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**THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY**

Graduate School of Media and Communications

**THE POWER OF SATIRE: AN ANALYSIS OF GADO'S CARTOONS IN THE  
STANDARD NEWSPAPERS**

By

**KENNETH KIPRUTO NG'ETICH**

**531588**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Arts in Digital Journalism

Nairobi, Kenya

30/01/2020

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APPROVAL PAGE

The Aga Khan University  
Graduate School of Media and Communications

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Digital Journalism

Members of the Thesis Evaluation Committee appointed to examine the thesis of  
**KENNETH KIPRUTO NG'ETICH-535188**, found it satisfactory and recommended  
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## DECLARATION

I, **KENNETH KIPRUTO NG'ETICH-535188**, declare this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and that to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. The editorial assistance provided to me has in no way added to the substance of my thesis, which is the product of my own research endeavours.

---

Signature

30/01/2020

---

Date

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my boys Kiprop and Kigen, and to Caroline, Elizabeth and James.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I am grateful to my supervisors Dr. Peter Kimani and Dr. Joseph Nyanoti, whose scholarly advice, help and constant encouragement have contributed significantly to the completion of this study. I am thankful to Dr. Nancy Booker and Dr Sam Kamau, who provided critical advice and guidance throughout the research, helping shape and refine my thoughts. To Kimweli Wambua and Henry Kibira who went out of their way to critique and make this thesis better. I wish to thank my Thesis Committee members for their critical input for my study. I also wish to thank the Aga Khan University Vice Provost and Graduate School of Media and Communications Interim Dean Dr. Alex Awiti, staff, faculty members, and my fellow students for their invaluable input and for being a great source of support to me during my study. My gratitude to the library staff, specifically Augustine Gitonga, for his support. I would like to thank my parents, my wife Carol and sons Kiprop and Kigen for their unconditional support and inspiration throughout this study.

## ABSTRACT

Editorial cartoons form a key part of newspapers, offering much-needed comic relief to acres of news stories. Godfrey Mwapembwa, popularly known by his pen name Gado, has been described by the Financial Times as East Africa's most important syndicated cartoonist. Yet no extensive scholarly study has been done on the way Gado frames his drawings. This study analysed how politics, politicians and political issues are framed in Gado's editorial cartoons by looking at his illustrations published by The Standard between November 1, 2018 and October 31, 2019. It starts with a brief look at modern trends in editorial cartoons. The study was guided by three objectives: (i) to determine the main characters and symbols in Gado's political cartoons; (ii) to analyse the dominant themes in Gado's political cartoons, and; (iii) to analyse the framing of politics, politicians and political issues in Gado's political cartoons. To answer the research questions, guided by the framing theory, the study collected 60 cartoons through a systematic random sampling technique and employed a thematic analysis to understand and interpret the data. By executing a framing analysis of select cartoons, this study found that characters, symbols and words –the main elements used by Gado to frame the messages in his illustrations- help advance and push the boundaries of press freedom in saying the unsayable and writing the unprintable in a way no other media can do and in ways that are more provocative than in traditional media. The study also concluded that Gado's interpretations of news events deepen and extend newspaper readers understanding of news developments and that by use of simple lines, words, characters and symbols, cartoonists effectively breakdown and communicate complex developments for the masses



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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

|              |                                       |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>BBI:</b>  | Building Bridges Initiative           |
| <b>DRC:</b>  | Democratic Republic of Congo          |
| <b>EACC:</b> | Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission |
| <b>FES:</b>  | Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung              |
| <b>KRA:</b>  | Kenya Revenue Authority               |
| <b>NCCK:</b> | National Council of Churches of Kenya |
| <b>ODM:</b>  | Orange Democratic Movement            |
| <b>SGR:</b>  | Standard Gauge Railway                |
| <b>VAT:</b>  | Visual Argumentation Theory           |

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a background to the study, the problem statement and highlights the research questions and objectives that guided the study. It also discusses the scope, limitations and assumptions of the study.

#### 1.2 Background to the Study

Editorial cartoons are a comical yet powerful way of passing information. In Kenya, as across the world, almost all newspapers publish a cartoon daily, occasionally running them on the front page. Kenya's leading top two newspapers – *The Daily Nation* and *The Standard* – carry theirs on their editorial page (page 14) of their daily and weekend editions. *The Star*, Kenya's third newspaper in terms of circulation, varies its placement, running its editorial cartoon on page 3 and sometimes in its political pullout, *Siasa*, on its weekend editions.

*The People Daily* and the *Business Daily* run theirs on page 10, while the *East African* varies its placement on its Op-Ed (the newspaper page opposite the editorial page, mostly dedicated to personal comment) pages, 18 or 20.

Editorial cartoons are a popular and important part of a newspaper. Like any other form of art, most editorial cartoonists leave it to their readers to interpret and discern meaning from their drawings. According to (Eisner, 2008), any storyteller – cartoonists included – expects the audience, in this case, the newspaper reader, to understand the

information in the illustration while the reader expects the storyteller to present something comprehensible.

Editorial cartoons feature a wide range of issues, from politics, corruption, rule of law, culture, religion, sports, and governance to name a few. A political cartoonist's primary goal while enjoying the freedom of expression is to "make social and political commentary that simplifies the subtle and often complex underlying issues of a news story" (Mulanda & Khasandi-Telewa, 2014).

This means that like any other form of journalism, editorial cartoons' greatest impact on its readers – and the society in general -- lie in their inherent capacity to sway public opinion. Editorial cartoonists rely on satire to pass across their intended messages to their readers. Cartoonists employ comics journalism and use satire to expose the ridiculous or highlight a truth (AlJazeera, 2017).

Sometimes, this satire is lost in the minds of readers and to the characters on which it is based. Different people will interpret a satirical illustration differently. In June 2019, a Canadian cartoonist's illustration of US President Donald Trump playing golf over the bodies of two migrants went viral. The cartoon depicted Trump asking the bodies of a Mexican immigrant and his daughter who drowned while trying to cross the border into the US whether they minded if he played through. Two days later, Michael de Adder – the cartoonist who drew the illustration – was fired by his newspaper, Brunswick News Inc (Liao, 2019).

Godfrey Mwapembwa, whose cartoons this study is based on, is one of Kenya's most popular editorial cartoonists (Pilling, 2017). For 26 years, Mr. Mwapembwa, who



goes by the pen name Gado, has earned himself a huge following in East Africa, especially with his political caricatures targeting key figures in Kenya's and East Africa's politics. For a country like Kenya, which has an almost freewheeling atmosphere for journalism, satirists like Gado, have been testing the boundaries and limits of a free press with their pens. Initially, and especially during the one-party rule of Kenya's second President Daniel Moi (1978-2002), most cartoonists dared not draw the president's face (Pilling, 2017) until Mado, a veteran editorial cartoonist, did so in 1992. Moi's and Kanu's rule came to an end in 2002, ushering in a new era of media freedom. Since then, cartoonists have been pushing the limits in their illustrations of powerful political elites.

Through Gado's drawings, Kenyan newspaper readers have come to view Uhuru Kenyatta initially as an entitled political starter with diapers and a feeding bottle, then as a spoilt emperor, William Ruto as a turban-wearing land grabber (Rusbridger, 2017), Raila Odinga as an ever grinning politician with a cap and Kalonzo Musyoka as a chameleon. Gado also drew Kenya's former President Mwai Kibaki with a golf club (<http://gadocartoons.com/category/politics/>).

In 2016, Gado was sacked from the Nation Media Group, publishers of East Africa's largest circulation newspaper *The Daily Nation*. His cartoons had rubbed powerful people the wrong way, and his editors could no longer defend him from them (Rusbridger, 2017). He got into trouble with his bosses at Nation for drawing the President (Uhuru Kenyatta) in "unflattering light" (Pilling, 2017). President Kenyatta's hand was very visible in Gado's abrupt exit from Nation Media Group. Gado had been drawing the President and his deputy with shackles on their feet in an apparent reference to their International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment where they were facing crimes against humanity cases

over the 2007 Kenyan post-election violence where more than 1,500 Kenyans were killed, 3,000 women raped and 300,000 left internally displaced (Roberts, 2009). But it was the cartoon Gado drew of President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania that had Gado suspended and forced to take a paid sabbatical from *The Nation*, then quietly pushed out.

But the straw that broke the camel's back for Gado was the cartoon he drew of then and now former Tanzania President Jakaya Kikwete surrounded by a bevy of scantily dressed women, three of them labeled cronyism, incompetence, and corruption (Rusbridger, 2017). The cartoon led to the banning of the East African, the regional newspaper that published the cartoon and which is owned by the Nation Media Group, from circulation in Tanzania.

Most academic studies conducted on editorial cartoons and cartoonists in Kenya have mainly dealt with the history of cartoons in Kenya, cartoons and corruption, cartoons and violence, cartoons and terrorism, cartoons and politics and cartoons and leadership.

Scholarly studies have been done around the subject of cartoons and editorial cartoons in the Kenyan context. Obonyo (2004) explores the history and impact of cartoons in Kenya, capturing the evolution of the cartoons in Kenya's earliest newspapers of the 1900s, the introduction of indigenous comic strips, the impact of Joe magazine and the first satirical drawing of Kenya's second President Daniel Moi.

Frederiksen (1991) explores the impact of Joe magazine on Kenya's middle and lower-middle classes of the 1970s, while Wekesa (2012) studied how cartoons on the 2007-08 post-election violence in Kenya were as powerful as the written and verbal word in communication.

Omanga (2014) discusses how Kenyan cartoonists framed the 2011 raid in Abbottabad, Pakistan, that led to the killing of Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden, and how they related to Kenya's anti-terrorism war. Omanga (2012) probes the dominant frames in editorial cartoons covering Kenya's anti-terror war.

No scholar has attempted to analyse Gado's cartoons even though they are the most popular and most controversial (Pilling, 2017). This study, therefore, seeks to analyse how Gado's editorial cartoons communicate and portray key happenings in Kenya's politics. It seeks to analyze how he portrays key public figures and how his portrayal of these public figures evolve with time. This study explores how Gado uses his artistic licence to expand media freedom by saying, through his cartoons, the unsayable.

### 1.3 Problem Statement

According to Chappatte (2019), political cartoons were born with democracy, and they are challenged when freedom is. Cartoonists have an almost freehand to draw and communicate messages that other journalists cannot say or write openly (Chappatte, 2019). They help advance and push the boundaries of press freedom in saying the unsayable and publishing the unprintable. They can depict complex issues in a simple yet effective way.

Two recent editorial cartoons have sparked talk on the place of comics/ satirical journalism to pass a message and ignited debate on press freedom especially when it comes to satirical journalism and editorial cartoons in particular.

The first is the case of Canadian Cartoonist Michael de Adder, who in June 2019 drew an illustration of US President Donald Trump playing golf over the bodies of two Mexican immigrants. De Adder's freelance contract with Brunswick News Inc. was

terminated soon thereafter. This opened up a chain of events that also led to the dropping of syndicated political cartoons by the *New York Times* in its international editions in May 2019 following a much-criticised illustration of President Donald Trump holding and guiding a dog with the face of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (Lohr, 2017).

The second instance was a localised drawing of a cartoon by South African cartoonist Zapiro. The cartoon shows five men with the faces of Kenya's senior political leaders taking turns to defile a woman captioned Kenya. The original cartoon had the faces of South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma and his political and business associates, which the Kenyan cartoonist edited and substituted with those of Kenyans. The cartoon was met with a huge uproar online, with offended readers saying it normalized rape, making it a laughing matter.

Zapiro's original cartoon, 'Rape of South Africa', was published in April 2019 by South Africa's *Daily Maverick* and was heavily criticized for trivializing rape (Willis, 2018). Zapiro had in 2008 drawn a similar cartoon, 'Rape of Lady Justice', which became the subject of formal complaints at the South African Human Rights Commission and attracted a lawsuit from former South African President Jacob Zuma, the main protagonist in the cartoon (Willis, 2018).

The power of images in the age of the internet has never been so big. Cartoons are increasingly forming the basis of reader criticism.

"We are in a world where moralistic mobs gather on social media and rise like a storm, falling upon newsrooms in an overwhelming blow."  
(Chappatte, 2019).

The power cartoonists hold makes them susceptible to attacks from people in a position of power and their readers, sometimes to deadly consequences as it happened to Charlie Hebdo cartoonists (Library, 2018). Gado has been accused of offensively and unfavourably depicting Kenya's key politicians. He was sacked by *The Nation* in 2016 after for among other things drawing President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto in an unfavourable light and for ignoring the advice of his editors to go slow on his depictions of the two (Pilling, 2017). His cartoons led to the banning of *The East African* from circulation in Tanzania in 2015, while some have forced his editors to issue formal apologies. As East Africa's most popular cartoonist (Pilling, 2017), Gado's work has earned him a massive following, but it has also put him at loggerheads with key political figures in the region.

Across the world, most cartoonists are facing the same challenges (Chappatte, 2019). As Gado, Chappatte, De Adder and Charlie Hebdo's tribulations have shown, editorial cartoons have led to attacks on press freedom. This study, therefore, sought to analyse Gado's cartoons in a bid to illustrate the power of satire in framing issues while pushing and advancing press freedom.

#### 1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study sought to examine how politics, politicians and political issues are framed in Gado's editorial cartoons in the post-2017 General Election era.

#### 1.5 Overall Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to analyse framing in Gado's political cartoons.

### 1.5.1 Specific Objectives

This study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To determine the main characters and symbols in Gado's political cartoons
2. To analyse the dominant themes in Gado's political cartoons
3. To analyse the framing of politics, politicians and political issues in Gado's political cartoons

### 1.5.2 Research Questions

1. Who are the main characters in Gado's cartoons?
2. What are the dominant issues and messages in Gado's editorial cartoons?
3. How do Gado's cartoons frame politics and political issues in Kenya?

## 1.6 Rationale of the Study

The satire in editorial cartoons is a double-edged sword. To readers, it provides comic relief even as it passes across serious messages (Kemnitz, 1973). Sometimes, the comic relief can be lost in the interpretation of the cartoon as it happened in July 2019, when *The Standard* was forced to run an apology after it published a cartoon, drawn by Gado, showing a prominent Muslim leader as a pig. The reaction was swift, with the leadership of a local mosque demanding an apology ("Apology to Duale and Muslim Community," 2019).

The apology was only the latest case in a long list of happenings that ignited a debate on the place and future of editorial cartoons, especially among cartoonists

themselves. In June 2019, *The New York Times* decided to end political cartoons in its international editions, igniting a debate in media circles (Cavna, 2019). The Times prides itself with its bold journalism, often referring to itself as the world's best newspaper. Earlier in May, a Canadian newspaper had sacked one of its cartoonists following backlash over a cartoon he drew of President Donald Trump.

Thus, this study sought to analyse Gado's political cartoons to establish how the framing of political issues and characters with a view of understanding why editorial cartoons are so powerful that media organizations, even in the most liberal of countries like the US, are considering whether to stop publishing them.

### 1.7 Significance of the Study

Cartoons are powerful ways of communication that can communicate better than words or pictures (Kemnitz, 1973). This study will, therefore, help journalists, editors, media managers and scholars understand how Gado communicates by portraying the subjects of his caricatures the way he does and how he frames certain politicians, politics and political issues.

### 1.8 Scope of the Study

As an editorial cartoonist, Gado's illustrations cover a wide variety of issues that range from politics, governance, corruption, culture, religion, terror and global affairs to list a few. This study only covered cartoons by Gado that have political messages and touch on politicians and which were published over one year between November 2018 and October 2019. Other aspects of his illustrations are not studied in this research. This study understood politics to mean the activities associated with the governance of a country or

area. As such, cartoons that portray politicians, elections, political alliances and realignments, corruption, economy, and related issues were considered to be political. Those that had a mixture of themes were also considered for this study provided main political players and/ or issues could be identified. It understood Kenya's main politicians as those that form the core leadership of Kenya's politics, the President, his deputy, and the main opposition leaders.

Occasionally, Gado's cartoons appear in various pages of the newspaper. This study only covered those cartoons that are published in the editorial and opinion (the Op-Ed) pages, specifically pages 14 of *The Standard*.

The research investigated cartoons that feature Kenya's main political players – the President, Deputy President, and key Opposition leaders. Cartoons that had other politicians as well as those from neighbouring countries as well as key international political leaders who have from time to time been drawn by Gado fall outside the scope of this study unless it has one of Kenya's top political players prominently featured among the characters.

Some of Gado's cartoons are for one reason or another – legal, commercial, religious or ethical -- sometimes rejected by newspaper editors and he chooses to publish them, as he does all of his drawings, on his website <http://gadocartoons.com/>. This study confined itself to those that have been subjected to the editorial judgement process at The Standard and published in the newspaper's daily and weekend editions.

Since Gado has worked as an editorial cartoonist for 29 years at the time of this study, this research limited itself to cartoons published between November 1, 2018 and



October 31, 2019. This timeframe provided readily available content for analysis, but most significantly, it was a key period in Kenya's political history, with the country just having come from a general election whose presidential results had been nullified by the courts – a first in the history of Kenya – and the opposing sides reaching a truce that ended in a political realignment. Therefore, this timeframe thus fed well into the objectives of this study.

### 1.9 Limitations of the Study

The researcher worked as an editor for The Standard, the newspaper that publishes Gado's cartoons. As such, he was, directly and indirectly, involved in the decisions to or not to publish Gado's cartoons. Secondly, the findings of this study may be influenced by his biases as an insider in the newsroom. Thirdly, the number of editorial cartoons Gado has published over his career meant that the researcher had to limit himself to a particular period, and the analyses may not be a true reflection of his other cartoons.

### 1.10 Assumptions of the Study

This study assumed that there is a hidden meaning behind all cartoons, one that is not easily derivable to all readers. That the researcher's analysis of the cartoons will be free of his biases.

### 1.11 Operation Definition of Terms

**Cartoon:** A sketch or drawing, usually humorous, published in a newspaper or periodical, symbolizing, satirizing, or caricaturing some action, subject, or person of popular interest.

**Caricatures:** A symbol that exaggerates individuating characteristics of its subject.

**Satire:** The use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and other topical issues.

**Editorial cartoons:** Images and text that punctuate and enliven the daily newspaper editorial page

### 1.12 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of what editorial cartoons are, their usage in newspapers and recent trends in editorial cartoons across the world. It also outlined the background to this study, the objectives of the study, its significance and limitations and discussed the problem statement.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the nature of editorial cartoons, defines what they are and gives a brief history of their use and development in Kenyan media. Empirical literature review and theoretical framework of the study are also discussed in this chapter in relation to the objectives and research questions of the research. This section also presents the research gaps identified in the literature reviewed.

#### 2.2 The Concept of Cartoons, Caricature and Satire

The Oxford Learners Dictionary (2019) defines a cartoon as an amusing drawing in a newspaper or magazine, especially the one about politics or events in the news. Dictionary.com defines it as a sketch or drawing, usually humorous, published in a newspaper or periodical, symbolizing, satirizing, or caricaturing some action, subject, or a person of popular interest.

From these two definitions, we can deduce that a cartoon is a humorous and satirical graphical depiction of an individual, subject or event. In newspapers and magazines, they are meant to convey a particular message humorously.

Many scholars have defined the word cartoon in different ways but all pointing to the same definition. Kemnitz (1973) describes it as an imprecise term used to describe a multitude of graphic forms varying from drawings to simple sketches and caricatures. According to Worcester (2007), cartoons use symbols, icons, lines, and words to affirm,

mock, and complicate the assumptions and boundaries of acceptable discourse. Hempelmann and Samson (2008) define cartoons as humor-carrying visual/visual-verbal picture, containing at least one incongruity that is playfully resolvable to understand their punch line.

Cartoons should not be confused with caricatures. Kemnitz (1973) says caricature is a technique of cartooning. To differentiate between the two, Perkins (1975), defines a caricature as a symbol that exaggerates individuating characteristics of its subject, offers two distinct features sacrosanct to cartoons and caricatures. One, he says, is exaggeration as a caricature is premised on exaggerating the features of its subjects by, for example assigning a longer nose to a politician or a protruding tummy to signify greed. The second feature distinct to caricatures is individuation, which Perkins (1975) says is necessary to differentiate one subject in a caricature from his fellows. Caricatures are in some way the historical predecessors of cartoons (Hempelmann & Samson, 2008). Cartoons often incorporate caricatures or exaggeration as general stylistic devices.

### 2.3 What then is an Editorial Cartoon?

Worcester (2007) defines editorial cartoons as a typical outburst of images and text that punctuate and enliven the daily newspaper editorial page. Editorial cartoons can further be broken down to opinion cartoons – those that are used to communicate the artist's opinions and sum up situations – and joke cartoons – those that are primarily designed to communicate humour (Kemnitz, 1973).

For an illustration to be defined as an editorial cartoon, it must incorporate both humour and opinion to pass a message or communicate situations (Kemnitz, 1973). One

cannot separate the humour and the opinion of an editorial cartoon, as they are both intertwined.

One other key feature of editorial cartoons, derived from its humour and opinion qualities, is its use of satire to communicate. Bal, Pitt, Berthon, and DesAutels (2009) describe satire as the use of ridicule, irony or sarcasm to lampoon something or someone. Caricature, which draws attention and laughter through exaggeration of features can be thought of as a subset of satire.

Most editorial cartoons are placed on the editorial page right next to the newspaper's editorial. Newspaper editorials, also known as the *leader*, are opinion texts that represent the stand of a newspaper on particular issues already reported or are reported in that edition of the newspaper (Bonyadi & Samuel, 2013).

In some cases, the message in the editorial is amplified in the editorial cartoon and vice versa. Mostly, however, the editorial cartoon is a stand-alone piece of journalism. But according to Kemnitz (1973) the cartoon is more likely to get its point across better than the editorial or other news stories. In cases where the editorial and the cartoon feature the same subject, many readers are likely to grasp the cartoon more than they would the editorial.

The cartoon is also an ideal medium of suggesting or implying what cannot be said by the printed word. But as Kemnitz (1973) says, it cannot match the printed word and is incapable of the reasoned criticism and argument of the editorial.

## 2.4 The Place of Humour and Recent Trends in the World of Editorial Cartoons

“Without humour, we are dead.” These were the words on the caption of an editorial cartoon published on the front page of the New York Times website on January 8, 2015 after the Charlie Hebdo attacks. The illustration, the work of the Times cartoonist Patrick Chappatte, was a tribute to satirists killed in Paris in January 2015 when two brothers, Saïd and Chérif Kouachi, stormed the offices of the French satirical weekly newspaper Charlie Hebdo, opening fire and killing 11 people (Library, 2018).

Established in 1970, the magazine had become notoriously popular for its satire on religion and politics. In February 2006, Charlie Hebdo republished cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad that had originally appeared in the Danish Jyllands-Posten. Such visual depictions of the Prophet were prohibited by Islam, which adheres to the principle of aniconism, the opposition to the use of icons or images to portray living creatures (Petrikowski, 2019). Thus, the attackers told the police before they were shot dead that in attacking the magazine, they were avenging Prophet Muhammad.

The attack on Charlie Hebdo was in itself the bloodiest demonstration of the immense power of cartoons. The use of satire in the world of newspaper publishing has come under increasing attack from readers and the very subjects of the caricatures, especially political leaders (Chappatte, 2019).

In June 2019, the New York Times announced that it would stop publishing political cartoons in its international editions (Lohr, 2017). This was after a caricature of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu triggered widespread outrage. The cartoon depicted Netanyahu as a Star of David-wearing guide dog leading a blind President Donald Trump, who was wearing a kippah (a brimless cap worn by male Jews). The backlash was

immediate, with critics saying it was promoting anti-Semitism. Its consequences were the decision by the Times, one of the world's most respected newspapers, to cease publication of political cartoons.

THE NEW YORK TIMES INTERNATIONAL EDITION



*(Source: The New York Times (2019))*

*Figure 1: The Trump-Netanyahu cartoon as published by the New York Times*

These two incidents, unrelated and years apart, serve to show the power wielded by editorial cartoons. Patrick Chappatte, a long time cartoonist with The New York Times and who lost his job with the newspaper's decision to stop publishing editorial cartoons, described the Times decision as an unfortunate move for opinion and journalism, not just cartoons (Chappatte, 2019).

Lamb (2007) says politicians and other influential figures have tried to silence editorial cartoonists for nearly as long as they have existed. A one-time New York City official William Tweed summarized the simple potency of the editorial cartoon thus: “Let’s stop them damned pictures. I don’t care what the papers write about me my constituents can’t read; but damn it, they can see pictures!”(Lamb, 2007).

## 2.5 Editorial Cartoons in Kenya: A Short History

The history cartooning in Kenya is closely related and intertwined with that of the media (Obonyo, 2004). As such, it is almost impossible to tell the development and evolution of the cartoon without looking back at the young and growing media in the Kenya of the early 19th century.

Kenya’s mass media can be traced back to the coming of the colonialists in the late 19th Century and early 20th centuries. The media in Kenya as we know it today was a creation of European missionaries, immigrants and the colonial administrations as the chief actors (Ochilo, 1993).

The colonialists used the press as a social and political tool to maintain their domination. The Asians and Africans also established their own newspapers to fight the colonialists' domination (Gikonyo, 1986). Started in 1902, *The Standard* is East Africa’s oldest newspaper. It was established by an Asian railway contractor, JM Jevanjee, who sold it soon thereafter to a European businessman (Gikonyo, 1986). As such, *The East African Standard*, as it was known back then, catered for the needs of the colonialists.

The Aga Khan, the spiritual leader of the Ismaili Muslims, established *The Nation* in 1960 to cater to the views and aspirations of the African population. In 1959, the Aga



Khan had established the Swahili paper *Taifa Leo*. Thus, while *The Standard* catered for the needs of its white owners and readers, *The Nation* sought to serve the local population. It was not until 1975 that *The Standard* employed its first Kenyan editor-in-chief, 11 years after *The Nation* had done so (Gikonyo, 1986).

According to Obonyo (2004), the earliest reference to cartoons in East Africa chronicles the circulation of caricatures among soldiers fighting in World War I.

“Cartoons and anecdotes circulated throughout East Africa; at least one humour magazine, the *Karonga Kronikal*, was created for and by the troops.” The purposes of the *Kronikal* and other sources of humour were to boost the morale of the soldiers and to provide an outlet for their frustrations” (Obonyo, 2004, p.18)

But these cartoons never featured Africans as subjects. The first indigenous cartoons in Kenya were drawn by E.G. Gitau at around 1950 (Obonyo, 2004). The comical strip featured the escapades of a man, Juha Kalulu, his constant companion, a dog called Taska, and occasionally Juha’s wife, Serah. Juha Kalulu was the longest-running comic strip in Kenya, running for 62 years, and was first published in the Swahili language newspaper *Tazama*.



(Source: *Taifa Leo*, Muigai (2016))

Figure 2: An illustration of the *Juha Kalulu* comic strip that run

When *Tazama* folded, Gitau moved it to *Baraza*, another Swahili language newspaper that was owned by the *East African Standard* (Muigai, 2016). When *Baraza* also folded in 1961, Gitau moved to *Taifa Leo*, where the *Juha Kalulu* strip was published until his (Gitau's) death in 2016.

But it was Terry Hirst who drew Kenya's first political cartoon. Hirst was the first political cartoonist in Kenya, gaining a huge following among newspaper readers in the 1970s with his Friday cartoons in the *Daily Nation* (Obonyo, 2004). Hirst specialised in depicting social scenes and the then quiet political life in Kenya. In 1970, he left *The Daily Nation* to establish *Joe Magazine*, a monthly magazine, with Hillary Ng'weno, his then editor-in-chief at the *Nation*. At *Joe Magazine*, Hirst's cartoons featured the character "Joe"

through whose eyes the reader was exposed to a variety of social issues. Unlike “Juha Kalulu” which never cared for social issues or politics, Joe did not shy away from the political (Obonyo, 2004).

“Joe emerged as a mouthpiece for the new African middle and lower-middle classes, as a socialising agent, educating people in how to be urban, and as a contribution to a fairly democratic public sphere in which issues of importance to the urban population of Kenya could be voiced and discussed” (Fredereksen, 1991, p.135).

At its height in 1975, Joe had a monthly circulation of 30,000 copies. But this figure dropped to 22, 000 in 1976 mainly due to recession and the collapse of the East African Community. Soon thereafter in 1974 Hillary Ngweno, who alongside Terry Hirst was Joe’s founding editor, left to pursue other interests. Almost every issue of Joe carried a new, original short story, illustrated by different artists (Frederiksen, 1991).

Although the magazine ran for only about three years, Joe inspired many of the cartoonists who came after Hirst. Significantly, most of these cartoonists that came to the scene were from outside Kenya (Obonyo, 2004). Most notable were Tanzanian Philip Ndunguru of the Kazibure comic strip, Ugandan James Tumisiime of Bogi Benda series and Ghanaian Frank Odoi of the Akokhan and Golgoti fame. Before his death in 2012, Odoi was considered one of the most socially and politically conscious, and longest active cartoonists on the Kenyan scene (Obonyo, 2004).

Local cartoonists soon came to the scene, led by Koskei Kirui of the East African Standard and Paul “Madd” Kelemba of the Nation. Maddo, as he is now known, was the first indigenous political cartoonist to reach national prominence. He was to later draw the first caricature of a Kenyan President when he drew President Daniel Moi in 1992 for the

Viva Magazine. Maddo joined the Nation in 1986 as the country's first full-time staff editorial cartoonist. His Madd Madd World column that is published in *The Saturday Standard* has been running for 30 years. It is the works of these cartoonists that paved the way for today's editorial cartoonists.

## 2.6 Editorial Cartoons and Politics

A cartoonist creates and manipulates public opinion, shapes opinion and builds images in a reader and provides frames through which the reader views a politician. A political cartoon affects the image of a politician in a reader's mind (Ashfaq & Hussein, 2013). The editorial cartoon, therefore, gives a cartoonist a safe platform to express his opinions and raise public voice in the same way a newspaper writer or opinion columnist does. According to Oliphant (2004), a political cartoon is a potent galvanizer of opinion, the kick-starter of conversation and discussion" (Oliphant, 2004).

A political cartoonist's primary goal while enjoying his/her freedom of expression is to make social and political commentary that simplifies the subtle and often complex underlying issues of a news story (Mulanda & Khasandi-Telewa, 2014). A good example of this would be the Watergate scandal where cartoonists played a big role in the termination of the Nixon presidency by satirising what was otherwise a very serious matter by bringing comic relief to the serious reportage (Oliphant, 2004).

Therefore, the greatest impact of editorial cartoons on society lies in their inherent nature to sway public opinion. And they do not have the obligation to be fair (Howell, 2008). But Scully (2018) argues that as powerful influencers of social and political issues, political cartoons should give voice and structure to what newspaper readers think, not

necessarily change a newspaper reader's opinion. Rather, they should provoke deeper thought.

## 2.7 Empirical Literature Review

In seeking to analyse the power of visuals, Wekesa (2012) studied cartoons at an exhibition that was held in Nairobi in 2010. The exhibition featured only those cartoons that had the post-election violence that rocked Kenya in 2008 as its central theme. From the analyses, they concluded that visuals can argue as simply and forcefully as their verbal counterparts.

Wekesa used the Visual Argumentation Theory (VAT) that advocates for the fact that visuals or images can argue or persuade as forcefully as their verbal counterparts. His study analysed only the best cartoons as adjudged by a panel in an exhibition hosted by the Goethe Institute, Katuni and the Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung (FES). His study was only limited to the 2007-08 post-election violence and did not feature other cartoons whose illustrators did not enter them into the exhibition.

Omanga (2012) used a qualitative framing analysis to study the framing of terrorists and terrorism by Kenyan newspapers, *The Daily Nation* and *The Standard*, following the killing of Osama bin Laden in 2011. Using editorial cartoons, the study traces the transformation of Bin Laden to the time of his killing, concluding that the way he was framed by the Kenyan editorial cartoonists was largely a result of social context in Kenya and beyond as the global war on terror focused on finding Bin Laden.

All the editorial cartoons studied were the original works of Gado and Kham, the pen names of the two cartoonists that worked for *The Daily Nation* and *The Standard*

respectively at the time. The researcher interviewed the two cartoonists to gain an insider's view of the media culture that shapes their work.

To understand how the framing of Bin Laden by cartoonists evolved, Omanga (2014) analyses cartoons published by the two newspapers from the time of the September 11, 2001 bombings in the US to the aftermath of Bin Laden's killing in 2011. In total, Omanga (2014) analysed nine cartoons but does not highlight the methodology through which he arrived at his sample.

By executing a comparative analysis of 400 political cartoons across 12 countries in Europe, Van Hecke (2017) examines how cartoons framed the Eurocrisis and argues that its definition, causal interpretation, and moral evaluation, is constructed along national or cultural lines. Van Hecke (2017) argues that political cartoons are part of a mediated filtering system that framed the Eurocrisis by 'selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient. He did this in a bid to answer two research questions: what frames do political cartoons use to give meaning to the eurocrisis? and; how is the frequency of certain frames distributed across Europe?

To answer these two research questions, Van Hecke (2017) first build a theoretical framework where he conceptualized communication about the Eurocrisis as a framing contest and political cartoons as a tool for framing the eurocrisis. He then executed a framing analysis of 400 political cartoons created by 18 cartoonists from 12 European countries. He drew his sample from politicalcartoons.com, the largest searchable online database of political Cartoons, then filtered them using several criteria. He then applied a coding scheme to reveal the frames hidden within the cartoons.

## 2.8 Research Gaps from the Literature Reviewed

Many scholarly studies have been done around the subject of cartoons and editorial cartoons in the Kenyan context. Obonyo (2004) explores the history and impact of cartoons in Kenya, capturing the evolution of the cartoons in Kenya's earliest newspapers of the 1900s, the introduction of indigenous comic strips, the impact of Joe magazine and the first satirical drawing of Kenya's second President Daniel Moi.

Frederiksen (1991) explores the impact of Joe magazine on Kenya's middle and lower-middle classes of the 1970s, how the strip became a socialising agent and how it contributed to a democratic public sphere where important issues could be voiced and discussed. Obonyo (2004) has also looked at the past, present, and future of the Kenyan cartoonists, drawing on past experiences in Kenya and across the world to predict the future.

Most scholarly articles reviewed for this study sought to explain how cartoons have been used to frame important issues in Kenya. Wekesa (2012) studied how cartoons on the 2007-08 post-election violence in Kenya were as powerful as the written and verbal word in communication. He argued that visuals can stretch the truth beyond caricature or mere amusement in ways the written or verbal word cannot. Omanga (2014) discusses how Kenyan cartoonists framed the 2011 raid in Abbottabad, Pakistan that led to the killing of Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden and how they related to Kenya's anti-terrorism war. Omanga (2012) probes the dominant frames in editorial cartoons covering Kenya's anti-terror war.

Mulanda and Khasandi-Telewa (2014) studied comical political strips in the *Daily Nation* and concluded that political cartoons are very subjective and easily polarized

opinions, even calling for regulations to govern the publication of political cartoons. But whereas a lot of research has been done on cartoons and cartoonists, there was no single study that has sought to analyse Gado's political cartoons, or Gado's satirical work for Kenya's newspapers, given the fact that he is Kenya's most famous yet most controversial cartoonist (Pilling, 2017). It is this gap that this study sought to fill.

## 2.9 Theoretical Review

McQuail (2011) defines theory as a general proposition based on observation and logical argument that states the relationship between observed phenomena. Theories of mass communication, therefore, provide a grounding for the explanation for the many relations that exist between media and social and cultural life. He further identifies five kinds of theories relevant to mass communication: social scientific, cultural normative, operational and everyday theory.

Social-cultural theories seek to explain the nature, working, and effects of mass communication based on systematic and objective observation of the media. On the other hand, the everyday theory seeks to explain how a consumer of media makes sense of what is reported in the media and how that consumer understands how media content is intended to be read. It also explains how a consumer of media content constructs lifestyle and identities around the content they consume. The everyday theory enables consumers of media to distinguish between "reality and fiction and helps read between the lines" (McQuail, 2011). This study sought to explain the concept of editorial cartoons through one of mass communication's major theories: framing.



### 2.9.1. Framing as a Theory of Mass Communication

Framing as a theory of mass communication was adopted from sociology, where it had been developed as a theory by Erving Goffman in 1974 (D. A. Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2006). Goffman argued that for an individual to process new information efficiently, they needed to apply what he described as schema or “primary frameworks” to classify and interpret it meaningfully. Schema can be defined as a singular object or relation between objects (B. Scheufele, 2004).

Simon and Xenos (2010) define framing as the organization and packaging of information. James Tankard, a leading scholar on mass communication theory, defines a media frame as “the central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration”(Griffin, Ledbetter, & Sparks, 2015). McQuail (2011) cites Goffman as the originator of the notion that a frame is necessary to organize what would otherwise be fragments of ideas into usable information. They are modes of presentation that journalists and other communicators use to present information in a way that resonates with existing underlying frameworks among their audience (D. A. Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2006).

Other scholars have drawn a close relationship between media framing and other theories of communication. D. A. Scheufele (1999) suggested that framing is an extension of agenda-setting, calling it second-level agenda-setting as he sought to describe the impact of the salience of characteristics of media coverage on audiences’ interpretation of media content. Griffin et al. (2015) concur, saying that in trying to tell its audience what to think and what to think about, the media makes some issues more salient, ensuring that the audience pays great attention to these issues as more important.

But Griffin et al. (2015) also suggest that framing goes way beyond the agenda-setting mantra that although the media is not very successful in telling its audience what to think, it is very successful in telling them what to think about. The mass media, they say, also tells its audience how to think about it.

“To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition” (Griffin et al., 2015, p.380)

Frames are necessary tools for a media user to define problems, make informed choices and solve problems. We can, therefore, take framing to also mean the context, theme or news angle given to media content (McQuail, 2011). Critics of the notion that framing is an important part of journalism argue that it removes the very sacrosanct journalistic value of objectivity and introduces bias, intended or unintended. But McQuail (2011) argues that when sources supply information to journalists, that information is packaged in frames that suit the purpose of the source and is very unlikely to be objective.

### 2.9.2 Relevance of Framing Theory to this Study

This study sought to answer three research questions: (i) What are the dominant issues and messages in Gado’s political cartoons? (ii) How are Kenya’s most popular political figures characterised in Gado’s cartoons? and (iii) How do Gado’s cartoons frame politics and political issues in Kenya?

The aim is to first understand the main issues covered by the cartoons by studying Gado’s work over a given period, in this case, the period between 2013 and 2019 during the tenure of the Jubilee government. This then helped give a clear understanding of how the most popular subjects of Gado’s cartoons are characterised.

All these led to an understanding of the frames employed by Gado to give meaning to political issues and political figures. The aim here is to present a descriptive overview of how newspaper readers can make sense of Kenya's politics.

To answer these research questions, this study employed the framing theory of mass communication which states that the media organizes news into certain frames that influences readers into thinking in a particular way (Griffin et al., 2015). The most significant aspect of this study is to establish and understand how cartoons frame politicians and political issues in Kenya. Cartoons are part of a mediated filtering system that helps the construction and framing of social reality (Van Hecke, 2017). They reinforce and produce the messages already highlighted by reporters and columnists in a newspaper. As such, cartoonists draw upon topics that have already been identified in the media as worthy of public attention.

Simon and Xenos (2010) define framing as the organization and packaging of information. Shoemaker and Reese (2013) explain framing as a way to dress up facts to give them meaning while Simon and Xenos (2010) say framing is inherent in the practice of journalism and the framing theory helps explain how news media covers issues.

When it comes to framing, the premium is on salience, which in this context according to Shiundu (2018), means "making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful and memorable to audiences".

The choice of framing as a methodology is informed by the fact that it helps to define problems, diagnose courses to make value judgements and suggest remedies (Shiundu, 2018). This lends credence to the works of Van Hecke (2017), who found that

political cartoons enable the public to actively classify, organize and interpret what they see and experience in meaningful ways.

Therefore, this study employed a text and image-based framing analysis, because as Museum (2010) when analysing political cartoons, one has to describe the action taking place in the cartoon, identify the symbols therein, identify exaggerations, describe the irony and highlight the captions (if available).

## 2.10 Summary

This chapter provided relevant literature about the problem, gave a comparative definition of cartoon and caricatures and outlined a brief history of editorial cartoons in Kenya. It outlined the identified possible gaps in the research and provided an in-depth discussion of the theoretical framework.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a description of the nature of this study and the research approach adopted. It discusses the study population, sampling techniques employed, the coding approach employed and the scope of the study. The procedure of analyzing and interpreting the data collected as well as the ethical considerations of the study is also discussed.

#### 3.2 Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach. This kind of approach allowed for an in-depth understanding and analysis of Gado's editorial cartoons as published by *The Standard* newspaper. The qualitative part of the research also allowed for a closer analysis of the characters and symbols, themes and framing of politics, politicians and political issues in Gado's editorial cartoons to answer the research questions. In choosing this approach, the researcher was guided by Shiundu (2018) who said that a research approach is advised by the question: "For which (research) questions are qualitative (and/or quantitative) information more useful or sufficient?"

#### 3.3 Research Design

This study sought to analyse the framing of politics, politicians and political issues in Gado's editorial cartoons by first identifying the characters and symbols in the cartoons and identifying the themes and then using these to analyse how politics is framed. The

design of this study, therefore, is descriptive as it involves answering the questions of who, what, why and how. It sought to describe what exists in Gado's cartoons with the aim of obtaining information concerning the current status of the phenomena. The study leaves further research on Gado's cartoons open.

Since this study sought to identify characters, symbols and themes in Gado's cartoons and to analyse framing in those cartoons, a qualitative approach was applied to gain an in-depth understanding of the research questions. According to Gitonga (2017), qualitative research is grounded in a philosophical position that is broadly interpretivist as it seeks to explain how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced and produced. This kind of research design aims to produce a detailed understanding of the topic under study using rich, contextual and detailed data.

### 3.4 Research Methods

The choice of research method is determined and to a large extent dictated by the topic under study. This research sought to study political cartoons by Gado in a bid to first identify and understand the dominant issues and messages in Gado's editorial cartoons, and then seek to understand how cartoons frame politics and political issues in Kenya.

This research sought to understand, provide new insights and increase understanding of a particular phenomenon, in this case, political cartoons. As such, it is a content analysis based study.

Content analysis can be defined as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from the text, works of art, images, maps, sounds, signs or symbols to the content of their use (Krippendorff, 2018).

Cartoons can be defined as work of art as a cartoonist employs images and texts to communicate (Worcester, 2007). As a scientific tool of research, content analysis must meet two key requirements, reliability and replicability (Krippendorff, 2018). Findings must be reliable in such a way that researchers studying the same phenomena but working under different environments and times must reach the same conclusions (Krippendorff, 2018). Shiundu (2018) posits that content analysis is a crucial method as it addresses questions on the usefulness and sufficiency of the data collected.

In seeking to understand and analyse Gado's cartoons, this research sought to study only those cartoons that are deemed to be political and have been published either in the newspapers Gado has worked for or in his website <http://gadocartoons.com/>.

One critique of content analysis is that it is nothing more than reading a newspaper and applying individual worldviews in what they mean. But Krippendorff (2018) says that in content analysis, a researcher must analyse and develop in detail their study and describe how they derived their judgements so that others may replicate their results. Content analysis takes into account the fact that no one has a monopoly of interpreting the meaning of content, but whatever inferences are made, must be valid and supported by evidence (Shiundu, 2018).

As mentioned above, this research studied political cartoons using Gado's drawings as a case study. As such, this study has identified Gado's cartoons as worthy of academic research whose findings will relate to similar contexts (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008).

Kumar (2019) says that in a case study, the case being studied should be typical of similar cases and can provide insight into events and situations prevalent in the group

where that case is drawn from. This study, therefore, assumed that political cartoons drawn by Gado, who is East Africa's most popular cartoonists (Pilling, 2017), can form the basis of understanding framing of Kenya's political issues in political cartoons through the framing theory as proposed by Erving Goffman (D. A. Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2006).

### 3.5 Data Sources

Gado's cartoons have been published by *The Standard* since June 2016, when he joined the newspaper after a long sabbatical following his sacking from The Nation (Pilling, 2017). His work is published six days a week. *The Saturday Standard* is the only edition of *The Standard* where Gado's work is not published as his contract with the media organization requires him to submit cartoons for six days every week. When Gado is on a sabbatical, *The Standard's* editorial cartoons are drawn by other syndicated cartoonists contracted to the organisation.

### 3.6 Population

This thesis reviewed cartoons published in *The Standard* and its weekly publication *Sunday Standard*. Since he joined The Standard in June 2016 and considering that his cartoons are published six times a week, Gado has published 1,008 different cartoons.

#### 3.6.1 Target Population

Given that the total population for this study is 1,008, the study restricted itself to only those political cartoons published after the 2017 General Election and selected those published between November 1, 2018 and October 31, 2019. It involved the analysis of only those cartoons published in the editorial pages, Page 14, of *The Standard* and *Sunday Standard*. Most of these cartoons are also found in <http://gadocartoons.com/>, which also



has cartoons that for one reason or another were rejected by the newspaper editors because of ethical, religious, political, ownership or legal considerations. Since Gado's cartoons are published six days a week, the total number of cartoons published by *The Standard* and *The Sunday Standard* between November 1, 2018 and October 31, 2019 are 240. Therefore, the target population was 240.

### 3.6.2 Sample Size

To get a sampling interval, the researcher employed the formula expounded by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) that is dividing the total population by the target population. Therefore,  $1,008 / 240 = 4$ . Since the starting point for this study has already been given as November 1, 2018 every fourth cartoon from November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2019 was picked. This gave a sample size of 60 documents for analysis.

### 3.6.3 Sampling Techniques and Procedures

As this study is analyzing content, it employed a systematic random sampling technique. In content analysis, systematic samples are favoured when the content under research stems from regularly appearing publication, in this case, *The Standard* newspapers (Krippendorff, 2018). The study, therefore, selected every *kth* from the list of cartoons, given that the starting point of the study is already given as November 1, 2018.

But as Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) suggest, in using this sampling method, the list of members in the sampling frame must be randomized to ensure a truly random sample. Since editorial cartoons are published daily, they undertake to convey satirical messages of events making news. Thus, a political cartoon published today even if made up of the

same characters drawn in a cartoonist's particular style will never be the same as that published yesterday or tomorrow. Therefore, this reduces systematic errors in sampling.

### 3.7 Coding

For purposes of analysing political cartoons in Kenya's newspapers, this study reviewed and analysed the characters, captions, symbols, and issues in the cartoons drawn by Gado and published by the two newspapers he has worked for, *The Daily Nation* and *The Standard* (Shiundu, 2018). A coding sheet (See *Appendix A*) was used to analyze the cartoons and place them into frames. To identify the different frames Gado uses to give meaning to the issues he wishes to communicate in his cartoons, this study applied a frame analysis of several steps as expounded by the works of Van Hecke (2017).

First, Gado's cartoons that treat politics as their main theme were collected. These cartoons were then filtered using various criteria. First, only those cartoons that had key political figures in the Kenyan political scene were selected. Cartoons that only had other political players but who do not form the core leadership of Kenya's politics were discarded.

Secondly, these cartoons were then filtered based on the issues they carried. Those cartoons that had politically related messages but outside Kenya's core political themes of elections, corruption, ethnicity, integrity, and succession were discarded.

A coding scheme was then developed to reveal the frames hidden in these cartoons. As Van Hecke (2017) explains, in cartoons, a frame is a certain pattern composed of several elements. This study, therefore, followed directions by Van Hecke (2017) that rather than directly encoding the entire frame, it should be split into its separate 'frame elements' or

‘reasoning devices’. When these elements group together, they form a pattern that can be identified across several cartoons. These are what Van Hecke (2017) calls frames.

### 3.8 Validity and Credibility of the Content Analysis Guide and Coding Tool

To test the validity of the data collection tool, and to eliminate the researcher’s biases, the researcher gave the content analysis guide to two research assistants – a journalist and an accountant. The journalist was chosen because he is a news producer and interacts with editorial cartoons regularly, while the accountant was chosen as a news consumer.

The researcher provided them with a content analysis guide for each cartoon that was to be analysed and got back all the forms. The researcher then did a side-by-side in-depth comparison of the content analysis guides and found their analysis to agree.

### 3.9 Scope of the Study

This study covered those cartoons that are published in the editorial and opinion (the Op-Ed) pages, specifically pages 14 of *The Standard* and *Sunday Standard*. *The Standard* is Kenya’s second-leading newspaper in terms of circulation.

Gado’s cartoons, those that were published and others that were not, are all available on his website, <http://gadocartoons.com/>. The internet has provided substantial and highly accessible platforms to professional and amateur cartoonists (D. A. Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2006). In Gado’s website, I looked at cartoons that appear under the tab ‘politics’, covering the period 2013 and 2019.

Since Gado has worked as an editorial cartoonist for 29 years at the time of this study, this research limited itself to cartoons published between November 2018 and October 2019. This study omitted any other editorial cartoon that was published elsewhere from the editorial page, Page 14, and those cartoons that were not drawn by Gado. Since most newspaper content, including editorial cartoons, end up online in the websites of these newspapers, this research omitted them and only analyzed those cartoons published in the print newspapers.

### 3.10 Techniques of Data Processing and Analysis

This research analysed data using a thematic analysis approach of the qualitative data obtained in relation to the objectives of the study which were: (i) To establish the dominant themes in Gado's political cartoons; (ii) To analyse the main characters and symbols in Gado's political cartoons; and (iii) To analyse the framing of politics, politicians and political issues in Gado's political cartoons. From the themes arising from the study, data can be systematically analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2015).

Data obtained from the content was analysed in the following steps:

- i. Using a content analysis guide and a filtering tool, the cartoons were grouped according to the themes/ issues they carried
- ii. The main characters and other symbols in these cartoons were identified and described in detail
- iii. A coding scheme was then used to analyse and describe the various frames Gado uses to communicate through his cartoons

Once the data had been systematically analysed in accordance with the objectives of the study, an interpretation was made and results presented in a descriptive/ narrative method.

### 3.11 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered fully to the prescribed ethical practices of academic research. First, the researcher came up with a research proposal and defended the proposal before a panel constituted by the Dean, Graduate School of Media and Communication of the Aga Khan University. The researcher then sought and obtained approval from the Aga Khan University Ethics Review Committee. (See *Appendix C*).

Secondly, the researcher obtained all the requisite approvals and statutory permits before embarking on data collection. Permission to collect the data was sought from the organisation that holds the copyrights to the cartoons studied, in this case, the Standard Media Group, through a formal letter. Only after the permission was granted that the researcher proceeded to collect the data.

### 3.12 Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology process, and discussed research method, design, population, sample size, data collection and analysis procedures. A rationale was provided for the choices in the methodology. The ethical considerations that arose during the study were also outlined.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses data presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the key findings in response to the three research objectives and questions that informed this study. The analysed data was acquired from the cartoons drawn by Gado and published by *The Standard* and its sister publication, the *Sunday Standard*, between November 1, 2018 and October 31, 2019.

#### 4.2 Respondents Overview

The study adopted content analysis as the research method. The researcher analysed content that related to the objectives of the study. The sampled content for analysis was 60 cartoons published on diverse dates between November 1, 2018 and October 30, 2019 by *The Standard* newspapers. The study achieved its desired sample size of 60 cartoons. This means that 100 per cent respondents rate was achieved.

#### 4.3 Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation

Guided by the objectives and research questions of the study, the researcher was able to identify the characters and symbols used by Gado in his political cartoons as well as the dominant themes in the cartoons. The researcher then used the findings to analyse the framing of politics, politicians and political issues by Gado in his editorial cartoons.

The researcher developed and used a content analysis guide to understand the data. First, the researcher developed a filtering tool to align the data collected to the objectives

and scope of the study. Once the data had been sifted, the researcher then used the content analysis guide to establish the characters and symbols in the cartoons as well as the issues and/or themes the cartoons were premised on. This helped in achieving the first two research objectives on identifying the main characters and symbols in Gado's political cartoons and the dominant themes in the cartoons.

Next, the researcher developed a coding scheme to analyse and describe the various frames in Gado's political cartoons in a bid to answer the third research objective; analyzing the framing of politics, politicians and political issues in Gado's political cartoons. The findings were then presented descriptively in a narrative format.

#### 4.4 Objective One: Characters and Symbols used in Gado's Political Cartoons

This objective sought to determine the main characters and symbols in Gado's political cartoons. The researcher approached this objective through the definition of the word character by the Oxford Learners Dictionary (2019), which defines character as a person or an animal in a book, play or film. In establishing the characters in Gado's political cartoons, the researcher extended this definition to include the person (s) and/or animals represented in the cartoons.

Cartoonists tend to exaggerate a character's physical appearances to communicate a particular message and to bring the element of humour to their illustrations. Thus, the identity of a particular character may be lost to different readers. The study found that Gado's drawings do retain the key features of the political character he wishes to portray, in a bid to leave no doubt in the eyes of the readers on who that particular character is. According to Perkins (1975), individuation is a key feature in satirical journalism as it is necessary to differentiate one subject in a caricature from his peers.

Gado also uses symbols to represent particular people, groups of people and/or issues. The study established that the way these symbols are drawn have largely remained the same, and their main role is to affirm and mock the issues under scrutiny.

#### 4.4.1 Characters and Characterisation

The research established that the main characters in Gado's political cartoons are Kenya's main political players. The study identified President Uhuru Kenyatta, Deputy President William Ruto, and Opposition leader Raila Odinga as the main and most popular subjects of Gado's political cartoons.

In most cases, the three would be drawn together, often with President Kenyatta standing between Ruto and Raila. Their political associates can in most times be seen standing behind them, drawn in a generic version that makes it hard to place their names to the faces. President Uhuru Kenyatta is drawn with a crown on his head to represent his royalty/ aristocracy status. The crown is a constant feature on his head and is the symbol that identifies him. Mostly, and depending on the theme of the cartoon, he is drawn with a big smile and larger lips; sometimes, he wears a confused face.

In all the cartoons reviewed, the researcher found that Deputy President William Ruto is always drawn with a turban on his head, the kind that is worn by members of the Sikh community. Mostly, he is in a shirt, whose sleeves have been folded, and tie and occasionally in suit and tie. Ruto's nose appears to be larger than it is in real life, and like the turban on his head, it is a constant in all his cartoons.



The most defining features of Opposition leader Raila Odinga are the constant cap in his head and dotted shirt. The dots on his shirt resemble oranges in an apparent link to his party, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM).

Another key feature of Gado's political cartoons is the fat cats, vultures, hyenas, and pigs drawn to bodies of men wearing suits and ties. Mostly, they carry briefcases full of cash and have big protruding bellies. They are ever smiling or laughing and stand behind the three big political leaders. They represent corruption, cartels, and political wheeler-dealers or political associates. They appear to be an embodiment of (lack of) values and/or vices.



(Source: *The Standard*, Mwampembwa (2019, June 02))

*Figure 3: Fat cats, hyenas, pigs and vultures*

To represent Wanjiku, the common man, Gado uses the image of a woman in a headgear who is always carrying a basket. Wanjiku always wears a sad, confused and thoughtful face.

Occasionally, the citizens will be drawn in a group that contains a man in a cap, a small boy, a pregnant woman carrying a child on her back and a seemingly heavy load on her head and a basket on her hand, a man in a suit but without a tie and a girl in school uniform with a bag on her back. The group looks lost and helpless.

Another group of common characters in Gado's cartoons is church leaders and clergy. The cartoonists leaves no doubt as to who they are; Cardinal John Njue, the head of the Catholic Church in Kenya, can be identified by his eyeglasses, mitre (bishop's hat) and crozier (staff carried by a bishop); Prophet Awor can be identified by his long beard and bald head; while Canon Peter Karanja, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) can be identified by his moustache. The three are some of the most known church leaders in Kenya.

#### 4.4.1.1 Special Character

A constant feature, in most but not all, of Gado's cartoons is a small almost unnoticeable character that resembles a person. This feature can be construed to be a symbol, but the study found it to be a character as it is illustrated as a stick figure – a simple drawing of a person composed of a few lines, curves, and dots. It looks like an alter ego of the cartoonist Gado uses it to give a commentary on the theme of the cartoon.

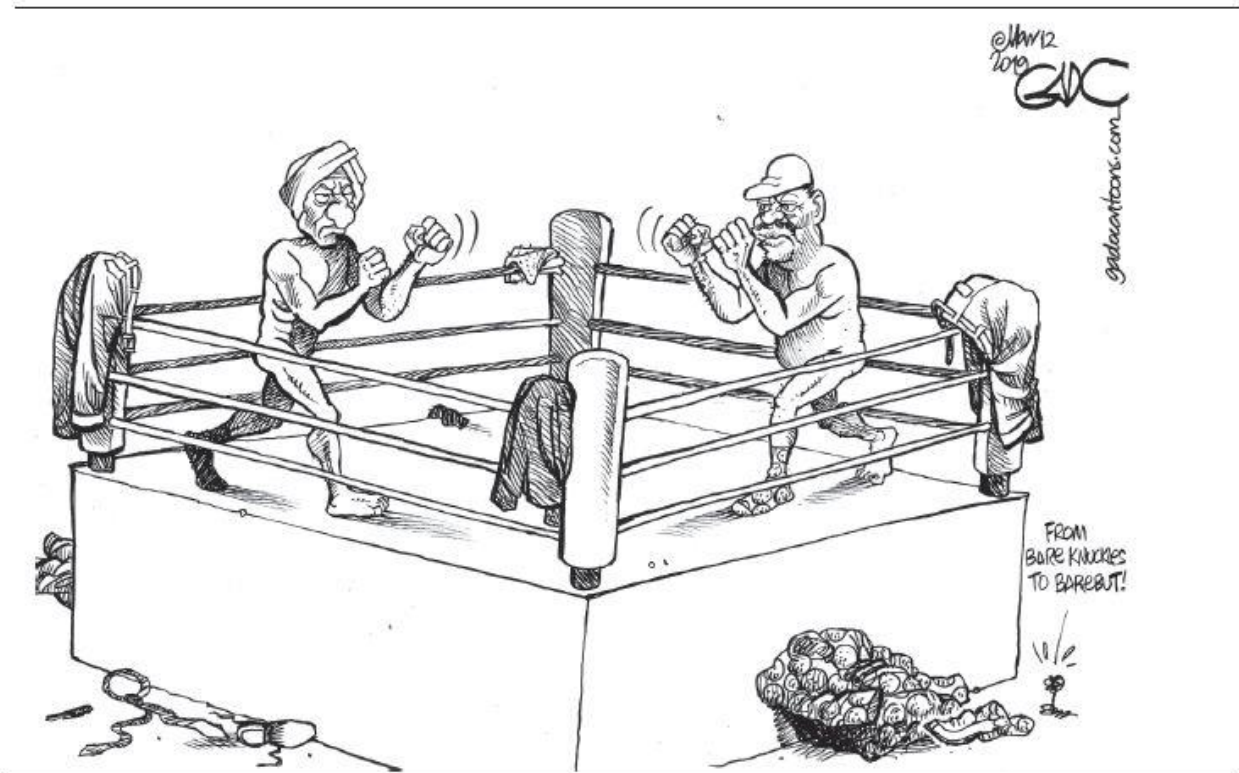


(Source: *The Standard*, Mwampembwa (2019, October 24))

*Figure 4: Special character*

In most cases, it is illustrated with an exclamation and question marks, and in others, with simple punctuation marks. The character is illustrated as being confused, fatigued, startled, bemused and taken aback by the action illustrated in the cartoon.

As shown in Figure 4, punctuation and question marks are drawn above the special character, who seems to be confused by the action taking place in the cartoon where President Kenyatta is a puppet under the control of a fat cat as regards the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) project.



(Source: *The Standard*, Mwampembwa (2019, March 12))

Figure 5: Special Character with Commentary

In other instances, as shown in Figure 5 above, the special character offers background/ commentary to the cartoon, helping explain/ clarify the meaning of a cartoon to the newspaper readers by use of text. As in the example above, the special character has been assigned a speech balloon with the words ‘from bare knuckles to barebut’. In assigning the special character these words, Gado is informing the reader that the rivalry between Deputy President William Ruto and his political nemesis Raila Odinga is no longer political but has gone personal, with both protagonists stripping each other naked.

#### 4.4.2 Symbols

Gado uses particular symbols to clarify the message he wishes to convey and to identify and/ or distinguish one character from the other. The research established that

some of the most widely used symbols in his cartoons are a crown, turban, cap and dotted word, basket.

The crown is a symbol of authority, royalty and aristocracy, and is used to identify the character of President Uhuru Kenyatta, who is the son of a former President. The turban helps identify the Deputy President, who was once pictured donning one at a Sikh wedding after he had been linked to a land-grab scandal in a case in which a Sikh businessman came out to say the land, on which a primary school sits, was his. The Deputy President was accused of hiding behind the Sikh businessman.

The cap and oranges-dotted shirt are synonymous with Opposition leader Raila Odinga's character in Gado's cartoons. For a long time, Raila used to don a cap, and the orange-dotted shirt represents his leadership of the political party, ODM, whose symbol is an orange and theme colour is also orange.

The basket has become synonymous with Wanjiku, the woman who characterises the common folk in Gado's political cartoons. A basket is used to carry groceries. Rural folk use it everywhere. It also represents the basket case in a country that is frequently hit by droughts and famine.

Other symbols commonly used in Gado's political cartoons are a chopper to represent a political class that is out of touch with the reality, a crutch to represent Deputy President William Ruto's political disability following the coming together of President Uhuru Kenyatta and Opposition leader Raila Odinga, a luxury car to also show opulence, and money to represent opulence and corruption.

Gado uses a dog to represent the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) as a toothless dog that cannot bite and is being controlled by big forces that have it on a leash. The dog depicting the graft agency is small and looks harmless and subdued.

#### 4.5 Objective Two: Themes and Issues

This objective sought to analyse the dominant themes in Gado's political cartoons. From the analysis of the data, the researcher was able to establish the main themes and issues covered in Gado's political cartoons by looking at the characters and symbols used in the cartoons. The first thing that signals a cartoon's theme/ subject to a reader at first glance is the characters. Their mood, appearance, and facial expressions are the first and most important attractions. Cartoons are premised on humour and satire to pass a message. Thus, a reader will first look for the comic in a cartoon before they take a moment to decipher the message therein.

The other key, and probably the most important, pointer to the themes and issues covered by Gado's political cartoons were the words assigned to particular characters in the speech balloon or those written on a wall as signposts or on characters' clothing. Words and/ or phrases clarify the message in the cartoons. Although the cartoonist uses them sparingly, he chooses particular words to amplify the actions of the characters. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the symbols help clarify the message in editorial cartoons besides being the key identifiers of the characters in the cartoon. From the analysis of the cartoons, the researcher was able to identify the following themes:

#### 4.5.1 Political Realignments

This was manifested through the depiction of the new relationship between President Uhuru Kenyatta and his longtime rival and opposition leader Raila Odinga through the handshake. In cartoons featuring the two, they can be seen laughing and walking hand in hand or shoulder to shoulder as best of friends. The Deputy President, on the other hand, is depicted as being unwanted in this new arrangement and is trying to exert himself into it. In cartoons featuring the three, the President is drawn standing between them.

#### 4.5.2 Corruption

This is the most dominant theme in Gado's political cartoons. Corruption came out in Gado's cartoons in the form of very big but faceless men, with tags on their clothing written 'graft'. It was depicted in the form of fat men carrying loads of cash in briefcases but with the faces of fat cats, hyenas, vultures, and pigs. The animals echo oral African storytelling trope, and they represent greed and unbridled appetite for the plenty. The fight against corruption was depicted using a dog that is lying on the laps of the big faceless men and a leash. The dog is branded EACC and looks subdued. The theme is brought out by combined use of characters, symbols, and words.

#### 4.5.3 President's Legacy

Gado depicts President Uhuru Kenyatta's legacy project, the Big Four Agenda, as a lost cause. The cartoons depict the legacy projects as luxurious undertakings that are out of touch with the real needs of the poor. He references the point on affordable housing

through a drawing of a slum and the quest for a food secure country as a never-ending struggle.

#### 4.5.4 Church/ State Relationship

Gado's cartoons depict the church and the state as two entities that co-exist and have common undertakings. The relationship between the church and the state is depicted through the dalliance between the big political leaders and Kenya's most known church leaders. Their relationship is defined by money, a key feature in all the cartoons with political and church leaders analysed for this study. The two are brought together by lust for money and the desire to control their followers.

#### 4.5.5 Economy

The poor state of the economy is depicted through the desperate and poor citizens. Wanjiku is a suffering character and is perpetually complaining about the government not caring about the common person who is bogged down by corruption, hunger, and disease. Wanjiku is a popular Kikuyu female name, but its use as a reference to the common folk gained prominence in the height of the clamour for constitutional review in the early 1990s. Former President Daniel Moi was against the participation of common citizens in the process, claiming Wanjiku could not be trusted. The civil society picked up the name, and it has since become the main reference to the working class citizen, with Gado illustrating her as an ever sad, confused and thoughtful woman with a basket on her hand. Meanwhile, in a high-level government official meeting to discuss the poor economy, the political leadership is only concerned with a proposed constitutional referendum on more leadership positions.



#### 4.5.6 Elections

The problems that bedevil Kenya's elections seem to have been exported abroad so much so that President Uhuru Kenyatta and other presidents from the region are taking lessons from the former Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) President Joseph Kabila. In an apparent reference to the 2018 elections in the DRC where Felix Tshisekedi was declared the winner after several days of uncertainty, Kabila is seen giving a lecture to other African heads of State – Kenya's Kenyatta, Uganda's Yoweri Museveni, and Tanzania's John Magufuli are unmistakable.

#### 4.6 Objective Three: Framing of Politics, Politicians and Political Issues

This objective sought to analyse the framing of politics, politicians and political issues in Gado's cartoons. To analyse the framing of politics, politicians and political issues, a coding scheme was developed to reveal the frames hidden within these cartoons. According to Van Hecke (2017), the methodological concept of a frame originates from communication and media studies which describe a frame as a cluster of logically organized devices that function as an identity kit. Van Hecke (2017) thus defines a frame as a certain pattern in a cartoon that is composed of several elements.

The works of Van Hecke (2017) suggest that rather than encoding a frame in its entirety, it should be split up into its separate 'frame elements' or 'reasoning devices' that deal with justifications, causes and consequences. It is these elements that when grouped together form a pattern that can be identified across several cartoons. The result is a frame.

The research developed a coding scheme from the content analysis guide, which established these elements to include the characters, the action these characters are

involved in, the objects and/or symbols, words and exaggeration used by the cartoonist as expounded in tables 1 and 2 below. When these elements are put together, they pass a particular message that the cartoonist wishes to communicate. From the content analysis guide, the researcher then developed a coding scheme to help analyse the framing of politics, politicians and political issues in Gado’s political cartoons. To develop a coding scheme, the study also borrowed the definition of Entman (Van Hecke,2017) of framing elements as consisting of specific properties of a news item that encourage those perceiving and thinking about issues to develop particular understandings of them. From the analysis of main characters and dominant themes in Gado’s cartoons, the research yielded five different frames through which Gado captures politics, politicians and political issues.

*Table 1: Frame elements*

| <b>Framing tools</b> |            | <b>Description</b>           |
|----------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| 1.                   | Words      | What are the key words?      |
| 2.                   | Symbols    | What symbols have been used? |
| 3.                   | Characters | Who are the key characters?  |

Table 2: Schematic overview of frames

|          |  | <b>Words</b>   | <b>Symbols</b>  | <b>Characters</b>   |
|----------|--|--|---|---|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Political realignment:<br/>Handshake as a marriage<br/>of convenience</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handshake</li> <li>• Deal</li> <li>• Handy man</li> <li>• No need to fight</li> <li>• Enough for all of us</li> <li>• Handcheque</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handshake/high five</li> <li>• Crutch</li> <li>• Cash/ money</li> </ul>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uhuru</li> <li>• Raila</li> <li>• Ruto</li> </ul>  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>War on corruption as a<br/>failed undertaking</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graft</li> <li>• EACC</li> <li>• NYS</li> <li>• SGR</li> <li>• Cookies</li> <li>• Corruption</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog</li> <li>• Leash</li> <li>• Cookie jar</li> <li>• Gun</li> <li>• Briefcase</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uhuru</li> <li>• Ruto</li> <li>• Duale</li> <li>• Sossion</li> <li>• Fat cats</li> <li>• Vultures</li> <li>• Hyenas</li> <li>• Pigs</li> </ul> |
| <b>3</b> | <b>BBI as a bridge to nowhere</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBI</li> <li>• Handcheque</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helicopter</li> <li>• Unfinished bridge</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wanjiku</li> <li>• Raila</li> <li>• Uhuru</li> </ul>   |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Church and State: Joined<br/>by same goals</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church</li> <li>• Regulating</li> <li>• Tithe</li> <li>• Votes</li> <li>• Uninyunyizie maji</li> <li>• KRA</li> </ul>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money</li> <li>• Confessional box</li> <li>• Cross</li> <li>• Briefcase</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uhuru</li> <li>• Ruto</li> <li>• Raila</li> <li>• Clergy</li> </ul>  |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Suffering citizens</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunger</li> <li>• Disease</li> <li>• Corruption</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flag</li> <li>• Luxury car</li> <li>• Chopper</li> <li>• Skulls and bones</li> <li>• Basket</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uhuru</li> <li>• Ruto</li> <li>• Wanjiku</li> </ul>  |

#### 4.6.1 Political Realignments: Handshake as a Marriage of Convenience

This frame relies and builds on the notion that the political realignment that brought together President Uhuru Kenyatta and his erstwhile political rival Raila Odinga and their parties was nothing other than a marriage of convenience meant to benefit the two politicians only. It suggests that the new alliance was meant to cut Deputy President William Ruto off and prevent him from ascending to the highest office. It also suggests

that the President and the Opposition leader are using the arrangement to benefit themselves by amassing wealth through corrupt ways.

The biggest political development in Kenya since the 2017 general election and repeat presidential elections was the political truce and closing of ranks between President Uhuru Kenyatta and his long-time rival, Opposition leader Raila Odinga. In what has been called the Handshake, the political pact between the two-ended political tension that followed the elections. Nevertheless, it also soured relationships between the President and his deputy William Ruto. It is from this background that Gado picked up the handshake narrative, framing it as a marriage of convenience that was only meant to benefit the President and the Opposition leader plus their political associates. The Handshake has since then become a dominating feature in the news.

Gado's cartoons depict the Deputy President as a man without an arm and a leg and who supports himself with a crutch, as President Kenyatta and Raila Odinga laugh his disability. In essence, Gado is passing the message that Uhuru and Raila have connived to finish Ruto off politically, with the crutches reflecting Ruto's clipped powers. In another cartoon, the three political protagonists are at a casino, gambling and sharing the country's resources with half-baked policies and multi-billion shilling infrastructure projects. This frame builds on the notion that the political class would readily bury their differences only when it benefits them financially and politically.



(Source: *The Standard*, Mwampembwa (2019, March 1))

*Figure 6: A handicapped Deputy President*

#### 4.6.2 War on Corruption as a Failed Undertaking

The researcher found this to be the most dominant frame in Gado's political cartoons. This framing depicts Kenya as a corruption avenue where cartels run roughshod aided by the political class.



(Source: *The Standard*, Mwampembwa (2019, February 4))

*Figure 7: EACC a Toothless Dog*

By depicting the anti-corruption agency as a small, harmless dog on a leash, one that does not look like it can bite, Gado frames the fight on corruption as a failed war. He also depicts graft as a huge monster-like and faceless man controlling the anti-corruption agency.

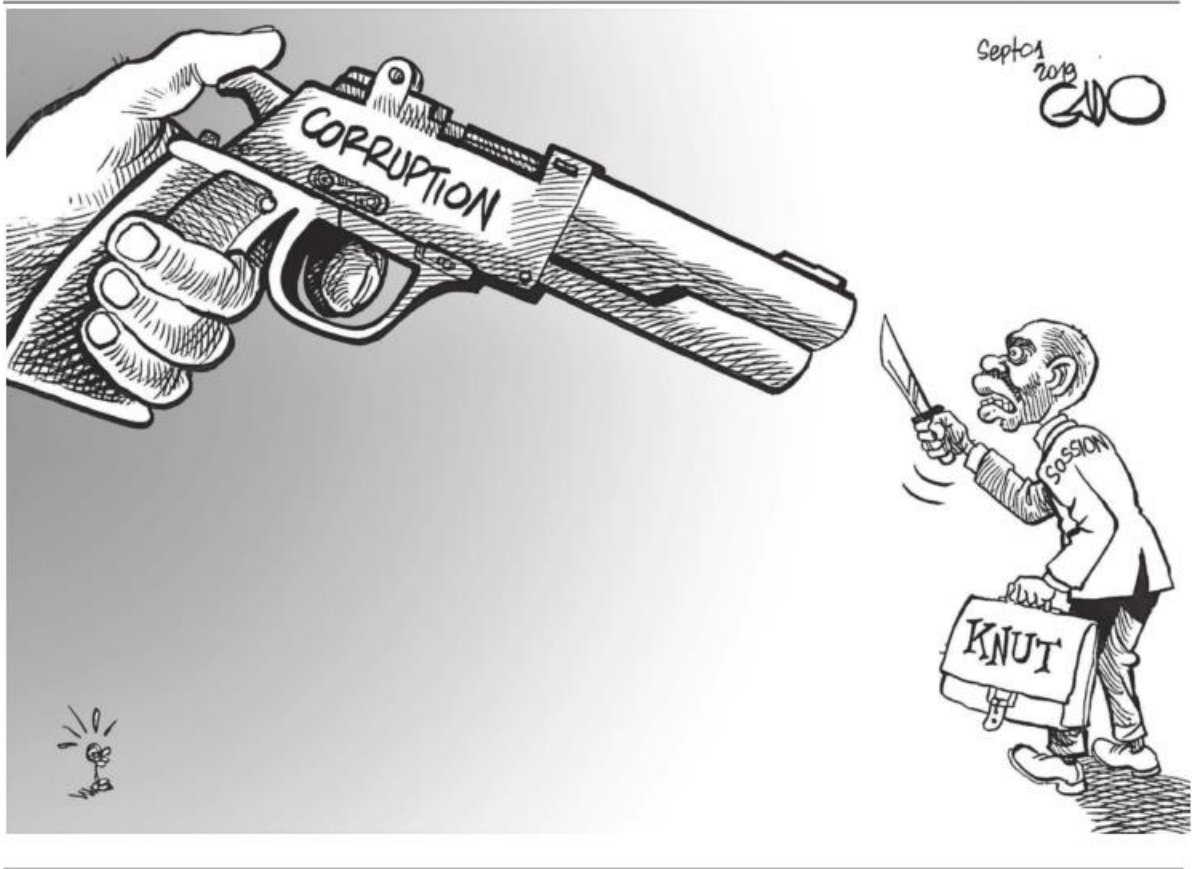
The fat cats, hyenas, vultures, and pigs represent the relationship between political leaders and the cartels. They are always seen together. Masking corrupt individuals' identity with animal heads, helps Gado cleverly escape legal jeopardy and in so doing helps expand the limits of press freedom. This frame also labels corruption as a vice that has gripped the Kenyan society so much that it has become a virtue that can be proudly exported. In one instance, Kenya's President, his deputy and opposition leader-turned allies and accompanied by the fat cats, hyenas, vultures, and pigs, are seen inducting a newly elected President of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) into the world of corruption.



(Source: *The Standard*, Mwampembwa (2019, February 8))

*Figure 8: Exported Corruption*

But he also depicts the war on corruption as a weapon to fight those seen to be opposing the government. In this particular framing, he depicted corruption as a big gun held by an even bigger hand and pointed at a hapless politician who happens to be the leader of the teachers union and a key critic of the government. Through the cartoon, Gado is mocking the war on corruption as an agenda meant to suppress the most outspoken of critics and force them into submission.



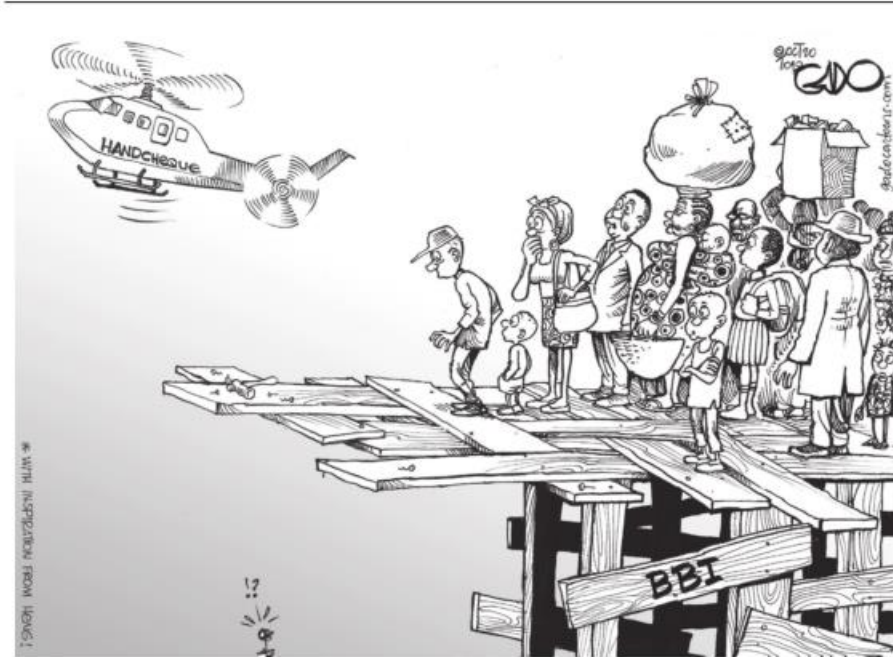
(Source: *The Standard*, Mwampembwa (2019, September 1))

Figure 9: Graft fighting back

#### 4.6.3 Bridge to Nowhere

The political realignments that brought together President Uhuru Kenyatta and his political nemesis Raila Odinga brought with it a Building Bridges Initiative (BBI), an arrangement that was meant to cure Kenya's problems of governance, tribalism, and elections. It was an arrangement that was meant to cement the Handshake but was soon turned into a major talking point for politics. Like the handshake, Gado started framing the BBI as an arrangement that was only meant to benefit Uhuru and Raila, and lock out Deputy President William Ruto.





(Source: *The Standard*, Mwampembwa (2019, October 20))

*Figure 10: Bridge to Nowhere*

This frame perceived the BBI as a bridge to nowhere, that it is founded on a weak foundation. In one illustration, Gado draws a group of citizens stranded on a rickety incomplete bridge with a hanging end, and in the background a helicopter branded ‘handcheque’ flying away. Using a rickety incomplete bridge as a symbol and a vulnerable group of Wanjikus standing lost on it as a helicopter flies away, Gado managed to frame the message that the citizens are on their own as the handshake had duped them into trusting a bridge to nowhere, a bridge whose proponents would never walk on themselves. The ‘handcheque’ helicopter frames the alliance between Uhuru and Raila as a money-induced negotiated democratic arrangement.

#### 4.6.4 The Church and the State: A Symbiotic Relationship

The centuries-old relationship between the church and the State is a key feature of Kenya's politics. This frame looks at this as a symbiotic relationship that is mutually beneficial to both the church leadership and political leaders. In the first cartoon, Gado draws Kenya's three main political leaders, Uhuru Kenyatta, William Ruto and Raila Odinga in discussion with three of Kenya's most known church leaders, Cardinal John Njue, Prophet Awuor and (former) National Council of Churches of Kenya secretary-general Canon Peter Karanja.



(Source: *The Standard*, Mwampembwa (2019, February 24))

Figure 11: A Symbiotic Relationship

They seem to be in deep discussion over what seems to be an uncomfortable issue judging by their facial expressions, the issue of taxing the billions of shillings the church receives in tithes and offertory. This frame implies that the State and the Church are happy to maintain the quid pro quo relationship as is seen in the second cartoon where a church leader is in a confessional box at the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) to beg for forgiveness for not paying tax. To sweeten the deal, the church leader has with him a briefcase full of cash. At the centre of this relationship, the cartoons on religion and politics frame, are money and votes. This frame also implies that the church is happy to look away on corruption issues as portrayed by the clergy, political leaders, the pigs, vultures, hyenas and fat cats dancing to a hymn as money rains out of the skies.

#### 4.6.5 A Suffering Citizen

This frame revolves around a suffering and neglected woman, Wanjiku, who is always questioning the government's decisions and/or lack of. Wanjiku's character represents Kenya's hoi polloi and seems to always be concerned, and loudly questions the things happening around her. In one instance, and while staring at a Kenyan flag flying half-mast, she asks why the government will not fly the flag at half-mast for victims of hunger.



(Source: *The Standard*, Mwampembwa (2019, March 28))

*Figure 12: A Suffering Citizen*

This frame implies that Wanjiku is on her own as can be seen in the instance where, together with her fellow hoi polloi, she is left stranded on a rickety half-built bridge that looks to be collapsing as their leaders fly away to safety in a helicopter. This frame also implies that Wanjiku is a rational woman who knows that there are things she cannot change as she is helpless to do so.

#### 4.7 Summary

This chapter outlined the data analysis, presentation and interpretation. This study sought to examine how politics, politicians and political issues are framed in Gado's cartoons. The analysis revealed the main characters and themes in Gado's cartoons and using a coding sheet, analysed the framing of politics and political issues in the cartoons.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the major findings of the study and offers recommendations to the findings discussed. It also highlights the gaps identified and offers suggestions for areas of further research on this topic.

#### 5.2 Summary

The study explored the framing of politics, politicians and political issues in Gado's illustrations, which are published as editorial cartoons by Kenya's second-largest newspaper in terms of circulation, The Standard. To do so, the study anchored itself on three specific objectives: (i) to determine the main characters and symbols in Gado's political cartoons; (ii) to analyse the dominant themes in Gado's political cartoons, and; (iii) to analyse the framing of politics, politicians and political issues in Gado's political cartoons. From the literature reviewed, it emerged that there existed research gaps on the subject of Gado's cartoons. The gaps included the following: (i) an in-depth analysis on the main characters and symbols in Gado's political cartoons; (ii) an analysis on the themes and issues in Gado's political cartoons; (iii) the aspect of framing in Gado's political cartoons, and; (iv) research on exaggeration and humour in Gado's cartoons

The analysed primary data addressed the above-mentioned gaps. Above all, there would still be a need for further investigation on the same. Hence, this study lays a foundation for future investigation of the study topic. Thus, the following section

reexamined the results and findings from chapter four stating the key issues and their consequence on the objectives of the study.

### 5.3. Discussion of Key Findings

In this study, the key findings were those supported by the research objectives and questions that informed the study. They are discussed and summarized as follows:

#### 5.3.1 The main characters and symbols in Gado's political cartoons

The first objective of this study sought to establish the main political characters in Gado's cartoons. The literature reviewed in a bid to answer this objective proffered that a political cartoon affects the image of a politician in a reader's mind (Ashfaq & Hussein, 2013) and that the main role satirical journalism, under which editorial cartoons fall, is to use ridicule, irony or sarcasm to lampoon something or someone and pass a particular message (Bal, Pitt, Berthon, and DesAutels, 2009). The findings of this study agree with these scholars and established that with the stroke of a pen and with the help of words and symbols, Gado's cartoons manipulate and shape public opinion and build images of politicians in readers' minds.

The study established that the main political characters in Gado's cartoons are Kenya's big three political players -- President Uhuru Kenyatta, Deputy President William Ruto, and Opposition leader Raila Odinga. Almost all political editorial cartoons analysed for this research had the three main political players or at least one of them. Other key characters in Gado's cartoons as established by the study include church leaders.

President Kenyatta is identified in the cartoons by the royal crown he wears in his head, which signifies his aristocratic lineage as the son of a former president. William Ruto

always wears a turban on his head while Raila has the same cap and dotted shirt/jacket. This makes it easier for newspaper readers to identify them. The crown on Uhuru's head and the turban on Ruto's as well as the illustration of their political associates as fat cats, hyenas, vultures, and pigs. By illustrating the main characters as he does, Gado manages to galvanise opinion, kick-start conversation on the message the cartoonist wants to communicate. This lends credence to the theory expounded by (Oliphant, 2004) that a cartoonist's primary role is to provoke thought, ignite debate and shape public opinion.

### 5.3.2 Dominant themes in Gado's Political Cartoons

This study's second objective was to determine the dominant themes in Gado's political cartoons. The research understood politics to mean the activities associated with the governance of a country. Scully (2018) argued that as powerful influencers of social and political issues, political cartoons should give voice and structure to what newspaper readers think. The study established that by employing humour and exaggeration, Gado's cartoons helped shine a light on the issues that affect Kenyans. This lends credence to the view by Oliphant (2004), that a political cartoon is a potent galvanizer of opinion, the kick-starter of conversation.

Thus, the study established the dominant themes in Gado's cartoons as political realignments, corruption, the president's legacy, elections, the relationship between the State and the Church and corruption. The study established that the first thing that signals a cartoon's theme to a reader at first glance is the characters. Their mood, appearance, and facial expressions are the first and most important attraction. The words in the cartoon, either in the speech balloons or as captions on the characters or objects in the cartoon, help identify and/or emphasize the theme.

### 5.3.3 Framing of Politics, Politicians and Political Issues

From McQuail (2011), we understand that a frame is necessary to organise what would otherwise be fragments of ideas into usable information. Griffin et al. (2015) offer that to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition” (Griffin et al., 2015). The findings of the study lend credence to the works of Shiundu (2018) that when it comes to framing in the media, the premium is on salience, which in this context means “making a piece of information more noticeable, meaningful and memorable to audiences”.

From the analysis of characters, symbols, and themes in Gado’s editorial cartoons, the study found this to be true. Gado takes a lot of care in developing his characters, assigning them particular salient features to help newspaper readers to correctly identify the characters without him having to write their names in captions.

The works of (Van Hecke, 2017), who found that political cartoons enable the public to actively classify, organize and interpret what they see and experience in meaningful ways, support these findings. Analysis of the primary data yielded that the characters, symbols, and words must be put together in an organized way for a cartoon to communicate. Characters, symbols, and words are the elements that are necessary for a cartoonist to frame the particular issues they wish to communicate. Characters alone in a cartoon cannot pass a message, at least not in the way a cartoonist intends.

Thus, the research yielded five different frames through which Gado captures politics and politicians: (i) Political Realignments: Handshake as a marriage of convenience: In this frame, Gado identifies the political realignments that brought



President Uhuru Kenyatta and Opposition leader Raila Odinga together as nothing more than a deal that only benefits only the two of them together; (ii) The war on corruption as a failed undertaking: This frame depicts Kenya as a corruption haven where cartels run the show; (iii) Bridge to nowhere: This frame portrays the BBI as a rickety bridge to nowhere and which is only meant to serve the political interests of the two political leaders with nothing for the poor citizen; (iv) The church and the State: A symbiotic relationship: This frame portrays the church as silent amidst serious ills committed by the State on its citizens and the church on its followers, and; (v) A suffering citizen: The fifth frame from the analysis of Gado's political cartoons portrays the sufferings of citizens under a government that does not serve their needs.

#### 5.4 Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Gado's political cartoons frame politicians and political issues in a way that no other medium does. By illustrating President Uhuru Kenyatta as a royalty and the Deputy President as a turban-wearing person, they pass a message that no other media can openly do – that the President regards the country as his entitlement and that the Deputy President is a corrupt land grabbed. Cartoonists have an almost freehand to draw and communicate messages that other journalists cannot say or write openly. They help advance and push the boundaries of press freedom in saying the unsayable and writing the unprintable. They can depict complex issues in a simple yet effective way.

Many elements play into the framing of politicians and political issues in a cartoon. Apart from humour and exaggerated physical features of key characters, the symbols and words go a long way in passing a message in the particular frame the cartoonist intends to

leave no room for misinterpretation. The findings of the study support the theoretical proposition expounded in Chapter One of this study that through framing, editorial cartoons that are politically themed contribute to press freedom through their no-holds-barred approach to journalism.

Gado's editorial cartoons push the boundary on press freedom, by putting into print most issues that mainstream media would be afraid to do so. He does so in ways that are more provocative than in traditional media. The research thus made the following conclusions:

- (i) The use of humans with animal features deftly manoeuvres legal minefields as no one can claim they are identified as fat cats, pigs, hyenas or vultures.
- (ii) Gado's interpretations of news events deepen and extend newspaper readers understanding of news developments
- (iii) By use of simple lines, words, characters and symbols, cartoonists effectively breakdown and communicate complex developments for the masses
- (iv) Editorial cartoons erode the powers of the political elite by making them the laughing stock of readers

However, the study also found a flip side to point number (iii). The study found some cartoons to be multi-layered and hard to interpret, especially in the absence of captions or speech balloons. Many layers in a cartoon make it hard to interpret, and make the illustration complex. In such cases, captions or speech balloons would help the reader comprehend the message the cartoonist intends to communicate.

The research also found that the framing in Gado's cartoons does not capture the place of women in political leadership positions. In all the cartoons analysed for this study, not one of Kenya's senior female politician could be identified. The few cartoons that had women as characters were those that had Wanjiku, the character itself portrayed by a woman, or had a group of Wanjikus, the common citizen.

The study thus concluded that Gado's cartoons could in some way be contributing to the marginalisation of women in Kenya's politics, essentially portraying them as non-political and as happy to be led by men.

### 5.5 Recommendations

Editorial cartoons form a small yet significant part of a newspaper. Cartoonists employ artistic prowess to convey messages. They have an almost free hand to frame characters and themes as they wish and imagine, and do not have to stick to pre-set rules of engagement as other journalists do. Many cartoonists, and indeed their readers have realised just how powerful their work is. Given the above conclusions, editorial cartoons as works of art are worthy of preservation. Many of them, Gado included, have compiled their drawings into books. However, from an academic point of view, there is a need for a more elaborate comparative research design to achieve a comprehensive understanding of how framing by political cartoons relates to other types of media discourse.

The study also wished to suggest further development of the content analysis guide developed for the analysis of cartoons. Future studies can improve the tool and even tailor it to suit other forms of content analysis.

## 5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

For an illustration to be defined as an editorial cartoon, it must incorporate both humour and opinion to pass a message or communicate situations (Kemnitz, 1973). The researcher grappled with the question of what exactly exaggeration in cartoons is. The researcher looked at the explanation offered by Perkins (1975) that exaggeration in a caricature is premised on exaggerating the features of its subjects by, for example assigning a longer nose to a person. With this definition in mind, can a depiction of President Uhuru Kenyatta with a crown on his head and fat lips be said to be an exaggeration? Can the drawing of Deputy President William Ruto with a turban and a missing arm and leg and supporting himself with a crutch said to be exaggerated?

The researcher established that exaggeration in cartoons is not a linear phenomenon and that to establish whether a character's appearance has been exaggerated, one cannot look at a single cartoon of that character and compare it with several others. A plain drawing, depicting or expressing what people already know, should not be considered a cartoon because it lacks humour. One of the easiest ways of adding humour to a drawing, to make it a cartoon, is by exaggerating certain aspects of the character, event or incident that is being depicted. Therefore, the simple aspects of drawing a character with a crown or a turban, with protruding eyes or belly or with bigger lips than they do have in reality can be described as an exaggeration and the very essence of what makes a cartoon a cartoon.

Given the research gaps articulated in the literature review and not addressed by this study, the researcher also wishes to suggest further research on the impact of editorial

cartoons on readers and on the little talking head that forms part of the characters in Gado's cartoons.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A Content Analysis Guide for Gado's Cartoons

#### 1. Visuals

| List the people you see in the cartoon | List the objects/ symbols you see in the cartoon | Explain what you think each symbol means |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |

- i. Did the cartoonist exaggerate any of the objects or the physical features of a person or people in the cartoon? If yes, describe how.
- ii. What effect was the cartoonist trying to achieve by exaggerating these items?

#### 2. Words

- i. Identify the cartoon's caption and/or title.
- ii. List the words or phrases used by the cartoonist to label objects or people within the cartoon
- iii. How do the words in the cartoon clarify the symbols?

### **3. Action**

Describe the action taking place in the cartoon

### **4. Issues**

What political event or issue is the cartoon referring to?

What conclusions can you draw about the cartoonist's opinion?

What specific details in the cartoon led you to this conclusion?

Which words or phrases appear to be the most significant? Why?

Appendix B Ethics Review Committee Approval Letter



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY  
*Graduate School of Media and Communications*

REF: AKU-GSMC/ERC/2019/010

Date: November 19, 2019.

Dear Kenneth Kipruto (Student No. 535188)

**RE: THE POWER OF SATIRE: AN ANALYSIS OF GADO'S CARTOONS**

This is to inform you that Aga Khan University – Graduate School of Media and Communications Ethics Review Committee has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your approval period is November 1, 2019 to October 31, 2020 and your application's approval number is AKU-GSMC/ERC/2019/010.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following, under the supervision of your two supervisors:

1. Only the approved documents including the informed consent form and the data collection instruments will be used.
2. Any changes, made on the approved documents that may increase the risks or affect the welfare or safety of the participants or compromise the integrity of the study must be reported to GSMC within the shortest time possible. The amended documents will be taken through a fresh review and the due process of approval.
3. In the event that the research cannot be completed within the one year approved period, the researcher will request for renewal of approval 30 days prior to the end of the approved period.
4. The researcher will be required to submit a comprehensive progress report when applying for renewal of approval.
5. Submission of an executive summary report to the GSMC's Ethics Review Committee within 90 days of completion of the study.
6. Produce all the data collected using the approved tools as and when required by the Ethics Review Committee within the 90 days of completion of your study.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be required to obtain a research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). You can access the application portal from the website on <https://www.nacosti.go.ke/>.

Please feel free to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely

Dr Nancy Booker  
Director- Academic Affairs

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

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Appendix C Introductory Letter from AKU



**THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY**  
*Graduate School of Media and Communications*

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation  
P. O. Box 30623 – 00100  
Nairobi

October 25, 2019

Dear Sir/Madam.

**KENNETH KIPRUTO (STUDENT NO. 535188)**

Kenneth Kipruto is a registered student at the Aga Khan University, Graduate School of Media and Communications. He is enrolled in the Master of Arts in Digital Journalism Programme and has completed his course work. He is now working on his Master's thesis. Mr. Kipruto's topic is "**The Power of Satire: An Analysis of Gado's Cartoons**".


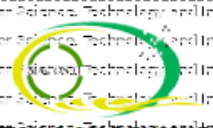


The purpose of my writing is to request you to assist Mr. Kipruto complete this important academic exercise. Any information collected will be used solely for academic purposes. Upon completion of the research, Mr. Kipruto's thesis will be available at our library. He will also submit two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf of his completed work to your department.

We appreciate your support to our student towards his successful completion of his thesis research.

Please feel free to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely,

**Dr. Nancy Booker**

|   |   |
|---|---|
|    |  |
| REPUBLIC OF KENYA   | <b>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR<br/>SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &amp; INNOVATION</b>             |
| <b>RefNo: 112769</b>  | <b>Date of Issue: 09/January/2020</b>   |
| <b>RESEARCH LICENSE</b>   |   |
|    |   |
| <b>This is to Certify that Mr. Kipruto Ng'etich of Aga Khan University, has been licensed to conduct research in Nairobi on the topic: The Power of Satire: An Analysis of Gado's Cartoons for the period ending : 09/January/2021.</b> |   |
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