The Pre-Election Coverage by Kenyan Newspapers

March 2012

Monitoring Report

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Monitoring Report
Media Council of Kenya

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Preface

The study „The Pre-Election Coverage by Kenyan Newspapers" is the first monitoring report that the Media Council of Kenya publishes ahead of the General Election in (presumably) March 2013. More monthly reports on the performance of print and electronic media will follow.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the adherence of the print media to the "Guidelines of Election Coverage" that the Media Council of Kenya has developed in co-operation with many other media stakeholders. The guidelines are aimed at helping journalists to provide comprehensive, accurate, impartial, balanced and fair coverage of the elections.

By sharing media monitoring results on a regular basis, such as this report, the Media Council wants to ensure that the media houses can rectify negative trends in order to contribute to a free, fair and democratic election process which enables citizens to make informed choices.

Haron Mwangi
Executive Director
Media Council of Kenya

Acknowledgements

1. Executive Summary

The Media Council of Kenya (MCK), the statutory body established under the Media Act 2007 which regulates media and advances professionalism of the media in Kenya, monitored the political coverage of Kenyan daily newspapers in March 2012 in order to assess the quality and fairness of their pre-election coverage.

Key Findings

- The political coverage was predominantly personality- and not issue-driven.
- Differences reported between parties or politicians were limited to debates about political alliances and the approval or rejection of the 2013 election date.
- The most frequently covered presidential candidates were Raila Odinga, Uhuru Kenyatta, William Ruto and Musalia Mudavadi. The activities of other aspirants were rarely considered to be newsworthy.
- Election issues dominated the political coverage, although the polls are still many months ahead. Nearly 2/3 of the lead stories on page 1 were devoted to election matters.
- While calling for calm in their editorials, some dailies contributed to heightening tensions by reporting unconfirmed rumours and using sensational headlines.
- More than a quarter of all news reports presented only one viewpoint. This was due to the extensive coverage of individual political rallies, only reporting one political point of view.
- The reporting about IEBC´s setting of the poll date for March 4, 2013 failed to provide legal background analysis of the various political points of view discussed.
- Hate speech was not encountered as a significant breach of the code of conduct. Only a very few articles contained negative stereotypes.
- Political coverage is still a male domain. Women were clearly underrepresented both as authors and as news subjects. Only 7% of the authors were female, and only 4% of the articles focused on women.

Recommendations

The Media Council of Kenya in cooperation with Editors´ Guild, Kenya Union of Journalists, Kenya Correspondents Association, Media Owners Association, Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission has published Guidelines for Election Coverage to ensure the proper coverage of elections in order to enable citizens to make an informed choice.

In adherence to these guidelines, the press must provide a balanced and impartial (pre-) election coverage, which includes a fair coverage of minor parties and candidates, well sourced reports based on sound evidence and the careful use of language to help reduce tension between parties.

2. Project Description
Monitoring Pre-Election Coverage

2.1 Objective, Data Collection and Analysis

MCK observed the coverage of parties and politicians by the Daily Nation, The Standard, The Star and The People Newspaper from March 17 – 31, 2012. All major articles (quarter page and longer, n=276) mentioning any of the presidential candidates and/or their parties were analyzed with regard to their adherence to the code of conduct and quality and fairness of reporting. 81% of items monitored were news reports, 3% features and 15% opinion pieces. Data was entered into MCK´s digital media portal using "Enhanced Evaluation" software. Statistical analysis was carried out with SPSS version 17.0.

3. Findings
3.1 General Observations

The dominant political topics covered from March 17 – 31, 2012 included the debate on the election date, the controversy about ODM´s nomination rules for the presidential candidate, the GEMA meeting in Limuru and the cabinet reshuffle. The most frequently mentioned politicians were Raila Odinga, Uhuru Kenyatta, William Ruto and Musalia Mudavadi. The activities of most other presidential candidates were only rarely considered as newsworthy.[1]

Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto received extensive coverage during their second round of "prayer meetings" following the confirmation of charges by the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Kenyatta was also mentioned in connection with the GEMA meeting in which the participants declared him the political leader of Central Kenya. Raila Odinga and Musalia Mudavadi made news because of their controversy about the ODM presidential candidacy. Odinga was also extensively covered with regard to his criticism on the election date set by the IEBC.

The political coverage was predominantly personality- and not issue-driven. The politicians received significantly more mentions than their parties. There was no coverage of party manifestos or any other content-based differences between the parties. Party differences discussed in the print media were limited to the approval or rejection of the 2013 election date.

Taking into account that the elections are still many months ahead, the daily press clearly contributed to hyping the topic. Nearly 2/3 of the lead stories on page 1 were devoted to election matters.
While calling for calm in their editorials, the dailies contributed to heightening

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[1] Articles like "Busy week as presidential hopefuls up their game" (Standard 25, 2012), covering the activities of Mudavadi, Karua, Camencu, Kenneth, Saitoti, Musyimi, Tuju and Kiyiapi were a rare exception.

tension by reporting unconfirmed rumours[2] and using sensational headlines such as "Election Countdown"[3].

3.2 Adherence to the Code of Conduct

6% of all articles were classified as containing breaches of the Code of Conduct, whereas 94% adhered to the rules of the code.

3.3 Accuracy and Balance

40% of all news reports provided answers to all six W/H questions (Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?), whereas 5% only answered three of the questions. 21% of all news reports referred to only one source, 19% to two sources, and 60% to more than two sources. 27% of all news reports presented only one viewpoint.

Figure 1

Number of Viewpoints in News Reports

n=223
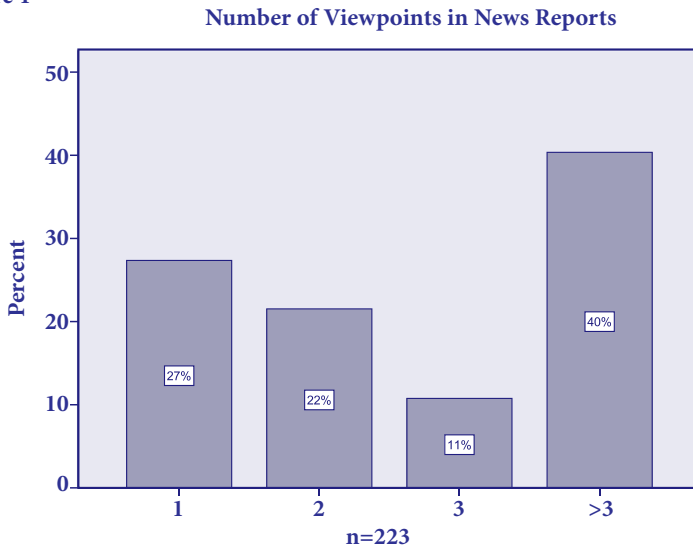
The People and the Daily Nation scored highest regarding the diversity of viewpoints covered in the news: 70% of the news reports analyzed in The People and 65% of the reports in the Daily Nation presented more than 3 viewpoints. 77% of the reports in The Star and 38% in The Standard only provided one point of view. One reason for that was the extensive coverage of individual political rallies, only reporting one political viewpoint.

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[2] On March 22, The Standard titled on p.4: „IEBC officials accuse Raila, Midiwo of intimidation". On the same day the Daily Nation reported that IEBC had denied this accusation. Only on March 23, The Standard reported IEBC´s confirmation that there was no threat but disagreement about the election date. On the same day The Star titled "Uhuru, Ruto to support Mudavadi". The lead article on p.1 was largely based on anonymous sources.

[3] See Standard March 21, p.1

Figure 2

Viewpoints in News Reports
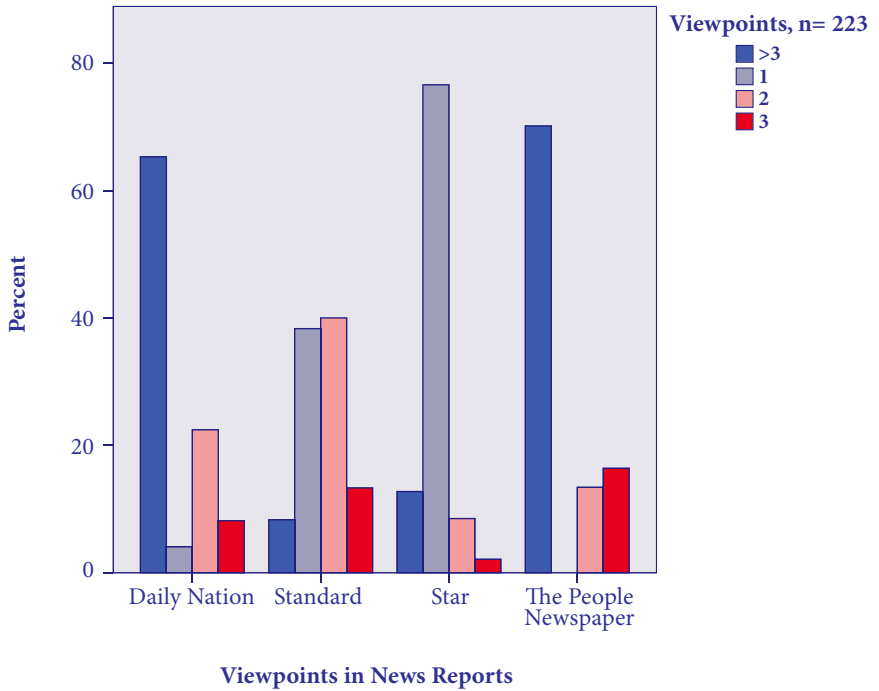
In addition to this trend, 53% of The Star reports, 23% of The Standard reports, 9% of The People reports and 4% of the Daily Nation reports referred to only one source.

The Standard scored highest with regard to the completeness of information. 93% of all Standard news reports answered all 6 W/H questions, compared to only 3% in The People newspaper.

Figure 3

**Number W/H Answers
n=223**

Legend:
- **2**
- **3**
- **4**
- **5**
- **6**

Percent (y-axis)

Categories (x-axis): Daily Nation, Standard, Star, The People Newspaper

Number of W/H Answers in News Reports
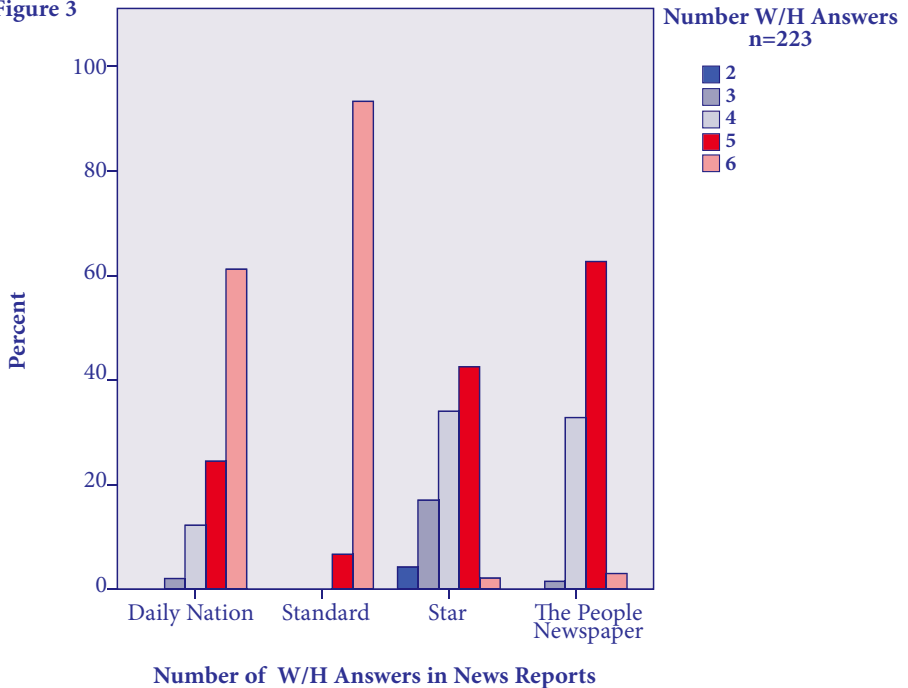
3.4 Distinction between comment and facts
The vast majority of articles didn´t mix editorial comment and facts.
96 % of all news reports didn´t contain any journalistic opinion, whereas 2% contained a small portion (<20%) and 1% a higher portion (>20%) of journalistic opinion.

3.5 Hate Speech
98% of all articles observed contained no hate speech.

3.6 Obscenity
None of the articles observed contained obscene language or images.

3.7 Gender Balance
The vast majority of articles were written by men (74%), only 7% of the authors were female. Due to male dominated party politics and the prevailing absence of female presidential candidates, men were central subjects in 90% of all the articles observed. Only 4% of the articles focused on women.

Figure 4

Gender of Author

n=276

Figure 5

Gender of Author

Author Gender, n=276
- n.a
- both
- female
- male
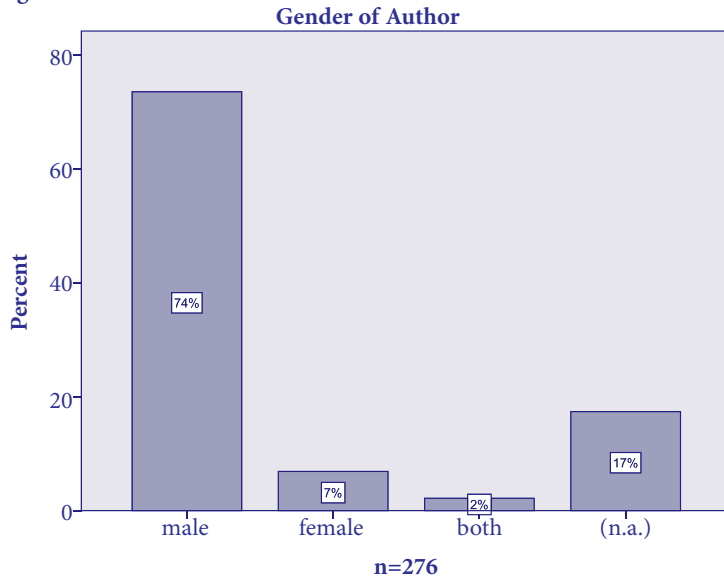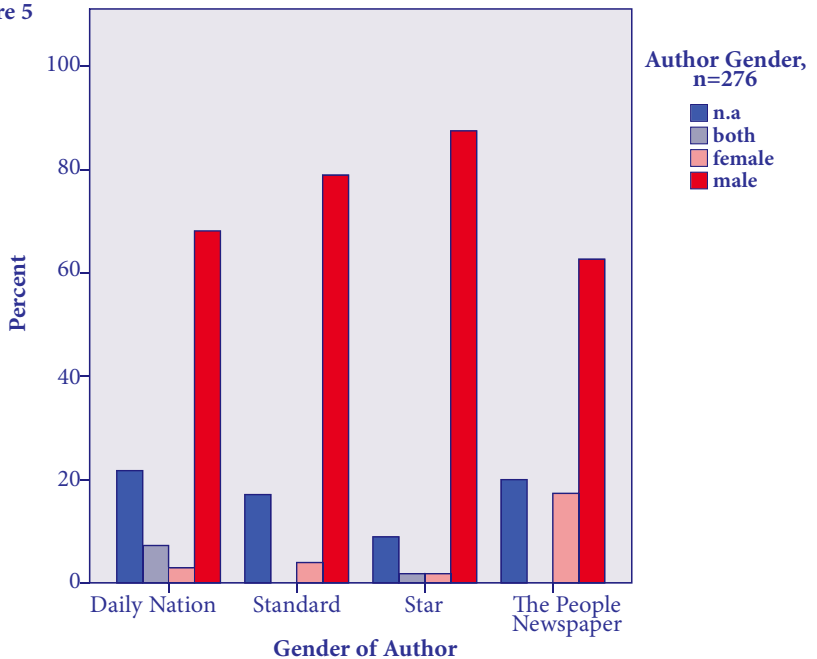
There were significantly more articles by female journalists in The People News-paper than in the other dailies (17%); The Daily Nation presented more women as central subjects of the article (7%) than the other papers (e.g. Standard 1,3%).

Figure 6

Gender Presence

n=276
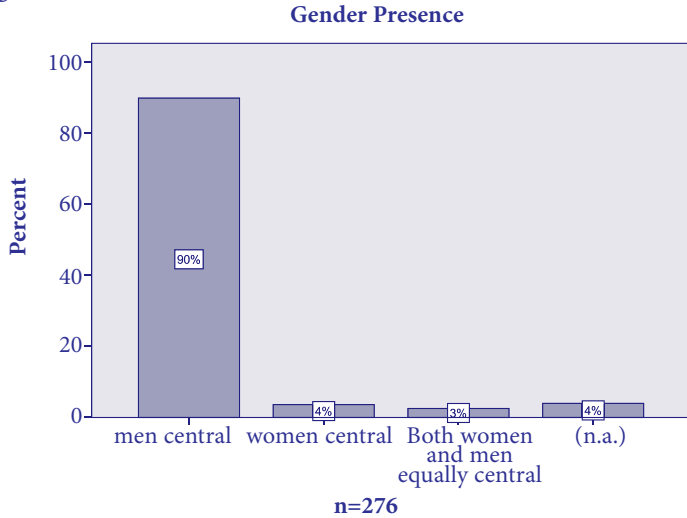
Figure 7
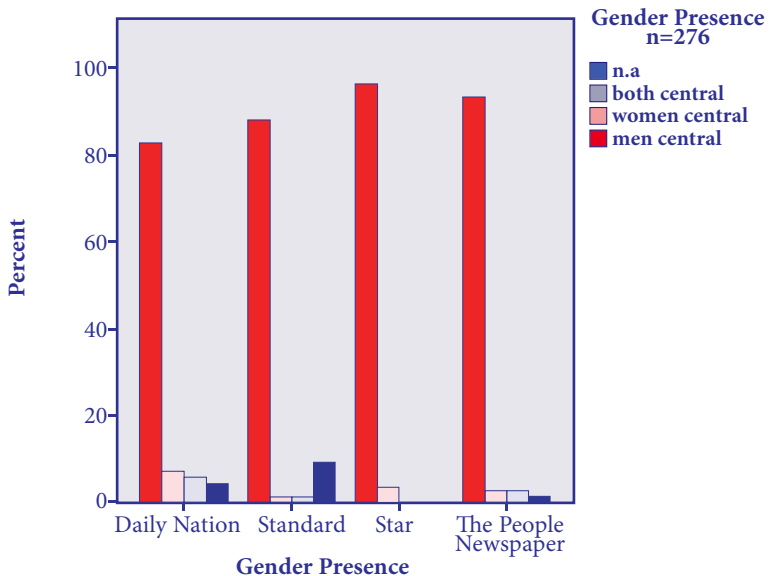
3.8 Allocation of space

Raila Odinga was the most prominently covered politician in all newspapers (30% of coverage of all politicians observed), followed by Uhuru Kenyatta (18%), William Ruto (11%) and Musalia Mudavadi (10%). Kalonzo Musyoka, Eugene Wamalwa and Martha Karua received 3% coverage each, whereas Peter Kenneth, Raphael Tuju and Paul Muite were presented in only 1% of the articles analyzed. The coverage focused on politicians rather than on parties. Less than 20% of the political coverage was allocated to parties. ODM received the highest amount of party coverage (55%), followed by the G7 Alliance (16%), KANU (10%), PNU (9%) and NARC Kenya (6%).

Figure 8

Coverage of Politician (%) n=276
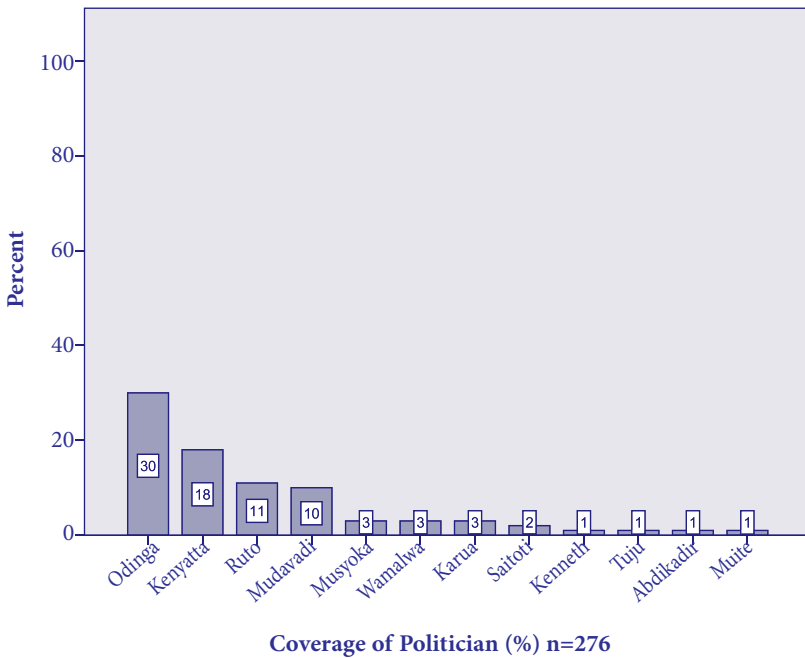
The People allocated the highest amount of coverage to Raila Odinga (33%), followed by Daily Nation (32%), The Standard (28%) and The Star (25%). Uhuru Kenyatta received 22% coverage in the Star, 18% in the Daily Nation and The Standard and only 8% in The People.

Figure 9

Coverage of Politicians
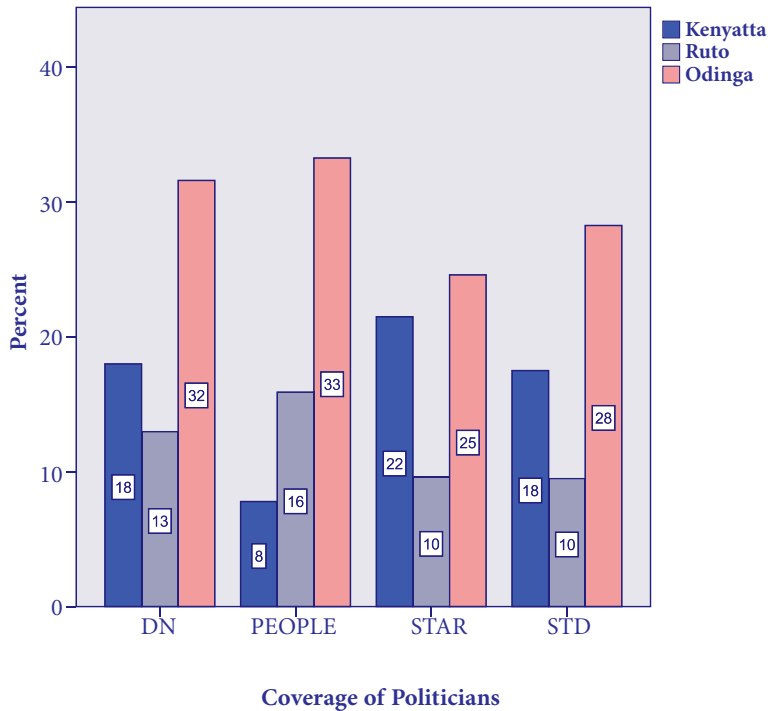
3.9 Tonality of Coverage

70% of the overall coverage of Raila Odinga was classified as neutral, whereas 21% was positive and 18% negative. The reporting about Uhuru Kenyatta was classified to be 68% neutral, 13% positive and 14% negative. The coverage of Martha Karua was analyzed as the most positive one: 60% of the mentions were classified as neutral whereas 24% were positive and 5% negative.

Figure 10

Tonality of Coverage
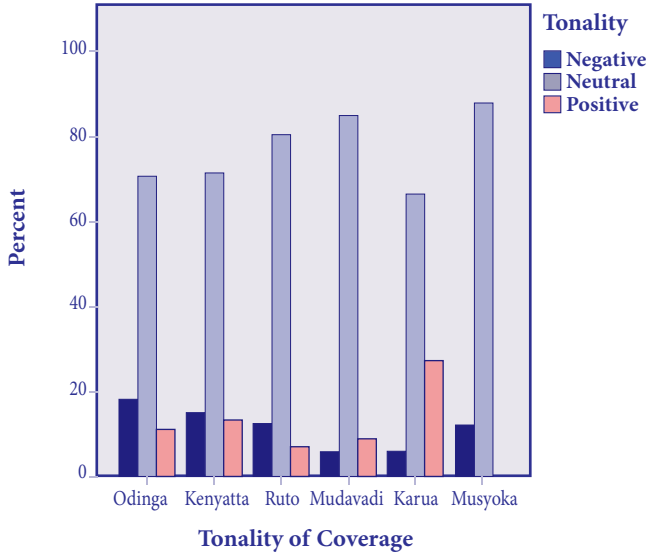
There was no significant, continuous bias encountered in the coverage of the different newspapers. However, it was obvious that The People´s coverage of Kenyatta didn´t contain any negative tonality.

Figure 11

Tonality of Coverage
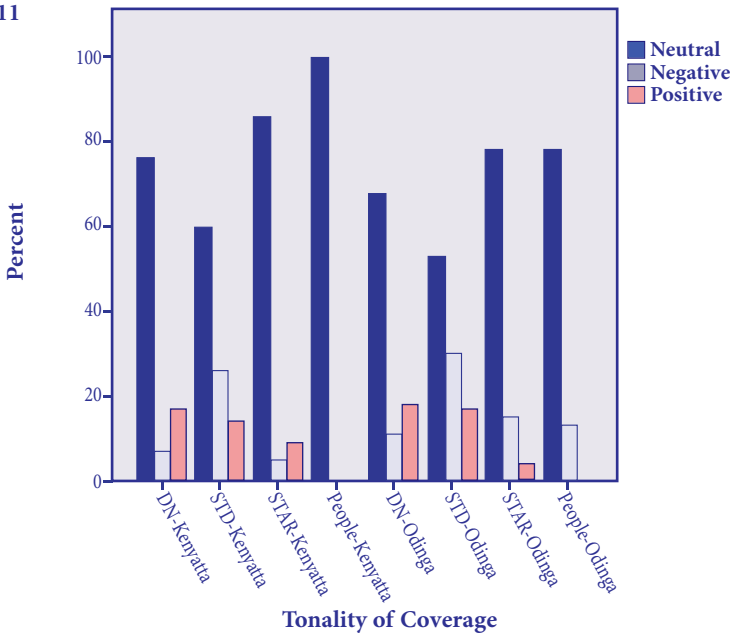
3.10 Topics of Coverage

The pre-election coverage focused on election issues (e.g. the election date), general national politics (political alliances and the cabinet reshuffle) and the ICC. Viewpoints and political concepts in the fields of economy, education, land issues and security were not significant issues.

Figure 12

Topics of Coverage
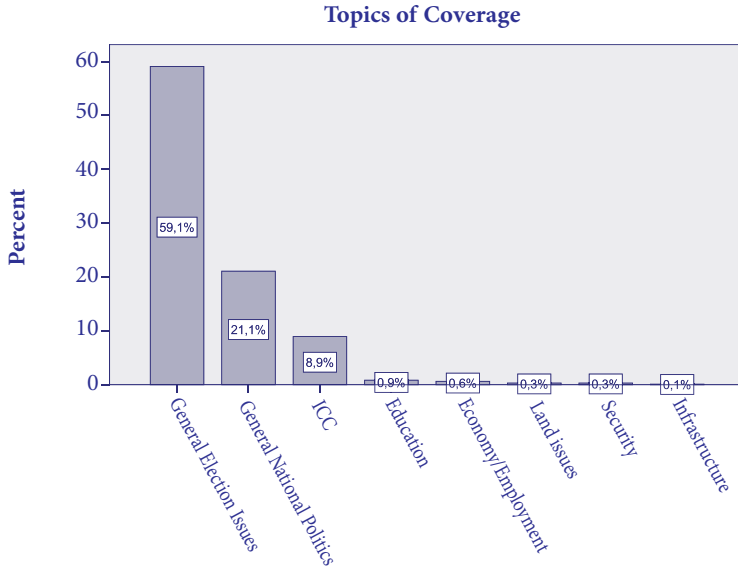
4. Conclusions and Recommendations

- The political coverage was predominantly personality- and not issue-driven.
- Differences reported between parties or politicians were limited to debates about political alliances and the approval or rejection of the 2013 election date.
- The most frequently covered politicians were Raila Odinga, Uhuru Kenyatta, William Ruto and Musalia Mudavadi. The activities of other presidential candidates were rarely considered as newsworthy.
- The daily press contributed to hyping election matters beyond reasonable proportion. More than 60% of the lead stories on page 1 were devoted to election issues.
- Reporting unconfirmed rumours and publishing sensational headlines added to the unnecessary heightening of tensions.
- More than a quarter of all news reports presented only one viewpoint. This was due to the extensive coverage of individual political rallies, only reporting one political point of view.
- The extensive reporting about IEBC´s setting of the poll date for March 4 failed to provide legal background analysis of the various political points of view discussed.
- Political coverage is still a male domain. Women were clearly underrepresented both as authors and as news subjects. Only 7% of the authors were female and only 4% of the articles focused on women.
- Hate speech was not encountered as a significant breach of the code of conduct. Only a very few articles contained negative stereotypes or ethnically based sarcasm.
- The Media Council of Kenya in cooperation with Editors´ Guild, Kenya Union of Journalists, Kenya Correspondents Association, Media Owners Association, Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission has published Guidelines for Election Coverage to ensure the proper coverage of elections in order to empower citizens to make an informed choice.
- In compliance with these guidelines, the press must provide a balanced and impartial (pre-) election coverage, which includes a fair coverage of minor parties and candidates, well sourced reports based on sound evidence, and the careful use of language to help reduce tension between parties. Fair and balanced coverage also means that individual stories and their patterns over a period of time should reflect the views of different parties or candidates.

5. Appendix

Tables
All Articles

Sample of Articles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Daily Nation	69	25,0	25,0	25,0
	Standard	76	27,5	27,5	52,5
	Star	56	20,3	20,3	72,8
	The People Newspaper	75	27,2	27,2	100,0
Total	276	100,0	100,0		

Format of Article

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Feature	8	2,9	2,9	2,9
	News	223	80,8	80,8	83,7
	Opinion	40	14,5	14,5	98,2
	Other	5	1,8	1,8	100,0
	Total	276	100,0	100,0	

Frequency of Breaches

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	259	93,8	93,8	93,8
	Yes	17	6,2	6,2	100,0
	Total	276	100,0	100,0	

Gender of Author

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	(n.a.)	48	17,4	17,4	17,4
	both	6	2,2	2,2	19,6
	female	19	6,9	6,9	26,4
	male	203	73,6	73,6	100,0
	Total	276	100,0	100,0	

Gender Presence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	(n.a.)	11	4,0	4,0	4,0
	Both women and men equally central	7	2,5	2,5	6,5
	Man central	248	89,9	89,9	96,4
	Woman central	10	3,6	3,6	100,0
	Total	276	100,0	100,0	

Hate Speech

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	negative stereotypes or insults	2	,7	,7	,7
	no hate speech	271	98,2	98,2	98,9
	ridicule or sarcasm	3	1,1	1,1	100,0
	Total	276	100,0	100,0	

Headlines

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Alarming	3	1,1	1,1	1,1
	Descriptive, informative	270	97,8	97,8	98,9
	Does not reflect the story	2	,7	,7	99,6
	Provocative	1	,4	,4	100,0
	Total	276	100,0	100,0	

Identification of Sources

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	(n.a.)	3	1,1	1,1	1,1
	Sources explicitly identified	262	94,9	94,9	96,0
	Sources identified as anonymous	5	1,8	1,8	97,8
	Sources not identified	6	2,2	2,2	100,0
	Total	276	100,0	100,0	

News Reports Only

Distinction Comment/Fact

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<20% journalistic opinion	5	2,2	2,2	2,2
	>20% journalistic opinion	3	1,3	1,3	3,6
	no journalistic opinion	215	96,4	96,4	100,0
	Total	223	100,0	100,0	

Number of W/H Answers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	2	,9	,9	,9
	3	10	4,5	4,5	5,4
4	44	19,7	19,7	25,1	
5	78	35,0	35,0	60,1	
6	89	39,9	39,9	100,0	
Total	223	100,0	100,0		

Number of Sources

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	47	21,1	21,1	21,1
	2	43	19,3	19,3	40,4
	3	51	22,9	22,9	63,2
	4	31	13,9	13,9	77,1
	5	17	7,6	7,6	84,8
	6	10	4,5	4,5	89,2
	7	11	4,9	4,9	94,2
	8	6	2,7	2,7	96,9
	9	2	,9	,9	97,8
	10	2	,9	,9	98,7
	11	3	1,3	1,3	100,0
	Total	223	100,0	100,0	

/Article/Viewpoints

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	>3	90	40,4	40,4	40,4
	1	61	27,4	27,4	67,7
	2	48	21,5	21,5	89,2
	3	24	10,8	10,8	100,0
	Total	223	100,0	100,0	

Crosstabs News Reports

Number W/H Answers

			/Article/Number_W_Answers					Total
			2	3	4	5	6	
/Article/ SourceName	Daily Nation	Count % within /Article/ Source Name	0 ,0%	1 2,0%	6 12,2%	12 24,5%	30 61,2%	49 100,0%
	Standard	Count % within /Article/ Source Name	0 ,0%	0 ,0%	0 ,0%	4 6,7%	56 93,%	60 100,0%
	Star	Count % within /Article /Source Name	2 4,3%	8 17,0%	16 34,0%	20 42,6%	1 2,1%	47 100,0%
	The People Newspaper	Count % within /Article/ Source Name	0 ,0%	1 1,5%	22 32,8%	42 62,7%	2 3,0%	67 100,0%
Total		Count % within /Article/ Source Name	2 ,9%	10 4,5%	44 19,7%	78 35,0%	89 39,9%	223 100,0%

/Article/SourceName * /Article/Viewpoints Crosstabulation

			/Article/Viewpoints				Total
			>3	1	2	3	
/Article/SourceName	Daily Nation	Count	32	2	11	4	49
		% within /Article/ Source Name	65,3%	4,1%	22,4%	8,2%	100,0%
	Standard	Count	5	23	24	8	60
		% within /Article/ Source Name	8,3%	38,3%	40,0%	13,3%	100,0%
	Star	Count	6	36	4	1	47
		% within /Article/ Source Name	12,8%	76,6%	8,5%	2,1%	100,0%
	The People Newspaper	Count	47	0	9	11	67
		% within /Article/ Source Name	70,1%	,0%	13,4%	16,4%	100,0%
Total		Count	90	61	48	24	223
		% within /Article/ Source Name	40,4%	27,4%	21,5%	10,8%	100,0%

Crosstabs All Articles

/Article/SourceName * /Article/Gender_Presence Crosstabulation

			/Article/Gender_Presence				
			(n.a.)	Both women and men equally central	Man central	Woman central	Total
/Article/Source Name	Daily Nation	Count	3	4	57	5	69
		% within /Article/ Source Name	4,3%	5,8%	82,6%	7,2%	100,0%
	Standard	Count	7	1	67	1	76
		% within /Article/ Source Name	9,2%	1,3%	88,2%	1,3%	100,0%
	Star	Count	0	0	54	2	56
		% within /Article/ Source Name	,0%	,0%	96,4%	3,6%	100,0%
	The People Newspaper	Count	1	2	70	2	75
		% within /Article /Source Name	1,3%	2,7%	93,3%	2,7%	100,0%
Total		Count	11	7	248	10	276
		% within /Article /Source Name	4,0%	2,5%	89,9%	3,6%	100,0%

/Article/SourceName * /Article/AuthorGender Crosstabulation

			/Article/AuthorGender				Total
			(n.a.)	both	female	male	
/Article/Source Name	Daily Nation	Count	15	5	2	47	69
		% within /Article/ Source Name	21,7%	7,2%	2,9%	68,1%	100,0%
	Standard	Count	13	0	3	60	76
		% within /Article/ Source Name	17,1%	,0%	3,9%	78,9%	100,0%
	Star	Count	5	1	1	49	56
		% within /Article /Source Name	8,9%	1,8%	1,8%	87,5%	100,0%
	The People Newspaper	Count	15	0	13	47	75
		% within /Article/ Source Name	20,0%	,0%	17,3%	62,7%	100,0%
Total		Count	48	6	19	203	276
		% within /Article/ Source Name	17,4%	2,2%	6,9%	73,6%	100,0%

Politician Coverage according to Newspapers

Politician	cm2 STD	% STD	cm2 DN	% DN	cm2 STAR	%STAR	cm2 PEOPLE	%PEOPLE
Kenyatta	5373	17,51	939	18,00	630	21,50	248	7,79
Musyoka	1173	3,82	53	1,02	139	4,74	81	2,54
Ruto	2916	9,50	677	12,98	281	9,59	506	15,90
Kenneth	230	0,75	15	0,29	66	2,25		0,00
Karua	1049	3,42	299	5,73	81	2,76	104	3,27
Wamalwa	1013	3,30	170	3,26	15	0,51	137	4,30
Mudavadi	2029	6,61	451	8,65	581	19,83	476	14,95
Odinga	8675	28,27	1649	31,61	721	24,61	1059	33,27
Kibaki	6302	20,54	844	16,18	340	11,60	158	4,96
Saitoti	313	1,02	10	0,19	76	2,59	257	8,07
Tuju	370	1,21		0,00		0,00	38	1,19
Muite	814	2,65	38	0,73		0,00	71	2,23
Abdikadir	428	1,39	71	1,36		0,00	48	1,51
Total	**30685**		**5216**		**2930**		**3183**	

Party Coverage according to Newspapers

Party	cm2 STD	% STD	cm2 DN	% DN	cm2 STAR	%STAR	cm2 PEOPLE	%PEOPLE
G7	1241	18,13	48	5,93	195	14,40	58	8,91
KANU	822	12,01	81	10,01	165	12,19	43	6,61
KNC	20	0,29		0,00		0,00		0,00
NARC Kenya	124	1,81	143	17,68	142	10,49	99	15,21
New Ford Kenya	151	2,21	5	0,62	66	4,87		0,00
ODM	3772	55,10	431	53,28	700	51,70	294	45,16
PNU	437	6,38	101	12,48	81	5,98	104	15,98
Party of Action	10	0,15		0,00		0,00	38	5,84
Safina		54	0,79		0,00		0,00	0,00
UDF		0,00		0,00	5	0,37		0,00
UDM		60	0,88		0,00		0,00	0,00
URP	155	2,26		0,00		0,00	10	1,54
Wiper						0,00	5	0,77
Total	6846		809		1354		651	