

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines ethics in the coverage and news presentation of socio-political issues in Kenya. There are a few studies on how the Kenyan newspaper media relates to the established code of professional conduct and regulation as stipulated in the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism in Kenya. The research studied the levels of deviation from journalistic ethics in the reporting and coverage of the political drama that unfolded at City Hall; Nairobi after first County Governor Evans Kidero allegedly slapped first Nairobi County Women Representative Rachel Shebesh outside his office on September 6, 2013. The study analyzes selected newspaper articles covering the wrangle as published by the Daily Nation, the Standard and the Star. This research identifies newspaper articles that contain contentious journalistic ethical issues and sought to interrogate them in order to determine the levels of deviation from journalistic ethical standards. The study was guided by the Social Responsibility Theory as propounded by Siebert et al., (1956). The theory was important in analyzing the chosen texts to reveal the extent these publications deviated from the established code of professional conduct for journalists. Purposive sampling was used since only information rich newspaper articles were relevant. Data collected from the newspaper documentary sources and interviews carried out between September 2013 and February 2014 were qualitatively analyzed. The media content analysis method was used to analyze the data. The study observed that the most tangible, self-policing mechanisms designed to ensure more responsible journalism are ethical codes. These regulatory norms serve to guide press behaviour and symbolize the industry's good faith in its reporting conduct. It was also noted that significant differences exist in individual journalists in upholding journalistic ethics. These variations were critical in making practical recommendations for the establishment of theory to media studies. In addition, the study sought to take a multidisciplinary approach since it incorporated linguistics and media studies and hopes to make a contribution to these fields. Moreover, it is hoped that the study may benefit media practitioners and policy makers in and outside government to nurture a good political relationship in regard to how journalism connects to the political life of a nation. Further this study could form the basis of introspection for media professionals towards establishing acceptable professional practices.