

# Vernacular Broadcast and National Disintegration in East Africa

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**Abstract:** This paper assesses the role of the media in instigating conflict and tension in society leading to break ups of nationhood in various states in East Africa. The paper isolates two case studies, Kenya and Rwanda, to illustrate how the vernacular radio can be a catalyst to ethnic violence in the region. The paper asserts that there is great need to monitor the spread of hate speech through the radio stations that broadcast in vernacular languages. It is also revealed that the vernacular radio is more susceptible to the abuse by the politicians because of its accessibility and effectiveness in reaching out to even the non-literate members of the society. However, the researcher also found out that there are other means in which hate speech is transmitted such as direct address to the people by the politicians in meetings and through the newspapers. The paper recommends that East African states need to come up with more proactive policies and legal regulations to prevent the propagation of hate speech and any other divisive discourses that might cause ethnic violence. The paper contends that broadcasters need to hire highly trained journalists who may be able to uphold professional norms and ethics.

**Key Words:** Ethnic, Radio, Vernacular, Hate Speech, Violence, Broadcast.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The media, whether national, international or local has a double edged utilitarian value in any society of directing emotions and attitudes to the negativity or positivity. On the positive note, vernacular media is a force to reckon with in mobilizing public participation (as was seen in the last chapter) in social economic and political development, influencing their decision making trends, directing and correcting the right attitude towards the desired trajectory. It provides a forum for people to speak out as they exercise their freedom of expression, thereby empowering them holistically. However, since listeners and viewers have no control of what they see or view, they can as well be affected by negative broadcast. The media used in this manner has the potential to infect people's minds with the negative energy that can be so destructive. The media can incite people to hate, to be violent, to discriminate, to kill or to go into war. This is the double-edged paradox of the media. That is, the media's ability to create war or peace. In this section, we focus on how the radio has been used or abused to fan ethnic tension leading to war and disintegration of nations in East Africa. Two case studies will be used. These are Kenya and Rwanda.

## II. THE CASE STUDY OF KENYA

Kenya has recorded massive growth in the telecommunications sector especially the growth of the radio sub sector. This has seen an exponential rise in both community and privately owned radio stations. For instance international and local companies have invested in the radio industry to tap into the market potential offered by the huge youth population. Royal Media services for example runs more than ten radio stations with most of them broadcasting using vernacular languages. Radio Africa too has several FM radio stations mostly broadcasting in English while Media Max has some radio stations broadcasting in Kiswahili and a few others using vernacular languages. It is this sharp increase that has made the radio quite impactful in shaping the behavior of the listeners. The radio stations have always come under sharp focus every electioneering season in Kenya because of the way they influence the masses. Politicians have used them to sell their policies during campaigns successfully.

Unfortunately these radio stations have also been used by politicians to spread hate speech so as to portray their opponents in bad light. They have also used them to divide people along tribal and clan lines. In this way they entrench tribalism, nepotism, cronyism and xenophobic feelings among the electorate. The greatest impact of this hate speech was seen prior to and during the election violence in Kenya from 2007-2008. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights summarized the role of Vernacular media stations in post-election violence as follows, "The media had, particularly local language media influenced or facilitated the influencing of communities to hate or to be violent against other communities. For example, Radio stations broadcasting in Kalenjin and Kikuyu languages were culpable in this respect. These radio stations contributed directly or indirectly to the eruption of violence during and before the 2007 general elections in Kenya. There were several programmes that facilitated the spread of hate speech for example life phone-in programmes were particularly notorious for disseminating negative ethnic stereotypes, cultural chauvinism and peddling of sheer untruths about political situation and individual politicians."

Ngugi and Kinyua (2014) notes that peddling of hate speech especially among commercial FM radio stations took various formats and methods of dissemination. These methods are:

- i. Call-in programmes were frequently used where listeners would pass inflammatory messages against rival communities living in the same province.
- ii. Through music where a hate message was packaged in a song criticizing a particular community by exposing its weaknesses.
- iii. Use of social media such as Twitter, Facebook and other messaging platforms such as SMS and WhatsApp. Inciting messages were sent through these platforms urging various communities to migrate or else they be evicted.
- iv. Talk-shows. Various FM radio stations would invite guests to air their opinions and in the process, unfettered public opinions either by the guests or by the radio presenters were propagated to the public.
- v. Other methods involved transmission of tribal jokes laced with biased opinions of other tribes, use of non-existent proverbs and sayings, careless reporting of rumours and unsubstantiated reports being presented as if they were facts. Lastly, extremist politicians were also given a lot of air time to speak to their people but in the end they ended up utter inciting remarks.

We can observe from the above methods that the radio presenters integrated the use of social networks to engage their audience besides talking to them directly. Therefore the use of the social media attracted more audience especially the youth into listening to the radio and eventually ended up being receivers and disseminators of hate speech. National cohesion and integration commission (NCIC) in 2007 through its vice chairperson pointed out the misuse of social media by the vernacular radio stations. The then vice chair, Millie Lwanga said "Care must be taken to ensure that the rights of others are not prejudiced during enjoyment of freedoms enshrined in the constitution. Commercial radio stations were and still are notoriously integrating the use of the social media in their broadcasts so as to attract more listeners, hence more revenue through advertisements. Abdi et al (2008) shows that it was not the community radio stations but the commercial FM stations that were responsible for much of the hate speech and ethnic prejudice during post-election violence in Kenya. Abdi et al (ibid) noted that some journalists were so unprofessional that they allowed hate speech to be communicated to the audience. He quotes one journalist as having remarked, "The ethnic hate that our radio station was propagating about those from outside the community was unbelievable. The unfortunate thing is that we allowed these callers to speak vile and laughed about it." Another broadcaster said, "We took sides in the issue and we became subjective, forgetting our professional tenets of objectivity and neutrality. In fact, this polarisation was so bad in the news rooms that some broadcast journalists refused to cover or read news that was not favourable to the candidate or the party they supported."

### *2.1 The Radio and Ethnic Violence in Kenya*

Kenya has been regarded as a beacon of peace and stability in a region plagued by ethnic and political instability before the era of Multiparty elections were ushered in. Since 1992 when political pluralism was introduced through the amendment of section 2A of the constitution, there have been sporadic outbreaks of ethnic violence before, during or immediately after general election. According to the Human Rights Watch reports, around 2000 people were killed during the 1992 general election, a figure that was higher in 1997 general election and the climax was witnessed in 2008 after the 2007 general election when the presidential election results were announced. The same report indicates that the 2007 election caused violence unprecedented before in Kenyans history, killing over 1300 people and displacing over 600,000 people. This is also corroborated by the krieggler report of 2008.

One of the main causes of the violence as identified by the above two reports was the spread of ethnic hatred by politicians and tribal kingpins through the platform offered by the FM radio stations. Much of the violence was witnessed in the Rift Valley province where ethnic kingpins incited their tribesmen to inject those who did not vote for a particular candidate in the general election. As noted by Muluka and Nassiuma (2017), the question of land was and still is very emotive in Kenyan national politics. Therefore, grievances over a land caused the main tension between various ethnic groups living in Rift Valley such as the Kalenjins and the Agikuyu. Kenya being a multi-cultural society with around 44 ethnic groups, every ethnic group lays claim to some community land. As such any encroachment on ethnic land by other groups causes latent tension, which is a potent keg which can explode at the slightest provocation. This explosion happened in 2007 in Kenya with far reaching social economic and political repercussions. Thus communication through the use of vernacular language whether on FM radio stations or through social networks, reinforced and radicalized tribal stereotypes culminating into violence.

The liberalization of the air waves by the Communications Authority in Kenya, has made radio and TV ownership and accessibility easy. However due to the huge capital needed to start such initiatives, most of these stations are owned by wealthy politicians, who, unfortunately use them to advance their own political agenda. They are often used as campaign tools before elections to advance the ideologies of the owner and to castigate the opponent at times including his ethnic group. Thus the media is a powerful tool that can shape and influence voting patterns in Kenya. According to the agenda setting theory propounded by McCombs and Shaw (1972,) the media can influence peoples' thinking patterns and therefore, a group of people exposed to similar media content is bound to direct their thoughts and actions on the same issues.

### *2.2 Kass Fm and Post Election Violence In Kenya*

This is a vernacular FM station broadcasting in Kalenjin Language on 90.6 FM. It serves audience in the former Rift

Valley Province of Kenya. However, its communication reaches out other regions where Kalenjin speakers are found in Kenya. Based in the capital Nairobi, it broadcasts to Kalenjin speakers in Nairobi, Coastal region and parts of Western Kenya. A study by Sang (2015) found out that the station was founded to promote development through various programmes touching on Economy, Agriculture, education, politics and health care. Therefore the stations' programming was tailored on these main subject areas but with a specific target audience. That is the Kalenjin Ethnic group. We posit that it is this ethnic leaning in ideology that made it an easy target for manipulation by politicians. The stations deviated from addressing the original objectives and became a key player in fanning ethnic violence in Rift Valley Province.

The Waki Report (2008) on post-election violence in Kenya singled out the role KASS FM played in spreading negative ethnicity and political propaganda. It was blamed for inciting the Kalenjin community against the Agikuyu community living in their midst. The Agikuyu had bought land from the locals thereby increasing pressure on the available community land and deepening a sense of local grievance which was magnified by the tribal kingpins. The victims of post-election violence recalled with horror, the inflammatory statements from the media house as they gave testimonies to the Waki Commission of enquiry. Some victims said that the stations created a climate of fear and hatred by labeling some communities as foreigners who should be evicted from Rift valley province. Mulluka and Nassiuma ( ibid) notes that it is because of these incitements that KASS FM's presenter Joshua Arap Sang was among the six Kenyans who appeared before the international Criminal court ( ICC) to answer charges of crimes against humanity. The Radio presenter was accused of using the station to propagate a campaign of division and violence against other communities.

According to the Human Rights Report (2008) titled, 'Ballots to Bullets: Organized political violence and Kenya's Crisis of Governance', KASS FM allowed its invited guests to use its airwaves to spew hate messages. The report quotes one politician as having said, 'What was broadcasted on the radio depended on who was in the studio at any particular moment'. Various other sources such as the commission of enquiry into the post-election violence in Kenya notes that the effectiveness of the messages transmitted by KASS FM was boosted by the use of highly idiomatic language that could only be understood by the natives who speak Kalenjin language. For Instance, KASS FM would urge the Kalenjin community, "To cut grass and clear the land". This implied to the listeners to kill members of the Agikuyu community so as to "Reclaim back their land". To avoid a clear reference on who was to do the reclamation of the land, the radio station would refer to the Kalenjin community as, "People of the Milk" in reference to the pastoralism and nomadic nature of majority Kalenjin sub tribes. Mayers (2008) also notes that the use of coded language to pass inflammatory messages was common by the vernacular stations even before the

electioneering period. She says that the radio presenters at KASS FM would say that, "The mongoose had come and stolen our chicken". This meant that the foreigners had invaded the community land and therefore there was an urgent need to force them back. Such idiomatic language created a special appeal to the Kalenjin speakers to rise up in arms hence sparking post-election violence. At the same time it inspired fear to the foreigners and triggered xenophobic attacks similar to the ones witnessed in South Africa. The spiral effect was massive migrations to the unknown by the groups considered as the newcomers and the emergence of internally displaced persons.

However political and ethnic incitement did no begin with KASS FM. This was a recurring problem perpetuated by the political class since the introduction of multiparty elections in Kenya in 1992. The politicians would either openly or in public meetings or even through literature incite their ethnic groups to expel the non-locals. Concerning the chaos that resulted from the 1992 general elections in Kenya, the Human Rights Watch report of 1993 observed that the violence coincided with calls by high ranking Kalenjins within the government for the creation of a majimbo system of government, a federal type of administration based on ethnicity. They together with other proponents of majimboism called for the expulsion of all other ethnic groups from the land occupied by other communities who are not the original pastoralist communities of Maasai, Samburu and Turkana. This in effect meant that other ethnic groups who had bought land in Rift Valley such as the Agikuyu, Abagusii and Luos were not wanted in the presumed Kalenjin land. Such calls were amplified by the local FM radio stations thereby heightening the disintegration of the country.

Parts from KASS FM, there were other vernacular radio stations that played a role in fanning post-election violence in Kenya albeit to a less extent. For instance, Howard (2009:26) notes that some radio stations broadcasting in the Kikuyu language used to invite radical politicians into the studios and these would incite the listeners. He cites Coro FM as one station where incitements would be propagated by telling the listeners that their community would retain the presidential seat and maintain power. By sheer mention that they should remain calm as they must win, was enough testimony that a win by another candidate was not acceptable. Inooro FM was also accused of offering airtime to highly distraught and emotional victims of post-election violence. By giving them a platform to vent their emotions, the stations ended up arousing feelings of sympathy and a need to rise up to revenge by their tribesmen. Thus the spread of negative emotions among the audience by the FM radio station was enough ammunition to perpetuate war. Probably inviting victims into the studios would have been done during the process of healing and reconciliation rather than when the wounds of violence were fresh. Such liberal use of the media also means a serious indictment on the professionalism in media houses including the management of the private radio stations and their

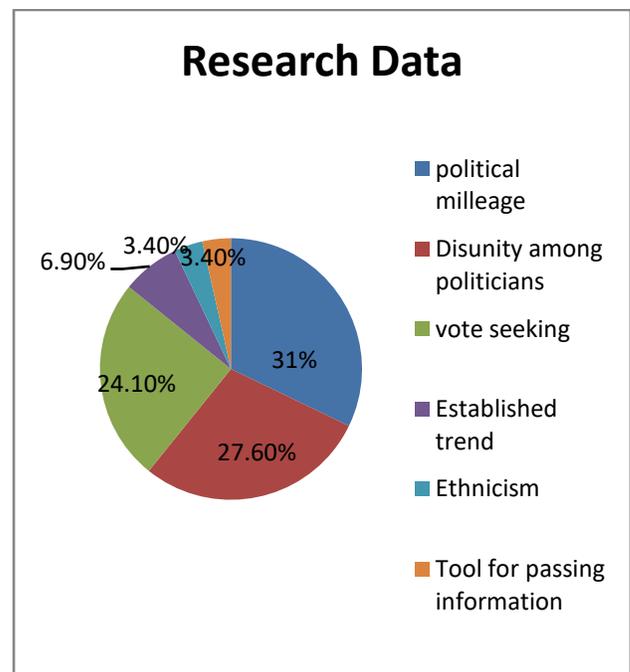
editorial policies. On the other hand, Howard continues to explain, politicians from the Luo community would use The Lake Victoria FM to advance similar views. This station advanced the ideology that it was the time for the members of the community to ascend to power and that anything contrary to this would be a denial of their right to reign. This antagonism indicates that various political players were not going to accept defeat or cede ground to any political negotiation. These radio stations thus exacerbated an already volatile situation. This indicates that in Kenya during and before the post-election violence of 2007-2008, both the opposition and the ruling coalition politicians used their ethnic languages through the vernacular radio stations to provoke their people into violence. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights Report, 2008 also cast aspersions on the role of the media in Kenyan elections, blaming it for taking sides.

Media as stated before, has a double edged role in the society as it can be used, as demonstrated in chapter one to build peace and development. However, as seen here, it can as well be used to cause national disintegration by inciting communities into self-immolation. Howard (2009) has observed that vernacular radio stations appear to be telling the listeners that it is okay to keep to themselves. Here, he alludes to the fact that broadcasting in vernacular languages tends to give the listeners a narrow view of the world, that of their surroundings only. By maintaining this narrow view the vernacular radio seems to facilitate national disintegration as opposed to broadcasts that uses a country's official or national languages which have the power to facilitate national unity and cohesion. In his research, Howard (ibid) quotes one listener's views about the divisive nature of the vernacular radio stations in Kenya;

*If you are a Gikuyu, you listen to a Gikuyu radio station, if you are a Luo, you listen to a Luo radio station. Every community is just listening to itself and people who cannot talk to one another, are very easy to be incited to war.*

It is this inward-looking role of the media that this article sees as having the potential to divide rather than unite the Kenyan communities. This is especially so with the proliferation of the vernacular radio stations in Kenya. That is to say that the gains made on the national integration are slowly getting reversed while internal ethnic cohesiveness grows. Thus care should be taken so as to balance the social, economic and political developments brought about by these radio stations with the goals of uniting nations not only in Africa but throughout the world where indigenous languages are used in broadcasting. The shortfalls of using the vernacular languages in broadcasting can be seen in the balkanization envisioned by the above quote especially in multi-ethnic societies such as Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria and others. Often matters can, and often does, get worse if a media outlet is manned by ill-trained journalists who might discard professional ethics in pursuit of ethnic patriotism.

Though Kenya has taken concrete steps to contain the spread of hate speech such as formation of National Cohesion and Integration Commission, the trend still continues in the political discourse even during non-election seasons. Mulluka nad Nassiuma (2017;63) investigated some of the reasons why hate speech which is so divisive is common among politicians during and after campaigns. They found out that 31% of the respondents said that politicians use hate speech so as to gain political mileage and popularity, 27% said that the disunity among politicians provokes them into using highly abusive language. 24.1% of the respondents stated that hate speech is used for seeking votes, 6.9% reported that it is used because it is an established trend, whereas the rest said that it is used because it serves as a tool to discreetly pass information. Some respondents also cited other reasons such as that the common man also likes it and lastly because of tribalism (3.4% each as shown in pie chart below.



Source: Research by Mulluka & Nassiuma., 2017

### 2.3 Reversing the Trend

The outbreak of various post-election conflicts in 1992, 1997 and 2007 have jolted various players in Kenya such as the politicians, the civil society, the church, NGOs, the citizenry and the international community to take several steps to prevent future occurrences. Some lessons too, appear to have been learnt on the possible causes of the post-election violence such as historical injustices and the inequalities surrounding regional developments and the land distribution question in Kenya. Thus the following steps, some already buttressed in both legal and policy frameworks may help to forestall future violence:

(i) The establishment of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) in 2008 emanating from the

recommendations of the Kriegler report of Enquiry into Kenya's post-election violence. The duty of this commission is to monitor the use of hate speech by politicians either through the use of the social media, the FM radio stations or openly in meetings. The body also checks abuse of the media freedom by the mainstream media both print and electronic by arresting the perpetrators and charging them in courts. However, the commission has often been blamed for arresting politicians and releasing them without charges. Besides, it has run into headwinds of accusations by the opposition politicians for being used to fight political battles by the ruling parties, often exercising favouritism. More so there are challenges as regards what constitutes a hate speech and what does not with the inciters and peddlers of hate speech offering differing interpretations of what they meant coupled with claims of being quoted out of contexts. Cases too drag in courts due to lack of sufficient evidence and often fails. There also appears that the division between hate speech and freedom of expression which everybody is guaranteed by the constitution is vague.

(ii) The decentralization of resources to the rural areas through the inauguration of the 2010 constitution. This is meant to promote inclusivity and address the problem of marginalization of the regions that were left behind in development due to their natural disadvantages such as aridity. To achieve this equalization, the constitution has also introduced various funds for special groups like the youth, women and people with disabilities. Therefore, there exist funds such as the Women Fund, Youth Fund, Constituency Development Fund (CDF) managed by the people's representative in the national assembly and the Equalisation Fund which is granted to the counties in the marginalized area. The intention is to reduce feelings of exclusion which often foments tension that lead to violence. There is also the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF) managed by the Women Representative in the National Assembly and used to address gender inequalities. Various county authorities too have set up various funds to be managed by Members of the County Assemblies.

(iii) Reforms on various institutions tasked with the management of national elections such as the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK), which has been granted more independence and renamed The Interim Independent and Electoral Commission (IEBC) have been carried out. This new outfit has been given more funding and increased responsibilities such as vetting election candidates, controlling use of public funds by politicians during campaigns and to promote integrity and accountability in election matters. Other bodies that have undergone some improvements include the judiciary and establishment of the office of the Ombudsman to handle public complaints. Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission too has been established so as to ensure that people of high integrity hold public office.

(iv) The media having come under sharp focus during the post-election violence has been put under more legal controls

to ensure ethical regulation. For example, Communications Authority of Kenya has been created to oversee licensing of all media outlets and review of press freedom. Kenya Film Classification Board is in charge of regulating all media content to ensure that inflammatory content is not transmitted to the viewers. The Communications Authority also calls for the media to self-regulate in their broadcast. The Media Council was established as early as 2004 to provide a mechanism for promoting media accountability. Initially, this was meant to be a self-regulatory body but its failure to do so, led to a further amendment into the Media Act of 2007 to provide for the establishment of The Media Council in 2013. This made it more proactive and inclusive in its membership. The Media council was to:

- a) Promote ethical standards among the journalists and in the media industry
- b) To mediate in disputes between the government and the media, between the public and the media and between intra media.
- c) To promote and to protect the freedom of the media.
- d) To promote professionalism among the journalists among other duties. Failure to uphold and maintain journalistic norms would lead to the use of law to protect the public from consuming uncensored content that might cause disorder. The Media Council is now the lead government agency that ensures compliance with the set standards. However, lack of commitment by the media owners, self-regulation has not been effective forcing the government to use other channels for controlling the media.
- v) There are rafts of statutory regulations adopted to contain the spread of hate speech. The Kenyan Parliament passed Anti-hate speech bill which prohibit the use and spread of divisive speech. The National Cohesion and Integration Act of 2008 criminalize use of abusive and hate speech against an individual or a group of people or sending of threatening messages. It is also supported by the penal code of 2009 which defines hate speech as a subversive activity intended to provoke feelings of hatred between communities or races. It calls for an imprisonment of up to seven years in jail.

### III. RADIO AND NATIONAL DISINTEGRATION IN RWANDA

#### *3.1 Background Historical Introduction*

The Rwandan genocide erupted soon after the shooting down of the presidential jet carrying the then Rwandan president, Juvenal Habyarimana and his Burundian Counterpart, Cyprian Ntaryamira, on 6<sup>th</sup> April 1994. The incident happened in an already politically charged atmosphere with the inter-ethnic civil war between the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and the Hutu government (Scheffler, 2015). The ethnic violence resulted to the killing of around 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus. The military victory of RPF stopped the genocide in July 1994 and by September 1994, around 2.1

million Rwandese had fled the country and a further 1.8 million people had become internally displaced.

### 3.2 The Role of the Print media

Several media theories are in agreement that media influences peoples' perceptions and consequently their behavior towards certain issues. The media in Rwanda, before, during and after the genocide played a key role in shaping the magnitude of the war. Both Print and the electronic media were culpable in instigating the crisis. Scheffler (ibid) correctly points out that the newspaper, *Kangura* had participated in hate speech propagation by publishing anti-Tutsi and anti-FPF campaign in October 1990. Besides, the paper had published the infamous Ten Commandments that provoked and entrenched ethnic hatred by portraying the Tutsi as very evil people. Through this paper therefore a wedge was driven between the Hutus and the Tutsis. These commandments are as follows:

- (i) Every Hutu should know that a Tutsi woman, whoever she is, works for the interest of her Tutsi ethnic group. As a result, we shall consider a traitor any Hutu who; marries a Tutsi woman, befriends a Tutsi woman or employs a Tutsi woman as a secretary or a concubine.
- (ii) Every Hutu should know that our Hutu daughters are more suitable and conscientious in their role as a woman, wife and mother of the family. Are they not beautiful, good secretaries and more honest?
- (iii) Hutu women, be vigilant and try to bring your husbands, brothers and sons back to reason.
- (iv) Every Hutu should know that every Tutsi is dishonest in business. His only aim is the supremacy of his ethnic group. As a result, any Hutu who does the following is a traitor:
  - a) Makes a partnership with a Tutsi in business.
  - b) Invests his money or the government's money in a Tutsi enterprise.
  - c) Lends or borrows money from a Tutsi.
  - d) Gives favours to Tutsi in business.
- (v) All strategic positions, political, administrative, economic, military and security should be entrusted only to Hutu.
- (vi) The education sector (schools pupils, students and teachers) must be majority Hutu.
- (vii) Rwandan armed forces must be exclusively Hutu. The experiences of the October 1990 war has taught us a lesson. No member of the military shall marry a Tutsi.
- (viii) The Hutus should stop having mercy on the Tutsis.
- (ix) The Hutus, wherever they are, must have unity and solidarity and be concerned with the fate of their Hutu brothers; must constantly look for friends and allies for the Hutu cause, staring with their Hutu brothers, they must counteract Tutsi propaganda, the Hutu must be firm and vigilant against their common Tutsi enemy.

(x) The social revolution of 1959, the referendum of 1961, and the Hutu ideology, must be taught to every Hutu at every level. Every Hutu must spread this ideology widely. Any Hutu who persecutes his brother Hutu for having read, spread and taught this ideology is a traitor.

The newspaper also spread inciting propaganda by showing the Tutsis as 'Neo-Nazis' who are nostalgic for power and that given a chance to ascend to power, the Tutsis would oppress the Hutus. The editor of the *Kangura* newspaper, having caused great incitement to commit genocide, was in 2003, convicted by International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) for committing crimes against humanity. Benesch (2008:504) also notes that as early as 1991 another Rwandan publication named *Echo des 1000 Collines* had published a cartoon showing a Tutsi massacring Hutus with the caption, "Flee: A Tutsi will exterminate the Hutus". As can be seen from the above publications the media had long planted the seeds of ethnic violence before the eventual eruption in 1994. The print media had started the campaign of hate speech before it was picked up by the electronic media especially the radio in 1994. However as other sources have indicated before, our research indicates that the radio was responsible for much of the damage that happened.

### 3.3 The Role of the Radio in Rwandan Genocide

The radio's ability to reach to the majority of the population including the illiterate ones makes it the most influential media than the print one. Here one only needs to listen, a natural ability that most people have, as opposed to reading a newspaper which is an acquired ability. Two radio stations played a key role: Radio Rwanda, a state owned station and the privately owned, Radio Television Libera Des Milles Collines (RTLTM). Des Forges (2007) says that both radio stations were used to convey orders from the authorities and were used to order and to direct killings. RTLTM was owned and controlled by Hutu hardliners in government who used it to create major rivalries between the Tutsis and the Hutus. Scheffler notes that RTLTM used to broadcast five times a day in March 1991 that 'A Human Rights Group' in Nairobi had issued a press release warning that Tutsis were going to kill Hutus. The radio on many occasions kept on underlining the differences between the Hutus and the Tutsis. It emphasized that the Tutsis were well endowed with much wealth as opposed to the Hutus. RTLTM also reminded the Hutus of the past horrors of the Tutsis in leadership. It warned them to prepare to defend themselves against the supposed attack by the Tutsis. Therefore it encouraged listeners to fight. Besides such open incitements, the radio also broadcasted names of individuals and places to be targeted during the war (Des Forges, 207:45). The radio station told the people that the RPF combatants were already mingling with the rest of the population dressed in civilian clothes. The intended effect of this description was that the perceived enemy was already on the loose amidst them. This created fear and anxiety among the residents. Des Forges quotes one radio presenter as telling

the people thus; “Go fight them with the weapons you have. You have arrows, you have spears, go after those *Inkotanyi*<sup>1</sup>”.

RTLTM also issued strict warnings to the moderate Hutus that if they sympathize with the ‘enemy’ they would be treated as traitors. The station also castigated those who failed to participate in the hunting of the enemy. Des Forges quotes one listener retelling what he heard from the RTLTM presenter, ‘Those who side with both sides are traitors. It is they who tell a lot to the *Inyenzi*<sup>2</sup>. It is them we call accomplices. They will pay for what they have done’.

As can be seen above, just like the Kenyan case, use of coded language was the preferred means of concealing the name of the community to be attacked. This reference also indicates the contemptuous attitude of the Hutus towards the Tutsis as at that time. The radio could pass such messages using the vernacular language so as to reach only the intended members of one ethnic group. In the case of RTLTM, the Tutsis were referred using expressions such as, *Inyenzi*, a term meaning cockroaches in Kinyarwanda. This analogy points out the belief and perception of the Hutus that the Tutsis are a destructive nuisance. The term *Inkotanyi* was also used derogatively in reference to FPF supporters and sympathizers however the word’s meaning was expanded to mean also the Tutsi ethnic group in general (Scheffler, 2015:16).

In Kenya use of analogies to refer to rival communities was also common. Mayers (2008) gives the examples of Kameme FM and Inooro FM that broadcasts in Kikuyu language as playing songs mentioning ‘Beast from the West’ which was a veiled reference to the then opposition leader Raila Odinga and other politicians from the Western Kenya. Radio Lake Victoria FM which broadcasts from Western and Nyanza regions would in turn play a song alluding to the Kikuyu leadership as ‘Leadership of baboons’. This researcher was also told that in Rift Valley Province, in which the Kalenjins and the Maasai are the dominant communities, the Agikuyu, the minority in that locality, were referred derogatively as, ‘The madoadoa’ meaning the blemishes. The usage and propagation of these ethnic stereotypes in Kenya and Rwanda through the mass media therefore contributed greatly to the disintegration of communities and making peaceful coexistence hard in the times mentioned. This is why this paper puts into question whether the emergence of the FM radio stations is a boom or a bane for the third world countries especially those in Africa.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The ability of the radio stations to cause national disintegration as highlighted in this paper is a call for states to exercise caution in licensing and monitoring the operations of the media houses especially in societies fragmented by ethnic politics. However, media control should not be interpreted to mean the muzzling of the media freedom but rather a calculated balancing between legal regulation and the need to ensure citizen’s access to information as enshrined in the constitution. This would ensure that the potential of economic

growth offered by the radio stations is not diminished by the wrongs of a few radio stations. There is enough evidence in Kenya to show that whereas around five or so radio stations were involved in propagation of hate speech, there were more radio stations involved in promotion of peace during and after the post-election violence.

Lack of clear yardsticks for evaluating what constitutes hate speech has been shown to frustrate the prosecution of those who peddle hate speech. Use of coded language especially ethnic metaphors and analogies complicates matters in courts. As we have seen with the Kenyan case, interpretation of metaphorical statements often proves difficult leading to failure in prosecution. Proper legal frameworks should be enacted by the East African countries to provide inter alia how to identify hate speech and modes of punishment. As it appears in Kenya, the punishments are too lenient and unable to deter a recurrence of hate speech propagation. Unfortunately, the laws are made by politicians and are the first ones to abuse them to their own gain.

Whether the media or the politician is to blame for perpetuation of the hate speech and thus violence is a lengthy debate for future research. However, what is clear is that the politician is everywhere; as the owner of a media house, as the guest speaker in the studios, as the lead analyst in social economic and political discourses and in making laws to regulate the media. Therefore it is willingness or lack of it that enforces the law. For this reason, the media and especially the vernacular media is dominated by politicians’ interests. Regarding ownership, Mayers (2008), observes that in the Democratic Republic of Congo, several commercial radio stations associated with the politicians have orchestrated violence in the election of 2006. She gives the example of Radio Liberte chain owned by the then presidential candidate Piere Bemba and Digital Congo, owned by Kabila.

We have seen in this research that the commercial radios stations are more susceptible to political abuse than the national and communal radio stations. This because the radio stations with countrywide audience use the country’s national language which has the potential to unite the people than vernacular ones. They are also subject to more state restrictions. The community radio stations on their side, have close control and wider goals. Some are managed by the trustees, boards of management, religious groups or committees. Some that enjoys external funding may be subjected to more strict scrutiny hence they have a high likelihood to uphold transparency and accountability.

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