence, the main influence in the awakening of racial and political consciousness was the emergence of mass media controlled by the nationalist leaders. Clearly, at the dawn of independence, there was high expectation that mass media were to become a canonical democratic voice in the emerging states. How wrong! The assumption never materialized. The emerging leaders suddenly developed cold feet in their promotion of African consciousness. Majority of these leaders killed the independent mass media at the cradle. Suddenly, in minds and in the deeds of pioneering African leaders, independent mass media in Africa was no longer necessary. The paper posits that such pull and push games by the pioneering leaders, especially as informed by the bipolar world of capitalism and socialism contributed a lot in influencing this outcome and which in my opinion also set the early media in newly independents states in Africa on the *dilatory wave* which made them ineffective democratic tools.

Nkruma's definition of **'**true African Journalist' vividly captures what we mean by and push games that creates the *dilatory-wave*. He says*, 'just as in the capitalist countries the press represents and carries out the purposes of capitalism, so in revolutionary Africa, our revolutionary press must represent and carry forward our revolutionary purposes'. He adds 'his newspaper is a collective organizer, a collective educator – a weapon first and foremost to overthrow colonialism and imperialism and to assist total African independence and unity. ...the true African journalist very often works for the organs of the political party to which he himself belongs and whose purpose he believes'.* Hatchen (1993, 28). From the quote, the role of mass media in building democracy was abandoned and instead they were to become tools of state consolidation and to support pioneering African leaders, who by then had acquired demigod statuses. With this new norm, the role of media shifted to serve the government rather than to educate the people. This then, is but a historical glance into the past which broadly shed right on how the African media started and perhaps in the wrong footing.

From this early misstep of mass media in their democratic role, and the troubled democracies that are scattered all over the world, there is a need to restate, reinforce and even demonstrate empirically how specific mass media platforms contributes in the democratic process. Without this knowledge, the role of media in democratic process will continue to be subdued by the political turmoil and conflicts that have become common whenever a democratic process of voting is undertaken and its resultant outcome challenged.

Lyengar and Reeves (1997) argue that, the 24-hour news coverage with instant global reach and live reporting have altered the pace and mode of decision making by actors in a given community. Mass media are able to alter the pace and mode of decision because they are consumed by everybody - which in turns creates a sphere of shared knowledge where each actor in the system knows what the other know. Clearly, the mass media are good in steering attention, creating awareness and giving information (McCombs and Shaw 1977).

Variegated approaches illustrates how mass media impacts on society is practiced and lived: Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) talks of *Mediatization.* This is a situation where political institutions/actors are increasingly dependent on and shaped by the mass media…they note that a slip of the tongue, a leaked email, or a premature public statement can damage not only a policy issue but also a political career. According to Meyer (2002) mass media have 'colonized' the political process by imposing their operational logic on institutional procedures of public policy. Page and Shapiro (1992) talks of media coverage and public opinion formation; Herbst (1998) talks of policy making alignment to media priorities; Davis (2007) talks of media influence via 'anticipatory news media effects' – where policy makers evaluate policy based on reaction they might trigger in media.

All what the above scholars indicate is that, the media's role in a democratic election is crucial. A voting citizen needs to be properly informed, in order to able to decide who will best represent his or her interest and

views. This information has to be honest fair and delivered in a responsible manner. Clearly, there can never be democratic elections without a free press. To qualify as 'free and fair', not only must the election take place under appropriate political and administrative conditions but voters /citizens must have adequate information about the parties, candidates and voting procedures to ensure that they make an informed and valid choice.

Positions vary about how the above tasks (which in essence constitute a public duty or what is generally called public interest) are to be achieved. Usually, it is broadly accepted that for media to inform the public in a rigorous and honest manner (perform fourth estate role), they must be independent and free of any political, ideological, or economic pressures. It must not be misconstrued that, mass media should do anything they wish but rather they are called to a high calling. They must ensure that they act responsibly. The media must themselves contribute to the fairness of the poll. This implies that contenders and voters should be treated equally, provided they abide by the rules of the electro game. Thus, news selection in a democratic context involves a measure of responsibility. On this Milton (in Areopagitica) would say 'such journalist...emphasize mine, need to be men and women above the common measure; studious, learned and judicious.'

Frere (2011) argues that, for the media to stay the cause of public duty in a given campaign period, they must put forth some operational rules and guidelines. Among the mechanism Frere advocates for includes: journalists codes of conduct, legal and regulatory laws, press laws, and electoral codes. Such frame-works should then be used in regulating how framing of different types of messages - generally considered problematic in any political cycle - is treated. The problematic areas include: political information (generated by journalists themselves through news treatment), political communication (debates and round table discussion in which various candidates and parties are invited to express themselves directly), political advertisement (advertising space sold to contenders and parties for diffusion of their campaign messages) electoral information (publication of useful official information such as electoral registers and results) and finally the publications of opinion polls. Further issues of concern include hate speech and libelous statements.

Frere's regulatory regimes are illustrative of how the *dilatory-wave* may be created. Every time a journalist /media institutions fails in his/her/its obligations to society, the seed of dilatory-wave is planted. The paper uses Frere's logic and concentrates on the problem areas as identified above (political information, political communication, political advertisement, electoral information). Audiences' perceptions about radio contents on these issues for two democratic cycles in Kenya (2007 and 2013 presidential race) are then evaluated. Inferentially, exposure to mass communication is conceptualized as a necessary avenue which can facilitate the democratic process and nation building.

The mass media are expected – because they serve the public interest- to foster peoples' affiliation, identity and political viability for their country. In any case, the contemporary 'media generation' acquire knowledge of themselves, others and the world actively in and through mass media and to a lesser degree by interaction with peers and authority.

Bert (2007) for instance argue that, the challenge for media is how to manage to communicate and act in common while remaining internally different. From Bert, mass media should help people to discover the common among their differences in order to create what he calls 'like-minded' people. He concludes that, the common shared spaces' by people despite their diversity and differences could be used to cultivate democracy.

This study adopts a process paradigm approach (what stakeholders perceive as the quality of the product (as promised by product makers) and its process as again promised by product maker and as expected by users). That is, the stakeholders' perceptions about a phenomenon. In this case, an analysis of *Kass* and *Inooro's* audiences' perceptions concerning how the two radio stations covered the presidential race in both the 2007 and 2013 general elections is undertaken. The study is about the media's influence on citizens' political attitudes and political behaviour as informed in what is generally called mass media political marketing.

2. The problem

While a lot of researches have provided a large and rapidly growing bank of knowledge concerning the role of mass media and democracy, studies of specific mass media vehicle such as vernacular radio stations are only beginning. Consequently, researchers and scholars must look beyond mainstream private and government's mass media and refocus their scholarly gaze towards other directions such as vernacular radio and television stations.

For both the 2007 and 2013 general elections in Kenya, one major element stands out: Two major tribes in Kenya (the Luo and the Kikuyu tribes) were the major protagonists in the presidential race, their sons Hon. Raila Odinga (a key Luo leader) and Hon Mwai Kibaki (a key Kikuyu leader) were the main competitors in the presidential contest in 2007. Kibaki emerged the winner in a bitterly contested presidential election. Raila was also a presidential candidate in 2013 General elections. Uhuru Kenyatta (another key Kikuyu leader) was a presidential candidate in the 2013 General elections (he eventually won the presidential contest).

In the 2007 Presidential race the *Kalenjin* tribe in Kenya supported almost to a man the candidature of Hon Raila Odinga. They even adopted him as their political son, giving him a political moniker *arap Mibei* (son of Mibei) Shilaho (2013). Whereas five years later (2013) they supported almost to a man the candidature of Hon

Uhuru Kenyatta – Raila's greatest competitor. The same cannot be said about the Kikuyu community who supported Kibaki, a man from their own community in 2007 and overwhmly supported Uhuru (a Kikuyu) in 2013. For Kikuyu voters there was continuity in support of a presidential candidate whereas for Kalenjin voters there was a discontinuity.

Key questions can validly be asked. How did Kass Fm and Inooro FM adapt to this new societal dynamics? In other words, how does mass media operations adapts to changed audiences' position. In case of *Kass* FM how did the voters' shift of allegiance (from Raila to Uhuru) impact on their packaging of political content? Similarly for *Inooro* how did the new political dynamics where political adversary ('enemy' tribe) suddenly become a friendly tribe impacts on their political contents from audiences' perception? Finally, what are the lessons to be learnt about media operations and democracy?

Kass and Inooro are vernacular radio stations and use Kalenjin and Kikuyu dialects respectively. They (*Kass* and *Inooro*) have massive following in their respective communities. Indeed, Joshua Sang (a journalist then working at Kass FM) was among the six Kenyans charged at the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crime against humanity as a result of 2007 post poll violence. Indicating, a perceived key role of vernacular radio in the post poll violence.

The Kenyan mass media covered both the 2007 and 2013 General elections in a variety of ways: regular news updates, live coverage of political rallies, In-depth political analysis and live-call-in shows (interactive shows), Civic education programmes, radio theatre and comedy shows, and playing of contemporary political songs and music composed to rally support to presidential candidates among others. Similarly, in both the 2007 and 2013 presidential elections, the presidential candidates and their supporters used very many strategies to win votes. They for instance: extensively used paid up media adverts, sought for favourable mass media coverage, bill boards, brochures, fryers, graffiti on walls and highway, Short message services (SMS) via mobile phones, political rallies and meet the people tours etc.

3. Methodology

The introduction reveals that democracy entails many interrelated issues. As such, the study explored respondent's perceptions about the vernacular radio's contents in relation to the democratic process of a presidential campaign in Kenya in both the 2007 and 2013 General elections. The study interrogated whether links could be found between a respondent's attitude and consumption of radio contents. The guiding issues were largely as identified by Frere (2011) –see earlier discussion.

For comparison purposes, two sets of data were used. The first set of data consisted of the Audiences' perception of the coverage of the presidential race in Kenya's 2007 general elections. This data was extracted from a PhD thesis titled: Vernacular Radio and Democracy: A Historical Reconstruction of Audiences Usage of Kass and Inooro radio stations in Uasin-Gishu District (2011) by the same author. In 2007, a sample of 384 audiences of *Kass* and *Inooro* radio stations from Uasin- Gishu District were studied. The District covers what is described as the epicentre of the 2007 post poll violence in Kenya. The audiences were reached through survey questions.

The second set of data consisted of vernacular radio's audiences' perceptions about the coverage of the presidential candidates in the Kenya's 2013 general election. A hundred (100) audiences from the same district (now Uasin Gishu County) were interrogated (50 from each radio station). Like in 2007 these audiences were reached through survey questions. The intention was to find out whether audiences of these radio stations could identify continuity and change in the way their radio covered the two political cycles and whether what the paper calls dilatory wave and cogent wave modes of media operations is observable from the audiences' rhetorical repertoire about radio outputs. Data collection for the 2013 general election was partially supported by Society of International Devolvement (SID), Kenya office. It was collected in June, 2014.

The *Kalenjin*s are the Highland Nilotes and forms principal population of Kenya's Western highlands in the present Rift Valley Province. Nganga (2006, 307) states that, the *Kalenjins* consist of seven principal groups with numerous subdivision within them. They are: Kipsigis, Nandi, Tugen, the Pokot, the Marakwet, the Keiyo, and the Saboat known as Southern *Kalenjins*. The *Kalenjins* formed the bedrock support for the Orange Democratic Movement led by Hon Raila Odinga in the Rift Valley during the 2007 General Election. In 2013 the Kalenjins supported the candidature of Uhuru Kenyatta. By extension Kass Fm was largely perceived to be supportive of the Raila's presidential Candidature in 2007 but supportive of Uhuru candidature in 2013.

The *Agikuyu* are the largest community in Kenya. They are central Bantus. Nganga (2006, 107) says that, their ancestral and spiritual homeland was what was formely known as the Central Province. They are also the second largest group in the Rift Valley Province. The Agikuyu formed the bedrock support for the PNU party led by Hon Mwai Kibaki during the 2007 General Election. In 2013, the Kikuyus supported the candidature of Uhuru Kenyatta. Like Kass Fm, *Inooro* fm was perceived to support Kibaki and Uhuru's presidential bids in 2007 and 2013 respectively.

4. Findings
4.1. Vernacular Radio stations as tools for Democracy Kenya
4.1.1. Radio ownership, Frequency and place of listening to the radio
The pattern of radio sets ownership (for 2007 and 2013) show no significant difference between the audiences of the two radio stations in the two set of data. Suffice to say that most audiences of *Kass* and *Inooro* owned a radio set. See pie Chart below (fig 1). The charts show that 76% of both *Kass* and *Inooro* audiences' owned the radio set they listened to. Secondly, 22% and 20% of *Kass* and *Inooro* audiences respectively listened to a radio set that belonged to the family. And 2% and 4% of Kass and Inooro audiences' listened to a radio that belonged to a friend. From this data, several inferences could be made. First, radio is a valued technology and is highly diffused among audiences. Secondly, listening to the radio could be a largely solitary activity, although audiences also listen to the radio with family members and sometimes with friends. Thirdly, the data suggests that radio technology is widely accessible to audiences. Consequently, radio must be playing a useful role in the lives of audiences and would be expected to impact on their behaviours.

Figure 1   Radio ownership
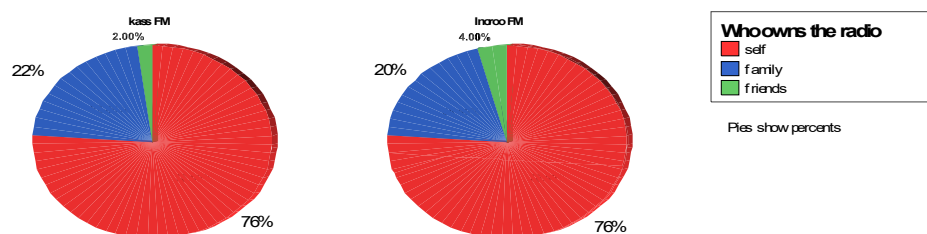
Clearly, radio is a valued technology and is highly diffused among audiences..

Similarly, *Kass* and *Inooro's* audiences showed no significant difference in terms of how often they listened to the radio. Of all audiences: a bigger number (41%) listened to the radio twice daily as opposed to once or more than thrice per day. (23% listen to the radio once daily, 32% three times a day and 4% once per week). The data suggest that the audiences are heavy consumers of radio contents. This heavy use of radio can be attributed to both ownership and accessibility to this technology.

4.1.2. Types of Radio Formats listened by audiences
Kass and *Inooro* radio stations have almost identical programming formats. Such formats includes: Regular news and updates, current affairs, political commentaries and analysis, routine producer/presenter based programmes, live call-ins, contemporary local and international music, greetings, education, and political advertisements. (See table 1)

The table indicates that, the two stations broadcast contents with very similar thematic orientations and they draw their broadcasting themes from the same societal issues.

Radio programmes	
KASS FM	**INOORO FM**
1. *Kass kuskong* – listen and turn	1. *Hagaria*-loosely translated as sharpen
2. *Leenee-emet*—what the nation/world is saying	2. T*hiririka*–loosely translted as flow
3. *Kass international*—focused on diaspora discussants	3. *Rikiria* – loosely translated as deepen
4. *Kass ilosun*—hear and praise	4. Kuihuria- topping up
5. *Twolyot* – the 'bell'—late night programme dedicated to sexual and relationship talks. Adult programme	5. *Cuacua* – hurry up/or keep up
6. audiences calling sessions —identified very regular callers using various pseudo names such as chief whip, arap naibei, chepkirichot and Larry Marula. These callers talked radicalised politics	6. *Racuria* – open up your eyes
	7. *Hutia mundu* –loseely translated as feel/touch somebody aired Saturday night – strictly adult programme.

Table 1   Radio formats
Source Author's data

From the table, all the pragrammes of Kass and Inooro indicate very close resemblance. For instance in item 1. *Kass Kukong* (listen and turn) and Hagaria(sharpen) the programmes focus on educaive matter that areintended to make the their audiences'change focus (turn from their cureent stand or view) and be adquately

infomed (sharpen audiences' minds to make them better citizen). Again item 5 for Kass (twolyot) and Item 7 for Inooro (hutia Mundu) are adult programmes that deals with romatic issues.

4.2.0. Relationship between audiences' behaviour and usage of radio content
4.2.1. Vernacular radio and voting behaviour.

Audiences were asked to state the presidential candidate they supported and the presidential candidate perceived to be supported by their radio stations. The data obtained showed a remarkable contrast. In 2007 audiences were diametrically opposed in their political stand as opposed to 2013 which showed congruence in their support of presidential candidate. In 2007, 92% of *Kass* audiences perceived their radio as supporting Raila and 96% of *Inooro's* audiences perceived their radio to be supportive of Kibaki. In contrast in 2013, 86% of *Kass* audience thought their radio supported Uhuru and 98% of Inooro audiences thought Inooro supported Uhuru.

When audiences were asked whether they supported the same presidential candidate as the vernacular radio, 91% of *Kass'* audience said Yes- they supported Raila, against 95% of *Inooro's* audiences who said they supported Kibaki in 2007. Moreover, even those audiences of *Kass* who did not support the same presidential candidate – Raila, nevertheless, said *Kass* radio station was perceived to support him. Similarly, the *Inooro's* audiences who did not support Kibaki still said I*nooro* supported him.

In 2013, about eight in every ten audiences (83.7%) of *Kass* audiences also voted for the candidate supported by their radio station- Uhuru. Similarly, almost all (97.7%) of Inooro's audiences supported the candidate perceived to be supported by their radio station.

From table's statistics, there is a relationship between vernacular radio perceived support and the candidate supported by the audience. This data constitute part of the proof that vernacular radio contents have an impact on both the candidates' electoral performance and the audiences' actions (such as supporting or not supporting). Secondly, the data points out that the vernacular radio stations did support specific presidential candidates and rallied support for them. The data indicates that Raila seemed to have lost both the support from the *Kass* radio station as well as from its audiences (See the tables 2a &2b below).

Table 2 a (2007 data) Candidate's perceived support by vernacular radio and support by audiences.

Did you support the same presidential candidate as supported by vernacular radio	V. radio		Presidential candidate supported by vernacular radio		Total
			Raila	Kibaki	
Yes	Kass FM	% within VERNACULAR RADIO	90.5%	9.5%	100.0%
		% within candidate supported by vernacular radio	95.0%	9.1%	50.0%
		% of Total	45.2%	4.8%	50.0%
	Inooro FM	% within VERNACULAR RADIO	4.8%	95.2%	100.0%
		% within candidate supported by vernacular radio	5.0%	90.9%	50.0%
		% of Total	2.4%	47.6%	50.0%
	Total	% within VERNACULAR RADIO	47.6%	52.4%	100.0%
		% within candidate supported by vernacular radio	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	47.6%	52.4%	100.0%
No	kass FM	% within VERNACULAR RADIO	100.0%		100.0%
		% within candidate supported by vernacular radio	100.0%		50.0%
		% of Total	50.0%		50.0%
	Inooro FM	% within VERNACULAR RADIO		100.0%	100.0%
		% within candidate supported by vernacular radio		100.0%	50.0%
		% of Total		50.0%	50.0%
	Total	% within VERNACULAR RADIO	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within candidate supported by vernacular radio	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Table 2b Candidate's perceived support by vernacular radio and support by audience 2013)

V. RADIO	did you support same candidate supported by V. Radio		Presidential candidate supported by vernacular radio			Total
			Uhuru	Raila	Neither	
kass FM	Yes	Count	36	3	4	43
		% within did you support the same candidate supported by vernacular radio	83.7%	7.0%	9.3%	100.0%
		% within candidate supported by vernacular radio	83.7%	100.0%	100.0%	86.0%
		% of Total	72.0%	6.0%	8.0%	86.0%
	No	Count	7	0	0	7
		% within did you support the same candidate supported by vernacular radio	100.0%	.0%	.0%	100.0%
		% within candidate supported by vernacular radio	16.3%	.0%	.0%	14.0%
		% of Total	14.0%	.0%	.0%	14.0%
	Total	Count	43	3	4	50
		% within did you support the same candidate supported by vernacular radio	86.0%	6.0%	8.0%	100.0%
		% within candidate supported by vernacular radio	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	86.0%	6.0%	8.0%	100.0%
Inoroo FM	Yes	Count	43	1		44
		% within did you support the same candidate supported by vernacular radio	97.7%	2.3%		100.0%
		% within candidate supported by vernacular radio	87.8%	100.0%		88.0%
		% of Total	86.0%	2.0%		88.0%
	No	Count	6	0		6
		% within did you support the same candidate supported by vernacular radio	100.0%	.0%		100.0%
		% within candidate supported by vernacular radio	12.2%	.0%		12.0%
		% of Total	12.0%	.0%		12.0%
	Total	Count	49	1		50
		% within did you support the same candidate supported by vernacular radio	98.0%	2.0%		100.0%
		% within candidate supported by vernacular radio	100.0%	100.0%		100.0%
		% of Total	98.0%	2.0%		100.0%

Source: Author's data.

**4.2.2. Radio, Knowledge level and promotion of democracy.**
Both *Kass* and *Inooros'* audiences thought vernacular radio was important in promoting democracy. About 93% of all audience supported this perspective against 6% who said it played 'somewhat important' role and 1% said it played 'no role'. Similarly, both audiences of *Kass* and *Inooro* said there were programmes that supported democracy during and after the 2007 and 2013 General elections. Three in four audiences (76%) said such programmes were indeed aired very regularly. Only about one in every ten of all audiences (9%) said they did not know whether such programmes existed. In any case, about 60% of *Kass* and 40% of *Inooro* audiences said they heard the programmes at least once in a day and once in a week respectively. Furthermore, 92% of all audiences said that those programmes were effective in delivering knowledge and information about democracy. Apart from slight percentage deviation almost similar responses were reported for 2013 data.
4.2.3. Owning a radio set and knowledge of Democracy
The data suggests that owning a radio increased chances of improving on ones' knowledge level. It is clear from figure 2 below that, in general terms, the percentage of audiences who owned a radio set had a higher score in the level of knowledge about democracy. For instance, 17% of audiences who owned a radio set said they were not at all knowledgeable about democracy. The percent of the audiences who are not 'at all knowledgeable'

increased to 19% for those who listened to a family radio and a score of zero at the 'extreme knowledgeable' and 'knowledgeable' levels for those listening to a friend's radio. Similarly, 55% of the audiences owning a radio set had slight knowledge about democracy against 43% for those who accessed a family radio. In addition, when one uses the positive values of knowledge, that is, 'extremely knowledgeable', 'knowledgeable' and 'slightly knowledgeable', those owning a radio scored 83% knowledge level against 81 % for those using a family radio.

Figure 2 Relationship between owning a radio set and democracy

**How knowledgeable do you perceive yourself in terms of democracy**
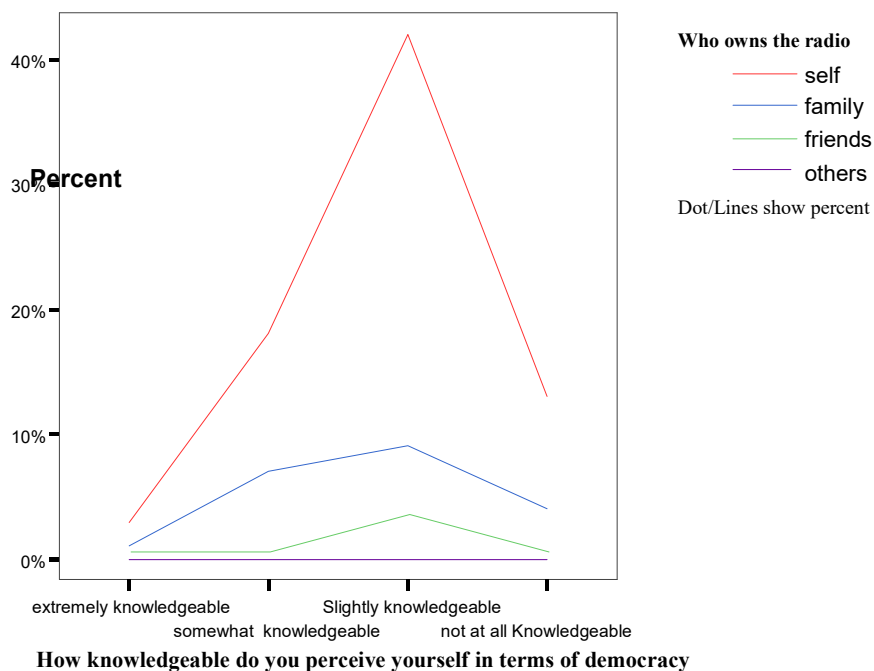
Thus, owning a radio set increases the audiences' chances of increasing his/her knowledge about democracy. From figure 2, it is evident that, the audience with the least knowledge about democracy also did not own radio sets. Clearly, owning a radio enhanced acquisition of democratic knowledge.

4.2.4. Frequency of listening to the radio and democracy

The frequency of listening to the radio also increased knowledge level of audiences. The data indicates that audiences listening to the radio only once in a week had less knowledge about democracy than audiences listening to the radio more frequently, say, once, twice or thrice per day (See figure 3 below).

Fig 3 Frequency of listening to the radio and knowledge level.

How Knowledgeable are you in matters democracy
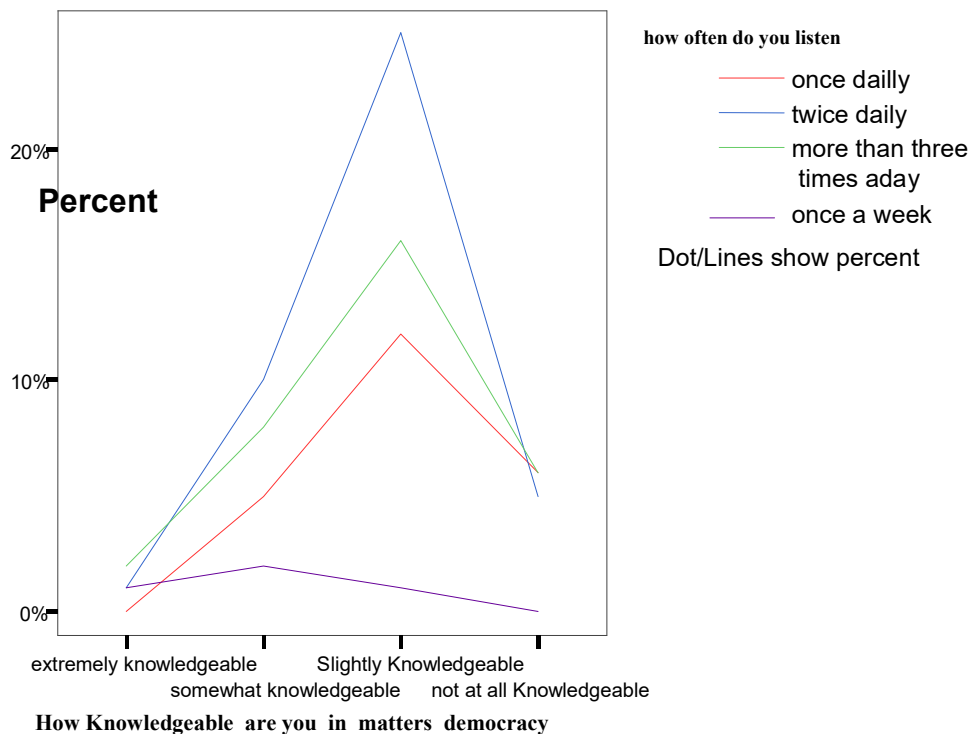
From the figure, we can see that, the frequency of listening to the radio increases the audiences' knowledge. The figure indicates a general lack of knowledge for audiences who listened to the radio only once per week. For those listening to the radio once, 21 % were extremely knowledgeable against 24% and 25% for those listening twice and thrice per day.

Generally, the strong relationship between listening and increased audiences' knowledge levels trend is repeated with other variables like: knowledge of tribes, duty and obligations of citizens and the functions of political parties. Categorically, the data demonstrates that listening to the radio more often increases knowledge. A process we are calling the cogent wave of radio operation

The data suggests that owning and listening to the radio frequently increased the chances of the audiences being knowledgeable about their duties and obligations.

4.2.5. Presidential debates and the Peace Industry

In 2013, a historical moment happened. For the first time in the Kenya's political history two sets of Presidential debates were organized. The debates were aired live and broadcasted simultaneously by all media houses in Kenya. The debates generated a lot of mass media debates and discussions. Indeed, 9 in 10 of both *Kass* and *Inooro's* audiences claimed to have heard and listened to this debates in 2013. A remarkable performance for radio stations. The audiences reported that the debates were very useful and were appropriate form of democratic information.

Similarly, *Kass* and *Inooro's* audiences identified the peace theme as a leitmotif issue for Kass and Inooro broadcasts in 2013. Slightly over 8 (83%) in 10 audiences of *Kass* and *Inooro* said they heard more peace messages in 2013 than in 2007 general election. This data suggests that the radio stations were operating in a very different mood in 2013- what the paper calls the cogent wave mode.

5.0. Challenges Faced by Vernacular Radio stations in Ethnically Diverse Nation-state

Audiences of *Kass* and *Inooro* were as pessimistic for their radio undermining democracy as they were optimistic for its role in enhancing it. For instance, nine out of ten audiences (85%) said unregulated vernacular radio posed serious threat to democracy against one in every ten audiences (10%) who said it posed no serious threat. Eight in every ten audiences (84%) of all audiences said that there were programmes aired by vernacular radio that required regulation. Seven in ten (70%) of all audiences out of which 52% and 48% were *Kass* and *Inooro's* audiences respectively said these programmes (requiring regulation) injured democracy.

5.1. Mistrust and Unbalanced contents in radio Programmes
In terms of whether the audiences trusted the radio programmes fully, partially or not at all, there was no significant difference between the way *Kass* and *Inooro's* audiences responded to live political talk's shows, live coverage of political campaigns, contemporary local political songs, political advertisements, greetings, education programmes, and political advertisements. On average more than 8 in 10 audiences (84%) of both Kass and Inooro audiences perceived these programmes as prejudicial in 2007. In 2013, they again scored an average of 62% in terms of perceived prejudice (6 in 10 audience said the programmes were biased and prejudicial). Clearly, and in line with Frere (2001) observations, these radio contents needed regulation and control.

5.1.1. Political talk shows and commentaries
Apart from a few programmes like general news, greetings and education programmes that are trusted fully by the audiences and who's content are projected as balanced to other audiences (non – speaker of vernacular language), the bulk of the vernacular radio programmes and formats are neither balanced nor trusted. For example, in 2007, 86% and 90% of all the audiences partially trusted the contents of live political campaigns and thought the programmes were very unbalanced for *Kass* and *Inooro* radios respectively (See fig 4).

Figure 4.Relationship between content balance and level of trust for political talks and commentaries
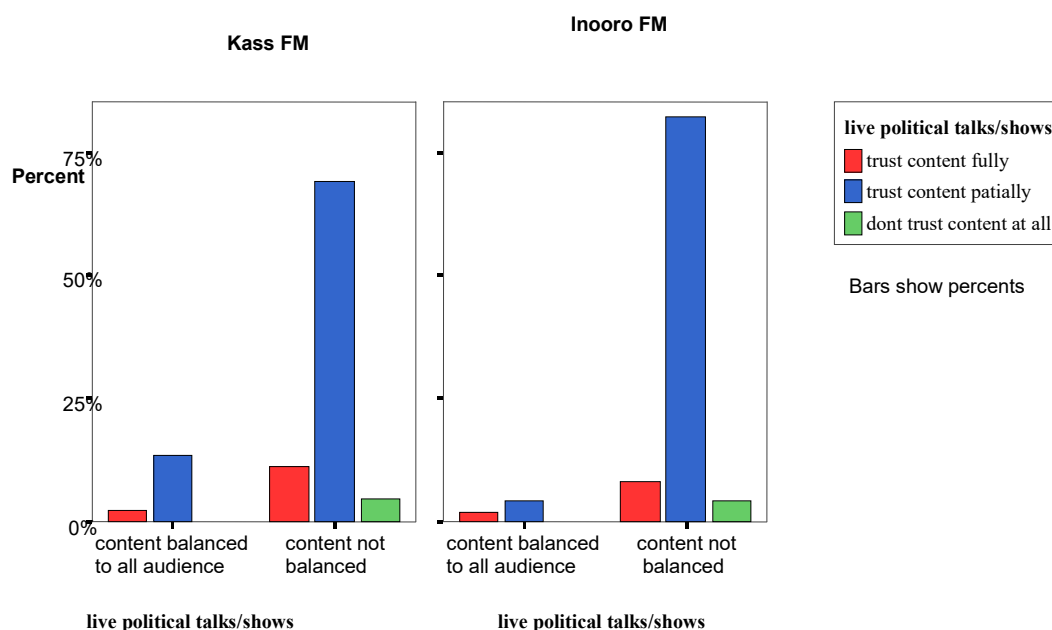
For both radio stations, most audiences partially trusted live political talk shows and commentaries. 85% of all audiences trusted this category partially. 84 and 94 % of *Kass* and *Inooro* audiences respectively said the contents were not balanced. Only 11% of all audiences trusted live political commentaries fully, and another 4% did not trust contents of live political rallies at all.

5.1.2. Political Songs
Most of the *Kass* and *Inooro's* audiences partially trusted the contents received from contemporary local political songs. 78% of all audiences trusted political songs partially and 6% didn't trust political songs. Seven in ten of *Kass* and I*nooro's* audiences (67%) thought that contemporary political songs were not balanced. Political songs are lethal carriers of ethnic feelings, biases, and ethnic stereotypes. Indeed, Mungai (2007, 339) observes that in most African societies, music and songs play an important part in the social life of the community. He cautions that, stereotypes in songs constitute a corpus of folklore, originated within the 'in groups' and deployed against the 'out groups'. He also notes that stereotyping through songs and other folkloric texts retain their potency in subversive agenda because their production exists outside the direct control of the state and industry.
In most African communities, songs are used in a variety of ways: rally people into a specific course, call for peace and war, and to praise the heroes and demonize the villains among others. Political songs were important voices in 2007 and 2013 General Elections. They were aired very regularly.

6.0. Sources of prejudices, negative ethnicity and radio propaganda.
Negative ethnicity is perceived as one of the greatest contributors to audiences' narrow world view. In 2007

general election 2/3 of the audiences (66%) were of the opinion that, *Kass* and *Inooro* radio stations did promote negative ethnicity. Likewise, half (52%) of *Kass* and *Inooro's* audiences said that the two stations did not cover other ethnic groups (tribes) objectively, although they believed that the two stations gave true and factual political information during and after the 2007 General Election. And ¾ (75%) of all the audiences said *Kass* and *Inooro* the vernacular radio were used as propaganda tools. Politicians and the vernacular radio caused about 70% of all prejudices.

For 2013, there were remarkable changes in the way radio stations were evaluated along the above values. For instance, in 2013 only three in every ten (32%) of the audiences perceived their radio as promoting negative ethnicity. This was a 34% increase in improvement on this variable. However, 57% of audience thought that their radio did not cover other tribes objectively. This was a 5% decrease on their rating based on this variable. Despite this observation audiences still thought vernacular radio gave true and factual political information in 2013 general election. In 2013, 85% of audiences said vernacular radios were never used for propaganda, a complete reversal of what they had said in 2007.

6.1. Social distance and radios' projection of a tribe discrimination by Central Government.

A shocking finding in 2007 General election was the finding that, about 25% of the respondents felt strong hatred against communities that did not vote for their preferred candidates. In fact, 33% and 16% of *Kass* and *Inooro's* audiences respectively felt this way. Another 39% and 19 % of *Kass* and *Inooro's* audiences respectively felt hatred towards communities not supportive of their preferred candidate. When analysed from a close up perspective, the data reveals that over half of all audiences (55%) hated communities not supportive of their preferred presidential candidates. A meagre percentile of audiences (4%) accepted the communities that did not support their preferred presidential candidates. These two audiences reflected a very big gap in their social relations in 2007 (see table 3)

Table 3. Feelings towards candidates not supportive of an audiences' favourite presidential candidates (2013)

		feelings towards communities that did not vote 4 your favourite candidate					Total
		strongly hatred	Hatred	Dislike	neither love nor hatred	acceptance	
kass FM	% within VERNECULAR RADIO	2.0%	2.0%	38.0%	12.0%	46.0%	100.0%
	% within feelings towards communities that did not vote 4 your favourite candidate	33.3%	16.7%	48.7%	27.3%	76.7%	50.0%
	% of Total	1.0%	1.0%	19.0%	6.0%	23.0%	50.0%
	% within VERNECULAR RADIO	4.0%	10.0%	40.0%	32.0%	14.0%	100.0%
Inoroo FM	% within feelings towards communities that did not vote 4 your favourite candidate	66.7%	83.3%	51.3%	72.7%	23.3%	50.0%
	% of Total	2.0%	5.0%	20.0%	16.0%	7.0%	50.0%
	% within VERNECULAR RADIO	3.0%	6.0%	39.0%	22.0%	30.0%	100.0%
	% within feelings towards communities that did not vote 4 your favourite candidate	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	% of Total	3.0%	6.0%	39.0%	22.0%	30.0%	100.0%

The 2013 data generates a remarkable improvement on audience feelings towards communities not supportive of their preferred candidate (table 3). From table 3, audiences showed a lot of improvement regarding the kind of feelings they felt for those communities not supportive of their presidential candidate. The data indicates that there is a general improvement on respondents' feelings toward communities not supportive of their preferred candidate. Indeed, acceptance level increased by 29% for all audiences. From the table, four in every ten (39%) audiences felt dislike for those not supporting their preferred candidate. It can be inferred that social distance is still high.

The audiences were asked to state the perceived discriminations from the central government as projected by vernacular radio. They were asked to state their reactions to the following: 1. whether their vernacular radio presented their tribe's economic condition as worse than others tribes. 2. Whether their vernacular radio presented their tribe's influence in nation politics worse than others. 3. Whether their vernacular radio presented the tribe's treatment by government worse than other tribes.

The 2007 data indicates that there was significant difference in the way the *Kass* and *Inooro* radio stations

projected the perceived discrimination by the Central Government. For instance, eight in every ten (80%) and about two in every ten (16%) of *Kass* and *Inooro* audiences respectively said that their tribe's economic condition was presented as worse than other communities. Table 4a indicates that almost all (96%) and about four in every ten (38%) of *Kass* and *Inooro's* audiences respectively said that their radio presented their tribes treatment by government worse than the other tribe. In addition, 80% and 28% of *Kass* and *Inooro* audiences respectively, said that their tribe's influence on national politics were worse than those of their counterparts in 2007 see table (4 a).

From the table *Kass* and *Inooro* radio stations leaned to the right and left respectively. Inferentially, *Inooro* radio station was conservative and pro-establishment and *Kass* was liberal and more anti-establishment. However, irrespective of the vernacular radio's inclinations, the crack of social distance may begin to originate when one group starts to perceive itself as rejected by the government and at the same time see another group as being favoured by the same government.

Table 4a How vernacular radio projection of government's treatment of tribes (Kalenjin and Kikuyu communities) in 2007.

		v radio presents your tribes treatment by government worse than others				Total
		strongly agree	agree	Disagree	strongly disagree	
Kass FM	% within V RADIO	60.0%	36.0%	4.0%		100.0%
	% within tribes treatment worse than others	76.9%	64.3%	20.0%		50.0%
	% of Total	30.0%	18.0%	2.0%		50.0%
Inooro FM	% within V RADIO	18.0%	20.0%	16.0%	46.0%	100.0%
	% within tribes treatment worse than others	23.1%	35.7%	80.0%	100.0%	50.0%
	% of Total	9.0%	10.0%	8.0%	23.0%	50.0%
Total	% within V RADIO	39.0%	28.0%	10.0%	23.0%	100.0%
	% within tribes treatment worse than others	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	39.0%	28.0%	10.0%	23.0%	100.0%

Candidly put, when the government is perceived to belong to one ethnic group (tribe), not only is that government resented but also the ethnic group or community that is perceived as favoured is summarily resented. When such perceptions reach the mass media, as the 2007 data seems to suggest, then seeds of discord, conflicts and hatred find fertile ground to flourish.

The 2013 data indicates that there was a reversal in the way vernacular radio of Kass presented the economic conditions of the Kalenjin community. Different from 2007, eight in every ten (82%) audiences disagreed that their tribe's economic condition was presented as worse than others. On a similar perspective nine in every ten (90%) of Inooro audiences did not perceived Inooro radio as having presented their economic condition worse than others. In like manner, the 2013 data indicated that audiences of *Kass* saw a reversal in the way *Kass* radio presented the community's treatment by central government. See table 4 b.

The table indicates a clear departure for audiences of Kass from their earlier perspective. Indeed, seven out of ten (72%) said that their vernacular radio did not present their treatment by central government worse than others. Inferentially, 2013 data suggests that vernacular radio helped in closing up the electioneering differences and platforms spaces. (See table 4b)

Table 4 b Presentation of tribes' treatment by Government in 2013.

		v radio presents your tribes treatment by government worse than others					Total
		strongly agree	Agree	don't know	disagree	strongly disagree	
kass FM	Count	2	6	6	36	0	50
	% within V RADIO	4.0%	12.0%	12.0%	72.0%	.0%	100.0%
	% within tribes treatment by goven worse than others	66.7%	75.0%	75.0%	52.2%	.0%	50.0%
	% of Total	2.0%	6.0%	6.0%	36.0%	.0%	50.0%
Inoroo FM	Count	1	2	2	33	12	50
	% within V RADIO	2.0%	4.0%	4.0%	66.0%	24.0%	100.0%
	% within tribes treatment by goven worse than others	33.3%	25.0%	25.0%	47.8%	100.0%	50.0%
	% of Total	1.0%	2.0%	2.0%	33.0%	12.0%	50.0%
Total	Count	3	8	8	69	12	100
	% within V RADIO	3.0%	8.0%	8.0%	69.0%	12.0%	100.0%
	% within v radio tribes treatment by goven worse than others	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	3.0%	8.0%	8.0%	69.0%	12.0%	100.0%

7.0 Conclusion

There are a number of lessons that we learn from juxtaposing the *cogent* wave and *dilatory* wave in our discussions. First, it is a cautionary approach that reminds us that, how the media operated in the past illuminates and broaden debates about how the present mass media are to be treated and understood. The data seems to suggest that, mass media operations are not without blemish. Sometimes they deliver and other times they fail. Needless to say, their operation should always be judicious.

The data also illustrates that, despite audiences' diversities (Kikuyu/Kalenjins) it is possible to identify common areas of unity, common area of collaboration, common struggles, common fears and unity of purpose for the common good. Such shared spaces can and are used in transcending tribal bigotry (like feeling hatred for people who don't vote for a presidential candidate). The data reveals that such common spaces included: presidential candidate, community's survival and interest, society's dignity, common suffering (like the ICC cases for both Kikuyu and Kalenjin Leaders). Mass media need then to refocus and redefine their content in a manner that promote *modus vevendi (*allow peaceful coexistence) for communities.

Our data indicates that, in 2007, the two radio stations were judged harshly on the way they treated other communities (non-speakers of a given vernacular language). They were non-objective and very prejudicial in their coverage of other tribes. They were used as propaganda tools as well as coercive force (intimidating people to vote in a particular way) – a vice that is traceable in 2013. The net effect was that a huge percent of their audience didn't trust their contents. Such data is indicative of decay in the operation of mass media (vernacular radio). Clearly, partisan and less judicious media contents breed dilatory wave.

It cannot be denied that, if people have no right to criticize and yet have dissenting ideas, there can be no freedom of the press or of opinion. However, certain restrictions to freedom of expression contained in law are legitimate. For instance, restrictions aimed at protecting social order (decency, Public order); institutions (the state, the head of state, and the courts); individuals (privacy, defamation) or certain sections of society (minors). The point being articulated is that, press freedom is wider than the person's right to express himself/herself and even the public right to know. It also involves protecting individuals and institutions from abusing freedom of information. For the journalist, freedom and responsibility are indivisible. That is to say, freedom without responsibility invites distortion and other abuses.

In addition, the data illustrates how 'rhetorical repertoire' informed vernacular radio operations. The audience of *Kass* said that in 2007 it was leaning to the left and in 2013 it was leaning to the right. Similarly data indicates that, *Inooro* radio dramatically changed its coverage of Kalenjins' based issues in 2013. From rhetorical repertoire we learn that, actors draw interpretations and acts on them, this is called the patterned ways of representing the world through words and action. Unlike in 2007, in 2013 the two radio stations adopted interpretative flexibility (recall radio representations of a tribes welfare, tribes treatment by government, etc.) and closed on issues that could lead to disequilibrium. They focused more on peace and stability issues.

It can be inferred that, in 2013 there was congruity in the way the two radio stations covered critical issues in society. They promoted connectedness by bridging the social distance gap between the Kikuyus and the Kalenjin communities. For instance, in 2013 both radio stations had symmetrical coverage of a tribes' economic conditions as well as how the government treated a given tribe. As a result social tension was radically reduced in 2013 general elections. They also reduced production of ethnic prejudices, usage of propaganda and creation

of negative attitudes among people.

The data explains how the radio stations adapt to its local realities and pressures. For instance, it may be inferred that Jubilee coalition (Created in 2013, and which Kenyatta appointed a key leader from Kalenjin community as a running mate – deputy president) was a political reality for the two categories of audiences. Consequently, vernacular radio operating in these two communities had to fit in that political arrangement. As *Kass* radio demonstrates (shifting from liberal to conservative stand), radio programming and contents (editorial positions) is not cast in stone. It changes and adapts to the changing dynamics of society.

In 2013, the two radio stations created a *cogent* wave, by breaking the intercultural barriers that stood in the way of strength, unity and mutual benefits of the audiences. It can be inferred that the two radio stations may have abandoned the unidirectional communication and replaced it with dialogical communication that generated an alternative approach to the definitions of what is 'news' for vernacular radio. There was a dramatic shift in the way the two stations were perceived to have operated by their audiences in the two political cycles. They both abandoned the *dilatory* mode of news presentation.

Desirous of serving humanity well, the mass media must strive to look for news and frame it in manner that satisfies specific needs of society. And to be to be able to do this, they must collect information on key user factors (from questions posed to audiences) and develop a repertoire of message responses that match audiences' information needs. They must tailor make news to fit into audiences' needs. For instance, audiences of *Kass* and *Inooro* indicated that they heard more peace messages in 2013 than in 2007 general election. The paper views peace as the promotion of harmony characterized by lack of violence, conflict behaviours and the freedom from fear of violence. When a country is peaceful, then there is absence of hostility and retribution, peace also suggests sincere attempts at reconciliation in2013.

Our data speaks to media in in Kenya, in Africa and indeed in the world, in the same manner as Milton spoke in defense of press freedom in Areopagitica. 'It is a right and a duty of every rational man to know the grounds and to take responsibilities for his beliefs and actions. In contemporary society political unity is secured not by force but by consensus that respects variety of opinion.' And in contemporary society decisions are to be reached by open discussions, in which the source of the information is not contaminated!

Consequently, as the presidential debates and peace leitmotifs of Kass and Inooro broadcasts in 2013 illustrates, the paper can't agree more with Asmara (2002) assertions   when he says,' *I'm sick of saying tribalism, ethnic war, I'm sick of talk, I want movement, construction, action. I want new way of thinking. New words, new talk. Equality talk. Creative talk. Talk to make me an insider and outsider at the same time.* After all those who communicate in effect become good neighbours

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