

**CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE COVERAGE OF PREMIERSHIP
ISSUE AS DEBATED IN THE KENYA NATIONAL
CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE IN 2003 BY FOUR
NEWSPAPERS**

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Title	
Dedication	i
List of Tables	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Declaration	iv
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Literature review and theoretical framework	8
3.0 Methodology	14
4.0 Discussion of research findings	17
5.0 Summary, conclusions and recommendations	29
6.0 Bibliography	31

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

- 1. Frequency-** Volume of coverage
- 2. Article** – All published news stories, opinion and analysis, editorials, letter to the editor, photographs and mug shots which contain information on the issue of Prime Minister.
- 3. Prominence** – When the issue is splashed on page one or given a lot of space in the newspaper.
- 4. PM** – Prime Minister
- 5. Nation** – The Daily Nation, Saturday Nation and Sunday Nation
- 6. Standard** – The East African Standard and Sunday Standard
- 7. Kenya Times** – The Kenya Times and
- 8. People** – The People Daily

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Kenya having been colonised by Britain, was under a monarchical government prior to independence. When Kenya attained self-rule in June 1963, the office of Prime minister (PM) was established but the monarch still reigned. The PM post lasted 18 months (June 1963 to December 1964) when the country attained independence.

With the ascension of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta to the Presidency, the PM post was abolished and the result was a compromise between two executive regimes namely parliamentary executive and presidential executive.

As Jackton Boma Ojwan'g (1976) indicates in the abstract of his Thesis, Kenya became independent on the basis of a constitution so severely limiting of public power as to be ill- engineered of the major tasks of integration and development which were imperative following on independence.

That therefore means that the quest by Kenyan political leaders for premiership started immediately after independence.

The issue of premiership in Kenya generated more debate than ever in the mid 1990s when civil society groupings such as the Citizens Coalition for Constitutional Change began to push the agenda. It bore fruit when the then ruling Kenya National African Union (KANU) government was forced to

repeal section 2 (A) making Kenya a multiparty State .The debate resurfaced during the run up to the 2002 Presidential General Election.

When Former President Moi appointed Uhuru Kenyatta to be the official Presidential candidate for the Kenya African National Union (KANU), Raila Odinga who was the Secretary General left the party, together with a number of cabinet ministers and Members of Parliament, to join the Liberal Democratic Party(LDP). They quickly entered into an alliance with the National Alliance Party of Kenya (NAK), which comprised of the Democratic Party(DP), the National Party of Kenya, and Ford Kenya, to form the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). NARC brought together four former presidential candidates namely, Kijana Wamalwa, Charity Ngilu, Raila Odinga and Mwai Kibaki. They agreed to field only one presidential candidate, Mwai Kibaki. The rest were to be accommodated in a power sharing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In this arrangement, the post of PM, was in writing, promised to Raila Odinga.

Since the current Constitution of Kenya has no provision for a PM post, it was envisaged that it would be created and included during the Constitution of Kenya review process. This yielded fruit when the National Constitutional Review Process Commission was established in 2000 and the first in a series of several conferences held in mid 2002.

The conference, however, has not been able to produce the new constitution as planned and as this study goes on, it is on recess and is to be reconvened in January 2004.

The premiership issue is now a bone of contention between the National Alliance Party of Kenya (NAK) and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) wings of the ruling National Rainbow Coalition (Narc).

Kenya's media has been instrumental in bringing to the fore issues that arise from the debate by giving the news items on premiership different treatments.

Frederick Whitney (1975:69) observes this in relation to media functions;

“It informs, it keeps one up to date. It educates, broadens and deepens one's perspectives. It persuades, it sells goods and services and candidates and opinions. It entertains, it causes laughter, it fills a void. It costs no money and it makes money.”

In dealing with this issue, the Kenyan mainstream media has carried out two of the four functions of mass communication which are: surveillance role and correlation role. Surveillance has to do with the collection and distribution of news on this subject while the correlation role involves interpretation of information on the premiership issue; the essence of editorials and opinion columns.

By doing this, various mediums have presented the issues in different ways and hence set different agenda for the public. In this study, our focus was on the print media in Kenya, specifically the four dailies, namely, Nation, Standard, People and Kenya Times.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The print media in Kenya seeks to influence public opinion and engage the public in debate on political happenings in the country by giving or not giving them prominence within their publications.

Those who accord a big and prominent story a small space or place it on the inside pages of their publication are applying gate keeping techniques. Different publications treat the same news item differently depending on the ownership and political persuasion of the publication.

In this research, we sought to find out how ownership and political persuasion influence the way the print media in Kenya actually set the agenda on the issue of PM. We did this by carrying out a **content analysis of the coverage of premiership issue as debated in the Kenya National Constitutional Conference in 2003 by four daily newspapers.**

1.2 HYPOTHESES

- There are significant differences in the volume of coverage of the premiership issue by the four dailies in the period under study depending on their political persuasion
- The Kenya Times, which is owned by Kanu, the former ruling party, overplays the issue of PM.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

- 1.3.1 To what extent did the publications under this study set the agenda on the issue of Prime Minister in Kenya?
- 1.3.2 To what extent does a publication owned by a political party differ from others owned by private investors in setting the agenda on the issue of PM?
- 1.3.3 Does the political persuasion of a publication influence the way it sets the agenda?

1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The print media has a key role to play in informing, educating and entertaining the readers. In Kenya, a lot of the elite, both rural and urban rely on newspapers as a key source of information on ongoing issues in the country. The print media owners have a responsibility despite their political persuasion, to ensure the agenda they set is not misleading. This means there must not be irresponsible journalism such as sensationalisation of issues. This is exemplified in the use of captivating headlines on news stories undeserving the first priority in a paper.

The print media should remain objective if they are to be believed. Failure to this, they can cause turmoil and political division or even internal conflict by inciting various groups against each other. The result in such cases is a snowball effect on the economy and investments within the country.

Media in Africa has played a crucial role in setting political development trends. In the case of Rwanda, they were even used to influence genocide and some media owners have been charged with Genocide at the

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, alongside those who actively killed and maimed hundreds of thousands of people.

Although the issue of Prime Minister was one of the power sharing arrangements agreed upon by the Narc coalition and contained in the MOU that preceded the 2002 General Elections, MPs allied to NAK now seem opposed to an executive Prime Minister because, as they say, it will create two centres of power.

MPs allied to LDP are pressing for it because according to the pre-election Memorandum of Understanding, Cabinet Minister, Raila Odinga, was the Prime Minister designate.

The issue has now taken centre stage in the Narc coalition politics since the Constitutional Review commenced and even threatens the cohesiveness of this ruling coalition. The course the debate now follows is envisaged to bring about serious ramifications in the governance of the country.

Although there are other contentious issues contained in the draft constitution, the one of premiership has been given more prominence and is now a key subject of discussion in the country.

This study shows the role the media plays in setting political agenda. It is important to note that media cannot be separated from political development. This is because media plays the watchdog role within the society and keeps the public informed on all political developments.

They highlight issues and decisions that have serious impact on the society. In playing this role, the media can help to educate the public to enable them make informed choices. It must be noted however, that sometimes, the media can use its influential position to mislead the public.

1.5 Operational definitions and abbreviations

- 1. Frequency-** Volume of coverage
- 2. Article** – All published news stories, opinion and analysis, editorials, letter to the editor, photographs and mug shots which contain information on the issue of Prime Minister.
- 3. Prominence** – When the issue is splashed on page one or given a lot of space in the newspaper.
- 4. Nation** – The Daily Nation, Sunday Nation and Saturday Nation
- 5. Standard** – The East African Standard, Saturday Standard and Sunday Standard
- 6. People** – The People Daily and The People on Sunday
- 7. Kenya Times** – The Kenya Times and The Sunday Times
- 8. Narc-** National Rainbow Coalition
- 9. NAK** – National Alliance Party of Kenya
- 10. LDP** – Liberal Democratic Party
- 11. Kanu** – Kenya African National Union
- 12. PM-** Prime Minister

such issue. It is now one of the dominant debates among those who read newspapers and watch news.

The media under our study, have in different ways, influenced the opinions and attitudes of their readers depending on the editorial policy and political inclinations of their owners (and editors too).

By selecting and packaging news items on the prime minister debate, pro-government media have downplayed it as though is not newsworthy while publications leaning towards the opposition have placed a lot of emphasis on the same news items.

Marcia Grant, in a comprehensive study of the relationship between the press and the political system in Nigeria during the first republic, found, among other things, that the character of political reporting and commentary in the print media was entirely dependent on media ownership structure and the owner's relationship with the political system(Okigbo 1994).

The gatekeeper theory was originally coined by Kurt Lewin in 1947 in human relations to describe the process by which a news item traveling through channels gains clearance at certain checkpoints along the way. Kurt called these checkpoints gates and the people who man them, gatekeepers.

The gatekeeper's function is to evaluate media content in order to determine its relevance and value to audiences. What is most important is

the fact that gatekeepers have the power to cut off or alter the flow of certain kinds of information. (Hzebert: 107)

In our study we will investigate into the reasons why one publication on a given day would carry a story and another does not yet the issue was newsworthy.

Publications alter one story until you end up with several versions of one story. The alteration is done through deleting limited portions of it or by adding a lot of detail to serve as background.

Some newspapers gate keep by downplaying emphasis through headlines size and story placement. A very prominent story is either used as filler or is relegated to inside page.

Depending on if newsmakers delete a message, increase the amount and importance of a certain kind of information or decrease the amount and importance of a specific kind of information, they engage in gate keeping.

2.2 Premiership

A lot has been written about the issue of Prime Minister in newspaper articles but because the issue is current and ongoing, there is hardly any research that has been carried out on the same.

It has been difficult for us to find other studies that are close to defining the issue of premiership in the terms we have used. This is a field that really begs for more work to be done.

However, there have been papers written by a few Kenyan scholars on the devolution of power from which stems the issue under our study; that of Prime Minister.

The first such document is the draft constitution itself that continues to be debated at the National Constitutional Conference. It proposes the Office of Prime Minister as one of the structures to be used in the devolution of power.

The draft contains the following proposals:

170. (1) The Prime Minister is the Leader of the Cabinet and presides at meetings of the Cabinet

(2) The Prime Minister and the other members of the cabinet exercise executive authority within the republic by-

(a) Developing and implementing national budgets and policy;

(b) Preparing and initiating government legislation for introduction in Parliament;

(c) Implementing and administering Acts of Parliament;

(d) Co-ordinating the functions of ministries and departments; and

(e) Performing any other executive function provided for by the Constitution or an Act of Parliament, except those functions assigned to the President.

In a paper presented to the Constitutional Review Commission, *The Devolution of Power*, Julius Kipng'etich argues that it is of utmost independence to replace an outdated political system to suit the contemporary political and social constraints of a country. He suggests that devolution of power among communities living in the country should be considered as this will enhance our nationhood. According to his paper, one of the structures that can be used is creating the Office of the Prime Minister.

Professor Makau Mutua who teaches at the State University of New York at Buffalo New York expresses a different view in an article in the *Sunday Nation* on 14th September 2003 *Kenya does not need a Prime Minister*. He argues that the office of a prime minister would have zero impact on devolution of power or the democratization of the executive. According to him, there is no single good constitutional argument for the office of a Prime Minister.

Kipng'etich's argument on devolution among communities may be good but he does not see that this would definitely threaten the unity of a country comprised of over 42 communities. He fails to notice that this would weaken the central government.

On the other side, Professor Makau's argument refuses to acknowledge the fact that, right now, power is coalesced around the Presidency. The

Executive has immense powers and that was why the prime minister proposal was intended to distribute some of that power. From these two points of view, it would, however, make no difference if all the power from the presidency is transferred wholly to the Prime Minister or to the communities.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 METHODOLOGY

There are more than 20 publications from both the mainstream and the alternative media in Kenya. They fall into various categories such as dailies, weekly, monthly and quarterlies. Besides the print media, electronic media also plays a key role in agenda setting.

In selecting the four dailies studied, we used purposive sampling. This involves the study of a small subset of a larger population in which the members are easily identified. In Kenya, there are only four daily papers and we analysed all in our study. The sample used for this study was drawn from mainstream daily newspapers and their weekend editions for the period between 1st and 31st August 2003. These are *The Daily Nation*, *East African Standard*, *Kenya Times* and *The People*. This was the accessible population. Since the papers are owned by different people, some private investors and others such as Kenya Times is owned by a political party, it was possible to examine the difference in agenda setting as relates to ownership and political persuasion.

Since they are published everyday, dailies cover news when it is very fresh. They are also able to give an item a lot of space within the publication as opposed to weeklies and quarterlies which will cover a lot of issues in one publication. As opposed to electronic media which is transient, daily papers can easily be archived and are available for analysis at little or no cost. If a similar method is to be used for electronic media, it would entail long hours

of airtime and would require daily monitoring of all programmes or alternatively purchase of tapes from the media houses, which is extremely expensive. Printed matter stays longer with the reader and can be revised and analysed further as opposed to electronic matter that one hears once and it's gone. The cost of airing news is high and electronic media houses cannot afford to dedicate a lot of time to analysis of ongoing debates and as such this would not be useful in clearly showing the various means used in agenda setting.

The unit of analysis for this study was represented by whole news items or paragraphs in a news item, related to the issue of Prime Minister in Kenya. In the study news items have been categorized as news stories, editorials, opinion and analyses, letters to the Editor, humour, mug shots and photographs.

This research was a comparative study carried out with the scientific method of content analysis. According to Earl Babbie (1991), content analysis is used in the study of books, magazines, poems, newspapers, songs, paintings, speeches, letters laws and constitutions, as well as other components and collections.

The study is generally quantitative in nature. All the news items, and the space allocated to them are quantified for purposes of analysis. A description of placement and type will also be done. The space is measured in square centimeters.

The sample was 20 per cent of the accessible population, which is enough for descriptive studies. The sample period was selected out of a list of all the months covering the National Constitutional Review Conference, due to the fact that it was the time when the issue of Premiership was given a lot of media attention over other issues discussed.

3.1 Data Collection and analysis method

All the data collected was from secondary sources, i.e. newspaper cuttings from the four publications on articles related to the issue of Prime Minister. We could not use questionnaires because our objective was to analyse the content of information in the newspapers and not its effect on the readers.

The nature of the study therefore limited the extent to which we could use other data collection method such as focus group discussions, interviews and observation.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Discussion of research findings

The method of data analysis we used was frequency distribution. This is method is a form of descriptive analysis and describes the shape of the distribution. For easier analysis, we used frequency distribution tables as they help to show recurrence. We also used an area coverage chart to help in showing the amount of space allocated by the papers.

As discussed earlier, the amount of space dedicated to news on any particular issue helps to show how much attention the paper is calling to the issue. By analysing the different categories of news items, it was possible to show which areas were more emphasized over the others. In this research we sought to establish the relationship between ownership and political persuasion and agenda setting. In order to do this, we made an analysis of the frequency of news items covered. This is as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF NEWS ITEMS ON PREMIERSHIP

	Nation	Standard	People	Kenya Times
News Story	27	49	23	45
Opinion & Analysis	26	27	3	29
Editorial	1	5	1	1

Letters to Editor	6	6	9	10
Humor	4	2	2	7
Mug shots	22	27	14	48
Photographs	13	18	3	3
TOTAL FREQUENCY	99	130	55	143

Table 1 shows that in general, *Kenya Times* carried the highest number of articles related to the issue of Prime Minister followed by the *East African Standard*. The *Daily Nation* was third and lastly *People*. This clearly shows that *Kenya Times* fuelled the debate on premiership by dedicating more articles, compared to the rest. However, this newspaper is reknown for using pictures to fill up space for lack of stories. That could explain the use of 48 mug shots which made the paper top the list in terms of coverage of the issue of prime minister in the month of August.

The most serious attention to the premiership debate came from the *East African Standard* which carried more news stories (49) than any other paper.

This is unlike the decision by its closest rival in the market, the *Daily Nation* which carried 27 news stories and a total of 99 articles. *The Nation* is renowned for its advocacy in many political issues but it appears to have downplayed this particular one. Usually, both *Nation* and *Standard* compete neck to neck for such hot stories and it is therefore curious why there is this wide margin in their coverage of the same issue; that of the prime minister. It is to be remembered that the *Nation* was key

in highlighting the success of the current President, Mwai Kibaki, and in his campaign while in the opposition. This sort of downplaying could be seen as a form of support for his stand where the paper tries to influence opinion by focusing on other issues as opposed to the premiership. Infact, the *Nation*, at that time must have diverted the attention of its readers to the other issues it regarded as prominent and more important than the premiership debate.

As said earlier, although in the frequency distribution, *Kenya Times* appeared to have carried more articles in total than the *Standard*, most of these were mug shots. It is the *Standard* that has more hard news and analysis. Unlike *Kenya Times*, *Standard* had more acres of pages and in almost all stories on the Constitutional Conference whether related or not to the issue of Prime minister, more than a paragraph. For *Kenya Times* it was at least a paragraph or two in the middle of a story on other issues.

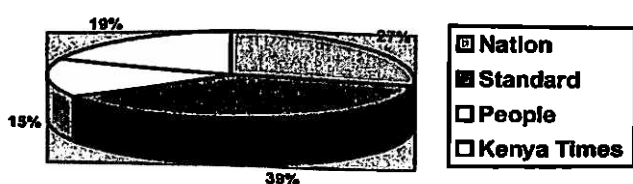
That the *Standard* had a great interest in the issue is shown in the use of the editorial column to cover the debate. The editorial is the voice of the newspaper and seeks to persuade the readers to agree with its stand on any issue. By editorialising five times within a month on the same issue, the *Standard* clearly sought to set the agenda of its readers in a certain direction. The direction is what the newspaper advocates for; that Kenya needs the office of Prime Minister. Comparatively, the other papers carried only one editorial each on the issue during that period.

Besides having the most editorials, the amount of space allocated by the dailies to the premiership issue seemed to confirm that the *East African*

Standard was interested in generating and maintaining the issue on the people's agenda. Table 2 below shows that the paper once again had the biggest space allocated to articles on the issue of Prime Minister. The bulk of the space was in opinion and analysis articles.

Table 2: AREA IN CM²

	Nation	Standard	People	Kenya Times
News Story	8609	12127.9	9359.5	8653
Opinion & Analysis	15667.4	22484	1457.6	5996.4
Editorial	211.7	401	186.7	29
Letters to Editor	1071.8	596	2355.9	1072
Humor	977.9	517	1212.4	1473
Mug shots	323.6	1420	274	2197
Photographs	1880.1	3907	601	495
TOTAL AREA	28741	41452.9	15447.1	19915.4



Although some of the opinion columnists are employed by the media house, even those who are contributors can only have their articles published if they are in line with the editorial policy. This therefore means that both *Nation*

and *Standard* newspapers sought to influence their readers' opinion by dedicating between 15,000 and 23,000 cm² of space to opinion and analysis.

In order to get feedback from the readers, newspapers rely on letters to the editor. Both the *Standard* and *Nation* had six letters printed while *People* had nine and *Kenya Times* had 10 letters published. In terms of space allocation, the *Standard* gave the least space to the letters (596 cm²). *Nation* had 1071.8, *People* 2355.9 and *Kenya Times* 1072 cm².

The Standard which had allocated a lot of space to opinion, editorial and news stories gave too little for feedback or alternative opinions from the readers. This therefore means the paper intended that its voice remains dominant.

The page where a news item is placed within the paper shows the amount of prominence given to the article. When given headline space, a news item is seen as very important by the readers and cannot escape their attention. Readers sometimes even consume stories carried in the first page and do not bother to go to other pages. Splashing stories therefore means that they are read by anyone who reads the paper and are taken seriously by virtue of page placement.

From our analysis of page placement as shown in Table 3 below, it is clear that all papers in this study concentrated their stories on the first 10 pages.

Table 3: FREQUENCY IN PAGE PLACEMENT

	Nation	Standard	People	Kenya Times
1	19	21	15	18
2	12	20	18	10
3	4	8	5	9
4	11	7	1	0
5	3	3	6	6
6	3	4	2	5
7	0	0	12	8
8	11	2	0	11
9	6	2	0	11
10	13	5	0	7
11	8	4	0	0
12	4	10	0	0
13	3	4	0	1
14	5	5	0	1
15	2	1	2	0
16	1	2	0	0
17	1	0	0	0
18	0	0	0	1
19	0	2	0	0
20	0	0	0	0
21	0	1	0	0
22	0	2	0	0
BACKPAGE	1	3	2	10

The *East African Standard* accorded 21 articles to page one, *Nation* had 19, *Kenya Times* had 18 and *People* 15. All four papers treated the Prime Minister issues prominently. They all gave salience to it by according a lot of articles to the first page, both as the lead story and as the anchor. Most of the articles were actually covered between page one and two.

Although there were articles on the back page, most were spill overs from page one or two.

In agenda setting, what the media intends to portray as prominent, it splashes on the front page, and uses big fonts for the headlines. By maintaining this throughout the month and in all major newspapers, the Kenyan print media succeeded in making Kenyans who read English newspapers or those who can access them discuss the issue of Prime Minister.

The *Standard* outdid all the other papers. This is strongly indicates its commitment to sustain the premiership debate by portraying it as the most prominent issue in the country at that time.

It is important to note the pattern of daily coverage by the papers as seen in the table 4 in the next page.

Table 4: TOTAL DAILY COVERAGE IN SQUARE CM OF PREMIERSHIP ISSUES

Page	Nation	Standard	People	Kenya Times
1	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0
3	194.7	892	0	225
4	240.3	545	815.4	705
5	628.4	358	311	423
6	321.4	369	418	647
7	0	0	432.8	811.4
8	0	0	251.1	0
9	543.2	1036	0	0
10	4966.7	5823	1343.8	2697
11	607.5	595.2	0	502
12	415	1024	0	1476
13	1451.1	1270	408	428
14	1718.7	631.7	0	1853
15	1146.3	82	853.5	713
16	175	349	658.1	723
17	5926	3116.5	1942.6	1511
18	0	1937	632.3	1270
19	2524.6	1866.9	2755.8	1173
20	409.7	850	1000.6	730
21	574.1	383	1013.2	577
22	1524.8	652	743.4	511

23	637.6	514	865.4	200
24	3161.5	7764.2	0	633
25	0	9066	573.7	0
26	550.3	108	0	269
27	0	0	428.4	54
28	0	0	0	731
29	0	0	0	1039
30	0	6	0	0
31	1024.6	2214	0	14
TOTAL	28741.5	41452.5	15447	19915.4

Although the issue was not covered on the first two days, it was covered either by all newspapers or at least one of them for the remaining part of the month of August.

On the 10th and 19th of August, all the newspapers dedicated a lot of space to the issue. On the days when there were a lot of opinion columns, it was evident that a lot more space was allocated. This is especially on Sunday editions. The Sundays were 10th, 17th, 24th and 31st.

Between 3rd and 31st August the *Nation* did not publish any articles on the PM issue on 10 different days. For 11 days also, the *People* did not carry any story on the same. However, the two remaining papers did not publish any articles on fewer days. The *Standard* did not publish any story for five different days and *Kenya Times* four.

This trend indicates a sustained effort by *Standard* and *Kenya Times* to get their readers reading and debating the issue of Prime Minister.

Despite the death of the Vice-President on 23rd August, the *East African Standard* still dedicated 7764.2 cm² of space in their Sunday edition on 24th August. On Monday, 25th August, the paper had an eight-page analytical pullout on the Prime Minister's issue.

This clearly shows that to them the issue of Prime Minister was very important to this paper. Its management wanted people to discuss it despite there being other prominent issues such as the Vice-president's sudden death. Even for the news items of the late Wamalwa's death, the *Standard* newspaper linked them with the premiership issue. They discussed what his views concerning the post of Prime Minister were. The opinion and analysis pieces they carried also depicted the late Vice-President as a strong proponent of premiership in Kenya.

This fervent agitation by the *Standard* paper is directly related to its ownership. *Standard* has among its directors, former President Moi and some of his former powerful cabinet ministers. Its stand could be attributed to the fact that Moi was opposed to the office of PM but was constantly challenged by members of the opposition who are now in government. It was one of the key issues that led to the walkout from Kanu by Ministers and MPs which later led to the victory of Narc and President Kibaki.

It is these directors then who used this paper to push for reforms that the current government is opposed to alongside highlighting her weaknesses. The paper's focus is on election pledges made by the Kibaki administration

that have not been fulfilled and hence depict him as one who cannot honour his promises.

Linked to ownership is the political persuasion of this paper. Since the owners are in the Kanu party, it is clear that although they were against premiership in Kenya, they have now made a turn around. They seem to be settling scores with Narc, which removed them from power after 40 years of continues rule, in pushing this agenda. Former President Moi and others in Kanu now seem to agree with Raila's quest for premiership. Through the *Standard* paper they are coercing President Kibaki to create the post in the constitution of Kenya.

The *Nation*, on the other part, is largely owned by His Highness the Aga Khan but most its senior management are ardent Narc supporters. During Moi's era, the paper dedicated itself to constantly showing the ills of his government. Infact, Moi openly showed his dislike for the *Nation* and he often said that it was after him. The paper vigorously campaigned for Narc saying that the country would gain a lot by electing President Kibaki. This paper, therefore, would definitely steer away from anything that discredits the Narc party and government. It has softened its stand on the PM issue since the time current government appeared not to support the issue any longer.

Kenya Times is owned by the former ruling party, Kanu. Although its editors claim independence from the party, it still acts as a mouthpiece for the leader of opposition, Uhuru Kenyatta. Despite the fact that it is not widely read, the paper consistently attacks the current government just as the Kanu MPs do. The paper strives to show how President Kibaki and his Narc

party cheated their way into government by "conning" Kenyans that a new constitution would be in place in 100 days with the PM post created within it.

This is the reason for *Kenya Times*' sustained crusade against the stand the government has taken on the premiership issue.

Former leader of opposition, Kenneth Matiba who run against Moi in the first multi-party elections and came second, owns the *People* newspaper. In the past, the paper attacked Moi's government over such issues and blamed it for all the problems in the country. This stems from the 1992 elections which Matiba believes he beat Moi but that massive rigging was used and Moi declared the winner. Currently, his paper does not maintain such a strong stand against Kibaki's government. Infact its editorial policy seems to be leaning towards the government. Some people have argued that this is due to tribal inclinations because both Matiba and Kibaki come from the same Gikuyu tribe.

But just like *Nation*, as seen in this study, this paper was not keen in fuelling the debate on the PM post in the way *Kenya Times* and *Standard* did.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the analyses above, we conclude that all the four publications under this study adequately covered the issue of Prime Minister.

The coverage however varied from paper to paper. The East African Standard gave it the most coverage, allocating a total of 41452.9 square centimeters, followed by Nation's 28741.5, Kenya Times 19915.4 and lastly, People's 15447.1 square centimeters.

Considering the total estimated circulation for the four papers is seven million readers in urban areas, the papers are bound to have greatly influenced what people discussed and focused on during the entire month. However, in a country of 30 million people, the impact of agenda setting by the print media may have had little impact. It could be because there were other reasons why the readers were interested in the issue. It is also possible that the papers knew that most Kenyan were interested in knowing what was being discussed about the premiership since it would affect the way the country is governed. In this case then, the people could be seen to have set the agenda for the media.

Although to some extent the print media manages to set the agenda especially for the elite who can read and follow the debate in the newspapers, it is not known who does it for the rest of the people who are either illiterate or who do not have access to newspapers.

In conclusion, it is clear that both political persuasion and ownership of a paper determines how much time and space a paper dedicates to an issue such as the one on premiership, in order to influence its readers to agree with its stand. On the other hand, a paper may choose to downplay an issue and fail to give it prominence so as to avoid public debate on the same. It is therefore quite clear that the media play a critical role in the day to day political happenings in a country.

We recognise that there could be bias in the purposive method of sampling used since it was on a specific group and recognise the need for further study on the role played by electronic media in the entire agenda setting process. It would be especially interesting to compare the role of the print and electronic media and to examine the extent to which each sought to set the agenda on premiership.

We recommend that further studies be carried out to measure the impact of the agenda set by the media on the population. This will help to establish if really the print media were successful in setting the premiership agenda or not. Since most Kenyans do not have access to newspapers, a study to establish who sets the agenda for those who do not access newspapers should be done.

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