

MANAGEMENT SCIENCE AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION: UPSETTING ELECTORAL TRADITIONS IN KENYA

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Introduction

In the month of October a year ago Kenya was in a tight political spot. The economy was growing negatively; poverty had set in, in a big way with nearly 70% of the population living below the poverty line. Unemployment had risen sharply as a result of collapse and closure of numerous industries. The level of illiteracy was rising rapidly as a result of declining state investment in education in a poverty stricken society. The media was replete with reports of looting of billions of public funds, grabbing of public land set aside for essential purposes, and plunder of government institutions. Many were reports of private land and other property taken away by public figures, and nothing could happen to them. By October 2002, all these scandals sounded like fairly tales. State institutions collapsed one after the other as a result of corruption in the police, judiciary, and in the entire public service.

Economic activities collapsed too, especially farming and industry, with the result that workers were laid off in droves between 1993 and 2001. Crime rate hit an all time high record as more and more people became converted to the belief that corruption and not hard work was their only way of making ends meet. Kenyans became sick and tired of this state of affairs.

Yet the government responsible for this state of affairs was unapologetic. Since 1992, all democratization efforts and demands for an end to corruption, for accountability, and for a new style of government, meant nothing to the government of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and its main protagonists. Instead, they strengthened their resolve to stay in power by any means.¹ KANU had plans in place to use most of tactics it had employed to get itself "elected" in spite of people's wishes to the contrary. No doubt all the good will was with the opposition in 2002 as it was in 1992 and 1997 when the opposition lost to KANU twice. For the opposition to overcome KANU politically and get elected to replace it into power this time round, much more was required in form of political communication among the opposition parties themselves, and then between these parties and the electorate. It was here that professional support was most critical to design an effective system of political communication and manage it efficiently. This was the only way of averting yet another political catastrophe for Kenya.

Understanding political situation

The role of election management is to facilitate adequate communication between the candidates or their political parties so as to influence the voters sufficiently enough as to cause them to demonstrate their preference of such candidates or parties when casting their votes. Scientific election management is based on a systematic build up of data that specifies the pattern of things and points at the opportunities to be exploited for successful electoral results. To get to a precision level of determining the pattern one wishes to create in order to win an election, situational analysis must be carried out, drawing from the past experience and looking at the present strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It is out of this analysis that one determines the required political, institutional and organizational framework to mount a winning election campaign.

¹ KANU was formed in 1960 and formed the first independence government in 1963, ruling the country as a single party for the best part up to 1992 when the first multi-party election was held. KANU retained power by default until KANU was defeated by the opposition, in a peaceful election on December 27, 2002.

In the particular case of Kenya, this meant the following:

- Comparing the strengths and weaknesses of opposition parties with those of KANU, the competitor party;
- Establishing the areas that need enhancing in order to strengthen the competitiveness of the opposition against KANU;
- Clearly isolating the weaknesses KANU's that must be exploited. For example, it was observed from previous elections that KANU had always and consistently relied on governmental structure and election falsehood and many types of rigging in order to win elections since independence.² Without state resources KANU became a very weak party and unable to mount a credible election. Determining which of the strengths of competitors must be played down in the eyes of the public, and which ones must be turned into the object of intensive propaganda against the candidate.
- Establishing which of the weaknesses of your candidate or your party must be worked on in order to reduce their effect on the behavior of the electorate, and
- Establishing which of your candidate's strengths can be drummed up and effectively marketed to the voters in order to win their admiration and emotional support.

Previous experiences and the situation in 2002

The experiences of 1992 and 1997 clearly demonstrated some of the best opportunities the opposition parties had to win the two presidential elections. The question asked after each of these two elections was, why did they fail to exploit the massive popular clamor for change and garner enough votes to win power over KANU? The answer to this question may be summarized in form of a SWOT analysis as illustrated below. The situation was very similar to that of 2002, and hence the importance of the analysis.

Strengths

- Massive support by massive followers behind opposition movement and democratization
- Massive support for liberalized political space and political freedoms of expression, assembly, press, etc.
- Massive support for a combined opposition
- Leadership of opposition not as implicated in scandals as the ruling party's leaders

Weaknesses

- Low level of political party institutionalization
- Lack of clearly defined and clearly articulated political ideology and declaration of basic values to unite the members or followers
- Weak organizational frame work
- Weak fund raising methods, hence lack of adequate funds to run the affairs of the party and adequately finance elections

² In previous elections and by-elections, KANU had used more than 150 methods of electoral cheating and vote rigging spread across the entire electoral process, and often not without the knowledge or cooperation of the members or officers of the Electoral Commission of Kenya. Even in 2002 removal of some pages of the voters register in one constituency and their inclusion in the registers of another constituency in order to deny the affected voters from voting could not have happened without the direct involvement of ECK.

- Lack of funds renders political parties exposed to monetary lures and bribery, and makes them open to manipulation by wealthy members and friends, especially wealthy businessmen
- Lack of united opposition or coalition of parties
- Inexperience in political negotiation and horse trading
- With four political parties with a large constituency - KANU, DP, FORD- Kenya, and NPK- it was clear that no one party was able to win the elections alone; yet they were unable to unite or form winning coalition(s)³
- Weak party structure and network limited to geographic and ethnic regions

Opportunities

- General public fatigue arising out of many years of one party dictatorship and personal rule
- Numerous public scandals against the ruling party and government
- Economic collapse due to KANU government economic and social mismanagement
- Oppressive methods of the ruling party KANU and the hatred this engendered among members of the public
- Unfulfilled promises by KANU
- Massive corruption by KANU Government officials at all levels especially at the top
- Theft of public funds by leaders and officials of the ruling government
- Grabbing of public land and illegal transfer to private ownership;
- Stoppage of KANU's reliance on state machinery to win elections. By 1992, this party had completely forgotten how to conduct and win an election without the support of state structure and security machine to help the party candidates secure presidential, parliamentary and civic seats. The party was so dependent on state resources and election rigging that blocking the usage of such resources as state network, state funds, state vehicles, provincial administration, and security machine would significantly affect KANU's ability to win any election. This opportunity was not applied in 1992, and attempts to use it in 1997 came too late in form of Inter-party Parliamentary (IPPG) group reforms.

Threats

- Moi's experience in competitive elections among different parties in the 1960's
- Moi's experience and skills in ethnic manipulation for political purposes; some of these he had learned from the colonial government while others were learned from Jomo Kenyatta under whom he served as a vice-president for 12 years. He ultimately perfected them and used them ruthlessly against his opponents and in favor of his friends.
- Moi's political experience and manipulative political and financial skills
- Moi's long control of security branches of government, especially police, para-military police unit, the armed forces, and the country's intelligence agency
- Moi's long experience in manipulating and rigging elections, and his perfected art of manipulating all other aspects of electoral process in favor of the ruling party-KANU; for example, he was smart when it came to the appointment of the chairman and members of the electoral commission and was careful to put in place people who were completely loyal to him and who were willing to support his demand for support to stay in power whether people liked it or not; he was careful when creating administrative districts loyal to KANU and the electoral commission almost automatically made them constituencies in his favor;

³ Finally formation and maintenance of a winning coalition was one of the vehicles used by the opposition to win elections and replace KANU as a government in 2002.

- Oppressive machinery of one party state dictatorship still intact
- Ruling party continuing governing through the oppressive laws restricting freedom of speech or expression, assembly, movement, press, and association
- Massive capacity of the ruling party to mobilize the entire government machinery to (1) campaign for the KANU and (2) work against the opposition parties and associated organizations, groups or individuals
- Opposition leaders ill preparedness to compete for power; in stead they settled for competition for influence; in the past all had competed within the same ruling party and therefore competed for positions of influence but not for power;
- Inexperience of most opposition parties in inter-party electoral competition;
- KANU's long and very well developed experience, schemes and methods of rigging elections;
- Opposition parties' unawareness of the ruling party's capacity to rig elections even within the multi-party conditions;
- Divided opposition and its inability to sustain organized coalition(s) for the sole purpose of replacing KANU, the party in power;
- Moi's perfected skill of playing opposition parties against each other, extending state or personal resources to some in order to destroy the others, and vice versa; they finally end up destroying each other's chances of accessing power through the ballot to which, as opposition parties, they were all committed.
- A divided opposition whose leaders were unable to come tighter and compete for power jointly in 1992 and 1997, thereby leading to a total humiliation by KANU when indeed they commanded a total of two thirds majority of votes on both occasions; and
- Lack of a huge countrywide support for each of the opposition parties individually; each of these parties attracted support for the ethno-regional districts of the party leaders, they harbored mutual wariness and mistrust that kept them divided for a whole decade between 1992 and 2002.

As can be seen, the opposition had a few, but major, strengths in its favor. It took such strengths for granted and failed to see the numerous weaknesses that had the potential of rendering their electoral effort a doubtful enterprise. Sure enough, there were some opportunities that someone ought to have exploited to the maximum. But numerous and ubiquitous were the threats to opposition's bid for power, especially as individual candidates were fronted by relatively weak individual political parties.

In spite of the high stakes, the opposition preferred to handle electoral politics and elections themselves with much less seriousness than the occasion demanded. Despite the fact that in 1992 and 1997 KANU hired professionals with some experience in political marketing and media propaganda management, the opposition parties adopted the attitude that everything was obviously in their favor, relaxed for the better part. They instead resorted to friends who claimed to know how to manage elections. The opposition candidates and political parties therefore declined to employ the services of quality election management with a capacity to do a political and electoral SWOT analysis and come up with strategies of tackling the real situation on the ground with the aim of increasing the chances of winning the 1992 or 1997 elections.

The people who were charged with the responsibility of election management on behalf of various opposition parties were no doubt efficient and effective managers in their own right within their professional lines of competence. But they were oftentimes politically naïve, and

had no competence in election management. They had neither the adequate training in areas related to election management, nor had they been exposed to any positive experience or association regarding properly and successfully organized and managed local or nationwide elections.

As can be seen, the opposition had numerous strengths in its favor and which it took for granted and therefore failed to see the weaknesses, and opportunities, and threats confronting its bid for power. The opposition never employed the services of quality election management with a capacity to design strategies and methods of dealing with the situation and increase the probability of winning the election under very hostile conditions.

Professionalization of 2002 Presidential Election Management

The caliber of the Presidential Election Boards of the Democratic Party (DP), FORD-Asili, FORD-Kenya, Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Development Party (NDP), in 1992 and 1997 elections was that of people who despite being professional managers in their own right, had neither adequate political training related to election management, nor any positive experience or association with properly organized and managed nationwide elections. Some of them had failed in their own elections and one wondered how they expected to help others win, least of all the president. They squandered the numerous opportunities at their disposal, and developed no credible formula for dealing with the many threats that clearly jeopardized opposition capacity to win the two elections. The 2002 situation changed when professional election management was employed by NARC to manage the Kibaki election, and therefore influence the outcome of parliamentary and civic election in favor of the opposition.

The situation changed in 2002 when Kibaki decided to professionalise the management of NARC presidential election. With that decision, efforts were made to professionalise the entire NARC presidential election, thereby completely changing the character of political communication in Kenya. The results were equally transformed from the previous elections, with the opposition gathering 3.8 million votes against the nearest competitor, Uhuru Kenyatta with 1.8 million votes.

NARC Strategic Election Objectives, 2002

Like any other soundly organized election, The first thing the professional management team had to do was to come up with a strategic plan that would get the opposition in power either as individual party or as a coalition. The team considered all variables carefully and came up with the 2002 NARC election strategic goal that was “to get political power by gathering enough votes to get a landslide victory for its presidential candidate.” It was estimated that KANU had the capacity to garner some 1.5 million votes. On this basis NARC management team decided that a clear landslide victory for its candidate required a clearance of not less than 4 million votes. That meant the need to work hard and skillfully so that the difference between Kibaki and the candidate following him would be in excess of 4 million votes. That was the target set by NARC presidential election management team. It was a goal that demanded a well worked out political and election strategic plan. Without doubt the goal also demanded efficiently executed election skills, as well as availability of adequate financial, human and other resources. At the end of the day the strategic plan took these variables into

account, after considering the SWOT analysis, the management team came up with the following in form of strategic objectives for NARC presidential election:

1. To promote coalition of parties as the only option the opposition parties had if they were to win power. This meant demonstrating in the most graphic terms the fact that failure by the opposition leaders to compromise and form some coalitions would lead to each of them being swept aside by the voting public who would ruthlessly be seeking to push out such leaders completely out of the political arena. It was put before each of these leaders that the Kenyan public were ready to send all or any of them into a permanent political oblivion for failure to form coalitions that would break the prevailing political stalemate since 1992;
2. To do everything necessary to secure Kibaki's position as the candidate of the main opposition coalition;
3. To mobilize all available means of fund raising in support of the Kibaki campaign; to mobilize resources of the donor countries to support training of election agents of all political parties in a bid to eliminate electoral cheating and vote rigging;⁴
4. To get all political players to focus on getting political power first, as all else would come to them thereafter; this to be done through formation of a coalition strong enough to beat KANU on the ballot and regardless of KANU's control of state machinery, and through ensuring that the coalition held together no matter what until the elections were over and Kibaki was president;
5. To establish an efficient machinery to collect all relevant and adequate information, analyze it and produce knowledge that would enable the management to put together and maintain an efficient campaign strategy consistent with the numerical substance of the 2002 Kibaki election goal;
6. To develop the message for the electorate in form of an election manifesto that would appeal to all voters regardless of their political persuasion, and market such a message in a way that Kibaki and NARC would become the center of discussion at all public and private occasions throughout the campaign period.
7. To apply pressure of the donor community, the opposition parties and the civil society to get the government to legislate against the use of such resources for partisan political purposes. Minimizing such use of state resources, particular for purposes of electoral cheating and vote rigging presented a big opportunity for the opposition to compete favorably with KANU on a more or less even ground.
8. To employ every marketing skill in the book to get Kibaki and NARC to become the most desired political products in the country; and to use all possible political pressure and political propaganda to break KANU's readiness to unleash sufficient state forces of coercion in a manner that would affect NARC election plan. This was intended to influence electoral environment in favor of NARC, though a lot of damage had been done before NARC came into being.
9. To secure the Kibaki votes by every means, and especially by making sure that the traditional massive electoral fraud and vote rigging that characterized the 1988, 1992 and 1997 elections did not take place this time round;
10. To ensure that the election results were broadcast over the radio as the management team received them from the polling stations countrywide; then maintain a tally that would facilitate the announcement of results of presidential elections within twenty four hours after the close of the polling on December 27, 2002.

⁴ Donors such as Germany and US extended funds for training of party agents covering all the parties, including KANU and the opposition parties. This was done in the interest of free, fair and transparent election.

11. To ensure that the ECK announced the true results that were identical to those of NARC presidential election team and not any other results, and that the same ECK declared Kibaki, and did not declare any other person, the winner of the presidential election.
12. To ensure Kibaki was sworn in as President, and that there would be no attempt to swear anyone else; this would firmly render any attempt to carry out a post-polling electoral coup both impotent and practically impossible.
13. To see that Kibaki formed the government any time after January 1, 2003.

Coalition Building and Election Management in 2002

By far getting the main opposition parties to enter into a binding coalition to fight elections together became was the biggest challenge of all.

By 2002, none of the political parties in Kenya had a large following enough to win an election alone. Their support was unevenly distributed in the eight provinces of Kenya, with the bulk of their support coming from the provinces or districts and ethnic group(s) most associated with the party head. This drawback affected all political parties, KANU, DP and FORD-Kenya.

Meanwhile, the FORD-Asili in 1992 and the FORD-People in 1997 had lost favor with the voting public after the electorate realized that their leaders had wittingly or unwittingly played the predator's role whose mission was not to defeat KANU, but rather to ensure that Kibaki lost his bid for presidency on both occasions. In the two elections the two parties, knowing well they could not gain the presidency, utilized enormous resources to divert many of the uncommitted voters from casting votes for Kibaki. By so doing they also indirectly led some voters to cast their votes for KANU. On many occasions the leaders of these parties appealed to their supporters to vote for the ruling party KANU rather than Kibaki, thus significantly contributing to the defeat of the entire opposition. This was the kind of political communication that aimed at confusing the political scene out of a passionate personality clash or hatred. On this basis, FORDP-People and other smaller parties were expected to try this strategy again in 2002. With or without their knowledge, FORD-People leaders knew well they never had the numbers to get their presidential nominee anywhere, and one can only extrapolate from past experience and conclude that they were doing it at the behest of KANU. All the same NARC strategists who were ready for them went ahead and developed innovative counter strategies of political containment that saw Kibaki and NARC campaigns adequately insulated from such mercenaries and political predators.

In their search for a way forward the leadership of DP decided to go any length to ensure the successful formation of a coalition involving numerically stronger opposition parties, but also welcoming other serious parties. Kibaki, then the chairman of DP, first approached FORD-Kenya's chairman, Kijana Wamalwa, and won his confidence.

Charity Ngilu was the next target. Originally she was a leading member of DP in 1992, but she defected and fought for the presidential position on a Social Democratic Party (SDP) ticket in 1997 and became fourth after Moi (KANU), Kibaki (DP), Wamalwa (FORD-Kenya), and Raila Odinga (National Development Party (NDP)). When Raila's NDP was absorbed (some say swallowed) by KANU, Ngilu's SDP was hit by habitual leadership wrangles for want of a clear political direction. She saw no future in the party. And in the hope that both DP and FORD-Kenya would seek to band together around a new party in

order to save face, she formed the National Party of Kenya (NPK), in May 2002, and immediately offered her party as apart of the ongoing search for a coalition for the opposition. This became the beginning of the famous breakfast meetings among Kibaki, Wamalwa and Ngilu. Prospects of a coalition and building sufficient capacity to mobilize voters to win the next election now appeared quite real and hence politically quite reassuring.

Meanwhile, opposition political sympathizers and strategists relayed a very strong message to the main political parties through various workshops organized for the training of political parties. They made it abundantly clear to the leadership of the main political parties - DP, FORD-Kenya, SDP, and now NPK, that politically they had only two choices, namely, to form a coalition and fight they elections together, or be relegated into political oblivion by the wrath of the electorate. "Form coalition now or perish," was the message.⁵

This message sank deeper as the election clock ticked. When the elections drew near other parties like and Civil Society Organizations joined the negotiations to press for the consummation of the much-awaited coalition. Ultimately a deal was struck and the first serious coalition of parties with the common objective of fighting elections together was born. At a full-to-capacity Ufungamano House in Nairobi, the venue of many key political declarations since 1991, the leaders of DP, FORD-Kenya, and NPK, other eight parties and two CSOs, announced their solemn agree to nominate Mwai Kibaki as their presidential candidate agreement to fight the election together under the banner of the National Alliance Party of Kenya (NAK). This was one of the most sensational moments of Kenya's political history. But more surprises were yet to come.

This move by the opposition had immediate, very serious and far-reaching implications on Kenya's political landscape. With the nomination of Kibaki as the opposition presidential candidate, and with Moi's commitment to the nomination of Uhuru Kenyatta as KANU's presidential candidate, two blessings in disguise had visited the country. In the first place fronting two presidential candidates from Central Province, one in KANU and the other in the opposition, meant that the ethnic factor where the Kikuyu candidate would be the villain and therefore unacceptable to other Kenyans was shattered. All along this was Moi's principal political card. It was finally crushed, and KANU's fall now became imminent. Political pundits could now see a day when Kenyans could work together for a common course without recourse to their ethnic cocoons and petty parochialism. The question in everyone's mind, however, was: could it be that Kenya was about to witness the beginning of a new era, one bolstered mutual confidence and trust among the forty two plus language groups in the country? A new wave of nationalism was here and it sent ripples throughout the entire fabric of the nation.

In the second place, through his imposition of Uhuru Kenyatta on KANU delegates as his presidential nominee, Moi alienated, humiliated and gravely slighted both Raila Odinga and George Saitoti, the two leading top competitors for KANU presidential nomination. To NAK these two constituted the cream of the expected fall out. Their importance was based on the

⁵ The Agency for Development Education and Communication (ADEC), National Democratic Institute (NDI) were some of the CSOs that organized several training workshops for political parties countrywide to promote coalition, political communication, and proper election organization and management. They were supported with funds from the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and USAID among other donors. Individual political parties also made a big contribution for the training of their top leadership and election agents.

large combined size of the electorate they commanded in different parts of the country.⁶ It was also calculated that through their influence, both Raila and Saitoti would bring with them other leaders like Kalonzo Musyoka, William Ntimama, Moody Awori, and Fred Gumo. The combined group disgruntled with Moi's behavior had left KANU with at least three options ahead of them. They considered forming a new party and field one among them to run for presidency. They also considered joining one of the existing political parties, and supporting one of them for presidential nomination in such a party. Equally they considered entering into a coalition deal with one of the existing coalitions, NAK and Kenya People's Coalition. Their motive being to remove Moi and KANU from power in revenge for the humiliation he meted against them. It was here that NAK strategists sought to demonstrate beyond any doubt that the bitterness the ex-KANU leaders had with Moi could only be rewarded if they joined NAK and not any other party or group of parties. The anticipated reward was aptly presented to them by being assured, first, of non-contested direct nomination for parliamentary seats, and second, of being partners in power sharing as ministers once NARC won the elections.

By the time KANU's fall out took place, the name, the spirit, and liberating mission of NAK symbolized by the "Olympic torch" reverberated throughout the country. Even before the fall out, the slighted KANU leaders started associating with one of the existing miniature parties, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). They quickly manufactured a party symbol cum slogan, "*rainbow*". Contacts between these leaders and NAK leadership were established, and negotiations started behind the scene. On the day Uhuru Kenyatta was to be declared the presidential candidate, the *rainbow leaders* entered into formal negotiations with NAK leadership at the Serena Hotel. The two teams proceeded to the Uhuru Park for a public rally, where Raila took the bold lead and preemptively, and without prior notice, pronounced his acceptance of Kibaki as the compromise presidential candidate in what is now acknowledged as a famous declaration "Kibaki tosha", that is, Kibaki was enough. Despite a few murmurs from the FORD-People leaders Simon Nyachae who also expected nomination, Kibaki became the undisputed presidential candidate for the widened opposition. This became the most important indicator that the chances of the opposition forming the next government within the a few months were real.

The coming together of NAK and LDP was inspired by the South African Rainbow National spirit. It was not based on any commonality of principles or political values. It was fundamentally a marriage of convenience. For Kibaki and NAK the coming of LDP clearly brought power closer than ever before. For LDP the move would ensure that Moi was thoroughly punished and humiliated for slighting them, while at the same time they would be assured of a place in under NARC dispensation. The saying that in politics there are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies could not have been more fitting.

By its composition and variegated interests, NARC was intrinsically a polarized and a weak coalition. More than anything else, NARC needed very careful handling and nurturing throughout the election campaign, and more so thereafter when it formed the government. Nevertheless, the fact that NARC was formed at all and eventually formed the government is a living tribute to the numerous and great talents, skills and strategies that went into the negotiations, confidence building and coalition management in order to set the country finally

⁶ Together with their followers, they could influence most of Nyanza province, a big part of western province, and a big chunk the Rift Valley province. They would also significantly influence election outcomes in Eastern, Nairobi, and Coast provinces. This was on account of their ethnic and other considerations.

free through the ballot rather than through the barrel of the gun. Such efforts had not been witnessed in Kenya before where the mission was to hold the parties together throughout the electioneering period and until it won the presidential and other elections on December 27, 2002.

Election management set up

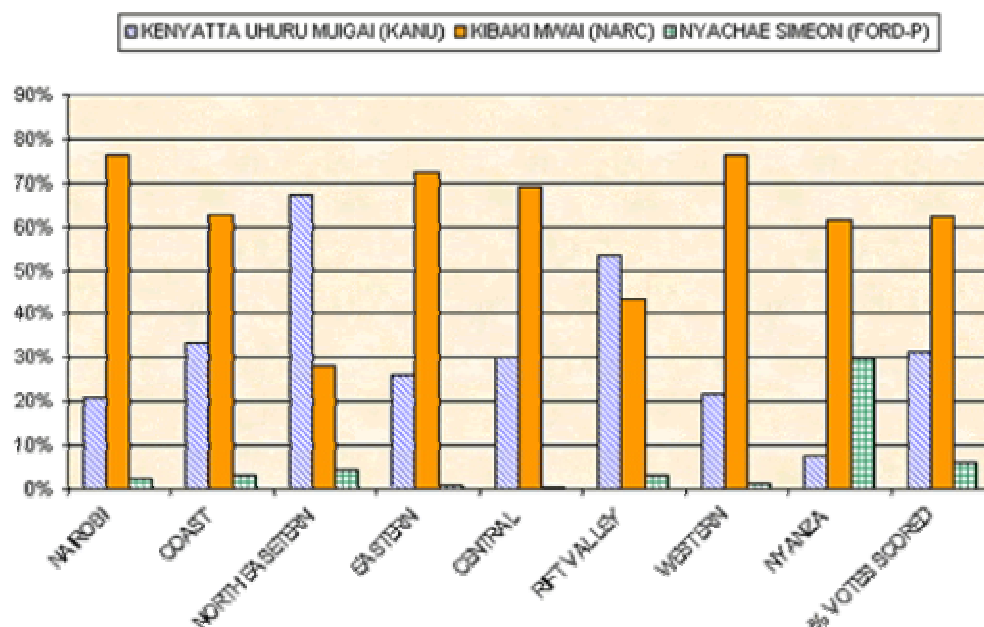
Having overcome the most formidable challenge, Kibaki election team now turned to nitty-gritty of professional election management whose objective was to reach out to the electorate countrywide and influence them to vote massively for NARC. Specifically, the team focused on the following:

- Setting up an election office and command post, and equipping it with the requisite personnel, equipment and funds to get the election campaign in motion. This amounted to establishing the top campaign organization, set up campaign roles and functions, and get the people to perform them.
- Setting a Kibaki election structure and network countrywide to match, surpass or neutralize state administrative and security network that KANU had all the years to retain itself in power regardless of people's wishes. The newly formed NARC had no network of its own, while the network of nearly all the constituent parties that formed this coalition were very weak institutionally and technically incapable of mounting and sustaining a credible election campaign consistent with the 2002 Kibaki election goal.
- Crafting and continually updating the necessary geo-political outlay to checkmate and overcome KANU and governmental machinery, and subjecting such an outlay to critical scrutiny and scientific testing, remodeling and retesting at different stages, until it passed as a tool effective enough to do the job successfully. This particular item was designed much earlier, and it gave impetus to the rest of election related designs. Thus, by October 2001, the conceptual design for an appropriate Kibaki election was in place. But the core political ingredients were yet to be worked out. This took much longer than anticipated, primarily because KANU believed in delaying tactics so as to give itself an upper hand through sudden and rapid strike. The Kibaki team was fully aware of this Machiavellian political device and was ready to tackle it with equally good and unexpected initiatives that KANU could not predict. In addition a superior and efficient election management machine had been up to KANU's surprise. Between September and December 2002, Kibaki election team was able to organize, coordinate, direct and control political communication throughout the country despite some of the problems that characterized the 1992 and 1997 elections. Consequently, KANU was totally confused and sent off-balance by the new and sudden unpredictability that Kibaki and NARC introduced in the electoral competition for the first time since 1992.

What were the results?

The results of this election can be summarized in Figure 3. This figure illustrates the enormous support Kibaki and NARC obtained from the 2002 election whose political design and election management was professionally conducted. Kibaki got a big majority of votes in six out of eight provinces, and secured more than 62 percent of the total vote. This was very close to the votes the combined opposition got in 1992 and 1997, once again signifying the significance of the coalition in bringing Kibaki and NARC to power in 2002.

figure 3: % votes per candidate per province



The same information is contained in Table 1.

Table 1: Presidential election results by province.

Provinces	PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES AND VOTES PER PROVINCE				All Candidates
	Simon Nyachae	Uhuru Kenyatta	Mwai Kibaki	Others	
Nairobi	8,775	76,001	279,705	1,192	371,374
Central	4,441	308,072	701,916	3,496	1,033,516
Coast	11,716	121,645	228,915	2,362	370,611
Eastern	7,854	270,060	748,273	5,712	1,054,168
North Eastern	5,660	83,358	34,916	370	125,090
Nyanza	208,490	64,411	521,052	10,743	865,106
Rift Valley	45,375	762,354	624,633	5,433	1,462,808
Western	9,069	143,013	506,999	5,267	686,508
Total	345,378	1,828,914	3,646,409	34,575	5,969,181

What factors contributed to the success?

Many factors contributed to the success of NARC presidential election. These include the following.

1. Improved Electoral Environment

The benefits of Inter-Party Parliamentary Group (IPPG) reforms passed on the eve of 1997 elections paid off in 2002. More specifically the following were most crucial:

- Constitutional reforms, which recognized Kenya as a multi-party, state and required the ECK to hold democratic elections.
- Legal and administrative reforms particularly those that drastically reduced the legal capacity of the provincial administrative machine to restrict the freedom of

movement, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly. They also criminalized the involvement of civil servants and especially the police in partisan politics; thereby render it difficult for KANU to use the provincial administration and the security personnel led by the police to exclude the opposition from the political arena. The new law also gave the opposition ability to keep the police and the provincial administration from being used to rig and falsify elections on behalf of KANU.

- Equally important was the amendment of the Parliamentary and Presidential Election Act and requiring that the ECK conduct elections that were free, fair and transparent. This in effect made it illegal for any civil servant or police to engage in any activity that would influence political outcomes such as elections, and especially through electoral cheating and vote rigging.

2. *Greater Role of civil Society in Political Crafting*

Many civil society groups now stepped in and engaged in civic education, political party training, conflict management, and the like. They helped in the negotiations for coalition building among the parties in the opposition with a view to strengthening their competitiveness *vis-à-vis* KANU.

3. *Coalition of the major opposition parties*

By the coalition of some fifteen political parties led by DP, FORD-Kenya, NPK and LDP into one party, NARC, gave this party countrywide massive and united support it required to win the presidential and parliamentary seats it required to take over power in a convincing way. It also enabled Kibaki and NARC to command support of the electorate in all provinces, and more so in the capital city of Nairobi, followed by Western, Eastern, Central, Coast and Nyanza provinces. KANU the rival party managed to get majority of votes in only two provinces, namely, the Rift Valley – Moi's home province, and North Eastern Province which had only 140,000 votes out of nearly 6.0 million cast in this election. This perhaps the most important factor, but in the absence of other factors it would not be easy to beat KANU with all its manipulations and habitual election cheating and vote rigging.

4. *Effective Political Communication*

The purpose of political communication in 2002 Kibaki election was directed at the following objectives:

- Confidence building among voters who were almost giving up on the possibility of opposition unity and ability of the opposition to win political power.
- Transmission of messages and symbols to interest the electorate to come forward and participate in the electoral process
- Getting the electorate to discuss and debate issues raised by Kibaki and his team in NARC in order to motivate the voters to vote for Kibaki as president and NARC parliamentary and civic candidates.
- Getting the message to supporters of other parties to make them think of changing their minds in support of NARC.
- Getting all institutions involved in the management of elections in one way or the other to conduct electoral business responsibly and impartially. Such institutions involved government departments, security personnel, provincial administration, and other departments of government, the Electoral Commission of Kenya, political parties, and CSOs
- Supporting coalition building and permanent sustainability of the NARC coalition throughout the campaign period.
- Helping to manage the NARC coalition and disrupting any moves by the competitors to divert NARC's attention from the focus of winning the elections.

- Voter confidence building, voter mobilization via national and local newspapers, radio, TV, popular literature, alternative press (gutter press), campaign rallies, media, website,
- Propaganda building and management.

5. *Relative Freeing of airwaves*

Also some relative freedom of the media, particularly some relaxation on the restriction of the airwaves, increased opposition access to the electorate. Then there was reduction in the use of sedition and incitement laws, which meant less use of the police to harass opposition leaders and their supporters.

6. *Availability of new communication facilities*

- Facilities such as mobile telephones, which the government could not effectively control, or stop. Previously, KANU tapped opposition telephones and used information so gathered to undermine opposition plans. Kibaki management team had calculated that KANU also needed them, although there were efforts to try and frustrate communication within the opposition party leaders and their supporters.

ICT was effectively used in this in election management especially to do the following:

- Ø To secure information in the country and from the rest of the world
- Ø To investigate our rival candidates
- Ø To communicate within the electoral network
- Ø Efficient transmission of results
- E-mail and Internet facilities, which the government found hard to control. A website named Kibaki for President was especially useful to mobilized international support and rally Kenyans abroad behind NARC.

7. *The role of Training in political communication and election management*

A department was set up to deal with training as a vehicle of electoral communication, and as a toll to pre-empting electoral rigging and other malpractices. It was also used as a tool for dealing with threats of violence that characterized the entire election. It was clear that electoral violence would only hurt the interests of NARC presidential and parliamentary candidates, since KANU planned to use it as an excuse to unleash state security forces on the voters in order to rig elections. NARC had to use every means, especially training to prevent the occurrence of violence in the 2002 election. The other important use of training was in the area of party election agents. These were trained on how to detect and pre-empt plans aimed at electoral cheating of any nature. It was a strategy that got KANU completely off guard since, as said before, the party relied heavily on the belief that the traditional methods of cheating and stealing elections would still be available come 2002 election. Training was used to thwart such evil and antidemocratic electoral schemes.

8. *Disorganizing the enemy*

Learning from 1992, the election administrators decided on a political strategy to fight coalitions out to ruin chances for NAK presidential candidate. These included the Nyachae-led Kenya Coalition of FORD-People, Safina and individuals from FORD Kenya; and the Moi-led KANU-LDP coalitions. This was an administrative decision which the management

team was not entitled to know about for fear of endangering the strategy through political naivety which was often not in short supply. A decision was made to exploit political bigotry and selfishness of relevant party leaders and their elite supporters. A mixture of doses of love and hate messages worked very well, as many of them were ready to die for their own honor and self esteem.

9. Building international support

All countries worldwide need some international support for in one way or the other. The opposition was quite aware of this fact, just as KANU was. Many consultations with various embassies, foreign influential donor agencies and foreign influential personalities were approached in their private capacity for their support. They were asked to help lobby their governments for understanding and support. In particular, the opposition emphasized their disadvantage resource wise compared to KANU which had its hands in the state coffers, and requested for financial, material and moral backing. Of course to do this the opposition had to demonstrate that its cause would lead to political stability since it had popular support. This was part of *real politik* which demanded that the opposition talks even to countries that were known, from intelligence reports, to be supporting the retention of KANU in power.

10. Effective Election marketing

NARC developed and effectively marketed a strong Party manifesto on whose basis Kibaki was marketed as the best and most appropriate president to form the new government. This document contained the core of NARC message to the electorate. To get it across, the following devices were utilized:

- Effective and well timed press conferences
- Effective media advertising
- Other forms of marketing, including posters, handbills, t-shirts, and the like.
- Popular literature depicting crisis created by KANU in each district and NARC solutions
- Countrywide political rallies which were organized to run simultaneously for quick reach of a wide area, and to spread a common message to all at the same time.
- Media debates by the candidates or their leading representatives of the party. Care was taken to insulate Kibaki against candidates whose objective was not to debate issues to embarrass him before a large audience by throwing insults at him. More particularly so after his car accident as a result of which he had to be hospitalized and bed-ridden in the middle of his campaign.
- Other marketing methods were used.

11. Efficient use of Election volunteers

Part of the election and mobilization plan was to use various categories of volunteer support groups, provided that individual volunteers were properly vetted. These included groups like the *council of elders, professional support group, youth support group, women support group, religious support groups, and several support groups* organized out of individual initiatives, both nationally and locally. Their role was to relay the election message to the smallest social groups and remotest village and hamlets. They were also charged with the responsibility of recruiting additional election agents, security agents, and organize adequate

food supply to ensure that opposition agents did not get drugged foodstuffs from KANU and leave the polling exercise, votes, and vote counting unattended as had happened in the past. With this type of all NARC-parties and countrywide volunteer network which the state machinery could not track down, another factor was in position in readiness for the dismantling of KANU's electoral machine, and get the opposition on to a clear win. Some of the functions of election management were delegated to selected members of these groups, particularly such functions as supporting transportation of election agents, relaying results of poll count to NARC results center, and manning rapid response centers.

Main Challenges

Every election campaign has its peculiar challenges. In 2002 Kibaki election in Kenya the main challenges can be summarized as follows:

1. Kibaki's physical absence from the campaign due to a car accident during the campaign trail early in the campaign. This was the most serious challenge the management of this election faced. As a result of the accident Kibaki was hospitalized for three weeks and was bed-ridden for the rest of the campaign period. This gave the competitors a lethal weapon to try and frustrate the NARC campaign. They often spread rumors that Kibaki was dead or at the point of dying, and that he was paralyzed from the neck downwards, and the like. Nevertheless, the management team reorganized the campaign and decided to use the proxy approach to campaign execution, combined with more emphasis on what the party NARC would do under the Kibaki leadership.
2. Inadequate funding was the next biggest challenge because as KANU campaign was set to spend more than 20 billion shillings, or \$ 256,410,000, NARC found it difficult to raise even one billion shillings or \$ 16,108,000 for entire campaign. KANU spent more than twenty times the money NARC spent for this election. Much of NARC funds went to direct costs such as advertising, transport, training, and maintenance of election agents. Much of KANU election funds were spent on direct payment of bribery to voters, and to buy support from the electorate.
3. Sophisticated election rigging schemes by KANU was another challenge, for they had come up with new methods of cheating and rigging elections. Training and full alertness of NARC parliamentary candidates and NARC election agents helped a lot to deal with this problem.
4. Threat of organized violence, largely directly organized by state agencies, or by individuals at the behest of state machinery. The most serious threat was posed by private gangs including political-religious Mungiki sect, Jeshi la Mzee, Bhagdad Boys, Musumbiji, and more than twenty others.
5. Threat of repeat of genocide through what was known tribal clashes similar to those accompanying the KANU election campaign in 1992 and 1997. This would frighten voters deemed to be supportive of the opposition, sending them away during elections. It was a means of disenfranchising the opposition, especially in the presidential election.
6. Antagonistic media was a big challenge. Newspapers such as The East African standard and Kenya Times which KANU leadership had the majority shares were outright hostile and were used to advance KANU presidential candidate, and to peddle propaganda against NARC in particular. The same happened to the Kenya Television Network, with a KANU and KANU leaders as interested parties. This TV network was a little more subtle in its attack on the opposition. Others were The

Nation daily and its sister papers, all of which maintained a semblance of neutrality, but whose editors were often quite hostile to the opposition parties particularly NARC. The People daily was initially cynical toward Kibaki presidential candidacy, but played a major role to advance NARC's fight against KANU. The radio and TV stations were sharply divided with the public radio and TV station the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation giving a lot more airtime to KANU than to the opposition. Whenever reports on Kibaki and NARC were aired they were given the negative angle all the time. This meant that NARC had to try and use advertising on radio and TV stations to reach more voters. But even such adverts were sometimes rejected by the editors at the pressure of KANU leadership. It required a very tough intervention in form of protest by the NARC management team to persuade the KBC radio and TV to resume Kibaki adverts.

As the campaign came nearer the end and public opinion polls showed an imminent victory of Kibaki and NARC some of these stations toned down their vicious attack on the opposition. Citizen radio and TV helped immensely in the management of the last stage of the electoral process, namely the announcement of results. The station helped to announce the results as they were received from the polling station, thereby pre-empting the possibility of massive doctoring of results by KANU rigging machinery before they were forwarded to the ECK.

7. Shortage of transport facilities, especially aircrafts to take campaign rallies to all corners of the country; and
8. Many others

Conclusion

The 2002 NARC presidential election in Kenya has been a good case of how much can be achieved through carefully managed political communication. It points at what Africa can achieve when professionalism and efficiency is allowed to play its part. With the help of the international community, particularly in providing resources for capacity building and development of properly functioning and accountable political institutions and governments, Africa can stop being the burden of the developed world and become a major contributor to the wealth of nations in all ways. All that Africa needs is some temporary and well-directed help to get her political and economic institutions in order. Then the continent will be able to develop and contribute to a more prosperous and peaceful continent in the community of nations.