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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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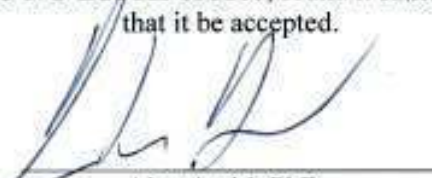
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APPROVAL PAGE

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  
that it be accepted.




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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.

*Keeth*

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Signature

30/01/2020

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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