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Media and Electoral Processes: Media coverage of the 2017 Kenya's general elections

The media has been a critical part of any election process, that of educating and informing the populace. Media continues to play a critical role in educating and informing the populace. The increased number of media outlets has ensured broader access to election information, negotiating political and electoral discourse, and provided a platform where citizens can exchange ideas and engage with their leaders. During the 2017 election process the media remained at the forefront of presenting different opinions and highlight issues of public importance to their audience. Compared with previous elections there was been an improvement in live coverage, immediacy, and updates on the campaigns/elections. The media houses also followed the various legal challenges during the 2017 elections, there were efforts to encourage issue-based debating platforms and to give fair opportunities to all candidates, for better engagement.

However, the media was also been accused of been parochial, partisan and biased on their coverage. The adherence to the principles of truth and accuracy, independence, fairness and impartiality were questioned. There were accusation of the media being partisan, journalists revealed their political biases, there was blurred the lines between the personal and the professional, wallow coverage of issues or content, propagating fake news, lack of verification and fact checking. The media was also accused of lack or delay in setting the agenda on issues of public concerns such as use of state resources for campaigns and the conduct of political party primaries.

This paper therefore seeks to examine the role played by media during the 2017 elections in Kenya, analyze the media coverage of the 2017 elections, and the impact of media coverage on the 2017 general elections in Kenya.

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