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Media coverage of Kenya's 2002 elections:A Case Study of The Daily Nation and The East African Standard

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ABSTRACT

Everywhere in countries around the world, there is an urgent call for governments in Nations to enforcement democracy for its citizens. One of the measures of democracy is in an election where citizens are able to freely elect the leaders who govern them. In such times, the media in general play a vital role in among other things, informing the voters, providing a forum for debate and acting as a watchdog to ensure that election malpractices are not carried out. Further, as purveyors of truth, the media is expected to give balanced accounts of the political parties contending as well as debate the promises of the candidates and parties in question. In Kenya's 2002 elections, the voters depended on the media to effectively play out its role as a purveyor of information, and also set the agenda for what was deemed important.

This research report is an examination, an analysis, which looks into what Kenya's leading newspapers reported about the elections in 2002. In this report, I will not only be looking at the overall picture the newspapers painted but further, I will examine the themes that played themselves out in the newspapers over the election period. The theories of news production as well as the role of media in democracy and subsequently in election coverage will aid the arguments in this paper. Further, I will also debate the notion of objectivity in media coverage in order to ascertain whether private media can be the standards set for the industry. In doing this, the research will be examining the role of media in democracy and subsequently in an election coverage.