

## Assessing the Digital-Analogue Ideological Positioning of the Jubilee Coalition.

Habakkuk Wanyonyi Nakiboli

Egerton University, Kenya

Email address: [habank502@gmail.com](mailto:habank502@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The objective of this study was to assess the digital-analogue ideological positioning of the jubilee coalition. Lakoff's (1993) Conceptual Metaphor Theory was the guiding principle to this study for it hoists metaphor above its linguistic value to consider the conceptual property on which this study is founded. This study adopted an interpretative research design targeting all the telecast campaign coverage between 24<sup>th</sup> December 2012 and 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013. The video clips as well as the FGD participants were purposively sampled in terms of specific relevance to the objective of this study. The study made use of video method of data collection as well as FGDs. The video clips used in this study were sought from the mainstream TV channels namely Citizen TV of Royal Media Services (RMS), Kenya Television Network (KTN) of Standard Group (SG) and Nation Television (NTV) of Nation Media Group (NMG). The clips were transcribed and then interpreted for their conceptual relevance to the digital-analogue metaphor. This study established that the digital analogue Metaphor summarized the ideological incline that characterised their campaign discourse which in turn accorded them a favourable attitude from the voter. It was clear that majority of the voters were influenced by the ideology pedalled in the digital-analogue narrative. The study recommended that there should be a critical evaluation of campaign discourse for the public to decide based on deliberative and substantive policies from those seeking elective positions.

**Key terms:** Digital, analogue, metaphor, ideology.

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### How to cite this article in APA (6<sup>th</sup> Edition)

Nakiboli, H. W. (2021). Assessing the Digital-Analogue Ideological Positioning of the Jubilee Coalition. *Editon Cons. J. Media Commun. Stud.*, 3(1), 197-204. Doi: [10.51317/ecjmcs.v3i1.200](https://doi.org/10.51317/ecjmcs.v3i1.200)

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## INTRODUCTION

The aspect of age mediating political competition was not new in Kenyan politics even with the onset of post-colonial regimes. For instance, Tom Mboya, who was among the first African representatives to the Legislative council (Legco) is one of the youthful forces who pushed for new course of national politics. He exploited the dual advantage of being a member of the Legco and a trade unionist. Just at the age of 28, Mboya chaired the 1958 All Africans People's Conference in Ghana in which he challenged the African obsession with old age as the defining characteristic of leadership (Mwongola, 2013). Until recently, youthfulness was considered debilitating to one's ascension to positions of political power. In fact, the aggregated attitude to the youth within the first four decades of independence was such that the youth were considered as societal burdens of some kind, who have to be carefully 'handled' (Mwongola, 2013).

With the adoption of the analogue-digital metaphorical catch phrase, the Jubilee coalition intended to cultivate a particular attitude in the voters: that it is time for the new generation leadership that has new ideas unlike the old which has been outmoded. This was a direct projectile to their competing CORD coalition, which in fact was composed of leaders who hitherto had been identical to the earlier regimes. The CORD members were also viewed as old and therefore too tired for robust and efficient service delivery. In a nutshell the Jubilee coalition wanted to cultivate the attitude of putting away the dysfunctional old for the functional new in all spheres of socio-political development. Jubilee coalition therefore adopted a manipulative strategy to get everybody onto his or her bandwagon. The fact those months before the 2013 elections, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto – principals of the Jubilee coalition - had been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) with crimes against humanity following the 2007 polls and their aftermath

presented yet another mediating factor in the outcome of the 2013 elections. This was hypothetically a hefty campaign capital for the CORD coalition on one hand but a hefty liability for the Jubilee coalition on the other. This study questions the truthfulness of Jubilee ideological presuppositions as they affirmed their suitability for office despite the perceived inadequacies that came with the monumental ICC challenge.

Political campaigns leading to the 2013 elections in Kenya featured metaphor prominently both as a persuasive and manipulative tool to voters given that the election were highly contested. Although some literature has been put forth on matters political and political communication in Kenya, there has not been any focus on the persuasive or manipulative power of metaphor. This study takes a step further to assess the digital-analogue ideological positioning of the jubilee coalition.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

While politics is largely understood to be the process of determining who gets what when and how by the influential (Lasswell, 1951), political communication, according to Denton and Woodward (1990), is a discussion about the allocation of public resources, official authority and the state sanctions. Landau and Keefer (2014) confirms the ubiquity of metaphors in political discourse that leads to the aforementioned process and raises the important question of whether or not the metaphors influence how the audience understands and evaluates political issues. The use of symbols and metaphors according to Eldelman (1964), awaken the latent tendencies among the masses.

Metaphor in political communication is both a linguistic and conceptual tool that enables politicians to make close contact with the audience so that the two parties constitute a community. Metaphor furnishes the persuasive power of political communication discourse

(Cohen, 1978; Weinberger, 1995) by making the communication to be audience oriented. The emotional and moral faculties of people are said to be mediated by thought to produce metaphors that enable us adapt change in personal and social environment (Charteris-Black, 2008). Metaphors at play in campaign politics may give a combative polarization modelled along the ‘us-versus-them’ dichotomy. Such metaphors are said to be metaphors of conflict. Conflict metaphors imply a concept that attempts to control or struggle with a force. This argument inherently gives descriptive explanation as to why “digital-analogue” is a conflict metaphor that conceptualized the Jubilee Coalition’s view of the self and that of their opponents, in CORD coalition. According to Charteris-Black (2008), Conflict metaphors offer effective rhetorical advantage especially in campaign politics because it identifies political opponents and creates an automatic set of oppositions thereby highlighting the political spectacle even as it clarifies political instances. Additionally, recent literature on the persuasive power of metaphor has it that metaphorical language is key to emotive appeal to the audience. It therefore stands as an important ingredient of political language since political communication is about persuasion or manipulation by appealing to emotion and reason or as put by Edelman, awakening latent tendencies among the audience. This standpoint also articulates the classical views of Aristotle who conceives the power of emotion as the cornerstone of political language. According to Aristotle, pathos is the main component of persuasion in rhetoric, which is not disparate to the two other components: logos and ethos. Political emotional experience precedes cognitive processes. Taking it that emotion reflects attitude, we can argue that a favourable attitude about a speaker will motivate a rational process about what he says in the audience and the inverse is true. Emotion therefore directs attention towards what is perceived as the most important. Society is confronted by a myriad of socioeconomic issues all competing for attention and the

need for selection cannot be gainsaid (Marcus, 2002). The powerful suggestive mechanism activated by metaphor triggers underlying emotions and pegs them to political individualities (Beer, & De Landtsheer, 2004).

Metaphor as a linguistic element has gained a lot of attention from many scholars. Earlier scholars have treated metaphor as a poetic device for poetic imagination and rhetorical flourish pinned to language alone, devoid of thought and action. This view has however been quashed by contemporary scholars in communication and cognitive linguistics. In this vein, metaphor is considered pervasive in everyday life in both thought and action (Lakoff, & Johnsen, 2003). It is in fact argued that a metaphorical construct in language is analogous to a solar eclipse; it hides the object of study while revealing some of its salient features both in one huff (Pavio, 1979). In harmony with Pavio’s view therefore is the argument that metaphor does not only define the pathway of perception but also determines the pattern of perception to which people respond. Metaphor used in communication is therefore partial for it foregrounds one aspect about a subject as it hides the other. Metaphor intensifies selected perceptions and ignores others thereby helping one to concentrate on the desired consequences of favoured public policy (Mio, 1997).

A bulk of metaphor literature especially in light of political communication has largely concentrated on how it applies in political campaign as a rhetorical device not shedding much light on how metaphor can be used to form a seed crystal around which a particular ideology describing a specified group of a given social interest can form. The digital-analogue metaphor as exploited by the Jubilee coalition was conscious of this functional metaphor property in the sense that it, among other things, highlighted the perceived youthful nature of the Jubilee Coalition that portended robust socio-political and economic revolution on one hand and the worn-out and

nonstrategic policies of the CORD coalition whose lead members were, from the outset, of a more advanced age and had been greatly ubiquitous in the previous political regimes. Used repeatedly, such a metaphor becomes symbolic and functions - like it did - as coded speech which can effectively dull or stir the critical faculties of the audience.

Semino's (2008) focus on Tony Blair's speech on 30 September 2003 at Bournemouth demonstrates how metaphor can succinctly express one's thought pattern and again, be used to justify a standpoint as part of a persuasive or manipulative strategy. In the entire realm of human communication, metaphor usage is seen as the core of human thought and creativity and is considered political (Browski, 1972). Politicians use metaphors for symbolic representation, justification of action and to create political reality that when accepted, can shape perceptions and lead to logical consequences.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### Assessing the Digital-Analogue Ideological Dichotomy of the Jubilee Coalition

As a discursive concept, digital analogue-metaphor harbours certain cognitive defects or inconsistencies with the existing socio-political context owing to the fact that metaphorical constructs are partial in their descriptions as they foreground certain properties while hiding others about the same subject. That is to say human beings author metaphors to serve their interests particularized by the need and context. In light of ideology therefore, digital-analogue metaphor inculcated a false or slanted perspective that arranged facts in a misleading way, or failed to mention certain facts or placed them in an inconspicuous context. Subscribing to the conceptual dimensions mapped out of the metaphor raises the following critical questions on age limit for political leadership, the concept of youth, and the critical argumentation arising from the questions above highlights

the discursive properties in digital-analogue campaign discourse that can be analysed at this level of the research. The authors of the metaphor in this study deliberately highlighted self-serving qualities and those of their competitors as they blurred those that were perceived to be liability to their campaign ideology or capital to their competitors; making it a typical conceptual eclipse.

### The Conceptual Eclipse in the Digital-Analogue Metaphor

The mischief of metaphor in language is such that it hides some features of the subject described while revealing other attributes just in one huff. The Digital-analogue metaphor foregrounds and hides certain attributes on either side of the divide fittingly falling in van Dijk's square as shown in the table below:

**Table 1: Conceptual Framework of Van Dijk's Square**

Emphasizing Jubilee's aptitude and deserving nature for the job.	De-emphasize Jubilees disadvantageous stance.
Emphasizing CORD'S ineptitude and non-deserving position.	De-emphasizing CORDS's good.

### Emphasizing Jubilee's Aptitude and CORD's ineptitude in leadership

The digital particle of the metaphor is intended to put premium on what is perceived to be express capacity for leadership as expressed in their campaign communications. The following extract demonstrates this.

#### Excerpt 1 (see footage clip 5, pg. 20)

*Tunamwambia Mwai Kibaki umefanya kazi, wewe ustaafu uende nyumbani salama salmini.  
Tunamwaambia Raila Odinga pia aende nyumbani kama*

Mwai Kibaki. Tunamwambia Kalonzo Musyoka umekuwa Serikalini miaka thelathini. Pia wewe undend nyumani na Mwai kibaki.

(We are telling Mwai Kibaki, you have worked, you retire and go home in peace. We are telling Raila Odinga to go home like Mwai Kibaki. We are telling Kalonzo Musyoka you have been in government for 30 years you also go home with Mwai Kibaki.)

In the excerpt, the speaker sends the outgoing president home, with the two CORD lead personalities. Tucking Mr. Kalonzo (at 60 years) and Mr. Odinga (68 years) to Kibaki (at 82 years of age) is a form of endorsement that the three form a pack of old people tending to leadership impotence. What is eclipsed deliberately is the relative youthfulness of Raila and Kalonzo to Mr. Kibaki, which at least counts to fourteen years. It is also not clear if Mwai Kibaki left office out of submission to old age or constitutional dictate. It is evident that we have had older leaders than Kibaki and a case in point is Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, who by 2013 was 89 years of age and still in power. The speaker exploits relative youthfulness as opposed to the constitutional youth put at 35 years of age. The validity of Jubilee flag bearers' youthful tag was only validated when conjoined to CORD personalities.

In the same way, the speaker highlights the perceived ubiquitous presence of CORD leaders in past regimes to discredit them. The implied question here is; "What new development agenda did they have for the people?" Accordingly, Kalonzo should go home because he has been in government for over thirty years. The speaker is keen to present the CORD leaders as exhausted in ambition and vision for the people and therefore expired. What is deliberately omitted is that both lead persons of the jubilee had been in the previous governments; William Ruto and Uhuru Kenyatta came into national politics and limelight in 1990s.

The ICC question at this electioneering time was propped by CORD as a defining factor of leadership integrity. The application of this factor saw the CORD team label their competing team as "coalition of the accused". This is what made them package their communication to the objective of diminishing the ICC challenge. This came out clearly during the presidential debate in which Uhuru Kenyatta was put to task to give a plan of how he would run the country and at the same time attend trials of crimes against humanity at The Hague. In his response, he says:

**Excerpt 2** (see footage clip 7, pg. 20)

Many Kenyans are faced with personal challenges and I take this to be a personal challenge ... if the people of Kenya do decide to vote for me as their president, I will be able to handle the issue of clearing my name while at the same time ensuring that the business of government continues ... in two days we will be having a status conference, that status conference will be handled through video conferencing.

The argument advanced by Uhuru Kenyatta in this excerpt is intended to explain the agility, and vigour to navigate through the double task of the ICC setback and country leadership. The option of videoconferencing during the hearing of his case seems confirm his own plan team to exploit technology in solving problems.

Despite the fact that Jubilee invested heavily on the subject of being young and for the youth as the pivot for change oriented leadership in their campaign discourse, it should be noted that it was coincidentally descriptive as opposed to prescriptive of Jubilee politics. The Coalition exploited the immediate social consciousness and statistical facts about national population age profile having the youth as the majority in the voter population. The origination of the digital-analogue metaphor was apparently not meditated

but an easy pick from the prevalent technological world. The existing social psychology was that Kenya was at 50 years of independence and this is what informed the pick of Jubilee for a formal party identity. More fittingly, the coalition was live to the socioeconomic plight of the young generation and as such wanted to identify with them holding onto the fact that the youth form the majority of the voter population. Digital-analogue description of the 2013 electoral contest was easily sourced from the technological world and applied to the political. Tracking the Jubilee coalition campaign communications, you discover their perceived trajectory to solving socioeconomic challenges through modern technology that was loosely dubbed “digital”.

#### **De-Emphasizing Jubilees Ineptitude and CORD'S Aptitude for Leadership**

The campaign discourse of the Jubilee team down played their competitors' ability to lead the country into unity, and economic transformation. They tap in history as well as CORD's own campaign rhetoric as seen in the following excerpts:

#### **Excerpt 3** (see footage clip 8, pg. 21)

*Kuna kundi mbili: iko kundi ya kuongozwa na Uhuru Kenyatta ya kusema na kutenda, iko kundi ya kuongozwa na jamaa wengine ya kusema na vitendawili.*

(There are two groups: one lead by Uhuru Kenyatta that does what it says and another led by other fellow that speaks in riddles.)

As presented in the extract, Jubilee want to be sure of delivering their promises in their *Kusema Nakutenda* (promise and deliver) philosophy. Bring in the riddle a language device that characterised Raila Odinga's campaign language is intended to trivialize CORD's agenda. In this context, riddles are largely viewed as little pass-time language games for children lacking in serious commitment. Fact that the speaker use vague

nominalization (other fellows) instead of particularizing to CORD of specific persons exudes a diminishing attitude of the Jubilee group to CORD.

The Jubilee Coalition uses the perceived poor track record for Raila and Kalonzo's long time in government to supposedly confirm CORD's ineptitude and this, coupled with the perceived age factor, renders them no longer capable to lead the country to development. As demonstrated in the excerpt:

#### **Excerpt 4** (see footage clip 9, pg. 21)

*Mheshimiwa Kalonzo, Musyoka, sasa karibu agonge miaka salasini ndani ya serikali. Sasa kama yeye amekuwa miaka salasini, na mimi na Ruto pamoja hatujafikisha miaka saba, nanai angekuwa maeleta suluhisho? Ni mimi ama yeye? Raila Odinga amekuwa waziri kwa serikali ya Moi, amekuwa waziri katika serikali ya kwanza ya Kibaki, amekuwa prime minister kwa miaka mitano, boss yangu wa kunitawala. Kama kuna mtu ambaye angeleta suluhisho ni yeye au mimi?*

(Honourable Kalonzo Musyoka has now been in government for almost 30years. If he has been in government for 30 years and William Ruto and have been there for hardly seven years in total... who should have given a solution? Is it him or me? Raila Odinga was minister in Moi government, he was minister in the first term of Kibaki government and he was the prime minster in the second term of Kibaki government, my boss. If we have somebody who should have brought solution, is it me or him?)

The theme advanced in the excerpt above is carefully sifted to highlight the inefficiency of the CORD figureheads and to establish a historical disconnect between the two competing factions. It is carefully sifted because the speaker Uhuru Kenyatta and his ally William Ruto had also been in previous regimes in fact since 1997 with Ruto having served as Member of Parliament for three terms,

and again three times as minister. Uhuru Kenyatta on his part had been in politics since 1997 serving in different capacities for finance and leader of opposition.

The apogee of Jubilee's positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is displayed in the excerpt below:

**Excerpt 5** (see footage clip 10, pg. 21)

*Mtakuwa katika chama ya kuunda serikali au ya kwenda upinzani?*

(Will you choose to be in a party that will form government or be in that team that will form opposition.)

The impression created here is that CORD's failure to win elections was imminent and voters could choose where to subscribe because it was sealed.

The study also discovered that 'digital' as a label for the comparatively youthful Jubilee group meant a team that was perceptibly efficient and fast in addressing social issues. Analogue therefore implied the slow and inefficient old ascribing to the CORD coalition. The efficiency Jubilee was contained in the youthfulness and ambition to exploit technology in solving social challenges.

The findings in this study also ascertained that the label 'digital' was exploited by jubilee for a social articulation to the youthful nation that comprised the majority of the

voter population. Jubilee poised as the would-be government of the youth by the youth and about youth. Their pledges during campaigns were seen to target problems greatly afflicting the youth.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

**Conclusion:** The metaphor defined whom Jubilee was and how they wanted to be perceived relative to their competitors. It summarized the ideological incline that characterized their campaign discourse, which in turn accorded them a favourable attitude from the voter. It was clear that majority of the voters were influenced by the ideology pedalled in the digital-analogue narrative.

**Recommendation:** Political campaign discourse is largely discursive and therefore prone to abuse; it lacks objectivity and only serves its authors. The voters should not be passive consumers of such discourse but be people who can interrogate campaign arguments to determine their fairness, feasibility and honesty. There should be a critical evaluation of campaign discourse for the public to decide based on deliberative and substantive policies from those seeking elective positions. Politicians can use language selectively to hide important information – that could be used by the public to ratify them for public office – to only reveal self-serving content.

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