

Abstract

The way the media processes, frames, and passes on information either to the government or to the people affects the function of the political system. This chapter discusses the interaction between new media and ethnicity in Kenya, Africa. The chapter investigates ways in which the new media reinforced issues relating to ethnicity prior to Kenya's 2007 presidential election. In demonstrating the nexus between new media and ethnicity, the chapter argues that the upsurge of ethnic animosity was chiefly instigated by new media's influence. Prior to the election, politicians had mobilized their supporters along ethnic lines, and created a tinderbox situation. Thus, there is need for the new media in Kenya to help the citizens to redefine the status of ethnic relationships through the recognition of ethnic differences and the re-discovery of equitable ways to accommodate them; after all, there is more strength than weaknesses in these differences.