

**Analysis of RBA's Coverage of the 2017 Presidential Elections:
A Content Monitoring Report**

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Executive Summary

The present monitoring report examines how Rwanda Broadcasting Agency (RBA) performed in covering the 2017 presidential elections (held on 3rd & 4th August 2017) in line with its statutory obligation to give equal access to candidates and also perform its public mandate in the utmost professional manner. The National Electoral Commission (NEC), which has the mandate to “ensure equal access to public media by political competitors for public office”, assigned Rwanda Media Commission (RMC) to carry out this activity on its behalf upon signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with RBA indicating what RBA commits to do to ensure that it abides with the requirements of the law.

Following those commitments, RMC embarked on this monitoring activity purposely to assess how RBA covered and reported the 2017 presidential campaigns and election, and check whether all candidates received equal access and coverage with respect to legal and professional requirements. Also, interest was put on measuring to which extent RBA fulfils its social responsibility of enabling citizens to make informed and educated choices during election period.

Consequently, RMC assembled a team of media monitors composed of four (4) ladies and eight (8) men to carry out the assignment. The monitors developed a coding sheet with variables and their specific units of analysis that were instrumental in gathering data from RMC’s broadcasting monitoring machines. The content gathered for monitoring was merely the one focusing on the campaign period that started on the 14th July and ended on 2nd August 2017. All in all, the retrieved content for analysis comprises 525 news articles (published by six radio stations, one television, and one website), one debate, three talk shows hosted on Rwanda Television (RTV)

(through the “*In-focus*” show), the conducted live coverage and crossovers, as well as spot adverts submitted by candidates or their political parties.

Monitors used the media content analysis approach to scientifically study data broadcasted through RBA media platforms. Methodologically, quantitative and qualitative methods were combined to analyse media coverage of the campaign. The use of the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software enabled the monitoring team to obtain statistical data on pre-determined performance indicators in this analysis. Further, subsequent results were interpreted and attention was paid to examine whether the coverage was professionally conducted guided by standards and ethical obligations of the media profession.

The findings of the report indicate that, the rate of coverage and airtime allocated to candidates was fair and equitable. The presidential campaign rallies for each candidate were covered at a rate of 35.43% for Paul KAGAME, 33.71% for Frank HABINEZA and 30.86% for Philippe MPAYIMANA. The presidential candidates featured in the news content at a rate of 38% for Paul KAGAME, 33% for Philippe MPAYIMANA and 29% for Frank HABINEZA.

Also, RBA news reporters were found to be accurate and objective in their news reporting at a rate of 95.24% and 98.86% respectively. That said, however, the majority of the news content was less gender responsive whereby the number of male sources of information outweighs the number of female sources in the analysed news content.

Worthy to note is that all presidential candidates were provided an opportunity by RBA platforms to reach out to the electorate and the general public through their well coordinated debate, talk shows and live coverage. Viewers and listeners were able to follow political competitors live. The report highlights some recommendation to RBA to enable it deliver on its

public mandate more effectively while covering future elections. The report recommends to RBA to set up standard principles governing its performance in covering future election.

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List of acronyms

BME: Broadcasting Monitoring Machines

DGPR: Democratic Green Party of Rwanda

e.g.: *Exempli gratia* « For example »

etc.: *Et cetera*

i.e.: *id est* “that is”

MHC: Media High Council

MoU: Memorandum of Understanding

N/A: Not Applicable

NEC: National Electoral Commission

RBA: Rwanda Broadcasting Agency “”

RC: Radio Communautaire

RGB: Rwanda Governance Board

RMC: Rwanda Media Commission

RPF: Rwanda Patriotic Front

TV: Television

UNAIDS: The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

UNR: Université Nationale du Rwanda

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Science

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The media is universally recognized as one of the key prerequisites for elections to be declared free and fair, and thus sacrosanct to democracy. On this principle, the Centre for Democracy and Governance asserts that “*Free and fair elections conducted through transparent processes require a media sector which gives candidates equal access, and reports the relevant issues in a timely, objective manner*”¹. In this context, professional media abide by journalistic principles of fairness, balance, objectivity, accuracy and truthful representation of events, issues and policies of political contestants during campaigns and elections. This duty to the public was also recognized by Rwandan journalists by establishing their own election related guidelines in June 2017. They acknowledge this role in these terms: “*Media has a duty to fully and accurately inform and educate the public and specifically the electorate on the election processes and all related information to make informed decisions [...]*”².

On 3rd and 4th August 2017, Rwanda held her third multiparty presidential elections involving more than one presidential candidate since the end of the Genocide against Tutsi in 1994. From 14th July to 2nd August 2017, two competing candidates from two political parties and an independent candidate traversed the country promoting their manifestos and soliciting for votes. That said, this media monitoring work arises from the National Electoral Commission (NEC)’s mandate³ to “*prepare and provide civic education on elections*” and “*put in place strategies to ensure elections are free, and transparent*”. From this mandate, there is an embedded responsibility to “*ensure equal access to public media by political competitors for public office*”

¹ Center for Democracy and Governance (1999:3)

² Article II.1 of the Rwanda Journalists’ Guidelines for Election Coverage 2017

³ Article 5 (paragraph 4 &6) of Law N° 31/2005 of 24/10/2005 as modified and completed to date.

in line with the conviction that this is the media's central role in democratic processes. This duty is emphasized in Article 67 of the Law⁴ relating to elections which provides for political competitors' right to use media, and their entitlement to equal access to public media. It stipulates that *“A candidate may, for his/her election campaign, use posters, banners, distribution of letters or circulars, public rallies or public debates, radio, television, print media, information technology means and any other means which is not contrary to the Law. For State media, the National Electoral Commission shall ensure that all independent candidates, political organizations and coalitions of political organizations in competition are allotted equal access in the State media”*. In the same vein, as states the same Article, subsequent instructions⁵ were established by NEC to determine modalities of campaigning through public media.

From the above perspective, this media content monitoring and analysis activity was conducted in a general framework that aims at deepening democracy and fostering good governance as well as enhancing citizen participation in governance and decision making processes in Rwanda. The present report reflects how the Rwanda Broadcasting Agency (RBA), a public broadcaster covered and reported the presidential campaigns and elections.

1.1. Rationale for monitoring RBA

During electoral periods, responsible media are expected to enable citizens make informed decisions on whom to cast their votes to govern collective affairs. In this sense, while one of the now widely accepted key indicators of democracy are regular elections where ordinary citizens decide, through a free and fair vote who should govern their collective affairs, elections alone are

⁴ Article 67 of the Law N° 49/2015 of 02/12/2015 Modifying and Complementing Law N° 27/2010 Of 19/06/2010 Relating to Elections as Modified and Complemented to date.

⁵ Instructions No. 01/2017 of 04/04/2017 of the National Electoral Commission regulating 2017 presidential elections as modified and complemented to date

not equivalent to democracy. Instead, democracy presupposes not only freely acting citizens taking independent decision during elections, but also citizens acting from an informed position. This means that to take an educated decision, voters need to know what competing political parties and candidates represent in terms of policies and programs. Voters hence need to understand and compare the quality of political competitors. In all this, the media plays a central role in conveying to the public the choices available to them. It is from such information that voters can make the decision about who the best candidate and political party between competitors to entrust their collective affairs.

In the above perspective, several studies have been undertaken to analyse the media in the last few decades, looking at their communication processes and their influence in shaping the public agenda. Those analyses have approached the matter from different theories, including agenda setting and framing theories. The *agenda-setting theory* makes reference to ‘the capacity of the media to direct the public’s attention to certain issues presented as the most important ones at that moment. As a result, the public’s attention is biased to certain issues on the political and electoral scene to the detriment of others’ (GarcíaBeaudoux et al., 2007: 78). In that regard, the media constitute a window for gaining insight into a reality to which the citizenry does not have direct access. It is they who identify and prioritize those events or issues to which the public eye is directed day after day. They are also the ones who select the actors in those events or issues which the news reporting renders controversial. Several studies, many of them on politics and elections, have shown empirically that there is a relationship between the importance the public assigns to certain issues and the level of coverage those issues have been assigned by the media (Bernard Cohen, quoted in Rodríguez Díaz, n.d.).

From a general perspective, part of RBA’s mission (as public broadcaster) is “*to provide the Rwandan population and other members of its audience with national and international news that is not biased and accurate*”; and “*to provide the Rwandan population and other members of its audience with educational programs*”⁶. More specifically, the role of public media during elections matters more than private media since the former have a mandate to consistently offer media access to candidates and their respective political parties often ignored by private mainstream media outlets, and examining the electoral system and the media’s influence. Therefore, NEC embarked on this media monitoring work to discern the extent to which the public media (RBA) offers equal airtime to all political competitors during the 2017 presidential campaigns and elections, not merely for fairness ends, but also for ensuring that public media fulfil their social responsibility of enabling citizens to make informed and educated decisions vis-à-vis collective affairs. It is throughout media monitoring that potential loopholes can be identified and actionable recommendations can be formulated on how the public broadcaster can improve their duty towards citizens.

1.2. Objectives of monitoring the media

1.2.1. General objectives

The overall objectives of monitoring how RBA covered and reported the 2017 presidential campaigns and election is to examine whether all candidates received equal access and coverage.

1.2.2. Specific objectives

The specific objectives are:

⁶ Article 4 of Law N° 42/2013 of 16/06/2013 establishing Rwanda Broadcasting Agency and determining its mission, organization and functioning

- ☞ To review whether political parties / coalition of political parties and candidates received equal access and fair coverage;
- ☞ To determine whether access to the public media are being respected in the allocation and timing of free airtime, advertising slots, etc.
- ☞ Discern the level of quality in terms of program and talk-show content and interpretation and analysis of competing political party/candidate programs and policies;
- ☞ Determine and report the extent to which citizens are offered fair, accurate, balanced and complete news and information necessary for them to take informed decisions when voting for the party or candidate they consider, from the information given as more suited and qualified to lead them;
- ☞ To identify any emerging issues relating to electoral management or the conduct of the campaign that the NEC may have to address.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

By definition, media content monitoring refers to *“the activity of monitoring the outputs of the media during a specific period. This activity includes the systematic recording of radio and television broadcasts, the collection of press clippings from print media publications, and the collection of data from online information sources. Media monitoring is practically achieved by a combination of technologies, including audio and video recording, high speed text scanners and text recognition software, human readers and analysts”*⁷.

To scientifically carry out the present media content monitoring work, quantitative and qualitative methods were applied for content analysis throughout with focus is on observing and counting the number of times selected RBA media outlets report on election related stories within a specific period of time. Also, attention was paid to understand whether such contents abide by journalistic standards of balance, accuracy, objectivity and fairness. In addition, interest was put on measuring how targeted media outlets fulfil their social responsibility of enabling citizens to make informed and educated choices on whom to entrust collective affairs.

2.2. Constituting the media monitoring team

To obtain a quality and reliable report, it was imperative to have highly skilled personnel in media content analysis. Hence, through an agreement between NEC and RMC, the latter’s media monitoring team was assigned to undertake this work. Moreover, it was deemed necessary to hire other experienced personnel on a short term basis in order to have a quality report. All in all, a

⁷ KAYUMBA, C. (2008), Introduction to Media Monitoring, School of Journalism and Communication, UNR (Training Material for the Media High Council), Kigali

total of eleven media monitors, one data quality controller (report writer) and one supervisor invested their efforts to produce the present report.



Team of monitoring agents on duty and the Broadcasting Monitoring Equipments of RMC

2.3. Desk review

At this stage, efforts were made to make a media environment scanning by exploring the existing laws and regulations on media and elections, existing reports on Rwanda's media performance on election reporting especially by the Media High Council (formerly the statutory media regulatory body), NEC, RGB, etc. Some of the documents used include the media law, the access to information law, Rwanda Media Barometer (2016), the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015, the law governing NEC and RBA respectively, the law relating to elections as amended to date, Rwanda Journalists and Media Practitioners' Code Of Deontology And Ethics, Rwanda Journalists' Guidelines for Election Coverage, as well as relevant instructions by NEC.

While the media have certain internationally recognized rights to freely gather and impart information, they also have responsibilities to citizens regarding the information they provide. The responsibilities become especially sensitive during elections. From this perspective, this media monitoring finds its *raison d'être* from the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2015, specifically in Article 38⁸. This article provides for and guarantees freedom of the media and access to information. Based on the Constitution, the 2013 media law guarantees free access to information by journalists and media outlets not for its own sake but with the objective of serving the public's constitutional right to know. It is by serving this right that the citizenry can be able to carry out and fulfil their civic duties, including electing their own leaders from an informed position.

2.4. Quantitative and qualitative methods

The methodology applied to this media monitoring exercise is twofold: quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to record and interpret data on how RBA covered and reported the 2017 presidential campaigns and election. These methods enable measuring the extent to which the media reporting respects the journalistic principles of accuracy, objectivity, balance, fairness and voter's education, among others. They also allow tracking and measuring the extent to which the public media outlets under RBA provide equal broadcast airtime (on Rwanda Television, Radio Rwanda and affiliated community outlets) to all the competing presidential candidates and political parties as required by the law.

⁸Article 38 which states that "Freedom of press, of expression and of access to information are recognized and guaranteed by the State.

Freedom of expression and freedom of access to information shall not prejudice public order, good morals, the protection of the youth and children, the right to every citizen to honour and dignity and protection of personal and family privacy.

Conditions for exercising and respect these freedoms are determined by law."

On the one hand, the quantitative approach allows gathering numerical data. Analytically, statistical data gives a descriptive picture of media's overall performance and allow measuring concepts such as fairness and balance as well as discerning the extent to which the media, particularly the public media provides equal airtime on radio and television. The same method is used to gather data and analyse aspects such as the gender dimensions of news sources and reporters, comparing media houses to discern which media gives which political party or candidate more time, discerning types of the main topics or policy position advanced by candidates covered in each media outlet, types of news stories, news sources by party and status in society, et cetera. This type of quantitative data helps answer questions such as: how much airtime is offered to political competitors? Which political party or political competitor is given more airtime than the others? Comparatively, which political party or politician is more favoured? Which gender is more represented or which gender acts as the main source of news and information? Which topics, or policy positions are covered more than others? Et cetera.

On the other hand, the qualitative method allows developing a deeper understanding of quantitative data as well as making subject analysis of quality of content and journalistic principles of fairness, accuracy, balance, objectivity, et cetera. This approach also facilitates the evaluation of media conduct in ways that enable media policy makers, regulators, researchers to make objective commentary on the extent the media reporting is fair or unfair, partial or impartial, biased or unbiased. It is also through the qualitative method that we are able to discern whether or not the media is not merely describing candidates and what they say, but whether it goes deeper by discerning and discussing policy positions of each party and getting candidates to clarify their policy positions and priorities. This is done because, as earlier mentioned, it is the

responsibility of the media to get political competitors to clarify and present the voters with a menu of policy positions fully discussed for them to understand differences (and similarities) between policy positions presented by the competing office seekers.

2.5. Scope of analysis

As earlier mentioned, this work is all about public media content analysis. That said, not all media outputs were concerned but rather focus was put on campaign and election related newscasts, live talk shows, live coverage, and adverts. It is worth mentioning hereby that only prime time news editions broadcast in Kinyarwanda were considered, not only because they reflect the entire day happenings but also are assumed to be followed by larger audience in their vernacular language. In addition, any news item on RBA website (www.rba.co.rw) was put under analysis.

2.6. Variables explored by the monitoring report

As mentioned above and as noted in the terms of reference between RBA and NEC regarding this media monitoring work, quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized to analyse media contents. Hence, this activity was not just a mere measurement of how much airtime competing candidates receive and how many times they are covered, but also how accurate, balanced, objective and fair their respective coverage was. In this regard, the following are the quantitative and qualitative variables (criteria of analysis) that were measured and focused on.

2.6.1. Quantitative variables:

a) News:

- 1) Frequency with which candidates were mentioned
- 2) Time of broadcast

- 3) Length of time allocated to candidates
 - 4) Number of stories allocated to candidates per day
 - 5) Order of the placement of the news item and order of candidates' mention
 - 6) Gender of reporter
 - 7) Frequency or time allocated to electoral issues
 - 8) Major sources in the news items
 - 9) Source variance
 - 10) Selection of topics
 - 11) Gender responsiveness
- b) Adverts**
- 12) Advert length
- c) Talk shows (live & pre-recorded)**
- 13) Live coverage (before and afternoon)
 - 14) Length of live coverage
 - 15) Candidate or representative presence in live coverage
 - 16) Recorded programmes and their length
 - 17) Live debate length

2.6.2. Qualitative variables

- a) News**
- 1) Accuracy
 - 2) Five Ws & H (If the story answers who, what, where, when, why and how questions)
 - 3) Balance

- 4) Headline bias
 - 5) Primetime bias
 - 6) Mention bias
 - 7) Objectivity
 - 8) Bias/fairness (Allegations)
 - 9) Impartiality/partiality
 - 10) Scrolling text (TV)
- b) Talk shows (live & pre-recorded)**
- 1) Background information
 - 2) Right of response
 - 3) Jokes (negative / positive)
 - 4) Moderator not central
 - 5) Equitable time given to candidate / representative

2.7. Definition of concepts / Operational definitions

As earlier stated, the quantitative approach was supplemented by the qualitative one for a deeper interpretation and analysis of the obtained statistical data. This interpretation was implemented through the measurement of journalistic standards of balance, accuracy news sourcing, etc. definitions⁹ of which are provided in the following lines.

2.7.1. News source

In the context of this study, a news source is referred to as a person who is directly or indirectly accessed (i.e. either directly or indirectly quoted) in the information gathering for reporting

⁹KAYUMBA, C. (2008), Introduction to Media Monitoring, School of Journalism and Communication, UNR (Training Material for the Media High Council), Kigali

purposes. Primary sources of information are also considered as sources where they are directly or indirectly quoted. Secondary sources of information usually take the form of a report, articles, or other pieces of written information, which are directly or indirectly quoted in stories. For example, if a story is directly quoted from a UNAIDS report, the latter will be considered a secondary source¹⁰.

2.7.2. Balance

Balance in journalism relates to the fact that journalists should ensure that, in their reporting, all sides to the story receive a fair and equal hearing. In this monitoring, a story is considered to be balanced when it:

- ☞ Identifies sources by name unless justifiable anonymity is clearly stated;
- ☞ Gives the floor to all sides involved;
- ☞ Is not one sided/single sourced;
- ☞ Has accessed a wide variety of relevant sources (or indicated that tried to do so);
- ☞ Uses statistics/figures/facts or evidence & sourced from an authority where necessary.

2.7.3. Accuracy

Accuracy is one of the key principles in journalism but abstract. A story is considered to be accurate when it:

¹⁰ MHC, Media Monitor's Handbook: A Practical Guide to Monitoring Election Coverage, Kigali, 2008, p. 28

- ☞ Clearly states proper name of subject of the story (who);
- ☞ Clearly states correct details of subject (e.g. age, occupation, area of residence, nationality, etc.);
- ☞ Gives clear presentation of what the story is about (5Ws & H); and
- ☞ States issues in their proper order of occurrence.

2.7.4. Bias

In the course of their profession, journalists are ethically required not to be biased. Bias may occur in different ways:

1. For example a story would be biased when it refers to a subject not convicted by competent courts of law as: ‘thief’; liar, ‘conman’, rapist; ‘corrupt’; genocide denier, etc.
2. Language bias occurs¹¹ where the language used in a news item clearly and distinctly favours one party/source above another, or substantially disfavours or damages the image of another source. Language bias consists of *Exaggeration*, *Trivialization*, and *Generalization*. The following are questions that may assist in identifying bias cases:

- ✓ Is there any language in the item that is damaging to any of the source mentioned?
- ✓ Does the item exaggerate any particular incident/event/issue/source by using dramatic language?
- ✓ Does the item trivialize any particular incident/event/issue/source? Look out for demeaning or dismissive language!
- ✓ Does the item generalize any particular incident/event/issue/source? Look out for vague language!

¹¹ MMP/ RMMP, Rwanda Media Monitoring Project : A Monitoring User Guide, Kigali, MHC, 2006

In the context of campaign and elections, biased and un-biased reporting are defined as and distinguished in terms of:

- ☞ Whether or not the subject in the news not convicted by competent courts of law is referred to as a ‘thief’; liar, ‘conman’, rapist; ‘corrupt’; genocide denier; et cetera;
- ☞ Consistently presenting the same candidate in news headlines or on the front pages while other candidates and parties are consistently presented on inside pages or not in news headlines;
- ☞ Consistently referring to certain news subjects and political competitors as good and competent while others are consistently referred to as bad, incompetent, corrupt, et cetera without objective evidence;
- ☞ Consistently making negative or positive jokes about certain subjects of news;
- ☞ Not reporting certain important news stories reported in other mediums;
- ☞ Even when subjects appear in the news headlines, consistently giving more airtime or space to certain subjects than others without objective reasons;
- ☞ Consistently featuring certain news stories with certain subjects many times in a day or days in news without justifiable reason;
- ☞ Mentioning certain subjects in the same news stories many times while other subjects in the same stories are not mentioned by name;
- ☞ Naming certain subjects in news stories that do not concern them;
- ☞ Consistently presenting certain subjects in stories where they are giving gifts, caring for the sick, the poor, the vulnerable while others are consistently presented with negative images or in compromising positions;

- ☞ Consistently featuring certain subjects/candidates' interviews in prime time (e.g. immediately after news) and others in late hours (e.g. after 10pm);
- ☞ Not presenting background information for certain subjects while doing so for others

2.7.5. Editorial balance

To produce a well elaborated report/story, journalists are expected to:

- ☞ separate news from opinion;
- ☞ clearly mark pages/programs by what is published on it (e.g. editorial, opinion, ad, etc);
- ☞ not to trivialize a subject or an important issue;
- ☞ not to misrepresent an issue/claim/assertion;
- ☞ state facts and not emotions & feelings;
- ☞ where not sure, use words that suggest scepticism of what is being said, such as 'claimed' or 'alleged';
- ☞ not to make an assertion/statement of fact without supporting evidence or source;
- ☞ not to disguise an opinion/analysis as factual news;
- ☞ not to make assumptions and drawing unsupported conclusions;
- ☞ Ensure that headlines accurately reflect story content.

2.7.6. Objectivity

Objectivity is here used to refer to a news story:

- ☞ Not mixed with a journalist's views or attitudes;
- ☞ Based on verifiable facts;
- ☞ Evidence are derived from authoritative sources;
- ☞ Separates news from opinion & commentary;

- ☞ Based on what actually happened;
- ☞ Presents all sides i.e. balanced.

2.7.7. Fairness

Fairness is an important journalistic principle but difficult to empirically see. Fairness can relate to whether or not the message disseminated does not contain harm or in any way attack one's reputation. It can also refer to equal treatment of sources or subjects of news. Empirically, a fair story is one where:

- ☞ Allegations in story are clearly stated as such;
- ☞ Language used to describe all the sources is the same;
- ☞ All subjects mentioned in the story have clearly presented their side;
- ☞ Right of response is not denied;
- ☞ Photos/images of subjects mentioned in the story have approximately equal space and size;
- ☞ Subject not convicted by courts of law is not referred to as: 'thief'; liar, 'conman', rapist; 'corrupt'; genocide denier;
- ☞ Giving equal airtime to all political competitors (in the public media);
- ☞ Asking similar or nearly similar questions to political competitors;
- ☞ Giving approximately equal time to political competitors on the same talk-show or debate to answer questions;
- ☞ Presenting subjects on camera in similar angles.

2.8. Monitoring steps

The present media monitoring exercise was conducted through the following crucial steps:

2.8.1. Determining the monitoring period

The monitoring work covered the period from 14 July to 2nd August 2017; i.e. it was set in respect with the campaigns and election official calendar by NEC.

2.8.2. Identifying media outlets to be monitored

As earlier explained, focus was put on public media in this work. Therefore, RBA outlets were subject to monitoring for the account of NEC as they are bound to follow the regulations on equal access to competing candidates. Consequently, media outlets at glance include the following:

Table 1: Media outlets monitored

RBA outlets	Frequency
Rwanda Television	N/A
Radio Rwanda	100.7 FM
Radio Huye	100.4&107.7 FM
Radio Musanze	98.4 FM
Radio Nyagatare	95.5 FM
Radio Rubavu	95.1 FM
Radio Rusizi	103.2, 96.1,106.9 FM
RBA website	www.rba.co.rw

2.8.3. Data gathering for monitoring

The Broadcasting Monitoring Equipment (BME) of RMC was utilized to gather radio and TV content and serves as a databank from which needed data can be easily retrieved. Also, the monitors gathered content of RBA's affiliated radio stations in Rusizi, Rubavu, Nyagatare, Huye and Musanze from the respective Chief Editors for analysis.

2.8.4. Retrieving radio and TV recordings

On a daily basis, media monitors had to select and put aside election related newscasts, live coverage, talk shows and adverts that were aired on RBA's media platforms.

2.8.5. Analysing information and feeding database

Members of the media monitoring team had to assess each news item, radio/TV talk show following the pre-determined criteria of analysis, and feed the data base with their respective codes in SPSS version 23.

2.8.6. Data processing

Monitors retrieved the data from the SPSS after cleaning it up, then compiled all the work done by quantitative compilation that they latter presented it in form of tables, charts, and graph formats.

2.8.7. Report drafting

A report writer had to write up the methodology applied, analyse and interpret quantitative data availed by monitors, integrating their comments and observations, and formulate subsequent conclusion as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER THREE: MEDIA MONITORING FINDINGS

3.1. Introduction

In line with the presidential elections held on 3rd and 4th August 2017, and as per the legal requirements and established guidelines on elections, public media owe equal access to all candidates in the race during the campaign period. This chapter therefore presents the findings of analysis of media coverage on election related contents by RBA, its affiliated outlets and online news portal, starting from 14th July to 2nd August 2017. The three candidates competing for presidential office as approved by NEC include Paul KAGAME (representing Rwanda Patriotic Front/RPF and coalition), HABINEZA Frank (representing Democratic Green Party of Rwanda/DGPR) and MPAYIMANA Philippe (an independent candidate).

To measure whether these candidates were equally covered, the design of this media content analysis was focused on the following programmes: news bulletins, live debates, live coverage, adverts and specific programs that concern the candidates.

3.2. Findings and analysis

3.2.1. News analysis

In the news section, media monitors considered several aspects to discover the performance of the media outlets in relation to the laws and regulations in place. The following results indicates the features of the monitored program on individual presidential candidate covered in news, namely the length, time and dates of broadcast, number of stories produced and aired, gender of the reporter, gender responsiveness, professional performance of journalists and media outlets, topics covered, etc.

3.2.1.1. Summation of candidates' coverage in news

Under the news section of the RBA and affiliated media outlets, over a period of twenty days (14th July to 2nd August 2017), media monitors identified and analysed a total of 525 news items. The table below indicates the number of news items and articles per candidate and per media outlet.

Table 2: Number of news items per media outlet and per candidate

Medium	Presidential Candidate			Total	%
	Kagame Paul	Habineza Frank	Mpayimana Philippe		
RTV	47	54	49	150	28.57
Radio Rwanda	52	60	54	166	31.62
Radio Musanze	14	11	11	36	6.86
Radio Huye	36	37	31	104	19.81
Radio Nyagatare	9	0	2	11	2.10
Radio Rusizi	11	7	8	26	4.95
Radio Rubavu	11	2	2	15	2.86
www.rba.co.rw	6	6	5	17	3.24
Total	186	177	162	525	100
%	35.43	33.71	30.86	100	

The horizontal reading of Table 2 above indicates the rate at which presidential candidates were covered by RBA media outlets. Paul Kagame was covered at rate of 35.43%, Frank Habineza at rate of 33.71% and then Philippe Mpayimana at 30.86%.

The vertical reading of the same table above indicates how individual media outlets of RBA performed in generally covering presidential candidates. In total, Radio Rwanda and Rwanda Television are leading at a rate of 31.62% and 28.57% respectively. In other branches of RBA, Radio Huye came up with predominant coverage equal to 19.81%, while others scored less than 10% of coverage (Radio Musanze 6.86%, Radio Rusizi 4.95%, Radio Rubavu 2.86%, and Radio

Nyagatare 2.10%). In addition, there were articles published on RBA online news portal (www.rba.co.rw) amounting to 3.24% of total coverage.

3.2.1.2. Time allocation to candidates

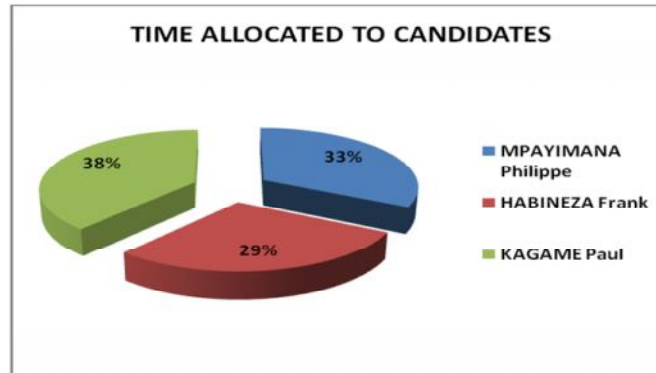
An ad hoc meeting bringing together RBA and NEC delegates and other stakeholders was held on 14th July 2017 to discuss and agree on how RBA will respect its obligation to provide “equal access” to all candidates. In light of resulting agreement, each presidential candidate was entitled to a three minute news story daily on Radio Rwanda and affiliated radio stations and Rwanda Television as per their campaign activities and to one article on RBA website every time they held campaigns.

With the above in mind, airtime allocation in news item was measured by counting the *length of time* attributed to each candidate in the newscast. Hence, the following table and diagram displays the length of the time allocated to candidates themselves (i.e. direct speech) in news, either in form of interviews or speeches during the rallies.

Table 3: Airtime allocation to candidates in news

Candidate	Time allocated
MPAYIMANA Philippe	1h15mn17sec
HABINEZA Frank	1h 06mn 59sec
KAGAME Paul	1h 28mn55Sec
TOTAL	3h51mn11sec

Chart 1: Airtime allocation to candidates in news



As illustrated by the table and chart above, RBA newscasts *equitably* covered all candidates in its news content even though statistics of the findings reveal that candidates did not have equal length of time.

3.2.1.3. Mentions in prime time news

Media monitors counted the frequency of presidential candidates’ mentions in all news items, given the fact that every time a candidate’s name is mentioned , it gets into voters’ ears and it leaves a certain influence on whom to cast his/her vote.

Table 4: Mentions in prime time news

Candidate	Mentioned in prime time news cast		Total	%
	Yes	No		
KAGAME Paul	170	16	186	35.43
HABINEZA Frank	171	6	177	33.71
MPAYIMANA Philippe	156	6	162	30.86
Total	497	28	525	100
%	94.67	5.33	100	

The findings in Table 4 indicate that out of 525 analyzed news items, candidates’ names were mentioned 497 times in the gathered news content and that amounts to a rate of 94.67%, whereas

the remaining 5.33% were mentions on other election related news items. The Findings further reveal that all candidates were equitably mentioned in a sense that they all fall in the same range of mentions (30-35%). The RPF candidate, Paul KAGAME turned out to be the most mentioned in prime news with 35.43%, while Frank HABINEZA came in second position with 33.71%, and Philippe MPAYIMANA scored 30.86%. This implies that all candidates were fairly exposed to the general public through RBA's media outlets.

3.2.1.4. Time of Broadcast

While analyzing candidates' coverage by RBA, it was also judged important to consider the time of broadcast. To this end, three time intervals were preset: *Between 6:00 am and 9:00 am; Between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm; and Between 5:00 pm and 9:00 pm.* Media monitors were hence examining the period of time in which newscasts were aired and their frequency, so that they can identify the number of the news items affiliated to each candidate. This measurement was not applicable to the RBA website.

Table 5: Time of Broadcast

Medium	Time of Broadcast				Total
	Between 6:00 am and 9:00 am	Between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm	Between 5:00 pm and 9:00 pm	N/A	
RTV	50	50	50	0	150
Radio Rwanda	53	56	57	0	166
Radio Musanze	0	0	36	0	36
Radio Huye	0	18	86	0	104
Radio Nyagatare	10	0	1	0	11
Radio Rusizi	0	0	26	0	26
RC Rubavu	0	0	15	0	15
www.rba.co.rw	0	0	0	17	17
Total	113	124	271	17	525
%	21.52	23.62	51.62	3.24	100

The findings above reveal the level at which the general public was fed with elections related information and enlightenment during prime time. The data therefore indicate that much of elections related content was aired in the evening hours (5:00 to 9:00 pm). This was intended to showcase the effectiveness of RBA’s media outlets in delivering news content to the public.

The above data is also relevant when interpreted in view of the data bellow. The table bellow shows the period of time that presidential candidates received most coverage and again that is evening hours. Given to the fact that most people are free to follow news content at that time, this in its self reveals the effectiveness of RBA in reaching out to the public with news content on presidential candidate’s campaigns.

Table 6: Time of broadcast per candidate

Time of Broadcast	Presidential Candidate			Total
	KAGAME Paul	HABINEZA Frank	MPAYIMANA Philippe	
Between 6:00 am and 9:00 am	40	37	36	113
Between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm	40	45	39	124
Between 5:00 pm and 9:00 pm	100	89	82	271
N/A	6	6	5	17
Total	186	177	162	525

N/A: Online media (RBA website: www.rba.co.rw)

As exhibited in Table 5, it is clear that a larger number of analyzed newscasts on elections were frequently aired between 5:00 PM and 9:00 PM (51.62%), while others were dispatched between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM (23.62%) and between 6:00 AM and 9:00 AM (21.52%). The majority of newscasts on elections were frequently aired on Radio Rwanda which is an indication that a

wider audience was reached with election related news content given its penetration level and listenership which is believed to be of wider scope especially during the synergy of its news in period between 5:00PM and 9:00PM. Concerning coverage per individual candidate in terms of these time intervals (Table 6 above), it is evident that all the three candidates were fairly and equitably covered.

3.2.1.5. The daily coverage of candidates

Before the start of campaigns, RBA committed to NEC (ref: appended signed minutes) that it will cover one story per day for each of the presidential candidates. The findings of this monitoring report indicate that during the 20 days campaign, RBA overextended its commitment by reporting/airing more than three stories per day for each candidate in the race. The table 7 below displays the related details.

Table 7: The rate of daily coverage of candidates

Number of stories	Presidential Candidate			Total	%
	Kagame Paul	Habineza Frank	Mpayimana Philippe		
One story per day	115	99	95	309	58.86
Two stories	40	42	37	119	22.67
Three stories	29	35	30	94	17.90
Four stories	2	1	0	3	0.57
TOTAL	186	177	162	525	100

Table 7 above indicates that all presidential candidates' were daily covered at least once per day at a rate of 58.86%. The findings further reveal that RBA went beyond its commitment and covered stories on presidential candidates more than once per day as indicated in table 7 above. All in all, it is evident that

RBA’s commitment to cover the presidential candidates was effectively achieved since it delivered beyond its promise.

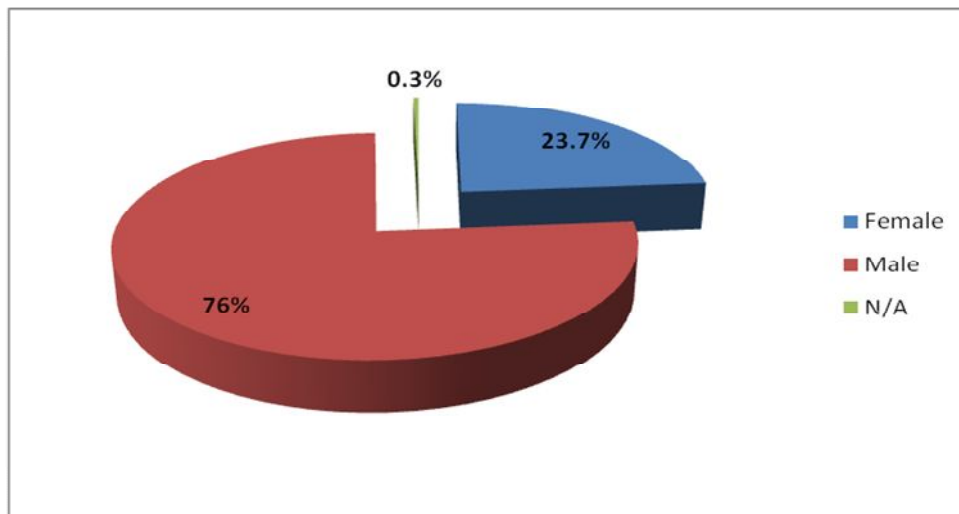
3.2.1.6. Gender of reporter

Findings on gender sensitiveness in assigning reporters help editors and media managers to be gender responsive and respect gender equality and this is very important since gender is crosscutting issue. This report provides information on RBA journalists who reported on presidential campaigns and election by sex. These data are significant because they may give insights into the gendered nature of media and politics as well as gender biases. Generally, it is assumed that women tend to cover or are assigned by their editors to cover soft news such as reporting children related stories, fashion et cetera and the bias that male counterparts are assigned to cover hard news.

Table 8: Gender of reporter

Medium	Gender of reporter			Total
	Female	Male	N/A	
RTV	52	98	0	150
Radio Rwanda	50	116	0	166
Radio Musanze	2	34	0	36
Radio Huye	3	101	0	104
Radio Nyagatare	4	7	0	11
Radio Rusizi	3	23	0	26
Radio Rubavu	4	11	0	15
www.rba.co.rw	6	9	2	17
Total	124	399	2	525
%	23.62	76.00	0.38	100

Chart 2: Gender of reporter



Referring to Table 8 and Chart 2, it was found out that male reporters were far numerically more than females. The results show that 76% of RBA reporters who were assigned to cover campaign rallies were males while the females were 23.76%. This performance is reasonable given the fact that the number of male practicing journalists outweighs female ones¹². However, this dominance of men on the airwaves has long term implications since few female journalists appear on radio and TV to act as role-models for young girls while there are more male journalist role models for boys. It is this state of affairs that partly perpetuates male power and influence as well as stereotypes of what men and women can or cannot do due to their sex rather than their intellectual ability. The remaining 0.3% tagged “N/A” (Not Applicable) represents some articles on RBA website where monitors were unable to identify whether the reporter/writer was a female or male.

¹²Available statistics at RMC indicate that in Rwanda media sector, female journalists amount to 23%, while male ones are 77% (equivalent to 177 and 588 respectively) (List of accredited journalists in Rwanda of August 2017).

3.2.1.6. Sources information

In the conduct of their profession, journalists are always expected to indicate their sources of information, except in circumstances where the latter requested to remain confidential. On this point, article 12 of the Rwanda Journalists’ Code of Deontology and Ethics states that “A journalist has the obligation of professional secrecy. While broadcasting or publishing information, he/she shall mention his/her sources. However, he/she has the obligation to protect those having requested for confidentiality. This protection becomes necessary if identification may be prejudicial to these sources”. It is in this respect that this monitoring report sought to identify the variety of people (and/or documents) directly or indirectly consulted by journalists while gathering information to be disseminated, not only because it is a mandatory practice, but also for credibility and reliability ends on the part of information consumers.

Table 9: Primary sources

Type of source	PRIMARY SOURCES			Total	%
	Kagame Paul	Habineza Frank	Mpayimana Philippe		
Candidate/representatives	29	38	40	107	19.67
Party official	29	4	3	36	6.62
Public official	13	12	8	33	6.07
Political analyst	2	2	2	6	1.10
People with disability	0	0	2	2	0.37
Politician	3	0	0	3	0.55
Security agent	1	1	1	3	0.55
Woman or man on street	40	36	37	113	20.77
Reporter's narration	76	85	72	233	42.83
Others	6	1	1	8	1.47
Total	199	179	166	544	100

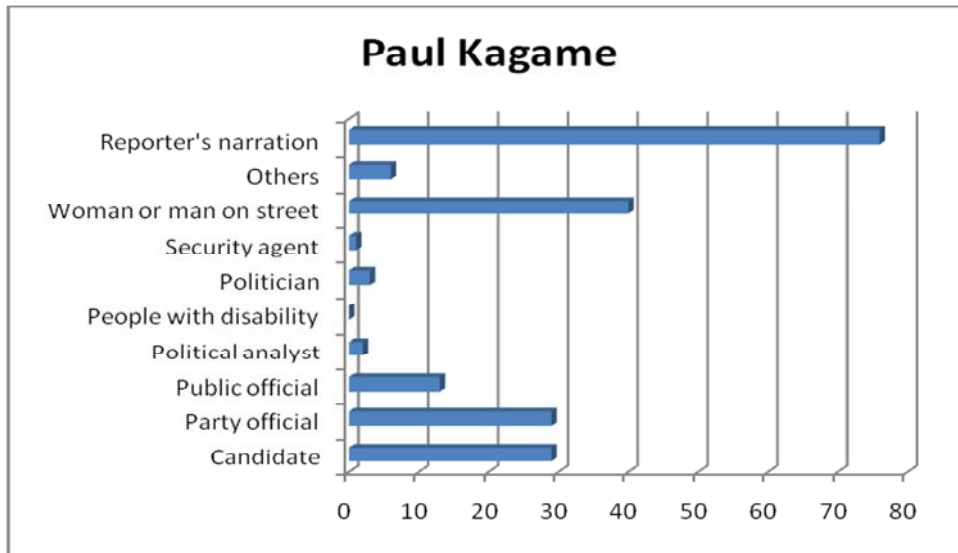
Results displayed in Table 9 indicate that the sourcing of information was broad. Variety of sources was thus used in news content which indicates authenticity in coverage of presidential elections. Contesting candidates's voice or direct speech in news content was at the rate of 19.67%, whereas other major sources that were directly given the floor which include party and public officials was at the rate of 6.62% and 6.07% respectively.

The "reporters' narration" took the prominent part at a rate of 42.83% in serving as primary sources of election related information. Critically, this may seem not to be a healthy practice in journalism but this is justified by the fact that news anchors in studio had to repeatedly talk to field reporters for in-depth description at campaign sites which explains why they dominated as primary sources of information. Members of the public technically analysed as "men and women on the street" (or participants at rallies) were directly contacted as sources of information to give their views on candidate manifestos as potential supporters at the rate of 20.77%.

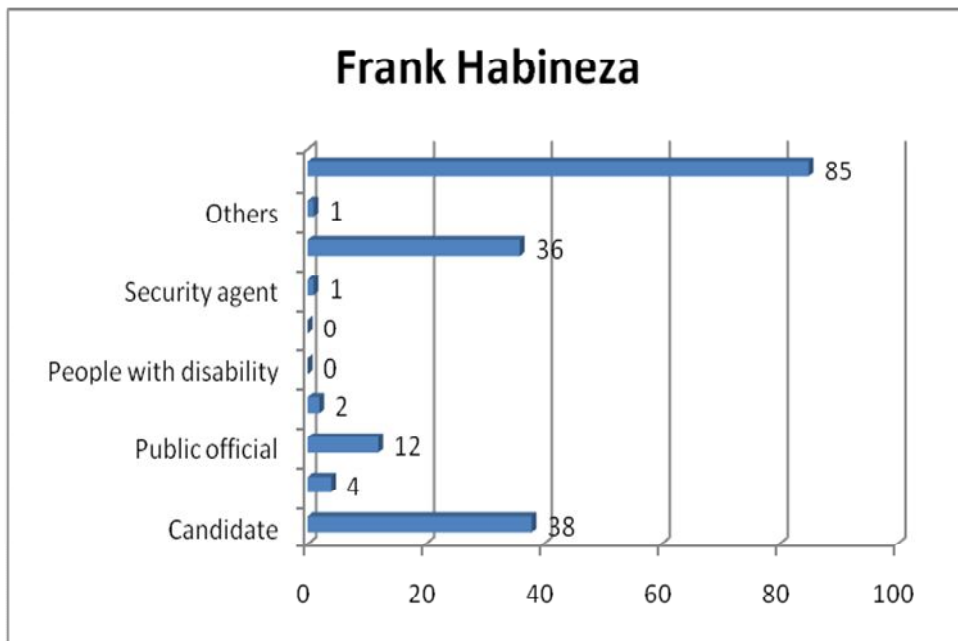
Another observation is that Philippe Mpayimana took the lead as primary source (40 times), followed by Frank Habineza (38 times) and Paul Kagame (29 times). This can be attributed to the fact that RPF (and coalition), in a decentralized manner, utilized party officials to speak in favor of their candidate (29 times).

The following charts exhibit the extent to which various sources were accessed by journalists while gathering presidential campaign related information for each of the three candidates in the race.

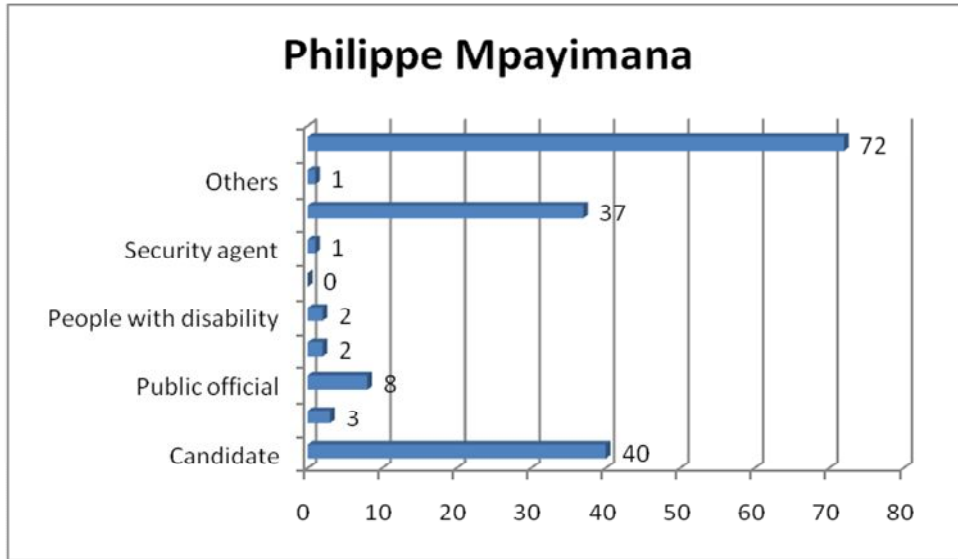
Graph 1: Primary sources (Paul Kagame's coverage)



Graph 2: Primary sources (Frank Habineza's coverage)



Graph 3: Primary sources (Philippe Mpayimana’s coverage)



3.2.1.7. Focus on presidential candidates campaign

The findings show that the daily news content on presidential candidates focused on their respective campaigns at a rate of 99.43%. Other news items that were identified while reporting on presidential campaigns focused on voter education at a rate of 0.57%.

Table 10: Focus of election news coverage

Candidate	Election Topics	
	Campaigns	Voter education
Kagame Paul	185	1
Habineza Frank	176	1
Mpayimana Philippe	161	1
Total	522	3
%	99.43	0.57

Predominantly, reporters focused their coverage and reporting on campaigns of presidential candidates as indicated in table above. This shows that RBA covered the campaigns of presidential candidates with the importance they deserve.

3.2.1.8. Accuracy in news coverage

The credibility of media organizations is judged upon the accuracy and reliability of information they disseminate. This must be well-sourced, supported by strong evidence, examined and tested, clear and unambiguous. On this point, the Rwanda Journalists and Media Practitioners’ Code of Ethics states that “A journalist shall keep in mind his/her social responsibility. He/she, therefore, distributes or publishes only information for which He/she has established the origin, veracity and accuracy [...]”¹³. The accuracy parameter was measured by checking if reporters respected the 5Ws and H (i.e. the story answers who, what, where, when, why and how questions).

Table 11: Accuracy in news

Accuracy	5Ws & H			Total	%
	Kagame Paul	Habineza Frank	Mpayimana Philippe		
Yes	179	167	154	500	95.24
No	7	10	8	25	4.76
Total	186	177	162	525	100

Guided by the above stated criteria, results exhibited in Table 13 above indicate that presidential candidate’s coverage was accurately covered at a rate of 95.24%. Inaccuracy which is at the rate of 4.76% was identified in some stories that didn’t qualify to the 5Ws and H qualities of a well structured news story.

¹³ Article 3 of The Rwanda journalists and media practitioners’ code of ethics

3.2.1.9. Objectivity of reporter

To be objective, a reporter should retain fairness, disinterestedness, factuality, and non-partisanship, but most often objectivity encompasses all of these qualities. The table below indicates how presidential campaigns were objectively covered.

Table 12: Objectivity of reporter

Candidate	Objectivity		Total
	Yes	No	
Kagame Paul	181	5	186
Habineza Frank	176	1	177
Mpayimana Philippe	162	0	162
Total	519	6	525
%	98.86	1.14	100

A general depiction of the findings above is that most of RBA journalists' were objective in covering presidential campaigns at a rate of 98.86%.

3.2.1.11 Mentions of candidates in headlines

Professionally, well formulated news headlines leave the gist of information in audience (readers') minds. Hence, this monitoring sought to know whether this practice was observed, especially to the attention of radio listeners or TV followers who might be short of time to follow the entire news editions. Candidates' mentions in headlines, therefore, keep them informed on key campaign and election related happenings.

Table 13: Mentions of candidates in headlines

Candidate	Appeared in news headline		Total
	Yes	No	
Kagame Paul	174	12	186
Habineza Frank	165	12	177
Mpayimana Philippe	151	11	162
Total	490	35	525
%	93.33	6.67	100

In light of obtained results, all candidates appeared in the news headlines at the rate of 93.33%. This is an indication that all candidates received equitable mentions in news headlines.

3.2.1.12 Credibility of news content

In the conduct of their profession, journalists are allowed to give their *views* but *separate* them from facts to maintain credibility of information to the public. According to article 13 of the Journalists' Code of Ethics "A *journalist is free to make a stand on any issue. He / She has the obligation to separate comments from facts*". In this perspective, media monitors examined whether the reporters comment's in any case were mixed with facts reporting while covering the presidential campaigns. The findings in Tables bellow reflect the extent to which reporters' views/comments and opinions on presidential campaign were expressed in accordance to the requirements of this professional standard.

Table 14: Reporters' views in news

Candidate	Information Mixed With Reporters Views		Total
	Not Mixed	Mixed	
Kagame Paul	137	49	186
Habineza Frank	138	39	177
Mpayimana Philippe	127	35	162
Total	402	123	525
%	76.57	23.43	100

Findings exhibited in Table above reveal that reporters' views in news content were expressed at a rate of 23.43%. This means that reporters observed the principle of separation of their views from the fact in the news content at the rate of 76.57%. In principle, unless a journalist is writing/narrating an editorial or review, stories should not merely be about his/her comments. Therefore, it is generally the best practice to use the third person when reporting. Third person is any person, place, or thing other than the speaker (reporter).

The findings may be interpreted to mean that reporters did not observe the professional standard of separating comments from fact, but again since this was an event based reporting this critic may not hold much weight.

3.2.1.14 Tone biasness

Along this analysis, attention was also put on the tone used to check if news reporters and presenters could not get biased. Though journalists are normally required to remain neutral, tone biasness might occur where the tone used in a news item clearly and distinctly favours a party/candidate, or substantially disfavours or promotes unfairly the candidates / party image.

Table 15: Tone used

Candidate	Tone usage			Total
	Negative	Neutral	Positive	
Kagame Paul	0	180	6	186
Habineza Frank	0	177	0	177
Mpayimana Philippe	1	161	0	162
Total	1	518	6	525
%	0.19	98.67	1.14	100

In light of results displayed in Table 19, only one case of negative tone disfavouring Philippe Mpayimana was identified (0.19%). On the contrary, six cases of positive tone favouring Paul Kagame were identified (1.14%). That said however, the paramount portion of news reports was found neutral (98.67%), and this is a positive note on the part of RBA news reporters.

3.2.1. 15 Candidates' mentions in scrolling texts on RTV news

While analyzing TV news editions, attention was also made of scrolling text in news bulletins to check whether all candidates were equally mentioned. Of identified 150 news items with scrolling texts on Rwanda Television, all the three candidates were featuring in a fair manner (132). Only 18 news items did mention presidential candidates in their scrolling texts. Table 20 displays related details.

Table 16: Candidates' mentions in scrolling texts on RTV news

Candidate	Does scrolling text in a news bulletin mention all candidates?		Total
	Yes	No	
Kagame Paul	41	6	47
Habineza Frank	47	7	54
Mpayimana Philippe	44	5	49
Total	132	18	150

3.2.1.16 Gender responsiveness

This analysis also sought to know who the media's sources of news are by identifying them by sex. In so doing, media monitors could determine whether news reporters were gender sensitive in searching legitimate and knowledgeable sources of news to add value to the needs of campaign and election related news consumers. The table below presents subsequent details.

Table 17: Gender responsiveness

Candidate	Did the news story on elections feature both women and men as sources?		Total
	Yes	No	
Kagame Paul	85	101	186
Habineza Frank	56	121	177
Mpayimana Philippe	63	99	162
Total	204	321	525
%	38.86	61.14	100

In light of results exhibited in Table 21, a big number of analysed news items were found not gender responsive (61.14%), i.e. the number of male sources outweighs the number of female ones by far. This this may be explained by the fact that, as noted earlier, accredited journalists in Rwanda are predominantly male. It can then be said that male journalists tend to solicit male

ideas than females. This is one of the reasons why the number of female reporters and journalists should be increased.

3.2.2. Candidates' adverts

3.2.2.1. Candidates' adverts on Radio Rwanda

In reference to the agreement¹⁴ between NEC and RBA on equal access to public media during the presidential campaign, every candidate was entitled to a seventy minute radio spot, six times a day. Such spots or adverts have to be equal in number for all parties as well as equal in time each lasts on air. Each candidate composed their own spot in line with the RBA time schedule and submitted to the latter's outlets for airing. However, media monitors focused on spots which were aired between 6:00 AM and 9:00 PM to check whether each candidate's spot was aired three times a day.

Results from the monitoring indicate that at the beginning of the campaigns, only adverts of the RPF candidate, Paul KAGAME were being aired. That was from 14th July to 20th July 2017 and it was aired more than 3 times per day. The DGPR's adverts / Frank HABINEZA were aired for the first time on 21st July 2017¹⁵ and it was aired three times a day or more until 31st July 2017. The advert of the independent candidate, Philippe Mpayimana was aired for the first time on 31st July 2017. The following table indicates the spot/advert airing frequency.

¹⁴ Op. cit.

¹⁵ For candidates' adverts frequency, RBA explains that the approval process – Advert submission to NEC for approval, then forwarding it to RBA for airing - was also long; there should be a way to shorten the process as the complaints by some candidates and cited by RBA suggest.

Table 18: Daily frequency of spot/advert airing on Radio Rwanda

		Three advertising spots per day aired			Total
		Three adverts aired	Less than three adverts aired	More than three adverts aired	
Presidential candidate	Kagame Paul	1	0	19	20
	Habineza Frank	0	0	14	14
	Mpayimana Philippe	1	2	0	3
Total		2	2	33	37

3.2.2.2. Candidates' adverts on Rwanda Television

Like on Radio Rwanda, presidential candidates were entitled to a seventy second spot/advert on RTV six times per day, and this monitoring focused on verifying whether candidates' adverts were aired at least three times daily. Results of this monitoring indicate that on 14th July there was no single advert for all candidates. On 15th July 2017 they started advertising the RPF candidate (Paul Kagame) and the independent candidate (Philippe Mpayimana). On 23rd July 2017, instead of airing the RPF advert, RTV displayed RPF song for 39 seconds. The first advert for DGPR's candidate was broadcasted on 26th July 2017. The following table indicates the spot/advert airing frequency on RTV.

Table 19: Daily frequency of spot/advert airing on RTV

		Three advertising spots per day aired			Total
		Only three adverts aired	Less than three adverts aired	More than three adverts aired	
Presidential Candidate	Kagame Paul	4	2	13	19
	Habineza Frank	1	0	6	7

	Mpayimana Philippe	4	2	13	19
Total		9	4	32	45

3.2.3. Live coverage of the candidates' campaigns

3.2.3.1. Candidates' live coverage and crossovers

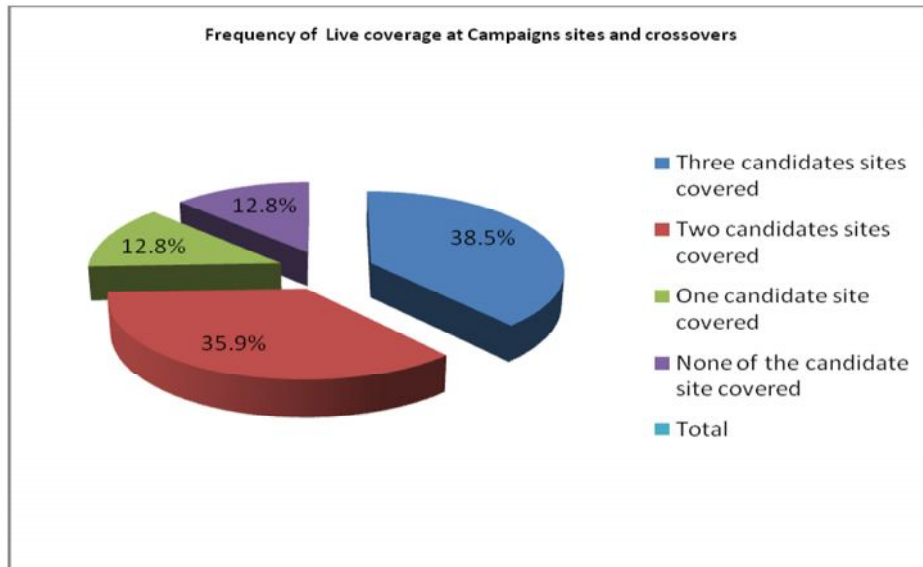
Every morning from 11:00 am and in the afternoon from 3:00 pm, RTV conducted a one hour and half live talk show discussing on candidates' manifestos but also featuring a live cross over coverage of candidates at their sites of campaign. It was expected that each of the three presidential candidates will receive at least 5 minutes coverage at their campaign sites every day for the 20 days of campaign.

In this regard, the monitoring of this program was targeting at measuring if each of the three candidates sites were covered in the crossovers made during the talk show. The monitoring exercise further examined the length of cross coverage awarded to each candidates site of campaign, the candidates represented in live coverage, Candidate or representative presence, voices in the crossovers and topics discussed as indicated by the tables and charts below.

Table 20: Live coverage at Campaigns sites and crossovers

Live coverage		Frequency	Percent
	Three candidate sites covered	15	38.5
	Two candidate sites covered	14	35.9
	One candidate site covered	5	12.8
	None of the candidate site covered	5	12.8
	Total	39	100.0

Chart 3: Frequency of “Live coverage” at campaign sites and crossovers



The findings above indicate that at least all candidates’ campaign sites were covered during crossovers coverage at a rate of 38.5%. It was also observed that at times the crossover coverage was given to only two sites and this was at a rate of 35.9%. Media monitors observed that this was mainly not a failure of RTV to cover the three sites but rather the non-respect of some candidate’s schedules to launch their respective campaigns at the planned sites. However, since the principle of providing equal airtime goes beyond covering the same number of events, attention should also be paid on providing equal airtime per event carried live. It is important to discern the time provided for each candidate at these campaign rallies¹⁶.

¹⁶ RBA management comments that live coverage at campaign sites and crossovers were difficult at times as in some cases candidates decided to suspend campaigning for various reasons, thus inability of RBA to cover three sites during each live coverage and cross over.

3.2.3.2. Candidate featuring in live coverage

The candidates' featuring in live coverage of rallies is of paramount importance since it gives the accurate presentation of facts, thus meeting the audience expectations to enable them make well informed judgement. The following tables reflect the frequency of live coverage of campaign before and afternoon.

Table 21: One hour and half of live coverage of campaign before noon

		Frequency	Percent
Coverage of campaign before noon	Yes	9	45.0
	No	11	55.0
	Total	20	100.0

Table 22: One hour and half of live coverage of campaign after noon

		Frequency	Percent
Coverage of campaign after noon	Yes	8	42.1
	No	11	57.9
	Total	19	100.0

Illustrations of the tables 25 and 26 indicate that live coverage of campaigns during morning and afternoon hours was realised according to RBA's commitment.

3.2.3.3. Voices in the crossover

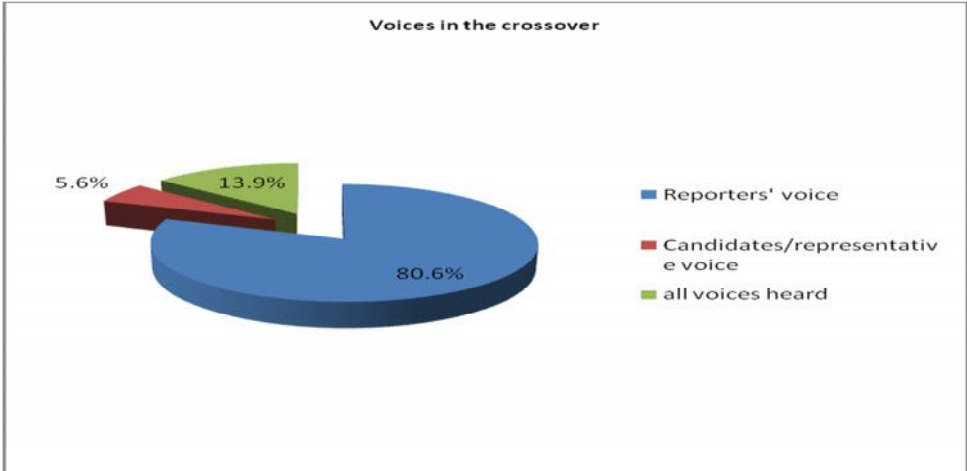
While conducting live coverage of candidates' rallies, it was a common practice to offer five minute airtime to party candidates, their representatives or rally attendants to give their views on the campaign and their expectations from either voters or candidates. This diversification of

opinions on public affairs helps citizens make sufficiently informed choices, thus nurturing a democratic culture and mind set. The following table and chart exhibit the related details.

Table 23: Voices in the crossover

	Frequency	Percent
Reporters' voice	29	80.6
Candidates/representative voice	2	5.6
All voices heard	5	13.9
Total	36	100.0

Chart 4: Voices in the crossover



The chart 4 above showcases that reporters’ voices dominated at a rate of 80.6% , whereas the candidates’ voices was at a rate of 5.6% . In other situations variety of voices that included journalists, candidate and public at the same time was recorded at a rate of 13.9%. According to

the monitors' observation, the journalists' voices prevailed during the crossovers because they were called during the campaigns time where it was not easy to reach candidates or public within 5 minutes airtime that was provided for the crossovers.

3.2.4. Live debate on RBA

3.2.4.1. Equal opportunity to respond on issues

According to the commitment of the RBA, all the three candidates or their representatives were expected to participate to a two hour live debate hosted by Rwanda Television. The table below illustrates the level at which, all the three candidates were given an opportunity to answer a question presented to them by moderator on how they intend to address various issues of public interest as enumerated in table below. It is evident that each candidate was given the opportunity to comment or respond to the moderator's question accordingly. Monitors further observed that each candidate was given ample time to express fully their views and agenda in regards to the issues presented to them. It is worth noting that the live debate lasted for one and half hour instead of two hours as previously committed by the RBA.

Table 24: Equal opportunity to respond on issues

Discussed issues		Number of participants	Percentage
	Poverty issues	3	16.7
	Economic issues	3	16.7
	Rural development issues	3	16.7
	Productivity and youth employment	3	16.7
	Accountable governance	3	16.7
	Other fundamental issues	3	16.7
	Total	18	100.0

The candidate and party representatives were given equal opportunity by the moderator to discuss and respond to his question on how their manifestos and agendas are going to deal with each of the above issues addressed to them. The column showing number of participants who responded to each of the issue based questions shows that all the three (3) were given an opportunity to express themselves. Media monitors observed that the moderator respected the 80:20 rule and standards of moderation. This implies that the moderator of the debate was not the central person in the debate but rather the participants.

3.2.5. Participation to the *InFocus* talk show

Presidential candidates and their respective parties were promised by RBA to have a 30 minute airtime to broadcast documentaries infomercials of their manifestos. However, none of the three candidates or their respective parties submitted the documentaries for dissemination. RBA alternatively gave them the opportunity to be invited to its weekly program famously known as *InFocus* so that they can use that platform accordingly. The analysis of the show indicated that each of three candidates or party representative was provided with equitable time to express their political agenda and manifestos, and none was denied a right to respond to any comments that were made about the candidate manifestos and agenda.

3.2.6. Articles on RBA website

Table 25: Number of stories published on RBA website on presidential campaigns

		Frequency	Percent
	15-JUL-2017	5	29.4
	16-JUL-2017	1	5.9
	23-JUL-2017	3	17.6
	26-JUL-2017	2	11.8

	28-JUL-2017	3	17.6
	29-JUL-2017	1	5.9
	30-JUL-2017	2	11.8
	Total	17	100.0

Table 26: Number of published stories on RBA website on presidential candidates

Presidential Candidate		Stories published	Total
	Kagame Paul	6	6
	Habineza Frank	6	6
	Mpayimana Philippe	5	5
Total		17	17

Table 29 indicates that, over a period of twenty days of the campaign, only 17 campaign related news articles were published on RBA website (www.rba.co.rw). Yet, according to RBA commitment, each candidate was entitled to one story per day of campaigning activity. Thus, 60 news articles in total were expected to be published if the three candidates conducted campaigns all the 20 days of rallies. However, as indicated by Table 30, all the three candidates obtained almost equal number of articles.

3.3. Other observations

It is very important to mention that the general public's reaction vis-à-vis the conduct of RBA during the campaigns was very active as per some recorded tweets on social media. Following are some illustrative examples:



Dr. Joseph NKURUNZIZA
@ryarasa

Great work the media is doing. We see balanced coverage for all presidential Candidates. Congs @RMC_Rwanda #RwandaDecides @kezio_musoke

11:57am · 15 Jul 2017 · Twitter for iPhone

10 RETWEETS 11 LIKES



Reply to @ryarasa @RMC_Rwanda @kezio...



bugirimfura Rachid
@rashidintegre

@BusingyeJohns: Today we have the most professional media that is diverse, well informed, and serving the interest of the pple @RMC_Rwanda

12:08pm · 11 Jul 2017 · Twitter for Android



Joseph Nkurunziza @Nzizajoseph Jul 25
@kezio_musoke media has improved
@RMC_Rwanda is doing a great Job.

David Kezio-Musoke @kezio_musoke
Mpayimana on @NewTimesRwanda front page? This is quite a leap ... quite revolutionary. I must commend The New Times 🌟🌟🌟🌟

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusion

Analysis of coverage of the 2017 presidential elections shows that RBA has done a tremendous job to enable the Rwandan electorate to make sufficiently informed choices about whom to entrust the governance of public affairs. As public broadcaster, RBA had to ensure the principle of “equal access” for all candidates in the race for presidential office. This media monitoring exercise revealed that, in addition to newscasts, the coverage also illustrates new innovations such as live coverage of campaign events and political competitors’ debates throughout which viewers and listeners were able to follow political competitors live. Moreover, candidates or their political parties could formulate radio/TV spots advertising their manifestos through RBA waves free of charge. All these points prove the increasing role of the media in providing the necessary news and information to the ordinary citizens to be able to partake in their own governance.

Data presented in this report indicate that more than any other time in the past, political parties and candidates or their representatives were challenged by journalists to substantiate the reasons for seeking presidential office. Concerning RBA legal requirements vis-à-vis equal access by all candidates, the rate of coverage and airtime allocation was found not equal but fairly equitable. From a professional perspective, news was more fairly presented, accurate, and objective with a variety of sources. These are all positive developments that need to be encouraged and supported. However, findings also hinted upon some weaknesses that should be addressed to enable RBA keep its

rightful place of shaping public opinion and holding public officials accountable. Below are highlighted some recommendations to address few weaknesses exhibited by this monitoring report.

4.2. Recommendations

RBA as Public service media has a central role to play in elections. In this regard, this report recommends that RBA should develop and adopt principles and guidelines governing its participation. The pre set standards and guidelines will guide its regular performance in elections coverage. The set principles should aim at helping RBA maintain its objective, independent and substantive coverage of all election in the country. The preset principles should detail its mode of operation in allocating equal access and airtime allocation to all competing candidates and political parties.

The same principles should encourage reporters to be gender sensitive while sourcing information in order to balance both males and females serving as sources of information. In same vain, RBA editorial should affirmatively assign its female journalists to tackle and cover political issues such as elections, thus serving as role models to female youth to encourage them engage in political journalism.

Furthermore, RBA should seek more involvement of researchers and experts to interpret and analyse candidate policies to enlighten the public's opinion on issues involved in political contests.

Concerned media partners should intensify the number of capacity building initiatives on election reporting, especially talk show moderation on elections.

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2. MCCOGITO Consult Ltd (2013), Media Coverage of the 2013 Parliamentary Elections in Rwanda, A Media Monitoring Conducted under UNDP Support (for the account of NEC) (unpublished report), Kigali
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4. Rwanda Media Barometer 2016
5. Law regulating Media N° 02/2013 of 08/02/2013
6. Law relating to access to information N° 04/2013 of 08/02/2013
7. The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 revised in 2015
8. Law N° 31/2005 of 24/10/2005 Relating to organization and functioning of the National Electoral Commission.
9. Law N° 42/2013 of 16/06/2013 establishing Rwanda Broadcasting Agency and determining its mission, organization and functioning;
10. Instructions No. 01/2017 of 04/04/2017 of the National Electoral Commission regulating 2017 presidential elections as modified and complemented to date (Article 30).
11. Rwanda Journalists' Guidelines for Election Coverage 2017
12. Rwanda Journalists and Media Practitioners' Code of Deontology and Ethics

Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Inyandikomvugo y'inama yabereye muri RBA ku itariki 10/07/2017 yahuje komisiyo y'igihugu y'amatora na RBA ku myiteguro y'amatora ya Perezida wa Repubulika ya 2017