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Women Voters' Radio Exposure by Sociodemographics During the 2013 Kenya General Election Campaigns in Kakamega County: Implications for Policy and Broadcast Journalism

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ABSTRACT

Sociodemographics shape audience exposure to radio. However, it remains unclear whether these sociodemographics correlate with women voters' radio exposure during elections in Kenya. Grounded in political mobilization, uses and gratification theories, this paper examines women voters' exposure to political information on radio during the 2013 Kenya general election campaigns in Kakamega County. The study adopted a descriptive correlational survey based on data collected from women voters in six constituencies in Kakamega County using a questionnaire ($N = 372$). It was established that weekly political news exposure through radio for almost three-fifths (58.6%) of women voters was 12–56 h. Respondents' radio exposure was statistically significantly and strongly linked to their age, marital status and level of education. Further, this radio exposure was statistically significantly and moderately associated with women voters' employment status, income and residential location. Using these demographic data, this article explores research implications and recommends the adoption of policies and practices that can better harness the power of radio to reach women as voters in counties in Kenya.

KEYWORDS

Broadcasting policy; election campaigns; Kenya; sociodemographics; women voters; radio exposure; audience research; gender equality

Introduction

Previous studies have established radio as an important source of political information for the electorate during Kenya's 2013 general election (see, for example, Muriithi and Page 2013; Schulz-Herzenberg, Aling'o, and Gatimu 2015; Yankem 2015). This is due to radio's advantages of pervasiveness, affordability and portability (Asiedu 2012; Churi et al. 2012; Mwantimwa 2018; Myers 2009; Yankem 2015). Radio also overcomes language and illiteracy barriers, which are rampant in Africa (Myers 2009). Further, one can listen to radio while performing other daily chores (Asiedu 2012; Myers 2009). The audience also consider radio as a trustworthy source of information in Kenya (Bowen 2010; Oriare, Ugangu, and Okello-Orlale 2010). In Tanzania, radio is also one of the most highly

trusted sources of information (Murthy 2011). High citizen trust in news media in Kenya during the 2013 polls could be credited to its diverse, pluralistic and unbiased coverage (Commonwealth Observer Group 2013; Schulz-Herzenberg, Aling'o, and Gatimu 2015).

Benesch (2012: 147) asserts that "survey results reveal that there is a gender gap in information consumption. Women, on average, consume less political information than men". In agreement, Gillwald, Milek, and Stork (2010) note that broadcast programmes on politics are preferred by men. Benesch (2012) further argues that this often leads to women being less politically informed, engaged and represented. We contend that women are an important voting and radio audience group. Women constitute slightly over half of Kenya's population but remain marginalized in both politics and academic research (Kasomo 2012).

Past research in Kenya has focused on sociodemographics as predictors of general media use but not as correlates of media exposure for political information. Further, the few studies on the 2013 Kenyan polls have not sufficiently addressed women's radio exposure for election campaign information (see, for example, Muriithi and Page 2013; Schulz-Herzenberg, Aling'o, and Gatimu 2015; Yankem 2015). This is despite the need to analyse women's political information environment for purposes of satisfactorily meeting their information needs (Uwem and Opeke 2015). In our analysis, we examined the sociodemographics that shape women's exposure to political information on radio.

Scholars affirm that sociodemographics predict audience exposure to information media (Eveland and Scheufele 2000; Flanagan 1996; Mwantimwa 2018; Uwem and Opeke 2015). In particular, Uwem and Opeke (2015) note that sociodemographics influence women's information accessibility. This study focused on the following sociodemographics: age, marital status, level of education, employment status, income and residential location.

In this paper, we argue that despite the abundance of media audience surveys in Kenya, there is a dearth of research on the relationship between women's sociodemographics and political information-seeking on radio during elections in the country. To bridge this knowledge gap, this article examines the correlation between selected sociodemographics and radio exposure among women voters during the 2013 Kenya general election campaigns in Kakamega County. This study was guided by the following research questions:

- (1) What was the level of women voters' weekly exposure to political information on radio during the campaigns for the 2013 Kenyan polls in Kakamega County?
- (2) What is the association between sociodemographics and political information exposure on radio among women voters during the 2013 Kenya general election campaigns in Kakamega County?

The general election held in Kenya on 4 March 2013 was the tenth since the country's independence in 1963 and the first under the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. The 2010 Constitution of Kenya introduced two levels of government, namely: central government and 47 county governments. A total of 14,388,781 voters comprising 49.1% women registered through biometric technology to participate in the general election (Independent and Electoral Boundaries Commission [IEBC] 2013).

Staples (1998) acknowledges that sociodemographics are part of the individual characteristics that influence radio consumption. We live in a highly competitive and

fragmented audience radio sector in Kenya and a country in which gender equality in elective politics is anchored in the constitution. Therefore, there is a need for audience segmentation and programming practices that can attract and sustain the large block of female radio audience. This article therefore makes three important contributions on women voters' demographic research on political information seeking on radio in Kenya. First, it demonstrates that women voters spend considerable time listening to radio to obtain political news. This has implications on the use of radio for women's voter education, electoral participation and the attendant policies and practices for radio journalism. Second, the findings have practical application as they foreground the significance of women's sociodemographics to radio stations' design and implementation of audience segmentation and programming strategies. Lastly, this paper contributes to the body of knowledge on audience research which in Kenya has deficiencies in disaggregating data by gender, which is important for political information messaging and consumption.

Sociodemographics of women differ to those of men and thus have impact on gender-mainstreaming in society and media in particular. The Media Council of Kenya [MCK] (2017) advocates for gender-responsive election reporting which entails: (1) reflecting an understanding of gender roles, inequalities, biases and stereotypes; (2) encouraging equal and fair coverage of men and women; (3) facilitating fair and equitable participation of men and women in elections; and (4) exposing gender-based violence. Gender-responsive reporting seeks to mainstream and integrate "the interests and needs of men and women in the electoral process by addressing the different barriers that deny them full participation in national issues or electoral process" (MCK 2017: 14).

Radio sector in Kenya

Kenya has a vibrant radio sector characterized by public radio, private and community radio broadcasting in English, Kiswahili and vernacular languages (Oriare, Ugungu, and Okello-Orlale 2010). The majority of the radio stations in Kenya are privately owned. Radio is the main source of information for the majority of Kenyans and the country has about 120 radio stations on air (Nyabuga and Booker 2013). An audience survey conducted in 2012 revealed that the top five radio stations in Kenya in terms of audience size were: Radio Citizen, Milele FM, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) Radio Taifa, Jambo FM and QFM (Ipsos Synovate 2012). These radio stations broadcast nationally in Kiswahili. Besides Radio Taifa which is state-owned, all the others are privately owned.

In Kenya, radio listenership is at its peak in counties located in western and Nyanza regions. This is credited to the residents in these regions being keen to tune into their favourite radio programmes (Simiyu 2015). The location for this study is Kakamega County, situated in western Kenya. A study by the Communications Commission of Kenya [CCK] (2010) found that 80.9% of respondents in western Kenya had access to radio.

Theoretical framework

This study was grounded in political mobilization and uses and gratifications theories. The research used political mobilization by Flanagan (1996) to explain sociodemographics that impact on women voters' radio exposure. The theory acknowledges that

socioeconomic status, sex, urbanization, age and social networks influence an individual's exposure to media (Flanagan 1996). Thus, it is likely that women's sociodemographics and radio exposure are correlated. Some of the sociodemographics that predict exposure to information media are: age, marital status, level of education, income, employment status and residential location (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], and ICF Macro 2014; Mbeke 2010a; McQuail 2010; Oriare, Ugangu, and Okello-Orlale 2010; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). These were the select sociodemographics identified for analysis in this research.

Uses and gratifications theory by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) was used to analyse sociodemographics influencing women voters' radio exposure. As Staples (1998: 15) asserts, "listening to the radio is an individual experience. So individual characteristics such as sociodemographics, social, and psychological factors influence a person's motivation to use radio". According to Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974: 15), "audience is conceived as active". This is because the audience seeks out media sources that best fulfil their needs and they have alternative choices to satisfy them (McQuail 2010). This implies that female audience radio consumption can be shaped by their sociodemographics.

Empirical literature review

Radio is a dominant mass medium in Africa in terms of reach and listenership. Mwanitimwa (2018) observes that radio is one of the important sources of information in Tanzania. Almost 6.5 million households (74%) in Kenya own radio sets (KNBS 2010). Numerous studies have revealed that radio is the leading news medium in Kenya (see, for example, Bowen 2010; Gillwald, Milek, and Stork 2010; Ipsos Synovate 2013; KNBS, and ICF Macro 2014). This may explain why radio was identified as an important source of voter information in the 2013 Kenyan polls (Muriithi and Page 2013; Schulz-Herzenberg, Aling'o, and Gatimu 2015; Yankem 2015). These statistics suggest the political significance of radio as a source of information for the electorate.

Asiedu (2012) acknowledges that women constitute the majority of people using radio in sub-Saharan Africa. Corroborating this, Sibanda's (2001) study on 3000 poor rural women in four sub-Saharan African countries established that 67.8% of them owned radio sets and 91.1% listened to radio. Studies conducted in Kenya show a high level of radio listenership among female audience in the country (see, for example, CCK 2010; Gillwald, Milek, and Stork 2010; Ipsos Synovate 2013; KNBS, and ICF Macro 2014; Koech 2017).

In a 17-nation information and communication technology (ICT) survey in Africa in which Kenya was involved, it was found that women's radio ownership and listenership in the country was 82% and 81%, respectively (Gillwald, Milek, and Stork 2010). The other countries covered were: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. It was found that radio dominates in Africa and its use is promoted by its affordability. However, it is limited by income constraints, gender differences and residential location (rural or urban).

A 2010 national ICT survey in Kenya by CCK determined that 78.3% of female respondents had access to radio. Gillwald, Milek, and Stork (2010) further established that the average time that a woman spent per day listening to radio in Kenya is 5.3 h. This was

against national radio ownership, listenership and frequency of listening to radio per day of 84%, 84% and 4.9 h, respectively. Koech (2017) conducted a study on women's radio listenership in the rural sub-county of Kipkelion West in Kericho County, Kenya. It was found that almost three-quarters (74.2%) of the respondents listened to radio daily. On average, women reported spending up to 4 hours per day listening to radio.

Justifying her findings, Koech (2017) established that respondents' considered radio programmes that they were exposed to as being informative, educative and entertaining. Radio as a secondary medium can be listened to while performing other tasks (Koech 2017). Women are often at home and this may give them an opportunity to listen to radio (Gillwald, Milek, and Stork 2010). This implies that women can listen to radio while performing other daily chores especially within their households.

An audience survey by Ipsos Synovate (2013) revealed that a female radio listener in Kenya tunes to approximately three radio stations per day and reports an average 33 h listening to the radio per week. Overall, findings show a high level of female audience radio exposure in Kenya. However, our observation is that these results do not focus on specific information such as political information which is at the centre of this study. Focusing on the 2013 Kenyan polls, Comparative National Election Project (CNEP) national survey found that 82% of the respondents listened to radio. Sixty-one per cent tuned to radio on a daily basis (Schulz-Herzenberg, Aling'o, and Gatimu 2015). A study conducted in Nairobi County revealed that 76% of the respondents listened to radio during the 2013 Kenya general election's campaigns (Yankem 2015). Although without gender-disaggregated data, these studies provide data on radio exposure during the 2013 Kenyan polls.

Women consume less political news than men (Benesch 2012; Bowen 2010; Gillwald, Milek, and Stork 2010). For instance, a nationwide survey by Bowen (2010) determined that 15% of male respondents as opposed to 11% of female respondents consumed broadcast programmes on politics and local issues in Kenya. These differences are justified by structural differences in the social roles of women and men, inadequate and stereotypical coverage of women in the media (Gallagher 1981). We contend that different gender roles and media coverage diminish women's desire to consume political news.

Our observation is that the majority of audience surveys available do not focus on political information consumption among women during elections in Kenya. Thus, there is a need to understand the sociodemographics shaping women's exposure to political information during elections in Kenya. Age predicts media use (Eveland and Scheufele 2000; Flanagan 1996; Uwem and Opeke 2015). The national survey by CCK (2010) established a positive correlation between age and usage of ICTs (radio, television, internet and mobile phones), with radio access increasing with age up to 69 years.

Various scholars admit that marital responsibilities reduce the amount of time women have to use the media (see, for example, Benesch 2012; Gallagher 1981; Mbeke 2010a; McQuail 2010). Despite this, and backed up by various researchers (for example, Asiedu 2012; Koech 2017; Myers 2009), we argue that the feature of radio as a secondary medium still makes it ideal for women. The level of radio listenership reported in this study's empirical literature suggests that despite their household chores, women in Kenya still find time to listen to radio.

Mbeke (2010a) points out that the patriarchal Kenyan society limits women's exposure to radio as men control household mass media. This is pertinent to the current study as the majority of women in Kakamega County are married (KNBS, Population Studies and

Research Institute, and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2016). We therefore argue that men as heads of families and as members in households are likely to shape the frequency of listening to radio as well as the radio stations and programmes that women tune to for political information.

The level of education positively correlates with news media exposure (Benesch 2012). Research conducted in Tanzania confirms this as it was established that income predicts household access to and use of media devices such as radio, TV and mobile phones (Churi et al. 2012; Murthy 2011). Past studies in Kenya have also shown that the level of education impacts on news media exposure in the country (Bowen 2010; CCK 2010; Gillwald, Milek, and Stork 2010; KNBS, and ICF Macro 2014; Mbeke 2010a, 2010b).

CCK (2010) established a positive association between level of education and radio access in Kenya as 66% of those without any formal education had no radio access while 89.6% with post-secondary education had radio access. This is supported by KNBS and ICF Macro (2014), where it was found that education impacts on radio listenership. It was determined that 28% of women with no education and 79% with some secondary school education listened to radio at least once a week. Low levels of literacy among women in Africa make them listen to radio stations broadcasting in local languages (Myers 2009). Vernacular radio is thus popular in Kenya and an important source of information (Commonwealth Observer Group 2013; Nyabuga and Booker 2013; Oriare, Ugungu, and Okello-Orlale 2010).

The level of education also determines employment and occupational status, which in turn impacts income (CCK 2010; Gillwald, Milek, and Stork 2010; Mbeke 2010a). We therefore consider that it is highly possible that women voters with tertiary and university education have high incomes that can enable them to own and access various news media. The positive correlation between employment status and news media access is explained by Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995), who note that full-time employment consumes a lot of time. Gillwald, Milek, and Stork (2010: 7) note that "being more often at home and less often in full-time employment, it is assumed that women listen to the radio more often (at home) than men". These findings suggest that the unemployed may have more free time to listen to radio than the employed.

Studies show that the gap in radio access between rural and urban residents in Kenya is diminishing (Bowen 2010; CCK 2010; KNBS, and ICF Macro 2014; Mitullah 2014). The survey by CCK (2010) revealed that radio access among respondents in rural and urban Kenya stood at 78.1% and 83.1%, respectively. Bowen's (2010) audience study found that radio use for accessing information in rural and urban areas was 91% and 88%, respectively. The 2010 CCK ICT survey also established that radio access in rural and urban areas in Kenya stood at 81% and 86% correspondingly.

Mitullah (2014) determined that radio listenership among respondents in two constituencies in Kenya, namely: Seme in Kisumu County (rural, $N=377$) and Ruaraka in Nairobi County (urban, $N=383$) was at 98% and 92%, respectively. Mbeke's (2010a) study focusing on the 2007 Kenyan polls in Nakuru district (now Nakuru County) established that rural youth listened to radio more than urban youth. This may be attributed to wider access to other mass media among urban youth than those in rural areas (Mbeke 2010a). However, overall, urban women have wider media access than their rural counterparts in Kenya (KNBS, and ICF Macro 2014). Consistent with the literature reviewed from Kenya and which largely focused on the years between 2010 and 2016,

this paper argues that overall radio consumption among the audience in the country is high and shaped by sociodemographics.

Methodology

This study focused on the election campaign period between 1 January 2013 and 31 March 2013. The research was conducted in six constituencies in Kakamega County, which has 12 constituencies and 60 County Assembly Wards (CAWs); IEBC 2014). CAWs form the lowest level of electoral units in Kenya. Kakamega County is the second-most populous after Nairobi as it has a population of 1,660,651 comprising of 863,539 (52%) females (KNBS 2010). In the 2013 general election biometric voter registration, 287,325 women accounted for 50.6% of Kakamega County's 568,151 voters (IEBC 2013). In 2010, radio ownership in households in Kakamega County stood at 77.8% (KNBS 2010). Radio Citizen, West FM and Radio Taifa are among the most listened to radio stations in Kakamega County (Ipsos Synovate 2012). Additionally, Mulembe FM (privately owned) and Radio Ingo (state-owned) are among the leading broadcasters in the Luhya language in Kakamega County.

The researchers adopted a descriptive correlational survey research design to assess women voters' exposure to political information on radio (dependent variable) by socio-demographics (predictors). Using Yamane's (1967) formula, the study used a sample of 400 women drawn from the target population of 287,325 women registered as voters for the 2013 Kenyan polls in Kakamega County. The sample was obtained through multi-stage sampling technique from six constituencies in Kakamega County. As shown in Table 1, these constituencies were purposively selected to represent the three regions in Kakamega County as well as rural and urban CAWs. Proportionate sampling was used to allocate the sample size to the six selected CAWs based on the number of women voters in each CAW. In each CAW, rural and urban sub-locations were selected using simple random and purposive sampling techniques respectively. The researchers selected households in sampled sub-locations using a random walk sampling method. Only one interview was carried out per household with the respondent selected using the Kish grid method.

Data were obtained within sampled households through a researcher-administered structured questionnaire. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21.0 was used for univariate and bivariate analyses. Respondents' sociodemographics were

Table 1. Sample size distribution for women voters.

Region	Constituency	CAW	CAW setting	No. of voters	Allocated sample size (%)	Sample size
Northern	Lugari	Lugari	Urban	5226	7.9	31
		Lumakanda	Rural	5840	8.8	35
	Likuyani	Likuyani	Urban	4923	7.4	30
		Sinoko	Rural	3580	5.4	22
Central	Malava	Chemuche	Urban	5042	7.6	30
		Manda-Shivanga	Rural	4292	6.5	26
	Lurambi	Sheywe	Urban	11,392	17.2	69
		Butsotso South	Rural	3264	4.9	20
Southern	Mumias	Mumias Central	Urban	6262	9.4	38
		Musanda	Rural	5046	7.6	30
	Butere	Marama Central	Urban	7870	11.8	47
		Marama South	Rural	3683	5.5	22
Total			66,420	100.0	400	

analysed based on descriptive statistics. Bivariate analysis was done using chi-square test of independence (χ^2) and Cramer's *V*. The chi-square test is used to analyse if there is a relationship between two study variables (McHugh 2013). In this study, the chi-square test uses a *P*-value (represented by *Sig* in cross tabulation) to show the significance of the association between the study variables. A *P*-value that is less than or equal to 0.05 (5%) shows a significant relationship among the variables.

McHugh (2013: 143) notes that "Cramer's *V* is the most common strength test used to test the data when a significant chi-square result has been obtained". Values for Cramer's *V* range from 0 to 1 with a value closer to one (1) denoting a strong association (Healey 2015). Cramer's *V* results were interpreted according to Healey (2015) as follows: .00–.10 (weak relationship), .11–.30 (moderate relationship) and greater than .30 (strong relationship). Data are presented in frequency and contingency tables.

Study variables

In this study, sociodemographics were used as predictors in data analysis. Age was measured and categorized as: 1 = 18–35 years (youth), 2 = 36–50 years (middle-aged) and 3 = 51 years and above (old). Marital status was considered as follows: 1 = single; 2 = married; 3 = separated, divorced or widowed. Level of education completed was based on the following categories: 1 = no formal education; 2 = primary school; 3 = secondary school and 4 = tertiary and university education. Employment status was measured as: 1 = unemployed; 2 = part-time employment and 3 = full-time employment. Level of income depended on the approximate monthly income (in Kshs.) for: (i) a respondent and (ii) her spouse (if married) or parents (if single). This was measured as: 1 = Kshs. 20,000 and below (low income), 2 = Kshs. 20,001–50,000 (medium income), and 3 = Kshs. 50,001 and above (high income). Income was used as a proxy to the wealth status of a respondent's household. Residential location was labelled as 1 = rural or 2 = urban.

The dependent variable in this study was radio exposure, which was measured by considering a respondent's total hours spent in a typical seven-day week listening to radio to obtain information on the 2013 Kenyan polls. Respondents were asked how many days in a week and estimated number of hours per day they were accessing radio for this political information. Responses to these two questions were used to develop a weekly radio exposure scale as follows: 1 = no exposure (zero [0] hours per week), 2 = low exposure (1–11 h per week), 3 = medium exposure (12–23 h per week) and 4 = high exposure (24–56 h per week).

Findings

Respondents' sociodemographics

The outcomes of this study are based on women voters' responses to 372 (93%) of the 400 questionnaires returned. Table 2 shows that 72% of the respondents were youth and middle-aged voters. A total of 59.7% was married and 43.3% had attained primary school education while 36.8% had post-primary education qualifications. Unemployed and employed respondents stood at 38.2% and 61.8% of women voters, respectively.

Table 2. Respondents' sociodemographics.

Sociodemographic categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age category		
Youth	162	43.5
Middle-aged	106	28.5
Old	104	28.0
Total	372	100.0
Marital status		
Single	92	24.7
Married	222	59.7
Separated, divorced and widowed	56	15.1
No response (NR)	2	0.5
Total	372	100.0
Level of education		
No formal education	72	19.4
Primary school	161	43.3
Secondary school	71	19.1
Tertiary and university education	66	17.7
NR	2	0.5
Total	372	100.0
Employment status		
Unemployed	142	38.2
Part-time employment	82	22.0
Full-time employment	148	39.8
Total	372	100.0
Level of individual monthly income		
Low	268	72.1
Medium	72	19.3
High	8	2.2
NR	24	6.4
Total	372	100.0
Income level of spouses/parents		
Low	103	32.8
Medium	104	33.2
High	18	5.7
Don't know (DK) and NR	89	28.3
Total	314	100.0
Residential location		
Rural	155	41.7
Urban	217	58.3
Total	372	100.0

Table 2 further indicates that 72.1% of women voters' level of monthly income was classified as low. Sixty-six per cent of 314 respondents had the monthly income of their spouses/parents classified as low and medium. Finally, respondents residing in rural and urban areas were 41.7% and 58.3%, respectively.

Exposure to political information on radio

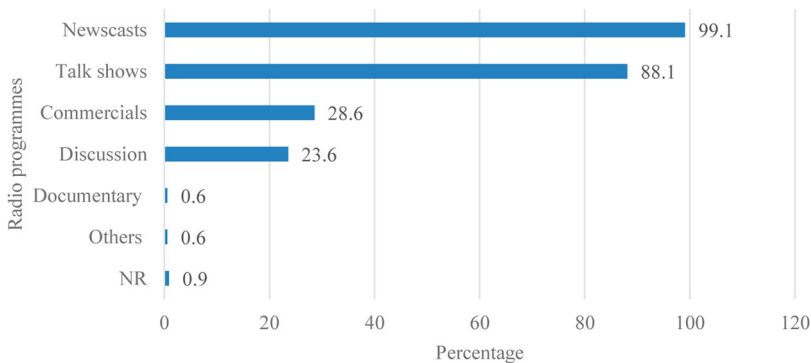
Radio ownership impacts on the frequency of listening to radio. A total of 86.8% of women voters were residing in households with a working radio set. Table 3 reveals that 14.5% of participants had no radio exposure. This contrasts with 30.4% and 28.2% for medium and high radio exposure, respectively. The mean number of hours spent listening to radio per week by respondents was 16.44 ($SD = 13.46$). A total of 80.4% of respondents indicated being exposed to radio for political information in a week. In total, 58.6% of participants' weekly radio exposure was categorized as medium and high.

Table 3. Respondents' weekly radio exposure.

Level of radio exposure	Frequency	Percentage
No exposure	54	14.5
Low exposure	81	21.8
Medium exposure	113	30.4
High exposure	105	28.2
DK and NR	19	5.1
Total	372	100.0

Table 4. Radio stations preferred for political information.

Radio stations	Frequency (<i>n</i> = 318)	Percentage
Mulembe FM	277	87.1
Radio Citizen	273	85.8
Radio Ingo	146	45.9
KISS FM	112	35.2
West FM	105	33.0
Radio Taifa	82	25.8
Radio Mambo	22	6.9
Radio Jambo	19	6.0
Milele FM	9	2.8
Others	148	46.5

**Figure 1.** Radio programmes preferred for political information.

From Table 4, it can be observed that the top six most preferred radio stations for obtaining political information as identified by participants were: Mulembe FM (87.1%), Radio Citizen (85.8%), Radio Ingo (45.9%), KISS FM (35.2%), West FM (33.0%) and Radio Taifa (25.8%).

In Figure 1, it can be noted that the top most two preferred radio programmes for accessing political information among participants were: newscasts (99.1%) and political talk shows (88.1%). These results are reflective of the recognition of the importance of newscasts and talk shows in political participation in Kenya (Yankem 2015).

Association between sociodemographics and political information exposure on radio

Table 5 illustrates that 55.1% of the youth reported high radio exposure in contrast to 2.1% of old-aged women voters. The association between women voters' age and

level of radio exposure for political information was significant and strong, $\chi^2(df=6, n=353) = 182.63, P < .001, V = .51$. It was also established that respondents who were single had higher exposure to radio (49.5%) as opposed to those who were married (27.7%), separated, divorced or widowed (5.4%). A statistically significant and strong relationship was established between marital status and the level of radio exposure among women voters, $\chi^2(df=6, n=351) = 108.02, P < .001, V = .39$.

Table 5 demonstrates a high radio exposure among respondents with secondary school education (45.5%) in dissimilarity to those with no formal education (11.8%). The researchers established a significant and strong relationship between level of education and radio exposure, $\chi^2(df=9, n=351) = 114.79, P < .001, V = .33$. Table 5 further illustrates that 35.3% of those in full-time employment were highly exposed to radio than the unemployed (22.7%). The relationship between employment status and radio exposure was significant but moderate, $\chi^2(df=6, n=353) = 40.82, P < .001, V = .24$.

Table 5 shows high radio exposure among women voters with high income (37.2%) as opposed to those with low income (28.3%). There was a significant but moderate association between women voters' level of income and radio exposure, $\chi^2(df=3, n=332) = 16.99, P = .001, V = .23$. It was found that women voters whose spouses/parents were in medium income bracket (35.6%) and high-income class (35.3%) were highly exposed to radio than those with low income (26%). A significant but moderate relationship was established between the level of income of women voters' spouses/parents and radio exposure, $\chi^2(df=6, n=218) = 27.33, P < .001, V = .25$.

Women voters' resident in urban areas (33.7%) were more highly exposed to radio than those from rural areas (24.3%). The association between women voters' residential location and level of radio exposure was significant but moderate, $\chi^2(df=3, n=353) = 8.62, P = .035, V = .16$.

Discussion

Exposure to political information on radio

Almost three-fifths of the participants' weekly radio exposure were categorized as medium and high. This is in harmony with prior studies on the 2013 Kenyan polls which established radio as an important source of political information (Muriithi and Page 2013; Schulz-Herzenberg, Aling'o, and Gatimu 2015; Yankem 2015). Further, the findings are consistent with various prior surveys which have revealed that radio dominates in Kenya (Bowen 2010; Gillwald, Milek, and Stork 2010; Ipsos Synovate 2013; KNBS 2010; KNBS, and ICF Macro 2014; Koeh 2017).

The foregoing results could be attributed to several reasons. First, the majority of the respondents were residing in households that owned radio sets. Second, only 18% of households in Kakamega County have an electricity connection (KNBS, Population Studies and Research Institute, and UNICEF, 2016). This promotes radio ownership and use as radio can be operated on dry battery cells or solar energy. Third, the 2013 Kenyan polls were highly competitive and involved extensive campaigns both at the national and county levels (Commonwealth Observer Group 2013; Yankem 2015). This might have motivated participants to follow up the 2013 election campaigns via radio.

Table 5. Women voters' exposure to radio by sociodemographics.

Sociodemographic categories	n	Level of radio exposure				Total
		No exposure	Low	Medium	High	
Age						
Youth	158	0.6	11.4	32.9	55.1	100.0
Middle-aged	101	9.9	26.7	47.5	15.9	100.0
Old	94	45.8	38.3	13.8	2.1	100.0
Total	353	15.3	22.9	32.1	29.7	100.0
	$\chi^2 = 182.63a$	df = 6	Sig = 0.000	V = 0.51		
Marital status						
Single	89	0.0	11.2	39.3	49.5	100.0
Married	206	11.2	30.5	30.6	27.7	100.0
Separated, divorced or widowed	56	53.5	14.3	26.8	5.4	100.0
Total	351	15.1	23.1	32.2	29.6	100.0
	$\chi^2 = 108.02a$	df = 6	Sig = 0.000	V = 0.39		
Level of education						
None	68	52.9	25.0	10.3	11.8	100.0
Primary school	153	11.1	20.9	36.6	31.4	100.0
Secondary school	66	0.0	16.7	37.8	45.5	100.0
Tertiary and university	64	0.0	31.3	39.1	29.6	100.0
Total	351	15.1	22.8	32.2	29.9	100.0
	$\chi^2 = 114.79a$	df = 9	Sig = 0.000	V = 0.33		
Employment status						
Unemployed	132	30.3	23.5	23.5	22.7	100.0
Part-employment	79	10.1	22.8	35.4	31.7	100.0
Full-time employment	142	4.2	22.5	38.0	35.3	100.0
Total	353	15.3	22.9	32.0	29.8	100.0
	$\chi^2 = 40.82a$	df = 6	Sig = 0.000	V = 0.24		
Individual income*						
Low income	254	17.7	23.6	30.4	28.3	100.0
High income	78	0.0	23.1	39.7	37.2	100.0
Total	332	13.6	23.5	32.5	30.4	100.0
	$\chi^2 = 16.99a$	df = 3	Sig = 0.001	V = 0.23		
Income of spouse/parents						
Low income	100	14.0	35.0	25.0	26.0	100.0
Medium income	101	1.0	18.8	44.6	35.6	100.0
High income	17	0.0	41.2	23.5	35.3	100.0
Total	218	6.9	28.0	33.9	31.2	100.0
	$\chi^2 = 27.33a$	df = 6	Sig = 0.000	V = 0.25		
Residential location						
Rural	148	20.2	26.4	29.1	24.3	100.0
Urban	205	11.7	20.5	34.1	33.7	100.0
Total	353	15.3	23.0	32.0	29.7	100.0
	$\chi^2 = 8.62$	df = 3	Sig = 0.035	V = 0.16		

Note: * For purposes of the chi-square test in this table, individual income was collapsed into two categories, namely: 1 = Kshs. 20,000 and below (low income) and 2 = Kshs. 20,001 and above (high income).

Fourth, almost two-thirds (60.2%) of the participants were unemployed and in part-time employment. This suggests the availability of free time for the majority of the respondents to listen to radio. As advanced by Gillwald, Milek, and Stork (2010), women are often at home and this may give them an opportunity to listen to radio.

Lastly, radio is one of the most trusted mass media in Kenya (Bowen 2010; Oriare, Ugangu, and Okello-Orlale 2010). This study did not interrogate why respondents may have trusted radio as a source of political information. However, the Commonwealth Observer Group (2013), Schulz-Herzenberg, Aling'o, and Gatimu (2015) attribute audience trust in the media during the 2013 polls to its diverse, pluralistic and unbiased coverage. We take this line of reasoning to justify why radio exposure among women voters could have been promoted by their trust in the radio stations they listened to. Overall, the level

of weekly radio exposure among women voters suggests the significance of radio as a source of political information.

The top most preferred radio stations for obtaining political information were in the following descending order: Mulembe FM, Radio Citizen, Radio Ingo, KISS FM, West FM and Radio Taifa. To a large extent this is consistent with the finding that Radio Citizen, West FM and Radio Taifa are among the most listened to radio stations in Kakamega County (Ipsos Synovate 2012). Mulembe FM and Radio Ingo FM broadcast in Luhya, the dominant vernacular language in Kakamega County. The findings demonstrate the significance of Kiswahili and vernacular radio as sources of political information. Only 36.8% of the respondents had post-primary educational qualifications. Thus, the majority of respondents would opt for radio stations broadcasting in Kiswahili and local languages which they understand. Additionally, West FM, Mulembe FM and Radio Ingo broadcast programmes focusing on issues affecting western Kenya where Kakamega County is located. The foregoing results show that both privately and state-owned radio stations broadcasting in Kiswahili and Luhya were used to get electoral-related information by women voters in Kakamega County.

It was established that the top most preferred radio programmes for accessing political information were newscasts and talk shows. Overall, respondents' choices of different radio stations and programmes for obtaining political information are in harmony with uses and gratifications theory. The theory notes that the audience seeks out media sources that best fulfil their needs and they have alternative choices to satisfy these needs (Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch 1974; McQuail 2010).

Association between sociodemographics and political information exposure on radio

We established a statistically significant association between each of the study's sociodemographics and political information consumption on radio. This is consistent with Uwem and Opeke (2015), who note that sociodemographics influence women's information accessibility. It was found that women voters' level of radio exposure was statistically significant and strongly associated with their age, marital status and level of education. It was also established that there was a statistically significant but moderate association between women voters' employment status, level of income and residential location and exposure to radio. From these findings, several inferences were made and buttressed with various reasons.

First, youthful women voters were more likely to be exposed to radio than the old, a finding consistent with CCK's (2010) positive correlation between age and usage of ICTs. We also contend that majority of the youth could be single or with small families if married. This leaves them with limited responsibilities and gives them free time that they can use to listen to radio. It was found that women voters who were single were prone to be exposed to radio more than the married, separated, divorced or widowed. This can be linked to Mbeke's (2010a) view that marital responsibilities diminish the time available for women to use information media.

Participants with primary and secondary school education were more likely to be exposed to radio than those with tertiary and university education and no formal education. This is in line with the findings by CCK (2010), KNBS, and ICF Macro (2014)

which established a positive association between level of education and radio access in Kenya. Additionally, in Africa, low levels of literacy among women make them to listen to radio stations broadcasting in local languages (Myers 2009).

The study outcomes signified that women voters in employment were more liable to radio exposure than the unemployed. This seems to contradict the view of expected high radio exposure of unemployed women who are often at home (Gillwald, Milek, and Stork 2010). Three factors could explain this contradiction. First, the majority of people in Kakamega County are self-employed in the agricultural sector and employed in the informal sector (KNBS 2010). We are of the view that these employment sectors are more flexible than formal employment and one can even carry and listen to the radio while at work. Second, women who are employed have income which they can use to acquire and access radio more than the unemployed can. As CCK (2010) points out, employment impacts on media access as it determines income. Finally, it is possible that unemployed women as housewives have no one else to assist them in marital responsibilities, which diminishes the time available for listening to radio.

Women voters from medium and high-income backgrounds were more likely to be exposed to radio than those from low-income backgrounds. This is in harmony with prior studies which have established a positive relationship between income levels and exposure to news media in Kenya (Bowen 2010; CCK 2010; Gillwald, Milek, and Stork 2010; KNBS, and ICF Macro 2014; Mbeke 2010a). We therefore contend that radio, which is a cheaper news medium, becomes a suitable source of political information for women.

We established that respondents residing in urban centres were more likely to be exposed to radio than those from rural areas. Association between place of residence and radio exposure is established in prior surveys in Kenya (Bowen 2010; CCK 2010; Gillwald, Milek, and Stork 2010; KNBS, and ICF Macro 2014). Additionally, Mbeke (2010a) argues that urban residents may be better educated and with better incomes that enable them to own radio sets and other mass media. The moderate association between residential location and radio exposure can be credited to the narrowing gap between radio access in rural and urban Kenya (Mbeke 2010a; Mitullah 2014).

Limitations

The findings, conclusion, implications and recommendations of this study have to be seen in light of some limitations. The findings should be interpreted within the context of women voters, the election held on 4 March 2013 and in one county, Kakamega. Furthermore, the use of correlation design poses a methodological limitation as it does not consider causal relationships between variables. However, it is assumed that the implications and recommendations provide background information than can be used by community radio stations in Kakamega County, other regional and national radio stations that reach the county.

Conclusion

Women voters' radio consumption during the 2013 general election campaigns in Kakamega County was largely moderate and high. We consider this an important indicator of the significance of radio in women's electoral-related information seeking. All seven socio-demographics at strong and moderate levels significantly correlated with exposure to

political information on radio. Therefore, we recognize the significance of sociodemographics in shaping political information consumption on radio by women voters in Kakamega County. This suggests the importance of sociodemographics in analyzing women voters' electoral-information seeking for purposes of fulfilling their political information needs through civic and voter education programming on radio.

Implications and recommendations

The findings demonstrate the significance of sociodemographic indicators in influencing women voters' political information consumption on radio. These indicators are relevant to the formulation or revision and implementation of policies and in the practice of radio journalism. Given the varying women voters' sociodemographics, we cannot assume that women as consumers of political information from radio are homogenous. Instead, radio stations reaching or intending to reach women voters in Kakamega County should consider their sociodemographics within the context of political information needs for a specific election.

The findings demonstrate the significance of radio as a source of political information during elections in Kakamega County. In realization of radio as a powerful agent for social change, we contend that it should be used by political actors championing women's electoral participation in Kenya. We recommend that the government, IEBC and other civic educators should endeavour to use radio stations broadcasting in Kiswahili and vernacular languages. This paper calls upon for more gender-responsive election radio broadcasts in various local languages throughout the country's five-year electoral cycle.

Implementing gender-responsive election reporting will go a long way in reducing gender stereotypes in political news coverage on radio. This study therefore recommends that radio stations should reformulate their editorial policies to make them more gender-sensitive, especially regarding election coverage. The 2017 MCK guidelines can be used as a reference tool in formulating gender-responsive election reporting, attaining and monitoring the same within individual radio stations and by media regulators such as MCK. It is our view that Kenya's state broadcaster, KBC, which has several radio stations broadcasting in various languages should lead in ensuring a gender-balanced coverage of political information on radio.

Kenya does not have a national broadcasting policy. Further, guidelines on election coverage formulated by the state's media regulator (MCK) are not anchored on law and thus not legally binding to all broadcasters in Kenya. Therefore, there is a need for media professionals to lobby the government to formulate a national broadcasting policy with specific guidelines on gender-sensitive election reporting.

We further recommend that gender policies and strategies formulated at the national and county levels in Kenya should make specific references to the role of radio and other news media in advancing the principle of gender equality in elective politics. Once broadcasting laws, policies and regulations that are gender-sensitive are revised and put in place, there should be a close monitoring of their implementation more especially during election campaigns. All aspects of gender mainstreaming in radio stations and other media houses must be monitored and evaluated by various media stakeholders in Kenya.

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