

## Reality or Mirage? Representations of African Union agenda in Kenyan and Zimbabwean newspapers.

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### Abstract

*The journey to the realisation of the African unity has been marked by many challenges that are political, social, cultural, commercial and historical. Arguably, the African dream is still alive and the effective communication of the African dream could be one of the pillars of its realisation. The past decade however, has seen a consistent paling of the hope as media discourse in the form of editorials and commentaries reflect that the dream is an uphill task. This paper critically examines the impact of media coverage of the African Union. Specifically, this paper assesses how, why and to what extent media representations of the subject of African unity in editorials and commentaries affected its implementation. The paper looks at some of the African media, mainly newspapers and news agencies portrayal of the African Union. Key research methods used in this study include archival research, textual analysis and content analysis. Based on the mass communication theories of gate-keeping, agenda setting, representation, media and political economy theories, this paper argues that the media casting and portrayal of the AU has a direct impact on the success or failure of its agenda. The paper found out that the overall underlying tone of newspaper editorials were dismissive and negative and contributed very little towards helping the AU achieve its objectives.*

**Key terms; Media, Editorial, Journalism, African, Unity,**

### Introduction

The quest for continental unity among African states is the main objective and preoccupation of the African states. Even before independence, African states have shared the unity dream. To a certain extent, these efforts have been successful, through formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on 5 May 1963 and now the African Union (AU) formed on 9 July 2002. The challenges facing the AU have been complex and varied. Some of these challenges have been communicated effectively through existing news medium while others have not. Being the oldest form of mass media in Africa the newspaper has been used to record and comment about the continent's history from the time of colonization