Interpreting News Discourse on Kenya’s Post-election Crisis


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Interpreting News Discourse on Kenya’s Post-election Crisis
Context, ideology, and the pragmatics of national and international press coverage.

ROEL COESEMAN

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Preface

As an existential doubter I was not sure what I was going to study when I left high school. I was interested in languages and translation studies, but I was also interested in literature and history. So I went to study Germanic Linguistics and Literature. Because I could not choose to specialize in my MA in linguistics or literature, I did both. In my MA-thesis under supervision of Jan Nuyts I tried to combine my old literary interests with newly acquired interests in the meaningful functioning of language in real contexts of use as well as my passion for sports by analyzing metaphors in football press coverage. In this exercise Conceptual Metaphor Theory was subjected to a critical evaluation through a comparison with pragmatic approaches to metaphor with special attention for Relevance Theory. When I graduated in 2006, doubts struck me again as to what career to pursue. I had three fields of interest: education (because I enjoyed doing the teacher’s degree), journalism (because I was a news addict, thinking of becoming a journalist as an interesting, socially relevant profession) and academic research (because I wanted to know more about people’s language use and how language works in society in our multicultural global village). My doubts were relieved when Jef Verschueren contacted me and assured me that I did not have to choose. I could try to pursue a PhD and combine my interests. In fact, he was initiating a research project to investigate language use in international news reporting. So, I happily applied for the TOP-BOF project ‘Intertextuality and Flows of Information’.

Awaiting the outcome of the application, I remember I had two concerns. First, I worried that I would be buried beneath books, if I was to become a PhD student, losing all contact with the world. If that would not be the case, I was concerned that the planned periods of fieldwork abroad would put a pressure on my social relationships. Nevertheless, I was curious and adventurous enough to take on the challenge. Although I had no special interest in Africa and lacked any foreknowledge about (international) news production, I suddenly found myself engaged in studying how Kenyan news is reported in global and local news markets. The outcome of my research is the text at hand, but it only captures a part of what I have learnt as a doctoral student.

During my research three worlds opened up for me: academia, Kenya and the world of news production. Often I had an Alice in Wonderland feeling, as I entered these worlds with a naïve curiosity and I was regularly intrigued by what I encountered. Presumably known practices or familiar things turned out to function quite differently than I first thought. In that way my ventures into these worlds were always very instructive. My PhD project has been quite a journey, literally and figuratively. I has been a fascinating time of wondering and wandering, of frustration and incomprehension, of searching and finding. The past four years I learnt a lot about the topics addressed in this thesis, but I learnt even more about myself and the world.
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<td>AFP</td>
<td>Agence France Presse</td>
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<td>AP</td>
<td>Associated Press</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>AzG</td>
<td>Artsen zonder Grenzen (Médecins sans Frontières)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAQDAS</td>
<td>Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDA</td>
<td>Critical discourse analysis</td>
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<td>COG</td>
<td>Commonwealth Observer Group</td>
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<td>DC</td>
<td>District Commissioner</td>
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<td>DM</td>
<td>De Morgen</td>
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<td>Daily Nation</td>
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<td>ECK</td>
<td>Electoral Commission of Kenya</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>EU EOM</td>
<td>European Union Election Observer Mission</td>
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<td>FORD</td>
<td>Forum for the Restoration of Democracy</td>
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<td>GSU</td>
<td>General Service Unit</td>
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<td>HRW</td>
<td>Human Rights Watch</td>
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<td>ICG</td>
<td>International Crisis Group</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person(s)</td>
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<td>IN</td>
<td>The Independent</td>
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<td>KADU</td>
<td>Kenya African Democratic Union</td>
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<td>KAG</td>
<td>Kenya Assemblies of God</td>
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<td>KANU</td>
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<td>Kenyan Election Domestic Observation Forum</td>
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<td>Kenya Journalists Association</td>
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<td>KNCHR</td>
<td>Kenya National Commission on Human Rights</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<td>NaRC</td>
<td>National Rainbow Coalition</td>
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<td>NPA</td>
<td>Norwegian People’s Aid</td>
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<td>NYT</td>
<td>New York Times</td>
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<td>OCDP</td>
<td>Officer Commanding Police Division</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<td>ODM</td>
<td>Orange Democratic Movement</td>
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<td>ODM-K</td>
<td>Orange Democratic Movement-Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
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<td>PC</td>
<td>Provincial Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>PM</td>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
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<tr>
<td>PNU</td>
<td>Party of National Unity</td>
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<td>SPLA</td>
<td>Sudan People’s Liberation Army</td>
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<td>ST</td>
<td>The Standard</td>
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<td>TI</td>
<td>The Times</td>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom of Great Britain</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<td>WP</td>
<td>Washington Post</td>
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1. Introduction: Review and preview of research

“We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there – there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly, and the men were – No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it – this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled, and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity – like yours – the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you – you so remote from the night of first ages – could comprehend. And why not? The mind of man is capable of anything – because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future. What was there after all? Joy, fear, sorrow, devotion, valour, rage – who can tell? – but truth – truth stripped of its cloak of time. Let the fool gape and shudder – the man knows, and can look on without a wink. But he must at least be as much of a man as these on the shore. He must meet that truth with his own true stuff – with his own inborn strength. Principles? Principles won’t do. Acquisitions, clothes, pretty rags – rags that would fly off at the first good shake. No; you want a deliberate belief”.


1.1. Topic of investigation, research questions and goals

1.1.1. Delimiting ‘Intertextuality and Flows of Information’

When in 2007 people all over the world were preparing for joyous New Year celebrations, Kenya came into the international media’s spotlight, when the East African country tumbled into a post-election crisis after the presidential elections had gone awry, causing political stalemate and social unrest with increasing forms of violence. A few headlines exemplify the purport of the world press coverage: ‘50 die in blazing church as spectre of tribal war looms’ (The Times 02/01/2008, UK), ‘Les rivalités ethniques alimentent les violences au Kenya’ [Ethnic rivalries increase acts of violence in Kenya] (Le Monde 02/01/2008, France), ‘Accusations of ethnic genocide and fears of civil war as Kenyan crisis escalates’ (The Cape Times 03/01/2008, South Africa), ‘Tribal rage tears at diverse Kenyan city’ (The Washington Post 03/01/2008, US), ‘Après des années de cohabitation, des ethnies kényanes se déchirent encore’ [After years of coexistence Kenyan ethnic groups still destroy each other] (Le Potentiel 08/01/2008, Democratic Republic of Congo), ‘Ethniciteit speelde cruciale rol in recente geweld in Kenia’ [Ethnicity played a crucial role in recent violence in Kenya] (De Morgen 12/01/2008, Belgium). The titles on the front-pages of the two largest Kenyan newspapers on the corresponding days read: ‘Peace calls amid continued bloodletting’ (The Standard 02/01/2008), ‘Suspicion, mistrust as ODM and PNU
These titles already imply that different news stories can be written about the same events and that is exactly what I am interested in. A superficial contrastive analysis already reveals that the same events are reported on from different perspectives, so that distinct interpretive frames arise. Whether international or national, the press only shed light on a few limited aspects of Kenya’s crisis, instead of illuminating the multiple facets of the events in their specific contexts. My aim was to investigate why this was so. This thesis is the report of a four-year research on how Kenya’s post-election crisis was covered in the international as opposed to the national press. The main goal was to analyze the news discourse from a linguistic pragmatic perspective with special attention for patterns of ideological meaning. In order to gain an insight into the journalistic language that was used to make sense of Kenya’s post-election crisis, I did not just critically evaluate the newspaper texts, but I aimed at a better understanding of the news discourse and the choices that were made by the language users through an investigation which was a combination of textual and contextual analysis by bringing into the discourse analysis information from ethnographic fieldwork. However, that was only after I found the right focus.

During my PhD I learnt that academic research shares at least two basic essentials with journalism. Academic research, like the practice of journalism, is (i) a matter of making choices, and (ii) learning as you are going. As will become clear in this dissertation, much of this is due to the fact that both doing research and doing journalism are instances of using language. Also between news research and language study, which I tried to combine in my research, there are similarities. Contingency, blunders and serendipity are not only typical of news research (Cottle 2001), they are characteristics of any innovative research in the social sciences and the humanities, as are flexibility, adaptability, uncertainty and incompleteness. After all, social and discursive phenomena, such as news reporting, are too complex to capture in one research design. Moreover, such phenomena are always dynamic and context-dependent. Throughout this book the importance of context will be emphasized. To give some background, I will first muse on the early days of my PhD project. An insight into the research context helps to understand the direction my study has taken as well as some of the choices that were made.

The research presented in this thesis grew in the lap of the TOP-BOF project Intertextuality and Flows of Information, which took off in October 2007. This project had the ambitious plan to carry out a “linguistic analysis of the way in which meanings are generated and transformed in information flows in the context of globalization [with a] specific focus on intertextual processes

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1 This introductory chapter is both initiatory and anticipatory. It touches upon the central issues of the reported research. In setting the scene, already a couple of the key notions will be dropped. However, they will only be elaborated and clarified in the following chapters.
approached from the point of view of ethnographically supported pragmatics-based ideology research, concentrating on the variable use of implicitness and differences in reference to sources” (from the original research proposal). It started from the observation that the globalization of information flows in contemporary information society can lead to a narrowing and asymmetry of information, *i.e.* a concentration of information coupled to an imbalance between center and periphery of the global information society. With mediatized international communication as its theme and meaning-generating processes of language use as its focus, the overarching project intended to be a linguistic contribution to communication studies. The main goal was to reach an understanding of the processes that determine the meanings that circulate at the intertextual level within an international public information flow.

To achieve this goal two interrelated types of linguistic phenomena were subject to investigation: (i) entextualization devices linking information to sources (*e.g.* evidentials, reported speech, polyphonic expressions), and (ii) types of ideology-related implicit meaning (*e.g.* presupposition, entailment, implicature). I chose to pursue the second strand of research. In my development of this line of investigation the key notion of intertextuality was retained (see 2.2.2), but the other title term of the parent project, *viz. flows of information*, was dismissed. Although the term was used in the general sense of local information that is circulating globally, the concept of ‘international information flow’ would be misleading in the context of my research. In communication studies, information flow research primarily refers to the study of news from its initial inception through the creation of a news story by a reporter and rewritings at the editorial office, taking all versions into account, up to its reception and possible re-use in other media, whereas my research mainly focuses on the final products, *i.e.* on how newsworthy events are rendered in the newspaper. Moreover, in the studied data set only rarely bits and pieces from the local news were recycled in the foreign press. Instead of speaking of a flow of information, I came to conceptualize my research in terms of different news stories that are written about the same events in social reality from different perspectives with different audiences in mind and with various contextual restraints and sensitivities. Thanks to the integration of ethnographic information, I could get a glimpse of news production processes, the knowledge of which was only taken into the analysis in function of the news output and not as a research goal *an sich*.

As I set out to study patterns of meaning in international as compared to national press coverage and the role of specific, contextualized uses of language therein, the first question was how to tackle this research topic? Since the broad research proposal with an interdisciplinary orientation left quite some room for further determination and interpretation, it was not easy to immediately find a clear focus. From the first year onwards a lot of choices had to be made. First a specific news item was to be selected. Like all choices, the eventual choice of the case study
resulted from a combination of practical considerations, specific, scientific purposes and coincidental opportunities. When I was monitoring the international media in search for news from Africa that received worldwide attention, suddenly a crisis erupted in Kenya after the general elections. This news topic was interesting for a number of reasons. First, the news about Kenya was globally covered. Second, it broke at the right time at the beginning of my research. Third, the news events consisted of a succession of specific incidents (instead of a continuing process, like climate change) which could be clearly situated in time, so that the data could be delimited. Always somewhat artificial, it was reasonably easy to fix a beginning and an end, which was convenient for the corpus compilation. Fourth, the news came from an African country with a reputable, English-language local press. Fifth, Kenya’s capital is a journalistic hub. A lot of (East)Africa correspondents are based in Nairobi owing to the living conditions, the availability of information and communication technologies, and the strategic location. For academic research the well-infrastructure city has also a lot to offer. For instance, there are ten universities in greater Nairobi, six of which offer journalism courses.

Subsequently, a selection of newspapers had to be made. For Kenya it was evident to select The Standard and the Daily Nation as the two biggest national newspapers. Fine-grained linguistic analyses of (implicit) meanings require a near-native language proficiency. Therefore the primary newspapers for comparison were best in English or Dutch. Another criterion was the international outlook of the newspaper. That is why I narrowed down my search to quality newspapers in the supposition that such newspapers deliver a considerable amount of ‘world news’ and that they consider accuracy, clarity and objectivity of paramount importance, which made them especially interesting when these concepts would be problematized in the research. Finally, aware of the possible ideological orientation of newspapers, I aimed at diversity. Thus, The New York Times and The Washington Post from the US, The Times and The Independent from the UK and in addition two Dutch-language Belgian broadsheets, De Morgen and De Standaard, were chosen to represent the international press in my research. Here I can already note that the studied newspapers (including Saturday and Sunday editions) will be abbreviated as follows in the remainder of the text: Daily Nation = DN, The Standard = ST, New York Times = NYT, Washington Post = WP, The Independent = IN, The Times = TI, De Morgen = DM and De Standaard = DS (see also the list of acronyms above).

The next choice concerned the theoretical and methodological framework. Theoretically, it was a clear case that the research would draw on insights from four fields of investigation: linguistic pragmatics, (critical) discourse analysis, journalism studies and (news) ethnography. Special attention was paid to such concepts as ideology, representation and implicit meaning. If the definition of such multi-interpretable and polysemous terms was not an easy task, the operationalization of these concepts really proved to be challenging. The chosen linguistic
pragmatic approach, propagated by Verschueren (e.g. 1991, 1999a, 2012), does not come with a fixed analytical toolkit, nor does it promote the imposition of analytical categories onto the data. Rather, it allows for a functional selection from a wide range of available linguistic and pragmatic tools. During my search for an applicable toolkit to analyze (implicit) meanings in news discourse, I experienced the same procedural difficulty as many of Fowler’s students: “they are likely to believe that the descriptive tools of linguistics provide some privilege of access to the interpretation of the text, but of course this is not so, and thus students find themselves not knowing where to start” (Fowler 1996: 9).

Ideology cannot simply be read off newspaper articles. Of course, implicit meaning can only be approached through the explicit level. So I started to search for possible ‘markers of implicitness’. However, that did not smooth out the difficulties. Which linguistic elements, expressions or constructions in the surface structure of the news discourse could lead to implicit meanings and which could be discarded? There are numerous entries to the implicit, ranging from connotative lexical items over grammatical phenomena like modality to interpretive exploitations of the surface structure like implicature. Matters were complicated when I realized that the same linguistic structure can be differently described and interpreted depending on the research perspective and analytical preference. Consider, for instance, (1) from the TI report ‘Furious voters take their revenge on Kibaki and Kenya's discredited old guard’. Note that the source of examples will always be identified by a caption in the format of: Abbreviation of newspaper_Headline_Date.

1) The final result was still too close to call, but Raila Odinga, 62, a veteran firebrand politician and son of one of the heroes of Kenya’s independence struggle, appeared to be well ahead in the most tightly fought election the country has known. (TI_Furious voters take their revenge on Kibaki and Kenya’s discredited old guard_29/12/2007)

The description of Odinga as “a veteran firebrand politician” can be analyzed in different ways. The adjective veteran can be said to have a military connotation, if a semantic analysis is preferred, while firebrand is used figuratively, though it is common in this sense in this context. The whole expression can also be treated as a presupposition, triggered by the apposition (see 6.2.3), or as the representational discursive strategy of functionalization (see 6.2.2). Or the whole expression can give rise to the implicature that Odinga is an experienced agitator, not afraid to stir up emotions, fan animosity or spark ethnic hatred (all frequent expressions in the studied corpus). The descriptions of the election can be given a metaphorical analysis with the expression to be ahead of signaling a general spatial metaphor or an election-as-race metaphor and the past participle of to fight conceptualizing the election as a battle. All of these observations were potentially relevant for the pragmatic analysis I had in mind. Gradually the
importance of comparison and context to discover differences in meaning and ideology became clear. In other words, ideological patterns of meaning can be found at the intertextual level of discourses, but that is not enough. In addition, insights into their specific contexts are essential.

To end this contextualization of the research, I will already briefly account for the analytical choices that were made. After some small-scale exploratory investigations, I managed to compose an analytical toolkit that could deal with the complexity of the studied texts. After all, what I read in the newspaper articles was seldom black and white. There was not one frame of interpretation to be opposed to another. It would be too simple to judge either the international press or the local media as better than the other, because all news outlets had their strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, the reasons why journalists wrote as they did, why language was used in a particular way in the discursive construction of news and why certain interpretations were preferred, always depended on specific contextual factors. In search for explicit linguistic structures through which to approach patterns of unquestioned meaning, I first turned to the lexical level of the studied news discourses. In the vocabulary several value-laden concepts could be distinguished, such as tribe, tribalism, genocide, political impasse, crisis, peace, etc., which acted as useful starting points to get an insight into the differences and similarities of the newspaper reports. Secondly, I noted that a basic feature of all news stories are people. A striking intertextual phenomenon throughout the whole corpus was the way the main characters of the stories were represented. That is why I added representational strategies of social actors to the analytical toolkit. To complement the analyses at the lexical and the discursive levels of the language use, I opted for presupposition as a final analytical category, situated at the interface between grammatical and pragmatic, explicit and implicit levels of news discourse.

1.1.2. Research questions

The research reported in this dissertation started from the following general questions, which pertain to both content and language use, as the two cannot be separated from each other.

(1) How are the events reported in the different newspapers, more precisely, how is the Kenyan post-election crisis interpreted and depicted?
(2) What happens in terms of recontextualization and meaning transformation when a local news item starts to circulate globally and becomes news in foreign news markets?

Note that this observation is not to be confused with the (French) media criticism of the ‘peoplisation de l’information’ (e.g. Grevisse 2009), which resembles McNair’s (2002) notion of ‘striptease culture’, referring to the media’s obsession for the private lives of public figures.

As will become clear in 6.2.3, presupposition is a kind of more or less implicit meaning that is triggered by grammatical constructions in the surface structure of discourse. Furthermore, previous pragmatic research (e.g. Bekalu 2006, Meeuwis 1993, Sbisà 1999) showed that presuppositions often express an ideological, informative function in news contexts.
(3) What are the implications of specific linguistic and journalistic choices for the meaning of news and the interpretation of news events?

(4) What are the most striking intertextual differences and similarities between the American, Belgian, British and Kenyan newspaper reports?

(5) Which unquestioned patterns of meaning, linked to lexical choices, representational strategies and presuppositions, can be distinguished in the news discourses under investigation?

(6) What is the function of the analyzed linguistic pragmatic phenomena or discursive features in the specific context in which they are used and how can they be accounted for?

These research questions will gradually become more concrete. They will be further refined in function of the methodology presented in chapter 6 and they serve as guiding background questions of the analyses in chapters 7 and 8.

1.1.3. Motives, aims and relevance

During the first orienting and exploratory stages I was struck by three observations. First, the global village we live in has become more and more multicultural and for a vast majority of people the mass media are a major source of information. People’s imaginations and conceptions of African countries are influenced by news reporting. Second, when comparing topically-related news in different newspapers, the discrepancy in the news stories suggests that readers do not get to see the whole picture. By definition a newspaper article is restricted to a limited number of views on the reported events. This becomes problematic only when certain perspectives are systematically obscured. Third, as readership figures drop, newspapers are not only under siege of economic and commercial pressures, but they are also increasingly confronted with readers who question the quality of contemporary journalism. However, the best horseman is always on his feet. Journalists are expected to explain as accurately as possible what is happening in the world by capturing complex realities in fairly concise news texts that are attractive to and understandable for as many people as possible. At the same time news reports are to be thorough and easily interpretable for all readers, whether or not they are familiar with the context of the events. This tension underlies a lot of dilemmas in journalism.

As early as 1922 the American journalist and political commentator Walter Lippmann compared the press to “a beam of a searchlight that moves restlessly about, bringing one episode and then another, out of darkness into vision” (Lippmann 2004: 197).\footnote{Running ahead of the next chapter: if the use of this quote in the context of a study about news events from Africa, makes you think of Conrad’s novella \textit{Heart of Darkness}, you have experienced intertextuality at work, admittedly...} A selective choice of
events in the world which are made into news with only a limited number of aspects of complex social reality being illuminated, while other aspects remain in the dark, implies not only a social, but also an ideological practice. For always other choices could have been made from other perspectives, yielding different meanings and understandings of the events. Newspaper articles are typically based on world views, which come into expression in the interplay between explicitly communicated information and implicit assumptions underlying the interpretation of the news events. When journalists try to make sense of events in social reality, they always take their readership into account. These issues are the origins of ideology in news production and news discourse.

The way language is used in the construction of news is crucial for journalism, especially for political journalism and foreign correspondence, the two subtypes of journalism that are investigated in this thesis. That was the most fundamental reason why a linguistic pragmatic perspective on news discourse seemed worth investigating. To avoid confusion I must add a particular notification here. In the remainder of this thesis I will make quite a lot of seemingly general statements about news reporting and journalism. I will, for instance, discuss democratic and watchdog functions of journalism and the social role of the journalist. These statements cannot be made of journalism in general, as there are different kinds of journalism with different purposes and functions (e.g. culture journalism, sports journalism, fashion journalism, women’s magazine journalism, citizen journalism, etc.). When I talk about journalism I mean the two kinds of journalism, viz. political journalism and foreign correspondence, which are at stake in my research. The word journalist(s) in this thesis refers to the Kenyan political reporters and the foreign correspondents who wrote the newspaper articles which comprise my dataset.

With reference to Lippmann’s quote above, on a meta-level, this research, too, can be seen as a searchlight, one that tries to illuminate some of the things that were left in the dark by the press. With regard to an understanding of the reported events it tries to complement as much as to scrutinize the work of the press. As was argued above, the reported research is the result of a selective procedure, involving a range of choices. Other aspects of the news discourse could have been studied. Neither the news, nor the social context could be completely highlighted, but by putting the flashes of the searchlights together an insightful general picture arises. Although they involve a considerable amount of interpretation and selection, the analyses and findings are especially triggered and actualized by the deliberate choice of citation to open this chapter. It might even raise eyebrows with those who know the story of steamer captain Charlie Marlow’s voyage up the Congo River to bring back the degenerate ivory trader Mr. Kurtz. Thus, it is proven in a simple way that meanings arising from (presumed) intertextual links depend both on the language producer and the interpreter. They are hard to pinpoint, because not everybody has the same background knowledge and will make the same associations. Intertextuality is never a fixed phenomenon, but open and dynamic to be approached via concrete linguistic pragmatic phenomena.
firmly rooted into the data. They are based on empirical facts and substantiated reasoning, so that the analytical results can always be checked and verified (or falsified).

My academic searchlight has a multiple target. The relevance of this research is not limited to the subject of news reporting in general or (inter)national news discourse about the Kenyan post-election crisis in particular. The outcome is expected to have implications for theory formation and the development of methodology in journalism studies, discourse studies and linguistic pragmatics as the interdisciplinary study of meaningful communication. In addition, it has a relevance for journalistic practice, so that this work could be of interest to both practitioners and professors of journalism. Because the texts are not just studied in isolation, but in their contexts of production and interpretation, linking language to society, this research is also hoped to have a social relevance.

My work has a quintuple purpose. (i) Theoretically, this thesis attempts to make an empirically founded contribution to the study of concepts such as intertextuality, (re)contextualization, ideology, representation and presupposition in the context of news media. On a wider theoretical level, the research will have implications for the critique of ideology and for theories on the information society. (ii) The major methodological aim is to work out a linguistic pragmatic methodology to news discourse, reconciling methods from linguistics, ethnography and journalism studies. By focusing on micro-analyses of meanings with their implicit groundings as they arise through the specific use of language in news, this qualitative research wants to complement media and journalism studies which primarily concentrate on quantifiable aspects of communication and on the explicit content of messages, on the basis of which conclusions are drawn on a macro-level. (iii) There are educational aims pertaining to journalism training. Since this research looks into journalists’ discursive, choice-making practices, it aspires to be instructive for (budding) journalists. An awareness of the implications of their language use is essential for quality journalism, characterized by accuracy, reflexivity, accountability and transparency. Therefore a course about the language of news or the linguistics of journalism, which critically investigates news discourse, is recommended in any journalism curriculum. (iv) On a societal level this project aims to contribute to the foundations of an ethical global information society, in which news media play a fundamental role. By reflecting on how the news shapes our view of the world, which in turn determines how we think and act in the world, the research wants to stimulate critical reflection on news production and consumption (cf. Richardson 2007). As awareness-raising research, it also wants to promote an enhanced media literacy. (v) Finally, this research has an immediate relevance for the society of the studied news topic, because it gives new insights into Kenya’s post-election crisis and its interpretation by the national and the international press.
1.2. Structure and idiosyncrasies

1.2.1. The dissertation in outline

This dissertation is composed in such a way that the chapters increasingly become less theoretical and more analytical. However, the analysis starts with this introduction. This thesis is deliberately not divided into a theoretical part and an analytical part. There is no rift between the theory, the methodology and the practical applications in the analyses, because I aimed at presenting a coherent unity of theory and empirical analysis. Therefore, the theoretical chapters are not just meant to support and frame the analyses, but they are considered to be part of the whole pragmatic analysis.

The next three chapters situate my research in the wider fields of linguistics and journalism studies. They present my linguistic and journalistic assumptions as well as the theories that are drawn upon. In chapter 2 I will first give a brief introduction to pragmatics as the interdisciplinary study of meaning in language use and communication in context (2.1.1), after which I will conceptualize the main theoretical foundation of this research as a social, cognitive and cultural perspective on the meaningful functioning of language in use (2.1.2). Then I will discuss my view of discourse as language use (2.2.1) and make a digression about intertextuality which is part of my view of discourse and serves as a background notion in this thesis (2.2.2).

In chapter 3 I will promote a discursive view on news as product and practice. In the first part I will position my newspaper research in mass communication theory (3.1.1), review some views of news (3.1.2) and present a theoretical description of newspapers as multifunctional carriers of news (3.1.3). In the second part of chapter 3 I will discuss the practice of journalism in terms of news values (3.2.1), on which I take a discursive-cognitive perspective, compatible to the overall pragmatic perspective on news as a discursive construction of social reality. Then I will go into journalism ethics when I discuss the journalist’s role in society (3.2.2).

In chapter 4 the intricate notions of context and ideology, which are introduced in chapters 2 and 3 as crucial notions for news and discourse, will be further elaborated. Before I explain my view of context as the orientation to and mobilization of features of external reality in discourse (4.1.2), which is linked to processes of recontextualization and framing, I will provide a brief theoretical introduction to some analytical, socio-cognitive and interactional approaches to context within linguistic pragmatics (4.1.1). When context is clarified I will try to define ideology in terms of representations, worldviews, frames of interpretation and the interaction between explicit and implicit meanings in (news) discourse (4.2.1). Afterwards I will further elaborate on the ideological aspects of representation in news media and on the ideological work of journalists (4.2.2).
In chapter 5 I will provide the necessary context to the topic of the news, viz. Kenya’s post-election crisis, and to the corpus of newspapers. It is no coincidence that this chapter is in the middle of the thesis, because it is a bridge between the more theoretical chapters and the concrete analyses of the news discourse. With regard to the historical, sociopolitical context of the news topic, I will first critically reflect on the notion of tribe (and related notions of ethnicity and tribalism) in relation to Kenya’s society and politics as well as in relation to international news reporting about African countries (5.1.1). Then I will sketch the climate in Kenya at the time of the 2007 elections and the ensuing political and societal crisis (5.1.2). In the second part of this chapter the selected newspapers will be briefly characterized (5.2.1). Next I will present some facts and figures of the corpus, explain the restriction of the primary dataset to well-defined critical discourse moments and discuss the data management by means of the qualitative software of NVivo (5.2.2).

In chapter 6 the methodology is detailed. This chapter is another bridge between theory and analyses. In the first part I will enumerate a few essential, methodological guidelines for critical language study in the framework of contrastive pragmatic ideology research and describe the three analytical stages of my research (6.1.1). Next I will introduce the ethnographic component of the research (6.1.2), including the different sources of ethnographic information that were used to support the analyses of the news discourse. In the second part of the methodological chapter I will present my analytical toolkit. The text-based discourse analysis focused on three levels of analysis: the lexical level of word choice with value-laden concepts and keywords such as tribe, crisis, violence, politics and ethnic as analytical categories (6.2.1); the discursive level of the representation of social actors in the news discourse with specific socio-semantic representational strategies as analytical categories (6.2.2); and the linguistic pragmatic level of meaning devices at the explicit-implicit interface with presuppositions as analytical categories (6.2.3).

In chapter 7, which together with chapter 8 is the most analytical in character, I will further illustrate the methodology by means of an elaborate and detailed example analysis on the basis of one specific news item from the whole corpus, viz. the murder of a group of refugees who were burned to death in a church in Kiambaa village on 1 January 2008. After cautiously legitimating the choice of this specific news item, I will put the events into context and provide some background (7.1.1) before presenting in full the newspaper reports that were written about these tragic events (7.1.2). When the news texts are carefully read I will carry out a contrastive linguistic pragmatic analysis following the propagated methodology by first coding the keywords (7.2.1), followed by a discussion of the representation of social actors (7.2.2). At the end of this chapter I will interpret and evaluate the news discourse in terms of context and ideology at the interplay between the explicit and the implicit, ethnic versus politico-criminal frames of
interpretation, and news values as discursive constructions (7.3.1), after which I will perform a
counterscreening to my interpretive analyses (7.3.2).

In chapter 8, finally, I will bring all my analyses together and present a summary of research
results. First I will focus on the coverage of the disputed elections and the political actors
involved (8.1.1). Then I will look at how the different journalists explained the violence that
erupted after the elections and how the victims and perpetrators of violence were represented
(8.1.2). Then I will revisit and critically reflect on the two dominant (ethnic and politico-
criminal) frames of interpretation that emerged from the analyses (8.2.1). As in chapter 7, I will
constantly interlard my observations on the basis of the texts with information derived from
ethnographic fieldwork. After providing some quantitative support to my qualitative analyses, I
will give Kenyan journalists as well as foreign correspondents the opportunity to react on my
research results and put them into perspective. At the end I will try to account for some of the
journalistic and discursive choices that were made and conclude with a critical, though
understanding, discussion of the tribal language use in the international press and the anxious
reporting of ethnicity in the Kenyan press.

1.2.2. Extra structural features

To embellish this thesis and make the whole of the text less dense I added a few idiosyncrasies to
the structure. Every chapter will begin by a quote that is relevant for its content. Conrad’s quote
from the novella *Heart of Darkness* at the beginning of this introduction is an example. These
quotes will not come from the academic literature of the scientific disciplines here treated, but
from the broader public and intellectual sphere to show that the issues I am concerned with are
not limited to this particular kind of academic activity. They are also addressed and reflected on
in literary circles, other academic disciplines, music, politics, etc. They are a result from my
broad interests, as I have never liked to limit myself to disciplinary academic readings or
university lectures, so that I always kept reading a lot of non-academic literature and went to
public debates or happenings where I sometimes recognized some of the topics I was dealing
with in my research.

If there is still space left on the opening pages of the chapters, the quotes will be followed by
a cartoon and a photo depicting the story of Kenya’s post-election crisis from the elections to the
violence and the start of a new government of national unity which brought relative peace to the
country. Three examples about the election campaign are rendered in figures 1, 2 and 3 to warm
up. When the photographer is mentioned in the original source I will always add his name in the
caption, but when this is not the case the photo was published in the newspaper without clear
attribution. These cartoons and photos could be included by courtesy of the two Kenyan
newspapers. Therefore, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to both *The Nation* and *The Standard* for letting me use these materials to graphically illustrate my research. In addition I want to acknowledge that it would be interesting to systematically bring these illustrations into a multimodal analysis from a linguistic pragmatic perspective, which would be a fascinating future research path, as I will point out in the conclusions in 9.2.

![Cartoon](image1.png)

**Figure 1:** Cartoon by Gado about the empty rhetoric and the actual meaning of campaign pledges, published in *Daily Nation* 12 December 2007.

![Image](image2.png)

**Figure 2:** “ODM presidential candidate, Mr Raila Odinga, addresses party supporters in Kariobangi North, Nairobi” (*The Standard* 3 December 2007, p. 2).

![Image](image3.png)

**Figure 3:** “Security men try to control wananchi from surging towards President Kibaki in Maua town yesterday. He later left without addressing them after a stampede” (*The Standard* 12 December 2007, p. 1).
2. A pragmatic perspective on news discourse

“Sino ad allora avevo pensato che ogni libro parlasse delle cose, umane o divine, che stanno fuori dai libri. Ora mi avvedeva che non di rado i libri parlano di libri, ovvero è come si parlassero tra loro. Alla luce di questa riflessione, la bibliotheca mi parve ancora più inquietante. Era dunque il luogo di un lungo e secolare sussurro, di un dialogo impercettibile tra pergamena e pergamena, una cosa viva, un ricettacolo di potenze non dominabili da una mente umana, tesoro di segreti emanati da tante menti, e sopravissuti alla morte di coloro che li avevano prodotti, o se ne erano fatti tramite”.


“Until then I had thought each book spoke of the things, human or divine, that lie outside of books. Now I realized that not infrequently books speak of books: it is as if they spoke among themselves. In the light of this reflection, the library seemed all the more disturbing to me. It was then the place of a long, centuries-old murmuring, an imperceptible dialogue between one parchment and another, a living thing, a receptacle of powers not to be ruled by a human mind, a treasure of secrets emanated by many minds, surviving the death of those who had produced them or had been their conveyors”.


Figure 4: Cartoon by Kham about pre-election violence in Kuresoi, published in The Standard on Wednesday 5 December 2007 (p.6).
2.1. Pragmatics as an interdisciplinary practice

2.1.1. Different views and definitional difficulties

2.1.1.1. A topic view
In the introductory chapter the research was introduced as (1) a linguistic pragmatic study of (2) intertextual meanings in (3) the discourse of (4) news about Kenya’s post-election crisis, taking into account the viewpoints of the practitioners of (5) journalism. Owing to their postmodern prominence, social relevance, analytical utility and intriguing intricacy, concepts such as discourse, intertextuality and news have been theorized and put into practice by numerous scholars from a variety of academic fields. There also exists a whole library of introductions to pragmatics and journalism. Hence I could not hope to attempt to explain these notions in full. Nevertheless, it is necessary at this stage to briefly introduce these five key notions and the basic assumptions attached to them. First I will deal with the linguistics and provide a concise theoretical introduction to pragmatics. After reviewing a topic view and a component view I will outline in 2.1.2 the perspective view on pragmatics which constitutes the main theoretical foundation of this research. In the next part of this chapter (in 2.2) I will clarify the notion of discourse from the adopted pragmatic perspective. In my view of discourse as language use in society, intertextuality is a constitutive feature. Moreover, intertextual meaning generation\(^5\) constantly plays in the background of the research, so this chapter will be concluded with a theoretical digression on intertextuality. The other key notions, news and journalism, will be expounded on in chapter 3.

To start with the scientific practice undertaken, pragmatics can be defined in various ways, but the concepts of usage, context, meaning and interpretation are always crucial. Back in 1938, Charles Morris, one of the founding fathers, defined pragmatics as “the science of the relation of signs to their interpreters” (Morris 1938: 30, cited in Verschueren 1999a: 6). According to Van Dijk forty years later, pragmatics relates text to context (1978: 76). The importance of context is also stressed in definitions in which pragmatics is specified as “the study of linguistic communication in context” (Blum-Kulka 1997: 38) or as “the study of meaning in relation to the context in which a person is speaking or writing” (Paltridge 2006: 53). In a more elaborate attempt, Cruse states that pragmatics is “concerned with aspects of information conveyed through language which (a) are not encoded by generally accepted convention in the linguistic

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\(^5\) Following the pragmatic framework sketched below meaning is seen as being generated rather than constructed. Construction implies an active and conscious process, while generation also allows for more spontaneous activation or emergence of meanings beyond intentionality.
forms used, but which (b) nonetheless arise naturally out of and depend on the meanings conventionally encoded in the linguistic forms used, taken in conjunction with the context in which the forms are used” (2000: 16). From a cognitive perspective, pragmatics can be narrowed down to the study of interpretation and considered as a mental comprehension system: “‘pragmatics’ is a capacity of the mind, a kind of information-processing system, a system for interpreting a particular phenomenon in the world, namely human communicative behaviour” (Carston 2002: 128-129).

Whereas pragmatics is often associated with linguistics, I would situate it in the broader field of the humanities and the social sciences. So, it can be defined just as well from the context of literary theory:

“People think they know some things, and they are prepared to work towards some general agreement as to what might be true. This kind of imagined, inherited, negotiated ‘truth’ is what we assume and rely on all the time in our actions, and we appeal to it as a context in which to place linguistic utterances, written or spoken, literary or non-literary. Without such habitual cross-references to an assumed world, language would not function at all, and pragmatics is the study of the interrelationship between uses of language and the contexts of putative circumstances and assumed world-knowledge in which they become meaningful, effective and affective” (Sell 1994: 234, highlighting added in boldface).  

This quote already touches on the important basic assumption about the construction of social reality (see 2.2.1) and the negotiated nature of ‘truth’, which is always relative and provisional. Needless to say, this also holds for the ‘truths’ put forward in this thesis. In that respect I corroborate Belgian investigative journalist Kristof Clerix’s reflection: “Reality is often a sum of thousands of truths, of nuances in shades of grey instead of black and white”.7

Even though the above definitions share an underlying gist, the polysemy surrounding pragmatics can be confusing for anyone unfamiliar with the term or the scientific practice. However, Levinson reassures:

“This diversity of possible definitions and lack of clear boundaries may be disconcerting, but it is by no means unusual: since academic fields are conglomerates of preferred methods, implicit assumptions, and focal problems or subject matters, attempts to define them are rarely satisfactory” (Levinson 1983: 5).

So, instead of the far too general definitions above, pragmatics can also be defined by means of its subjects of research. A definition of pragmatics by means of a list of topics can be called a topic view. What are the central topics? If the handbooks are to be believed (e.g. Horn & Ward 2004, Huang 2007, Levinson 1983, Mey 1998, Östman & Verschueren 2011), deixis, speech

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6 When I modified a quote by adding italics or boldface, this will always be indicated in the brackets. Otherwise the italics or boldface belonged to the original text.

7 My translation of: “De werkelijkheid is vaak een som van duizenden waarheden, van nuances in grijswaarden veeleer dan zwart-wit” (Clerix 2010: 27).
acts, presuppositions and implicatures belong to the canon of pragmatics (see also Ariel 2010: 149ff. or Verschueren & Östman 2009).

Deixis is “the ‘anchoring’ of language use in a real world by pointing at variables along some of its dimensions, in particular time, space, society and discourse” (Verschueren 1999a: 50). It involves those linguistic expressions the interpretation of which crucially depends on the context in which they are produced or received. Deictic expressions or indexicals typically include demonstratives, first- and second-person pronouns, tense markers, adverbs of time and space, and motion verbs. Speech acts can simply be defined as “verbal acts that don't describe events, but rather, perform acts in the world” (Ariel 2010: 39). They refer to the performativity of language. Our speech constantly constitutes actions in the world, i.e. through the use of language we assert a state of affairs, we attempt to get people to do something, we commit ourselves to a future course of action, we express a psychological attitude or emotion, we create a new reality and so on (Huang 2007: 106-108). Presupposition can be provisionally defined as “an inference or proposition whose truth is taken for granted in the utterance of a sentence” and which usually acts “as a precondition of some sort for the appropriate use of that sentence” (Huang 2007: 65).

As will become clear in 6.2.3 where a pragmatic view on presupposition will be elaborated, presuppositions are kinds of pragmatic inferences at the interface of the explicit and the implicit level language use, closely attached to particular linguistic expressions. Note that ‘pragmatic inference’ is understood as “the process of inferring meaning in a way that cannot be imagined without taking contextual information into account” (Verschueren 1999a: 30). Implicatures are more implicit kinds of pragmatic inferences, viz. implicated meanings that can be worked out on the basis of the linguistic structure, extra-linguistic context, background knowledge and the observance or violation of communicative maxims on the assumption that communication is a purposive, cooperative enterprise (Bertuccelli Papi 2009: 151-152, Marmaridou 2000: 223).

Not only can the general criteria of pragmatics as a discipline, such as context-dependence, non-truth-conditionality or naturalness be problematized (Ariel 2010), a restriction of pragmatics to the above topics is also problematic. Although they are nutritional for pragmatic reasoning, these phenomena are also characterized by a diversity of possible definitions. Moreover, their scope is rather narrow to understand the full complexity of language in use, as defined in 2.2 below, unless these concepts are defined in such a broad sense that every single utterance is indexical, presuppositional, interactional and implicational. This can be claimed from a philosophical perspective, but it would make the abovementioned notions hard to apply in research. This problem touches on the tension between empirical pragmatic analysis and pragmatic theory formation. The oft-heard criticism that ‘pragmatics’ is based on contrived, instead of attested, examples of language use (Simpson 1993: 120) can only hold for the latter. It must be acknowledged that some influential theories, e.g. the theory of the cooperative principle,
speech act theory or relevance theory, were first supported by examples that sprang from the theoreticians’ (or language philosophers’) minds instead of the real world. Nowadays there seems to be more interaction between the two activities. Pragmatic theories are empirically tested and empirical observations can lead to new theoretical insights. This makes theory formation less abstract. Empirical analyses of pragmatics can never be decontextualized and are always action- and discourse-oriented in the sense explained below. That is why concepts such as presupposition must come loose from abstract philosophical thinking and be elaborated in function of empirical research (as will be done in 6.2.3), so that they become applicable categories for discourse analysis.

The canonical pragmatic phenomena tend to co-occur and can be illustrated by means of (2).

2) “Land is the key fundamental issue at the moment. It is high time the Government stepped in to solve the crisis for the sake of the future generation,” said Dor [Sheikh Mohammed Dor, Secretary General of the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya].

(ST_Land and inequalities the cause of unrest, Imams say_03/02/2008)

The verb tenses and the adverbials at the moment and it is high time anchor the utterance in a specific time frame and can only be understood with reference to the context in which the statement was made and the report was written. As such, they encode temporal deixis. The latter reinforces the presupposition, induced by the inchoative verb to step in, that the government has not yet taken any steps to solve the crisis. The government has not done anything up till now. The whole utterance exemplifies the speech act of reporting. By means of this representative or assertive speech act the journalist wants to inform the public of a statement that was made by the Secretary General of the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya. Dor’s utterances themselves can be interpreted as a representative speech act, committing the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition, or as an expressive speech act, expressing his personal belief, but the whole statement contains an indirect (directive) speech act of requesting the government to come into action. The whole of (2) can be interpreted as having implicatures such as: the government is to blame for unresolved land issues (= a weak implicature) or the government is able to solve the crisis (= a strong implicature). A strong implicature is an implicated premise or an implicated conclusion that clearly follows from the language used and for which the utterer takes a lot of responsibility, while a weak implicature is an implicit meaning that can be inferred from the language use and for which the interpreter takes more responsibility (cf. Sperber & Wilson 1995: 199).

8 Where necessary or useful, extra background information or clarification of examples will be added in square brackets. In the examples relevant words or phrases to pay attention to are underlined.
A definition of pragmatics by means of its topics is instructive but not sufficient for my research, because I study naturally occurring language use and in real language use, such as journalistic writing, the introduced linguistic pragmatic phenomena do not occur in isolation, as was exemplified by (2). In my view pragmatics is more than the aforementioned topics. These topics should not be excluded, but a linguistic pragmatic analysis should also focus on other subjects of investigation which are relevant for the generation of patterns of (implicit) meaning in function of a particular context.

2.1.1.2. A component view
In search of a definition pragmatics can also be contrasted to semantics, syntax and other components of linguistic theory. When he wrote his standard book on the subject in 1983, Levinson seemed to prefer a conception of pragmatics as “a theory of language understanding that takes context into account, in order to complement the contribution that semantics makes to meaning” (1983: 32). As such, he revealed himself at the time to be a proponent of the so-called ‘component view of pragmatics’ (cf. Huang 2007: 4).9 In this view, pragmatics is seen as a “theory that can take its place beside syntax, semantics and phonology within the overall theory of grammar” (Levinson 1983: 33).

In its extreme, the pragmatic discipline then becomes a mathematical sum: \( \text{pragmatics} = \text{semantics} + \text{context} \), as found in Simpson (1993: 120). Areas such as applied linguistics or psycholinguistics, to name but two, fall outside the scope of such a core component of linguistic theory. However, if the above phenomena as well as interaction and discourse are central topics of inquiry, the component view is untenable. After all, these phenomena typically intersect different domains and call for interdisciplinary investigations, if a thorough understanding is to be reached. Put differently, the often problematized distinction between, for instance, syntax, semantics and pragmatics dissolves when actual language use is tackled, because in the meaningful functioning of language they are inseparable and must be analyzed in unity (see the discussion of example 3 immediately below). A more flexible view is required to encompass among others sociolinguistic facts and concrete workings of discourse.

Basically, pragmatics is the study of language in use, \( i.e. \) of meanings that are generated and interpreted when language is used by people for specific purposes in real-life contexts of communication. In short, pragmatics is about what people do with language, about their communicative behavior in society and their interaction with themselves and the world. Note that the emphasis on context does not equal a ‘radical and exclusive contextualism’, as Van Dijk

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9 It must be emphasized that I am here only talking about Levinson’s 1983 reflections. Later he moved away from the component view as he developed more flexible, integrative accounts where there is not a strict division between semantics, syntax and pragmatics (\( e.g. \) Levinson 2000). However, a deeper discussion about these issues falls outside the scope of this thesis.
(1998: 379) fears. In pragmatic analysis a degree of generalization is always possible, but priority is given to how linguistic forms function in concrete contexts of use, instead of abstract structures or principles. In the framework as used in this dissertation the starting point is not the normative question Which linguistic expressions are appropriate in a specific context?, nor the Gricean question What does the speaker intend X to mean in context Y?, but the basic pragmatic question What is the meaning of expression X in context Y? (cf. Verschueren 1999a: 251). Even though an appeal to appropriateness or ‘normal practice’ can be found in several accounts (e.g. Van Dijk 1977), language in use will be shown to be much too flexible, dynamic and creative to be captured in a few normative rules (cf. Levinson 1983: 26-27). Conditions of language use that are claimed to be necessary and sufficient are, in fact, always language-specific, context-specific or culture-specific. Hence, they are often ethnocentric when sold as universal. Linguistic anthropologists like Keenan Ochs (1976) and Rosaldo (1982) were among the first to point that out. As the question of intentionality is concerned, throughout this book it will be confirmed that in spite of their relevance, intentions are not the all-determining factors of meaning generation.

2.1.2. Pragmatics as perspective

2.1.2.1. A perspective view
When a topic view and a component view of pragmatics are deemed insufficient, we need a different conceptualization of the pragmatic practice. As Blommaert puts it, “[v]iews of pragmatics that define it as a ‘school’ of linguistics, or as a particular ‘level’ of linguistics (like phonology, syntax or semantics) are unproductive, because what is nowadays understood as pragmatics is a vast and widely divergent range of scholarly orientations and interests” (2011: 123). What ties these interests together is a shared (though not wholly identical) perspective on language and discourse, and its associated notions like text, context and meaning. I see pragmatics not as a clearly delimited discipline but as a practical perspective on language, which can be taken in different academic disciplines, such as communication or journalism studies. More precisely, in this research news discourse and journalism will be approached from a linguistic pragmatic perspective, understood as “a general cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their usage in forms of behaviour” (Verschueren 1999a: 7). This can be called the ‘perspective view of pragmatics’.

In this view, pragmatics is the cognitive, cultural and social study of language use in specific communicative contexts. Language is not treated as an autonomous object of study, but as part of social life. Since “the dimension which the pragmatic perspective is intended to give insight into is the link between language and human life in general” (Verschueren 1999a: 6-7), the central topic of investigation is the meaningful functioning of language in actual contexts of use (in
chapter 4 a pragmatic theory of context will be expounded). In its promotion of a **functional perspective**, it constitutes an inclusive, empirically-grounded approach to language in social reality. So, semantic analyses or grammatical categories are not rejected, rather they can be integrated into pragmatic research as resources or units of analysis (in addition to the traditional concepts of deixis, implicature, presupposition, *etc.*) in function of the data under investigation.

Next to the fact that the pragmatic perspective can be applied under different banners without the restrictions typical of bounded, language-theoretical components and that it is able to account for the dynamics of language in use, this view has two other advantages. First, viewing pragmatics as a perspective “not only solves most of the delimitation problems, but it also counteracts both imperialist and isolationist tendencies [which follow from the institutionalization of pragmatics as a discipline]” (Verschueren 1999b: 872-873).¹⁰ Second, the pragmatic perspective is broad and specific at the same time: it is broad enough to capture the true complexities of language use without being constrained by disciplinary boundaries, idealized methodologies or fixed theoretical categories; and it is specific in the sense that it can shed light on particular details of discourse. It can therefore link micro-level analyses of linguistic minutiae to macro-level phenomena in society.

However, the propagated pragmatic perspective is not without flaws. The notion of perspective implies that a profound, though unavoidably limited, view of discourse is provided and that other perspectives are always possible. There is also a tension between theory and practice. Doing research from a pragmatic perspective, one realizes that language must be approached in its totality. Yet for applied discursive research to be feasible one cannot but focus on a few salient meanings, so there is always the possibility that other interesting aspects of discourse are passed over. Furthermore, the interpretive nature of pragmatic research and its eclecticism are both a curse and a blessing. Since the analysis of discourse from a pragmatic perspective is a qualitative and interpretive pursuit the research results are always open to discussion. This entails some amount of tentativeness and also makes the researcher vulnerable in a way (see 6.1.1.1 where I discuss the predicaments of critical analysis of discourse).

> The pragmatic perspective that I adopt in this research is a dynamic way of looking at language and meaning generation in relation to social, cognitive and cultural aspects of the context in which the language is used in order to gain insights into how language functions in society.

2.1.2.2. **Clarification and illustration of the pragmatic perspective**

To be completely clear about the pragmatic perspective as I see it a few misunderstandings must be removed. With respect to 2.1.1.2, Huang (2007: 4-5) identifies the component view with “the

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¹⁰ Verschueren (1999b: 873) adds in parentheses: “(even if, in a market-rather than content-driven world, one of these two may be needed to get money, or jobs, or both)”.
Anglo-American school of thought in contemporary pragmatics”, while he attributes the perspective view to “the European Continental school”. Maybe such a division could be made on historical grounds, although ‘continental’ Teun Van Dijk has been an adherent of the component view since the 1970s (cf. Van Dijk 1977). It certainly does not hold for contemporary pragmatics in a globalized academic world. I would not like to feed all those scholars, adhering to the perspective view, who live outside of the European continent, or the proponents of the component view, who work in Europe, or Africa for that matter. It is not only artificial and senseless, but it also seems quite narrow to divide the wide global field of pragmatics into a presumably homogenous Anglo-American and European school. My mentor at the University of Nairobi, Dr. Helga Schröder, for instance, has been doing pragmatically inspired research in Kenya for over 20 years, both on cultural aspects of implicatures within the framework of relevance theory (Schröder 2010) and on intercultural communication (Schröder 2005). The head of the Department of Linguistics and Languages at the same university is the Kiswahili pragmatician John Hamu Habwe, who has written about the role of Kiswahili in regional integration (Habwe 2009) and about the pragmatic implications of Kenyan political speeches (Habwe 2010). Beyond Africa, pragmatics on the Asian continent is neither a decoction of Anglo-American or European work. On the contrary, a lot of Asian pragmatics have their own original perspectives, witness Sachiko Ide’s (2006) Wakimae no Goyooron [Pragmatics of Discernment] or her recent ‘ba (field)’-theory based pragmatics (Ide 2011), Si Liu’s (2004) integration of statistical methods and ethnography in a pragmatic account of power relations in Chinese Higher Education, or Rukmini Bhaya Nair’s (2003) narrative pragmatics.

Further, I object to Huang’s reading of the perspective view as “everything is pragmatics” ergo “nothing is pragmatics”, while claiming that the component view is “conceptually more elegant and methodologically more sound” (2007: 4-5). Such a claim can only be maintained by an abstract theoretician of pragmatics. It becomes problematic when concrete discourse in its full complexity is studied, where analytical categories are never clear-cut. Take (3), isolated from the TI report ‘Kenya violence: “We waited, now we’ll chop them to bits”’.

3) The growing and seemingly uncontrollable tribal violence has led to inevitable comparisons to Rwanda, where the 1994 genocide claimed nearly 1m lives. (TI_Kenya violence: 'We waited, now we'll chop them to bits'_03/02/2008)

On a syntactical level, violence is topicalized in the subject slot. The following comment involved the morphological operation of nominalization of the action of comparing, as a result of which the actors involved are obscured. Neither are the actors of violence specified. However, the nucleus of the noun phrase is modified by the gerund growing and the adjectives uncontrollable and tribal, the latter of which is modified by the epistemic modal adverb seemingly. These linguistic elements should not be studied in isolation, but together contribute to
the meaning generating process of the utterance. The non-restrictive relative clause (“where the 1994 genocide claimed nearly 1m lives”) can be analyzed as triggering a presupposition to activate the background information about Rwanda’s past. Or is it an assertion expressing information on the explicit level of discourse? Still the same clause can be argued to trigger the implicature that Kenya is heading for a civil war. Alternatively, it can be given a more semantic analysis, focusing on the pejorative and emotional connotations of *genocide*, the figurative or loose use of the linguistic action verb *to claim*, or the metonymical use of *lives* instead of *people*. To come to grips with the meaning of (2), the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic aspects of the utterance cannot be separated, which the component view stereotypically does.

Moreover, the whole context of the news discourse must be taken into account to prevent misleading conclusions. The utterance in (2) is followed by the contrasting sentence: *But Kenya is not Rwanda*. The interpretation of the violence as tribal is also determined by the sources (some of which are quoted in the article) and by the events the journalist witnessed in Nakuru. That is why the process of news production has to be taken into account. The preference of the adjective *tribal* above *ethnic* can have to do with the sociocultural context and could even have ideological reasons (in chapter 4 the complex notion of ideology will be elaborated). Conflicts in Belgium between Flemish and francophone hardliners would never be considered as tribal. The comparison with the Rwandan genocide could be made not only because of the related geographical or geopolitical context. It also provided an easy interpretive frame to understand the chaotic events on the basis of possibly pre-existing (or previously acquired) cognitive representations and mental scripts on the part of the journalist as well as the implied reader.

Although the journalist indubitably intended to cover the events as accurately as possible, this information might be perfect for certain readers, while it is rejected by others like Betty from Houston, USA, who reacts online that “the article is neither balanced nor fair”. These are some issues an empirical pragmatic analysis is concerned with and which cannot be accounted for by a pragmatics that is a narrowly delineated component of a theory of language. Real discursive phenomena have fuzzy boundaries, are context-dependent, interwoven, multidimensional and subject to negotiation, as other examples in chapters 7 and 8 will show. To account for such complexities and dynamics, a view of pragmatics as a holistic perspective on communicative social phenomena with their inextricable cultural and cognitive aspects, is deemed fit. This thesis tries to illustrate that such a pragmatic perspective allows for a systematic analysis of natural discourse.

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11 See [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article3295501.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article3295501.ece) [25/08/2008].
2.1.2.3. *Three remarks: Labels of pragmatics, its adjective and reflexivity*

Before moving on to my view of discourse, three remarks are in order. First of all, the literature abounds with subdivisions to account for the above phenomena. A continuously specifying spectrum can be found of ‘abstract pragmatics’, ‘cognitive pragmatics’, ‘sociological pragmatics’, ‘socio-cognitive pragmatics’, ‘social-psychological pragmatics’, ‘ethnographic pragmatics’, *etc.* (see Van Dijk 1998 for an enumeration). Again I do not see the point of this exercise. Leech (1983: 10-11) posited a ‘general pragmatics’, subdivided into ‘pragmalinguistics’ and ‘socio-pragmatics’ in order to distinguish between the general conditions of the communicative use of language, the more grammatical resources for conveying pragmatic meaning and the local conditions of language use. I am convinced that the different aspects of language use can be separated for analytical purposes, but do not require artificial research labels. This does not mean that I prefer what Ariel (2010) calls ‘big tent pragmatics’, resembling the view that everything is pragmatics (*cf. supra*). The propagated, integrative approach of pragmatics is aimed at finding tools and theories to analyze discourse, in which linguistics and context are inextricably entangled, not at incorporating all linguistic research into one pragmatic basket. I agree with Ariel (2010: 230-231) that “there is no sense of asking *in general* whether some instance or topic of language use is grammatical or pragmatic” (italics added), although she believes the dichotomy between grammar as concerned with ‘code’ and pragmatics as concerned with ‘inference’ must be made on a much smaller local scale, starting from actual analyses. To set things right, I disagree with her grouping of Verschueren’s view into ‘big tent pragmatics’:

“Verschueren (1995[a]) who believes that pragmatics constitutes a perspective rather than a linguistic component, advocates that *all* cognitive, *all* social, and *all* cultural studies of language are of the same nature, *all* to be analyzed by what he terms linguistic pragmatics”
(Ariel 2010: 97, emphasis added in italics).

This quote is based on a misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the present perspective view. The subtle insertion of the intensifier *all*, nowhere to be found in Verschueren’s writings, is distorting and creates a false sense of generality. Stating that pragmatics is the cognitive, social and cultural science of language use, is not the same as claiming that all cognitive, social and cultural phenomena are the equal in nature and are to be analyzed in the same way. One of the difficulties of the perspective approach is precisely to find the best categories to explain the data, starting from a bottom-up analysis. The pragmatic perspective intends to shed light on social, cognitive and cultural phenomena without accommodating all of them completely in a ‘big tent’. In the same vein, from my position there is no use for a special label of ‘discourse pragmatics’ or ‘discursive pragmatics’ (*e.g.* Blum-Kulka 1997, Van Dijk 1977, Van Dijk 1998, Zienkowski, Östman & Verschueren 2011). Only when pragmatics is purely theoretical can it be non-discursive. In all other cases, *i.e.* in hybrids of theory-cum-analysis and all kinds of ‘empirical pragmatics’, the term ‘discursive pragmatics’ would be pleonastic. It follows that forms of
Qualitative discourse analysis and pragmatic analysis are often indistinguishable. That is why the pragmatic perspective, taken in this empirical news study, has a lot in common with critical discourse analysis (CDA) and other forms of critical linguistics (see also 6.1.1.1), as well as language-oriented journalism studies (see 3.2.1). Likewise the pragmatic perspective on language can be found in other fields of investigation, such as cognitive linguistics, linguistic anthropology or social psychology. So, pragmatics as a perspective is not a separate discipline, rather a way of approaching language and doing socially relevant research of discourse.

Secondly, it must be remarked that in this book the adjective pragmatic is always used as derived from pragmatics in the technical sense sketched above. Nevertheless, there remains a connection with the dictionary meaning of the word. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, for instance, explains pragmatic as “solving problems in a practical and sensible way rather than by having fixed ideas or theories” and gives realistic as synonym (Wehmeier 2001: 990). I hope to deliver a realistic and sensible account of the news discourse under study without being blinded or biased by fixed ideas or pre-existing hypotheses. My use of pragmatic has less affinity with a common-sense meaning that is also frequently encountered in daily discourse, where the adjective has acquired a pejorative connotation. Williams observed that “the word has been useful as a dignified alternative to unprincipled or timeserving, especially in political movements which profess a set of beliefs and which decide, under pressure, to neglect, discard or betray them, but with a show of skill and intelligence” (1988: 241). Not only in the context of politics, but also in media studies and criticism this use of pragmatic is prevalent. Nick Davies, for instance, complains in his book Flat Earth News about the pragmatic attitude of news editors in that they have no rules, no boundaries and no ethics. To him, a pragmatic newspaper is a newspaper that decides to run a story even if it knows it is daft and false, purely driven by opportunistic, commercial reasons (Davies 2009: 312-328). In this study, I also distance myself from the “self-appointed pragmatists” Kovach and Rosenstiel talk about, when they refer to those “people in corporate settings who are convinced that the current economics of journalism prove that quality and commitment to the public interest are quaint notions and naïve ideas that knowledgeable realists must forgo” (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007: 7).

A third and final remark concerns the reflexive awareness of language in the specific context in which it is used. In my research, reflexivity refers to the language user’s ability to judge, describe, recognize or indicate communicative behavior and monitor the on-going interaction. Pragmatics is bound up with metapragmatics: “every ‘pragmatics’ (every way of handling language) goes hand in hand with a ‘metapragmatics’ (comments about, and references to, the way of handling language)” (Blommaert 2005: 48). Metapragmatics can be defined as follows:
“The systematic study of indicators of the language user’s reflexive awareness of what is involved in a usage event, i.e. the study of a metalevel at which verbal communication is self-referential to various degrees” (Verschueren 1995b: 367).

Metapragmatics incorporates the metalinguistic dimension of language, assuming that “all language use is in some way metalinguistic in that its production and interpretation depend on the successful deployment and uptake of what has been variously referred to as the framing and keying strategies, contextualization cues, metamessages, code-orientation, and a plethora of other signals and devices exploiting and relying on the reflexive nature of language” (Jaworski 2007: 271). Metapragmatics is concerned with traces in the language use of what the language use is (about) and of what is happening in the speech event. Examples of these linguistic traces are the self-referential use of this study in the concluding sentence of the previous paragraph (which as a whole is a metapragmatic reflection on the word pragmatic), the intertextual links in this paragraph to writings by Blommaert, Verschueren and Jaworski, the linguistic action verb define in combination with the modal adverb can, introducing Verschueren’s definition above, the quotation marks in the citations, etc. All of these reflect and draw attention to linguistic choices that were made in function of the context. However, markers of metapragmatic awareness are hardly ever fully explicit. Consider (4):

4) Systematic electoral fraud including vote-rigging in a third of all constituencies, stuffed ballot boxes and election officials changing results had a decisive impact on the outcome of the Kenyan elections, an investigation by The Independent can reveal. (IN_Kibaki 'stole' Kenyan election through vote-rigging and fraud_23/01/2008)

The unchallenging, generically used (plural) noun phrases electoral fraud, ballot boxes and election officials in the subject slot reflect on the journalist’s conviction of their factuality. Otherwise he could have used, for instance, a modal sentence adverb like allegedly to mitigate the content of the utterance. The factual presentation is reinforced by the use of the simple past. It refers to the journalist’s certainty, as opposed to alternative verb forms, such as would have had or could have had. Moreover, the use of investigation metapragmatically frames this newspaper article as an investigative report, which derives its authority from the IN (a clear autoreference), implicitly assuming this is a trustworthy institution. Further, attention is drawn to the strong possibility of the report to be revealing by the modal auxiliary can and also the choice of the speech act verb to reveal qualifies the language use as a revelation, creating a (slightly sensational) sense of newsworthiness.

Note that metapragmatics is not an unequivocal term. Caffi (1998a) reports that it can also be interpreted as ‘metatheoretical reflection’, i.e. the researcher’s reflection on theory and analytical

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categories, exemplified by my attempt at defining pragmatics above. The term can also be used in a third sense, *viz.* to refer to specific metapragmatic terms, such as speech act verbs. The description of metapragmatics as a dimension of language already reveals one facet of our view on discourse.

2.2. Discourse

2.2.1. Discourse as language use

2.2.1.1. Discourse in society and cognition

In this section I will present a dynamic view of discourse as language use, characterized by variability, negotiability and adaptability. From a pragmatic perspective the different meanings that arise in and can be derived from discourse are largely dependent on the context (see 4.1 for a detailed account of context). First discourse will be described as a social practice that we use to (inter)act in the world. Afterwards a broad conception of intertextuality will be introduced not only as a general background notion of the research at hand, but also as an essential feature of discourse as language in use. In this discussion I will regularly try to make a connection with the particular discourse under study, *viz.* the discourse of written news.

The previous discussion of the perspective view entails a view of language as a social phenomenon. Together with Hanks I assume that “[u]tterances are part of social projects, not merely vehicles for expressing thoughts” (Hanks 1996: 168). From all the basic assumptions, presented in this chapter, this is the most generally shared point of departure among sociologically-oriented linguists and discourse analysts or linguistically-oriented sociologists and anthropologists. Of course, it is not language as such that is social, rather the mobilization of language for communicative purposes. As Thompson sees it, “speaking a language is a social activity through which individuals establish and renew relations with one another” (1995: 12). The view that using language is a social activity, a social interaction is so common that it surfaces in most introductions to pragmatics and discourse analysis (*e.g.* Blommaert 2005, Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999, Levinson 1983, Mey 2001, Van Dijk 1997, Verschueren 1999a, and many others).

Such a view dovetails with the ‘intermental perspective’ on language, promoted by Mercer (2000). He sees language as an adaptable meaning-making system, not so much aimed at transferring information from one mind to the other, but at collaboratively developing social knowledge. That is explained as follows:
“Language is designed for doing something much more interesting than transmitting information accurately from one brain to another: it allows the mental resources of individuals to combine in a collective, communicative intelligence which enables people to make better sense of the world and to devise practical ways of dealing with it” (Mercer 2000: 6).

Both the mental and the social are acknowledged in this view of language as “a system designed to support the essentially collective nature of human thinking”, or, alternately, as a tool for ‘inter-thinking’, by means of which we make sense of (our interactions with and experiences of) ourselves and the world we live in (Mercer 2000: 168). The use of language is a joint activity.

Since Austin (1975) observed that communicating an utterance is performing an action, aimed at uptake and reaction – not just describing a state of affairs – it gradually became mainstream in pragmatics to consider the use of language as a complex form of social human behavior. However, the origins of this view are old and diverse. Retracing it through history falls outside the scope of this dissertation. Nonetheless, one source of inspiration must be mentioned. The Russian language scholar Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin13 directly influenced the way language is conceived of in this research.14 I share his view on the social nature of language, as a result of which form and content cannot be studied separately from each other:

“Form and content in discourse are one, once we understand that verbal discourse is a social phenomenon – social throughout its entire range and in each and every of its factors, from the sound image to the furthest reaches of abstract meaning” (Bakhtin 1981: 259).

According to Bakhtin, language is a complex and multidimensional, social and dialogical phenomenon, always situated in a certain socio-cultural, historical context, and carrying an ideological load. Bakhtin understood language in its full diversity, as being part of a complex heterogeneous reality. In his own words,

“at any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth [...]. These ‘languages of heteroglossia’ intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying ‘languages’” (Bakhtin 1981: 291).

In addition to the social view, throughout his writings Bakhtin stresses three fundamental aspects of language: (i) the dialogic nature of discourse, (ii) the contextual situatedness of language,

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13 The most interesting scholars are difficult to put a label on and that certainly holds for Bakhtin. In retrospect, he could be called a sociolinguist, literary theorist and philologist, but he would be vehemently opposed to such labels, because Bakhtin and his associates such as Vološino at their time reacted against linguistics and literary theory which they saw as formalistic, structuralistic and overabstractive (cf. Bakhtin 1981: 269 or Vološinov 1986: 71-73). Note that he has even been identified as the founder of pragmatics (Todorov 1981 : 42), while I believe he is one of many precursors of pragmatics.

14 Of course a lot of other thinkers (e.g. Herder, Wittgenstein, Derrida, Foucault) are worth mentioning in this regard. Unfortunately, in the timespan of the research project their work could not be studied as profoundly as Bakhtin’s. So, influence of other ‘language philosophies’ is mainly implicitly present in this dissertation via secondary reading and vicarious intertextual links.
specifically the “ineluctably historical nature of language” (Holquist 1981: xviii), and (iii) its intrinsic ideological potential. That is why “Bakhtin rejects the Saussurean notion that the locus of meaning ultimately belongs to the abstract system (‘langue’) of language rather than to the agent’s highly contextualized, historicized use of it as ‘utterance’” (Weir 1998: 1052). The first characteristic will be elaborated in my discussion of intertextuality below in 2.2.2, while (ii) and (iii) will be further developed in chapter 4.

A consequence of this kind of social reasoning is that language is not individualistic. Obviously, it always springs from an individual mind, but it is not isolated from society. Therefore, Verschueren (1999a: 173-175) speaks of a ‘mind in society’ with reference to Vygotsky (1978). Language is not just owned by one individual, but it is a public good at the service of social groups, conceived as open and dynamic collections of people(s), who mutually (and often unconsciously) have agreed to share in some joint action, belief, attitude or other such attribute (Day 2006). People can fall out of social groups, while outsiders can be socialized into social groups, which are constantly changing, forming an adaptive network of members. Language is essential in the life of communities. In the current research both terms, social group and community, are used as near-synonyms. A community is a formation of individuals who have socially organized and who not only perceive themselves, but are also perceived by others as a group of people with essentials of mind set and practice in common. According to Mercer (2000: 106), members of a community share a history, a collective identity, a discourse and reciprocal obligations, having to do with responsibilities, roles and principles for appropriate behavior. Any kind of discourse can always be appropriated, influenced, recreated or reinvented by different people, notwithstanding their (newly acquired) membership of a primary discourse community. Hinting at the discussion of the dialogic nature of discourse it can already be remarked that people, when using language, always “transmit, recall, weigh and pass judgment on other people’s words, opinions, assertions, information; people are upset by other’s words, or agree with them, contest them, refer to them and so forth” (Bakhtin 1981: 338). That is why Bakhtin views language use as internally dialogized: “the internal dialogism of discourse is something that inevitably accompanies the social, contradictory historical becoming of language” (Bakhtin 1981: 330).

In Bakhtin’s reasoning language often seems to correspond to discourse. Throughout his work he uses the terms interchangeably and brings them into dialogue. When he discusses “socially typifying ‘languages’ ” as in the quote above, he could have meant discourses. Todorov indicates that Bakhtin defines discourse alternatively as “le langage dans sa totalité concrète et vivante”

15 Here it is important to remark that language or discourse does not exclusively belong to one specific community, no matter how typical a jargon may be. It is always polyvalent and multitribal: “Language, the creation of sociality which had arisen on the basis of intertribal communication brought about by economic needs, is the accumulation of precisely this kind of sociality, which is always multitribal” (Marr cited in Vološinov 1986: 76).
language use in its concrete and live totality, my translation], “le langage comme un phénomène concret total” [language use as a concrete and total phenomenon, my translation] or as the utterance (énoncé) in context (1981: 44). This holistic conception of discourse is an important starting point for my undertaking. However, I would like to make a terminological distinction between language as a general, abstract concept and discourse as contextualized language in use (following e.g. Baugh & Sherzer 1984, Fairclough 1995, Fasold 1990, McHoul 1998, Richardson 2007, Schiffrin 1994, Verschueren 2011).

2.2.1.2. The dynamics of language use
The above description of discourse has yielded a few starting points and assumptions, but is still too general. It is time to clarify the concept of language use. Discourse as language use is understood as:

“a process of interactive meaning generation employing as its tool a set of production and interpretation choices from a variable and varying range of options, made in a negotiable manner, inter-adapting with communicative needs, and making full use of the reflexivity of the human mind” (Verschueren 2008: 14).

Using language, for instance to create a newspaper article, is a kind of social practice that is interactively achieved (see also e.g. Fairclough 1992: 28). As we will immediately see in 2.2.2, any instance of language use, especially news reports, is based on or reacts to previous language use – it never exists in a vacuum. The interactivity also pertains to the purposiveness and direction of discourse. It is always produced with an audience in mind to achieve certain effects in the receiving language user(s), and through them even society at large. The uptake and interpretation of language use is anticipated by the producer, so it is not a unidirectional affair. The attribution of meaning to discourse depends as much on the interpreter as it does on the writer. It is the dynamic result of processes of negotiation and adaptation, based on the choices made both at the producing and the receiving end, as will become clear in the analyses in chapters 7 and 8.

This view corresponds to how language use is conceived within CDA. First, it is recognized that discourse involves selective procedures: “The Critical Discourse Analyst faces every linguistic representation in a discourse as a selective construction, never losing sight of the fact that there is always a possible alternative representation which could bear in it a totally different meaning” (Fowler 1996: 4). This has implications for meaning generation and evokes a view of language as intrinsically ideological (cf. Fairclough 1995 and chapter 4). Thus, Fowler describes discourse as “an intervention in the social and economic order [which] works by the reproduction of (socially originating) ideology” (Fowler 1996: 3). Van Leeuwen (1993, 2008) considers discourse a special kind of social practice, viz. a recontextualization of social practice. It is a linguistic (or semiotic) social practice that represents other (communicative or non-
communicative) social practices, whereby the original social practice is taken out of its context and inserted into a new discursive context following the purposes, priorities, preferences and possibilities of the communicative event (compare to the linguistic anthropological view on recontextualization in the framework of natural histories of discourse introduced in 2.2.2.2). Van Leeuwen (2008: 12-13) further notes that such a recontextualization is recursive and that the recontextualizing social practice (e.g. a news report on Kenyan elections) filters the original social practice (e.g. the organization of elections or the performance of voting). Moreover, the way in which social practices are recontextualized in discourse is usually not fully known to the participants involved, because it is done automatically as a matter of common sense, based on ‘tacit know-how’.

In chapter 4 (esp. 4.1.2.2), I will argue that news is a discursive product, which is subject to recontextualization. News media are recontextualizing devices *par excellence*. After all, mediated experience is always recontextualized experience. Through the media people can experience “events which transpire in distant locales and which are re-embedded, via the reception and appropriation of media products, in the practical contexts of daily life” (Thompson 1995: 228). That is why media images, particularly those from foreign news sections, can sometimes disconcert readers. The shocking character of such images of misery do not only stem from the desperate life conditions of the people portrayed in these images, but also from the fact that their life conditions diverge so dramatically from the contexts within which these images are re-embedded. “It is the clash of contexts, of divergent worlds suddenly brought together in the mediated experience, that shocks and disconcerts” (Thompson 1995: 229).

Applying the proposed theoretical account of discourse as language use to my field of investigation, newspaper journalists as well as their readers can be said to constantly make linguistic and language-external choices (consciously and unconsciously) in the recursive processes of discourse production or interpretation, which are characterized by *variability*, *negotiability* and *adaptability* (Verschueren 1999a: 59-61). *Variability* refers to the wide range of linguistic possibilities to capture real-life events in discourse. From various options, the WP journalist of the article mentioned in 1.2 chose to describe the raging protests and acts of violence in Nairobi’s slums during the post-election crisis as *tribal rage*, thus lumping together a series of different conflicts. Possible alternatives could have been *post-election violence, political violence, unrest, or skirmishes*, which are found in other news reports about the same events (see e.g. examples 5 and 6). Whether she intended to express that ‘tribe’ was the driving force behind the violence or just that some people whose primary identification is tribal membership were enraged with each other, the meanings invoked in the article are negotiated between writer and reader. Some readers will be offended by the label of tribal rage, while others will take it for granted. Neither production nor interpretation choices are made mechanically.
according to fixed form-function relationships. The word *tribe* does not automatically and invariably have a pejorative connotation – in fact, some of my informants told me that this word only tends to be used in newspapers in positive contexts of cultural festivities (see 8.1.2 and 8.2.1), just as the linguistic form *tears* does not always function as the third person singular of the verb *to tear*.

5) The ministers, who spoke at the office of Internal Security minister, Mr John Michuki, almost came to blows with journalists after they were pressed to substantiate claims that the Opposition was fanning *postelection violence*.

(ST_Ministers, media clash_03/01/2008)

6) Journalists were asked to identify themselves and only particular media houses were allowed to cover the *skirmishes*. For others, they could only cover the *violence* if given police protection.

(ST_Four more killed in Nairobi slums_03/01/2008)

In these extracts, taken from the ST, other choices were made with different effects for the meaning of the news discourse. When I initially read such messages, I thought the Kenyan newspapers *intended* to express that the violence should not be interpreted in tribal terms. But Ogola (2009) argues that deliberate omissions of ethnic labels, when reporting events involving ethnic aspects, might well be understood by a Kenyan readership as emphasizing the urgency of the ethnic dimension. So, meanings are neither stable nor fixed, as the interpretation is a result of dynamic processes of meaning generation, which go beyond the individual intentions of the writer or the collective intentions of the news medium, at the same time being more than a matter of mechanistic decoding on the part of the reader. Referring back to Lippmann,

“language is by no means a perfect vehicle of meanings. Words, like currency, are turned over and over again, to evoke one set of images to-day, another to-morrow. There is no certainty whatever that the same word will call out exactly the same idea in the reader’s mind as it did in the reporter’s” (Lippmann 2004: 36).

We will return to these issues in chapters 3, 7 and 8 for deeper, theoretical and empirical explorations. Ultimately journalists try to adapt their language use to the (idealized) reader by rooting their writings into what they believe to be common ground and by creating a presumably shared and accessible, or *in casu* appropriable, frame of interpretation (see 4.1.1 for more explanation). On the basis of the journalistic output, the reader, in turn, is to arrive at interpretations, also from a range of variable possibilities, by adapting all ingredients of the speech event, including background knowledge, within a dynamic frame of meaning, in such a way as to approach relative satisfaction of expectations, interests and comprehension for the (assumed) purposes of the communication.

The professed view of discourse implies a social constructionist stance. Mehan remarks, “[b]ecause discourse, use of language, is action, different discourses constitute the world differently”, which means that “[e]vents in the world do not exist for people independently of the
representations people use to make sense of them” (1996: 273). By communicating and interacting people co-construct reality (Shotter 1993). In this respect, Mottart and Verdoost (2000: 6) define discourse as a construction of reality from a certain ideological perspective, promoting specific interests. Similarly, Burr regards discourses as “systems of meaning, ways of representing ourselves and our social world, which constitute not only what we think and say, but what we feel and desire and what we do” (1995: 85). Rather than viewing language and thought separately, she suggests that language provides the basis for thought: “It provides us with a system of categories for dividing up our experience and giving it meaning, so that our very selves become the product of language” (Burr 1995: 44). This is too strong a claim. Instead of such a radical poststructuralist, constructionist view, I adhere to a pragmatic constructionist view in which the existence of an outside reality is not categorically rejected (see 4.1.2). In this more moderate view, it is assumed that representations in discourse do not absolutely determine, but have an impact on how people envisage and experience the world (see the next chapter for the implications of this idea for my conception of news).

In CDA the relation between language and society is described as dialectical, in that “[t]exts are socioculturally shaped but they also constitute society and culture, in ways which may be transformative as well as reproductive” (Fairclough 1995: 34). For this idea, discourse analysts are (probably not solely, but definitely) indebted to Vološinov (1986), who in his philosophy of language repeatedly stresses that every word as an ideological sign not only reflects and refracts reality, but also is a constitutive part of it. By representing, i.e. discursively recreating, aspects of the world, discourse contributes to the dynamic construction of social reality. After all, there is “a two-way relationship between a ‘discursive event’ (any use of discourse) and the situation, institution and social structure in which it occurs: discourse is shaped by these but it also shapes them” (Mayr 2008: 8). Anticipating the next section (2.2.2) about the dialogism of discourse, Richardson recapitulates the essence of the dialectics of discourse:

“Language use exists in a kind of dialogue with society: language is produced by society and (through the effect of language use on people) it goes on to help recreate it. Language first represents social realities and second contributes to the production and reproduction of social reality or social life” (Richardson 2007: 10).

Note the difference between external reality and social reality, which is (often discursively) constructed by people as social beings on the basis of the former.

That this view is not exclusive to discourse studies is proven by McNair, who in his explanation of the chaos paradigm of journalism (see 3.1.2.2) states that the paradigm he advances “recognises that media messages do not impact on reality as an external influence in isolation, but become part of what reality is, and that the two elements are inseparable for analytic purposes. Journalism, from this perspective, is not just an account of reality, but an
essential component of it. Events happen, are reported, and that reportage may feed back into events, changing their evolutionary paths” (McNair 2006: 50).

So far, I have dealt with ‘classic’ assumptions which the research at hand shares with lots of other pragmatic and discourse studies. Less frequently made explicit, though not less essential, is the assumption that discourse is messy, chaotic and fuzzy (but see Shotter 1993: 17-18). Since “we must deal with the life and behavior of discourse in a contradictory and multi-linguaged world” (Bakhtin 1981: 275), the social phenomenon of discourse is interspersed with contradictions and discrepancies. Heterogeneity and contradiction are characteristics of any discourse. It is the task of the pragmatically-inspired discourse analyst to dissect discourse and explain it by making the necessary differentiations, while imposing analytical categories without disregarding the fundamental disorderliness. Briggs warns against “scholars [who] impose an image of order and cooperation on dimensions of discourse that embody disorder” (Briggs 1997: 456). Once disorder is recognized, instead of dismissed as anomaly, it can be accounted for. Language use can only be studied accurately if the inherent, often intricate, contradictions and heterogeneities are acknowledged. As such we follow an old piece of advice by Bakhtin, who claimed that “it is possible to give a concrete and detailed analysis of any utterance, once having exposed it as a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tendencies [viz. the centripetal and the centrifugal] in the life of language” (1981: 272). In the context of the present research of news discourses about Kenya’s post-election conflicts, it is worth noting that narratives about conflict are not merely seen as sources of information about the specific conflicts, but also as a part of processes of conflict themselves (cf. Briggs 1996).

To recapitulate, discourse is seen as a social phenomenon, more precisely a social practice, when it was defined in terms of language use, characterized by variability, negotiability and adaptability. It was also already hinted at that discourse is dialogical in nature. This assumption will be further elaborated in the next section, where discourse will be presented as an intertextual phenomenon.

2.2.2. Intertextuality

2.2.2.1. Tracing the unoriginal origins
Intertextuality is one of the crucial notions underlying this work if only because the reported research revolves around a contrastive analysis of topically-related newspaper texts (see 6.1.1.2. for more information about the intertextual methodology). Therefore, the notion of intertextuality could have deserved its own main section. Yet, it is introduced here in a subsection, because I consider it an essential feature of discourse. To compensate for such ‘backgrounding’, this chapter opened with a passage from Eco’s The Name of the Rose, in which the narrator of the
story, Adso of Melk, discovers the intertextuality of writing. Here I will first try to define intertextuality from a historical perspective as the historical and conceptual situatedness of a text in relation to other anterior, simultaneous or posterior texts. Then I will briefly review a few well-known theories of intertextuality in 2.2.2.2. Finally I will present some applications of the theoretical notion in 2.2.2.3 in order to position my own research in the body of existing thought.

Intertextuality comes down to this witticism: language use is always also used language. In general, intertextuality can be fairly simply explained, but it is a very rich and complex notion, once you go deeper into the details. The term has to do with the historicity, dialogism, interdependence and interconnectedness of discourse. Intertextuality means that all texts are related to other texts; they are a reaction to, recycled from, made up of or based on other texts. Allen (2000: 6, 67) points out that this essential idea is metaphorized in the notion of ‘text’ itself, which derives from Latin textus, a tissue, a woven fabric. With reference to Barthes (1977: 159), he remarks that a text is a web or garment, woven from the threads of the ‘already written’ and the ‘already read’. Apt to this context is Bakhtin’s famous one-liner that we live in a world of others’ words (1986: 143).16 Put differently, “each act of textual production presupposes antecedent texts and anticipates prospective ones” (Bauman 2004: 4). It follows that the meanings of a text depend on previous and future texts, on discourse that is produced and interpreted on other occasions. For Todorov, intertextuality as dialogism, is not only the central characteristic of every utterance, but of discourse as a whole.

“Intentionnellement ou non, chaque discours entre en dialogue avec les discours antérieurs tenus sur le même objet, ainsi qu’avec les discours à venir, dont il pressent et prévient les reactions” (Todorov 1981: 8).17

In passing, he intimates that intertextuality in discourse does not have to be intentional. In the current research the term of intertextuality stands for the historical and conceptual situatedness of a text (widely conceived as any form of discourse, though in this study often restricted to journalistic texts), i.e. how a text relates to other, simultaneous or earlier texts with which it is connected.

Concrete manifestations of intertextuality in language use, in casu news discourse, can be very diverse. Intertextuality plays a role in topic selection, word choice, news medium, genre, interpretive frames, background assumptions, argumentation patterns, the representation of sources or voices (e.g. the linguistic structures of reported speech), etc. Above all, it can pertain to local, purely linguistic-textual features or it can be considered as a philosophy of language.

17 Quotes from French scholars are presented in the language in which I read them. I tried to read their works in the original language. I believe that the least meaning is lost by rendering the quotes in French, but for those who do not speak the language, I included English translations in footnotes. Here Todorov wrote: “Intentionally or not, all discourse is in dialogue with prior discourses on the same subject, as well as with discourses yet to come, whose reactions it foresees and anticipates” (Todorov 1984: x).
The polysemy surrounding intertextuality is due to the concept’s rich history of visions and applications. To clear things out, a concise review of some intertextualities of intertextuality, so to speak, is useful. For the purposes of this dissertation, the following historical discussion will be quite selective, only touching upon the conceptualizations of a few prominent thinkers on intertextuality, ignoring others (Gerard Genette and Michael Riffaterre not in the least).

In his introduction to intertextuality from a literary perspective, Allen (2000: 11) identifies three people who are at the origins of the foundations of the notion, as it is used nowadays in the humanities. Ferdinand de Saussure provided the basis of a few central ideas by pinpointing the relational and differential nature of the word. Starting from his conception of the linguistic sign as a non-unitary, non-stable, connected unit, the understanding of which rests on a network of relations, of similarity and difference, which constitutes the synchronic system of language, others could work towards a notion of intertextuality.

However, Saussure’s ideas still stemmed from a vision of language as a generalized and abstract system. As we have seen in 2.1.1, such a view of language is diametrically opposed to everything Bakhtin stands for. With his social, heteroglossic and dialogic perspective, he could be regarded as “the originator, if not of the term ‘intertextuality’, then at least of the specific view of language which helped others articulate theories of intertextuality” (Allen 2000: 10). Although Bakhtin himself never used the term intertextuality, this is how he formulates the thought expressed above:

“no living word relates to its object in a singular way: between the word and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme, [...]. Indeed, any concrete discourse (utterance) finds the object at which it was directed already as it were overlain with qualifications, open to dispute, charged with value, already enveloped in an obscuring mist – or, on the contrary, by the ‘light’ of alien words that have already been spoken about it. It is entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgments and accents. The word, directed toward its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group: and all this may crucially shape discourse” (Bakhtin 1981: 276).

For Bakhtin discourse is dialogic and dialogue permeates all spheres of life. Weir (1998: 1053) observes that the Russian scholar broadly uses the concept of dialogue in three different, at times slightly contradictory, ways: (i) in the context of utterances, every uttered word is by its very nature dialogic, deriving its meanings from an orientation towards other concrete utterances (cf. Vološinov’s multiplicity of meanings (1986: 101)); (ii) in a larger context, every discourse is characterized by a polyphony of explicit and implicit voices and is aimed at responsive understanding; (iii) in the totalizing context of life, Bakhtin believes that the open-ended dialogue is the single adequate form for verbally expressing authentic human life – to live means...
to participate in dialogue. Bakhtin’s anthropology is properly summarized by Todorov: “c’est l’être humain même qui est irréductiblement hétérogène, c’est lui qui n’existe qu’en dialogue : au sein de l’être on trouve l’autre” (1981: 9).

To refer to the fact that all utterances are responses to previous utterances and are addressed to specific addressees Bakhtin uses the term *addressivity*. This idea is picked up and worked out by Vološinov, who sees an utterance, metonymically standing for language use in general, as a two-sided, dialogic, thus intertextual, act, which is determined equally by *whose* utterance it is and *for whom* it is meant. He cogently argues that utterances are always “constructed between two socially organized persons, and in the absence of a real addressee, an addressee is presupposed in the person, so to speak of a normal representative of the social group to which the speaker belongs” (Vološinov 1986: 85). That is what happens when a journalists writes a newspaper article with a certain target audience in mind. Consequently, the meanings of a news text do not only depend on the journalist, but are also dependent on how the news article will be received and interpreted. This observation will be revisited in 3.1.1.2 and 3.2.2.1.

The woman who coined the term *intertextuality*, inspired by her reading of Saussure and Bakhtin, is Julia Kristeva. The term was launched in Kristeva’s definition of text in the context of her elaboration of ‘semianalysis’, a semiotics of literary texts.

“sans vouloir réduire le texte à la parole orale, mais en marquant que nous ne pouvons pas le lire en dehors de la langue, nous définirons le texte comme un appareil translinguistique qui redistribue l’ordre de la langue, en mettant en relation une parole communicative visant l’information directe, avec différents types d’énoncés antérieurs ou synchroniques. Le texte est donc une *productivité*, ce qui veut dire: (i) son rapport à la langue dans laquelle il se situe est redistributif (destructivo-constructif), par conséquent il est abordable à travers des catégories logiques et mathématiques plutôt que purement linguistique, (ii) *il est une permutation des textes, une inter-textualité*: dans l’espace d’un texte plusieurs énoncés pris d’autres textes se croisent et se neutralisent” (Kristeva 1968: 300 [stress added in italics]).

Kristeva recognized the productivity of texts and focused on the production side of textual processes, instead of approaching texts as finished products, ready to be quickly consumed. Analysts of news discourse can learn from this that also processes of news writing have to be taken into account.

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18 The translation reads: “it is the human being itself that is irreducibly heterogeneous; it is human ‘being’ that exists only in dialogue: within being one finds the other” (Todorov 1984: x-xi).
19 Translated as: “without reducing the text to oral speech, while noting that we cannot read it outside of language, we define the text as a trans-linguistic apparatus that redistributes the order of the language by relating communicative speech, which aims to inform directly, to different kinds of anterior or synchronic utterances. The text is therefore a *productivity*, and this means: first, that its relationship to the language in which it is situated is redistributive (destructive – constructive), and hence can be better approached through logical categories rather than linguistic ones; and second, that it is a permutation of texts, an *inter-textuality*: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another” (Kristeva 1980: 36).
An important consequence of the dynamic vision of texts as being always in a state of production is that, for Kristeva, the intertextual dimensions of a text cannot be studied as mere ‘sources’ or ‘influences’ stemming from what traditionally has been styled ‘background’ or ‘context’. She shares with Bakhtin the idea that all texts contain within them the ideological structures and struggles present in society. As Allen has it, “[t]exts do not present clear and stable meanings; they embody society’s dialogic conflict over the meaning of words” (2000: 36). Texts about tribe are a case in point, as will be shown in 5.1.1, but there are also other examples.

Take the word genocide, as used in example (3) and (7), or the term democracy in (8) and (9).

7) Bush has himself followed up Rice’s visit to Kenya with an even more telling reminder when he spoke of early warning signs of a major conflict and the need to stop them from snowballing into a Rwanda-like genocide. (ST_Uncertainty over PM post_21/02/2008)

8) We need to find new government processes which reflect African ideas. Current national level democracy is probably too rooted in western culture to reflect African feelings of family, culture and community. (DN_Psychology of protests: Grievances that fuel violence_03/02/2008)

9) Ms. Rice’s promises of more help for Kenya, which already receives more than half a billion dollars of annual American aid, fit in with President Bush’s approach of rewarding countries who embrace democracy and American-approved development programs. (NYT_Rice in Nairobi offers incentives to end violence_19/02/2008)

A word like genocide has strong connotations and invokes a number of already scripted, familiar, but also contestable meanings, coupled to historic events (cf. the notion of natural histories of discourse below). In an African context, a reference to past conflicts between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda is never far off. By applying that word to the conflicts in Kenya, its history is projected onto the Kenyan crisis and at the same time the word acquires extra meaning aspects from the new context in which it is used. Also democracy (and its derivative adjective) is a term without a consensual meaning. Like every word, its meaning depends on perspectives, ideology and context, including the language users. However, because its precise reference is far from clear, as are the ideas and practices it stands for, it is particularly amenable to negotiation and exploitation (cf. the Democratic Republic of Congo). In another framework, it has been called an empty signifier (Laclau 2001). Both genocide and democracy are sensitive concepts with a clear intertextual dimension and with an ideological load that is more salient than words which are less politicized. In that respect, Blommaert points to the “fundamental difference between intertextualities depending on whether or not such intertextualities invoke historically ‘charged’ categories of meaning, such as gender, race, ethnic, or political-ideological categories such as ‘bandit’, ‘freedom fighter’, ‘terrorist’, ‘conservative’, ‘progressive’, or ‘radical’ – categories with a long history of politicised use” (2005: 129).
When journalists use such words, society’s conflict over the meanings of these words is incorporated into the newspaper texts; in Kristeva’s terms, such words and utterances retain an ‘otherness’ within the text itself. Note that the preceding discussion was about a specific and explicit kind of intertextuality, based on lexical choices. However, examples (7) and (9) also reveal a more general, thematic intertextuality in that both fragments are about Rice’s visit to Nairobi in the margin of Bush’s 2008 tour through Africa and about American foreign policy.

Eventually, Kristeva’s thinking about intertextuality turned into semiotic and abstract theorizing with a primary focus on signs and their interrelations instead of social life, history and real language users. As Allen concludes, “[w]hilst Bakhtin’s work centres on actual human subjects employing language in specific social situations, Kristeva’s way of expressing these points seems to evade human subjects in favour of the more abstract terms, text and textuality” (2000: 36). When intertextuality is seen as the passage from one sign system to another, the notion becomes blurred and the link with social life is lost. Then it loses its value as an analytical concept for my kind of project.

2.2.2.2. A supplementarity of views
In the following discussion about the way Kristeva’s thoughts on intertextuality were further developed within poststructuralist thinking, a few basic notions about text and language use will be challenged. These will pertain to (i) the uniqueness and autonomy of the text, (ii) the power of the language producer, and (iii) the determinacy of interpretation. From the beginning of her studies in the 1960s Kristeva was in contact with other French theorists and philosophers, such as Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida. They mutually influenced one another and built on each other’s ideas to develop poststructuralist accounts of text and meaning. Although it is an outright travesty to summarize their thoughts about intertextuality in a few paragraphs, Barthes and Derrida deserve to be mentioned here. Unfortunately, a full exposition of the complexities and subtleties of their theories would lead us too far. However, a succinct discussion of some of their central ideas about language and intertextuality will show that my understanding of meaning and language use is not typical of pragmatics, but also features in poststructuralist frameworks (see Zienkowski 2012 for the relation between pragmatics and post-structuralism). In particular, their ideas about the processual nature of texts, the role of the reader, the transcendence of intentions, the dynamicity of meaning and the importance of context are important to be kept in mind.

Following Kristeva, Barthes stresses the processual state of texts, to which he adds the productive role of the reader. He dismisses a stabilized model of text and context, in which a self-contained context wholly determines the text, while remaining distinct from it. Departing from the observation that all texts are shot through with citations, references, echoes, antecedent or contemporary ‘cultural languages’ and so forth, Barthes came to the conclusion that “[t]he
intertextual in which every text is held, is itself being the text-between of another text, not to be confused with some origin of the text: to try to find the ‘sources’, the ‘influences’ of a work, is to fall in with the myth of filiation; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet already read” (1977: 160). Since the true origins of a text cannot be traced, due to the plurality of voices, of other words and other utterances, underlying all texts, the direct originator (or rather most recent re-user) of the words, viz. the author, loses its power and authority over meanings.

Additionally, Barthes goes against a view of reading as the consumption of a finite, disposable product or commodity. It is in this context that Barthes’ notorious statement about the death of the author must be understood:

“a text is made of multiple wirings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused, and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology [...] the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” (Barthes 1977: 148).

It is interesting that Barthes acknowledges the role of the reader and thus empowers the language user at the receiving end in the construction of meaning out of texts, contrary to certain pragmatic theories, where the speaker is the focal actor of language use, which is then seen as essentially revolving around the hearer’s recognition of the speaker’s intentions (e.g. Grice 1989, Sperber & Wilson 1995). That media texts acquire their meaning when they are read is also the starting point of reception analysis in media studies, where it is stressed that the audiences are the producers of meaning (see Ang 1995: 214).

However, in Barthes’ reasoning, the scale tips to the other extreme. He seems to deny the speaker/writer all agency to the benefit of the reader, whereas, surely, there is agency on both sides. We have already said that journalists make a lot of choices when writing a news report and also newspaper readers make interpretive choices (e.g. beginning with the choice to browse through the ‘world news’-section and read more than the headline of a news article). Furthermore, Barthes makes the reader devoid of history, biography and psychology. When the production side of the author is discarded and also the reader is taken out of context, the text becomes totalitarian, isolated from its sociohistorical context, a view I would not like to maintain. In that case, meaning just stems from ‘language viewed intertextually’ (Allen 2000: 74). It is a dismissal of choice as well as the interdependence of language users who are always situated in history and society. This point of criticism also applies to Barthes’ radical constructionist idea that nothing exists outside the text. As Allen puts it, “[t]here are, in Barthes’s intertextual world, no emotions before the textual description of emotions, no thoughts before the
textual representation of thoughts, no significant actions which do not signify outside of already textualized and encoded actions” (Allen 2000: 73).

A similar view is held by Derrida. He pleads for a conception of language, not as a logical route to objective truth, but as a rhetoric structure, a persuasive strategy, apart from any underlying truth (cf. Schrover 1992: 19). Derrida argues that the text “ne serait plus, dès lors, un corpus fini d'écriture, un contenu cadré dans un livre ou dans ses marges mais un réseau différentiel, un tissu de traces renvoyant indéfiniment à de l'autre, référencées à d'autres traces différentielles” (1986: 127). Any kind of language use is a historical product of a differential system of chained signs, the meanings of which can never be completely foreseen or surveyed by the language users, neither the writer nor the reader. This idea also comes to expression in McNair’s cultural chaos paradigm (see 3.1.2.2).

Words are characterized by iterability. They can constantly be repeated in new contexts, which undermines any fixity or determination of meaning. This reflects what was stated in 2.2.1.2, viz. that meaning is not absolute, but dynamically changing from context to context. It is a never-ending process of relations that is continuously developing in time and space and keeps on disseminating, while leaving traces from earlier uses and interpretations (Derrida 1972a). That is why Derrida believes that the meaning of meaning is to be found in an infinite implication of always new meanings, as the language users are referred from one signifier to another. Consequently, interpretation always has an undecidable, hypothetical character, which is not to claim that texts are un-interpretable or that meanings are indeterminable. Every interpretation is a contextually determined construct and it is always the beginning of a new interpretation (Schrover 1992: 78). So, the interpretation of a newspaper article is never definite, because it always calls for reactions, replies and refutations, and it always yields new questions. As Allen puts it, “no interpretation is ever complete because every word is a response to previous words and elicits further responses” (2000: 28). That also holds for my interpretations of the post-election news discourse provided in chapters 7 and 8.

Additionally Derrida thinks that the meaning of a text transcends its intentions. This idea finds expression in his discussion of the word pharmakon (φαρμακον) in Plato’s dialogue Phaedrus.

“Le mot pharmakon y est pris dans une chaîne de significations. Le jeu de cette chaîne semble systématique. Mais le système n’est pas ici, simplement, celui des intentions de l’auteur connu sous le nom de Platon. Ce système n’est pas d’abord celui d’un vouloir-dire. Des communications réglées s’établissent, grâce au jeu de la langue, entre diverses fonctions du mot, et, en lui, entre divers sédiments ou diverses régions de la culture. Ces communications, ces couloirs de sens, Platon peut parfois les déclarer, les éclairer en y jouant ‘volontairement’ [...]. De même, Platon peut, dans d’autres cas, ne pas voir les

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20 Text “is henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces” (Derrida 1987: 84).

Communication is established through language games, through the interaction between words, culture and both the context of production and reception. Language users always unintentionally produce more meaning than they intend(ed). But that does not mean that ‘intention’ disappears from view. As Derrida remarks, “la catégorie d’intention ne disparaîtra pas, elle aura sa place, mais, depuis cette place, elle ne pourra plus commander toute la scène et tout le système de l’énonciation” (Derrida 1972b: 389). When he further presents context as the concrete form in which the iterability of linguistic signs manifests itself, Derrida touches upon intertextuality. For it follows that the new use of a sign in another context always leads to a new meaning, so a word never has the same meaning twice (Schrover 1992: 111).

Derrida’s highlighting of context, whereby intentions are not all-decisive, but one among many factors, squares with the way meaning generation in language use is viewed from the earlier presented pragmatic perspective. However, a caveat is in order. Pushed to the extreme, Derrida’s idea can be recapitulated as: “Meaning is context-bound, but context is boundless” (Culler 1983: 123). That would almost make it impossible to study meanings in context. For how to determine context? What contextual factors are to be taken into account when studying meanings in language use? In chapter 4 I will try to answer these questions and propose a dynamic view of context.

Based on the foregoing review, five characteristics of intertextuality can be distinguished.

(i) Intertextuality is a fluctuating feature or process, rather than a stable and unchanging property of texts. Slembrouck speaks of “a processual state which is reflected in a text” (2002: 2). As a result, intertextuality is never fixed or static, but it is always prone to evolution, transformation and change.

(ii) Intertextuality is not a purely textual affair, but an ideological, social and signifying phenomenon contributing to or co-determining the meaning of texts. In this respect, Thibault writes that intertextual patterns depend on “the social basis of the often

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21 “The word pharmakon is caught in a chain of significations. The play of that chain seems systematic. But the system here is not simply that of the intention of an author who goes by the name of Plato. The system is not primarily that of what someone meant-to-say [un vouloir-dire]. Finely regulated communications are established, through the play of language, among diverse functions of the word and, within it, among diverse strata or regions of culture. These communications or corridors of meaning can sometimes be declared or clarified by Plato when he plays upon them ‘voluntarily’ [...]. Then again, in other cases, Plato can not see these links, can leave them in the shadow or break them up. And yet these links go on working by themselves. In spite of him? thanks to him? in his text? outside his text? but then where? between his text and the language? for what reader? at what moment?” (Derrida 1981: 98).

22 In translation: “the category of intention will not disappear; it will have its place, but from that place it will no longer be able to govern the entire scene and the entire system of utterance” (Derrida 1982: 326).
implicit and automatized ways in which specific social groups make textual meanings” (1998: 404). Briggs and Bauman emphasise that “the roots of intertextual practices run just as deeply into social, cultural, ideological, and political-economic facets of social life as they do into the minutiae of linguistic structure and use” (1992: 160).

(iii) Intertextuality is multidirectional and open to interpretation. Intertextual aspects do not have a single meaning for all language users – they can be interpreted differently, or they can even be glossed over. Language users “construct, recognize, and recover a given set of meaning relations […] on the basis of the specific intertextual formations to which their social positionings give them access” (Thibault 1998: 402). Intertextual relations not only run between texts, they also go between text producers and earlier language users, between producers and receivers, and vice versa, or between one reader and another in multidirectional ways. Briggs and Bauman “suggest that relations between intertextuality and ideology can be read in both directions – in terms of the way that broader social, cultural, ideological, and political-economic formations shape and empower intertextual strategies and the manner in which ideologies of intertextuality and their associated practices shape society and history” (1992: 160).

(iv) Intertextuality is always contextual, that is, socioculturally situated and historical. Blommaert reasons that “[t]exts generate their publics, publics generate their texts, and the analysis of ‘meanings’ now has to take into account a historiography of the context of production, the mechanisms and instruments of reproduction and reception, ways of storage and remembering” (1999a: 5).

(v) Intertextuality is an abstract notion referring to diverse relations in texts, which are gradable and layered. When texts are seen as incorporating, reformulating, reinterpreting or re-reading other texts, “every act of communication is grounded in semantic and pragmatic histories which are not simple and linear, but complex, multilayered and fragmented” (Blommaert 1999a: 5).

2.2.2.3. Applications of intertextuality
If intertextuality is such a pervasive, multifaceted and multi-layered phenomenon, it becomes difficult to pinpoint. That is why some scholars have related intertextuality to notions of textuality which they deemed more applicable, such as (re- or de-)contextualization, or why others have made distinctions between specific kinds of intertextuality. To exemplify how the notion of intertextuality can be put into practice I will look at three frameworks: one from linguistic anthropology, one from media studies and one from discourse studies. At the end of this section I will argue that intertextuality does not have to be explicitly operationalized, because in my view it can be dealt with by studying and interrelating discursive phenomena on
different levels of language use. Indeed intertextuality, as defined above, is often touched upon in analyses of discourse without being explicitly addressed.

The notion of intertextuality has not exclusively been worked out in poststructuralist critical (literary) theory. It has also aroused the interest of some linguistically-oriented anthropologists such as Silverstein and Urban (1996), who developed the framework of ‘natural histories of discourse’, which was already hinted at above. In this framework intertextuality is closely linked to genre, giving rise to the notion of generic intertextuality (Bauman 2004, Briggs & Bauman 1992) and to processes of contextualization. When intertextuality is studied through genre, the latter term comes to refer to orienting frameworks for the cultural production and reception of particular types of texts. However, I will not go deeper into this part of the theory, because I want to focus on three other central concepts in the natural history of discourses, which are related to intertextuality.

Intertextual aspects come about through the interlinked processes of entextualization, decontextualization and recontextualization. Compared to my linguistic-pragmatic framework, this linguistic-anthropological strand treats discourse in a broader way as a changing constellation of (semiotic or symbolic) cultural practices, constituting ongoing social action\(^\text{23}\), whereas texts are more specifically viewed as discursive constructs that grow out of and refer to actual cultural practices, i.e. as a reification of discourse (Silverstein & Urban 1996).\(^\text{24}\) In this view, entextualization is the process of turning discourse into text, or in other words, the process of creating text from discourse. By capturing discourse as cultural practice in text, a piece of discourse is first decontextualized and then recontextualized in a new text, contributing to a new instance of discourse (see 4.1.2.2 for more on recontextualization). The essence of this view is clearly articulated by Bauman:

“The process of entextualization, by bounding off a stretch of discourse from its co-text, endowing it with cohesive formal properties, and (often, but not necessarily) rendering it internally coherent, serves to objectify it as a discrete textual unit that can be referred to, described, named, displayed, cited, and otherwise treated as an object [...]. Importantly, this process of objectification also serves to render a text extractable from its context of production. A text, then, from this vantage point, is discourse rendered decontextualizable: entextualization potentiates decontextualization. But decontextualization from one context must involve recontextualization in another, which is to recognize the potential for texts to circulate, to be spoken again in another context. The iterability of texts, then, constitutes one of the most powerful bases for the potentiation and production of intertextuality” (Bauman 2004: 4).

\(^{23}\) Compare to Blommaert’s broad conception of discourse as a general mode of semiosis or meaningful symbolic behaviour: “Discourse to me comprises all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity seen in connection with social, cultural, and historical patterns and developments of use” (2005: 3).

\(^{24}\) This view is not incompatible with our own view of discourse. The apparent differences have to do with the focus of investigation. While the research of natural histories of discourse targets culture, I am concerned with journalistic language use, of which culture of course is an ingredient.
During every process of entextualization, new meanings are created, while other significances, attached to the cultural practice(s) on which the text is based, are inescapably lost. Note that when this is how language use in general is seen to work, processes of decontextualization and recontextualization are also at play in academic writing. As Blommaert points out: “‘Original’ pieces of discourse – socially, culturally, and historically situated unique events – are lifted out of their original context and transmitted, by quoting or echoing them, by writing them down, by inserting them into another discourse, by using them as ‘examples’ (or as ‘data’ for scientific analysis)” (2005: 47). This point should be taken into account when interpreting the exemplary newspaper extracts, with which this thesis is interlarded. So, also the present work has a natural history of discourse, parts of which were highlighted in the preface and in the introduction.

With regard to the data under study, the mechanics and dynamics of the natural history of discourse can be clarified by means of example (10) and figure 5 (two pages down).

10) Residents in Nairobi's sprawling Kibera slum expressed their impatience by setting fire to tyres on Tuesday, and throwing stones and vandalising a railway line yesterday. Some said that they were protesting against the political standoff but one man, who declined to be named for fear of reprisals, said a slum gang was trying to extort protection money from the railway company. David Miliband, the Foreign Secretary, said “all sides must be prepared to make concessions... including President Kibaki's supporters ceding some powerful portfolios.”

(IN_Protesters clash with police as Kenya's power-sharing dispute rumbles on_10/04/2008)

First of all the damaging of the railway line in Kibera is reported. With a broad definition of discourse, the whole social action, involving the grouping of people, the incitement, the commotion, the destructive acts, possibly also outcries of anger and frustration and other speech acts, can be seen to constitute a discourse. Through processes of entextualization (e.g. taking notes and photos at the scene, talking to people, conferring with colleagues, editing, etc.) journalists took the event out of its sociocultural context and rendered it into text, transforming it into one or more sentences in press agency, newspaper or other news reports. Elizabeth Kennedy of Associated Press (AP) textualized it as a ‘vandalisation’ by unspecified, impatient slum dwellers, “protesting against the political standoff”, while she also added an alternative explanation, viz. that of a slum gang “trying to extort protection money from the railway company” (see appendix I for the original AP-report). This entextualization involved a partial decontextualization, which always goes together with a certain loss of meaning. For instance, the fact was lost that it was part of “the railway line from Nairobi to Western Kenya”, which is used for “transport to Uganda”, as is stated in the DN (see figure 5 and Appendix I for the whole article in its original format). The same actions were differently entextualized in the Kenyan newspaper report, where the picture’s caption in figure 5 states that the railway line “was uprooted by rioters demanding the naming of a grand coalition cabinet by President Kibaki and
ODM leader Raila Odinga”. In this decontextualization and subsequent recontextualization there is no mention of the alternative explanation. While meaning is lost through decontextualization, recontextualization brings about other or additional meanings. In the AP-report the destruction is described as an expression of impatience at the slow progress in finding a solution for the political impasse, or as an attempt at extortion. In the context of the newspaper report the event is categorized as an ‘incident of violence’ by rioters (instead of protesters) with economic and international consequences, because it paralyzed transport to Uganda. Furthermore, for Kenyan readers the reported events constituted an intertextual link to earlier reports about destruction of the same railway (cf. DN_ODM calls off mass action as deaths rise_19/01/2008, ST_Counting losses_19/01/2008 and DN_More killed as rivals differ over peace talks_21/01/2008).

However, it is not wholly Kennedy’s version in (10). The press agency copy has been slightly edited by an anonymous editor in accordance with the stylistic guidelines of the IN. For instance, the spelling of the text was turned into British English (e.g. tires → tyres and vandalizing → vandalising). By the recontextualization of the press agency text in the newspaper, also the deictic center changed, resulting in an adjustment of temporal deixis. The temporal adverbial on Wednesday in the press agency report was turned into the time adverb yesterday. Furthermore, the AP-report is not just made up by Kennedy, but it abounds with the words of others. For one, Associated Press writer Katharine Houreld contributed to the report, as indicated at the end in a by-line (see Appendix I). Secondly, the report is also about and consists of quotes from a few actors involved, such as United States Ambassador Michael Ranneberger, ODM spokesman Salim Lone or the British Foreign Secretary David Miliband. The latter’s comment again has a complex discursive history. It came about through processes of entextualization at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London, since it is part of an official statement released on 9 April 2008 (see Appendix I). It is a reaction to “the latest turn of events in Kenya” and the Annan brokered power-sharing agreement. It is to this agreement, which stated that “the Cabinet should be shared equally with appropriate portfolio balance”\(^{25}\), that Miliband referred by commenting that “[a]ll sides must be prepared to make concessions to allow this to happen, including President Kibaki's supporters ceding some powerful portfolios”. Note that the anaphoric phrase to allow this to happen is left out in the recontextualization in the IN. In the DN the triple recontextualization of this comment, first in a summarizing bullet under the headline, then in the second paragraph of the text, and repeated as an eye-catching quote aside, has powerful meaning effects, stressing the importance of making concessions and the urgency of a quick coalition

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government formation, even though the full citation is pictorially attributed to the wrong source.²⁶

COALITION CRISIS

Tension as Kibaki side told to give up key seats

UK asks rivals to make concessions US envoy rules out sanctions as Cabinet will be named soon Riots continue

By NATION Team

Britain yesterday suggested that some of President Kibaki’s supporters surrender their plum Cabinet posts for sharing with their ODM rivals, as some diplomats expressed optimism that the coalition government would be named soon.

UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband said in a statement that all sides should be prepared to make concessions, “including President Kibaki’s supporters ceding some powerful portfolios.”

His US counterpart, Ms Condoleezza Rice, said she had spoken separately to President Kibaki and ODM leader Raila Odinga on telephone and that they had assured her of their commitment to ensure the power-sharing deal was effected.

Named soon

And American ambassador Michael Ranneberger, who has engaged in a flurry of shuttle diplomacy between the President and Mr Odinga, said he was sure the coalition Cabinet would be named soon.

Mr Ranneberger said he met on Tuesday with both President Kibaki and Mr Odinga, and he “came away optimistic about their commitment” to forming a grand coalition government. “I do not think there is any need to impose sanctions,” Mr Ranneberger said in answer to a question from reporters during a news conference in Nairobi.

In response to a question from a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Railway transport to Uganda was paralysed after this section of the line that passes through Kibera slum, Nairobi, was supported by voters demanding the naming of a grand coalition cabinet by President Kibaki and ODM leader Raila Odinga.

Figure 5: Snapshot of the main article on the front page of Daily Nation 10 April 2008.

A second example of the operationalization of intertextuality comes from media studies. In his study of Television Culture, Fiske (1987: 108-127) makes a distinction between ‘horizontal

²⁶ Instead of depicting David Miliband, as the subscript says, an old picture of the Dutch Ambassador and then head of the EU delegation to Kenya, Eric van der Linden, is mistakenly used.
intertextuality’ and ‘vertical intertextuality’. The former relates to the diachronic dimension and concerns the transfer and accumulation of meanings over historical time, as preserved in metaphors, themes, characters, genres and content. The latter kind of intertextuality operates synchronically during a more limited time period, but across several media and social contexts. It concerns references from a ‘primary text’ to ‘secondary texts’ and ‘tertiary texts’. Take the documentary film *Page One: Inside the New York Times* (2011). The hybrid genre and its place in the *oeuvre* of director Andrew Rossi would belong to horizontal intertextuality. As for vertical intertextuality, the final cut would be called the primary text. Studio publicity from Magnolia Pictures, interviews with the participants and critical reviews in newspapers or specialized magazines would be regarded by Fiske as secondary texts. Examples of tertiary texts would be viewers’ letters to the press, conversations among the audience, gossip, mouth-to-mouth publicity, the book based on the documentary edited by Folkenflik (2011), or debates about the future of the newspaper industry, based on the film.

Although Fiske’s framework can easily be adapted to the context of newspapers, it will not be applied here. Contrary to the distinction between horizontal and vertical intertextuality, the subdivision into primary, secondary and tertiary texts seems quite arbitrary and artificial. If the film is considered as the primary text, other compositional texts, such as the loose script or the interviews the film is based on, are left in the background. The boundaries between secondary and tertiary texts are also not really clear, so that their usefulness can be questioned. It seems like imposing an imagined order onto entangled and interacting aspects of the data. Besides, Fiske’s focus is mainly aimed at explicit intertextual links, while we also want to have an eye for implicit aspects of intertextuality.

A third example of intertextuality put into practice comes from Critical Discourse Analysis. Fairclough (1992) distinguishes between ‘manifest intertextuality’, *i.e.* the overtly mixing together of elements from specific (real or imagined) texts within a certain text, and ‘constitutive intertextuality’, *i.e.* “the shifting articulation of different discourses, genres and voices in interactions and texts” (Choulia raki & Fairclough 1999: 45). Manifest intertextuality can be further circumscribed as “the weaving together of the words of another or others with my words, the weaving together of different ‘voices’” (Choulia raki & Fairclough 1999: 153). This specific, local kind of intertextuality is subdivided in five analytical categories: discourse representation, presupposition, negation, metadiscourse and irony (Fairclough 1992: 119). Constitutive intertextuality or interdiscursivity is broader. It refers to the fact that texts are situated in a certain paradigm, tradition and medium, as a result of which they are made up of heterogeneous elements such as generic conventions, discourse types, register and style. Fairclough later renamed constitutive intertextuality ‘interdiscursivity’. This terminological distinction will not be
retained, though, because everything that can be called discursive perfectly fits into my broad view of intertextuality.\textsuperscript{27}

Again the overall distinction is interesting, but not as practical and clear-cut as it is presented. The subdivisions of manifest intertextuality show considerable overlap. Like Fairclough, I will turn representation and presupposition into analytical categories through which intertextuality can be studied. However, as will be demonstrated in the analyses, representation often involves presuppositions. Moreover, both manifest and constitutive intertextuality target ‘voices’ in a studied text, as the above quotes indicate. The question arises: Which voices are manifest and which are constitutive? That is not always clear. And why would an instance of indirect speech be more manifest (and less constitutive or interdiscursive) than generic conventions, like a lead, source attribution in subscript or a factual reporting style in hard news reports?

In the newspaper texts to be analyzed, I could distinguish different levels of intertextuality. There is intertextuality related to the nature and context of news events, including the main participants. When newspapers report on the same event, they show a similarity and connectivity which constitute the most basic kind of intertextuality. The choice of language can also create a general kind of intertextuality. Writing about a certain topic in English, can lead to the recurrence of associated conventional or idiomatic expressions (\textit{e.g.} to run for State House on a \[name of party\] ticket, a fiercely fought election, the election was stolen, the violence exploded, erupted). Textually, this kind of intertextuality is further manifested in the theme of news stories (\textit{e.g.} the Kenyan elections), the main characters (\textit{e.g.} the incumbent president, the principal opposition candidate, the chief mediator), references to time and place, \textit{etc.} There is also intertextuality in relation to genre of news and the medium of publication. News routines, selection processes and the availability of information in newsrooms can lead to intertextual links. When an event is extensively covered by a news agency, such as AP, and different newspapers are subscribed to that agency and use it for their news stories about the event, intertextuality is at play. Aspects of intertextuality can also be found in the typical layout and structure of newspaper texts (headline, lead, subtitles, picture, caption, with an overall inverted

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\item[\textsuperscript{27}] Intertextuality has always been about intermixing discourses as well as specific words with histories of usage. A separate term does not seem to add anything new. It suffices to look at a few definitions in which the distinction is maintained to make this point. According to Candlin and Maley, intertextuality relates to “how texts contain within themselves evidences of the histories of other texts” (1997:203), whereas interdiscursivity refers to “the use of elements in one discourse and social practice which carry institutional and social meanings from other discourses and social practices” (1997:212). When a text is seen as an instance of discourse, which in turn is conceived as an instance of language use, the purported distinction is removed. On the same grounds, I reject Fauadree’s distinction between interdiscursivity, referring to “continuity across speech events and hence to stability rooted in persons and types of persons”, and intertextuality as referring to “a related yet distinct stability in communication tied to structural qualities of texts themselves” (2009: 154). From a CDA-perspective, Abdul-Latif asserts that “investigating interdiscursivity means connecting text with context, examining how discourses and genres are configured in ‘orders of discourse’, how different discourses and genres are combined, and how texts are produced and interpreted based on a particular social context” (2011: 54). That is exactly how I understand intertextuality.
\end{itemize}
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pyramid structure) or in linguistic choices resulting from stylistic or journalistic guidelines. At a micro-level intertextuality has to do with the specific sources mentioned (quotes, reported speech) and concrete pieces of information which are presented in the different newspaper reports, often specific facts and figures (*e.g.* statistics or casualty counts).

Further I noticed that there is a difference in intertextuality on the level of content between references to ethnicity or the discursive representation of social actors, which are globally present in a variety of news reports and particular one-off intertextual links, such as the claim of the missing names beginning with letters O, P, Q, R and A on the voter registers of Odinga’s Lang’ata constituency or the material evidence of the fraudulent augmentation of Kibaki votes in Molo constituency. The former are recurrent and systematic intertextualities, which are inherent to the topic and to the discursive setting of the newspaper articles as journalistic texts. They are like a *leitmotiv* and so constitute the theme of the newspaper corpus as a whole. The latter do not run through all the newspaper articles, but are often limited to one single paragraph. In between, there is a category of sporadic intertextualities which are spread throughout the corpus, but which only occur in a few scattered instances. References to the large voter turnout (often including numbers or percentages) are a case in point. Such occasional intertextual links occur in more than one time frame, but do not have a systematicity of recurrence.

In sum, the basic distinction is between general and particular kinds of intertextuality, which can be studied via concrete discourse-related phenomena, such as the ones mentioned above. The former pertain to texts as a whole and operate on the macro-levels of discourse, while the latter are often more specifically localized in texts by being operative on the levels of utterances, sentences and words. Richardson (2007: 100-106) uses the ill-chosen terms of external versus internal intertextuality to refer to this contrast. Of course, both are intrinsic to every sort of discourse. The concrete intertextual phenomena that we have encountered so far can be grouped and supplemented with a few other examples before being placed on a continuum from context over text (in a narrow sense as a coherent collection of sentences) to individual words. Figure 6 presents a schematic overview.*28* It is important to note that the listed phenomena are not exclusively intertextual. Although they clearly have an intertextual dimension, they can still be studied from other perspectives, irrespective of intertextuality.

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28 The sole purpose of this figure is to provide an overview and to create some order for expository purposes. Therefore the intertextual phenomena are grouped under *ad hoc* labels. Besides, a schema is always a simplification and a distortion. Keep in mind that the proposed divisions are artificial and overlapping. In the real workings of discourse, they are always interconnected.
Two concluding remarks can close the discussion about intertextuality. In the study of intertextuality this critical question always pops up: Where to draw the line in studying the history of texts or the evolutionary meanings of words in and through discourses? If Thibault (1998: 403) is to be believed, intertextual analysis requires three tasks. First, the text under study has to be set apart from other texts. Then, structural limits should be defined. And finally, the temporal continuities and discontinuities vis-à-vis historically earlier texts have to be mapped. Except for its vagueness, this methodological advice hinges on a series of selections. To avoid the risk of making random choices, the researcher should empirically determine concrete intertextual relations on the basis of the data and the context. Moreover, the chosen intertextual aspects should be relevant for the research question and the aspired goals. Since it is necessary to break free from the abstractness of intertextuality in its generality I will indirectly tackle the intricate phenomenon through a focus on activated aspects of the sociocultural, thematic and institutional context in combination with the specific analytical categories of presupposition, representational strategies, categorization and word choice (see chapter 6 about methodology). Inevitably, such a restriction does not do full justice to the complex notion of intertextuality. That is why it was introduced as a notion, underlying (and not directly targeted by) the research.

To end this discussion of intertextuality, one final question must be dealt with: What about monologic discourse? Evidently, there is a difference between a face-to-face conversation, a television news interview and a newspaper report. But does that make the latter monologic? The
basic idea of intertextuality is that every time someone says or writes something he or she says it to or writes it for somebody else and expects the addressee to be affected by and to do something with their words. At the same time, every utterance is situated against a historical and contextual backdrop, which, taken together, leads Todorov to the conclusion that “[i]l n’existe pas d’énoncé qui soit dépourvu de la dimension intertextuelle” (Todorov 1981: 98).29 In contrast to the narrow meaning of the word dialogue as an immediate Q&A session, I prefer a broad notion of dialogue as language use, comprising the words of others and expressing ideas, sprouted from ‘interthinking’ minds in interaction or minds in society (cf. supra), aimed at uptake and response. In that respect, I am on the same wavelength as Vološinov:

“Dialogue, in the narrow sense of the word, is, of course, only one of the forms – a very important form, to be sure – of verbal interaction. But dialogue can also be understood in a broader sense, meaning not only direct, face-to-face, vocalized verbal communication between persons, but also verbal communication of any type whatsoever. A book, i.e., a verbal performance in print, is also an element of verbal communication. It is something discussable in actual, real-life dialogue, but aside from that, it is calculated for active perception, involving attentive reading and inner responsiveness, and for organized, printed reaction in the various forms devised by the particular sphere of verbal communication in question (book reviews, critical surveys, defining influence on subsequent works, and so on). [...] Thus the printed verbal performance engages, as it were, in ideological colloquy of large scale: it responds to something, objects to something, affirms something, anticipates possible responses and objections, seeks support, and so on” (Vološinov 1986: 95).

In short, naturally-occurring discourses with real-life utterances are always dialogic, while claims about monologic language forms reduce them to isolated utterances in abstraction. To conclude with Chilton and Schäffner: “Even when a stretch of talk or text is apparently monologic, it usually involves implicit dialogical organization, reflecting oppositional discourses in the surrounding political culture” (1997: 216).

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29 This can be literally translated as: There is no utterance devoid of an intertextual dimension.
3. News as product and practice

“News is what a chap who doesn't care much for anything wants to read. And it's only news until he's read it. After that it's dead”.

**Figure 7**: Picture published in *The Standard* on 28 December 2007 (p.2) with subscript: “A queue meanders along the corridors of River Bank Primary school, Nairobi, as Kenyans wait to vote yesterday”.

**Figure 8**: Cartoon by Kham, depicting ECK chairman Kivuitu counting the votes, while presidential candidates Odinga, Kibaki, Kalonzo and Muiru are anxiously waiting, published in *The Standard* on 28 December 2007 (p.12).
3.1. News in newspapers

3.1.1. News as mass communication

3.1.1.1. Newspapers as mass media

An element of repetition cannot be avoided in this and the following sections, because my view of news as an instance of language use with journalists and readers as language users draws on the understanding of the language-society nexus, outlined in the previous chapter. All of the assumptions, underlying the linguistic-pragmatic perspective on discourse in general, naturally hold for the specific realm of media discourse as well. When I assumed that language use is an interactive social activity and that discourse is through and through intertextual, news discourse will also be understood in those terms. Of course, this is not a unique position. From the school of CDA, among others Fairclough (1995) and Richardson (2007) hold similar views. From another related perspective, Scollon (1998) promotes a view of news discourse as social interaction. Thus, he states that “the news and other print and broadcast media are not always and openly available for interpretation, but, in fact, are tightly constrained within an interdiscursivity of social practice that makes them available as texts for appropriation only within the purposes, goals, and agency of members of communities of practice” (Scollon 1998: 20). While the previous chapter placed my research in the field of linguistic pragmatics, this chapter is intended to position my research in communication science. Because my study is about news discourse, I will explore the boundary between linguistics and (news) media studies. In this subsection I will critically reflect on the notion of mass media, then I will review a few influential communication theories and show how they relate to my pragmatic approach (3.1.1.2) and in 3.1.1.3 I will discuss some relevant issues in the study of international news. At the start of this chapter I must be clear about the reference of the word journalist(s) in the remainder of the text. There are different kinds of journalists (e.g. cultural journalists, sports journalists, tabloid journalists, …), but when I refer to journalists or to their role in society as in 3.2.2.1 I mean the journalists who wrote the newspaper articles that I studied in this research. The journalists talked about in this thesis are mainly political journalists and foreign correspondents.

Media discourse is not a trifling matter. On the contrary, the media in general, and the news media in particular, have become powerful players in daily social life. With respect to the constructive, ideological power of the media and the multiple stakeholders in mediated meaning-making processes, Johnson and Ensslin (2007) note that:

“In late- or post-modern western society, our daily lives are increasingly both characterized and determined by the production and consumption of diversely mediated meanings. [...] Consequently, we are subjected to, as well as in control of, a plethora of technological and
medial information flows that both construct and transfer ideologies between ourselves, our information providers, and our target audiences” (Johnson & Ensslin 2007: 11).

Therefore, “it is becoming essential for effective citizenship that people should be critically aware of culture, discourse and language, including the discourse and language of the media” (Fairclough 1995: 201). To begin with, let us look at how news functions as a form of communication.

The discursive practice of news as it appears in newspapers is part of mass communication. Before paying attention to the second part of that compound noun, a critical comment about the mass aspect is in order. Media products from newspapers, television, internet, etc. are often less massive and undivided than is assumed. Ultimately, all communication comes down to interaction between one individual and another: a journalist who communicates a message to a reader. The only difference is that journalistic texts are aimed at large groups of receivers, which complicates the establishment of common ground, essential to any kind of language use (see 4.2.1.1 and 4.2.2.1 as well as the discussion about presupposition in 6.2.3). After all, a journalist can only make an educated guess about a possibly shared background in which news can be safely anchored. With respect to the newspaper as mass medium, more often than not, the specific act of reading, like writing, is a solitary activity, even though two readers can read the same newspaper copy at the same time, and even when a newspaper text would be the result of different dialogic interactions or a collaboration between journalists. From early times, “the exchange of news was a social relationship based on face-to-face communication, taking place in a community context and connected to place” (Rantanen 2009: 49). Later when news was transmitted by mass media, it did not lose its interactivity, rather it became mediated interaction. Following the broad, Bakhtinian conception of dialogue, news reports in newspapers are dialogic language products. During different stages of news production and reception there is even often face-to-face communication going on. Not only journalists do a lot of discussing, but also readers often discuss with each other what they have read.

Moreover, the audience of any newspaper is still relatively small compared to the (sometimes global) society of which it is a part and it is certainly not a homogeneous group of people, even if they can share certain values or views. Therefore, it is slightly misleading to conceive of the consumers of media texts as a mass. Instead of viewing audiences as “large aggregates of more or less anonymous consumers” (McQuail 2010: 56), I treat them as dynamic and heterogeneous collections of active social agents. Thanks to easier media access and interactive technology in modern ‘information society’ (Webster 2006), a member of the audience can easily come out of anonymity, as did, for instance, Nancy Laura from Plainsboro, NJ, who had her say about the TI report ‘Kenya stares into the abyss as post-election violence spirals out of control’ (30/01/2008). In her online reaction, she stated that “[w]hat is being witnessed now is a people who are tired of
not being listened to with all their pain of hunger, oppression, poverty and hopelessness all this combination is a very volatile mix”.

Reader A. Njuguna from London, in turn, replies that the violence in Kenya was indeed ethnic, as the newspaper article explains, and “planned well before the election”, while even dropping the expression of “ethnic cleansing”. Such reader reactions illustrate that news messages are not directly injected into the veins of a passive, mindless, mass audience to the same effect, as if newspapers were hypodermic needles. Different readers have different views and can have varying interpretations. On the basis of such observations I disagree with Curran when he states that contemporary “audiences seek to be diverted rather than represented” (Curran 2000: 132). The newspaper can be used for different purposes (see 3.1.3.1 below), but I believe it is only a proportion of the possible public that prefers entertainment in newspapers above representation and education. It cannot be cast in general terms.

On the same grounds, I reject the perception of the audience as an anonymous and uniform market of consumers who swallow everything that they are served. Ang rightly observes that such visions “tend to ignore the fact that media audiences consist of human beings who do not merely more or less passively respond to media output, but are actively involved, both emotionally and intellectually, with particular forms of media material, [and who] do not consume media material as isolated and solitary individuals, but in particular social settings and within certain cultural frameworks” (1995: 212). People actively use news media products in order to satisfy intellectual, psychological and social needs. However, we may not fall into the trap of thinking that, since the news media are always functional to people, i.e. that uses are related to gratifications, they give the audience what it wants and that there is no reason whatsoever to change them, thus implicitly accepting and justifying the current state of affairs in relation to media content and the way news institutions are organised (Ang 1995). We must realize that “audiences are made, not naturally given” (Ang 1995: 220).

Audience design cannot only be accomplished by corporate strategies but also by means of discursive strategies. Van Dijk and colleagues (1997) show that news media use so-called ‘ingroup discourse’ to make the news consumers a complicit community and to create a feeling of us versus them. In that respect, they state:

“The ‘Western’ press may even imply (though it will seldom say so explicitly) that their ‘ethnic strife’ or ‘tribal wars’ are backward and primitive, while at the same time denying or mitigating our (and its own) stereotypes and racism” (Van Dijk et al. 1997: 146).

This quote must be kept in mind when interpreting the analyses in chapters 7 and 8. Similarly, Partington contends that “newspapers ‘groom’ their readership”, i.e. they create a bond with the readers and present their information as the only correct information, which the readers are supposed to know very well, because the attitudes and opinions expressed are presumably also

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30 From http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article3273346.ece [25/08/2008].
those of the sensible, rational and thoughtful reader, so they create “a sense of ‘collusion’ [...] between the paper and the readers, flattering and complimenting them on having certain beliefs, values, and personal qualities” (2009: 262). However, notwithstanding audience design, do not forget that readers are not mindless subjects. With reference to what has been said before and at the same time running ahead of the discussion about ideology next chapter, Fowler remarks:

“Texts construct ‘reading positions’ for readers, that is, they suggest what ideological formations it is appropriate for readers to bring to texts. But the reader [...] is not the passive recipient of fixed meanings: the reader [...] is discursively equipped prior to the encounter with the text, and reconstructs the text as a system of meanings which may be more or less congruent with the ideology which informs the text” (Fowler 1996: 7).

Even though newspapers often assume the existence of groups that may only partially or imaginatively exist as actual groups within society, they can create a shared ideology by addressing themselves in a particular way to these configured groups. People can be identified as a social group by reading the same newspaper. As early as 1848, De Tocqueville knew that:

“A newspaper can only subsist on the condition of publishing sentiments or principles common to a large number of men [sic]. A newspaper therefore always represents an association which is composed of its habitual readers. This association may be more or less defined, more or less restricted, more or less numerous; but the fact that the newspaper keeps alive, is a proof that at least the germ of such an association exists in the minds of its readers” (De Tocqueville 1848: 122).

Newspapers can give rise to interpretive communities (Lindlof 1988, Schröder 1994) and even create a sense of belonging. 31 Comparatively, Reah defines newspapers as follows:

“Newspapers are not simply vehicles for delivering information. They present the reader with aspects of the news, and present it often in a way that intends to guide the ideological stance of the reader” (Reah 1998: 50).

Newspapers often identify and address their implied readership by reporting stories in a way that is designed to evoke a particular response, thus establishing a set of shared values. By doing that, they sometimes turn their audience into a homogeneous group which it may not be in reality, because there is no uniformity of views on a given range of topics. Readers do not univocally react to news, but actively and dynamically construct the meanings that they read into newspaper texts at the moment of reception.

In the same vein, the journalists that I got to know are not passive puppets of the organizations they work for. They are not simply “unwittingly, unconsciously” functioning “as a support for the reproduction of a dominant ideological discursive field” (Hall 1982: 82). In the previous sections it has been systematically argued and illustrated how newsworkers, as journalists and editors tend to be called in ethnographic studies, constantly make choices in the use of language for journalistic purposes. Recent newsroom ethnographies have shown that

31 Compare to the role newspapers are seen to play in the creation of imagined communities by Anderson (1991).
journalists creatively exploit the information from sources and actively process different data and inquiries in the production of a news story (e.g. Van Hout & Jacobs 2008 or Van Hout 2010, see also Couldry 2003). That is why Cottle called for a conceptual shift in journalism studies from ‘routine’ to ‘practice’: “Journalists arguably do what they do for the most part knowingly and purposefully, which is not to say they are on an ‘ideological mission’ or […] that they somehow escape the structures in which they work, [but] it is to argue that they are more ‘consciously’ and ‘knowingly’ involved and purposefully ‘productive’ of news texts and output than they are often theoretically been given credit for” (Cottle 2003: 17). With reference to the audience of news media, Johnson and Ensslin state: “In their function as public agencies of observation, interpretation, performance, representation and dissemination, the media exhibit a variety of signifying practices, which are unconditionally purpose-driven. Depending upon their particular point of emphasis, media producers therefore combine conative, emotive and conceptual meanings so as to achieve a maximum effect on the target audience” (2007: 13).

In short, the *mass* in mass communication must be put into perspective. It can rather be understood as referring to media texts being reproduced, distributed and spread *en masse*. It also refers to the fact that the same news text can be read by different individuals in different locations at the same moment in time. As Thompson underscores, the “point about mass communication is not that a given number of individuals […] receives the products, but rather that the products are available in principle to a plurality of recipients” (Thompson 1995: 24). This is not the same as saying that media products or sources of information, like newspapers, are equally available to all people of a given society.

At the beginning I stated that newspapers are mass media. But in African contexts that is not a trivial statement, because there is some discussion about whether or not African newspapers should be regarded as mass media. During my research I was often told by international academics and foreign correspondents alike that newspapers in Africa cannot be considered as media of mass communication, especially when they are written in a European language, like English. There is a case for such a position. Two different kinds of argumentation are brought forward to support it.

The first reasoning has to do with the supposed limited access of large sections of the population to newspapers and it can be split in two main arguments. First, a lot of people, especially at the countryside, did not benefit from a thorough education. So, illiterates are excluded from reading newspapers, as are people with only little knowledge of the often exogenous and formal language in which national newspapers are written. Second, for people who struggle to survive, who can only just manage on their poor wages, newspapers are luxury goods. Only a segment of the population, from the middle-class to the upper regions in society, have a good command of the written language used in newspapers and can afford it to buy
newspapers. So, it is as much a linguistic as it is a financial problem for a majority to read newspapers. Madumulla et al. contend that “[w]ritten journalism […] is far from a ‘mass’ medium: it is highly elitist, aimed at an audience which is overwhelmingly urban, fully employed, highly literate in more than one language – a very small segment of society in any African country” (1999: 310). Also, Nyamnjoh thinks that the “term ‘mass media’ thus is often a misnomer in Africa, given that literacy in French, English, Portuguese or Spanish is a prerequisite for access to and participation in the media, a privilege too remote for both rural and urban illiterates” (2009a: 73-74).

The second pattern of argumentation has to do with Africa’s ancient indigenous oral culture. According to this anthropological argument, Africans are not readers by nature, because they have always lived in societies with strong oral traditions. They are storytellers rather than storywriters. Thus today African news consumers would prefer to listen to the radio or watch television above reading the newspaper (cf. Barber 2009 or Bourgault 1987, Nassanga 2009). Few Africans would deny their oral tradition and radio is indeed the most popular medium, but that does not mean that the newspaper cannot be an influential and popular source of information.

Most people that I met in and outside of newsrooms confirmed that the newspaper is an important source of information. For one, I was assured that a lot of modern-day, urban Kenyans are avid readers. Indeed, at street corners, in coffee houses, in parks, in matatus (the typical Kenyan public transport) and other places I witnessed Kenyans of all kinds reading a newspaper. The first line of thought can also be weakened. A lot of people, for instance in the slums or in rural shambas, might seem to be deprived of information from newspapers, but indirectly they do get to hear newspaper news. In Kenya, newspapers are an authoritative source of information. Therefore television or radio news is often based on newspaper reports. They are often literally read out in certain radio shows. Moreover, at newsstands in the city it is not uncommon to find groups of people ‘borrowing’ the newspaper and reading it out loud to discuss the news with their peers. Also at their work, people who do not have the means to buy a daily can have access to newspapers (e.g. security guards or askaris, deliverymen, taxi drivers, people who work in the tourism industry as most hotels are subscribed to one or more newspapers). The newspapers I bought during my last stay in Nairobi were read by the guest house manager, the cleaning lady, the gardener and the night watchman (see also Muiru Ngugi’s quote in 3.1.3 on how newspapers are used in Africa). Another anthropological argument could therefore be made that contradicts the ‘oral culture’ argument. What Nyamnjoh (2005) writes about ICTs is equally true for newspapers: Africa’s cultural values of sociality, interconnectedness, interdependence and conviviality make it possible for others to access news on the internet without necessarily being connected or owning the technologies themselves. Talking about readership figures, one Kenyan
managing editor once confided that she does not just live together with her husband and children, but that she shares her home with her sister’s family and her aunt, all of whom read parts of the newspaper that she takes home daily. In Kenya such extended families are not uncommon. That is why she concluded that an average of five people read one newspaper. Obonyo and Nyamboga estimate that “the pass along rate of the print media in Kenya is as high as 10 to 15 readers per copy” (2011: 90).

The linguistic argument remains. Although education is on the rise, large sections of the Kenyan population are still illiterate or incapable of reading English ‘journalese’ (McGarry 1991). Therefore, better schooling must be promoted, reaching all children, whether they live in the city or in the village, in Muthaiga or Mathare. The publication of quality newspapers in a lingua franca, such as Kiswahili, could be stimulated as well. So far, Kenya only has one national newspaper in a language other than English, viz. Taifa Leo (The Nation Today). Tellingly, this contains only a feeble fraction of what appears in its sister paper, the Daily Nation, as it excels in gossip and a dramatization of news. In Kenya, written news in Kiswahili is open to improvement. Nevertheless, based on my experience there, I would claim that Kenyan newspapers are definitely mass media which are not only read in the capital but also, for instance, in the town of Bumala in Western Province (see figure 9).

Figure 9: Picture by one of ‘Peter Ochieng, Isaac Wale, James Keyi, Collins Kweyu, Renson Buluma’, published in The Saturday Standard on 1 March 2008 (p.2); the caption reads: “Readers scramble for copies of their favourite paper, The Standard, from a vendor in Bumala yesterday. Many vendors had a hard time distributing copies of the newspaper to their clients in Busia and Samia districts due to high demand”.
3.1.1.2. Theories of communication

Having scrutinized the issue of mass, news also has something to do with communication, which is the primary function of language use. My pragmatic view of communication can be inferred from 2.1 and is related to Thompson’s. From a sociological perspective, he defines communication as “a distinctive kind of social activity which involves the production, transmission and reception of symbolic forms, and which involves the implementation of resources of various kinds” (Thompson 1995: 18). In comparison, it is useful to briefly review how communication is theorised in the wide field of communication sciences, in which media and journalism studies were traditionally situated. By doing this, it will become clear that the promoted pragmatic perspective does not clash with other approaches to communication. In fact, several pragmatic insights have already found their way to the study of (news) media from the perspective of mass communication theory. This already becomes apparent in the main themes that McQuail (2010) distinguishes in mass communication research: time and place, power, social reality, meaning, causation and determinism, mediation, identity, cultural difference, and governance.

Acknowledging that “[c]ommunication is so broad that it cannot be essentialized or confined within a single paradigm” (Littlejohn and Foss 2008: 5), let us look at a few influential definitions from communication theory. A classic is Lasswell’s 1948 definition: “A convenient way to describe an act of communication is to answer the following questions: ‘Who Says What In Which Channel To Whom With What Effect?’” (cited in Van Cuilenburg 1995: 52). In the context of globalization, Lull situates the essence of communication in its creation of culture: “In today’s complex world communication is the social nexus where interpersonal relations and technological innovation, political-economic incentives and socio-cultural ambitions, light entertainment and serious information, local environments and global influences, form and content, substance and style all intersect, interact, and influence each other” (Lull 2000: 10). Littlejohn and Foss write that communication basically is “the primary process by which human life is experienced”, adding that “communication constitutes reality” (2008: 6). Recall that the proposed pragmatic perspective aims at exploring the link between language and human life. Mass communication can be broadly defined as a technology-driven, meaning-making process which involves standardization, commodification, large-scale distribution and reception of content that flows in a one-directional manner from sender to receiver, both of whom are in an asymmetrical, impersonal and calculative relationship (McQuail 2010: 56-58).

Summarising the principal approaches to communication in the field of mass communication theory, McQuail (2010) presents four models highlighting different dimensions of the communication process. Pragmatic research into news as a communicative, discursive practice reflects and draws on different aspects from these models. The oldest is the transmission model,
in which “mass communication is a self-regulating process that is guided by the interests and 
demands of an audience that is known only by its selections and responses to what is offered” 
(McQuail 2010: 70). According to that model, communication via newspapers is about an 
ineffective message loaded into an article and transmitted for consumption to the masses.

In addition to the transmission model, Carey developed a view of communication as culture. In 
his ritual or expressive model, communication is defined as “a symbolic process whereby reality 
is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed”, emphasising the actual social process 
wherein significant symbolic forms are created, apprehended, and used (Carey 2009: 23). 
Communication is then linked to sharing, participation, association, fellowship, in short, a kind 
of routine construction of public unity. The ritual model considers “reading a newspaper less as 
sending or gaining information and more as attending a mass, a situation in which […] a 
particular view of the world is portrayed and confirmed” (Carey 2009: 16).

Another model is the publicity model, in which communication boils down to display and 
attention. The primary aim of the mass media is not to transmit particular information, nor to 
bond a group of people in a shared expression of culture, beliefs or values, but simply to catch 
and hold visual or aural attention in the pursuit of the direct economic goal of gaining audience 
revenue (assuming that attention equals consumption) and the indirect goal of selling audience 
attention to advertisers. This model focuses on newspapers as commercial businesses.

The final model of communication is the reception model which takes a critical stance 
towards mediated communication. It sees communication as a process of preferential encoding 
and differential decoding in the construction of meaning by sender and receiver.32 Although 
journalists can inscribe their texts with ideological meanings, suggesting a preferred reading, 
Hall (1980) observed that texts are not just received as transmitted or as expressed. The final 
interpretations of always open and polysemic news texts depend on the culture and context of the 
receivers. Meaning as decoded does not necessarily correspond with meaning as encoded. Every 
media message has the possibility of multiple meanings and the eventual meanings arrived at 
vary according to the interpretive community, so that “the seeming power of the media to mould, 
express or capture is partly illusory, since the audience in the end disposes” (2010: 75).

To gain an insight into the whole picture of (news) media texts, a unifying approach is 
welcome. The different models of communication can be reconciled by studying the news media 
from a linguistic-pragmatic perspective. As I will show in the analyses in chapters 7 and 8, such 
a holistic perspective allows to: (i) pay attention to the informative flow from sender to receiver

32 It must be remarked that no pragmatic perspective would subscribe to the simple coding model, proposed by Hall 
(1980). Rather, pragmaticians tend to prefer so-called ‘ostensive-inferential models of communication’, in which not 
just a sender encodes a meaning to be decoded by the receiver, but in which senders encode a range of meanings 
some of which they ostensively and intentionally try to make mutually manifest, while other meanings are less 
blatant and remain to be inferred (see Sperber &Wilson 1995: 46-54 for one such account).
without passivizing the language users or limiting the research to aspects of transmission only; (ii) take sociocultural aspects of news discourse into account; (iii) consider the organizational and institutional features, as well as the macro-context of production and reception; and (iv) take a critical and reflexive stance, not only towards the media products under investigation, but also towards its own discourse, acknowledging both the ideological potential of mediated meanings and the role of the reader in dynamically deriving meaning from a multiplicity of possibilities through negotiation and adaptation.

3.1.1.3. Issues of news as international communication

News is a form of communication that is becoming more and more international. Foreign news pre-eminently is international communication, which can be defined as “the total volume of messages that flow across national borders” (Hamelink 1985: 143). However, all news types can be argued to be gradually acquiring international dimensions in our globalised world. Therefore I will not try to define the problematic term of foreign news in opposition to domestic news. May it suffice to refer to the dictionary. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, foreign can mean “distant from home”, or something “alien in character, unfamiliar, strange”, while domestic means “intimate, familiar, at home”. One way in which such a distinction is problematic is that it “presupposes that only foreign news comes from a distance, from a culturally ‘unknown’ place – just because it is foreign [whereas] the distances inside one nation-state […] are often greater than those between two locations in different nation-states” (Rantanen 2009: 80). That is why Rantanen makes another distinction, viz. one between ‘home news abroad’, ‘foreign news at home’ and ‘foreign news abroad’ (a similar distinction can be found in Wouters et al. 2009). It is advisable not to take nation-states as self-evident starting points for news analysis, because the foreign and domestic are deeply interwoven, as are the global and local, a point that is also made by media and journalism scholars who approach news from a transcultural or intercultural perspective (e.g. Hepp 2009 or Dala 2010).

Nevertheless, the expressions foreign news and international news will be conveniently used in this dissertation to refer to the news reports from the American, Belgian and British newspapers in the dataset, as opposed to the texts from the local Kenyan newspapers. In that sense, international news is one of the objects of investigation (next to local news). In this context, I must note that “[i]nternational news coverage is a controversial and contested area of media production”, as a lot of foreign correspondents claim that their news coverage is objective, truthful, and unbiased, and that “what they report is ‘the way it really is’”, whereas critical news analysts have argued that international news coverage tends to “focus on sensational, negative

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33 The fact that Belgian or British tourists at the Spanish Costa Brava can easily read their tabloids full of regional news already lends that news an international dimension.
news of the ‘coup and catastrophe’ kind; [...] that whole continents remain invisible if not in crisis; that international news tends to be shallow and oversimplified, concentrating on personalities and pronouncements of governments rather than exploring how issues affect ordinary people; and that coverage fragments complex problems into isolated events without providing explanation for and analyses of their causes” (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1995: 430).

Hamelink (1985) diagnosed four interlinked ills of international communication, to which also (international) news reporting is not immune. All of them have to do with an imbalance between center and periphery of our global information society, between the dominant, most often western-based, news providers (e.g. news agencies like AP and AFP) and the news satellites in other parts of the world who receive more pre-packaged news than they produce themselves (see also the MacBride report and the ‘New World Information and Communication Order’ debates, e.g. MacBride 1980 and Offenhäußer 1999).

(i) The problem of cultivation is a consequence of the centralization of news production and the unavoidable constraints on the distribution and reception of messages. Through processes of selection, omission or distortion (e.g. stereotyping), an inadequate representation of the world is cultivated in the receivers. Van Ginneken (1998, 2002) speaks of the ‘selective articulation’ of the news media, by which journalists make sense of the chaos that surrounds them. To his mind, “[n]ews is based on a selective articulation of certain voices about supposed events” (Van Ginneken 1998: 85). News reports not only tend to be stereotypical, Van Ginneken also blames the presupposed ‘western’ producers of international news for being ethnocentric in their interpretation and presentation of events. He believes that international news reporting is characterized by ‘occicentrism’, i.e. the tendency to implicitly use ‘western’ values as a measure to make news (Van Ginneken 2002: 220). Necessary differentiations to these bold claims will be made in chapters of analysis in 7 and 8.

(ii) The second issue concerns the way big global communication companies sustain unequal power relations. Hamelink calls it the problem of legitimation. Transnational news organizations, as organs of international communication, have a self-sustaining overall ideology. “The selected images tend to contribute to the belief that a virtually ‘exclusive world’ (in which many nations do not really participate) is an ‘inclusive world’ (to which all nations can equally belong)” (Hamelink 1985: 147).

(iii) The third problematic factor is termed the problem of synchronization. It captures criticisms that are also promulgated by cultural imperialism theory and third world dependency theory (e.g. Boyd-Barrett 1997, Pennycook 1998, Rodney 1982; and see Thompson 1995 or Servaes & Lie 1996 for a critical discussion). It states that international communication is the main carrier of processes of cultural colonization. Simply put, this implies that news media provide and promote exogenous cultural models that are copied and indoctrinated in other, in
African, countries, thus threatening indigenous cultural autonomy and strengthening international dependency relations. However, the assumption that receiving ‘developing countries’ simply synchronize with the so-called developed countries is questionable. For, it has been shown that people do not just brainlessly adopt foreign cultural models or applications, but rather adapt them to their needs and contexts, which makes the (in)dependency relations (between developing and developed, between developing and other developing, or between developed and other developed countries) much more complex. Nyamnjoh attests that “Africans merge their traditions with exogenous influences to create realities that are not reducible to either but enriched by both” (2009b: 20). In his study about African periodicals and newspapers, Muiru Ngugi concludes that “[w]hat emerges is not a dominating western popular culture, as is often feared, or a resurgence of an atavistic Africa, as is often portrayed by the Western media, but a contemporary African popular culture that is moderated by urbanization, globalization, and tradition. Global standards and genres are appropriated, inverted, or otherwise diluted and imbued with local narratives” (Muiru Ngugi 2007: 36).

(iv) The final problem that Hamelink identified is what he termed differential distribution. “International communication strengthens through cultivation, legitimation, and synchronization existing international disparities in the distribution of vital resources” (Hamelink 1985: 147). Former General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists Aidan White speaks of “a terrible democratic deficit in terms of resources between countries of the north and countries of the south” (2001: 65). By controlling information flows, it is particularly the transnational corporations, like the global news agencies or international satellite television stations, which benefit from mass-mediated communication. In other words, international communication largely increases the benefits of those who can best afford the utilization of its infrastructures. Hamelink forgets to draw the conclusion that differential distribution can lead to differential access to information, which is also a factor of informational imbalance. This not only refers to the difficulty many people face in making news, in being represented or heard, but also to their access to relevant information. The problem of information inequality is related to the inequality in access to and use of advanced communication facilities which can ultimately result in a ‘digital divide’ (Norris 2001).

In addition, I should emphasize that in all of my interviews with journalists and in most of the literature on the topic it is repeated that international news is an easy victim of the commercialization and budgetary sanitization of newspaper companies. International news

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34 With respect to the comment about atavism, see example (104) in chapter 8. In addition to Muiru Ngugi’s arguments, see among others Atton & Mabweazara (2011), Murphy & Kraidy (2003), Strelitz (2003) or Van der Veen (2004: 14-15) for similar arguments.
coverage is not maximally profitable from an economic point of view. Sreberny-Mohammadi
draws this conclusion:

“A lack of independent analysis, the acceptance of prevailing government views on foreign
policy issues, and the ignoring of other sources of information color international news
coverage, but production and economic pressures compound the process. International
news coverage is increasingly expensive, and it does not regularly attract enormous
audiences” (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1995: 434-435).

In all news companies, and especially in newspapers, economic pressures and audience priorities
have steadily depleted the number of foreign correspondents. Of course, this has implications for
the ability of correspondents to cover an international issue adequately. With regard to the
newspapers under study, there are big differences. Whereas the NYT, WP and IN have Nairobi-
based journalists, the TI has cut down on its foreign correspondents and works with freelancers
or semi-contracted journalists. The Belgian as well as the Kenyan newspapers hardly have any
correspondents who are based abroad, so they rely on news agencies, freelancers, collaborations
with other newspapers and occasional trips by their own foreign desk staff. On the other hand,
international news is considered to be a quality criterion of news media (see Wouters et al. 2009
for a discussion of this tension). It almost has become prestigious to deliver accurate and original
news reports from abroad.

The foregoing imbalances are made possible and are even enhanced by another significant
trend in the world of mass media, viz. concentration and conglomeration. Thompson contends
that “the development of communication conglomerates has led to the formation of large
concentrations of economic and symbolic power which are privately controlled and unevenly
distributed, and which can deploy massive resources to pursue corporate objectives in a global
arena” (1995: 160-161). Media concentration denotes the process whereby important aspects of
the media (products or outlets) get concentrated in a single entity. On an organizational,
institutional level this often goes together with conglomeration of media companies, driven by
free market competition, the pursuit of high profit and the search for synergy. Although it is a
much-accredited view that the mass media’s function is to serve society (see 2.3.2.2), news
media are essentially profit-oriented companies that need to manage certain resources and
technologies, assess supply and demand, and aspire a continuous improvement of the quality of
their services. “Communications companies’ growth, vertical and horizontal integration,
diversification, internationalization, segmentation and specialization are appropriate tools for
enhancing profitability and ensuring their survival in highly dynamic markets” (Sánchez-
Tabernero & Carvajal 2002: 141). As to why there is so much concentration, McQuail explains
that the “reasons for increasing media concentration and integration of activities are the same as
for other branches of business, especially the search for economies of scale and greater market
power” (2010: 230).
Typically, concentration refers to different media coming into the hands of a few capitalist entrepreneurs (Bagdikian 1988, McChesney 1999 or McQuail 2010: 96-97). In that respect, a distinction can be made between vertical and horizontal concentration. The former “refers to a pattern of ownership which extends through different stages of production and distribution [e.g. a newspaper owning a printing press and a distribution network] or geographically (a national concern buying city or local newspapers, say)” (McQuail 2010: 228). The latter refers to mergers within the same market (e.g. of two competing city or national newspapers organizations) or to concentration of different media under one company or ownership (e.g. a media company that publishes newspapers, but also owns radio and television stations). Although rationalization of business and organization usually leads to the sharing of certain services, resulting in a reduction of the differences between them, McQuail remarks that the “units making up such media enterprises can remain editorially independent” (2010: 229). Editorial concentration mainly occurs when all content and other editorial decisions are made by a single editor-in-chief or one coordinating editorial team. A third kind of concentration is audience concentration, i.e. the concentration of audience market share. In this regard McQuail notes:

“A large number of independent newspaper titles does not in itself set limits to media power or ensure much real choice if most of the audience is concentrated on one or two titles, or is served by one or two firms” (McQuail 2010: 229).

Such a system, which does not allow for a lot of diversity, can be found in Kenya (see 5.2.1.2 where the newspapers of this study are briefly introduced). The lack of diversity and the high degree of media concentration in Kenya with unpropitious consequences for the media’s democratic role is further discussed by Obonyo and Nyamboga (2011: 92-95).

It is generally known that the effects of concentration are difficult to assess. There is a lot of discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of these economic trends. Sánchez-Tabernero and Carvajal nicely summarize the debate.

“Concentration, the construction of macro-conglomerates and hyper-commercialisation are – from the critical perspective – the greatest blemishes on the face of the mass media, and represent the biggest threat to the democratic system. Many of the analysts who defend these standpoints urgently demand a stricter regulatory policy to curb the growth of global multimedia conglomerates. But other researchers continue to have a more optimistic view of the situation: the free play of supply and demand does not guarantee that markets are always open to competition, but, in practice, the proliferation of media means that there are increasingly fewer cases of a lack of pluralism; for that reason – they add – excessive State intervention generates negative side effects which are more serious than the problems they attempt to correct” (Sánchez-Tabenero & Carvajal 2002: 147).

On the one hand, media concentration can be beneficial to both media concerns and consumers. It increases market share and both economic and professional strength. Thanks to the acquired power, news media can more easily criticize political bodies, because they do not rely on
national governments for their survival. More money could also lead to a better infrastructure and more resources that are necessary for journalists to deliver quality products. Furthermore, a capitalist market in free competition, it has been argued, stimulates a differentiation in products and a proliferation of ideas (McNair 2006, McQuail 2010: 232). In Kenya, too, the media have been affected by mergers, consolidation and internationalization. One of the positive effects is that many Kenyan periodicals are now read across national borders. This is the case for both the DN and ST, which are not only read in neighboring countries, but which, thanks to the internet (also a consequence of media concentration) can be read all over the world. According to Muiru Ngugi, media concentration can create “widening informational communities, and it is in this sense that the media will aid African integration” (2007: 36).

On the other hand, media concentration can lead to the reverse. In contrast with McNair’s optimistic belief in a free market system, Curran fears that such a media market “can give rise not to independent watchdogs serving the public interest but to corporate mercenaries that adjust their critical scrutiny to suit their private purpose” (2000: 124). He adds that “[m]arket-oriented media tend to generate information that is simplified, personalized, decontextualized, with a stress on action rather than process, visualization rather than abstraction, stereotypicality rather than human complexity” (Curran 2000: 127). The most frequently named negative aspect is the loss of pluralism in information or the reduction of diversity in media products. With respect to the homogenization of news content, Paterson argues that “[t]he dominance of a few powerful media alliances in the provision of international news product means that news, in both print and electronic form, from much of the world, is now determined and provided by what is essentially a single editorial perspective – that of a small number of culturally homogeneous news workers in a few very similar and often allied Anglo-American news organizations” (1998: 94). In support of his argument, he quotes the veteran British television anchorman Jonathan Dimbleby: “as we’re technically capable of becoming more and more informed and better and better informed, we’re at risk of becoming less and less informed by fewer and fewer people” (Paterson 1998: 80). This claim can be compared to McNair’s observation that “[j]ournalists have more and better news-gathering technology to work with, but less time to develop their stories, and more space to fill” (2006: 205). Critical theory maintains that although more information is available due to new technologies, this information is selected, filtered and presented from similar ideological angles, so that in the end more of the same remains.

Another downside of media concentration is that it could lend force to the opinion of a happy few to the detriment of a voiceless majority’s freedom of expression.

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35 This was proven to me by the Standard’s Online Technical Manager, Daudi Gicheru, and his assistant, Julius Bett, who showed via Google Analytics that the online contents of the newspaper are regularly accessed worldwide, even from remote places, such as – to my surprise – the small Belgian village of Bouwel where my girlfriend grew up.
“With the transformation of media organizations into large-scale commercial organizations, the freedom of expression was increasingly confronted by a new threat, a threat stemming not from the excessive use of state power, but rather from the unhindered growth of media organizations qua commercial concerns” (Thompson 1995: 239).

Additionally, there is the risk that almighty “proprietors would use their property rights to restrict the flow of information and open debate on which the vitality of democracy depended” (Golding & Murdock 2000: 78). In the media market, it can also lead to a situation of oligopoly or monopoly, which in turn has consequences for the prices of media products.

Unmistakably, media concentration and conglomeration can lead to a narrowing of information. Especially in the case of international news reporting, where gigantic concerns, such as Thomson-Reuters, have a considerable influence on global flows of information (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen 1998, Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. 1997). If all the news comes from major news companies or worse from one journalist the danger exists that we get “a kind of international news product that compares with a Big Mac, a single homogeneous commodity divorced from the political realities, social concerns, and information needs of different polities and peoples” (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1995: 441). These tendencies also have implications for the supposed democratic functions of the news media, seen by most media critics as the Fourth Estate. As Schudson put it, “if the media were to fulfill their democratic role, they would offer a wide variety of opinions and perspectives to encourage citizens to choose among them in evaluating public policies” (2000: 185). A narrowing of information could allow powerful actors to streamline potential expressible meanings in such a way that the diversity of perspectives normally characteristic of a democratic society could be controlled, while asymmetry could corroborate the central role of the international power centers (cf. Thompson 1995). So, from a critical perspective, there is always a risk that concentrated and asymmetrical information production and distribution yields one-sided news coverage. As such, Van Ginneken (1998, 2002) claims, a distorting ‘Euro-American frame of interpretation’ on news events is globally exported.

However, I think that goes too far. It is quite an overgeneralization (something Van Ginneken reacts against in journalistic discourse) to talk of a ‘Euro-American frame of interpretation’. Moreover, Van Ginneken’s claim betrays a depreciatory view of journalists as passive producers of news from the wire (cf. Davis’ notion of churnalists). My experiences in newsrooms taught me that foreign desk reporters actively process news texts, so that even within the same country the underlying frame of interpretation can be different from newspaper to newspaper and from news story to news story. Critics of media concentration often note that it can be combated by

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36 Thomson-Reuters is not only a dominant player in the news market, it also controls academic flows of information through the ISI Web of Science and related databases that it manages.
encouraging new entrants into the market and by regulation (McQuail 2010: 232). However, state control of the media and its excess of censorship also has a lot of well-documented, negative effects (cf. Chomsky 2002, Downing 1995, Kalyango 2010, McNair 2006, Mukhongo 2010, Curran & Park 2000). Without denying the negative effects of media concentration, I believe other factors could also play a role in some of the aforementioned disadvantages.

“The critics of concentration usually point to negative situations which are not always the direct consequence of the growth of companies: the absence of a critical attitude on the part of journalists, the homogenization of the contents, less attention given to local interest issues, the trivialisation of information” (Sánchez-Tabernero & Carvajal 2002: 144).

These side remarks must be kept in mind when approaching the newspaper texts. What is definitely clear is that there is a tension between the economic and the social values of news and information, which run through media organizations, and which are also inherent in the practice of journalism (see 3.2 below).

3.1.2. News perspectives

3.1.2.1. Habari: What’s news?
News discourse is my central topic of investigation. Now that discourse and communication has been elucidated, I can examine what news is. Let me start with a comparison of a few prevailing views of news. The following views can be relegated to the models of communication, sketched above. As a general definition, I adopt Zelizer and Allan’s description of news as “new information about an event or issue that is shared with others in a systematic and public way” (2010: 80). It is often claimed that news is a universal feature of human societies. Kovach and Rosenstiel start their investigations into the nature of news with the allegation that:

“When anthropologists began comparing notes on the world’s few remaining cultures [sic], they discovered something unexpected. From the most isolated tribal societies in Africa to the most distant islands in the Pacific, people shared essentially the same definition of what is news” (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007: 1).

But they do not clearly explain what that universal definition exactly would be.37 Idealistically, they are convinced that the “news media help us define our communities as well as help us create a common language and common knowledge rooted in reality” (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007: 12). Furthermore, they concede that news comes down to spreading the words and ideas of others, which makes it essentially dialogic and intertextual.

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37 The two former journalists come up with woolly statements about information concerning events beyond direct experience which are interesting or useful to be aware of or information that we need “to live our lives, protect ourselves, bond with each other, identify friends and enemies” (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007: 2). The anthropologists are also left unspecified.
I concur with Kovach and Rosenstiel in that news gives people a ‘shared sense of discovery’, simultaneously feeding and whetting a universal ‘hunger for experience’ (Carey 2009: 17). I agree that news satisfies an intrinsic need of people to know what is occurring beyond their direct experience in the supposition that “[b]eing aware of events we cannot see for ourselves engenders a sense of security, control, and confidence” (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007: 1). In sum, news plays an important role in social life, where it can have various functions. It not only informs people about current affairs, but it can also educate people, set the agenda of public debate, change minds, warn people, make them afraid or reassure them, provide them with conversation topics, entice news consumers into buying commodities, etc. (see also 3.1.3.1 below for the uses of newspapers). In Kenya, even a popular Kiswahili greeting derives from people’s desire for news: Habari? literally means ‘(what is the) news?’. It is which is equivalent to English How are you? or to the informal greeting What’s new?38. Acquiring news, telling news, spreading news is social to the core.

However, a few side remarks are required. Why is it so difficult to define news that a lot of textbooks explain how to gather news or how to write it rather than what it actually is?39 Humans might have comparable general views of news, but there is a difference between news as it is known by all peoples throughout history, and news as we know it, as a product of current mass media (the sense in which news will be used in this dissertation). The particular understanding of news is open to interpretation and subject to social or cultural differences. This has to do with the fact that news is a kind of information exchange40 and information is dealt with differently in various social or cultural contexts. Keenan Ochs (1976), for instance, revealed a contrast between Western European norms for information exchange and those held in the Malagasy village where she carried out ethnographic fieldwork. In that community, news was not exchanged by mass media, but by word of mouth. It would be a valuable commodity, as it is for most people, but one that comes with a status and certain moral obligations. Instead of aiming at optimal informativeness and maximal dispersion, the release of information, in casu the actual telling of news, depended much more on the addressee, who had to be trusted, because otherwise harm could come to your family. In Keenan Ochs’ ethnographic context, the withholding of information, rather than the free reporting of news, could create a sense of security, control and confidence for the community members.

So, there are differences in how news is understood and enacted in the world. That must always be kept in mind when interpreting the following definitions, which are about mass-mediated news, as it developed in the north-western hemisphere before spreading to other parts

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38 I want to thank Craig Rollo for bringing that to my attention.
39 A similar lamentation is found in Zelizer & Allan (2010: 81).
40 This is reflected in Hargreaves’ definition: “News can never really be defined as anything other than information, which is new and of interest to other people” (2000: 60).
of the world. When Ott and Mack state that “[i]deally, the news ought to provide the public with accurate and reliable information that assists them in better exercising their civic duties in a democratic society” (2010: 58), a description I fully subscribe to, it is also expedient to be aware that people do not have the same ‘civic duties’ in all societies all over the world. As will be shown in the analyses, the way news is presented and information is packaged or withheld depends on a range of contextual factors. Moreover, as Ott and Mack rightly remark, the content of a news message need not have use-value or truth-value to be classified as informational: “fairness and accuracy are not defining attributes of information [which] need only be meaningful, as opposed to gibberish, to count as information” (2010: 13). News cannot just be equated to information. News is a reformulation of information as a commodity, which was, according to Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, originally “gathered and distributed for the three purposes of political communication, trade and pleasure” (1998: 1). Gans defines news as “information which is transmitted from sources to audiences, with journalists […] summarizing, refining, altering what comes to them from various sources in order to make the information suitable for the audience” (1979: 80).

3.1.2.2. Six views of news

Going through the literature, six major views of news can be distinguished. First, news can be seen as a form of knowledge about the world. The underlying assumption is that there exists an external reality which can be known and mirrored in news (Zelizer & Allan 2010: 82-83). It follows that reality can be unveiled and displayed as it is. Thus, a journalist can write: “Party chairman, Mr Henry Kosgey […] unveiled the events at Pentagon House [the headquarters of the Orange Democratic Movement]” (ST_EU meets Kibaki_20/01/2008; italics added). A similar sense is captured by such verbs as to uncover or to reveal (see example 14). Another example from the data of how news creates knowledge about the world pertains to the description of Kenya. As if it reflects an objective reality, the country is presented as an economically prosperous and stable country (at least before the crisis broke loose). This is a small selection:

11) Rioters and looters torched Rebecca’s modest home on the edge of the Nairobi slum of Kibera last week in post-election violence which has killed more than 300 people, created 250,000 refugees and wreaked enormous economic damage on one of Africa’s most prosperous and hitherto stable countries. (TI_Refugees pray for peace in burnt churches_07/01/2008)

41 However, there are also tendencies which make it more and more difficult to separate both notions: “It has become increasingly difficult to make a clear distinction between events, information, sources, and news. Most events are organized and ‘newsed’, often even before they take place. Information is available everywhere, and its form often resembles the form of news. News sources are incredibly varied and potentially almost anybody can become a news source thanks to new media end communications technology” (Rantanen 2009: 75).
12) Ms. Frazer spent much of the past week in Kenya trying to find an end to a post-election crisis that has killed hundreds of people and damaged Kenya’s image as one of the most stable countries in Africa.
(NYT_U.S. Presses Kenyan president and opposition leaders to meet_13/01/2008)

13) Earlier in the summit, a string of leaders condemned the violence in Kenya, which has reduced the former regional peacemaker and stable trade hub into one of Africa’s most pressing crises.
(ST_Chad, Kenya violence stains AU Summit_03/02/2008)

14) Sources who attended the top-level diplomatic meetings revealed that Dr Rice insisted that Kenya must quickly stop the slide into the abyss and return to the democratic path as a stable, secure country.
(DN_Revealed: Secrets of talks with Condoleezza_24/02/2008)

News does not just create knowledge out of the blue, it spreads knowledge. Occasionally journalists make use of the linguistic strategy of staging ‘people with knowledge’, as in the evidential expression According to several people with knowledge of the events, found in the IN report ‘Kibaki `stole´ Kenyan election through vote-rigging and fraud’ (23/01/2008). It seems evident that news is about knowledge. However, news is not a pure reflection of reality. Rather it is a way of interpreting events in the world. Giddens sharply observes:

“If there is one area of media that people are most likely to uncritically accept as reflecting reality rather than constructing it, that area is probably the news. People watch, read, or listen to news to find out what happened in the world that day. However, the perceived reality often diverges quite dramatically from the ‘real world’, where much more happened than can be reported in any day’s news program or publication” (Giddens 1990: 141).

In a second view, news is understood as a social construction of reality. Put differently, news is “a socially constructed account of reality, rather than reality itself, composed of literary, verbal and pictorial elements which combine to form a journalistic narrative disseminated through print, broadcast or online media” (McNair 2006: 6). In their texts, newspaper journalists depict and propagate a view of the world (Van der Veen et al. 1985). Professionally, newsworkers contribute to the construction social reality (Tuchman 1978: 208). Tuchman continues that the view of reality thus constructed often reflects an ‘institutionalized reality’ by the agency of ‘competent knowers’, a conclusion that corresponds to observations made by other news ethnographers, such as Gans (1979).

That Kenya’s definition as a stable country is not an incontestable knowledge claim, but, in fact, an ideological interpretation can be inferred from counterexamples where Kenya is described as a country of impunity and inequity or as “the usually stable East African nation” (ST_Credibility test as leaders give Kibaki, Kenya a wide berth_03/02/2008), with the modifying adverb usually leaving open the implicature that Kenya is not always so stable, while the

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42 For instance, in the Nation reports ‘Talks to focus on 2 key proposals’ (10/02/2008) and ‘Pressure mounts to end crisis’ (28/02/2008) or in the ST front-page article ‘A blot on the talks’ (13/02/2008).
localizing adjective *East African* is much weaker than the generalizing phrase that it would be “one of Africa’s most stable countries” (see examples 11 and 12). Another counterexample is (15), where Kenya is not described as *known* for its stability, but where it is presented as *perceived* to be democratic and stable.

15) Western countries are likely to review their development programmes in Kenya in the light of the past fortnight’s events, which has shattered the perception of Kenya as a democratic and stable country.

(IN_Kenyan police had ’shoot to kill policy’ 14/01/2008)

In this view, news events can also be approached through the practical purposes they serve for those with access to the news media. Zelizer and Allan point to the implications: “Abandoning the notion that an objective world waits to be reported on by journalists and underscoring journalism’s constructed nature, seeing news as purposive behaviour has pragmatic consequence, enabling the routinization of newswork” (2010: 83).

That brings me to the third view with a focus on professional practices and routines. Since editors are under considerable economic pressures to find attention-grabbing stories on short deadlines with minimal resources, the selection of news items often has little to do with their social and informational value to the public. Hence, news is not something that is uncovered, explored, and reported, but it is the result of various routinized organizational and professional practices, such as deadlines, style guides, sourcing tactics, *etc.* What is more, “it is a product or commodity manufactured by news organizations for maximum palatability and profitability” (Ott & Mack 2010: 61). We will encounter in 7.3.1.2 and 8.2.1.3 a few idealistic, contextual and well-considered reasons for Kenyan journalists to be cautious with ethnic terms in their coverage of the post-election crisis. But when the editorial policy of the ST stipulates that they “will reflect the public interest by being consistently truthful, non-sectarian and non-partisan” or when the Nation Media Group promotes “racial, ethnic, religious and communal harmony and tolerance”, it is not just “to help audiences of all races and nations to see events in perspective, and to understand their inter-relationships”, another factor is that non-partisan news in Kenya is able to attract more news consumers from different ethnicities and thus increases profits. Another point to be remarked here is that news can be sold in a figurative sense at different stages through its production. First a news source, like an NGO, can contact a reporter with a story, then the journalist can try and convince their desk chief to write the story. Afterwards the desk chief takes it to the editorial morning meeting. When I visited the newsroom of the Belgian newspaper *De Standaard*, I witnessed animated meetings during which desk chiefs tried to sell their stories to

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43 It can be argued that in example 13, the adjective *regional* has the same mitigating function.

44 These citations come from two internal documents, gathered during the so-called ethnographic fieldwork at the editorial offices of the Kenyan newspapers: the 2008 *Board resolution on the editorial policy of the Standard Group* and the *Nation Media Group Editorial Guidelines and Objectives* (2008) respectively.
the editor-in-chief, who in turn was accountable for the news to the newspaper’s ownership as well as the readership. The whole process of a newspaper report from its inception to its publication goes with considerable debate. It is the result of complex interactions or processes of language use.

Fourthly, news can be viewed as culture. For Schudson, “news is a form of culture [...] a structured genre, or set of genres, of public meaning-making” (2000: 177 or see Schudson 1996). In this view, news is defined as something that binds people together in a sense of community and gets them talking to each other (Burns 2002: 50). One underlying assumption is that “[w]e form relationships, choose friends, and make character judgements based partly on whether someone reacts to information the same way as we do” (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007: 1).

Taking a historical perspective, Carey argues that news (read ‘western-style news’) is “a form of culture, invented by a particular class at a particular point of history – in this case by the middle class largely in the eighteenth century” (2009: 17). This quote reveals quite a static view of culture that cannot be endorsed. Rather, culture is considered to be an ever-changing and interadaptive property of human socialization. Without denying its historical roots, news has evolved through time.

The view of news as culture is particularly applicable to the African press, as characterized by Ochs (1986). According to him, the press in Africa, whether private or government-controlled, is characterized by four ‘African press values’, resulting in (i) reassuring and positive news to create a sense of ‘psycho-political security’, (ii) prominence of African stories under impulse of a feeling of ‘ideological kinship’ with neighboring countries, (iii) the promotion or defense of national policy and obeisance to the government, and (iv) the advancement of a positive national image. Later this kind of journalism came to be known as ‘development journalism’, where journalists support socioeconomic and political development while maintaining good relations with both the government and the broader populace (Romano 2010) and where the government mobilizes the news media for nation building (Kalyango & Eckler 2010: 370). That is the role which the first Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta, who believed in its group-creating power on a national level, ascribed to the press. He is quoted saying in a speech that the Kenyan press should inform and inspire the people, positively promote national development, ensure a growing self-respect and always seek to coalesce, rather than to isolate the different cultures and aspirations (McGarry 1991: 138). For my research it is important to note that from then on, in Kenya, “[m]atters of ethnicity were viewed, at least officially, as being contrary to the national goals of unity and modernity (McGarry 1991: 139).

Related to the culture paradigm is the term of news culture. It is introduced by Allan “as a means to help facilitate critical efforts to transcend the media-society dichotomy” (2010: 4). He pleads for an integrative approach in which news is studied in its totality as part of society and
culture with a unified focus on the political, economic, institutional and ideological dimensions of news, without analytically isolating these dimensions. That is also the aim of my pragmatic perspective. In particular, news culture refers to “the shared norms, values, beliefs, expectations, conventions, strategies, symbol systems and rituals shaping the ethos of journalism as an interpretive community” (Zelizer & Allan 2010: 86). It aims at addressing both negotiated norms or ideals and counterproductive or contradictory aspects of journalism. The taken-for-granted nature of news culture often only becomes apparent when its ‘common-sense’ assumptions are transgressed. For example, when journalists are bribed by campaigning politicians to put them into a favorable light. Or when the government intimidates and restricts journalists, resulting in poor news work (see e.g. DN_Media houses protest over ban_01/01/2008 or ST_Media vow to ignore ban on live coverage_01/01/2008). The assumption that journalists should be knowledgeable about the topics they write and provide correct information also comes to the surface when errors or mistakes occur. In the Belgian newspaper DM, for instance, the acronym NaRC is explained as ‘Nationale Alliantie Regenboog Coalitie’ [National Alliance Rainbow Coalition], while it just stands for National Rainbow Coalition (DM_Internationale waarnemers veroordelen fraude bij Keniaanse presidents-verkiezingen_31/12/2007). In one IN article mention is made of the “re-elected President Moi Kibaki”, merging the names of the former president, Daniel arap Moi, and the incumbent, Mwai Kibaki. It could be argued these are innocent typos. However, newspaper articles are assumed to be revised by subeditors and proofread before printing. Such misinformation can be confusing for readers.

Another example of news culture, surfacing through transgression of silent norms and presupposed values, can be found in the opinion article ‘Media crossed the line of good taste in Sinai tragedy’ by Otuma Ongalo, Senior Editor Production and Quality at the ST (see Appendix II). He protests against the sensationalizing, merciless and gruesome coverage by the local press of a devastating and uncontrollable petrol fire that swept Nairobi’s Sinai slum. In his eyes, it was intolerable to focus on “shocking images of blackened bodies with bones jutting out” and “[r]aw close up pictures of those hanging precariously on a thin thread of life”, even comparing the tragic events “to nyama choma gone wrong”. While he acknowledges that “one of the greatest commandments of news coverage is objectivity - that is conveying reality as it unfolds without bias or distortion” (cf. the view of news as a form of knowledge above), he contends that “in journalism there are other commandments that should be taken into consideration while exercising the dictates of other rules [because journalism] is a balanced game of exercising the right to relay information and at the same time taking into account societal sensitivities”. This idea is deeply-ingrained in Kenya’s news culture, as will become clear in 8.2.1.3.

45 Nyama choma is a typical Kenyan barbecue diner, literally ‘roast meat’ in Kiswahili.
The fifth view of news builds on the previous ones. It treats news as an emergent product of cultural chaos. McNair argues that news media are not simply controlled by elites, nor by political or economic pressures alone or by any other dominant factor, but that news is always contingent on contextual factors, fortuitous interactions and constellations of circumstances:

“news is not just manufactured […], nor is it ‘constructed’. Nor does it just happen. It emerges from the interacting elements of the communication environment which prevails in a given media space. These spaces contain many social actors striving to manufacture and shape the news, but none has any guarantee of success” (McNair 2006: 49).

Thus, the unpredictability, contingency and volatility of both news production and reception is stressed. Various forces work together and counteract in the production of news; the final outcome is partly the result of coincidental circumstances, past experiences and interactions with participants and stakeholders, which makes news the product of a cultural chaos. Similarly, McQuail notes: “By way of the media, meanings are formed and social and cultural forces operate freely according to various logics and with no predictable outcome” (2010: 8).

News as the product of cultural chaos results from ideological competition rather than imposition: “News, from this perspective, is not an agent of ideological imposition, but a product of the interaction of all the environmental factors within which it is formed” (McNair 2006: 48). Likewise, the interpretation of news is always dependent on the specific context in which it is received, because meanings are never inferred from words or texts alone.

“As opposed to the linear model of top-down cause-and-effect, the chaos paradigm implies a non-linear model of constant feedback and adaptation as the news cycle evolves, each iteration of the cycle determined by what has gone before, the future of the system contingent on its past, and the evolution of other, interacting cycles” (McNair 2006: 50).

This can involve ambiguous news production, contradictory meaning generation, loss of control, dilution of authority, and more opportunity for disruption on different levels of power.

Plenty of examples of news as a product of cultural chaos can be found in the book Van onze correspondent Standplaats Nairobi [From Our Correspondent in Nairobi], in which the Dutch Africa correspondent Kees Broere (2004) reflects on his life and work in Africa. He relates, for instance, his trip to war-torn southern Sudan in November 2003. First Broere joined the Dutch Minister of Development who was on a tour through the country. With the diplomatic corps he got stuck in Rumbek from where they wanted to fly to New Site for a meeting with John Garang, then leader of the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA). The pilot of the first plane that arrived in delay did not want to take them further because he did not know the airstrip at New Site, while the pilot of a second smaller and slower plane was afraid of arriving in the dark. So, the journalist sat down in the shadow of a tree and had a beer with the minister, a perfect opportunity to talk about Dutch foreign policy in informal terms. The next day they flew to New Site where they ran into Ruud Lubbers, then UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Again a
fortunate coincidence for the journalist to get some privileged information. If their plane had been on time the other day, he would not have met Lubbers. After the interview with Garang, Broere decided to go to the village of Leer in the oil province of Western Upper Nile in order to see how ordinary Sudanese villagers are affected by the conflicts. However, again he experienced a few, unplanned transport problems, because there was only one plane flying to Leer and the Canadian pilot of the Verification and Monitoring Team refused to take him. Another option was going to neighboring Thonyor, from which it was a 15-kilometre walk through swampland to Leer. However, there were no flights to Thonyor either. “Journalists working in Sudan who do not dispose of a plane of their own must be flexible”, Broere wryly remarks (2004: 147 [my translation]). After long hours of waiting, a plane of the Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) showed up to depart for Akot. At that airport where Broere had to change planes, he ran into an NPA worker who he had met once before in Nairobi. This man convinced his pilot to make a detour and so Broere made it to Thonyor after all. Upon his unannounced arrival he was lucky to find refuge at an improvised outstation of Artsen zonder Grenzen (AzG or Médecins sans Frontières), where also Jonathan Steele and David Levene from The Guardian, were staying for the night. In their company he took on the four-hour walk to Leer the next day.

At 19 November 2003 Broere’s report about these adventures appeared in De Volkskrant under the headline ‘Vredesmacht op de fiets houdt Zuid-Sudan rustig’ [Peace corps by bike keeps calm in Southern Sudan]. In this newspaper article, Broere reported on the Verification and Monitoring Team, on the peace process and the life at the village of Leer, and he quoted SPLA-commanders as well as AzG-workers. The lengthy background story ‘Olie en oorlog, een noodlottig verbond in Sudan’ [Oil and war, a fatal union in Sudan], published on 8 December 2003 was also based on the previous experiences, the interviews in the villages and the conversations en route with fellow journalists and other participants such as the aid workers in Thonyor. It is clear that a news story can never be fully planned. In a philosophical reflection further on in his book, Broere posits that life is chaos and especially the professional life of a foreign correspondent in Africa can be pretty chaotic (2004: 185).

Finally, the sixth way to define news is as plain as it is simple: news is information that is new. On the one hand definitions that emphasize the newness of news acknowledge the fleetingness of news; on the other hand they touch upon its orientation towards the audience. Evelyn Waugh masterly captures this understanding of news in his novel Scoop, as the quote at the beginning of this chapter indicates. News is the specific kind of new information that people are interested in reading, spread by certain media. It stops being news, though it remains information, after it is consumed. Van Ginneken (2002: 36) defines news as something that is perceived as ‘new’ within a specific society or social group, something that is considered to be unexpected, extraordinary and abnormal. Crucially, what is deemed normal or irrelevant does not
tend to be made explicit. As a consequence, the underlying worldview of news often stays out of
view. Such definitions point to the ideological potential and the selectivity of news. That is why
Harcup concisely defines news as “a selective view of what happens in the world” (2004: 30).
Definitions of news as new information are somewhat problematic in the context of foreign
news. The Dutch former correspondent and media critic Joris Luyendijk (2006: 46) observes that
when news about a foreign country (e.g. Kenya) only shows what deviates from the ordinary,
from everyday life, the reader easily gets a distorted view of that country, especially if the
ordinary daily context against which news events play is unknown to him or her. For Belgian or
American readers who have never been to Kenya, who are hardly able to situate it somewhere in
the east of the African continent, almost any information from the country might be unknown
and thus new. This makes foreign news all the more selective and ideological. On 31 March
2008 an internal, confidential report from the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) came out,
in which it admitted having committed grave mistakes in the organization of the General
Election, especially during the tallying of the results. All Kenyan newspapers ran the story on
their front-page (DN_Report: ECK made serious mistakes and ST_Revealed: How ECK bungled
the election). This was important news, though it was not picked up by the international press,
which generally remained fairly silent about the role of the ECK in the election chaos, as we will
see in the analyses. Because events from foreign countries remain new for longer than domestic
affairs, sometimes foreign correspondents hold new information to a later date. During my last
stay in Kenya in May 2011, the ST broke the poignant story of hunger and hopelessness among
the Turkana people, who seemed to be neglected by central government.46 If it was new to most
Kenyans, it was certainly new information for a foreign audience and it was as relevant as stories
about hunger in Somalia. Yet it never made it to a full story in the American, British and Belgian
newspapers. Rather, the famine in the Turkana region was touched upon weeks later in coverage
about Somali refugees and in charity appeals.47 On a smaller scale, I witnessed at the newsroom
of De Morgen how a background story to an episode of the war in Eastern Congo, written during
the week to accompany a factual hard news story, was decided to be kept for the weekend edition
during an editorial meeting. So, foreign news can, more often than other news, be old
information that is still new, however, for a majority of readers.
To recapitulate, my stand to news must be clear. From all of the discussed definitions of news
it follows that news is not only a valuable, but also a useful commodity. It makes people feel at

46 See the front-page story ‘Are they Kenyans’ or the abridged version ‘Hopelessness in Turkana’, published online
aandacht voor Somalische vluchtelingen’ [Kenyans not happy with attention for Somali refugees] (20/07/2011) in
De Morgen, ‘Charity for Kenya’ (29/07/2011) in the Times or ‘Give a day’s pay for Africa: Kenya is on the brink of
its own disaster’ (31/07/2011) in the Independent.
home in the world, orients the public towards shared topics of conversation, facilitates political engagement and helps to create a ‘public mind’ (Zelizer & Allan 2010: 83). News is essentially dialogic, because it relays others’ words and provides information about what is happening in the world, upon which people need to exercise judgment. It not only helps people organize their daily lives, but it also helps people to “make up their minds so they can function as informed citizens” (Burns 2002: 50). As such, this view of news links up with how journalism will be presented in 3.2.2.

3.1.3. Qualities of the newspaper

3.1.3.1. The utility and functionality of newspapers

The news about the Kenyan post-election crisis that will be studied in this dissertation is taken from newspapers. Some properties and functions of newspapers will here be addressed before the different threads about mass-mediated news are brought together in an elaborate recapitulation in the next subsection (3.1.3.2). Taking a cultural or ritual view of this news medium, De Tocqueville notes that:

“nothing but a newspaper can drop the same thought into a thousand minds at the same moment. A newspaper is an advisor who does not require to be sought, but who comes of his own accord, and talks to you briefly everyday of the common weal, without distracting you from your private affairs. [...] To suppose that they only serve to protest freedom would be to diminish their importance: they maintain civilization. I shall not deny that in democratic countries newspapers frequently lead the citizens to launch together in very ill-digested schemes; but if there were no newspapers there would be no common activity. The evil which they produce is therefore much less than that which they cure” (De Tocqueville 1848: 119).

Newspapers are often seen as sources of important information about, and interpretation of, the world. That is why they are often praised for their informational as well as educational qualities (Bentley 2001: 6). But newspapers can have different functions.

Generally, people turn to the media and make use of them for a variety of reasons. Drawing on McQuail’s mass communication theory, Ang (1995: 212-213) presents four categories of media use. First, people can use the media in search for information. That is, to learn new things and expand their knowledge about their immediate environment, society or the world, to seek advice on practical matters, to satisfy curiosity and interest. The second category of media use is personal identity. The media can be used to get personal values reinforced, to find models for behavior, to identify with media figures who people value or to gain a better insight into oneself. Thirdly, the media can be used as a means for integration and social interaction, i.e. to gain an insight into the living (or working) circumstances of others, to gain a sense of belonging, to find a basis for conversation or as a supportive tool for carrying out social roles. The fourth use of
Media is entertainment. Media can be employed as a way of relaxation, to be diverted from problems, to gain cultural and aesthetic enjoyment, to kill time, for emotional release or even sexual arousal.

All media, including newspapers, anticipate this potential of manifold uses. On 30 June 1945 the deliverymen of the New York newspapers went on strike. Berelson (1949) took advantage of this fortnight strike to study why people read the newspaper, starting from the question: What are you missing now that you don’t receive any newspapers? Three functions of the newspaper can be distilled from the reasons Berelson found why people craved their daily paper: an informational function, an escapist function and a social function.

To begin with, people wanted to be informed about public affairs and they wanted to be able to understand their environment and the world at large. Readers can use newspapers to learn about and from specific events or to orient to certain social themes. The informational function of newspapers lives strongly in Kenya. As reader Jacob Millo put aptly in a letter-to-the-editor, published in DN (‘Media houses could have saved Kenya from the election crisis’, 11/01/2008):

“The local media houses, both electronic and print, never tire of reminding us of their role to educate, entertain and inform. However, since there are other sources of getting entertainment and education, Kenyans hold their role of informing as the most important one”.

Furthermore, not only did the readers who Berelson surveyed appear to be interested in factual news reports, they also liked to read editorials, columns, opinions and analyses to stimulate their thinking and lend them insights into social reality.

Secondly, people needed the newspaper as entertainment, to have fun (Bentley 2001), in order to escape the drag of daily life. Then the newspaper functions as ‘respite’ of everyday routine. However, people’s reactions to the lack of their daily newspaper also indicated that reading the newspaper can at the same time be part of daily routine. The activity of newspaper reading can have a ritualistic, even compulsive, character for some readers who are lost when the newspaper fails to arrive (Bentley 2001, Versluis 1996). The following uses that Berelson (1949) recorded attribute a social function to the newspaper. People use newspapers to live their lives and to do their work, i.e. as ‘a tool for daily living’. They study the weather forecast or consult road works information; they want to know the latest laws, new measures which come into effect or updates of the ratings and figures of the stock exchange.

Newspapers can also promote ‘social prestige’, which rises when one is well-informed and knows something about everything. Newspapers can finally be a ‘medium for social contact’. Some people expect to be led by newspapers, to be helped in making decisions and entering into relations or interactions. Indeed, news from newspapers is often used as a conversational resource. More than fifty years later, Bentley (2001) repeated the exercise and came to the same
conclusions. Thus, newspapers can be one of the ways by which people participate in society and give meaning to life (Lull 2000: 101).

In addition, newspapers can have a range of atypical, personal or creative functions, which are often left unmentioned. I know people who use newspapers to beat their dog, to put under the electric frying pot against oil splashes, to clip pictures of celebrities, to go to the toilet with, to cover surfaces that should not be painted when painting, to make artworks with in nursery class, etc. The fact that in Africa, too, newspapers can have multiple uses is clearly indicated by Muiru Ngugi, whose quote also reinforces African newspapers as mass media (see above), because they reach a lot more people than the circulation numbers might suggest, albeit sometimes indirectly.

“Many people in Africa cannot afford the prize of periodicals, so they rely on the goodwill of the newspaper vendors, who in turn enjoy the goodwill and popularity emanating from this act. It is not unusual to see a vendor being surrounded by jobless people who read a publication from cover to cover and put it back on the stand. [...] This communal reading of newspapers is a site of cultural production where discussions often ensue, arguments are picked, and lasting friendships struck. Those who are fortunate enough to read the newspapers for free then share their newly acquired information with those without access to newspapers. This results in hand-me-down news, a kind of informed gossip or third party news [...]. Once a publication has been paid for, however, its life has just started. Several people, as many as 10, may read it. When it is eventually discarded, what is left of it will be bought by a shopkeeper or butcher, who will use it to wrap meat or grocery. At the very end of its life, a periodical may be used as a toilet paper in a pit latrine” (Muiru Ngugi 2007: 20-21).

Before he started to appreciate them for their informational, political and societal value, Nyamnjoh (2009b: 10) recalls that crumpled newspapers were always the bearers of good news, when he was a little boy, as their contents would reveal akara beans, puff balls, bread, groundnuts or other goods that were wrapped by the market woman, shopkeeper or street vendor.

The impact or effects of newspapers on readers depends on the diverse roles they play in the lives of the readers as well as on the personal interest in a particular news item (a topic that falls outside the scope of this dissertation).

Newspapers are an interesting resource for discourse analysis not only because newspapers are significant sites of ideology production and play an important role in society, as will be argued below (see also Milani 2007). An extra advantage is the ready availability of the data, because newspaper articles are by definition publicly accessible texts. As will be shown later, newspapers are a data source suitable for combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. Cotter also noticed this: “Newspapers are convenient repositories of large bodies of data, and this fact has allowed the development of research backed up by quantity of example” (2001: 423).
3.1.3.2. Recapitulation: Main characteristics of paper news

With the assistance of Rantanen (2009), newspaper news can be characterized by processes of temporalization, localization, narrativization, cosmopolitanization, globalization, nationalization, commodification and technologization. It is hard, if not impossible, for any news to equally take all of these factors into account, but a linguistic-pragmatic news study concentrates on the discursive and linguistic aspects of these processes and does not a priori exclude any of these aspects as a topic of investigation, because they could all have an influence on the linguistic and discursive processes involved. Although the focus is on language use, a pragmatic perspective can simultaneously shed some light on a number of these facets of news, especially when they play a role in the language used in news reports, in the verbal interactions leading up to a newspaper article or in the ‘linguistics of news production’ (Catenaccio et al. 2010).

Whatever view one takes, it is clear that language plays an important role in the selection, interpretation, construction and dispersion of news. This role is not limited to the linguistic output of news processes. At newsrooms and ‘in the field’ different kinds of interaction also contribute to the production and distribution of news. That is why discourse-analytical research is to be complemented by ethnographic insights, which will be expanded on in 6.1.2. Thus, the propagated ethnographically-supported, linguistic-pragmatic approach is in line with Cotter’s interactional and ethnographic approach to news media language (Cotter 2010). The present study will not explicitly theorize the following processes affecting news and newspapers, but it will touch upon some of the linguistic aspects involved and it will serve as background knowledge for the interpretations of the case study.

Time is an important factor of news. News is usually about events that have taken place recently and are reported on soon after. However, as was pointed out, news, particularly foreign news, may be new, even if the event is old, because the audience did not previously know about it. Things always happen that can be framed and presented as news. So, even in the process of temporalization language is operative. To Rantanen (2009), news consists of events, sources, information, time, space and audiences. These ingredients are brought together and mixed in the narrative form of a story that is socially recognizable as news. Narrativization is clearly a matter of language use. The genre or format and the news medium are also crucial.

“When newspapers published news, it was not necessarily ‘new’, but the timing, regularity, and increasing frequency of their appearance made news ‘newer’. Still, the event could sometimes be ‘old’; there could be a spatial and temporal distance between the event and the information, but the publication and the narrative made it ‘new’, i.e. news” (Rantanen 2009: 17).

Note that the specific narrative form of news varies historically and culturally.

Time pairs with space. News makes experiences and information available to people in different and distant locations. That is why, in news studies, relevant places must be taken into
consideration, not only the space where events originated, but also the place of production, the medium through which news is distributed and where it is interpreted. This prompts again a plea for more ethnographic research in news and journalism studies. Much can be done by combining news discourse analysis with ethnographic research (see chapter 6). Connected to localization are the aspects of cosmopolitanization, nationalization and globalization. From their origins in the sixteenth century (see e.g. Zelizer & Allan 2010: 91), newspapers, as we now know them, were the products of cosmopolitan cities rather than nation-states. Cities that were centers of power and trade were also centers of news, and so “early news was cosmopolitan rather than national” (Rantanen 2009: 20). Modern news started off as an intercity business of networks that easily crossed the boundaries of nation-states. As products embedded in transnational ownership structures, the newspapers under study are characterized by cosmopolitanization, referring to “internal globalization, globalization from within the national societies” (Beck 2002: 17). The local, national, regional and global layers of information flows are enmeshed. National media is opened up ‘from within’ (Chalaby 2005: 32).

In the urbanized societies of Belgium or Great Britain news is not anymore linked to cities, though newspapers are always based in (or near) the capital, or else another regional hub. In Kenya it is still striking that newspapers are urban goods. It would be too crude to say that in most African countries newspapers are a privilege of city dwellers, because they are also sold by hawkers in rural areas, but it is true that one has easier access in urban centers. However, news and newspapers are not just typical of cities, they are products of cosmopolitan cities, a term comparable to Castells’ informational city (1989). Hannerz (1996: 129-131) reserved that label for cities which are characterized by (i) transnational business, (ii) third world populations, (iii) artists and artisans, (iv) tourists, and (v) migrants and (political) refugees. It must be remarked that the second characteristic is pretty ethnocentric. Surely, Nairobi, where I stayed most of my time in Kenya, is a true cosmopolitan city, although it is located in what Hannerz would call the third world, so its population is by definition that too. Nairobi is a center of transnational trade (not only with neighboring countries). Arguably, what makes Nairobi cosmopolitan is not its third world population, but its ‘first world population’. Some neighborhoods are full of expats, since the city is the operating base of numerous NGOs and international agencies. A better characteristic to replace (ii) would perhaps be the presence of ‘fourth world populations’, i.e. people who are living below the poverty line, irrespective of their country of origin. Tourists musing around in Nairobi can admire the different handicrafts of Kenyan artists and artisans who gather in the capital. Finally, Nairobi meets the fifth characteristic. It contains a lot of migrants and refugees, such as the Zimbabwean who touched me for money explaining his life story when I was wandering around the central business district in search for International House, where the offices of AFP East Africa & Indian Ocean are located. In short, I met a lot of Nairobians who
would satisfy Rantanen’s description of cosmopolitans as people “with a knowledge of several languages, access to and familiarity with the latest communications technology, a sense of freedom from restriction to one place and of belonging to several places [and who] are not necessarily members of the dominant elite, indeed are often excluded from that elite by their ethnicity, ideology, or religion” (2009: 24).

To claim that newspapers are cosmopolitan is not to deny the nationalization of news. On the one hand, Anderson (1991) posited that the act of simultaneously reading newspapers allows people who do not know each other to imagine themselves as belonging to the same nation. On the other hand, national interest and image are issues in news making. Governments sometimes interfere in the news production. This happened in Kenya in the aftermath of the 2007 elections when the government banned all live news coverage. Governments can also support news institutions so that these may primarily serve the interests of a particular nation-state. This can happen either indirectly, through associated ownership, licenses, discounted fees, subsidy, or political support, or directly, through state-control or the establishment of news agencies. Rantanen (2009) notes that numerous national news agencies were founded by states as a reaction against the misrepresentation of the country by foreign news agencies and afterwards became government-supported because purely state-owned news agencies were not perceived to be objective. Thanks to national news agencies, nation-states are less dependent on foreign powers for information. Kenya lacks an independent news agency, as the Kenya News Agency is run by the Ministry of Information and Communications. Another candidate, the Pan-African News Agency, which has an office in Nairobi, is not highly regarded in the Kenyan newsrooms and only rarely used as a source of information. Rather, Kenyan editors turn to global news agencies, such as Reuters or AP, even for matters domestic. Rantanen concludes:

“The uneasy relationship between the international and the national is one of the contradictions most news organizations carry within themselves. They have claimed to be, at the same time, national institutions with a mission to their home country and international organizations without a bias toward any country” (Rantanen 2009: 108).

Globalization is the next essential process involved in written news. Generally, it refers to “the growing interconnectedness of different parts of the world” (Thompson 1995: 149). Giddens defines this process as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (1990: 64). About the effects of globalizing media “one commentator in 1892 wrote that, as a result of modern newspapers, the inhabitant of a local village has a broader understanding of contemporary events than the prime minister of a hundred years before” (Giddens 1990: 77). However, not everyone shares this optimism. Globalization is sometimes argued to come at the expense of tradition and local culture (but see Thompson 1995: 179-206 for a rebuttal). Njogu and Middleton, for instance, associate globalization in Africa with
colonization: “‘Change’ here was once called ‘colonization’; today it is called ‘globalization’.” (2009: xv). Global communication networks came into being in the nineteenth century under the impulse of economic, political and military pressures, and due to the rise of new technologies which enabled information to be dissociated from physical transportation (Thompson 1995). Newspapers make use of international news wires and other technologies, like the internet, which carry the information they produce across national boundaries. As a consequence it becomes increasingly difficult for journalists to envision their target audience, because the *New York Times* can be perfectly read in Brussels and the *Sunday Standard* can have news consumers in Switzerland (see the reaction from reader J. Momanyi in 7.3.1.3). What is more, Kenyan immigrants in Bristol can be readers of the *Times*, or British expats living in Naivasha might be subscribed to *The Standard*. On Monday, January 14, 2008 the message below appeared on the letters page of *The Standard*. It illustrates how the Kenyan crisis affected Kenyans and Africans living all over the world. It shows how a local event can have global effects, a clear case of globalization.

All of this has repercussions for journalistic discourse, given that journalists must aim at writing in such a way that it is acceptable and understandable for as many readers as possible. On the one hand, there is a globalized diffusion of news, on the other hand, the appropriation of

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KENYANS in the Diaspora are not proud to reveal their identity. Earlier, in Europe, even people from other countries used to say they were from Kenya. They were ashamed of their country and just wished they could belong to Kenya. They were proud of our development and democracy. But after the vote tallying fiasco and killings, nobody wants to say they are Kenyan. Many say they are from South Africa or Namibia. Our country’s name has gone to the drainage. An encounter with a Somalian refugee abroad brought to my attention the fact that a few power-hungry individuals had made the country what it looks like. But it never occurred to me that Kenya could be in a similar situation. Young Kenyans must not let the old folk lead this country to a mess, especially after they have enjoyed 44 years of independence. We are just starting, we need to live happy lives in our mother country and not be refugees. Can the leaders do something?

*Paul Nyandoto,*

*Via e-mail.*
news media products is always local and contextualized (Thompson 1995: 173). People actively interpret and process the information they read in newspapers, and incorporate it into their daily lives as well as their ways of thinking. Foreign news in particular can provide them with new insights into their own life and their own ‘spatial-temporal locales’. When people read news reports they may pay as much attention to scenic depictions, colorful descriptions of housing and clothing or the accompanying pictures of far-away places as to the factual ‘hard news content’. As such, newspapers can be material for comparison, enabling readers to compare their own life conditions with those that appear to prevail elsewhere. Likewise they may enable readers to form views which may diverge from the official government interpretations that are routinely presented to them. In sum, newspapers as globalized media products can stimulate individuals to critically think both about their own lives and the workings of the world (Thompson 1995: 176).

Nowadays, journalists have to write for the critical news consumer of the global village. Moreover, news in general, but also the carriers of news, such as papers, have become objects of global trade. This brings us to the concept of commodification. From a historical outlook, there is a symbiotic relationship between news and trade which was established very early at the marketplace. Together with an increasing globalization, the nineteenth century witnessed the commercialization of news. Rantanen argues that editors and publishers first saw their publics as voters, later they came to see the audience as customers or consumers. That is how the newspaper became a manufactured, industrial product “reflecting the requirements of the parties involved in its production, distribution, and consumption process” (Rantanen 2009: 46). The linguistic and discursive implications of the commodification of news is that it must be written in such a way that it appeals and can be sold to large and diverse communities of readers. This view is reflected in TI correspondent McConnell’s comments in 8.2.1.2. Newsmakers try to cater for different news consumers with different interests. As a result, news is “heavy with content that could be shared in many places, but at the same time pregnant with contradictions” (Rantanen 2009: 60). Another consequence is that they never completely close off their texts and that they are hesitant to clearly suggest one dominant reading of the events they report on (see 4.2.2.1 and the analyses below). This can lead to a numbing and dulling of information in newspapers. Commodification can also drive sensationalization and needless embellishment to lure people into buying the newspaper.

A final influence on news is the process of technologization. Without all kinds of technologies working at different stages of the news production, ranging from mobile phones and the internet to contact sources and check information over the printing presses to the different

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48 I admit still other factors could be pointed out. However, this list is not meant to be exhaustive. Its sole intention is to present the factors which I deem particularly relevant to take into account when analysing newspaper production and news discourse.
means of channeling, distribution and transportation, news could not exist. Following Rantanen (2009: 64-65), technology can be argued to affect news in at least five different ways: (i) it gives news one of its vital components, its novelty; (ii) it allows news to be traded in different time zones, and thus to be sold several times in different markets; (iii) it enables the transmission of news about distant places as if they were close; (iv) it affects the costs of news, as transmission costs have a direct effect on how news is priced; and (v) technology has an influence on the format of news. Especially through its impact on format and genre, technology affects the language of the news. A television news items will be differently written and presented than a newspaper article, which will be different from an online news article by a citizen journalist. Since technology created the opportunity for newspapers news to be used transnationally, it can influence the style of news reports as well. It requires news texts to be constructed in such a way that they can be easily cut, pasted, and re-written, either wholly or partially, by different media in different parts of the world. Rantanen links this to the creation of ‘so-called objectivity’, “which is not in fact about how objective news is, but how it represents different views so that it can be used by different media all over the world” (2009: 65). In 3.2.2.1 I will go deeper into this point.

To conclude it must be acknowledged that several (mainly western) newspapers are in dire straits, as they try to cope with an existential crisis, economic challenges, unstable financial markets and competition with rising new media (e.g. alternative news websites). It is questionable how global the trend is, but in the United States and in Europe the newspaper business seems to be in a transition phase, in which it has to reinvent itself both professionally and qua business model. In this respect, the erosion of mainstream media authority can be mentioned, caused by 24/7 satellite television and real-time information flows on the internet, as a result of which newspapers as ‘freeze frame media’ became one of many voices in the marketplace of news (McNair 2006). There is much debate about the economic, technological and social evolutions that lead to the so-called ‘crisis of the newspaper’ with changing reader habits and adapting advertisers causing income insecurity (e.g. Meyer 2004, Davies 2008, Soete 2009, Thevissen 2010, McChesney & Pickard 2011). But it is not all sorrow and misery:

“Newspaper journalism, even in the age of dramatic and technology-led change, still represents more than any other medium the essential of journalism: to find things out and tell others about them; to tell stories in a simple and accessible way; to explain; to root out hypocrisy and corruption among those who wield power, in so many ways, over the rest of us; to right wrongs and campaign; to provide the stuff of everyday conversation; to enrage and entertain; to shock and move; to celebrate and condemn” (Cole & Harcup 2010: 14).

So, the hue and cry must be relativized.

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49 Rantanen (2009: 63) remarks that the two major news costs are transmission costs and salaries.
3.2. The practice of journalism

3.2.1. International news values

3.2.1.1. From a discursive to a pragmatic approach to news values

In this section (3.2.1) I will study the practice of journalism by means of values of news (events), while I will explore the values of journalists in the next section (3.2.2). In addition to the definitions above, news can be defined by means of a list of qualities, which are recognized in and ascribed to events or stories by journalists or by readers. Newsworkers display preferences and intuitions about the nature of news (e.g. Bell 1991, Galtung & Ruge 1965, Harcup 2004, Pape & Featherstone 2005, Van Dijk 1988, Westerståhl & Johansson 1994, Wu 2007, and many more). When deciding what is news, what information is worth being transformed into a newspaper article, as well as how to write a news story and where to place it in the actual paper, journalists and editors are led by so-called news values. These do play a crucial role not only in the selection of news, but in the news writing process and in news reception as well. So, they do not just determine the newsworthiness of events, but also their interestingness, their reportability, and ultimately the news discourse about them.

For instance, when an event is perceived to be negative, extraordinary or unusual, clearly delineated, easily interpretable and explainable for the target audience, thanks to readily available sources, it will more likely be rendered into a newspaper article than when the event is seen to be hardly deviant from daily reality or irrelevant for the audience, when it is the result of long societal processes, or when it requires a lot of historical background knowledge to comprehend. Immediately, I must be point out that news values have to do with both professional and personal judgments, expectations and perceptions. Bell speaks of “the values by which one ‘fact’ is judged more newsworthy than another – and so more worth remembering and understanding” (1998: 101, see also Fowler 1991). This lends news values particular ideological power. They are about perceptions and assessments, as they are attributed to incoming information. As such, they contribute to the creation of news in discourse, and thus also to the discursive construction of reality.

In spite of the often heard claim that journalists have a nose for news, that they are blessed with a news instinct that helps them to pursue stories and decide what is news, journalists are not born with a sense of news values. These are gradually learnt and appropriated. Surprisingly, Zelizer and Allan (2010: 89) assert that news values are rarely written down or codified. On the contrary, news values are easy to find explicitly stated in textbooks, editorial guidelines and codes of practice, as they are one of the first themes budding journalists are confronted with during training, either in-house or at schools of journalism. In their course book about...
journalistic writing for newspapers, Donkers and Willems (2005: 60-63) enumerate ten criteria to
determine whether a topic is fit to print\textsuperscript{50}: topicality, geographic or emotional proximity,
unusualness or curiosity, development and change, excitement and suspense, fortune and
misfortune, involvement, consequence and significance, human interest, and entertainment.\textsuperscript{51} In
the official stylebook of the Belgian \textit{De Standaard}, the first instruction about writing style is
“choose the standpoint of a person” and “search for a person who is as close as possible to your
readers”, followed by the recommendation: “In the whole of the text, try to put people in the
focus of your sentences” (Permentier 2008: 148).\textsuperscript{52} These instructions tap into the news values of
personalization and involvement. The \textit{New York Times’} code of ethics has the revealing subtitle
‘A Handbook of Values and Practices for the News and Editorial Departments’.\textsuperscript{53} After their
training, journalists are constantly reminded of the values that constitute newsworthiness and
how they can be used to decide and write. At the ST newsroom, I noticed the frame, pictured in
figure 10, standing on a cabinet. It makes explicit the news values of timeliness, public interest,
credibility, relevance, consonance and continuity (compare to the editorial guidelines stated in
3.1.2.2 in 8.1.2.2 and in 8.2.1.3). Maybe, Zelizer and Allan thought of daily newsroom
interactions and decision-making, wherein news values are not generally referred to in so many
words, although they are always part of the rationales that guide news coverage. In that respect,
editor John Diaz told Cotter (2010: 71) that “[r]eporters may not talk about ‘proximity’ or
‘prominence’, but they know what gets on Page One”. In conversations amongst journalists and
editors, as in the actual news products, news values might be left implicit, but they are always
present beneath the surface.

\textsuperscript{50} My free translation of the Dutch original (“criteria die bepalen of een onderwerp een artikel waard is”) echoes the
\textit{New York Times} masthead logo: “All the News That’s Fit to Print”.
\textsuperscript{51} See Cotter (2010: 68-71) for more examples, also of newspaper extracts explicitly referring to news values.
\textsuperscript{52} Literal translations of: “Kies het standpunt van een mens”; “Zoek die mens zo dicht mogelijk bij je lezerspubliek”;
“Probeer in de gehele tekst mensen in de focus van je zinnen te plaatsen” (Permentier 2008: 148).
\textsuperscript{53} This manual can be found online at http://www.nytco.com/pdf/NYT_Ethical_Journalism_0904.pdf [17/01/2012].
Due to different applications and conceptualizations, the notion of news value can give rise to definitional ambiguity, which I will try to settle by pleading for a pragmatic approach. The term news value has been around for quite some while. However, it stayed in the margin of journalism studies, until Galtung and Ruge (1965) reported on their seminal study on the structure of foreign news in Norwegian newspapers. Building on Östgaard (1965), they identified twelve factors influencing the flow of news, alternatively presented as conditions that events should (partly) satisfy to become international news, ranging from frequency to negativity (see the next subsection for an illustrated list). However, it could be somewhat confusing that the broad notion of news values can apply to the news text, the news process, the events, the news actors or the audience (Bednarek & Caple 2012, Bell 1991, Cotter 2010). Moreover, the different concepts listed in the literature as news values are not of the same kind. That is why Bednarek and Caple (forthcoming) make a distinction between (i) values in the news text, such as brevity, clarity and color, which they call ‘news writing objectives’; (ii) values in the news process that affect the
selection of news, such as continuity, competition, co-option, composition, predictability and prefabrication, referred to as ‘news cycle/market factors’; and (iii) actual news values related to reported events and the news actors involved in the events as reported in the news story.

For Harris (2009) news values are related to the qualities of a newsworthy event, which seem to conflate with the characteristics of an eligible news story. He distinguishes five primary characteristics of a newsworthy event/story (using both terms interchangeably): personalization, drama and conflict, concrete action, novelty and deviance, and a link with ongoing themes. To these he adds the secondary characteristics of inoffensiveness, credibility, ‘packageability’ and ‘local hook’, i.e. the connection of the story to the community of the readers. “The more of these characteristics a story has naturally, the more likely it is to be heavily covered in the news” (Harris 2009: 191). Similarly, Paterson defines news values as “those particular characteristics of an event which make it more likely to be chosen for the news agenda” (1998: 93, see also Van der Veen et al. 1985: 38). However, neither events, nor stories are intrinsically newsworthy. As is stated above, any event in the world can be turned into news. News values are not inherent to stories or events, rather they are properties of ‘professional vision’ (Goodwin 1994) and (projected or imagined) audience expectations. Indeed, the basic distinction is that between news values in the ‘community of practice’, held by journalists and editors, and news values in the ‘community of coverage’, projected onto and read into news texts by the audience (Cotter 2010).

The concept of professional vision must be briefly elaborated. It refers to a socially organized way of seeing and interpreting events that are answerable to the distinctive interests and particular purposes of a certain social group (Goodwin 1994: 606). It is about the ability to see meaningful events, turn them into objects of knowledge and articulate them in discourse, so that they can be reflected on, discussed and understood. In Goodwin’s words,

“Central to the social and cognitive organization of a profession is its ability to shape events in the domain of its scrutiny into the phenomenal objects around which the discourse of the profession is organized” (Goodwin 1994: 626).

Professional vision or “the ability to see relevant entities is lodged not in the individual mind but instead within a community of competent practitioners, [and so it] is not a purely mental process [but one that] is accomplished through the competent deployment of a complex of situated practices in a relevant setting” (ibid.). Arguably, news values, which are an essential ingredient for the profession of journalists, underlie the ways of seeing news as well as the construction of news in cognition and discourse. They belong to journalists’ established ways of looking at events in the world or information that qualifies for becoming news. Thus, news values are part of journalists’ professional vision. A similar view is advanced by Cotter who conceptualizes news values as ‘emic coordinators’, guiding journalistic decision-making and text production: “they help to coordinate the ‘emic’ or structurally significant and community-identified patterns
of reporting and writing, to restrict the ‘etic’ overload or all that is potentially meaningful within
the news process” (Cotter 2010: 85).

Van Hout (2010: 133-136) gives a good example of how journalists reflect on their own
professional activities, invoking news values, when an Apple press release is deemed
newsworthy and turned into a newspaper article. At the same newspaper, I witnessed another
example of the interaction between news values, planning, events and context, combining into
professional vision. When I was observing the news production process at DS on Thursday 8
May 2008, I learnt that during the 2 o’clock meeting five topics were agreed on to be worked out
for the ‘bovenbouw’ of the foreign news pages, literally the superstructure, which allows for
longer, more informative articles that demand more time and can even contain some analysis.
One of these was a story about tensions in Southern Sudan, which was deemed newsworthy,
because it satisfied among others the news values of impact plus continuity (the reported events
had larger consequences on the existing order in Sudan, and particularly on the situation in
Darfur, which had been regularly in and out the news) and composition (otherwise there would
be no story from Africa in the next day’s newspaper). The journalists then got to work and senior
editor Bart Beirlant started to write a large piece with interview about the elections in Serbia.
Meanwhile, information kept flowing in and the whole day CNN and BBC World had been
screening unrest in Lebanon. During the morning meeting the team had already decided to report
on it the following day. However, around 6pm the continuous stream of Lebanon updates from
the news agencies could no longer be ignored and the escalation of violence prompted the news
value of negativity. Gradually, the foreign desk chief saw a story in the unfolding events that was
considered to be more relevant, timely and topical, so that Beirlant was assigned to write an
additional report, which appeared in DS on 9 May 2008 as ‘Burgeroorlog komt stap dichterbij in
Libanon’ [Civil war comes closer in Lebanon], while the already-written story about Southern
Sudan was postponed to the Saturday edition. Its news values were overridden by those of the
Lebanon story. Only thanks to his experience, background knowledge and professional vision,
which allowed him to immediately recognize a structure and storyline in the scenes of violence
in Lebanon, could Beirlant quickly write this other story before the deadline. McNair (2006)
would consider this an example of cultural chaos at work.

Even when an insider perspective is taken and news values are restricted to the newsroom, a
multiplicity of definitions can be found. Bell (1991: 155) described news values as the criteria
newsworkers apply to determine what is news. In relation to the receivers of news, they have
been defined as “the assumed taste or interests of the audience” (Westerståhl & Johansson 1994:
71) or “the (imagined) preferences of the expected audience” (Richardson 2007: 94). Machin
(2008: 67) conceives of news values as the institutionally and historically established themes and
features concerning what is newsworthy or what can be made newsworthy that all journalists are
socialized into and learn to perceive. Zelizer and Allan define news values as “a subjective set of criteria that journalists use to assess the newsworthiness of events or topics” (2010: 89). Fowler (1991: 17) regards news values as ‘intersubjective mental categories’ and links them to frames, stereotypes and schemata.

Some of the above views run the risk of disregarding journalistic agency in favor of organizational and institutional determinants of news production, “thereby reducing newsmaking to a bureaucratic routine” (Van Hout & Jacobs 2008: 66). Without denying the importance of the institution of the news organization for the final news product, I cannot comply with Machin’s claim that “[w]e must understand news not as the investigative activity of the truth-seeking reporter but as an institutional process” (2008: 88). That is only half true. It is obvious that journalists do not act and interact in the same structures in the same way. Journalists have an individual consciousness and individual values, also-called ‘personal biases’, which may influence their work (Whitney & Ettema 2006: 159-162). Moreover, different journalists have different personalities, backgrounds, interests, etc., all of which ensure a varied news output. News values may also vary considerably, as “[e]very journalist and every editor will have a different interpretation of what is newsworthy, because it’s such a subjective process” (Rau 2010: 14). Cotter (2010) underlines that news values are interpreted differently across publications and editors and through time.

So far, most of the reviewed definitions lean towards a cognitive conceptualization of news values as beliefs, criteria or ‘internalized assumptions’ (Cotter 2010: 56) that people hold about qualities of newsworthiness of events or information topics. News values are cognitive, but not just that. They are also and at the same time discursive. First, they exist and are taught, acquired, internalized, or challenged in and through discursive interactions, processes of communication. Second, they not only impact on the selection of news, but also on how the news is rendered into news discourse. Third, newsworthiness is discursively constructed in newspaper texts in view of the audience, which in turn can invoke news values to decide which article to read and which to skip. Fourth, news values are constantly open to negotiation. They are neither predetermined nor sacrosanct, rather they are an object of daily debate in newsrooms (albeit often implicitly). During one story meeting at the DS, the following questions were literally asked and debated in reaction to the stories proposed for the next day of news: Does this story provide enough new information? Is that news? Would that be a good story? Is it useful to break that news now or shall we postpone it to the weekend edition? Is it relevant to explore that topic?54 It is clear that news values are not stable or fixed, as Westerståhl and Johansson pretend (1994: 72). They consider news values to be psychological, rather than ideological. In their view, “ideologies are

54 See also among others Cotter (2010) and Van Hout (2010) for the role of news values in story meetings.
the main source of deviations in news reporting from a standard based on more or less objectified news values” (Westerståhl & Johansson 1994: 77). In 4.2 I will expound quite a different view on ideology.

In my view, news values cannot be objective, as they come down to ways of interpreting, judging, selecting, perceiving and discursively constructing events or information. Since they function as guidelines for journalistic choice-making, they are embedded in news discourse and contribute to the shaping of the final news texts. Because news values are a matter of language use, they have ideological aspects. After all, language is never free of values, neither is news. “News is determined by values, and the kind of language in which that news is told reflects and expresses those values” (Bell 1991: 2). Or as Reah formulates it, “[e]verything that is written in a newspaper has to be transmitted through the medium of language [and] the transmission of a message through language almost of necessity encodes values into the message” (Reah 1998: 55). As such, news values are “one of the most important practice-based and ideological factors in understanding the focus and shape of news stories and the decisions of journalists” (Cotter 2010: 67).

For example, the event of Pastor Pius Muiru of the Kenya People’s Party who went to vote is in itself not more important than the voting of Maloba Wekesa, a politically committed lecturer at the University of Nairobi. Yet Muiru’s vote received coverage in the Kenyan newspapers, because journalists attribute more prominence to a presidential candidate, however insignificant, than to a university employee. This is an ideological choice, as is the choice to focus on acts of violence instead of appeals for peace in some international newspapers, when the crisis was rampant. For the same reason, the DN announced on its 4 March 2008 front-page an article about the demotion of High Court Registrar Christine Meoli. In Kenya is not that unusual for magistrates (even high ones) to be moved or degraded. However, Meoli was the first woman in that position and during a controversial inauguration ceremony she was the one who swore in President Kibaki for his second term. Therefore, she was seen to have some prominence, which justified her picture on the front-page. This news value is discursively constructed and accentuated in the newspaper article ‘Registrar demoted in judicial reshuffle’ by such phrases as “after her historic appointment”, “the powerful woman who swore in President Kibaki”, “the first woman High Court Registrar in Kenya’s history” and “she was only a rung below the Chief Justice”. Conversely, as she was unknown to most foreign correspondents, and certainly to their publics outside of Kenya, the same news value prevented Meoli from making it to the international news.

55 See DN_We will win, say contenders for State House job_28/12/2007 and ST_Kenyans make huge statement_28/12/2007.
From a discursive perspective, news values can be conceptualized in terms of how newsworthiness is construed through discourse. Bednarek & Caple (forthcoming) promote such a perspective in which news values are considered to be established by language in use, more precisely, by means of linguistic devices, such as ‘evaluative language’, ‘intensification and quantification’, ‘comparison’, ‘references to emotion’, ‘negative vocabulary’, ‘word combinations’, ‘metaphor or simile’, ‘story structure’, ‘references to time and place’, ‘references to the nation/community’, ‘role labels’ and ‘references to individuals’. They add that the cognitive and discursive perspectives are not mutually exclusive, but work in combination:

“beliefs about and linguistic construals of newsworthiness interact: News workers have assumptions about what is newsworthy, about what audiences find newsworthy and this may influence (consciously or not) their construction of newsworthiness through discourse”

(Bednarek & Caple, forthcoming)

That is exactly why I prefer a linguistic-pragmatic perspective on news values. To opt for such an approach is refusing to choose between a cognitive or a discursive perspective. From my point of view, news values can only be studied through language in use, in which, as we have seen in chapter 2, the social, the cognitive and the cultural cannot be separated, but are entwined, constituting complex and contextualized interplays. Drawing on Blommaert (2011), it can be repeated that in pragmatics language is an agentive, active, dynamic object that dialogically operates between people (e.g. journalists, editors and newspaper readers) in particular activity patterns, which are cognitively, socially and culturally constituted, and that produces more than just linguistic meanings.

Already the pioneers of news value research noticed the interaction between cognitively inspired value judgments about events and the discursive construction of these events in news discourse according to one’s perceptions, when they wrote down the following pattern of thought: “1. The more events satisfy the criteria mentioned, the more likely that they will be registered as news (selection). 2. Once a news item has been selected what makes it newsworthy according to the factors will be accentuated (distortion). 3. Both the process of selection and the process of distortion will take place at all steps in the chain from event to reader (replication)” (Galtung & Ruge 1965: 71; italics in original). The latter statement means that not only newsworkers have internalized values which are constructed in the text they produce, but also the readers have preconceived values with which they approach texts and which not only determines their decision to read a newspaper article but also their focus or perspective. For some readers, it is not a problem that journalists write about Kenyan people in terms of tribes. But for others, one reference to tribe might be like a red rag to a bull.

In reaction to a paper about contrastive news discourse analysis I wrote on the basis of this research, one anonymous reviewer suggested “to draw on news values to interpret findings, in addition to drawing on ideology”, as if news values are not ideological. When news values are
seen as linguistic-pragmatic operational tools which journalists use, know, and construct, they cannot be but ideological. Passing over the fact that news values also play a role in journalistic identity (Cotter 2010: 87) and their occupational ideology (Deuze 2004), what else makes them ideological is their audience-dependence. They cannot be detached from the (implied) readership that journalists and editors have in mind when they make news. They are always about presumptions and presuppositions. From my linguistic-pragmatic perspective, news values are part of newsworkers’ professional vision and their discursive constructions.

3.2.1.2. From timeliness to negativity: A critical overview
After the largely theoretical discussion of news values, it is time for some illustrations. This will be done by means of the newspaper extracts in examples (16) and (17) and figures 11 and 12.

16) SUSWA, Kenya — At the sound of the copter blades, a thousand Masai tribesmen crane their necks upward. It is as if their savior is dropping from the sky. "Railaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaal!" they yell. The tribesmen turn into a stampede, hollering and poking their gnarled wooden clubs in the air. An enormous cloud of dust swallows the copter as it lands. Out comes Raila Odinga, one of Kenya's most flamboyant politicians, a man who when he is not buzzing over the savannah in a helicopter is being chauffeured around in a red Hummer, who favors purple suits, whose son's name is Fidel Castro and who may very well become Kenya's next president. (NYT_In helicopter or hummer, Kenya contender dazzles_22/12/2007)

17) Kenya: 13 Dead in Brutal Attack Linked to Land Dispute
Thirteen people were burned alive or hacked to death Monday in an attack blamed on a land dispute, the first major eruption of violence since a power-sharing agreement was forged last week to end Kenya's post-election crisis. The attack in the village of Embakasi in Kenya's fertile Rift Valley, about 300 miles northwest of Nairobi, illustrated that land conflicts exacerbated by the political fight are still boiling.
Kenya's presidential election on Dec. 27 unleashed weeks of bloodshed that killed more than 1,000 people, exposing divisions over land and resentment toward President Mwai Kibaki's Kikuyu ethnic group. The 13 dead included six children, police said. (WP_13 dead in brutal attack linked to land dispute_04/03/2008)
12 killed as militia raid villages

By GEORGE OMONSO
and BARNABAS BII

Twelve people were killed when militiamen at-
tacked two villages west of Kitale Town yester-
day. Among the dead were four children.
Police said five of the victims were burnt alive
inside a house, while four others were shot dead
during the raid 25km from the town.
The other three had their heads chopped off.
Six people were wounded and taken to Kitale
District Hospital for treatment.
Four of those who were burnt alive were rela-
tives of a Kenya Police Reservist identified as Mr

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Figure 11: Newspaper article to compare with example (17), published in Daily Nation on 4 March 2008 (front-page)
In selectively drawing on the literature about news values or the (often informal) rules of newsworthiness, the following factors may be regarded as being significant. Note that some of the presented news values show resemblances and cannot always be clearly separated.

*Timeliness* refers to the time and the timespan of a news event, ideally short-lived and clearly delineated. Recent events are favored. If not, recency is constructed in the news discourse. The moment when the information reaches the newsroom is also important. It has to come at the right time in the production cycle of newspapers or, as Allan puts it, preference is given to events “which can be easily monitored as they unfold in relation to institutional constraints and pressures” (2010: 73). Events occurring during the night or in the morning do not come at a welcome moment for morning newspapers, as afternoon happenings are inopportune for evening newspapers. Timeliness also means that particular seasonal events, such as Christmas, are newsworthy. In (16), which is an extract from one of the first newspaper articles in the NYT about the 2007 Kenyan elections, the upcoming elections can be seen as the seasonal event...
which legitimates the article. Elections constitute a cyclical theme. Typically, prior to any elections, stories are written about the campaign of the main political parties and contenders.

**Proximity** has to do with how close an event is to the readers and whether there is an affinity with the community the newspaper targets or the nation in which it is based. It can pertain to geographical, cultural, political or still another kind of nearness. For instance, between the UK and Kenya there is a historical relationship. As a colony, the East-African country was part of the British Empire. This makes Kenya one of the focal countries of British foreign news. But Kenya also frequently features in US newspapers. One reason is that it is an English-speaking country, which implies a linguistic proximity. Another explanation can be found in geopolitics, as Kenya is an ally of the US in the war on terror. Furthermore, the diaspora of Kenyans living in the UK and the US creates a kind of proximity.

**Consonance** is the next factor of, *i.e.* the extent to which information can be seen (or can be constructed) to fit in with journalists’ and readers’ worldviews, stereotypes, mental scripts or frames. After all, it is recommended that what is reported is familiar, recognizable and understandable, so that the readers can easily process and interpret the news. In example (16), a typical exotic scene is depicted with a archetypical (some would say derogatory) portrait of the Maasai as primitive tribesmen with their gnarled clubs, (presumably) consonant with ‘western’ (NYT) readers’ stereotypes and their preconceived view of African society and politics, where tribal chiefs are worshipped as big men. Another aspect of consonance is shown in (17). The ‘world in brief’ report illustrates that journalists or editors often like to fall back on pre-existing frames of interpretation. Instead of naming the perpetrators of the violence, *viz.* the Sabaot Land Defence Force (see figure 11 where it is explicitly named), the report exclusively focuses on the victims, with which readers are thought to identify more easily than with cruel radicals. Note the passive voice of the opening sentence. However, this strategy distorts the explanation of the events, which are immediately linked to previous post-election violence, while it is, in fact, unrelated to the elections. In reality, the revenge attacks were the result of an intracommunal settlement, related to long-drawn out regional conflict. The article in the DN clearly states that: “All those killed were members of the Saboat community who live on the TransNzoia/Mt Elgon boundary”, *i.e.* the same community as the attackers. Since the frame of the post-election violence was available and still fresh in memory, it was readily used, even if it gives rise to a wrong interpretation, leading to a distortion of the situation.

**Relevance** is a related notion. It is about interest and pertinence to the readers. If a discursive, journalistic choice is important and interesting for the reader, it can be considered to be relevant (Van Dijk 1984: 213). Van Dijk names the headline, the lead, the pyramidal information structure, the order and size of topics as typical ‘relevance structures’ in newspaper texts. However, I disagree that modern-day headlines express the most important topic of the news
article “according to the journalist/newspaper” (*ibid*.). Rather, headlines have become marketing means to attract attention. Seldom do they fully cover the content of the newspaper article and often they are designed by a specialized editor in view of their catchiness. What they can be, Dor (2003) indicates, is ‘relevance optimizers’ in the technical pragmatic sense of the word, theorized by Sperber and Wilson (1995; see also Ifantidou 2009). Relevance also comes into play when events are seen to impinge on the audience’s lives and experiences. What is selected from the continuous flow of information to become news in the format of a newspaper report depends on the relevance of the informational item (or what is deemed to be relevant by newsworkers) for a majority of the implied readership. Allan (2010) speaks of a ‘sense of relevancy’ that informs news production. Indeed, in my conversations with journalists about their practice, they often spontaneously brought up relevance as an explanation of their choices. Then foreign desk editor at *The Nation* Wycliffe Asalwa, for instance, said: “When I go through the wire stories, I always ask myself what will interest our reader. The news should not only interest the local Kenyan, because we are also serving international readers”.

The news values of relevance has an ambiguous status. It can either be treated as a rule of thumb “for judging the news value of any event, issue or personality” (Brookes *et al.* 2005: 5) or still as a pervasive principle operating on and interacting with the news values in the selection and entextualization of news (Harcup 2004: 38). For instance, international news stories could be said to be more relevant to the readership of a newspaper, when there is some kind of connection, when there are cultural reference points or when the geographical distance is not too large. On a completely different level, relevance can even be an essential principle of cognition and communication (Grice 1989, Sperber & Wilson 1995). In such a view the different news values would be seen as elements of relevance. Thus it can be asked why it is relevant in (16) to mention that Odinga’s son is called Fidel Castro. One possible explanation is that this name with its connotations and associations is well-known to the American readers. Another is that it is presumed to be relevant for the readers to get an impression about what kind of person Odinga is. Or maybe, it was thought to whet people’s curiosity.

*Impact* is also linked with the previous news values. When judging the newsworthiness of an event, newsworkers always assess its effects or consequences. Events that impact on society or people’s lives more easily make it into the news than trivial, inconsequential events. In this respect, it could be asked why the DN pictured on its front-page the Odinga family on holiday at the Kenyan coast (see figure 12). However, at that time the image came as a strong signal with several implications. It can be argued to impact both on Kenyan society in general and the economically important tourism sector, because with this trip Odinga showed that calm had

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56 Personal interview with Wycliffe Asalwa on 20 November 2008.
returned to Kenya, that people should not consider fighting for him anymore and that it is safe to go on holiday in the popular safari-and-beach country.

Prominence is another news value, which was touched upon above when discussing the newspaper report about the demotion of High Court Registrar Meoli (see 3.2.1.1). In that case, prominence paired with a focus on persons or personalization, which highlights the human (interest) aspects of an event. The article from which (16) is taken, is not so much about the election campaign as it is about the person of Odinga. As clearly follows from different stylebooks, training guides or textbooks, from starters, journalists are educated to focus on human beings. However, not only members of the elite can lend an event prominence, also the high status of organizations, institutions or elite nations matters. For instance, the information about the atrocities reported in figure 11 derives from ‘the police’, a credible and authoritative institution with enough prominence. Further in the article the boss of the regional Criminal Investigations Department, two local MPs and the mayor of Kitale are quoted, all prominent people. Adding to the newsworthiness of Odinga’s weekend off in figure 12 is his stay in a well-known, elitist resort at the famous Diani beach, 30 kilometers south of Mombasa.

Novelty is the next news value. It reveals a journalistic preference for strange, unexpected, extraordinary, extravagant or – in negative contexts – outrageous events. For American readers a presidential candidate flying around to convince voters all over the country is not strange and extraordinary, but the exotic scene depicted in (16) is. Totally different, but inspired by the same overarching news value, is the outrageousness of the brutal attacks, described in (17). The same events are framed as unexpected and aberrant by the DN in figure 11. A raid by definition comes unexpectedly. This news value also accounts for descriptions of Kenya as a safe haven of peace (recall examples 11-14), which discursively constructs a kind of novelty and makes the reported crisis all the more newsworthy.

Continuity is another news value which refers to the fact that once a country or topic gets into the news, it can more easily stay in the news. Once a story is out it can be followed up. Before the post-election crisis, Kenya only sporadically made it into the world news pages of American newspapers, but after the crisis Kenya has regularly been in and out the news due to continuity.

Composition as news value means that the whole world must be more or less equally covered in the international news section. No journalist or editor will confirm that they have to include every day news from all major continents, but the world news section of, say American newspapers, will never only consist of news from Europe. Newspaper makers strive for maximal dispersion, so some events can be casually turned into a newspaper article for only for compositional reasons.

Finally, negativity is a weighty news value. Newsworkers often show a tendency towards negativity. If events are not overly negative, they can be dramatized to be more negative. Even
when events are clearly negative in themselves, as in (17), the most spectacular or tragic aspects will be embroidered. Both the Kenyan and the American newspaper mention cold-blooded killings, people burnt alive and chopped-off heads. Cynically, since these horrors were so shocking in the eyes of their respective publics, it made the events all the more newsworthy. For many, this would be an inconvenient truth, but Jeffrey Gettleman, East Africa correspondent of the NYT, assured me that “negative news sells”. In a discussion about information selection, journalistic instincts and topic determination I asked his opinion about the negativity of African news. Gettleman replied that “in Africa a big theme is conflict” (war, hunger, natural disaster), in short “any stories where there's large numbers of people in conflict that results in death and displacement and turmoil and economic damage that's gonna be an important story”. Later he admitted that he is sometimes criticized for not writing more positive stories, but “that's not our job, our job isn't to write positive or negative stories [...] we do not necessarily look for stories that are depressing and about conflict, but you don't want to avoid doing a really hard-hitting important story to do some light fluffy thing; you don't want to avoid the hard topics” (remember this quote for 8.1.1.2). With regard to the news value of negativity, conflict has a double meaning. It can refer, as in Gettleman’s words, to conflict situations in the world. Or it can it can pertain to opposing voices. Under the pretext of being balanced, journalists often prefer to oppose different views and parties, whether or not these are genuine, acceptable or veracious.

Often, news values can also be inferred from the non-selection of news. So, I asked myself the question why the WP and also the Belgian DM (but one day later, though with the same distortion, linking it to the post-election crisis58) chose to bring that news, contrary to the other four ‘western’ newspapers under study. On the same day, the NYT, for instance, made a portrait of, oh yes, Raila Odinga who went from stern opposition leader to PM hopeful (NYT_Kenyan opposition leader says foreign pressure must continue_04/03/2008). It is sad, but every day there are killings somewhere in the world. A quick search in the archives of Reuters and AP learnt that two other stories arrived at newsrooms worldwide around the same time when the story ‘Kenya police say 12 killed in land dispute’ (08:07am) was sent through the wire: ‘Six villagers die fighting forest fire in China’ (08:07am) and ‘Chopper carrying UN staff crashes in Nepal, 10 dead’ (08:09). Later that day also a story circulated about the death of 8 people in Armenia and more than 100 injured following election violence there. Yet the Kenya story was picked by the WP and DM to appear in the newspaper. One possible explanation is its negativity and brutality in combination with other news values which made this story at that time for the editorial team more newsworthy than the others.

57 Personal interview with Jeffrey Gettleman on 20 May 2011.
58 See DM_Vijftien doden bij aanval op dorp_05/03/2008 [Fifteen deaths due to attack on village].
It must be reiterated that events in the world do not have to satisfy all news values to become news and that the different news values interact. They can reinforce each other or when some news values are missing, other news values can be salient enough to tip the scale and lead to the writing of a news story. From the previous illustrations, it is also clear that news values function ideologically. For instance, under the influence of the news value of negativity, the violent nature of conflicts may be overemphasized, so that very infrequent violent events may be assumed by the readers to be the norm and non-violent events may be neglected or very important issues not conducive to drama, conflict or personalization may be grossly underreported, so that people’s world view is distorted. Finally, it must be remarked that news values do not wholly determine what will be news. Few practitioners or scholars of journalism would deny the existence or validity of news values, but no serious scholar would consider them the all-determining criteria for news. News is just too chaotic, contextual and contingent (cf. McNair’s notion of news as cultural chaos). There are a lot of other factors that play a role in the production of news. Wu (2007), for instance, found out that influences of trade and the existence of news agencies in the country are important determinants of international news coverage. Newspapers bring more news from countries with which ‘their own nation’ has economic ties and from countries where (regional) news agency offices are located.

3.2.2. The profession of journalism

3.2.2.1. The role of the journalist in society
The news values discussed in the previous section do not constitute an exhaustive list. Bednarek and Caple (2012), for instance, also mention ‘superlativeness’, related to exaggeration and sensationalization, while Allan (2010) includes ‘simplification’. Note that such values tie even more with discursive strategies. Still other decisive factors can be mentioned. Cotter (2010: 70) draws attention to Mencher’s textbook about news reporting, in which he discusses among others ‘necessity’ as a news-decision factor. That is the net result of personal initiative, investigative reporting or an urge to expose certain facts. Mencher talks of a ‘journalism of conscience’, intended to repair, reveal or scrutinize a dysfunctional element in the social system (Mencher 2006: 63). That brings me neatly to the role of the journalist in society.

After the extensive discussion of news and its values, my view on journalism can be cleared out. Obonyo and Nyamboga’s general observation is a good starting point:

“Journalists have one of the most important jobs in any society. Their circumstances differ from country to country. But whatever the situation, all good journalists share a basic mission. They give people the information that they need in order to understand the world around them and to make decisions about their lives” (Obonyo & Nyamboga 2011: 8).
Richardson (2007) criticizes three dominant visions of journalism: journalism as entertainment, journalism as propaganda of the powerful and journalism as a commercial activity. Against these, he poses a view of journalism as a discursive social practice, aimed at providing insights into the world, which I endorse. Moreover, I share the hopeful assumption that “journalism exists to enable citizens to better understand their lives and their position(s) in the world” (Richardson 2007: 7). In the same vein, Heikkilä and colleagues (2010) state that the relevance of journalism for its readers is embedded in the social fabric of their everyday lives. These and the following, sometimes idealistic, assumptions inspired my analyses in chapters 7 and 8.

“The word journalist came into use in 1693 to describe those who wrote about daily doings for the public press”, Rantanen teaches (2009: 3). However, journalists are no longer the hacks they were in the seventeenth century. Nowadays, their profession – or should I say craft\(^{59}\) – has become much more complex and they all incorporate different roles. First of all, journalists are information processors, gatekeepers and sense-makers. They decide what information will be distributed as news, how this information will be packaged and interpreted. Of course, journalists are not academics. They do not have years to dig into a topic. Instead, they have to produce their daily articles and actually respect their deadlines, working within the restrictions of their news organizations and other contextual limitations. Meanwhile, they must know as much as possible about as much as possible. Above all, they must aim at making their texts appealing to a large audience. Yet their job is not free of engagement. They are constantly making connections, thinking ahead and anticipating when they write news stories and interpret events to make them comprehensible to the audience. In that regard, they could be seen not only as opinionators, but also as discourse guides. For McGarry, “it is well established that the press is an effective tool for both the formation and maintenance of public opinion” (1991: 137). Newspapers not only determine what is talked about in the public sphere, as they set the agenda, but they also influence how people talk about the issues of the day, as they direct discourse and debate. Hallin summarizes that “[t]he nation’s political agenda, its stock of social knowledge, its style of political discussion, all are shaped by the news media” (2000: 234).

By way of cluster analysis on the basis of survey responses of 1800 journalists from 18 countries Hanitzsch (2011) distilled four ‘global professional milieus of journalism’. Journalists can be ‘populist disseminators’, ‘detached watchdogs’, ‘critical change agents’ or ‘opportunist facilitators’. (i) The populist disseminator is an audience writer. These journalists select interesting topics and write their stories in function of the widest possible audience. They do not consider it their job to be politically correct, to critically scrutinize, to educate or to take an active or participatory role in their reporting, as they just want to spread information with

\(^{59}\) Hallin observes that “[m]any journalists would characterize their job as a craft rather than a profession” (2000: 220) and also Cotter (2010) speaks of a ‘craft ethos’.
popular appeal. (ii) The *detached watchdog* is an impartial, though also slightly indifferent observer, who takes a skeptical and critical stance towards the government and business elites. As watchdogs, they monitor these elites without actively striving for change. Nevertheless, they are predisposed to political information, because such knowledge enables citizens to make informed political decisions. (iii) The *critical change agent* is more radical than the detached watchdog. They have a critical attitude towards the elites and the establishment, complemented by an ‘interventionist impetus’, as they advocate for social change, explicitly want to influence public opinion and aim at setting the political agenda. Besides, they are eager to encourage their audiences to participate in civic activity and public debate. (iv) Finally, the *opportunist facilitator* is a constructive partner of the government in the process of economic development and political transformation. Journalists in this professional milieu tend to support official policies and like to convey a positive image of political and business leadership, whereas they are not interested in critical scrutiny or audience mobilization.

Hanitzsch (2011) further notes that the detached watchdog is the most prototypical milieu of ‘western’ journalists, while the opportunist facilitator would dominate the journalistic field in developing, transitional or authoritarian countries. However, I have a few doubts about these claims. They need confirmation by larger-scale, follow-up research with more than two African, South-American and Asian countries. Moreover, I believe that journalists can easily change identities or have multiple identities, depending on what they have to write.

In view of the analyses that will follow, two frequently mentioned functions of journalism deserve extra critical attention. The first is the function of the *watchdog*. The second function of journalism as the *Fourth Estate* will be reflected on below. The watchdog role originally came down to the task of monitoring “the full range of state activity, and fearlessly expose abuses of official authority” (Curran 2000: 121). Later this role was expanded to also check on private power bases. Journalists are often claimed to be non-political, non-sectarian, in sum, neutral monitors of the establishment. A suspicion of power belongs to the most important ‘genetic material’ of the journalist, former Dutch correspondent in South Africa Peter Ter Horst is convinced:

>“Without distrust no distance, without distance no independent view on the motives of the ruler. That is how you are supposed to work from the first day you approach the world with bloc note and pen” (2008: 51, my translation).60

I agree that critically scrutinizing a country’s economic or political leadership is a core task of political journalists and foreign correspondents, but I do not think this can be done neutrally. For,

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60 The original citation is: “Tot het belangrijkste genetische materiaal van de journalist behoort het wantrouwen van de macht. Zonder wantrouwen geen afstand, zonder afstand geen onafhankelijke blik op de motieven van de machthebber. Zo hoor je te opereren vanaf de eerste dag dat je met blocnote en pen de wereld tegemoet treedt” (Ter Horst 2008: 51).
journalists always report from particular perspectives and the presentation of information in news is always based on frames of interpretation (see 4.2). Even when journalists try to be independent watchdogs, they are always dependent on the context within which they work, including the news organization, their background knowledge, prior experiences, attitudes, prejudices, the circumstances surrounding the events, their intentions, (presumed or imagined) audience expectations, etc.

Moreover, it must be admitted that journalists constitute “an elite group which itself has close links to other powerful groups and institutions” (Cottle 1998: 36). That does not mean that they cannot be watchdogs, rather that they cannot watch over the establishment in an objective way. In East Africa, Kalyango and Eckler report, “state leaders use the media to positively infuse their authority directly to the people in order to garner public support on issues concerning nation building, unity, peace and poverty alleviation” (2010: 376). Nyamnjoh (2005), too, found that the media often assume a partisan, highly politicized, militant role in Africa. Besides, when journalists are heavily dependent on the government for accreditation and (income) security, their watchdog role is compromised. However, journalists from continents other than Africa, for instance foreign correspondents, also fail to be fully independent and objective watchdogs, even if they try to be detached. Lee et al. (2000: 295) discovered that “the same event may be given distinct media representations by various nations through the prisms of their dominant ideologies as defined by power structures, cultural repertoires and politico-economic interests”. They concluded that “[m]edia domesticate foreign news in the light of their own national interests and cultural assumptions” (Lee et al. 2000: 306). Furthermore, whether in Belgium, in the US or in Kenya, the line between journalism and politics can be easily crossed, as is illustrated by several journalists that became politicians, politicians that became newspaper makers or journalists that became political advisors.

From my conception of news and discourse, it is clear that truly objective news reporting is unattainable, since “[w]riters, editors, and presenters of news select, interpret and present events from particular ideological positions” (Ngonyani 2000: 22). But a perceived degree of objectivity can be reached. So, I would not dismiss the notion of objectivity altogether as a media myth, as do Halloran (1998: 20) or Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007: 6), if only because it belongs to some journalists’ cognition and self-defined professional ideology. Nonetheless, I must agree with the latter that “[t]he concept of objectivity has been so mangled it now is usually used to describe the very problem it was conceived to correct” (ibid.). According to Van Ginneken (1998, 2002), at best a certain intersubjectivity can be reached. He rightly remarks that objectivity also depends on the public, as a notion of objectivity (or even intersubjectivity) is always implicitly related to a view of and a tacit agreement between relevant audiences. “Therefore, what might appear as
‘objectivity’ to Western audiences (all relevant groups agreeing to that point of view), may appear as pure ‘subjectivity’ to non-Western audiences” (Van Ginneken 1998: 43).

Unfortunately, Van Ginneken seems to hold an outdated, generalizing view of audiences as homogeneous blocs, which is incompatible with the multicultural societies that characterize our contemporary global village. News can never be a truly objective representation of reality, nor can it be neutrally interpreted. Readers are differentially and subjectively positioned towards texts and contexts. Van Ginneken states that

“[e]ven if Western journalists and news media did nothing else than objectively observe and neutrally report the social reality in non-Western parts of the world […], this would still inevitably become completely mangled and distorted in the reception process of Western culture, since many of the cultural codes implied in the text (sound, image) about the expressions and behaviour of these peoples would be lost on others” (Van Ginneken 1998: 193).

The context that the reader brings in could be inadequate and provide insufficient or misleading cues, so that the reader could do little more than to decode the news text in his or her own terms (Van Ginneken 2002: 106).

Even when real or complete objectivity is impossible, the cognitive concept of objectivity can be seen to work as a ‘regulative principle’, an ideal that is supposed to apply, even if at the limit it does not (Lichtenberg 2000). In this respect, I am at odds with Van Ginneken (2002: 49) who reasons that the ideal of objectivity implies that objectivity really exists and that it can be reached. On the contrary, an ideal, by definition, is something that is aspired or aimed at, but that cannot be attained. Otherwise, it would not be an ideal. Lichtenberg draws the conclusion that

“To believe in objectivity is not, then, to believe that anyone is objective. My main purpose has been to show that, nevertheless, in so far as we aim to understand the world we cannot get along without assuming both the possibility and value of objectivity. That the questions reporters ask have answers to which people of good will and good sense would, after adequate investigation, agree is the presupposition that we make, and must make, in taking journalism seriously” (Lichtenberg 2000: 252).

Although I do not underwrite all of the arguments that Lichtenberg (2000) makes in defense of objectivity, I tend to believe that objectivity in news making can best be understood as an ideal on the part of the newswriter and as a presupposition for the reader. Even if most academics would reject the notion of objectivity, for journalists it is a useful working hypothesis. Therefore, objectivity should be taken into account in journalism studies, knowing that journalists are unable to objectively tell the truth. The final word is for the Dutch essayist Marc Reugebrink who recently wrote in an opinion article: “A journalist with only a grain of integrity will always
aim at objectivity, but will at the same time always know how far he will inevitably be removed from it” (translation, RC).

Without going into a laborious discussion about truth, which would throw me off track, it can be noted that what has been said about objectivity also holds for the notion of truth. News reporting is not about presenting the readers the absolute truth. Yet a notion of truth can be part of some journalists’ ‘craft ethos’ (Cotter 2010). In this respect, it is instructive to cite Austin:

"consider also for a moment whether the question of truth or falsity is so very objective. We ask: 'Is it a fair statement?', and are the good reasons and good evidence for stating and saying so very different from the good reasons and evidence for performative acts like arguing, warning, and judging? [...] In real life, as opposed to the simple situations envisaged in logical theory, one cannot always answer in a simple manner whether it is true or false” (Austin 1975: 142-143).

Austin adds that “[i]t is essential to realize that ‘true’ and ‘false’, like ‘free’ and ‘unfree’, do not stand for anything simple at all; but only for a general dimension of being a right or proper thing to say as opposed to a wrong thing, in these circumstances, to this audience, for these purposes and with these intentions” (1975: 145). So, the facts that are reported in ‘hard news’ reports depend on events themselves, on how journalists see the events and on their knowledge of the events, on their purposes and intentions, on physical constraints, in short, on the whole context within which they write their news stories, when keeping a target audience in mind (flash forward to 4.1.1.1). However, that may not hold us back from critically scrutinizing news discourse. “The questions of whether a taken-for-granted proposition helps produce or reproduce relations of domination is independent of judgements about its truth or falsity” (Fairclough 1995: 15). This does not mean that critical analysis must be indifferent to questions of truth. It is possible to compare and evaluate representations of reality without aiming at an ultimate truth, but by assessing their relative (un)truthfulness, while, as an analyst, being conscious of your own subjectivity and point of view. So, I concur with Fairclough that “[t]ruth is a slippery business, but abandoning it altogether is surely perverse” (1995: 47).

Even though journalistic produce is not truly objective, it is useful and influential, since journalism affects “the quality of our lives, our thoughts, and our culture” (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007: 2). As Pape and Featherstone formulate it, “news is not just about people, it affects people. News impacts on their lives, even if, in the case of the rush hour motorists, it means something as simple as changing their route to avoid traffic hold-ups” (2005: 16). That is why I assumed that news media have an effect on people’s cognition as well as their actions. “Mass media

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61 The original quote came from the opinion article ‘Het lijken wel schrijvers, die wetenschappers! Waarom we journalisten soms niet moeten geloven’ [They seem to be writers, those scientists! Why we sometimes don't have to believe journalists] (DS, Tuesday 10 January 2012, p. 22): “Een journalist met ook maar een greintje integriteit zal altijd naar die objectiviteit streven, maar ook altijd weten hoever hij er noodgedwongen van verwijderd blijft”.

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greatly influence how people make sense of even the most basic features of their societies” (Lull 2000: 19).

About the sociocognitive effects of newspapers, McGarry assures that

“it is well established that the press is an effective tool for both the formation and maintenance of public opinion. By manipulating structures of language, however, subtly and/or unconsciously, writers and editors ‘slant’ coverage of events to achieve a desired effect in the mind of the reader. This subtle manipulation of language by the press can be a significant factor in either the continuation or amelioration of conflict” (McGarry 1991: 137).

Prudently, Halloran argues that news media such as newspapers do not have direct effects, neither do they have a unilinear influence on the audience. But they do have an influence that is exercised in complex ways:

“The media operate at societal levels by creating a social ethos and climates of opinion. They may provide meanings, confer status by approving and disapproving, offer models for identification, define problems, suggest remedies, offer selected guidelines, and so on. They may effectively control the social and political dialogue by setting the agenda, ordering priorities, and inviting contributors to participate” (Halloran 1998: 17-18).

According to active audience theory, the media are merely a tool or resource which people can use, to varying degrees, to help them make sense of current events (Croteau & Hoynes 1997).

Harris (2009) also understands media consumption and effects in cognitive terms, but he goes one step further. He not only believes that news media affect people’s minds, but that they also have an influence on their actions, because “they give us ideas, change our attitudes, tell us what the world is like [so that these] mind constructions (i.e., our perceived reality) then become the framework around which we interpret the totality of experience” (Harris 2009: 370). When the news media are a major basis for acquiring knowledge about the world, foreign news reports can be seen as a window to the world. Indeed, Thompson (1990) noted that the rise of mass circulation newspapers has had a profound impact on people’s modes of experience and patterns of interaction:

For most people today, the knowledge we have of events which take place beyond our immediate social milieu is a knowledge largely derived from our reception of mass-mediated symbolic forms. The knowledge we have of political leaders and their policies, for instance, is a knowledge derived largely from newspapers, radio and television, and the ways in which we participate in the institutionalized system of political power are deeply affected by the knowledge so derived. Similarly, our experience of events which take place in contexts that are spatially and temporally remote, from strikes and demonstrations to massacres and wars, is an experience largely mediated by the institutions of mass communication” (Thompson 1990: 216).

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62 One reviewer of this thesis remarked about the foregoing: “I agree, but that is how news and news media function in our western global village”. To me, the latter phrase is a *contradictio in terminis*. I can attest that news and journalism also function that way in the urban centers of Kenya.
The same thought is purported by Allan when he observed that journalists are pre-eminent storytellers of modern society whose “accounts shape in decisive ways our perceptions of the ‘world out there’ beyond our immediate experience” (2010: 94). Offenhäußer also saw the news media as “ein Ort der Weltvergewisserung, für viele Menschen geradezu ein monopolarer Zugang zur Welt” (1999: 78).63

From all this, it can be concluded that news media may not only influence how people think but also how they (inter)act on the basis of their beliefs, ideas and preconceptions. If newspaper readers are systematically confronted with news reports about Kenyans described as violent or primitive tribespeople, as in examples (18) and (19), while they never get to read reports that highlight other aspects of Kenya, they easily might get a view of the country and its people that does not correspond to reality.

18) **Tribal gangs burned homes** and tea plantations in Kenya’s Rift Valley on Saturday, sending residents fleeing with all they could carry, despite an agreement between feuding politicians to try to end weeks of post-election bloodshed. (WP_Gangs torch homes, plantations_03/02/2008)

19) Some of Kenya’s best distance runners funded, organised and commanded **tribal gangs** involved in some of the worst violence in the country last month, according to witnesses in the Rift Valley town of Eldoret. (TI_Kenyan athletes accused of organising violence in political tribal clashes_21/02/2008)

Hypothetically, if Britons or Americans started to see Kenyans as ruthless killers at the instigation of the newspapers they read, this could affect their relationship with their Kenyan immigrant neighbors or colleagues. Newspaper coverage not only has the potential to reinforce existing prejudices, it can also influence the way people behave towards each other (e.g. fellow citizens of African descent). Example (19), for instance, is a clear case of journalistic distortion through the combination of selective use of sources and the discursive strategy of generalization, which often occurs when research reports are used as an information source. The information of Kenyan athletes as possible sponsors or commanders of violence fills one paragraph on page 16 of a circumspect and well-researched International Crisis Group report where different causes and different interpretations of localized conflicts are detailed.64 It only mentions one former athlete and army-corporal, Lucas Sang, who competed in the 1988 Olympics and who, according to witnesses, speaking out at Crisis Group interviews, died on the outskirts of Eldoret, when he was commanding a Kalenjin raiding party. The way this is turned into news could suggest for some readers that all Kenyan athletes were involved in the violence, while, in fact, no evidence

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63 This citation can be freely translated as: the media are “a place where the world can be discovered, for many people they are an almost exclusive access to the world”.

has been found up to date that any of the current, well-known international stars of the athletics circuit was involved. Yet they were suddenly cast into a bad light.

The second issue that begs for some reflection is the democratic role of journalists. It must be dealt with here from a theoretical perspective, because democratic arguments were regularly appealed to by the Kenyan journalists who I interviewed to explain the discursive and journalistic choices. Idealistically, Kovach and Rosenstiel believe that “[j]ournalism provides something unique to a culture: independent, reliable, accurate, and comprehensive information that citizens require to be free” (2007: 3). The often voiced basic assumption is summarized by Atton and Wickenden:

“[I]n modern democracies there are expectations of the media to facilitate democracy through providing pluralistic information from which informed choices can be made and debates can take place” (2005: 347).

Journalism as the Fourth Estate is a view that has also taken root in African journalism studies. Kalyango and Eckler, for instance, are convinced that “the professional role of the news media is to advance democratic governance and the welfare of society” (2010: 369). Obonyo and Nyamboga (2011), too, regard the Kenyan news media as open fora for democratic debate and critical information provision. The question about media and democracy is a bit like a vicious circle. Democracy requires freedom of speech as well as press freedom. Citizens need to have access to accurate and balanced information in order to make well-informed choices and be able to participate in society and politics. Free and independent media require a democratic form of government to flourish.

A few more comments can be made with regard to this idealist view on the news media. First, media and society cannot be easily separated from each other. They hang together and interact. That is why Allan preferred the notion of news culture (see 3.1.2.2). Consequently, the news media “can only be as democratic, free and pluralistic as the society within which they exist” (Hochheimer 1997: 237). If, for instance in Kenya, society is corrupt from top to bottom, it is no surprise that corruption also occurs in the Kenyan media (Khamisi 2011: 264).65 Second, being a ‘democratic journalist’ is not just about being balanced for the sake of being balanced, offering different voices a platform for their ideas. Rather, it means being honest, realistic, attentive, sensitive, incorruptible and useful for the community of readers. As editor Asalwa put it, “I try to put myself in the shoes of our readers, because when I sit here, I'm not serving myself, I'm serving the reader”66 (see also the comments below about journalists’ social responsibility). In addition, Atton and Wickenden rightly remark that “democratic media depend also on what messages they allow sources to communicate” (2005: 347). If there is a general scientific

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65 This is quite a strong statement out of the blue. It will be better explained in 5.2.1.2.
66 Personal interview with Wycliffe Asalwa on 20 November 2008.
consensus about climate change caused by human activity, then it would not be good journalism simply to give voice to opponents of climate change in a newspaper article about the disastrous consequences of climate change in Kenya, just for the sake of argument, to be supposedly balanced and offer pluralistic information.

The most important caveat with relation to the news media’s role in a democracy is that it always has to be kept in mind that there are different conceptions and different forms of democracy. When talking about the democratic role of the news media, citizens, newsworkers and scholars alike often assume that everybody has the same understanding of democracy, whereas, as a matter of fact, it often functions as an empty signifier. People know what the word means and its meaning is vague or polyvalent enough to be appropriate in different discourses and all kinds of discussions. However, democracy in practice can be filled out in different ways. Moreover, the political noun comes with all kinds of adjectives. Some countries with a dictatorial-like regime call themselves ‘democratic republic’ (Congo), others ‘non-party democracy’ (Uganda). Still others hold democratic elections, but mess up the tallying process (Kenya). Different models of democracy yield different kinds of journalism (Strömbäck 2005).

Liberal theories of democracy are pervasive. According to such conceptualizations, the prerequisite for the concrete realization of democracy lies in a number of institutional guarantees.

“These guarantees include (1) freedom to form and join organisations, be they political parties, social movements, or civic, professional and welfare associations; (2) freedom of expression and movement; (3) universal adult suffrage; (4) eligibility, in principle, of any citizen to seek public office; (5) right of political leaders to compete freely for support and votes; (6) existence of alternative sources of information; (7) free, fair and competitive elections; (8) accountable governmental decision-making institutions; (9) freedom of elected officials from overriding opposition from unelected officials” (Nasong’o & Murunga 2007: 4).

In any country in the world, it is hard to satisfy all of these prerequisites. Therefore, Nasong’o and Murunga (ibid.) notice that “[t]he more a country approximates these institutional guarantees, the more democratic it is”. With regard to Africa in particular, Ake (1996) pinned down four criteria for what he thought would be the ideal democracy on the African continent. First, it has to be a democracy in which people have some real decision-making power over and above the formal consent of electoral choice. This implies among others a powerful, though independent legislature and a decentralization of sociopolitical power to local democratic formations. Second, it has to be a social democracy that places emphasis on social, political and economic rights and that invests in the improvement of people’s health, education and capacity, so that they can participate effectively. Third, it has to be a democracy that lends as much weight to collective rights as it does to individual rights. This means it has to equally recognize nationalities, subnationalities, and ethnic communities as social formations that can express and fulfill themselves in freedom, and thus grants them rights to political and economic participation.
Fourth, it has to be a democracy of inclusion, pursuing a policy that engenders inclusive participation and equitable access to state resources and ensures special representation in legislatures of mass organizations, especially the youth, labor movement and women’s groups, which are usually marginalized but without whose active participation there is unlikely to be democracy or development. Here, it must also be noted that democracy is not an exclusively ‘western’ affair.

“While present understandings of democracy [in Africa] have been influenced by new ideas coming from elsewhere, they have been equally shaped by indigenous practices existing before the colonial period” (Mwangola 2007: 132).

Mwangola (2007) argued that several indigenous political systems were organized around certain principles of democratic governance avant la lettre. In his anthropological book Facing Mount Kenya founding father Jomo Kenyatta recounted the itwika revolution, which caused an old Gikuyu king to abdicate, after which a non-autocratic, non-military agricultural society was established with a constitution that incorporated several values which resemble some of those that characterize modern-day democracies. Afterwards the word itwika came to be associated with the changing of government and the regular inauguration of a new generation of political leadership.

For democracy in Africa to work, in the eyes of Nyamnjoh (2005), liberal democratic values must be married with cultural, historical, indigenous realities. Nyamnjoh extends this argument to journalism. He finds that the news media should be informed by and aimed at local African social, political and economic realities instead of blindly following principles that do not correspond to their own and their audience’s life world. Otherwise, you get a “democracy hardly informed by articulations of personhood and agency in Africa, and media whose professional values are not in tune with the expectations of those they purport to serve” (Nyamnjoh 2005: 2). In other words, a “democracy or journalism that focuses too narrowly on the individual and is insensitive to the centrality of group and community interests is likely to impair and frustrate the very recognition and representation it celebrates” (Nyamnjoh 2009b: 17). I believe Nyamnjoh is right to point out this tension between professionalism and cultural belonging, which is also apparent in the Kenyan news media. On the one hand, their profession requires Kenyan journalists to be impartial and neutral; on the other hand, the feelings of solidarity with their ethnic community are deeply ingrained. This was clearly voiced by Agina and Onyango in 7.3.2.3. As Nyamnjoh puts it,

“Under liberal democracy where the individual is perceived and treated as an autonomous agent, and where primary solidarities and cultural identities are discouraged in favour of a national citizenship and culture, journalism is expected to be disinterested, objective, balanced and fair in gathering, processing and disseminating news and information. [...] But under popular notions of democracy where emphasis is on interdependence and competing cultural solidarities are provided for, journalists and the media are under constant internal
and external pressure to promote the interests of the various groups competing for recognition and representation” (Nyamnjoh 2009b: 20).

There is only two errors in his reasoning. Nyamnjoh seems to assume that there is only one kind of liberal democracy, a western-style one, which is clearly defined, and that there is the one-best way of doing journalism. This is not the case. I believe there are abstract ‘near universal standards’ for good journalism, like writing compellingly, double-checking of information, serving the community of readers. The latter means that, as a journalist, you work in the service of your audience. If you write for a national newspaper, then the whole multi-ethnic nation is the community that you are to serve. But such ‘near universal standards’ are not uniform. Journalists must concretize them in the contexts in which they work.

Against the existing liberal theories of the media-democracy nexus, Curran proposes an alternative democratic media system that is best explained in his own words.

“A democratic system needs [...] to have a well-developed, specialist media tier, serving differentiated audiences, which enables different social groups to debate issues of social identity, group interest, political strategy and normative understanding on their own terms. [...] This specialist tier also has a secondary democratic purpose of enhancing the political effectiveness of different social groups. It should include media that assist collective organizations to recruit support; provide an internal channel of communication and debate for their members; and transmit their concerns and policy proposals to a wider public. In other words, the representative role of the media includes helping civil society to exert influence on the governmental system.

Above this specialist sector is a general media sector, reaching heterogeneous publics. This should be organized in a way that enables different groups in society to come together and engage in a reciprocal debate. This should be staged in a way that promotes mutual understanding, and furthers a common search for solutions. However, by offering an open public dialogue, this sector should also help people to identify adequately their self-interest, and weigh this in the balance in relation to competing definitions of the common good. In addition, this general media sector should facilitate democratic procedures for defining agreed aims and regulating conflict” (Curran 2000: 141).

Thus, according to Curran, democratic news media should try to empower people by enabling them to explore where their personal and collective interests lie. In addition, it should foster sectional solidarities and assist the functioning of organizations necessary for effective political representation. It should also sustain vigilant scrutiny of government and other (e.g. economic or religious) centers of power. Finally, it should aim at creating the conditions for real societal compromise based on an open working through of differences rather than a contrived consensus on the basis of elite dominance.

These democratic ideas resound in Kovach and Rosenstiel’s elements of journalism. They list ten principles for quality journalism that journalists are supposed to agree on and that citizens have a right to expect: (1) Journalism’s first obligation is to the truth; (2) Its first loyalty is to citizens; (3) Its essence is a discipline of verification; (4) Its practitioners must maintain an
independence from those they cover; (5) It must serve as an independent monitor of power; (6) It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise; (7) It must strive to make the significant interesting and relevant; (8) It must keep the news comprehensive and in proportion; (9) Its practitioners have an obligation to exercise their personal conscience; (10) Citizens, too, have rights and responsibilities when it comes to the news, i.e. they have the duty to set aside prejudice and fairly judge the work of journalists on the basis of whether it provides them the information they require to live their lives and take part in society (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007).

From the previous discussion, it follows that journalists have a social responsibility. Like Nyamnjoh, I see “journalists as socially and politically shaped beings who are part and parcel of the cultural communities in which they pursue their profession” (2009b: 11). Notwithstanding the above critical comments, I do not support Cottle’s view:

“The romanticised image of news workers as independent watchdogs challenging government and powerful vested interests may say more about the profession’s self-projected image than what remains for the most part a highly bureaucratic and less than critical professional practice” (Cottle 1998: 35).

Some scholars seem to suggest that editors just come to their desks to do their daily jobs and correspondents go out in the field free of engagement (e.g. Deuze 2004, Machin 2008). Such a view does not accord with my experiences. Most of the foreign desk editors, Kenyan journalists or foreign correspondents that I met spontaneously expressed a feeling of social responsibility. The chief news editor at the ST, Ben Agina, told me that “as a journalist you must have social responsibility”.67 Also the political journalist David Mugonyi was clear:

“The basic principle we're here for is to inform the public of what is happening, not only in their environment or in Kenya but from all over the world, because all these people make decisions best by the information they get”.68

Similarly, the DM chief of the foreign desk, Koen Vidal confirmed that journalists have a social responsibility, i.e. they have “the responsibility to inform the public as well as possible and to report on issues of interest”.69

However, admittedly, one interviewee distanced himself in a way from the journalist’s social role. According to Times correspondent Tristan McConnell, journalism is about

“the ability to tell what's gonna incite an editor, because that's what it's really about; it's not necessarily about what the readers want, it's about what your editor wants, because the editors are the filters between you and the readers, so I'm really not thinking about the reader; I'm thinking about my editors at the foreign desk in the editor's office in London; what do they want and I trust that they know what the readers want because I don't

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67 Personal interview with Ben Agina on 22 November 2008.
68 Personal interview with David Mugonyi on 20 November 2008.
69 Personal interview with Koen Vidal on 17 October 2008.
interact directly interact with the readers I’m here in Africa and they’re somewhere in London or wherever”.70

In this case, the editor might (or might not) feel socially responsible. Nevertheless, I side with Broere (2004: 9), who writes that it is a privilege to be a journalist, because journalists actively contribute to society and have a certain responsibility for it. This is in line with the findings of Beam and colleagues (2009) that journalists remain strongly committed to informing the public and to serving the public interest. Accordingly, the Dutch journalist and commentator Joris Luyendijk said in a debate about ‘The journalist of the future’ that, in his opinion, “a quality newspaper is a newspaper where people work who could earn a lot more money elsewhere, but who do this lousy job (literally, dog’s job) out of engagement (or involvement) and curiosity”.71

3.2.2.2. What journalists say and what they write: Discourse of and about news
To close this theoretical introduction into news, a few comments can be made about news discourse to warm up for the following chapter. Content and language of news are closely knit together. In Vološinov’s words, the “theme of an ideological sign and the form of an ideological sign are inextricably bound together and are separable only in the abstract” (1986: 22). That is why, for journalists, “decision-making about news content cannot be isolated from decisions about news language, or vice versa” (Bell 1991: 37). In the research reported here I will treat them both together in a large-scale analysis of news.

However, note that the expression news discourse involves a polysemic ambiguity, which I do not want to resolve, because it adds to its signifying power. News discourse can refer to three things. It can mean the discourse of the news under investigation, viz. the Kenyan post-election crisis, thus referring to the language used in the separate newspaper texts. But news discourse can also be discourse about the news. On a meta-level it then refers to language or talk about news stories. The reflections of Agina, Mugonyi, Vidal and McConnell above are exemplary, but also the whole of this thesis can be considered as a news discourse in that sense. Thirdly, as news is often about verbal instead of non-verbal actions, news discourse can also apply to discourse that is recontextualized in the format of a newspaper article. This can be the discourse of politicians, of violators or victims, of street witnesses, of the international community, etc. This sense of news discourse is referred to as ‘embedding’ by Bell (1991: 53).

The way news reports are written is crucial for their meanings. However, as has been argued, the generation of meaning is an interactive process between writer and reader. Readers can derive various meanings on the basis of the language used in newspaper reports, depending on

70 Personal interview with Tristan McConnel on 18 May 2011.
71 Quote picked up at the debate ‘De journalist van de toekomst’ at Vooruit in Gent on 31 March 2010. Compare to Pape and Featherstone’s “Reporting is foot-slogging hard work with little pay, yet, despite this, good reporters keep turning up enthusiastic, self-motivated and determined” (2005: 179).
their intentions and expectations, background knowledge, attitudes, ideology, etc. That is why news reporting as well as analyses thereof will always carry the potential to spark off criticism. This does not make the study of meanings in news through contrastive discourse analysis an idle exercise. Although readings may vary and any reading is a product of an interface between the properties of the discourse and the interpretative resources and practices which the interpreter brings to bear upon it, the range of potential interpretations is always constrained and delimited by the language used. Therefore, “text analysis [or rather the analysis of discourse, RC] remains a central element of media analysis, though it needs to be complemented by analysis of text reception as well as by analysis of text production” (Fairclough 1995: 16). That is exactly what I have tried to do in this research by taking opinions of journalists and reader reactions into account when analyzing the news discourse about the post-election crisis.

When Bakhtin (1981) wrote that language is present to the novelist only as something stratified and heteroglot, this is also true in a way for the journalist, who, just as Bakhtin’s novelist, operates in a heterogeneous environment. So, he is also always aware that his language is not self-evident, not incontestable; it is a language that must be championed, purified and motivated, as Bakhtin put it. The journalistic text shares with the novel the discursive orientation that it is “contested, contestable and contesting – for this discourse cannot forget or ignore, either through naïveté or by design, the heteroglossia that surrounds it” (Bakhtin 1981: 332).
4. Context and ideology in journalistic language use

“Zonder context lijkt veel menselijk gedrag onbegrijpelijk, onduidelijk, vreemd of ronduit absurd”.

[“Without context a lot of human behaviour seems incomprehensible, obscure, weird or plainly absurd” (from Peter Vermeulen’s ‘Autism as Context Blindness’)]

Figure 13: Picture by Chris Ojow, published in the *Sunday Nation* on 30 December 2007 (p.28); the caption reads: “Residents of Kibera in Nairobi march to demand speedy announcement of polls results”.

Figure 14: Cartoon by Kham, published in *The Standard* on 2 January 2008 (p.6), capturing the essence of the post-election crisis.
4.1. Context in linguistic pragmatics

4.1.1. The meaning of discursive context

4.1.1.1. Meaning and facts

Two crucial concepts for the analyses in this research, and language use in general, were left largely unexplained. The reason is that the fascinating, intricate and rich notions of context and ideology merit a chapter of their own. Here, I will try to clear out the concept of context and describe how contextualization can be seen to work from a linguistic-pragmatic perspective. After all, in language studies, the concept of context is often used with little critical awareness (Verschueren 1999b: 875; similar remarks are made by Fowler 1996 or Wodak 2007). In the next part of this chapter, a pragmatic definition of ideology will be proposed after which ideology will be related to media representation in the context of the ideology of news.

“Could we define man as the contextualizing animal above all others? Would such a definition perhaps be more basic than, say, homo faber or homo loquens?”, Enkvist asks (1994: 58). Throughout this thesis it is argued that the notion of context is crucial to comprehend (journalistic) language use. Permitting some simplification, Linell states that “understanding is based on relating that which is to be interpreted and understood to something, a set of contextual properties, which is already known or (partially) understood” (1998: 144). Only in “multiply and variously embedded frameworks of operative pragmatic contextualization […] can we understand the indexical significance of ‘what-is-said’” (Silverstein 1997: 632). That is also why considerable attention will go to amplifying the sociopolitical context of the news events in the next chapter. The notion of context is of principal importance in understanding how discourse is embedded in society. Pragmatics as well as most strands of discourse analysis consider any instance of language use, all text to be situated or contextualized. The functional perspective on discourse as language use, which was promoted in chapter 2, must not be understood in a classic structuralist, nor in a systemic-functional sense, rather it means seeing language as an object that is to be considered in its actual functioning (Blommaert 2011 or Verschueren 1999a) and that functioning of language can only be studied in context.

Communication always takes place in a social, historical, cultural, mental, linguistic, institutional situation, briefly, in a context. Whether face-to-face or mediated, “communication is an integral part of – and cannot be understood apart from – the broader contexts of social life” (Thompson 1995: 11). Taking an intercultural perspective, Liddycoat (2009), for instance, understands communication as a culturally contextualized practice. However, context is both more

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72 Van Dijk notes that “the main distinction between abstract discourse analysis and social discourse analysis is that the latter takes the contexts into account” (1997: 11). The notion of context is also crucial for other studies of discourse as action or interaction.
and less than society plus culture. As will become clear, language users can have different definitions of and visions on the context. That language use is inherently contextual is stressed by Hanks, who wrote that “context interpenetrates language from production through reception” (1996: 196). It is important to notice that this implies that “[c]ontext cannot be treated as the scenery to which language and interactive structure are related once they have been ‘objectively’ defined on other grounds, linguistic or sociological” (Hanks 1996: 163). Context not only determines how news discourse is interpreted. The at times shocking and disconcerting character of media images from Africa, in casu from post-election Kenya, stems not only from the desperate life conditions of the people depicted, “but also from the fact that their life conditions diverge so dramatically from the contexts within which these images are re-embedded, [so it] is the clash of contexts, of divergent worlds suddenly brought together in the mediated experience, that shocks and disconcerts” (Thompson 1995: 229).

Communication of news through newspapers can be regarded as the exchange of information in context. Consequently, also the facts that are reported in so-called factual ‘hard news’ reports are context-dependent. As Mey (2003) contends, “they always hang together with the context in which they are found and with the people that are at their origins” (2003: 335). And he continues: “A context with which we can identify will make the fact occurring in that context into much more than just ‘information’” (Mey 2003: 336). Shotter, too, remarked that facts are not as factual, i.e. as certain and uncontested, as people might think.

“Facts [...] are not the cause of our perceptual processes, but the result. The mystification achieved is the transformation of the qualities which belong to them as socio-historical products into qualities belonging to them as natural things. In other words, something which is essentially made is transformed into something apparently found” (Shotter 1993: 70).

Thus, facts are never context-free, nor are they value-free. The naturalizing entextualization of socio-historical information into newspaper facts can be said to involve an ideological process (see below). The more newspaper readers know about the context or the better they can identify (with) the context, the better they can judge the ‘facts’ of news reports. A frequent criticism of news reporting, also ruled over the newspaper coverage of the Kenyan post-election crisis, is that a lack or deficiency of contextual information leads to a distorted presentation and inaccurate interpretation of reality (see e.g. Somerville 2009 and Iraki 2010 or opinion articles such as Furedi 2008 or Kircher-Allen 2008).

“Each word when used in a new context is a new word”, Firth is cited by Enkvist (1994: 47). Words derive their exact, discursive meaning from the context in which they occur. That thought of ‘meaning is use’ was already salient in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy of language (cf. Wittgenstein 2009 or Ahmed 2010 for a critical discussion). As Shotter phrases it, “the meaning of our words shows up [...] in their use” (1993: 56). The adopted view of context corresponds to
the dynamic view of meaning that was introduced in 2.2.1.2 (remember Lippmann’s quote about
the contingency and instability of meaning in news texts).

As context is a determining factor for the interpretation of language use, it follows that there
is never one fixed meaning attached to news discourse, but there is always the possibility of a
variety of meanings. By word of Marshall, “multiplicity of meaning is a function of the sign’s
multi-accentuality, its openness to different evaluative orientations” (1998: 216). Linguistic
forms do not have a one-to-one relation with meanings. However, it is a useful working
assumption that a different form to describe the same events entails a difference in meaning
(Fairclough 1995: 57-58). In other words, meaning is not seen as a stable counterpart to
linguistic form, rather, it is dynamically generated in the process of using language (Verschueren
1999a: 11). A dynamic view of meaning is shared by most linguists, sociologists, media scholars
and anthropologists who carry out empirical investigations into people’s use of language.
Bayley, for instance, corroborates that “[m]eanings are not inherent properties of lexemes and
inscribed in dictionaries, but are constructed, construed and contested on the basis of context and
collocation in single texts, and on the basis of intertextual thematic systems across texts” (1999:
44). Thompson (1987, 1990, 1995), too, emphasizes on numerous occasions that meaning is not
a stable or invariant property of a linguistic product, but rather a fluctuating phenomenon, while
adding that not only the producer’s context counts, but also the context of the interpreter(s):

the ‘meaning’ of a message conveyed by the media is not a static phenomenon,
permanently fixed and transparent for all to see. Rather, the meaning or sense of a
message should be regarded as a complex, shifting phenomenon which is continuously
renewed, and to some extent transformed by the very process of reception, interpretation
and reinterpretation. The meaning that a message has for an individual will depend to some
extent on the framework that he or she brings to bear on it. Of course, there are some
limits to this process; a message cannot mean anything, and an individual must have some
knowledge of the rules and conventions in accordance with which a message is reproduced
in order to make some sense of it (for instance, he or she must have a rudimentary
knowledge of the language). But these limits are quite wide and they leave ample room for
the possibility that, from one individual or group of individuals to another, and from one
social-historical context to another, the message conveyed by a media product may be
understood differently” (Thompson 1995: 42).

That meaning is not just inherent in the words alone, nor the monopoly of the speaker is a
weighty observation. For it implies that using language in the writing of newspaper reports is
always somewhat hazardous. When we follow Eelen (1999) and dismiss the ideology of
‘understanding as sharing’,73 there is always the risk of inadvertent or unintended

73 “One majestical trick that language plays on us is that it makes us believe that ‘understanding’ means ‘having the
same ideas’ (or states of mind). Because we use the same words, and because we can communicate through those
words, we get the feeling that those words therefore must also mean the same thing to all of us, or that using the
same words implies that we have the same ideas. After all, those words do allow us to successfully conduct our day-

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misunderstanding. In this dissertation, the generation and interpretation of meaning is considered “a dynamic process, involving the negotiation of meaning between speaker and hearer, the context of utterance (physical, social and linguistic), and the meaning potential of an utterance” (Thomas 1995: 22).

With regard to Thomas’ use of the phrase ‘context of utterance’ it can be noted that the distinction that is commonly made in pragmatics between a sentence and an utterance is based on context. Whereas a sentence is considered to be an abstract grammatical entity, an utterance is a self-contained piece of language use or a sentence that is used in an actual context. One more thing has to be set straight. In my understanding of meaning I do not make a distinction between written or spoken discourse when it comes to ‘the negotiation of meaning, as was already hinted at in the discussion about intertextuality in 2.2.2. It is true that in oral exchanges meanings can be questioned, clarified or checked with the speaker ‘on the spot’. But that does not mean there would be no negotiation of meaning when interpreting, for example, written news texts (cf. supra 2.2.1.2). What Blum-Kulka (1997) describes can also pertain to written discourse:

“Negotiations over pragmatic meaning are part and parcel of everyday communication even when interlocutors share language and culture. But when interlocutors come to the communicative event from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, with possible mismatches in cultural and contextual presuppositions – as well as in the interpretative frameworks for the linguistic means of signaling pragmatic meanings – the chances for miscommunication abound. Such miscommunication in turn can lead to mutual negative stereotyping, and have grave social implications for further inter-group relations” (Blum-Kulka 1997: 60).

A journalist always has a reader in mind when he or she writes a newspaper article, whether it is an actual reader, an implied reader or the editor as reader, and so he or she tries to anticipate certain interpretations that the reader could make. The reader in turn tries to understand what the journalist is communicating by making sense of the text on the basis of the words and his background knowledge, by accommodating information and by adjusting his or her worldview. While the journalist tries to make a point, describe a state of affairs, persuade the reader of a point of view, inform, educate, entertain, etc. (or a combination of these), the reader can go along with the discourse, partially follow it or reject is. These processes can be conceptualized as a negotiation of meaning, although it is not a direct or face-to-face negotiation.

to-day business, to get along with people, to get things done, etc. This ideology of ‘understanding as sharing’ has found a firm foothold in linguistics” (Eelen 1999: 170).

Levinson (1983: 18-19) explains it thus: “Essentially, we want to say that a sentence is an abstract theoretical entity defined within a theory of grammar, while an utterance is an issuance of a sentence, a sentence-analogue or sentence fragment, in an actual context. Empirically, the relation between an utterance and a corresponding sentence may be quite obscure (e.g. the utterance may be elliptical, or contain sentence fragments or ‘false starts’), but it is customary (after Bar-Hillel) to think of an utterance as the pairing of a sentence and a context, namely the context in which the sentence was uttered”.

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In general, context is often conceived of as the sociocultural situation in which an instance of language use is produced, an understanding of which is necessary to interpret that language use. However, I will not simply equate context with the society-culture nexus. Intuitively, the concept applies to the environment or circumstances of a discursive, communicative event. Or else, it tends to be conceptualized “in terms of properties of communicative situations, such as the gender, age, class or ethnicity of the speakers” (Van Dijk 2008: 217). Huang claims to define context from a “theory-neutral point of view” “as referring to any relevant features of the dynamic setting or environment in which a linguistic unit is systematically used” (2007: 13). More specifically, he distinguishes three subparts of context, conceptualized as three different sources making up the ‘geographic division of context’: the physical context, the linguistic context and the ‘general knowledge context’, which includes background or common ground, encyclopaedic information and real-world knowledge. When an appeal to context is made in the analyses further on, it concerns discursive context. That is the concrete context of the actual language use in a communicative event. It is the context that emerges from the discourse and that can be empirically linked to the texts of analysis. This notion of context will be further elaborated in 4.1.

4.1.1.2. Kinds and characteristics of context

To situate my view on context, four more or less pragmatic (not always clearly separable) approaches to context will be concisely presented, before going through some characteristics of context. The first approach can be termed analytical, as it dissects the broad notion of context into different kinds of context. Fetzer and Aijmer, for instance, “suggest to decompose context along function-based and discourse-anchored lines into cognitive context, linguistic context, social context and sociocultural context” (2008: 1498). The cognitive context involves mental representations and meta-representations, knowledge of the language, communicative strategies, routines and activity types, communicative intentions and goals, as well as more general background knowledge, which is functionally synonymous with ‘common ground’. The linguistic context is the co-text, namely all the grammatical constructions and lexemes, used to build clauses, sentences and texts. Social context refers to the context of the speech event, including the interactional categories of speaker (or writer), addressee (or reader), ratified and unratified audience, their physical and psychological dispositions and the specific knowledge or assumptions about the persons involved. This kind of context could also be called extra-linguistic context, in that Fetzer and Aijmer’s social context as an immediate extra-linguistic context is embedded in more remote extra-linguistic contexts, such as organizational context and other socio-historically constituted contexts of institutions and subcultures. Social context can be
further subcategorized into different types of sociocultural context, which are defined by a particular cultural perspective on that context.

A second approach to context that can be brought into the limelight is a sociocognitive approach. One such approach is thought out by Van Dijk, who first provisionally defined “context as the structure of those properties of the social situation that are systematically (that is, not incidentally) relevant for discourse” (1997: 11). I follow Van Dijk in that discursive context constitutes those aspects of external reality which are constructed and seen to be relevant for discourse by the language users. But a view of context as structure, which, in addition reduces context to social situation, is incompatible with Verschueren’s conception of context that will be adopted in this research. As will become clear below, the term of structure is reserved for linguistic aspects and expressions in Verschueren’s framework. Van Dijk goes on to conceive of contexts as ‘subjective participant constructs’, conceptualized as unique mental models in memory, comprising schemas of shared, culturally based, conventional categories, which allow for fast interpretation of ongoing communicative events.

“Contexts are thus not some kind of objective condition or direct cause, but rather (inter)subjective constructs designed and ongoingly updated in interaction by participants as members of groups and communities” (Van Dijk 2008: x).

Context models subjectively represent communicative situations and make explicit participant experiences during interaction (Van Dijk 2008: 23). Like that, they control the way language users adapt the utterance to the communicative environment. Moreover, they not only “embody personal experiences of autobiographical (episodic) memory, but also relevant inferences of socially shared beliefs” (Van Dijk 2008: 219). So, context is not just a cognitive model, but a sociocognitive model, as context exists through subjective definitions of communicative situations that are structured and constructed by means of ‘social cognitions’, such as world knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, grammar, norms and values (Van Dijk 2008: 17). The Dutch discourse theorist goes on to postulate that “context models have a central knowledge device, or K-device, that at each moment during interaction calculates what the recipients already know” (Van Dijk 2008: 220). That is not how I see context to work in discourse.

Context models feature categories like setting (time, place), speech participants (in various roles and identities), social relations and the social activity in which the participants to discourse are engaged. There is some resemblance with how Levinson understands contexts as a collection of “the identities of participants, the temporal and spatial parameters of the speech event, […] the beliefs, knowledge and intentions of the participants in that speech event, and no doubt much

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75 In the same paper, Van Dijk (1997: 15) makes a distinction between local or interactional context and global or societal context.
besides” (1983: 5). So, context must consist of social, cognitive, physical, spatial, temporal and cultural aspects of the communicative event.

Still closer to the linguistic-pragmatic approach that will be outlined below, is an interactional approach that sees context as an interpretive, dynamic, reflexive and interactive essential of language use (e.g. Gumperz 1982, Auer & Di Luzio 1992). In his discussion of Gumperz’s notion of context, Knoblauch (2001) writes that

“context can neither be defined with respect to some basic universal apparatus nor by variables external to the communicative acts. Rather, context is a feature which characterizes the communicative actions” (Knoblauch 2001: 12).

Moreover, context is interactively achieved and, hence, constantly open to (re)negotiation and interpretation. Knoblauch links context to culture, arguing that the “notion of cultural context allows us to evade the common distinction of the two ontological spheres of contexts, such as ‘outer’ social structural context which appears to be ‘external’ to interaction, and ‘inner’ context which seems to be immanent to interaction” (2001: 25). Contextualization cues are in this view conventions within certain communities of practice by which contexts are constructed.

Related to the above view is the view of context as a projection and fastening of discourse into the social and cultural world of the language users. In his analysis of oral performance, such as poetry, legends, folkloristic tales, or old Icelandic sagas, Bauman relates context to “the anchoring of verbal art in the social and cultural worlds of its users” as well as to “the complex, multidimensional web of interrelationships that link performed texts to culturally defined systems of meaning and interpretation and to socially organized systems of social relations” (2004: 32). This also holds for newspaper coverage. By means of the context journalists provide they anchor the news discourse into the worlds of the readers. If the news world is far removed from the readers’ world of experience, foreign correspondents can apply processes of domestication (Lee et al. 2000, see 3.2.2.1). Bauman continues that context invokes three principal dimensions of the aforementioned interrelationships:

“(1) the context of cultural meaning, that is, what it is one needs to know about a culture to make sense of its verbal art; (2) the functional context, social or psychological, that is, how verbal art forms operate to validate social institutions, maintain social solidarity, socialize children, alleviate psychological conflict, and the like; and (3) the situational context, focusing on the social use of verbal art in the conduct of social life, within culturally defined scenes and events” (2004: 32-33).

In his own analyses Bauman tried to discover the context of texts from the inside out by “using textual performance itself as a point of departure, and allowing it to index dimensions of context” (2004: 33). That is also how I went about, when I invoked context in the analyses of chapters 7
and 8, as I tried to reveal some links of contextualization that the journalists forged to give shape and meaning to their news reports.\textsuperscript{76}

To end this section, a few salient characteristics of context can be summed up. First of all, context is indispensable in the production and interpretation of language use, of which news texts are an instance. However, context is not pre-determined; it is always a matter of choices. Contexts are flexible and negotiable, as they can change continuously, \textit{i.e.} undergo redefinitions or reinterpretations, during (different repositionings in) interaction. As a result, the study of context is never straightforward. The influence of context cannot be established \textit{a priori} and language researchers are advised not to take any contextual element for granted without empirical proof. As Van Dijk observes: “The influence of context is often subtle, indirect, complex, confused and contradictory, with results far from the main effects of independent social variables” (2008: xi).

Context is often said to be necessary to disambiguate utterances, expressions or particular uses of language, but mind that context can also contribute to ambiguity. In certain contexts ambiguity can add to the meaning potential of the discourse. Given the commercially supported journalistic ethos to leave more than one interpretation of the news events open to the readers so as to maintain the attention of as many readers as possible, also those with views that deviate from the dominant reading (\textit{cf.} 3.2.2), ambiguity can sometimes be preferable in news writing. Consider example (20).

\begin{quote}
20) The \textbf{Kalenjin gangs} arrived just after midnight. Witnesses said that hundreds of youths went from shack to shack singling out homes belonging to \textit{members of the Kikuyu tribe}, setting light to each one as sleepy families stumbled to safety. \\
[…]
Peace returned to much of the country after a \textbf{wave of bloodletting following the elections} when \textbf{opposition demonstrations} ended last Friday. The Western Rift Valley is a bloody exception. Father Brian Treacy, one of three Irish priests at St Kizito’s, said that the \textit{violence was directed at opposition supporters and Kikuyu in equal measure}. “This is about \textit{ethnic cleansing}, nothing else,” he said. \\
[…]
Most are \textbf{Kikuyus} trying to reach safety. Those in Londiani also include \textbf{Kalenjins} whose businesses were destroyed in the first signs of retaliation. “\textit{Raila and Kibaki must agree},” said Joel Chelule Kaptich as he picked through the ashes of his butcher’s shop, workshop and small hotel. “Until then there will be no improvement.”
\end{quote}

The fragments in (20) are respectively taken from the opening paragraph, the middle and the coda of one and the same newspaper report, which is a praiseworthy attempt to capture as accurately as possible a complex and chaotic situation in order to explain it to a British audience.

\textsuperscript{76} Bauman adds an important side remark: “The aim is not to dismiss the more collective, institutional, conventional dimensions of context, but ultimately to provide an analytical counterweight to them in the service of moving us closer to a balanced understanding of that most fundamental of all tensions constitutive of the social condition, the dynamic interplay of the collective and the individual, the ready-made and the emergent, in human life” (2004: 33).
At the beginning, the context of ethnic violence is evoked through the use of tribe names in describing the acts of violence. In the middle, the violence is put partly in an electoral context, linking it to the elections, opposition demonstrations and political supporters, and partly in an ethnic context, again by the reference to Kikuyu and the priest’s quote about ethnic cleansing. Thus, the news text also reflects the ambiguity in the language use of its sources. The ethnic context is continued, but at the end the violence is placed in a political context by blaming it on the two leading politicians’ incapacity to agree on power-sharing. Through fluctuating and differing contexts the foreign correspondent tried to provide an insight into the complex and equivocal events. Apart from the ambiguity of the events, the ambiguity in the news story leaves the readers with different interpretations. So, context can play multiple roles in language use. It is not only necessary for disambiguation, also ambiguity depends on the context: “all ambiguity depends on, and is conditioned by, the context of the ambiguity, including the point of view of the utterer as well as that of the interlocutor(s), along with their common understanding of each other as members of society, sharing certain (but by no means all) goals” (Mey 2003: 342).

The next characteristic is that context comes into being where utterer and interpreter meet – its intersubjectivity – and that it is both constituted by and constitutive of language use. Remember that this fits the view of using language as “an ongoing process of co-construction in which discourse is both shaped by and also shapes the context” (Briggs 1997: 454). Context is a dynamic construction of both utterer and interpreter; it is not “an undefined primitive” (Mey 2003: 336), nor an a priori given, but it is jointly constructed. And at the same time it is constructing. There is a double relationship between context and language use. Context is necessary to produce and understand discourse, so context determines language use, but simultaneously language use becomes part of the context, constantly creating a new context. With a glimpse at conversation analysis, it can be said that utterances are “doubly contextual in being both context-shaped and context renewing” (Heritage 1984: 242). In Fetzer’s words, “[a]n utterance relies upon the existing context for its production and interpretation, and it is, in its own right, an event that shapes a new context for the action that will follow” (Fetzer 2007: 121). In the same vein, newspapers contextualize events in the world, but by doing so also become part of the context of those events. You could say that news media report on events or social process, of which they are part, or in other words, “media are part of political problems and part of the solutions, essential elements of repressive political structures as well as vehicles for their overthrow” (Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi 1997: 220).

It follows that context is variable and can be used strategically. As a consequence, it incorporates an element of power, which is a final characteristic that will be pointed out here. Alcoff already knew that “the discursive context is a political arena” (1991: 15). It is important to reiterate that contexts “are not objective in the sense that they consist of social facts that are
understood and considered relevant in the same way by all participants [rather they] are interpreted or constructed, and strategically and continually made relevant by and for participants” (Van Dijk 1997: 16). They are subjective representations. Controlling the parameters of the context can be seen as a first strategy to control public discourse as a means to exercise social power (Van Dijk 1997, 2008). “All this means that discourses and their contexts presuppose and imply each other, and that a piece of discourse cannot be taken out of a given matrix of contexts without changing its interpretations, or its potential of being interpreted in specific ways” (Linell 1998: 144). It must also be noted that a given communicative event can give rise to multiple or competing context, which are consequently not shared by all speech participants involved.

4.1.2. From context of language use to contextualization

4.1.2.1. Contextualization as orientation and mobilization
No matter which approach to context is preferred, a theory of context must always try to overcome two associated problems, viz. the problem of delimitation and the problem of demonstration. Let us have a look at (21) which can be compared to (20)⁷⁷:

21) The crisis has been occasioned by a standoff between PNU and ODM over the outcome of the presidential vote. 

[...]

But even as politicians sat in conference rooms, precious lives continued to be lost. Youth suspected to be members of the outlawed Mungiki sect overran and took over Elburgon town. Sniffing tobacco and chanting war cries they attacked a motorist and burnt him to death in his car. They barricaded all roads leading in and out of Molo town.

(ST_Kenya’s reality check: Hope alive as Annan jets in_23/01/2008)

The problem of delimitation has to do with the question where the context of an instance of language use stops? Where to draw the line? What should be considered as the context of this newspaper clipping? What can be understood under sociocultural context, i.e. the kind of context which is often referred to in (critical) discourse analyses? Is it limited to contemporary ethno-regional or local politics or does it also involve geopolitics? After all, it is about a presidential election and it mentions Kenyan political parties. But it also mentions the Mungiki, which is to some a backward politico-religious group and to others an illegal ethno-criminal organization with roots in traditional Agikuyu culture (Gecaga 2007). How far back in history should a researcher go to dig up more context? Is the historical context limited to the previous elections in 2002 or does it expand to earlier elections – in 1992 and 1997 there were also ethnic clashes in

⁷⁷ The news events in (20) and (21) are about the same conflict region. Londiani in (20) is a town next to Molo and about 35 kilometres from Elburgon.
the region of Molo – or should we go further into colonial times – in Molo there are land conflicts resulting from colonization? These few questions indicate that it can be difficult to define and delimit the context of discourse (see also Silverstein 1992).

The problem of demonstration has to do with the question whether context is to be sought within and/or outside the text. Where does context manifest itself in the text? In the whole discourse, in its intertextuality, or in single paragraphs, sentences, expressions or in individual words? The word *crisis* evokes context, but *the* does not, or does it? It could be argued that the definite article signals that the crisis has already been mentioned in the article (the co-text) or that it is known to the readers (common knowledge). It can trigger an existential presupposition (see 6.2.3.1). If every word can be a manifestation of context – even the acronyms PNU and ODM evoke a whole contextual universe – the first problem pops up again: how to delimit it? Text does not exist without context, but can all relevant features of the context be derived from the text? The context in which news is produced has a considerable impact on the final output of a newspaper article. Does this context just float around the text or is it visible and tangible somewhere?

As has been explained above, context is essential for the understanding of a text. “Central to the processes of (inter)adaptation in language use […] is the dynamic generation of meaning”, Verschueren contends (1999a: 147). In 4.1.1.1, it has been emphasized that meaning is not stable. In the linguistic pragmatic framework that was outlined in chapter 2, meaning is considered to be dynamically generated through the interplay between structure and context. *Structure* in this theory refers to any element of linguistic form or language organization, ranging from register or code and style over sounds, morphemes, words, clauses and whole utterances to building principles such as coherence or information structuring. Structural elements of (21) are, for instance, the factual news reporting style, the genre of the ‘hard news’ report, the passive voice of the first sentence, fronting the object, instead of the agents, the letters combining in PNU and ODM, the contradicting counterexpectational temporal clause, initiated by the conjunctions *but even as*, the aspectual verb *to continue* which is used in the simple past, the whole build-up of the article which begins with the mediation attempts and political news to end with the reporting of acts of violence, *etc.*

*Context* is broadly conceived as “any (combination of) ingredient(s) of a communicative event […] with which linguistic choices are interadaptable” (Verschueren 2008: 18). In this conception, context is empirically analyzable, as it is visible in the discourse. With regard to the delimitation and demonstration problems, context is delimited by and manifested in concrete instances of language use. That is what is meant by the term ‘discursive context’, as introduced in the beginning of this chapter. When choosing linguistic forms of expression to entextualize news events, journalists are constrained by certain aspects of the context, take other aspects into
account and activate yet other contextual aspects in their language use, while readers, on their part, orient to concrete aspects of the discursive context. This definition of context is not far removed from Mercer’s view on context as “a mental phenomenon [that] consists of whatever information listeners (or readers) use to make sense of what is said (or written)” (2000: 20). However, here Mercer forgets to include the writer who also uses contextual information to make sense of what he or she wants to express. Moreover, as Mercer later adds, “writers have a responsibility for providing their […] readers with what they need to know, or at least with clues to help them access what they need to observe or remember” (2000: 21).

Thus, context in my analyses of the news discourse is not an objective, stable, external reality that determines the language use, rather context is the product of processes of contextualization: aspects of external reality are made into context in the service of the overall process of meaning generation. These aspects derive their relevance from the language users’ subjective orientation to them (Verschueren 2008). So, it is the language users who generate contexts. To make this clear, Verschueren elsewhere uses the metaphor of ‘lines of vision’:

“language users carve out ‘lines of vision’ from the unlimited potential of context: It is those aspects of context that language users orient to (as well as aspects that might be carefully or carelessly left out) that are the most relevant for interpretation” (Verschueren 2012: 58).

This process of contextualization is a joint activity, so analysis must take both the reader and the writer into account, as they create meanings together (Mercer 2000). For the sake of clarity, the discursive context does not only involve the traces of an ‘outside’ reality that are actualized in the discourse, but also those aspects of the wider context that can be ostensively and empirically linked to the language use in question. As such, an attempt is made to make context concrete and deal with the problems of delimitation and demonstration. However, this approach does not completely resolve the aforementioned problems, because, even with a delimitation from any aspect of the external world to those relevant aspects that are actualized in the discursive context, the full context of language use can never be known, since the range of ingredients of reality that can become part of the discursive context is infinite and depends from one language user to the other. Moreover, there are methodological and practical reasons which make it impossible to pursue every ingredient of the communicative event with which linguistic choices interadapt. At best, the most salient and influential aspects of the ‘outside’ reality can be touched upon in actual analysis of discourse.

That is why one of Verschueren’s methodological guidelines is to investigate the (social, political, historical, geographical, cultural, …) context “to the extent that it is accessible” (2012: 63). This necessary modification evokes the research context, which should not be lost out of sight. Analyses of discourse must always be assessed in relation to the context of the investigation. Running ahead of the exposition of the methodology in chapter 6, it can here be
stated that this view on context resists a divorce between formal and non-formal analysis. The analyst’s choice of contextual elements to focus on is one of the first steps in the interpretive analysis.

Before listing the specific ingredients of the communicative event that can become part of the discursive context, the consequences of this view on discourse as language use in context are in need of further explication. First of all, structure and context cannot be treated separately. Linguistic structure and context are geared to one another. In combination, they constitute the locus of dynamic meaning-generating processes (Verschueren 2008). Secondly, a dynamic view emerges in which using language is conceptualized as a “communicative dynamics [that] consists of movement through consecutive and/or overlapping contexts and alternating focus on different levels of structure” (Verschueren 2008: 16). Thirdly, meaning is more than intentions. When language use comes about through the interaction between context and structure, both production and interpretation choices are involved. Or in Paltridge’s words, meaning generation through language use “involves social, psychological and cognitive factors that are relevant to the production and interpretation of what a speaker (or writer) says, and what a hearer (or reader) understands by what is said” (2006: 55). So, the journalist does not have a monopoly on meaning. Rather meaning generation is a context-dependent joint action. That is why I oppose an intentionalist view (without therefore being radically anti-intentionalist), according to which the content of an utterance is fixed by the speaker’s intention (Montminy 2010). Finally, it follows that, next to the creation of linguistic structure, also discursive context is largely a matter of choice. From an infinite range of possibilities a concrete context of language use comes into being in the dynamics of meaning generation through the interaction between utterer and interpreter, where both focus on, react to, incorporate or make relevant certain aspects of an ‘outside reality’ (Verschueren 1999a: 75ff).

If context is not a stable, objective ‘reality-out-there’, what exactly is it? The actual context of language use, here also-called the discursive context, is a varying constellation which comprises (i) the basic context in which discourse comes into being and is received, including those aspects of the institutional or professional context (of production) and the (often highly personal) context of reception which do not surface in the discourse as such; (ii) the topical context, involving the

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78 In this regard, Bakhtin already noticed that “[l]anguage is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker’s intentions; it is populated – overpopulated with the intentions of others (1981: 294). That is why he speaks of ‘active’ and ‘responsive understanding’. A newspaper reader actively engages with the text and responds to it, just as the news writer anticipates and tries to steer the interpretation (cf. discourse’s fundamental dialogism).

79 Billig refers to the paradoxical act of speaking, in which the “speaker can be portrayed as both master and slave. As slaves, speakers are condemned to recycle concepts, which function behind their back […]. On the other hand, the speaker is the master of language: to speak is to assert the self, and the speaker is the hero who creates patterns of discourse, which have never been uttered before” (1991: 8).
social, political, historical, geographical, etc. context which the investigated discourse is
topically related to, i.e. the world that it is about;\(^80\) (iii) the language users, in my case at least
involving sources, journalists and readers; (iv) the linguistic context or co-text, including the
information structure, intertextual links and markers of contextual cohesion, such as anaphora,
conjunctions, co-reference, exemplification, explanation, comparison; (v) the communication
medium or the channel(s); (vi) physical reality, pertaining to time, space and material
circumstances or physical conditions; (vii) a mental milieu or inner self, accounting for cognitive
or emotive elements of language use; and (viii) a social world, involving social settings,
institutions, social identities (e.g. social class, ethnicity, nationality) and social relations (e.g.
kinship, gender, authority, power, solidarity, dependence). All of these ingredients of the
communicative event that can be mobilized may overlap and they certainly do not exist in
isolation.

By way of illustration, the basic context of (21) concerns the collaborative effort of the
‘Standard team’ who produced the front-page story, of which it is an extract (see appendix III for
the original article). More precisely, it incorporates their selective choices, their search for
sources, the professional practices that are not directly visible in the language use.\(^81\) It also
involves the ownership of the newspaper, the editorial hierarchy, possible tensions between the
team members, etc.. Immediately, there is overlap with the medium or channel of the language
use and the social world context, notably that part of the institutional context which is evoked in
the discourse. For instance, every page contains a running head with the newspaper’s name, the
day, the date and the page number. Especially on the front-page, the block-lettered newspaper
title evokes the institutional context of the newspaper, as does the authorial attribution ‘By
Standard Team’. Another part of the basic context are all those relevant aspects of the context in
which the newspaper article is read, not clearly emerging from the discourse, which can vary
from reader to reader. For instance, it could be the time of reading (in the morning, the evening, a
day later), certain mental predispositions of a particular reader, preconceptions of the reader, etc..
The topical context is the historical, sociopolitical context of the elections in Kenya and their
violent aftermath.

The next ingredient of the discursive context of (21) consists of the language users involved.
First, the journalists and editors who worked on the news report. It also includes the sources and

\(^{80}\) Verschueren (2012: 63, 83) combines (i) and (ii) under the general label of ‘wider context’, which I find
somewhat confusing with regard to the distinction that I made between wider, external ‘outside’ context and
discursive context. He contrasts the ‘wider context’ to ‘context of situation’, referring to the immediate context in
which the discourse itself is communicatively situated as a speech activity.

\(^{81}\) I am not claiming that readers consciously reflect on all of these and the following potential aspects of the
discursive context, or that they need to know all this information to understand the newspaper article, but these
aspects are important to take into account as an analyst of discourse, because they determine other contextual
aspects which readers do need to know and they have an impact on the meaning generation of the discourse.
social actors whose discourse is incorporated (or rather recontextualized) in the news discourse. In this example, among others the World Bank, Anglican Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi, mediators such as Grace Machel, Vice-President Kalonzo, a provincial police administrator, public intellectual Wangari Maathai, etc. The other ‘language user’ is the receiving party, the members of the audience. They are actualized in the discourse through devices of audience design (see 3.1.1.1), but also the choice of language and topics evokes a reader who is interested in politics, fluent in formally written English, knowledgeable of the Mungiki, and who also has some knowledge of the towns of Elburgon, Molo and environs. Moreover, the reader is present in the discursive context by the dialogism of the surrounding discourse and through intertextual links, also an aspect of the linguistic context. For instance, in the Letters section, reactions which picked up on information of the newspaper article were published, such as ‘Be open minded during mediation’ (ST 24/01/2008) or ‘Kenyans, not Annan will solve our problems’ (ST 25/01/2008).

Aspects of the physical world that belong to the discursive context of (21) concern the time frame (it is news about events that happened on Tuesday, 22 January 2008), the localities, such as Elburgon and Molo, but also the conference rooms and the barricaded roads. The mental world has to do with the informative intentions of the newspaper writers and the expectations and interpretive intentions of the reader. Also emotive language use, such as the adjective precious, the chanting war cries and the explicitly shocking description of the car driver who is burnt to death evoke aspects of a mental as well as a physical world. Next to the institution of the newspaper, the political parties PNU and ODM, the relations of power between the members of the political class, the Mungiki, who, with the right foreknowledge, can be clearly ethnically linked to the Kikuyu, etc. are all aspects of the social world that are evoked as context.

A concluding remark about the notion of discursive context is required to differentiate it from culturalist conceptions of context (see Coesemans, forthcoming, for more information). Much of the above social world aspects of context would, in other frameworks or studies, be considered as culture. Since contrastive newspaper analyses often result in comparisons between cultures (e.g. Berkowitz & Eko 2011), a few comments about culture in relation to context are in order. Culture tends to be used as an easy explanator of human (communicative) behavior. However, culture is a complex concept with a wide variety of possible conceptualizations and definitions (see e.g. Blommaert 1991 or Sarangi 2009 for critical overviews of approaches to culture). Culture is commonly associated with a way of life or a way of interacting, involving social practices, communicative norms as well as visions of the world, which are perceived to be typical of a certain community (cf. Kramsch 1998).

Scollon and Scollon, for instance, define culture as “any of the customs, worldview, language, kinship system, social organisation, and other taken-for-granted day-to-day practices of a people
which set that group apart as a distinctive group” (2001: 126). Such treatments of culture assume that there are properties that are so typical of a certain group of people that they allow for a clear distinction from other groups and that attribute a distinctive identity with almost essential characteristics to the group members. However, such a concept of culture can easily lead to a generalizing and idealizing fixation of social groups, ignoring that they are the result of social interactions between individuals and that in real life culture involves a dynamic, variable and heterogeneous complex of practices, subject to negotiation and contextual adaptation. In addition, most contemporary societies are characterized by a growing multiculturalism, so that some sociologists even speak of a ‘global multiculture’ (Nederveen Pieterse 2007). Such multiculturalism is not only characteristic of so-called ‘western’ nations, it can also be found in the multi-ethnic Republic of Kenya. Another aspect of ‘global multiculture’ is that cultural products are consumed by more than one cultural group. The studied newspaper texts are a case in point.

Instead of taking culture for granted, Sarangi suggests that ‘discourse-oriented research’ should deal with how and when concrete cultural elements play an active role in meaning-making processes (2009: 100). This view fits my conception of discursive context. In this respect, culture can best be treated as a repertoire of concepts and practices that serve as conventionalized orienting frameworks for the production, reception, and circulation of discourse (Bauman 2004: 2). From a pragmatic perspective, culture is always characterized by continuity, change and variability, the source of which is not an idealized group, but the individual with adaptable social identities (Verschueren 1999a: 92). Undeniably, cultural elements exist outside of discourse, but only in concrete contexts of social (inter)action do they become relevant. Cultural traits can emphasize or blur distinctions between social groups, depending on the specific context and goals of the communication. Close to this view is Knoblauch’s conception of ‘culture as contexts’, constructed by interactive processes of language use. He argues that culture is essentially communicative since “culture is not only ‘enacted’, it is to be seen as a continuous process of meaning construction through communicative action” (Knoblauch 2001: 24). It must be clear that a dynamic view of context has been propagated here, in which context is thought as both a resource and a constraint in meaning making (cf. Sarangi 1998).

4.1.2.2. Recontextualization and framing
In the context of theory formation around ‘natural histories of discourse’, recontextualization has already been touched upon in 2.2.2.2. Briggs and Bauman recommend that language researchers study “discourse vis-à-vis the way it is transformed in the course of successive decontextualizations and recontextualizations and of exploring the process of entextualization that provides the formal and functional basis for such transformations” (1992: 164). In 2.2.1.2, it
was explained how the use of language in discourse can be considered as a recontextualization of social practice, be it another instance of language use or a non-discursive action in social reality. Above, it was stated that the actual context of an instance of language use is the product of processes of contextualization. Following Gumperz (1992), contextualization can also refer to speech participants’ use of verbal and non-verbal signs to indicate what they are doing in discourse (e.g. arguing, debating, informing, or establishing a relation of familiarity). Recall that contextualization cues are markers of metapragmatic awareness (see 2.1.2). As contexts continually shift, these processes of contextualization involve practices of recontextualization. Like contextualization, Linell (1998) suggests that recontextualization is a fundamental aspect of cognition and communication. Putting something into context (contextualizing it), putting something out of context (decontextualizing it) and putting something into a different context (recontextualizing it) are all three everyday and professional practices, so they are also at play in the scientific activity of producing the academic discourse you are currently reading (cf. Bauman & Briggs 1990).

In view of the forthcoming analyses, recontextualization can be defined as “the dynamic transfer-and-transformation of something from one discourse/text-in-context (the context being in reality a matrix or field of contexts) to another” (Linell 1998: 144-145). It is not just a re-rendering of context, as it always involves a transformation of information. When discourses are relocated through recontextualization, they are often subject to processes or strategies which involve changes of meaning, such as simplification, condensation, elaboration and refocusing (Linell 1998). Moreover, recontextualization can be seen as “a redefinition and re-evaluation of figure-ground relations in and across ongoing interaction” (Sarangi 1998: 305). As a result, some contextual elements become “grounded (in the sense of becoming amorphous and less stable) rather than figured (in the sense of becoming sharply defined and well articulated)” at particular discursive moments (ibid.). To an extent, decontextualization accompanies recontextualization, because, when language use is recontextualized certain elements of prior contexts inevitably go out of view and disappear from the new context. From this perspective, what is not said or reported is as important as what does get reported and reinterpreted.

Also in the field of journalism, recontextualization is prominent. Golding and Murdock note that “discourses are seldom available for public consumption in their ‘raw’ state. They are reorganized and recontextualized to fit the particular expressive form being used” (2000: 84). Forstorp (1998), who studied recontextualization in terms of journalistic communicative practices of contextual and informational transfer occasioned by new information and voices, attributes it to the investigative stance of journalism (and I might add the contingent and provisional nature of news writing) that old assessments are constantly revised in light of incoming information. That is why news reporting can be seen as a continual process of
recontextualization, rather than as a reproduction of empirically grounded facts. Forstorp (1998) also found that newswerkers not only recontextualized information for their audience, they also continuously recontextualized information and events amongst themselves in the newsroom when selecting and discussing news stories. In Sarangi’s words, which originally applied to medical contexts, it can be said that “[b]oth at the intraprofessional and the professional-client levels, we notice recontextualization processes at work” (1998: 311). Furthermore, Sarangi (1998) notes that recontextualization plays a role in the construction and negotiation of identities in professional settings. Surely, this observation also holds for journalists.

To look at an example, different levels of recontextualization or embedding in Bell’s sense (see 3.2.2.2) can be discovered in (22).

22) Observers also reported that counts were changed by returning officers in local polling centres, as well as staff at the National Electoral Commission in Nairobi, largely to favour the incumbent bidding for re-election. Koki Muli, a senior Kenyan observer, said: “They added 5,000, 10,000, 15,000 – whatever they wanted. It was bizarre. We had results which were quite outrageous.” In some constituencies the total announced for Mr Kibaki at electoral headquarters in Nairobi was higher than that announced at regional tallying centres in the presence of foreign observers. An additional 25,116 votes were added in Molo and 17,677 in Kieni.

(IN_Kibaki ‘stole’ Kenyan election through vote-rigging and fraud_23/01/2008)

The foreign correspondent recontextualized the discourse of an election observer report to make his argument. In that report, the election observers recontextualized the words of returning officers and ECK staff who, in turn, whether or not for reasons of rigging recontextualized the original counts (even literally from the local polling center to the ECK headquarters in the capital). One of the most obvious recontextualizations in this example is the reported speech, which is taken out of an interview context to be inserted in the newspaper article. The question that the journalist asked is decontextualized. From the text, we cannot know whether Muli spontaneously labeled the results as ‘outrageous’ or whether it was elicited by a suggestive question, such as ‘Don’t you think it’s a scandal that some results could be falsely augmented?’.

To get an insight into what is left out of the context and to know the answer to such questions, ethnographic fieldwork can be of service (see 6.1.2). Note that such a recontextualization by quotation is not innocent, nor neutral. By taking Muli’s words out of the face-to-face communication with the correspondent and publishing them in the newspaper, the opinion of one woman is amplified and presented as being representative, adding to the argumentation of rigged elections that the journalist tried to get across to the readers. In this respect, Fairclough asserts

82 To get familiar with the broader picture of the press coverage under study, note that this news report attests electoral fraud in Molo constituency, the eponymous town of which had been described on a different occasion as “a city where ethno-political violence had caused bloodshed” (DM_Akkoord in Kenia over coalitie-regering_29/02/2008), where the violence was earlier in (21) interpreted in terms of sectarian revenge attacks by the Mungiki, and where the violence of a neighboring town was interpreted in ethnic terms in (20).
that “that communicative events and social practices are recontextualized differently depending upon the goals, values and priorities of the communication in which they are recontextualized” (1995: 41). “To decontextualize and recontextualize a text is thus an act of control”, Bauman and Briggs conclude (1990: 76), and this involves ideology, as I will argue in 4.2.

In journalism studies, the notion of context can be associated with the notion of frame. Contextualization and recontextualization can be seen to amount to framing and reframing (Linell 1998). Sarangi, as well, noticed that “Goffman’s (1974) notion of ‘frame’ is well equipped to deal with a dynamic notion of context as it emphasizes the indexical nature of talk and text, while also drawing our attention to the configuration of role-categories in a given interactional order” (1998: 306). In this study, the notion of frame refers to the way in which journalists see, organize, interpret and ‘entextualize’ events in the world to make them meaningful and presentable to the public in the format of newspaper articles. As such, the ability to frame events is part of journalists’ professional vision (see 3.2.1.1). It involves perceptions, judgments, perspectives, (world)views and ways of thinking. My understanding of (interpretive) frame is related to Gitlin’s conception of frames as “principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (1980: 6). Since they naturalize aspects of social reality in discursive constructions like newspaper texts, frames of interpretation can be seen to have an ideological potential. This clearly comes to expression in Entman’s view on framing:

“Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in the communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Frames, then, define problems – determine what a causal agent is doing and costs and benefits [...]; diagnose causes – identify the forces creating the problem; make moral judgments – evaluate causal agents and their effects; and suggest remedies – offer and justify treatments for the problem and predict their likely effects” (Entman 1993: 55).

My use of expressions like interpretive frame, frame of reference or the verb to frame can be compared to an understanding of news frames, involving news slant and bias (Entman 2010).

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See D’Angelo and Kuypers (2010) for more information on framing and news frames in the context of journalism studies.
4.2. Ideology in news discourse

4.2.1. Implicit and explicit meanings of ideology

4.2.1.1. Some comments on definitions of ideology

In 2.1.1, linguistic pragmatics was situated in the broad field of the social sciences or humanities, which Vološinov refers to as ‘the ideological sciences’ (1986: 26). The concept of ideology is useful in insisting that not only is there no ‘natural’ meaning inherent in an event or object, but also that the meanings by which events and objects are constructed are always socially oriented. As has been intimated above, language use is always rooted in an ideologically shaped worldview and inevitably relies on common ground, bearing in mind that common ground is never really common, since language users are positioned differently towards and in the text and context. Language use is ideological in that it adds to the construction of social reality and creates a framework of interpretation that can always be contested or disclaimed. Note that language users’ orientation to context, in which certain aspects of culture, social world, mental world, etc. are made relevant at the expense of other aspects that are obscured, can be seen to have an ideological dimension. In the preceding pages, I have been talking about ‘ideological aspects’, ‘ideological potential’ and ‘ideological assumptions’ in language use and news. Now it is time to define my position with regard to the intricate concept of ideology.

First, I will briefly review a few definitional attempts, which do not, or only partially, correspond to the way in which ideology is conceptualized in this research. I follow Thompson (1987: 522-523; 1990: 399) in so far that ideologies are not self-contained, discrete systems of beliefs and ideas which can be clearly delineated and analyzed into smaller components, such as bodies of political thought or economic systems. Such a view would prevent us from studying ideology in everyday contexts like the media. Moreover, it would presuppose that ideology is a static phenomenon and so it would fail to take its social and historical situatedness into account. In my view ideology is subject to contextual variation. Neither do I support theories, inspired by (interpretations of) certain Marxist writings, in which ideology is understood in terms of ‘false consciousness’, delusion or a misrepresentation of the world, as does, for instance, Hawkes (2003). He thinks of ideology in terms of “a binary opposition between true and false modes of thought” (Hawkes 2003: 189). Ideology can have to do with distortion, but not in a sense that implies that there is one absolute underlying reality, apart from ideology. In fact, ideology is always part of people’s social reality. Neither is it about conflicts of class, to stay in a Marxist context. Hartley, for instance, defines ideology as “[k]nowledge and ideas characteristic of or in the interests of a class” (2002: 103) and also according to Luke, the “term ‘ideology’ refers to systems of ideas, beliefs, practices, and representations which operate in the interests of an
identifiable social class or cultural group” (1998: 366). Ideology can promote class interests, but is not limited to them. Rather, ideology is a complex or a stock of ideas that is community-based. So, ideology is often not that straightforward. What is more, even within social classes people can have different ‘ideologies’84. Finally, ideology must not be seen as a kind of social cement that stabilizes societies and keeps people together by shared values and norms, as it constitutes an arena of constant contestation and struggle. Ideology is also about what is not shared or what goes against the norm.

Against these views, Thompson posits a ‘dynamic pragmatic’ conception of ideology “which focuses […] on the ways in which symbolic forms serve, in particular circumstances, to establish and sustain relations of domination” (1995: 213). Thus, he conceptualizes ideology as meaning in the service of power (Thompson 1987, 1990, 1995). It follows that ideology as an object of investigation is a concept of criticism, but in some milieus this conception has also reinforced ideology’s pejorative connotation, when it narrowly comes to be seen as something that has to be exposed and denounced. In journalism, for instance, ideology has long been a taboo word (see below). Thompson’s view has been quite influential in the social sciences, so that it is echoed in Crossley’s (2005) observation that in critical social theory ideology has acquired the meaning of a self-evident, uncontested system of ideas which serves to legitimate social relations. In this kind of ideology research the focus tends to be on “the less explicit beliefs, assumptions and taken-for-granted conceptions which legitimate, often by naturalizing them and thus making them seem inevitable, situations of domination which are deemed by the theorist of ideology to be neither natural nor inevitable” (Crossley 2005: 148).

More or less the same perspective is taken in several critical discourse analyses, which are inspired by Fairclough’s statement that “ideologies are propositions that generally figure as implicit assumptions in texts, which contribute to producing or reproducing unequal relations of power, relations of domination. They may be implicit, for instance, in the presuppositions (taken-for-granted assumptions) of texts” (1995: 14). Thompson’s view also resounds in the observation that “representations in media texts may be said to function ideologically in so far as they contribute to reproducing social relations of domination and exploitation” (Fairclough 1995: 44).

It is true that presupposition is an interesting pragmatic phenomenon to study ideology (see 6.2.3). However, I do not share Fairclough’s propositional and political view. Consider, for example, (23) to (24):

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84 I share Verschueren’s caution to use the plural form of ideology, hence the single quotation marks, since a countable use of the abstract noun runs the risk of reification, as it can create the impression that ideology is clearly delineated and homogeneous (cf. Verschueren 2012: footnote 11).
From (23) different implicit assumptions can be interpretively derived. They can be phrased in such propositions as: Kenyan tribes are waging a tribal war; Kenyans are primitive people fighting with sticks and stones, machetes, bows and arrows; Kenyans are aggressive and merciless, etc. I am not saying that is what the journalist intended to communicate or that it is the right interpretation, not at all, but it is a possible interpretation, which is, for instance, arrived at by Moloo, who complains about the international media’s ‘reductionist reporting’ in which Kenya’s crisis is “reduced to a few violent images, like those of machete-wielding youth dancing next to burning houses”. The question here is: are the above propositions on the basis of interpretive implicit assumptions ideologies, as Fairclough claimed? To me, these are just ideological implicit meanings, but ideology is more. As I will soon argue ideology is what is behind these assumptions. It is not just one proposition, but a complex of ideas, view and beliefs on the basis of which the journalist makes discursive choices and on the basis of which the reader makes interpretive choices. To me, ideology is more about frames and representations, which Fairclough also acknowledges (see his second quote above), than it is about propositions. Moreover, representations do not become ideological when they contribute to reproducing social relations of domination and exploitation, they always are ideological. Example (24) shows that victims and perpetrators of violence can be represented in such a way as not to reproduce social relations of domination and exploitation. As will be explained in the analyses in chapter 8, Kenyan journalists often left out ethnic identifications in order to promote social relations of equality and harmony, even when instances of violence had clear ethnic overtones. The fact that

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85 See the media analysis ‘Machetes, ethnic conflict and reductionism’ by Zahra Moloo in the Canadian monthly online paper The Dominion issue 50, published on 28 February 2008 (http://www.dominionpaper.ca/articles/1703 [14/09/2010]), where Moloo adds: “This variety of sensationalism and oversimplification is not atypical of corporate media reporting from Africa. Their representations perpetuate the racist assumptions that have historically influenced western perceptions of "Africans" as barbaric, primitive and inherently destructive".
relations of domination or exploitation, say of one ethnic group over another, were not reproduced in (24) does not make the representations less ideological.

Although Thompson’s and Fairclough’s views yield workable operationalizations of the concept and ideology certainly involves aspects of power, I do have a few objections, which were touched upon in the examples above. For one, Thompson (1995) as well as Fairclough (1995) seem to imply that words, utterances, texts or discourses can be non-ideological; they only become ideological when they involve asymmetrical relations of power. In my view, discourse always contains aspects of ideology, because it is informed by ideology and at the same time shaping it (e.g. through instruction, reinforcement or contestation). I also feel that a study of ideology should not be restricted by default to social relations of domination. After all, powerless and dominated people are not deprived of ideology. Thompson’s view seems to be about ‘dominant ideology’, rather than ideology in general. In addition, Verschueren (2012: 9-10) gives a methodological reason not to restrict social relations in the public sphere a priori to relations of domination for the purposes of ideology research. It can be analytically observed whether patterns of meaning bear on social issues or relations, but what functions are served by those meanings (among others the establishment or sustenance of domination) can, at best, be decided only upon completion of the analysis. It is easy to find differing views in language use that present (aspects of) social reality in a certain way and can affect social interactions or relationships, of which none is really dominant. For instance, in the studied press coverage the elections are variably metaphorically conceptualized as a battle and as a race in both the international and the national press. The lack of a dominant conceptualization does not make the patterns of meaning that are at issue any less ideological.

This said, ideology often has relations of power at its core, also when ideology is more moderately viewed as a resource for ways of seeing the world and interpreting events in social reality. Verschueren notes that ideological meanings often have a hegemonic tendency “in the sense that they are supported by a (variety of) source(s) of societal power, and that they are dependent for their success (in terms of an influence that dominates social-political life and public debate) on the extent to which they are experienced by (a significant segment of) the population as representing the ‘normal’ views” (1999a: 245). Albeit not negative in se, ideology in my research will mainly relate to, sometimes one-sided or biased, media representations of social reality, which contribute not only to the frames of interpretation in newspaper reports, but also to newsworthers’ as well as news consumers’ worldviews (see below).

Ideology can also be viewed as social cognition. Van Dijk (2006) defines ideology as a constitution of mental representations which are shared by members of the same social group, the body of thought and range of ideas that is necessary to think and act and understand each other, to form social relations and to distinguish one social group from another.
“Thus characterized as shared self-definitions of groups that allow group members to coordinate their social practices in relation to other groups, ideologies show a number of basic dimensions. They feature representations of criteria of membership and group access (Who are we? Who belongs to us?), typical actions and aims (What do we do, and why?), norms and values (What is good and bad for us?), relative social position to other groups (Where are we?), as well as the special social resources of the group (What do we have?)” (Van Dijk 1997: 26).

In his socio-cognitive view, ‘ideologies’ are both social systems and cognitive representations. As if ideological meanings or ideological aspects of discourse amount to necessary and sufficient clusters of features constituting identifiable, let alone separable, coherent entities that can be compared, Van Dijk proclaims that “ideologies are the mental representations that form the basis of social cognition, that is of the shared knowledge and attitudes of a group. […] besides a social function of coordination, they also have cognitive functions of belief organization: at a very general level of thought, they tell people what their ‘position’ is, and what to think about social issues” (1997: 29). To nuance, he adds that “social members are usually members of several social groups, and therefore participate in several group ideologies” (Van Dijk 1997: 30). I agree that people can have interiorized contradicting ideological ideas associated with different social groupings, but my sociocognitive definition of ideology is still somewhat different, as I will elucidate in the next subsection.

4.2.1.2. Ideology as a naturalized frame of reference and worldview
For the current research, a pragmatic view of ideology is borrowed from Verschueren (2012). In this view, ideology is associated with underlying patterns of meaning, frames of interpretation, worldviews, or forms of everyday thinking and explanation. The abstract theoretical notion of ideology itself is broadly defined as:

“any constellation of fundamental or commonsensical, and often normative, beliefs and ideas related to some aspect(s) of (social) ‘reality’” (Verschueren 1999a: 238).

So, in this dissertation, I will call ideological any basic pattern of meaning or frame of interpretation bearing on aspects of social reality and which is felt to be taken for granted and therefore often functioning in an authoritative or normative way (Verschueren 2012: 10). What seems to be lacking in this general definition is a sense of agency, although it is certainly implied. The ideas and beliefs that are talked about are human ideas and beliefs which can be employed by individuals in concrete contexts in different adaptive ways. Being inherent to the generation of meaning, ideology plays a role in how events in the world are entextualized and interpreted. In this sense, journalists’ reporting of events in the world is an ideological affair, for they try to make sense of what is happening in often complex situations and offer interpretations to the readers, which have to be rooted in a familiar frame of reference (otherwise the journalistic writing would be incomprehensible), while also drawing on their own prior knowledge,
experiences, pre-conceptions and internalized views of the world. By doing this, journalists influence the worldview of their readers.

Verschueren adds that “the commonsense nature of ideas and beliefs is manifested in the fact that they are rarely questioned within a specific group of people in a given society or community” (1999a: 238). What makes certain meanings ideological is that they are naturalized, that they are taken to be so normal or obvious that they are deemed to be generally acceptable. However, as this research aims to show, it is useful to critically reflect upon ideological meanings in the press. Ideology is a socially situated cognitive phenomenon that has aspects of society as its object and which involves a specific form of intersubjectivity that is clarified by Eagleton:

“Ideological statements [...] would seem to be subjective but not private [...]. On the one hand, ideology is no mere set of doctrines but the stuff which makes up uniquely what we are, constitutive of our very identities; on the other hand it presents itself as an ‘Everybody knows that’, a kind of anonymous universal truth” (Eagleton 2007: 20).

Thus, “ideology is a fully integrated sociocultural-cognitive phenomenon” (Verschueren 2012: 8). This intersubjective phenomenon is not stable, since ideology constantly evolves: “Its dynamics may result from occasional explicit questioning, from forms of interaction between different frames of interpretation, but also from changing circumstances that induce adaptations in ways of thinking” (Verschueren 2012: 12). As will be shown in chapters 7 and 8, even in the limited discursive space of press coverage, ideological changes concerning the keywords can be found.

It is important to emphasize that ideology is not a collection of inconsequential, disembodied ideas. As a ‘sociocultural-cognitive phenomenon’, it is not limited to people’s individual cognition, but it has an impact on society.

“Discursively reflected, constructed, and/or supported ideological meanings may serve the purposes of framing, validating, explaining, or legitimating attitudes, states of affairs, and actions in the domains to which they are applicable” (Verschueren 2012: 19).

Keep, however, in mind that there is no predictable one-to-one correspondence between frames of interpretation and behavioral patterns.

As Verschueren cogently argues one of the most tangible manifestations of ideology is language use or discourse “which may reflect, construct, and/or maintain ideological patterns” (2012: 17). Since ideology can be seen as a set of unquestioned ideas and beliefs, it is often, though not always, nor exclusively, manifested at the implicit layers of meaning, in the supposition that the meaning complex of every act of communication is the product of the interaction between what is explicitly communicated and what is left implicit for the reader to infer. With respect to news media, Fairclough maintains that “[i]deological representations are generally implicit rather than explicit in texts, and are embedded in ways of using language
which are naturalized and commonsensical for reporters, audiences, and various categories of third parties – presuppositions and taken-for-granted assumptions upon which the coherence of the discourse depends” (1995: 45). According to Hill, “the most effective and enduring ideological frameworks are precisely those that are implicit, reproduced only in unspoken presuppositions and entailments” (2007: 76). An insight into ideological aspects of news reports, then, can be gained by studying the taken-for-granted patterns of unquestioned meaning, which are often carried along implicitly in the news discourse (see also Thompson 1990, 1995). However, ideology is not purely implicit. It exists at the interplay between the explicit and the implicit. It is “a combination of implicit and explicit views” (Verschueren 1999a: 243). That is why one of my analytical foci will be presupposition (see 6.2.3 for more explanation).

Note that there may be a discrepancy between implicit meanings and what one would be willing to state explicitly. For example, the representation of the Maasais in example (16) above as “tribesmen [who] turn into a stampede, hollering and poking their gnarled wooden clubs in the air” feeds into ideological stereotypes. Although he drew this picture that can give rise to ideological meanings about the Maasais being a pristine people of traditions unaccustomed with modern life, NYT correspondent Jeffrey Gettleman, who is a trained anthropologist, would never explicitly describe them as such. In the interview I had with him, he clearly showed the utmost respect for all of Kenya’s peoples. Moreover, since he has been living in Kenya for several years, he must know that most Maasais do not live in isolation. Most of them combine their traditional lifestyle with modern technology like cell phones (e.g. to coordinate and make consultations with each other about cattle prices, weather and water, when herding), as I myself witnessed during travels through the country. Yet, Gettleman sketches this picture of Odinga landing with his helicopter as a savior, a godlike being among the Maasais, that reminds of the farcical film *The Gods Must Be Crazy* by Jamie Uys (1980).

The expounded view of ideology has not only some aspects in common with the way ideology is treated in critical discourse analysis, but it also shows some overlap with conceptions of ideology in the broader domain of critical linguistics. Strangely enough, this connection is not acknowledged by Verschueren (2012). In his propagation of linguistic criticism, Fowler defines ideology as “the system of beliefs, values, and categories by reference to which a person or a society comprehends the world” (1986: 130). In critical linguistics, ideology often refers to “a society’s implicit theory of what types of objects exist in their world (categorisation); of the way that world works (causation); and of the values to be assigned to objects and processes (general propositions or paradigms)” (Fowler 1996: 11). This ‘implicit theory’ is drawn upon to constitute ‘common sense’ which provides a normative base to discourse. Fowler also recognizes that

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86 In the whole book of *Ideology in Language Use* there is only one distancing reference in a footnote to Kress and Hodge (1979), who are proponents of critical linguistics (see Verschueren 2012: 28).
ideology is socioculturally and historically situated, being “both a medium and an instrument of historical processes” (1996: 12).

For a good understanding of ideology, two final remarks are in order. First, as has been stated earlier, ideology plays a role in contextualization in language use, i.e. news reporting. Journalists decide about the relevance of contextual elements, provide context to events and place them into a context which they think the readers can relate to. In that sense, newspaper articles are important sites of ideology production in so far as they do not only cite and repeat, but also strategically recontextualize texts and discourses originally produced elsewhere (Milani 2007: 114). Therefore, journalists can be described as ideological brokers (Blommaert 1999b and see 4.2.2 below). Couldry touches upon the media’s ideological potential with reference to the area of tension between globalization and localization.:

“Media provide common contexts, language and reference points for use in local situations, even though media production takes place outside most localities and its narratives cut across them from the outside. The frameworks within which we reflect on ourselves and others are shared with others, because they have a common source in media flows, and yet those frameworks are never entirely ‘ours’; we can grasp them alternately as ‘inside’ or ‘outside’” (Couldry 2003: 48).

Discursive contexts are constituted on the basis of ideological ways of interpreting events in the world, but they also contribute to ideology. Language users rely on background assumptions about context, interactive goals and interpersonal relations to derive frames in terms of which they can interpret what is going on (Gumperz 1982: 2). In that sense, context often makes interpretive preferences, informed by ideology, light up.

Secondly, it must be emphasized that, next to being dynamic, ideology is heterogeneous. It may be internally consistent, at face value it not always looks coherent. “The fact is, even within an ideology, there is debate and argumentation, because, within each ideology, there is an irresolvable dialectic of themes and counter-themes”, Shotter (1993: 146) remarked. On the surface level, ideology can contain a lot of contradictions. Thus Blommaert rightly recognized that:

“the hegemony of one ideology does not necessarily imply total consensus or total homogeneity. On the contrary, ambiguity and contradiction may be key features of every ideology, and subjects’ adherence to one ideology or another is often inconsistent or ambivalent” (Blommaert 1999a: 11).

Fowler too made this point when he stressed that ideology is not a homogenous or monolithic entity. He warns that “[i]t would be incorrect to think that each individual possesses one single, monolithic, world-view or ideology encompassing all aspects of his or her experience; rather, the ideational function provides a repertoire of perspectives relative to the numerous modes of discourse in which a speaker participates” (Fowler 1986: 149).
4.2.2. Representation in media and journalists as brokers of ideology

4.2.2.1. The polysemy of representation and its ideological aspects

“No individual person, social group, or institution dispenses ideology as attractively and continuously as the mass media” (Lull 2000: 47). This is an ideological statement, as there are various views in journalism (studies). Some believe that the news media are not ideological at all, others contend that the media can be ideological, while still others are convinced that the news media are ideological. I lean towards the latter view, since ideology does not exist independently of people and “man is an ideological animal by nature” (Althusser 2008: 45), so there is no escape from ideology in the media. In chapter 3 it was argued that “every media performance reflects the interpretation, perspectives and attitudes as well as, no less significantly, the constructions, ‘inventions’ […] and thus the personal, institutional and corporate ideologies of media producers together with those of other social actors who are similarly authorized to stage themselves and their agendas medially” (Johnson & Ensslin 2007: 13). Newspapers were described as media that can generate social meaning and social cognition. As such, they can even be regarded as ‘ideological state apparatuses’ (Althusser 2008). According to Partington, “news reports and newspapers […] are indeed a ‘primary discursive site’ for fostering and negotiating ideological values and in constructing individual and social attitudes and beliefs” (2009: 262). News media were assumed to have not only an impact on people’s stock of ideas, but also on their interactions and their actions. Thompson (1995) argued that ideological meanings, transmitted through the media, can be incorporated reflexively in the lives of media users. They can become part of their projects of self-formation and people can make use of media-induced ideological meanings in the practical contexts of their day-to-day lives, as they “become deeply ingrained in the self and are expressed not so much in explicit beliefs and opinions, but rather in the ways that individuals carry themselves in the world, relate to themselves and others” (Thompson 1995: 214).

In addition to all that has been stated before about the ideological potential of language use, news values, selective procedures, journalistic choices, etc., news media can be said to be ideological in two ways that need some more elaboration. First, news media offer representations of (people in) events in social reality, which readers take up and on which they base their (inter)actions in society and views on the world. Second, newspapers discursively construct credibility and authority, so that they are often looked upon as trustworthy windows to the world.

Recall that in 2.2 using language was described as a choice-making practice. Even though not all choices are equivalent, it implies that every choice carries along its alternatives. That is why communicative effects are often scored as much by not choosing an available option as by the actual choice that is made. Representation, broadly referring to the non-neutrality of discursive
descriptions, works in the same way. In media studies, the notion of representation is alternately used to denote “the images, ideas, signs, symbols, discourses and debates that feature within and are circulated by the channels and genres of the mass media” (Cottle 2004: 368). What makes media representations ideological is the fact that they generate meanings and “do not simply reflect society, but can play an active part in constituting what the nature of that society is, of how its social relations are conducted, and in defining what its future can be” (ibid.). Representation is a concept of ideology as “it is the essence of representation that it is always representation from some ideological point of view” (Fowler 1991: 85). It is important to realize that representations in the media are neither fixed, nor generally accepted. They can be used to legitimate certain practices that perpetuate inequalities, but they can also challenge stereotypes and promote positive understandings of social reality. Cottle concludes that “media representations can help construct boundaries of inclusion as well as exclusion” (2004: 369).

Although representation is not new to media or journalism studies, the polysemous meaning of the term is seldom considered fully. After all, there is some interesting ambiguity involved, which can be exploited in analyses of media discourse. Representation is a nominalization of the verb to represent, which can have at least five different meanings. It can mean (i) to present or describe somebody or something in a particular (often negative) way, so representation can refer to the way a social actor is depicted in discourse. Or it can mean (ii) to be a representative for a group of people and to speak or act on their behalf. Representation can also be associated with (iii) being a representative example of something. Related is the sense of (iv) being a symbol of something, as to represent can in certain contexts be synonymous with to symbolize. Finally, representation can refer to (v) being re-presented, to be presented again and recontextualized in discourse.

The idea of “news as a representation of the world in language” implies a selective construction and the possibility of an alternative representation, yielding a totally different interpretive frame (Fowler 1991: 4). Following Fairclough, journalists engage in “ideological-linguistic processes [which are] processes of struggle, in which choosing to represent an event in one way may also be refusing to represent in other currently available ways” (1995: 27). Maybe the choice of the verb to refuse here implies too much agency. For, journalists often feel they do not have a choice or a different representation to refuse, since they write ‘the world as they see it’, implying ‘the world as it is’. Of course, that is a masterly example of ideology. Other journalists do acknowledge their ideological work. Fairclough adds that “the ideological work of media language includes particular ways of representing the world (e.g. particular representations of Arabs, or of the economy), particular constructions of social identities (e.g. the construction in particular ways of the scientific experts who feature on radio or television programmes), and particular constructions of social relations (e.g. the construction of relations...
between politicians and public as simulated relations between people in a shared lifeworld)” (1995: 12). From a discursive, pragmatic perspective, representations do not so much ‘distort’ reality – when this would imply that a totally undistorted, generally acceptable view of the world would be possible – as productively provide the means by which ‘reality’ is actively constructed and known (cf. Cottle 2004: 371).

The ideology in news media often lies in its power to represent and the unavoidability or people’s readiness to internalize these media representations. As Croteau and Hoynes suggest, “media images do not simply reflect the world, they re-present it; instead of reproducing the reality of the world out there, the media engage in practices that define reality” (1997: 171). This practice becomes all the more ideological when the “value-laden, simplified picture of the world as represented by the media becomes the world for its recipients” (Fabiszak 2007: 73). This is an issue of international reporting. After all, “[p]eople who do not live in or routinely travel to other countries generally have little or no opportunity to test or challenge their conception of the (mass media-provided) ‘reality’ of those countries” (Paterson 1998: 82). Thus newspapers can contribute to people’s worldview and to their interpretive frames. The use of labels and names, the attribution of group membership and other representational strategies to present participants of news events in discourse make an important contribution to the overall frame of interpretation. Note that this observation is different from the hackneyed observation that the news media always express a society’s dominant ideology. Evidently, journalists, like all language users, need a common ground to communicate efficiently. But there is more ideology in news than a reproduction of so-called dominant ideology. The ideological power of representation especially lies in the fact that a “particular way of representing events in discursive language influences, first of all, the way we think about the events represented, and, second, the way we act toward the events” (Mehan 1996: 274). Mehan (1996) notes that conflicts are often waged in and through discourse. Proponents of various positions in such conflicts attempt to pinpoint their own mode of representation of the events or the state of affairs. In the ‘politics of representation’ there is always competition over the meaning of events and people in the world.

However, representation is not the only thing that makes news media ideological. There are at least three other features that prompt an ideological view of journalism. (i) Journalists such as the political reporters and the foreign correspondents who wrote the newspaper text in my corpus are engaged in interpreting social reality. In their reports they create a frame of interpretation to the world. On the one hand, newspaper reports usually have an overriding frame of reference inspired by an underlying ideology. Even ‘impartial’ reports in which opposite views are incorporated, tend to guide the readership into a direction of interpretation. Often this is done by means of ‘primary definers’, i.e. accredited and presumably authoritative, often elite, sources whose interpretation of the events is highlighted or foregrounded to the detriment of alternative
viewpoints (Allan 2010: 84-85). The initial definition or primary interpretation of the news topic suggests the preferred reading of the events and the text which describes them (see 7.2.1.1 for an elaborate example). On the other hand, journalists hardly close off their topics completely, for they are aware of the provisional nature of news, and they want to provide some interpretative leeway for people who disagree with the dominant reading of reality so as not to push them away from the newspaper. As such they leave openings for different interpretive communities to potentially recast the truth claims of the news account in light of their lived experiences and knowledge. That explains the often found paradoxes in news reports, which also abound in the news discourse that I studied (see chapters 7 and 8).

(ii) Another aspect of news media’s ideology is the impression of truthfulness and factuality that it tries to create. This feeds back into the discussion about objectivity (see 3.2.2.1). Although objectivity can only be an ideal, given the provisional and contingent nature of news, journalists can be said to have a ‘will to facticity’ (Allan 2010), related to Tuchman’s notion of ‘web of facticity’ (1978: 82ff.). This means that they use strategies and devices to lend their accounts a factual status. Notwithstanding readers’ ability to interpret news texts differently, journalists anticipate on how their texts will be interpreted by the implied readership. “News organizations and their journalists emphasise language that frames the news in a way that is consistent with what journalists perceive their audiences are expecting” (Somerville 2009: 531), which makes their job quite ideological. Moreover, as was explained above, explicitly communicated meanings are always rooted in ideological assumptions and implicit background knowledge which must be taken into account to make sense of the news reports. In international news coverage the reader is oriented into the universe of discourse by the specific use of language (Reah 1998). By all kinds of discursive choices and measured wording strategies the interpreter of news texts is guided in a certain direction (Van Ginneken 2002: 152).

(iii) Journalism is also an ideological practice in that it can be seen as an ‘argumentative discourse genre’. In news reports journalists try to persuade the audience that their description and interpretation is the rational and appropriate one (Richardson 2007: 64). As McGarry formulates it, newspaper journalists “have access to a myriad of linguistic devices designed to help the reader understand what is being expressed. Furthermore, writers use a variety of linguistic strategies in order to manipulate the reader to adopt his/her point of view” (1991: 157). Representational strategies, for instance, play an important role in the naturalization and legitimation of (interpretations of) news events. They help the reader to reinterpret contradictions or inconsistencies, and make the appropriate, rational or commonsensical inferences in keeping

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87 This was voiced by Bart Sturtewagen, the editor-in-chief at DS as journalists’ “search for the truth is never finished, and thus, every news story is provisional” as he wrote in the editorial ‘Tussen feit en vermoeden’ [Between fact and presumption] in DS on Friday 8 January 2010 (p.2).
with the dominant frame of interpretation (Allan 2010: 119-120). In this respect, journalistic discourse can be argued to perform as ‘authoritative discourse’ in Bakhtin’s sense (1981: 343). According to Bauman (2004: 152) the authoritativeness of someone’s words derives from the authority vested in his or her (social, institutional, communicative, …) role and mediational performances contribute to the process by enacting the authorization of discourse, by making its authority manifest. Even though news consumers are becoming more and more articulate and critical, people still (like or wish to) put a lot of trust in the news media. In a lecture titled “The truth, the half-truth and everything but the truth’ writer Jonathan Coe stated that “people who daily buy a serious newspaper and people who daily publish a serious newspaper share an imaginative contract that stipulates that the newspaper will provide a report about what has happened in the real world that is as reliable and as intelligent as possible”. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007: 52) speak of an ‘implied covenant with the public’. Similarly, Allan notes that in the language game of journalism “[w]e are asked to believe […] that truly professional journalists are able to set aside their individual preconceptions, values and opinions in order to depict reality ‘as it actually is’ to us, their audience” (2010: 94). This assumption encourages a majority of readers to rely on news accounts as faithful representations of reality. Thus, news media can be seen as expert systems in Giddens’ sense, i.e. as “systems of technical accomplishment or professional expertise that organise large areas of the material and social environments in which we live today” (Giddens 1990: 27). We trust that people like journalists perform their jobs well and we rely on them to live our lives in society.

4.2.2.2. Journalistic ideology is ‘no ideology’

Van Ginneken (1998, 2002) claims that the ideology of journalists is that they do not have an ideology. Being one himself, Davies (2008) also remarks that a lot of journalists are in denial of ideology. Gans (1979) invented the term paraideology to denote ideological aspects of the practice of journalism (e.g. news values like ethnocentrism, patriotism, etc.) without really

88 Coe said this during a public lecture, organized by Stichting Lezen, on Tuesday 29 April 2008 at FelixArchief, Antwerpen. See also http://www.stichtinglezen.be/NewsFlashDetail.aspx?l=002.003&id=120 [30/05/2008].

89 As a side remark: Often journalists are worth our trust, but not when ‘single stories’ are created in newspapers. Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie warns in the lecture ‘The danger of a single story’ at TED-Global Conference, July 2009 (http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html [04/01/2012]). When journalists create a single story they “show a people as one thing, as only one thing over and over again and that is what they become”. Adichie links single stories to power. Single stories create stereotypes and “the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete” or one-sided. If you read a single story about something or someone, you have a view of something or someone even before you have actually seen it or met that person. When you have a single story of Africa, Adichie critically reflects, you easily get “a sort of well-meaning, patronizing pity”, because often it concerns “a single story of catastrophe [in which] there is no possibility of Africans being similar to [the western reader] in any way, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals”. She criticizes the representation of Africa in popular international media as “the place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals and incomprehensible people, fighting senseless wars, dying of aids and unable to speak for themselves and waiting to be saved by a kind, white foreigner”.

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speaking of the at that time even more heavily connotated notion of ideology. Van Dijk (1997) holds a different view. He describes the ideology of journalists as follows: “journalists [...] acquire and use an ideology that consists of a self-schema that self-servingly defines them as people with special abilities, who professionally produce news and background articles in order to inform the public, by value standards such as objectivity, reliability and fairness, while being positioned independently between the public and the elites, and having special access to the resource of information” (Van Dijk 1997: 30).

The fact that some journalists think they do not have an ideology or that they do not fully realize the range of ideological aspects involved in their work – some of which are just a consequence of their being language users, although they use language in a particular way in the public sphere – is because ideology may be highly immune to experience and observation due to its normative and common-sense nature (Verschueren 2012: 14). However, whether one realizes it or not, every language user has a dynamic ideology, including the scholar who tries to investigate news discourse and turns his investigations into an extensive academic dissertation. Like journalistic writing, academic writing is always done from certain ideological standpoints, also the critique of ideology itself. That is why, as a matter of fact, every critique of ideology should itself be subjected to a critical analysis. Ideology often requires an outsider to point out, or else specialized training, some distance from the discourse and practices you are engaged in or a lot of critical self-reflection to become aware of. Herein lies the critical potential of ideology research for journalism studies. Verschueren convincingly argues that ideology research can be aimed at pointing out how ideological meanings work in specific cases and indicate what alternatives there are. “Hence ideology research also opens the way to – and is often informed by – alternative frames of interpretation” (Verschueren 2012: 15).

This chapter has made the case that there is no doubt that journalists engage in ideological activities. Their work can be considered partly ideological, not only because they frame reality – the event ‘out there’ – by foregrounding, backgrounding or even erasing some aspects of it, but also because, in representing reality, text producers may incorporate, and thereby indicate, a particular interpretation of existing ideologically laden discourses on this very reality. This, together with the authoritative status typically accorded to newspaper discourses means that print media can have an influence on how people think and (inter)act. Finally, newspapers are arenas to which only a relatively limited number of people have access in terms of actual production processes. In other words, social groups which wield social power are likely to have privileged or exclusive admission to the production of media texts (Blommaert 2005). At the same time newspaper editors, in particular, may elect to invest with authority the statements of those who would not generally be given the floor, that is, private individuals or the so-called, ‘man in the street’ (Milani 2007).
5. Context of news and corpus of newspapers

“[MP] Mwamzandi: I have seen every Minister loading his office with his own tribe. I wonder how far we shall go, Mr. Speaker. If I go to the office of the Minister for Finance, I will be spoken to in the Kikuyu language, right from the bottom to the top.

The Assistant Minister for Finance (Mr. Odero-Jowi): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, can the hon. Member substantiate the allegation he is just making about my Ministry?

The Speaker (Mr. Slade): Yes, can you do it, Mr. Mwamzandi? I think you were about to do so, but please substantiate.

Mr. Mwamzandi: Mr. Speaker, this does not need any substantiation. If I go right from the bottom of that office, it is obvious; he, himself, knows. I have given that as one example. I would not say your office, but your Ministry, your own office has only Kikuyus, I know. [...] Mr. Speaker, he is asking whether I am Luo or Kikuyu. He does not know my tribe. This is the danger, Mr. Speaker. They are regarding the Kikuyu and Luo as the main tribes in Kenya. This should not be taken as fact”.


“[MP Charles] Kilonzo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister should know how their Government is operating. The first thing that one does when they are appointed Minister in this Government is look at the parastatals under their Ministry and replace the majority of their Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) with members of their community. This is not a problem with only this particular Minister, but rather a problem with the entire membership of the Front Bench on the Government side. [...] My question is: What action is the Government taking to ensure that Ministers do not abuse office? [...]”

The Minister for Cooperative Development and Marketing (Mr. Nyagah): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. Is my good friend, my father in this Parliament who escorted me to be sworn in, in order to make a general statement that everyone of us, including myself, only appoint people from the same tribe?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. C. Kilonzo, you cannot make a sweeping statement. You are out of order. Proceed and ask your question!

Mr. C. Kilonzo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I hear you, but the majority of them, even from my own community [Kamba], put Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) from their own community. Whether it is Kikuyus or Luos, they put CEOs from their own community. That is most offending. What I am asking is very simple: When will these Ministers start thinking as true Kenyans, so that the positions of CEOs in their Ministries do not belong to them and their communities?”


Figure 15: Cartoon by Gado, published in the Daily Nation about Kenya’s state on 2 January 2008.
5.1. Sociopolitical context

5.1.1. Trials of tribe

5.1.1.1. The ideology of tribe, tribalism and ethnicity

As was argued in the previous chapter, context is crucial for the analysis of discourse. Gumperz (1982: 196), for one, knew that interpretation is always a matter of context. A good understanding of different kinds of context is required to gain an insight into the meaning dynamics and the ideological aspects of news texts. That is why it is important to acquire some knowledge about the sociopolitical context of the news topic and about the organizations behind the news. This contextual information will be complemented by information about the news production process and context, provided by means of ethnographic fieldwork, which will be explained in 6.1.2. In the first part of this chapter I will look into the sociopolitical context of the events that are reported in the newspaper articles under study, viz. the 2007 elections and the violent aftermath, leading to a political and a societal crisis in Kenya. This is necessary because the more we know about the news topic, the easier “it becomes to interpret how the media screen veils that reality, to know how the story has been constructed, to know what has been omitted, to see beyond” (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1995: 431). In the second part of this chapter I will first provide a minimal context to the newspapers involved and then give a numerical presentation of the dataset, including an introduction to the method of data management.

The highly charged notion of tribe is a good starting point for this contextualizing chapter, particularly because it is one of the main keywords of the news discourse under investigation, which is clearly indicated by a series of text mining techniques tested on the data (see Pollak et al. 2011 in appendix IV, and see table 2 and figure 20 in 6.2.1.1). Moreover, tribe was an important element in Kenya’s electoral politics as well as in the conflicts that rocked the country during the post-election crisis. Like genocide or democracy, tribe is a word with a loaded natural history with different intertextual links, as it often has a strongly politicized use in Blommaert’s sense (see 2.2.2.1). When tribe comes into the spotlight, for instance, in an African context of conflict, images of primeval strife or labels of ethnic cleansing are readily used and comparisons to other countries with ethno-political and ethno-social problems, such as Rwanda, are never far away. That is systematically attested in the studied news coverage. However, tribe is a very complex notion with clear ideological aspects, as are the related notions of tribalism and ethnicity. Therefore, I deem it useful to subject these notions to a critical examination. After defining them and questioning their accuracy to describe heterogeneous groups of African people and their behaviors in countries such as Kenya, I will explain the specific entanglement of tribe and politics in Kenya in the next subpart (5.1.1.2).
The concept of tribe is fundamentally a category of political organization, but it has also been used as an ethnological category to classify social groups. A standard definition is lacking. Winthrop (1991: 308) discerned four major uses of tribe in anthropology and political science: (i) tribe can be understood as an ethnological classification, usually based on a specific configuration of culture, language, territory, religion and ethnicity, to distinguish between communities of people, say the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru, or the Kipsigis, Nandi and Tugen in Kenya; (ii) tribe can be seen as a nonstratified, culturally distinctive, kin-based society that figures as one stage in an evolutionary sequence (band – tribe – chiefdom – state) with an emphasis on the historical transformation of certain characteristics of politics, economy and social structure (see also Kottak 1997: 238); (iii) tribe can function as an expression of social identity and distinctiveness or as one aspect of people’s multiple identities; (iv) tribe can be used to denote a primitive pattern of existence that is then often contrasted to ‘civilized societies’.

In general, tribe is defined in cultural, political and economic terms. In his handbook of anthropology, Kottak (1997), for instance, presents a description which links tribe to a certain way of life:

“Tribes usually have a horticultural or pastoral economy and are organized by village life and/or descent-group membership. Class structure and formal government are absent. Many tribes have small-scale warfare, often in the form of intervillage raiding. Tribes have more effective regulatory mechanisms than do foragers, but tribalists have no sure means of enforcing political decisions. The main regulatory officials are village heads, ‘big men’, descent-group leaders, village councils, and leaders of pantribal associations. All these figures and groups have limited authority” (Kottak 1997: 241).

In this narrow anthropological definition, which roughly corresponds to the second meaning of tribe listed above (but which also has some elements of (iv)), tribe is a type of sociopolitical organization, coupled with specific economic activities. As a general definition I rather follow Winthrop (1991), who brings different meanings together and defines tribe as:

“A culturally homogeneous, nonstratified society possessing a common territory, without centralized political or legal institutions, whose members are linked by extended kinship ties, ritual obligations, and mutual responsibility for the resolution of disputes” (Winthrop 1991: 307).

After reviewing the literature, Mafeje (1971) already noted that the main characteristics to distinguish a tribe from other forms of human organization are territoriality, primitive government through elders and chiefs, and a small-scale subsistence economy. I wonder whether my Kenyan acquaintances, most of which proudly identify as members of one or the other ‘tribe’,\(^9^0\), would recognize themselves in these definitions. To my judgment, the answer would be negative, as I will argue immediately.

\(^{90}\) I will use the word tribe in the context of Kenya as a synonym of ethnic group, as does also Oucho (2002: 9), because that is how tribe is usually innocently used in Kenya. However, since I am aware of the problematic aspects
Tribalism is a notion that is related to tribe. In Kenya it is regularly used with heavily pejorative connotations not only in political discourse (see the extracts of the parliamentary debates at the beginning of this chapter), but also in the public sphere. In Kenya, tribalism alternatively refers to (i) favoritism on the basis of ethnicity, or in the words of ST journalist Onyango as “giving favors to certain people based on tribal linkages”\(^{91}\) (see 8.1.1.1); (ii) ethnic bigotry, as it is called, for instance, in the opinion article ‘Spare youth your ethnic bigotry’ by editor Henry Munene (DN 03/12/2007) or in the analysis ‘Kenya approaches instability: What is the way out’ by development scholar Karuti Kanyinga (DN 06/01/2008); (iii) tribal chauvinism and the irrational dislike of people on the basis of their ethnicity, as ST foreign news editor Kipkemboi wrote in his defense to a critical opinion article after which he received loads of vehement reader reactions; (iv) parochial jingoism and the selective orientation to people depending on their cultural background, as commentator Miguna wrote in the opinion piece ‘Tribalism and graft have been Kenya’s undoing’ (ST 17/12/2007); and (v) negative ethnicity, as tribalism was described in the opinion article ‘Tribalism holding us captive’ by commentator Namwamba (ST 04/11/2007) (see below and Wa Wamwere 2008).

However, Ekeh (1990) noticed that tribalism has not always been such a negative word. In social anthropology, it did not originally refer to an objectionable “kinship ideology in multiethnic communities” or to “undesirable modes of behavior in modern Africa”, but tribalism used to denote “a valued and desirable attribute of tribes and tribesmen”, or more neutrally “the sum of the ways of life of tribesmen” (Ekeh 1990: 661). In the 1960s the Luo unionist and prominent politician Tom Mboya (1963: 28) could innocently claim that tribalism is a positive stabilizing factor in a society which is changing with an overwhelming speed (though he did acknowledge that there is a negative kind of tribalism, see below). In Mboya’s view, tribalism was primarily about interdependence within a community of people characterized by mutual responsibilities, duties, expectations, inherent generosity and solidarity.

Such positive meanings contrast sharply with the meaning the word tribalism acquired in contemporary African societies. As Wa Wamwere writes:

“In Africa, when a person from one ethnic community despises or attacks someone from another community, or denies someone a job based on the applicant’s ethnicity, ordinary Africans in the streets, villages, government offices, and at political rallies do not call this ethnicity. They call it tribalism” (Wa Wamwere 2008: 95).

Thus, tribalism is often understood as the misuse, abuse or corruption of ethnic feelings for the benefit of personal, parochial or short-term gain and at the cost of national harmony and interethnic prosperity. The negative interpretation of tribalism is in contrast to the positive

\(^{91}\) Personal interview with Dennis Onyango on 15 November 2008.
attitudes that are commonly held towards ethnicity or people’s ethnic identities. In that view, tribalism belongs to the list of nepotism, cronyism, and even fascism, while ethnicity would be in the list with identity, plurality, collectivity. But it is also a part of personality and individuality.

Although not everyone would be happy with an ethnic identification, most of the people that I met and talked to in Kenya, ranging from taxi drivers or cleaning ladies to editors or professors, were proud of their ethnic background. My experiences in Kenya learnt me that if there are ethnically-related problems in Kenyan society, ethnicity is never named as the malefactor, but tribalism is. People tend to make a clear distinction between the positive feelings of ethnic identity and community, and the bad excesses of ethnic perversion and hatred. Wa Wamwere tries to keep them apart by contrasting ethnicity to ‘negative ethnicity’.

“I am against the use of the word tribalism to refer to ethnic bias in Africa. Yet I am uncomfortable with the use of the word ethnicity to refer both to innocent ethnic pride and harmful ethnic hate. To remove this confusion [...] I use ‘ethnicity’ only to refer to positive ethnic pride and ‘negative ethnicity’ to indicate ethnic hatred and bias” (Wa Wamwere 2008: 97).

Although this may be “a weird way of looking at it”, as NYT correspondent Gettleman put it, and although the expression ‘negative ethnicity’ can be questioned, I believe that the distinction between ethnicity as a positive aspect of people’s identity, and the exploitation of ethnicity for disruptive ends is a valuable distinction to make in Kenya. However, Wa Wamwere is not revolutionary with his ideas. At independence Mboya already deemed it “essential to isolate what you might call ‘negative tribalism’ from tribalism in the form of customs and culture” (1963: 68). As he clarified,

“I would never pretend that there is not a negative form of tribalism, which is most harmful in Africa. The man who tries to live so completely within the confines of his tribe, not so much revering its customs as discriminating against other tribes, represents the kind of tribalism of which Africa must beware. The Luo who thinks nothing good can come from other tribes or continuously protects a person merely because he is a fellow Luo; the Kikuyu who thinks it only suitable to meet other Kikuyu and disregards merit and ability in other people because and only because they do not belong to his tribe; this is negative tribalism which cannot allow for unity. That we are born from different tribes we cannot change, but I refuse to believe that, because our tribes have different backgrounds and culture and customs, we cannot create an African community or a nation” (Tom Mboya 1963: 70).

In the wake of the Kenyan 2007 elections which turned into a violent crisis such ideas were frequently echoed. However, with regard to what happened during Kenya’s crisis, it is surprising to note that many people still have not learnt what Mboya already knew. The tension between the virtues and vices of ethnicity was also brought forward in several of my interviews with Kenyan

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92 Note that there is a difference between being proud of one’s ethnic background and the readiness to be ethnically identified. For the Kenyan writer Binyavanga Wainaina (2008), for instance, tribe is not an issue and that is why he opposes to being tribally identified.

93 Personal interview with Jeffrey Gettleman on 20 May 2011.
journalists (see below and see 6.1.2.2 and the analytical chapters 7 and 8). A similar distinction is made by Lonsdale (2004) who speaks of ‘moral ethnicity’ as people’s positive sense of belonging, social responsibility and communal values, which is opposed to ‘political tribalism’ the exploitation of ethnic identities in the context of ethnic rivalry for a share in natural and public resources. In Lonsdale’s view, moral ethnicity is about the “social renegotiation of what one ‘ought or ought not, to do or believe’ in relation to kin and neighbours, patrons and clients” (2004: 78). Political tribalism is the obverse side:

“It governs external relations with other perceived ethnic groups [...]. Its seedbed was those twentieth-century changes that militated against the inter-ethnicity of former times – the alien imposition of a state that fostered new regional inequalities of power and its more urgent factionalization; the diversion of much farm production from local exchange to the export trade; inter-ethnic competition in labour markets; demographic pressure on the choicest land” (Lonsdale 2004: 79-80).

Although Lonsdale (2004: 80) observes that inter-ethnicity remains a precondition for the coexistence and the informal economy of ordinary Kenyans, political tribalism is one of Kenya’s major problems, perhaps the main cause of the post-election crisis (see below).

A profound discussion about the semantics and pragmatics of ethnicity falls outside the scope of this thesis, so I will limit myself to these few comments about the relationship between ethnicity, tribe and tribalism, which are relevant for my case study. As Fought (2006: 4) remarks ethnicity is one of those concepts that everybody knows, but that is very hard to define in an univocal and consensual manner (see e.g. Fought 2006 for an overview of definitions).94 A general definition will do for my purposes. According to Kottak, ethnicity means “identification with, and feeling part of, an ethnic group, and exclusion from certain other groups because of this affiliation” (1997: 65). An ethnic group then is a group which is distinguished by cultural similarities (shared among members of that group) and cultural differences (between people of the ingroup and others). Members of an ethnic group “share beliefs, values, habits, customs, and norms, and a common language, religion, history, geography, kinship, and/or race” (Kottak 1997: 65). A similar view is held by Day (2006) who argues that an ethnic group is “a sub-type of cultural group distinguished by an institutionalization process” following from the knowledge amongst a collection of individuals that they (presumably) share common origins, beliefs, discursive and other social practices to organize reality and make sense of the world (Day 2006: 220). However natural ethnicity might feel for some people, it is important to note that ethnicities are ideological constructs, which can change over time. As Oucho observed, “ethnic groups […] are not necessary or natural outcome [sic] of cultural beliefs and practices; rather, they are a creation of politics and ideology” (2002: 4). Ethnicity is a combination of past and

94 She notes that it is more interesting to see how this social category functions in social reality than to try to define it theoretically (Fought 2006: 9).
present, which is clear from Lonsdale’s definition of ethnic group as a “community that mythifies diverse pasts into a common history, to face up to the present” (2004: 78).

Ethnicity as a social category is an intrinsic part of people’s identity, but it does not constitute the whole of identity, however prominent it can be for some people. Hanlon (2006) discerns two kinds of scholars in the field of ethnic studies: ‘primordialists’, who argue that ethnic identity is innate and largely fixed, and ‘constructivists’, who argue that it is malleable and changing.

“‘Primordialists’ view ethnicity as an exceptionally strong affiliation which is often linked to ancient conflicts, age-old hatred and past atrocities. These identities change little over time. It leads to the view that there are irreconcilable differences between ethnic groups, and that violent clashes are inevitable. […] ‘Constructivists’ or ‘instrumentalists’ argue for a social construction of identity, moulded by social systems, leaders and circumstances. Identity is malleable, changes rapidly over time, is often recently formed, and is not inherently conflictual” (Hanlon 2006: 97-98).

Although this dichotomy is rather caricatural, especially with regard to the so-called ‘primordialists’, if I were to put myself into one of those two groups I would lean towards the constructivists. In contrast to Hanlon, Fought treats the socially constructed nature of ethnicity under the heading ‘Areas of agreement about ethnicity’, as she argues that “scholars across the disciplines […] agree that ethnicity is a socially constructed category, not based on any objectively measurable criteria” (2006: 4). That does not mean it is a purely hypothetical or insignificant concept, because ethnicity is a social reality that can be deeply rooted in the consciousness of individuals and groups and it can materialize in society’s institutions (Fought 2006: 5). Two other points of general agreement about ethnicity according to Fought are (i) “that ethnicity cannot be studied or understood outside the context of other social variables, such as gender or social class” and (ii) that the construction of ethnic identity is a combination of “both self-identification and attitudes of others” (2006: 5-6). Similarly, Van der Veen (2002: 107, 435) considers ethnicity as group membership, which incorporates both a bottom-up feeling of belonging of an individual and a top-down imposition of identity by the authorities.

In Kenya the notion of ethnicity is related to tribe. Ethnicity is about tribal affiliation, which is one part of people’s multiple identities and as such neither ethnicity nor tribe are negative words, as many of my informants confirmed. The chief news editor at DN Shimoli was firm:

“I don’t think tribe is negative in the African context, it’s what you do with it, because my tribe [Luhya] gives me an identity, it gives me an ancestral land, it gives me a culture, which is rich in many respects, it builds me and before these artificial boundaries came there were traditional ways of dealing with neighboring communities that did not speak your language or share your culture. The Luhyas and Luos, for instance, are neighbors of a completely different ethnicity, Bantu and Nilotic, and they never fought a war, even if they had political
differences. Traditionally, they know how to deal with each other. Even marriage between them is regulated by culture, as are burials, child birth, etc.\textsuperscript{95}

So, here is the confusion. A lot of Kenyans have a positive attitude towards ethnicity and often use the word \textit{tribe} to denote their ethnic identity. But tribe also comes up in conflict situations, where it can easily aggravate, pervert and obfuscate the deeper underlying causes of conflicts. In such a context foreign correspondents who hear of tribes and see tribes just report on tribes without making the distinction between what is happening in the situation of conflict as opposed to the way tribe functions in daily life (see 5.1.1.3 for more on this).

Even though particular ethnic groups have been fighting before, ethnic conflict is never about ancient tribal animosity. Memories, past experiences, traditional perceptions and stereotypes do play a role, but these are often resurged, recontextualized, (re)constructed, shaped or manipulated in order to legitimate contemporary goals. Ethnic conflicts are always a combination of historical and more recent evolutions. Moreover, they are rarely about pure repugnancy among different ethnic groups. Hanlon (2006: 103) argues that such conflicts are seldom “ethnic in character”, because they mainly revolve around disputes over political, territorial, economic or social issues. In that respect it must be noted that the stronger the ethnic identity of a faction of people, the more this aspect will come to the fore in social struggles. Kottak also points out that ethnic conflicts always have deeper roots, such as “a sense of injustice because of resource distribution, economic and/or political competition, and reaction to discrimination, prejudice, and other expressions of threatened or devalued identity” (1997: 59). This also holds for the conflicts in Kenya after the 2007 elections, which were so eagerly labeled as ethnic by the international press (see below and chapters 7 and 8).

Shimoli’s quote above, especially the references to history, tradition, ‘ancestral land’ and ‘artificial boundaries’, intimates a few problems with the concept of tribe, which were already touched upon by Mafeje (1971) when he defined the notions of tribe and tribalism:

“A relatively undifferentiated society, practising a primitive subsistence economy and enjoying local autonomy, can legitimately be designated as a tribe. When such a society strives to maintain its basic structure and local autonomy, even under changed economic and political conditions, perhaps it can be said to exhibit ‘tribalism’. But to impose the same concept on societies that have been effectively penetrated by European colonialism, that have been successfully drawn into a capitalist money economy and a world market, is a serious transgression” (Mafeje 1971: 258).

The notion of tribe, as it is sketched above, has at least five interrelated problematic aspects.

(i) To begin with, there is a problem of denotation and evolution. There is a tension between the historical meaning aspects and current uses of \textit{tribe}. The semantics of the term lags behind the social evolutions of the people who are identified and identify themselves in such terms.

\textsuperscript{95} Personal interview with Eric Shimoli on 6 May 2011.
Today there are more than 40 ethnic groups in Kenya (the oft heard number is 42, but it can be more depending on how you count). Traditionally these are grouped together in three divisions: Cushites, Nilotes and Bantus. It is assumed that the first inhabitants of present-day Kenya were hunter-gatherers, akin to modern Khoisan communities, who assimilated with the southern Cushitic cultivators and herders from northeast Africa who settled in the area between 3000 and 300 BC. Around 500 AD a second migration took place of Nilotic groups from present-day Sudan and environs. By 1000 AD Bantu people who originated in western Africa moved into the region (Ogot 2002). In this view present-day ethnic groups such as the Kikuyus, Luhyas, Kambas, Kisiis, Merus and Mijikendas are classified as Bantu. Together they constitute a majority in Kenya. The Luos, Kalenjins, Maasais, Samburus and Turkanas are Nilotic people. From the Cushites only the Somalis are rather populous. Other groups such as the Rendiles, (Oromo) Borans or Ogieks are very small (see Oucho 2002: 38-42 for more details about Kenya’s ethnic groups). Historically, these people might have lived in separate tribes, but it is hard to say whether the ancestors of these groups identified themselves in this way with historical evidence suggesting ethnic interaction giving rise to the view of pre-colonial Africa as an ethnic melting pot (see next point). Ogot (2002: 266) indicates that there were and still are a lot of “hybrid ethnic groups”. Anyway, it is clear that the old Cushitic, Nilotic and Bantu groups evolved into complex, contemporary social groupings, the members of which have an ethnic identity next to other kinds of (professional, geographical, religious, educational, …) identities. In this respect Tarimo (2011: 16) emphasizes that ethnic identity is related to the changing conditions of life, i.e. “one has to consider the cultural, socio-economic, and political changes that have been taking place and how they have continued to fashion ethnic identities, loyalties, and interests”. The word tribe as it is used in Kenya does not denote the ancient or primitive groups of yore, which are often still associated with the word by Europeans or Americans.

(ii) To continue with this historical perspective, the second problem of tribe is a problem of ascription and construction. Historically, tribe is a foreign, externally-imposed construct. It was a categorization that was applied by mainly European or American explorers, traders, missionaries, anthropologists and colonial administrators to indigenous peoples. It was a case of other-identification. Whether they came from Flanders or Friesland, from Wales or Scotland, the people who introduced tribal terms to Africa did not describe their own ethnic communities in those terms, although ethnicity was, and still is, an important issue in Europe and the US. So, the notion of tribe was not only a projection, but also a disassociation. As Wright writes about pre-colonial Africa,

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96 It must be noted that Kenya also has inhabitants with non-African ethnicities, e.g. people from Arab, Asian (mainly Indian) or European (mainly British) descent.

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“English, French, and Dutch lived in worlds where ethnicity mattered greatly. Thus seamen and administrators from these cultures seem increasingly to have come to Africa expecting to find ‘tribes’ and they labelled the people they encountered as ethnic ‘tribesmen’. In their records and on their maps, they bespoke boundaries and drew lines about various villages, states, and ethnic groups. It was a European notion of how Africans lived, rather than an African one. Then came anthropologists [...] ready to declare things in the present existing as if they always were just that way. [...] They tended to generalize from individual observations about larger groups of people they identified as ethnic groupings, and they used the ‘anthropological present tense’ to describe the ways ‘these people’ lived” (Wright 1999: 419-420).

Later Africans indeed came to see themselves as belonging to prescribed ethnic groups, because people’s self-conceptualizations are flexible and subject to change (see the next point of appropriation). That is why some people in Africa incorporated or internalized ethnic identities which did not exist a few decades earlier, as they went through processes of acculturation. Such processes also underlie today’s particular use of tribe in Kenya. If identities are nowadays fluid and dynamic, also in pre-colonial Africa “[i]dentity was fluid, and ethnicity, if such a concept existed, was a permeable membrane through which passed links of marriage, ties to religion, and much more”, Wright argues, while noting that in pre-colonial Africa “[c]lass and social standing seem to have been far more important than ethnicity in social relationships” (1999: 423). Nevertheless, colonial rule reinforced ethnic thinking in Africa and contributed to the formal classification of tribes. This again shows that ethnicity and ethnic group formation are always ideological in a sense. As Mafeje already observed,

“European colonialism, like any epoch, brought with it certain ways of reconstructing the African reality. It regarded African societies as particularly tribal. This approach produced certain blinkers or ideological predispositions which made it difficult for those associated with the system to view these societies in any other light” (Mafeje 1971: 253).

This is also the gist of Reader’s argument who adds that a lot of Africans were ready to follow the new ideology as they saw personal benefit. He argues that

“ethnicity [...] was not a cultural characteristic that was deeply rooted in the African past; it was a consciously crafted ideological tradition that was introduced during the colonial present. [...] And once the process was in motion, it was enthusiastically reinforced by the Africans themselves. They inhabited a world of social and economic uncertainty in which the invented histories offered at least a hope of order [...]. Africans wanted effective units of action no less than the colonial administrators wanted effective units of government. [...] There were always individuals with personal motives for collaborating with the identification of tribal units that they could lead. Throughout Africa, tribal identities were catalysts which enabled ambitious individuals and groups to achieve positions of status, dominance, and wealth that might otherwise have been unattainable” (Reader 1999: 616).

As an example of the colonial construction of tribal identities, Reader (1999: 615) cites the case of the Kikuyus and the Maasais. He explains that their being sworn enemies is a fiction, invented by the British administration for its own convenience. Although there had been sporadic fighting
between specific clans of Kikuyus and Maasais, the Kikuyus fought among themselves as much as they fought with the Maasais. Moreover, the Kikuyus not only traded with the Maasais, they intermarried and shared aspects of social and ritual practice. Their interaction is also reflected in the language. For instance, almost all words relating to cattle in the language of the Kikuyus are borrowed from the Maasais. In the same way, the supposed ancestral homelands can be argued to be a colonial fiction (see example 127 in 8.1.2.1).

(iii) Building on the two prior observations, the third problematic aspect of tribe has to do with appropriation. As was argued, traditionally, “tribes are nonliterate, culturally uniform, religiously cohesive, technologically simple, economically self-sufficient, and politically autonomous” (Winthrop 1991: 310), but for most modern-day ‘tribesmen’ in Kenya the contrary is true. In multi-ethnic societies, such as Kenya, the classical meaning of tribe does not apply to the groups of people it is supposed to describe (which is not to deny that there still exist, even in Kenya, a few groups to which the classical label would apply). Kenyans know that, but what about others, say newspaper readers in the US or Europe who only know the notion of tribe from the media, history books, anthropology class or dictionaries, where the classical meaning prevails? A lot of Kenyans appropriated the word tribe in their own way to denote social groups, members of which are literate, heterogeneous, technology-savvy and can have different religions or denominations. In comparison to Winthrop’s definition above, these groups are stratified and live in a society with both regional and centralized political and legal institutions. Moreover, although most of Kenya’s modern-day ‘tribes’ claim to possess a common territory, the so-called ancestral lands, such claims can be questioned from a historical perspective (see above).

This observation can be used both to defend the use of tribe in news reporting and to reject it. Foreign correspondents often wondered why they would shun the word if Kenyans themselves are using it. Mafeje (1971: 254) heavily reacted against such apologies, arguing that the term is inappropriate, even if ‘the natives’ themselves use it. But he did not seem to take into account that words can be used by different people in different contexts with different meanings and that the meaning of words can change (cf. tribalism above). I think foreign correspondents could use the term, provided that they would use it in a contemporary sense, corresponding to modern-day Kenyan conceptions, and if they could transfer that meaning to their audiences at home. However, that is where the difficulty lies, as the classical meaning of tribe is well-established in Europe and America. In addition, there is no denying that the concept has a charged natural history – in most academic circles it is a tarnished term – and therefore it is unacceptable for some readers. That could be a reason not to use the word tribe. The question is whether the

97 Insightful in this respect is Meeuwis’s observation that “the Africans’ language use, like their ethnic self-identification, was to a large extent the object of the Europeans’ control. In their contacts with Europeans and among themselves, the colonized were often compelled to resort to clearly identified linguistic resources and to behave and present themselves according to very specific patterns of expectation” (1999: 409).
expression *ethnic group* provides a valid alternative (I come back to this in 5.1.1.3). Another complication is that also Kenyans do not use the word *tribe* in an unambiguous way.

(iv) That brings me to a fourth problematic aspect of the notion: the problem of connotation. As stated above, my impression is that *tribe* in Kenya is not negative by default. I base myself on such statements as the one by ST chief news editor Agina, who told me that *tribe* does not have a primitive or pejorative connotation in Kenya, contrary to the way it is often used in the international reporting about Kenya, rather “it expresses diversity and curiosity about each other’s culture” and he continued that “it only becomes negative when you bring it into the context of conflict” (cf. Shimoli’s statements above). In the assumption that tribe is related to ethnic identity, Tarimo formulates it this way:

> “Ethnic identities are not evil in themselves as it has been portrayed by the forces of colonization and post-colonial politics. Ethnic identities become harmful when manipulated for self-interest” (Tarimo 2011: 20).

That ethnicity is to be celebrated, instead of politically manipulated is also put forward by Udogu (2001). However, for many people in Europe or the US, including some foreign correspondents, *tribe* does undeniably have a negative and even primitive connotation (cf. Lowe et al. 2008 or Ray 2008). And if it does not, which was claimed by some of the foreign correspondents who I interviewed, it is conspicuous that *tribe* is almost always used in international news in negative contexts. In this respect of particular relevance is Krishnamurty’s (1996) corpus-based study of the ideological meanings of the words *ethnic, racial* and *tribal*. He clearly laid bare their pejorative connotations and typical uses in negative contexts in the English language, particularly in newspapers. He found that especially the noun *tribe* tended to carry negative connotations of primitiveness and savageness in the so-called ‘Western world’ (Krishnamurthy 1996: 147). The use of *ethnic group* and *ethnic* may be less ideologically marked and more politically correct than *tribe* and *tribal*. However, Krishnamurty (1996: 132) discovered that both pairs often seem to be used interchangeably in the English-language press. This observation not only holds for the foreign press reports in my corpus, *tribe* and *ethnic group, tribal* and *ethnic* are also used interchangeably in the Kenyan press, which was confirmed by several of my informants. The only difference is that these terms are not mainly restricted to negative contexts in the Kenyan press. On the contrary, as my analyses will show, in negative contexts tribal terms are shunned in the Kenyan newspapers (see chapters 7 and 8).

(v) A final problematic aspect of *tribe* that must be mentioned has to do with characterization, demarcation and heterogeneity. In classical definitions the notion of tribe implies homogeneity and boundedness. But in Africa, tribes have never been closed groups. Even in pre-colonial times “southern Cushites and several Bantu and southern Nilotic-speaking groups interacted with each

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98 Personal interview with Ben Agina on 22 November 2008.
other fighting, trading and intermarrying and thereby influencing each other’s societies and economic practices” (Ogot 2002: 23). However, during colonial times attempts were made to fix lists of criteria to characterize ethnic groups. One important factor was language and even today you often hear the claim that some people form an ethnic group because they speak the same language. Like other characteristics, such as habits, customs, religion (see Kottak’s definition above), language is not a definitive criterion to distinguish between ethnic groups. Hymes (1984), for one, demonstrated that the assumption of one tribe, one language cannot be taken for granted (see also Winthrop 1991: 310). Furthermore, members of Kenya’s ethnic groups are often very diverse. What is more, a lot of the major tribes can be divided in smaller groups. There are regional subdivisions of Kikuyus, for instance, and also the Luhyas consist of different subgroups. That makes general ascriptions, such as “a warrior culture” ascribed to the Kalenjin people in the NYT report ‘Signs in Kenya that killings were planned’ (21/01/2008), particularly problematic. Except for the fact that the Kalenjin can hardly be called one united tribe, as the name refers to a collection of related ethnic groups including the Kipsigis, Nandi, Pokot and Tugen, all with their own dialect and other cultural specifics, it is obvious that not all Kalenjin people are belligerent.

5.1.1.2. Tribal politics in Kenya
After having illuminated the notions of tribe, tribalism and ethnicity, I will further explore their interrelatedness in Kenyan sociopolitical realities. In this subsection I will show how social groups, such as tribes, have been politicized and how politics has been ethnicized in Kenya, as a consequence of which social and political conflicts can be easily interpreted as ethnic. However, in 5.1.1.3 I will question the usefulness of an ethnic lens to conflicts in Kenya.

To start, I will present a very concise overview of Kenya’s post-independence history to show how ethnicity and politics were closely knit from the inception of the Republic of Kenya. One cautionary note is in order. Because it would lead me too far to detail Kenya’s history in depth, the following presentation is inevitable a selective simplification. I fully realize it is wrong to oppose a simple past to a complex present, because that strategy would lead to a problematic distancing from the past. The past is as complex as the present. It is affected by big tendencies, trends and policies, but also by everyday actions of ordinary people (Pennycook 1998). However, I cannot but refer to other history works (see Branch 2011, Hornsby 2012 or Ogot & Ochieng’ 1995 for more elaborate accounts of Kenya’s recent history).

Kenya became a British protectorate in 1895 and an official colony in 1920. As was stated in 5.1.1.1, ethnic feelings were stimulated and ethnic groups were created by the colonial administration. But I also indicated that many Kenyans were ready to adopt the new ideologies. Ethnic groups became “an ideological refuge” in times of stress such as famine or elections and
Kenyan leaders mobilized tribes in the struggle for independence (Reader 1999: 616). Ethnicity also played a role in the foundation of the two main social movements which were at the basis of independence and which later evolved into political parties. The Kenya African National Union (KANU) was an alliance of Kikuyu and Luo leaders, notably Jomo Kenyatta, who would become Kenya’s first president, and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, the father of the current Prime Minister Raila Odinga, one of the key figures of the news discourse under study (see below). Incumbent President Mwai Kibaki was also as a young man already involved in KANU. Out of fear to be dominated by two of Kenya’s biggest ethnic groups, a number of minority groups founded the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU) under the impulse of the Kalenjins, headed by Daniel arap Moi, who would become Kenya’s second president. While the former proclaimed to be nationalistic, the latter had a more regionalist ideology, but this difference soon disappeared when KADU was absorbed into KANU after independence to form a unity government in 1963 when Kenya became an independent republic.

In the early days the governing elite, who took over a lot of institutions and systems of the colonial regime without any fundamental changes, was struggling to consolidate power. That is when the seeds were sown of a “culture of authoritarianism [that] reigned and still persists” (Oloo 2007: 94). As ethnicity had already been involved in power struggles during colonial times and during the independence struggle, politicians of Kenya’s first republic continued to exploit ethnic feelings in their dash for power. Mboya, who was in government at that time until he was assassinated in 1969, already warned against politicians who tried to recreate tribal hostilities to come into power.99 In combination to a differential development of Kenya’s regions, such practices led to ethnic envy and tensions. One of the reasons for present-day resentment of some people towards the Kikuyu community can be traced back to this episode in Kenya’s history when “President Kenyatta aggravated the regional inequalities through consolidating the Gikuyu, Embu and Meru domination of the country’s economy, a process that further ethnicised political relations between the Kikuyu and other ethnic groups” (Gecaga 2007: 69), although it is definitely not the only reason of such resentment. Another problem of the post-independence government was that it failed to provide a better working and more democratic alternative to the former colonial state. Nasong’o’s verdict is harsh:

“The new regime adopted the colonial administrative apparatus, complete with its legal and statutory instruments and prerogatives. [...] The failure to deconstruct the colonial state and reconstruct one consistent with the aspirations of the majority of Kenyans amounted to a betrayal of the nationalist movement” (Nasong’o 2007: 29).

99 “In Kenya the Masai used to fight the Kikuyu, either for cattle or women, and Luo had boundary clashes with the Kisii. Some political leaders have revived these old hostilities for their own personal reasons. When a leader feels himself weak on the national platform, he begins to calculate that the only support he may have will come from his own tribe: he starts to create an antagonism of this sort, so that he can at least entrench himself as a leader of his tribe” (Mboya 1963: 71).
At that time all political functions came under the control of the president and opposition parties were outlawed. Again the abuse of ethnicity by the ruling elite was never far away. As Nasong’o observes, “[u]nder the ethnic accumulation logic that the Kenyatta regime fostered, social movements were pulverised and political institutions perverted to serve the self-aggrandising interests of an ethnically based political elite” (Nasong’o 2007: 30). Note that this “ethnically based political elite” was not ethnically homogeneous. It incorporated politicians from different ethnic groups.

When Kenyatta died in 1978 he was succeeded by his vice-president Daniel arap Moi. With his nyayo (literally footsteps) strategy he continued “the politics of exclusion” and subtly worked to the promotion of his fellow Kalenjins in the centers of economic and political power (Nasong’o 2007: 32). That does not mean that all influential people in Moi’s successive governments were Kalenjins. Moi’s first and longest serving vice-president was Mwai Kibaki (1978-1988), who kept his post of Minister for Finance (1969–1981), later to become Minister for Home Affairs (1982–1988) and Minister for Health (1988–1991). Moi’s rule was characterized by hard repression against dissidents and political opponents. Countervocies were systematically marginalized or choked. This only aggravated after a failed coup d’état by some air force officers, mainly directed against the person of the president, in which Raila Odinga was involved, who was at that time an influential businessman and manager of the Kenya Bureau of Standards, a government agency responsible for governing the standards and practices of metrology in Kenya. Consequently Odinga was imprisoned from 1982 till 1988, but after his release he was immediately arrested again for his involvement with human rights and pro-democracy activists, thus following in the footsteps of his father Jaramogi, who had become a prominent opposition politician as the leader of the Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD). After one more year of detention in 1990 together with other opposition politicians, such as Kenneth Matiba and Charles Rubia, he fled to Norway in 1991 in fear of his life.

In 1991, under pressure from Kenyan activists and the international community, political pluralism was restored in Kenya having been a de facto one-party state from 1969 to 1982 and a de jure one-party (KANU) state from 1982 to 1991. By that time Kibaki had left the government to become one of the most prominent opposition leaders as the founder and chairman of the Democratic Party (DP). However, Moi had always been skilled in tribal politics and that is how he stayed in power throughout the 1990s, which were a turbulent time in Kenya. To prove his point that multiple parties lead to instability in Kenya and to create strong ethnic voting blocs for the 1992 and 1997 elections, Moi was at the basis of state-sponsored violence in the Rift Valley, where ethnic animosity was whipped up to the benefit of the ruling elite. As a consequence, groups of Luos, Kikuyus and Luhyas and others, were chased away from such places as Molo,
Burnt Forest, Nakuru or Narok in the Rift Valley province (Gecaga 2007: 77). The displaced people who were left in the cold grew frustrated and some of them were prone to recruitment of criminal gangs such as the Mungiki (see 4.1.1.3). Several of those groups had ended up in the Rift Valley because they had become landless during or after colonialism, when the elite reserved the best pieces of land for themselves. To compensate these landless people were often forcibly moved and were allotted a piece of land through settlement schemes (see 7.1.1.2 for more explanation and illustration of this practice which underlies a lot of conflicts in Kenya). As the population grew, economic inequality persisted and land became more scarce this created ethnic rivalry in some areas. This is not a typical Kenyan problem as Nyamnjoh notes.

“As ethnic groups, either local majorities or minorities, clamour for status they are countered by an often aggressive reaffirmation of age-old exclusions informed by colonial registers of inequalities amongst the subjected. This development is paralleled by an increased distinction between ‘locals’ and ‘foreigners’ and between ‘indigenes’ and ‘settlers’ within and between countries, with the emphasis on opportunities and economic entitlements” (Nyamnjoh 2009b: 8-9).

Nyamnjoh indicates that the root causes of potential ethnic conflict are political and economic (see below). Although a lot of problems with settlement schemes have often been associated with the Kikuyus living in regions where they are not welcome, it must be noted that, for instance, impoverished Kalenjins have also been resettled. In the end, the common Kalenjin did not benefit from Moi’s tribal politics, which shows that politicians in Kenya tend to manipulate ethnicity solely for their own purposes. That is how KANU retained control, winning contentious elections in 1992 and 1997.

Another reason why Moi and KANU could stay in power has to do with the malfunction of the opposition, which since 1992 has known a history of division, infighting and a consistent inability to co-operate to achieve common goals. Olo (2007) lays his finger on the problem:

“Among the factors that affected the performance of opposition parties were lack of institutionalisation; factionalism; absence of internal party democracy and openness; dominance of party founders and parochial interests; refusal of the state to level the playing field; lack of resources; cultural diversity; and lack of ideology” (Olo 2007: 100).

Because I believe these factors still affect Kenyan politics, not only the performance of opposition parties but the functioning of all Kenyan political parties, they deserve some more explanation.

As the poor institutionalization is concerned, a lot of political parties in Kenya do not have proper party structures and often they lack offices outside the major urban centres. Moreover, several parties are essentially regionalist or personalist, so that they lack a national aura, necessary to govern the country as a whole. Finally, political parties are usually not funded as

100 Remember those place names.
institutions but as enterprises. Party funding is often dependent on patronage or entrepreneurial financing, while paid-up membership is almost non-existent. As a matter of fact, party membership is not seldom maintained in an artificial way. With many of the parties relying on a handful of patrons, usually their leaders or founders who have all the power, parties increasingly became susceptible to building cults of personality. This is not surprising, Oloo notes, as “most of the opposition parties were themselves launched as vehicles for key individuals to achieve power” (2007: 111).

Then there is factionalism and the minimal internal party democracy. Kenya’s democratic parties do not always practice what they preach: “what exists generally is not democracy but some aspect of oligarchy” (Oloo 2007: 106). Party elections, democratic nominations or leadership appointments, national congresses to determine the party rules all are rare or involve a lot of fraud, corruption and even violence. Instead, political parties are formed on the basis of ethnic cleavages and are structured around charismatic persons, often with clear ethnic identities, which they cultivate. “It is from this perspective that politicians see ethnicity as the base for political activity and ethnic sentiment as the focus of appeal”, Oloo (2007: 103) notes. Factionalism is not only manifested on the macro level of Kenyan politics between different parties, but also within parties themselves there are often different and capricious factions within the party. When the strong figures disagree a party can easily split up and then the different factions can form different parties, which is what happened when ODM-K split from ODM.

Another problem is the dominance of the state, which goes together with unequal resource availability. The ruling coalition has often tried to thwart other political parties and those in power tended to cling to power at any cost. Clientelism and favouritism are deeply engrained in Kenyan politics (Oloo 2007). In the General Elections of 2007 there were indications that state resources were used by the PNU of President Kibaki to fund their campaigns. In this respect Oloo observes that the democratization process in Kenya is hampered: “meaningful democratic elections in a multiparty electoral system can only be attained if the state is a neutral arbiter. However, where there is fusion of party and state in the interest of the ruling party, multiparty elections become a political façade” (Oloo 2007: 114).

A final problem is the lack of ideology which characterizes most of Kenya’s political parties. There are ideological programmes, but these change as easily as politicians change parties. A lot of Kenyan politicians “are not motivated by party principles or constructive policy commitments”, but instead “they are more concerned with the quest for raw power, perceived as attainable by relying on the ethnic card” (Oloo 2007: 111).101 As a result, party ideologies or

101 An example of such opportunism is found in Odinga’s political career. When he failed to succeed his deceased father as leader of the Ford Kenya party, Odinga joined the National Development Party, which he merged into KANU after he lost the presidential elections in 1997, so as to become Energy Minister and the party’s secretary.
policies do not serve as the basis on which voters determine their choice. Political parties in Kenya do not tend to be well-established institutions based on a body of ideas.

“The suitability of a party mainly revolves not around what it stands for but the opportunities it offers for the advancement of an individual politician’s political career. Since most of the parties are formed around personalities, they pay little attention to the need to have clear visions or ideological principles. Even in cases in which such visions have been drawn out, they have mostly remained on paper and have rarely been revealed to the public in open forums. Instead, ethnicity and personality politics have remained the focus during campaigns, rather than issues” (Oloo 2007: 113).

Such complaints are often heard in the Kenyan public sphere. Political commentator, former journalist and president of the KEJA Vitalis Musebe, for instance wrote in an analysis that “Kenyan parties are equally bereft of any ideological bases upon which serious political parties are founded, nurtured and differentiated. What has become true of parties is that many, if not all of them are built on personalities than on membership, ideology or commitment” (DN_Many parties with few members_27/12/2007).

Only in 2002 the rivaling opposition parties joined forces in the National Rainbow Coalition (NaRC) to remove the former single party of KANU from power. Mwai Kibaki was put forward as the opposition’s presidential candidate who challenged Moi’s favorite successor, Uhuru Kenyatta, son of Kenya’s first president. However, Kibaki could not do a lot of campaigning as he was in hospital after a car crash. Nevertheless he won the third multiparty elections because people were tired of the KANU regime and thanks to the strong support of Odinga, who was second in command in NaRC. At that time euphoria and optimism reigned, as political pluralism finally seemed to pay off and a lot of Kenyans for the first time had the impression that they could have an impact on politics (Oloo 2007). As a result expectations for Kibaki’s government ran high. Though there were many positive evolutions, the expected radical changes stayed behind. Compare Moi’s Kenya marked by economic mismanagement, foreign debt, rampant corruption, political repression and ethnic tensions to Kenya in 2007, which was characterized by a booming economy, spearheaded by the tourism industry, a thriving media climate, a growing urban middle class, a reasonable promotion of education with free primary schooling on the one hand and unequal access to vital resources, a growing gap between the rich elite and the poor masses, corruption scandals, failing institutions, an increasingly homogeneous cabinet and ethnic tensions on the other hand. Against these historical evolutions the 2007 Kenyan elections must be interpreted, but that does not mean there were no other more recent and local factors to contributed to the violent post-election crisis (see 5.1.2.2 below).

general from 2001 to 2002, when he left KANU to form the Rainbow Movement, because Uhuru Kenyatta was nominated by Moi as successor instead of himself.
5.1.1.3. A note on ethnic interpretations in news reporting about Kenya

Above I have characterized Kenya as a multiethnic nation and shown how ethnicity is often exploited by politicians in their own self-interest. Because of Kenya’s ethnic layout and its tribal politics, different conflicts are easily placed into an ethnic frame of interpretation. As will be shown in chapters 7 and 8, that is a tendency in the international press. Problems in Kenya, especially long-standing conflicts, indeed often take an ethnic angle. To reiterate, there is no denying that ethnicity is a potent force in Kenyan life for the better and the worse. But ethnicity is not a simple matter. It is entwined with other aspects of people’s identity, sociality and work or life conditions. Tarimo gives an African perspective on ethnicity:

“It is a factor in political struggles and the distribution of resources. It often determines who gets jobs, who gets promoted, who gets accepted to university, because by its very definition ethnicity implies sharing among members of the extended family, making sure that your own are looked after first. To give a job to a fellow ethnic member is not nepotism, it is an obligation. For a political leader to choose his closest advisers and bodyguards from the ranks of his own ethnic group is not patronage, it is a good common sense. It guarantees security, loyalty, and control” (Tarimo 2011: 18).

This quote indicates that social and economic issues underlie ethnic issues. In my opinion, issues of ethnicity cannot be separated from the specific social and economic issues with which they are always entangled.

This prompts the question whether such expressions as tribe or ethnic group are illuminating in news reporting. As argued above, the notion of tribe is somewhat problematic, because there seem to be contradictory definitions and uses of tribe and different attitudes towards the word depending on the speech community and whether one is part of such a social group or not. What Mafeje calls the ‘ideology of tribalism’, i.e. the constant use of tribal tags in discourse about Africa, “oversimplifies, mystifies, and obscures the real nature of economic and power relations between Africans” (1971: 261). So, what about the expression ethnic group and derivatives such as ethnic tensions or ethnic clashes? As Somerville observes, ethnic “does not carry with it quite the same atavistic feel as ‘tribe’ and has come to have a respectable academic usage” (2009: 536). Because it is widely applied to conflicts and political competition across the world, it does not have the same pejorative meaning which is often associated with tribe. However, I agree with Somerville (2009) that ethnic terms are little more helpful to understand African realities if they are used in the same way and in the same negative contexts as tribal terms were.

In international news reporting about Africa, ethnicity is often used as a catch-all explanation, which does not do justice to the complexity of the conflicts or the politics it is used to describe. That will be one of my main criticisms against the foreign press reports which I studied in this research. In foreign correspondence words like tribe or ethnic group are often regarded as a useful terminology to explain complex political or conflict situations in the tight space of newspaper texts, because they compress a lot of meaning into a few words (Somerville 2009:
531-532). As Somerville (2009: 537) continues, ethnic labels can be used to make complex social and political situations more understandable for readers with little background knowledge, but they can also easily simplify events, so that the readers’ understanding is distorted (see what TI correspondent McConnell has to say about this in 8.2.1.2). In my view, ethnic explanations can be accurate and insightful if they are not separated from the underlying social and economic factors which are at stake. Otherwise they only provide a partial explanation. If the focus is limited purely to ethnicity, disregarding social, political and economic issues, then “ethnic explanations are not adequate” (Hanlon 2006: 103). In the next section I will explain that Kenya’s post-election crisis was not due to purely ethnic issues, but that it was the result of both historical and recent evolutions, and of social, political and economic factors.

5.1.2. Kenya’s 2007 elections and the post-election crisis

5.1.2.1. General Elections in a climate of ethnic polarity
Before providing some context to the dataset, the exact topic of the news discourse under study must be contextualized a bit more. However, it is impossible to capture the complexities of Kenya’s sociopolitical climate in 2007 and 2008 within the limits of this section. So this outline will inevitably be a simplification, focusing on the ethnic aspects of presidential elections, the social conflicts and the violence, because in the press these aspects were most conspicuous (in their absence in the local news). For more information I can refer to some official reports, notably those from the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), the European Union Election Observer Mission to Kenya (EU EOM) and the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR). But even more insightful is the impressive work on Tensions and Reversals in Democratic Revisions in Democratic Transitions (Kanyinga & Okello 2010) in which all possible factors of the 2007 Kenyan elections and the ensuing crisis are treated in detail.102

Part of the political troubles that plagued Kenya in 2007 and 2008 resulted from Kibaki’s first term in office. Kibaki and his cabinet reneged on some important election promises, which would have grave consequences for the 2007 elections. Before the 2002 elections Kibaki agreed on an informal memorandum of understanding with all coalition partners of the opposition to create the post of prime minister as a first step to reduce the almost absolutist power of the presidency. Once elected, Kibaki put this agreement aside and together with his allies in government he sabotaged further attempts at constitutional reform. This caused a lot of frustrations, notably to Odinga, who had campaigned for Kibaki and was therefore promised the prime minister post. Disappointed he left the NaRC government together with other dissidents,

102 Many thanks to Cecilia Bäcklander and Bo Göransson for pointing my attention to that voluminous book.
such as Kalonzo Musyoka. Through the subsequent reshuffle the government lost its diversity: several communities were underrepresented and Kibaki’s cabinet came to be perceived as an unreliable organ of cronyism. “Kibaki’s administration quickly acquired an ethno-regional bias, not different from Moi’s and Kenyatta’s” (Nasong’o & Murunga 2007: 9).

Meanwhile Odinga and Musyoka teamed up with other dissidents in the oppositional Orange Democratic Movement that campaigned against the government’s draft Constitution according to which the president kept overall control of the state institutions and resources. In a decisive referendum in 2005 the governmental draft was rejected. Despite their successful collaboration Odinga and Musyoka soon disagreed about the course of the ODM and Musyoka’s faction founded the political party of ODM-Kenya. When Kibaki founded the Party of National Unity, a coalition created only weeks before the polls, to vie for re-election, ignoring his earlier claim that he would serve only one term, the three leading presidential candidates and their parties were known. However, it must be noted that there were six more presidential candidates (see the specimen of the ballot paper in appendix V) and in total 159 parties participated to the General Election.

In the run-up to the 2007 elections politics became increasingly polarized along ethnic lines. During the campaign aggressive rhetoric was not eschewed and the ethnic angle was ever present (Rambaud 2008). Partly this was a result of Kenya’s tribal politics (cf. supra), partly it was due to specific campaign strategies. Especially (though not only) ODM held campaign rallies with strong tribal language, aimed at whipping up sentiments against Kibaki and his Kikuyu “Mount Kenya Mafia”, as also TI correspondent Clayton witnessed (see 8.2.1.2). In “a single-member-district first-past-the-post winner-takes-all” kind of electoral system ethnic support is crucial (Oloo 2007: 121). To become president, Kenyan law stipulates that in addition to winning a majority of the votes nationwide, a candidate must win a seat in Parliament and secure at least 25% of the votes in five out of eight of the country’s provinces. More reasons for the ethnic orientation of the past elections can be found in the election pledges. Simply put, ODM presented itself as a coalition of minority tribes who stood up against Kibaki’s homogeneous government of Kikuyu favoritism, passing over the fact that common Kikuyus were as badly served by the government as other people. The ODM capitalized on Kibaki’s failures and basically promised a more equal distribution of wealth by a tribally-mixed, corruption-free government in a reformed federal state. To that end the old idea of majimboism, i.e. decentralization leading to a Kenyan federal system in which each region would have its own regional government, became one of the most important topics. Remarkably, during election rallies this idea was frequently interpreted as removing Kibaki and his cabinet from power, thus polarizing and further ethnicizing the elections.
This strategy rocketed Odinga in the opinion polls, while Kibaki seemed to lose credit. Nasong’o and Murunga observe that “[o]n account of the above political developments in Kenya following the transition from Moi to Kibaki, most Kenyans [were] overly disappointed with the Kibaki regime to the point of disillusionment” (2007: 10). Tensions were fuelled when it came out that the president not only personally installed five new judges to the Court of Appeal soon after the 2005 referendum, but also appointed 19 of the 22 ECK commissioners, which was interpreted as “a means through which he would use state institutions to stay in power” (Ogola 2009: 61).

On Thursday 27 December 2007 Kenyans cast their vote in presidential, parliamentary and civic elections: one president, 210 members of the National Assembly and 2,498 members of local authorities were to be elected (EU EOM 2008: 1). Notwithstanding widespread discontent with the performance of the ruling class, people optimistically believed in change. The political commentator Charles Onyango-Obbo analyzed that Kenyans were still in the “optimism phase” they entered after Moi’s dictatorial regime ended; a phase, in which people tend to react violently if things turn for the worse, because they cannot accept any kind of relapse as they nurse high hopes for a better society. That is why the Kenyan people went to vote en masse; a turnout of 72% of the total eligible voters is reported by the KNCHR. The voting process passed peacefully with only a few minor disturbances and ballot hitches, the most dramatic of which concerned missing names on some voter registers, prompting new prints by the ECK and delaying even Odinga’s voting, as his name was not on the Lang’ata constituency voter list. Yet, according to all official reports, the voting process was considered to be relatively free, fair and transparent.

The tallying and the declaration of the civic and parliamentary results went smoothly and timely. These indicated that people had opted for change by voting for novices or underdogs irrespective of their parties. This meant the end of the political career of some high-profile, long-term power politicians, often associated to Kibaki’s clique and/or to corruption scandals, such as then Minister of Home Affairs and Vice-President Moody Awori or Minister of the Environment and National Resources David Mwiraria. The major presidential candidates retained their seats in the National Assembly. In sum the ODM won 99 of the 210 parliamentary seats, the PNU obtained 43 seats, the ODM-K 16, the KANU 14 and the other seats were scattered over a few smaller parties. Also in the civic polls the ODM came out best. By contrast the outcome of the presidential results took abnormally long.

Anxiety grew as concrete evidence of fraud reinforced wide-spread rumors of rigging and the ECK seemed to lose control of the tallying process. On Friday 28 December 2007 Odinga looked to be winning with a lead of one million votes, but the gap with Kibaki narrowed overnight to

103 Charles Onyango-Obbo, ‘The politics and economics of post-election violence’ in *Daily Nation* 03/01/08 p.10.
38,000 votes and on Saturday evening the tallying was cancelled due to protests and conflicts between party officials, after which observers and media were thrown out of the tally center by the GSU paramilitary police. Most disputes revolved around fraudulent augmentation of votes and unrealistic voter turnout in some constituencies. For example, for Molo (Rift Valley Province) and Kieni (Central Province), Kibaki had 20,000 respectively 17,000 more votes in the announcement of the results at the ECK headquarter in Nairobi, compared to the results as announced on the spot by the returning officer in the presence of EU observers (EU EOM 2008: 34). With an incomplete tally and many available results lacking the required statutory documents, ECK boss Samuel Kivuitu released ‘final results’ on Sunday 30 December 2007 and minutes later Mwai Kibaki of the PNU was sworn in as president in a private ceremony. He was supposed to be re-elected with 4,584 000 votes (46.4%) against Raila Odinga of the ODM with 4,352 000 votes (44.1%) and Kalonzo Musyoka of the ODM-K with 879,899 votes (8.9%). The other six presidential candidates accounted for 59,172 votes (0.6%).

According to these highly disputed results Kibaki won a majority of votes in four provinces (Central 96.4%, Eastern 49.8%, North Eastern 50.9% and Nairobi 47.3%), while Odinga received most votes in the other four provinces (Nyanza: 82%, Western: 66.5%, Rift Valley 64.1% and Coast 58.8%). Different observer groups, including the East African Community Observer Mission, the Kenya Elections Domestic Observation Forum and the Commonwealth Observer Group, branded the presidential elections as deeply flawed. EU EOM concluded that these elections “leave a legacy of uncertainty as to who was actually elected as President by the Kenyan people”, resulting in “an unprecedented situation in the country characterised by deep ethnic rifts and civil unrest as well as a political stand-off” (2008: 37).

5.1.2.2. Multifactorial post-election conflicts
The flawed presidential election immediately triggered mass demonstrations by opposition supporters, but also violent rioting by dislocated youths, looting by criminal gangs and excessive use of force by different security forces. When on New Year’s Day even ECK boss Kivuitu publicly admitted that he was not sure who had won the elections, popular anger grew and chaos spread over Kenya. However, not the whole country was burning (contrary to such reports as ‘Kenya in flames over stolen election’ in the IN 31/12/07). Most outrages took place in and around the lower-class areas of five provinces: Central, Nairobi, Nyanza, Rift Valley, Western and Coast. This already points at socio-economic circumstances as an important factor of the violent conflicts which erupted after Kibaki’s inauguration.

The OHCHR distinguished three main categories of violence: spontaneous violence as a result of the corrupted elections and the political deadlock, organized attacks against targeted communities following unresolved disputes or long-standing grievances (e.g. about land rights)
and organized retaliations. The KNCHR categorized the post-election violence into political violence, violent protest, verbal violence, criminal acts of killing, looting and destruction of property, pre-planned ethnic violence, sexual and gender-based violence. Some instances of violence acquired ethnic dimensions or from the start had ethnic aspects. However, it would be wrong to determine the Kenyan post-election crisis as one big ethnic conflict. The reason is that there were a lot of underlying factors which caused ethnic tensions or which were entangled with ethnic issues. Kimenyi and Ndung’u are clear:

“Because violence has been organized along ethnic lines, the inference is that ethnic clashes in Kenya have been purely the result of “ethnic hatred.” But this hatred must be qualified. It is linked to electoral politics and competition among new arrivals in a region, groups with large land ownership, and native groups who feel threatened by the others” (Kimenyi and Ndung’u 2005: 127).

In Kenya there had been and still are what Oucho (2002) calls ‘undercurrents of ethnic conflict’. I cannot go into details, but will point out some of the most salient underlying causes of the post-election conflicts.

First, there were political reasons, both historical and more recent, as indicated above. In order to reach their agendas politicians once more turned to identity politics inciting people against each other through appeals on seemingly incompatible cultural identities (Van den Broeck 2011: 38). Also failed constitutional and judicial reform processes belong to the political factors. Then, there were social factors. Demographic and migratory trends caused social tensions which were not addressed, let alone resolved, by the authorities. The land factor, which has been mentioned before, is both social and economic. Other economic factors have to do with poverty and unemployment. Related to these factors is the rising criminality in certain regions. Combined with Kenya’s often failing judicial systems, which lead to an atmosphere of impunity, people are not afraid to use ethnically-inspired violence, either as an instrumentality of survival (Odhiambo 2004) or just for personal gain. In 2007 a lot of militias who took part in state-sponsored ethnic clashes in 1990s still roamed the country without being disarmed or charged. The OHCHR concluded in its final report: “Lack of accountability for previous acts of electoral violence and on-going violations of economic and social rights seem to have contributed to fuelling and exacerbating the violence in the aftermath of the elections” (OHCHR 2008: 8).

There are several more factors (see Oucho 2002, 2010 and Kimenyi & Ndung’u 2005 for elaborate accounts about the relation between ethnicity and conflict in Kenya), but it is idle to try and separate the different factors, because they interact and occur in combination, as is clear from Tarimo’s account:

“Kenya [...] is a multi-ethnic society, and many communities have lived in harmony for years. In recent years, however, the dominant ethnic groups have been on the forefront in fighting for political power. The situation has resulted into fighting to control the state. The relatively less dominant communities have been playing the card of opportunism.
Historically, many ethnic groups supported the armed struggle for independence in hope that they could regain their stolen lands. This expectation did not become reality. The situation fomented anger, resentment, lust for revenge, and aggressive competitiveness that overlooked the common good of the entire country. Frustration among the poor, both in urban and rural areas, created a growing tendency to use violence as a viable means to change the situation. When violent reactions emerge, under the influence of ethno-political ideologies, they tend to take the form of ethnocentrism, the ideology that animates the competition between ethnic groups. [...] Ethno-political violence is a deliberate political strategy created by desperate groups intended to effect change in the political system that marginalizes them. The situation has emerged because of unequal distribution of resources, unabated corruption at the national level, extreme poverty in urban slums and squatters, unemployment, and irresponsible leadership. The situation is combined with the political unwillingness to address structural injustice" (Tarimo 2011: 13-15).

Ethno-political competition for power and resources can degenerate into discrimination, stigmatization, violence and conflict, as it happened in Kenya at the time of the 2007 elections. Another factor which is not often mentioned is the deployment of ethnic stereotypes in Kenyan cyber communities prior to and after the elections (Ligaga 2009) and the spread of manipulative, misinforming and inciting mobile phone text messages (Osborn 2008, Wa-Mungai 2010). Poor education, credulity and disinformation, mainly by vernacular as well as new media, were among the most underestimated factors of Kenya’s post-election crisis.

Eventually, it took a lot of (inter)national pressure and mediation to resolve the political stalemate and end the societal crisis. On 28 February 2008 chief mediator Kofi Annan brokered a power-sharing deal between President Mwai Kibaki and ODM leader Raila Odinga. This agreement stipulated the creation of a prime minister's position and the allocation of cabinet posts based on each party's representation in parliament. Only in April was “Kibaki’s grand coalition team”, as it was called in the DN, complete with 40 ministers and 40 assistants, forming the largest (some say most bloated) government in Kenyan history. On 14 April 2008 president Kibaki’s government with Musyoka as vice-president and Odinga as prime minister became operative, but the sociopolitical situation has remained tense. Up to 1200 Kenyans died during the post-election crisis and more than 300,000 people lost their homes to become internally displaced. Many of them are still waiting for a better place.

5.2. Description of the dataset
5.2.1. Identification of newspapers

5.2.1.1. Newspapers from the US, the UK and Belgium
Not only the topic of the news discourse, also the corpus of newspapers needs some context. Before I will give a few numbers about the corpus or dataset, I will present the newspapers from which the studied reports are culled. In this study The New York Times (NYT), The Washington
Post (WP), The Times (TI), The Independent (IN), De Standaard (DS) and De Morgen (DM) represent the international press, which is contrasted to the Kenyan Daily Nation (DN) and The Standard (ST). Although the commercial side of the newspapers as enterprises and the power structures behind them are relevant and have an influence on the news output, these aspects of the news are not into focus in my research. That is why the following characterization of the newspapers will be very brief.

To start with the corpus newspapers from the US, The New York Times is the third largest newspaper in the United States with a daily circulation of 927,851 copies.²⁰⁴ The NYT is a newspaper of standing and is considered to be an authoritative source of information. In an interview with Kate Novack, media critic Knut Andersen compared the newspaper to the Vatican: “In the secular church of establishment opinion and press, the New York Times is where the encyclicals come and where life is organized and ruled. You know, it’s the great position of authority” (Novack & Rossi 2011: 6). As Folkenflik put it, the NYT is “the leading American exemplar of that peculiar hybrid of commercial enterprise and public service” (2011: xi). This liberal newspaper is part of the New York Times Company, chaired by businessman and managing publisher Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr. whose family owns a majority of the shares. Being a major contributor to the International Herald Tribune from the same company, and having a strong global edition of its own, the NYT is the most international in character of the studied newspapers (see e.g. Folkenflik 2011 for more information). The Washington Post is a center-right, pro-administration, broadsheet newspaper with an elaborate ‘world’ section next to its core business of national politics (Hill 2007: 74). It sells 582,844 daily copies. The WP is owned by the Washington Post Company, an education and media company, of which manager and former publisher Donald E. Graham was the CEO (see Kindred 2010 for a journalistic presentation of the newspaper). Both the NYT and the WP have their own (East Africa) correspondents based in Nairobi. Occasionally they get local support for their news coverage. For instance, Kenyan journalists Kennedy Abwao and Charles Wachira contributed to some NYT and WP reports.

In the UK The Times is the quality newspaper of record with a weekday circulation of 505,062. It is owned by media mogul Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation and has a moderately conservative, center-right orientation (see e.g. Partington 2009: 274). A much smaller quality newspaper is the leftist The Independent with a daily sale of 183,547 copies. It used to be published by businessman Tony O’Reilly’s Independent News & Media company, owning different print titles, radio stations and commercial websites in Ireland, South-Africa, Australia

²⁰⁴ The circulation data are the recent figures obtained from the national Audit Bureau of Circulations (from October 2009 for the US and February 2010 for the UK newspapers, see http://www.accessabc.com/ and http://www.abc.org.uk/ (accessed on 18/03/10). They were higher at the time of the discussed events.
and India among others, but in March 2010 it was sold to the Russian businessman Alexander Lebedev. Both British newspapers pay considerable attention to world news and African stories. Especially former colonies, such as Kenya, get a lot of coverage. With respect to foreign news from Kenya, the TI works with expatriate freelance journalists, some of whom are based in Kenya. The IN has a contracted foreign correspondent who is more or less permanently based in Nairobi (see e.g. Cole & Harcup 2010 for more information).

From my home country I selected De Morgen (literally ‘The Morning’, but as an adverb Dutch morgen also means tomorrow) and De Standaard (literally ‘The Standard’), two quality newspapers written in Dutch, which is the first language spoken in the northern half of Belgium. This region is known as Flanders. Although, following their history, the DM is still often considered as a more socialist newspaper and the DS as a catholic daily, the traditional religious and sociopolitical have broken down, both in the newsrooms and in the audiences of the newspapers. The weakening of traditional ideological orientations is partly due to current trends in the newspaper business, such as media concentration (see 3.1.1.3). For instance, by a takeover in 1989 the left-leaning, progressive DM became part of a center-right media group, to which also the liberal newspaper Het Laatste Nieuws belongs. This group developed into the international media holding De Persgroep led by media mogul Christian Van Thillo. Nowadays the newspaper presents itself as an “independent daily” which is “aimed at a young and educated audience” which is “interested in general news, national and international politics, culture and media, financial-economic news, and sport”. At the time of the studied events the DM had a daily circulation of 74 703. The biggest quality paper in Belgium is the DS, which had in 2008 a circulation of 103 507. This newspaper is part of the Belgian media company Corelio, which was previously called the Vlaamse Uitgeversmaatschappij (VUM). The chairman of the Board is the entrepreneur Thomas Leysen. This center-right newspaper describes itself as “an open newspaper which provides its readers with the knowledge to thoroughly understand the political, economic, cultural, social, scientific and technological current affairs” (see De Bens & Raeymaekers 2010 for more information). In this thesis the primary focus is on the English-language newspapers so as to avoid too many Dutch fragments or translations. However, in the course of the research project the selected Belgian newspaper articles were thoroughly analyzed (see Coesemans 2012) and proved to be a useful resource to check interpretations on the basis of the other newspapers in the contrastive pragmatic analysis (see chapters 7 and 8).

5.2.1.2. Kenyan newspapers

Though I mentioned the general ideological stance of the above newspapers (or at least perceptions thereof), it must be noted that newspapers are complex heterogeneous organizations which tend to follow sociopolitical trends. So they should not be essentialized by an ideological characterization which will never be shared by all employees and is always subject to change. The Times, for instance, traditionally is supportive of conservative policies, but it endorsed the Labour Party in both the 2001 and 2005 general elections. Changes in political inclination are also found in the Kenyan print media. Historically, the Daily Nation supported the opposition, but under Kibaki it became more pro-government, although it has a fairly neutral status. As Ogola put it, “the Nation was and still remains largely politically conservative, consistently maintaining a critical yet fundamentally congenial relationship with the state” (2009: 64). In 2008 it had a daily circulation of around 200,000.108 The DN belongs to the Nation Media Group, the largest East-African media conglomerate with branches in Uganda and Tanzania, which is publicly owned, although the majority of shares is still in hands of the former private owner, Shah Karim al-Hussayni, better known as the Aga Khan of the Ismaili Muslims. The second largest Kenyan quality daily is also written in English. The Standard is part of the Standard Group, which also runs a radio and a television station.109 It had an average circulation of 100,000 copies at the time I collected the data. The ST is Kenya’s oldest newspaper and used to be the voice of the colonial community. Also under its current ownership of Kenyan investors, associated to former president Moi’s inner circle, it tends to support the government. However, since Kibaki’s presidency in 2002 it gradually became more oppositional. That is why it is nowadays perceived to be a pro-ODM newspaper.

The informants I consulted confirmed the perceptions of the DN slightly leaning towards the PNU and the ST slightly favoring the ODM, but they denied that these were the official orientations of the newspapers. Moreover, there are commercial reasons to be balanced and not to take sides, as there are commercial reasons to be slightly partisan. What ST news editor Douglas Okwatch confided to Rambaud (2008: 79) about the stance of the newspapers also came up in my interviews: “it is a question of perception and communication” in combination to commercial reasons. The ST, for instance, was perceived to be an opposition newspaper because it sold more in opposition regions, like Nyanza, Rift Valley and Coast Province, but it could not afford to take sides openly, because then it would lose readers in other regions (see Kisero’s comment in 8.1.1.2). Even though both newspapers aimed at impartiality, a quantitative content

108 These circulation figures are adjustments of the numbers given by Rambaud (2008: 61) on the basis of my communication with the managing directors.

109 Note that Kenya’s media landscape is characterized by such a high degree of media concentration, as was already pointed out in 3.1.1.3, that it can be called excessive: “Concentration is reckoned to be excessive where three or four firms control more than 50% of the market” (McQuail 2010: 230, 232).
analysis revealed that the PNU coalition received 54% share of coverage in the DN compared with 55% in the ST, while ODM got 29% in the DN and 30% in the ST, and ODM-K had a 12% share in the DN, which was 2% more than in the ST (EU EOM 2008: 26).

This is not the place for a thorough evaluation of the press in Kenya. Throughout the analyses I will make critical comments on both the international and the national news media which will be brought together in a few final reflections in the concluding chapter 9. However, five key issues concerning Kenya’s news media can be briefly mentioned here as background information. (i) The first issue pertains to professionalism. For journalists to be hired nowadays they need at least a basic university degree, but that does not mean that they are schooled in journalism. Although university journalism programmes are booming in Kenya, there is a need for better training and better educational infrastructure. To professionalize their staff, the media houses of ST and DN have in-house training programmes, from which mostly staffers at the head offices benefit, while regional correspondents are not reached and so often lack the necessary professional training. These correspondents usually work as freelancers and are systematically disadvantaged. (ii) They suffer most from the second problem: remuneration and resources. The media houses in Nairobi are well-equipped, but the contrast with the regional bureaus is huge. Away from the capital journalists often lack the basic resources to do their job. Although even in Nairobi there is a big gap between well-paid editors and the poor wages of junior journalists (Mbeke & Mshindi 2008), it is especially the regional correspondents who experience difficulties to make a living. (iii) This makes them particularly vulnerable to chequebook journalism or other kinds of corruption. However,

“Freelance correspondents who earn peanuts, but who contribute up to an estimated seventy percent of all content in media outlets, are often blamed for promoting corruption in the media, but the problem is much bigger than that, and involves even senior reporters and editorialists” (Khamisi 2011: 265).

In their ‘Media Sector Analysis Report’ Mbeke and Mshindi (2008) also concluded that some news sources and corporate organisations retained some senior editors at a fee to ensure continuous positive coverage of their events and issues. But corruption is not only instigated by external actors, also some journalists know to play that game. Khamisi (2011) claims that politicians are sometimes harassed and even blackmailed by journalists. He also gives testimony of an ODM-K press conference in which he took part where some journalists became angry because they did not get any money from the party officials, while threatening to give the event a black-out and never again to respond to future media events organized by ODM-K. The situation was saved only after a party official was willing to give out some cash (Khamisi 2011: 269). (iv) Such issues of corruption are related to the problem of ethno-political partisanship:

“While the big advertisers may seek to influence the coverage of news that affect them the major influence on editorial policies usually come from politicians. Senior politicians seldom
let pass an opportunity to cultivate a symbiotic clientele relationship with journalists especially those from their own ethnic communities. It is not uncommon for politicians to call journalists from their own tribe when they have a story to break” (Obonyo 2003: 534).

This is what Mbeke (2010: xi) calls the problem of political co-optation. (v) The key issue is related to the legislation. Traditionally, Kenya had a legislation that did not allow a lot of press freedom. Nowadays improved media policies are being developed, coupled with constitutional reforms, but a lot of media bills keep circulating for a long time in the chambers of power and become eroded (Obonyo & Nyamboga 2011), so that journalists still have to operate in weak legal framework which offers them little protection against people who try to conceal relevant information or undermine press freedom (Ogola 2009) (see Mbeke 2010 for more information on Kenya’s different kinds of mass media and their weaknesses).

5.2.2. Corpus in numbers

5.2.2.1. Critical discourse moments
Before the methodology can be detailed in the following chapter, a few words must be said about the data sample. After the news topic of this research was decided as well as the newspapers, the time-consuming and tiresome process of data-gathering began. I used different data collection techniques for different newspapers.

The news reports from the American and British newspapers were collected by means of their digital archives, which were in 2008 still freely accessible via their websites. These archives had sophisticated search engines, so that I could combine keyword searches with parameters such as data range and publication type. After all, I was only interested in the newspaper articles about Kenya’s post-election crisis which were published in the print versions of the newspapers. Articles which were only published online were discarded. Since differentiation of the data is a requirement for the kind of pragmatic analysis that I have carried out (see 6.1.1.1), I did not initially make a distinction between different genres of newspaper text. I just collected all newspaper articles containing one (or more) of the keywords ‘Kenya’, ‘Kenyan’, ‘Kibaki’ and ‘Odinga’ published in the newspapers between 1 December 2007 and 30 April 2008, whether they appeared on the front-page, in the ‘World News’ section, on the opinion pages or on the sports pages.110 Thus I found 68 articles from the IN, 74 from the TI, 63 from the NYT, and 78 from the WP.

110 When the world was watching Kenya, even on the sports pages a few features and interviews were found with Kenyan athletes about the situation in their home country during the post-election crisis, e.g. IN_Kenyan dreams of Gold: Run for your life_26/01/2008, DS_Geweld als trouwste trainingsmaat_30/01/2008 [Violence as most loyal training partner] or DM_‘Onthoofde mensen op straat, dat beeld vergeet ik nooit’_22/02/2008 [I will never forget the image of decapitated people on the street], an interview with middle distance runner Daniel Kipchirichir.
The same keywords and the same date range was used to collect the newspaper articles from the Belgian newspapers. However, for this data collection I made use of the digital press databank Mediargus (http://www.mediargus.be/ [02/02/2012]). These searches yielded 57 articles from the DS and 66 from the DM. As with the American and British newspapers, the articles found were copy-pasted into Word documents, so that they could easily be imported into the qualitative software program of NVivo (see 5.2.2.2 below).

The collection of the Kenyan newspaper articles proved to be a bit more difficult, as the digital archives which are available at the websites of the DN and the ST were still in development and contained only a fraction of the articles published. Moreover, the search facilities were often failing. That is why I went to visit the editorial offices of the newspapers in Nairobi. One of the main reasons of the first stage of fieldwork, which will be introduced in 6.1.2, was to collect the relevant Kenyan newspaper articles. After some negotiation and persuasion both of the Kenyan newspapers were so kind to provide me with the full newspapers in separate pdf. files for the period of 1 December 2007 to 30 April 2008. From the Kenyan newspapers I distilled 404 DN articles and 484 ST articles.

So, at the beginning of the analytical phase I had a corpus of 1294 newspaper articles, including ‘hard news’ reports, commentaries, editorials, opinion articles and reader letters. This mixed dataset was too big for an in-depth qualitative analysis, so I had to make a few restrictions to make the analyses more manageable and feasible. First I decided to focus on the ‘hard news’ reports in the corpus as the primary dataset for my linguistic pragmatic analyses, while using the other newspaper articles as secondary data. But what are ‘hard news’ reports and how could they be distinguished from other newspaper articles? ‘Hard news’ is usually contrasted to so-called ‘soft news’. Pape and Featherstone (2005) make the following distinction:

“Hard news stories are those that deal with topical events or issues that have an immediate or catastrophic or life-changing effect on the individuals concerned. In short, hard news is (often) bad news and often deals with serious matters that require equal weight to be attached to both the who and the what. [...] Soft news [...] has more of a human interest focus, and, although, in the short term at least, events may be equally immediate or important for the individuals concerned, they are rarely life-changing in quite the same way” (Pape & Featherstone 2005: 22).

However, when faced with real newspapers the distinction is not always easy to make and often feels rather artificial. Newspaper articles tend to be hybrid discursive constructions combining topical events with human interest angles or they are written in a factual style, but are neither

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111 I am very grateful for the unconditional support and constructive cooperation of both the DN and the ST. Many thanks to then editorial administration manager David Aduda from the DN and the then managing editor Zipporah Musau from the ST for making the newspaper texts available to me. Special thanks are also due to Daudi Gicheru and Julius Bett from the DN and to Dan Okoth, Matthew Shahi and Rose Nzioka who provided the necessary technical assistance.
‘catastrophic’ nor ‘life-changing’. Also other textbook definitions, like Ott and Mack’s, offer little help and lead to the same problems when it comes to differentiating different kinds of newspaper texts.

“Soft news describes news that is high in entertainment value, but low in educational value; this type of news is sometimes referred to as ‘infotainment’ because it is packaged so as to make it look important and informational despite the fact that it has no intrinsic social significance. In contrast to soft news, hard news is characterized by sustained reporting on issues important to people’s lives, and in a manner that equips citizens to make informed decisions on the public policy and social issues. Soft news appeals to viewers primarily on an emotional level by evoking fear, concern, or outrage. Common topics of soft news include crime […], gangs and violence, and fires and accidents” (Ott & Mack 2010: 67).

Although Ott and Mack recognize that no story “is inherently soft or hard news [since] even crime stories can be reported as hard news if they focus on the social causes and consequences of violence, rather than on the sensational details of the crime or the tremendous grief of the victim’s family” (2010: 67-68), my corpus contains factual stories on politics or social issues with a focus on violence and with sensational details. Because such definitions proved to be inadequate to distinguish ‘hard news’ from other kinds of news, I let the newspapers themselves determine my choice for ‘hard news’ reports by using section labels as the selective criterion. Thus I sampled a primary dataset containing all foreign press reports which were published either on the front-page or in the ‘World News’ section and all Kenyan articles which were published on the ‘National News’ pages.

However, the dataset was still too large, so I needed one more reduction. That is why I decided to restrict the primary dataset with the ‘hard news’ reports for detailed analysis to well-defined critical discourse moments. Chilton (1987) conceptualized these as key turning points in the wider discourse on a certain topic which magnify the features of a frame by generating a lot of commentary and debate. Critical discourse moments are understood as moments in time or events which attract a lot of attention from the press, politics and the public sphere. Such moments concentrate the discourse and make it particularly visible (Gamson 2002). I use the expression of critical discourse moments in a slightly modified meaning to refer to peaks in the discursive material on the theme of the Kenyan post-election crisis. The way I use critical discourse moments resembles how Dirks (2006: 117) saw them as “focal points in a discourse”. For me, a critical discourse moment is a period in the press coverage, rather than an actual event. I define critical discourse moments in terms of international media output. A critical discourse moment of my corpus of newspaper texts is a (period of) day(s) on which at least four of the six non-Kenyan newspapers published minimally one article about the case under study. The Kenyan media could not be used as a measure because they produced every day a wealth of articles. When counting the newspaper articles I made the following charts which offer a visual presentation of the non-Kenyan part of the corpus.
Daily distribution of newspaper articles: December 2007

Daily distribution of newspaper articles: January 2008

Daily distribution of newspaper articles: February 2008

Only the ‘hard news’ reports, as defined above, published on these critical discourse moments were subjected to a meticulous analysis. The other newspaper articles were also analyzed but not in such great depth. After the reductive selection procedures the primary dataset comprised 653 newspaper reports (see table 1). Note that the Kenyan subset (400 articles) greatly outnumbers the foreign press reports (253), which would be a problem for quantitative approaches, such as computer-assisted corpus linguistics, but it did not pose any problems for my qualitative methodology. By means of a word count I also calculated the average article length in number of words to make this quantitative presentation of the corpus complete. On average the Kenyan
newspapers wrote slightly longer articles than the American, British and Belgian ones. In the international press the average length of a newspaper article about Kenya’s post-election crisis was 607 words, while the Kenyan journalists used on average 709 words. An overview of all these articles is provided in appendix VI. Note that most of these newspaper articles are still circulating on the World Wide Web and can be easily retrieved by typing in their titles in any internet search engine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>IN</th>
<th>TI</th>
<th>NYT</th>
<th>WP</th>
<th>DM</th>
<th>DS</th>
<th>DN</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average article length</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>666</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>709</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Number of newspaper reports in the primary dataset (foreign versus local) and the average article length in words.

5.2.2.2. Managing data in NVivo

To manage this amount of data I used the qualitative software of NVivo 8. This is a kind of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), an expression coined by Fielding and Lee (1998). Those kind of software programs come as full packages, typically incorporating functions for text searching, coding, transcription and data visualization (Lindlof & Taylor 2011: 260-266). Next to NVivo, other examples are MAXQDA or Atlas.ti. The applications in CAQDAS that can be used for quantitative linguistic analysis sometimes overlap with tools from computer-assisted corpus linguistics (MacMillan 2005: 17-22).

NVivo allows a qualitative researcher to process data efficiently and do many things simultaneously: interpreting raw material, storing ideas that emerge, coding and reflecting on coding, linking data or ideas, etc. The main frame resembles Microsoft Outlook’s interface and that is what makes it user-friendly at first sight (see figure 16).
To start working with the program you have to create a so-called NVivo project. After the configuration of the basic settings, the project is ready for the data to be imported. Raw data are stored in ‘Sources’. This section standardly contains the following folders: ‘Internals’ for the data you import, ‘Externals’ for data that is kept on different locations outside of the NVivo-project by means of hyperlinks, ‘Search Folders’, where the results of searches are automatically stored, and ‘Memos’, which is the place where users can make text documents of analysis. Except for the ‘Search Folders’, users can make their own subfolders in these standard folders. For my research I created nine large NVivo-projects: one test project, pictured in figure 16, to get to know the program and to do preliminary analyses and experiments, in which I analyzed my primary data from 27 December 2007 to 6 January 2008; four other ‘analysis projects’ in which I imported and analyzed the remainder of data per month (January, February, March, and April); two ‘interview projects’ in which I transcribed and analyzed the interviews of the two stages of fieldwork (see 6.1.2); one big project in which I collected the full corpus of 1294 newspaper articles and another NVivo-project to store and analyze different kinds of secondary text data, such as opinion articles or commentaries from other media than the selected newspapers, expert analyses or research reports. The process of importing the data into NVivo projects was not without difficulties, because NVivo was not able to read the encoded and secured pdf. files which I obtained from the Kenyan newspapers so I had to transfer them one by one by means of

Figure 16: Screen shot of my first NVivo test project.
ABBYY PDF Transformer 2.0 to Word documents, which was a laborious and time-consuming process.

In the ‘analysis projects’ I immediately coded all imported newspaper texts as ‘Cases’, so that I could give them certain identity tags. By means of the ‘Classifications’-function I could add attributes and values to the individual ‘newspaper text cases’, such as ‘Country’, ‘Author’, ‘Newspaper’, ‘Section’ and ‘Date’. This enables the automatic generation of a ‘casebooks’ on which the overview in appendix VI is based. In NVivo the ‘Cases’ are stored under ‘Nodes’, which is NVivo’s term for codes linked to the data. The program allows for a distinction between ‘Free Nodes’ for the coded data that is not inherently connected to other codes and ‘Tree Nodes’ for codes that are interconnected in a hierarchical structure. In 6.1.2.2 I explain the coding strategy that I followed.

By means of NVivo data can also be managed in ‘Sets’ or visually represented by all kinds of ‘Models’, but these functions were not relevant for my research. The ‘Links’-section in which different kinds of functions are offered to establish links between the data also proved to be of little use for my research project. The ‘Queries’-tool was more useful. By means of the ‘Find’-function data texts could always easily be retrieved and ‘query functions’ allowed for complex investigations and searches of the data, interpretations and codes. NVivo has six kinds of queries, which gradually become more complex: (i) ‘Text Search’ to search for words, expressions or fragments of text; (ii) ‘Word Frequency Query’ to count the most frequently used words; (iii) ‘Coding Query’ to search for coded information and relations between codes in your coding work; (iv) ‘Matrix Coding Query’ to investigate how a set of nodes relates to another set of nodes, the result of which is presented in the form of a matrix or table; (v) ‘Compound Query’, which is a combination of coding and text search to search for coded information that contains certain text fragments; and (vi) ‘Coding Comparison Query’ which can be used to compare the coding of two researchers in view of inter-coder reliability. Especially the ‘Text Search’, the ‘Word Frequency Query’ and the ‘Compound Query’ proved to be useful for my research.

After the first test project, in which I threatened to lose myself in the different applications, I started to use NVivo 8 in a minimal manner. In the end I mainly used it to organize and structure my diverse data, to code the newspaper texts and to do searches in order to see patterns, make interpretations and test interpretive hypotheses. However, NVivo has a lot more possibilities and functionalities than what is described above (see Bazeley & Richards 2007, Gibbs 2002 and Richards 2009 for more information).

Although I claim to be a moderate user, I must recognize that NVivo, like any other computer program or research tool, is not an epistemologically neutral instrument. It has methodological consequences and can distort a researcher’s view of the data. That is why regularly returned to the original newspaper articles which I had printed out not to lose the overview of the data in the
fragmented NVivo codes. Next, it must be pointed out that although NVivo may be helpful to deal with large corpora of texts, it is not without its limitations. I experienced four main problems. (i) The program is not very stable and sensitive for crashes which are particularly dramatic as an NVivo project is stored as a single file, so if something happens to that file you lose a lot of data at the same time. Regularly clicking the ‘Save’-button does not help because when the program is running information is saved in a temporary file and it is only saved definitely when the program is shut off completely. So, it is no option to keep it running for days. To give some examples of the instability, when I wanted to import more than one hundred newspaper articles at the same time, the program crashed. This also happened when I wrote a longer annotation in one of the newspaper texts I was analyzing. Annotations are meant to write brief remarks in the sideline, but I soon learnt never to write more than 1024 characters per annotation, because then the program freezes. Apparently this is a looping error caused when you write too much text in annotations. (ii) NVivo has a lot of applications, too many to use at the same time for the same project, so it is important to know which functions are useful for the project you want to carry out, but a new user can only learn to make the right choices by trial and error. The danger of the different applications and the diverse coding facilities is that the use of tool like NVivo can lead to random, hyperactive coding, because it is so easy to create and organize new codes in the qualitative data, which are always very rich, and this may in the end invite the user to draw unwarranted conclusions (MacMillan 2005, Schönfelder 2011). Therefore it is essential to have a clear research focus and use NVivo eclectically, only where it helps the research project. (iii) In NVivo it is possible to attach everything to everything, to create infinite relationships and to make all kinds of links, so that the project can easily degenerate into chaos and then, ironically, all organization is lost in this data management tool. (iv) My research benefited from the ‘Query’-applications, but the NVivo’s Query section is still open to improvement. Small function words such as the or a or even that cannot be searched. Also the option to do a ‘stemmed text search’, which means that the search is made on the stem of the word and all its variations, did not always work properly. In general, the Queries seem to work best when working with English-language data. When I analyzed the Dutch data from the Belgian newspapers the level of accuracy of the searches lowered considerably.
6. Methodological manual and toolkit

“Critical categories are not just tools to be employed in producing sound interpretations, but problems to be explored through the interaction of text and concept”.

**Figure 17**: Compilation of photos taken by Omondi Ony, Yasuyoshi Chiba and Moses Omusula in *The Standard* on 1 January 2008 (p.2). The captions read: (1) Demonstrators yell as looters cart away stolen items in Kibera slums, Nairobi. Looters ransacked stores and set cars and other property on fire, yesterday; (2) A rioter at a petrol station in Kibera where several vehicles were set ablaze; (3) A demonstrator feels the pain of a policeman’s wrath at Kaptembwa slums in Nakuru; (4) An opposition supporter wields a knife in Kibera slums; (5) Police arrest looters they found drinking stolen beer at Migadini in Mombasa.

**Figure 18**: Cartoon by Kham published in *The Standard* on 28 January 2008 (p.6); While politicians are making grandiloquent speeches about peace, their supporters are fighting in the background.
6.1. Ethnographically-supported pragmatic news discourse analysis

6.1.1. Contrastive pragmatic ideology research

6.1.1.1. Methodological guidelines for the empirical and critical study of language use

The promoted pragmatic perspective on journalistic language use can best be seen as a theory-cum-methodology. The previous chapters already included a lot of methodological hints. In the foregoing analytical concepts such as news values, primary definers, frames of interpretation and (re)contextualization, were introduced. In this chapter a few more general methodological guidelines will be presented before illustrating the main analytical tools that are used in the pragmatic analysis of the selected news discourse on Kenya’s post-election crisis. In the following chapter the concrete methodology will be clarified and exemplified by means of an elaborate example analysis. Methodologically, the research at hand draws on Verschueren’s (2012) pragmatic guidelines for empirical ideology research on language use in combination with insights from critical analyses of news discourse (e.g. Bell & Garrett 1998, Fairclough 1995, Fowler 1991, Richardson 2007, Van Dijk 1985) and qualitative, linguistically-oriented or discursive approaches to journalism (e.g. Atton & Wickenden 2005, Bednarek & Caple forthcoming, Cotter 2010, Hartin Iorio 2004, Paterson & Domingo 2008). In addition, Gumperz’s (1982) inductive methodology to tackle various contextual frames and perspectives in terms of which verbal signs can be perceived, grouped together and interpreted, was a source of inspiration. Finally, the following analyses will also show some methodological similarities with work that has been done under the label of linguistic anthropology and the anthropology of news and journalism (e.g. Bird 2010, Murphy & Kraidy 2003, Silverstein & Urban 1996).

In 2.1.2 it was pointed out that Critical Discourse Analysis is not incompatible with the pragmatic perspective taken in this research. That is why the previous sections already contained a number of methodological incentives from CDA and why also some of the following guidelines can be recognized, although maybe in different wordings, in analytical frameworks of the CDA schools. Besides, in pragmatic research such as this it is perfectly possible to employ tools from CDA, like Van Leeuwen’s socio-semantic inventory to analyze social actors (see 6.2.2). This is not the place to give a contrastive account of the relation between CDA and linguistic pragmatics. However, in order to acknowledge the fact that both ways of analyzing discourse share a number of similarities I will briefly highlight a few salient correspondences. Note that these correspondences are not exclusive to the relation between CDA and pragmatics. It could be argued that most CDA practitioners hold a pragmatic perspective on the functioning of language use in social reality.
Apart from the already mentioned commonalities, such as the shared assumptions about language use as social practice and (inter)action in context and the shared focus on ideology in discourse, it can be acknowledged that CDA and linguistic pragmatics essentially are both theory and methodology at the same time. In accordance with the adopted perspective view of pragmatics, CDA has even been described as a research perspective (Blommaert 2005: 21, Van Dijk 2009: 96, Wodak 2009: 2; see also Reisigl 2011 for more information). Richardson defines CDA as “a theory and method analyzing the way that individuals and institutions use language” (2007: 1). However, it is not a single theory or method, rather both critical and pragmatic discourse analysts tend to be eclectic using insights from a multiplicity of theories and methodologies from such disciplines as anthropology, applied linguistics, cognitive science, literary studies, philosophy, rhetoric, social psychology, sociolinguistics, sociology or corpus linguistics, which makes both approaches to discourse an interdisciplinary endeavor. Like pragmatics, “[i]here is not just one way of doing CDA and the various methodologies reflect the theoretical and philosophical orientations of the researchers” (Mayr 2008: 9).

Critical discourse analyses and pragmatic analyses of discourse often work with similar data, as there is a preference for naturally occurring language use, often from the public sphere (political discourse, media discourse) or from other discursive domains with social relevance (classroom, medical settings). Both in linguistic pragmatics and in CDA the focus is on larger discursive units beyond isolated words or sentences and a link is established between micro-structures of language and macro-phenomena of society. As such, language use is studied in its intertextuality and in its historical, sociocultural context, while taking implicit layers of meaning into account. However, especially with regard to the latter two aspects, CDA might benefit from pragmatic insights. As Wodak remarks, “[p]ragmatics has attempted to distinguish important features of the immediate context (speakers, hearers, settings, expectations, intentions, etc.), these and other relevant dimensions have frequently been left vague or sometimes simply to the researcher’s subjective intuition” (2007: 206; see also Fowler 1996: 10). Pragmatics is also better aimed at discovering implicit meanings and patterns in contextualized language use: “much research in CDA has often neglected the subtle and intricate analysis of latent meanings and has left the interpretation of implicit, presupposed and inferred meanings to the intuition of the researcher and/or the readership” (Wodak 2007: 206). Always keep in mind that these are general similarities. It is very well possible that the abovementioned points of correspondence are put into practice differently in the separate research traditions and then they, naturally, become points of difference. As became clear in chapter 4, it is not uncommon to see different uses of the same concepts (e.g. context or ideology) by different researchers even within the

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112 I thank Martin Reisigl for giving me access to his paper about the relation between (critical) discourse analysis and pragmatics.
same domain of study, so the following similarities always have to be put into perspective (see Reisigl 2011, Verschueren 2001, Wodak 2007 for more information).

What CDA and linguistic pragmatics also share is a qualitative take on discourse. Gibbs (2002) lists eight characteristics of qualitative research which also typify my methodology: (i) the primary study object is language and meaning (see also Charmaz 2006: 35); (ii) qualitative analysis is interpretive and holistic, i.e. it involves interpretation and well-founded argumentation and it is not limited to analytical details, but takes the totality of the investigated phenomena into account; (iii) qualitative research favors a relatively open and not linearly structured research strategy in which there is a “reluctance to impose a priori theoretical frameworks at the outset” (Gibbs 2002: 3), such a flexibility permits the researcher to follow leads that emerge from the diverse data (Charmaz 2006: 14); (iv) qualitative “data analysis is commonly iterative, recursive and dynamic” (Gibbs 2002: 2), i.e. there are no clear boundaries between the different steps in the research (like in normative quantitative research), because you are constantly going back to the data, revisiting ideas and interpretations, but such a dynamics and recursivity also give rise to an inevitable fuzziness; (v) there is hardly any reduction and condensation of the data or as Gibbs put it, a “difference between the procedures of qualitative and quantitative analysis is that the former does not seek to reduce or condense the data, for example, to summaries or statistics” (2002: 3); (vi) in qualitative research an ‘emic’ or insider perspective is often taken in order to try and grasp the social practices that are studied through the eyes of the people who are involved in them, so researchers can show empathy for the life world of their study objects, but this not only “includes a sensitivity to the differing perspectives held by different groups, [it also] introduces the potential of conflict between the perspective of those being studied and those doing the studying” (Gibbs 2002: 3); (vii) because the studied phenomena are interpreted in relation to the context and the setting in which they occur, a lot of time is spent on detailing out the context and describing of the setting (see the previous and the following chapters); (viii) finally, in qualitative research the wrapping up, the writing of the research report cannot be underestimated. In Gibbs’s words, “how qualitative data are written about is as important as how they are analysed, [so that] one can argue that writing about qualitative data is analysis” (2002: 10). From these characteristics the following methodological guideline can be derived.

➔ **Without denying the usefulness of quantitative support, the data should be thoroughly analysed in a qualitative manner, avoiding the typical traps of overinterpretation, overgeneralization, data distortion, abstraction and inconsistent application of vague concepts to the data.**

There are five common traps of qualitative, interpretive analysis. First, there is the possible enthusiasm to read more into texts than can be empirically proven, which can lead to prejudiced
interpretation or even speculation. Therefore, it is important to stick to empirical findings. A second trap is the temptation to overgeneralize on the basis of specific, contextualized data, which leads to unwarranted generalizations. Third, there is the danger of distorting the data by overemphasizing examples that support your interpretive hypotheses while downplaying or even ignoring counterexamples. This has also been called ‘cherry-picking’ or ‘selective anecdotalism’, i.e. the use of particular examples to try to make a general point in combination with the tendency to pick out only those fascinating or even exotic examples that illustrate your point (Gibbs 2002: 231). The fourth trap has to do with abstraction and narrow vision. By using abstract labels, by applying analytical categories and by determining frames of meaning, there is the possibility that the researcher loses sight of the embeddedness of what is really happening in all its variability, negotiability and adaptability. That is why it is important never to forget that abstractions are only abstractions and why we must keep an open mind. Fifth, there is the trap of vagueness and inconsistency and this is tricky to mention in research that tries to apply such concepts as context and ideology which are difficult to make palpable. Yet it is important to avoid vague definitions of concepts and categories and not to fall into the trap of their inconsistent application to the data.

In connection to the previous stipulations a few more interrelated methodological guidelines can be proffered.

- **Analytical results pertaining to ideological meanings should emerge coherently from the data, both in terms of conceptual connectedness with other aspects of meaning and in terms of patterns of recurrence or of absence.**

Within the pragmatic framework of this research, a discourse analysis that focuses on ideological aspects of language use derives its strength from the recurrence of the observed phenomena and from the coherence between the observed patterns of meaning. This does not mean that ideology itself has to be coherent, but it means that even contradictory empirical observations have to emerge coherently from the data (Verschueren 1996: 592; 1999a: 245; 2012: 23). Therefore, “special attention has to be paid to the emergence of global meaning constructs, i.e. consistent ingredients of an overall world view, the systematic reliance on what is supposed to be ‘normal’, unquestioned patterns of argumentation, and the like” (Blommaert & Verschueren 1994: 230). It is inadmissible to draw wide-ranging ideological conclusions from isolated examples.

- **Enhance the data and ensure differentiation so that a dense and complex picture arises on the basis of which conclusions can be drawn.**

In the previous chapter we already saw that a considerable amount of data is required for pragmatic ideology research and that different types of data are preferable. Next to the horizontal
variation of the data, in this research allowing for a combined study of different genres of newspaper articles, interviews with journalists, policy documents and editorial guidelines (cf. *infra*), also a vertical variation is required. Since “[m]any properties of news are not analyzable at one specific level, but cut through various levels” (Van Dijk 1984: 212), it is important not to focus on one level of linguistic description and journalistic practice. As the next chapter will show, my analyses will touch on different levels of linguistic structure related to different journalistic practices (*e.g.* topic selection, word choice, representation of social actors, frame, coherence and perspective, argumentation and phenomena of implicitness).

**Sociolinguistic criticism must be humane and constructive; it must not only be theoretically founded, but also empirically grounded.**

“Criticism is conscious analysis of the relationship between the signs – words, phrases, *etc.* – people produce and the meanings they communicate” (Fowler 1986: 36). The analysis of this relationship requires an exploration of the social origins of meanings and the (intended as well as unintended) purposes and effects of language use. A pragmatic analysis as carried out in the following chapters has a critical edge. This comes with a responsibility. The role of critic should not be taken on lightheartedly, because it is a complex task.

“The critic’s task is to comprehend texts as discourse: to realize them as transactions within society, to understand how they represent the dominant or the problematic beliefs current within a historically specific society. That is to say, linguistic criticism has a goal [...] to understand the transmission and the transformation of values in a culture. The linguistic critic [...] is not concerned simply to reproduce dominant values, but to come to a reflexive understanding of the values of a time and a culture. I have insisted that linguistic criticism is necessarily a historical discipline: it must regard the texts it studies not as isolated and timeless artefacts but as products of a time of writing and of a time of reading. The significance of the text changes as cultural conditions, and beliefs, change, and so criticism is a dynamic process” (Fowler 1986: 178).

If you want to do it well, this is not an easy job, because it requires involvement and distance at the same time, so it is a balancing act. Moreover, it makes the researcher vulnerable, because the critic is the first to be criticized. To guard oneself against criticism, scientific criticism should have both theoretical and empirical foundations (Verschueren 2001). Criticism can be constructive and stimulating, but it can also easily become pedantic and denunciative. Linguistic criticism should always be practiced with respect and consideration for the language users involved. It should not only focus on the texts, but also on the people behind the language use and those affected by the language use in question. In Fiske’s words,

“as critics, we must never be content with asking and revealing what view of the world is being presented, but must recognize that someone’s view of the world is implicitly or explicitly, obviously or subtly, inscribed within it. Revealing the who within the what is possibly the most important task of criticism” (Fiske 1987: 42).
That is why I incorporate voices of journalists as well as readers into the analyses (see 6.1.2 below and the following chapters). What should be avoided at all cost is an academic who starts to condemn and lecture from his or her ivory tower. Only then can criticism fulfill its proclaimed social and educational aims of defamiliarisation, consciousness-raising (Fowler 1986, 1991, 1996) and “equip readers for demystificatory readings of ideologically-laden texts” (Fowler 1996: 6). Only then can it have positive effects and open up the way to alternative frames of interpretation or maybe improvement of the studied practices. After all, criticism is not just an academic exercise. It is easy to criticize but difficult to suggest better alternatives.

➔ Be aware of your own position and your own role in the society and in the practices that you investigate; always reflect on your own language use and your own research practices.

“Since the social sciences are essentially ideologically marked forms of discourse, the question as to the role of the investigator, his or her own contribution to the communicative processes that are investigated, and how this influences the knowledge which is scientifically obtained, is of great methodological importance” (Blommaert & Verschueren 1991: 7). With respect to the previous guideline, Fowler stresses that “[c]riticism is not a self-justifying or self-contained pursuit, nor is it disinterested [rather it] is a form of social practice” which involves reflexivity: “in so far as the critic is a member of the society whose codes he criticizes, he uses those same codes, and his analysis of them is a critical reflection on his own habits of perception and communication” (Fowler 1986: 36). As Reisigl and Wodak phrase it, “critics are not disembodied heremitic individuals, but interested members of specific societies and social groups with specific points of view” (2001: 35). This does not make the research purely subjective or unscientific. As Halloran convincingly argues,

“We need to rid ourselves of the phoney objectivity which has characterised the positivistic research effort. Most of us believe that some things are more important than others and our task, as concerned social scientists, is to make this clear and then use our social science to address these selected issues in a systematic and disciplined manner” (Halloran 1998: 17).

Reflexivity is a requirement for any ideology research because writing about ideology is never ideology-free and that must be acknowledged in the research. As Verschueren stipulates, “a researcher engaging with language use and ideology should never forget his or her own positioning in relation to or involvement in the social structures, processes, and relations that are at issue” (2012: 63). However, in this kind of research, “influence of bias can be kept under control by the careful self-monitoring and self-critical application of research procedures” (Verschueren 2012: 29).
Because form-function relationships are never absolute, ideology research is necessarily comparative and contrastive.

This guideline is literally borrowed from Verschueren (2012: 119). In 2.2.1 we saw that the form and content of language cannot be separated, nor can form-function relationships be interpreted automatically, because their meaning largely depends on the context. Implicit or absent meanings can only be discovered if you are aware of their existence, i.e. if they are made (more) explicit in other contexts. That is where comparison and contrast come in. “Close scrutiny of elements of contrast is one of the most powerful tools available to ideology research, because of its potential to reveal patterns of implicit meaning” (Verschueren 1996: 594). In order to arrive at solid interpretations, it is essential to analyze contrastively. Through contrasting the newspaper reports it becomes clear what aspects of the events are shrouded, how certain interpretations are highlighted while others are de-emphasised or even withheld (cf. Coesemans, forthcoming, for an extensive plea for contrastive news discourse analysis). With respect to the discourses in the different (sub)genres of newspaper articles and other documents the question can be asked whether it is justified to compare all of these different kinds of language use. Bakhtin, who compared different ‘languages’ or discourses in the novel, gave this answer:

“In actual fact [...] there does exist a common plane that methodologically justifies our juxtaposing them: all languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique, are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values. As such they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically. As such they encounter one another and co-exist in the consciousness of real people” (Bakthin 1981: 291-292).

Even though national news reports are different from international newspaper articles, they can be carefully compared to each other and to other discourses, taking into account the differences in genre and target audience, because they are thematically related as they discursively (re)construct or recontextualize the same events. They are all perspectives, interpretations or representations of the same reality and they all reflect as well as affect people’s worldview. Besides, comparison is not the same as equation.

In a research with rich, dynamic and sometimes messy data systematicity must be built into the methodology, but methods are not sacrosanct.

In pragmatic analysis formal analysis and interpretation must be systematically integrated (Verschueren 2012: 51). The data must be systematically scrutinized in search for meanings, but not all meanings are equally relevant and salient. So, the analytical categories, described in 6.2 will be systematically, but not rigidly applied. For instance, it is useless to identify and code all presuppositions, because they abound in every instance of discourse. Rather it can be
systematically investigated how presuppositions function in a few selected salient ideological meaning patterns (see also Halloran’s quote above). Methods are only tools and good methods do not automatically lead to good research:

“A method provides a tool to enhance seeing but does not provide automatic insight. We must see through the armament of methodological techniques and the reliance on mechanical procedures. Methods alone – whatever they might be – do not generate good research or astute analyses. How researchers use methods matters” (Charmaz 2006: 15).

In pragmatic research the data have to remain central, so researchers should try to prevent that results are dictated by the theoretical assumptions or that they superimpose their own ideologies on the data.

To end, it must be clear that a pragmatic analysis of news discourse is more than analyzing news texts. Van Ginneken (2002: 145) remarks that distortions and imbalances in global news cannot be discovered by purely formalistic, quantifying methods. But also a discourse analysis in a narrow sense falls short to gain a deeper insight into the complexities and subtleties of meanings in news. A text-based discourse analysis needs to be coupled with an analysis of the content and an analysis of the context by means of ethnographic fieldwork, as explained in 6.1.2. The next chapter exemplifies how this can be carried out.

6.1.1.2. Stages of the analysis
In the methodology three research stages can be distinguished: a propaedeutic stage, an analytical stage and a reflective stage. Note that these stages are not at all as clear-cut as the description below suggests; in real-time cyclically developing research they overlap and are often performed simultaneously or recursively.

During the preliminary, propaedeutic stage the foundations of the research were laid. This was the stage of immersion into theory and methodology, delimitation and contextualization of the topic, familiarization with the field and corpus collection, all essential for the following phases, in which the in-depth discourse analysis was carried out. Verschueren’s (2012) first guideline to get to know your data thoroughly cannot be underestimated. Fowler (1996), too, underlines that an analyst of discourse first needs a lot of background information, experience and context in order to be able to perform a critical analysis of discourse. Therefore, a huge amount of information was processed, because (news) discourse cannot be accurately interpreted without thorough contextual knowledge about topic and field. This entailed both theoretical and practical knowledge. That is why considerable time was spent on reviewing the literature about Kenyan politics, (international) news reporting, news production and selection, etc. The societal context and professional practices were further explored during fieldwork through visits to news desks, interviews with journalists and academics, and by browsing internal, editorial or policy
documents. Another time-consuming step in the preparation of the research concerned the sampling and processing of data (see 5.2.2).

In the analytical stage three kinds of analysis were concurrently and recursively carried out. The textual analysis scrutinized the language used in the individual newspaper reports on a micro-level. After studying the surface level of discourse by identifying what kind of words or phrases were used to describe news events and participants examining how the relations between actors and actions were (grammatically and semantically) rendered, and establishing connotations and ambiguities, etc., the search was broadened to implicit patterns of unquestioned meaning that emerged from the texts. It was here that the need for contrastive analysis was most felt (cf. supra). Only through comparative close (re)reading, ideological aspects of language use could be revealed, both at the explicit and implicit levels of the news discourse. Gradually, the textual analysis turned into an intertextual analysis. As “[i]ntertextuality grounds discourse analysis firmly into histories of use – histories that are social, cultural, and political, and which allow the synchronic use of particular expressions to acquire powerful social, cultural, and political effects” (Blommaert 2005: 46), the textual and intertextual analyses continued into a contextual analysis where linguistic observations were linked to macro-processes on a societal level. Following Carvalho (2008), the contextual analysis consisted of both a historical-diachronic and a comparative-synchronic analysis. So, I studied information sources about the historical, political, social and economic context and I also looked into the wider discursive context and the various representations of an issue at the time of production and interpretation (e.g. readers’ letters, investigative reports, opinion articles).

At the final reflective stage of the research the results were critically evaluated and moderated or adjusted, when necessary. So, the analytical results were double-checked and field-tested through a triangulated methodology of counterscreening, ethnographic support and computerized quantification (see the work I did together with Pollak, Daelemans and Lavrač in appendix IV). The better the results are triangulated, the more credible and reliable they are, and the more cogent the news discourse analysis is. Firstly, “since interference with one’s own ideology is to be expected, the research requires a phase of counterscreening during which meaning constructions incompatible with the tentative research conclusions are systematically searched for, in spite of the fact that it would be a mistake to think that all bias can (or should) be eliminated” (Verschueren 1996: 593). Secondly, it is important to get back to the language users involved, viz. to get feedback from some of the journalists about the findings. This helps to put the research results into perspective and to avoid over- or underinterpretation. When working with large corpora of texts quantitative support can be very useful to substantiate the analyses and to allow for some generalization, as will be explained in 6.2.1 and in 8.2.1.1.
6.1.2. Ethnographic support

6.1.2.1. What ethnography and why ethnography?
Ethnography is a qualitative research method that stems from anthropology, but it has been adopted and appropriated by different fields of investigation, so that nowadays there is a wide array of ethnographic methods. Rather than reviewing the main approaches to ethnography, I will here explain how I understand ethnography in the framework of my research and how I used it to support the analyses of the news discourse. I will promote a minimalist kind of ethnography in the service of news discourse analysis as a means by which a deeper insight can be gained into the discourse through an understanding of the news practice and as a way of triangulating the research results, so that the interpretive analyses can be reinforced, refined or rejected. Furthermore, by the integration of ethnography into discourse studies theoretical assumptions can be put into perspective, and organizational and professional constraints on news production as well as agency of individual newsworkers can be taken into account. By means of the ethnographic component of the research I could break away from the texts, and lend a voice to and enter into dialogue with the language users who produced the discourse. As such, I subscribe to the program to bring more ethnographic insights into linguistically-oriented research on news as a discursive practice (Van Hout & Jacobs 2008, Jacobs et al. 2008, Catenaccio et al. 2010).

My research is not a full-fledged ethnography, but the ethnographic component is based on the way ethnography is practiced in linguistic anthropology, sociology and journalism studies. In the Oxford English Dictionary ethnography is defined as “the scientific description of nations or races of men, with their customs, habits, and points of difference”. That is definitely not the way I see ethnography in this research. Duranti’s general description is a better starting point:

“As a first approximation, we can say that an ethnography is the written description of the social organization, social activities, symbolic and material resources, and interpretive practices characteristic of a particular group of people” (Duranti 1997: 85).

This, however, implies a large-scale immersion into a specific community with extensive participant observation. Although cultural immersion and long-term participant observation also have a central place in media ethnography (Murphy & Kraidy 2003: 5), that is not what I have done in my research, but I did build in the ethnographic component to get an insight into the organization, the activities, the resources and the interpretive practices of journalists. For a pragmatic analysis focusing on contextualized interpretations of language use it is necessary to become familiar with the (institutional) production context of the studied texts.

Duranti (1997: 85) observes that ethnography requires two apparently contradictory qualities: the ability to take a distance from one’s own culturally, and I would add professionally, biased reactions and preconceptions; and the propensity to achieve empathy for the members of the studied group in order to provide an insider perspective. The combination of critical distance and
empathy is essential for the ethnographic component of my research. My ethnographic fieldwork not only puts into perspective the discourse under investigation, but also the theories reviewed about intertextuality, news values, social responsibility, etc. The insider perspective helps understand why journalists write and work the way they do and as such it can prevent unjustified criticism. After all, a good understanding of language use requires an understanding of the language users. Silverstein points out that there is a close relationship between adequacy of pragmatic analysis and the inherent commitment to engaging with what he terms the ‘macropolitics of discourse’:

Adequate pragmatic analysis forces the analysts themselves to contemplate the very issues and conditions of being that are the concern of the people whose discursive interaction we are interested in” (Silverstein 1997: 632).

The fact that I did not become an enduring participant observer can be criticized, but I did not have the opportunities to extend the fieldwork in the context of this research. However, the small scale of my ethnographic fieldwork ensured a distance, often literally as well as figuratively, to the Kenyan journalists and foreign correspondents whose language use I scrutinized, which enabled me to maintain a critical attitude without identifying too much with the research participants. After all, when empathy turns into sympathy critical distance is easily lost.

Nevertheless, fieldwork is essential to ethnography. Traditionally, fieldwork is said to be dependent on the ‘rapport’, a constructive relationship, between the researcher and one or more members of the studied community. However, I side with Marcus (1997) who believes that it is rather ‘complicity’ than ‘rapport’ which characterizes mutual fieldwork relations. In this respect, Couldry (2003: 46) claims that it is not so much (cultural) knowledge that ethnographers and their interlocutors share as a curiosity and inquisitiveness to get to know each other, a willingness to try and understand each other’s practices. In my experience there is always interest involved in ethnography. The journalists that I interviewed were interested in my research, as I was interested in their work. Those who were completely disinterested, simply did not make time to see me. Interest can even be regarded as a prerequisite for research. As Saïd wrote, “[t]here is never interpretation, knowledge and then understanding where there is no interest” (1981: 165).

Furthermore, relations between the researcher and the informants are dynamic and contingent on personal attitudes and perceptions. “The evolving relationship between ethnographer and informant is a process framed by the boundaries of race, class, ethnicity and gender, which shape meaning” and these “relationships unfold not only in relation to the researcher’s perception of the informant, but also in relation to the participant’s perception of the ethnographer” (Murphy &

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113 This does not mean that my interviewees were the only people who were interested. My interviews were also dependent on practicalities, contingencies and availability, as there were several journalists who I contacted and who were willing to meet, but who I in the end did not get a chance to speak due to circumstances.
Moreover, prior experiences and beliefs also play a role in ethnographic contacts, as “[n]either observer nor observed come to a scene untouched by the world” (Charmaz 2006: 15). My first Kenyan contacts were people with an international mind. Most of them had been in Europe for educational or professional reasons, so they understood how I felt as a lonely foreigner trying to find his way around the hectic city of Nairobi and it was easy to relate to them. With respect to the research participants, Murphy and Kraidy also stress that “participants not only can, but also do provide direction for the research and negotiate a constitutive voice in the production of ethnographic knowledge, but it remains the delicate and inescapable task of the ethnographer to translate that voice” (2003: 14). Indeed, my analyses were guided by the conversations with journalists who sometimes drew my attention to certain aspects in the national or international news discourse.

Simplistically, fieldwork means to leave the academic office and go into the field, in my case the newsrooms or editorial offices of the studied newspapers, in order to see and experience how things really work. Of course, that is an illusion. As Murphy and Kraidy (2003: 11) indicate, the assumption can easily be questioned that the reality of any given cultural community is readily available for interpretation just by being there and by integrating into the community, as long as the ethnographer disposes of the proper tools (e.g. good field notes, genealogies, maps, demographic data). In Couldry’s words,

“Even when stripped of its colonial connotations, ethnography’s fiction of ‘being there’ – ‘there’ where the systematic order of a wider culture is ‘revealed’ to a sensitive observer – remains problematic” (Couldry 2003: 40).

Whether you study a closed cultural community, the professional community of Kenyan journalists or the global community of foreign correspondents, what matters is the way you engage in the ethnographic practice and how you interpret what is observed and what is learnt from the ethnographic experience. In 6.1.2.2 I will briefly outline my ethnographic fieldwork.

The importance of observation, fieldwork and interpretation is also stressed by Cotter (2010), but her definition of the ethnographic approach to news media language adds a crucial element which has not been mentioned so far, viz. the use of ethnography to triangulate analytic results.

“The ethnographic approach constitutes an informant-based interpretive method, reliant on participant observation, extended fieldwork, and confirmation of analytic judgments with community members themselves. What it does (and how it works) is to prioritize the community as a working, structured, rule-governed, dynamic, culturally inscribed entity. Thus, a researcher goes through a systematic process of fieldwork (and data-gathering) to understand community values, community routines, and community roles and

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114 Some of my informants were genuinely concerned. They gave me safety tips, invited me for lunch or let me use their computer to send a few reassuring e-mails back home, as I did not have an internet connection in the place where I was first staying.
relationships. With this understanding, the researcher can identify patterns, communicative roles, and cultural meanings” (Cotter 2010: 19-20; emphasis added in italics).

By incorporating an ethnographic component into news discourse analysis the results of the interpretive analyses can be fed back to the language users involved, who can check the analytical results, refine them or give their counter-opinion. That enhances the quality and validity of the discourse analysis. When journalists can reflect on their language use and comment on the researcher’s analyses, they are taken seriously as research partners. It is important to give them a voice in order to substantiate and diversify the study of the news discourse. That is a way of avoiding single interpretations and bringing in multiple perspectives, which is a key characteristic of any ethnography.

“A successful ethnography, then, is not a method of writing in which the observer assumes one perspective – whether ‘distant’ or ‘near’ – but a style in which the researcher establishes a dialogue between different viewpoints and voices, including those of the people studied, of the ethnographer, and of his disciplinary and theoretical preferences” (Duranti 1997: 87).

In this respect I share the goal of linguistic ethnographers “to move forward in a dialectic fashion toward understanding by way of a continuous dialogue between the interpreter and the interpreted” (Van Praet 2006: 2 with reference to Van Maanen 1988: 93).

However, this is not unproblematic. Bauman (2004: 160) distinguishes two moments of dialogue in ethnography, the first represented by the fieldwork encounter and the second by the writing of the ethnographic account addressed to an audience of readers, and he warns that “a degree of potential distortion arises when the respective dialogues are dissociated into two separate stages”. This must be taken into account when reading the analyses in the following chapters, because, like journalists do in news reports, I have taken quotes from interviews out of their original context and recontextualized them into my analyses of the news discourse, which is not a neutral rendering of the words of my informants. Such a practice leads to changes in meaning and opens up further dialogue.

As Bakhtin already knew, ideological meanings “can only be grasped dialogically, and [...] include evaluation and response” (1981: 352). The comments of journalists in the following chapters can be seen as responses to my evaluations of their language use. However, since I study ideological meanings in news discourse, I must admit that my own discourse, which is, in fact, a meta-discourse on the journalistic language use, is also full of ideological meanings. My analyses could be seen as constituting a ‘multivocal text’. In the context of ethnographic studies such texts can run the risk of “positioning the Other as more comfortable and proactive [...] than they might have actually been during the ethnographic encounter” (Murphy & Kraidy 2003: 13).

Moreover, Murphy and Kraidy (ibid.) observe that “the incorporation of the Other as an active speaker in an ethnographic text often erases rather than challenges relations of power”, so that
they wonder “if the elaboration of polyvocal texts actually democratizes ethnographies or if multivocality merely camouflages the authoritative voice of the writer”.

However, ethnography is more than observation and interviews, as it is also more than the provision of contextual background to linguistic analysis. Ethnographic fieldwork can yield different sources of information which can be used as data to support the analyses of discourse. In this respect, Charmaz’s characterization of ethnography is revealing:

“Ethnography means recording the life of a particular group and thus entails sustained participation and observation in their milieu, community, or social world. It means more than participant observation alone because an ethnographic study covers the round of life occurring within the given milieu(x) and *often includes supplementary data from* documents, diagrams, maps, photographs, and, occasionally, formal interviews and questionnaires” (Charmaz 2006: 21; emphasis added in italics).

My lack of prolonged observation is compensated by focusing on a wide array of diverse data which can shed some light on the language users and their discursive practices. As such, the ethnographic component that complements my pragmatic analysis of news discourse bears some resemblance to Knoblauch’s (2005) ‘focused ethnography’ which is characterized by short periods of fieldwork, extensive and diverse data-gathering (different kinds of multimodal recordings, digital material, *etc.*), intensive data analysis and interaction with other researchers and participants involved to achieve an accepted degree of intersubjectivity.

In my research I used different kinds of information, such as field notes, interviews, readers’ reactions, policy documents, opinions from academics and news watchers, collected during ethnographic fieldwork, not only at newsrooms but wherever I found them (see below). These kinds of ethnographic information are not only useful during the analytical phase but also afterwards to triangulate the results. To be clear, feedback from journalists is only one source of information that can be used for triangulation. Typically, triangulation involves the comparison of data produced by different data collection techniques and so also, for instance, editorial guidelines, letters-to-the editor or opinions by public intellectuals proved to be useful as a basis for checking interpretations, as will be explained below. Although I spoke of an enhancement of quality and validity, a caveat is in order with respect to the use of ethnographic information. Always bear in mind that

“Data must never be taken at face value. It is misleading automatically to treat some as true and some as false. Rather, what is involved in triangulation is a matter not of checking whether data are valid, but, at best, of discovering which inferences from these data seem more likely to be valid” (Atkinson & Hammersley 2007: 184).

That is exactly how I used the ethnographic information that I gathered, to check and field-test my interpretive analyses and to help me draw valid inferences.
So, to recapitulate: why is ethnography useful for analyses of news discourse? The simple answer is that a pragmatic analysis of news discourse needs context to arrive at solid interpretations and this context can be partly provided by ethnographic inquiry. As Agar notes, “At some point, all pragmatics work must leave the world of available linguistic detail and call up interpretive assumptions about the worlds of speakers and hearers, worlds in the sense of biography and immediate circumstance, and also in the broader sense of social identity, culture, and political economy” (Agar 1995: 590).

Fieldwork is useful for discourse analysis, because “[e]thnography sets out to learn meaning and contexts which lie outside the concepts and habits of prior experience, to construct and test representations of new knowledge” (Agar 1995: 583). In the context of journalism studies Philo (2007) remarked that purely text-based discourse analyses cannot wholly explain the content of news and journalists’ discursive practice, for such analyses fail to show (i) the origins of competing discourses and how they relate to different social interests, (ii) the diversity of social accounts compared to what is present (and absent) in a specific text, (iii) the impact of external factors such as professional ideologies and routines on the manner in which the discourses are represented, and (iv) what the text actually means to different parts of the audience.

The integration of ethnography into discourse analysis could obviate some of these criticisms (see also Macgilchrist & Van Hout 2011). Ethnographic work provides an insight into the processes of news production, which is an important part of the context. As Schlesinger put it, “the ethnographic approach permits the observation of how specific problems are dealt with which are otherwise concealed from the analysts of texts or content who are confronted with the products of action but denied access to the processes which lie behind them” (Schlesinger cited in Cottle 2001: 151). Ethnographic methods can reveal how texts were produced and which texts did not come into being. In his plea for an ‘ethnographic-sociolinguistic analysis of discourse’ Blommaert states that such a discourse analysis “should also look at texts long before they were produced as texts, and should also question the absence of texts” (2011: 127; see also Blommaert 2005: 16). By means of ethnography pragmatic interpretations can be grounded “through an emergent analysis across many segments of data in a quest for a high level coherence that […] connects with multiple moments of language” (Agar 1995: 590). To use Haviland’s words, in detailed language studies “we are thus not permitted the luxury of ethnographic blindness, a methodological myth” (1997: 570). In sum, in my research the ethnographic component fulfilled the three supportive functions of familiarization, orientation and triangulation. Ethnographic information was used (i) to acquire background knowledge about both the journalistic practices and the news events, (ii) to orient and substantiate the analyses of journalistic language use, and (iii) to triangulate the research results.
6.1.2.2. Fieldwork and sources of ethnographic information

Now it is clear why an ethnographic component was built into the research, I can give a concise account of the concrete ethnographic work that I did. First I will describe the fieldwork and then I will illustrate the different data that I gathered. For the current research I did two stages of fieldwork, one at the beginning of the project and one at the end. Between these two periods ‘ethnographic’ contacts were maintained by regular e-mail correspondence and occasional phone calls.

The first period of fieldwork was carried out in 2008 during the explorative phase of the research. The initial fieldwork had multiple purposes: (i) to become familiar with the field of investigation, (ii) to gain an insight into the news context and the production processes of the studied discourse, (iii) to make contacts with informants, (iv) to acquire deeper knowledge about the discourse topics and the sociopolitical context, and (v) to collect both the primary data of the newspaper articles and secondary data from the newspapers and from the ethnographic field. The preparation of the ethnographic work was not without difficulties, because I lacked the necessary connections to get into newsrooms. Therefore, the first step was to contact a few foreign correspondents and foreign desk editors in Belgium whose e-mail addresses I could retrieve from the newspaper websites. The foreign desk chiefs of three newspapers, *viz. De Standaard, De Morgen* and *Le Soir* were immediately curious.\(^{115}\) Thanks to their positive reaction my colleague Liesbeth Michiels and I could visit the editorial offices of the Belgian newspapers. There, we got an introduction to the news production process from the inside, as we followed the work of the respective foreign desks for one day from morning till evening. We witnessed the editorial meetings in the morning and in the afternoon, studied the news wires and how the enormous amount of incoming information is processed, took part in discussions, and followed developing storylines. In short, we observed the workings of the newsroom, while we were constantly harassing the journalists with questions about their decisions, their practices, their experiences and their values.

These visits were followed up by formal interviews with some of the journalists at later moments. For these interviews we designed an extensive questionnaire (see appendix VII). As we preferred semi-structured interviews, most of the questions from this list were not literally posed, rather the query sheet was used as a guide to orient the direction of the open interviews. So, we interviewed:

\(^{115}\) The latter newspaper was eventually dropped from the corpus for practical reasons and for reasons of comparison, so that a balanced corpus of two newspapers per country was made. Nevertheless, it would have been interesting to contrast one or more French-language newspapers to the other newspapers which are written in English and Dutch. Possibly, that could reveal more perspectives to the news events. For the same reason it would have been interesting to include a few newspapers from other African countries and in other languages than English (*e.g.* Kiswahili), but then the corpus would have been too big for this project.
- Evita Neefs, then chief of the foreign desk at *De Standaard*, now senior editor (8 May 2008, 33min);\(^{116}\)
- Bart Beirlant, then senior editor at the foreign desk at *De Standaard*, now news manager (8 May 2008, 25min);
- Ine Roox, editor at the foreign desk and occasional foreign correspondent at *De Standaard* (8 May 2008, 29min);
- Catherine Vuylsteke, senior foreign editor and occasional foreign correspondent at *De Morgen* (29 September 2008, 24min);
- Koen Vidal, chief of the foreign desk at *De Morgen* and former foreign correspondent in Nairobi (17 October 2008, 1h 22min);

However, I did not limit my Belgian informants to those newsrooms. The courses I took on ‘International Media and Conflict’ and ‘History in Africa’ can also be considered as part of the ethnographic component, because they were taught respectively by television foreign correspondent Peter Verlinden and foreign editor Jan Van Crieckinge, both Africa experts, who also outside their courses provided me with useful background information about foreign correspondence and Africa. Finally, I looked for useful contacts at the Belgian universities.

It was more difficult to find an entry to Kenya, and in particular to the newsrooms of the Kenyan newspapers. Eventually, I found the right persons to show me around in Nairobi and introduce me to the Kenyan press by means of the snowball referral technique (O’Reilly 2009: 199), which means that one contact person introduces you to another one who brings you into contact to other people and so on. The main fieldwork in Nairobi was carried out at the editorial offices of *The Standard* and *The Nation*. Two people in Belgium and two in Nairobi were invaluable to me, as they helped me get access to the Kenyan newspapers. Thanks to the help of university researcher Guy De Pauw from the African Language Technology network\(^{117}\), I got to know former *Nation* journalist Mwangi Gitahu, who provided me with some useful e-mail addresses of *Nation* employees. Via Mukami Namu, who worked at the Kenyan Embassy in Brussels at that time, I came into contact with John-Allan Namu, who was then journalist and news anchor at KTN, the television station of the Standard Media Group. Without their initial help I could not have continued my ethnographic plans.

Because I concentrated on data gathering, my first introduction to both the ST and DN newsrooms went through the online desks. That is why I am greatly indebted to Dan Okoth, then chief online desk at *The Standard*, and Daudi Gicheru, online technical manager at the *Nation*. These men were not only extremely helpful for the sampling of the corpus, but they and their

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\(^{116}\) Some of my interviewees changed functions or jobs since I first met them. This will be indicated by making a distinction between ‘then’ (2008) and ‘now’ (the time of writing this thesis in 2011-2012); when no distinction is made that means that those informants are still doing the same job. Between brackets I put the date and the length of the interview.

\(^{117}\) See http://www.aflat.org/?q=node/1 [22/02/2012].
online colleagues also offered me an operating base from which I could further explore the newsrooms. They also introduced me to their managers who were the ones to give me permission to stay. After I introduced my research to the managing editors, my strategy was to ask them whether they could introduce me to some interesting people on the news floor. In the end, I spend one full week hanging around at each newspaper to observe the news production processes, gather as many data as possible and talk to editors and reporters.

Apart from the numerous informal chats, of which I kept records in the form of fieldwork notes, I recorded a few formal interviews by means of a digital voice recorder. These interviews were later roughly transcribed for their informational content and coded in NVivo, as is illustrated in figure 19. In view of the analyses of the news discourse the following codes were used: ‘editorial policy and guidelines’, ‘evaluation 1 of Kenyan press and challenges’, ‘evaluation 2 of international news and foreign correspondence’, ‘explanation of post-election crisis’, ‘function of newspaper’, ‘ideology and partiality of newspapers and journalists’, ‘news values and criteria of news selection’, ‘reflections on language use’, ‘revisions and checks of newspaper articles and language use’, ‘social responsibility of journalists’ and ‘target audience’. Sometimes codes were overlapping. By means of these codes relevant remarks or opinions from journalists could be easily linked to corresponding aspects of the news discourse analysis.

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118 Rose Nzioka, now chief of the online desk at The Standard, and Julius Bett, assistant technical manager at the Nation online desk, also deserve special mention.
Next to using questions based on the designed query sheet in appendix VII, I also asked the interviewees to comment on a number of statements derived from the collected news reports, academic literature or other interviews (see appendix VIII for examples). Thus, I interviewed:

- Dennis Onyango, former senior political reporter at The Standard and at that time brand-new communication advisor to PM Odinga (15 November 2008, 42min);
- David Aduda, editorial administration manager at the Daily Nation (19 November 2008, 22min);
- Peter G. Mwesige, then Nation’s training manager, now moved to Uganda (19 November 2008, 20min);
- David Mugonyi, then political reporter at the Daily Nation, since 2010 spokesman of the Speaker of Parliament (20 November 2008, 59min);
- Wycliffe Asalwa, sub-editor at the Daily Nation (20 November 2008, 25min);
- Ben Agina, chief news editor at The Standard (22 November 2008, 44min);
- Abiya Ochola, senior reporter at The Standard, now doing PR work for a local firm (22 November 2008, 44min);
- Zipporah Musau, then managing editor daily editions at The Standard, now managing editor magazines (24 November 2008, 27min);
- Andrew Kipkemboi, foreign news editor at The Standard (25 November 2008, 40min).
During my first stay in Kenya from 6 to 30 November 2008 I also talked to a lot of other people about the post-election crisis and about the media, including some of the people who were working at the United Kenya Club where I stayed (e.g. the askari Christopher with whom I had interesting daily conversations when I took off to work and when I came back). That is how I learnt a few perspectives of some common people. After having been introduced by my first contact person Mwangi Gitahu, I also did a long interview with Vitalis Musebe, then president of the Kenya Journalists Association. All of these people shaped my views on the post-election crisis and the Kenyan press, and so they influenced my analyses of the news discourse. Who I did not meet, however, were foreign correspondents, as most of them were in Goma, because at that time the war in Eastern Congo had just flared up; others were disposed or not interested.

The second period of fieldwork consisted of a return trip to Nairobi from 2 to 22 May 2011. Due to time constraints I did not go back to the Belgian news offices. The main purpose of the second stage of fieldwork was to feed my analytical results back to some of the newsworkers involved and ask my informants for clarifications, comments or refutations. In particular, I set myself the goal to meet some foreign correspondents since their voices were still unheard. However, it appeared to be very difficult to get access to these journalists, because they are always very busy and because a critical Belgian PhD student is not their main priority. Though, the main problem was that I missed the first ‘snowball’ to get me introduced into the milieu and when I finally thought I had found a good contact, the Dutch correspondent Ilona Eveleens, who lives in Nairobi, she was in Rwanda for a few months, so we lost contact.

First I tried to reach the foreign correspondents who had written the news reports in my corpus by means of the e-mail addresses that I could find on the internet or through the readers’ service of the newspapers. That is how I had established contact with Jeffrey Gettleman from the New York Times in 2008, when he let me know he was in the Democratic Republic of Congo. That is also how I managed to contact Stephanie McCrummen who told me her assignment in Nairobi had finished and that she is now working at the offices in Washington. With Gettleman I had more success the second time, as he mailed me to phone him when in Nairobi. Once there I called his office several times, but he always was out of town, so that I began to fear that we would again miss each other. Only two days before I would leave he suddenly rang me back. Next to Gettleman, the Dutch foreign correspondent Kees Broere was the only journalist who immediately replied to my e-mail request.

Since most of my e-mails were left unanswered I tried a different strategy. I decided to go and visit the Nairobi offices of the big press agencies, because I could not find out where the offices of the newspapers themselves were located. However, that was not a success. At both Reuters and AP they kept me dangling. I did not get past the respective receptionists who asked me to call back or who promised me to schedule a meeting with one of the employees. After several
frustrating phone calls I gave up. But my patience was rewarded at AFP where I finally got to speak to news editor François Ausseil who provided me with the contact details of freelancer Tristan McConnell.

In the meantime, I went to visit some old friends at the editorial offices of the DN and the ST, so I again spent a couple of days at the local newsrooms. Some of my informants had left the media, but I also had the chance to talk to others. These were the people interviewed during the second period of fieldwork:

- Zipporah Musau (5 May 2011, 1h 3min);
- Ben Agina (6 May 2011, 46min);
- Alex Ndegwa, senior reporter at The Standard (6 May 2011, 36min);
- Eric Shimoli, chief news editor at the Daily Nation (6 May 2011, 1h 15min);
- Njeri Rugene, political reporter at the Daily Nation (6 May 2011, 48min);
- Henry Owuor, foreign and diplomatic editor at the Daily Nation (9 May 2011, 33min);
- Otieno Otieno, sub-editor at the Daily Nation and Sunday Nation journalist (10 May 2011, 1h 58min);
- Andrew Kipkemboi (11 May 2011, 1h 14min);
- Tristan McConnell, freelance Africa correspondent, based in Nairobi, who works mainly for The Times and for the alternative international news website GlobalPost (18 May 2011, 38min);
- Kees Broere, Africa correspondent for the Dutch newspaper De Volkskrant, who lives in Nairobi (19 May 2011, 52min);

To be explicit, I aimed at maximum diversity in my interviewees to avoid that I would only have a male perspective or the voices of people from only one ethnic community. For that I did not have to make any extra effort as it almost automatically happened that I interviewed both men and women (e.g. Ine Roox, Catherine Vuylsteke, Zipporah Musau, Njeri Rugene) and that I met at the ethnically mixed Kenyan newsrooms people with different ethnic identities, e.g. Luo (Agina or Otieno), Kikuyu (Rugene or Ndegwa), Kamba (Musau), Kalenjin (Kipkemboi), Luhya (Shimoli). Again I did not limit my interviews to news people. In 2011 I stayed for a while at the University of Nairobi, where I gave an afternoon seminar about my research. So, I talked to a lot of academics and students. Especially, Helga Schröder, Iribe Mwangi, Lillian Kaviti and Maloba Wekesa, with whom I briefly shared an office, were very supportive. In addition to the many informal conversations, I did two extra interviews, one with Professor Levi Obonyo, Head of the Communication Department at Daystar University and chairman of Kenya’s Media Council, and
another interview with Professor Peter Oriare Mbeke from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Nairobi.

With respect to all of these interviews a self-reflective critical stance is necessary. Although the interviews I provided much extra information in support of the discourse analysis, this knowledge is always potentially contestable. Interviewers should be aware of the specific context of the interview setting, their own présence, the suggestiveness of their questions, the possibility that their conversation partners already anticipate a certain recontextualization of their words and the co-construction of the narrative. All of these factors impact on the dialogue between researcher and interviewee. For instance, interviews developed differently when they were done in between phone calls during the rush of journalistic activity, than when journalists took me apart to a quiet conference room to do the interview. The way I was introduced to my informants also influenced the conversation. Although I aimed at open interviews, I must admit that I sometimes asked suggestive questions. That is just unavoidable, because an interview is an interactive, collaborative, interpretive and discursive effort to retrieve information (Gubrium & Holstein 2003). Sometimes informants would take an active hand in directing how their discourse could be recontextualized, so my interviews were always co-constructed. It must be clear that I did not regard my interviews as a fact-finding technique. Interviewing is not about truth, but it is about hearing different voices to get a grip of the context in which language is used and produced.

As said before, I consider the interviews as one source of information among others. During my ethnographic fieldwork I realized that news organizations have editorial guidelines and policies which also partly impact on the discourse of the news. That is why I began to collect policy documents, editorial guidelines, stylebooks, etc. which were available and accessible to me. I obtained the following documents:

- The Code of Conduct and Practice of Journalism in Kenya, drawn up by the Media Industry Steering Committee in 2001;
- The Guidebook on Election Coverage for Media Correspondents in Kenya, a collaborative product of the Kenya Correspondents Association (KCA), the Kenyan Section of the International Commission of Jurists and the press freedom NGO Article 19;
- The Nation Media Group’s Policy Guidelines and Editorial Objectives (revision of September 2003), signed by then editorial director Wangethi Mwangi;
- The Nation Stylebook (edition of 2007), originally drafted by Pamela D’Angelo Hagy in 1997 by order of the Nation Media Group.
- Standard Group Stylebook, published in 2005 under the management of Tom Mshindi;
- The Board Resolution on the Editorial Policy of the Group from 2005 by the management of the Standard Group;

- The UK Editor’s Code of Practice, ratified by the Press Complaints Commission in January 2011;

- The stylebook of the *De Standaard* as published by Ludo Permentier in 2008.

No doubt there are lots of other interesting internal documents where I could not lay my hands on. Nevertheless, the above data provided me with institutional and professional information which was again used to support the analyses of the discourse.

Finally, I supported my analyses by additional information from various sources, such as other news media, magazines or history books. This information includes the official reports that I used to sketch the sociopolitical context in the previous chapter (and see 7.1.1.2). As Philo’s fourth point of criticism about the reception of news texts and their effects on the audience (*cf. supra*) was going through my mind, I also started to pay attention to readers’ letters, because they can be a starting point to see how the audience received and interpreted the newspaper reports. Of course, I realize that letters-to-the-editor are a biased source of information, as they are selections of what a selected part of the readership wrote. Moreover, as Madumulla *et al.* rightly remark,

“getting one’s opinion printed is not merely an act of expression of ‘public’ – in fact private – ‘opinion’, but it is a very strong form of social and political self-identification and self-disclosure, which categorizes the author as somebody from the upper regions in society” (Madumulla *et al.* 1999: 310).

On the basis of published readers’ letters no conclusions can be drawn about the majority of the readership. Yet they do give an idea about how the studied texts are read by other people than the discourse analyst and they “represent a fruitful, though not necessarily exhaustive, site for the exploration of grass-root opinion within the public sphere” (Milani 2007: 115).

To end, the question must be asked whether all of this is ethnography. According to Murphy and Kraidy (2003), the term of ethnography is all too often improperly used in media studies, especially reception and public studies, as a rhetorical strategy.

“Rather than demonstrating a commitment to immersion, building of trust, long-term observation, or participation in the daily lives of research participants, the corpus of reception work was marked by its reliance on discussion groups, solicited and unsolicited letters and in-depth interviews. This gap fostered a tradition of ‘ethnographic’ inquiry where rigorous participant observation and description were largely absent […], and often replaced by an increasingly textual rhetorical usage of ethnography” (Murphy & Kraidy 2003: 3).

They denounce “the hit-and-run version of participant observation” and would possibly also categorize my work under the label of “quasi-ethnographic studies” (Murphy & Kraidy 2003: 12), as they are convicted that ‘real ethnography’ consists of intensive fieldwork and sustained
participant observation. However, they pass over the fact that ethnography is more than participant observation. So, I do not share their opinion because I believe ethnographic methods can be creatively used in combination with other methodologies, particularly in a multi-method approach to news discourse (among others Van Hout & Macgilchrist 2011 share this view). In the next two chapters I will try to prove my point.

6.2. Analytical toolkit

6.2.1. Word choice and content analysis

6.2.1.1. The identification of starting points at the explicit lexical level

In this part of chapter 6 I will present the main tools and analytical categories that I used in the analyses. Although I found these tools particularly useful for an analysis of news discourse, I do not exclude that there are other, equally expedient, tools to comprehensively analyze news discourse. Remember that my research rests on three methodological pillars: an explorative analysis of the content of the newspaper reports, an in-depth analysis of the language used to express that content and an ethnographic component to substantiate the discourse analysis, put it into perspective and to triangulate the results. In this section I will present a kind of computer-assisted content analysis that was carried out to get an initial quantitative overview of the corpus of newspaper texts. In the following two sections I will present the main analytical categories of the discourse analysis. In 6.2.2 I will present the methodological tools for the analysis of social actors and in 6.2.3 I will try to operationalize the concept of presupposition. Throughout the following presentations of analytical categories, Culler’s quote at the beginning of this chapter must be kept in mind.

Recall that “[t]he basic premise of a pragmatic approach is that every utterance relies on a world of implicit background assumptions, supposedly shared or presented as such, which combines with what is explicitly said in the construction of meaning” (Verschueren 1996: 592). Implicit meanings can only be accessed via explicit expressions at the surface level of linguistic structure. That is why the lexical level of word choice or vocabulary is a good starting point for any discourse analysis. A lot of words in journalistic writing are unconsciously chosen, while some words are carefully reflected on, but word choice often has an ideological aspect. One kind of politically contested representation is the lexical label, Mehan (1996) contends. He sees the process of lexical labeling as an entextualization process with possible ideological effects, especially when “[c]omplex, contextually nuanced discussions get summed up in (and, hence, are entextualized through) a single word” (Mehan 1996: 253). Indeed, in the news discourse
under study complex and contextualized discussions about politics, social integration or identity are often entextualized by means of general or abstract expressions, such as *ethnic tension, tribal war* or *post-election crisis*.

Moreover, such expressions also contain an evaluative aspect. Evaluative words, negative vocabulary, metaphors, all these lexical features are identified by Bednarek and Caple (forthcoming) as linguistic features that contribute to the discursive construction of news values. So, the lexical level of news discourse also lends itself to the study of news values. As with the other phenomena investigated, these become especially apparent through the comparison of newspaper articles about the same topic.

During the analyses of the newspaper texts I constantly paid attention to striking word choices and the use of value-laden concepts, such as *genocide, looting, protest, chaos* or *peace*, which could be regarded as ‘ideographs’ (McGee 1980), because they are entry points to deeper layers of ideological meanings. As Williams (1988) writes in his book on keywords of culture and society the more complex, differentiated and value-laden a word is, the more probable it is that it played a crucial role in important historical debates. Critical words and expressions are often politicized and they carry with them a history of use with a lot of meaning aspects from earlier contexts. As Sreberny-Mohammadi concluded:

> “News language, whether international or domestic, supplies subtle and not-so-subtle value-laden terms that constitute an interpretive framework for the audience” (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1995: 435-436).

In my corpus words like *tribe* or *community*, *violence* or *protest*, *Kikuyu* or *supporter* are such value-laden terms that open up an interpretive framework. In particular, ethnic labels which are often used in utterly negative contexts in the international press can be seen as functioning as “pragmatically loaded indices-of-affiliation that appeal widely so as to attract at least partially like-minded adherents” and around such “terms a wide diversity of opinion can be organized into ideological binaries” (Silverstein 1997: 630). That is also how tribal tags are frequently used in political discourse in Kenya, especially in campaign rhetoric.

Striking word choices can be coded manually, but a more systematic way to get an insight into the lexical content level of large corpora of texts it to perform a keyword analysis. With the aid of Senja Pollak a keyword frequency analysis was carried out by means of *WordSmith* lexical analysis software (Scott 2008). Table 2 presents the first thirty keywords of the Kenyan versus the international part of the corpus.\(^{119}\) The list is sorted by the *keyness* value, a measure that compares the relative frequencies of a word in a given (collection of) text(s) to a reference corpus. So, a word was identified as a keyword when it was frequent in the respective subparts of the corpus, but relatively rare in the corpus of reference, for which the British National Corpus

\(^{119}\) In this dataset the newspaper articles of March and April had not yet been included.
was used. Next to the keyness value, the absolute and the relative frequencies of the retrieved words is given, as well as the Julliand’s D index, which measures the dispersion of individual keywords throughout the respective subcorpus (the higher the value the more evenly a keyword is distributed). Such a keyword analysis is not only a way to scrutinize the content of large corpora, but it can also already hint at patterns of meaning that can be found at the explicit level of texts (see Pollak et al. 2011 in appendix IV for more information.).

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<td>YESTERDAY</td>
<td>1271,49</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>0,24</td>
<td>0,92</td>
<td>RIFT</td>
<td>1393,17</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>POLICE</td>
<td>1194,51</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>0,27</td>
<td>0,80</td>
<td>LUOS</td>
<td>1320,77</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>KISUMU</td>
<td>1157,63</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>0,06</td>
<td>0,68</td>
<td>KOFI</td>
<td>1229,14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>MPS</td>
<td>1119,01</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>0,12</td>
<td>0,82</td>
<td>LEADERS</td>
<td>1146,89</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>ELDORET</td>
<td>1116,15</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0,06</td>
<td>0,88</td>
<td>VOTE</td>
<td>1071,38</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Keywords obtained by WordSmith lexical analysis.

One of the most interesting observations is that in the local press there are no ethnic words identified as keywords, while in the foreign press the word that has the fifth highest keyness
score, *Kikuyu*, is an ethnic label. Other ethnicity-related words frequently occurring in the international newspaper reports are: *Kikuyus* (N11), *ethnic* (N15), *Luo* (N21), *Kalenjin* (N23), *tribe* (N24), and *Luos* (N27). In contrast, the words that typify the local press belong to the lexical field of (Kenyan) politics. The acronyms of the major political parties, *ODM* and *PNU* (N1, N10), have a high keyness value. The same holds for *ECK* (N19), *government* (N21) and *MPs*. As we will see later, it is no coincidence that the twenty-fifth keyword is *political* in the local press, while it is *tribal* in the foreign press. Also striking is the high frequency of *Annan* (N5), *mediation* (N15) and *talks* (N17), the latter two especially in comparison to their absence in the top keywords of the international press. The words *election* and *violence* are keywords in both parts of the corpus and they have a very high dispersion score to boot.

The content level of the studied discourse was further explored by means of a *topic ontology*, which presents a hierarchical organization of documents’ topics and their sub-topics, using the semi-automated topic ontology construction tool OntoGen (Fortuna et al. 2007). See appendix IV for the technical details. The topic ontology generated on the basis of my corpus, split into a local Kenyan part and a ‘Western’, international part, is shown in figure 20.

![Figure 20: The topic ontology of local and Western press articles on Kenyan elections.](image-url)

The computer program first identified three central topic domains which were further divided in three topical subdomains, each of which is described by a set of keywords representing the main
topics of the article groupings. In that way the topic ontology represents the relations between the newspaper articles while making a link to their content. The central topics distinguished for the local, Kenyan subcorpus correspond to the aftermath of the elections \((odm, eck, court)\), the protests and rioting \((police, media, mp)\), and the search for a mediated solution to the political impasse \((odm, Annan, talk)\). Similar topic domains were found for the international newspapers, but they have other keywords. The central topic characterized by the key terms \textit{voting}, \textit{Mr Odinga}, \textit{Mr Kibaki} clearly refers to the elections; the second central topic of \textit{opposition, protest}, \textit{Mr Odinga} refers to the protests; and the third central topic of \textit{Kikuyu, Mr Kibaki, ethnic} refers to the violence and is also linked to the mediation talks to reach a political deal under the supervision of Annan. Again it is striking to find a lot of words from a political vocabulary in the Kenyan part of the topic ontology \((ODM, ECK, party, MP, Bush, …)\), while the international news distinguishes itself by the use of words, like \textit{ethnic, Kikuyu, Luo, tribalism}, which do not feature as keywords in the local content. On the basis of these sophisticated content analyses three main thematic domains were identified: the (disputed) elections, violence and protests, and mediation and peace.

6.2.1.2. Coding in NVivo

With the three main themes identified I could start coding systematically all of the newspaper texts. This is the coding strategy that I followed. First I read through the newspaper articles and imported them per month in different NVivo-projects (see 5.2.2.2). Then I did a first round of thematic coding in NVivo. While reading I broadly coded the newspapers articles following the main themes. Note that this is another kind of content analysis. To save time I gradually began to do this thematic coding automatically by means of the ‘Queries’-function in NVivo. I would do a ‘Text search’ for the word \textit{election} (or for ‘mediation OR peace’) and then automatically code the results with ‘broad coding context’ under the tree node of ‘Elections’ (or the node ‘Mediation and peace’), which I had created in advance (see figure 21). However, the passages about the violence were still coded manually, because the violence could be described in too many ways \((e.g. \text{protesting, attacking, shooting, burning, looting, destruction, rape, killing, maiming, …})\).

From these thematic codes I ‘coded on’, \textit{i.e.} within the selected text fragments I manually coded how the main social actors were represented (see figure 21). These codes were organized in NVivo’s section of ‘Tree Nodes’. Simultaneously I coded other interesting excerpts in which I recognized possible ideological meanings. Thus, I created in ‘Free Nodes’ codes such as ‘Description of Kenya the country’, ‘Campaign rhetoric’, ‘Mistakes and typos’, ‘Kiswahili words and expressions’, ‘Community instead of tribe’ and ‘Tribal language’. In retrospect, not all codes turned out to be relevant for the analyses. Within these coded fragments I looked for how the reported (aspects of) events we described or represented, always with special attention for
presuppositions which could open up implicit layers or reveal unquestioned patterns of meaning. So, these codes were continually contrasted and compared in the search for similarities or differences of intertextual links, which disclosed different meaning patterns on the basis of which I could continue my interpretations of the news discourse.

In the process of analysis and interpretation the text fragments and the inferred meanings were linked to relevant information from the ethnographic fieldwork. At the end of the analyses I left the coded fragments and returned to the full articles which I subjected to a counterscreening in which I looked for extracts which would contradict my interpretive analyses. This counterscreening also helped me check in hindsight whether I had missed important information that was not coded. That is how I tried to build in the necessary systematicity in the methodology to tackle the large corpus of newspaper texts.

![Figure 21: Screen shot of NVivo in action with the coded tree structures of the 'Representation of social actors' and the 'Themes' under which most of the analyzed text fragments were coded.](image)

6.2.2. Representation of social actors

6.2.2.1. The ideological positioning of people in news

After the newspaper articles were coded thematically I focused on two particular linguistic pragmatic phenomena with possible ideological effects, viz. discursive strategies to represent the
main characters of news stories, which will be introduced here, and presuppositions, which will be defined in 6.2.3. In chapter 4 the ideological potential of representation in (journalistic) discourse was explained. In Fairclough’s words, “[d]iscourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or ‘constitute’ them; different discourses constitute key entities (be they ‘mental illness’, ‘citizenship’ or ‘literacy’) in different ways, and position people in different ways as social subjects (e.g. as doctors or patients)” (1992: 3). The fact that “all representation is mediated, moulded by the value-systems that are ingrained in the medium” and that representation always rests on selective choices, in other words, that everything that is represented could have been represented some other way, with a very different significance, this is what makes representation ideological (Fowler 1996: 4). Fowler (ibid.) rightly adds that representation is not always a question of bias or distortion, because “there is not necessarily any true reality that can be unveiled by critical practice, there are simply relatively varying representations”.

An important kind of representation in news discourse is the representation of social actors, as people are a vital ingredient of news.\(^\text{120}\) The social actors involved in news reports are represented in function of the overall frame of interpretation and at the same time contribute to the frame of interpretation. The representation of social actors also adds to the contextualization of news discourse. When Mey discusses ‘the sociolinguistics of exclusion’ he says that contextualization and decontextualization come down to this: “Contextualizing thus means including the proper context and the persons fitting into that context; decontextualization is exclusion, both of contexts and people” (Mey 2003: 343). Cottle argues that questions such as “whose voices and viewpoints structure and inform news discourse go to the heart of democratic views of, and radical concerns about, the news media” (2003: 5). Atton & Wickenden (2005: 347) add that the way social actors are represented when they secure access has implications for how the media perform their democratic function.

Since representations of social actors contribute to the interpretation of news events and because the way social actors are represented is pivotal for the activation of relevant background knowledge, an investigation of the representation of social actors is a good starting point in the search for patterns of unquestioned meaning and ideological aspects of news discourse. Also Fairclough and Wodak noted that it “is useful to think of ideology as a process which articulates together particular representations of reality, and particular constructions of identity, especially of the collective identities of groups and communities” (1997: 276). This observation is especially relevant with respect to the way the perpetrators and victims of the post-election violence in Kenya were represented in the news discourse under study. Next to these social

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\(^\text{120}\) This is emphasized in almost every single textbook on news writing or journalism. See also the Introduction.
actors, the focus of my analyses will be on the two main political actors Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga. This part of the pragmatic analysis departed from three research questions: (i) In which newspapers do which key actors occur and what is their function in the news articles? (ii) By which linguistic-pragmatic strategies are the social actors represented? (iii) What is the impact of representational choices on the total interpretive frame of the discourse, i.e. what are the ideological implications of the specific representations of the social actors?

6.2.2.2. Representational strategies as analytical categories

The above questions can be tackled by means of Van Leeuwen’s methodology for ‘social actors analysis’ (2008: 23-54). His readily applicable toolkit was chosen, because it is compatible with the promoted pragmatic perspective. However, that does not mean that all of Van Leeuwen’s theoretical underpinnings are taken over. His ‘socio-semantic approach’ to the analysis of social actors seems to suggest that ‘social meanings’ are pre-existing independent entities which can be poured into language (a similar remark is made by KhosraviNik 2010: 58). Such an assumption does not tally with the adopted pragmatic approach. From Van Leeuwen’s sophisticated practical framework only a limited set of analytical categories was selected to avoid complication and ambiguity (see figure 22). In my analyses Van Leeuwen’s representational strategy of genericization, for instance, is discussed under the label of indetermination, while specification is treated as either individualization or collectivization. Other categories that Van Leeuwen suggests were just not useful for my research (e.g. circumstantialization, dissociation, distillation or inversion).

![Diagram of Analytical Categories](image)

**Figure 22:** Analytical categories for the representation of social actors

Let me briefly try to explain and illustrate these representational strategies which are used as the categories to analyze the representation of social actors in the news discourse.

Before we can investigate how these social actors are represented, we need to know whether or not they are present in the newspaper articles. As Van Leeuwen puts it, “[r]epresentations include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for
whom they are intended” (2008: 28). While some exclusions are unavoidable or negligible in the recontextualization process of journalistic writing, many exclusions pertain to details which readers are assumed to know already or which are deemed irrelevant to them, and sometimes the social actors are excluded for strategic reasons. In the latter cases, ideology is at stake. Consider example (25):

25) Desmond Tutu of South Africa called for peace, Amnesty International condemned the violence between rival tribes and **throng of diplomats**, including U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, urged **a political solution**.  

(*WP_Major protest in Kenya postponed as frustrations build* 04/01/2008)

When social actors are *excluded*, they are either *suppressed*, which means that they are fully absent from the news text, or they are *backgrounded*, i.e. they are not mentioned but can be inferred from the text, context or background knowledge. In (25) Kibaki and Odinga are backgrounded as the principal actors involved in the action of seeking a political solution. This can be inferred from previous reports in which the political conflict was explained as revolving around the two tenors of Kenyan politics. Note that backgrounding and suppression is often linguistically achieved by means of nominalization, an action with a verb is turned into a noun.121 Furthermore, a comparison with the other news reports on this news event reveals that also a number of ‘urging actors’ are backgrounded, e.g. then British Foreign Secretary David Miliband or the Danish ambassador Bo Jensen. Readers with the right foreknowledge could infer that Miliband and Jensen belong to the “throng of diplomats”, but only through comparison with respectively British and Kenyan newspaper coverage can we know that Miliband and Jensen were among the diplomats that urged for a solution.

However, other actors involved in reconciliation and mediation are not referred to at all in this newspaper report. Diverse Kenyan politicians, African political leaders, including John Kufuor, the Ghanaian president and then chairman of the African Union, called for peace, as did many different NGOs, religious, academic and civil society organizations in Kenya, e.g. the Council of Imams and Preachers, the Central Organisation of Trade Unions or the Universities Academic Staff Union (see the ST articles ‘Lawyers, ODM send an appeal for peace’, ‘Cotu urges Kibaki to start talks’, ‘Resign, Uasu tells Kibaki’, ‘Leaders appeal for peace’ or the DN reports ‘MPs-elect in move to restore peace’, ‘Preach peace, NGOs tell leaders’). These influential public peace brokers are suppressed in most of the American and British news coverage.

When the social actors are *included*, they can be represented as distinct individuals or they can be referred to as groups and this can be done in an unspecified, anonymous manner or by

121 Nominalization is not to be confused with Van Leeuwen’s category of nomination, see also the following examples.
means of specific reference. Hence the contrasting categories of *individualization versus collectivization* and *indetermination versus determination*, which are illustrated in (26).

26) The Commissioner of Police, Maj Gen Hussein Ali, said there were "few" cases of deaths reported following incidents of hooliganism soon after President Kibaki was announced the winner [...] The deaths were occasioned either in clashes between police and protesters, or by gangs of attackers who targeted members of some communities. And yesterday, other reports indicated that at least 10 people had been shot dead in Kericho by police.

(26) (ST_Death, chaos as ECK chiefs break ranks over results_01/01/2008)

Both the commissioner and the president are individualized, while individual policemen, protesters and attackers are collectivized by the use of group nouns (*e.g.* police) or plural nouns (*e.g.* protesters, gangs). The latter are clear examples of indetermination, as they are referred to in a generic, impersonal and unspecified way. A special case of collectivization is *aggregation* when groups of social actors are quantified as in “10 people”.

In the case of determination a further distinction can be drawn between *nomination* and *categorization*. Social actors can be represented in terms of their unique identity or in terms of identities and functions they share with others. The following extract constitutes an example.

27) Mr Odinga, the son of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, the trade-unionist independence hero and first vice-president of Kenya, was educated in East Germany and called his first son Fidel. Like all Kenyan politicians he is a wealthy businessman and dropped the socialist rhetoric long ago. Nevertheless, as a Luo from the poor Lake Victoria region of Western Kenya, he appeals to marginalised communities much more than the elitist Mr Kibaki, who is a Kikuyu.

(27) (TI_Democracy comes out fighting as Kenyan voters take off the gloves_27/12/2007)

Nomination is typically realized by proper names, whether or not complemented by titles or other kinds of honorifics (titulation or honorification in Van Leeuwen’s vocabulary). Odinga is nominated with introductory honorific; his father is formally nominated by his given name and surname. Additionally, both are categorized.

Van Leeuwen (2008: 40-45) distinguishes three kinds of categorization: *functionalization*, *appraisal* and *identification*. The latter is again subdivided into *classification* and *relational identification*. Functionalization refers to the representation of social actors in terms of something they do, an occupation or role in society, *e.g.* the representation of Odinga as “a wealthy businessman”. Representations of social actors can also be implicit. Thus, Odinga is represented as a Kenyan politician by means of the presupposition that arises through the comparison “Like all Kenyan politicians…” (see below for more information on presupposition). When the social actors are represented in evaluative terms by using words that express positive or negative attitudes, *e.g.* Jaramogi’s representation as an “independence hero”, this is called appraisal. Identification means that the social actors are defined by what they more or less permanently or unavoidably are. The representations of Odinga as “a Luo” and Kibaki as “a
Kikuyu” are examples of (ethnic) classification. That is the representation of social actors in terms of the major categories by which a given society differentiates between groups of people, such as age, gender, provenance, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and so on. Identification based on personal, kinship or work relations is termed relational identification. An example is “the son of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga”. By means of these representational strategies the description of Kibaki and Odinga, perpetrators and victims of violence is scrutinized in the following chapters.

6.2.3. Pragmatic presupposition

6.2.3.1. Presupposition triggers and properties
The third focus of analysis is presupposition. Because there are different uses and different views on presupposition some amplification is required. First I will present a formal definition of presupposition by means of linguistic structure and properties. Then, in 6.2.3.2, I will anchor my use of the term in a pragmatic approach and provide an operational definition so that it can be put into practice in news discourse analysis. I will regard presuppositions as contextual background assumptions, associated with certain linguistic triggers, which are either considered to be common ground or which contain uncontroversial information that has to be taken for granted to make sense of the utterance or of the discourse as a whole. However, the linguistic structures that give rise to presuppositions can creatively be exploited to communicate other kinds of information than presupposed information. This will create a tension in my analysis of presuppositional structures and meanings.

Generally and intuitively presupposition is a notion that relates to taken-for-granted background information which contributes in laying the foundations of communication. Dictionaries often rely on such explanations as “something that is supposed in advance and taken for granted”, “something you must assume is true in order to continue communicating” or “something that is believed to be true even though it has not been proved”.122 Consider example (28).

28) Fears grew that the bloodshed, which marks the worst crisis the East African country has known for decades, would spread into a larger ethnic conflict between Luo, who generally support Mr Odinga, and the Kikuyu tribe of Mr Kibaki.

This extract presupposes a number of things: (i) that there is bloodshed; (ii) the existence of East Africa as a geographical entity and of a country that can be qualified as East African; (iii) a group of people which can be identified as Luo and a tribe called Kikuyu; (iv) two identifiable men with unique reference, called Odinga and Kibaki; (v) that the bloodshed marks the worst

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crisis the country has known for decades; (vi) that the country has known bad crises before; (vii) that the situation is not (yet) a large ethnic conflict; (viii) that the Luo generally support Mr Odinga; and (ix) that Kibaki belongs to the Kikuyu tribe. These pieces of information seem to be fairly explicit, yet they are not asserted in the main clause or the foreground of the information structure, nor wholly explicitly stated, neither are they entailed, nor implicated, but they are clearly conveyed, or rather assumed in the background structure of the utterance as they can be shared, worked out or inferred by the reader largely on the basis of text, co-text and context. So, although in pragmatic theories presuppositions are often treated from the utterer’s perspective as “the background beliefs of the speaker” (Bertuccelli Papi 2009: 147), they are rather “a ‘ménage à trois’ between a speaker, the framework of his/her utterance, and an addressee” (Caffi 1998b: 751).

As example (28) showed, presuppositions are attached to certain lexical items, syntactic structures or otherwise linguistic constructions. These are called presupposition triggers or inducers. The following enumeration of presupposition triggers only contains those linguistic carriers of presuppositions which were the most relevant and most representative in function of the studied discourse. Mind that only the presuppositions relevant for the discussion are given; often more presuppositions can be posited than the ones made explicit, because presuppositions can be combined or come in layers (see below).

a) **Definite descriptions**, often in the form of a proper name or determiner + noun phrase, presuppose the existence of the referent(s), thus engendering existential presuppositions.

29) **The Kalenjin**, the tribe to which the former President, Daniel arap Moi, belonged, resent the perceived elitism and wealth of the Kikuyu even though Mr Moi came out in support of Mr Kibaki’s [Party of National Union](http://www.pnu.org.ke) at last week’s election. (TL_Kenya teeters on the brink _03/01/2008_) >>> there is a tribe called Kalenjin; there is someone uniquely identifiable to writer and reader as Daniel arap Moi; there exists a Kikuyu tribe; there is a Mr Kibaki; the existence of a political party, called Party of National Union.

b) **Factive predicates**, introduced by a factive verb or a factive nominal, which can be either epistemic (e.g. *to know, to notice, to discover, to find out, to realize, to see, to ignore, to suffice, the fact that, …*) or emotive (to regret, to resent, to mind, to bother, to matter, to be glad/proud/sorry/surprised/... that), presuppose the factuality of their complements, giving rise to so-called factive presuppositions.

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123 The following list is based on Levinson (1983: 179-185), Huang (2007: 65-66) and Bertuccelli Papi (2009: 143-146).

124 The symbol ‘>>’ is conventionally used to stand for ‘presuppose(s) (that)’. The relevant presupposition-carrying constructions are underscored.
30) But the government quickly realised that most Kenyans view Mr Annan as second only to Nelson Mandela in terms of eminent African leaders.

(IN_Kenya warms to Kofi the peacemaker_20/02/2008)

>> most Kenyans in fact view Mr Annan as second only to Nelson Mandela in terms of eminent African leaders.

31) [Information and Communications minister] Poghisio regretted that the media had focused on violence in some parts of the country and ignored the peaceful side.

(ST_Minister calls for balanced coverage_20/01/2008)

>> the media indeed focused on violence in some parts of the country and ignored the peaceful side.

c) Implicative predicates, initiated by implicative verbs, such as to manage, to forget, to succeed, to remember, to remind, to care, to condescend, presuppose an implication underlying the action described in the verb phrase or in Bertucelli Papi’s words “some necessary and sufficient condition which alone determines whether the event described in the complement took place” (2009: 144).

32) "We wish to remind international media organisations operating in Kenya of the need to adhere to journalistic ethics," he said [Information and Communications minister Poghisio].

(DN_Ban on live news coverage still on_15/01/2008)

>> international media organizations were forgotten to adhere to journalistic ethics.

d) Iteratives, either verbs like to return, to come back, to restore, to repeat, to re-elect, or adverb(ial)s such as again, anymore, another time, carry presuppositions concerning a (frequent or habitual) state of affairs prior to the one that is invoked in the main clause or an action which happened at least once before.

33) Kibaki reiterated his Government's commitment to the ongoing talks, adding that he was personally committed to ensuring peace was restored in all parts of the country.

(ST_President holds talks with EU official_08/02/2008)

>> this is not the first time that Kibaki made public his commitment to the talks; there has been peace before in all parts of the country.

34) Lines around the block formed at some supermarkets and banks as people stocked up against protests they fear could again paralyze the nation.

(IN_Kenyan minister rejects UN offer_15/01/2008)

>> the nation has previously been paralyzed by protests.

e) Change of state verbs or aspectual predicates (e.g. to stop, to start, to begin, to finish, to cease, to continue and to carry on) presuppose their complements, expressing a
previous state of affairs which is either different from the one in the superordinate clause or a continuation after a possible turning point.\(^{125}\)

35) He [Kibaki] also-called on leaders to stop inciting Kenyans to violence at a time while mediation talks are under way.
   (DN_Team in crucial talks over Premier’s role_21/02/2008)
   >> leaders have been inciting Kenyans to violence.

36) On Friday, the two sides continued to bicker over cabinet posts.
   (NYT_Stalemate in Kenya over top posts_29/03/2008)
   >> the two sides were bickering over cabinet posts.

f) **Time clauses**, normally introduced by a temporal conjunction, presuppose the truth of the content they convey.

37) Outside the emergency room sat Job Baraza, a baker by trade, who had brought his friend and colleague William in to be treated after he was struck on the head by a machete when he tried to break through the roadblock.
   (IN_A chilling tour of Kenyan church that became scene of mass murder_03/01/2008)
   >> he was struck on the head by a machete; he tried to break through the roadblock.

g) **Non-restrictive relative clauses**, providing additional parenthetical information, presuppose what they predicate of their antecedent.

38) Odinga seems to have snatched the Muslim vote from Kibaki, who has been criticized by Muslim human rights leaders for illegally detaining Kenyan Muslims and in some cases sending them hooded, handcuffed and without trial to neighboring Ethiopia in an attempt to cooperate with U.S. counterterrorism efforts.
   (WP_Tribalism isn’t on the ballot, but in Kenya it’s key issue_25/12/2007)
   >> Kibaki has been criticized by Muslim human rights leaders for illegally detaining Kenyan Muslims and in some cases sending them hooded, handcuffed and without trial to neighboring Ethiopia in an attempt to cooperate with U.S. counterterrorism efforts.

h) **Comparisons and contrasts** can carry presuppositions, induced by adverb(ial)s, such as too, back, like, such as, comparative forms of adjectives or other comparative constructions.

39) The growing and seemingly uncontrollable tribal violence has led to inevitable comparisons to Rwanda, where the 1994 genocide claimed nearly 1m lives. […] The brutal ethnic cleansing that divided Bosnia is a fairer analogy.
   (TI_Kenya violence: 'We waited, now we'll chop them to bits'_03/02/2008)

\(^{125}\) Verbs like to continue, to keep, to go on, to begin, to stop have a similar role to the progressive form, *i.e.* they indicate that the episode described in the sentence is under development. Such aspectual verbs carry a relatively low amount of lexical information, as their main role is to clarify the stage of the action expressed by another verb.
Kenya can be compared to Rwanda; the comparison between Kenya and Rwanda is a fair analogy, but less fair than the comparison to Bosnia; what is happening in Kenya is brutal ethnic cleansing comparable to the violence that took place in Bosnia.

Three more presupposition triggers, not usually explicated in the standard lists, deserve special mention, because they are common in the news discourse under study: appositions, (adnominal or adverbial) participial and infinitival modifier clauses, and possessives.

i) **Modifier clauses** like appositions, or participial and infinitival subordinate clauses, which either occur in parenthesis, are headed by a present or past participle, or come in the form of an infinitive construction, presuppose their propositional content.

40) Mr. Odinga, a veteran firebrand, has a spring in his step. After years in opposition, the kingmaker of Kenyan politics believes he is about to seize the crown himself in tomorrow's poll—a prospect unimaginable only a few years ago. Final opinion polls give the flamboyant 62-year-old, scion of one of Kenya's biggest political dynasties, a slight edge over the incumbent, President Kibaki.

( **TI_Wind of change is shaking tribal loyalties_26/12/2007**

>> Odinga is a veteran firebrand; that Odinga would become president was unimaginable a few years ago; Kibaki is the incumbent president.

41) Mr. Kibaki and Mr. Odinga are from different ethnic groups and much of the bloodshed flared along ethnic lines, threatening to destabilize what had once been one of Africa’s most stable and promising nations.

( **NYT_Deal reported on dividing Kenya cabinet posts_13/04/2008**

>> the bloodshed threatened to destabilize what had once been one of Africa’s most stable and promising nations.

42) Before Kofi Annan had even arrived in Nairobi to try to persuade Kenya's leaders to begin peace talks, one of President Mwai Kibaki's more hardline ministers made the government's view quite clear.

( **IN_Kenya warms to Kofi the peacemaker_20/02/2008**

>> Annan came to Kenya with the purpose to persuade Kenya’s leaders to begin peace talks.

j) **Possessives or genitive constructions** presuppose possession, membership or inclusion (in a broad sense). In example (29), “Mr Kibaki’s Party of National Union at last week’s election” presupposes that Kibaki is a member of the PNU and that the election was held last week; in (43) “Kibaki’s use of brute force” presupposes that Kibaki in effect used brute force.

43) Raila said ODM would not be cowed by the unjust system, saying the liberation struggle would succeed despite Kibaki’s use of brute force.

( **ST_Chaos as talks begin_24/01/2008**

>>Raila said ODM would not be cowed by the unjust system, saying the liberation struggle would succeed despite Kibaki’s use of brute force.
Admittedly, instances of (i) with appositions or participial clauses can be seen as reduced relative clauses, while (j) could be classified under definite descriptions, but I believe they deserve a category of their own.

What is also clear from the examples above is that presuppositional constructions often have a layered structure. The participial modifier clause in (43), introduced by the present participle of \textit{to say} presupposes that Raila said that the liberation struggle would succeed. In this presupposition the implicative verb \textit{to succeed} presupposes that they are aiming at liberation despite Kibaki’s use of brute force. The presupposition that Kibaki used brute force constitutes a third layer in the presuppositional structure. The examples above are full of multiply layered presuppositional constructions.

In the quest for an adequate and applicable definition of presupposition, a summary of five properties is useful to keep in mind. The list above has indicated that (i) presuppositions are always tied to particular, though diverse, linguistic expressions. By substituting the verb \textit{to remind} in (32) with \textit{to notify} the presupposition is lost that the international media organizations knew the message before but had forgotten it. Presuppositions are relations between a form of expression and a more or less implicit meaning which can be arrived at through pragmatic inference (Cummings 2005: 29). So, (ii) presuppositions are on the boundary of the explicit and the implicit, even if presuppositions on the basis of appositions are less implicit than those arising from implicative predicates, as they typically carry background information. The next two properties have to do with stability or invariance and the possible lack thereof. When the main verb of an utterance is negated, the presupposition remains intact. Stating that “the two sides \textit{did not continue} to bicker over cabinet posts” does not delete the presupposition in (36). Moreover, (iii) presuppositions not only remain constant under negation, they are also preserved in questions (\textit{Did the two sides continue to bicker over cabinet posts?}). Yet in certain linguistic or extra-linguistic contexts presuppositions are cancelled or suspended. By radically negating a sentence like (33) or slightly modifying the discourse context by adding extra information to (31) their respective presuppositions are overridden:

44) (adapted from 33) \ldots Kibaki also-called on leaders to stop inciting Kenyans to violence, which they in fact had never done.

45) (adapted from 31) \ldots Kibaki was personally committed to ensuring peace was restored in all parts of the country, except for the North Rift region where it had never been peaceful.

Furthermore, if bystanders saw William from (35) fleeing away instead of trying to break through the roadblock when he was struck by a machete, their world knowledge will prevent them from inferring the second of the identified presuppositions. All this shows that (iv) presuppositions are context-sensitive and defeasible. It is also clear that the components of a
sentence are not always projected to the complex whole, which is known as the projection problem. Finally, partly due to the aforementioned properties, presuppositions are harder to question or refute than what is explicitly asserted in the main clause, since they are often just given as premises. Therefore (v) presuppositions are felt to be uncritically assumable, acceptable and uncontroversial, although they surely are not always so (see below and in the next chapters), which lends them particular ideological potential.

6.2.3.2. Problems of presupposition from theory to practice
Presupposition is not an unproblematic notion and that is why I want to position my view on presuppositions in the theoretical field, so that it becomes clear how I try to operationalize the concept from a pragmatic perspective. One influential pragmatic theory of presupposition is the ‘common ground view’ (e.g. Stalnaker 1991, 2002). Stalnaker distances himself from the semantic view of presupposition by stating that “it is persons rather than sentences, propositions or speech acts that have or make presuppositions” (1991: 473). Approaching presuppositions via the situations in which presupposition-carrying utterances are made, focusing on the attitudes and intentions of the speaker, he initially arrives at the following definition of presupposition:

“A proposition \( P \) is a pragmatic presupposition of a speaker in a given context just in case the speaker assumes or believes that \( P \), assumes or believes that his addressee assumes or believes that \( P \), and assumes or believes that his addressee recognizes that he is making these assumptions, or has these beliefs” (Stalnaker 1991: 473).

In this definition mainly the standpoint of the speaker is taken. What could be called a ‘speaker presupposition’ is tied to speaker intentions and is successively claimed to express common knowledge, common belief, common ground and what is accepted as common ground in various refinements of the theory (Stalnaker 2002). Here it must be noted that the move of relating presuppositions to “speakers’ subjectivity, beliefs and assumptions, and not to the truth-conditionality of the sentences uttered”, does not dismiss truth (Delogu 2009: 198). Presupposition is not conditional on the absolute truth, but a notion of (inter)subjective or presumed truth remains central to account for presuppositions. If a speaker expresses a taken-for-granted assumption by presupposing it, s/he assumes it to be true (or at least pretends that s/he assumes it to be true).

According to Stalnaker, presupposing is not a mental attitude, as much as it is a linguistic disposition, viz. “to behave in one’s use of language as if one had certain beliefs, or were making certain assumptions” (1991: 474). Then presupposition comes to be seen as a propositional attitude of the speaker. He clarifies:

“To presuppose something is to take it for granted, or at least to act as if one takes it for granted, as background information – as common ground among the participants in the conversation” (Stalnaker 2002: 701).
This account of presupposition is incorporated into a theory of language use, based on Grice’s ideas about the functioning of language and meaning (cf. Grice 1989). Thus Stalnaker assumes that linguistic practices have a conventionalized use, i.e. that they can be standardly used to mean something. Once this is mutually recognized, it becomes possible to exploit the conventional use, so that a linguistic phenomenon can adopt different meanings. The standard use of speaker presupposition is argued to be common belief, seen as the basic model for common ground, which in turn is broadly defined as “the mutually recognized shared information” in a particular communicative context (Stalnaker 2002: 704).

A lot of the examples above have presuppositions which arguably are not shared by all of the newspaper readers but contain new information. To account for such informative presuppositions Stalnaker has recourse to Grice’s concept of exploitation and the notion of accommodation, borrowed from Lewis (1991). Accommodation is the process whereby language users align their presuppositions and adjust them to the context by virtue of the fact that they both recognize the assumption of a certain common ground. To be concrete, if the reader of (29) does not know that there exists a Kalenjin tribe, which is the tribe of former President Moi, nor that Kibaki is a member of the PNU, these propositions are informative. Somewhat oversimplifying, they would be thus explained: the reader knows that presuppositions are normally used to express common ground but since the presupposed information is not shared on his/her part, the reader, assuming cooperativeness, recognizes that the writer believes that the presuppositions are mutually shared and therefore the reader incorporates that information into his or her frame of interpretation and adds the information expressed to the common ground.

To evaluate the common ground view, I must first acknowledge that a contextual account of presupposition, put in a Gricean theory of language use, is able to explain satisfactorily many of the traditional examples, while most of the essential properties are fairly respected, which has lent this view considerable support and appeal.126 No doubt presupposition comprises a sense of commonality and the speaker’s perspective cannot be ignored. Also praiseworthy is Stalnaker’s dynamic view on language. He holds that common ground and thus also what is presupposed changes discursively in the course of communication. Moreover, by emphasizing the role of inferential interpretation in context, Stalnaker not only avoids the fallacy to see presupposition as a condition for truth, but also allows for different cases of presupposition to be explained in different ways. Neither the fact that presuppositions can be cancelled, nor that they are often a matter of degree pose any problems.

However, the drawback of Stalnaker’s preoccupation with the speaker is that he risks losing touch with the linguistic aspects of presupposition. The theory lacks an explanation of the typical

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126 That is why Geurts (2006: 273), for instance, calls it the received view on presupposition, while Abbott speaks of the dominant one, claiming with an exaggeration that “it is almost universally accepted” (2008: 524).
triggers associated with presupposition. Stalnaker believes that the linguistic facts, which he sees as “facts about the constraints […], imposed by what is said on what is appropriately presupposed by the speaker, according to various different standards of appropriateness” (1991: 473), can be stated and explained directly in terms of speaker presupposition. The main problem is that for Stalnaker meaning is dependent on individual intentionality, so that his theory is not perfectly suited to account for types of meaning which do not exclusively or primarily depend on individual intentionality or for nonintentional forms of meaning. As has been mentioned before, in reading the newspaper people are not primarily preoccupied with recognizing the intentions of the journalist – they just try to interpret the news text or the events reported in it – and they can derive meanings which are not intended by the writer. A consequence of the focus on speakers and their intentions is the negligence of the interpreter perspective. In short, Stalnaker’s idealized notion of common ground is questionable. It is more or less accepted that presupposition involves background information, but taken-for-granted background information cannot always be equated with common ground. Of course, there is always overlap between the worlds of the interpreter and the utterer, but remember that it was explained in 4.2.1.1 that even elements of common background may be different for each language users because the perspective can always differ, at least slightly, so that common ground is almost never really common.

One alternative for Stalnaker’s account holds that non-controversiality is the main function of presupposition, as accommodation is believed to work properly only when the presupposed information is not controversial. Inspired by Grice (1989: 274), who noticed that the informative kind of presupposition contains uncontroverisal rather than common knowledge, Soames (1991: 430) proposed a new definition:

> An utterance U presupposes P (at [time] t) iff. one can reasonably infer from U that the speaker S accepts P and regards it as uncontroversial, either because
> a. S thinks that it is already part of the conversational context at t, or because
> b. S thinks that the audience is prepared to add it, without objection, to the context against which U is evaluated”.

Also in this account the new default function of presupposition, viz. to communicate something that is uncontroversial or as if it is so, can always be exploited to serve other functions. Abbott (2000, 2008) reacts against the common ground view as well as modifications like the one by Soames, because she finds that these accounts blur the distinction between presupposition and assertion. In her interpretation the former view still associates presupposition with old

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127 Note that Stalnaker himself does not consider that to be a problem, as he openly shows his preference for a separation of means from ends in the search of an accurate account of language use. That is why he deliberately concentrates on the functions that presupposition is designed to serve, while ignoring the means that language provides for serving those functions (Stalnaker 2008: 539).
information and assertion with new information, while she presents a myriad of examples of presuppositions with new, unknown information, and of assertions expressing common knowledge. The modified proposal is rejected on the basis of the existence of noncontroversial assertions. However, even if speakers make assertions in a way that makes it plain that what they are asserting is not controversial, there are still always backgrounded assumptions that have to be taken for granted and which are more uncontroversial and acceptable than the asserted ones. Even so, Abbott argues to treat presuppositions as ‘nonassertions’, proposing that “grammatical presuppositions are a consequence of a natural limit on how much can be asserted in any given utterance, where what is asserted is what is presented as the main point of the utterance – what the speaker is going on record as contributing to the discourse” (Abbott 2000: 1431). But here too, counterexamples can be easily found:

46) This unfolded as a new battle-front opened up between ODM and ODM-Kenya, who advocated for a release, without any further delay, of the controversial presidential vote outcome, a decision which quickly plunged the country into anarchy. (ST_Suspicion, mistrust as PNU and ODM dig in_03/01/2008)

The main point of (46) is established by means of a presuppositional structure. Moreover, in the supposition that one of the readers of this news message (e.g. an ODM party member) takes umbrage at this depiction of what s/he sees as just another political dispute, the accumulated presuppositions could even contain new and controversial information for this reader. That discredits a characterization of presuppositions as ‘nonassertions’, expressing non-main point.

Another pragmatic approach attributes a normative dimension to presupposition. According to Gauker (2003) speech participants, which are assumed to be cooperative, have to comply with an ‘objective context’, because their utterances can only be relevant and assertible in this context, if certain conditions (i.e. presuppositions) are satisfied. This means for the hearer that, if s/he takes the objective context of an utterance not to hold the presupposed propositional content, “he or she will be bound to consider the speaker not only as being wrong about the facts […], but also as violating some norm of discourse” and this is deemed “a kind of uncooperative behaviour”, which is not conducive to the act of communication (Sbisà 1999: 502). So, “whenever possible, the hearer will avoid treating the speaker as someone violating norms of discourse”, rather s/he will accept the presupposition as part of the objective context. This insight led Sbisà to consider presuppositions “not as shared assumptions, but as assumptions which ought to be shared” (1999: 501).

My own view on presupposition is informed by the above discussions. On the one hand, in my judgment, the view on presupposition as common ground or as information that has to become common ground by accommodation is too strong, as it treats the linguistic pragmatic phenomenon a bit too rigidly and limits the complexity of the concept. In the newspaper texts
that I studied presuppositions are able to perform a range of functions, of which just one is the expression of common belief. On the other hand, I am of the opinion that alternative definitions of presuppositions as “just parts of information that are less central to the speaker’s concern than what he wants to assert, question, and so on” (Geurts 2006: 273; see also Abbott 2000), are too broad, since they go beyond the specificity of presupposition. Moreover, such views are inaccurate, because in news reports journalists often knowingly present new information which constitutes the central news content in the form of a presuppositional structure. Sbisa’s outlook on presupposition as “a communicative device for constructing the participants’ takes on the context” (1999: 503), paves the way to my understanding of presupposition.

My view on presupposition starts from the pragmatic perspective on discourse, sketched in chapter 2, according to which complete explicitness is impossible in language use. Linguistic expressions can have conventional functions, but these can easily be strategically exploited. In this respect “strategies of language use are ways of exploiting the interplay between explicitness and implicitness in the generation of meaning” (Verschueren 1999a: 156). In this framework presupposition can be seen as a tool which by default links explicit content to relevant background information which is more or less implicit, so presuppositions are background assumptions which may (to a certain degree) or may not be really common. Since this conventional use may easily be exploited, presuppositions can have other or supplementary functions. Thus, informative presuppositions can be explained as a strategic use of presupposition to convey new information in a context where the utterer accounts for the possibility that the content of the presupposed information does not belong to the interpreter’s background knowledge, while the information is contextually relevant and acceptable to be presupposed. In technical terms, I see presuppositions as contextual assumptions inferable from specific linguistic triggers, expressed in a backgrounding format, which both utterer and interpreter take to be (minimally) acceptable and (maximally) relevant in the discursive context, and which are used to anchor the utterance into a supposedly (or pretendedly) given, shared or familiar worldview.

So, I concentrated on the linguistic triggers of presupposition in my analyses, because such a formalistic approach turned out to be most practical. However, as the analyses will show, not all information that is expressed in a presuppositional structure is really information that is presupposed. Thus exploitations of presuppositional triggers can be ideological. Presuppositions also have ideological potential because they contribute to the creation of a frame of meaning. Contrary to Simons (2004), such contextual assumptions do not have to be intended, because an

128 Verschueren stresses that strategies are always involved in any type of communication, but “they do not necessarily imply attempts to deceive, manipulate, express (non)solidarity […], and the like (1999a: 157).
129 In the case of presupposition from non-restrictive relative clauses the presupposed information is rather explicit, while presuppositions on the basis of implicative predicates are more implicit.
interpreter could infer non-intended presupposed content when s/he has a different position towards the frame of reference than the utterer. Further, my notion of acceptability is derived from Stalnaker (2002: 716) in that accepting an assumption means “to treat it as true for some reason” at a particular time in a certain context.

Serving as anchoring points for the communication, presuppositions do not only help journalists to overcome the impossibility of complete explicitness and to communicate efficiently, or to guide the readers’ interpretations, they also play an important role in the contextualization of an instance of news discourse. They position both the language users and the discourse itself into a world of interpretation. That is why they can be argued to have ideological effects. In addition, as noted by Fairclough (1995: 107), presuppositions help to establish represented realities as convincing. That is why presuppositions are perfectly suited to study the worldview the journalist assumes s/he shares with the newspaper’s readership (cf. Verschueren 1991, 1999 or Meeuwis 1993). Finally, in this view it is the utterers who take quite some responsibility for, even often strongly authorize, the inferences the interpreters (are supposed to) make. In this respect, presuppositions can be claimed to be “based on a mutual, tacit agreement which has not been given before, but which is constantly renewed or revoked during interaction” and which is “grounded on complicity” (Caffi 1998b: 751). This commitment of the utterer, which leads to easy uptake by the interpreter, is one of the features that set presupposition apart from certain types of implicature. However, it is important to observe that when the hearer or reader does not raise any objection to what is inferable from a presupposition, then s/he becomes co-responsible for it (Caffi 1998b: 757). In the following chapter we will further see how presuppositions and their associated linguistic structures can function in news discourse.
7. Exemplary analysis: Mass murder in church

“Always use the word ‘Africa’ or ‘Darkness’ or ‘Safari’ in your title. [...] Also useful are words such as ‘Guerrillas’, ‘Timeless’, ‘Primordial’ and ‘Tribal’. [...] In your text, treat Africa as if it were one country. It is hot and dusty with rolling grasslands and huge herds of animals and tall, thin people who are starving. Or it is hot and steamy with very short people who eat primates. Don’t get bogged down with precise descriptions. [...] Your African characters may include naked warriors, loyal servants, diviners and seers, ancient wise men living in hermitic splendour. Or corrupt politicians [...]. The Modern African is a fat man who steals and works in the visa office, refusing to give work permits to qualified Westerners who really care about Africa. He is an enemy of development, always using his government job to make it difficult for pragmatic and good-hearted expats to set up NGOs or Legal Conservation Areas. Or he is an Oxford-educated intellectual turned serial-killing politician in a Savile Row suit. [...] Avoid having the African characters laugh, or struggle to educate their kids, or just make do in mundane circumstances. [...] African characters should be colourful, exotic, larger than life – but empty inside, with no dialogue, no conflicts or resolutions in their stories, no depth or quirks.”


![Figure 23: Cartoon by Gado depicting the international community offering assistance in the mediation process, published in the *Saturday Nation* on 2 February 2008 (p.10).](image1)

![Figure 24: Photo of Kibaki and Odinga’s reconciliation handshake while Annan watches by Govedi Asutsa published on the front-page of *The Standard* on 25 January 2008.](image2)
7.1. Looking back on the historical events

7.1.1. Reporting the Kiambaa killings

7.1.1.1. A cautionary note
As was calculated in 5.2.2.1, the language use of 653 newspaper reports from 16 critical discourse moments was meticulously analyzed. In order to illustrate the methodology for my detailed pragmatic analysis, I will not spell out how exactly the analysis of every single newspaper article of the primary dataset was carried out. Since it would be impossible in terms of space and readability to go into the analytical details of every article analyzed, the strategy of analysis will be exemplified by means of one particular episode in Kenya’s post-election crisis, or in journalistic terms, one news item: the murder of a group of refugees in the Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG) church in Kiambaa. The results of the analyses of the rest of the reports is summarized and discussed in the next chapter.

The selection of this particular fragment of the corpus, like any selection, is not without its consequences. On the one hand, this news event is representative for both the post-election crisis and its press coverage. On the other hand, it is distorting in its specificity, poignancy and conspicuity. This fragment from the whole news discourse under study is characteristic of the way the events in the turbulent and chaotic aftermath of the elections are reported. The following news reports show the main tendencies in the different discourses and carry many of the meanings which in chapter 8 will be seen to pattern in the studied newspapers. Following the rule of thumb that whatever is found throughout a wide corpus should also be recoverable in (at least a number of) individual instances of discourse (Verschueren 2012: 28-29), this selection of news can be argued to give an impression of the patterns, the tensions and the problems that are found in the larger corpus. However, although the choice of this particular discursive topic can be justified, with it comes the risk of misrepresenting the whole news discourse.

By highlighting one day of news, one fragment of the corpus, the risk exists that the larger picture of the news discourse(s) is lost out of sight. This selection may be representative in a way, it does not represent the totality of the studied discourse. The specific analysis here presented should be put into context and should be considered in the light of the preceding and the following press coverage in the different newspapers. Surely, it is improper to jump to conclusions on the basis of the following few news reports. Moreover, it must be emphasized that the main topic of the selected news reports is about a very specific and tragic event. In general, the post-election crisis was quite violent, but Kenya has seen five peaks of violence (31/12/2007-02/01/2008; 18-20/01/2008; 25/01/2008-02/02/2008; 03-06/03/2008 and 08-09/04/2008). The act of violence, reported in the articles below, took place during the first heavy
outburst when a lot of journalists, who had not seen it coming, were unprepared and still grappling with the situation, so they had to rely on their reflexes, instincts, foreknowledge and ready frames of interpretation. A majority of both the Kenyan journalists and the foreign correspondents had not yet found the time to let the events sink in and dig into the deeper causes of the conflicts.

Because of the atrocity of the reported events, the newspaper articles that are chosen to exemplify the followed methodology may give rise to a negative bias towards the press coverage under investigation. However, the following chapter with more comprehensive and subtle analyses is intended to provide the necessary counterbalance. Also information from interviews with journalists will help put the reporting into perspective. It might seem that this choice of articles distorts the discourse as a whole and blows up a marginal, exceptional excess in the post-election crisis. Unfortunately, that is not true. The killings in Kiambaa are not the only gross crimes against humanity that occurred during Kenya’s post-election crisis. Afterwards other churches were burnt and other groups of people from various communities were slaughtered. This event made most journalists realize the gravity of the post-election crisis. It was not the very beginning and certainly not the end of violence. So, what happened in Kiambaa did not constitute an isolated case. On the contrary, it had a lot of impact and the Kenya National Commission of Human Rights concluded that the Kiambaa killings were “considered emblematic of the violence in the North Rift Region and the country as a whole” (KNCHR 2008: 145). According to a report by the International Crisis Group, the Kiambaa “church massacre […] did more to focus and sustain international attention on the erupting crisis than anything else” (ICG 2008: 9). Locally, the horrifying events were imprinted into Kenyans’ collective memory. As such, it is part of the visual narrative Kenya Burning (Kahora 2008), based on the (therapeutic) photographic exhibition to come to terms with the key moments and tipping points of the post-election crisis.

To be honest, it has to be acknowledged that it is easy to explain and look back upon historical events ex post facto, when inquiries have cleared things out and a critical distance is possible. That is a luxury which the newsworkers did not have. On the day that I write this section the international news is dominated by the alleged killing of more than 200 people, most of them innocent civilians, by government forces in the Syrian city of Homs. At least, that is the dominant version, because it is difficult to get verifiable information from the beleaguered city and the situation is very chaotic. Even when I would be there as a foreign correspondent, it would be hard to see and report on all the aspects of the events that are taking place in Homs, but

130 Other human rights violations listed by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights include the burning of a house in Naivasha where 19 individuals from the Luo community were killed, the forcible circumcision of Luo men in Naivasha and parts of Central, Nairobi and Rift Valley Provinces, police shootings in places including Kisumu and Kericho, and the rape of women and children, also in the IDP camps (KNCHR 2008: 4).
in four years certainly more information will be available about what happened. As a researcher who comes into action some time after the events took place, I can dispose of more and different knowledge than the journalists at the time when the events were still to be written into history. In the next section I will share some of this knowledge by way of introduction to the news reports that are analyzed in this chapter.

To gain insight into the events in order to be able to interpret and assess the news reporting, an analyst of news discourse cannot simply rely on the news coverage at hand, even though it consists of different newspapers and comprises different perspectives on the events. Neither is it sufficient to take into account editorials, opinion articles and commentaries, published in the same newspapers, supplementary to the hard news reports. To contextualize the newspaper discourses other sources of information, including research reports, NGO-alerts or humanitarian agency briefings, legal documents and oral testimonies, must be consulted. All of them can help interpret conflict situations, which are typically chaotic and multifactorial, and tentatively reconstruct what happened.

However, with the following account of the tragedy in Kiambaa I do not cherish illusions about penetrating to the ultimate truth. In the next section, I will try to present the ‘facts’ of the Kiambaa killings, as they can be established on the basis of the available information at this time, in the knowledge that such ‘facts’ are always open to revision. Yet it is important to try and come to grips with what happened, not only because it is what the news reports are based on, but also because it provides a basis upon which the press coverage can be judged and it helps discover ideological meanings in the journalistic discourse. After all, journalists aim at ‘getting the facts right’, as a study by the Pew Research Center indicated (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007: 36 and see the previous discussion on objectivity in 3.2.2.1). This caveat about truth does not intend to promote a radical relativism. Of course, there are facts, but their rendering into newspaper discourse turns them into recontextualizations, and therefore interpretations, of the bare facts.

For instance, when a journalist witnesses an officer beating up a young man in Mathare slum or when another journalist sees how a man is almost bludgeoned to death by fellow-residents in Huruma Estate, as caught on camera in figures 25 and 26 respectively, the acts of violence, the location, the people involved or the number of blows that the victims receive indubitably constitute facts. But the representation of the actors involved, the labeling of the violence and the possible explanations constitute different layers of truth. With regard to figure 25, the pictured scene could be described as a member of the paramilitary GSU cracking down on an innocent protester or it could be written as a provoked law enforcement officer teaching a rowdy youth a lesson. In the newspaper the caption read: “A GSU officer confronts a rioter who pelted them with stones while on patrol in Mathare slums”.

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Figure 25: Picture by Boniface Mwangi, published in *The Standard* on Wednesday 2 January 2008 (National News, p.5).

Figure 26: Picture by Boniface Okendo, published in *The Standard* on Thursday 3 January 2008 (National News, p.9).

Figure 26 leaves more open to the interpretation of the readers. The caption is factual, but not very revealing: “A mob corners a man in Huruma Estate in Nairobi, yesterday. He was attacked and severely injured, and only the intervention of GSU officers saved him from death”. Knowing that at the time Huruma was divided into rival zones, one part accommodating pro-PNU Kikuyus and another area housing pro-ODM Luhyas and Luos (Waki 2008: 197), the brutal scene hypothetically could have been depicted as a gang of Luos attacking a Kikuyu fellow citizen, or *vice versa*; or as PNU supporters clobbering an ODM supporter, or again the other way around. This is how the episode was reported in the accompanying newspaper report:
Shortly after, a man in a blue tracksuit casually emerged from the battlefield in Kiamaiko, heading towards Mother Theresa road. Within minutes a mob that had converged at the junction descended on the hapless man with pangas and other crude weapons. Armed policemen prevented the bloodthirsty mob from hacking him to death. They chased away the crowd and put the badly injured man in an ambulance. His attackers said he belonged to a community that was targeting their own in the raging violence. These are the violent scenes that have gripped city slums since post-election violence broke out. Here danger lurks everywhere and at anytime. Humanity has been replaced by a reign of terror. (ST_Death stalks the slums of Nairobi_03/01/2008)

This story contains a lot of facts, but they are not free of interpretations and other journalistic or discursive choices, which can give rise to ideological meanings. The stories about the violent facts in the above figures can be told in different ways, as each news story is written through a certain lens that could be fogged over by ideological interpretations, stereotypes, community loyalties, past experiences or personal predilections.

7.1.1.2. The circumstances
The facts presented in this section are distilled from national and international press coverage, opinion articles, commentaries and analyses in various news media (internet, newspapers), interviews with journalists and ordinary Kenyans, as well as a number of investigative reports, including the ‘Kenya in Crisis’ report by the International Crisis Group (ICG 2008), the official report from the fact-finding mission to Kenya by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR 2008), the final report by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR 2008), the final report by Human Rights Watch (HRW 2008), the special issue of Les Cahiers d’Afrique de l’Est on ‘The General Elections in Kenya, 2007’ by the Institut Français de Recherche en Afrique (Lafargue 2008) and the report of the findings of the Commission of Inquiry into the Post-election Violence in Kenya, headed by Justice Philip Waki, also known as the Waki report (Waki 2008). It must also be noted that there is a mutual relationship between official, investigative reports, like the ones mentioned above, and news reports. Such reports frequently use as information sources all kinds of news reports, national and international, while, in turn, they themselves are eligible sources of information for journalists (see example 19 which was taken from a news report based on a fragment of the ICG report). They partly feed on news reports and can be fed into the news media again.

What could have possessed the mob that caused death and destruction in Kiambaa is something we might never fully know. It is impossible to pin down one reason for the violence, as there are different factors, some of which were immediately triggered by the contemporary sociopolitical events, while others were rooted in historical injustices and socio-economic

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131 The details of these publications can be found in the list of references.
discriminations. All reports identify the corrupted outcome of the presidential elections as the immediate breaking point. Organized attacks in Uasin Gishu district in the North Rift region of Rift Valley Province began on 30 December 2007, following the announcement of the final election results, confirming Kibaki’s reappointment as president. On that day, Kimuri village, which borders the village of Kiambaa, was raided by Kalenjin youth, who profiled themselves as warriors. Since their houses were torched, the residents of Kimuri sought refuge in nearby Kiambaa. There they found shelter in the Kenya Assemblies of God church. The village, also known as ‘Kiambaa farm’ (KNCHR 2008), is situated on the outskirts south of Eldoret town, off the Nairobi-Nakuru highway. It is not just an agricultural site or an outlying residential area of Eldoret; it is a settlement scheme, *i.e.* land made available by (early) government policies either to redistribute the lands, formerly known as the ‘White Highlands’ or to encourage settlement in the arable Rift Valley to relieve pressure on other overpopulated or arid areas. Kiambaa was predominantly inhabited by members of the Kikuyu community. According to the KNCHR, these families had bought the land from the colonial white settlers right before their exit after independence (2008: 66). It must also not be forgotten that places like Kiambaa have a history of election violence. After the multiparty electoral system was restored in the declining years of the oppressive Moi regime, the ‘immigrant settlements’, where people did not tend to vote for KANU, were targeted by state-sponsored, xenophobic violence, especially during the elections of 1992 and 1997. The people who were responsible for these instances of violence were never tried and got away with it. What’s more, the tensions between the settler communities and the local inhabitants were never really resolved (Anderson & Lochery 2008).

A lot of anger and anxiety rocked the region, even prior to the 2007 elections, but the announcement of Kibaki’s re-election was the catalyst, as is reported by the Commission of Inquiry into the Post-election Violence in Kenya:

> “The former OCPD [Officer Commanding Police Division] for Eldoret Division, Angelus Karuru, told the Commission that on 30 December, his office began receiving reports from all over the district of arson, theft, the destruction and looting of property, and the taking of livestock. Outside of town, gangs with crude weapons also barricaded access to various sites, including farming communities in the largely Kikuyu inhabited settlement schemes. Here, mostly unsuspecting and terrified victims were suddenly overwhelmed by large numbers of Kalenjin youth who set fire to their compounds, burned and stole their possessions, as well as maiming, gang raping, and hacking to death large numbers of defenseless families, most of whom were Kikuyu. The DC [District Commissioner] said that the main areas affected were Kiambaa, Rurigi, Rukuini, Kiamumbi, Moiben Division, Matunda in Soi Division, and the area around Turbo” (Waki 2008: 43).

However, it is always dangerous to rapidly draw general conclusions. The fact that Kiambaa is a settlement village was an important factor, also identified by Anderson and Lochery (2008), but that does not mean that all settlement schemes were volatile areas. As is clearly cautioned in the
Waki report, “[s]tudies done elsewhere have not found that the presence of a large number of ethnic groups or inequality per se explains large scale violence even though most of the violence in the Rift Valley has occurred mainly in ethnically mixed settlement schemes” (Waki 2008: 31).

On 31 December 2007, when the rapidly spreading violence drew nearer, also the most vulnerable of the local residents of Kiambaa decided to hide in the church. As the men stood guard, no incidents were reported at night. The next morning, however, outrageous young men arrived in the village.

“Witnesses report having seen a large gang of Kalenjin raiders/youths, armed with bows, arrows, clubs and pangas, with their faces masked in mud approaching the village. There are conflicting figures on the approximate number of the raiders ranging from 200 to 3,500 and the residents stated that they came in three to four different groups and emerged from different directions” (KNCHR 2008: 66).

After torching houses in the neighborhood and chasing more people into the church, the mob closed in on the refugees. On 1 January 2008 between 10 and 11am the attackers overpowered and killed the few men who tried to protect the people inside the church. Then they doused blankets and mattresses with petrol, threw them in and onto the building and set the church ablaze. The details of their methodology are attested in all of the reports consulted. The refugees, most of them women and children, were trapped inside. Those who succeeded to break out were pushed back into the fire, hacked to death or pursued with bow and arrows. There still is no clarity about the precise number of deaths, as is also clearly shown in the newspaper reports. Some reports put the eventual death toll at 30 (ICG 2008, HRW 2008). The KNCHR established that 35 people died in the church attack, while 50 injured persons were rushed to Moi University Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret. The Waki-led commission counted 17 people burned alive in the church, 11 dying in or on the way to the hospital, and 54 others injured who were treated and discharged. The different investigative bodies found a few survivors who could testify of the horror, such as the woman whose testimony is included in the adjoining box.

In all reports the perpetrators of the violence are identified as Kalenjin, but they are differently described. They are consequently called ‘raiders’ in the KNCHR report, while the Waki report refers to them as ‘marauding youth’ and the ICG speaks of

“On the 1st of January 2008 at around 10 a.m., I heard people yelling that some raiders were coming. I saw smoke coming from some houses in our village and the houses were burning. Everyone in the village started running away to the church (KAG). My mother who was 90 years old was with me at the time. I decided to take my mother into the church for safety. After a few minutes, I saw more raiders coming towards the church….We thought the raiders would not attack the church.

Many people were being pushed into the church by the raiders. The raiders threw some mattresses into the roof of the church and threw more into the church. They were also pouring fuel (petrol) onto the mattresses. All of a sudden I saw fire break out. I took my mother toward to [the] main door to get her outside, but there were many others scrambling toward the door as well. We both fell onto the floor. I wanted to save my mother from the burning church, but one of the raiders prevented me. I saw the fire had reached where my mother was. I heard her cry for help as the fire burnt her, but I could not help.”
(Waki 2008: 46-47)
‘vigilantes’. For HRW there is no doubt that the agents of violence were people from the area whom the Kikuyu inhabitants of Kiambaa had peacefully coexisted with, as their report states that “[m]any of the survivors said many of the attackers were people they knew well”, including this testimony: “‘They are our neighbors,’ one man said, adding that he recognized ‘a young boy who sells milk, and the son of the man who owns the farm that borders mine [sic]’” (HRW 2008: 41). The KNCHR report contains similar testimonies, but elsewhere this report suggests that the raiders came in large numbers after kilometer-long walks. Also in the Waki report some witnesses claimed to have seen militias being ferried in lorries owned by a local politician. After the KAG church was burnt, foreign correspondent Pascale Harter made a probing report for BBC World Service Assignment, titled ‘Inside Kenya’s burning Rift Valley’, in which she interviewed Anthony Nganga Kimani who identified himself as a Kikuyu from Kiambaa and gave a poignant testimony of the fatal day. In the interview the frightened witness stresses that he knew the attackers, as they lived among them. What the journalist does not ask is how this man accounts for other testimonies who speak of hundreds of youth who marched from village to village.132

Next to historical land conflicts and interethnic tensions resulting from socio-economic imbalances, which are implicitly hinted at, the KNCHR investigators found two possible immediate reasons why these merciless murders occurred: “Some members of the Kalenjin community investigators spoke to alleged that the burning of the church was provoked by rumours that the Mungiki [the notorious Kikuyu militia, see 4.1.1.3 and example 21] were being harboured in the church. These rumours are said to have emanated from Kaptien area [more than 50 km from Kiambaa] where it is alleged that the raiders came from. Other allegations are that the attack was provoked by the killing of a Kalenjin boy at Kiambaa” (KNCHR 2008: 67). More evidence of these statements is not provided. In the Waki report it is stated that the attack “on the Kiambaa church was caused by some councillors who spread propaganda that the church held Mungiki adherents from Central Province who were ready to attack the local Nandi community” (Waki 2008: 70-71). This is the only report which specifies the attacking Kalenjins as Nandis.

Asked why the Kalenjins started attacking the Kikuyu settlers in the North Rift region, one Kalenjin youth from Eldoret answered Harter in the abovementioned report: “We want to send a very, a very strong message to Kibaki. Because we cannot get him, we are going to work on his tribe, which is the Kikuyu here”. Such an answer instantly triggers a tribal frame of interpretation. Then Harter asked an important question: “Is it the Kikuyu tribes themselves, ordinary Kikuyu who live among you as your neighbours that you resent?”. The subsequent answer shed a different light on the matter:

132 Pascale Harter’s report can still be listened to at the BBC News website, where it can be retrieved from http://news.bbc.co.uk/player/nol/newsid_7220000/newsid_7226000/7226089.stm?bw=nb&mp=wm&asb=1&news=1&bbcws=1 [05/02/2008].
“The point is this: when we voted for Kibaki in 2002 we were voting Kibaki on the platform of change and we wanted him to assist all Kenyans. When Kibaki went to power he began to assist Kikuyus and the rest of the Kenyans were left in poverty. So, actually this fight...it is a balance of resources; [it is about] the haves and have nots; and we’re only seeing that Kikuyus continuously are getting into the brackets of haves, so that other Kenyans are left wondering whether they’re Kenyans in the first place”.

In the same report, an 18-year-old boy from Kiambaa who participated in the burning of the church told Harter: “They were happy because Kibaki won and we did not want these people to be happy...that is why we decided to chase them, when we chased them, they went to hide in the church, so we decided to burn the church”. Harter fails to elicit who ‘we’ exactly is. Although this young man repeats that they will kill every Kikuyu until Kibaki has resigned (after that the Kikuyu could come back to live in peace), he does admit to feeling guilty and worried about having contributed to the death of acquaintances and neighbors. An important remark in this testimony is that nobody tried to prevent them from killing the innocent Kikuyu in fear of being killed themselves. Another man testified on record what was said in local political meetings: “We are going to make sure that all the Kikuyus are out of the Rift Valley. […] I was told to do this - it was something permitted by our elders”. He adds that in his culture young men do not question their elders, but do what they are told. To check this story, Harter interviewed the radical conservative Kalenjin leader Jackson Kibor who confirmed that he wanted to get rid of the Kikuyus in his region, who were not welcome anymore and that he did not allow multi-ethnic Kenya to be ruled by only one ethnic group. 133

However, even this explicit testimony should not lead us to conclude that all of the violence in the Rift Valley was planned and organized by traditional chiefs or assemblies of councillors. That would be an unwarranted generalization. Always there is the need for nuancing, even when some scenes call up memories of the murderous, state-sponsored campaign which rocked the country in the 1990s or when comparisons with the genocide in Rwanda spring to mind. As the ICG warned, even though

“there was a certain amount of anti-Kikuyu incitement by local elders, the suggestion there was a systematic, well-orchestrated campaign to purge the region of Kikuyus needs to be treated cautiously. In a less publicised incident, a Kalenjin mob ‘hunting for Kikuyus to kill’ at the University of East Africa, Baraton, was persuaded by a lone police officer to disperse, not a likely response by an organised group bent on genocide” (ICG 2008: 11).

133 The online news story is a slightly distorting recontextualization of the radio report, as it presents some information in a different order, mixing interviews from Eldoret with those from Kiambaa and it leaves out some revealing and insightful details. For instance, the fact that the Kalenjins interviewed voted for Kibaki in 2002 or that the youth in Kiambaa was 18 years old and differed in some views with mzee Kibor (e.g. with respect to the Kikuyus being welcome again after Kibaki would step down). Moreover, the online text mistakenly refers to Kiambaa as Kembar. Such little inaccuracies may compromise the credibility of the skilful radio reportage. See the news story at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7217737.stm [01/02/2012].
This incident is not reported in any of the investigated newspapers. But in the KNCHR report an ‘anguished letter’ is published, in fact an e-mail sent on 4 January 2008 by one of the people who were trapped in the Baraton University of East Africa. The e-mail reveals two more aspects of the North Rift violence. First, it makes clear that even the academic Luos and Luhyas who were protecting their Kikuyu, Kamba, Meru and Kisii colleagues were not safe from the Kalenjin militias, while in the low-end residential areas of Eldoret Luos and Kalenjins were fighting side by side. Second, the letter from Baraton reveals that some militiamen could be negotiated and reasoned with. But when one militia finally decided to let some food go through, it was attacked by another militia from the same community.

All this shows how complex the situation was and how difficult it was to tell an accurate and unbiased news story. It certainly was not a black and white picture with unilateral violence between Kalenjins and Kikuyus. HRW reports that in many communities anti-Kikuyu violence was expanded to also include Kalenjin supporters of Kibaki’s Party of National Unity: “In several communities such as Turbo, Kurinet, and Soy, Kalenjin PNU supporters were forced to flee in fear for their lives alongside local Kikuyu. In other communities mobs threatened to torch the homes of local Kalenjin PNU supporters unless they agreed to provide a goat or cow as compensation for failing to support the ODM” (HRW 2008: 42). Also the authorities and the police played a role in this tragedy. According to the Waki report, the District Security and Intelligence Committee already was aware of plans to attack Kiambaa on 31 December 2007, but the communication with the local security forces failed, and when they were finally informed, these local forces were hampered by illegal roadblocks and criminal gangs. The Waki commission concluded that “[p]olice attempts to rescue the situation [in Kiambaa] were thwarted through a combination of an inability to respond quickly enough and encountering delays through unlawful roadblocks” (Waki 2008: 424). In general, the verdict about the actions of the police is that: “while not denying many instances where police mobilized quickly to assist victims to quell the violence or where they were overwhelmed, the Commission also has evidence that in some other cases victims of post-election violence found the very people they thought would help and defend them as they were under attack participating in the violence themselves or indifferent to their plight” (Waki 2008: 57).

It must also be emphasized that the shocking events in Kiambaa had repercussions for other parts of the country, even for Kenya’s image abroad (ICG 2008). It inflamed other areas and led to the organization of revenge parties. In the KNCHR report it is stated that tensions arose in Central Province at the time the Kikuyu people started to be attacked in the Rift Valley.

This escalated on 1 January 2008 after the burning of the church in Kiambaa, Eldoret. A crosssection of Kikuyu leaders from Rift valley, Central and Nairobi provinces, and mostly newly elected MPs, made public statements calling for an end to the violence on their people. Members of the Kikuyu community were also pressurizing the government to
intervene and stop the violence visited on their people once and for all. When the government did not respond quickly enough to stop the violence, some elements of the Kikuyu people in Central Province started to mobilise against killings, maiming and destruction of property and evictions of Kikuyu people, and the government’s ineffectual response. This situation ultimately triggered violence in Central Province with non-Kikuyu residents as the targets” (KNCHR 2008: 125-126).

This citation shows that even Kikuyus were dissatisfied with the government and its failure to protect them, while at that time the same government was seen by others as a Kikuyu bastion. Again the ethnic angle of the conflicts is put into perspective. The United Nations team concluded that in “Central Province, and in particular, in the locality of Kikuyu, the violence and the evictions were first sparked by news about the massacre in Kiamba church, then, in the second half of January, it appears to correspond with the arrival of Kikuyu IDPs from Rift valley and other nearby regions” (OHCHR 2008: 10). Rutten and Owuor document that

“In Naivasha the Mungiki implemented a revenge killing for the tragic burning of a church in Kiambaa near Eldoret by ODM supporters killing some 30 people, mainly Kikuyu women and children, on 1 January. In the retaliatory attack, allegedly organised by prominent Kikuyu, mainly Luos (32 out of 50 deaths) were victimised, including forced circumcision, in late January 2008” (Rutten & Owuor 2009: 318).

Following the ICG (2008: 1), the brutal Kiambaa killings illustrated “the fragility of a national fabric in which the disparity between rich and poor remains one of the world’s biggest”, adding that years of maladministration, manipulation and neglect by the central government were an important cause of the explosive situation in the Rift Valley.

At the end four people were arrested who were identified by witnesses, namely civic seat aspirant Stephen Kiprotich Leting, Emanuel Kiptoo Lamai, Clement Kipkemei Lamai and Julius Nyongio Rono. They were tried at the Nakuru High Court for the killing of eight of the church victims. However, on 30 April 2009 all four were acquitted by Justice David Maraga for lack of substantial evidence. Thus Kenya’s notorious impunity remains. Also the local leaders who directed the attacks from both sides kept out of range. Only the International Criminal Court in The Hague could bring some sort of justice. Two of Kenya’s most prominent politicians, the Kalenjin leader, former ODM strongman and former cabinet minister William Samoei Ruto and Kikuyu figurehead and son of the founding father Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta are accused of crimes against humanity, including murder, forcible transfer and persecution. Their trial is still in preparation.

134 To prevent confusion, note that Kikuyu can be both a toponym and the name of an ethnic community.
7.1.2. Texts for analysis

7.1.2.1. World news reports
After the above information which gives some insights into the complexities of Kenya’s post-election conflict situations, one can wonder how journalists took up the challenge to capture these complex events into a single news story. How did the foreign correspondents make sense of the events and how did local newsrooms with Kalenjin and Kikuyu members account for what happened? The answers can be found in the newspaper texts below. The following newspaper articles are rendered as I imported them into the NVivo programme. This means that they are stripped from photos and other graphics so as to concentrate on the textual level of the news discourse (compare the Kenyan articles to their original versions in appendix IX). For a good understanding of the contrastive analysis that will follow in 7.2, it is important to carefully read the included newspaper texts, because I will constantly refer back to them. The main points of attention are highlighted.
80 children massacred in Kenyan church

The Independent: Wednesday, 2 January 2008
By Steve Bloomfield in Nairobi

Kenya edged closer to **tribal warfare** last night after more than 100 people at least 80 of them children burned to death as the church they had fled to for refuge was set alight. More than 200 people, mainly Kikuyus, the same tribe as President Mwai Kibaki, were sheltering for safety in the Kenya Assemblies of God church five miles outside Eldoret in the Rift Valley. An armed gang of young men drawn from the Kalenjin, Luhya and Luo tribes ethnic groups which backed the beaten presidential candidate Raila Odinga stormed the church compound yesterday morning and set it alight.

Joseph Karanja, a volunteer for the Kenya Red Cross, who arrived at the scene in the afternoon, said he counted scores of bodies. "They were piled up, on top of each other". He said at least 80 of the dead were children. "You could see from the size of their heads and bodies they were kids. "There were also adults but I couldn't recognise the men from the women they were all burnt beyond recognition. There were old, old people and women who could not walk. They and the children all got burned. Altogether there were more than 100 bodies.

"Those were the ones I could see. There were also others who were covered by the building itself which was burning. The whole church was on fire. It had collapsed. Outside the gates there were six dead bodies. They were cut with pangas [machetes]. They had been running away, running for their lives."

The death toll at the Eldoret church was expected to rise further. As darkness fell the remains of the mud and wood structure continued to smoulder. Police had been unable to recover any of the bodies.

"I have cried, I have cried, I have cried," said Mr Karanja. "What I saw today should never be seen. I could not handle it myself."

Last night a further 42 people were in Eldoret's Moi referral hospital with serious burns, many in a critical condition. Kenya Red Cross officials said that number would also rise.

Bishop Korir, the bishop of Eldoret, said more than 15,000 people were sheltering inside church compounds in his diocese. "It is the only place where people felt safe, but now I don't know. This situation is so bad. We have 8,000 people in one compound. They have no food, no water and no security. The situation is so bad there are dead bodies lying in the streets."

**Ethnic violence** has swept through Kenya since Mwai Kibaki was controversially announced as the winner of last Thursday's presidential election. Paramilitary police have fired on Mr Odinga's supporters in Kisumu on the shores of Lake Victoria, and in the slums of Nairobi.

Kikuyus, the largest of Kenya's 42 tribes, and the ethnic group of Mr Kibaki, have been fleeing their homes across the Rift Valley, seeking sanctuary in churches and police stations. Friends from other tribes have been hiding Kikuyus in their homes. Up to 50,000 Kikuyus across the country are believed to have left their homes.

Rhetoric was ratcheted up on all sides as the nationwide death toll from post-election riots rose above 200 in **clashes which have become increasingly tribal**. Mr Odinga said the government was guilty of "genocide", while government ministers in turn accused Mr Odinga of inciting **ethnic violence**.

Police spokesman Eric Kiraithe warned: "Our officers are exercising a lot of restraint in maintaining the law. This restraint will not last forever."

In a front-page editorial, Kenya's Daily Nation urged both Mr Kibaki and Mr Odinga to "stop the senseless slaughter". It accused both men and their acolytes of stirring up **ethnic tensions**. "How many more must die, how much more must be destroyed before you come to your senses?"

The security forces are becoming increasingly divided along ethnic lines. Kalenjin army officers were said to be taking to the streets of Eldoret joining in the attacks on Kikuyus.

Witnesses said most of the business properties owned by Kikuyus had been burnt down. The marauding gangs were now attacking residential areas. "They stormed our house at night and burnt everything," said Margaret Wanjiru, a Kikuyu. Her 90-year-old grandmother and 75-year-old mother were both too frail to run. They perished in the fire.

Many Kikuyus have looked on in horror as the violence has intensified. "Kibaki has put the whole tribe in danger," said Juliette Njeri, 28, from Nairobi. "This won't end soon."
A mob set fire to a church where dozens of people had sought refuge from violence in Kenya yesterday, killing at least 50 and raising new fears that one of Africa's most stable countries would collapse into a bloody tribal war.

The dead were mostly of the Kikuyu tribe, which overwhelmingly backed President Kibaki's bid for a second term in last Thursday's election. Mr Kibaki defeated his rival, Raila Odinga, by just 230,000 votes and Mr Odinga's supporters, who are mostly ethnic Luo, believe that the election was "stolen".

The admission last night by Samuel Kivuitu, the head of Kenya's Electoral Commission, that he was pressured by Mr Kibaki's Party of National Unity not to hold an inquiry into the results appeared to support the claim. European envoys and the state-run Human Rights Commission had called for an investigation.

More than 300 people have been killed in Kenya since the election, and last night there was no sign that security forces were willing, or able, to bring the rampaging mobs under control. Gangs of machete-wielding men set up roadblocks along the main road out of Nairobi to the west, pulling Kikuyus from their cars. "We cannot move out of the house," said Elijah Ombiru, a father of four, in Eldoret. "People are being killed everywhere."

While calm was restored in Nairobi and among Mr Odinga's slum strongholds, things in the west – where support for his political party is strongest -- were getting worse.

The Kenyan Red Cross said that 70,000 people had fled the violence, and some Kikuyus had reportedly crossed into Uganda for safety. "This is a national disaster," said Abbas Gullet, the agency's secretary-general. Aerial footage taken by the Red Cross showed farms and hundreds of houses on fire and roadblocks every ten kilometres (six miles). Only those from "the right ethnic group" were allowed through the barricades, Mr Gullet said. A police spokesman told a news conference in Nairobi: "We never expected the savagery to go so far."

The violence has erupted throughout Kenya, from the capital's shanty towns to coastal resorts, exposing tribal resentments that have long festered. Mr Kibaki's Kikuyu people, the largest ethnic group, are accused of using their dominance of politics and business to the detriment of others.

In the slums, which are often divided on tribal lines, rival groups have been fighting with machetes and sticks, as police fire teargas and live rounds to keep them out of the city.

Anne Njoki, 28, had fled her home in the slums after she saw her fellow Kikuyus being attacked and their homes looted. She was camped out near a military base with her sister, three-year-old nephew and seven-year-old niece. The looters had taken their "beds, blankets, even spoons", she said. The children had not eaten for days.

Yesterday Mr Kibaki called for a meeting of all political parties, where leaders would appeal for calm. Mr Odinga, who has also urged his supporters not to resort to violence, has said he will not meet Mr Kibaki until the President steps down.

"I am only pained by what is happening and I will say that President Kibaki represents the old leadership, that old dictatorial leadership that is on its way out of Africa," said Mr Odinga. "He's part of the endangered species of leadership that belongs to the museum."

The opposition candidate has called for one million people to converge on the centre of Nairobi tomorrow and declare him the "people's president". The Government has declared the rally illegal, raising fears of violence between protesters and the security forces. Mr Odinga's supporters say that they expect him to be sworn in as President tomorrow, and his supporters in the slum-town of Kibera appear ready to fight.

"We have been patient. We have lowered our tempers because we want to get directives from our leaders," said Morris Otieno, a 45-year-old businessman in Kibera. "If they say, 'Let us go to town,' we will go peacefully. If the police interfere, you can expect what will happen - hell will break loose." [...]

50 die in blazing church as spectre of tribal war looms
The refusal of either candidate to stand down has dashed hopes that the violence would abate. “I can see the beginnings of an ethnic conflict,” Mwalimu Mati, a Nairobi-based anticorruption campaigner, said. “There’s always been this undercurrent of suspicion, but by and large the poor were just the poor living together. Now the police are ringing those places and not allowing them to leave, so it’s a slaughterhouse situation.”

The tribal enmity was by no means shared by all Kenyans. Yusuf Ibrahim, a 24-year-old from the Nubian tribe, has lived in Kibera all his life.

During a lull in the violence yesterday he stood among the ruins of looted shops and shacks. “The houses are torched, the kiosks have been torched but what have we gained?” Mr Ibrahim said. “We’ve gained nothing. Where is Mwai Kibaki, where is Raila to come here and do what’s necessary?”

Mr Kibaki, 76, who won the presidency by a landslide in 2002, ending Daniel Moi’s 24 years in power, is credited with turning the country into an East African economic powerhouse. But his anticorruption campaign is seen as a failure. The main constituency of Mr Odinga, 62, is the Kibera slum, but he has been accused of failing to do enough to help its impoverished people in 15 years as an MP.

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**Mob Sets Kenya Church on Fire, Killing Dozens**

*New York Times: January 2, 2008*

By JEFFREY GETTLEMAN

NAIROBI, Kenya — Dozens of people seeking refuge in a church in Kenya were burned to death by a mob on Tuesday in an explosion of ethnic violence that is threatening to engulf this country, which until last week was one of the most stable in Africa.

According to witnesses and Red Cross officials, up to 50 people died inside the church in a small village in western Kenya after a furious crowd doused it with gasoline and set it on fire.

In Nairobi, the capital, tribal militias squared off against each other in several slums, with gunshots ringing out and clouds of black smoke wafting over the shanties. The death toll across the country is steadily rising.

Witnesses indicate that more than 250 people have been killed in the past two days in bloodshed connected to a disputed election Kenya held last week.

The European Union said Tuesday that there was clear evidence of ballot rigging, and European officials called for an independent investigation. Kenya’s president, Mwai Kibaki, who won the election by a razor-thin margin, has refused such an inquiry.

Government officials said Tuesday that they would crack down on anyone who threatened law and order, and they banned political rallies. Meanwhile, Raila Odinga, the opposition leader who lost the election, has vowed to hold a million-person march on Thursday, which many Kenyans fear could become a bloodbath.

The Kenya celebrated for its spectacular wildlife and robust economy is now a land of distress. Tens of thousands of people have fled their homes, and some are so frightened that they have crossed into Uganda.

“We’ve had tribal fighting before, but never like this,” said Abdalla Bujra, a retired Kenyan professor who runs a democracy-building organization. As for the people burned alive in the church, Mr Bujra echoed what many Kenyans were thinking: “It reminds me of Rwanda.”

While the bloodshed of the past few days in Kenya has fallen far short of the Rwandan genocide in 1994, many Kenyans are worried that it is spiraling out of control.

The violence has been a mix of hooliganism, political protest and ethnic bloodletting. Most of the victims have been Kikuyus, the tribe of the president and Kenya’s traditional ruling class[ ...]
Kikuyus have dominated business and politics since independence in 1963. They run shops, restaurants, banks and factories across Kenya, from the Indian Ocean coast to the scenic savannah to the muggy shores of Lake Victoria in the west.

They make up only 22 percent of the population and are part of Kenya’s mosaic of roughly 40 ethnic groups, which have intermarried and coexisted for decades. But the election controversy has created a new dynamic in which many of Kenya’s other tribes, furious about the ballot rigging that may have kept Mr. Kibaki in power, have vented their frustrations against them.

“We are easy targets,” said Stephen Kahianyu, a Kikuyu, staring at the embers of his home in Nairobi that was burned to the ground on Saturday. Over the past few days, Kikuyus have fled to police stations and churches for protection.

On Monday night, several hundred Kikuyus barricaded themselves inside the Kenya Assemblies of God church in Kiambaa, a small village near the town of Eldoret. The next morning, a rowdy mob showed up.

According to witnesses, the mob was mostly Kalenjins, Luhyas and Luos, Mr. Odinga’s tribe, which makes up about 13 percent of the population. They overran Kikuyu guards in front of the church and then pulled out cans of gasoline. There were no police officers around, witnesses said, and no water to put the fire out.

Most people escaped. But in addition to those killed, dozens were hospitalized with severe burns. Witnesses said most of the people hiding inside had been women and children.

The Eldoret area has become a killing zone. Residents say dozens of Kikuyus have been hacked to death, including four who were beheaded on Monday.

In Nairobi, a much-feared Kikuyu street gang called the Mungiki seems to be taking revenge. According to residents in a Luo area, the Mungiki, who are said to take an oath in which they drink human blood, were sweeping through the slums and killing Luos.

The government is now blaming Mr. Odinga for the violence. “This isn’t random,” said Alfred Mutua, a government spokesman. “This is part of Raila’s plan to create hysteria and trouble and make us declare a state of emergency,” which Kenya seems to be rapidly approaching, with curfews in several areas and a ban on live news media coverage.

Western diplomats have been urging the political leaders to reconcile, but the lines between those leaders seem to be only hardening.

Mr. Odinga said he would not talk to Mr. Kibaki until the president admitted that he had lost the election. Still, he urged his followers to calm down. “This is tarnishing our image as democratic and peaceful seekers of change,” Mr. Odinga said.

Mr. Odinga and Mr. Kibaki ran together in 2002, in what was considered Kenya’s first free election. The tribal alliance they built steamrolled Kenya’s governing party and was a watershed moment. But the two fell out soon afterward, and diplomats here said that it has been very difficult trying to broker a truce. “We just want them to meet,” said Bo Jensen, the Danish ambassador to Kenya. “But at the moment they’re quite far from each other.”

The election did not start off badly. A record number of Kenyans, nearly 10 million, waited in lines miles long on Thursday to scratch an X next to their chosen candidate.

Mr. Kibaki, 76, vowed to keep growing Kenya’s economy, one of the strongest in Africa, partly because of its billion-dollar tourist trade. Mr. Odinga, 62, ran as a champion of the poor and promised to end the tradition of Kikuyu favoritism. Voting followed tribal lines, with a vast majority of Luos going for Mr. Odinga and up to 98 percent of Kikuyus in some areas voting for Mr. Kibaki.

Tribes, obviously, do matter in Kenya. But for the most part, the country has escaped the widespread ethnic bloodletting that has haunted so many of its neighbors, like Rwanda, Congo, Sudan and Ethiopia. In Kenya, the Kikuyu elite has shared the spoils of the system with select members of other tribes, which has helped defuse resentment.

That has led to decades of stability and is a reason why most Kenyans, including Mr. Bujra, the retired professor, do not think their country will end up like Rwanda, where nearly one million people were killed. Clearly, Kenya is a long way from that.

“In Rwanda, the conflict was between a small minority and a large majority,” he said, referring to the history of Tutsis dominating the Hutu majority. “Here, it is different, because many tribes have a stake.”

But election time in this country, where politics and tribe are so intertwined, is often bloody. Hundreds of people were killed in tribal clashes surrounding the 1992 and 1997 elections. And this time, passions were as high as ever. [...]
The early results showed Mr. Odinga well ahead and more than half of Mr. Kibaki’s cabinet losing their Parliament seats and therefore their jobs.

But when Mr. Odinga’s lead began to vanish as further results were announced over the weekend, his supporters suspected that something was amiss. It was slow-motion theft to them, and they began to riot.

Even before Kenya’s election commission declared Mr. Kibaki the winner on Sunday, election observers said the president’s party had changed tally sheets to reflect more votes than were cast on election day. In some areas, there were more votes for the president than registered voters.

On Tuesday, Samuel Kivuitu, the election chairman, said he had been “under undue pressure” to certify the results.

Western governments, including the United States, are calling for a vote recount. “It’s the only way forward,” said Graham Elson, the deputy chief of the European observer delegation.

Kennedy Abwao contributed reporting from Nairobi, and Matthew L. Wald from Washington.

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**Kenyans Killed Fleeing Violence**

**Dozens of Victims Trapped in Church That Mob Set Afire**

*Washington Post: Wednesday, January 2, 2008; Page A01*

*By Stephanie McCrummen*

NAIROBI, Jan. 1 -- A mob of men wielding sticks, spears and machetes set ablaze a church where villagers had sought refuge from Kenya’s post-election violence, burning to death at least 35 people, including women and children, according to aid workers and a priest.

"It is hard to tell the number," said a Kenyan Red Cross official in Eldoret, where the attack took place. "Some people have been burned beyond recognition."

The church stood just outside the volatile city in western Kenya, which has been swept by ethnically charged attacks since Thursday’s disputed election. President Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner of a second term Sunday after a vote that opposition candidate Raila Odinga says was rigged and European Union observers said Tuesday was seriously flawed.

According to the priest, who asked that his name not be used for fear of retaliation, at least 200 villagers fled to the Kenya Assemblies of God church Monday night to avoid roving gangs that appeared to be targeting Kibaki’s ethnic group, the Kikuyu. Gang members had been setting up roadblocks and checking identification cards, which often indicate tribal affiliation.

"They surrounded the church," the priest said. "I just saw from a distance. People were just watching helplessly, because if there was any movement, you were risking your life." He said he had tried to help, but could not get close enough.

According to aid workers, at least 10,000 people have essentially gone into hiding in the Eldoret area, holed up in schools, churches, police stations and the local airport, awaiting evacuation.

The church burning was part of a wave of violence generally pitting Kikuyus, who have dominated Kenyan politics since the country won independence from Britain in 1963, against Odinga’s ethnic group, the Luo, and other tribes who sided with him to oust what they consider entrenched Kikuyu power.

Although the groups have lived together largely without incident for years, Luos in some Kikuyu-dominated areas say they have been targeted with violence and told to leave. In areas where Kikuyus are not dominant, such as Eldoret, many Kikuyus say they are being driven out.

The violence has caused dismay across Kenya, an East African country that has been a model of economic and democratic development since 2002, when Kibaki defeated the chosen […]"
successor to Daniel arap Moi, who ruled Kenya repressively for 24 years.

It is a place where most people are poor and rural, but where a growing middle class of urban professionals has enjoyed unprecedented prosperity in places such as Nairobi, the capital, where condos are going up and well-dressed Kenyans fill swanky bars on weekends.

Non-Kikuyu people often feel that this sort of prosperity has benefited mainly the Kikuyus, who voted overwhelmingly to return Kibaki to power. The elections centered on the idea that Odinga would end tribal favoritism and spread the country's wealth more equitably.

After a campaign that was the most open and competitive in Kenyan history, voters flocked to the polls in record numbers, only to see the process degenerate as tallying began amid charges of rigging. People now say they fear the country is slipping back into the condition of a police state, or worse.

Eldoret, about 160 miles northwest of Nairobi, is considered the homeland of the Kalenjin tribe, which has tended to support Odinga. During the 1990s, it was the scene of ethnic clashes that killed hundreds of Kikuyus and displaced thousands more.

On Tuesday, police appeared to have lost control beyond the city center, according to residents. "People are just in escape mode," said John Mburu, a lawyer and a Kikuyu whose grandmother is among those hiding in a rural school with little food or water. "They are trying to get out."

Mburu was at a Nairobi airport Tuesday night, along with a dozen or so families, frantically arranging flights to evacuate relatives. "We've been taking it lightly -- that these are just threats," he said. "They are not just threats."

Despite the church burning, Nairobi and other recent trouble spots in Kenya were quieter Tuesday. The capital's downtown was thronged with security forces in fatigues, and roads were blocked. The volatile slums that are Odinga strongholds were being patrolled by water cannon trucks and helicopters, and security forces have not hesitated to beat or shoot anyone who confronts them.

Hundreds of thousands of people remain hemmed in with dwindling supplies of food, unable to express their frustration in lawful protests. Odinga has called for a million-person march in downtown Nairobi on Thursday, but the police have forbidden it. Meanwhile, U.S. and British diplomats were urging Kibaki and Odinga to reach some sort of political settlement.

The party led by Odinga, who fought Moi for years and was jailed for advocating multiparty democracy, won the largest share of seats in parliament, sweeping out even Kibaki's vice president. Odinga has refused to meet with Kibaki unless the president concedes defeat.

A report by the largest team of international election observers concluded Tuesday that Kenya's vote was "marred by a lack of transparency" and included "verifiable irregularities" in the tallying process. The E.U. mission's report said the problems raised doubts about the accuracy of the final results.

In one constituency, an election officer said he was "too tired" to finish counting the votes and shut the tallying center, according to Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, chief of the E.U. mission.

In eight other constituencies, election officials refused to show European observers their tallies. The bulk of the problems occurred in Kibaki's home province, the report said.

Lambsdorff said that so far, there were about 48,000 questionable votes in a contest that came down to a difference of about 200,000 votes. "The problem is with the number of tallying stations we could not observe," he said. "So we cannot verify if those numbers were reported correctly."
Peace calls amid continued bloodletting

The Standard: Wednesday, January 2, 2008

BY STANDARD TEAM

ANOTHER round of calls for peace was drowned under a new wave of bloodletting that left the country tottering on the brink, with Britain announcing it was ready to broker a deal.

But even as calls for peace rang loud across the political divide, with top Party of National of Unity (PNU) and Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) politicians calling for a ceasefire, a new standoff was unfolding. A newly sworn-in President Kibaki and Mr Raila Odinga — who is strongly convinced he was robbed of the presidency and who says his party has evidence of massive rigging — retreated to the trenches, with Raila reeling out a raft of conditions to be met before any meaningful engagement begins.

On its part, the United States has since withdrawn its congratulations for President Kibaki, with the State Department raising, what it described as "serious concerns" over the conduct of the polls.

The European Union (EU), on the other hand, has declined to congratulate the newly re-elected Kibaki, with its own election observer team and five top Kenyan election officials calling for an independent inquiry into the polls.

In an early sign of what could be a long-drawn battle, the Government continued with its strong-arm tactics, banning an Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) rally planned for Uhuru Park, Nairobi, tomorrow and further tightening its grip on interpersonal communication only a day after it banned live broadcasts.

Yesterday, in his New Year message, British Prime minister, Mr Gordon Brown, telephoned Raila with an offer to intervene and end the chaos that has so far claimed over 300 lives.

Saying he accepted Britain's initiative, Raila, however gave his own terms. "The first condition is that President Kibaki must first step aside and publicly own up to the fact that he was not elected President," Raila demanded.

RAILA INSISTED THURSDAY UHURU PARK RALLY WOULD GO ON DESPITE POLICE BAN

He added: "The second condition is that the negotiation must be done by mediators because I'm not willing to talk to him directly".

Raila said Brown was "deeply disturbed" by the post-election chaos and bloodletting and that the PM "expressed his deep disappointment".

This came on a day the postelection violence that has rocked parts of the country took serious proportions when at least 30 children and 10 adults who had sought refuge in a church were burnt to death in acts of violence linked to protests against the President's re-election.

Deaths, destruction and fear reigned in many parts of the country as more than 100 people were killed yesterday alone, including a District Officer (DO), a National Security Intelligence Service (NSIS) officer, a veteran Rift Valley politician.

Yesterday, the Internal Security ministry warned mobile phone subscribers that they risked prosecution if they sent or forwarded short text messages (SMS) that it said "may cause public unrest", in what could be a move to shut down 21st century's most effective communication mode.

"The Ministry of Internal Security urges you to please desist from sending or forwarding any SMS that may cause public unrest. This may lead to your prosecution," a warning sent by Safaricom, read.

Last night, Mr Peter Arina, the Safaricom deputy managing director, confirmed that the mobile giant had received the order, that it circulated to its subscribers, from the Internal Security ministry.

This came only hours after President Kibaki addressed the nation on State TV, outlining his expectations for a second and last term. In his New Year message, Kibaki said: "This year, we are marking the New Year at a time when the country has just concluded a closely contested free and fair general election. [...]

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"With the elections behind us, it is now time for healing and reconciliation among all Kenyans. I ask all of us, and particularly all leaders, to embrace a renewed spirit of national unity, respect for the democratic choice and maintain peace, law and order".

Added the Head of State: "Let us choose to live together in a true democratic spirit of tolerance and mutual respect, for that is the only way of ensuring that we forge ahead and open a new chapter of development and improvement of our social and economic circumstances".

The President then went on to state that his Government would also deal decisively with those who breach the peace by intensifying security across the country. But positions appeared to harden, with ODM vowing it would go on with tomorrow's rally at Uhuru Park despite a Government ban.

"The meeting will go on as planned. We are going to lead a million Kenyans to the venue. The work of police is to provide security," Raila, who spoke even as the venue remained ringed by armed General Service Unit (GSU) personnel keeping round the clock vigil, declared.

Announcing the ban, Government Spokesman Dr Alfred Mutua yesterday said the police would clamp down on dissent. "Before the General Election, the Police Commissioner announced the Government would not allow any public rallies to be held by anybody after the elections. This decision is still in force and will be enforced until the current security situation normalises," Mutua said in a statement read to the Press at the KICC, Nairobi.

Police spokesman, Mr David Kiraithe, who was also present, said the police would not allow lawlessness in any part of the country. He warned: "Law and order is supreme and violence does not create any environment for anyone to lead".

But Raila, who addressed an international news conference at Pentagon House accompanied by running mate Mr Musalia Mudavadi, Pentagon members Mr William Ruto, Mr Joseph Nyagah and Mrs Charity Ngilu, together with ODM chairman, Mr Henry Kosgey and MPs-elect Mr Omingo Magara and Mr Fred Gumo, said the party had rejected the police ban and would proceed to the venue.

"The OCPD has told us that due to insecurity, the meeting will not go on. But the law says that police are to be notified so that they can provide security," said Raila.

The Orange party also went on to state that it would today release what it described as "a comprehensive report detailing how President Kibaki was rigged back into the office by the ECK".

A NATION IN A CRISIS

35 burnt alive in church

■ Death toll from violence climbs as refuge seekers attacked ■ ODM asks its supporters to stop killing political opponents ■ UN calls for end to carnage

Raid on church leaves 35 dead as chaos spreads

Daily Nation: Wednesday January 2, 2008
By SAMUEL SIRINGI and PETER NG’ETICH

House of worship set on fire by 200 marauding youths in Eldoret South

At least 35 people, most of them women and children, died yesterday in Eldoret in the most bizarre killing yet in the ongoing post-election violence.

They were killed when more than 200 youths burnt down a church where residents of two villages in Eldoret South constituency had sought refuge.[...]

NATIONAL NEWS

ODM President Raila Odinga (left) and DP William Ruto at an international news conference at the Pentagon House yesterday. Courtesy of Daily Nation.
The Kiambaa and Kimuri villagers were caught unawares as the youths chanted war songs and surrounded the Kenya Assemblies of God church in Kiambaa in the afternoon.

**Serious burns**

Those who tried to escape were waylaid and burnt in a nearby shamba. One of the dead, police confirmed, was a disabled woman in a wheelchair.

A pregnant woman who sustained serious burns on her leg was among 20 survivors who were rushed to Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital for treatment.

According to a survivor, Mr Joseph Kamande, 47, the killers accused those camping in the church of having voted for President Mwai Kibaki. "They said we must pay for our decision to vote for President Kibaki," he said.

Mr Kamande said he was lucky to be alive after he fell into a ditch, leading the killers to believe he had died. But he lost his wife, three children and two grand-children in the incident.

Another survivor, Mrs Elizabeth Wangui Kimunya, 102, had gone to answer a call of nature when the attack occurred. Peter Munderu, 44, said he lost his three children. "Many bodies are still buried in the debris," he said.

The killings brought to 50 the number of deaths reported around the town yesterday alone. Eleven others had been killed in Langas estate early yesterday morning.

**Humanitarian crisis**

The town is experiencing one of the worst humanitarian crisis in its history. Kenya Red Cross officials estimated that more than 30,000 families had been forced out of their homes.

The displaced families have packed into police station compounds, churches, schools and mosques to capacity. But the families, mainly women and children, are facing a serious shortage of food and water as all shops and supermarkets remained closed.

Uchumi Supermarket, which had remained the only open shopping outlet, was closed yesterday after it ran out of stocks. There is also a shortage of medicine and sanitation.

"We are kindly appealing to donors and humanitarian organisations to help supply food items to the women and children that are facing starvation," said Mrs Mary Kiptanui, a volunteer with the Kenya Red Cross.

Calls were being made yesterday that a way be cleared to enable displaced people travel to their rural areas. "We are facing a critical humanitarian and security situation in Eldoret," said Mr Mohamud Jama an elder in the town. "There is heavy fighting in the outskirts and there are no signs that the flare-ups will end any time soon," he added.

Many bodies lay at the Moi University Teaching and Referral Hospital mortuary. "We need urgent measures to help us collect the bodies from the mortuary for burial," said Mr Jama.

**Provided refuge**

Former State House Comptroller Ibrahim Kiptanui, who helped rescue two children from the hand of killers, described the situation as grave. In Kisumu, at least 56 people have died and 1,500 others displaced following skirmishes that have rocked the area in the last five days.

Kisumu central and Kondele police stations provided refuge to many of the displaced while others camped at the Kisumu West DCs office after groups of people destroyed their homes and threatened to lynch them.

Their attempts to secure transport back to their ancestral homes hit a snag after vehicle owners refused to ferry them, fearing that they may be attacked along the way.

Nyanza PC Paul Olando said a group of residents had requested the administration to assist them move out of Kisumu. He said security arrangements had been made among three PCs to hand over the people at their boundaries.

Kisumu DC Jamleck Mbaruga was holed up in a meeting with the vehicle owners for the better part of the morning.

When the press called on him in his office, he said, "We are discussing how to get these people out of this place to a safer zone." He, however, did not elaborate whether the Government will provide alternative means if they fail to reach an agreement.

The riots that entered the fifth day yesterday have left a lot of damage in their wake. The protesters burnt down several residential and commercial buildings in the town, looted from shops and injured several people.

Mr Mbaruga described the situation as terrible but assured that the Government was doing everything possible to restore normalcy.

Additional reporting by Walter Menya
7.2. Contrastive analysis

7.2.1. Coding of keywords

7.2.1.1. Qualification of the elections
To start, it must be noted that even though these articles only constitute a fragment of the whole corpus, every single newspaper text is so rich that it is undoable to exhaust its meaning potential. It was impossible to identify all of the ideological meanings that can be derived on the basis of the journalistic language use. So, I do not pretend that my reading of the reports is to be a definitive one. The following analysis and interpretation highlights a few salient meanings of the news discourse, while it ignores other aspects. As such, I leave open the challenge to dig deeper into the discourse, either to corroborate my findings or to refute them. As was previously argued, it is impossible in a pragmatic analysis to separate analysis from interpretation. Yet for expository reasons I will here make an attempt to do so (contrary to the next chapter), although already a considerable amount of interpretation will sneak into this 7.2 section.

Methodologically, the thematic keywords identified in 6.2.1.1, viz. election(s), crisis, violence, and peace, were first identified in the newspaper texts. All explicit references to these terms were coded with a lot of surrounding co-text, i.e. ‘broad coding context’ as the setting is called in the qualitative software of NVivo. In that way, the newspaper texts were divided up in thematic units (see also 6.2.1). Subsequently, I studied how these keywords (or phrases in some cases) were conceptualized and constructed in the news discourse. In each case, attention was paid to word choice, figurative language and adjectival qualification at the lexical level. At the semantic level, connotations of value-laden terms were taken into account. At a structural, syntactic level conjunction, juxtaposition and information structure were studied. And at a pragmatic level there always was a focus on implicit meanings and underlying frames of reference which can be studied through presupposition.

To begin chronologically, let us review how the elections are qualified in the national and the international press. First, it must be noted that in the above newspaper articles the term election(s), originally referring to Kenya’s General Election, comprising presidential, parliamentary and civic elections, is narrowed down to mean the presidential election. It is not the parliamentary or civic elections which are claimed to be disputed (NYT) or stolen (TI). From the above news reports only those from the NYT and the WP still spend one paragraph on the outcome of the parliamentary elections, while the civic elections are generally hardly ever mentioned in the whole of the international subcorpus. When the IN talks of “last Thursday’s
presidential election”, one would almost forget that at the same day there were also two other elections which were successfully completed without much fuss.

In the international press the presidential election is more or less cautiously qualified as a rigged election. It is blatantly characterized as controversial and disputed in the NYT and the WP via phrases such as “the election controversy” or “Thursday’s disputed election”. In the British newspapers the election is only implicitly qualified as such. In the IN it is not the election that is called controversial but the announcement of the winner (see also 7.2.2.1), while in the TI the evaluation of the election as “stolen” is put between distancing quotation marks and attributed to Odinga supporters. Moreover this evaluation is not presented by means of a speech act verb as a claim or an assertion, but as a belief. A belief is a personal persuasion or opinion, the veracity of which depends upon the credibility of the people who hold the belief. You can believe something without having seen real evidence, whereas in the case of the presidential election there was evidence of rigging. This is implicitly expressed in the following paragraph of the TI report (see example 48), where it is stated that Kivuitu’s admission “that he was pressured by Mr Kibaki’s Party of National Unity not to hold an inquiry into the results appeared to support the claim”. The claim anaphorically refers to the beliefs of the Odinga supporters about the election being stolen, so in the discursive dynamics of two paragraphs beliefs have become a claim. Yet the foreign correspondent remains prudent. He does not write that the admission downright supports the claim, but he only links the admission to the support by means of the copula verb of perception to appear. In the same paragraph the sentence is added that “European envoys and the state-run Human Rights Commission [i.e. the KNCHR] had called for an investigation”. The inference that can be drawn on the basis of this paragraph is that Kibaki’s party rigged the election. After all, otherwise they would not pressurize the chairman of the election commission. Likewise, if the results were fair the EU and human rights activists would not call for an investigation. The NYT is more explicit about the rigging. Compare (48) to (49).

48) The admission last night by Samuel Kivuitu, the head of Kenya’s Electoral Commission, that he was pressured by Mr Kibaki’s Party of National Unity not to hold an inquiry into the results appeared to support the claim. European envoys and the state-run Human Rights Commission had called for an investigation. (TI_50 die in blazing church as spectre of tribal war looms_02/01/2008)

49) The European Union said Tuesday that there was clear evidence of ballot rigging, and European officials called for an independent investigation. Kenya’s president, Mwai Kibaki, who won the election by a razor-thin margin, has refused such an inquiry. (NYT_Mob Sets Kenya Church on Fire, killing dozens_02/01/2008)

In (49) the ballot rigging and the investigation are explicitly linked by means of the coordinating conjunction and taking on the implicit meaning of ‘and therefore’, implying reason. The extract from the NYT also can be argued to contain the strong implicature that Kibaki’s refusal is a sign
that he has something to hide, or even further the weaker implicature that if Kibaki refuses the inquiry, he must be personally involved in the vote rigging. The presupposition that Kibaki won by a razor-thin margin can add to this interpretation. Also *vox pop* Juliette Njeri’s statement that “Kibaki has put the whole tribe in danger” (IN) implies that Kibaki is responsible for the killings of Kikuyus. Another implication of rigging is that the winner is understood as the one who rigged, while the loser of rigged elections, in this case Odinga, is the aggrieved who was unlawfully put aside. This inference obscures the fact there is also evidence of rigging attested in favor of Odinga and his party, though to a lesser extent.

These news reports work with primary definitions (see 4.2.2.1). In the beginning of the text the articles’ view on the election as disputed, rigged or flawed is expressed, but not evidenced. It has to be taken for granted and is only explained further down the inverted pyramid structure. After first positing ‘clear evidence of ballot rigging’ with the nominalization excluding the actors of the rigging, only at the end of the NYT report is this claim somewhat elaborated: “Even before Kenya’s election commission declared Mr. Kibaki the winner on Sunday, election observers said the president’s party had changed tally sheets to reflect more votes than were cast on election day. In some areas, there were more votes for the president than registered voters”. Also in the WP report the “disputed election” is first presupposed by means of a temporal adverbial with a definite description (“since Thursday’s disputed election”) and only further explained at the end: “A report by the largest team of international election observers concluded Tuesday that Kenya's vote was "marred by a lack of transparency" and included "verifiable irregularities" in the tallying process. The E.U. mission's report said the problems raised doubts about the accuracy of the final results”. So, the readers first have to accept it before they get arguments. Trusty readers simply accommodate such informative presuppositions, but some readers could immediately take umbrage at this, which could lead them to stop reading. In the WP the foreign correspondent reinforces her argument by including a few literal citations from the EU EOM report. Note also that at that time several other observers were questioning the election results, such as the Kenyan Election Domestic Observation Forum (KEDOF) or the Commonwealth Observer Group (COG). However, the EU EOM is used as the only source, arguably because this body was considered to be sufficient and more credible to the journalist and the home audience.

The same theory of the primary definers holds for the Kenyan newspapers. While the international press could safely reject the election results, in polarized Kenya there was a political camp which considered the elections as ‘free and fair’, as is illustrated by the quote from Kibaki’s New Year message in the ST. However, the ST suggests its preferred interpretation of the election by positing Odinga’s conviction in the third paragraph of the text (see example 5). The president’s contradiction appears much later in the text, so it is this primary definition that is determining how the readers will evaluate the election.
A newly sworn-in President Kibaki and Mr Raila Odinga — who is strongly convinced he was robbed of the presidency and who says his party has evidence of massive rigging — retreated to the trenches [...].

(ST_Peace calls amid continued bloodletting_02/01/2008)

Of course, the election is not explicitly qualified as rigged, which was risky in the sociopolitical climate at that time, but it can be clearly inferred and for supporters of ODM who follow their captain there is no doubt. That the outcome of the presidential election was not fair is doubly presupposed by the relative clause-like construction and by the use of the factive predicate to be convinced of. Cautiously, this presupposition is distanced by placing the message not just in a regular relative clause but in a parenthetic clause. Odinga’s words about the evidence are introduced by means of the neutral speech act verb to say, instead of claimed. Note also the intensifying adverb strongly and the adjective massive. Although this is a purely political conflict, it is conceptualized as a war by the figurative expression of retreating to the trenches. In the same newspaper, ‘the polls’ are further discredited by bringing in critical statements by the US State Department and the EU, both considered as unimpeachable and authoritative sources. In the DN report the disputes around the election are not addressed. But they are in other articles in the newspaper. On the same page as the included news report, a newspaper article is published about the EU EOM press conference with the title ‘Poll results doctored, say EU observers’ (see appendix IX). That is a major reason why newspaper texts should not be studied in isolation.

Finally, in both the national and the international press the election is seen as the immediate cause of the violence in the country. In the ST it is explicitly written that the “acts of violence [are] linked to protests against the President’s re-election”. In the DN a survivor of the Kiambaa tragedy is quoted saying: “They said we must pay for our decision to vote for President Kibaki”. Also in the international press a strong link is established between the violence and the announcement of the presidential election results by frequently using a temporal adverbial introduced by the conjunction since which gives rise to the presupposition that the presidential election led to the reported violence. This passes over the fact that there were also tensions and violent acts before the elections at campaign rallies and even a few instances of violence during the process of voting (EU EOM 2008: 27), although in comparison to previous elections this violence rate was low. I will go deeper into this link when the journalistic characterization of the violence is discussed in 7.2.1.3.

The violence that erupted when the tally process of the presidential election dragged on and that increased after Kibaki’s precipitous inauguration, put the election, or even the sum of elections, in a bad light. However, as said before, the parliamentary and civic part of the General Election did go smoothly and their outcomes were judged by different observer missions as sufficiently free and fair. Moreover, the presidential election was not all bad. Both American
newspapers rightly note that the election did not start off badly, as a record number of voters came out to vote largely peacefully. For a good understanding, it is important to know that the election process degenerated as tallying began (WP).

To end this discussion about the elections which are part of the political process, one final remark is in order about the imagery in the news discourse. Elections are traditionally and innocently conceptualized as a race, a competition or a contest. Anybody with enough language proficiency and linguistic knowledge easily understands these metaphors as they are meant on a figurative level. But sometimes some people, unwilling or unable to make the conventional interpretations, do not seem to make a distinction between a figurative and a literal level of discourse as social practice. With an explosive situation and frustrated voters who are easily inflamed, it can be questioned whether it was wise of the ST to describe the political disputes and the interactions between government and opposition parties in terms of “retreating to the trenches”, “a long-drawn battle” or “strong-arm tactics” (see also Obonyo & Nyamboga 2011: 98 for a criticism of ‘warlike language’ in the Kenyan press).

7.2.1.2. Categorization of the crisis situation
Subsequently, I looked at the way the situation in general, i.e. the crisis or the totality of conflicts, was described, again starting from the surface level of discourse. Via general descriptions and explicit references to the situation other implicit layers of meaning can be broached. A generalization about the reported situation is often, but not always found in the headline (see 7.3.1.2 for a discussion of the role of headlines). The title of the WP report, for instance, immediately draws the attention to violence; the IN reports on a church massacre, while the TI headline announces a “tribal war”. In the lead the image of doom is repeated and reinforced by the graphic and evaluative adjective bloody. Further in the TI report, the situation in general is categorized by mouth of Red Cross secretary general Abbas Gullet as “a national disaster”. This disaster is the result of the violence that erupted after the election and said to be caused by “tribal resentments” (see 7.2.1.3), so that the conflict in general can be described as “an ethnic conflict”.

This term does not come from the foreign correspondent, but is attributed to a Kenyan anti-corruption campaigner. By literally quoting this, the journalist tries to unload the responsibility of this claim unto his source, though it is less strong than the unattributed term of “tribal war”, which occurs twice in the article. It must be remarked that both the tribal war and the ethnic conflict are not predicated of the situation at the time of writing, but are rather presented as projections to the future. The predicate I can see the beginnings of presupposes that there is not yet a full ethnic conflict, only a conflict in the bud. Similar presuppositions are triggered by the modifying phrase a spectre of and the tentative future tense would collapse (but see 7.3.1.2 for
possible effects of these word choices on the interpretation of the news text). In this way the journalist creates a sense of professional detachment. At the same time he covers himself against critical comments that he categorized the conflict as ethnic. However, the choice of information sources and citations is also significant for the construction of events in news discourse and thus adds to the rise of ideological meanings. Although they might not have been the first people he encountered, surely there must have been other sources available who held different views of the general situation. Here I am not claiming that the foreign correspondent had to be balanced just to be balanced. If ten people are claiming it is an ethnic conflict and only one source is claiming that it is a social conflict, then it is not absolutely necessary to mention the other view. However, as is indicated in chapter 5 and above, the ethnic interpretation was not as generally accepted as is pretended in the TI report. There were enough dissenting views to be taken into account. In both Kenyan newspapers, for instance, the crisis is implicitly categorized as a political conflict by constantly linking it to political intrigues. Furthermore, in the DN a Kenyan witness, Mr Mohamud Jama, does not describe the state of affairs in Eldoret in ethnic terms but as “a critical humanitarian and security situation” with national but also very local aspects. This is in line with the people’s “fear [that] the country is slipping back into the condition of a police state”, as reported in the WP.

Yet Wadhams from the TI preferred to suggest only one interpretation, or did he not? The statement by the anti-corruption campaigner Mwalimu Mati continues:

51) “There’s always been this undercurrent of suspicion, but by and large the poor were just the poor living together. Now the police are ringing those places and not allowing them to leave, so it’s a slaughterhouse situation.”

(TI_50 die in blazing church as spectre of tribal war looms_02/01/2008)

Here the situation in Kenya is not categorized as an election crisis nor as an ethnic conflict, but the troubles are related to the social class of the poor, so a socio-economic interpretation of the violence is implicitly invoked. If the violence is limited to the lower-class areas of Kenya, it puts the professed specter of a national tribal war into perspective. Moreover, in this quote the role of the police in the violence is acknowledged. Their actions contribute to the creation of “a slaughterhouse situation”. It can be inferred that if security forces keep angry voters who feel aggrieved by the ballot rigging inside the slums and prevent them from venting their anger, they are partly responsible for the explosive situation. Although this is only mentioned in passing without any further elaboration, it is an example of how news reports incorporate multiple, even slightly contradictory, meanings, and of how alternative interpretations can be offered in the margin, next to the dominant interpretation of the events. It is not because a dominant reading is suggested, that alternative readings are excluded. Contrary to what Van Ginneken (1998) states, in the international news reports that I studied, only seldom were all elements removed that made
oppositional readings impossible. Nevertheless Mati’s words are recontextualized in such a way that they are in support of the dominant reading of the events. His observation about the beginning ethnic conflict is foregrounded, while his qualification and nuancing comments are backgrounded.

Even more than in the international news reports, in the local press the crisis is mainly linked to the elections. But in the early days after the election, the Kenyan newspapers did not always talk of crisis. In the ST, for instance, the crisis is generically and abstractly referred to as “the post-election chaos” or just as (the) chaos, as is done in the DN subtitle. This lexical choice can be argued to emphasize the disorderliness and incomprehensibility of the events. It touches on another aspect of Kenya’s post-election crisis. Via conversations with various Kenyans, I came to know that a majority of the people did not take part in the violence, as could be inferred from some international news reports with a narrow focus on acts of violence, but that most Kenyans were sincerely shocked and afraid. After the elections when Kenya was in the grip of despair and chaos, there was more anxiety than anger. By the violent acts of a number of people whole communities were terrorized. That is why the ST team wrote that “deaths, destruction and fear reigned in many parts of the country”. The aspect of fear is indirectly activated in the reporting of people fleeing their homes. In the NYT, for instance, Kenya is depicted as “a land of distress”, where “[t]ens of thousands of people have fled their homes, and some are so frightened that they have crossed into Uganda”. This fearful and distressing context can also be evoked in an implicit manner by means of witnesses, as in the Red Cross worker Karanja’s exclamation: “I have cried, I have cried, I have cried” (DN).

7.2.1.3. Depiction of the violence
One of the main themes of the newspaper reports under scrutiny, except the one in the ST, is the burning of the KAG church with the refugees inside in Kiambaa. Though, note that the tragic event in Kiambaa is in most newspapers only used as a peg on which a broader news story about the Kenyan crisis is hung. It is used as an illustration of the violence that struck Kenya at the moment of writing and through this event Kenya’s troubles are interpreted. By means of the following extracts, the entextualization of this violent act can be compared in different newspapers. These extracts show what kind of context is evoked, what is focused on in the news reports and how the atrocity is interpreted (see also the examples in 7.3.1).

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155 “Dominant readings are usually inscribed into [a news item], alternative readings are closed off. Very often the item is stripped of those elements which would make an oppositional reading possible at all” (Van Ginneken 1998: 155).
More than 200 people, mainly Kikuyus, the same tribe as President Mwai Kibaki, were sheltering for safety in the Kenya Assemblies of God church five miles outside Eldoret in the Rift Valley. An armed gang of young men drawn from the Kalenjin, Luhya and Luo tribes ethnic groups [sic] which backed the beaten presidential candidate Raila Odinga stormed the church compound yesterday morning and set it alight. (IN_80 children massacred in Kenyan church_02/01/2008)

A mob of men wielding sticks, spears and machetes set ablaze a church where villagers had sought refuge from Kenya's post-election violence, burning to death at least 35 people, including women and children, according to aid workers and a priest. (WP_Kenyans Killed Fleeing Violence_02/01/2008)

This came on a day the postelection violence that has rocked parts of the country took serious proportions when at least 30 children and 10 adults who had sought refuge in a church were burnt to death in acts of violence linked to protests against the President's re-election. (ST_Peace calls amid continued bloodletting_02/01/2008)

At least 35 people, most of them women and children, died yesterday in Eldoret in the most bizarre killing yet in the ongoing post-election violence. (DN_35 burnt in church: Raid on church leaves 35 dead as chaos spreads_02/01/2008)

If not explicitly labeled, it can be inferred from the contextualization how the violence is (to be) understood, especially from the representation of the social actors involved (see 7.2.2.2). In 7.2.1.1 it was pointed out that the elections were often stated as the main reason for the violence, but it was not specified what kind of violence was linked to the election.

In (52) the violence is not explicitly generalized. However, in the description of the violent acts, viz. the storming and burning of the church, the violence is implicitly linked to the presidential election through the representation of the victims and perpetrators of the violence (see below). Next to the elections, the context of ethnic conflict is evoked. Further down the report this connection is made more explicitly: “Ethnic violence has swept through Kenya since Mwai Kibaki was controversially announced as the winner of last Thursday's presidential election”. Again in the subsequent paragraph “post-election riots” are linked to “clashes which have become increasingly tribal”, presupposing that they have always been tribal, though to a lesser extent. In support the politicians’ dangerous high rhetoric of ‘genocide’ and ‘ethnic violence’ is copied. In addition, the violence is more or less clearly localized. The KAG church is located “five miles outside Eldoret in the Rift Valley”, and also other centers of violence “in Kisumu on the shores of Lake Victoria” and “in the slums of Nairobi” are spatially situated. However, this is as far as the spatial contextualization goes. The local dynamics of the conflicts remains out of sight, as the violence is mainly seen through a national lens, as triggered by events in the capital of Nairobi where the journalist is based. Only readers with a lot of foreknowledge can infer that the different conflicts have also other than ethnic aspects. For many readers Eldoret, Rift Valley or Kisumu are empty proper names.
Next to the reporting of the crime of arson, the violence is generally labeled as post-election violence in (53). Through the localization of the crime scene in Eldoret or “the volatile city in western Kenya, which has been swept by ethnically charged attacks since Thursday’s disputed election”, the burning of the church as post-election violence is implicitly connected to ethnic violence. A few more things must be remarked. First of all, this localization is confusing, because geographically Eldoret might be in the west of Kenya, geopolitically it lies in Rift Valley province and not in Western province (see appendix XI). Although the arson was triggered by the turbulence around the rigged presidential election, there were a lot of local Rift Valley aspects that played a role and which are obscured by such a localization. The same confusion could arise in the NYT where Kiambaa is described as “a small village in western Kenya”. Secondly, that Eldoret was plagued by ethnically charged attacks is not asserted but presupposed in the relative clause. Readers are encouraged to take it for granted without much further proof or explanation. They need to accommodate this information in order to follow the dominant reading of the events as ethnic violence. Thirdly, running ahead of 7.2.2.2, although the article clearly identifies the victims of the violence as Kikuyus, the reader has to do a lot more processing effort to work out that the attackers of the church are Kalenjins. First it is reported that “[t]he church burning was part of a wave of violence generally pitting Kikuyus […] against Odinga’s ethnic group, the Luo, and other tribes who sided with him to oust what they consider entrenched Kikuyu power”. Hasty ‘inferers’ could conclude that it were Luos who burnt the KAG church, which is reinforced by the subsequent paragraph in which again Kikuyus are played out against Luos, offering quite a simplistic picture of Kenya’s multi-ethnic society. Six paragraphs later Eldoret is described as “the homeland of the Kalenjin tribe, which has tended to support Odinga”. Thanks to this contextual information, it can be inferred that Kalenjins constituted the “mob of men wielding sticks, spears and machetes” which set the church in fire.

Although an ethnic frame of interpretation seems to be dominant, McCrummen from the WP opens up some alleys to other explanatory factors. By referring to the perception of “entrenched Kikuyu power” and by indicating that ‘non-Kikuyu people’ often feel that Kenya’s wealth has mainly benefited the Kikuyus, she suggests that there are socio-economic factors at play in the violent crisis. Moreover, by reference to ethnic clashes in the region of Eldoret in the 1990s she also brings in a historical context. However, although this context creates opportunities for a better understanding of what is going on, it is only mentioned and not elaborated. People with short memories or little knowledge of Kenya’s history and politics are left wondering why hundreds of Kikuyus were killed and thousands more displaced in the 1990s and what it has to do with the 2008 violence. Any links to Kenya’s colonial past, difficulties with social integration in settlement schemes or state-sponsored violence to keep the Moi regime in power that can be established by some readers are always implicit. The explicit mention of foregoing ‘ethnic
clashes’ is what guides the interpretation of all other newspaper readers. Almost the same can be said of the NYT report where there is also a reference to “tribal clashes surrounding the 1992 and 1997 elections” to support the underlying claim that it concerns typical post-election violence and in a country “where politics and tribe are so intertwined” this comes down to ethnic violence. The NYT gives a little bit more context – at least we now know that the ‘ethnic clashes’ McCrummen in the WP referred to occurred in the context of elections – but again the past violence is not illuminated. Just as in the WP, it is not explained what exactly happened in 1992 and 1997 and why these clashes were ‘tribal’. Since it is not substantiated, it has to be assumed they were tribal.

In the Kenyan ST the violence gets the general label of post-election and any link to ethnic violence is absent (see example 54). On the contrary, the acts of violence are explicitly linked to protests against the president’s re-election. As such, the violence receives a political explanation. To be precise, the violence is linked to national politics. By a layered presuppositional structure, it is presented as a background to events on the high political plane, such as peace calls by prominent politicians, the standoff between PNU and ODM, the election observers’ conclusions and the then British PM Gordon Brown’s call to Odinga. Note that this is the only news report in that day’s edition that deals with the Kiambaa tragedy, which is also telling. In (54) the main point of the utterance is expressed in a presuppositional structure (a complex temporal clause), which makes that the meanings expressed cannot be regarded as true presuppositions, because but the information that (i) the post-election violence has rocked parts of the country, (ii) that it took serious proportions, and (iii) that at least 30 children and 10 adults were burnt to death is new information that is conveyed in an explicit way. Grammatically, this structure could be considered as a presupposition, but pragmatically it is not (see the discussion in 6.2.3.2). This shows that journalists can use presuppositional linguistic structures in a variety of ways, not just as background structures or conveyors of common ground, but even to express new information that is asserted rather than presupposed, because conventional ways of using language can always be creatively exploited.

Even more than in the international reports, in this newspaper article all local aspects are obscured and left highly implicit. Except for emphasizing that the violence has affected only “parts of the country”, the report hardly contains any clear references or spatial deixis. Curiously, only in the adjoining picture the church and the place (Eldoret instead of more specific Kiambaa) are identified. When the actual incident is tackled in the text, the vague adverbial in a church renders the locality indefinite. Further on, only in the reference to “a veteran Rift Valley politician” is the spatial context of the conflict province made clear.

In contrast, the villages of Kimuri and Kiambaa are clearly localized and the pentecostal church is explicitly mentioned in the DN report. This enables many Kenyan readers to infer the
fighting parties in the absence of explicit ethnic tags. So, on the implicit level the ethnic factor is present. But on the explicit level the violence is linked to the post-election turmoil with the unconventional adjective *bizarre* stressing the strangeness and unusualness of the event. The superlative presupposes that it is not the only ‘bizarre killing’. To entextualize the ferocious attack as a bizarre killing is part of a euphemistic writing strategy, which is continued throughout the article. Elsewhere, violence is euphemistically described as ‘skirmishes’, ‘protests’ or ‘riots’. In that way all distinction is lost for the audience between rightful protest, small-scale rioting out of discontent, criminal behavior like looting or destruction of property, and downright deadly clashes. Also in the WP “riots, protests and ethnic clashes” are lumped together. The use of a hedge like *a mix of* can prevent unwarranted generalizations. In the NYT the violence is generally qualified as “a mix of hooliganism, political protest and ethnic bloodletting”. Unfortunately the explanation of the hooliganism and political protest is not in proportion to the spotlighting of the ethnic aspect. In the DN subtitle the attack on the KAG church is described as a raid. Depending on the readers, this noun can have at least two interpretations. Either it calls up the context of war where an enemy can be raided, or it could be associated with criminal behavior. For both interpretations, there are supporting elements in the text. For instance, the youthful attackers are reported to have chanted war songs, but they are also criminalized when they are represented as marauding, while their actions are linked to other criminal acts of looting and the destruction of property. Although in the other newspapers, references to violence are not limited to manslaughter – in the IN, TI and NYT, for instance, destruction of property and looting are reported – the DN report places more emphasis on the humanitarian and economic aspects of the human and material damages. The burning down of shops, while other supermarkets remained barricaded, leads to “serious shortage of food and water”.

Next to violence between ordinary Kenyans, violence was also exercised by law enforcement troops. The IN reported that “[p]aramilitary police have fired on Mr Odinga’s supporters” in Kisumu and in the Nairobi slums. Consistent with the dominant interpretation suggested in this article, even violence between police and protesters is put in a tribal frame: “The security forces are becoming increasingly divided along ethnic lines. Kalenjin army officers were said to be taking to the streets of Eldoret joining in the attacks on Kikuyus”. Another way of describing the clashes between police and protesters is to present the events as a battle between government agents and opposition supporters. This is done in the ST. The government-issued ban to enter Uhuru Park in Nairobi, where the opposition intended to gather and protest against the rigged elections, is alternately called “police ban”, thus implicitly pinpointing the police as working in the service of the elite government instead of the people. Also the statement of the government spokesman Alfred Mutua that the police would clamp down on anyone who considers a public manifestation establishes such a link. Moreover, when Odinga is quoted saying that “[t]he work
of the police is to provide security”, the implicature can be derived that the police is responsible for the insecurity and that they should not interfere with peaceful protest. In the TI the security forces are first presented as protectors instead of perpetrators of violence: “police fire teargas and live rounds to keep them [rival gangs of slum dwellers] out of the city”. Also in the DN the police is positively represented with police stations as places of refuge. Through later quotes in the TI from Kibera businessman Morris Otieno and the anti-corruption campaigner Mati, it can be inferred that the police’s violent hindrance of peaceful protest was a contributing factor of violence (see also 7.2.1.2 above). The role of the police in the Kiambaa tragedy is not directly addressed. However, the unwillingness, incompetence and failure of the security forces in Eldoret region is hinted at in the TI, where it is stated that “there was no sign that security forces were willing, or able, to bring the rampaging mobs under control”, and in the NYT as well which reported that “[t]here were no police officers around, witnesses said, and no water to put the fire out”. This analysis of the role of the police is already a kind of social actors analysis, so that it is again shown that it is artificial to separate the different foci of investigation.

Analyses such as the ones above, but also those in the following section cry for nuancing, which is provided in 7.3.2. In the next chapter the analyses, interpretation, perspectivization and counterscreening will be more integrated.

7.2.1.4. Mediation and peace
Although it does not really show from the above articles, the search for a solution out of the crisis and the various appeals for peace are a third topical domain that runs through the newspaper texts in the corpus as a whole. At the time when the articles were written there were a lot of appeals for peace, as is reported in the ST, not only by the leading politicians or the international community, as is stated in the WP, but also by the Kenyan clergy, NGO’s, civil society organizations, etc. These local actors tend to be excluded by the international press. In general, appeals to peace are only mentioned in passing in the international newspaper reports. In the Kenyan newspapers more attention is paid to such appeals, so that they feature in the ST headline and in the DN two out of four summarizing bullets are peace calls: “ODM asks its supporters to stop killing political opponents”, which contains the presupposition that ODM supporters are killing political opponents, and “UN calls for end to carnage”, again with the presupposition that a carnage is going on. Note that the latter is an evaluative categorization that is not literally repeated in any of the following articles in that day’s newspaper. It is a journalistic interpretation of a press briefing from the office of the UN Secretary General, released on 31 December 2007, in which no such language is used. Of course, this word choice guides the readers’ frame of interpretation, especially when they read that youths chanting war songs burnt

down a church where women and children were hiding. By the juxtaposition in the bullet points the killing of political opponents by ODM supporters is evaluated as a carnage. It may seem that the DN has less attention for peace calls than the ST, as appears from the attached articles, but it suffices to look at the surrounding articles in the newspaper to deny that claim. On the same front-page where the Kiambaa bloodbath is announced, the DN ran an editorial urging Kenyans and their leaders to “give peace a chance” (see appendix IX), and between the front-page announcement and the rest of the Kiambaa news story, the second page of the newspaper is full of peace calls (cf. DN_World reacts to Kenya’s crisis_02/01/2008 and DN_Leaders need to meet and call for calm_02/01/2008).

In several news reports the contradictory attitude of the high-level political players is more or less implicitly intimated. On the one hand, they made calls for peace in the media; on the other hand, they kept waging a verbal war and some reports even suggest that they further incited their supporters in the backrooms in order to keep up the pressure or to stay in power. The ST starts its news report by stating that calls for peace did not obtain any hearing. The question why this is so is not explicitly answered but can be inferred from the following sentences.

56) But even as calls for peace rang loud across the political divide, with top Party of National of Unity (PNU) and Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) politicians calling for a ceasefire, a new standoff was unfolding. A newly sworn-in President Kibaki and Mr Raila Odinga […] retreated to the trenches.

(ST_Peace calls amid continued bloodletting_02/01/2008)

The contrastive temporal clause in (11), introduced by the conjunctions but as and reinforced by the adverb even strongly implies a contradiction between the called-for ceasefire and the actual behavior of the politicians which came down to bitter adversity, refusing to talk to each other and retreating to the trenches. Political reconciliation rhetoric is not reported in the IN, but the inciting accusations between Odinga and government ministers guide the readers to the implicature that the politicians are not helping cool down the situation. See also the TI report.

7.2.2. Representation of social actors

7.2.2.1. Quarrelling politicians

After coding in NVivo the thematic units to study the categorizations of the elections, the crisis, the violence and the attempts at a peaceful solution, I analyzed within the coded text fragments how the social actors involved in the reported events were represented. Van Leeuwen’s socio-semantic categories proved to be useful as analytical categories (see 6.2.2). The main (political) actors throughout the corpus are the two pretenders to the presidency, Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga. The two leading politicians are in each of the articles personalized and determined in Van Leeuwen’s terminology. In the local as well as the foreign newspapers they are represented
as quarrelling agitators who trade accusations of election rigging, genocide and tribal favouritism, often by means of reported speech from press meetings or official statements (cf. supra). However, in line with the typical contradictoriness of news discourse and the journalistic resistance to absolute interpretations, both politicians are also sometimes (implicitly) represented as reconcilers or healers of the nation, e.g. when Kibaki is reported to have called for a meeting with all political parties to appeal for calm (TI) or when Odinga is reported to have urged his supporters to calm down (NYT). Compare to ST and DN (especially Kibaki’s New Year message in the ST).

In the American and British newspapers both Kibaki and Odinga tend to be introduced into the news discourse as tribal politicians. In the IN report Kibaki is not just functionalized as president, which is Kibaki’s most frequent representation. The apposition to Kikuyus in (7) evokes the presupposition that Kibaki is a Kikuyu. The same strategy of ethnic classification is used when it is reported that “Kikuyus, the largest of Kenya’s 42 tribes, and the ethnic group of Mr Kibaki, have been fleeing their homes” (IN). Through the genitive in “Mr Kibaki’s Kikuyu people”, Kibaki is represented by means of his ethnicity in the TI report. Such identifications by association also occur in the NYT and the WP (e.g. “Kibaki’s ethnic group, the Kikuyu”). In that way, Kibaki’s primary identification in Van Leeuwen’s sense is ethnic and he is presented in the news discourse as representative of and representative for the Kikuyu people (see 4.2.2.1). By introducing Kibaki as a Kikuyu and describing the Kikuyu as Kibaki’s ethnic group, this one man comes to epitomize the whole community. Moreover, by ethnic affiliation he is immediately linked to (the victims of) the violence, who are ethnically represented (see 7.2.2.2). Also in the Kenyan newspapers, Kibaki is linked to the violence, not directly through his ethnicity, but through his voters, thus through his functionalization. In the DN a survivor of the Kiambaa killings testifies: “They said we must pay for our decision to vote for President Kibaki” (cf. supra). In this formulation it is suggested they were killed because they supported Kibaki, which is different than claiming that they were killed because of their ethnicity. Nevertheless, it must be granted that a Kenyan reader knows Kibaki’s ethnicity, so that he or she could always make the latter inference (see 7.3.1.2).

In a similar way, Odinga and the Luos are reciprocally characterized (e.g. “Odinga’s ethnic group, the Luo” in the WP). Odinga is indirectly represented as an inciter of ethnic violence through government accusations of genocide reported in the IN, though he returns the accusation. He is also indirectly associated to the perpetrators of the Kiambaa violence, who are first identified as tribesmen and then as supporters of Odinga. A similar strategy is used in the NYT where only the Luos of the alleged mob are modified by “Mr. Odinga’s tribe”, while the

137 Kibaki’s representation as president can also be interpreted as a titulation, more precisely a honorification, to apply Van Leeuwen’s framework.
Kalenjins are not described as William Ruto’s tribe, nor the Luhyas as Mudavadi’s tribe. Yet both were high-profile ODM politicians. The former is the MP for North Eldoret constituency and the leading politician of the North Rift region. On 23 January 2012 he was officially charged by the International Criminal Court in The Hague (see 7.1.1.2). The latter was Odinga’s running mate in 2007 and was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Local Government from 2008 till 2012. These and other political actors are excluded in the international news reports. In the ST report they do get a stage, first by means of nomination and then in a collectivized way as ‘Pentagon members’.

In the ST newspaper and to a lesser extent in the DN, Odinga is called by his first name. At first, I interpreted this as a token of affection or familiarity, because leading politicians, such as Barack (Obama), David (Cameron) or Mwai (Kibaki), are not usually addressed by their first name. However, upon asking at the Kenyan newsrooms, I found out that Odinga is commonly known as Raila, which came first into use to avoid confusion with his relatives in politics, especially his famous father, Oginga Odinga when they were both politically active in the same party. Strictly speaking, such a representation is an informalization in Van Leeuwen’s framework, but in the case of Odinga it adds little extra meaning in contrast to Kibaki whose last name is always used. Odinga is called Raila by both friends and foes, in both formal and informal contexts (see government spokesman Mutua’s quote in the NYT).

Evidently, both Kibaki and Odinga are also represented as politicians participating in the elections. Kibaki is mostly represented by means of functionalization as “the Head of State” (ST) or categorized as a (re-)elected politician, especially in the Kenyan newspapers, as the international newspapers often have more specific representations (see below). Through the phrase “Mr Kibaki’s Party of National Unity” he is also functionalized as a member of the PNU in the TI report. Odinga is represented as “the opposition leader who lost the election” (NYT) or the “opposition candidate” (TI, WP). Such a representation could possibly be misleading, because it could give rise to the implicature that there was only one opposition (party) in Kenya, one opposition candidate in the presidential election and one leader of that opposition. Admittedly, Odinga was Kibaki’s main challenger, but Kenya’s political landscape is much more diverse than the above generalizations suggest. In the WP Kenya’s politics is simplified to two political blocs, one forming the government and the other the opposition. This can be justified in view of the American or British audiences who are familiar with such a political system and who would be distracted by more details, but it does not fully do justice to the complex reality of Kenya’s politics.

When the context of the election campaign is recalled, the WP writes that “Odinga would end tribal favoritism”. This implies that he stands above the tribes and is a national politician. That contrasts with his identification as a Luo, but it is confirmed by noting that other tribes, such as
the Kalenjins, sided with him. In contrast, in the WP report, as in the other foreign reports, only Kikuyus are mentioned as backing Kibaki, obscuring the fact that he also got a lot of support from the Kisii, the Meru and others who are not represented but excluded. Also note the slightly different recontextualization in the NYT where it is reported that Odinga “promised to end the tradition of Kikuyu favoritism”. Apart from presupposing that there is a tradition of Kikuyu favoritism, which was still reported as a widely held perception or attributed to certain sources in earlier NYT reports, this recontextualization generates different meanings. First of all, the Kikuyus are explicitly targeted. Secondly, this specific phrasing leaves the interpretation open that Odinga may end Kikuyu favoritism, but not other kinds of tribal (e.g. Luo) favoritism.

Although there was proof of rigging and the final results were flawed, the press is wired to write about elections in terms of winners and losers. Thus, Odinga was represented as “the beaten presidential candidate” (IN) and Kibaki was systematically represented as the winner, albeit of contested elections. In both the national and the international press Kibaki is implicitly represented as a vote rigger or cheater (see also 7.2.1.1). In the IN he is represented as the winner of a controversial presidential election, which contains a negative appraisement. He is the implicit agent of ‘stolen’ in the TI report. The presupposition that Odinga is robbed of the presidency, as expressed in (50), contains a metaphor that can give rise to the implicature that Kibaki is a thief, which perfectly fitted intertextually in the rhetoric that the ODM employed at that time. This meaning is incorporated in the NYT report by the statement that Odinga’s vanishing lead was seen as “slow-motion theft”. Even though the nominalization of theft backgrounds the social actors involved, it is clear from the context that Kibaki (or his party) is implicated. Also the quote by the ‘ODM Pentagon’, with which the ST report closes (see 60 below), presupposes that Kibaki obtained the presidency in a fraudulent way. There, Kibaki is not presented as the agent, but the beneficiary of the act of rigging, while the ECK is accused as the agent of the fraud. In the NYT it is the president’s reported refusal of an inquiry into the election and the election observers’ statement that “the president’s party had changed tally sheets”, which can lead to the inference that he was involved in practices of rigging and which makes explicit the excluded actors of the nominalization ballot rigging. In the WP the implicit representation of Kibaki as a fraudster can be derived from the following interpretive association: “In eight other constituencies, election officials refused to show European observers their tallies. The bulk of the problems occurred in Kibaki’s home province”. This report is the only one that mentions local election officials as the agents of rigging, although in an indeterminate way (see also “an election officer”). These important actors in the tally process are

138 In this account of how I went about in the pragmatic analysis of the newspaper reports, repetition is unavoidable.
backgrounded or even completely excluded in the other international news reports (not so in other articles in the Kenyan newspapers of that day).

Contrary to Kibaki, Odinga did a lot of talking after the elections, which was partly reported by means of speech act verbs in the news discourse. In the international press the neutral verb to say was the most common speech act verb to introduce his indirect speech (the only verb used in the IN, 2 out of 4 in the TI and NYT and 1 of 2 in the WP). In the DN report Odinga is not performed, but in the ST his discursive actions are not so neutrally recontextualized. By means of speech act verbs, such as to reel out, to set terms, to demand, to insist and to declare, Odinga is implicitly represented as a determined and persistent, but also impatient person.

Due to the different background knowledge of the readers, representations of social actors, such as the principal politicians, require more words in the genre of the foreign news reports than in the national press coverage, where the representations of Kibaki or Odinga are rather limited or largely implicit. That is why some representations are almost exclusively found in the foreign press. A recurrent one is the functionalization of Kibaki as an economist, referring to his university education and his years of service as Minister for Finance under Moi. This can be done either explicitly, as will be shown in 8.1.1.2, or implicitly as in “Mr Kibaki, 76, […] is credited with turning the country into an East African economic powerhouse” (TI) or “Mr. Kibaki, 76, vowed to keep growing Kenya’s economy” (NYT). These fragments also mention Kibaki’s age, which is an implicit classification of Kibaki as an aged man, which does not have the positive, respectful connotation as the Kiswahili word mzee has in Kenya. In some representations, whether or not attributed, Kibaki is even presented as a dinosaur of Kenyan politics with a pejorative connotation. For instance, in the TI, Odinga is quoted saying that “President Kibaki represents the old leadership, that old dictatorial leadership that is on its way out of Africa […] the endangered species of leadership that belongs to the museum”. Here the suggestion that Kibaki is a dictator is added to the representation that he is an old man.

Odinga’s age is also sometimes given (see TI and NYT), either in contrast to Kibaki or to present him too as an old stager of Kenyan politics. Further, Odinga is explicitly represented as “a champion of the poor” (NYT), or implicitly when reference is made to the “volatile slums that are Odinga strongholds” (WP). In the TI it is explained that the “main constituency of Mr Odinga, 62, is the Kibera slum”. This is an example of a kind of distortion that is not uncommon in international press reporting. Rhetorically, it could be called a pars pro toto, since Odinga is the MP for Lang’ata. This constituency indeed comprises Kibera, but also the quarters of Karen and Lang’ata, some of the most affluent suburbs in Nairobi. Before Odinga, Philip Leakey, the son of the paleontologists Louis and Mary Leakey, was the Lang’ata MP (1979-1992). He does not live in the slums, neither does Odinga. In the WP, Odinga is further represented by means of two presuppositions triggered by the non-restrictive relative clause as a warrior who fought
former president Moi and as a former political prisoner who “was jailed for advocating multiparty democracy”. These promote a positive picture of Odinga. Others would say he was imprisoned for his involvement in the 1982 coup and for subversive activities (e.g. TI_Ruthless leader Odinga battles to save 'rightful' victory_04/01/2008).

7.2.2.2. Victims and perpetrators of violence

Next to the elections and the subsequent political standoff, the other main topic of the selected news reports is violence with special attention for the burning of the KAG church in Kiambaa. Typically, for the dramatic effect headlines feature victims instead of perpetrators of violence, the NYT headline being an exception. In the headlines the victims are variously identified as “80 children” (IN), “50” (TI), “dozens” (NYT), “Kenyans” (WP) and “35” (DN). Although headlines are not always representative for the bulk of the article (see 7.3.1.2), the four main representational strategies to refer to the victims or perpetrators of violence are present: indetermination, classification, collectivization and aggregation. It seems to be an attested informational strategy to first refer to the number of victims (aggregation), sometimes in combination with classification by ethnicity, age or gender, but always in general without specification (indetermination) or as a collectivity (collectivization). After such general introductions more specification is brought into the representations in compliance with the inverted pyramid principle. Also the perpetrators of violence are first indeterminate or collectivized (e.g. “a mob”, “a furious crowd”), less frequently aggregated (but see “200 marauding youths” in the DN), before they are specified in the remainder of the text. Of course, these strategies are often combined. For instance, “35 people” (DN, WP) is a combination of aggregation with an indeterminate collectivization, and “30 children and 10 adults” (ST) combines the representational strategy of aggregation and indeterminate classification by age, while the description of the quantified youths in the DN as marauding adds an appraisement to their categorization as criminals.

The victims of the church burning are classified as “mostly women and children” (DN, IN, NYT, WP). This already can be argued to imply that they are innocent and defenseless. That picture is reinforced by their representation as refugees. By means of juxtaposition the “35 burnt alive” of the main headline on the front-page of the DN are identified as “refugee seekers”. In the NYT, they are referred to as “[d]ozens of people seeking refuge in a church”. They can also be implicitly represented as refugees by means of their actions, when it is predicated of the victims that they sought refuge (DN, ST, IN, TI, WP). In the DN these refugees are clearly localized as “residents of two villages in Eldoret South constituency” and as the “Kiambaa and Kimuri villagers”. In the NYT the victims are localized through the localization of “the Kenya Assemblies of God church in Kiambaa, a small village near the town of Eldoret”. In the other
news reports they are situated in “the Eldoret area” (WP) in Rift Valley province. More context about this location is not provided, neither in the local, nor in the foreign press.

The perpetrators of the violence are represented in the DN as youths who chanted war songs, implicitly characterizing them as warriors. They are also-called “the killers”, highlighting their criminal behavior. This is also done in the IN when the attackers are described as “marauding gangs”. By means of an indeterminate collectivization, the NYT speaks of “a rowdy mob”, while the WP defines them as a “mob of men wielding sticks, spears and machetes”, evoking a primitive, barbaric context. In the latter newspaper, they are also-called “roving gangs” or “gang members”, which activates a criminal context. While the survivors of the violence are abundantly quoted, in none of the newspapers do we get to hear a voice of the attackers or their associates. So, their representation in the news discourse is largely dependent on how the victims see them. That is a hiatus in the reporting, because one side of the conflict is overrepresented. It must be acknowledged that it was difficult to speak to the perpetrators of the violence, but it can also be noted that BBC journalist Harter did succeed in interviewing a few of the actors involved (see 7.1.1.2).

One of the most striking differences between the national and the international press has to do with the way in which the general, introductory representations of the victims and perpetrators of violence are further specified. Consider the following newspaper clippings.

57) According to a survivor, Mr Joseph Kamande, 47, the killers accused those camping in the church of having voted for President Mwai Kibaki. [...] Mr Kamande said he was lucky to be alive after he fell into a ditch, leading the killers to believe he had died. But he lost his wife, three children and two grand-children in the incident. Another survivor, Mrs Elizabeth Wangui Kimunya, 102, had gone to answer a call of nature when the attack occurred. Peter Munderu, 44, said he lost his three children.
(DN_35 burnt in church: Raid on church leaves 35 dead as chaos spreads_02/01/2008)

58) “We are easy targets,” said Stephen Kahianyu, a Kikuyu, staring at the embers of his home in Nairobi that was burned to the ground on Saturday. Over the past few days, Kikuyus have fled to police stations and churches for protection. On Monday night, several hundred Kikuyus barricaded themselves inside the Kenya Assemblies of God church in Kiambaa, a small village near the town of Eldoret. The next morning, a rowdy mob showed up. According to witnesses, the mob was mostly Kalenjins, Luhyas and Luos, Mr. Odinga’s tribe.
(NYT_080102_Mob Sets Kenya Church on Fire, killing dozens)

59) Witnesses said most of the business properties owned by Kikuyus had been burnt down. The marauding gangs were now attacking residential areas. "They stormed our house at night and burnt everything," said Margaret Wanjiru, a Kikuyu.
(IN_80 children massacred in Kenyan church_02/01/2008)

60) Anne Njoki, 28, had fled her home in the slums after she saw her fellow Kikuyus being attacked and their homes looted.
(TI_50 die in blazing church as spectre of tribal war looms_02/01/2008)
In the DN there are no explicit references to the ethnicity of the victims, nor to that of the killers, although there was clearly an ethnic aspect involved. Witness Kamande is not explicitly identified as a Kikuyu; he is only classified by means of gender and age and through his reported speech he is categorized as a voter for Kibaki.

Contrary to the victims, who are represented by means of nomination, the perpetrators of the violence are not specified, but are only represented by means of indetermination and collectivization, so that Kenyan readers could only guess their ethnicity. In the ST even less information is provided about the victims and the agents of violence are excluded altogether by means of passive constructions. Also the offenders in other parts of the country are not nominated in the Kenyan newspapers. Rather, they are represented as criminals (rioters, looters) or as “protesters [who] burnt down several residential and commercial buildings in the town” (DN). By such a representation the protesters against the rigged election are implicitly categorized as arsonists. Firstly, this representational strategy excludes peaceful protesters. Secondly, it passes over the fact that violence is usually a two-way affair. Peaceful protesters do not just turn violent, if there is no provocation, unless they are not protesters, but “tribal militias” as in the NYT. As indicated above, also in the ST the acts of violence in Kiambaa are not presented as being directed against one ethnic community, but they are linked to protests against Kibaki’s re-election (see above).

Since readers in Europe or the US cannot infer Kenyans’ ethnicity from their names, victims and perpetrators of violence are consistently categorized by means of their ethnic affiliation. This can be straightforward as in “John Mburu, a lawyer and a Kikuyu” (a nomination + functionalization + classification) or it can be more implicit as when in (61) the possessive pronoun and the relational noun fellow lead to the inference that Anne Njoki is a Kikuyu. Note that all of the victims portrayed in the British newspaper reports are Kikuyus. Also in the American newspaper articles most of the cited actors involved in the violence are identified as Kikuyus. But in both the NYT and the WP it is acknowledged that not only Kikuyus are killed. In the NYT, it is reported that “a much-feared Kikuyu street gang called the Mungiki seems to be taking revenge”: “According to residents in a Luo area, the Mungiki, who are said to take an oath in which they drink human blood, were sweeping through the slums and killing Luos”. In the WP it is reported that “Luos in some Kikuyu-dominated areas say they have been targeted with violence and told to leave. In areas where Kikuyus are not dominant, such as Eldoret, many Kikuyus say they are being driven out”. In such reporting a polarization is created between Luos...
and Kikuyus in correspondence to the political battle between Kibaki and Odinga, while excluding many other actors involved.

7.3. Interpretation and discussion

7.3.1. Context and ideology

7.3.1.1. The interplay between the explicit and the implicit

In this section the analyses made above will be further interpreted and discussed, taking different sources of ethnographic information into account. In 7.1 the historical, socio-cultural and political context of the reported events was outlined as well as some aspects of the context of research. In 7.2 the intertextual discursive context, especially the textual-linguistic context and the co-text, became clear. Through references to value-laden terms, conceptualizations, frames of interpretation and emotional language use also aspects of cognitive context were evoked. In the discussion of ideological aspects of the news discourse under study some more aspects of cognitive context will come to light. At this stage also the institutional context of production and reception is brought into the ethnographically-supported pragmatic analysis.

In the analyses above we saw that discursive meanings arise in the interplay between explicit assertions and implicit assumptions. Explicit statements build on implicit propositions and are anchored into a common ground, which is not explicated, but taken for granted. That is the essence of communication. Compare (62) to example (52) which is here repeated as (63).

62) At least 35 people, most of them women and children, died yesterday in Eldoret in the most bizarre killing yet in the ongoing post-election violence. They were killed when more than 200 youths burnt down a church where residents of two villages in Eldoret South constituency had sought refuge.

(DN_35 burnt alive in church: Raid on church leaves 35 dead as chaos spreads_02/01/2008)

63) More than 200 people, mainly Kikuyus, the same tribe as President Mwai Kibaki, were sheltering for safety in the Kenya Assemblies of God church five miles outside Eldoret in the Rift Valley. An armed gang of young men drawn from the Kalenjin, Luhya and Luo tribes ethnic groups [sic] which backed the beaten presidential candidate Raila Odinga stormed the church compound yesterday morning and set it alight.

(IN_80 children massacred in Kenyan church_02/01/2008)

Typically, first the scene is set explicitly and the fundaments of a frame of interpretation are lain by providing information that satisfies the six content questions that can be found in any journalism textbook: who (typically in the subject slot, but also possible as (in)direct object or in the agentive phrase), what (typically realized by the verb or wider predicate), where and when (typically realized by adverbials), why and how (typically realized by adverbials or larger
argumentation patterns). What is explicitly communicated in (62)? At least 35 people (who) died (what) yesterday (when) in Eldoret (where) in a killing (what, how) during post-election violence (what, why). Implicit assumptions, such as the one that there is violence going on which started after the election, support the information at the explicit level. Or, they can add to the common ground and the frame of interpretation. In (62) it is presented as a background assumption that most of the victims are women and children, evoking the context of vulnerable, defenseless people. In the interplay between explicit and implicit meanings ideological aspects of news discourse can come to the fore.

It is further explicitly communicated that these people were killed during a certain incident, *i.e.* the 200 youths are not directly identified as the agents of the act of killing. They do not appear in an agentive *by*-phrase, but in a presuppositional temporal clause with an implicit causative meaning aspect. Of course, readers automatically make the connection between the youths as murderers when we connect explicit to implicit information. In contrast, in (63) the explicit content that 200 people where sheltering for safety in the KAG church when an armed gang of young men from the Kalenjin, Luhya and Luo tribes stormed the compound and set it alight, is complemented by the (presupposed or is it asserted) background information that the victims were mainly Kikuyus and that these people belong to the tribe of president Kibaki. The agents of the violence are implicitly represented as Odinga supporters. Moreover, implicitly, a frame of reference is created of a country where people are living in tribes or where people’s primary identity is tribal. The picture is that of a tribal war (see example 64) instead of an incident.

However, a skeptical reader of this analysis might object that there is no difference in the way the events are reported, because in (63) the violence is also linked to the presidential election (candidates) and that it is the analyst’s interpretation that the DN would depict the Kiambaa killings as an extraordinary and extravagant incident, contrary to the IN where the tragedy would be put it in a general frame of nationwide ethnic fighting (*cf.* “the nationwide death toll”). To counteract such fruitless discussion and to minimize the impression of speculation on the part of the researcher I started to study the news production context and talked to correspondents and editors in order to see whether my interpretations of the news discourse would be reinforced or should be nuanced. In this case I found some support for the above interpretation. Asked what he thought was the biggest difference between Kenyan and international press coverage of the post-election crisis, ST chief political editor Agina told me: “foreign media are concentrating more on violence and try to bring this ethnic aspect of it, but the local media were focusing on incidents, but not on tribal issues, incidents only”.139

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139 Personal interview with Ben Agina on 22 November 2008.
With respect to the explicit-implicit interface, the three (sometimes overlapping) uses of presuppositional structures that were established in 6.2.3.2 could be distinguished in the above news reports. First, there is the default use of presupposition as a background assumption, when the information expressed in a presuppositional structure is (presumed to be) part of the common ground. The presuppositions in (64) that Kibaki was announced as the winner of the presidential election and that this election took place last Thursday are illustrative.

64) Ethnic violence has swept through Kenya since Mwai Kibaki was controversially announced as the winner of last Thursday's presidential election.
   (IN_80 children massacred in Kenyan church_02/01/2008)

Presupposition is used most frequently in such a manner. Often what is presupposed is information that has been reported in earlier news articles. Then presupposition is used to refresh the readers’ memory. After all, journalists are never certain about what the readers already (or still) know, so they always have to weigh new and old information. They only recycle old information, usually in implicit layers of meaning, that they deem relevant or necessary for the interpretation of the new information, which makes even these uses of presupposition ideological in a way. Another example of this use of presupposition is “Kenya’s president, Mwai Kibaki, who won the election by a razor-thin margin, has refused such an inquiry” (NYT), in which it is presupposed that the president of Kenya is Mwai Kibaki and that Kibaki won the election by a thin margin. This example additionally shows that presuppositions often accumulate.

A second frequent function in the studied news discourse is the informative use of presuppositional structures to bring in new information which is backgrounded. This information must be taken for granted and accommodated by the readers to understand the discourse. The sentence in (65) constitutes an example.

65) Eldoret, about 160 miles northwest of Nairobi, is considered the homeland of the Kalenjin tribe, which has tended to support Odinga.
   (WP_Kenyans Killed Fleeing Violence_02/01/2008)

For many readers of the WP it is not ready knowledge that Eldoret lies about 160 miles northwest of Nairobi, nor that the Kalenjins tended to support Odinga. To understand the whole news discourse of that article and the sentence in particular the readers must accept these propositions and turn them into common ground. Here it becomes more difficult to speak of real presuppositions. It is also a matter of degree on the cline between presupposition and assertion. Some information is less informative or less uncontroversial than other pieces of information.

The third kind of presupposition is far less frequent. Persuasive presupposition normally occurs in argumentative discourse, which these hard news reports typically are not. Yet these kinds of presupposition sometimes filter through when the news discourse is intertextually based on political discourse as in (66) or opinionating discourse as in (67).
“This is tarnishing our image as democratic and peaceful seekers of change,” Mr. Odinga said. (NYT_080102_Mob Sets Kenya Church on Fire, killing dozens)

In a front-page editorial, Kenya’s Daily Nation urged both Mr Kibaki and Mr Odinga to "stop the senseless slaughter". (IN_80 children massacred in Kenyan church_02/01/2008)

The change-of-state verb to tarnish triggers the presupposition that the ODM has indeed a democratic and peaceful image, whereas the aspectual verb to stop presupposes that there is senseless slaughter going on. Here presupposition is used to implicitly convince the interpreter of the information of the veracity of the evaluation that is expressed. This is obviously an ideological use of presupposition. However, also the default and the informative uses of presupposition can have ideological aspects when they are used to anchor, recapitulate or present contestable information or a certain representation of reality that is used to support the dominant reading of the news events at the expense of other valid perspectives.

To be clear presupposed information can, but does not have to be ideological. Presuppositions can have still different functions next to anchoring explicit information into a common ground, expanding the frame of reference, backgrounding news or ideologically promoting a certain frame of interpretation. Apart from these functions or in addition to them, presuppositions may be used as a writing style to discursively show readers the news instead of telling it in order to prevent didacticism, paternalism or lecturing (cf. Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007: 200-201). Instead of repeating the evaluation of “tribal violence”, which had already been expressed more or less explicitly four times in the NYT article, Gettleman decided to cinematically show what happened in Kiambaa. He did not repeat the shocking and emotional expression that people were “burnt to death”. He only pictured the scene (‘[Kalenjins, Luhyas and Luos] overran Kikuyu guards in front of the church and then pulled out cans of gasoline. There were no police officers around, witnesses said, and no water to put the fire out”) and lets the reader do the inferring. The co-text and the particular use of language in this depiction encourages the reader to draw inferences of tribal violence.

Journalists can also exploit the implicit-explicit interface in order to avoid taking sides or to create a sense of facticity and professionalism (see 3.2.2.1). In 7.2.1.1 we saw that the election was only implicitly categorized as rigged in the TI, while the foreign correspondent exerts himself not to explicitly evaluate the election as flawed. That would be good practice if (the journalist thought) there was still a lot of uncertainty and doubt about the validity of the election. Then, it would have been an appropriate way by means of which the journalist could hedge his coverage and leave the explicit rigging claim for the readers to infer. Nevertheless, the day before clear evidence of ballot rigging had been provided, among others by the EU EOM, as is
reported in the other newspaper articles (e.g. NYT). That is why Wadhams’ implicit strategy can be questioned in this case.

Evidently, not all readers will automatically make that inference, as not all WP readers will have made the inference that the church burners are Kalenjins instead of Luos (see 7.2.1.3), because the church was near Eldoret and Eldoret is the homeland of the Kalenjins. Such implicit categorization and representation strategies require extra processing effort on the part of the reader. This may have at least five outcomes. One, the reader may miss the inference; two, the reader may already have wrongly inferred that the Luos are the arsonists and passes over the potential inference about the Kalenjins; three, the reader is put off by the way the news is narrated and stops reading or takes umbrage at the article; four, the reader may work out the triggered inference and the processing effort creates extra cognitive effects (cf. Sperber & Wilson 1995: 123ff.); five, the reader may immediately at the beginning of the article draw a right or a wrong inference on the basis of pre-existing assumptions or personal foreknowledge. With respect to the fourth outcome, it can be mentioned that implicit meanings from worked-out inferences often have a deeper impact on how people think and act, because this information is firmly rooted into people’s frame of interpretation. For instance, information that is inferred has been proven to be better retained and more rapidly reproduced as knowledge (Rickheit & Strohner 1985). That is one of the reasons why implicit layers of meaning must be scrutinized in news discourse in addition to explicitly communicated messages.

7.3.1.2. A tribal versus a sociopolitical frame of interpretation
With respect to what was remarked in 7.2.1.2, a lot of discourse analysts have pointed to the importance of headlines for the interpretation of news (e.g. Jiwani & Richardson 2010, Maneri & Ter Wal 2005, Van Dijk 1985 or Van Ginneken 2002), but I feel their role in news discourse is sometimes overestimated, especially when news analysis is restricted to the analysis of headlines (as in Dor 2003 or Ifantidou 2009). Rather than topic setters, headlines are eye catchers. Instead of considering them as indicators of the ‘macrostructure’ or global meaning of the news report (Van Dijk 1985, 1988, 1997), I follow Bell in that “headlines are not just a summary but part of news rhetoric whose function is to attract the reader” (1991: 189). Santander Molina, too, observed that the relationship between the content of a newspaper article and its headline is dynamic and ‘non-univocal’, as the headline’s function to summarize “depends heavily on the available space and on the importance assigned to the news, so that it can be asserted that it is correlative: the less the space for the news, the greater the function of the title as summary […]; but by having a greater availability of space (e.g. a front-page headline), the communicative function of captivating the reader […] begins to prevail” (2009: 190). Without denying that headlines can guide reader interpretations, it must be noted that they may also be misleading.
So, although some of the above news reports contain general tags in their headline, such as *spectre of tribal war* (TI), *bloodletting* (ST) or *chaos* (DN), it cannot automatically be assumed that the flag always covers the cargo. In the TI report it does to an extent, as it is mainly about tribal violence, though it does not explicitly categorize the situation as a tribal war, because the strong expression is premodified by the hedge *spectre of*, meaning that it is not yet a tribal war, but that the situation is evolving towards a tribal war (*cf. supra*). Even with this modification, the choice for this term with a heavily negative connotation is very salient and immediately activates a certain frame of interpretation. In contrast, in the case of the ST report, the bloodletting from the title is not the main theme of the article. Only 14 out of the 30 paragraphs are about violence and only 4 paragraphs explicitly address real bloodletting. Instead of the headline, I believe a newspaper report is better characterized by the lead and/or the first sentence of the news text and the final paragraph. More than the headline these informational units determine the preferred reading of the newspaper text. Let us look at the beginning and ending of a few articles:

68) Kenya edged closer to **tribal warfare** last night after more than 100 people at least 80 of them children burned to death as the church they had fled to for refuge was set alight.

   [...] Many Kikuyus have looked on in horror as the violence has intensified. "Kibaki has put the whole tribe in danger," said Juliette Njeri, 28, from Nairobi. "This won't end soon."

   (IN, 80 children massacred in Kenyan church_02/01/2008)

69) **NAIROBI**, Kenya — Dozens of people seeking refuge in a church in Kenya were burned to death by a mob on Tuesday in an explosion of **ethnic violence** that is threatening to engulf this country, which until last week was one of the most stable in Africa.

   [...] Western governments, including the United States, are calling for a **vote recount**. "It's the only way forward," said Graham Elson, the deputy chief of the European observer delegation.

   (NYT, Mob Sets Kenya Church on Fire, killing dozens_02/01/2008)

70) **ANOTHER** round of **calls for peace** was drowned under a new wave of bloodletting that left the country tottering on the brink, with Britain announcing it was ready to broker a deal.

   [...] The Orange party also went on to state that it would today release what it described as "a comprehensive report detailing how President Kibaki was rigged back into the office by the ECK".

   (ST, Peace calls amid continued bloodletting_02/01/2008)

71) House of worship set on fire by **200 marauding youths** in Eldoret South.

   [...] Mr Mbaruga described the situation as terrible but assured that the Government was doing everything possible to **restore normalcy**.

   (DN, 35 burnt in church: Raid on church leaves 35 dead as chaos spreads_02/01/2008)
From these fragments the gist of the separate articles can be extracted. They also highlight what dominant frame of interpretation is employed. In the lead or the first sentence the focus of the article is made clear. As was shown in chapter 3, a news story typically consists of one (or at best, a few) limited perspectives to events in reality. In the final paragraph the news story is either concluded or put into perspective. Alternatively, the final sentences can be used to anticipate criticism and reader interpretations or to look forward to the next day’s coverage.

In the IN and the TI the situation is summarized as (heading at) “tribal warfare” and “a bloody tribal war” between the Kikuyus on the one hand and the Luos, Kalenjins and Luhyas on the other hand, thus evoking a tribal frame of interpretation in which one ethnic group is pitted against other ethnic groups. Also in the NYT and the WP the events are overall put into an ethnic frame of interpretation. It is emphasized that the clashes were ethnic, albeit triggered by the elections. Kenyan politics in general is presented as a tribal affair. Easily the link is established that because politics is tribal the violence after the elections must also be tribal. In fact, that is almost exactly what NYT correspondent Gettleman told me when he considered whether the conflict was ethnic, post-electoral, political or whether there were other underlying (social, economic, historical) causes: “it’s all wrapped together here, politics are along tribal lines”.

In contrast, such an evaluative view could be found in the Kenyan press, but without the ethnic angle and it was not formulated in the format of hard news reports, but rather in the form of opinionating pieces as this extract from an editorial from the ST illustrates.

72) “We are ominously moving towards the picture of war-ravaged nations such as Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. On the international television channels, we are ranked alongside them, and the running order of the clips speaks volumes on how the outside world sees us” (ST_Hardened positions will only fuel conflict_02/01/2008).

In the hard news reports a criminal-political frame of interpretation was created in the Kenyan newspaper reports with the differentiation that the ST was slightly foregrounding Odinga and his party, whereas the DN was focusing on the actions of the government (agencies). This is in line with their proclaimed orientation as opposition versus government paper, although this must be interpreted with the necessary reservations. The criminal-political frame is visually captured on the front-page of the DN. By means of juxtaposition and the ordering of the summarizing bullet points under the front-page headline, the “35 burnt alive in church” are first identified as “refugee seekers” and then immediately below as “political opponents” who are presupposed to having been killed by “ODM supporters” (see appendix IX). So, strongly put, it is about political supporters who turn into criminals, instead of tribesmen who become genocidal.

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140 Personal interview with Jeffrey Gettleman on 20 May 2011.
Remember, however, that there were multiple facets to Kenya’s post-election crisis in general and the problems in the North Rift region in particular. The ethnic and the political aspect are only two factors. Another factor pertained to the intricate role of the security forces, which were both protecting and neglecting the people, defending and repressing them. This was mentioned by all of the here analyzed newspaper reports, but only in passing. Also marginally touched upon were the socio-economic factors of the conflicts. Socio-economic aspects surface, though are not accurately explained, in the recontextualizations of ODM’s campaign rhetoric that the Kikuyus, as the largest ethnic group, have always dominated politics and business to the detriment of others (TI) or when it is claimed that ‘non-Kikuyu’ people feel that mainly Kikuyus have benefited from Kenya’s relative prosperity (WP). Not only are such statements generalizations and platitudes, which do exist in some people’s minds, but which require clarification, they also result in backgrounding the different, local socio-economic factors that were at play. It is as if foreign correspondents did not ask themselves the question: Why of all places did this act of cruelty happen in that specific village, instead of in a village in Eastern province or a coastal town to name but two other localities? And if they did, they did not succeed in addressing it well in their news coverage. Naturally, not all ‘non-Kikuyu’ people feel disadvantaged by the Kikuyus, as it is also clear from traveling through Kenya that not all Kikuyus are local community leaders or wealthy businessmen. In fact, it could even be argued that due to historical, regional and political circumstances, among others related to colonialism, the Mau Mau uprising, land scarcity in the Kikuyu ‘homeland’ and post-independence social politics, the Kikuyus constitute both the poorest and the richest of Kenyans (Galaty 2005: 181). Also the Kenyan newspapers failed to capture the full complexity of the conflict, as they left implicit important information.

The way social actors are represented is not arbitrary or trivial. Representations contribute to the creation of a frame of interpretation and *vice versa* the interpretive frame of the journalist or the news text determines how the main characters of news are represented. When Kenya’s leading politicians are constantly classified by tribe membership and when also aggressors and victims are categorized by their tribe, their actions are likewise placed into a tribal frame of interpretation. By doing so, the totality of conflicts can come to be seen by the readers through an ethnic lens without any differentiations. In the Kenyan newspapers the victims and perpetrators of violence are not explicitly represented by means of ethnic classification. The violence is seen as a consequence of the elections, while the underlying historical and socio-economic causes which made the violence in the North Rift particularly fierce are untouched or left implicit. The picture that is implicitly conveyed is that of innocent people who were attacked by irresponsible, degenerate youths, just because they made a free and democratic choice. Like the foreign press which simplified and generalized a multitude of conflicts to tribal violence, the
Kenyan press also displays distortion, because there is no doubt that some of the conflicts had a tribal dimension or gradually turned into ethnic conflicts. So, the DN and ST also failed to provide an accurate account of this episode of the Kenyan post-election crisis.

Before I will go deeper into the journalistic and discursive choices that were made to provide some nuancing, it must be repeated that both in the international and in the Kenyan press only Kikuyu victims are given a voice in the newspaper texts. When Luos are mentioned as victims in the NYT and the WP they are collectivized and/or represented by means of indetermination. As such, readers of these reports do not get to know what happened to other than Kikuyu victims and what these other people felt. By having only Kikuyus to testify, the readers can identify and even sympathize with them, which is more difficult for the indeterminate and collectivized Luos or other victims. This reinforces the ideological meaning that the Kikuyus were the main victims of the post-election crisis and that the violence was intertribal. In reality, a lot of other communities were victimized and several cases are noted of intra-ethnic violence (cf. KNCHR 2008, Waki 2008). In an interview former ST journalist Onyango told me that he originally comes from a place where there are only Luos and yet people fought among each other, as they started to look for scapegoats or people they thought did not support their party of choice (well enough). People were saying: “we had a rally here and so and so did not come or they were looking for government officials and chased them away […] they did not want anything to do with the government because they thought the government was Kibaki”. Onyango told this to make a point when I asked him to clarify the post-election crisis: “so it was not tribal”. According to him, “the violence was actually a protest against president Kibaki”.

As a final note, it is striking that in the international press with its focus on ethnic classification only politicians and people involved in the violence are ethnically identified. Unless they can infer people’s ethnicity on the basis of their names, as many Kenyans can, readers in the US, the UK or Belgium have no idea of the ethnicity of Red Cross secretary Abbas Gullet (TI), anti-corruption campaigner Mwalimu Mati (TI), bishop Korir (IN), professor Bujra (NYT) or politics watcher Gichinga Ndirangu (DM). The question can be asked whether it is relevant to know their ethnicity, but in an ethnic frame of interpretation it could sometimes help nuance the situation. If, for example, people would know that Korir, who looked after Kikuyu and other refugees and who constantly pleaded for peace, is a Kalenjin they might less easily think that all Kalenjins in Eldoret are against the Kikuyus.

7.3.1.3. Contextualization and reflections on journalistic language use
As argued before, the violence was not just related to the elections, as Onyango above suggests. In many places the violence transcended the level of political protest. The ST chief political

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141 Personal interview with Dennis Onyango on 15 November 2008.
editor Agina emphasized that the problems after the elections resulted from a mix of social issues, adding that the violence was not as widespread as the international newspapers might have suggested, because it mainly occurred in the city slums, the outskirts, rural settlements, but not so much in upper-class residential areas or the central business district. In his own words, “the violence was associated with the down-trodden”. This is how he laboriously tried to explain in guarded terms the complex situation to an ignorant PhD student from Antwerp University: “one community feels that they are more superior than others, one feels that they are suppressed for so many years and one finds that the other community can't rule the country because of some cultural issues, while the other feels that this community can't rule the country because they have had their chance”. Only later I realized he was talking about Kikuyus, Kalenjins and Luos.

It is evident that the way journalists understand the events themselves affects how they write about it. That is why I always asked whether they could explain the post-election crisis to me. Not all Kenyan journalists share the ideological interpretation of Onyango, who became communication advisor to the PM, that it was just a ‘coincidence’ that mainly Kikuyus were targeted, when people started to fight against those who voted for Kibaki, because “it appeared to be only his tribesmen who voted for him”. But it is beyond dispute that all of the journalists that I interviewed across the board stressed that the violence could best be seen as “post-election violence pitting supporters or pitting areas that supported ODM or PNU”, as Agina put it (compare to the WP report pitting Kikuyus against Luos). His then counterpart at the Nation Emman Omari confirmed this in an informal chat at the newsroom. Asked how he would explain and label the violence in general, then political reporter at the Nation Mugonyi said that “is was post-election violence that took an ethnic dimension”. He further clarified:

“ODM supporters believed you supported PNU by virtue of your tribe (mainly Kikuyus); they kill them. It took an ethnic angle and later Kikuyus organised and retaliated and killed mainly ODM supporters, who were believed to be Kalenjins and Luos. It took a tribal angle but it was more or less what they believed who supported this party and who supported that party. So, it started as a political problem which took a tribal angle.”

Recall the WP quote about the Luos in Kikuyu-dominated areas who are driven out, as the Kikuyus are chased away in regions where they are not dominant. This is how the ST political editor Ochola explains the same situation:

“When the election was allegedly stolen, what happened is that those who were perceived to be followers of PNU, and by extension the Kikuyu, the Meru and all that, in those regions which were ODM received the biggest brunt of the violence. And those ODM supporters who lived in regions that were predominantly PNU also had problems. So, it did matter if you are a Luo or a Kalenjin or a Somali; as long as you are in Central province you are in

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142 Personal interview with Ben Agina on 22 November 2008.
143 Personal interview with David Mugonyi on 20 November 2008.
problems, because here you are perceived to be an ODM supporter. So, if you look at it, it was a mixture of so many things [...] it was a combination of politics, perceived injustices, stolen election, stolen resources, so many things”

He added that a lot of people had very high expectations and some of them felt quite desperate after they saw their hopes go up in smoke. Some people thought: “the victory is stolen, so we don't have a future; we are poor because this guy has taken over all our resources”. From these quotes it becomes clear that the Kenyan journalists realized that there were multiple factors contributing to the sudden outburst of violence, but their dominant frame tends to be electoral and political. That interpretation does not do justice to Kenya’s complex post-election crisis.

Some of the foreign correspondents that I interviewed saw things differently, as is already clear from their coverage. I asked Gettleman from the NYT how he looks back on the post-election crisis. He told me:

“I think a lot of it was tribal, ethnic, because you had people of the same class killing each other based on ethnicity, tribe. Some people were like oh it's classist, but it wasn't. You had one person living in a slum in a little iron roof shack fighting against another person living in a slum in an iron roof shack; one farmer with a farm fighting against another farmer.”

Apart from deliberate literal equation of tribal, ethnic and ethnicity, tribe, it can be noted that Gettleman here touches upon the socio-economic aspect of the post-election crisis, but he gives his observation an ethnic interpretation. When I objected that such a view obscures possible social and economic factors that were also playing a role beneath the surface, he replied that “land issues are connected to tribe, so the two are the same, and economic empowerment, it's the same”. Although he had quite a sophisticated view on Kenyan affairs, he had not lost his ethnic lens in 2011. Freelance journalist Tristan McConnell, who works for the TI, revealed the core of the problem:

“the more time you spend here the more difficult it is to ignore the organising role that tribe plays. Look at the way people vote. I mean, for fuck sake, it's right there for all of us to see. To ignore it is to do a disservice to your reader. Now, where the problems comes up is: Call it what you like ethnic group bla bla bla, it's tribe we're talking about and the problem is that as soon as you use that word all other nuances are thrown out of the window. So, tribe is one organising principle in society and in the political disputes and in the conflicts that arise around here. But it's only one, one of a number of different organising principles that are at play. Others are social status, religion, poverty and the wealth gap, there are all sorts of things that are involved in the conflicts and tribe is one of them.”

McConnell does not deny the ethnic aspect but at the same time he does not blow it out of proportion. He acknowledges that the word is used, that it even has to be used (see 8.2.1.2), but that it has the tendency to obscure a lot of other explanatory factors at stake.

144 Personal interview with Abiya Ochola on 24 November 2008.
145 Personal interview with Jeffrey Gettleman on 20 May 2011.
Whereas the international press runs the risk of creating a tribal frame of interpretation, the Kenyan press can be criticized for downgrading or even obscuring this factor of the crisis. As they kept silent about ethnic tensions, they neglected their role as promoters of public debate about the critical issues of society. However, that claim must be put into perspective. It is true that the DN and ST avoided explicit references to ethnicity and when references to ethnic group membership were inevitable, the Kenyan newspapers resorted to the more neutral and positive sounding word *community* as in (73), but the issue was present in implicit layers of meaning. As was confirmed by several journalists and other Kenyans during my fieldwork inquiries, most readers would have been able to infer the ethnicity of the Kiambaa victims on the basis of their background knowledge, the location and the names of the witnesses. “Of course, people can infer; you can easily infer, if you say Naivasha and you’re talking about two communities, then you know it's between Maasai and Kikuyu”.

73) A survey by *The Saturday Standard* in refuge centres established that those seeking safety are drawn from *all communities inhabiting Uasin Gishu District*, whose headquarters is Eldoret. Ms Margaret Atandi from Kisii and her five children are seeking refuge at the Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Langas, where close to 20 people lost their lives in the ongoing violence. “Those who died were not from one community. All of us are affected. We lost relatives, friends and neighbours as well as property”. *(ST_Violence hurting women and children in Eldoret_05/01/2008)*

Note first that (73) indicates that not only Kikuyus lost their lives in Uasin Gishu district, where Kiambaa is located. Because of the narrow focus of the context provided in the international news reports, that fact does not come to expression in the foreign press. Secondly, this example shows how Kenyan newspapers avoid referring to ethnicity, while it is assumed that most readers can make the necessary inferences on the basis of contextualization cues, such as *Uasin Gishu, Eldoret, Atandi, Kisii* (which is used as a place name here) and *Langas*. For other readers, however, such a description is rather opaque and there is always the risk that people (whether or not willingly) make the wrong inferences. So, this representational strategy, too, can be questioned. Furthermore, Ogola finds that the deliberate deletion of ethnic references “merely reified the framing of the conflict as unambiguously ethnic” (2009: 68). When ethnic motives clearly played a role in certain conflicts, the striking omission of references to ethnicity can have a reverse effect. According to Ogola (2009), in some cases the ethnic frame became conspicuous by its absence.

Kenyan newspapers can play with this implicit naming strategy. The victims who are nominated in the DN report, Kamande, Kimunya and Munderu, all have clear Kikuyu names. The perpetrators of the violence are not nominated, so their ethnicity is even more implicit. But in this report Kikuyus are not simply pitted against Kalenjins in a generalizing way, even if the

146 Personal interview with Abiya Ochola on 24 November 2008.
readers would infer correctly the ethnicity of the agents of violence. The reason is that the DN report gives also people from other ethnic groups a platform to spread appeals for help and peace, like Mohamud Jama. In that report it is also implicitly shown that not all Kalenjins are killers by mentioning that Ibrahim Kiptanui (a clear Kalenjin name) rescued two children from the hand of killers. In the ST report no named witnesses are staged. Even the place name of Eldoret is suppressed, so this newspaper was even more cautious to intimate the ethnicity of the people involved in the Kiambaa violence. Although it was not confirmed in any of the interviews, it might have had to do with the ownership of the newspaper. A majority of shares of the Standard Media Group is in the hands of a bunch of Kalenjin businessmen.

As a discourse analyst involved in interpretive pragmatic analysis, I felt sometimes insecure about my interpretations. It might seem a bit harsh to attribute a largely tribal frame of interpretation to the international press and a distorting political interpretive frame to the local written media. However, I am not alone with my analyses. The international newspapers’ tribal frame of interpretation was also identified by among others Somerville (2009) and Iraki (2010), and it was attacked in opinion articles, such as those by Furedi (2008, ‘Kenya is not the new Rwanda’) or Kircher-Allen (2008, ‘Journalism deficit requires deeper expertise’). Letters-to-the-editor as another source of ethnographic information can also be used to support interpretive analyses of news discourse. They can help reinforce or refine the analyst’s interpretations.

Some letters remind the newspapers of their responsibility, indicating that newspapers are seen as social instruments and have a democratic role to play in Kenyan society. That is why they should provide accurate information with sufficient context and background knowledge, so that people get a correct view of what is happening. On the same day the Kiambaa killings appeared in the newspaper, the following letter was published in the DN.

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**Lapse in media**

I want to congratulate both the print and electronic media for the superb job in covering the 2007 General Election.

I only want to register my feelings of being let down by the media when it came to tallying of results.

Whereas the media did well in reporting what ODM was alleging and ECK was insisting on, it was important for both the electronic and print media to give us a background on what they recorded at the constituency tallying centres.

NYORERA MACHANCHABLE,
Gucha
In a letter to the editor, published in *The Sunday Standard* (06/01/2008), J. Momanyi from Zürich, Switzerland, judged the Kenyan coverage as “the most disappointing ever” and he accused the news media of being “under the control of the Government by withholding information”.

Not only the national but also the international news media received criticism. On 17 January 2008 the following letters appeared in the ST (see figure 27).

![Figure 27: Two letters-to-the-editor published in *The Standard* on 17 January 2008.](image)

In the first letter a reader is complaining about “the negative attention” from the foreign media which represent Kenya as “a war-torn country”. The second letter states that it is irresponsible to present the different conflicts as a war between Luos and Kikuyus, because such disinformation can act as “a catalyst to ethnic violence and does nothing but further ethnic polarisation”. The letter writer continues that the “post-election violence is not between tribes but Opposition supporters and the Government’s”.

To identify certain frames of interpretation which contribute to ideological views on the events that are reported is one thing. A truly linguistic pragmatic news discourse analysis, however, should go one step further and try to find out why certain journalistic and discursive choices that lead to ideological meanings were made. In the next chapter I will go deeper into this question, but here a corner of the veil can be lifted. Whether foreign correspondent or local reporter, all of the journalists that I met agreed that it is important to watch your language use, especially when it is about sensitive issues like tribe. “To write about tribes, as a reporter you have to be very sensitive … you can use like the Luo community in a good context, not write that
the Luos are fighting the Kikuyu, [then] we just say two warring communities”. 147 Many others confirmed this, as did Onyango: “Kenyan newspapers rarely use tribal words, they do not say Kikuyus against the Luos, the Kalenjins, no! They would say members of one community against members of another community”. 148 But why do they adapt their language use like that? The answer of the experienced journalist is dead on target:

“It is some silly assumption that it could inflame tension in other parts of the country, but often the place where you talk of members of two different communities people will know who you are talking about, so it is based on nothing, but it is some kind of tradition.”

Also editorial guidelines could partly explain such linguistic choices. As Mugonyi put it:

“In the Nation we have a guideline and a code of ethics. We are not supposed to write anything leaning towards your ethnicity or anybody's ethnicity. The Nation does not write about tribes, unless it's all good. Things like if it's a cultural event, a tribal cultural event, that's what you write, but in politics we don't distinguish tribes, we try as much as possible not to distinguish tribes. That is the basic fundamental guideline here.”

Such guidelines raise a few objections, but the discussion will be continued in the next chapter.

In the international press words like tribe are used because they attract the attention of the readers and are easy explanators. Moreover, also in terms of meaning potential it is deemed to be a salient term. As DM foreign desk chief Vidal explained:

“I’m rather cautious to name ethnic groups, but sometimes you can’t avoid it. You sometimes have to be pragmatic in that respect and I think it’s more important that a journalist doesn’t start to think in racist terms, though always remains sensitive [to issues of ethnicity]. I try to avoid negative reference to tribe, but sometimes it’s necessary to be clear for the reader … as long as a conflict is not explained in purely ethnic terms, because then you would have a reduced frame of interpretation.”

Vidal adds that, broadly, there are three additional factors on which journalistic discourse depends. (i) The moment and the situation influences what you write. “Sometimes you don’t have the time to reflect on your language use; there are all kinds of situations possible in which it has to go quick and then some things get easily overlooked”. (ii) The way stories are written depends on the experience of the journalist, which is also noted by McConnell. Vidal said that good journalism is not about writing on automatic pilot, but about writing on experience. (iii) It may not be forgotten that the genre and the publication space is a determining factor. As Vidal exemplified, a long piece in the weekend paper on which a journalist could spend a few days and which has been thoroughly revised, will be better researched and more prudently worded.

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147 Personal interview with Ben Agina on 22 November 2008.
148 Personal interview with Dennis Onyango on 15 November 2008.
149 Personal interview with Koen Vidal on 17 October 2008, my translation.
7.3.1.4. *The discursive construction of news values*

What was discussed above had to do with frames of interpretation and contextualization of news events. It was about ideology in that journalists evoke certain contexts in their language use and highlight certain aspects of events, while other aspects are underexplored or obscured. Such ideological practices can be argued to distort what happened, but the information that is provided about Kibaki or Odinga, or about the Kiambaa killings is not factually wrong so to speak, although it could sometimes be regarded as a bit one-sided or narrowly focused and thus possibly giving rise to ideological meanings. However, as was discussed in 3.2.1, news discourse can also be ideological in the construction of news values. This sometimes goes at the cost of the factuality and accuracy of the news report. In the process of discursively accentuating and increasing the newsworthiness of the information, the facts are sometimes stretched.

Here I am not talking about the discursive construction of the news value of timeliness by deictic expressions such as *yesterday* which stress the recency of the news. But sometimes even timeliness can be ideological, as when the violent events in Kiambaa are only placed in an election time frame (*e.g.* NYT, but esp. ST and DN), detaching them from other non-electoral, historical circumstances that contributed to the build-up of tensions which finally erupted in an explosion of violence. The discursive construction of other news values even more ideological and sometimes leads to wrong information being presented to the reader.

To enhance the shock effect and tap into the news values of novelty, negativity and emotional involvement, some newspapers blew up the number of victims in the KAG church, or rather they followed the rumors with the largest number of victims instead of incorporating the conservative estimates in their reports. It must be admitted that different numbers were circulating (see 7.1.1.2). Yet the WP and the DN quantified 35 killed in Kiambaa on that particular day, which is close to the official numbers established by the consulted investigative reports, ranging from 28 in the Waki report to 35 in the KNCHR report. It is less than the 50 victims reported in NYT, TI, DM and DS, and it is far less than the 80 children who were reported to have died in the tragedy in the IN. By means of the discursive strategy of exaggeration the newsworthiness of the report is artificially heightened. However, it must be noted that the international press agencies were reporting that 50 people had died in Kiambaa on the basis of a statement by a Red Cross volunteer, which can be derived from the DS report that is based on information from AP and Reuters. Also negatively evaluative word choices, such as *massacred* and *tribal warfare*, not only catch readers’ attention, but also evoke news values of negativity and impact, which can steer the interpretation of the news text.

Moreover, the emphasis on children and women who died in the church with the DN explicitly referring to “a disabled woman in a wheelchair” and a “pregnant woman who sustained serious burns on her leg” discursively reinforces emotional involvement. In that way, the
newspaper article tries to create a kind of proximity and a sense of relevance. It can also be argued to add to the news value of consonance, because the victims were consistently represented as vulnerable and defenseless, as a disabled or a pregnant woman typically are. Children, women, elderly or disabled people all fit in with peoples’ preconceptions about innocent victims.

An ideological consequence of the international media’s narrow focus on elite persons is that Kenyan politics tends to be reduced to a struggle for power between Kibaki and Odinga, while other influential politicians with other ethnicities are excluded, *e.g.* the aforementioned William Ruto and Musalia Mudavadi, but also incumbent vice-president Kalonzo Musyoka (Kamba), minister of information and communication Samuel Poghisio (Kalenjin), defense minister Mohamed Yusuf Haji (Somali), minister of national heritage and culture William Ole Ntimama (Maasai), tourism minister Najib Balala (Arab/Mijikenda), and many others. All these people play important national and regional roles, also in the upcoming 2012 elections. To emphasize the prominence of the two main presidential candidates it is sometimes noted that Kibaki belongs to the largest ethnic group, while Odinga would belong to the second largest ethnic community in Kenya (DM). The former claim cannot be denied, but the latter is an overstatement, as the Luos are the fourth ethnic group in numerical terms according to the 2009 census. It is possible that this was unknown to the journalist, but then his information is not properly checked. In the CIA World Factbook, for instance, which can be easily consulted online and which is used by the foreign desks of at least the NYT and the TI to verify information, the Luos are not ranked second.150

The news values of novelty, negativity and impact are discursively constructed in representations of Kenya as “one of Africa’s most stable countries” or as “a beacon of stability” (TI and DM). The contrast that is created between a stable and economically prosperous country and the outrageous events which suddenly erupted, as it were out of the blue, also create a sense of relevancy and increases the sensational character of the news report. This can also lead to contradictions. In the NYT, for instance, it is claimed that Kenya has known “decades of stability”, but two paragraphs below it is reported that “[h]undreds of people were killed in tribal clashes surrounding the 1992 and 1997 elections”. If one decade spans 10 years and tribal clashes presuppose unrest, there is something wrong here. The decades of stability are clearly exaggerated. As Gettleman later defended himself, such mistakes were made in haste. But that does not mean they are less ideological and that they tap into certain news values.

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7.3.2. Counterscreening

7.3.2.1. Qualification and anticipation
The tribal frame of interpretation that was found in the international press is not an absolute interpretive frame. Usually, journalists leave open other interpretations, whether consciously or unconsciously (cf. 4.2.2.1). At the end of every analytical exercise I subjected the studied newspaper texts to a counterscreening in order to prevent that I would present a distorted, biased picture of the news discourse under investigation. So, I scanned the newspaper texts for the last time in search for meanings or elements that contradict my own analyses. The danger of analyses such as the one above is that the researcher starts to make a few strong claims and jumps to unwarranted conclusions in function of the dominant meaning patterns that were discovered, while losing sight of the subtleties in the texts. To overcome this problem I also did the interviews with journalists and looked at other sources of information. But the studied texts have the final word.

From these texts it is clear that journalists do sometimes make the necessary differentiations. After all, none of the foreign correspondents interviewed intended to create the impression that all Luos were fighting against all Kikuyus, although some of their texts could be argued to give rise to such interpretations for readers who lack the necessary background knowledge. That is why I argued in 4.1.1.3 that meaning is more than intentions. There is always the possibility that readers read more into newspaper texts than the journalists intended and that is also part of the meaning potential of the newspaper articles. Unfortunately, nuancing statements often drown in a dominant frame of interpretation. In the IN report, for instance, one sentence is included to suggest that not all Kenyans have turned against the Kikuyus: “Friends from other tribes have been hiding Kikuyus in their homes”. It anticipates the generalizing misinterpretation that it would have been all against one, but it does not transcend the tribal frame of interpretation. At times journalists seem to realize that their reports might lead to too general conclusions and then they can anticipate possible unintended interpretations. Sometimes this is done explicitly, as when Wadhams in the TI writes that “[t]he tribal enmity was by no means shared by all Kenyans”. Such statements are expressions of metapragmatic awareness. But again, it must be noted that the definite description *the tribal enmity* presupposes that there is tribal enmity and it categorizes what has been reported before this sentence as tribal enmity.

Another technique that journalists employ to prevent unwarranted generalization is the use of quantifiers such as *mostly* or other modifiers such as *generally*, which give rise to scalar implicatures. See for instance (74):

74) The dead were *mostly* of the Kikuyu tribe, which *overwhelmingly* backed President Kibaki’s bid for a second term in last Thursday’s election. (TI_30 die in blazing church as spectre of tribal war looms_02/01/2008)
The superlative adverb *mostly* implies that not all of the victims were Kikuyus, while the modifying adverb *overwhelmingly* gives rise to the inference that not all Kikuyus supported Kibaki. Another example is “mainly Kikuyus” in the IN report. By means of the limiter adverb *mainly* the scope of the reference is limited to prevent the inference that the KAG church was exclusively sheltering Kikuyus. This is a practical way for journalists to put their coverage into perspective and cover themselves against the criticism that they generalize too much. It is especially useful when there is still some doubt about the facts (see 7.3.1.1). Another way to deal with uncertainty is the use of tentative verbs of perception like *to appear* in “roving gangs that appeared to be targeting Kibaki’s ethnic group, the Kikuyu” (WP). This is less decisive or sensational, but it is more accurate.

Another discursive technique of journalists is the use of quotation marks, which has already been remarked above. They can use quotations to report statements which some readers might find too strong. In the TI the Kiambaa violence is described as *savagery* in a quote by a police spokesman. Although the journalist can hide behind the quote, it is his choice to put it into the article, which makes it an element that adds to the frame of interpretation. Quotes can also be exploited. In the NYT professor Bujra is quoted saying that Kenya “had tribal fighting before” and that “[i]t reminds […] of Rwanda”. From a his interview with the professor Gettleman takes four particular quotes to incorporate in his news report. In that way Bujra’s words are decontextualized and inserted into a new context of the news discourse where they are used to support the view of the violence as ethnic, even with a comparison to Rwanda, which in African contexts of violence metonymically stands for genocide. Only later in the newspaper article does Bujra get the chance to nuance his words, but by then the notion of genocide is already activated in the minds of the readers following the principle of the primary definition. Moreover, other interpretations or causes of the conflicts which Bujra must have provided were not taken up in the newspaper article.

To cover themselves and avoid generalization journalists can also make use of concessive clauses as in “[a]lthough the groups have lived together largely without incident for years, Luos in some Kikuyu-dominated areas…”. Note also the use of nuancing hedge *largely*. Sometimes attempts at moderation and perspectivization can lead to or reinforce generalization. See (75).

75) They make up only 22 percent of the population and are part of Kenya’s mosaic of roughly 40 ethnic groups, which have intermarried and coexisted for decades. 
(NYT_Mob Sets Kenya Church on Fire, killing dozens_02/01/2008)

It is true that intermarrying is a common practice in Kenya and that people from different ethnicities live together peacefully, which in this context is the implication of the verb *to coexist*, but that is not the same as claiming that all ethnic groups intermarried and peacefully lived
together. In some localities and in some communities there have always been tensions, although they do not make it to the world press.

To end, some of the statements that I made in the analysis and interpretation of the news discourse deserve some nuancing. It was said that the international press did not pay a lot of attention to the numerous appeals for peace, but rather depicted the Kenyans and their politicians as belligerent people. Yet one appeal for restoration of order and peace is incorporated in the IN report, viz. the urgent message from the Nation team to Kibaki and Odinga in its front-page editorial to stop the senseless slaughter, a clear example of manifest intertextuality. In this commentary all responsibility for the eruptions of violence and the deep sociopolitical crisis is passed onto “the tribal, economic and political elite”, which is a view that was long held in the Kenyan media. In retrospect, however, it was not so simple. Political actions played a major role in the triggering and ending of the violent crisis, but some violence continued even after a peace deal was signed. Also cases were reported in which peace calls of leaders were ignored once mob justice was put into operation. Sometimes militias even turned against their politicians when they urged for an end to the violence. There were very divergent views and at least there was a shared responsibility between ordinary Kenyans and their leaders. Moreover, a cocktail of historical, social, economic, cultural and political factors which had been boiling for a long time made a lot of people prone to incitement and inflammation, as was confirmed by many of the Kenyan journalists that I interviewed. The main allegations of the editorial are carelessness for the nation, years of irresponsible behavior and bad leadership in the service of personal gain instead of the people:

76) Kenyans can see through the high-sounding proclamation from both your sides: This has nothing to do with Kenya, it has nothing to do with democracy, it has to do with power and pork. Your parties whipped up sentiments in the campaigns to create tribal voting blocs. They fanned fears and enthusiasm, either through irresponsible promises or by driving the people deeper into tribal silos.
(DN_Kibaki and Raila: Stop the senseless slaughter_01/01/2008)

This nuances my statement that tribal language is largely absent from the Kenyan newspapers. However, the use of tribal terms is seldom, even in columns of opinion. From the whole editorial, only the accusation of “stirring up ethnic tensions” is recontextualized in the IN to support the dominant reading of the events as “ethnic violence”. Note also that in this recontextualization the original adjective tribal is replaced by ethnic (see 7.3.1.1). The Nation’s question of despair, “How many more must die, how much more must be destroyed before you come to your senses?” which is literally quoted in the IN and which implicitly accuses the Kibaki and Odinga of insanity, contains an intertextual link to the editorial of the following day,

151 It is all the more intertextual, as the same phrase of “senseless slaughter” is attributed by the DS to a Red Cross statement.
which opens with the sentence: “This madness cannot be allowed to go on” (DN_Give peace a chance_02/01/2008).

In 7.2.2.2 my analysis showed that the perpetrators of violence do not get a voice in none of the analyzed news reports. This certainly holds for the agents of the Kiambaa violence, but with regard to the reported violence in Nairobi one possible exception could be found in the TI. Upon detailed scrutiny, Kibera businessman and protester Morris Otieno is a potential perpetrator of violence as he threatens that “hell will break loose” should the police interfere with their protests. By means of this recontextualization the journalist rightly shows that peaceful protesters do not just turn into violent agitators. It must also be noted that in contrast to the ethnic frame of interpretation, which is promoted from the headline and lead down to the rest of the article, this man who has a typical Luo name is not classified by tribe. News reports are rarely univocal and can easily contain contradictions. Finally, it must be mentioned that the intervention of the vox pop witness Yusuf Ibrahim, who is identified as “a 24-year-old from the Nubian tribe” from Kibera, makes clear that not all young men took part in the violence and that Kibera is not just inhabited by Kikuyus and Luos.

7.3.2.2. A chain of recontextualizations and the dynamics of discourse
The Kiambaa tragedy on New Year’s day was such a dramatic event that it was often referred to or recalled in both the local and the foreign press. Journalists (re)visited the scene of the killings and comparisons were made to other incidents in the post-election crisis. It is recontextualized in 30 newspaper articles of the primary corpus\(^{152}\) and in several more other articles (editorials, commentary, opinion articles, …). Through chains of recontextualization the primary interpretation of the violent events was either reinforced, refined or reassessed.

The purely ethnic interpretation is confirmed in the TI report of 3 January 2008 where the Kiambaa atrocity is recontextualized as an example of the bloodletting with “strong tribal overtones, pitching Mr Kibaki’s Kikuyu tribe against Mr Odinga’s Luo”. The ST’s primary interpretation is also reinforced one day after the tragic news came out. In the article ‘17 bodies retrieved from burnt church’ (03/01/2008) the events are again depicted as an exceptional incident of aberrant and criminal behavior. The root causes are not touched upon. The report focuses on the victims which are anonymous and the agents of violence are only once mentioned when they are represented by means of a negative functionalization as arsonists. In the DN report of the same day (DN_Clergy put church death toll at 50_03/01/2008) the perpetrators of the violence are also identified as unspecified and collectivized criminal arsonists, but the events acquire some additional meaning when they come to be seen as a symbol of the evil of the post-

\(^{152}\) After the primary news of 2 January 2008, it is referred back to in 7 reports from the DN, 7 from the ST, 1 from the IN, 4 from the NYT, 4 from the TI, 3 from the WP, 3 from the DM and 1 from the DS.
election crisis. Moreover, the Kiambaa tragedy is recontextualized in function of the religious leaders’ appeals for peace. The following day the Kiambaa killings are again similarly recontextualized in the DN as they are described by Peter Karanja, the general secretary of the National Council of Churches of Kenya, as “sacrilegious acts [which] not only profane holy places of worship but also invoke the wrath of God against the actual perpetrators and indeed the whole nation” (DN_NCCK asks leading parties to form unity government _04/01/2008).

Some more examples of reinforcement through recontextualization. In the Sunday Nation review article ‘Raid on displaced families that shocked the world’ (06/01/2008) journalists Barnabas Bii and Peter Ngetich take pains at steering clear of an ethnic frame of interpretation by representing the killers as ‘protesting youths’ and the victims as their perceived “political enemies”. In another report it is remarked about Kiambaa that “[i]t has now attracted international media keen to highlight the costly outcome of political chaos” (DN_Looters reap from victims’ agony_09/01/2008). Ironically, it was not so much political chaos as ethnic hatred that the studied international press highlighted.

The instigators of the violence usually remain out of reach in the Kenyan newspapers. However, in the DN front-page article ‘Kibaki-Raila deal possible, says Tutu’ (05/01/2008) the previously identified meanings are refined by implicitly accusing ODM leaders, such as Ruto and Odinga, through Kibaki’s condemnation that “it was despicable for some leaders to incite their people to burn a church where children and women were seeking refuge”. Also in the IN and the WP the recontextualization of the Kiambaa tragedy one day after the coverage of the event is used to reinforce the dominant interpretation of “tribal violence” or “ethnic fighting” (cf. IN_A chilling tour of Kenyan church that became scene of mass murder_03/01/2008 and WP_Tribal rage tears at diverse Kenyan city_03/01/2008). However, this interpretation is further refined. While in the first reports the agents of violence were identified as a group of Luo, Luhyas and Kalenjins, the killers are now exclusively identified as Kalenjin neighbors of the Kiambaa villagers. The WP even speaks of the transformation of “ethnically integrated neighbors into tribal warriors”. Both reports even present the same witness, Joseph Mugweru, a 50-year-old Kikuyu from Kiambaa, to corroborate this observation. This could be an indication that some foreign correspondents travelled together and interviewed the same people.

In later recontextualizations the events are often reassessed. In the DN report ‘Chaos in Rift unmasks historical disputes’ (25/01/2008) the underlying causes of the conflicts in the region of Kiambaa are addressed. Instead of interpreting the violence through an electoral-political lens, the conflicts are reassessed and now attributed to “land issues” dating back to colonial times and which both the Kenyatta and Moi regimes not only failed to solve, but even made worse. In (77) the journalist readjusts his view on the violence in the North Rift region. The extract indicates that not only the Kikuyus, originally from Central province, are targeted by indigenous Kalenjin
people, but also people who originally come from western Kenya like the Luos and the Luhyas and who are also perceived to be “aliens” to be driven out.

77) Initially thought to have targeted just one community from Central province, the violence is now targeting two other groups this time from western Kenya, raising the possibility of other causes.  
(DN_Chaos in Rift unmasks historical disputes_25/01/2008)

As such, a more complete picture is established of the wave of violence that swept through Kiambaa. Even the ethnic factor is acknowledged by the same two journalists who wrote the Sunday Nation review article mentioned above, as is shown in (78).

78) A Nation investigation points out to competition for land, tribalism and poverty as the key reasons why the violence was inevitable.  
(DN_Chaos in Rift unmasks historical disputes_25/01/2008)

Another clear example of a reassessment through the recontextualization of the Kiambaa events can be found in the DN report ‘How State land policy shaped conflict’ (09/02/2008). In the report ‘Neighbour against neighbour’ (12/01/2008) the ST’s primary interpretation of the situation as election-related violence by enraged voters who felt cheated is expressly reinforced, but the interpretation is also refined by acknowledging an ethnic aspect in the violence when it is reported that: “When last year's presidential poll results were announced, deep-seated tribal animosity came to the fore”.

Also in some foreign press reports the Kiambaa violence was gradually reassessed. In the NYT, for instance, the context of the land issue is activated in (33) by means of the comparison in the presupposition that the Kalenjins clashed with the Kikuyus over land in 1992.

79) Up to 50 people who had been seeking refuge inside the church were killed, most of them women and children, all of them Kikuyus. Witnesses said the attackers were from the Kalenjin tribe, which voted heavily for Mr. Odinga and clashed fiercely with Kikuyus over land before the elections of 1992.  
(NYT_Kenya leader and opponent to meet_08/01/2008)

Reassessments like these illustrate the dynamics of discourse. The news discourse about the events of Kenya’s post-election crisis constantly evolved as journalists received new and more information and as they dug deeper into causes of the conflicts. This has to be taken into account when interpreting one instance of discourse, as has been done in this chapter. Nevertheless, although reassessments occur, the identified dominant frames of interpretation never seem to be completely abandoned. The WP report ‘Tribal rage tears at diverse Kenyan city’ (03/01/2008) accounts for socio-economic aspects of the Kiambaa violence by discussing land issues, but a few days later the ethnic interpretation of the events is ever present as it is recollected that “a mob torched a church filled with refugees from ethnic violence” (WP_Odinga rejects talks with
Kenyan leader_09/01/2008). Above it was shown that the DN gradually developed a deeper understanding of the events, but on 1 March 2008 the Kiambaa tragedy is again exclusively explained from an electoral-criminal perspective in the article ‘Pastor relives Eldoret church massacre’.

7.3.2.3. Doing journalism in difficult circumstances
The final words are for the journalists. In the whole of this story the often difficult conditions in which both foreign correspondents and local reporters had to work cannot be ignored, nor their personal feelings and predilections. As Agina put it, in political journalism “there’s bound to be (self-)interest in whatever you do, so journalists also took sides, which I guess may also be so in Europe”.

Even if they try to be detached watchdogs, as explained in 3.2.2.1, also foreign correspondents are not free of preference. It is impossible to be one hundred percent neutral. Except for parachute journalists, most of the foreign correspondents that I interviewed live in the society they reported on. They have good contacts with certain people and can have bad experiences with others, which shapes their frame of reference. This is not typical of foreign correspondence in Kenya, but it happens everywhere. If you are a foreign correspondent for an English-speaking newspaper living in Brussels and you mainly intermingle with French-speaking Belgians you will miss a number of views on Belgium’s regional tensions which are held in the northern, Dutch-speaking part of the country.

Kenyan journalists writing about politics experience a particular predicament. They are expected to be detached as professionals and they are expected to be loyal as community members. After all, they cannot hide their ethnicity. Recall, Nyamnjoh’s comments on the tension between journalistic professionalism and cultural belonging in 3.2.2.1. In a society where political parties are organized around powerful persons with a strong ethnic identification, it can be hazardous to be a political journalist. That is why Kenyan journalists sometimes have to squirm and weigh their words when they try to write accurate, fair and balanced reports. From a tribalistic perspective, to be balanced and fair is seen as a bad quality. Onyango told me about the political and popular pressures that he experienced when he was covering the Kenyan elections.

“...You write a story and put your name on it and you go back home and you realize that the village is angry with you because you wrote a story that was not good for them. If I happen to write a good story on a candidate or a party of my ethnic background, then some people would think that I did this positive story because this guy is my tribesman, not because he deserved it. If I was to do a scandalous story on a politician who is not from my tribe the

153 Personal interview with Ben Agina on 22 November 2008.
154 Personal interview with Dennis Onyango on 15 November 2008.
assumption would be that I did it to finish him politically. And if you do a scandalous story on your tribesman, who is seen to be doing well politically, the community will rise up and say: ‘Why are you finishing one of our own?’. So, there are all those things to worry about.”

During the polarized election campaign, some politicians had a strong command of the population in certain rural areas and they did not flinch from suggesting their followers to harass journalists who wrote for newspapers they felt badly done by. When politicians turn against a newspaper, this also has a commercial effect. The sales could go down. That is one of the main reasons why both the DN and the ST, in spite of their perceived orientation, tried to keep a midway position in their coverage.

Most professional journalists, especially the staffers of the national newspapers in Nairobi who have a monthly income they can live with, try not to let their ethnic identity interfere with their reporting, but that does not mean that all news is free of ethnic bias. For freelance journalists and the newsworkers at regional offices it is more difficult to earn a living and so they are more prone to the negative effects of Kenya’s deep-seated clientelism or patronage (cf. Khamisi 2011: 264ff.). In the interview I had with him, Mugonyi disclosed to me that he had the impression that some journalists tended to slant their stories, favoring certain political parties. Moreover, he confirmed that “it is easier to approach politicians from your tribe, which personally I feel is a good thing and also a very bad thing, because if you approach a politician from your own tribe you tend to do things that favor him, because he comes from your community”, while he added that he had contacts with politicians across the board, because he does not have a clear tribal identity, as his mother is Kikuyu and his father is Luhya.

With regard to the foreign correspondents, Gettleman clearly articulated some of the contextual constraints and factors that affected the news production process. To him, it was different to report on conflict in Congo or Somalia, because afterwards you could always retreat to the safe haven of your Nairobi home. But in the case of Kenya’s post-election crisis, the conflicts were at his doorstep. That is why he found it quite “upsetting to see Kenya unravel so fast and violently” and readily admitted to “some emotional and psychological involvement” which he experienced less in his coverage of Congo or Somalia. Besides, the weight of the work should not be underestimated. While he usually writes two stories a week, during the post-election crisis Gettleman “wrote every day for 2 months straight [and that] was really, really, really hard work”. As he explained: “I was travelling around and pumping out a story almost every day and looking for not just the news story but bigger stories as well”.

On the one hand, Gettleman told, it was hard, nerve-wracking work. On the other hand, “it was very easy to get into the heart of it; it was a pretty easy conflict to cover”, because the crisis

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155 Personal interview with David Mugonyi on 20 November 2008.
156 Personal interview with Jeffrey Gettleman on 20 May 2011.
When the results of the election were declared, clashes broke out immediately in Eldoret. It was hell. Shops were looted, houses were burnt down, and people were hacked down and killed. There was blood everywhere.

I was constantly in the frontline of the events and was one of the first journalists to arrive to the church in Kiambaa where 40 people, mainly women and children, had been locked up and burned to death. Today, I still struggle with the trauma that has haunted me since I covered the gruesome events. I feel sad and painful and deeply embarrassed watching my own countrymen turn against each other like they did in the weeks after the election. I have not been offered any help from my newspaper. Employers do not care about freelancers. You are exposed to danger and they do not even care how you survive in the field. (IMS 2009: 25)

When analyzing news discourse such working conditions of journalists must be taken into account, because they obviously impact on how the news is reported and they can be quite revealing.
8. Research results: Interpretation and discussion

“Whether long range weapon or suicide bomber
Wicked mind is a weapon of mass destruction
Whether you’re soar away sun or BBC 1
Disinformation is a weapon of mass destruc
You could a Caucasian or a poor Asian
Racism is a weapon of mass destruction
Whether inflation or globalization
Fear is a weapon of mass destruction”
(Faithless (2004). Mass destruction. On the album No Roots)

Figure 28: Photo by Lucas Thuo of the IDP camp in Afraha Stadium, Nakuru, published in The Standard on 23 February 2008 (p.2).

Figure 29: Cartoon by Gado about the outcome of the crisis, published in the Sunday Nation on 2 March 2008 (p. 11).
8.1. Post-election news discourse on politics and violence

8.1.1. The disputed elections: Reinterpretations through recapitulations

8.1.1.1. From free and fair to fraud and flawed
In this chapter I will sum up the main research results of the pragmatic analysis of the 653 hard news reports which constitute the primary data set. The problem of this kind of qualitative research is that I can only present a limited number of text fragments to support my interpretations of the language use. Such a synthesis runs the risk of providing a distorted picture of the data. However, instead of focusing only on the most typical or striking illustrations, I will also include a lot of counterexamples and more ambiguous ones to provide a more or less representative picture of the studied newspaper discourses. Even more than in the previous chapter, in this chapter analysis and interpretation will form one coherent analytical discourse, which will concentrate first on the way the presidential election was reported (8.1.1) and then on the coverage of the violent conflicts (8.1.2). Each time I will pay special attention to the interplay between context and linguistic structure, between explicit and implicit meanings in the discursive rendering (or construction) of the two central topics, election and violence, and in the representation of the social actors involved. The third central topic, viz. mediation and peace, is not separately dealt with in this chapter for reasons of length, but it will be touched upon when the press coverage of Kenyan politics and violence will be discussed. Because the crisis is either linked to the violent incidents or to the elections, as became clear in 7.2.1.2, the categorization of the crisis as a whole will be mentioned in the sections about the elections or the different kinds of violence. The labeling of the crisis will be further discussed in 8.2.1.1. In 8.2.1 first the tribal and the sociopolitical frames of interpretation will be revisited. Then I will reflect on tribal language use in the international press in 8.2.1.2, followed by a critical reflection on the issue of ethnicity from the standpoint of Kenyan journalism. In 8.2.2, finally, I will put my own research into perspective by pointing out a few shortcomings (8.2.2.1) and problems (8.2.2.2).

Through a contrastive analysis of topically-related news reports from different newspapers it becomes clear what kind of context is created and which dominant meanings are generated about the news events, in casu the Kenyan post-election crisis. My linguistic pragmatic analysis, comprising a combination of textual, intertextual and contextual analysis, as was explained in chapter 6 about the methodology, resulted in three general findings, which can be illuminated by taking different sources of ethnographic information into account. In line with chapter 7, generally two dominant frames can be distinguished through which the news events were interpreted. The international press tended to highlight the ethnic dimension of the conflicts in Kenyan politics and society at the expense of other explanatory factors, such as constitutional
shortcomings, failing democratic institutions, inequality, poverty, historical injustices or impunity. The main ingredients of a so-called tribal frame of interpretation, which are found illustrated below, are the abundant use of the representational strategy of ethnic classification, the categorization of the violence as tribal and the lumping together of different kinds of violence as ethnic conflict, especially the equation of election-related violence to ethnic violence. The local Kenyan press was inclined to report on the events from a politico-criminal perspective, ignoring, or at least underreporting, societal problems or social issues, like internal migration, multi-ethnic co-existence and interdependence, ownership structures, the unequal distribution of resources, power imbalances, nepotism, corruption and disinformation. The main ingredients of such a politico-criminal frame of interpretation are a focus on political battles instead of conflicts among the population, the deliberate avoidance of explicit references to ethnicity, the use of indetermination and collectivization to represent people involved in the violence and the lumping together of different conflicts as election-related violence, generally captured under the label of post-election crisis.

However, although these interpretive frames can be argued to be dominant in the foreign and the local press, they are not the only frames of interpretation. More than ethnic interpretations can be found in the international press, as will be amply shown below. In the local press the ethnic angle is present at implicit layers of meaning. Moreover, I will contrast or complement the analyses of the news discourse with different kinds of information from the ethnographic fieldwork, in particular from the interviews I did with Kenyan journalists and foreign correspondents. In that way I want to take the news production context into account and acknowledge the opinions of some of the language users involved. Thus my interpretive analyses are refined, supported or sometimes refuted.

Immediately after the voting, which went largely peacefully compared to previous elections, the 2007 Kenyan elections were rather positively evaluated in both the Kenyan and the international press. Although none of the newspaper reports denied the instances of occasional violence and organizational hitches, the initial coverage of Kenya’s General Election, running ahead of the final outcome, tended to be positive for four reasons: (i) in previous elections in 2002 and the constitutional referendum in 2005 the voice of the majority was respected; (ii) there was not so much violence at polling stations during the voting day; (iii) the parliamentary and civic elections were swiftly concluded without much dispute; (iv) in these elections one third of the ministers of Kibaki’s cabinet and numerous other veteran MPs were voted out, while Odinga was soon leading by 1 million votes in the race for the presidency; and (v) election day got a good evaluation from local and international election observers. Examples (80) and (81) are illustrative of the positive mood.
80) Stability and smooth process were reported in most regions in the afternoon, but violent incidents continued to rock without derailing the elections. Voting went on well in clash-torn Mt Elgon constituency as armed police officers were sent to keep the peace during elections. There was calm in Kuresoi, with voters turning up at mobile polling stations, but for a reported hitch when ballot papers ran out.

The ECK process received a boost as key observers issued confidence statements that the electoral body had conducted a largely free and fair process despite the logistical hitches. US Ambassador, Mr Michael Ranneberger, gave the polling process a clean bill of health despite the hicups. Ranneberger termed the voting as orderly and hoped that the process continued peacefully.

(ST_Kenyans make huge statement_28/12/2007)

81) So far the election period has been relatively peaceful, with a few bursts of violence but no widespread turbulence. Foreign election observers, including the American ambassador to Kenya, have praised the process, saying it was free and fair, though at times a little chaotic.

(NYT_With Half of Vote Counted, Kenyan opposition is poised to sweep_29/12/2007)

Both (80) and (81) report on violence and logistical problems, but the core message is that the voting process is free and fair. The only difference is that the international press mentioned the violence in general and did not go into details about hitches, while these hindrances are discussed in detail in the local press, where reference is made to ballot papers running out, as in (80), mix-ups of ballot papers, delays in the opening of polling stations, etc. Only one so-called hitch, which gave rise to the “allegations of vote rigging” is reported in several international newspapers, viz. the incident of the incomplete voter registers in several polling stations, also in Kibera, where Odinga was supposed to vote and where names were missing which started with the letters A, O or R (e.g. NYT_Kenyans Vote in Test of Democracy_28/12/2007, TI_Polls put President ahead in Kenyan elections_28/12/2007, WP_Kenyans Vote in Presidential Election_28/12/2007). In the ST report of which (80) is an extract different kinds of violence are reported: an assault on a presiding officer, an attack on Internal Security Assistant minister Peter Munya, a “political revenge mission”, fights between supporters of different parties and the murder of an ODM supporter in Kibera. Only the latter is picked up by one foreign news report.

The TI reported that “gunmen shot and killed a man on the outskirts of Kibera, but it was not clear if the incident was linked to the election” (TI_Polls put President ahead in Kenyan elections_28/12/2007). In this case the man killed is not identified as an ODM supporter, nor is there any reference to ethnicity of the people involved in the shooting.

These examples show that there are a lot of intertextual links between the Kenyan and the international newspaper reports. Often the coverage was similar, although I will mainly focus on the differences. These examples also show that the international press coverage is not negative by default, contrary to a lot of criticism. Recall, for instance, the letter-to-the-editor ‘International press up to no good’, in which the negativity of the international press is faulted (see 7.3.1.3). The international media could have focused on the different shortcomings of the
election process or they could easily have hinted at the pre-election violence in Mt. Elgon and Kuresoi regions, which reminded of Moi’s regime, as did the ST in (80), because even before the elections there were pockets of violence in Kenya (see also figure 4 opening chapter 2). However, the international press originally had a positive outlook on the matter. The above examples also mitigate the claim that the international press would practice a kind of “predetermined journalism”, as senior parliamentary reporter Ndegwa criticized the foreign press, i.e. that foreign correspondents make up their minds in advance and have their judgments ready. That is only true to an extent (see also below). International media have a preference for good guy, bad guy reporting, because that provides a simple frame of interpretation for the readers back home who are often unfamiliar with the political scene of foreign countries. So, they tend to subtly, though never blatantly, sympathize for one political camp, often the underdogs or the opposition who fight against a long-established power clique. Most international media seemed to tentatively support ODM and its presidential candidate Odinga (but not so the TI). In that respect, the foreign press had made up its mind, but it did take the turn of events into account, so that the international coverage changed in the course of the crisis, as did the Kenyan coverage.

The positive evaluation of the elections quickly changed through a series of recapitulations and reinterpretations. While the Kenyan newspapers were reporting extensively on the outcome of the civic and parliamentary elections, only two of the other newspapers in the corpus devoted all-in-all one article to these elections (IN_Old guard crumbles as votes counted in Kenya_29/12/2007 and TI_Furious voters take their revenge on Kibaki and Kenya's discredited old guard_29/12/2007). In the other international news reports the civic and parliamentary elections were only mentioned in passing and the attention quickly faded away. The international media’s predilection for the news value of negativity put the spotlight on the degenerating presidential elections, so that the successful civic and parliamentary elections were overshadowed. Through a series of recontextualizations the presidential election and by extension the General Election in general is reevaluated as “deeply flawed” or “rigged”. Compare the following examples.

82) In Molo constituency, where European Union observers were present, Mr Kibaki won 55,145 votes. When Samuel Kivuitu, head of the electoral commission, announced the result, it had shot up to 75,261. In Kangara, the number of votes for Mr Kibaki rose from 33,835 to 70,443. In Juja it more than doubled from 48,293 to 100,390. (IN_Kenya in flames over 'stolen election'_31/12/2007)

83) Lambsdorff, chief European Union election monitor, said that the ECK “has not succeeded in establishing the credibility of the tallying process to the satisfaction of all parties”.

157 Personal interview with Alex Ndegwa on 6 May 2011.
"The president is Raila!" the rioters shouted, banging the machetes on tin roofs before tearing them down. "No Raila! No peace! They have rigged the election!" “The problem in Africa is people cannot accept defeat -- why?” said Kelley Omondi, 26, who pulled from his pocket a napkin scrawled with the results. "We are not protesting for nothing... If Kibaki had won in a fair manner, we would agree." 

Last Sunday, Kibaki was declared the winner by 231,728 votes, even though Odinga had led by a substantial margin in preliminary results. Kibaki was sworn in secretively as 152 European Union observers declared the election deeply flawed.

After a deeply flawed election that left international observers and diplomats unable to say for sure who won, both sides have accused the other of inciting violence which has so far claimed more than 600 lives.

The fighting has killed more than 1,000 people and made 300,000 homeless since the presidential election on 27 December, which foreign and local observers say was rigged. Protests have deteriorated into ethnic clashes, with much of the anger aimed at President Mwai Kibaki's Kikuyu tribe, long resented for dominating politics and the economy.

Allies of Mr. Kibaki, who was declared the winner of a deeply flawed election in December, retained the most powerful ministries, like finance and foreign affairs, but the leading opposition party managed to get some major posts, including local government and agriculture.

Different strategies are used in the foreign news reports to discredit the presidential election. One strategy is by giving evidence of the fraudulent augmentation of votes, as is done in (82). Except for the Kenyan newspapers, the IN gives the most detailed numbers with the specific locations of the constituencies. In the other newspapers reference is made to "a constituency", "some constituencies" or "certain constituencies" without clearly localizing them. Such a localization might not be very revealing for a European or American audience, but it would have been informative to provide some background information about these localities in view of the later violence. The Kuresoi division of Molo district, for instance, was already volatile before the elections, as noted in (80), and after the elections the North Rift region of Molo saw a lot of violence against the Kikuyus. Another example is Juja, which is situated in Central Province. There a lot of non-Kikuyu residents who did not vote for Kibaki were targeted by the Kikuyus of the region (see KNCHR 2008: 128).
Another strategy to discredit the presidential election is by giving voice to authoritative sources, such as Alexander Graff Lambsdorff, the chief of the EU election observers mission, as is done in (83). Although these observers had first praised the ECK and the electoral process they became more critical as vote counting dragged on and more evidence of vote rigging came into the open. Note that Lambsdorff still has a little bit of confidence in the ECK, as the implicative verb *to succeed* in his press statement yields the presupposition that the ECK indeed *tried to* establish the credibility of the tallying process to the satisfaction of all parties. No doubt there would have been commissioners for which this presupposition is true, but not for the whole electoral commission. Moreover, several opposition politicians claimed to the contrary that the ECK did not try to establish the credibility of the tallying to the satisfaction of all parties. However, also voices of the people, so-called *vox pops*, can be used to support the suggestions that are made in the news report. In the WP report of which (84) is an extract, foreign correspondent McCrummen does not herself evaluate the election as rigged, but she quotes some ODM supporters and additionally suggests the rigging in her description of the vote tallying process and the declaration of the winner. In (85) Kibaki’s inauguration is put in a negative light by referring to it as something that was executed *secretively*, which implicitly invokes suspicions, and by linking it to the presupposition that 152 European Union observers declared the election deeply flawed.

That the election was deeply flawed is also presupposed in the temporal clause in (86), but in that IN report the specification that it concerned the presidential election is left out, so that readers could get the impression that the election in general was flawed. The same impression is created by the presupposition that the elections in Kenya were flawed triggered by the genitive clause in (88). However, there is no pattern. There is no point after which a foreign correspondent starts to generally refer to the elections as flawed. In some articles the discursive strategy of generalization can be applied, while in other later articles the flawed election is again specified as presidential (see example 87). Example (89) illustrates that the vote rigging is linked to Kibaki, because he is the winner or the beneficiary of the flawed election.

The Kenyan newspapers always clearly specify the type of election and are in the ‘hard news’ sections more cautious to outrightly call the presidential election rigged, but through the different recontextualizations and recapitulations also in the local press the presidential election came gradually to seen as definitively flawed. Consider examples (90)-(94).

90) This unfolded as a new battle-front opened up between ODM and ODM-Kenya, who advocated for a release, without any further delay, of the controversial presidential vote outcome, a decision which quickly plunged the country into anarchy.

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158 See also *e.g.* [International observers condemn fraud during Kenyan presidential elections](https://www.euronews.com/2007/2007/12/03/international-observers-condemn-fraud-in-kenyan-presidential-election)
Yesterday, ODM issued a raft of demands that, it said, would lead to the unlocking of the impasse over the disputed presidential elections. (ST, Suspicion, mistrust as PNU and ODM dig in_03/01/2008)

91) At the same time, three people died and a petrol station and five vehicles were set ablaze in Nairobi as groups of youths went on the rampage after police blocked an ODM rally called to protest against the results of the disputed presidential election. (DN, Kibaki’s peace plan_04/01/2008)

92) Orange party leader, Mr Raila Odinga, says he won the election and it was stolen from him. But PNU maintains President Kibaki, who was quickly sworn-in after the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) Chairman Mr Samuel Kivuitu controversially declared the results, won fair and square. (ST, Kenya’s reality check: Hope alive as Annan jets in_23/01/2008)

93) ODM and Mr Kibaki’s Party of National Unity are locked in a tussle for the presidency, sparked off by the announcement on December 30 [sic] that Mr Kibaki had beaten Mr Odinga in the General Election, a verdict disputed by ODM and international election observers. (DN, Another MP shot dead_01/02/2008)

94) A month after the disputed presidential election results, most roads remained barricaded by charged youths. (ST, North Rift remains volatile_02/02/2008)

In the Kenyan press the presidential election is not explicitly evaluated as rigged. Rather, the results and the declaration of Kibaki as winner are qualified as controversial, while the presidential election is described as disputed (see examples 90, 91 and 92). In the Kenyan press numerous examples can be found of the claim that “the crippling crisis [is] caused by disputed presidential elections” (ST, US, Canada ban threat as talks register gains_05/02/2008; see also below). Alternatively, the election is referred to as the “presidential elections dispute”.159

Often the Kenyan newspapers are even more specific and recontextualize the flawed election outcome as “the disputed presidential election results”, as in (94). This phrase is often preferred above “the disputed presidential election”. In the Kenyan press the tally was more easily evaluated as flawed than the presidential election in general. Gradually, the flawed tally becomes presupposed background knowledge as in: “The US was however aware the tallying of the presidential poll was flawed” (DN, Bush to discuss Kenya crisis_15/02/2008). The factive predicate with to be aware of presupposes the truth of what is expressed in the complement clause. Instead of dispute also synonyms like tussle are used in the Kenyan press, as in (93). The phrase “the General Election” can be seen as a generalization. However, the context of the presidential elections has already been invoked in the co-text. That the outcome of the election is disputed by ODM and international election observers may be communicated explicitly, by

159 For instance, DN, Rival teams retreat to fine-tune positions_31/01/2008, DN, Annan team pledges to end violence in 7 days_01/02/2008, ST, AU’s hands tied on Kenyan crisis_03/02/2008, ST, It’s just too hot..._06/02/2008 or DN, Ray of hope_09/02/2008.
means of the background structure of the apposition it can be argued to be a presupposition, rather than an assertion.

Sometimes the Kenyan newspapers have recourse to more implicit ways of negatively appraising the presidential election. In (92) the statement that the election was stolen by Kibaki and the PNU is cautiously attributed to Odinga, but in the reply by PNU a non-restrictive relative clause is added to Kibaki, giving rise to the doubly embedded presupposition that Kibaki was quickly sworn in and that Kivuitu controversially declared the results. These combined presuppositions contrast with the subsequent claim in the main clause that Kibaki won fair and square. Implicitly, this latter claim is denied.

In the international press the electoral process was often linked to Kenya’s assumed democratic system of governance. In the NYT the elections were conceptualized as “perhaps the greatest test yet of Kenya’s young, multiparty democracy”, with the genitive construction presupposing that Kenya has a young, multiparty democracy. The TI reported that “[t]he poll has been hailed as the most accurate test of public opinion since the arrival of multiparty politics 15 years ago”, where the temporal clause gives rise to the presupposition that Kenya has had a multiparty political system for fifteen years (TI_Furious voters take their revenge on Kibaki and Kenya's discredited old guard_29/12/2007). The problem with the latter description is that the actors of the verb to hail are suppressed in the passive sentence construction to use Van Leeuwen’s 2008 terminology, so that it is not clear who did the positive appraisement. It is a typical example of a newspaper sentence which contains a grain of truth, but which is rather vague and general. Only two days later does it become clear that it is “[o]bservers [who] saw the vote as the greatest test yet of its 15-year-old multiparty democracy – a test it appears to have failed”. (TI_Violence erupts as Kibaki grabs election victory_31/12/2007).

Another more fundamental problem of such representations is that they assume that the organization of multiparty elections implies a multiparty democracy. However, Nasong’o and Murunga clearly indicate that national multiparty elections are only a first step towards full democracy. They criticize the “belief in the determinative importance of elections” as well as the “disproportionate emphasis on the conduct of initial, national-level multiparty elections” to portray a country like Kenya which lacks “broader patterns of democratisation” as truly democratic (Nasong’o & Murunga 2007: 7). According to these political scientists Kenya is in a process of democratization. Still before the 2007 elections they wrote that such a democratic transition is “bound to be messy, fitful and frustrating, with many advances and setbacks along the way” (Nasong’o & Murunga 2007: 8). Whether one follows a liberal conceptualization of

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160 See NYT_Kenyans Vote in Test of Democracy_28/12/2007 and the same phrase is repeated in NYT_Riots Batter Kenya as Rivals Declare Victory_30/12/2007. This is an example of recycling, which happened frequently in the international press.
democracy, of which the institutional guarantees were listed by Nasong’o and Murunga (2007) in 3.2.2.1, or whether one takes an African perspective to democracy, as did Ake (1996) in the same section, it is clear that Kenya is not yet a full democracy. Presupposing that it is expresses an ideological meaning.

Yet Kenya is often depicted in the international press as a stable and democratic country, as was also mentioned in 3.1.2.2, and in 7.3.1.3 I explained how such a representation contributed to the discursive construction of the news values of novelty, unexpectedness, negativity and impact so as to enhance the newsworthiness of the newspaper article. This trend is seen throughout the whole of the corpus. Kenya has been described as “one of Africa’s most stable democracies” or as “one of sub-Saharan Africa’s most stable democracies” (e.g. TI_British companies make plans to remove staff amid Kenyan chaos_03/01/2008 or WP_Kenyans Vote in Presidential Election_28/12/2007). Of course, journalists do not just make this up. The ideological view of Kenya as an established democracy is one that is commonly held by ‘the international community’. In the DN, for instance, US National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley says that the “country's leaders must also discuss a "process for ensuring a continuation of Kenyan democracy"”, presupposing that Kenya has been and is a democracy (DN_Bush to discuss Kenya crisis_15/02/2008). Also in the ST instances can be found of ‘western’ officials calling Kenya “Africa's most most stable democracy”, as did former UK ambassador Edward Clay in ‘Britain questions Kenya ban on Clay’ (07/02/2008). The presupposition that Kenya is a democracy, while it is rather a country in democratic transition, also comes to expression in (95), where it is triggered by the choice for the iterative verb to return.

95) Her [Foreign Secretary Rice's] task, the State Department said, would be to “deliver a message directly to Kenya’s leaders and people: There must be an immediate halt to violence, there must be justice for the victims of abuse, and there must be a full return to democracy.”
(NYT_In Kenya, U.S. Added action to talk of democracy_01/03/2008)

This does not mean that the foreign correspondents fail to realize that the country is in a democratization process, rather than in a full-grown democracy. Although DM correspondent Zevenbergen first reports that “the democratization process in Kenya goes in small steps” (DM_Keniaanse jeugd is wangedrag van oude elite beu_27/12/2007 [Kenyan youth is tired of misconduct of old elite]), he later presents Kenya as a democracy (e.g. DM_Internationale waarnemers veroordelen fraude bij Keniaanse presidentsverkiezingen_31/12/2007 [International observers condemn fraud during Kenyan presidential elections]). So, the latter representation is used in function of the news story to contrast Kenya’s “reputation” or a specific ideological view to the undemocratic events that are unfolding.
In the same ideological way Kenya is often described as a stable country both by the foreign correspondents and by the elite sources that they use in order to highlight the contrast between this “once stable country” and the turbulent events that are reported and so to enhance its newsworthiness. Representations of Kenya as stable and prosperous are often very selective and involve the use of the discursive strategy of generalization, as in (96), which is my translation of the original Dutch phrase.¹⁶¹

96) The East African country has always been a beacon of stability since independence in 1963 and it has the most thriving economy of the region. (DM_Kenia brandt-Al zeker 200 doden na geweld na verkiezingen_02/01/2008)

Such a representation presents a selective view on independent Kenya’s history, which had its ups and downs. For instance, it leaves out the border conflicts with Somalia, going back to the so-called ‘Shifta war’ (1963-1967), the bloody riots after the assassinations of the prominent politicians Tom Mboya in 1969 and Josiah Mwangi Kariuki in 1975, the attempted coup in 1982 and the state-sponsored violence in 1992 and 1997, to name but a few eventful periods in Kenya’s history. In the international press Kenya’s supposed stability is also often juxtaposed to its economic growth, as in “one of the most developed, stable nations in Africa, which has a powerhouse economy and a billion-dollar-a-year tourism industry” (NYT_Disputed vote plunges Kenya into bloodshed_31/12/2007) or in its representation as “a haven of stability and economic success” (IN_The golfer and the caddy: A tale of two Kenya’s_02/02/2008), as if economic prosperity automatically leads to stability. What is missing in these contexts is that the fruits of the growing economy are only enjoyed by a minority of the people, which partly explains certain social tensions. A positive ideological representation of Kenya similar to (96) is found in (97), which also ignores a lot of historical context.

97) The speed of Kenya’s unravelling has been breathtaking. In Africa, one country after another has been racked by political violence, massacres, corruption and civil war. For 44 years, since independence from Britain, Kenya was largely the exception. […] The election was projected as a milestone in Kenya’s advance to a more mature democracy. In 2002 Kibaki had put down the first marker on this path when he won a multi-party election that ended Moi’s autocratic rule. Odinga helped in his victory. But the two fell out and became political opponents. (TI_Kill two, get one free, Kenya’s cry of hate_06/01/2008)

Except for civil war, Kenya has in its history experienced political violence, massacres and corruption. However, by means of comparison it is presupposed that Kenya has not, although the modifier adverb largely is used, which leaves a little bit of room for interpretation with a lot of

¹⁶¹ “Het Oost-Afrikaanse land is sinds de onafhankelijkheid in 1963 altijd een baken van stabilité geweest en heeft de meest welvarende economie van de regio” (DM_Kenia brandt-Al zeker 200 doden na geweld na verkiezingen_02/01/2008).
inferencing. In (97) it is further presupposed by means of a change of state predicate that Kenya is not yet a mature democracy, evoking the idea of a democratization process instead of an established democracy.

The presupposition that Kenya is or has been a stable and by extension peaceful country, triggered by iterative verbs like *to restore* or *to return*, is also found in the local press, as is exemplified by (98)–(100).

98) "We have formed a team to work on how we can restore peace in the country. Kenya is not at war and we believe, we as Kenyans, can solve the problems we are currently witnessing".
(DN_MPs-elect in move to restore peace_04/01/2008)

99) In a statement from Geneva, Mr Moon [Ban Ki-moon] said, "for the purpose of acting together for Kenya, the agreement marks a breakthrough toward resolving the crisis and gives hope to the people of Kenya for a return to democratic stability."
(ST_The world applauds Kenya's deal_01/03/2008)

100) Javier Solana who is the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP): "Kenya will now return to stability and prosperity".
(DN_International and local leaders throw weight behind power-sharing deal_01/03/2008)

In the Kenyan press the ideological meanings expressed in the presuppositions that Kenya had been a country in peace before the elections (98) and that it had known democratic stability (99) or stability and prosperity (100) are usually recontextualized in the context of appeals for peace and calm, which gives them extra ideological meanings. This is not to deny that Kenya had been relatively stable and peaceful, but there had also always been tensions in certain regions and incidents of violence. Githongo dismissed the ‘myth’ of Kenya as “an oasis of peace and calm”, writing that “the ethnic attacks […] in parts of Kenya since the election of December 2007 has been nothing more than an intense re-visiting of violence that has been a regular feature of the country” (2008: 365). This was also argued by the chairman of the Social Democratic Party Mwandawiro Mgangha in the opinion article ‘The myth that Kenya is an island of stability’ (ST_15/02/2008).

In one Belgian newspaper article Kenya was explicitly described as an “ethnic democracy” (DS_Zware rellen in Kenia na frauduleuze verkiezingen_31/12/2007 [Heavy riots in Kenya after fraudulent elections]), referring to Kenya’s ethnicized politics. As was discussed in 5.1.1.2, it is true that much of Kenya’s high-level politics has often been tribal (Lonsdale 2004), that a lot of people vote along ethnic lines and that in 2007 there was an ethnic polarization of the political

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^162 But not all people vote following their ethnicity. One clear example came from the Kalenjins. One of their strongmen, former president Moi, openly supported Kibaki and the PNU and yet most Kalenjins voted for the ODM. They blatantly disregarded Moi’s advice. That is why Kenya’s politics and the people’s voting behavior cannot be described in generalizing terms. As Ochola said in the interview I had with him on 24 November 2008, “Kenyan politics is so fluid, it doesn’t operate by the rules, so many things change”.

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landscape. Kenyan readers know that, so it is not explicitly thematized in the Kenyan news reports, but it was debated on the opinion pages. Seven days before the elections then ST managing editor of quality and production Okech Kendo, for instance, warned the readers against political manipulation and misuse of tribal loyalties in the opinion article ‘Appeals to tribe are an excuse for exploitation’ (ST_20/12/2007). On 24 December 2007 political commentator and UN employee Rasna Warah criticized the ethnic voting and the lack of ideology and vision of ethnically-organized political parties, while she pleaded for a detribalization of Kenyan politics (DN_We must strive to detribalize our political allegiances _24/12/2007). These debates were very alive in Kenya at the time of the 2007 elections.

Kenya’s ethnicized political climate had to be covered more explicitly in the foreign press, as most of the readers in Europe or the US are not well aware of the subtleties of Kenyan politics. That is how the ethnic aspect immediately came into the picture in the international election coverage. The question is how the international press could cover these issues in a sensible manner without becoming derogatory or tapping into stereotypes. Compare examples (101)-(104).

101) The election has also been seen by many as a battle of tribes. Mr Odinga's Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) has claimed the President's own Kikuyu tribe has benefited greatly during his time in office, while other tribes have been left by the wayside. Mr Kibaki's Party for National Unity (PNU) has in turn alleged that Mr Odinga, an ethnic Luo, is intent on splitting Kenya along tribal lines. (IN_Kenyans vote amid fears of rigging_28/12/2007)

102) Tribal loyalties play an important role in Kenyan politics, particularly as this is a showdown between the Luo and Kikuyu, whose rivalry predates Kenyan independence. The Kikuyu make up 20 per cent of the 36 million population and are the largest single grouping, but the Luo – the second-largest tribe – have put together, under Mr Odinga, an impressive coalition of smaller tribes and younger Kikuyu dismayed by the elitism and corruption of the current leadership. [...] The result is hard to predict because of younger first-time voters who are much less tribalist in outlook, and, ironically, the President's own legacy – a booming black middle class angered about rampant corruption at the highest levels of government. (TI_Polls put President ahead in Kenyan elections_28/12/2007)

103) But an undercurrent of tribalism ran through the campaign season, with Odinga accusing Kibaki of favoring his own ethnic group and raising suspicions that his inner circle would never relinquish power. (WP_Incumbent Declared Winner in Kenya in Kenya's disputed election_31/12/2007)

104) With the president, Mwai Kibaki, a Kikuyu and Mr. Odinga a Luo, the election seems to have tapped into an atavistic vein of tribal tension that always lay beneath the surface in Kenya. (NYT_Disputed vote plunges Kenya into bloodshed_31/12/2007)

From the start the election is conceptualized as “a battle of tribes” (101) or as an “ethnic duel between the Kikuye [sic] and the Luo people” (DS_Zware rellen in Kenia na frauduleuze
verkiezingen_31/12/07 [Heavy riots in Kenya after fraudulent elections]), which is not very subtle, and the campaign rhetoric is taken over without much interpretation or clarification. Compare this to example (106) below where the election is conceptualized as a battle between political personalities. To talk of “tribal loyalties” is more subtle (102), but all differentiations are lost when the election is seen as “a showdown between the Luo and the Kikuyu”. In function of this conceptualization the Luo are wrongly presupposed to be the second-largest tribe. By means of the presupposition arising from the comparative much less Kenyan voters, even the younger ones, are identified as to some extent “tribalist in outlook”. In the TI report no distinction is made between tribal loyalties, which are not necessarily negative, and electoral or political tribalism, which is objectionable. Running ahead of the discussion about the use of tribe in the international press in 8.2.1.2, it can already be noted that there is a clear difference between tribe and tribalism. As former ST journalist Onyango explained to me, tribe does not have a default negative connotation in Kenya: “the use of the word tribe is not considered to be primitive or negative […] what is sensitive is tribalism; tribe is good tribalism is bad” (remember Onyango’s definition of tribalism as favoring people on the basis of tribal affiliation in 5.1.1.1).163 This was confirmed by most of the other informants. The WP report from which (103) is taken does not identify tribe as the problem of Kenyan politics, but the tribalism of power-mad politicians who constantly accuse each other.

By ethnically classifying Kibaki as Kikuyu and Odinga as Luo in function of the claim that the presidential election “tapped into an atavistic vein of tribal tension” (see immediately below), a blatant tribal frame is created to interpret the election. This particular newspaper report, published on the front-page of the NYT, provoked a storm of criticism. Ray (2008), for instance, reacted:

“To suggest, as New York Times’ reporter Jeffrey Gettleman does, that the recent violence has resulted from an “atavistic vein of tribal tension” dangerously reduces a very complicated political and social phenomenon down to the primordial sentiments of unchanged and unchanging “gangs of opposing tribes” whose violent actions are rendered inexplicable” (Ray 2008: 8).

Note that Ray recontextualizes Gettleman’s words and extends them to apply for the post-election violence, while they apply to the presidential election in the newspaper report. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that this article is a clear example of a tribal interpretation of the events. In the foregoing paragraph Gettleman reports that Kenya is quickly descending into “tribal bloodletting”, while he describes “Luo gangs” burning down “Kikuyu homes” in the subsequent paragraph. Githongo also reacts against such an ‘atavistic interpretation’, denouncing the “myth […] that the whole problem in a place like Kenya is tribalism, reinforced by the idea

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163 Personal interview with Dennis Onyango on 15 November 2008.
that Africa’s tribes simply do not get along and are prone to the occasional atavistic uprising that sees images of young men wielding machetes” (2008: 360). This must be kept in mind for the discussion of the coverage of the violence in the aftermath of the Kenyan elections in 8.1.2.1. When I interviewed Gettleman on 25 May 2011 I gave him a chance to defend himself against these criticisms. I asked him whether he, in retrospect, would write again the phrase of the “atavistic vein of tribal tension”. His reply was the only time he hesitated and took some time before saying:

“Would I write it again? May-be... I wouldn't be using the word tribe. I mean I might write something similar... You know, the question is how far back does it go and that was the big argument. Some people told you that it was the colonial system that aggravated the tensions and there was some history of that, but anywhere you look at it there were deep roots, even if you just went as far back as colonialism, but it may have gone back further. You know, I think when I wrote this I did not have a full appreciation of all the dynamics between the groups and the politics and the political history, but even after that...if you look at independence and what was happening then at that moment you will see there were tribal blocs and ethnic politics.”

Gettleman did not disclaim his news report, but he mitigates the atavistic claim. What is interesting is that he admits that he did not have “a full appreciation” of the dynamics in Kenya’s society and politics. This shows that journalists are constantly searching and learning about the countries and topics they cover (see further below). Foreign correspondents do not have fixed ideas, but their views can change. They do not always have a clear picture of events or they may still be processing certain essential background knowledge, but the deadline does not wait, so they have to write their stories.

One final remark is in order before I can shift the focus to the representation of the main political actors. In the TI report of (102) an isolated Kikuyu party is opposed to an ethnically diverse Luo party to which even younger Kikuyus belong. In the international press the PNU is mostly described as Kibaki’s party, but through association also as a Kikuyu party. As such, it is contrasted to the ODM, which is typically depicted as “a coalition of the Luo, the Luhya, the Masai, the Somali and many other tribes” (e.g. NYT_Kenyans Vote in Test of Democracy_28/12/2007). This is quite an ideological view which is in line with widely held perceptions in Kenya and which was propagated by opposition parties like the ODM, but it does not correspond to reality. The ODM was less heterogeneous than was often implicitly suggested, while the PNU was less homogeneous. The ODM’s leading body, the so-called pentagon, was dominated by Luos, Kalenjins and Luhyas. It is true that the ODM was more diverse than the PNU, but that does not mean that the PNU was an exclusive Kikuyu party. In the Kenyan press the PNU is most commonly described as either Kibaki’s party or as the government or ruling party, including most of the ministers from 2005-2007. Among them are, for instance, former minister for information and communication, tourism, and foreign affairs Raphael Tuju (a Luo),
Kibaki’s former finance minister David Mwiraria (a Meru), and home affairs minister and vice-

president Moody Awori (a Luhya).

8.1.1.2. The representation of the main political actors

After we have seen how the elections were reported and interpreted, let us have a look at the way the actors involved were represented in the international as opposed to the national press. Table 3 lists the fifteen political actors who were most frequently represented by means of nomination in the whole of the corpus (see the representational categories proposed in 6.2.2). This means that only their explicit representations by name were counted. Samuel Kivuitu, the chairman of the election commission, has a few more representations in the international press by means of the functionalization ‘ECK chairman’ without mentioning his name (see below). Because the dataset consists of twice as many Kenyan reports than foreign news reports the picture presented in table 3 is slightly skewed. For instance, South-African archbishop Desmond Tutu, who came to mediate, then US Ambassador to Kenya Ranneberger, then British Foreign Secretary David Miliband and Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, the leader of the EU election observer mission, who were all more or less frequently represented in the international press fell outside this table.

Nonetheless table 3 shows a few trends. The top three of the represented political actors, viz. Kibaki, Odinga and chief mediator Kofi Annan, is shared by all newspapers. Another high-

profile mediator also appeared in many newspaper reports both locally and globally: John A. Kufuor, the president of Ghana and then chairman of the African Union. In the Kenyan press the third most important presidential candidate and later Vice-President Kalonzo Musyoka was highly represented in contrast to the international press. In the American press their own officials, such as US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, then President Bush and Assistant Secretary of State Jendayi Frazer, were regularly represented. In both the local and international press William Ruto, who was then one of ODM’s leaders and an influential Kalenjin politician, is relatively frequently represented. The others in the table are Kenyan politicians who are mainly represented in the Kenyan part of the corpus: Moses Wetangula, Martha Karua and Mutula Kilonzo formed the PNU mediation team, Musalia Mudavadi was Odinga’s running mate and was later one of the ODM negotiators, and Kenneth Marende was the ODM politician who became the Speaker of Parliament.
Looking at who is included further reveals that the Kenyan newspapers represented more social actors in their news stories than the American, British or Belgian newspapers. Of course, in these dailies less space is reserved for news about Kenya, but that does not explain why even in relative terms the American and British news reports contain fewer voices than most of the Kenyan ones. Through comparison it became clear that the international press sometimes promoted a simplified reading of the events by including only a limited number of social actors, typically Odinga and Kibaki, a prominent international diplomat and a vox pop, frequently from the Kikuyu, Luo or Kalenjin community, who was more often a victim of the circumstances than a perpetrator of violence. In the international press both the Kenyan politicians and the common people or the street witnesses were usually tribally identified. Consequently, a hasty reader might get the impression that the problems in Kenya would lie in the struggle for power between rivalling tribes. Reality was much more complex.

Before focusing on the representation of the two main political actors included in the news discourse, I will spend a few words on who is excluded. Contrastive analysis can reveal ‘discursive absences’ (KhosraviNik 2010). In the Kenyan press due attention went to the successful parliamentary and civic elections and their candidates. Moreover, a voice was given to the other seven presidential candidates from different opposition parties (see appendix V). These
remained silent in the international press. In the context of appeals for peace and the search for a solution to the social and political crisis the Kenyan newspapers staged a variety of regional and national leaders, local human rights activists, civil society spokespersons, unionists, religious leaders and others, many of which are systematically suppressed or backgrounded in the foreign newspaper reports. Yet note that both domestic and international newspapers shared a preference for the explicit representation of elite persons, while common people were excluded or implicitly presented and backgrounded, so that they were marginalized.

Instead of reporting on the numerous, often local, peace initiatives164, the foreign press focused on the worst cases of violence, dictated by the news value of negativity. Not only lexical choices contribute to the frame of interpretation, it all starts with the selection of news. In an article about the systematic negative representation of Africa in the international press, the Africa program coordinator of the Committee to Protect Journalists, Tom Rhodes, said that “[t]he Western media prefers ‘burning tyre’ reporting, such as the xenophobia attacks in South Africa, the post-poll violence in Kenya, the coup in Chad”.165 Because the presidential election was corrupted and turned into a violent crisis Kenya became global news. In the case of a successful election it would have been dealt with in one or two briefs and an opinion article by an enthusiastic scholar. Recall Gettleman’s words in 3.2.1.2 about the commercial value of negativity to see how this feature can be explained. Because of the focus on violence, peace activists or human rights activists and a majority of the Kenyan people who lived in fear, but who were not directly involved in the violence, were underrepresented in the international press reports.

So, peace brokers like GSU superintendent Nthenge are excluded in the international press, while this reconciliatory officer, who refused to resort to violence, but instead called for peace and successfully reasoned with the protesters and rioters he was confronted with, is represented by means of nomination and positive appraisement in the DN article ‘Peacemakers to restore hope in country amidst ethnic, political divisions’ (06/01/2008).166 No reference could be found in any of the foreign newspaper reports to the (Kalenjin) “women in Nandi Hills [who] talked to 7,000 young men, urging them to keep peace”, reported in the same article. This DN report also discusses the plans of the ‘Concerned Citizens for Peace’, another important organization which made a lot of effort to bring about peace in volatile areas of the country. Upon checking, this

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164 These were reported e.g. in ST_Leaders in plea for amicable solution_05/01/2008, ST_Leaders launch peace initiative_06/01/2008, ST_Ex-UN peace envoy backs Annan_24/01/2008 or DN_MPs united in call for peace_25/01/2008.

165 In ‘Only Africa can tell her real story to the world’ by Nancy Mbura, The Standard 02/07/2008.

166 Contrary to what the headline suggests there is not one reference to ethnicity, tribe or even community in this two-page news feature. Again this illustrates how misleading news headlines can be.
group was mentioned in only one foreign news report\textsuperscript{167} (see 105) in the context of the political negotiation, while the its peaceful work on the ground was not illuminated.

105) Peace advocates in Kenya said any meeting was better than none. “It’s a good beginning,” said George Wachira, a member of a group called Concerned Citizens for Peace. “Symbolically, it sends the right message. If people feel this is going to be resolved at a political level, people will realize there is no need to keep fighting in the streets.”

(NYT_Kenya’s political rivals meet_25/01/2008)

This fragment also illustrates that foreign news reports do not have a consistent ethnic frame of interpretation. Only politicians and victims or perpetrators of violence tend to be identified by means of ethnic classification (see below). This selectivity can sometimes lead to distortion. By generalizing wordings such as “Kalenjin, who consider the land here historically theirs and appear to be waging a war against what they consider to be entrenched Kikuyu power” the WP report, titled ‘Tribal rage tears at diverse Kenyan city’, creates the impression that all Kalenjins are fighting against Kikuyus. In advance of 8.1.2.1, it can already be noted that the image of a tribal war is invoked without using that explicit label. In the same article voice is given to “the Catholic bishop of Eldoret, Cornelius Kipng’eno Arap Korir”, who appeals for peace and whose “church is hosting 10,000 people, mainly Kikuyus whose homes have been torched”. Recall from 7.3.1.2 that this man is a Kalenjin, but his ethnicity is not mentioned in the news report, nor in any other international news report where he is staged (e.g. IN_A chilling tour of Kenyan church that became scene of mass murder_03/01/2008, WP_Odinga rejects talks with Kenyan leader_09/01/2008). He is an example of those Kalenjins who did not take part in the violence and who risked their lives protecting their fellow Kenyans. If his ethnicity would have been given, readers would not so easily have been inclined to believe that all Kalenjins attacked the Kikuyus in Rift Valley. Another example of the international media’s selective ethnic classification is Maina Kiai, the chairman of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), who features in several international news reports, where the impression is often created that the Kikuyus form a homogeneous group supporting Kibaki. A lot of Kikuyus that I spoke to rejected this position. By providing Kiai’s ethnicity the misunderstanding that all Kikuyus support or voted for Kibaki, which is made possible in several foreign news reports, could have been avoided. For Kiai is a Kikuyu from Othaya, where Kibaki has his residence, and a fierce critic of the president and his government. As chairman of the human rights commission he stood up for all common people who were victimized whatever their ethnic community was.

\textsuperscript{167} The Concerned Citizens for Peace are represented in only one foreign news report from the primary dataset, but in the larger corpus this group is also reported on in NYT_Kenya's middle class feeling sting of violence_11/02/2008. See the critical reflection in 8.2.2.2.
This led to serious death threats by some members of his own ethnic group (cf. WP_For Kenya's Human Rights chairman, an environment of fear_25/02/2008 and see 8.2.2.2 below).

To end the analytical category of exclusion, one group of political actors must be mentioned: the election officials. These were often excluded from the international news coverage, while they played an important role in the organization of the elections, the tallying and the declaration of Kibaki as the winner. If mentioned at all, the election officials are represented by means of indetermination and collectivization as “an ECK officer”, “the electoral commission”, “election officials”, “returning officers”, etc. The ECK commissioners are also in the Kenyan press often collectivized (e.g. as “polling officials”, “polling clerks”), but in a number of articles they are individualized, nominated and functionalized, so that their role in the election process becomes clearer.168 Although other election officials, such as returning officers and presiding officers, are occasionally nominated in the Kenyan newspapers, they are not so often quoted or used as sources. While the international press ignored these local polling agents, also the Kenyan media missed a chance to question them on their role and behaviour in the electoral process.

Only one man has been thoroughly questioned by the Kenyan media and that is Samuel Mutua Kivuitu (e.g. ST_Kivuitu: We won't nullify poll results_29/12/2007, ST_In the hands of ECK_30/12/2007, DN_Final word will come from ECK, says Kivuitu_30/12/2007, ST_I acted under a lot of pressure, says Kivuitu_02/01/2008, DN_Kivuitu's alarm over altered election forms_03/01/2008). Although he is namelessly functionalized as the chairman of the ECK a few more times than he is nominated (cf table 3), he was hardly ever present in the international news stories compared to the Kenyan press. When the ECK is referred to in the international news it is just given, rather than qualified. However, there are a few notable exceptions. In the Belgian DM Kivuitu is represented as: “Samuel Kivuiti [sic], head of the independent election commission, acknowledges that there are problems”.169 The apposition gives rise to two presuppositions. First, it is presupposed that Kivuitu is the head of the election commission. Second, the definite description presupposes that there is an independent election commission. This is more tentatively expressed in one NYT article referring to “Kenya’s election commission, which is considered somewhat independent from the government” (NYT_Riots Batter Kenya as Rivals Declare Victory_30/12/2007). The independence of the ECK, however, was regularly contested


169 My translation of: “Samuel Kivuiti, hoofd van de onafhankelijke kiescommissie van Kenia, erkent dat er problemen zijn” (DM_Kenia brandt-Al zeker 200 doden na geweld na verkiezingen_02/01/2008).
in the Kenyan press and also in one report in the IN, saying that “President Kibaki appointed 19 of the 21 electoral commissioners earlier this year. One of the new commissioners is Mr Kibaki’s personal lawyer” (IN_Kenya in flames over 'stolen election'_31/12/2007). The inference is clear. In general, the responsibility of the ECK and its individual members for the crisis is one of the facets that is underexposed in the foreign press. In Kenya the ECK was often blamed for the crisis, also in the press. Lawyer Donald Kipkorir, for instance, wrote in an analysis that the ECK must be held accountable for the “poll chaos” (DN_Why Kivuitu must be held accountable for poll chaos_05/01/2008) and also in the Letters-pages of the newspapers several readers criticized the ECK (e.g. ‘ECK is to blame’ by reader Brian R. Willis in DN 03/01/2008 or ‘ECK: Come clean’ by readers William Arorin and George Njenga in DN 07/01/2008).

Of the political actors who are included Kibaki and Odinga are most represented. A quantitative study by Rambaud (2008) showed that Kibaki as the incumbent was given slightly more attention than Odinga in the Kenyan media. On the basis of table 3 the same observation holds for the international press. In the local press there were commercial reasons for a balanced coverage. What the managing editor of The East African, Jaindi Kisero, told Rambaud (2008: 80) was also confirmed in my interviews: “when a paper chooses a political camp it loses on the commercial front”. However, the way the participants are represented is more insightful than their quantification. By contrastively looking at the representations of Kibaki and Odinga, it becomes clear that they are not just depicted as tribesmen, but as tribal politicians in the foreign press, whereas they are presented as political opponents in the Kenyan hard news reports with no references to ethnicity whatsoever (in contrast to numerous editorials and opinion articles in which Kenya’s ‘tribal politics’ also-called ‘dirty politics’ is denounced).

In the Kenyan newspapers Kibaki and Odinga are mostly represented by means of functionalization and relational identification with few evaluative connotations. Extracts (106)-(110) are examplary.

106) Counting of votes began in earnest last evening with early results showing a close battle between President Kibaki and his main challenger, ODM's Raila Odinga. [...] ECK chairman Samuel Kivuitu had to rush to Lang’ata constituency of ODM presidential candidate Raila Odinga to resolve the issue of registers where names starting with A, R and O were alleged to have been missing. [...] President Kibaki, who is seeking reelection on a PNU ticket, and the ODM-Kenya presidential candidate, Mr Kalonzo Musyoka, were among the first voters in Othaya and Mwingi North constituencies, respectively. (DN_Results trickle in after record voter turnout_28/12/2007)

107) ODM Presidential candidate Mr Raila Odinga called a press conference on Sunday morning demanding the ECK to conduct a national audit and recount of the votes. Raila said the process of releasing results so far was a “fraud” and ECK had “doctored the results” in favour of incumbent president and Party of National Unity candidate, Mwai Kibaki. (ST_Raila calls for vote recount_31/12/2007)
At the talks, PNU has maintained that President Kibaki was duly elected and that ODM leader Mr Raila Odinga should take up his role as the Official Opposition leader in Parliament. *(ST_There is hope_16/02/2008)*

"Mass action is on and will continue as scheduled," Mr Raila Odinga, the ODM leader and Lang'ata MP, said moments after he and Pentagon members Mr William Ruto, Mr Joe Nyagah, Mr Musalia Mudavadi, Mrs Charity Ngilu and Mr Najib Balala were tear-gassed and chased out of the city centre by riot police. *(ST_Four killed as police clash with protesters_17/01/2008)*

Others on hand to receive the Head of State were Vice-President Kalonzo Musyoka and ODM leader and Prime Minister designate Raila Odinga. *(DN_Leaders unite as they usher in 10th House_07/03/2008)*

Both Kibaki and Odinga are represented by means of their recent political functions or they are identified by means of their professional relations as each other’s rival, challenger or opponent *(e.g. DN_Kibaki asks opponents to accept results_31/12/2007)*. In terms of functionalization Kibaki is mostly represented as presidential candidate, president, Head of State, a member or the leader of the PNU, whereas Odinga is functionalized as a member or the leader of ODM, a presidential candidate, the MP for Lang’ata constituency, the prime minister designate (towards the end of the selection corpus) or the leader of the opposition.

The latter representation is also the standard representation of Odinga in the international press, especially after the first few weeks of coverage. Although the representation of Odinga as opposition leader does not do justice to the several other opposition politicians from different parties, it is a fact that in Kenyan parliament there is a seat reserved for ‘the leader of the official opposition’, which was at that time occupied by Odinga *(cf. DN_Marende becomes speaker of parliament_16/01/2008 or ST_Sweet win for Marende on day of high drama_16/01/2008)*. However, the representations of actors contain often more evaluative connotations in the foreign press. In half of the NYT articles in the corpus Odinga is represented as the “top opposition leader” with an arguably positive appraisement. In the TI he has been represented as a ruthless and “colourful leader of the opposition Orange Democratic Movement” *(TI_Ruthless leader Odinga battles to save 'rightful' victory_04/01/2008)*. In the WP Odinga is sometimes represented as a “fiery opposition leader” with an arguably negative appraisement *(e.g. WP_Tribal rage tears at diverse Kenyan city_03/01/2008 or WP_Kenyan rivals sign power-sharing agreement_29/02/2008)*. The latter representation corresponds to Odinga’s image as a high-spirited fighter, which is often used in other news reports. In the IN Odinga is described as someone who is “known as "Agwambo, Agwambo" or "Warrior, Warrior"” among his
supporters (IN_Kenyans vote amid fears of rigging_28/12/2007). In the TI he has been represented as “Mr Odinga, who has a Socialist past and a streetfighter image” (TI_Polls put President ahead in Kenyan elections_28/12/2007). Also in the WP Odinga was portrayed as “a populist known as "the Warrior" for his years of fighting for multiparty democracy” (WP_Kenyans Vote in Presidential Election_28/12/2007). Such a representation is not exclusive to the international press. In the Kenyan press the fighting aspect of Odinga was also sometimes highlighted. An example can be found in “the Lang’ata MP, a reformist who has spent many years fighting successive governments from the trenches” (ST_Turning point_03/07/2008).

When the election is conceptualized as a battle (see above), both of the leading politicians were occasionally represented as “warring leaders” (WP_Deal on sharing power goes before parliament_07/03/2008) or as politicians at war with a negative evaluative load (ST_Stop the war, Kalonzo tells Raila, Kibaki_01/01/2008).

The international press also made use of the representational strategy of functionalization to introduce the main contenders for the presidency. In contrast to the local press the functionalizations in the foreign news reports often focus on past positions, regularly accompanied by appraisements (e.g. “economics whiz”, “flamboyant businessman”, “gentlemanly economist”, “political prisoner”). But even more frequently the representational strategy of ethnic classification is employed. Consider examples (111)-(115).

111) The contest pits the incumbent, Mwai Kibaki, a man who has a reputation as a courtly gentleman and economics whiz but also as a tribal politician, against Raila Odinga, a rich, flamboyant businessman who rides around in a bright red $100,000 Hummer and is running as a champion of the poor. (NYT_Kenyans Vote in Test of Democracy_28/12/2007)

112) The contest came down to a race between Kibaki, a gentlemanly economist praised for his stewardship of Kenya’s recent boom, and Odinga, a gloves-off crusader who promised to distribute the wealth more equitably, fight corruption and champion the poor. [...] Particularly among his own ethnic group, the Luo, there has been a sense of destiny surrounding Odinga, a former political prisoner widely viewed as a champion of multiparty democracy whose father was a key figure in Kenya’s independence movement. (WP_Incumbent Declared Winner in Kenya’s disputed election_31/12/2007)

113) Before the election, Mr. Kibaki was considered a courtly gentleman who stirred few passions. Now mobs of outraged voters are burning pictures of him and calling him a cheat. (NYT_Fighting Intensifies After Election in Kenya_01/01/2008)

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170 When I asked a Luo conversation partner what agwambo means he told me that it is a colloquial Luo nickname with a positive connotation for someone who is charismatic, powerful, enigmatic and heroic, which is not exactly the same as the translation which IN journalist Bloomfield provided.
As the representation of Kibaki in the international press is concerned, three portrayals co-occur and reappear: economist, courtly gentleman and tribal politician. Kibaki is not only explicitly or in presuppositional structures, as in the appositions in (111) and (112), functionalized as an economist, but in other articles he is more implicitly depicted as such when he is linked to Kenya’s economic growth. Next, he is often evaluated as an elitist, tolerant and loose ruler who stands aloof or, in other words, as “a quiet and seemingly courtly leader with extensive ties to an elite Kikuyu establishment” (WP_Kenyan rivals sign power-sharing agreement_29/02/2008). Such a representation draws on a common stereotype of the man that also lives in Kenya where Kibaki is often seen as “the archetypal gentleman of Kenyan politics” (ST_The stakes are high for Kibaki_27/12/2007). The representation in the WP which makes a connection to “an elite Kikuyu establishment” also invokes the context of tribalism.

Kibaki was represented as a tribal politician more or less explicitly as in (111), although it is in a presuppositional structure, or more implicitly in the non-restrictive relative clause when the NYT reported that “the Kenyan election commission said Raila Odinga, a flamboyant politician and businessman campaigning as champion of the poor, held a sizable lead of 57 percent of the vote, compared with 39 percent for Mwai Kibaki, the incumbent president who is known for bolstering Kenya’s economy but favoring his own tribe” (NYT_With Half of Vote Counted, Kenyan opposition is poised to sweep_29/12/2007; emphasis added in italics). Specifically with reference to Kibaki’s description as “a tribal politician” in (111) I had an interesting experience. When I gave a research seminar at the University of Nairobi one of the attending PhD students was sort of shocked by this description and remarked that she found it an inaccurate and racist representation. I myself did not interpret this so strongly, as I also took into account that Kibaki is not directly called a tribal politician by the journalist, but that this phrase is hedged by “has a reputation as”. That did not seem to matter for this specific Kenyan reader. So when I interviewed the foreign correspondent who wrote it, I called Gettleman to account for this linguistic choice. He still believed that Kibaki is what could
be called a tribal politician, but he acknowledged that he could have chosen a better wording. This is what Gettleman replied when I asked him whether he would use the expression again:

“Yes and no. Tribal politician is not a good phrase, I could have been clearer: he has a reputation of favoring his own tribe and that’s what ODM tapped into during the election. So, I should have been more accurate, but the idea that it is his reputation is valid. If you used the word ethnic in place of tribal that would not make sense. That’s not like really clear writing, also a tribal politician, what does that mean? I should have been clearer.”

So, foreign correspondents do take comments like these seriously and are able to reflect on their language use. They constantly want to improve their reporting. Although they aspire accuracy, it is obvious that they sometimes are less accurate, so that some readers might take umbrage at what they write.

The same representation can be brought about by even more implicit pragmatic inferences as in (114) and (115). By means of the possessive “his own Kikuyu tribe” Kibaki is presuppositionally represented as a Kikuyu in (114) and the seventeen new ministers too are presupposed to be Kikuyus by the use of an apposition. This information in combination with what is explicitly asserted, viz. that Kibaki appointed seventeen new ministers, implies that Kibaki is a tribal president who only appoints people from his own tribe. The same pattern of thought is to be followed to draw a similar inference on the basis of (115), where it can be inferred that Kibaki is a tribal politician, because he places members of his own ethnic group, the Kikuyus, in high-ranking positions of the military and security forces. In contrast, the Kenyan press is always very circumspect when they want to express a similar meaning: “It might not help, in any case, for the Government to send in security personnel to a hostile zone to protect a very vulnerable community that happens to be the President’s own (DN_President’s many trials and tarnished mandate_31/12/2007)

However, the information in (114) formulated in a presuppositional structure of apposition and the genitive phrase that all of Kibaki’s new ministers are Kikuyus which leads to the implicated conclusion that Kibaki is a tribal politician is not innocent. It is an example of an ideological representation, which is not even based on facts. Among Kibaki’s seventeen new ministers there were several non-Kikuyus (cf. DN_Kalonzo is new VP_09/01/2008). To name but a few, Kibaki’s Vice-President and minister for home affairs was the Kamba Kalonzo Musyoka, the then minister for Defense Yusuf M. Haji has a Somali ethnicity, Samuel L. Poghisio, the minister for information and communications, is a Kalenjin and energy minister Kiraitu Murungi comes from the Meru community. Example (114) also illustrates that presuppositions can have different functions. The presupposition that Kibaki belongs to the Kikuyu tribe can signal common ground for well-informed readers, it can bring this fact to

171 Personal interview with Jeffrey Gettleman on 20 May 2011.
memory for some readers or it can be an informative presupposition for readers who did not know it and who are supposed to accommodate it into their stock of knowledge. But presuppositions can also work ideologically in the context of the news discourse as a whole (see also 9.1.1). Another manifestly wrong representation that can be criticized is the claim in (113) that Kibaki stirred few passions before the elections. On the contrary, he provoked a lot of anger and frustration with many people which made them to vote for the ODM. By means of the description in (113) a sense of novelty is discursively created so as to increase its news value.

Odinga, in turn, tended to be functionalized as a “rich and flamboyant businessman” or as “a former political prisoner” (DS_Zware rellen in Kenia na frauduleuze verkiezingen_31/12/07 [Heavy riots in Kenya after fraudulent elections]), all representations with considerable connotations, positive or negative depending on the interpreter. See (111) and (112). He was not so much depicted as a tribal politician as he was represented as “a populist challenger poised to unseat the incumbent president” (NYT_With Half of Vote Counted, Kenyan opposition is poised to sweep_29/12/2007). In this context he was often portrayed as “a champion of the poor”, as in (111) and (112), or as a “man of the people”: “Though Odinga casts himself as a man of the people, he is also the consummate political insider, a Hummer-driving power broker” (WP_U.S. Envoy heads to Kenya as focus shifts to diplomacy_05/01/2008). The definite description “the consummate political insider”, with the adjective consummate here having a pejorative connotation, is clearly a negative appraisement. The foreign press liked to highlight the contrast between his richness and his appeal to the poor. Another example full of ideological meaning comes from DM, where Odinga is represented as “a man with two faces”: “During the election campaign he advertised himself as ‘the man of the people’, while he drives an expensive Hummer or else a Jaguar. He lives in a luxurious suburb, but has the slum known as the rectum of humanity [my literal translation] as his constituency”. What the journalist forgets to signal is that the expensive suburb of Lang’ata is an integral part of Odinga’s constituency, which also includes Kibera slum. Also relational identification through his well-known father occasionally occurs (see 112). Furthermore, references to his ethnicity are a constant in the way Odinga is represented in introductions during the first few weeks of international news coverage.

As said before, it is normal that the international press mentioned these politicians’ ethnicity, since politics in Kenya is such an ethnic affair and most American or British readers did not know or could not infer their ethnic affiliation. However, it becomes a problem when the ethnic classifications of Kibaki and Odinga are automatically projected to their supporters and by

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172 My translation of: “Tijdens de verkiezingscampagne afficheerde hij zich als ‘de man van het volk’, terwijl hij rondrijdt in een dure Hummer of anders een Jaguar. Hij woont in een luxe buitenwijk, maar heeft de sloppenwijk, bijgenaamd de endeldarm van de mensheid, als kiesdistrict” (DM_Internationale waarnemers veroordelen fraude bij Keniaanse presidentsverkiezingen_31/12/2007 [International observers condemn fraud at Kenyan presidential elections]).
extension to the victims and perpetrators of violence, so that they are used to put different instances of violence which often have multiple factors in a limited tribal frame, simply pitting Luos against Kikuyus. That is what happens in (116) and (117).

116) After the massacre of members of Mr Kibaki's Kikuyu tribe in a church in the Rift Valley, tensions are running high. Asked if he would urge his supporters to calm down, Mr Odinga told BBC Radio: "I refuse to be asked to give the Kenyan people an anaesthetic so that they can be raped." Mr Odinga whose supporters hail mainly from the Luo tribe is planning to go ahead with a banned rally in Nairobi today, and there are fears that more clashes could erupt between his supporters and Kenyan security forces.

(IN_Hopes pinned on African Union head to defuse poll violence_03/01/2008)

117) All around, she saw homes on fire and people fleeing as arsonists and looters tore through the slum taking vengeance on anyone perceived to have voted for President Mwai Kibaki. Kibaki is a member of Kenya's largest tribe, the Kikuyu, and the attackers went on the rampage believing he had stolen the election from his challenger, Raila Odinga, in order to stay in power for five more years. Odinga is the leader of the smaller Luo tribe. Mudegu knew what to expect next. The men from Odinga's Luo tribe would rape her.

(TI_Kill two, get one free, Kenya's cry of hate_06/01/2008)

All too easily the foreign press often made a connection between ethnic politics and ethnic violence, as I will further explore in the next section. After the ethnic classification of the politicians also the people involved in the post-election violence were often automatically identified by means of their tribe. In (116) the victims of the KAG church tragedy were solely identified as members of Kibaki’s ethnic group, while there was not a word about their identity as Rift Valley inhabitants or their identity as poor farmers living in a settlement scheme. Moreover, on the basis of the interpretive frame of the battle between ‘Kibaki the Kikuyu’ and ‘Odinga the Luo’ the wrong impression was created that the refugees were “massacred” by Odinga’s Luos, while they were killed by Kalenjin militias, as we have seen in the previous chapter. As will become clear in 8.1.2.2, the Kenyan newspapers would stop at the first sentence in (117), representing the people involved in acts of violence either as criminals (“arsonists and looters”) or as political supporters (“anyone perceived to have voted for President Mwai Kibaki”). However, in (117) a direct link is made with the tribally classified politicians and their respective tribes, thus narrowly focusing on the ethnic aspects of the conflicts and giving rise to a tribal frame of interpretation. That is why former ST journalist Ochola found that the international newspapers sometimes “overplayed the tribal card”, adding that “you can't rule out that there was that [but] the problem is that in Kenyan politics most political parties are run by individuals”.

173  Personal interview with Abiya Ochola on 24 November 2008.
8.1.2. Making sense of a variety of violent conflicts

8.1.2.1. Explanations of violence
As was explained in 5.1.2.2, Kenya’s post-election crisis was characterized by a variety of local conflicts. Four main categories of violence could be distinguished: (i) politically-instigated, (pre-)election violence to chase away supporters of rival parties or to cause chaos in the country; (ii) spontaneous violence by disappointed voters as a result of the flawed elections and the political deadlock; (iii) planned attacks against targeted communities following unresolved disputes or long-standing grievances (e.g. about land rights and access to vital resources); and (iv) organized or spontaneous retaliations for earlier violence. In all these cases the violence did not just have one reason, but there were always multiple explanatory factors. Yet both the Kenyan and the international press provided only a few limited perspectives, giving rise to ideological meanings. In the Kenyan as well as in the foreign press the flawed election was seen as the trigger of the outbursts of violence and the crisis as a whole. But this was subsequently framed in different manner. The Kenyan newspapers focused on the political and criminal aspects of the violence, while the foreign newspapers interpreted most of the violence through an ethnic lens.

In the international press the post-election violence tended to be interpreted as ethnic violence with a few notable exceptions (see below). The simple reasoning, which is most clearly expressed in (125), was that if the politics is ethnic and the voting is along ethnic lines, then the violence between supporters of different political parties must also be ethnic. Although a lot of conflicts clearly had ethnic aspects, a one-sided focus on ethnicity or tribe was a gross generalization and misrepresentation. Consider examples (118)-(125). Note that in these and the foregoing examples it is often reported, whether or not as a presupposition, that Kenyan vote ethnically. This was indeed confirmed by most of my Kenyan informants. But DN chief news editor Shimoli, for instance, put also this claim into perspective, when he remarked that “a majority of Luos vote for Raila, but I know a lot of Luos, even some who Raila appointed to government positions, who hate his guts, and I know a lot of Kikuyus who despise Kibaki and think he is a coward”, adding that his ethnic community, the Luhya, for instance, or the Kamba vote for different parties and different presidential candidates, so “it is especially the Kalenjins, the Kikuyus and the Luos who tend to vote as ethnic blocs”.

118) Anger over delays in announcing the results led to clashes between members of the Luo and Kikuyu tribes supporting rival candidates and raised fears of wider ethnic clashes. (TI_Violence erupts as Kibaki grabs election victory_31/12/2007)

174 Personal interview with Eric Shimoli on 6 May 2011.
At sundown, police helicopters hovered over fires burning across the poorest neighborhoods of Nairobi, where Joshua Mukabwa, a Luo, stood in the smoky haze. "We are telling all Kikuyus -- we want them all to go back to Central province, and we should have two countries in Kenya," he said. Among other boozy young Kikuyu and Luo men, tensions seemed to turn to bloodlust. Walking along an empty street near Kibera, Andrew Ndegwa, who is Kikuyu, said he'd barely escaped a machete-wielding crowd where he lives, and where his wife and baby son remained Sunday night. "I've just escaped from that place," he said. "They are just going house to house and if they find any Kikuyu, they just start cutting. I'm very afraid."

Fears grew that the bloodshed, which marks the worst crisis the East African country has known for decades, would spread into a larger ethnic conflict between Luo, who generally support Mr Odinga, and the Kikuyu tribe of Mr Kibaki. The 76-year-old President was sworn in for a second term on Sunday, despite claims of corruption and vote-rigging.

Kenya sank deeper into trouble on Monday, with a curfew imposed in Kisumu, the country's third-largest city, ethnic fighting intensifying and more than 100 people killed in election-related violence.

This election stirred up strong undercurrents of ethnic-based hatred that will not recede any time soon. Mr. Kibaki is a Kikuyu, known as Kenya’s privileged tribe, and Mr. Odinga is a Luo, a tribe that has long felt marginalized. The voting followed mostly tribal lines. After Mr. Kibaki was declared the winner, despite disputed vote tabulations that gave the president a razor-thin margin of victory at the 11th hour of the counting process, Luos and members of other tribes lashed out at Kikuyus. Mobs swept through towns across the country, looting Kikuyu stores, attacking Kikuyus and in one case burning to death up to 50 Kikuyu women and children who were taking refuge in a church.

President Mwai Kibaki, whose controversial re-election in December triggered a wave of ethnic violence, has hosted meetings with regional heads of state in the club's gardens in the past.

The post-election crisis has unbridled long-standing ethnic tensions over land and resources, as well as a sense among many of the country's 42 tribes that they have been marginalized by a government dominated by Kibaki's Kikuyu tribe.

More than 1,000 Kenyans have been killed and hundreds of thousands driven from their homes in an uncharacteristic burst of violence set off by a deeply flawed election in December. Much of the fighting, like the voting, has been along ethnic lines.

In the foreign news reports the violence was categorized as ethnic both explicitly and more implicitly. In (118) the TI explicitly stated that the delayed presidential results led to clashes between Luos and Kikuyus, while the other forty ethnic groups in Kenya were suppressed. As was pointed out above, because the presidential election was a contest between Kibaki and Odinga the post-election violence came to be seen as a battle between Luos and Kikuyus, which
is quite a simple picture. Political supporters are equated to tribal fighters (see also below). The fact that the clashes between the rivaling supporters must be interpreted as ethnic clashes is reinforced by the presupposition triggered by the comparative phrase “wider ethnic clashes”. Also in (120) no distinction is made between political supporters and the people involved in the clashes. The change of state verb to spread in the conditional future tense does presuppose that there is not yet a large ethnic conflict, but the comparative of large can be argued to presuppose that the conflict is ethnic. The singular form of conflict implies that there is one conflict, while in reality there were several different conflicts with multiple causes. Although (120) might create the impression that only Kikuyus and Luos are involved, this TI report also features a Kamba witness as a victim of violence (see 8.1.2.2).

In the WP report from which (119) is taken there is no general label such as “ethnic violence”; there is only one reference to “ethnically charged riots”. Yet the violence is a bit more implicitly, but not less clearly, categorized as ethnic violence by depicting a scene that leaves little to imagination and by the well-chosen Luo and Kikuyu sources as well as the recontextualization of their words in this particular context. Probably these sources had a lot of other things to say and anyone who ventures into Kibera will also encounter people from other ethnic groups, but the foreign correspondent picked out these two people to support the arguments of her news story. However, this journalist can be credited for clearly localizing the riots “in the poorest neighborhoods of Nairobi”, so that an attentive reader can infer that there are also socio-economic factors at play in the post-election violence (see below).

In (121) “ethnic fighting” is juxtaposed to “election-related violence”, thus creating a link between the two not always similar kinds of violence. What is explicitly asserted is that “Kenya sank deeper into trouble on Monday”. This main clause is subsequently explained in a background structure by a number of presuppositions. It is presupposed that a curfew was imposed in Kisumu, that Kisumu is Kenya’s third-largest city, that ethnic fighting was intensifying and by means of the inchoative verb to intensify that there was already some degree of ethnic fighting, and finally that more than 100 people were killed in election-related violence. By means of this structure this information is presented as uncontroversial to be accommodated into the common ground. In (122) an even stronger claim is made. By means of the inchoative verb to stir up in combination with the “undercurrents of ethnic hatred” it is presupposed that there has always been ethnic hatred beneath the surface of Kenyan society. It is true that in some localities there had been tensions long before the elections and that some of these tensions were ethnic, but the general claim that Kenya can be characterized by “undercurrents of ethnic hatred” is an exaggeration and generalization. Moreover, it is not further supported by arguments. Again the violence reported focuses on Luos and Kikuyus, unless readers would know that in Kisii town a lot of Kisii people live who were also perceived to be voters for Kibaki, but this is left
unexplained in the article. Next to Kikuyu stores a lot of shops from other people, e.g. Kenyan Asians, were looted and burnt, but not a word about this in the NYT report. Note also that the KAG church tragedy is constantly referred back to in order to top up the newsworthiness, contributing to the discursive construction of the news values of negativity, continuity and novelty in the sense of outrageousness.

With respect to the specific coverage of the NYT, it must be noted that the newspaper deliberately stopped using the word *tribe*, which was confirmed by Gettleman in the interview I had with him. After 8 January 2008 this word was only still used in quotes. In the beginning Gettleman was using *tribe*, but then the New York newsroom got a storm of protest by individual readers, organizations and media monitors. More precisely, they got a lot of “angry e-mails saying it’s not accurate to call them tribes, they’re really ethnic groups, they’re too big to be tribes”. This gave rise to a discussion between the foreign correspondent, who was reluctant to change his writing “because Kenyans use the word themselves”, and the editors in New York who were concerned with a disgruntled part of the audience. Eventually, the “editors made the decision that tribe was potentially offensive, maybe not accurate and we were gonna use ethnic group”. So, readers can have an impact on new coverage. Nevertheless, when I talked to Gettleman on 20 May 2011 he still was having second thoughts: “my philosophy with journalism is not to be too paternalistic and don’t tell people what is good for them; if a Kenyan who speaks perfectly English and is well-educated, uses the word *tribe*, to me, that means it’s not inaccurate, you know, they could say ethnic group, you know, community or people, but you hear it [tribe] across the board”. This incident also shows that foreign correspondents can, and sometimes are, overruled by their editors.

Gradually as the news discourse evolved the general, undifferentiated ethnic explanations became firmly established in the international press, so that this ideological interpretation of the events could be easily presupposed as a matter of common knowledge. The IN presupposes in the non-restrictive relative clause in (123) that Kibaki’s “controversial re-election” triggered “a wave of ethnic violence”. One more example comes from a NYT report dating from March: “After almost two months of watching *Kenya’s rival factions battle in ethnic-fueled violence* that left more than 1,000 Kenyans dead, President Bush dispatched Ms. Rice to Nairobi” (NYT_In Kenya, U.S. added action to talk of democracy_01/03/2008; emphasis added). The temporal clause induces the presupposition that Kenya’s rival factions battled in ethnic-fueled violence”. Again this is only partially true. Such discursive, journalistic choices have ideological implications in that readers might start to interpret all conflicts in Kenya by means of an ethnic frame of reference, suggested in the language use and presented as common ground to be taken for granted. In reality, there were also other reasons, or rather, multiple causes for the different violent incidents.
The Kenyan journalists that I met did not have such an ethnic view on the matter. Mugonyi, for instance, faulted the international press, because “they tended to show [the crisis] more or less in its primitivity”. According to him, “the violence was political and then it went to more tribal, but it had also economic aspects”, while he pointed out that it was no coincidence that the violence was concentrated in the lower-class estates of the cities and in the rural areas. As we will immediately see, this view is reflected in the Kenyan press coverage. He continued:

“That meant that the level of informedness mattered and the level of economic empowerment, because we think those people fought because they thought that, for instance, if Raila is president the economic deprivation will end. People expected a big change economically. [...] If I was a Kikuyu and you were a Luo and we lived in Lavington, one of the posh places in Nairobi, we would never quarrel. We greet each other in the morning, because we are economically empowered.”

Mugonyi added that the richer you are, the less tribe is an issue. That “rich people form a tribe on their own” was also confirmed by ST managing editor Musau.

So far, all of the examples have illustrated the ethnic frame of interpretation, which was dominant in the international press coverage of Kenya’s violent crisis. However, that does not mean that it was the only frame of interpretation in the news reports. A majority of news reports also (often marginally, or implicitly) touched upon other aspects of the violent conflicts. In (124), for instance, it is presupposed that there had been ethnic tensions over land and resources in Kenya. So, the violence was not just ethnic, there were also economic factors. However, the ethnic lens did almost never disappear altogether. Why the “tensions over land and resources” are ethnic rather than social or socio-economic is not explained. There is also again reference to resentment against “Kibaki’s Kikuyu tribe”. Towards the end of an article about looting, fights and revenge killings between Kikuyus and Luos in Kisumu Gettleman perceptively remarks: “There is some opportunism to all this. The rage that swept through town was selective, striking at electronics shops, cellphone kiosks and shoe stores but leaving the drapery dealer alone” (NYT_Kenyan City Is Gripped by Violence_06/01/2008). From this insertion one could infer that the looters had (additional) criminal rather than political motives or that poverty was a factor in the violence, but this is only one sentence in a full-page article which is mainly about ethnic violence. The same inference can be drawn from the following aside, where it is presupposed that poverty was one of the underlying causes of the violence: “A continued tourism meltdown could push millions of Kenyans toward poverty, which was one of the underlying causes of the violence in the first place” (NYT_As Kenya bleeds, tourism also suffers in land of safaris_01/03/2008). The fact that the poor were the losers in the post-election violence was not generally elaborated in the foreign press reports that focused on the atrocities in the violence. In

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175 These and the following quotes come from the interview I had with him on 20 November 2008.
176 Personal interview with Zipporah Musau on 24 November 2008.
contrast, the common men’s suffering due to the politicians was a major theme in the Kenyan press. One reader, Faith Mwende, used this Kiswahili saying in a letter-to-the-editor published in the DN on 22 January 2008: “Fahali wawili wapiganapo, ziumiazo, nyasi [when two bulls fight, it’s the grass that suffers]. Similar meanings are reiterated by different readers, for instance, Gideon R. Nyakiongora who adds that a “poor Kikuyu, a poor Luo, a poor Kalenjin have one thing in common, their poverty and that is the enemy!” (DN 22/01/2008).

Even when Gettleman speaks of “a burst of violence that has ethnic and socioeconomic roots but has been fueled by politics” (NYT_Kenya's political rivals meet_25/01/2008) he does not completely break away from the ethnic frame of interpretation, because ethnicity is seen as a root cause of the violence together with socio-economic factors, which have been blown up by politics. This is later in the article slightly contradicted by the statement that “[t]he worst fighting has been in the Rift Valley Province, where local elders and possibly higher-ranking politicians seem to have organized mobs of young men to attack along ethnic lines”. By the reference to the Rift Valley the violence is clearly localized, avoiding generalization. Moreover, the inference could be drawn that ethnic tensions are not naturally present, but that they are brought to life or stimulated by politicians. Such subtle contradictions are typical of news reports. As I will immediately show below, the latter interpretation is in line with what is reported in the Kenyan newspapers where politics is seen as the root cause of the violence, since politicians are held accountable for the creation of ethnic issues and socio-economic inequality. This position is also taken in the DS report ‘Ethnic tensions in Kenya not the cause but the consequence of politics’ in which the crisis is framed as “a political issue”, adding that it is politicians who provoke tribal strife (DS_Etnische spanningen Kenia niet oorzaak maar gevolg van conflict_03/01/2008). That is a totally different interpretation than the interpretation of pre-existent (or atavistic) ethnic tensions being fueled by politics, though it is not less ideological.

In the beginning of this section I mentioned a few notable exceptions. Especially towards the end of the selected corpus in the news reports dating from the second half of February to the beginning of April I found what I believe to be the most accurate portrayals of Kenya’s crisis. Only then did it seem possible to present the total picture, presumably because the journalists had had time to learn and to distance themselves from the most gruesome and striking instances of violence. These reports deserve extensive quoting. See (126) and (127).

126) Sarah Wangoi has spent her entire life — all 70 years of it — in the Rift Valley. But last month, she was chased off her farm by a mob that called her a foreigner. She now sleeps on the cold floor of a stranger’s house, seeking refuge in an area of Kenya where her ethnic group, the Kikuyu, is strong. It is, supposedly, her homeland. “I am safe now,” said Ms. Wangoi, though the mob still chases her in her dreams. Across the country, William Ojiambo sat in a field where the ground was too hard to plow. He, too, sought refuge with his ethnic group, the Luo. He used to live in an ethnically
mixed town called Nakuru but was recently evicted by a gang from another ethnic group that burned everything he owned.

[...]
Luos have gone back to Luo land, Kikuyus to Kikuyu land, Kambas to Kamba land and Kisiis to Kisii land.

[...]
Take Joseph Mwanzia Maingi, a retired teacher who was just driven out of Narok, a town in the Rift Valley, by a gang of local men with bows and arrows. He fled to his father's farm in an area that is a stronghold of the Kamba ethnic group, his people. He is now building a house. And not looking back.

[...]
The roots of the problem go deeper than the disputed election, in which the incumbent president, Mwai Kibaki, was declared the winner over the top opposition leader, Raila Odinga, despite widespread evidence of vote rigging. At the heart is a tangle of long-festering political, economic and land issues. Part of the trouble is the winner-take-all system in Kenya, which happens in much of Africa, where leaders often favor members of their own ethnic group and in the process alienate large swaths of the population. Many people in Kenya saw this coming even before independence in 1963.

[...]
Land became the explosive issue, and after the election, opposition supporters rampaged against people who they perceived had not only voted for the president but had also taken their land long before then. To members of the Kalenjin ethnic group, this meant Kikuyus, even if they had lived next door for generations.

(NYT_Signs in Kenya of land redrawn by ethnicity_15/02/2008)

This newspaper article starts off in the typical way with a strong ethnic focus, although it is fairly balanced, including a poor Kikuyu victim, an impoverished Luo as well as a Kamba victim. On the one hand, there is an implicit reference to ethnic cleansing with the tribesmen going back to their homelands. On the other hand, it merits some credit, because it clearly localizes the violence which prevents unwarranted generalizations. What makes this report especially interesting is that Gettleman acknowledges that the “roots of the problem go deeper than the disputed election” and that he clearly identifies political, economic and land issues as underlying causes of the violence. Multiple factors of violence are also present in the following WP report.

127) After reaching a power-sharing deal last week, Kenya's rival political leaders are now confronting one of the most explosive issues underlying the post-election crisis, and one that every Kenyan government since independence has managed to avoid: land reform. In the absence of real reform, politicians, especially here in the fertile Rift Valley region of western Kenya, have routinely exploited the sense of injustice surrounding the historic imbalance in land allocation. Since the disputed Dec. 27 presidential election, opposition politicians have once again cast people from President Mwai Kibaki's Kikuyu tribe as privileged, land-grabbing outsiders and urged local militias to reclaim so-called ancestral lands. Hundreds of thousands of Kikuyus have fled the Rift Valley, while Kikuyu militias have retaliated by chasing Luos, Luyahs [sic] and Kalenjins from areas considered Kikuyu territory. The pattern of displacement has essentially revived the colonial fiction of homelands that first served the British and now benefits the Kenyan elite that replaced them.

(WP_No quick fix for what still ails Kenya_07/03/2008)
Although ethnic groups play a role in this news story, tribe is not the dominant topic. Rather, it is about some of the underlying causes of the violence: land issues and political manipulation of ill-educated people who are living in difficult circumstances and have been suffering for many years which makes them prone to such exploitation by politicians. Furthermore, it traces some of the imbalances and historical injustices to the colonial regime of the British. The violence is also clearly localized. This is done through the interplay between explicit assertions and presuppositions. The implicative verb to manage, for instance, gives rise to the presupposition that previous governments not only failed to tackle the issue of land reform, but even tried not to deal with it. It can be further implied that they did not care and were negligent. Next, the definite descriptions presuppose that there is indeed a sense of injustice and that there is a historic imbalance in land allocation. Another presupposition is triggered by the iterative adverbial once again, meaning that oppositions politicians have cast Kikuyus as “privileged, land-grabbing outsiders” before. Note, however, that this was also done in the 1990s by the ruling party KANU under the leadership of Moi. Further this article not only focuses on Kikuyus as victims, but also acknowledges that people from other ethnic groups have suffered. Finally it draws a comparison between the British colonial rulers and the Kenyan elite.

Such differentiated explanations of violence are in stark contrast to the numerous categorizations of the conflicts as “tribal violence”; (128)-(133) are only a few selections from a whole list of examples.

128) Kenya is one of the most developed countries in Africa, but this election has exposed its ugly tribal underbelly. Mr. Odinga is a Luo, a big tribe in Kenya that feels marginalized from the country’s Kikuyu elite that has dominated business and politics since independence in 1963. Mr. Kibaki is a Kikuyu, and the voting so far has split straight down tribal lines, with each candidate winning big in his tribal homeland. On Saturday, the first signs of a tribal war flared up in Nairobi, with Luo gangs sweeping into a shantytown called Mathare and stoning several Kikuyu residents. In Kibera, another huge slum, supporters of Mr. Odinga burnt down kiosks that they said belonged to Kikuyu businessmen.
(NYT_Riots batter Kenya as rivals declare victory_30/12/2007)

129) Monday's attack on more than 200 Kikuyus seeking sanctuary from rising tribal violence has shocked the country. Kenya has always prided itself on being an oasis of stability in an otherwise turbulent region, but that reputation seemed in tatters after violence that has engulfed the country following presidential elections widely seen as flawed.
(IN_A chilling tour of Kenyan church that became scene of mass murder_03/01/2008)

130) Perhaps nowhere have Kenyans been transformed so quickly from ethnically integrated neighbors into tribal warriors than in this western city, which has been the scene of previous bouts of ethnic fighting, but not on this scale.
(WP_Tribal rage tears at diverse Kenyan city_03/01/2008)
131) The head of the African Union is expected to arrive in Nairobi today to try to stop the country widely regarded as one of the continent’s success stories from sliding into the abyss, after disputed elections triggered deadly tribal violence. (IN_Hopes pinned on African Union head to defuse poll violence_03/01/2008)

132) But the tribal violence sparked by the East African nation’s disputed elections last month amid claims of vote rigging has already caused $1bn damage to the economy. (IN_Kenya’s economy in crisis_25/01/2008)

133) President Mwai Kibaki urged Kenyan MPs yesterday to support an historic power-sharing agreement designed to end weeks of tribal violence. Within days political violence had spiralled into tribal clashes. (TI_President Mwai Kibaki paves way for Kenya coalition_07/03/2008)

The verb to expose in combination with the possessive noun phrase in (128) presupposes that Kenya has a tribal underbelly. It is also presupposed that there exist tribal homelands, which were described in (127) as a British invention. This report also uses the value-laden label “tribal war” with a lot of negative, evaluative connotations. The “tribal war” is presented as being between the Kikuyus and Luos. In (129) the KAG church tragedy is somewhat implicitly presented with one generalizing stroke of the pen as “tribal violence”. In a later report Bloomfield of the IN metapragmatically reflects on his own language use, writing that “[i]t has been easy to describe the violence as tribal because much of it has been. But the trigger was political: the feeling, shared by foreign observers, diplomats, even influential members of the Kikuyu business community, that Mr Kibaki’s people stole the election. But separating tribe from politics in Kenya is not so simple. Politics here is unashamedly tribal” (IN_Tribal strife leaves Kenya on brink of humanitarian disaster_06/01/2008). That was a difficulty foreign correspondents in Kenya were faced with.

The following example (130) again contains a contradiction. First the change of state verb to transform triggers the presupposition that the people of Eldoret had been before “ethnically integrated neighbors”, while it asserts that they changed into “tribal warriors”, implicitly categorizing the violence as tribal. But then the non-restrictive relative clause contains the presupposition that there was ethnic fighting in the past. People who experienced ethnic fighting hardly seem to be “ethnically integrated neighbors”. The aspectual verb to stop in (131) induces the presupposition that Kenya was sliding into the abyss, while it is presupposed in the temporal clause that the disputed elections triggered deadly tribal violence. By means of the presuppositional structure this information is presented as general knowledge or as uncontroversial information that is to be accommodated into the readers’ common ground. However, it is an ideological representation of the events.

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177 This tribal representation and the link that is established between political and tribal violence has also been criticized by Somerville (2009).
The next example does not only presuppose by means of a definite description that there is tribal violence and by means of a participial modifier phrase that this violence is the consequence of the disputed election, the report from which (132) is an extract is an example of how political violence is equated to tribal violence. The lead of this report read: “Political violence has caused £1bn in damage – but the country's tarnished image may be the worst casualty”. In the body of the text this is turned into “tribal violence”, so the two expressions are seen to be interchangeable. In (133) the tribal violence is depicted as an evolution of “political violence”. The different range of conflicts from December till March are in a generalizing way captured as “tribal violence”. But here I must add that further down the article Crilly not only focuses on tribe, when he writes that “[t]he unrest exposed deep-seated rifts over wealth, power and tribe, often exploited by politicians trying to further the interests of their own people from among Kenya's 42 different ethnic groups”. This, however, is not elaborated.

It is clear that in the international press different forms of violence with multiple explanations were often lumped together and labeled as ethnic or tribal. When conflicts are thus essentialized, socio-economic, historic, and other local factors easily pass unnoticed. The international media’s tribal language use and the focus on tribes has sparked a lot of criticism. Ray, for instance, remarks that the “reckless usage of the term ‘tribe’ […] hinders the ability of readers to understand how ethnic identities have evolved and interacted with one another in Kenya over time, and in relation to such factors as state and class formation; economic, social and political change; as well as more mundane facts of life such as migration and intermarriage” (2008: 8). Former British High Commissioner to Kenya (2001-2005) Edward Clay reacted to the language used in the TI in a letter-to-the-editor, titled ‘Kenya’s civil society’ (04/02/2008):

> “The reference to ‘ancient tribal passions’ is crude and misleading: whatever they are, they are certainly less antique than, say, the same passions in the British islands and, so far, still less lethal”.

By focusing on the violence in the aftermath of the Kenyan elections the international press often passed over the fact that the majority of Kenyans were not taking part in the violence, but were equally appalled and shocked by what was happening. Numerous readers’ letters published in the Kenyan newspapers support this claim. Reader Pelos Ndereithi Simon, for instance, wrote from Eldoret a letter to the DN (01/02/2008) of which the core message is captured in the title ‘All communities need each other’.

My Kenyan informants were unanimous, “the foreign media misread the Kenyan situation”, when they were reporting as in the above examples.178 According to Onyango, “the only thing I think they [the international newspapers] got wrong was to think it was tribal”. He added:

178 Personal interview with Zipporah Musau on 15 November 2008.
“The violence that erupted in the country was not tribal. The tribes got caught in it by accident. It would have happened even if we were just one ethnic community the entire nation. There was a lot of frustration that had been building up...in fact, me, I was not surprised. [...] It was never meant to be a tribal war, it was not tribe against tribe”.

Most of the foreign correspondents, on the contrary, were surprised. They did not saw it coming, as was confirmed by Gettleman and Broere, who was on holiday at the coast, when he was suddenly caught in the violence and had to rush back to Nairobi to start covering the crisis. Onyango continued that the foreign correspondents missed a lot of background, because they did not closely follow the election campaign and were not in touch with rural Kenya, so they did not experience the sour sentiments and flaring emotions during political rallies. They also underestimated the frustrations of some people and their high expectations for change.

To be honest, categorizations of the violence as tribal or ethnic are not wholly absent from the Kenyan part of the corpus. There is one news report in which the expression “tribal violence” is used. This report is written by a journalist from the diaspora, living in New York, and the explicit categorization occurs in a quote. The expression “ethnic violence” was coincidentally employed as many times in the DN as in the ST, six times to be precise. One of these articles is written by the same DN correspondent in New York (DN_US declines to reveal the eight in travel ban_09/02/2008). In other reports the expression occurs in the context of a quote (e.g. ST_Rights body calls for probe into killings_30/01/2008). In an article coming from Uganda, Museveni is quoted as saying that “instability and ethnic violence would not only hurt the region, but also Kenyans” (ST_Museveni briefed on country's poll crisis_10/01/2008). Or the expression occurred in the context of an article about a research report in which “the impunity relating to ethnic violence” is criticized (DN_UN sends agent to probe killings_30/01/2008). Another article is written almost in the typical style of the American and British news reports by the Canadian freelancer Arno Kopecky (DN_Ethnic violence complicates life for Aids widow and her children_19/01/2008). The expression “ethnic violence” and other explicit references to ethnicity also occur in a few articles which are literally taken over from Reuters press agency (e.g. ST_Pope calls for end to violence_06/01/2008, DN_Kagame: Army must take over_31/01/2008, DN_Global talks focus on Kenya_01/02/2008, ST_Pope's aide plea for quick solution to end crisis_22/02/2008), see also (134).

134) Violence in Naivasha, the county's key flower-producing town, threatens the industry in the key period before Valentine's Day, but growers hope the damage will be limited. Just 30 per cent of workers turned up at flower farms on Wednesday, Lake Naivasha Growers Group chairman Peter Szapary told Reuters. Ethnic violence has gripped the region since Sunday and over 40 people have been killed. (DN_Naivasha’s rose could wither under the heat of violence_01/02/2008)

179) Personal interview with Kees Broere on 19 May 2011.
The same Reuters report appeared in the ST with a few minor adjustments. In this report the flower farm worker Jacob Owuor is quoted: “"I fear I might lose my job on the flower farm as I have not reported for the last few days," he said at a police station that is now a makeshift shelter for 8,000 people displaced by ethnic violence” (ST_Flower workers weigh over their lives and jobs_01/02/2008; emphasis added).

In a few instances the meaning is expressed that the election violence acquired an ethnic dimension. This is illustrated in (57) and (58):

135) The killings, evictions and destruction of property has [sic] been rampant in Molo, Eldoret, and other parts of Rift Valley Province. But the intensity, speed and scope of the violence have assumed an ethnic dimension and leaders now say the problem runs deeper.

[...]
This is a middle ground initiative by alternative leaders to give hope to people. We reach out to other communities to end the hostility. Generations have lived together in Rift Valley and what we're seeing defies all explanation," one leader said.

[...]
During Kanu's rule, ethnic violence would intermittently break out, especially around elections, but it never escalated to today's level. Murungaru was President Kibaki's first National Security minister between 2003 and 2004. Around that time, the Cabinet decided to evict thousands of villagers who had been settled on public forests by the Moi administration. The twin issues of sackings and land saw an unprecedented backlash and widespread popular resentment against the Kibaki Government. (ST_Leaders launch peace initiative_06/01/2008)

136) Kenya has been thrown into political turmoil that has degenerated into inter-ethnic violence, resulting in hundreds of deaths. (DN_ICC closely watching Kenya_26/01/2008)

In (135) the violence is clearly localized instead of generalized. The change of state verb to assume presupposes that the violence did not have an ethnic dimension before. But the categorization of the violence as ethnic which is reiterated by making a comparison to ethnic violence during Moi’s rule is not reported in its own right. It is not the main topic and it is further explained in political and socio-economic terms. That is typical of the Kenyan press. If ethnic aspects of the violence are mentioned, then they are linked to political and socio-economic causes. In (135) the context of an earlier regime is invoked as well as previous policies by the Kibaki government. In addition, the issue of land is drawn in, which open up a socio-economic context. Example (136) comes from a report about the threat of the International Criminal Court. It is reported that the “political turmoil”, which is quite a euphemism, evolved into “inter-ethnic violence”, with the change of state verb to degenerate giving rise to the presupposition that the violence had not been inter-ethnic before. Although this view was held by many Kenyan
journalists – Mugonyi, for instance, told me that the violence could best be seen as “post-election violence that took an ethnic dimension” – it was seldom written down like that.

There are only a handful of Kenyan newspaper reports where ethnically categorized violence is the main theme. See (137)-(139).

137) In Molo and Kuresoi, the announcement triggered an old rivalry between members of two communities. “We were victims of the tribal clashes that claimed some 20 lives in Kuresoi recently. Hardly a month has passed and we are again caught up in another round of skirmishes,” said Daniel Arasa, a farmer displaced from his farm at Muchorwe in Kuresoi. In Molo town, where majority of the residents are from one community rioters targeted this group.

(ST_Unprecedented violence hits region_05/01/2008)

138) WHEN last year’s presidential poll results were announced, deep-seated tribal animosity came to the fore. The fabric holding together Kenyan communities snapped as ethnic hatred reached its apex. The reception of the outcome by a nation already polarised was fast and furious.

(ST_Neighbour against neighbour_12/01/2008)

139) The 10 people were hacked to death in ethnic violence mainly in Kericho, Nakuru, Nairobi and Mombasa and tens of houses torched.

(DN_More killed as rivals differ over peace talks_21/01/2008)

Example (59) refers to a series of conflicts that were going on well before the elections (recall figure 4 in chapter 2). The incidents are clearly localized and the explicit qualification of the clashes as tribal are in the context of a quote. Next, the context of “an old rivalry” is invoked. Note that the rivaling parties are described by the use of communities (see 8.1.2.2 below). The expression of “tribal animosity” also occurs a few times in the Kenyan press. In (138) the linguistic expressions came to the fore and reached its apex presuppose that there had been tribal animosity and ethnic hatred before. In this article journalist Kiprotich reports that “[e]thnic animosity reached boiling point, with indigenous communities attacking the 'enemy' tribe for not voting the 'right' way”. Ethnically driven violence is first linked to the flawed elections and to ill-informed attackers who identified the people who they thought had voted for Kibaki with the actual riggers of the election. Later in the same report politicians are blamed for causing the ethnic clashes. A woman named Viriginia Wambui is quoted as saying that “[i]t is unfortunate that fellow Kenyans are playing to the whims of selfish politicians”. Another victim, Edward Ongeri, said: “I have nothing after my property was burnt just because politicians are fighting for power”. There are no explicit references to the specific ethnic groups of these people, but Kenyan readers can infer that they are Kikuyu and Kisii, respectively, as they also know that Juliana Kipng'orem whose “entire business premises was burnt by rioting youths” belongs to the Kalenjins. So, there is some balance in terms of the diversity of the victims that are featured.

180 Personal interview with David Mugonyi on 20 November 2008.
Although the violence is explicitly categorized as ethnic in (139), besides this quote there are no explicit references to ethnicity in the remainder of the news report (see 8.1.2.2 below for how the actors involved in the violence were described). It is a clear example of how the violence, if it is categorized as ethnic, is clearly placed in a specific local setting. This was a deliberate strategy that was used at Kenyan newsrooms. As DN chief news editor explained, when the violence had clear ethnic aspects

“we would try to be as accurate as possible, because it is not possible for the entire Kikuyu community to attack the Luo, for example, so we would try to isolate which group is doing it. So, if it is teenagers from this area attacking teenagers from this other area; we narrow it to that group”.  

To stress that the violence was mainly limited to the lower-classes, he added that “the middle class Kikuyu has a lot in common with the middle class Luo; they have the same interests, so apart from the fact that they share a culture, the middle class Luo has nothing in common with the lower class Luo hawker”.

Other contexts in which sporadic references to tribal or ethnic animosity or clashes occurred were appeals for peace (e.g. DN_Peach peace, NGOs tell leaders_05/01/2008) or in contexts of denial as in (140) and (141).

140) ODM said the mayhem is not an expression of tribal hate but citizens cry for their democratic rights.
(ST_ODM: Chaos is citizens' demand for their rights_04/01/2008)

141) ODM leader Raila Odinga said all communities in the area were equally affected. [...] What happened was not premeditated but spontaneous as people reacted to the injustices they suffered after the elections. In addition, the violence could not have been planned because all the communities in the Rift Valley have suffered,” said Mr Odinga. However, he indicated that the land issue, which he had said has been contentious and which was the cause of tribal clashes in the Rift Valley, might have contributed to the violence.
(DN_ODM denies planning violence_26/01/2008)

The assumption in (140) that some people claim or that there is the idea that the violence is an expression of tribal hate is denied. That is also denied in the DN report from which (141) is taken and here the “tribal clashes in the Rift Valley” are linked again to the socio-economic issue of land by means of the presupposition that the land issue was the cause of tribal clashes. Among Kenyan journalists the idea lived that

“saying that it was tribal may not really be accurate, because...ok some elements of certain communities took advantage [of the situation] to chase away people from other communities from where they lived, but I think that would be as result of economic rivalry”.  

181 Personal interview with Eric Shimoli on 6 May 2011.
182 Personal interview with Abiya Ochola on 24 November 2008.
Ochola added the following example based on personal experience: “when someone from Central Province [the home of the Kikuyus] goes to invest in Busia [a town at the Ugandan border in Western Province] then he tends to develop faster than the locals, because he is running a business there and making money. And that will not go well with the locals, because they will say: ‘How come this man is making money and we're not; he is getting richer and we're getting poorer’”. According to this former journalist a lot of conflicts were rooted in economic, historical and social injustices.

That view was reflected in the Kenyan press coverage of the post-election crisis. While the foreign press focused on the violence and the ethnic aspects, occasionally adding a few comments aside about other possible causes of the violence, the Kenyan press contributed several reports exclusively to finding out the deeper, underlying causes of the conflicts. Especially the socio-economic factors of historical wrongs, land ownership, access to resources and poverty were highlighted. Consider (142)-(146).

142) The North Rift region has witnessed unrest in virtually every General Election with several contributory factors. Unlike in the previous elections where tribalism was the main factor, the ongoing insecurity being witnessed in the region is more of land politics. The region was viewed as predominantly ODM. The region overwhelmingly voted in ODM candidates and gave its presidential candidate Raila Odinga total support. It was not surprising therefore that the majority of residents were disappointed when the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) declared President Kibaki victorious. It’s on the account of these results that those viewed to have been supporters of other parties, and in particular PNU, turned victims of the violence. Communities that were thought to have supported President Kibaki in the elections easily became targets of attacks. Unlike in previous pre-election clashes witnessed in the region, communities grouped themselves according to party affiliation to fight those who did not side with them. Land could have been the other underlying factor that contributed to the current skirmishes that have led to the killings and displacement in the region. The North Rift is mainly occupied by members of the Kalenjin community although other groups have bought land in the region under the constitutional right to live in any part of the country. For a long time the eve of general elections has seen communities in the province engaging in skirmishes. The local communities have accused outsiders of acquiring large tracts of land during the administration of Founding President Jomo Kenyatta.

[…] During the regime of former President Daniel arap Moi, the residents thought that the allocation was going to be reversed but instead he protected settler communities.

[…] A resident of Eldoret South, Mr James Mosbei, said the settler communities could not be allowed to continue staying in the region while supporting candidates not favoured by the local community. Many North Rift residents say the protests against the presidential results were just a cover up as the key underlying factor was the land issue. As the victims vacate their land, those who have remained are discussing on how to take it over and share it out among the landless. The targeted land is in Cherangany and Saboti constituencies and the larger Uasin Gishu district.

(DN_The land factor in violence that has rocked North Rift_05/01/2008)
This report acknowledges that there are different explanatory factors for the violence, clearly localized in the North Rift region. This article calls up a number of contexts: a history of violence, tribalism, the policies of previous regimes, land issues, expectations of people for change and the disputed 2007 presidential election. This picture is more revealing than the picture of tribes exterminating each other. By means of the comparative clause initiated by unlike the presupposition is triggered that tribalism was the main factor in the previous elections, which are contrasted with the 2007 elections. A similar presupposition is found in the following comparative construction. However, in (143) this picture is readjusted to include tribalism as one of the “key reasons” of the violence next to land and poverty. This is an example of how news discourse evolves, as journalists get new insights. By means of the factive predicate “it was not surprising that” it is presupposed that the majority of residents were disappointed with the outcome of the election. While politics is seen as the first underlying factor of the violence, land is the second. At the end of the article it is presupposed to be indeed the key underlying factor by the use of a definite description. This interpretation can be compared to the interpretation found in the news report ‘Land and inequalities the cause of unrest, Imams say’ (ST 03/02/2008), which was drawn upon in example (2).

Example (142) also shows another discursive strategy that is often used in the Kenyan press: the degradation or downplaying of the gravity of the events by the use of euphemistic descriptions. The extreme violence witnessed in the North Rift, in particular Uasin Gishu district, where also the KAG church was located (see previous chapter), is consistently described as “the current skirmishes”. Euphemistic labels of violence such as skirmishes were also found in the international press, but not so systematically as in the Kenyan press. Other examples are descriptions such as “Close to 1,000 people have been killed and more than 250,000 people rendered homeless in post-poll unrest sparked by the announcement that President Kibaki had won the presidential election” (ST_Kibaki warns inciters_12/02/2008; emphasis added), the description of the the power-sharing agreement as a deal that “helped calm tension and unease, which had thrown the country into crisis for the last two months” (ST_The world applauds Kenya's deal_01/03/2008) or “Property worth millions of shillings was also looted and destroyed in the widespread skirmishes” (DN_Leaders unite as they usher in 10th House _07/03/2008). While the international press was speaking of a “wave of violence” and “violence of tribal origin” (TI_Kill two, get one free, Kenya's cry of hate_06/01/2008), of “tribal strife” and “widespread violence” (IN_Tribal strife leaves Kenya on brink of humanitarian disaster_06/01/2008), the ST wrote about “a week dominated by anxiety and fear of sporadic violence” (ST_A nation at a crossroads_06/01/2008). The brutal Rift Valley violence is also described as skirmishes in (143).
A Nation investigation points out to competition for land, tribalism and poverty as the key reasons why the violence was inevitable.

There are several underlying factors on top of them land that the Government has never addressed to resolve skirmishes in Rift Valley during every election,” said Bishop Korir. [sic]

Local communities accuse the "outsiders" of benefiting from the land allocation during the Kenyatta administration. “There is no doubt that one community benefited a lot from white highlands formerly owned by colonial settlers during the Kenyatta regime. This is evident by names given to huge tracts of land they own,” added Mr Kipkorir.

A number of residents interviewed said land was among the key causes of the clashes and that the polls were just a catalyst.

This report explicitly states that land was one of the “key causes of the clashes”, while the elections “were just a catalyst”. The lead of this article set the tune: “Scramble for arable farms, poverty and tribal animosity fuel violence in region”. In addition to post-independence policies by “the Kenyatta administration” the context of colonialism is invoked. Also in (144) reference is made to “historical injustices”.

Mr Ben Ngutu, director of VSO Jitolee, regretted that the country was reeling under a political, humanitarian and development crisis following the disputed presidential elections.

He said urgent measures should be taken to help thousands of people displaced during the skirmishes. The official lauded the talks between President Kibaki and ODM leader Mr Raila Odinga, mediated by former UN Secretary-General, Mr Koffi Annan. “We are optimistic that a lasting solution will be found to the violence, inequality, exclusion and other historical injustices that have been swept under the carpet since independence,” said Ngutu.
policies and unresolved issues. An example, published in the ST on 25/01/2008, is rendered below.

Not only historical injustices are factors of the violence, also current trends are pointed out. Take (145) into consideration.

145) Demographers have added a dimension to the current post-election violence — population increase, especially in agriculturally rich Rift Valley province. A rising population, unmatched by the availability of jobs couple with shrinking land, means that the large number of youths can only look to revolutionising land ownership systems to survive.

[...]

In the Rift Valley, the fertile land has attracted the interest of most farming communities, among them the Kikuyu and the Gusii, and many of whom have permanently settled there.

[...]

But now, threatened by the increasing population, some indigenous residents wish to reverse the trend, and are determined to keep the immigrant communities away. *Saturday Nation* investigations show that although the post-poll violence was triggered by the disputed presidential election results, it provided a good opportunity for the residents to correct what they term land anomalies. Many youths who are unemployed in a region, that ironically is also ravaged by poverty, resort to violence to keep the "interlopers" away. The rapid population growth, especially around Eldoret town, is a major contributor to the current clashes.

(3N_Population pressure at the centre of crisis in Rift Valley_09/02/2008)
Recent increases of the population, unemployment and the unavailability of natural resources are given as the factors of the violence in the Rift Valley. In a presuppositional background structure two ethnic groups are identified: the Kikuyu and the Gusii or Kisii. The ethnicity of the “indigenous residents” is left for the reader to infer on the basis of his general background knowledge. Nowhere in the whole article is there a reference to the Kalenjins. What is not clearly reported here is that the targeted “immigrant communities” are often just as poor as the people of the so-called indigenous community. That poverty was a major factor in the violent conflicts was also expressed in several analyses or commentaries in the Kenyan press. In a special report in the Saturday Nation revise editor Dorothy Kweyu, for instance, wrote that the crisis in Kenya is not just a post election crisis or a political crisis, but a societal crisis “with the ordinary mwananchi [citizen] as the ultimate loser” (‘No winners as post-poll violence takes toll an all’, 02/02/2008). She emphasizes that “both wazaliwa (the indigenous people of specific areas) and the so-called "outsiders" [are] paying dearly” and she gives two real-life examples:

“When hell broke loose as pro-ODM protesters went on the rampage torching homes and businesses of perceived PNU supporters, my nephew, who worked for a transport entrepreneur in the western Kenya sugarbelt found himself jobless. Reason: his employer, who comes from central Kenya, was considered to be an enemy and had to run for his life. The young man is now squatting with relatives in the Kayole slum of Nairobi, hoping that he might land some job to enable him to support his wife and child. Elsewhere in Kisumu, his brother, who was working for a transport firm run by managers from Central Province had to run for dear life when the vehicle shed was attacked and looted. He now has to re-integrate into the family at Butere and rely on his widowed mother and grandmother for survival”.

Kweyu warns that “those unable to earn an honest living, either because they have been evicted from their places of work, or because their employers have been evicted as "outsiders" are likely to be recruited into criminal gangs such as Taliban, Mungiki, Sungu Sungu and Mu-sumbiji”. When youths are thrown into poverty and see no future anymore they are amenable to “political manipulation and brainwashing by the key players in the dirty game of political vendetta”. She also accused the politicians to exploit the poverty of the people for their own political expedience, while she notes that “[p]overty dehumanises, which explains the beastly manner in which the recent killings have been executed”. There is one more context in which different factors of the violent crisis were touched upon, viz. the context of mediation under the supervision of Kofi Annan, as is illustrated in (146).

146) Annan said he would reconvene the mediation talks this morning to continue with agenda number four, which comprises long term issues such as comprehensive constitutional reforms, poverty and the land issue, (ST_Annan steers rivals to end crisis_29/02/2008)
During the mediation talks it was one of the key issues to find solution for what was called the “long term issues”. Agenda number four became a well-known notion in Kenyan life.

While in the international press the tensions were often interpreted as ethnic, as in (124) above (“long-standing ethnic tensions over land and resources”), the Kenyan press frames the tensions, some of which clearly had ethnic aspects, as political and social tensions: “The momentum is moving from demands for a re-tally of the presidential vote to a political settlement that will end the violence and possibly find long-term solutions to the underlying political and social tensions” (DN_Mixed signals on peace talks_05/01/2008). The so-called unresolved issues underlying the conflicts were also hotly debated in the opinion and letters pages of the Kenyan newspapers. The ST, for instance, wrote in a front-page editorial: “Leaders have lost control of their supporters and few can call for calm and be listened to. This is how low the country has sunk. Add this to underlying issues of bigotry, land, resource distribution and major and petty differences and the mix is a lethal one” (ST_Stop violence and chaos now before it's too late_29/01/2008; emphasis added in italics). Reader Robert Khaemba wrote in the letter ‘Let us learn from violence’: “The violence that has rocked our beloved country after last year’s elections must serve as a lesson to all of us who live in this country. […] I blame the situation on many unresolved issues that continue to bite Kenyans. These include land ownership, tribal animosity, poverty and general social and economic inequalities” (DN, 20/01/2008; italics added). These issues were not thoroughly investigated by the international press.

But also in numerous Kenyan newspaper reports these issues were disregarded or obscured. In the Kenyan press the violence was often exclusively linked to the rigged election or the political impasse, yielding labels such as “electoral violence” or “political violence”. But most of all the violence was referred to in general by means of the noncommittal expression “post-election violence”. Consider (147)-(152).

147) Commissioner of Police Hussein Ali appealed to politicians to stop whipping up ethnic emotions and inciting supporters saying police were acting with restraint. (DN_Raila leads but delayed results spark angry disputes and riots_30/12/2007)

148) President Kibaki, whose declaration as winner of the December 27 hotly contested poll plunged the country into chaos, called a press conference and told any aggrieved party to go to court. (ST_A slow start in search for peace_04/01/2008)

149) Politicians have been asked to stop using inflammatory language and desist from acts that could trigger more violence. Instead, they should seek peace, said the National Council of NGOs. […]

Nyeri Youth for Change lobby group chairman Kamau Gatwechi urged young people not to be misused by politicians to attack innocent wananchi. And in Molo, leaders called on ODM leaders to call for calm in parts of Rift Valley that had been hit by violence. Mr Duncan Njoroge, Mr John Kamama and Mr Muraya Mariako said: “So far the violence is narrowing down to the Rift Valley. One ethnic community is evicting
others.” Mr Njoroge said the different communities had coexisted for a long time and politics should not divide them. They said the killings appear to have been planned well in advance of the elections and those behind the killings should be held accountable.

(DN_Preach peace, NGOs tell leaders_05/01/2008)

150) More than 100 people have been killed in Uasin Gishu District alone and over 30,000 families displaced following the week long protest against the presidential election results.

"I was born and brought up here. My parents settled here after buying land and I do not understand why political issues have caused a rift between us and our brothers from other communities," said John Kung'u from Yamumbi farm.

(DN_Raid on displaced families that shocked the world_06/01/2008)

151) Kibaki and Frazer agreed that all efforts should be made towards ensuring that the politically instigated violence is ended and affected families are resettled.

(ST_A nation at a crossroads_06/01/2008)

152) The post-election violence has led to the death of about 1,000, displaced at least 350,000, and led to massive destruction of property.

(ST_Major shift_09/02/2008)

In the Kenyan press the crisis and the violence were often blamed on politics, politicians and the flawed election. The aspectual verb to stop in (147) induces the presupposition that the politicians are whipping up ethnic emotions and that they are inciting supporters. In (148) it is presupposed in the non-restrictive relative clause that it is the declaration of Kibaki as winner that plunged the Kenya into chaos. The change of state verbs to stop and to desist from in (149) give rise to the presuppositions that the politicians are using inflammatory language and that they are engaging in acts that can trigger violence. From the appeal for peace it can be inferred that they were not seeking peace. It can be further inferred that politicians could misuse young people to attack innocent citizens. Further, politics is pinpointed as dividing the people in the Rift Valley, instead of ethnicity. The violent killings and displacements in Uasin Gishu District are interpreted in the context of “protest against the presidential election results” in (150). Later the violence is linked to land issues in the quote by eye-witness John Kung'u, but the presupposition remains that it is political issues have caused a rift between the Rift Valley inhabitants. In (151) it is presupposed that the violence is politically instigated. Example (152) illustrates how “post-election violence” is explicitly named as the cause of death and displacement.

One-sided explanations of violence in terms of electoral politics contrast with the multifactorial explanations provided in the other articles mentioned above or in (153).

153) In its very essence, the speech cast hope as the country sat on the threshold of a new era after a tumultuous two months that exposed simmering rifts over wealth, power and tribe dating back to the colonial era, often exacerbated by politicians angling for supremacy for their own people but which over the years has remained untackled, leading to the near post-election meltdown.

(ST_Turning point_07/03/2008)
Nevertheless, a lot of readers supported the interpretation that the rigged elections were the cause of the violence. Samuel Kasera, for instance, wrote in a letter-to-the-editor that “Kenyans are now fighting. Why? Because they feel that some few individuals have robbed them of their democratic right” (DN 04/01/2008). That the violent conflicts would have been caused solely by the flawed election is denounced by Mwandawiro Mgangha:

“To attribute violence to the result of flawed elections is a myth. [...] it is now clear that the election result only helped to trigger the explosion of anger, bitterness, hatred and hypocrisy that have been simmering in society for a long time” (ST_ The myth that Kenya is an island of stability_15/02/2008).

The fact that politicians had a stake in the violence cannot be denied. A lot of readers agreed with the newspapers that politicians were the instigators of the violence. Michael N. Muna, for instance, wrote: “It is high time Kenyans realized they have their own lives and stopped being misused by the politicians. Why should we turn against our brothers and sisters at the agitation of the politicians, who continue to live in luxury?” (DN 28/01/2008). The Saturday Standard of 26 January 2008 collected a number of reader reactions under the headlines ‘Poor leadership has led to some of our problems’ and ‘Politicians not keen to end stalemate’. However, it must be noted that ordinary Kenyans also had their responsibility. It is all to easy to blame the politicians. Of course, they played an important role, but that does not acquit the people who actually engaged in the violence.

8.1.1.1 Victims and perpetrators of violence

Looking at the representation of social actors reveals that three other kinds of violence are well represented in the Kenyan press in comparison to the international press: violent protest, criminal acts and police violence. This is illustrated by means of (154)-(164).

154) Scores of people have been killed and property damaged in postelection riots in western Kenya. Hundreds of youths protesting against President Kibaki’s victory have barricaded roads and targeted homes and businesses of people they believe voted for the Party of National Unity candidate. Thousands of those targeted have sought refuge in police stations. In Kisumu, when the Nation visited the Nyanza Provincial General hospital mortuary, 19 bodies lay on the floor, all with gunshot wounds. (DN_Scores killed as post-election riots continue_01/01/2008)

This example contains the main representational strategies that are used in the Kenyan newspapers: collectivization, indetermination and aggregation. In the Kenyan press the people involved in the violence were often collectivized in an indetermined manner and aggregated as in “scores of people”, “thousands of those targeted”, “19 bodies”. The perpetrators of the violence are implicitly represented as murderous and vandalizing rioters because they are the suppressed agents of the acts of killing and damaging. The rioters are also often equated to protesters. This
does not do justice to all of the peaceful protesters, which were also active at that time. It creates the impression that all protesters were violent troublemakers. The violence is not put in an ethnic frame of interpretation, but in a criminal frame or in an electoral political frame, as the rioters target supporters of the PNU. If the representational strategy of classification is used, it is not ethnic classification, but classification by age set, as in the “hundreds of youths protesting”. By means of the reference to “gunshot wounds” also the context of violence by security forces is invoked, as the common man in Kenya does not usually dispose of fire arms. In the article in (76) the security forces as perpetrators of violence are backgrounded, but they are present. The police is more explicitly identified as perpetrators of violence in (77), where the protesters are again by means of their actions represented as rioters, hooligans, picklocks or looters, in short, as criminals. In the temporal clause introduced by the conjunction of time as the protesters are presupposed to be arsonists.

155) Witnesses said the police fired live bullets after protesters threw stones and broke into shops.

[...]

Residents, who feared to be caught in the slum houses, fled as protesters moved indiscriminately setting houses on fire.

[...]

The deaths were occasioned either in clashes between police and protesters, or by gangs of attackers who targeted members of some communities.

(ST_Death, chaos as ECK chiefs break ranks over results_01/01/2008)

Example (155) also illustrates another frequently used strategy in the Kenyan press, viz. the deliberate avoidance to explicitly name ethnic groups. Instead of the word tribe, the Kenyan newspapers often preferred to use the less value-laden, but also more vague term community. After all, the word tribe has an emotionally charged natural history, but this is not per se a negative one in Kenya (see Onyango’s remarks in 8.1.1.1 and see 5.1.1.1). Referring to the ST policy, Kipkemboi told me: “As a media house we usually try and leave the tribal off, we know it is there, but we don’t mention it”.183 Of course, the Kenyan journalists knew that ethnicity played a role in different conflicts, but they obscured that factor. As will become clear in 8.2.1.3 they had their reasons for doing so. Kipkemboi further explained:

“To many of us tribe is good when we talk about culture, it becomes bad when you talk of tribe and then there is politics, then it becomes a problem; tribe and culture excellent, tribal politics no, it's a sensitive issue”.

That is why the Kenyan journalists tried to avoid tribe in these negative contexts. This is also seen in (156), where reference is made to “a community that was targeting their own”.

183 Personal interview with Andrew Kipkemboi on 25 November 2008.
Shortly after, a man in a blue tracksuit casually emerged from the battlefield in Kiamiiko, heading towards Mother Theresa road. Within minutes a mob that had converged at the junction descended on the hapless man with pangas and other crude weapons. Armed policemen prevented the bloodthirsty mob from hacking him to death. They chased away the crowd and put the badly injured man in an ambulance. His attackers said he belonged to a community that was targeting their own in the raging violence. (ST_Death stalks the slums of Nairobi_03/01/2008)

In (156) the victim as well as the attackers are left unspecified. The representational strategies of indetermination (“a man”) and collectivization (the mass nouns mob and crowd) are used to remain vague about their ethnic identities. The victim is only indeterminately classified by his gender. Although the Kenyan newspapers almost always used the word community, the next example makes clear that it is synonymous to tribe.

He termed the killings targeting communities or tribes as crimes against humanity and genocide, which could attract accountability at the international level. “Targeting communities or tribes can also ultimately result in serious crimes under international law,” Mr Wako warned. (DN_AG backs push for vote recount_04/01/2008)

By mouth of Attorney-General Amos Wako the word communities is equated to tribes, so in Kenya they are synonyms. But in the ST the word tribes has disappeared in the recontextualization of Wako’s words: The AG warned against targeting communities, saying this could result in serious crimes under international law including genocide and crimes against humanity (ST_Wako calls for a fresh tallying of votes_04/01/2008). Note that the violence is called genocide by an important Kenyan social actor. Also in other Kenyan news reports references are made to genocide and comparisons are made to Rwanda and Ivory Coast by Kenyans themselves (e.g. in the accusations that were flying around between the ODM and the PNU). So, it is no surprise that so many foreign correspondents started to see things through an ethnic lens and used the same comparisons in their coverage. This is what they heard on the streets and even in some official press conferences. Of course, they could have been more critical and thoughtful themselves, but I believe they had a lot of informants who confirmed their way of thinking and reporting.

Remember that there were only a handful of Kenyan newspaper reports in which the violence was referred to as “ethnic violence”. The following example is a continuation of (139), which reported that “10 people were hacked to death in ethnic violence mainly in Kericho, Nakuru, Nairobi and Mombasa”. However, in the remainder of the article no references to ethnicity can be found.

In the newly-created Kipkelion District, five more people were killed when Kasheen farm was raided by armed youths on Saturday night. [...]

355
All the five were shot with arrows and died on the spot, bringing the number of those killed in Kipkelion in the past two days to 11. Kipkelion DC Abdi Halake said that six people were killed and 50 houses burnt in the area on Saturday night. In Nairobi, at least three people were killed in an orgy of violence at Huruma slums. Thirteen people were admitted to Kenyatta National Hospital with panga cuts.
(DN_More killed as rivals differ over peace talks_21/01/2008)

This article is a clear example of the representational strategy of aggregation. The district commissioner of Kipkelion is nominated, functionalized and localized, but the victims of the violence are only quantified. Except from their local identity as inhabitants of Kipkelion or as residents of Huruma slum, their identities are not further specified. The attackers are implicitly criminalized as raiders and explicitly represented as indetermined and collectivized “armed youths”. Another clear example of aggregation is (159).

159) At least ten people were burnt alive and three others stoned to death as violence sparked by the outcome of the December General Election spread to Naivasha yesterday. And in Nakuru, one more person was shot dead by attackers in Ponda Mali in the violence which has taken an ethnic angle. More than 10 people are admitted to the Provincial General Hospital with arrows lodged in their bodies. This brings to 82 the number of those killed in Nakuru and its environs in the past two days.
(DN_10 burnt alive as toll rises_28/01/2008)

Note that the victims, which are all quantified and not further specified, tend to be foregrounded in the subject slot, while the attackers are backgrounded in the agentive phrase. Although the violence is described as having taken “an ethnic angle”, the ethnicity of the people involved is not explicitly stated. But many Kenyan readers could infer who was written about by means of the specific place names Naivasha, Ponda Mali and Nakuru. Yet, even if a lot of people could make the right inferences, it still remained a guessing game and people could also have drawn the wrong inferences on the basis of their prejudices. So, this is hardly accurate reporting. See also (160).

160) Another four were hacked to death as they fled from the marauding gangs targeting members of one community. Others were killed and lynched after being fished out of public service vehicles on account of their tribe.
[...]
In Nakuru, the death toll hit 60, with the number expected to rise as rival groups continued to clash. Witnesses said some of the attackers, believed to be members of the proscribed Mungiki sect, were armed with guns and wore police uniforms.
[...]
At Sewage Estate, police had a hard time controlling two armed groups from rival communities and had to fire several times in the air to disperse them. Armed with pangas and other weapons, they mounted deathtraps at illegal roadblocks on the Nairobi-Nakuru highway, where they flushed out passengers from communities other than their own and lynched them.
[...]
At least four bodies were strewn in open fields. A man was hacked to death at a cemetery. Another was stoned to death a stone throw away from the burnt house. Two other bodies lay in shrubs where they were accosted as they fled. The main Nairobi-
Nakuru highway was sealed off as passengers from targeted communities were flushed out of vehicles and attacked. (ST_30 more dead_28/01/2008)

This report is only one of the 21 Kenyan articles in which the violence is so graphically described as people hacking each other to death. Although the Kenyan articles outnumber the international newspaper reports, the expression hacked to death occurs in 29 international news reports. They focused disproportionally on the most gruesome excesses of Kenya’s crisis, pumping up news values of negativity and shocking novelty. In the Kenyan press always different kinds of violence were reported and ethnicity was backgrounded, as is also clear from this description: “The victims were killed by police, flushed from Public Service Vehicles and clubbed by rowdy youths manning illegal roadblocks, attacked by raiders or lynched by an irate public” (ST_The second step_30/01/2008). In (160) it is reported three times that people were fished or flushed out of public service vehicles on the basis of their community, but in the beginning it says “on account of their tribe”, which again points to a synonymous relationship.

This example shows that even when the violence was clearly ethnically inspired the Kenyan press still preferred to obscure the ethnicity of the actors involved. This seemed to go against the editorial guidelines. The Nation Stylebook, for instance, stipulates: “Do not describe a person's race, tribe or ethnicity unless it is relevant to the story”. In the internal document of the Nation Media Group’s Editorial Guidelines and Objectives one can read:

“In general, the media should avoid prejudicial or pejorative references to a person's race, tribe, clan, religion, sex or sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or handicap. These details should be eschewed unless they are germane to the story” (emphasis added in italics).

In the internal document Board resolution on the editorial policy of the Standard Group the board of directors and the editorial team communicated to the journalists that “we do not report the ethnicity of criminal suspects unless this background is pertinent”. If the issue of ethnicity was not relevant in these post-election stories, it is never relevant. However, Kenyan journalists did tend to clearly locate the conflicts, so that people could infer. As Agina confirmed, “if you say a certain region, it's automatic to Kenyans to know that those guys who live in that area are such and such”. The Kenyan journalists also avoided generalizations and that is why they rather wrote about “rival groups” in a certain area than about warring communities in general. Note that the attackers are typically collectivized in an indeterminate way, but by means of the apposition the presupposition is triggered that the Nakuru attackers were believed to be members of the Mungiki sect. Kenyan newsworkers knew that there were a lot of Kenyans not taking part in the violence or helping people irrespective of their ethnic background, as is reported in (161).

184 Personal interview with Ben Agina on 22 November 2008.
In Nandi, the deputy OCPD, Mr Stephen Weda, was held hostage for more than 36 hours by irate youths at Keringet trading centre. The youths were angered after the officer rescued seven students from Kaiboi Technical Institute. The thousands of youths claimed that “members of an outlawed sect from Central Kenya” were in the institution.

[...]
He said the rescued students were from Coast, Eastern and Central provinces.
(ST_North Rift remains volatile_02/02/2008)

The deputy Officer Commanding Police Division is functionalized and nominated. On the basis of his surname a lot of Kenyan readers might have been able to infer his ethnic background. For me that was impossible, but I am almost sure his name is not typical of Coast, Eastern and Central provinces. This example shows that the angry rioting youths (again classification by age) not only targeted members of one specific community (the Kikuyus), but that they were against all people perceived to be ‘foreigners’ and that they turned against everyone who tried to protect their fellow Kenyans. That the perpetrators of violence were criminals and that they were a danger not just to ‘ethnic enemies’, but to any peace-loving person is clearly expressed in (162).

161) Kisumu Town and its environs has now been turned into gangland where criminals are robbing and looting from door-door in broad daylight. What began as mass action over the disputed presidential elections has mutated into criminal acts seemingly beyond the political goodwill. The criminals are now targeting the working class, business community and generally everybody trying to embrace order.

[...]
The Obunga and Bandani slums are the main hideouts for gangsters currently raiding families of their own community under the guise of flushing out “enemies”. ODM leaders in Kisumu and Western Province have cautioned top brass that if the violence is left unchecked, many of their supporters who have fallen victims may reconsider their stand. “We all know our supporters, rich and poor. But when a certain class we are fighting for to gain socio-economic equality in a new government turn against us under these painful circumstances, then ODM could lose its face in the ongoing crisis,” Dr Arunga Sino said.
(DN_Kisumu’s perilous slide into anarchy_06/02/2008)

The perpetrators of violence are represented as criminals who even harass members of their own community. By means of the possessive in “their supporters” referring back to the “ODM leaders” the victims are presupposed to be ODM supporters. From the location and the quote by Dr Arunga Sino it can be inferred that the perpetrators are poor slum dwellers who “mutated” from political supporters into criminals. Recall Dorothy Kweyu’s opinion above. In numerous other reports the aggressors are identified as youths engaging in criminal acts and harassing people indiscriminately. The ST, for instance, reported that “drunken youths demand between Sh50 and Sh100 per vehicle” to let people pass at roadblocks, irrespective of their ethnicity (ST_North Rift remains volatile_02/02/2008). Although the international newspapers often focused on issues of ethnicity, that does not mean that they did not touch upon other socio-economic aspects. What the ST reported can be compared to Gettleman’s observation on the
same day that “a different kind of roadblock seems to be taking root, one based more on opportunism than on politics” (NYT_Spreading Banditry Dilutes Benefits of a Plan for Ethnic Peace in Kenya_02/02/2008).

In (163) the balance is made of the people who died from “the post-election violence”.

163) Most people killed during the post-election violence in Western and Nyanza provinces died of bullet wounds, according to a report released yesterday. Research by the Independent Medico-Legal Unit showed that 91 per cent of victims from Western Province died of gunshot wounds. Eight others sampled from Kisumu also had the same injuries. But in the Rift Valley where most of the deaths occurred, the report found out that majority of the victims were either bludgeoned to death, hacked with machetes or shot with arrows. 
(DN_Chaos victims felled by bullets_27/02/2008)

Different kinds of deaths are reported in different regions. It can be inferred that most of the people who died in Western and Nyanza provinces died by bullets from the security forces, while in the Rift Valley people died in brutal ethnic clashes.

In the Kenyan press different examples were found of people from different tribe who are getting along perfectly and who even saved members of different communities; (164) is one of the clearest examples.

164) Nyokabi [Chege] says she will be forever grateful to her tenants who did not treat her as a member of a “rival community”. “They thought of me like one of their own. They saved my family and I from danger,” she says. Although the elderly woman is not sure if life will ever be normal again, she says she has learnt never to classify people according to tribe. “At the end of the day, we are all human beings,” she says. 
[...]
Eurice Wambui was also a landlady and a small-scale businesswoman in Kibera. She too was saved by a fellow businesswoman who defied “orders from her community”. 
(ST_How rivals saved our lives in Kibera_03/01/2008)

The ethnicity of these victims of violence is not explicitly given, but they are nominated. Chege and Wambui are Kikuyu names. That they were saved by members from different communities, of which the specific ethnicity can only be guessed (Luo?), shows that not everybody was against the Kikuyus and that the violence even in the slums was limited to certain groups of individuals. The core message of this article is articulated by Nyokabi: “We cannot change our tribes but we can live together peacefully”. This was a feeling that lived strongly in Kenya.

Some international press reports also picked this feeling up, so it was not the case that all of the foreign press reports consisted for one hundred percent of coverage about ethnic fighting. Especially at the end of the post-election coverage this came more often to the fore. Almost as a metapragmatic commentary to the foregoing international press coverage, McCrummen wrote in the WP: “If it is easy to find horror stories in Kibera, it is also possible to find Luos who hid Kikuyus in their houses, Kikuyus who kept Luos from being massacred, and so many small gestures of trust and urgent conversations between friends such as Osodo and Kyalo that
countered a violent momentum taking hold” (WP_A block-by-block bid for peace_11/03/2008). But also look at (165) and (166).

165) But a lot of people have not given up on democracy. On Monday, several hundred men in a mixed Kikuyu-Luo slum held a peace march. They met in the road that divides their enclaves, distinctions nobody really cared about until a few days ago, and spoke about putting down their weapons and working out their problems. “For all these years, we've been living together,” said Stanley Maina, a Kikuyu shopkeeper. “Why are we fighting now?” One Luo man yelled out, “Let Raila and Kibaki fight! They are presidents; we are just people!” Those in the crowd pumped their fists in the air and cheered. (NYT_Fighting Intensifies After Election in Kenya_01/01/2008)

166) "There is no movement here," said Lennox Ongaya, 30, an Odinga supporter who has grown angrier by the day at the police surrounding his community. "Let them kill us now rather than us dying slowly over the next five years," he said, referring to Kibaki's term. 

[...]

Not too far away, in front of the smoking ruins of a vegetable and fruit market, friends Agnes Moraa, an Odinga supporter, and Mary Wanjiro, a Kibaki supporter, were sitting together on a wooden bench. Their kiosks had been burned down during the night, and now they were selling their mangoes and pineapples out of a cardboard box. "The Luos burned the market down because they said it was owned by Kikuyus," said Moraa. Asked whether the rioting had altered their relationship, Wanjiro put her arm around her friend, with whom she has sold vegetables and swapped stories for three years. "Not us," she said. "But others, yes. And it's going to be that way. There is a lot of fear." (WP_Ethnic faultlines emerge in Kenya's post-election turmoil_01/01/2008)

The fragment in (165) makes clear that not everybody is engaged in violence, that not all Luos and Kikuyus are fighting, which could have been inferred from what precedes in the article. However, this information is inserted to counteract such an unwarranted conclusion. The journalist anticipated a possible misinterpretation and put his reports about “ethnic fighting” (see example 121) into perspective. But it has to be said that this positive news is backgrounded, as the focus is on “the mix of hooliganism, political protest and ethnic violence [that] has taken dozens of lives”. Note also that the information source who is nominated (Stanly Maina) is represented by means of ethnic classification (Kikuyu) and functionalization (shopkeeper). In (166) not all of the informants are automatically classified by their ethnicity. Lennox Ongaya is classified by means of his age and by means of his supporting relation to Odinga. This article does not put the events into an ethnic frame of interpretation. Instead of a simple ethnic explanation it indicates that the police cordon of the slums contributed to the build up of anger and frustrations. Since security forces prevented the people from protesting peacefully they became violent. This is also reported in example (168). Next, Moraa and Wanjiro are represented by means of relational identification as supporters of Odinga and Kibaki respectively, but also as friends. This goes against the generalization that all supporters of the rivaling camps would be fighting and it shows that not only PNU supporters suffered from the violence by ODM
supporters, but also other ODM supporters. However, again this is background in the informational structure of the article, as it only comes at the very end.

The next two examples come from foreign news reports which are written almost in the style of Kenyan news. They illustrate that the ethnic frame of interpretation was not dominant in all international news reports.

167) Whether any of the gestures would calm the ethnically charged violence and simmering frustrations remained unclear.

"We will go looting," he said, as about a dozen young men around him concurred. "It's not good, but what are we supposed to do? It creates a negative image, that is right. But what am I supposed to eat? I only had juice this morning. I looted it." Across Nairobi's sprawling slums, food and medicine are growing more scarce while much of the country has remained shut down for the past week. More than 300 people have been killed in post-election violence across the country, and at least 100,000 people have been displaced. Ethnic tensions are rising, as Odinga's supporters scapegoat people from Kibaki's ethnic group, the Kikuyu, for an election they say was stolen. (WP_Major protest in Kenya postponed as frustrations build_04/01/2008)

168) Yesterday about 50 young men grew frustrated that a huge security cordon thrown around the slum prevented them from attending a banned opposition rally in the city centre. They vented their fury on the place of worship attended by Ms Titus, a 20-year-old unemployed woman in a threadbare skirt, and her equally impoverished fellow worshippers.

This time no one was killed. Church members from various tribes escaped and vowed to defend its charred remains from looters who have spread chaos across Kenya in postelection violence which is now believed to have killed 375 people. (TI_Kenya mob sets fire to churches despite unity plea_04/01/2008)

In these articles the ethnic interpretive frame is not completely absent, but the ethnic aspect is not overrepresented. Instead, a subtle and moderate picture is drawn. In (167) the perpetrators of violence are represented as criminals, i.e. looters, and classified as “young men”. Although the violence is categorized as “ethnically charged”, McCrummen from the WP provides a better insight into the causes of the looting. They do not just loot to compensate for the stolen election or because they hate people from different communities, but out of poverty. This example also shows that the representational strategy of aggregation was used sometimes in international press (300 people killed; 100,000 people displaced). Quantification in combination with age classification was also employed in (168), where the social actors are further represented as “impoverished” slum dwellers by means of the location, the clothes description (“in a threadbare skirt”) and the possessive, comparative phrase “her equally impoverished fellow worshippers”. The perpetrators of violence are criminalized as church arsonists and looters, but contrary to many other articles an attempt is made to explain their behavior in other than ethnic terms. They grew frustrated because they were locked into the slum by a “a huge security cordon”, so that they could not vent their anger. Such subtle coverage is in contrast with what was reported one
day earlier in the TI, where the aggressors were also represented as “impoverished supporters of the two main rivals”, but also as tribal fighters. The sentence that “[t]he bloodletting has strong tribal overtones, pitching Mr Kibaki’s Kikuyu tribe against Mr Odinga’s Luo” even contains the gross generalization, giving rise to the interpretation that all Kikuyus are warring against all Luos (TI_Kenya teeters on the brink_03/01/2008). Also in (169) the ethnic frame of interpretation is absent. The people involved in the violence are rather represented by means of relational identification as supporters of opposition or government. What is more, the whole crisis is given a differentiated interpretation with the reference to “political, economic and land issues”.

169) Many Kenyans have said that a meaningful political settlement is the only way to end fighting between opposition supporters and those who back the government. A power-sharing agreement has been one of the possible solutions floated in recent days, and Western officials, including American diplomats, have tried to throw their weight behind this. [...] The election controversy has stirred up deep-seated grievances over political, economic and land issues, pitting opposition supporters against members of the president's ethnic group and groups perceived as supporting the government. Many people in Kenya tend to vote along ethnic lines, and much of the postelection bloodshed seems to have been ethnically driven, though many participants insist that their motives are political. (NYT_Annan sees small gains in peace talks_09/02/2008)

Although the previous examples show that an ethnic frame of interpretation was not absolute in the international press, a majority of foreign news reports did have a dominant ethnic frame. As a result, the representational strategy of ethnic classification was the most frequently used discursive strategy to represent the victim and agents of violence. Consider examples (92)-(99).

170) Kenya was plunged into further turmoil yesterday, as continued violence over Mwai Kibaki’s disputed re-election involved angry supporters of the opposition candidate, Raila Odinga. Confrontations with police left at least 135 people dead. [...] Terrified Luo living in areas dominated by Mr Kibaki’s supporters hid behind locked doors, while residents in Nairobi’s burning slums said that they feared for their lives. “They took my phone, they took my money, they took what I had in my pockets,” said Peter Mwau, a resident of the Kibera slum who comes from the smaller Kamba tribe. “I did not talk to them, I just went, they were holding machetes and iron bars. We did not even sleep.” (TI_135 dead in election bloodbath_01/01/2008)

The report in (170) begins with a politico-criminal frame of interpretation, talking about “angry supporters of the opposition candidate” and police violence. Note the aggregation of “135 people dead” without ethnic classification. But afterwards it switches to an ethnic frame. In the international press the victims of violence were often exclusively identified as members of Kibaki’s or Odinga’s ethnic group, while this is only one aspect of their multiple identities. Their ethnicity may have been a reason why they were victimized or why they became brutal attackers,
but there were also other reasons at play (e.g. social or economic), which were often backgrounded or eluded. This is also the case in (171). Much of the violence that broke out in Kenya seemed inexplicable and was often rendered as such in the international press. However, there were always underlying factors – violence is never really random – even though some of the reasons of some conflicts were very wrong and worrying. The article in (170) transcends the simple dichotomous picture of Luos versus Kikuyus, because it takes into account that also people from other ethnic groups, like the Kambas, were involved. This is framed as senseless ethnic violence without further elaboration. Senseless it might be, but I could imagine that Kambas were sometimes targeted by rioting gangs. There were at that time at least three prominent Kambas in the news who were constantly acting and speaking in a way that provoked the anger of ODM supporters, *viz.* ECK chairman Kivuitu, who lost control of the tally process, Alfred Mutua, the spokesman of PNU who consistently denied all charges of rigging and proclaimed that Kibaki was the rightful president, and ODM-K leader Kalonzo Musyoka who made a pact with PNU and so became Kibaki’s vice-president. As a result, some uneducated and ill-informed ODM supporters in the slums vented their anger against any Kamba they came across. This, however, is not explained in (167), although one foreign correspondent of the TI proved to have a more subtle view than the ethnic interpretation that can be derived on the basis of much of the press coverage, when he explained to me that

“after the violence began, it very quickly took on tribal aspects, even if at its roots were very serious political differences rooted in power struggles rather than tribal issues. In no time at all, the unrest became [sic] little more than local score settling. The more uneducated those involved were the more tribal it became – unsurprisingly so”.

Also the other TI correspondents must have had a differentiated view on the matter, but it did not always come across in the news reports, as the education of the aggressors or “the level of informedness” as Mugonyi called it above in 8.1.2.1 was often backgrounded. The only clue that readers often had was the location, as the setting of the violence was usually clearly located in one slum or another. Ethnic classification and a *ditto* frame of interpretation are apparent in (171).

171) Aggrieved at having apparently been cheated out of power, *Luo* went on the *rampage* against Kibaki’s *Kikuyu supporters*. Even mobile phone text messages called for violence. “Let’s wipe out the Mt Kenya mafia,” they read, a reference to Kibaki’s power base. “Kill two, get one free.” *As the Kikuyu hit back, tribal clashes spread* through the Rift Valley and beyond, as far as the teeming slums of Nairobi and on to Mombasa and the Kenyan coast. In the Rift Valley, *the Luo were supported by the Kalenjin and another minor tribe*. The resurrection of two violent criminal gangs, the *Mungiki* and the *Taliban*, loyal to the Kikuyu and Luo respectively, added a gruesome dimension. The *Taliban* were blamed for *horrendous killings* in which *Kikuyu were*

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185 Personal correspondence with Jonathan Clayton, who is not the one who wrote (89), nor the one who wrote (93), but who contributed to ‘Kenya teeters on the brink’, mentioned above.
hacked to death with machetes in the slums of Nairobi. The Mungiki, who are bound by secret rituals, were accused of hacking off heads and mutilating Luo men. It was reported that a number of Luos were admitted to hospital after forced circumcisions. The Luo do not practise male circumcision, while the Kikuyu are one of several tribes in which it is a rite of passage.

(TI_Kill two, get one free, Kenya's cry of hate_06/01/2008)

The explicit label of tribal violence is not used in (171), but from the context that is invoked in the language use a primitive and savage picture of tribal violence is sketched. This report contains a lot of graphic descriptions, such as “hacked to death with machetes”, “hacking off heads and mutilating”, and “forced circumcisions”. Such discursive choices are clear examples of how news values of negativity and novelty were construed in through the use of emotional and connotative language to create a shock effect or add to the dramatic effect of the events. Note that the circumcision of Luo men was not widely reported in the other newspaper articles. They are only referred to in one IN report and two NYT articles, compared to four TI reports.

Sporadically, foreign press reports try to counter the utterly negative picture that they present, as in (172).

172) But there are signs of hope. Among young urban Kenyans, the tribal identity is not so strong. "It has never been an issue for us," said David Okoth. "We went to school with people from different tribes. Now we are trying to build our businesses, forge our careers. Tribe doesn't come into it." Juliette Njeri, his girlfriend, added: "It is not a problem for us." David is a Luo, Juliette a Kikuyu. A week ago, this wouldn't have been worth mentioning. Now it's become something to cling to.

(IN_Tribal strife leaves Kenya on brink of humanitarian disaster_06/01/2008)

At the end of a report about tribal violence, backgrounded in the information structure, a message of hope is added. However, this fragment implies that tribal identity is bad or that it is a problem. I do not see why that should be the case. People can have a strong tribal identity and still be peace-loving. The recontextualization of their words and the way they are announced creates the impression as if “young urban Kenyans” do not have a tribal identity, which is good. To say that tribe is not an issue, that it does not come into career planning and to have an interethnic relationship does not mean that these people lack an ethnic identity. Tribe is still a part of their identity, among other aspects, for instance relating to their education, their urban lifestyle, their friends, etc..

With regard to the ethnic classification of people involved in violence examples (173) and (174) can be contrasted.

173) Across the Rift Valley, apparently well-organized militias have been burning houses and villages to drive out people from Kibaki's Kikuyu tribe. More recently, Kikuyu gangs have begun taking revenge in two western towns, Naivasha and Nakuru, hunting down people from Odinga's Luo tribe, torching houses and hacking or stoning people to death. As a result, Kenya is increasingly segregated along tribal lines, with Luos and members of other tribes that supported Odinga heading back to their
ancestral homeland in western Kenya and Kikuyus moving east toward their homeland in the country's lush, green central region.
(WP_Kenyan rivals agree on measures to end post-election violence_02/02/2008)

174) Convoys of buses are expected to begin leaving Nairobi today with Luo people who have been attacked by the Kikuyu tribe of President Kibaki.

[...]
The violence began in the western Rift Valley, where tribes backing Raila Odinga, the opposition leader, attacked Kikuyus.
(TI_Families flee violence by heading for home_06/02/2008)

Although a picture of ethnic cleansing is presented in (173), the violence is clearly located (Rift Valley, Naivasha, Nakuru) and the perpetrators of violence are represented in a collectivized way as militias or gangs. This prevents to some extent the generalization that all Kikuyus and Luos or Kalenjins are involved. Militias or gangs are only small factions of larger ethnic groups. In (174) the violence is also clearly located (western Rift Valley), but it is presupposed by the use of a non-restrictive relative clause that in that place tribes backing Odinga attacked Kikuyus. In this presupposition whole tribes are played out against each other, quite a generalization. Both of the examples again illustrate that the Kikuyus are always associated with President Kibaki, which is an association that would be rejected by several Kikuyus that I met, ranging from journalists over academics to taxi drivers.

175) Mariam Wambui thought she had survived the worst of it. A Kikuyu living in Kericho, a town in western Kenya with a large Kalenjin population, Ms Wambui lost her business, a small shack from where she bought and sold clothes, when a mob of Kalenjins burnt it down soon after the election.

[...]
In a restaurant in Nyagacho, a slum area where Ms Wambui lived, Rubenson Bett, a Kalenjin elder, calmly explained why the Rift Valley was better off without Kikuyus. Referring to them as "invaders" and "outsiders", Mr Bett said: "Our brothers from Central Province believe they are so superior in everything. They have invaded Rift Valley. The influx of these people here means the indigenous Rift Valley people will, in 50 years, be squatters in our own motherland. "They better settle them in Central Province. Kikuyus cannot be trusted. A Kikuyu is a Kikuyu, whether he is a bishop or whatever."

[...]
A group of young men gathered outside a nearby barber's shop echoed Mr Bett's views. But one, Tony Kirui, 23, a business management student, said quietly he hoped the Kikuyus would return. "One tribe cannot survive on its own," he said. "I want them to come back, then we can start again."
(IN_Hundreds flee from homes in Kenya as power-sharing fails to halt mob violence _07/03/2008)

The newspaper article from which (175) was taken illustrates a balanced kind of reporting which was not often found in the beginning of the press coverage in December and January, when mostly victims of violence were featured and quoted. The voices of the perpetrators of violence were often obscured or backgrounded in nominalizations, indeterminations or collectivizations. The social actors are mainly represented by means of ethnic classification. But here not only the
victim is nominated and given a voice, also someone from the attacking side is individualized and heard, so that readers can gain a better understanding of the problems. It is true that the testimony of the Kalenjin elder is recontextualized to exemplify the ethnic hatred in Rift Valley, but it also makes clear that poverty and deprivation are factors in the violence. What is expressed in this article contrasts with what was said in a ST report one week earlier, i.e. that a “group of Rift Valley MPs have welcomed the deal between President Kibaki and Mr Raila Odinga, and asked displaced persons to return to their farms” (ST_Rift MPs hail pact, welcome back IDPs_01/03/2008). Above all, the final comment by the functionalized Tony Kirui puts the Kalenjin voices into perspective. Readers can infer that not all Kalenjins are against (a return of) the Kikuyus.

This part of the analyses can be closed by a foreign press report which illustrates that it is possible to sensibly interpret and describe the Kenyan post-election crisis, taking different underlying factors into account, while not ignoring the issue of ethnicity.

176) At a row of low-slung shops at Oljorai last week, men who were gathered there happily admitted to expelling their Kikuyu neighbors, including Machiria. "The Rift Valley is Kalenjin land -- this is where I belong," said William Kaitany, 55, a cattle keeper who had been Machiria's neighbor. "The Kikuyus, I don't know why they're here. Even the young ones must go." But historians say that the prevailing sense of belonging to a homeland is rooted more in Kenya's colonial past than in any legitimate ancestral claim.

[...] Kaitany, the Kalenjin cattle keeper, said he arrived after Moi's government evicted him and his neighbors from better land elsewhere in the Rift Valley. They were given five acres each at Oljorai. Then last year, Kaitany said, it began to look as if they might all be evicted again. Officials from Kibaki's government came to Oljorai and began dividing their five-acre plots in half, he said. Those who resisted were beaten and jailed. "They came and said, 'Whether you like it or not, we're going to subdivide the land,' " said Veronica Kimitei, who was landless before Moi settled her at Oljorai in 1995. "But this is where we belong." As happened elsewhere in the Rift Valley, that sense of injustice, compounded by accusations that Kibaki had stolen the election, was cast in ethnic terms. For Kimitei, Kaitany and others, the enemy became not Kibaki's Kikuyu-led government, but the Kikuyus in their midst. As violence spread across the Rift Valley, so did fears that Kikuyu militias were poised to attack Oljorai. The people there called a meeting and decided, Kimitei said, that "Kikuyus must go." It was early morning when the mob came to the farms of Machiria and Karanja with bows and arrows and molotov cocktails. Machiria was away. But Karanja and his other neighbors ran across the twiggy fields to the closest safe place -- the farm of Moi's son, which always has plenty of security.

(WP_No quick fix for what still ails Kenya_07/03/2008)

This report seemingly starts off following the classical pattern, but then gradually more subtelties are built into the story. Kikuyu are not only victims, but also instigators of violence; Kalenjins are not only perpetrators, but also victims of violence. This report is not limited to the context of ethnic context, but it puts the events in a historical context with references to the repercussions of colonialism, the failed policies of previous governments and the people’s “sense of injustices".
In addition, contemporary causes are given, such as the flawed election and the people’s fear of Kikuyu militias. As such, this report provides a detailed and differentiated picture of what ailed the Rift Valley.

8.2. Dynamic and diverse frames of interpretation

8.2.1. The tribal and the sociopolitical frame of interpretation revisited

8.2.1.1. Quantitative and qualitative research
The contrastive pragmatic analysis above revealed that an ethnic frame of interpretation was often dominant in the American, British and Belgian newspapers, while the Kenyan newspapers mainly reported on the post-election crisis from a politico-criminal perspective. This was confirmed by quantitative research (cf. Pollak et al. 2011). In fact, the international media’s ethnic lens was even more prominent when the newspaper articles were subjected to a range of quantitative methods of text mining. In one experiment Pollak and I, for instance, explored the contrasting view of the international and local media coverage via the analysis of Support Vector Machine (SVM) keywords. After we created a local and foreign class and categorized the documents of the data inside these two categories, we analyzed the distinguishing keywords, discovered by the SVM algorithm implemented in OntoGen. The contrasting keywords that were found to be best distinguishing between the articles of the two classes, are presented in table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCAL</th>
<th>odm, mp, team, mr, pnu, odm_leader, president_kibaki, dr, media, statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WESTERN</td>
<td>kikuyu, mr_kibaki, opposition, mr_odinga, luo, tribe, tribalism, opposition leader, odinga, ethnic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Contrasting (SVM) keywords for the local versus Western articles.

These words show the differences in the way of referring to the main protagonists: in local articles the definite descriptions ODM leader and President Kibaki are mostly used, while the main participants are described more often as Mr Kibaki, Mr Odinga, opposition leader and Kikuyu or Luo in the foreign newspapers. According to this quantitative computer analysis Kenyan newspapers limited their coverage to political parties and functions: ODM, PNU and MP, while the international press presented the election through an ethnic lens by making use of

186 For more details of the use of SVM for key word extraction in OntoGen see Pollak et al. 2011 and Fortuna et al. 2006.
such words as *Kikuyu, Luo, ethnic,* and even the more ideologically marked words *tribe* or *tribalism.*

However, my pragmatic analysis also showed that these frames of interpretation were almost never absolute, but that there were often other interpretive frames at the background. So, actual news discourse is much more complex than quantitative methods can reveal. Therefore a qualitative analysis is necessary. After all, it was not hard to find examples in the foreign newspapers which slightly contradict the above analysis. For instance, in the IN report ‘Tribal strife leaves Kenya on brink of humanitarian disaster’(06/01/2008), also heavily criticized for its “tribal lens” by Somerville (2008: 538), first the image of genocide is implicitly evoked in a sentence like (177), but later the counterbalancing remark of (178) can be found.

177) In Eldoret, the scene of the church massacre, *Kikuyus* are running for their lives, their houses burned down by *gangs of Kalenjins, Luhyas and Luos,* as neighbour turns on neighbour.

178) But amid the violence, there have been signs that Kenya has what it takes to stop the slide towards tribal divisions. As the week went on, the vast majority of Kenyans refused to turn on each other. Instead, they turned on their leaders. *Kikuyus, Luos, Kalenjins and Luhyas* have openly criticised their own leaders. “These politicians,” said one Kikuyu man in Eldoret, “all drinking coffee in the InterContinental. They are not the ones fighting. It is the common man who is suffering.”

The idea that the poor are suffering for the benefit of the manipulating and unreliable rich political elite was found to be a common theme in the Kenyan press. Extracts such as these show that the international press reports are sometimes less one-sided than they seem to be at first sight. This can partly be explained by the inherent contradictoriness of news reports which is often a consequence of journalists’ will to facticity, as explained in 4.2.2.1. To achieve factuality they present different viewpoints. Besides, journalists never close off the interpretive frame and try to keep alternative interpretations open so as to hold as many readers as possible. This does not deny the existence of a dominant frame of interpretation. The remark in (178) does not break with the overall tribal frame of interpretation. The expression “stop the slide towards tribal divisions” contains the presupposition that Kenyans are sliding towards tribal divisions and people are still identified by their tribal affiliation.

It is clear that quantitative and qualitative research can complement each other. In combination they yield the best results. Pragmatic research into discourse can benefit from some quantitative support, derived by content analytic, corpus linguistic, text mining or other computational techniques. I do not stand alone with this position. Meeuwis (1993) already touched upon the importance of quantitative support for the analysis of a large corpus of news texts. He noted that quantity is not a criterion but an indication of significance: “phenomena discovered with a certain degree of recurrence are pretty reliable indicators of the characteristics
of [a world of interpretation]” and he adds that quantitative support can be used “to respond to the risk of reading more in(to) the text than what is meant by it, a risk the reader runs when his/her focus of analysis is implicitly conveyed messages” (Meeuwis 1993: 221). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 154), among others, also pointed to the need to combine qualitative text analysis with quantitative analysis of large bodies of text. The quantitative results can not only inform the analytical stages but they can also be used to test the qualitative results, to check whether the discourse analyst has not paid too much attention to certain patterns of meaning, or too little attention to others. So, qualitative research results can, and to my opinion should, be evaluated against quantitative figures to avoid underinterpretation and overinterpretation (cf. O’Halloran & Coffin 2004).

Used as another kind of triangulation, information from ethnographic fieldwork, particularly interviews with journalists and ordinary conversations with readers, additionally support the conclusions of the contrastive analysis. We have seen how elements from the co-text, the discursive context, the political and historical context (as ingredients of the context of language use) contribute to the creation of frames of meaning. Attention to another aspect of the context, viz. the language users, also helped nuance and refine the analyses. To begin with the ‘consumers’ of the news texts, a lot of readers not only picked up the ethnic frame of interpretation, but they took umbrage at the so-called “racist reporting” and heavily criticized the language used. “‘Tribal Rage’!? I guess we only get ‘Ethnic conflicts’ in the whiter parts of the globe”, a reader nicknamed ‘sweeneyogede’ reacted to the online publication of the WP article ‘Tribal rage tears at diverse Kenyan city’ (03/01/2008), while ‘forjarigirlonly’ shouts it out: “PLEASE, STOP CALLING IT TRIBAL WAR, TRIBAL RAGE, because it is not”.187 In the letter to ST ‘International press up to no good’, added as figure 27 (see 7.3.1.3), reader Njeri Kiarie faulted the foreign media for referring to “Kenya as a war-torn country”, while “indicating that there won’t be light at the end of the tunnel”. Also opinion makers and analysts took part in this debate. Kenyan writer Rasna Warah, for instance, criticized the readiness of the foreign press “to describe what was happening in Kenya as ethnic cleansing” in the opinion piece ‘Kenyans are fighting inequality, not ethnicity’ (DN 14/01/2008). It is clear that for a lot of readers the international press reports generated ethnic meanings, so my analyses are supported by their voices. However, also the national newspapers received criticism (remember the letter by J. Momanyi mentioned in 7.3.1.3). British Africa correspondent Michela Wrong denounced the “hypocritical coverage” in the Kenyan press: “By repudiating the notion of tribe, the Kenyan media have essentially refused to cover the biggest story on their patch” (Wrong 2008: 23).

187 From http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/02/AR2008010202971_Comments.html [28/06/2010].
Also information from interviews with the language users who did the producing proved to be insightful and enriching for the analyses. DM foreign desk chief Koen Vidal, for instance, taught me that foreign news is more than the news rendered in the ‘world news’-section. He emphasized that there is also a lot of international news in the opinion pages or in the cultural quire. That is why always the totality of news discourse must be taken into account. An analysis cannot be limited to one specific (sub)genre. Although I focused on hard news reports, I also had a look at opinion articles and commentaries. Then it became clear that the international press provided a much more subtle and differentiated view of the events. Often editorials were much sharper in their wordings and even more focused on ethnic and atavistic explanations than the supposedly moderate and factual hard news reports, as is illustrated by the TI editorial ‘At the Abyss’ (30/01/2008) of which (179) is a sample and which has as its theme that Kenya is becoming the new Rwanda.

179) Ancient tribal animosities, stirred by feuding politicians, have revived historic arguments over land and grazing rights, inflamed the loathing among the rural poor for the corrupt elites, shattered the tolerance engendered by prosperity and stability and again set Kikuyus against Luos, Kalenjins and others who resent the dominant tribe and voted for Raila Odinga, the defeated presidential candidate. Kenya does not have the bloody history of Hutu and Tutsi hatred; but in too many chilling ways the descent into violence is as rapid and random as the apocalypse in Rwanda.

In contrast, opinion articles often put such coverage into perspective. On 6 January 2008 the NYT published an Op-Ed commentary under the title of ‘No country for old hatreds’ by Kenyan writer Binyavanga Wainaina to counter-balance the coverage of tribal politicians, ethnic violence and the “atavistic vein of tribal tension”. Wainaina explicitly states that “the burning houses and the bloody attacks here do not reflect primordial hatreds; they reflect the manipulation of identity for political gain”, adding that “Mr. Odinga and President Kibaki are not really ethnic leaders, but in the days since the disputed election they have stoked tribal paranoia and used it to cement electoral loyalty”. Professor of African studies at Harvard University Caroline Elkins wrote on the same day in the WP the opinion peace ‘What’s tearing Kenya apart? History, for one thing’. The DM published a translated piece by the leading Kenyan commentator Charles Onyango-Obbo to explain the subtleties of Kenya’s crisis (‘Een staatshervorming voor arme Kenianen’ [A constitutional reform for poor Kenyans] 08/01/2008). Academics Steven Fish and Matthew Kroenig promoted in the opinion article ‘Kenya’s real problem (it’s not ethnic)’ (WP 09/01/2008) a political view on the events, as a counterweight to the dominant coverage. When the NYT was still focusing on violence between Kikuyus and Luos plus Kalenjins a subtler differentiation is brought in by Kenya based columnist who describes in the opinion piece ‘Democracy by other means’ (11/01/2008) the fighting near his farm between Samburu ODM

188 Personal interview with Koen Vidal on 17 October 2008.
supporters and Kibaki supporters of the Pokot. The latter community is a subgroup of the Kalenjins, so apparently they did not all vote for Odinga. That also explains the intra-ethnic violence which was largely left uncovered. One final example must suffice. In the opinion article ‘How violence infected Kenya’s democracy’ (IN 30/01/2008) the Director of the African Studies Centre at Oxford University David Anderson argued that “Kenya’s struggles are not rooted in any deep-seated ethnic hatred”.

To study news discourse in its totality also means that it must be acknowledged that the international press as a whole did succeed in providing a multifactorial view on Kenya’s crisis. Explanations which were ignored in some articles were often explored in later news reports. Some foreign press reports went over the top and can be heavily criticized, others were much more balanced and accurate. The same is true for the Kenyan press coverage. In their hard news coverage they shied away from explicit references to ethnicity and tribalism, but the issues were much debated in editorials and opinions, e.g. ‘The tribe is innocent: Can you say the same of yourself’ by commentator Lucy Oriang’ (DN 18/01/2008), ‘Let’s free our children from bondage of ethnic bigotry’ by psychiatrist Atwoli Lukoye (DN 18/01/2008) or ‘Let us talk about what really ails our country’ by then chief sub-editor at ST Nancy Mburu (ST 25/01/2008) to name but a few. By looking at news in its entirety changes of tone could be noted in both the international and the Kenyan press, as they came to see the events in different lights. After the initial limited focus on tribes the interpretations in the foreign press gradually opened up to incorporate underlying factors. In the Kenyan press journalists gradually started to cautiously account for the ethnic aspect of some of the conflicts. That is not surprising, as journalists constantly learn more about the topics they cover. They themselves are very much aware of the fact that their news stories are always inevitably provisional. That is why they are always open to revision. This was most clearly voiced by Gettleman:

“My coverage changed. As East-Africa bureau chief [responsible for the coverage of 12 countries in the region] I had spent before that a lot of time outside of Kenya, in Congo, Somalia, Sudan, so I wasn't really that prepared for what happened in Kenya. […] The honest truth is, you know, I was learning as I was going and I was no Kenya expert on politics or ethnicity when this thing started but by the end of it I had a much more sophisticated understanding of the history and the dynamics between the ethnic groups and the politics”.189

I believe most journalists can be credited for not having fixed interpretations and for being willing to constantly renew their views. That, however, does not detract from the fact that recurring patterns of meaning were found in the press coverage, which are debatable and can be criticized.

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189 Personal interview with Jeffrey Gettleman on 20 May 2011.
Such insights enabled me to put into context some of the claims that are made in the academic literature. So, I did not always find that there was “an absence of historical context in news stories” and that “news is standardly constructed in terms of events which are treated as more or less isolated from prior or subsequent events – isolated from history”, as Harris (2004: 106) claimed. What was confirmed by my research is that the international news media’s “basic desire for dramatic and visual stories with readily comprehensible plots and identifiable actors leads them to create stereotypes, labels, and impressions that remain long after particular events have ended” (Sreberny-Mohammadi 1995: 440). Indeed, I believe that the way the media portray a group of people or write about a certain country can have longer consequences and wider implications in broader society. However, in this respect I must acknowledge “the fundamental unpredictability of media effects” (McNair 2006). Even though I called upon readers’ letters and other reactions to support my analyses, other readers might still have other interpretations. As McNair put it,

“Impacts are never to be inferred from content alone, far less predicted, but only from content in context – the environmental context within which media consumption takes place, and which is unique for each individual consumer of the media message. Two consumers of the same media message will quickly diverge in their readings of its meanings because those readings are contingent on their individual backgrounds” (McNair 2006: 49).

Here it must also be recalled that the reception of media texts is not to be considered “as something passive, but as a kind of practice in which individuals take hold of and work over the symbolic materials they receive”, so that “[e]ven if individuals may have relatively little control over the content of the symbolic materials made available to them, they can use these materials, rework and elaborate them in ways that are quite alien to the aims and intentions of the producers” (Thompson 1995: 39). After all, “[i]nterpretation […] is an active, creative process in which the interpreter brings a set of assumptions and expectations to bear on the message which he or she seeks to understand” (Thompson 1995: 41). Interpretation also involves appropriation: “To appropriate a message is to take hold of its meaningful content and make it one’s own” (Thompson 1995: 42). People assimilate news messages and incorporate them into their own lives. That is why accurate reporting is necessary and why we must keep a critical eye on the news media.

Many of the above criticisms have to do with the Kenyan media’s reluctance to explicitly refer to ethnicity, which was, for instance, manifest in the use of strategies of collectivization or indetermination to represent victims or perpetrators of violence. However, these representational strategies are not only applied when the writer treats the social actor’s identity as irrelevant, as Van Leeuwen claims (2008: 40), they can have other, contextual reasons. With respect to the foreign press, the criticisms pertained to the international media’s focus on ethnic explanations of the conflicts, which was illustrated by the frequent use of the representational strategy of ethnic
classification. To explain these features of the studied discourses yet another aspect of the context has to be brought in, viz. the professional context of the newworkers. From my conversations with foreign and Kenyan journalists I learnt that they have good reasons to write as they did. The different contexts played a crucial role.

8.2.1.2. The (un)avoidability of tribal language use in the international press

Right before embarking on a plane for Johannesburg Tim Butcher, who wanted to become Africa correspondent, was taken aside by an old newspaper hand who had been reporting on Africa for many years and who gave him this piece of advice: “Just two things to remember in Africa, which tribe and how many dead” (Butcher 2007: 4). The foreign correspondents that I met did not have an obsession with tribe. On the contrary, they were well aware of the tensions and discussions surrounding the notion. Initially, in my view tribe was a discredited notion, but through my conversations with the journalists I also came to see its merits for foreign correspondence and its occasional inevitability.

To fairly judge and criticize foreign news one must always take the challenges of international journalism into account. No one explained the predicaments of foreign correspondence better than NYT correspondent Gettleman:

“We’re outsiders that come to places and try to make sense of them and boil it down into very digestable pieces. That’s gonna be problematic, you’re gonna be simplistic. You just should try to do your best to understand. You should see yourself as coming in a continuum: when we arrive in a place, it's all brand new to us. Let's say there's a timeline of Kenya [...] and we arrive at a certain point and it's all new to us, but there's a whole back story and I think its the journalist who has to be aware that they're just coming in at this one little discrete point and that there's a lot more under the surface before them. That should be humbling. Our job is to try to find good sources of information and present what they say and as long as you do that conscientiously and intelligently that's the best you can do. I didn't have a bias that I wanted to favor the Luos or favor the Kikuyus, or that I wanted to save Kenya or destroy Kenya, you know what I mean, I just wanted to try to show what was happening and how people were living through it, but, like I said, I don't know whether I succeeded”.¹⁹⁰

Gettleman also reiterated that his coverage got more sophisticated as he was learning as he was going. To him, news stories are never complete, because “daily journalism is the first draft of history” and it is restricted by a number of constraints of time, space, resources, accessibility, commercial pressures, etc.. However, as Gettleman added, “even with all those pressures we should still try our best to not so much as not being offensive, because I think that is too paternalistic, but we should try our best to be sophisticated, intelligent and fair”. This was corroborated by TI correspondent McConnell who added that¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Personal interview with Jeffrey Gettleman on 20 May 2011.
¹⁹¹ Personal interview with Tristan McConnell on 18 May 2011.
"you always got to weigh out the need to simplify stories, so that they get noticed and read, and the need to explain something. This is the kind of tension that you’re dealing with and I don’t think anyone really gets it right. I mean, maybe some great reporter who writes a 4000 word piece can explain it all, but who’s reading that? Fucking nobody! No one in the mainstream wants to read that”.

The latter comment made me realize that I am essentially involved in an academic exercise. In contrast, it is far from easy to provide a full explanation of complex and multilayered events in reality in the scope of a relatively concise newspaper report. The explanations of Kenya’s post-election crisis offered in this thesis are hoped to be elaborate, accurate and profound, but they are not part of work of mainstream writing.

Nevertheless, McConnell admitted that he was essentially involved in “an anthropological project” to interpret and explain foreign countries and their people to faraway readers with little background knowledge. Therefore, and also knowing that these readers appropriate what they read into their world view by which they live, as was reminded above, I think that international news can and should be continuously scrutinized. Critical readers must make sure that foreign correspondents live up to their responsibility to present an accurate and balanced picture of the world, a social responsibility which was readily acknowledged by all of my informants. So, there is nothing wrong to reflect on the journalistic writing now and then. One question stands out: Were the foreign correspondents right to emphasize ethnic explanations and develop a kind of ‘tribal language use’?

This question does not have one definite answer as there are different, equally valid, views that can be taken (which is one of the predicaments of criticism). For TI correspondent Clayton there was no doubt that the conflicts in Kenya were ethnic, even tribal. First he stressed that there is nothing wrong with the application of tribe in news reports about Kenya, because “whatever politically correct people in Europe may or may not think, the word tribe in much of east Africa is not a pejorative term”, particularly “in Kenya, tribe is referred to by Kenyans all the time and proudly so”. As I pointed out before (see 5.1.1.1), that is also what I found when I got to know Kenyans and their society during the stages of ethnographic fieldwork. The problem is that tribe is hardly ever used in positive contexts. It is the international press, also the TI, which contributes to the pejorative connotation of tribe. In the TI tribes are constantly named and shamed in the contexts of violence and politics, but the anti-corruption campaigner and political activist Mwalimu Mati is not ethnically classified (e.g. TI_Democracy comes out fighting as Kenyan voters take off the gloves_27/12/2007, TI_Confidence vote could ease tension_02/01/2008, TI_50 die in blazing church as spectre of tribal war looms _02/01/2008), nor do we get to know the ethnicity of the Odinga supporter and Kibera artist Alfred Karume (a

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192 Personal correspondence with Jonathan Clayton in February and March 2012.
Kikuyu name) (TI_Refugees pray for peace in burnt churches_07/01/2008), or of “Amos Wako, the Kenyan Attorney-General” and former Kibaki ally (a Luhya) who condemned the rigged election and the political incitement of the people (TI_Kenya mob sets fire to churches despite unity plea_04/01/2008), or of “George Muyera, an engineer who has volunteered to help to manage” St Stephen’s IDP camp in Kisumu and of “Pamela Indiaki, a regional manager for the Kenya Red Cross” (TI_Charities overwhelmed by Kenya refugees_16/02/2008). In positive contexts ethnic classification suddenly seems to have become irrelevant.

Clayton continued his defense of the view of the violence as tribal by noting that “the election campaign that preceded the violence was extremely tribal”. He supported his claim by this example:

“I went on the road with the main opposition party and they constantly and negatively played the anti-Kikuyu tribal card. They even had plays at meetings where someone would play a greedy local Kikuyu official and the crowd would boo and mumble the stereotypes that all Kikuyus are greedy and want to make money”.

Whoever witnessed such scenes saw the ethnic violence coming. But what this example actually illustrates is that the violence was not atavistic tribal hatred, but rather politically-instigated tribal animosity, building on social tensions among people who co-exist in difficult circumstances. This also comes to expression in the remainder of Clayton’s argument:

“When mini-buses are attacked and the passengers divided up along tribal lines and then the ones opposed to the attackers are macheted, how is one supposed to report this other than as tribal. This happened around Naviasha [sic], Matatus were stopped by Mungiki gangs and Luos and tribes linked to them and seen as allies were then attacked. Kikuyus in the bus were not. [...] A young Kikuyu friend of mine was targeting [sic] by a group of Luo thugs and chased and chopped simply because he was identified as a Kikuyu. [...] Indeed the great irresponsibility of the Kenyan elite was to play the tribal card and then distance themselves from those who paid the highest price. The children of the Odingas and Kenyattas go to the same schools, night clubs, golf clubs etc etc People like Rutu [sic], Uhuru stoked tribal enmities but were distanced from the chaos it caused. Those who suffered were of course the poor, but in places like Kibera do not think for one moment it was not tribal. Had any Kikuyu wandered in, he would have been killed and reverse was the case in Maathari [sic] valley” (emphasis added in italics).

Clayton indicates that the foreign press could not but interpret the violence as tribal. He emphasizes that it would have been inaccurate to report otherwise. The bottomline is that “there is no doubt” and if the foreign press would have reported otherwise, they “would have been totally irresponsible”. He goes on:

Indeed it would have been a case of allowing an external politically correct western agenda to influence the reporting of facts on the ground, simply because it is not palatable to hear certain facts. It is interesting to note the greatest criticism of foreign journos’ reporting comes from outside the continent and among the diaspora African community rather than those on the ground who know it was largely true.
The latter sentence can be simply contested by looking at readers’ letters and by talking to Kenyans at universities, newsrooms, but also in the street. Many of them hold the view that the violence was ethnic, but also many of them immediately give a list of other reasons for the conflicts. I am not after political correctness, although I seem to be implicitly accused of it. But I believe that if the press is serious about its responsibility, they should have noted that a majority of Kenyans were not killing each other. I have no problem with the coverage of violence, even if it is cruel, but then you should also report on the people who tried to establish peace, who saved people from other communities or who looking for solutions, ashamed and shocked that some of their compatriots were behaving in that way. Furthermore, Kibera is not representative of Kenya. The following certainly does not hold for Clayton, who has lived in Kenya for twelve years, but ST foreign editor Kipkemboi told me he detests those international media who in times of crisis send “a guy who comes to sleep at Hotel Intercontinental and then goes to Kibera and he says that he’s in Nairobi”. Yet most of the scenes that TI readers were offered to read played out in the slums or in impoverished rural areas. Some readers no doubt could have inferred the socio-economic motives behind the conflicts, but in many cases the correspondents could have been clearer about this.

This said, undeniably the violence Clayton describes above had ethnic aspects, but to repeat it again there were additional factors, which were hardly focused upon. I also seem to have a different understanding of tribal violence than Clayton. For me tribal violence means unscrupulous, irrational violence between one tribe and the other, but for Clayton tribal violence can be poverty-driven violence by some gangs of manipulated and ill-informed youths in the slums or in some rural settlements. Moreover, even if he is convinced of the tribal label, his argument is mainly about the political manipulation of the poor who then turned tribal against each other. This made me review those few articles which Clayton contributed to the TI subcorpus. Indeed his articles are mainly characterized by a toning down of ethnic classification and the highlighting of political and social aspects. Contrary to his feedback above the news reports he wrote are not full of tribal tags. Nonetheless, Clayton’s attempts at promoting a more subtle, political view on the events, largely in line with local interpretations, were drowned into the flow of ‘ethnic lens reporting’, written by his (TI) colleagues.

According to Vidal, efficiency is of the utmost importance in journalistic language use. recall his quote in 7.3.1.2, saying that whether a certain word such as tribe is used or not depends on whether is helps efficiently communicate what you want to tell the readers. To tell some stories tribe is essential and useful, because it attracts the attention of readers and can easily be used as an explanation of seemingly inexplicable complex conflicts, but it is also somewhat problematic.

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193 Personal interview with Andrew Kipkemboi on 25 November 2008. A similar criticism was voiced by Ochola.
In other words, *tribe* and all its derivatives seem to be useful terms from an economic perspective, but they are censurable from an ethical perspective. No other foreign correspondent reflected more clearly on this tension than McConnell (remember his quote in 7.3.1.3):

“Foreign journalists can talk about tribe. But for years I sort of shied away from it, [...] not because of editorial policy, it depends from your own moral position: it feels derogatory and wrong to talk about of tribe. But the more time you spend here the more difficult it is to ignore the organising role that tribe plays [see quote in 7.3.1.3]. But it's only one, one of a number of different organising principles that are at play; others are social status, poverty and the wealth gap, religion, there are all sorts of things that are involved in the conflicts and tribe is one of them. If you line the two things up: if you put tribe and wealth disparity alongside each other, well, *tribe* is a sexier word, it's gonna get people's attention, it's a shorthand, it presents a simple and comprehensible narrative and so the more you use tribe the less room there is to talk about the other issues. [...] We need to talk about it [tribe], but the talking about it tends to obscure anything else. Clearly, it is wrong, it is completely wrong-headed to look at conflicts and political disputes in Africa as tribal. They are not tribal, tribe plays a part in them, but that is not all there is to it. As soon as you use the word *tribe* people think that's all it's about...and if you got to tell the story of Kenyan politics in 500 words...it's difficult. So, I think that's the problem we face when talking about ethnicity and tribe and I don’t really know what the solution is”.

On the one hand, McConnell indicates that *tribe* is not always an accurate word choice and can be distorting. On the other hand, it is useful as it attracts the attention of the reader and provides an identifiable peg for a simple understandable narrative. In the assumption that readers have little background knowledge “you need to present a simple narrative and tribe offers that”, but “it obscures as much as it reveals”, McConnell concludes. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that, as Ogola puts it, by primarily focusing on ethnic explanations, the international news media disregarded that “inequitable allocation of resources, the failure to undertake comprehensive constitutional reforms, the monopolization of the political process by the elite, the arbitrary exercise of state power [...] together provided conditions for political instability which ultimately contributed to the 2007 election crisis” (2009: 62).

Yet it is possible to sensitively write about Kenya’s problems and account for the ethnic aspect in a sensible manner, as was for instance proven by McCrummen in the report, also referred to in (180). This is another extract:

180) Before the British colonized Kenya, ethnic identity was a fluid concept. A Kikuyu living among the Masai could assimilate and become Masai over time. But when the British began taking over land for tea and coffee plantations -- the most fertile swaths of central and western Kenya -- they created a rigid system of "ethnic reserves" to control the population they displaced. [...] Although the Kalenjin claim Oljorai as ancestral land, it was originally occupied by Masai cattle herders. Later, it was a ranch belonging to a wealthy white Kenyan hotelier named Block. In the 1970s, the government acquired the ranch, as it did many other colonial-era farms that have since been used for various resettlement programs and for political patronage. Far

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194 Personal interview with Tristan McConnell on 18 May 2011.
The focus is not narrowly on ethnicity, although it is accounted for, but on social problems. The events are put in a historical context without ignoring the contemporary evolutions which heightened the problems.

Apart from the difficulties of accurate language use, the foreign correspondents face other difficulties, which must also be mentioned. As a freelancer McConnell complained about financial resources. He lives in Nairobi, but the newspaper is not paying for his accommodation. Yet it costs a lot of money to remain informed and to travel around in search of news stories. Foreign correspondents need “a secure place with electricity and internet” in order to work efficiently but “it's increasingly difficult to find newspapers with the money and the interest in spending that on African reporting” (see footnote 192).195 Indeed the newspaper has to be interested in relevant stories and open to African news. Clayton told me that he suggested a number of stories to the TI editors in London, when he was following the election campaign and when people already started to predict trouble, but he wryly remarks: “Unfortunately the paper was not interested until violence broke out”.196 Another contextual factor that was hinted at before (remember Broere’s holiday) was the specific time period. When news breaks out at a rather inconvenient or inopportune moment the reporting will be less thorough. This was also noted by Somerville (2009). As Clayton wrote to me: “Personally I think our reporting was not good in that we lacked the breadth and depth of some of our reporting of African crises largely because it was the Christmas holidays and we were short-staffed and a bit late on to the story…”.

8.2.1.3. Debating ethnicity in Kenya

There were also a lot of contextual factors that can provide insights into the way the crisis was reported in the Kenyan press. The Kenyan journalists had good reasons for the journalistic and discursive choices they made. At least two contextual factors determined the language used in the local press: the editorial policy and the Kenyan media’s social responsibility.

In general Kenyan journalists were instructed to be careful with specific identity references. Discretion about people’s ethnicity was advised in several policy documents and editorial guidelines. The Nation Media Group Editorial Guidelines and Objectives stipulated under the subtitles of ‘Acts of violence’ and ‘Covering ethnic disputes/clashes’:

195 A professional budget is something Gettleman as staffer of the NYT and bureau chief could not complain about.
196 Personal correspondence with Jonathan Clayton in February and March 2012.
“The media should avoid presenting acts of violence, armed robberies, banditry and terrorist activities in a manner that glorifies such anti-social conduct. Also, newspapers should not allow their columns to be used for writings which have a tendency to encourage or glorify social evils, warlike activities, ethnic, racial or religious hostilities” (emphasis added in italics).

News, views or comments relating to ethnic or religious disputes/clashes should be published after proper verification of facts and presented with due caution and restraint in a manner which is conducive to the creation of an atmosphere congenial to national harmony, reconciliation, amity and peace. Sensational, provocative and alarming headlines are to be avoided. News reports or commentaries should not be written in a manner likely to inflame the passions, aggravate the tension or accentuate the strained relations between the communities concerned. Equally so, articles with the potential to exacerbate communal animosity should be avoided (emphasis added).

These editorial guidelines partly explain why the Kenyan journalists shied away from the topic of tribe in their coverage of the crisis. They not only presuppose socially responsible media, but also media that promote peace and national interests and that strengthen the cohesive ties of the social fabric (cf. Anderson’s view of newspapers in 3.1.3.2). In the Board Resolution on the Editorial Policy of the Standard Group similar guidelines could be found. With respect to the practice of referring to private citizens, it stipulates:

“The value of publishing names, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, ethnicity or past behaviour should be weighed against the relevance to the story and compassion for the individual” (emphasis added in italics).

However, as I have argued above, in some cases during the post-election crisis the facts could be verified, ethnic aspects were relevant and all people knew it. Moreover, information about the ethnic aspects of some conflicts was in the open, as Kenyans kept themselves informed via sms, internet and by watching at foreign news stations. So, the question could be asked: What is the use of avoiding references to ethnicity, which led to a distortion of some of the reported events, when most people clearly knew there was something going on?

Yet the standard practice of the Kenyan press was to conceal ethnic affiliation. This was due to the precarious context, viz. the tense times of elections, and the idea that they would inflame passions even more than already was the case. Former DN political reporter Mugonyi, for instance, told me during a fieldwork interview:

“We try as much as possible not to say this tribe is killing that tribe for the simple reason that...when, for example, you write a story and say Luos yesterday killed hundred Kikuyus, we believe that Kikuyus in different parts of the country, who read this story tomorrow will retaliate and maybe they will want to kill one hundred Luos. So we will not be helping the public, we will not be helping solving the problem and that is why we try to be careful, just say maybe one hundred people were killed in this place”. 197

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197 Personal interview with David Mugonyi on 20 November 2008.
This was the ethical line that was kept by both the ST and the DN. Senior political reporter at ST Ndegwa also confirmed that it was a ground rule during the post-election crisis to avoid tribal tags. He explained it thus:

"Why the local newspapers avoided identifying communities by name was because of the inciteful element of it, that when you report that Kikuyus are attacked in such and such a place, you tend to inflame some Kikuyu zones and I believe that is how the retaliatory attacks came about, when people got to learn that their communities were beaten somewhere else. [...] It is the house style that you don't identify the tribe in such situations, but a different context might allow you to name the communities, when you're talking about the positive stuff. If it is something that causes conflict, you don't use tribal tags, so it really depends on the context: in negative contexts we try to keep tribe out of it”.

Ndegwa interestingly stresses the importance of context for journalistic decisions about language use. When I asked him whether that practice was not a kind of self-censorship he replied: “you could call it censorship, but I think it was necessary”. That is a feeling that was shared by almost all of my Kenyan informants.

Before I put forward a few critical comments, I want to recognize that these are legitimate reasons for not using explicit references to ethnicity. The press has an obligation to the truth (cf. Kovach & Rosenstiel 2007, discussed in 3.2.2.1), but another fundamental of the news media is a responsibility to the society they are supposed to serve. At times the latter element could overrule the former. Assumptions about the democratic role of the news media and their social responsibility were even sporadically found in the studied press coverage, as is illustrated by (181) and (182).

181) The media have been urged to be responsible in reporting the post-election political crisis. The Standard Group deputy chairman, Mr Paul Melly, yesterday told the media that their responsibility lay with the interest of the public. "As media, we are the custodians of public interest. Our policies should be aligned with public interest at all times and exercise the role responsibly," Melly said. He appealed to the media to remain focused in their work and to endeavour to promote harmony. (ST_Serve the public, media told_25/01/2008)

182) Speaking at a media luncheon in Nairobi, Mr Martin Griffiths, the political advisor to chief mediator Kofi Annan, said it was the prerogative of the Press to monitor and ensure that the new deal is implemented and succeeds. "Journalists should ensure that the voice of the people (following the agreement) is heard through their stories. (DN_Media urged to keep a sharp eye on new deal_01/03/2008)

That is why I recognize that the studied Kenyan newspapers did their best to promote national unity and preserve the nation from further violence, in contrast to some vernacular radio stations (e.g. ICG 2008, KNCHR 2008, Waki 2008). When the violence was worst, the Kenyan quality newspapers excelled in editorials with urgent appeals for peace, e.g. ‘We must stop this poll chaos right now’ (ST 30/12/2007), ‘Give peace a chance’ (DN 02/01/2008), ‘Save our beloved

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198 Personal interview with Alex Ndegwa on 18 May 2011.
country’ (both DN and ST 03/01/2008), ‘Police must stop killing protesters’ (DN 18/01/2008), ‘Stop this violence and chaos now before it is too late’ (ST 29/01/2008). A glance at the letters pages suffices to know that this was appreciated by a lot of readers. David Mwagiru, for instance, wrote “a note to thank the Nation Media Group for their efforts in trying to restore peace and reconciliation in our beloved country. The Daily Nation’s front-page article yesterday, which was also carried by other newspapers, demonstrated that our media houses care about our country and are willing to do something about it. I am grateful for the efforts of the media fraternity. We are all one people, we are all Kenyans, no matter our backgrounds” (DN 04/01/2008). Another example is presented below:

183) The Kenya Correspondents Association also said that journalists did their best in the election coverage to ensure the process was peaceful, free and fair (ST_Group defends media coverage of polls_06/02/2008).

In my appreciation for the choices made by the Kenyan press in difficult circumstances of conflict I partly share Clayton’s opinion.199

“I fully respect the decisions of the Kenyan press to play down tribal aspects of the violence. They were desperate not to further enflame passions, and as representatives of middle class Kenya with all tribes represented in their newsrooms they were horrified by the turn of the events. They played a crucial in saying ‘No more’ and helping the country step back from the abyss. This does not mean the violence was not tribal, it does not mean the international press was ‘wrong’ to write up that aspect. In these complex cases, there is no such thing as a simple truth. The press has responsibilities beyond the simple reporting of fact, and the Kenyan press made a decision to downplay tribalism in the national interest. Was truth the victim of that? I don’t think so, because all Kenyans were aware of the tribal nature of the violence – they did not need it to be narrated to them. The international readership was and is different, they don’t know / understand the complexities. Few Times readers would even understand why there is a latent hostility towards the Kikuyus, and why the Kalenjins are resentful of a recent loss of power and influence. Kenyans don’t need to be told that – they can be told simply of incidents and that is enough”.

I agree with Clayton that the Kenyan press in principle had good reasons for downplaying the ethnic aspects, but I doubt whether their decisions were useful and reached the desired effect, as I will explain immediately. I most certainly agree that simple truth is an illusion and that the press has different responsibilities. I also agree that most Kenyans were aware about the nature of some of the conflicts, but that does not justify purposefully vague or inaccurate reporting, which can also be dangerous when people start to draw their own conclusions. Although it is generally assumed that people could infer who was fighting in Nakuru or Naivasha, it would have been much clearer if the culprits were specifically represented, so that the readers would not draw the wrong inferences.

199 Personal correspondence with Jonathan Clayton in February and March 2012.
Addressing another point that is made by Clayton, I do not claim that the international news media would be ‘wrong’, only that they sometimes narrowly focused on one explanatory factor at the cost of others. That TI readers would not understand the conflict and miss a lot of background does not excuse the newspaper from providing more subtle explanations than the ethnic one. In fact, it is up to the journalist to bring in the necessary background. Otherwise situations can arise as the one described by ‘the watchman’ who has a column on the opinion pages of the DN (09/04/2008):

“The post-election violence in which more than 1,000 Kenyans perished was pretty bad, but Larry Liza was stunned to experience just how far-reaching the effects of that moment of madness has spread [sic], when he turned up at the University of Cambridge in the UK for a conference on conservation. Says he: "As I wore my Proudly Kenyan T-shirt, people came up to me and asked: ‘So, are you Kikuyu or Luo?’ and ‘Are you Kibaki’s or Odinga’s supporter?’ All I could do is point to my T-shirt’.

Surely, Kenya was polarized at that time, but the simplified, dichotomous picture that was dominant in much of the international news coverage did not advance people’s worldview.

With regard to the choices of the Kenyan press, Gettleman is less sympathetic and I also partially agree with him. When we were talking about the avoidance in the Kenyan newspapers of explicit references to ethnicity in the assumption that such language use would incite the people, he reacted:

“I don’t buy that, I don’t think a journalist’s role is to incite or not to incite. I think you have got to tell what is going on as accurately and as fairly as you can. And if you are being accurate and fair and it is a cut and dry tribal conflict or ethnic conflict you need to report it that way. [...] I think there are tensions in the newsrooms here. I think people were worried that they would start arguing with each other. There could be tension between the different ethnic groups within the newsroom. [...] But I think people here have to deal with the facts”.

According to Gettleman, “the people and the journalists would have been better served by dealing with [the issues of ethnicity and tribalism] responsibly”. I fully agree, but I disagree with the view that Kenya’s crisis would be “a cut and dry tribal conflict”. Yet Gettleman is right to note that there was the risk of tensions in the ethnically diverse newsrooms (see also Clayton’s quote above). In fact, DN parliamentary reporter Rugene confided that “there were tensions in the newsroom; ethnic feelings were very strong, also in the newsroom, and some of the journalists identified with their community or with politicians”.  

But I witnessed that there is a lot of healthy discussion and critical reflection in Kenyan newsrooms. Even in times when there are no elections, there is much debate among the journalists and the editors, the editors and the managers, about the news stories. In my informal

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200 Personal interview with Jeffrey Gettleman on 20 May 2011.
201 Personal interview with Njeri Rugene on 6 May 2011.
chats with the people at the newsrooms I noticed that a lot of journalists critically reflect on the way they covered the 2007 elections and the aftermath. When I visited the newsrooms of the DN and ST there was a lot of debate about whether it was purposeful to report the way they did. This is what DN chief news editor Shimoli said:

“That is our editorial policy that we do not refer to tribe, but since 2007 we had debates internally whether that helps. Did it help by us not saying that the Kalenjin were evicting Kikuyus from the Rift Valley? Would we have inflamed the country if we had said that the Kikuyus were evicted from the Rift Valley? Would it have made the Kikuyus in Central Province and Nairobi attack the Luos or the Kalenjins? I think it would have. There are even photographs which were suppressed and up to this day have not been published. Around that time the new information minister was installed [Poghisio] and he was enthusiastic and he thought: ‘I'll tell the media that they are unfair and that they are burning the country’. We told him just come and we'll show you what we did not run and we showed him the photos and he left this place crying. He actually said we had been very responsible”.

Shimoli added that he believes “in the morality of the lesser of two evils: it may have been an evil not to tell it that way, but it was a greater evil to tell it that way and kill more people […], so I thought at that time it was a good policy”, adding that “maybe with the changing times and with the country maturing into a more unified nation it may be that the need to suppress references to tribe is not necessary any more”. When I as a critical interviewer questioned this strategy, saying people could still make inferences about the victims or perpetrators of violence, he replied that “it is worse when the newspaper mentions it, because it gives it some level of credibility and exposure which is much more serious than bad talk or street talk”. Because “the Kenyan media realized that we could destroy this country, the focus moved from scrutinizing the election results to saving the country”, Shimoli added. This feedback was very insightful for me. It helped me see things in perspective and I respect it.

But I am not convinced that that Kenyan newspapers would have inflamed the country more than it already was. Among others the DN journalists Rugene and Otieno found it quite ridiculous to write about members of one community evicting members of another community, while Kenyans could make inferences on the basis of the place names and their general knowledge. Even with the ‘suppressed newspaper reporting’ some people were killing each other and information reached new gangs who started to retaliate. What use is it to silence tribalism in the newspapers when people had other information sources at their disposal which did focus on issues of tribe (e.g. radio, television, mobile phone text messages as in (171) or international media)? With reference to Mugonyi’s comment above I believe that the Kenyan media were not always helping to solve the problems, even if they had good intentions. The commonly used representational strategies of suppression, indetermination and collectivization anonymize and

202 Personal interview with Eric Shimoli on 6 May 2011.
203 Cf. “The mob was reacting to the violence reported on TV” (ST_North Rift remains volatile_02/02/08).
depersonalize the social actors who are only attributed an indeterminate, collective identity. These representations have a distancing effect and do not promote a better understanding of people’s actions or anxieties. Moreover, the tendency to avoid naming (so-called nomination) of the perpetrators of violence contributed to a climate of secrecy and impunity. What is more, taking into account the inciteful advertisements of the two rivaling camps that both newspapers kept publishing (e.g. ‘Who killed our mothers and children’ by the Kibaki government about the Kiambaa killings and ‘Why Kenyans should never be fooled into respecting ECK’s verdict’ by ODM about the rigged election, see appendix X), it is clear that both the ST and the DN at least took an ambiguous, if not a hypocritical, stand.

I think it could have been better to sensibly deal with the issue of tribalism, while immediately making clear the distinction between pernicious tribalism and ethnicity, which is a positive part of people’s identities. I agree with Lonsdale that Kenyans “imaginations of ethnicity, too often destructive, can nonetheless be among their most fruitful sources of nationally active citizenship” (2004: 75). In my opinion ethnicity and its antipole tribalism should be issues that are open for debate in the public sphere. The DN sub-editor Otieno shared my view and regularly tries to address issues of ethnicity in his columns or in opinion articles.204 Only by means of reflection and communication can Kenyans gain an insight into their problems and start working towards long-term solutions. If communication breaks down, frustrations can again begin to build up until the next eruption. It can be considered a job of the media to facilitate national dialogue, so that people can freely discuss the issues that are troubling them and so that everybody is better informed.

I do not stand alone with this position. ST journalist Ndegwa, for instance, declared:

I refuse to run away from our tribes. [...] Everybody has their heritage, we should get those negative connotations out of it [the word tribe]. In day to day life tribe is not an issue, for instance, when you’re talking about tourism or cultural heritage. People know the traditional aspects of other people and learn about it in school. Tribe becomes a problem when you’re having politics thrown into it and I believe politicians also contribute a great deal, because they reap the tribe for their own selfish ends. I don't think it has been much of a problem, but when you throw in the politics and have an election coming up that is when people mass along tribal lines and then it becomes dangerous”.205

People should not disregard or reject their ethnic identities, but make ethnicity an equal and acceptable part among other aspects of their multiple identities. Ndegwa also indicated that politicians often tarnish and abuse the notion of tribe. If tribe would not be a taboo, this problem could be tackled in the press, following the will of some people. See the reader letter below, which was published in ST on 17 January 2008.

204 Personal interview with Otieno Otieno on 10 May 2011.
205 Personal interview with Alex Ndegwa on 6 May 2011.
Issues of tribe and tribalism must be debatable in society, instead of being swept under the carpet. As the late Nobel Prize laureate Wangari Maathai said:

“This time round, let Kenyans not sweep tribal clashes, demonstrations, murders, rapes and destruction of property under the carpet as they have always done. Only when the truth is known and justice is received can anxiety be reduced and all would heal” (ST_Maathai blames the State for skirmishes_23/01/2008).

Similar views were expressed in opinions and letters. Social Democratic Party leader Mwandawiro Mgangha, for one, wrote that “[a]ttitudes, platitudes and prejudices should be addressed, investigated and exposed”, while adding:

“Kenyans will have to look themselves in the mirror; they must honestly and critically examine themselves, their families, ethnic groups, and neighbours in relation to democracy, justice, human rights and the present and future. Every Kenyan must take responsibility and participate in searching for short and long-term solutions to the political and social crisis. This includes, among other things, confronting stereotypes, hypocrisy and myths that have been held about themselves and one another, especially of different ethnic groups. Self-criticism and reality of the inherent social contradictions, historical justices and inevitable conflicts must not be ignored. Ignoring reality, as has happened in the past, leads to brutal consequences” (ST_The myth that Kenya is an island of stability_15/02/2008).

Also several readers felt that tribalism must be openly tackled. Reader Joyce Kinuthia, for instance, wrote that “the post-election chaos has exposed deep ethnic tension and concern over distribution of resources. To begin healing we must first admit these problems exist” (ST 26/01/2008). In the letter-to-the-editor ‘Tribalism a reality that must be seized and slain’ (DN 22/01/2008) reader Wanzala pleaded for more attention to the question of tribalism in society.

“What is disquieting is that leaders often condemn tribalism in public but practice it. Kenya’s successive regimes have all thrived on tribalism. All of them have given priority to the development of their tribes at the expense of other Kenyans. [...] It is high time the Government of the day acknowledged the existence of tribalism and took measures to confront it”.

This can only be done if also the press acknowledges the existence of tribalism and is not afraid to name and investigate ethnic issues.
9. Conclusions and final reflections

“In stride, critics must always be taken calmly, after all, those people are your fans. They just have a preference!”

(Celebrity journalist Jeff Koinange when asked how he takes criticism in an interview by Adhyambo Odera in Zuqka 16 January 2009 (p.8-9), Friday pull-out of Daily Nation)

9.1. Outcome of the research

9.1.1. Analytical conclusions

In the first part of this closing chapter I will look back on the analyses (9.1.1) and on the theoretical-methodological framework (9.1.2), while taking a critical stance to my own research and putting it into perspective. In addition, I will mention a few recommendations. In the second part of this chapter I will look forward to some further research possibilities, because there is still a lot to investigate in the rich data that were studied and the whole thesis opened up a few interesting pathways for future explorations.

In this thesis I presented a linguistic pragmatic perspective on news discourse about Kenya’s post-election crisis. This involved an ethnographically-supported critical analysis of the language used in newspaper reports culled from the Kenyan newspapers the Daily Nation and The Standard as compared to foreign press reports from The Independent and The Times, the New York Times and the Washington Post, De Morgen and De Standaard. The linguistic pragmatic analysis focused on word choice, the representation of social actors, and presuppositions to reveal a few unquestioned patterns of meaning, which can be argued to function ideologically, as they are rooted in and reinforce certain worldviews and contribute to the dominant frames of interpretation of the news reports and by extension the events in social reality. Throughout the analyses the importance of context for the news reports as well as for the analyses was emphasized. In particular, contextual factors proved to be revealing for some of the journalistic and discursive choices that were made. Even though it was impossible to deal with all contextual factors that are relevant for the generation of meaning in the studied newspaper discourse, I touched upon several salient aspects of context that interact with linguistic structure in the production and interpretation of the news discourse.

So, I discussed a few ideological meanings and showed that some aspects of these meanings can be explained by contextual restraints and susceptibilities related to the role of journalists in society and their commitment to their audiences. Such explanations could be made by
incorporating ethnographic fieldwork into the discourse-analytical research. That is also how I managed to involve and give a voice to the language producers of the studied data in order to refine, moderate or comment on my interpretive analyses of their language use (see 9.1.2). It must be clear that I refused to scathe the Kenyan newspapers or to pillory the foreign press, neither did I treat the Kenyan journalists or the foreign correspondents as victims of the circumstances or as bureaucratic and routinized writing robots without much agency. Instead I considered them as language users who are involved in the ideological work of discursively constructing news on the basis of events in social reality which they try to make sense of. Moreover, one of the basic assumptions of this research was that language use, whether journalistic or not, always has ideological aspects. This followed from my view of discourse as something that is historical and social. In that respect Bakhtin among others was an early source of inspiration:

“We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even as a concrete opinion, insuring a maximum of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life” (Bakhtin 1981: 271).

In the reported research, ideology was regarded as a dynamic sphere of ideas, beliefs, modes of thought, assumptions, etc. associated with underlying patterns of meaning, frames of interpretation, world views, and forms of everyday thinking. These fundamental ideas and beliefs are related to aspects of social reality and considered to be commonsensical by the people who hold them. As such, ideological views and the meanings based on them can affect people’s perception and interpretation of the world and could even indirectly influence how people act and interact in society. That is why it is important to scrutinize language use, as it is a locus where ideology is manifested. In ideology research, the reason why something is ideological, why something is experienced as fundamental or commonsensical is much more difficult to retrieve than aspects of ideology as such. Yet it is crucial, both for raising consciousness and for presenting alternatives. I have tried to find out the reason why journalists considered some choices as natural and commonsensical through the interviews I did, but I realize that I have only managed to see the top of the iceberg, while a lot of reasons have remained hidden.

I hope to have made some convincing critical comments to both the national and the international news coverage of the Kenyan post-election crisis, grounded in empirical observations of language data. This said, I must assert my own humbleness. I often felt quite humble when I got to know the challenges that journalists face when they try to make sense of complex and multifactorial events in the format of concise and substantiated, informative and entertaining, quickly produced and well-considered news reports. Moreover, the Kenyan journalists and the foreign correspondents who produced my study material often work in chaotic and sometimes even downright dangerous environments. Witness the following extracts:
184) At Huruma Corner, three men were hacked to death as journalists watched. The thugs stripped the men naked and then slashed them with pangas, killing two on the spot. The third, who residents claimed was a soldier, was saved by the police but was wounded. A few metres away, Sanctuary Church was set ablaze, with the murderous youths claiming some of their rivals were hiding in the place of worship. The task of putting out the fire was left to the women as men fought with anti-riot police officers. Journalists were asked to identify themselves and only particular media houses were allowed to cover the skirmishes. For others, they could only cover the violence if given police protection. (ST_Four more killed in Nairobi slums_03/01/2008)

185) At some of the illegal roadblocks that we came across, groups of people would demand to know our ethnic identities before allowing us to proceed. Our photographer had to keep disguising his mother tongue and dress in a local attire. Many warned us to ensure that we did not have in our crew members of certain communities because deeper in the rural areas, gangs could as well demand to check our national IDs as they searched for their perceived enemies. (DN_A heart rending journey through the valley of fear, death and ruins_20/01/2008)

Comparatively, reader George K’Ouma wrote in a letter-to-the-editor, published in the ST on 22 January 2008: “Last week’s attacks and threats to journalists by the police are unwarranted. Journalists are professionals whose duty is to gather information and inform the public on social, political and economic issues. Threats to journalists will certainly not intimidate them from telling the truth”. Some of the foreign correspondents that I interviewed also confirmed that it was not always easy to report on some of the events that took place during Kenya’s post-election crisis. Taking their working circumstances into account, I often took on the job of critically analyzing the news discourse of certain newspaper reports with some diffidence. But even extreme working conditions should not free journalists from criticism. By means of sensitive and well-founded criticism readers of newspapers can gain better insights into the news and journalists could learn to reflect on and eventually improve their own practices.

With respect to the news discourse about Kenya’s post-election crisis, opinions about the quality of the press were divided and my analyses have shown why this is so. Next to the dominant frames of interpretation, which can be criticized, there were also other interpretations and pieces of information, which are rather praiseworthy. Newspaper articles almost never force one absolute meaning upon their readers, but leave room for interpretation, as journalists realize all too well that their writing products are always provisional. The Kenyan news media can be praised because they fluctuated between providing information and condemning rising violence (see also Rambaud 2008: 76 for a similar analysis of the election campaign coverage), they tried not to incite people, for instance, by shunning explicit references to ethnicity and they continuously promoted peace. Makokha (2010) further lauds them for providing a forum for debate, but he also finds fault with the Kenyan media for failing to provide in-depth analysis of the election issues and for neglecting their watchdog role. Ogola (2009), in turn, remarked that
the deliberate deletions of ethnicity from the newspaper reports unambiguously pointed the attention to the ethnic factor on an implicit level. Ethnic explanations were conspicuous in their absence. When people are just left to themselves to infer what is going on – they know that there are some issues of ethnicity, but not exactly what these are or who exactly is involved – that is not accurate reporting.

Also the international press can be both praised and criticized. On the one hand it deserved praise for tackling ethnic issues head-on without sweeping them under the carpet. Moreover, the international news discourse gradually gained in strength and knowledge. When mistakes were corrected, views were adjusted and when the foreign correspondents learnt as they were going, as NYT correspondent Gettleman put it, context was added in successive layers. So, stories became more and more accurate, when the news events came to be presented from different perspectives. In this respect also contributions on the editorial pages, op-ed opinions, blogs and reader reactions must be taken into consideration. On the other hand the international press was heavily criticized for its focus on ethnic explanations and for the tribal language use (e.g. Githongo 2008, Somerville 2009). Although it is clear that the conflicts in the aftermath of the 2007 elections were diverse and complex, in the international media the different instances of violence were often boxed together and labeled *tribal violence*. If a conflict is thus essentialized, the social, economic and material bases are neglected. By primarily focusing on ethnic explanations, the international media disregarded that

“inequitable allocation of resources, the failure to undertake comprehensive constitutional reforms, the monopolization of the political process by the elite, the arbitrary exercise of state power, [etc.] together provided conditions for political instability which ultimately contributed to the 2007 election crisis” (Ogola 2009: 62).

Without denying the role that ethnicity played in many conflicts, it is clear that the ethnic is only one aspect, which cannot be plainly generalized.

This observation puts me right in the middle of my analyses. The examination of keywords, representational strategies and presuppositions confirmed the existence of two dominant frames of interpretation. The international press tended to interpret the events through an ethnic lens, whereas the local press was inclined to view the events from an politico-criminal perspective. In the international press *tribe, tribalism, ethnic, violence, genocide, Kikuyu* and *Luo* were crucial keywords, while value-laden and connotative words such as *politics, crisis, PNU, ODM, community, mediation, protest, gangs and youths* were dominant in the local press, which was confirmed by quantitative analysis (as reported in the article in appendix IV).

With regard to the representation of the social actors, the international press mainly used the representational strategy of ethnic classification to describe political actors as well as victims and perpetrators of violence. In contrast, the Kenyan press referred to the political actors mainly by means of functionalization related to their current positions, while the victims or perpetrators of
violence were most often indetermined, unspecified or collectivized, or else represented by means of assimilation. In addition they were often represented by means of negatively appraised functionalizations, such as *raiders, arsonists* and *looters*. The main representational strategies revealed a stress on ethnic groups in the international press and an avoidance of ethnicity in the Kenyan press.

The analysis of presuppositions also indicated that the international press often tried to establish a common ground in their reports on the basis of which ethnic explanations could be foregrounded, while a lot of taken-for-granted meanings in the Kenyan press were rooted in a worldview of political and criminal forces driving the crisis. In addition, my analyses revealed some interesting insights into the intricate concept of presupposition. For practical, analytical reasons I focused on the linguistic structures which are said to give rise to presuppositions, the so-called presupposition triggers. However, these structures not always expressed presupposed meaning. That is why some of the information that I discussed in the analyses in the context of presuppositions can be questioned to be really presupposed. Sometimes this depended on the interpreter, at other times the information conveyed in a presuppositional structure was clearly not presupposed, but rather explicitly asserted. Thus, it turned out that journalists often creatively exploit presuppositional structures for stylistic or informative reasons, for instance, when they communicate new information in linguistic background structures which are often associated with presuppositions. Such information either had to be accommodated by the reader or it was to be processed as explicitly asserted information.

Moreover, although presuppositions were said to express by default a kind of common ground or uncontroversial background information, presuppositions can have different or additional functions as they contribute to the construction of frames of interpretation. Let us look once more at a few examples:

186) Rumours began to spread that among those missing [from voter registers] were people whose surnames began with the letter O, which included Mr Odinga and many of his closest supporters in his Luo tribe, the historic rivals of the President’s Kikuyu tribe.

(TH_Polls put President ahead in Kenyan elections_28/12/2007)

187) At the same time, former President Moi has urged leaders to stop fanning ethnic animosity that has led to the ongoing violence.

(ST_UN, Moi appeal for calm, restraint_03/01/2008)

188) Rejecting ODM’s calls for fresh elections, Mutua said: “The Government will never yield to blackmail. People should stop using violence to blackmail.”

(ST_In search of an answer_05/01/2008)

189) “This government has no credibility. That is why it has deployed a big number of armed policemen throughout the country to stop our peaceful rallies,” Mr Odinga said.

(DN_Death in ODM protests_17/01/2008)
In the above examples presuppositions are seen to function in a variety of ways. In (186) the non-restrictive relative clause contains the information that the lists with missing names starting with O included Odinga and many of his closest supporters in his Luo tribe. Is this information explicitly presupposed or asserted? It is obvious (and so known) that Odinga’s surname begins with O, so that piece of information could be regarded as a presupposition triggered by the non-restrictive relative clause. But not all readers of the TI would know that “many of his closest supporters in his Luo tribe” have a surname that begins with the same letter (which is actually a generalization), so that piece of information would be new for many readers, and thus cannot be presupposed in a strict sense. As this is still relatively uncontroversial background information they can safely accommodate it into their knowledge base. The information that Odinga belongs to the Luo tribe, expressed in the possessive phrase “his Luo tribe” can be seen as a pure presupposition, as it is information that is presupposed to be known or acting as a kind of reminder, as it was already stated in earlier newspaper articles. Then there is the information, expressed in the apposition that members of the Luo tribe are the historic rivals of the president’s Kikuyu tribe. Here it is presupposed that the president belongs to the Kikuyu tribe, but the information that Luos are the historic rivals of the Kikuyus can be regarded as either presupposed or explicitly asserted, depending on the personal background knowledge of the readers. Nevertheless, whether it is a presupposition or an assertion, it is formulated in a background structure and it has ideological aspects in that it presents an ideological view on the relationship between Luos and Kikuyus. After all, it is not difficult to find counterexamples to claim that the Luos and the Kikuyus have been historic allies in Kenya. So, whether or not such information should be called presupposition, the fact remains that this information is less easy to negate and to critically scrutinize, because it is rendered in a presuppositional structure that is usually reserved for background assumptions, common ground and uncontroversial secondary information.

So, presuppositions are not only ideological when they are strategically persuasive (Sbisá 1999), but they are mostly ideological because they root news stories in a certain worldview, which is taken to be commonly acceptable, and they add to the construction of an interpretive frame. In (187) the change of state verb to stop gives rise to the presupposition that leaders are fanning ethnic animosity that led to the post-election violence. This presupposed meaning can be considered ideological as it contributes to the overall frame of interpretation developed in the news report of politically-instigated violence with leaders exploiting people’s ethnic identities. Finally it must be noted that presuppositions in the studied news discourse were also often the result of recontextualizations of political discourse, as is illustrated by (188) and (189). In (188) government spokesman Mutua presupposes that people are using violence to blackmail, while the opposition claimed that people were just fighting for change and standing up for their
democratic rights. In (189) Odinga presupposes that they are holding peaceful rallies, while there were also a lot of instances of violent protest.

My analyses further tried to go beyond the identification of two frames of interpretation. I also searched for explanations of the language use. By taking into account contextual factors and information provided by the journalists themselves, I found that Kenyan journalists shied away from references to ethnicity in fear of inciting the people. They rather aimed at promoting national harmony. That is a praiseworthy initiative, but it can also be criticized, because it is not accurate reporting to obscure an important factor of some of Kenya’s conflicts and it does not help people to deal with the issues. When the media keeps silent about issues of ethnicity, there is no public debate. It promotes a culture of denial and impunity, which has made it possible for politicians and other powerbrokers to exploit ethnicity time and again without being held accountable. That is why, in my opinion, the Kenyan press is recommended to seek ways to debate negative as well as positive aspects of ethnicity in a sensible manner in order to make ethnic issues discussable, to stimulate critical reflections and to promote the finding of solutions to conflicts in which ethnicity is abused.

The international press did go into the ethnic issues, but often did not look beyond. In the case of some conflicts they only highlighted the surface level without penetrating to the deeper, underlying causes. This was sometimes due to a lack of background knowledge, but often it was a result of the orientation to a different audience than the Kenyan newspapers. The foreign press has to simplify events and present them in such a way as to attract the attention of the readers. Tribal terminology and ethnic explanations proved to be particularly useful, although it was also acknowledged that such language use could be misleading at times. My recommendation for the international press is to explore in greater depth the underlying factors when conflicts arise. In addition, foreign correspondents must be aware of the implications of their language use that can be consumed all over the world in the age of globalization. They must try to clearly contextualize their news reports.

Both the Kenyan and the foreign journalists put forward social and professional reasons to explain their writing, but of course also commercial and economic reasons were at stake, which was only sporadically touched upon in the analyses. Although they write for different media, Kenyan journalists and foreign correspondents have a lot in common. That is why I think they would benefit from more collaboration. During my ethnographic fieldwork I noticed that there are only sporadic contacts between certain Kenyan editors and specific foreign correspondents, but there is not systematic collaboration. However, Kenyan journalists sometimes have access to information (e.g. by their ability to speak vernacular languages) that could be relevant for foreign correspondents, while foreign correspondents may dispose of information that is interesting for the Kenyan journalists. I am not claiming that they have to share all of their information or
contacts (which is taboo in journalism), but their reporting would improve by some kind of collaboration. After all, they work for different information markets.

In sum, the whole of this thesis has been an utterly intertextual affair. I have explored intertextual links in the academic literature about pragmatics and journalism studies and I have examined intertextual links between the different newspaper reports. In this respect it is important to remind that:

“Whether it be based in poststructuralist or Bakhtinian theories, or in both, intertextuality reminds us that all texts are potentially plural, reversible, open to the reader’s own presuppositions, lacking in clear and defined boundaries, and always involved in the expression or repression of the dialogic ‘voices’ which exist within society. A term which continually refers to the impossibility of singularity, unity, and thus unquestionable authority, intertextuality remains a potent tool within any reader’s theoretical vocabulary” (Allen 2000: 209).

With this quote in mind I must admit that my research is only a snapshot. It does not pretend to be a finished or absolute analysis, as I am aware of the relativity of my work. So, I acknowledge that there other possible interpretations of the studied news discourse, which could be equally valid. In fact, this thesis is an invitation to responses from academics, journalists and other social actors involved. In this thesis criticism was described as a dynamic process, so it is always open to reinforcement, revision or refutation.

9.1.2. Methodological conclusions

The major theoretical-methodological aim of this thesis was to provide a pragmatic perspective on journalism. In my research I developed an elaborate methodology based on insights from pragmatics, journalism studies, discourse studies and (news) ethnography. A critical eclecticism and a combination of methods was deemed necessary for a thorough understanding of the news discourse. To address questions of validity, reliability and credibility I used four principal techniques: (i) I always tried to demonstrate how the results are empirically grounded in the data; (ii) I analyzed contrastively by constantly comparing newspaper reports and other sources of information; (iii) I subjected my analyses to a counterscreening in search for negative cases or counterexamples; (iv) I applied the method of triangulation to check interpretive results.

First I tried to process as much and as diverse data as possible to base my interpretations on, so that they are not the result of a few overemphasized quotes from one or two newspaper articles. My analyses were always based on empirical observations inside and outside of the texts. Secondly, a lot of interesting research results could only be found thanks to detailed comparisons of the newspaper texts to each other and of the news reports to other sources of ethnographic information. Thirdly, I cultivated a self-critical attitude and systematically searched for potential implications that contradict the ones on which the research conclusions are based.
Fourthly, I drew in quantitative text mining techniques and ethnographic information mainly from interviews and observations at newsrooms by way of triangulation to support, refine and moderate my analysis. I explicitly took into account the opinions of the language producers, *in casu* journalists, because I am convinced that this kind of discursive journalism research benefits a lot from getting back to the participants involved to present the (preliminary) research results and ask for feedback, comments and suggestions. This increases the accuracy and credibility of the research.

So, in this innovative ethnographically-supported linguistic-pragmatic research I combined three kinds of analysis: text-based discourse analysis, content analysis and contextual analysis, which in my view cannot be separated from each other. However, I must acknowledge that this methodology is not yet perfect. It has to be further developed. There can still be a better integration of concepts from journalism studies, such as news values or primary definers, and concepts from pragmatics, such as metapragmatic awareness or contextualization. The ethnographic component can also be built out, because even though it was limited, the fieldwork that I carried out already greatly contributed to my analyses and interpretations. It would also be possible to incorporate other analytical categories, such as implicatures, speech acts, metaphors or framing devices, into the analytical toolkit. Further I believe that methods of corpus linguistics and quantitative computer analysis can be used to deal with large corpora of texts.

### 9.2. Possibilities for future research

#### 9.2.1. Neglected meanings

In this thesis I presented a considerable amount of information and interpretation about the national and international news discourse about Kenya’s post-election crisis, as I tried to illuminate it from several perspectives. However, there is still a lot which has been left unexplored. Thus, my research is not free from neglected meanings and blind spots.

For one, the role and the impact of owners and advertisers on the news discourse was not systematically explored. The the majority of the shares of the Standard Media Group, for instance, are owned by Kenyan businessmen associated to former president Moi, many of which are Kalenjins. I did not study whether or how this fact influenced the ST’s cautious reporting of the violence in the North Rift region where certain gangs of Kalenjins turned against the Kikuyus in the settlement scheme villages. In this respect it must also be noted that the ST chose the side of the oppositional ODM against the advice of Moi who supported Kibaki and the PNU. This touches upon a second neglected meaning. During my research it was mentioned that the ST
wrote more in favor of the ODM, while the DN would be more pro-government, but whether this perception is confirmed in the whole of the newspaper discourse was not studied in detail.

In the same way the ideological differences between the American, Belgian and British newspapers were backgrounded by the contrastive focus on Kenyan versus international press. Furthermore, in this thesis the Belgian newspapers played a minor role (but see Coesemans 2012). It is clear that there are subtle differences among the foreign newspapers, although these differences are less clear in foreign news than in domestic reporting. Differences between progressive and conservative angles of reporting can be explored in future research. In this light it is interesting to note that, crudely put, the main presidential candidates Odinga and Kibaki are believed to adhere to two different ideologies, viz. socialism and neo-liberal capitalism. However, I did not systematically investigate whether that affected their portrayals in newspapers which are associated with socialism or conservatism.

My focus on the main politicians and the people involved in violence obscured a lot of other social actors, the representation of which is worth investigating. It would be particularly interesting to see how the chief mediator Kofi Annan and the international community was represented in the news discourse (see the cartoon in figure 23). Representations of peace brokers, aid workers and local leaders are also still to be investigated.

In order to get a readers’ perspective I incorporated letters-to-the-editor into my analyses, but that is where my exploration of the context of reception stopped. Audience research or the study of media effects would constitute an interesting complement to my analyses. After all, as Fairclough and Wodak already knew, “[t]o determine whether a particular (type of) discursive event does ideological work, it is not enough to analyse texts; one also needs to consider how texts are interpreted and received and what social effects they have” (1997: 275). However, this is not unproblematic. McNair (2006) is convinced it is impossible to predict behavioural outcomes of media messages, as he thinks you can never know how people will act after consuming a media message on the basis of that media message. The only statements that can be made are after the fact. That is why media effects, though they clearly exist, are not easy to study and it takes a lot of time.

The meanings that emerge from the graphics of newspaper articles were also not targeted. Nevertheless, the linguistic pragmatic analysis could be extended to a multimodal analysis. Such an analysis taking photographs, cartoons, and other aspects of layout into account would be an interesting complement to this study.
9.2.2. Future pathways

In addition to the abovementioned neglected meanings I can mention a few more possible pathways for future research. Until deep into the research the idea was to look at French-language newspapers from France, Belgium and the Democratic Republic of Congo, or at least to involve one additional African country (e.g. Tanzania or South Africa), as an extra point of comparison in a later stage of the research. At the onset of the PhD project it was also planned to consider a second case study (at that time suggestions were made to look into the press coverage of the rage of xenophobic violence in South Africa in May-June 2008 or the war in Eastern Congo when the renegade rebel Laurent Nkunda was in the spotlight August 2008-February 2009). Later the press coverage about the elections and post-election crisis in Ivory Coast would have been an interesting case for comparison. Such comparisons can help to see wider patterns, writing habits, frames of interpretation or preconceptions in local African press coverage and international news reporting.

The elaborate methodology of ethnographically-supported pragmatic ideology research is not limited to the context of international reporting, nor to the news medium of the newspaper. Another pathway for future research is to develop the methodology further and apply it to other news media, such as the radio, television, or online news sources. In that respect it would be interesting not only to look at mainstream news, but to make comparisons with alternative news sources such as specialized magazines or webzines, news blogs, or content-aggregating news websites combining both professional and citizen journalism. These domains all deserve critical scrutiny from a linguistic pragmatic perspective. Such studies can yield fascinating insights into the production and interpretation of news and the role it plays in our contemporary global information society.

So, this research creates some opportunities for follow-up projects as well as further elaborations. I can conclude with a piece of advice by Kenyan star reporter Jeff Koinange from the interview quoted above, which holds for both academic researchers, critics, Kenyan reporters and foreign correspondents alike: “Keep it real, keep it local and tell it as it is all the time!”.
References


Appendices
APPENDIX I
Additional info to the illustration of natural histories of news reports
The original AP-report is followed by the press release by the Britisch Foreign Secretary, after which follows the original newspaper report from the Daily Nation.

More protests in Nairobi as US ambassador pressures Kenyan leaders to share power

Author: ELIZABETH A. KENNEDY Associated Press Writer
Date: April 9, 2008
Publication: Associated Press Archive

Protesters in Kenya's largest slum battled again with police, throwing rocks at officers who fired tear gas and live rounds to break up demonstrations Wednesday as a political standoff persisted in the East African nation.

Diplomats urged President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga to agree on a coalition Cabinet, with the U.S. ambassador saying Kenya's relationship with the United States depends on quick implementation of a power-sharing accord approved by lawmakers last month.

"If the political accord is not implemented, it will make it difficult, if not impossible, for us to work in Kenya," Ambassador Michael Ranneberger said.

Kibaki and Odinga both claim to have won Kenya's disputed Dec. 27 presidential elections, a flawed vote that triggered weeks of unrest that killed more than 1,000 people and uprooted 300,000 from their homes.

The two agreed in February to share power – but have not worked out exactly how. The agreement calls for Cabinet posts to be split equally but both sides have been trying to secure powerful ministries such as internal security and foreign affairs.

"It's a little bit like kindergarten. Everyone's saying, 'Me! Me! Me!'" Ranneberger said.

The ambassador, who met with both leaders Tuesday, was optimistic that a deal could happen within a week. "There is no crisis. This is a time for the Kenyan people to remain calm."

Government spokesman Alfred Mutua declined comment. Odinga spokesman Salim Lone said he was encouraged by the ambassador's optimism but said "we have no indication" it will happen so soon.

"Clearly, the United States government recognizes that this impasse could affect peace and stability in our country," Lone told The Associated Press.

Residents in Nairobi's sprawling Kibera slum expressed their impatience by torching tires Tuesday, and throwing stones and vandalizing a railway line on Wednesday.

Some said they were protesting the political standoff but one man, who declined to be named for fear of reprisals, said a slum gang was trying to extort protection money from the railway company.

British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said "all sides must be prepared to make concessions to allow this to happen, including President Kibaki's supporters ceding some powerful portfolios".
The African Union also called on Kibaki and Odinga to quickly form a coalition government, saying in a statement that the delay “is also of concern to the rest of the region.”

The U.S. considers Kenya a vital partner in the war on terrorism and a regional economic and military powerhouse whose stability has stood in stark contrast to war-ravaged neighbors such as Sudan and Somalia.

Ranneberger said some $2 billion flows from the United States to Kenya every year, including aid, investments, tourism and remittances.

State Department officials said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice spoke Wednesday with former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, a day after he requested a special 70th birthday gift from Kenya: news of a power-sharing government.

She also phoned Kibaki and Odinga separately earlier in the week to urge them to act quickly in forming a government.

... 

Associated Press writer Katharine Houreld contributed to this report.

9 Apr 2008 14:28

Foreign Secretary statement on Kenya


"I am dismayed by the latest turn of events in Kenya. We strongly supported Kofi Annan’s efforts which brokered agreement to genuine power-sharing. We supported his statement last week that the Cabinet should be shared equally with appropriate portfolio balance. All sides must be prepared to make concessions to allow this to happen, including President Kibaki’s supporters ceding some powerful portfolios. We urge Kenya’s leaders to agree a power-sharing Cabinet that will serve all Kenyans effectively in order that the country can move forward and start to deal with the underlying issues that fuelled so much of the violence in the post-election period."

Press Office, Downing Street (West), London SW1A 2AL
Coalition Crisis

Tension as Kibaki side told to give up key seats

- UK asks rivals to make concessions
- US envoy rules out sanctions as Cabinet will be named soon
- Riots continue

By NATION Team

Currently supposed that some of President Kibaki's supporters should hand their plain Cabinet posts for sharing with their ODM (southern) rivals, as some diplomats expressed optimism that the coalition governments would be formed soon. 

UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband said in a statement that all sides should be prepared to make concessions, including President Kibaki's supporters ceding some powerful portfolios.

His US counterpart, Ms Condoleezza Rice, said she had spoken separately to President Kibaki and ODM leader Raila Odinga on telephones and they had assured her of their commitment to ensure the power-sharing deal was effected.

Named soon

And American ambassador Michael Ranneberger, who has engaged in a flurry of bilateral diplomacy between the President and Mr Odinga, said he was sure the coalition Cabinet will be named soon.

Mr Ranneberger said he met on Tuesday with both President Kibaki and Mr Odinga, and "they came away optimism about their commitments" to forming a grand coalition government.

"I do not think there is any need to impose sanctions," Mr Ranneberger said in an answer to a question from reporters during a news conference in Nairobi.

In response to a question from a
EU’s advice to Kibaki and Raila

‘Pick a grand coalition Cabinet without being pressured by allies’

By COHAMBODIRILE

A high-powered European Union delegation yesterday told Prime Minister Raila Odinga in a closed-door meeting in his office to来找 a grand coalition Cabinet without being pressured by allies.

The three-day trip to Kenya, the delegation's first visit here since the post-election crisis, ended on Friday.

The delegation's first visit here since the post-election crisis, ended on Friday.

The delegation was led by Mrs. Catherine Ashton, the European Commission's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

In his meeting with President Mwai Kibaki, Mrs. Ashton expressed concern over the delayed formation of a national unity government.

She also commended the Kenyan government for its efforts to implement the building of peace initiative.

“I am pleased to see the progress that has been made in the peace process,” Mrs. Ashton said.

She added that the EU was ready to provide any assistance needed to support the efforts of the Kenyan government and the stakeholders in the peace process.

The delegation also met with opposition leader Raila Odinga and other stakeholders.

In his meeting with Raila, Mrs. Ashton expressed support for the opposition leader's call for a national unity government.

“I am hopeful that a national unity government will be formed soon,” Mrs. Ashton said.

She added that the EU would continue to support the Kenyan government and the stakeholders in the peace process.

The delegation also met with other stakeholders, including the chairperson of the Kenya National Dialogue Conference, Mr. Henry Rotich.

In his meeting with Mr. Rotich, Mrs. Ashton expressed support for the dialogue process and the efforts of the committee in bringing the country together.

“I am confident that the dialogue process will bring the country together and pave the way for a national unity government,” Mrs. Ashton said.

She added that the EU was ready to provide any assistance needed to support the efforts of the dialogue committee.

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APPENDIX II

Opinion article by Otuma Ongalo about journalists’ ethics

Media crossed the line of good taste in Sinai tragedy

Published on 16/09/2011 in The Standard

By Otuma Ongalo

The media has always been hailed as the most trusted public watchdog on many issues. Through the mighty power of the pen, many tyrannical regimes have crumbled down like the great walls of Jericho.

Many despots loathe the power of the pen more than that of the bullet because in most cases, they control the latter. In a world fraught with official corruption and hordes of other vices, it is the media that has held the moral candle to society.

The media’s cardinal role is to inform. Everyday, wananchi read newspapers or tune to radio and TV stations to be informed on events taking place within and without. Media practitioners are taught in journalism schools and school of experience that one of the greatest commandments of news coverage is objectivity - that is conveying reality as it unfolds without bias or distortion.

However, in journalism there are other commandments that should be taken into consideration while exercising the dictates of other rules. It is a balanced game of exercising the right to relay information and at the same time taking into account societal sensitivities. Definitely, the greatest news of the week was the raging inferno that claimed more than 100 lives when a river of burning petrol swept through Nairobi’s Sinai slum. It was a great media event whose repercussion reverberated around the world.

As usual, there was scramble among media houses on who will be the first to tell the story and in the most dramatic way - be it in pictures or in the most graphic details. In the ensuing pressure to convey the magnitude of the tragedy, many media stations relayed reality all right, but crossed the path of another important journalism commandment - good taste.

In certain circumstances even reality is muffled if the pictures and words to be relayed are likely to shock the sensitivities of readers and the audience. Newspapers and TV stations generally do not show close up pictures of bodies, either mutilated or otherwise. Pictures of victims of rape do not find their way into newspapers or television or only appear if they are blurred to protect the identity of victims. Images of sexual scenes are out of question in news bulletin and pages.

In Sinai, some media houses crossed the path of good taste. They splashed shocking images of blackened bodies with bones jutting out. They showed a burnt field of death, where naked victims lay in eerie poses. Raw close up pictures of those hanging precariously on a thin thread of life were relayed. Victims who clearly needed peace of mind were haunted for comment. And pieces of human bones were displayed to complete a litany of shock and desecration of journalism.

Yes, Sinai was a tragedy of enormous proportion but was it necessary to splash the pictures of burnt bodies - which were even compared to nyama choma gone wrong - for the magnitude of the disaster to sink home? It was in bad taste considering many families were still searching their beloved ones and confronting them with chilling images and expressions exacerbated their trauma.

America’s 9/11 terrorists attacks remain one of the most memorable recent tragedies despite the fact that there were virtually no explicit media images of bodies or blood after the disaster. This, however, did not water down the magnitude of the mayhem. Is a section of our media obsessed
with blood and anguish? When terrorists hit Nairobi in 1998, pictures of hysterical blood-drenched victims were relayed by local media but we cried foul when the same were relayed around the world by foreign media.

Discretion is necessary in the use of shocking images. They are excusable if the media wants to rally the public behind a certain cause or to stem an ongoing catastrophe. The local media played this role well during the post-election crisis and the recent highlight of famine in Turkana. In both cases, the highlight drew international attention that helped in resolving the crises.

And, just a thought, could the Sinai gory images have been splashed had the tragedy hit Runda or Muthaiga?

The writer is Senior Editor, Production and Quality, at The Standard

Kenya’s reality check

POLITICAL CRISIS: KENYANS OPTIMISTIC OF SOLUTION TO Crippling Impasse AS ANNAN ARRIVES TO LEAD MEDIATION TALKS, EVEN AS MORE KENYANS ARE KILLED COUNTRYWIDE

BY STANDARD TEAM

THE Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) and bitter rival Party of National Unity (PNU) will today be presented with another important choice to take steps that could help return the country to sanity.

Representations that former UN chief, Mr. Kofi Annan, who jetted into the country last night, will bring together the two warring groups and chart a path out of a crippling post-election impasse — which has touched off an economic meltdown and threatens a complete social breakdown — were quite high last night.

But the bloodletting continued unabated.

The country was thrown into the grossest of froths when the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) were the latest to join in the fray with a chilling proclamation.

"The current situation could drive two million Kenyans into poverty, reversing the gains made over the last few years," the two institutions said in a joint statement. "Business confidence is being undermined.

The statement added: "We urge all Kenyans to continue working with the people of Kenya... but it is difficult to do so effectively in an atmosphere such as this."

It further said that both the WB and AfDB have suspended all projects in Kenya and that no funds will be released for the next 90 days, with plans to return only if the situation improves."

The government also suspended all its financial activities in the country and announced that it would freeze all payments, pending the outcome of the talks.

The President, Mwai Kibaki, said the country was on the brink of a full-blown economic crisis and called on all parties to work together to resolve the crisis.

The opposition leader, Raila Odinga, said the situation was serious and called for a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

The African Union (AU) also expressed concern over the situation and called on all parties to work together to resolve the crisis.
Hope alive as Annan jets in

Former UN Secretary General, Mr Kofi Annan, (second right), and UN Chief Executive in Kenya, Mrs Anna Tibajjika, Foreign Affairs minister, Mr Momas Wetangula, Attorney-General, Mr Amos Wako, and ODM Pentagon member, Mr Raphael Ringu, at the JKIA, yesterday.

Beside them are Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr Momas Wetangula, Attorney-General, Mr Amos Wako, and ODM Pentagon member, Mr Raphael Ringu, at the JKIA, yesterday.

Four bodies were discovered by villagers in a bush at Mutaragon Village in Kipkelion Division yesterday morning.

The bodies, which have been taken away by the police, had deep cuts while others seem to have been hit with blunt objects," said a provincial administrator, who declined to be named.

Local groups battled it out most of the day in Nairobi's Karrucu, Banana and Mathare, where people were killed in the skirmishes. In the border of the North Rift and Western Province, the violence took a new turn with escalated political affiliations turned on one another. Fighting raged on even as MPs, Mr George Khaniri (Homa Bay), Mr John Kogut (Kisumu) and Mr Gideon Moi (Kisii) tried to foster peace. And another internationally renowned marathon runner, Wesley Korir, 34, was shot in the hand in a firefight in his hometown of Eldare in Nakuru, about 210km from the capital, police said.

The killings were sparked by reports that police were的心中.
Abstract

Text mining aims at constructing classification models and finding interesting patterns in large text collections. This paper investigates the utility of applying these techniques to media analysis, more specifically to support discourse analysis of news reports about the 2007 Kenyan elections and post-election crisis in local (Kenyan) and Western (British and US) newspapers. It illustrates how text mining methods can assist discourse analysis by finding contrast patterns which provide evidence for ideological differences between local and international press coverage. Our experiments indicate that most significant differences pertain to the interpretive frame of the news events: whereas the newspapers from the UK and the US focus on ethnicity in their coverage, the Kenyan press concentrates on sociopolitical aspects.

Keywords: text mining; discourse analysis; pragmatics; ideology; Kenyan elections.

1. Introduction

Knowledge discovery in databases (Fayyad et al. 1996) is an iterative process of searching for valuable information in large volumes of data in a cooperative effort of humans and computers: humans select the data to be explored, define analysis problems, set goals and interpret the results, while computers search through the data, looking for models and patterns that meet the human-defined goals. The central step in this process is data mining (Witten and Frank 2005), the purpose of which is to automatically build classification models or find descriptive patterns in large data collections. A variant of data mining is text mining (Feldman and Sanger 2007) where models and patterns are extracted from collections of text documents. Text mining is relevant to linguistic research thanks to its ability to (i) process large amounts of text, which is hard to do by hand, and (ii) automatically uncover non-obvious and unexpected patterns in language use, for example in newspaper discourse. The goal of this paper is to investigate the potential of text mining techniques for pragmatic discourse analysis, where the purpose of pragmatics is to investigate how language functions in concrete socio-cultural contexts as a complex form of social action by looking for patterns of (explicit and implicit) meanings, dynamically generated in the process of using language (Verschueren 1999). The combination of text mining and discourse analysis from a pragmatic perspective, has – to the best of our knowledge – not yet been explored.

In the case of knowledge discovery using text mining, the discovery process consists of the following steps: selection of a corpus, document preprocessing, text mining, and finally the interpretation and human evaluation of the automatically discovered models and patterns. In our study, the latter two steps are performed from a linguistic pragmatic perspective.

Our paper has both a methodological and a thematic aim. Methodologically, this
paper aims to investigate whether text mining techniques can be applied in support of pragmatic news discourse analysis and so illustrate the fruitful interaction of these two approaches. Our second aim is to scrutinize the language use in newspaper reports about the December 2007 Kenyan elections and the ensuing post-election crisis, taken from the Kenyan newspapers Daily Nation and The Standard as opposed to the British and American newspapers The Independent, The Times, The New York Times and The Washington Post.

The starting hypothesis is that a comparison of different newspaper articles will show a discrepancy between local (Kenyan) and international (‘Western’) news coverage, which can partly be accounted for in terms of ideology. To test this hypothesis, the results of text mining will be interpreted and evaluated from the perspective of linguistic pragmatics, which studies cognitive, social and cultural aspects of language use. In pragmatics, language is seen as a process of meaning generation characterized by the constant making of choices, at both production and interpretation levels, from a variable and varying range of structural and contextual options. These choices are made in a flexible, negotiable manner and inter-adapt to reach relative satisfaction for communicative needs (Verschueren 1999, 2008). According to this pragmatic framework, all (conscious and unconscious) lexical, syntactic or discursive choices, relating to the vocabulary used, syntactic structures, modality, information structure, textual organization, etc., are considered to be significant and could have ideological implications. In this research, we mainly focus on the words used as well as salient absences of specific (often value-laden) lexical choices.

This paper is structured as follows. In Section 2 we describe the related work in computer assisted discourse studies and previous studies of text mining applied to media analysis. Section 3 provides the motivation for this work by discussing the role of ideology in news reporting. In Section 4 the studied corpus of newspaper articles is presented in its historical and political context, together with the initial corpus exploration using a standard corpus linguistics tool. In order to discover interesting differences between local and Western media, we used several data mining and text mining tools leading to results presented in Sections 5 and 6. Detailed analysis of the results from a pragmatic perspective is presented in Section 7. The paper concludes with the summary of main differences in news reporting and with our analysis of the complementarities of the two methodological backgrounds, text mining and pragmatics-based discourse analysis.

2. Related work

Computer technology is useful for the analysis of discourse and different techniques have been used for many years in discourse studies. However, computer tools are not yet part of the mainstream methodology, especially not in ‘handcraft disciplines’ like critical discourse analysis (CDA) or socio-culturally oriented linguistic pragmatics. While an exhaustive survey of computer-assisted discourse studies with comparisons of the different methods falls outside the scope of this paper, we present the major strands of related work without going into details.

The related work first addresses the main computer-assisted approaches that can be helpful for pragmatists or discourse analysts: computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software and corpus linguistics. This is followed by a brief review of related work in text mining applied to media analysis. We describe and position our approach in relation to these research areas.
2.1. Computer-assisted discourse studies

Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), a term coined by Fielding and Lee (1998), broadly refers to software “that supports a variety of styles in qualitative research” (Gibbs 2004: 87). CAQDAS is available through software packages, typically incorporating functions for text searching, coding, transcription and data visualization (Lindlof and Taylor 2011: 260–266). Examples of software packages are NVivo, MAXQDA and Atlas.ti. These tools, which can be used for quantitative linguistic analysis, have a greater overlap with corpus linguistics tools (MacMillan 2005: 17–22, see also below) than with text mining tools. In fact, in discourse analysis they are primarily used as tools for data management. Although they are useful for searching through collections of texts, for (interlinked) coding and for retrieving (coded) data segments, some discourse analysts find them time-consuming, impractical and distracting from both their research focus and the data, or even claim that they could easily lead to senseless or random, hyperactive coding and may invite the user to draw unwarranted conclusions (e.g. MacMillan 2005, Schönfelder 2011).

Linguistic corpora (Sinclair 1991) and corpus linguistics (Kennedy 1998) have a long research tradition. Corpus linguistics can be generally defined as “the study of ‘real life’ language use with the help of computers and electronic corpora” (Lüdeling and Kytö 2008: v), or as “the study of machine-readable spoken and written language samples that have been assembled in a principled way for the purpose of linguistic research” (O’Keefe et al. 2011: 6). As such, it lends itself perfectly to support discursive or pragmatic analysis of language in use, especially when a large amount of text is involved (cf. Koller and Mautner 2004). A corpus linguistic approach to discourse studies provides quantitative evidence of the existence of certain (ideological) discourses by enabling researchers to identify repetitive linguistic patterns of language use and to uncover hidden meanings, particularly in lexical items, e.g. by examining collocations (Baker 2006). Allowing some generalization, there are two basic kinds of ‘corpus-driven’ discourse studies (see Stubbs 1996, O’Halloran 2010, Thornbury 2010 for overviews). In the first kind, the use and the meanings of an a priori chosen linguistic expression or part of speech is studied in a language or in a specific discursive domain by looking for frequencies, co-texts and collocations, whereby the quantitative results are linked to society and are given social interpretations (e.g. ethnic, racial and tribal in Krishnamurty 1996, elderly in Mautner 2007 or sustainable development in Mahlberg 2007). In the second kind of research, corpus linguistic methods are used in function of further critical discourse analysis: meaning patterns can be revealed by identifying and quantifying emerging keywords or collocations so as to create an insight into a specific discourse and boost or guide detailed and contextualized analysis of the discourse (e.g. Baker et al. 2008, Morley and Bayley 2009). Another way is to use methods from corpus linguistics, not at the start, but during or after a pragmatic or critical analysis of language use, as a kind of triangulation to support and reinforce the interpretive results of the discourse analysis (e.g. O’Halloran and Coffin 2004, Baker 2006, Baker et al. 2008).

Our approach shows some similarity with this work. For one, our endeavor is inspired by the same basic philosophy of combining computer-assisted quantitative analysis with in-depth qualitative analysis to improve ‘manual’ analysis of discourse and give the interpretive results more rigor (e.g. Koller and Mautner 2004, O’Halloran 2010). Furthermore, we share a focus on meanings and real language use in context. However, we have different conceptions of meaning and context. In addition, we believe that our methodology combining discourse analysis and text mining can open up new pathways into discourse understanding.

Most differences are due to the computational methods that are used. Corpus linguists typically use frequency, keyword or concordance-based pattern analysis
techniques, while data mining methods, originally used for predictive purposes, do not concentrate only on frequent words but on the most distinctive words and their combinations which uncover patterns characterizing groups of documents: when two classes of documents are studied, such as local and Western press articles, our approach is well suited for detecting contrast patterns between these document groups.

Since one of the main drawbacks of text mining is that the words are taken out of the context, we creatively exploit text mining tools in combination with linguistic pragmatics analysis to get a deeper insight into naturally occurring discourse in its original context. The meanings corpus linguists are concerned with are often limited to semantic meanings of individual lexical items, while we are interested in the meanings of the discourse as a whole as well as the pragmatic functioning of language in use. Also the notion of context is more narrow: “In corpus work, context means [...] not only co-text (a short span of a few words within one single text), but also inter-text (repeated occurrences, often a very large number, of similar patterns across different, independent texts)” (Stubbs 2001: 157). In our pragmatic framework, context is broadly conceived as “[a]ny (combination of) ingredient(s) of a communicative event [...] with which linguistic choices are interadaptable” (Verschueren 2008: 18). Besides the language users, the co-text, the inter-text and the communication medium, any context of language use comprises “[a]pects of physical, social and mental reality [that] get ‘activated’ by the utterer and the interpreter in their respective choice-making practices, and that is how they become part of language use as elements with which the making of choices is interadaptable” (Verschueren 1999: 87–88). In our methodology, the basic unit of analysis is not an isolated word or phrase, but a newspaper article. Moreover, our results are interpreted by taking more (social, political, historical, institutional) context into account than the co-text provided in concordance lines. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that corpus linguistic studies with their focus on frequency and typicality (Stubbs 2001: 151) can provide interesting background information for discourse studies. In this respect, Krishnamurty’s corpus-based study of the ideological meanings of words ethnic, racial and tribal, is particularly relevant for our research. He clearly laid bare the pejorative connotations and typical uses in negative contexts in the English language, particularly in newspapers (Krishnamurty 1996). Here it must be stressed that our promotion of text mining tools to study discourse does not preclude the supplementary use of tools which are associated with corpus linguistics, proof of which is our own use of Wordsmith (see Section 4.2). Also interesting from our point of view are explorations in corpus linguistics of pragmatic phenomena, such as presuppositions, turn-taking, deixis or speech acts (e.g. Rühleman 2010, O’Keeffe et al. 2011). This could be a domain of synergy in the future.

2.2. Related text mining approaches

Text mining, a research field that has its roots in data mining (Witten and Frank 2005) and machine learning (Mitchell 1997), is a well-established technology for document analysis (Feldman and Sanger 2007). In particular, text classification methods are already routinely used for different types of newspaper article classification. The majority of tasks addressed are related to topic, genre and author classification (e.g. Cohen and Singer 1999, Liu and Hu 2007, Finn and Kushmerick 2006, Zhao and Zobel 2005, Stamatatos et al. 2000). An impressive application of statistical and machine learning approaches used in daily monitoring of news from different media is the Europe Media Monitor206, a research and development effort of the European Joint Research Center in

206 http://emm.newsbrief.eu/
Ispra, Italy, that gathers reports from news portals world-wide in 43 languages, classifies the articles, analyses the news texts by extracting information from them, aggregates the information, issues alerts, and produces visual representations of the information found.

Text mining approaches have already been introduced into ideology and opinion analysis (e.g. Balahur and Steinberger 2009, Fortuna et al. 2009, Lin et al. 2008). Balahur and Steinberger (2009) explore sentiment analysis on newspaper texts, aiming to discover the positive or negative opinions (sentiment) expressed in the articles on a given topic. They concentrate on sentiment analysis of quoted text, established the guidelines for positive and negative sentiment annotation and claim that in the case of newspapers, it is mandatory to distinguish between three different components: the author, the reader and the text itself. Fortuna et al. (2009) present an application of statistical learning algorithms to the analysis of patterns in media. They analyze two types of biases in four international online media: CNN, the English version of Al Jazeera, International Herald Tribune and Detroit News, in the period between March 2005 and April 2006. Their analytical focus was to find the bias in the choice of topics different sources report on, and to observe different choices of terms when reporting on a given topic. Lin et al. (2008) proposed a statistical model for ideological discourse, based on the hypothesis that ideological perspectives can be detected through lexical variations. On the Bitterlemons corpus, which aims at contributing to mutual understanding between Palestinians and Israelis through the open exchange of ideas, they observed that some words in discourse are used more frequently because of their relation to the text topic, while some words were used more frequently because of the author’s particular ideological perspective. They encoded the lexical variations in ideological discourse in topical and ideological weights of words. In contrast to Fortuna et al. (2009), Lin et al. (2008) cover the topical and lexical/ideological aspect in a common model.

Our own approach differs from the text mining methods presented above in two respects. Firstly, none of the above approaches focuses on qualitative discourse analysis of the results. They provide lists of words or word types that are indicative for a certain type of ideologically biased discourse, e.g. racist/non-racist in Grevey and Smeaton (2004), Palestinian/Israeli in Lin et al. (2008), and American/Arab in Fortuna et al. (2009), but do not provide the interpretation of features from a discourse-oriented theory. Secondly, these approaches do not take into consideration the combinations of words.

3. **Motivation: Studying aspects of ideology in news reporting**

In this study we aim at capturing significant differences between local and Western press coverage of the 2007 Kenyan elections and the following post-election crisis using a combination of text mining techniques and pragmatic analysis. For our experiments, we selected newspaper articles from a larger corpus that was originally collected as part of the Intertextuality and Flows of Information project in which an ethnographically-supported pragmatic analysis of news discourse is undertaken. The newspaper articles were culled from six English-language quality newspapers. For convenience sake - although running the risk of over-generalizing - the American and British newspapers The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Times and The Independent, will be labeled Western; this term does not denote a geographical nor geopolitical entity, but rather refers to a presumably similar ideological space in full awareness of its inherent heterogeneity and internal contradictions. In a similar simplifying move, in this paper The Standard and Daily Nation will generally be treated as local, thus ignoring several other

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207 More information can be found at http://www.bitterlemons.org/ [09/11/2010].
208 This research project, carried out by Liesbeth Michiels and Roel Coesemans at the IPrA Research Center, University of Antwerp, studies ideological aspects of processes of (implicit) meaning generation and transformation in (inter)national newspaper reporting.
In view of the discourse analysis carried out in this paper, we explain our expectations of finding ideological differences in national versus international news reports of the same events. Acknowledging that it is impossible to fully contextualize reality, which is always heterogeneous, multi-interpretatable and complex, news can be regarded as a selective presentation of recent events that happen in the world and are deemed relevant or interesting for the audience. The adjectives ‘relevant’ and ‘interesting’ already refer to the evaluative aspect, typical of any news item. In general, news depends on institutional constraints, professional routines, conditions of information accessibility, specific journalistic and discursive choices, and a sense of relevance in relation to the idealized reader and news values (see also Section 7). Van Ginneken (2002: 36) defines news as something that is perceived as ‘new’ within a specific society or social group, something that is considered to be unexpected, extraordinary and abnormal. Crucially, what is deemed normal or irrelevant does not tend to be made explicit. The common ground upon which the determination of news values is based or the worldview within which news discourse must be understood usually remains implicit. This makes news inherently ‘ideological’ in the sense that – like most types of discourse – it carries along unquestioned assumptions. Newsmakers’ interpretations and representations of newsworthy events are always made from a particular ideological position (Fairclough 1995, Ngonyani 2000, Verschueren 1999). It follows that news is never a neutral representation of facts. As Reah (1998: 50) puts it: “Newspapers are not simply vehicles for delivering information. They present the reader with aspects of the news, and present it often in a way that intends to guide the ideological stance of the reader”. Newspaper articles, as products of processes of meaning generation through choice-making, are also ‘ideological’ in that every choice made implies the rejection of other possible alternative choices (whether or not equally valid) that can lead to totally different meanings. In other words, “the linguistic choices that are made in texts can carry ideological meaning” (Fairclough 1995: 25). Matu and Lubbe (2007: 402) claim that “linguistic choices play a fundamental role in the propagation and perpetuation of implicit and dominant ideologies, and that there are certain ideological differences that are conveyed either tacitly or overtly in newspaper reporting”.

It is beyond the focus of this paper to elaborate on the complex concept of ideology, but a minimal clarification is in order. Ideology will be broadly conceived of as “any constellation of fundamental or commonsensical, and often normative, beliefs and ideas related to some aspect(s) of (social) ‘reality’” (Verschueren 1999: 238). This conception relates ideology to normality and worldview. It must be remarked that ideology consists of both implicit and explicit views on reality. Ideological content tends to be taken for granted when it relates to what is (thought to be) generally acceptable. When an interpretation of a newsworthy event is presented as inevitable and a news report is written on the basis of presumably natural assumptions, the underlying worldview will rarely be questioned, even though the interpretation and the news report as a whole might well be contestable from a different perspective. Note that our notion of ideology does not equal social cognition or socially shared belief systems in the sense of Van Dijk (2006), but we share with him the belief that ideology has social and cognitive functions, influencing how we think and act. To use Verschueren’s words, discursively constructed ideological webs “serve the purpose of framing, validating or legitimating attitudes and actions” (1996: 592). From this perspective, we can interpret Harris’ conviction that “[m]edia affect our minds [since they] give us ideas, change our attitudes, tell us what the world is like” and thus impact on the way we live (Harris 2004: 270).

Having established that newspaper articles are a matter of choice and ideology, and that they are both constituted by and constitutive of social reality, differences of reporting in various newspapers are to be expected, even if the same events are covered. For the purposes of this paper, we focus on the differences between the Kenyan and Western...
press coverage. The Kenyan and Western newspaper articles constitute different subgenres: the former fall into the category of national news, while the latter concern foreign or international newspaper reports. This means that a foreign correspondent has to adapt and write local news stories in such a way that they are easily understandable to the home audience. Often an angle of reporting is searched so that the foreign news can be rooted into the readers’ background knowledge or anchored into a familiar frame of interpretation. That is why a newspaper report typically takes one (or at best a few limited) perspective(s) to an event, while other aspects of reality are obscured, underexposed or just missed. In this respect, Lee et al. (2000: 295) observed how “the same event may be given distinct media representations by various nations through the prisms of their dominant ideologies as defined by power structures, cultural repertoires and politico-economic interests”. They concluded that “[m]edia domesticate foreign news in the light of their own national interests and cultural assumptions” (Lee et al. 2000: 306).

In short, we expect fundamental differences between the Kenyan and the Western part of the corpus because the articles are written for different target audiences. Through our analysis, we will not get to the bottom of ideology or implicit meanings, rather our aim is to use automated text mining techniques in order to explore where lexical choices differ in the Western and local written media, and how the discovered patterns of lexical variations can imply ideological differences, thus supporting a further pragmatic analysis of the newspaper discourse in the Western and local media.

4. Introduction to the corpus

In our study we analyzed 464 articles, spanning a time period from December 22, 2007 to February 29, 2008. As the four selected Western newspapers (WE: The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Times and The Independent) published 232 articles on the topic of the Kenyan elections and crisis, we selected an equal number of 232 articles also from the local dailies (LO: The Standard and Daily Nation) in order to have a symmetrical corpus in terms of the numbers of articles of the two classes (WE and LO).\footnote{While in corpus linguistics it is common practice to compile two corpora of similar length, measured by the number of words, the main technology used in this article is text mining where analysis units are articles and not individual words as in corpus linguistics. As an asymmetrical corpus could represent some difficulties for selected data mining techniques (especially for decision tree algorithms used in Section 5.2), we decided to make the corpus symmetric in terms of the numbers of articles of each of the two classes (Western and local), respectively. The selection of local articles was performed in a way that all the period was covered, and that the two local newspapers were equally represented. Within these constraints a random selection was made (from the same date we have randomly selected an article to be included in the corpus).} In this section we first present the background of the Kenyan election crisis (Section 4.1), followed by initial data exploration using a standard corpus linguistics tool (Section 4.2).

4.1. Historical and political background on the Kenyan elections

For a better understanding of the corpus, the news texts will be briefly situated in their historical and political context. The setting of the events is the Republic of Kenya, a multi-ethnic country with a booming economy and a centralized government where much of the power resides in the president. The incumbent, Mwai Kibaki, is only the third president since Kenya gained independence from Britain in 1963. Despite a growing
urban middle class, the gap between the rich elite and the poor masses remains wide. Poverty, unemployment, occasional periods of drought and unequal distribution of power and natural resources over Kenya’s people regularly causes tensions, especially in the city slums.

Expectations ran high when Kibaki won the elections in 2002 as the presidential candidate of the National Rainbow Coalition, thanks to the support of the businessman and influential opposition politician Raila Odinga. It was the first time since Kenya had become a multiparty state in 1991, when the main opposition parties joined forces to remove from power the Kenya African National Union. Although Kibaki succeeded in boosting the economy and installing free primary education, he failed to provide equal access to vital resources and reneged on his promise to reduce the power of the presidency by creating the post of prime minister for Odinga. In 2005, the latter left the government out of disagreement with the failed constitutional reform process. Together with some other dissidents, he founded the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). Through the subsequent reshuffle, Kibaki’s government, which had already been weakened by major corruption scandals, now lost its ethnic diversity and came to be perceived as an organ of cronyism (cf. Ogola 2009).

Even though Kibaki had lost a lot of credit, the 76-year-old president stood up for re-election within the Party of National Unity (PNU). In the run-up to the elections politics became increasingly polarized. During the campaign aggressive rhetoric was not eschewed and the ethnic angle was ever present (Rambaud 2008). Partly this was a result of some problematic characteristics of Kenyan politics, partly it was due to specific campaign strategies. In Kenya, political parties are seldom based on ideology, rather on social cleavages, as numerous politicians “are not motivated by party principles or constructive policy commitments”, but instead “are more concerned with the quest for raw power, perceived as attainable by relying on the ethnic card” (Oloo 2007: 111). Moreover, in the “single-member-district first-past-the-post winner-takes-all” electoral system ethnic support is crucial (Oloo 2007: 121). In this respect, it is useful to know that Kibaki is a member of the Kikuyu ethnic group, which makes up 17% of the population, while his main contender, Raila Odinga, belongs to the ethnic group of the Luo, representing 10% of all Kenyans. More reasons for the ethnicization of the 2007 elections can be found in the campaigning. Simply put, ODM presented itself as a coalition of minority tribes (though dominated by Luo, Kalenjin and Luhya) that stood up against “Kibaki’s Kikuyu government”. It promised an equal distribution of wealth by a tribally-mixed, corruption-free government in a reformed federal state. While Odinga rocketed in the opinion polls, tensions rose when Kibaki not only personally installed five new judges to the Court of Appeal, but also appointed 19 of the 22 commissioners of the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK), which was interpreted as “a means through which he would use state institutions to stay in power” (Ogola 2009: 61).

The General Election, comprising presidential, parliamentary and civic elections, took place on 27 December 2007. Up to 72% of the eligible voters went to vote. The swiftly processed and released civic and parliamentary results indicated that people had opted for change by voting for novices or underdogs irrespective of their party or ethnicity. The National Assembly became dominated by ODM with 99 of the 210 parliamentary seats, while PNU only obtained 43 seats. Also in the civic polls ODM came out best. By contrast the outcome of the presidential results took unusually long. Anxiety grew as concrete evidence of fraud reinforced widespread rumors of rigging and the ECK lost control of the tallying process. On Friday December 28, it looked like Odinga was winning with a lead of one million votes, but the difference with Kibaki narrowed overnight to 38,000 votes. The following day the tallying was cancelled due to protests and conflicts between party members and ECK-officials, after which observers and media were thrown out of the tally centre by the paramilitary police. Most disputes
revolved around fraudulent augmentation of votes and unrealistic voter turnout.\textsuperscript{210} With
an incomplete tally and available results lacking the required statutory documents, ECK
boss Samuel Kivuitu released final results on Sunday 30 December 2007. Mwai Kibaki
of PNU was declared the winner with 4,584,000 votes; Odinga of ODM was said to have
4,352,000 votes. According to the disputed results Kibaki won a majority of votes in four
provinces (Central 96.4\%, Eastern 49.8\%, North Eastern 50.9\%, Nairobi 47.3\%), while
Odinga received most votes in the other four provinces (Nyanza: 82\%, Western: 66.5\%,
Rift Valley 64.1\%, Coast 58.8\%). Different observer groups, including the East African
Community Observer Mission, the Kenya Elections Domestic Observation Forum and
the Commonwealth Observer Group, branded the presidential elections as deeply flawed.
The European Union Election Observer Mission to Kenya concluded that these elections
“leave a legacy of uncertainty as to who was actually elected as President by the Kenyan
people”, resulting in “an unprecedented situation in the country characterized by deep
ethnic rifts and civil unrest as well as a political stand-off” (EU EOM 2008: 37).
The outcome of the presidential elections immediately triggered mass demonstrations by
opposition supporters, but also rioting by frustrated youths, looting by criminal gangs and
excessive use of force by the police in response. When on New Year’s Day the ECK
chairman Kivuitu publicly admitted that he was not sure whether Kibaki had won the
elections, popular anger grew and chaos spread. Most outrages took place in and around
the slums of five provinces: Central, Nairobi, Nyanza, Rift Valley and Western. This
hints at the importance of the socio-economic local context of the violence during the
crisis. In general three main categories of violence could be distinguished: spontaneous
violence as a result of the elections and the political deadlock, organized attacks against
targeted communities following unresolved disputes or long-standing grievances (e.g.
about land rights), and organized retaliations. The Kenya National Commission on
Human Rights reported instances of political violence, violent protest, criminal acts of
killing, looting and destruction of property, pre-planned ethnic violence, and sexual and
gender-based violence. So the violence cannot be uniformly labeled. Without denying
that in some regions political protest turned into ethnic violence or was abused to settle
tribal scores, it is clear that the ethnic is only one aspect, which cannot be plainly
generalized (see the interpretations in Section 7).
Eventually, it took a lot of national and international pressure and mediation to resolve
the political stalemate and end the societal crisis. On 28 February 2008 chief mediator
Kofi Annan brokered a power-sharing deal. A total of 40 ministers, equally taken from
ODM and PNU, were sworn in on 17 April 2008, when president Mwai Kibaki’s cabinet
finally became operative with Raila Odinga as prime minister. However, the political
climate remains volatile. There is still a lot of disagreement about the inevitable
constitutional reform process, and tensions are ever present, not only between the
partners of the coalition government, but also within the ruling parties and between the
supporters of the different fractions. Up to 1,200 Kenyans died as a direct consequence of
the post-election crisis and more than 300,000 people lost their homes.

4.2. Initial insights into the corpus

In order to get a first impression of the data, we first performed a simple keyword
frequency analysis using the WordSmith lexical analysis software for finding patterns in
text (Scott 2008). Table 1 presents the first 30 keywords of the local and the Western part
of the corpus. The list is sorted by the keyness value, a measure that compares the relative

\textsuperscript{210} For example, for the constituencies of Molo (Rift Valley Province) and Kieni (Central Province), Kibaki
had 20,000 and 17,000 more votes, respectively, in the final announcement of the results at the ECK
headquarters in Nairobi, compared to the results announced on the spot by the returning officers in the
presence of EU observers (EU EOM 2008: 34).
frequencies of a word in the given text compared to a reference corpus: a word that is frequent in the given text and rare in the reference corpus gets a high keyness value. As the reference corpus, we used the British National Corpus (BNC). Given the space limitations we present only the keyness value, together with the absolute and the relative frequency in the given text. In addition, the table presents the measure of dispersion of individual keywords: the Julliand’s D index that indicates how uniformly the word is distributed in the corpus: high values mean that the words are distributed evenly throughout the corpus.

The most interesting observation is that in the local press we do not find explicit references to ethnicity, while in the Western press the word that gets the fifth highest keyness score. *Kikuyu*, is an ethnic tag. Other ethnicity-related words frequently used in the Western press are: *Kikuyus* (N11), *ethnic* (N15), *Luo* (N21), *Kalenjin* (N23), *tribe* (N24), and *Luos* (N27). In contrast, the words that typify the local press belong to the lexical field of (Kenyan) politics. The acronyms of the major political parties, *ODM* and *PNU* (N1, N10), have a high keyness value. The same hold for *ECK* (Electoral Commission of Kenya) and *MPs* (Members of Parliament). Also striking is the high frequency of *mediation* (N15) and *talks* (N17), especially in comparison to their absence in the top keywords of the Western press. As we will see later, it is no coincidence that the 25th keyword is *political* in the local press, while it is *tribal* in the Western press.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Keyword</th>
<th>Local (LO)</th>
<th></th>
<th>Western (WE)</th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>NAIROBI</td>
<td>2495,77</td>
<td>247,016</td>
<td>0,91</td>
<td>NAIROBI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>SAID</td>
<td>2399,71</td>
<td>1510,096</td>
<td>0,96</td>
<td>KIBAKI'S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>MEDIATION</td>
<td>2264,43</td>
<td>232,015</td>
<td>0,84</td>
<td>ETHNIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>PRESIDENTIAL</td>
<td>2075,46</td>
<td>301,019</td>
<td>0,91</td>
<td>KENYANS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>TALKS</td>
<td>2041,88</td>
<td>390,025</td>
<td>0,77</td>
<td>MWAI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>CRISIS</td>
<td>1844,72</td>
<td>350,022</td>
<td>0,84</td>
<td>PRESIDENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>ECK</td>
<td>1701,01</td>
<td>146,009</td>
<td>0,67</td>
<td>ANNAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>KOFI</td>
<td>1674,52</td>
<td>134,009</td>
<td>0,83</td>
<td>SAID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>GOVERNMENT</td>
<td>1567,30</td>
<td>676,043</td>
<td>0,87</td>
<td>LUO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>LEADERS</td>
<td>1494,84</td>
<td>318,020</td>
<td>0,90</td>
<td>ODINGA'S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>KENYAN</td>
<td>1345,02</td>
<td>139,009</td>
<td>0,88</td>
<td>KALENJIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>KIVUITU</td>
<td>1291,16</td>
<td>100,006</td>
<td>0,55</td>
<td>TRIBE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>POLITICAL</td>
<td>1273,01</td>
<td>463,030</td>
<td>0,89</td>
<td>TRIBAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>YESTERDAY</td>
<td>1271,49</td>
<td>383,024</td>
<td>0,92</td>
<td>RIFT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>POLICE</td>
<td>1194,51</td>
<td>427,027</td>
<td>0,80</td>
<td>LUNOS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>KISUMU</td>
<td>1157,63</td>
<td>94,006</td>
<td>0,68</td>
<td>KOFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>MPS</td>
<td>1119,01</td>
<td>195,012</td>
<td>0,82</td>
<td>LEADERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>ELDOROT</td>
<td>1116,15</td>
<td>89,006</td>
<td>0,88</td>
<td>VOTE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Keywords obtained by the WordSmith lexical analysis software.
Note, however, that frequency-based analysis can be sometimes misleading as a purely quantitative and highly de-contextualized representation of a (corpus of) text(s), and thus requires prudent interpretation. For instance, the frequency of ODM (N1) in the local part of Table 1 as opposed to the lower frequency of PNU (N10) might suggest that the party ODM was covered more in the Kenyan newspapers than the PNU. In reality the contrary was true. A classical content analysis revealed that the PNU received 54% share of coverage in the Daily Nation compared with 55% in The Standard, while ODM got 29% in the former newspaper and 30% in the latter (EU EOM 2008: 26). The explanation of this misrepresentation lies in the fact that the third largest party in the elections was called ODM-Kenya. This faction split off from the larger Orange Movement and later leaned towards PNU, so that its leader Kalonzo Musyoka could become Vice-President. As WordSmith does not count concepts, but word tokens, the ODM label refers to all instances of ODM, whether separately or in the composition ODM-K(kenya).

5. Detecting contrast patterns through classification model construction

In this section we use text mining methods to learn interpretable classification models which will allow us to study the differences in local and Western news reporting. This section is divided into three subsections. Section 5.1 is devoted to data representation and presents the transformation of documents into a feature vector format, Section 5.2 outlines document preprocessing and the experimental setting, also explaining the used text mining methods through a simplified example, and Section 5.3 presents the results of our experiments.

In text mining, document classification (or categorization) refers to the task of classifying a given document into one or more categories based on its contents (Sebastiani 2002). To enable automated document classification, a classification model (a classifier) needs to be learned from the data. Text mining methods are either supervised or unsupervised. Supervised learning (which is the topic of this section) is performed as follows. Given a set of documents, pre-classified into distinct classes or categories, the goal of text mining is to automatically construct a classification model that will enable to assign one of the predefined categories to a new text document. Several text mining tools enable the construction of understandable classification models (for instance, in the form of a set of classification rules) that describe the categories and their differences. On the other hand, unsupervised learning (addressed in Section 6) is performed entirely without reference to external information, e.g. by document clustering and in this way determining distinct document categories.

In the analysis of articles on Kenyan elections, performed in this section, our actual goal is not to classify articles into one of the two classes, local and Western, as the categories of articles are clearly defined by the source from where the articles were taken. Instead, from the given class-labeled newspaper articles we automatically construct classification models with the goal to describe the two categories and to improve the understanding of their differences.

5.1. Data representation

In text mining, one of the key issues is the representation of text documents in such a format that captures their meanings in a compact way, and at the same time enables efficient processing by text mining algorithms. Such data preprocessing can be described as the transformation of unstructured text documents into a structured computer-readable

211 In this paper we use classification (used in data mining and machine learning) and categorization (used in text categorization) as synonyms.
representations. The main task of data preprocessing is to identify and extract representative features, e.g. words or combinations of words, and to represent each document by the features which characterize the document, e.g. the set of words which appear in the document (Feldman and Sanger 2007).

In data preprocessing, documents are transformed into the so-called feature vector format, where each feature vector corresponds to one newspaper article. The most frequent representation of feature vectors is the bag of words representation, where individual features correspond to individual words. In this approach, a document is represented as a vector of features with as many components as there are different words in the corpus. Every component represents a word in its normalized form, and if this word occurs in the document, the value for this feature vector component is set to 1, otherwise the value is set to 0.\(^{212}\)

To explain the bag of words feature vector representation, take an illustrative example of two simplified documents consisting just of the article titles:

1. Kenyan elections in chaos
2. ECK delays results to avoid chaos

In the standard procedure of feature vector construction, less informative words like in and to (the so-called stopwords) are removed, and the remaining words are normalized (lemmatized). In our example, the list of remaining normalized words is the following: [avoid, chaos, election, Kenyan, result].

1. The first article, which contains words chaos, election, Kenyan, is represented by feature vector [0, 1, 0, 0, 1, 1, 0].
2. The second article, containing words avoid, chaos, delay, ECK, result, is represented by feature vector [1, 1, 1, 1, 0, 0, 1].

Note that word chaos occurs in both documents, represented by 1 at the second place in the bag of words vectors.

Instead of individual words (word unigrams, W1), document representation can also be based on combinations of words such as word bigrams (sequences of two words, W2) and trigrams (sequences of three words, W3).

5.2. Data preprocessing and experimental setting

Since our aim is to better understand the way of reporting on the same event by the local and Western media, all the information that could be distinctive for the two classes but is irrelevant for our analysis was removed from the articles. To illustrate this point, newspapers normally have only few journalists covering Kenyan affairs, so if bylines were not removed, the author’s name could easily be selected as a distinguishing feature. We therefore first performed data cleaning by removing meta-information such as newspaper source, authors of articles, dates of publication, photographers, mail addresses of authors, types of articles, etc. and used only the remaining relevant data\(^{213}\) (headlines, crossheads, text of the article and photo captions).

As our experiments are aimed at discourse analysis, we did not want to exclude any type of words beforehand in data preprocessing, since we consider all word types potentially important. Therefore, we opted for experimenting with the data without performing

\(^{212}\) Values 1 and 0 are known as binary feature values. Alternatively, term frequency or other similar values, such as TF-IDF (term frequency inverse document frequency) can also be used. We will use values 1 and ‘yes’ interchangeably to denote the presence of a word in the document, and 0 and ‘no’ for its absence.

\(^{213}\) Keeping the headlines, crossheads, pull quotes and captions means that with these news discourse specific phenomena we often included repetitions of words when counting word frequencies. As we believe that these repeated words also grasp readers’ attention we have decided not to exclude them. Anyhow, in the experiments described in this section, word frequencies do not play a role, as the binary representation of documents was used.
stopword removal, lemmatization or stemming, techniques often used in document preprocessing. In our corpus of 464 newspaper articles, which comprises about 320,000 words, we considered word unigrams (W1) as well as word bigrams (W2) and trigrams (W3) as features in our experiments. We used binary valued features, calculated on the basis of the presence (value 1) or absence (value 0) of the term in an article. However, since using all the features would result in too large feature vectors, automated feature selection of the best 500 features was done using the TACTiCS system (Luyckx, 2010).

Three data mining algorithms were used for classification model construction: two rule learning algorithms (JRip and PRISM) and one decision tree learning algorithm (J48). The choice of these symbolic data mining algorithms from the Weka data mining software (Witten and Frank 2005) enabled us to extract interpretable classification models (in the form of sets of rules and decision trees) from the document corpus. The choice of rule learning and decision tree learning algorithms was motivated by the need to ensure simple interpretability of the results.

To explain the idea of how classification models are learned from text documents and how to use the models for explaining the differences between two text corpora, take the following simplified example. Suppose we have 100 articles: 50 articles describing movie reviews, and 50 articles describing classical music reviews. In text preprocessing, the documents are transformed into a feature vector representation, where features correspond to individual words occurring in both sets of documents. A rule learning algorithm typically results in a set of rules for each class, with a class label (movie or music) in each rule conclusion, and a combination of most distinguishing or most characteristic features in rule conditions. An illustrative rule for the movie document category could be:

\[\text{IF } \text{actor}=1 \text{ AND screenplay}=1 \text{ AND symphony}=0 \text{ THEN Class}=\text{movie}.\]

This rule can be interpreted as “If the article contains the words actor and screenplay, and does not contain the word symphony, the article is from the movie category of articles”. Take another example for the classical music reviews document category.

\[\text{IF orchestra}=1 \text{ THEN Class}=\text{music}.\]

Inspecting these two rules enables you to explore the differences between the two classes of documents. As opposed to these two artificially constructed rules, see the real examples of rules learned from the articles on Kenyan elections in Tables 3 and 4, and decision trees in Figures 2 and 3.

In general, rules are constructed in the following way. First, for a given class, the ‘best’ feature is selected based on a statistical test, followed by conjunctively adding other features, until the statistical stopping criterion for rule construction is satisfied (the exact description of the tests is beyond the scope of this paper). In the hypothetical movie and classical music reviews example above, the algorithm would select a class (movie), add a first condition to the rule (actor=1) and continue conjunctively adding features (words) until a significant group of documents is covered by the constructed description which separates this group of documents from the documents of the other class (music).

Two rule learning algorithms were used in our experiments: JRip and PRISM. The JRip decision rule learning algorithm, which implements the original algorithm of Cohen (1995), proceeds by selecting the examples of a given class and finding a set of rules that cover all the instances of this class. Each individual rule is automatically constructed as a conjunction of features (words, their bigrams or trigrams) which best characterize the given class. Thereafter it proceeds to the next class and does the same. The PRISM rule learning algorithm (Cendrowska 1987) generates only correct or ‘perfect’ rules for each class: it measures the success of a rule by the accuracy and any rule with accuracy less

\[\text{214} \quad \text{The significance of words has been ensured in data preprocessing by using the chi-2 test (only 500 most significant words were used in the analysis).}\]

\[\text{215} \quad \text{Weka 3.6.0: http://www.cs.waikato.ac.nz/ml/weka/ [09/11/2010].}\]
than 100% is considered ‘incorrect’.

In addition, the J48 decision tree learning algorithm, which implements a decision tree learner developed by Quinlan (1993), was used. The algorithm builds a decision tree consisting of nodes that correspond to individual features (words, word bigrams or trigrams), and arcs corresponding to tests (e.g. does the selected word occur or not). For illustration, see a simple, manually drawn decision tree for the movie and classical music reviews example in Figure 1.

Figure 1. A simple decision tree.
The construction of a decision tree is a recursive process. First a feature (word) that is the most informative is selected as the root node. Then, branches for each possible value of this feature are made (for our problem the tree will be binary, each a feature represents a word or word combination that can be present or not). This process is repeated for each branch. The learning algorithm decides which feature to include as a node of the tree by calculating the informative value of a feature by an information-theoretic method called information gain. When using the tree for classification, depending on the value of a feature in the given node, a different sub-tree is accessed, or a different output class is assigned to the instance (document) being classified.

5.3. Experimental results and analysis of classification models

Table 2 presents the quality of the constructed classification models in terms of their classification accuracy.\textsuperscript{216} The evaluation of classification accuracy (i.e. accuracy of classifying an article as being of class LO or WE) was done with 10-fold cross validation\textsuperscript{217}, which means that we did each experiment ten times with different training and test sets, reporting the averages and standard deviation. These results show that all the learning algorithms perform very well. Given that there is the same number of articles in each of the two classes, the baseline accuracy of predicting randomly the origin of a news article is 50%. Note that J48 and JRip learning algorithms reach very high classification accuracy of about 90%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature set</th>
<th>J48</th>
<th>JRip</th>
<th>PRISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W1 (unigrams)</td>
<td>89.00 (4.64)</td>
<td>89.22 (3.95)</td>
<td>83.61 (6.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W2 (bigrams)</td>
<td>89.46 (4.17)</td>
<td>90.53 (3.81)</td>
<td>82.53 (4.41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W3 (trigrams)</td>
<td>89.67 (6.03)</td>
<td>90.96 (6.34)</td>
<td>83.86 (5.58)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Results of 10-fold cross-validation.

We now interpret some of the most interesting models and show that if we look for the context of the selected features in the corpus, we can get interesting additional information. We first present two different classification models automatically constructed with JRip. The first one (Table 3) was built in order to find rules for category Western, and the second one (Table 4) for category Local. In both cases, an ordered set of rules is constructed. The rules are constructed in such a way that the documents, which are covered by the currently constructed rule, are removed from the dataset before the next rule is constructed. The rules are ordered according to their support (the number of covered examples that fulfill the conditions of the rule). As the first rules are more representative than the others, they are more interesting for the interpretation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covered by the Rule</th>
<th>Correctly Classified Documents</th>
<th>Incorrectly Classified Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. If the article contains the words mwai and opposition, and not the word odm, the class is Western</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If the article contains the word kikuyu, the class is Western</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{216} Reporting on the accuracy of classification can be understood as means for estimating the reliability of automatically constructed models used as a starting point for our analysis. Although high classification accuracy of the constructed models is not our ultimate goal, high accuracy is desired as more accurate models also better describe the domain.

\textsuperscript{217} 10-fold cross-validation is a standard evaluation procedure used in data mining and text mining. In each run of the evaluation, a training set of 90% of articles is used for learning the classification model, and the remaining 10% are used for its evaluation.
3. If the article contains the word *raila*, but not the words *odm* and *about*, the class is Western 12 12 0
4. If the article does not contain the words *mr*, *will*, and *feature*, the class is Western 9 9 0
5. If the article contains the word *club*, the class is Western 7 5 2
6. If the article contains the words *opposition* and *least*, the class is Western 9 7 2
7. Otherwise, the class is Local 237 223 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covered by the Rule</th>
<th>Correctly Classified Documents</th>
<th>Incorrectly Classified Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. If the article contains the words <em>odm</em> and not the words <em>opposition</em> and <em>corruption</em>, the class is Local 124 124 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If the article contains the word <em>mr</em> and not the words <em>mwai</em> and <em>tribal</em>, the class is Local 77 69 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If the article does not contain the words <em>odinga</em> and <em>Kenya</em>, the class is Local 13 11 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If the article contains the words <em>dispute</em> and <em>odm</em>, the class is Local 6 6 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If the article contains the word <em>crisis</em> and not the words <em>odinga</em> and <em>kikuyu</em>, the class is Local 13 9 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Otherwise, the class is Western 231 218 13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first rule in Table 4 indicates that articles containing the party name *ODM* but missing the word *opposition* as well as the word *corruption* belong to the local media. Compared to the Western media (see the rules in Table 3), the Kenyan newspapers use the specific name of

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218 For completeness, the first rule of Table 3 in the original JRip output format is provided:
(feature43#mwai = 1) and (feature1#odm = 0) and (feature4#opposition = 1) => class=WE (142.0/2.0).
ODM, rather than the more general term opposition. The next most important rule dictates that if there is a feature Mr but not the features Mwai nor tribal, the article can be traced back to the local media. Here the absence of the feature tribal in the combinatorial rule for the local press is conspicuous. Moreover, both classification models (Table 3 and Table 4) indicate that references to concrete tribes, such as the Kikuyu, are typically present in the Western but absent from the local newspaper articles. This is an interesting observation as words like tribe and tribal are not ideologically neutral terms, but are frequently used for stereotyping diverse African societies and their conflicts (Ray 2008). As said before, we will come back to these issues in Sections 7 and 8 where more substantial interpretations will be provided. The third rule may seem curious, but it has a simple explanation. In many Kenyan newspaper articles the word Odinga is wanting, because in Kenya he is known by his first name. Frequently the proper name Raila is used to avoid confusion with his father, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, who was a prominent politician, and with his brother who is also into politics. Note also that according to this classification model, the conflict in Kenya is generally conceptualized by the local press as a dispute or a crisis.

The next experiment was done using the J48 decision tree learning algorithm, resulting in the classification model presented in Figure 2. In decision tree modeling we do not get a separate model for the Western and the local class. In the top node of the decision tree we find the feature Kikuyu. The left branch of the decision tree indicates that this word is frequent in the Western media, but that Kikuyu rarely occurs in the Kenyan part of the corpus (just in three articles). This classification model confirms our hypothesis: the Western press frequently refers to the ethnicity of the participants of the news stories, while this information is missing from the local newspaper articles. For further proof, we also checked the distribution of Luo, Odinga’s ethnic group, and found that its distribution is very unbalanced as well (80 Western and 3 local press articles).

The further interpretation of the decision tree shows that if the word Kikuyu is not present, the next node gives feature ODM as an indicator of the local class. We also verified in the corpus that the full name of the party, Orange Democratic Movement, is more present in the local than in the Western media. Between other alternative lexical choices of naming ODM, we discovered twelve references to ODM as Odinga’s party while in local coverage this expression appears only once. We can conjecture that the Western press reported the elections and the post-election crisis as a battle between tribes, assuming a sharp Luo-Kikuyu distinction, while the local press framed the events more in sociopolitical terms, explicitly downplaying or avoiding ethnic oppositions.

Finally, if Kikuyu does not appear and nor does ODM, but the first name of the ODM presidential candidate is part of the article, then it concerns a Western newspaper article. This does not contradict our earlier explanation about the frequent use of Odinga’s first name in the local press. It rather reveals that the Western media (when not concentrating on tribal repartitions) almost exclusively focused on the main candidates of the presidential elections, while the Kenyan part of the corpus contains a lot of articles about other people, such as other politicians, community leaders, election commission or other officials, civil society spokespersons, etc. However, this information cannot be read off from Figure 2. Rather it results from pragmatic, contextual knowledge.
The decision tree of Figure 3, constructed on word trigrams, correctly classifies nearly 90% of the examples, where the majority of the generated features concern the representation of the main protagonists. The referring expression Mr Raila Odinga proves to be the usual representation of the principal opposition leader in the local media. When Odinga is not referred to as Mr Raila Odinga, the decision tree generated a similar trigram, Odm leader Raila, as the second most important feature to distinguish between the local and Western newspaper texts. For articles lacking the latter trigram, the next distinguishing feature is President Mwai Kibaki. This third node in the decision tree model visualizes that an article is of the Western class when there is no reference to the opposition leader as Mr Raila Odinga, nor as ODM leader Raila, and when the elected candidate is presented in the news discourse as President Mwai Kibaki. In case Kibaki is not addressed in this way, but his full name is used, followed by a comma (Mwai Kibaki,), this is again an indication of Western journalistic writing. Descending to the final node, the model indicates that newspaper articles with Raila Odinga followed by a comma (Raila Odinga,) derive from the Western media too. So this particular decision tree facilitates the study of the representation of the social actors in a large corpus of newspaper articles.

These observations are significant in the sense that they suggest that in the local press Odinga is treated as one among many politicians, although an important and influential one. He is mainly neutrally referred to as Mr Raila Odinga, with an honorific introducing his full name comparable to, for instance, Mr Kalonzo Musyoka (presidential candidate for ODM-K) or Ms Nazlin Omar (presidential candidate of the Workers Congress Party). Or else he tends to be portrayed in the local press as one of the leaders of ODM or as its presidential candidate. His party is specified, rather than generalized as ‘the opposition’ (see also Tables 3 and 4 above). This is in marked contrast with the Western press, where Odinga is usually represented as the figurehead of the opposition, rather than as the presidential candidate of one of many opposition parties. Such a generalization could give the reader a distorted picture of Kenyan politics. After all, apart from Kibaki and Odinga, there were seven more presidential candidates and in total 159 parties participated in the General Election. Also of importance is what follows the comma in the last two nodes. As this cannot be read off from the model, we will return to it in Section 7.
Another model, given in Table 5, was generated with the PRISM algorithm, using the trigram feature vector representation. Again we can notice quite a lot of the classifying selections involving differences in the use of ethnicity-related terms (either using the words *tribe*, *tribal* or in relation to the name of the *Kikuyu* tribe, as it can be seen from rules 2, 3, 6 or 17 for the Western class).

Apart from revealing the main tendency that the local press prefers a political perspective on the events while the Western press opts for a tribal frame (compare the many references to politics versus tribe), two additional observations are to be highlighted. First we want to point to the salient presence of Samuel Kivuitu, the chairman of the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK), in the local news discourse (see rules 17 and 7). Kivuitu features prominently in the Kenyans newspaper articles, as he is in charge of the organization of the elections, the tallying process and the announcement of the winner. In spite of his importance for the legitimization of the election results and his (and ECK’s) role in the election crisis he is remarkably absent in the Western press. By often silencing his voice the Western media miss again a piece of the puzzle to better understand the Kenyan crisis. Secondly, it must be noted that not only the elections and the crisis but also the violence is depicted in tribal terms in the Western press. When the ethnicity of the social actors involved in the violence is not explicitly mentioned, Western journalists stress the primitive barbarity of what they see as tribal violence by their focus on exotic weapons, such as *machetes* (see rule 16 for the Western class) or pangas and spears, as revealed by additional analysis of the articles. Conversely, the Kenyan dailies speak of the post-election crisis and of post-election violence (rule 6). Instead of describing it as primitive and tribally-driven, they describe the violence in general terms as the destruction of property (rule 18 for the local class).
Table 5. Results of PRISM on W3 (only first few rules for each class), accuracy: 83.83%.

Running ahead of the contextual pragmatic analysis and discussion in Sections 7 and 8, it can already be acknowledged that phrases such as “divided on tribal lines, rival groups have been fighting with machetes and sticks” (from article ‘50 die in blazing church a specter of tribal war looms’, The Times, 2 January 2008) or “more than 100 local Kalenjin militiamen armed with machetes and bows and arrows” (from ‘Kenyans say tribal divide has reached police force’, Washington Post, 12 February 2008), reveal an arguably ideological choice to present the post-election conflicts as primitive, tribal warfare, which has been criticized as an ideologically dangerous and colonialist perspective (e.g. Ray 2008). On the other hand, exclusions of certain actors, e.g. by means of nominalization as in the destruction of property, are ideological too, as is the backgrounding of relevant characteristics like ethnicity in those specific conflicts that took an ethnic dimension (cf. Van Leeuwen 2008: 28-32). This ideological choice is criticized for instance by Wrong who remarks that “the Kenyan media have essentially refused to cover the biggest story on their patch” by repudiating the notion of tribe, while she adds that “[y]ou cannot defuse a problem you refuse to see” (Wrong 2008: 23). We will come back to this issue in Section 8.

6. **Contrasting keyword detection through semi-automated topic ontology construction**

In computer science, the term **ontology** denotes a formal representation of a set of concepts of a domain and the relationships among these concepts. Ontologies are organized hierarchically: a concept is divided into a set of sub-concepts. A concept representing a set of documents can also be described by the main topics addressed in the documents. Accordingly, a **topic ontology** (Fortuna et al. 2007) is a hierarchical organization of documents’ topics and their sub-topics. We used a semi-automated topic ontology
construction tool OntoGen\textsuperscript{219} (ibid.) mainly aimed at building topic ontologies by unsupervised learning from unlabeled data, but can be applied also for other purposes, such as classification of documents, document search, etc.

This section describes how a topic ontology was built from our set of articles and how the topic ontology construction tool was used to search for differences between the local and the Western press coverage of Kenyan elections. As input for OntoGen, we used the lemmatized document representation, where lemmas were obtained by using a memory based shallow parser (Daelemans et al. 1999).

In OntoGen, hierarchical decomposition of a given set of documents into document subsets is performed by $k$-means clustering\textsuperscript{220}, where $k$ is defined by the user at each step of the multi-layer hierarchical ontology construction process, and each sub-domain (sub-concepts) is described by the main topics that the documents cover. OntoGen offers two different ways of getting the topic descriptions. One option is to get a list of keywords composed of most contrasting words, where these distinguishing keywords are extracted by the Support Vector Machine (SVM) classifier.\textsuperscript{221} The other option is to get a list of keywords composed of most descriptive words for the document cluster: i.e., $n$ most frequent keywords describing the document cluster.\textsuperscript{222}

In our experiments the first step of topic ontology construction was the same: the first step of document grouping was performed by manually enforcing the root node (representing all the documents) to be split into two clusters WESTERN and LOCAL (corresponding to Western and local newspaper articles, respectively). The root node in the center of the topic ontology (see Figure 4), which stands for the whole dataset, was thus split up into a Western and local subset, each containing 232 documents. By manually enforcing this separation into two document sets enabled us to compare distinct topics separately for each of the two classes.

In the first experiment we explored the contrasting view of the Western and local media coverage via the analysis of Support Vector Machine (SVM) keywords.\textsuperscript{223} After we created the local and Western class and categorized the documents inside these two categories, we analyzed the distinguishing keywords, uncovered by the SVM algorithm implemented in OntoGen. The SVM-based contrasting keywords, best distinguishing between the articles of the two classes, are presented in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCAL</th>
<th>odm, mp, team, mr, pnu, odm_leader, president_kibaki, dr, media, statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WESTERN</td>
<td>kikuyu, mr_kibaki, opposition, mr_odinga, luo, tribe, tribalism, opposition leader, odinga, ethnic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. SVM (contrasting) keywords for the local vs. Western articles.

These words show the differences in the way of referring to the main protagonists: in local articles the definite descriptions ODM leader and President Kibaki are used, while the main participants are described more often as Mr Kibaki, Mr Odinga, opposition leader and Kikuyu or Luo in the Western newspapers. Local media limit their coverage to political parties and functions: ODM, PNU and MP, while Western media present the election through an ethnic lens by making use of such words as Kikuyu, Luo, ethnic, and even the more ideologically

\textsuperscript{219} For more information, http://ontogen.ijs.si/ [14/09/2009].

\textsuperscript{220} Clustering is an unsupervised learning method which groups documents into document clusters according to their similarity, where $k$-means clustering results in $k$ different clusters.

\textsuperscript{221} Support Vector Machine (SVM) denotes supervised learning methods that build a classifier by constructing a separating hyper-plane in a high-dimensional space of features (words) which has the largest distance to the nearest data points (documents) of the different classes (e.g. LOCAL and WESTERN).

\textsuperscript{222} In more detail, these are the most important words describing the centroid (the artificial ‘average’ document) of the document cluster.

\textsuperscript{223} For more details of the use of SVM for keyword extraction in OntoGen see (Fortuna et al. 2006).
marked words tribe or tribalism.

In the second experiment, the initial document groups, corresponding to the local and Western articles, were further automatically split into subgroups by using the OntoGen’s $k$-means clustering algorithm (the parameter of $k$-means clustering was manually set to $k=3$), in this way forming lower-level concepts and sub-concepts (i.e. topics and sub-topics). The resulting topic ontology is shown in Figure 4.

![Figure 4: The topic ontology of local and Western press articles on Kenyan elections.](image)

OntoGen first identified three central topic domains which were further divided in three topic subdomains, each of which is described by a set of keywords representing the main topics of the article group. In that way the topic ontology represents the relations between the articles while making a link to their content. So from Figure 4 we can infer what is the articles coverage, and inspect the similarities between the related articles within each cluster and in contrast with the other document clusters.

Broadly speaking, the central topics distinguished for the local subcorpus clearly correspond to three key stages in our case study: the elections (odm, eck, court), violent protests or rioting (police, media, mp) and the search for a solution (odm, Annan, talk). The whole election process is extensively covered, from the organization by the ECK over the announcement of the results by ECK chairman Kivuitu to different problems during and immediately after the elections. The former problems led to critical reports from observers, whereas the latter concerning the outcome of the elections prompted coverage about going to court to fight the final results. In the second topic, viz. the outbreak of protests and violence in the aftermath of the elections, the prominence of the police is striking. Three times police features as keyword: this shows that the local press not only focused on violence amongst the Kenyan people but also criticized the role and the actions of state-controlled law enforcement. The appearance of media in the topic boxes refers to the government-issued media ban on live coverage of the disturbances. The third topic (on the left) concerns the efforts to get out of the political deadlock. The local press coverage concentrated on mediation and talks between members of the opposition and the government. Chief mediator
Kofi Annan, who in the end succeeded in reconciling the rivaling parties, received most attention. But also other international support from both American (Bush, Rice) and African (Kikwete) commentators and conciliators is exhaustively covered. The Western newspapers roughly touch upon the same main topics, but they have different accents. The cluster described by the topics voting, Mr Odinga, Mr Kibaki, represents the articles about the voting process. The duel between Kibaki and Odinga is emphasized as well as the humanity of the elections. Furthermore Kenya as ‘a stable democracy’ is compared to less stable neighbors such as Somalia. The right main topic, typified by the keywords opposition, protest, Mr Odinga, deals with the violent escalation of sociopolitical unrest. Here the presence of the keyword tribalism in the subtopic is telling. The third main topic concerns the conflict resolution and peace talks. However, not the attempts to find solutions for the political deadlock and the violence in society receive primary attention, but rather the polarization between the disputing parties and the ethnicization of the conflict is focused on. In that way, the topic ontology corroborates earlier observations about the tribal frame that is used in the Western press. This issue will be picked up in Section 7.

7. Interpretation from a pragmatic perspective

Contrary to a classical content analysis we subjected our corpus to a number of text mining techniques to get an insight into the data and to procure computational support for further qualitative analysis. By means of a pragmatic analysis, the discovered differences between Western and local news are contextualized and put into perspective. This section presents a summary of our major findings and provides interpretations from a pragmatic point of view. With the experimental results in mind, pragmatic discourse analysis was guided by the following question: What is the meaning of the lexical choices uncovered by text mining in the contexts of the Western and/or local newspaper reports about the described events? More specifically, how do references to ethnicity, triggered by such words as tribe, tribalism or ethnic, function in the discourses and concrete contexts in which they occur? These questions must be tackled by a coherent methodology (cf. Verschueren 1996, 1999, 2008).

Without going into specifics, the most important methodological requirements concern the dataset, text analysis and triangulation. Ideally, the corpus should be large enough, so that the discourse analysis pertains to a variety of data types (e.g. different genres, text sources, discourse domains, …) and multiple levels of linguistic structure. Therefore we included both hard news reports, opinion articles, features and editorials. However, in this paper we only focused on patterns of topical, representational and lexical choices, ignoring other grammatical or discursive levels of linguistic structure. Text analysis means close scrutiny of linguistic elements, not only within one and the same text, but also between different texts and discourses. Thus it comprises also intertextual and contextual analysis. Different texts are compared by carefully (re)reading them and interpreting the meanings generated by their language use. By concentrating on contrast and variability, explicit and implicit patterns of meaning can be exposed. Since ‘ideological’ ideas and beliefs are often carried along implicitly in the discourse, a linguistic pragmatic study of ideology in discourse goes beyond the explicit content in the search for patterns of unquestioned implicit meaning. As triangulation is concerned, the results should be subjected to counter-screening by looking for evidence that would contradict one’s research conclusions. A discourse analyst has to take a critical and self-reflective stance towards his own research.

As a starting point for our pragmatic discourse analysis, it should be recognized that at

224 Jakaya Mhriso Kikwete, the president of neighboring country Tanzania, was chairman of the African Union from 31 January 2008 to 2 February 2009.
At first sight there are more similarities than differences between the local and Western newspaper articles. This might not be so surprising, given that the newspaper reports deal with the same events. A fair amount of intertextuality not only became clear in the linguistic analysis of keywords presented in Section 4.2, but is also evident from the text mining experiments. The topic ontology in Figure 4, for instance, shows that the Western and local press coverage share topical words, such as Annan and talk. However, the intertextuality cannot only be explained on the basis of a thematic relationship between the various newspaper reports. Other important factors are journalistic practices and commonly shared criteria of news values. In addition, similarities in the reporting and the overlap of meanings in our case study are also due to mutual influence.

Let us briefly explain these claims, because the obviousness of correspondences makes the numerous subtle differences all the more salient. News workers display universal preferences and intuitions about the nature of news (e.g. Galtung and Ruge 1965, Van Dijk 1988, Bell 1991, Westerstahl and Johansson 1994, Harcup 2004, Pape and Featherstone 2005, Wu 2007 and Machin 2008). When an event is negative, abnormal or unusual, clearly delineated, easily interpretable and explainable for the target audience thanks to readily available sources, it will likely become news. On the contrary, when the event is (perceived to be) hardly deviant from daily reality, when it is the result of long societal processes, or when it requires a lot of historical background knowledge to comprehend, the event will have a low news value. After all, news must fit into the readers’ familiar frame of interpretation. Finally, press coverage is also partly affected by other press coverage. Journalists report on what their colleagues report. They not only often go to the same press conferences and share interviewees, but they also read other newspapers and exchange information.

But the interpretations of the same events can be quite diverse in different news markets. The way words are used is crucial. For instance, quantitatively the topic of violence is more or less equally covered, but a qualitative pragmatic analysis combined with text mining reveals that the Western press often puts instances of violence into a tribal frame, either explicitly labeling violence as tribal and ethnic, or linking it to the ethnicity of the perpetrators (see below). In the local press the violence is connected either to political protest or to criminal behavior without any explicit references to the ethnicity of the people involved. Moreover, a high degree of intertextuality does not mean that there are no intertextual gaps. By reading the corpus articles one quickly observes that the Kenyan press provides more varied interpretations of the multiplicity of conflicts than the Western press, although they fail to explain the ethnic factor of certain conflicts. A glimpse at Figure 4 indicates that the keywords generated for the local press show a greater variety than the recurring keywords of the Western media.

Our first finding pertains to the first part of the double hypothesis that followed from the text mining analyses: the Western media covered the news through a dominant ethnic lens. All the presented classification models show the Western media’s tendency to link the Kenyan election crisis to ethnic divisions. Different lexical strategies are used to create a tribal frame of interpretation. Firstly, this is done by explicit references to the tribes of the actors involved. The text mining models indicate that an explicit reference to Kibaki’s tribe of the Kikuyu is one of the most important distinguishing features of the Western newspaper accounts (see for example Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6, and Figure 2). Although explicit references to other tribes, like the Luo, Kalenjin or Luhya, did not surface as principal classifier features, closer investigation showed that they occur almost exclusively in the Western press. The rare instances of Luo or Kikuyu in the Kenyan press all referred to regions or political entities as in Luo Nyanza, referring to the part of the Nyanza province that is inhabited by the Luo, or as in Kikuyu parliamentary seat. The latter is an example of the ethnicization of Kenyan politics, which is often taken for granted in the Kenyan press. Compare this specific use of
tribe names to the often generalizing and stereotyping way in which the ethnic communities are named in the Western press:

(1) The election has uncorked dangerous resentment toward the Kikuyus, the privileged ethnic group of Kenya, who have dominated business and politics since independence in 1963.

(The New York Times_ Fighting Intensifies After Election in Kenya_01/01/2008)

(2) More than 200 people, mainly Kikuyus, the same tribe as President Mwai Kibaki, were sheltering for safety in the Kenya Assemblies of God church five miles outside Eldoret in the Rift Valley. An armed gang of young men drawn from the Kalenjin, Luhya and Luo tribes ethnic groups [sic] which backed the beaten presidential candidate Raila Odinga stormed the church compound yesterday morning and set it alight.

(The Independent_80 children massacred in Kenyan church_02/01/2008)

(3) Unconfirmed reports said that gangs of Kikuyu youths had hunted down Luos, stripped them naked and forcibly circumcised them.

(The Times_Kenya teeters on the brink_03/01/2008)

These examples also illustrate other ways of ethnicizing the news coverage: the use of the ideologically marked word pairs tribe and tribal, ethnic group and ethnic. Especially in the ‘Western world’, the noun tribe tends to carry the negative connotation of primitiveness and savageness (Krishnamurthy 1996). It is a value-laden term, what McGee would call an ‘ideograph’, i.e. a keyword of the discourse that functions as a building block of ideology, signifying a unique ideological commitment, and which not only “warrants the use of power, excuses behavior and belief [but also] guides behavior and belief into channels easily recognized by a community as acceptable” (McGee 1980: 15). The occurrence of tribe in Table 1 is a first indication that it is prominent in the Western press coverage. This observation is corroborated by the PRISM rules in Table 5 and by the contrasting keywords analysis in Table 6.

Also the adjective tribal was often selected in the text mining processes as a distinctive feature. The word tribal appeared 182 times in 100 different Western articles, compared to its presence in only 14 articles of the local media. A more detailed discourse analysis, in which the terms are examined in their contexts of use, reveals that tribe and tribal are usually employed in negative contexts, viz. contexts of physical and verbal violence, of corrupt politics and courts, and of other crisis situations, hence its typical negative connotation in the Western media. In more positive contexts like those of health care or human rights ethnicity is not brought to the fore. For instance, in the Independent article ‘A chilling tour of the Kenyan church that became the scene of mass murder’ (3 January 2008) the attackers and the attacked are pinned down on their ethnicity. Also the tribal affiliations of the political leaders are always explicitly mentioned, while the tribe of the deputy director of the hospital is not given. Likewise the tribe of the often quoted chairman of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights can only be guessed. If the words tribe and tribal are used by the Kenyan press, they often occur in contexts of disapproval or denial. The contexts of these words involve places or political entities, such as voting blocs. While in the Western press tribalism is the main explanation of most conflicts throughout Kenya, the conflicts are clearly localized in the Kenyan media and the tribal factor is sometimes even explicitly denied, as in (4) and (5).

(4) ODM said the mayhem is not an expression of tribal hate but citizens’ cry for their democratic rights.

(The Standard_ODM: Chaos is citizen’s demands for their rights_04/01/2008)

(5) Unlike in the previous elections where tribalism was the main factor, the ongoing insecurity being witnessed in the [North Rift] region is more of land politics [sic].

(The Saturday Nation_The land factor in violence that has rocked North Rift_05/01/2008)

Only once is the violence referred to as tribal clashes in our Kenyan sample. In this case, the article ‘Pope calls for end to violence’ in the The Sunday Standard of 6 January 2008. .
appeared to be literally taken from the Reuters press agency. In general terms, the violence gets the qualification post-election in the Kenyan press (see Prism rule 6 for class LO in Table 5). Otherwise, concrete instances of violence are specified and again clearly spatio-temporally situated. Note, however, that even clear instances of ethnic violence are never specified as such in the local press, where the ethnic factor of certain conflicts tends to be obscured (see below).

The use of ethnic group and ethnic may be less ideologically marked and more politically correct than tribe and tribal. However, both pairs often seem to be used interchangeably, as the error in example (2) suggests (see also Krishnamurty 1996: 132). In the topic ontology generated with OntoGen (Figure 4), the adjective ethnic appears as topic descriptor of two document clusters, which makes it a key topic of the Western news content. Although ethnic group does not have the same connotation as tribe and the word ethnic is sometimes used in more neutral contexts (e.g. when there is reference to ethnic areas, ethnic communities, ethnic neighbors, ethnic solidarity), the label ethnic is still often applied to negative nouns such as conflict, violence, fighting, and tensions. We also found that the adverb ethnically only appears in the Western media (e.g. in the expression ethnically charged violence), 36 times to be precise.

Our next major finding concerns the second part of our double hypothesis. Contrary to the Western news texts, the tribal factor is downplayed in the local press coverage. Several models confirmed that the Kenyan reporting is typified by a sociopolitical perspective. The series of conflicts is seen as the consequence of the elections, vote-rigging, political incitement. When described in general, all these conflicts are labeled in political terms as a post-election crisis, a political impasse, a political stalemate or as a humanitarian crisis. Perpetrators of violence and their victims are not named by their tribe. Rather they are presented as supporters of political parties or as unspecified youths, gangs, mobs, protesters or criminals, even when clashes clearly have an ethnic aspect. The murdering of Kikuyus in the Kenya Assemblies of God church (see also example (2)) is reported in the Kenyan newspapers without any references to tribes:

(6) This came on a day the post-election violence that has rocked parts of the country took serious proportions when at least 30 children and 10 adults who had sought refuge in a church were burnt to death in acts of violence linked to protests against the President's re-election. (The Standard_Peace calls amid continued bloodletting_02/01/2008)

(7) According to those who escaped the killings, they have never had a problem with the community they have lived with in the village for the last 40 years and the attack caught them by surprise. (Daily Nation_Raid on displaced families that shocked the world_06/01/2008)

The Kenyan newspapers use the word community, which has a weaker, more neutral connotation, instead of tribe or ethnic group. Note the political framing of the events in example (6). A link is created with political affairs, while in (7) the events are illuminated from a social point of view. But the ethnic dimension of this particular conflict is ignored.

In Figure 4, political terms dominate the local topic ontology (e.g. ODM, ECK, MP, party, rally, (mediation) talk). One of the most distinguishing features for the local class of newspapers is the abbreviation of Odinga’s party, ODM. From several models as well as from the SVM keyword list we can infer that the local media preferred political party names above references to ethnic groups. For instance the JRip models in Tables 3 and 4 show that ODM is a typical feature of the local press and appears to stand in contrast to the word opposition: in both models, the first (thus most important) rules contain a combination of these two words (presence of ODM and absence of opposition in the local media and vice versa in the Western media). Table 4 also makes clear that instead of describing the troubles as a tribal struggle, ethnic fighting or civil war, the Kenyan press rather relates the events to the political dispute or a broader sociopolitical crisis, which is presumed to have triggered
them (see Rules 4 and 5). The framing of the events affects how the main participants of the news stories are presented. Our third finding relates to the different representation of the main protagonists. To continue our examination of the functioning of the word opposition, we started to explore the context in which this word is used. Looking at the use of lexical choices in context we discovered that opposition is often used in the expression opposition leader, referring to Raila Odinga (e.g. in phrases such as “to enter talks with the opposition leader Raila Odinga” or “President Mwai Kibaki and the opposition leader Raila Odinga”). Alternatively, in the local press Raila Odinga is represented as a presidential candidate or party member of ODM, proof of which can be found in the J48 decision tree in Figure 3. Odinga is referred to as Mr Raila Odinga, frequently complemented by the genitive modifier of ODM, or as a leader of ODM. Further close reading detected frequent uses of ODM’s Raila Odinga and the ODM presidential candidate.

Of course, the manner in which people are described depends on the background knowledge of the target audience. For a Western audience the information of Odinga being opposition leader is more relevant than his characterization as a member of ODM. On the other hand, the specification of the party is more informative for a Kenyan readership. Although it is inaccurate and a gross simplification of Kenyan politics to call Odinga the leader of the opposition, it can be explained by the notion of domestication. As Lee et al. (2000) concluded, international news is often adapted to local frames of interpretation. When the British reader is used to a political system in which there is an opposition and a ruling party, the journalist might decide to conceptualize the foreign political system likewise, so that the newspaper report can easily be understood. Similarly, a Kenyan journalist does not have to state explicitly the ethnicity of the actors as his readers know what tribe Odinga and Kibaki are from. Nevertheless, it is striking how the Western media portrayed the protagonists, constantly emphasizing their ethnic origin. Extra information is usually given in non-restrictive relative clauses, placed between commas. That is why in Figure 3 Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga followed by a comma came out as identifying trigrams for the Western press. Note the contrast between (8) and (9).

(8) Mr Odinga, the son of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, the trade-unionist independence hero and first vice-president of Kenya, was educated in East Germany and called his first son Fidel. Like all Kenyan politicians he is a wealthy businessman and dropped the socialist rhetoric long ago. Nevertheless, as a Luo from the poor Lake Victoria region of Western Kenya, he appeals to marginalised communities much more than the elitist Mr Kibaki, who is a Kikuyu. (The Times_ Democracy comes out fighting as Kenyan voters take off the gloves_27/12/2007)

(9) The impact of the logistical problems was felt in Lang’ata constituency where ODM presidential candidate and former local MP, Mr Raila Odinga’s name was among thousands missing from the polling register. (The Standard_ Kenyans make huge statement_28/12/2007)

By means of the repeated use of specific representations, such as in example (8), or as in the New York Times article ‘Kenyans vote in test of democracy’ (28/12/2007), in which Kibaki is introduced as “a courtly gentleman and economics whiz” but also as “a tribal politician” and Odinga as “a rich, flamboyant businessman who rides around in a bright red $100,000 Hummer”, the Kenyan politicians become caricatures.

8. Discussion and further work

This paper provides a methodological example of a fruitful collaboration of two, traditionally separated, methodological frameworks and illustrates this methodology through a specific case study of reporting on the aftermath of the Kenyan elections. In this section we evaluate the tested text mining techniques, critically reflect on their usefulness for pragmatic research and summarize some of the new insights into the discourse under study.
We hope to have shown that quantitative computational methods, more specifically the text mining methods, and qualitative pragmatic language research are not irreconcilable. What is more, they are complementary and enable better insights into the subject of investigation. In our case the combination of text mining and linguistic-pragmatic analysis constitutes a critical news discourse analysis with special attention to ideological differences in national versus foreign press coverage. The link with ideology is established by the fact that most of the differences we found usually remain hidden for the readers. They are unquestioned and taken for granted.

The text mining methods have focused on discovering contrasting views of national, Kenyan (called local), and foreign, British and American (called Western), press coverage. The text mining approaches used were all based on generating interpretable information: either by predictive classification models (decision trees and decision rules models) or by using descriptive topic ontology text mining approaches combined by contrasting keywords detection. Linguistic pragmatics, as elaborated by Verschueren (1996, 1999, 2008), was used as an interpretative methodology. The observed lexical choices follow from a natural way of seeing things, informed by an underlying ideology on the basis of which journalists try to make sense of things. A system of commonsensical, normative ideas and beliefs, partly shaped by and adapted to the context-specific events and the concrete circumstances in which they had to operate, caused Kenyan journalists to steer clear from tribal references. For the Western press, we noticed that the “[m]edia tie their narratives selectively to larger historical frameworks to achieve interpretative coherence” (Lee et al. 2000: 307). Because well-known ethnic conflicts raged in the past through different places in Africa and because tribal affiliations do matter in Africa, (new) conflicts are easily interpreted in ethnic terms.

Our text mining experiments indicated that the major difference between the Western and the local press lies in the framing. A tribal frame was created in the British and American newspapers, while the Kenyan dailies opted for a sociopolitical frame. This was done by the Western media when they explained the conflicts in Kenya mainly as tribal animosity or struggles for power between tribes, or when they compared the post-election crisis to the Rwandan genocide. No doubt a lot of the conflicts in the aftermath of the 2007 general election did have an ethnic aspect, but always the conflicts were more complex. In a multi-ethnic country like Kenya tribe is part of people’s identity, but the question can be asked whether it is always relevant to emphasize the tribe when introducing people into news discourse. As Ray (2008: 8) cogently argues, the “widespread and reckless usage of the term ‘tribe’ and its various permutations hinders the ability of readers to understand how ethnic identities have evolved and interacted with one another in Kenya over time, and in relation to such factors as state and class formation; economic, social and political change; as well as more mundane facts of life such as migration and intermarriage”. Reducing the interpretation of the conflicts to tribal clashes is a choice that prevents accurate understanding of the causes of these conflicts which in most cases also had considerable political, social and economic dimensions. When The New York Times writes that “the election seems to have tapped into an atavistic vein of tribal tension” (‘Disputed vote plunges Kenya into bloodshed’, 31 December 2007), a complex political and social phenomenon is reduced to primordial sentiments of unchanged and unchanging gangs of opposing tribes, while Ray (2008: 9) observes that “where ethnicity has played a role in post-independence violence, it is not because of ancient hatred but rather because of a perceived relationship between ethnicity and access to material resources and political power, which has its roots in the 20th century”.

By their strategies of generalization and simplification in focusing on tribes and tribal violence the Western media provided a rather one-sided view of the complex reality. Ogola (2009: 62) rightly remarks that “inequitable allocation of resources, the failure to undertake comprehensive constitutional reforms, the monopolization of the political process by the
elite, the arbitrary exercise of state power and the normalization of the state and its various institutions together provided conditions for political instability which ultimately contributed to the 2007 election crisis”. These aspects were dealt with in the Kenyan press.

The quality of the local newspaper reporting, however, is not without discussion either. Rambaud (2008: 77) contends that the Kenyan “print media treated the elections in a balanced and responsible manner”, avoiding a reduction to ethnic-only explanations. He acknowledges that ethnicity was a regular theme in the press but particularly in the opinion pages, adding that “The Daily Nation and The Standard denounced its overhyping” (Rambaud 2008: 82). Ogola (2009) on the other hand criticizes the Kenyan press for covering up instead of covering accurately and impartially. He even claims that “the deliberate deletion of ethnic references in stories merely helped reify the news media’s framing of the conflict as unambiguously ethnic” (Ogola 2009: 59). By applying self-censorship and anxiously avoiding the ethnic factors that were for many Kenyans very obvious in some conflicts, the issue of ethnicity became conspicuous in its absence in the Kenyan press.

Although our observation is that the reporting in both The Standard and Daily Nation was more balanced and varied than that in newspapers from the US or UK, the question remains why the local press at all cost shied away from references to tribe. By doing so they also failed to provide an accurate account of the events. Although they illuminated the events from different angles, they tended to neglect the ethnic perspective, even when it did play a role.

Coming back to our methodological collaboration between text mining and pragmatics, the findings presented in this paper could not be reached purely on the basis of text mining results, nor by pragmatic analysis alone. When applying text mining, one should be aware of the limitation that simple text mining approaches are incapable of analyzing the words in their context and ignore many important phenomena, such as negation, modality or the impact of headlines, crossheads and other news discourse specific text parts. Therefore, text mining results become really significant and socially relevant when they are reconnected with context in combination with a linguistic-pragmatic analysis in which the functioning of structural and linguistic choices in their contexts of use is examined. A pragmatic analysis takes co-text and context into account, not only by examining intertextual or interdiscursive relations, but also by appealing to related discourses from other contexts, such as election and human rights reports, and by taking the broader socio-cultural climate into consideration, which is essential to understand the automatically generated text mining results.

As manual linguistic-pragmatic analysis can be very laborious, especially when working with large corpora, text mining, as proposed in our framework, can be helpful in three ways. Firstly, it can be useful to get an initial, orienting view of a large-scale corpus. Secondly, it can indicate the further direction of the linguistic-pragmatic analysis by automatically pointing out contrasting words and patterns (for building new hypotheses and discovering new knowledge). Thirdly, text mining results can be used during the counter-screening phase. The quantitative results can be employed to check whether or not there are implications or patterns that contradict the research conclusions. On the other hand, as a limitation of our methodology, text mining tools are not yet sufficiently user friendly for direct use by linguists and much of text preprocessing needs to be done before using the tools.

To conclude, in our approach, text mining results are put back into the context and interpreted by pragmatic analysis, while pragmatic analysis benefits from the patterns and models built independently from a researcher’s subjective view so that they help to avoid the risk of reading more in(to) the text than is warranted. That is why we see text mining as a useful methodology in support of further pragmatic analysis. Moreover, we do not see text mining as subservient to pragmatic text analysis. Rather, we suggest an inclusive methodology of pragmatic discourse analysis in which text mining is combined with
linguistic-pragmatic analysis so as to gain a deeper insight into the discourses under investigation and in order to deliver accurate interpretations without falling into the traps of underinterpretation or overinterpretation (O’Halloran and Coffin 2004).

In future work, we plan to further develop our framework which combines text mining and pragmatic analysis, and extend it to cross-lingual domain modeling which would give the possibility of performing a similar analysis on comparable corpora of different languages. An important aspect of future analysis will be the consideration of syntactic patterns (Luyckx and Daelemans 2008), modality structures and reported speech (see the recently emerging field of sentiment analysis and opinion mining (Liu 2010).

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APPENDIX V
Specimen of the ballot paper for the presidential election of 2007
# APPENDIX VI

## Overview of newspaper articles of the primary data set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title newspaper article</th>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Journalist(s)</th>
<th>Word count</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Candidates prepare for vote</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>27/12/07</td>
<td>Team</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country set to mark another milestone in election and lead way for Africa</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
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**Editors' Note:**
- The news articles cover various aspects of the Kenyan election, including poll results, political shifts, and public reactions. The reports highlight the scale of the political upheaval and the lasting effects on the country's political landscape. The delayed results and the ensuing chaos have raised concerns about the integrity of the electoral process and the stability of the government. The reports also reflect international interest, with news outlets from the UK and US covering the events. The tension and conflict have been a theme across multiple sources, underscoring the gravity of the situation.
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**Key Points:**
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- There are battles on the streets and there's no tonic for the gin.
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<td>1,200 raped in clashes</td>
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<td>17 Cabinet ministers sworn in</td>
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<td>Fifty NGOs file protest on polls</td>
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<td>Can Annan save Kenya</td>
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<td>28 opposition rallies set</td>
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<td>In Tense Kenya, opposition elects one of its own to lead parliament</td>
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<td>Tribal identity shapes Kenyan views, realities</td>
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<td>Members hug and laugh as Kenyans fight on the streets</td>
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<td>New Speaker's challenge over competing political interests</td>
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<td>We will not be cowed, vows Raila as three-day poll protests begin</td>
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<td>Four killed as police clash with protesters</td>
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<td>Two killed as riot police open fire on anti-Kibaki supporters</td>
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<td>Protests bring new violence in Kenya</td>
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<td>Protest rallies across Kenya draw relatively small crowds</td>
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<td>8 more killed in chaos</td>
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<td>EU moves to freeze Kenya aid over crisis</td>
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<td>Killings will jeopardise crisis talks, says Raila</td>
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<td>Police prevent journalists from covering 'operation' in Kibera</td>
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<td>Police shoot more dead more protesters in Day two of demos</td>
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<td>Kenyan opposition leader threatens to call general strike</td>
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<td>World Bank under pressure to withdraw aid until resolution found</td>
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<td>Protesters clash with police in Kenya and loot train</td>
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<td>Kenyan opposition to call for strikes, boycotts</td>
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<td>Business owners call for end to fighting</td>
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<td>Britain yet to recognise Kibaki as President</td>
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<td>More lives lost</td>
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<td>Signs in Kenya that killings were planned</td>
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<td>Brutal killings mark Nairobi clashes</td>
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<td>Serve the public, media told</td>
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The second step

Violence now hits Kibaki's backyard

Bloed vloeit rijkelijk rond Lake Naivasha

Keniaanse steden toneel van almaar driestere etnische zuiveringen

Kibera brandt na politieke moord

Kenyan gangs seek revenge after MP is killed

Mwaniki

30/01/08 Gettleman

New York Times
Washington Post

Would-be peacemaker killed in Kenya

Opposition legislator slain in Kenya, sparking clashes

30/01/08 McCrummen

30/01/08 Crilly

Kenya stares into the abyss as post-election violence spirals out of control Times

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30/01/08 Roox

30/01/08 Vidal

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Daily Nation

Police probe Were's death

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Shock of MP shot dead after midnight

Daily Nation

Pledge to re-unite Kenya

Barasa

Okombo

President condoles with MP's family

Daily Nation

Four more die as clashes rage in North Rift region

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Daily Nation

City residents mourn MP killed in raid

Police apologise for 'stray' tear gas in Were's compound

Washington Post

Revenge killings stoke a violent cycle in Kenya

29/01/08 Gettleman

Standard

New York Times

Vengeance reignites Kenyan city

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Times

Murder gangs go on the rampage in savage day of tribal bloodletting

Kimball

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Kenya--'They killed our people, so now we'll do likewise'

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Kenyan opposition MP shot dead

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Paralysis as roads cut off in fresh violence

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Britain states its stand on Kenya

Daily Nation

Daily Nation

AU fears over genocide from clashes

29/01/08 Namunane

Report puts mediation efforts in spotlight

Daily Nation

Annan's peace agenda

28/01/08 McCrummen

Protests after Embakasi MP shot dead-MP shot dead in night raid (+2online)Daily Nation

Washington Post

Having driven out business, Kenyan town faces consequences

Kenya

Kenya

Kenya

Kenya

US

Kenya

Kenya

Kenya

Kenya

Kenya

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1139

1209

1405

526

US

US

UK

UK

472 Belgium

500 Belgium

927 Belgium

210

2471

1048

410

568

478

324

370

457

1018

349

1187

462

955

964

848

823

1077

610

600 Belgium

458 Belgium

1478

205

401

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<td>9/04/08</td>
<td>A sad day for Kenya</td>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>1199</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/04/08</td>
<td>Fresh protests in Kibera, Kisumu over impasse</td>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/04/08</td>
<td>Wrangles shift from Cabinet to Civil Service</td>
<td>Standard</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/04/08</td>
<td>Violence breaks out as Kenyan leaders fail to agree cabinet</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/04/08</td>
<td>Protests in Kenya as talks collapse</td>
<td>Times</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/04/08</td>
<td>Unrest in Kenya as peace plan falters</td>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/04/08</td>
<td>Rivals suspend talks on power-sharing</td>
<td>Washington Post</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/04/08</td>
<td>Seven women land top posts</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>Two rivals reach accord on makeup of cabinet</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>Kibaki and Raila unveil coalition team</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>President offers mix of youthful faces and experienced hands</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>1027</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>Raila's long and bumpy drive to the top</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>2871</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>New faces in Cabinet</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>1064</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>Divided opinions on new line up</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>Kibaki names new Cabinet</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>Raila named as new Prime Minister</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>Unity cabinet formed in Kenya, ending deadlock</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>1080</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>Grand Cabinet</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>1624</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>New Cabinet in Grand Coalition</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>New Cabinet in Grand Coalition</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>Kibaki names rival as new Prime Minister</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>775</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/04/08</td>
<td>Unity cabinet formed in Kenya, ending deadlock</td>
<td>Daily Nation</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** 653 newspaper articles
## APPENDIX VII

### List of questions for ethnographic fieldwork

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting of objectives</th>
<th>Interview questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Introduction to the institutional context of the newspaper as news firm or enterprise.</td>
<td>1. The newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Determining the ideology and values of the newspaper.</td>
<td>1.1 Can you describe the orientation of the newspaper? (what is its ideology?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Which values does the newspaper cherish? Which values are considered to be of paramount importance and expressed in the newspaper?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 What is the function of the newspaper? (does it have a role in society and if so what is this role) to inform, to entertain, to advertise? Or something else? Of course a combination is usually the case, but which function predominates or takes precedence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 What are the most important aspects or guidelines of the editorial line or the editorial policy of the newspaper?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.5 Is there a book of rules that determines the style of the newspaper or are journalists free to choose how they write?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.6 Are there perhaps any linguistic, ideological, commercial or other prescriptions that the journalists have to take into account? If so, which are they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.7 What is the target audience of the newspaper? Which audience does the newspaper try to reach? How does your standard reader look like? Do you have a certain reader in mind when you write your articles or is there a kind of pre-determined profile of the reader?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.8 Do all the newspaper articles which have appeared in the print edition of the newspaper also appear in the same literal form on the newspaper’s website?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are the newspaper articles from the print edition accessible online, on the internet?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.9 Is there a digital archive? Are the newspaper articles of the print edition...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(automatically) collected in a kind of (digital) archive? If so, is it immediately or after some time and is this digital archive accessible (for me)? Is it freely accessible or do I have to pay for it?

<p>| B. An exploration of the working of the foreign news office or the foreign desk at the editorial office of the newspaper. |
|---|---|
| d) Trying to get a good understanding of the notion of ‘(foreign or international) news’. |<br />
| e) Mapping out the division of tasks and the hierarchical structure of the (foreign desk) of the newsroom. |
| f) Studying the use of sources of the journalists. |
| <strong>General</strong> |
| <strong>Press agencies</strong> |
| 2. The (foreign) news office |
| 2.1 What is (international or foreign) news? How would you define the notion of ‘news’? |
| 2.2 What is the importance of (foreign or international) news? |
| 2.3 Is there an agreement on the number of newspaper articles per news section per day (e.g. should there be everyday at least one article about Europe, one about Asia and so on?) |
| 2.4 What is the importance of the website and online news reporting? What do you expect from the reader with respect to online news reporting? Do you want him to find more information about a topic on the website or is the website a summary of the newspaper (then the newspaper is more complete, has more news for the reader than the website)? |
| 2.5 How many journalists are working for the newspaper? How many of them are member of the foreign news desk? Does the majority of the journalists hold a permanent appointment or are most journalists freelance? |
| 2.6 Is there a division of tasks or can anyone write about any topic? |
| 2.7 Which journalists have written about the Kenyan elections and who has written about the South-African anti-immigrant violence in Mai? Who covers the story about the war in eastern Congo? |
| 2.8 Which sources are used? What kind of sources (spoken, written, eye witness)? - to write about the Kenyan elections - to write about the SA anti-immigrant violence - to write about the war in DRC |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Audio-visual sources</strong></th>
<th>Depending on the answer(s) to question 2.8 more information will be elicited by means of questions 2.9 till 2.36.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| *(other) Newspapers and magazines* | 2.9 Does the newspaper have a subscription to one or more press agencies? If so, which press agencies?  
2.10 Give the reason why the newsroom is subscribed to such and such a press agencies and not to others?  
2.11 Are the subscriptions evaluated? When and by whom?  
2.12 Were there any changes the past few years with respect to the subscriptions of the press agencies? |
| **Correspondents abroad or foreign correspondents** | 2.13 Is television or radio used as a source of information? If so, which television channels or radio stations are employed as sources for the newspaper reports? Why?  
2.14 To which extent do other (foreign) newspapers or magazines constitute a source of information? What is their language?  
2.15 From which countries do these sources come? Are there contacts between Kenyan journalists and journalists from other African or non-African countries?  
2.16 How are those information sources consulted (website, printed newspapers, by telephone, e-mail, …)?  
2.17 Does the newspaper cooperate with other newspapers? Which? Does the newspaper exchange articles or has it copyright to certain articles from certain newspapers? |
| **Freelance journalists** | 2.18 Does the newspaper have permanent foreign correspondents or journalists abroad? How many? Where are they stationed? In which countries? Why there?  
2.19 How do the foreign correspondents collect news (mainly press conferences, eye witness reports, interviews, etc.)? Hoe vergaren correspondenten in het buitenland nieuws? |
<p>| <strong>Non-journalistic contacts abroad</strong> | 2.20 Does it happen that journalists who don’t live abroad are sent abroad to |
| <strong>NGOs</strong> | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality and reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>g) Identifying the actors of the news selection process; determining the criteria for the selection of news and drawing out the different stages in the process of news selection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) Identifying the actors of the news production process; checking which factors influence and guide the processes of news production.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 2.21 How does this non-permanent, but temporary correspondent find news? How does he work? |
| 2.22 To what extent are freelance journalists appealed to? |
| 2.23 From which countries do foreign freelancers come? |
| 2.24 Do they only write for your newspaper or also for other newspapers? Do they have a kind of exclusivity contract (that states that they write exclusively for your newspaper in this country) or do they sell their articles to more newspapers? |
| 2.25 Are there also non-journalistic contact being made use of as a source of information for the newspaper articles? What kind of contacts are these? Are they fellow countrymen or foreigners? |
| 2.26 Through embassies, pre-determined lists or individually by the journalists connections? |
| 2.27 If compatriots are contacted, is the reason why people are abroad taken into account (e.g. professional or tourist reason) or can just anyone be contacted as an information source? |
| 2.28 Do these people have to satisfy certain criteria to be considered as a good source of information? If so, which criteria would that be? |
| 2.29 Are NGOs or humanitarian organisations (often) used as sources of information about news events? Which organisations are used as information source for news from South Africa, Kenya, DR Congo? |
| 2.30 How are NGOs used as information sources (via press conferences, telephonically or by means of interviews with press officers, etc.)? |
| 2.31 Are the above sources of information ordered hierarchically, i.e. are certain information sources considered to be more reliable than other sources? |
i) Studying the journalistic writing process with special interest in the integration of sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>Is news from western organisations, governments, press agencies, press officers, ... more easily accepted as a source of information on which a newspaper article can be based?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>Do you consciously evaluate the quality of news sources? How? Do you check the truthfulness and reliability of information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>What do you understand as ‘reliable information’? When is information reliable to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>Is news from western organisations, governments, press agencies, press officers, ... considered to be more reliable than other (African) sources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>What do you think about the fact that most major press agencies are western-based? Do you think it is harmful to news reporting about Africa? How do you try to compensate this disadvantage?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>Who determines what is news? Who selects the news?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>Do you have editorial meetings? Who takes part and when do they take place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>What happens before the editorial meeting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>What happens during the editorial meeting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>What happens after the editorial meeting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>Are there other meetings amongst journalists? (e.g. only the journalists of the foreign desk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>Which (informational, journalistic) criteria have to be fulfilled before a piece of information is selected as (foreign) news?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>Are the journalists free to choose about what topics they write?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>You can never treat all the countries in the world to the same extent. Some countries will be covered more than other. Which foreign (African and non-African) countries usually play a major part in the newspaper? Why these countries?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.46 Are there countries you would like to pay more attention to? Are there countries which you regret are underreported?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.47 To what extent do you take your readers into account when you are selecting information to become news and when you are writing a newspaper article?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.48 Who is involved in the process of producing a newspaper article next to the journalist?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.49 Do you experience any restrictions while writing newspaper articles? Are there things you can’t write about or words you can’t use?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.50 Do you feel there is an impact of the ownership on the newspaper?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.51 Are the newspaper articles critically revised and/or corrected before publication? If so, who does this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.52 How does the assembled information get integrated in the newspaper article during the writing process? Which kind of information penetrates most easily to a newspaper report?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.53 How are press releases incorporated in a newspaper article? Which adjustments are being made in terms of style, word choice, grammar, narrative structure, tone, voice, …?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.54 Does it occur that press releases are directly published in the newspaper without any adjustments? When and for what reason?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.55 When do you make use of quotes or paraphrases?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.56 Do you pay attention to the specific language use of newspaper articles? Do you make linguistic choices automatically or do you consciously think about it? If so, how and to what aim?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.57 Does the genre of the newspaper text have a great influence on the language used and sources used; is there a difference between regular news reports, feature articles or commentaries?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.58 Do you verify statements during the writing process? Or do you check the degree of truthfulness while writing a newspaper article? How?

2.59 How and where are information sources mentioned in the newspaper? Do you have a uniform system of acknowledgement of sources and do you always give chapter and verse?

2.60 Do you attach importance to a good acknowledgement of sources?

C. Getting to know the attitude of the journalist with regard to the journalistic practice and his or her profession.

j. Understanding how we can see journalism and journalistic practice; and finding out how the journalist’s profession is seen by journalists themselves.

3. Introspection of the journalist

3.1. Which are the required qualities of a good journalist?

3.2. What are the drawbacks or disadvantages of the profession/ of being a journalist?

3.3. What is the function or role of journalists in society? How do you see your function in society? Do you see yourself or do you consider yourself to be a gatekeeper or rather a kind of value seeker who picks out valuable information out of the flow of information, which can be interesting or relevant to the readers?

3.4. Do you feel journalists have a social responsibility?

3.5. Do you feel you work principally in service of the public or primarily in service of the newspaper company?

3.6. Do you believe it is possible to report the factual truth? Do you believe in objectivity? What is your opinion about objectivity in newspaper reporting? Can objectivity really be achieved or is it rather a professional ideal?

3.7. How far can a journalist go in interpreting events? Can or should a journalist express his or her own opinion or standpoint? Should a journalist restrict him/herself to reporting factually or can he/she also report interpretively?

3.8. How do you see your audience concerning their interests in relation to foreign/international news, particularly European/African news?

3.9. Do you think that journalistic output is
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>too strongly dependent on or determined by professional, institutional or editorial routines? Could you explain that a little bit further?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10. Have you ever been put under pressure not to report on a certain topic or to cover it in a different manner?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11. According to you, which criteria does a good and well-written newspaper article have to meet?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX VIII
Examples of statements checked with informants

Statements derived from newspaper reports

- Voting in Kenya went along ethnic lines. All Luos voted for Odinga, all Kikuyus voted for Kibaki.
- Almost everyone in Kenya whose surname begins with an “O” is a member of the Luos. Voters whose name begins with “M” are almost all members of the Kikuyus.
- On the one hand, Odinga has a streetfighter image; he is a warrior, a rebel. On the other hand, he is a rich, flamboyant businessman who rides around in a bright red $100,000 Hummer and is running as a champion of the poor.
- Kibaki has a reputation of as a courtly gentleman and economics whiz but also as a tribal politician.
- On policy matters Odinga is almost indistinguishable from Kibaki. Political parties are based on persons instead of ideology.

Statements on the basis of academic literature

- Kenyan newspapers are not really national newspapers, because they are only distributed and read in urban centers.
- Politicians cultivate clientele relationships with journalists, so it easier for journalists to approach politicians from their own tribe and politicians may even reserve scoops or give useful information more easily to journalists from their tribe.
- Kenyan newspapers adjust their stories to the readership for economic reasons, i.e. to get a large buying public in certain regions.
- International newspaper reports are heavily dependent on the global press agencies like Reuters and AP.
- Foreign correspondents adjust their language use to their readers and so they can reinforce stereotypes and preconceptions via an ethnocentric frame of interpretation.

Statements based on fieldwork conversations and interviews

- Kenyan journalists use words like tribe and tribal only in positive contexts. The rule is not to use tribal language in newspapers in negative contexts.
- Explicit references to tribes would spark more unrest in other regions during the post-election crisis.
- The international newspapers focused on violence and tribalism.
Appendix IX
Original Daily Nation and Standard news reports about the Kiambaa church tragedy

High Cost Of Poll Violence

The aftershocks of the violence rocking Kenya is being felt in Kampala, where fuel pumps have gone dry. BACK PAGE

Observers Fault Elections

Thursday's General Election fell short of international standards, EU observers have said in their interim report. PAGE 3

Daily Nation

NAIROBI, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2008

A NATION IN A CRISIS

35 burnt alive in church

- Death toll from violence climbs as refuge seekers attacked
- ODM asks its supporters to stop killing political opponents
- UN calls for end to carnage

FULL REPORTS ON PAGES 2-9, 14 AND BACK

Elizabeth Wangai waits outside the Kenya Assemblies of God church in Kiambaa, Eldoret where 35 people were burnt alive by a group of youths in the wake of post-election killings that have rocked various parts of the country. PHOTO: JARED NYATAYA

COMMENT

Give peace a chance

This madness cannot be allowed to go on. Horrific acts continue to come out of the killing fields that have remained after the chaos of the recent national General Election.

The latest one was recorded yesterday when between 35 and 40 women and children seeking refuge in an Eldoret church were burned alive. Those who tried to escape the inferno were hacked to death.

In Machakos, 11 people, most of them from one family, were killed when a murder mob blocked them in a house and set it ablaze.

It gives impetus to the mediation efforts launched yesterday by Commonwealth leaders, to restore peace by opening negotiations between President Mwai Kibaki and Mt. Raila Odinga on Kenya's political future.

They must proceed in haste.

More reports of mass slaughter continue streaming in from Nakuru, Karen, Nairobi, Kapenguria, Homa Bay, Molo, Laiha-

ni, Kakamega and many other parts of the county.

Yesterday, police said at least 176 people had been killed, while another 74000 displaced. These must be extremely con-

servative figures and the toll must be much higher and certain going to rise.

It is not a situation that will peter out on its own. Urgent intervention is required now before it becomes impossible to mediate or even talk. Kenya is one of the most stable democracies in Africa. If it goes aground, what is left to keep the killing fields in bound becomes into the abyss.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

NEWS 2-9, 14, BACK | OPINION 10-11 | LETTERS 12 | WORLD 16-18 | BUSINESS 20 | SPORTS 25-27
Raid on church leaves 35 dead as chaos spreads

House of worship set on fire by 200 marauding youths in Eldoret South

By SAMUEL SHERING and PETER MCHICH

At least 36 people, mostly women and children, died yesterday when a mob armed with fire extinguishers and sticks set on fire a church in Eldoret South constituency, leaving several injured.

The Kilgoris area of Eldoret South constituency, which has been periodically disrupted by bandits and marauding youths, has recorded its most massacres in one day.

A female teacher who was killed in the attack was identified as Emma Nakumnyi, who was on her way to school.

The teacher was among four people who were shot dead yesterday in the area.

A report by the National Disaster Management Authority (NEMA) said that the attack was a result of long-standing grievances between two communities.

“Frustration over land issues has been the cause of the attack,” NEMA official said.

An eyewitness who was among those who witnessed the attack said that the attackers were armed with sticks and stones.

The eyewitness said that the attackers were seen shouting anti-government slogans and loot properties.

A girl who was among those who were killed said that she saw the attackers entering the church.

“They were armed with sticks and stones and were shouting anti-government slogans,” the girl said.

The girl added that she saw the attackers setting the church on fire.

A police officer who was among those who responded to the attack said that the attackers were armed with sticks and stones.

The police officer said that the attackers were seen entering the church and setting it on fire.

The police officer said that the attackers were seen burning the church and setting it on fire.

The police officer said that the attackers were seen carrying away the bodies of the victims.

The police officer said that the attackers were seen setting the church on fire and carrying away the bodies of the victims.

The police officer said that the attackers were seen entering the church and setting it on fire.

The police officer said that the attackers were seen carrying away the bodies of the victims.

The police officer said that the attackers were seen burning the church and setting it on fire.

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The police officer said that the attackers were seen entering the church and setting it on fire.

The police officer said that the attackers were seen carrying away the bodies of the victims.
I acted under a lot of pressure, says Kivuitu

DAMNING ADMISSION: ASKED WHETHER KIBAKI WON ELECTION, POLLS BOSS SAYS: ‘I DON’T KNOW’. HE ADDS PNU AND ODM-KENYA PUSHED HIM TO RELEASE DISPUTED RESULTS

"With elections behind us, it is time for healing and reconciliation among all Kenyans."

---

Mr. Samuel Kivuitu last night made a disturbing admission that he announced results of the fiercely contested presidential election under pressure.

...continued

Peace calls amid continued bloodletting

An old woman breaks down outside the KIG Church in Eldoret, where up to 40 people died when the church was burnt.
Raila sets terms as UK offers to mediate

FROM PAGE 1

only a day after it banned live broadcast.

Yesterday, in his New Year message, Raila called for the 
President to beBinuized and said the 
that he could not accept the 2013 
prime minister. Raila, however, did not name him.

"The first condition is that 
President Kibaki must step down 
and publicly own up to the 
fact that he was wrongly elected," Raila said.

RAIL INSISTED THURSDAY THURSDAY THURSDAY 
UHURU RALLY WOULD RALLY WOULD RALLY WOULD ON 
DESPITE DESPITE DESPITE POLICE 
BAN

He added: "The second 
condition is that the 
negotiations must be 
limited to him as 
Pasqua and his 
Policy Board.

These were "deeply 
disturbed" by the post-
election chaos and 
heathenism. 
On his radio show.

This came a day after the 
President has vowed to 
ban all parties from 
participating in 
elections.

In his New Year message, 
Raila said: "This 
year, we are 
marking the New Year at a 
time when the country has 
just 
been plunged into 
chaos and 
the police have 
been implicated.

"This is the time for 
healing and 
reconciliation among all 
Kenyans. I ask all of us, and 
particularly all leaders, to 
embrace a 
peaceful path for the 
democratic 
change and nation 
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"Another condition is 
that the government 
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A violence victim seeks for first aid from a Kenya Red Cross Society worker in Kitale, yesterday. The Society's Secretary-General, Mr 
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Raila, who is a 
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He said he was 
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Appendix X

Provocative advertisements which were published each time on the same day in both the Daily Nation and The Standard.

WHO KILLED OUR MOTHERS & CHILDREN?

On New Years day, January 1st 2008, women and children taking refuge in The Kenya Assemblies of God Church in Eldoret were burned alive by an organized group in a clear example of ethnic cleansing and murder.

On 16th January 2008, ODM leader & Lang’ata MP Hon. Raila Odinga in a televised BBC TV interview explained what occurred:

“A very powerful point indeed, and we ourselves have issued a statement condemning the incident that took place in a church in Eldoret, but what are the facts? The Catholic father who is in charge has given the explanation in that these people who were attacking members of other communities were being chased and when they were being chased, they went to take refuge in a church and the pursuers then pursued them into the church. They did not know that in the church there were children which were being kept there as refugees. So in the process of course they set the church on fire. I am not saying that action was defensible at all…”

QUESTIONS
A) Does Hon. Raila Odinga know that the church was an Assemblies of God church and not a Catholic church?
B) Who is the Catholic priest he is talking about?
C) Has he recorded a statement with the police about his knowledge of the events?
D) Do Kenyans realize that what was witnessed in Eldoret is nothing short of murder and someone somewhere is a warlord responsible for crimes against humanity?
E) Does anyone know who ordered this attack and the organized ethnic cleansing that saw over 400 people murdered and 250,000 displaced?

GOD KNOWS WHO DID IT AND WARLORDS OF VIOLENCE WILL HAVE TO FACE JUSTICE.
WHY KENYANS SHOULD NEVER BE FOOLLED INTO RESPECTING ECK'S VERDICT

ANYONE WOULD THINK, from the ads the ECK and PNU have been placing in the press, that the recent general election went off without a hitch. Do they think Kenyans are stupid and can so easily be taken for fools?

The ECK and PNU have been desperately trying to answer the ODM's expose of how the rigging was done, which appeared in advertisements in the newspapers on January 20.

Where is the story in the ECK advertisement of the way the commission ignored returning officers at KICC, who were frantically trying to say that the results being announced were not the ones they had recorded in their constituencies?

Where is the story about the presidential results being held back while parliamentary results were announced, so that the pol could be rigged when ECK finally knew how many votes should be added to Kibaki's total in order for him to appear to defeat Raila?

Where is the story of the teargas thrown into KICC's corridors, and the building plunged into darkness as the power was switched off, and the press, diplomats, foreign observers, candidates and agents evicted, so that the ECK chairman could hurriedly announce a fraudulent presidential result in secret?

Where is the story of how the Chief Justice and other dignitaries just happened to be all dressed up and ready to swear Kibaki in at State House 20 minutes later?

The military had been practising at Nyayo Stadium for days, preparing for a joyous national occasion. Why did the swear-in have to be done in a rush, away from public eyes?

The ECK's attempted explanation of how Juja's presidential votes grew from the 48,293 announced by the returning officer at the constituency level to the 100,390 announced at KICC is PATHETIC.

Why would a returning officer announce results, convey these to KICC, complete the necessary Form 17a and go to all the trouble of typing an official letter confirming the results — if he knew that more than half the votes in his constituency had not been counted? EVEN THE ECK'S LIARS ARE SUBSTANDARD.

As for the statement that ECK officials are trustworthy and would never have tampered with the election documents after the tallying — the ECK CHAIRMAN HIMSELF has said that this has been going on,

And when it comes to the ECK chairman — we trusted this man. His friendly demeanour, like a kind father, and his silly jokes, made us feel he would always be on the side of truth, would always fight for what was right. We supported the renewal of his contract because we believed he would serve Kenyans with justice.

But he betrayed us, and because of the great trust we reposed in him, Samuel Kivuitu's betrayal is the worst betrayal of all.

Because of his cowardice and his double-deal, hundreds of Kenyans have died, hundreds of thousands are homeless, and democracy in this country has been set back more than 20 years.

Samuel Kivuitu and the members of the Electoral Commission of Kenya continue to betray Kenyans. The ads they are placing in the newspapers, trying to say that white is black and black is white, are costing more than HALF-A-MILLION SHILLINGS A DAY.

This is OUR MONEY, money paid in taxes by the people of Kenya for the development of this nation, money that could be spent on helping the displaced, paying hospital bills for those injured and shot during protests, and assisting those with the terrible burden of funerals to bear.

Instead, this public money is being spent on trying to persuade Kenyans that their very eyes lied to them, that what they actually saw happening at KICC and elsewhere never really took place.

PNU spent hundreds of millions of shillings on advertising before the election. This didn't persuade people to vote for them. Why do they think their ads will change people's minds now?

If nothing else, Kalonzo Musyoka's endorsement of this 'government' should alert us that something is wrong. This is a man who campaigned on an 'integrity' platform. Throughout his campaign, he sneered at Kibaki, said he could never join him, and swore he would never condone an election that was flawed.

Later, he said he would never accept the vice-presidency while people were dying. Is no one dying in Kalonzo Musyoka's eyes? Kalonzo apparently figured out another route to the glittering prize: he so desperately seeks. At that point, 'integrity' flew out of the window as self-interest rushed in. Is it what you could call a 'jua kali' miracle — one made by yourself at home. After all, apart from a few token appearances elsewhere, Kalonzo really only campaigned on his home turf, didn't he? Wasn't that rather strange for a presidential candidate? Was this a plan they had cooked up long before the polling exercise?

The ECK commissioners and their backers have no moral or intellectual authority to say anything at all in this country, and they should now all pack up and go home and STOP WASTING OUR MONEY.

The Orange Democratic Movement and RAILA ODINGA

Committed to respecting the will of the people
APPENDIX XI
Maps of Kenya (political and ethnic)
(from http://www.kenya-advisor.com/population-of-kenya.html [12/02/2012])
Samenvatting

Een innovatief perspectief op taal en betekenis in krantenberichtgeving


De taalpragmatiek is de studie van contextueel taalgebruik en betekenis. In dit onderzoek wordt het opgevat als een cognitief, sociaal en cultureel perspectief op de werking van taal in de maatschappij in een concrete nieuwscontext. In dat perspectief is nieuws een discursieve constructie van de werkelijkheid. Evenals elke vorm van taalgebruik bevat krantendiscours ideologische aspecten. Journalisten maken (bewust en onbewust) talige en andere professionele keuzes wanneer ze een complexe werkelijkheid trachten te vatten in begrijpelijke nieuwsstukken. Onvermijdelijk belichten ze slechts bepaalde aspecten van de gebeurtenissen en konden ook andere keuzes gemaakt worden met andere betekenissen tot gevolg. Bovendien beïnvloedden krantenartikels de opinies, denkbeelden en wereldkennis (en op basis daarvan mogelijk ook de gedragingen) van de krantenlezers. Dat maakt van de journalistiek een ideologische activiteit. In dit onderzoek wordt ideologie dus niet begrepen als een geheel van politieke principes, noch als een Marxistisch vals bewustzijn, maar als een veranderlijke en onderhandelbare verzameling van ideeënn, opvattingen en zienswijzen, die als vanzelfsprekend worden beschouwd en waarbinnen de werkelijkheid wordt geïnterpreteerd en beschreven. Het gaat over wereldbeelden en referentiekaders die worden uitgedragen en aangewend in krantenartikels.

Dynamische betekeniskaders: tribaal-etnische versus politiek-criminelle interpretaties

De pragmatische discoursanalyse focust op drie analyseniveaus. Op het lexicale niveau worden beladen termen in kaart gebracht via een kwantitatieve inhoudsanalyse. In de internationale pers zijn de woorden tribe (stam), tribalism (tribalisme), ethnic (etnisch), violence (geweld), genocide (genocide), Kikuyu en Luo (2 invloedrijke Keniaanse bevolkingsgroepen) cruciaal, terwijl politics (politiek), PNU (Partij voor Nationale Eenheid, de regeringspartij), ODM (Oranje Democratische Beweging, de grootste oppositiepartij), mediation (bemiddeling), protest (protest), gangs (bendes) en youths (jongeren) sleutelbegrippen zijn in de lokale pers. Op het discursieve niveau wordt de representatie van de sociale actoren bestudeerd. De hoofdrolspelers van de nieuwsverhalen over de Keniaanse crisis zijn president Kibaki, zijn belangrijkste uitdager Odinga, de slachtoffers van geweld en de geweldplegers. In de buitenlandse pers worden zowel de politici als de betrokkenen van het geweld veelal beschreven door middel van etnische classificatie. De Keniaanse pers daarentegen beschrijft de politici overwegend aan de hand van hun huidige politieke functies, terwijl de slachtoffers en daders van geweld niet worden gespecificeerd of negatief worden geportretteerd.
als raiders (overvallers), arsonists (brandstichters) of looters (plunderaars). Op het interpretatieve niveau tussen taalvorm en betekenisafleiding, tussen het expliciete en het impliciete worden presuppositions bestudeerd. Dat zijn achtergrondveronderstellingen die voor waar worden aangenomen en de gemeenschappelijke grond van de communicatie vormen. In de buitenlandse pers wordt veelvuldig voorondersteld dat Kenia een land is van etnische conflicten of stammenontwisten. In de Keniaanse pers wordt vaak voorondersteld dat corrupte, falende politici en criminele bendes achter de ontaarding van de Keniaanse verkiezingen zaten.

Die analyse onthult dus twee dominante betekeniskaders. De Amerikaanse, Belgische en Britse kranten concentreren zich voornamelijk op de etnische aspecten van de conflicten in Kenia, terwijl de Keniaanse kranten alle expliciete verwijzingen naar etniciteit angstvallig vermijden en de nadruk leggen op politieke en criminele intriges. Tegelijkertijd wordt duidelijk dat die dominante betekeniskaders niet exclusief zijn en dat ze niet vastliggen. Meestal laten zowel de Keniaanse als de buitenlandse journalisten nog andere interpretaties open en naarmate de tijd verstrijkt, komen er meer en meer interpretaties in de omloop. Zowel de Keniaanse als de buitenlandse pers biedt geleidelijk aan meer perspectieven op de gebeurtenissen.

Ideologische betekenissen, de nieuwsproductiecontext en journalistieke tegenwerpingen


Het vaak etnische discours in de buitenlandse kranten kan gedeeltelijk worden verklaard aan de hand van contextuele factoren. Verschillende geïnterviewde buitenlandcorrespondenten gaven aan dat etniciteit en verwante termen zoals tribe, etnische groep of tribalism een duidelijke verklarende kracht hebben en bovendien ook de aandacht van de lezers trekken. Zulke termen zijn herkenbaar voor de lezers en wekken hun nieuwsgierigheid. Ze laten journalisten toe om conflicten eenvoudig en begrijpelijk te schetsen en vormen dus een handig interpretatiekader. Bovendien maken ze vergelijkingen mogelijk met andere Afrikaanse conflicten. Tot slot volgen etnische visies op Afrika soms uit het wereldbeeld van sommige journalisten of passen ze in het wereldbeeld waarvan journalisten menen dat de meerderheid van de lezers het delen. Toch zijn buitenlandcorrespondenten zich bewust van de spanning tussen verklaring en vertekening bij de toepassing van etnische termen op Afrikaanse conflicten. Getuige deze reflectie van The Times correspondent Tristan McConnell:

“The more time you spend in Kenya the more difficult it is to ignore the organising role that tribe plays. Look at the way people vote. To ignore it is to do a disservice to your reader. Now, where the problem comes up is that as soon as you use the word tribe all other nuances are thrown out of the window. So, tribe is one organising principle in society, in the political disputes and in the conflicts that arise around here. But it’s only one, one of a number of different organising principles that are at play; others are social status, religion, poverty and the wealth gap. If you put tribe and wealth disparity alongside each other, well, tribe is a sexier word, it’s gonna get people’s attention, it’s a shorthand, it presents a simple and comprehensible narrative. We need to talk about ethnicity, but the talking about it tends to obscure anything else. Clearly, it is wrong to look at conflicts and political disputes in Africa as tribal. Tribe plays a part in them, but that is not all there is to it. Yet, as soon as you use the word tribe people think that’s all it’s about…and if you got to tell the story of Kenyan politics in 500
words...it's difficult. So, I think that's the problem we face when talking about ethnicity and tribe and I don't really know what the solution is.”

Sommige talige uitdrukkingen of interpretaties in krantenberichten waaraan bepaalde lezers of mediacritici aanstoot nemen, worden gebruikt om efficiënt te communiceren. Zoals Koen Vidal, chef buitenland van De Morgen opmerkte: “Ik ben nogal voorzichtig om etnies te benoemen, maar soms kan je er bijna niet om heen. Je moet daar ook een beetje praktisch in blijven, en het belangrijkste is denk ik dat je als journalist niet racistisch begin je te denken, maar dat je daar gevoelig voor blijft; ik probeer dat te vermijden, maar soms om duidelijk te zijn... zolang je een conflict maar niet puur etnisch begin uit te leggen, want dan zit je met een heel gereduceerd interpretatiekader”.

De Keniaanse kranten streefden harmonie en vrede na in hun berichtgeving. Zij vermeden expliciete verwijzingen naar etnische groepen uit vrees voor een escalatie van het geweld. Zoals David Mugonyi, politiek reporter van de Daily Nation, zei:

“We try as much as possible not to say this tribe is killing that tribe for the simple reason that...when, for example, you write a story and say Luos yesterday killed hundred Kikuyus, we believe that Kikuyus in different parts of the country, who read this story tomorrow will retaliate and maybe they will want to kill one hundred Luos. So we will not be helping the public, we will not be helping solving the problem.”

Wat de zaken complexer maakt, is de verschillende invulling die westers lezers en Afrikanen geven aan noties van etniciteit. In Kenia, bijvoorbeeld, wordt er een onderscheid gemaakt tussen etniciteit (of tribe) als een positief onderdeel van ieders identiteit of cultuur en een negatieve vorm van etnische uitbuiting of misbruik van etnische gevoelens voor politieke of zelfzuchtige doeleinden (zogenaamde negatieve etniciteit of tribalism). De term stam of tribe heeft er niet zozeer (of niet altijd) een negatieve, primitieve, barbaarse connotatie. Zoals The Standard journalist Alex Ndegwa opmerkte: “It is the house style that you don't identify the tribe in conflict situations, but a different context might allow you to name the communities, when you're talking about the positive stuff. If it is something that causes conflict, you don't use tribal tags, so it really depends on the context: in negative contexts we try to keep tribe out of it.” Ook in de Keniaanse berichtgeving werden talige en journalistieke keuzes dus deels bepaald door contextuele factoren.

Toch kan er eveneens kritiek worden geleverd op de Keniaanse kranten, want de vraag is of ze er werkelijk in slaagden om het escalerende geweld te kalmeren door informatie achter te houden. Het is niet echt accurate verslaggeving wanneer bepaalde verklarende aspecten van sommige conflicten worden verduisterd. Door etnische aspecten te verwijzen, blokkeerden ze het publieke debat over etniciteit en de manipulatie ervan door politieke leiders. Op die manier draagt de Keniaanse pers er onrechtstreeks toe bij dat de cultuur van strafloosheid kan blijven bestaan.

Door discoursanalyse te combineren met etnografisch onderzoek op krantenredacties worden in deze thesis dus enkele interessante inzichten gepresenteerd over de complexiteit van de journalistieke praktijk en over de interactie tussen taal, context, interpretatie en ideologie.
Abstract
This thesis presents an ethnographically-supported linguistic pragmatic analysis of news discourse on Kenya’s post-election crisis (December 2007 – April 2008). In search for intertextual links and ideological meanings in national and international press coverage thematically-related newspaper reports from the US (New York Times, Washington Post), the UK (The Independent, The Times) and Belgium (De Morgen, De Standaard) were contrasted to local newspaper articles (from Daily Nation, The Standard). This critical discourse analysis focused on patterns of word choice and keywords at the lexical level, the representation of social actors at the discursive level, and presupposition at the pragmatic level of the journalistic language use. An ethnic frame of interpretation was dominant in the foreign press, while the Kenyan press tended to report on the events from a politico-criminal perspective. Several journalistic and discursive choices with ideological potential, mainly concerning the tribal language use in the international press and the suppression of ethnicity in the local press, could be further explained by contextual factors from the news production process. For foreign correspondents tribe names and expressions such as tribal war or ethnic clashes were useful as they provided a means to narrate the news stories in a simple and comprehensible way and appealed to the audiences in the US, the UK and Belgium. The downside is that other factors of the violent crisis, such as land issues, historic injustices, political patronage, poverty, migration and recent socio-economic trends, were underexplored. The Kenyan journalists avoided explicit references to ethnicity, even when ethnic factors were involved in some of the conflicts, because it was editorial policy or they believed it would inflame passions and aggravate the situation. This kind of self-censorship can also be criticized, because it can be questioned whether the Kenyan press succeeded in soothing the anxiety by withholding information. Instead of sweeping them under the carpet, social issues, such as ethnic tensions, should be debatable so that long-term solutions can be found. It is argued that both the foreign and the local press can improve the accuracy of their reporting by being more transparent, providing more context and offering different perspectives.

Roel Coesemans