THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ON THIRD-WORLD COUNTRIES’ ELECTORAL PROCESS-THE CASE OF KENYA’S 2013 GENERAL ELECTIONS
A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS OF ARTS DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
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ABSTRACT
All over the world, general election is one of the key elements in determining a countries’ leadership. This means, elections are the cornerstone of any democracy, and the media has a vital role in informing the public about what politicians are promising, telling the politicians what ordinary people want, or do not want, and in ensuring that the polls are “free and fair”. Therefore, both local and international media are useful tools especially when a country gears towards general elections. The effect of Globalization over the years has increased international community’s participation in strengthening democracy around the world. This is mainly as a result of two main factors: the internal demand of countries in the process of democratization, and the external offer of the international organizations working to promote democracy around the world. This has led to an increased demand for many countries in the process of democratization to involve the help of international community in organizing their electoral processes. This study aimed at investigating the role of international media on third-world countries electoral process and 2013 Kenya’s General Elections. It sought to identify the role played by the international media in the Kenya’s 2013 electoral process as well as the role of international media on electoral process in a global perspective. The data used for this study was mainly derived from secondary and primary sources. This involved open ended interviews, indepth information gathering and document analysis. Data collected in this procedure include quotations, opinions and specific knowledge and background information relating to the role of international media on third-world countries electoral process and 2013 Kenya’s general elections. Descriptive survey method is used as the research design for this study. The findings for this study suggest that international media in third-world countries play a huge role in the electoral processes. The international media plays a role in determining how voters vote, highlighting new voting rules, length of registration and campaigns as well as penalties of election misconduct. The International media also probes and asks the hard questions; questions that the local media are scared of, or are simply not able to ask. Despite the role played by the international media, strategic government officials must increase the power of the international media as a tool that can be useful in executing commands as well as an avenue for relaying information. There is need for a legislative framework governing the international media while it still respects media freedom and autonomy. As a direction or suggestion for further related research on the Kenyan election conflict, an examination of the Kenyan media audience as the primary subject of study, as opposed to the international media and government officials as this research did, would give a bigger picture on the role of the international media.