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Conflict Sensitive Journalism: The case of the 2017 general elections in Kenya

The media plays an integral role and forms a crucial part of any electoral process. Over the years, it has become almost impossible for any electoral process to take place without considering the pivotal role played by the media. The media takes up its key role of informing the masses on the proceedings on any electoral process, from the national level down to the constituencies and wards. During an election, not all parties agree on the results and/or the whole electoral process as evidenced by the 2017 general elections in Kenya. In such events, conflicts are likely to occur after an election and the media therefore has a responsibility of channeling and practicing conflict sensitive form of journalism in effort to help avoid any escalation in conflicts between different members of any given society. This paper therefore seeks to answer the following questions: What is conflict? What is conflict sensitive Journalism? Does the media in Kenya practice conflict sensitive form of journalism during and after elections?. What are the effects of the media reporting during and after the elections? Descriptive method of data collection will be applied in this research. Agenda setting theory by Mc Combs and Donald Shaw will be used to analyze the media's intrinsic ability to shape public opinion and its power to inform decisions among the masses before and after elections. The study will rely on descriptive research design, which is a design in qualitative research and premised on Agenda Setting theory. The findings will be useful in informing about the media's ability to act professionally in their conflict sensitive reporting. Keyterms: Conflict, Media, Elections, Conflict Sensitive Journalism

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