

**CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT: A CASE OF USHAHIDI PLATFORM IN KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my Dear Dad Njeru Stephen, My Mother Gakunyi Njeru for helping me create a bearing for this journey. Gratitude to my lovely and caring wife Jemutai, my children Mbogo Mwariama Njeru and Kathomi Njeru for their love, care and comfort that gave me all the strength to undertake my Phd. studies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- SNS: Social Networking Sites
- CCK: Communication Commission of Kenya
- MENA: Middle-east and North Africa
- UGC: User-Generated Content
- ICTs: Information and Communications Technology
- GIS: Geographic Information System
- ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- NCIC: National Cohesion and Integration Commission
- SMS: Short Message Services
- NGOs: Non- Governmental Organizations
- US: United States
- DISC: Development and Institutionalization Support Center
- UN: United Nations
- ITU: International Telecommunication Union
- AU: African Union
- CDP: Conflict Data Project
- FATA: Federally Administered Tribal Areas
- NWFP: North West Frontier Province

- CNN: Cable News Network
- TCI: Television Côte d'Ivoire
- UPDF: Uganda People's Defense Forces
- OBN: Open Broadcast Network
- OHR: Office of the High Representative
- SFCG: Search for Common Ground
- RNL: Radio Ndeke Luka
- CAR: Central African Republic
- IHL: International Humanitarian Law

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Social media:** Refers to websites and technology-based platforms that enable the interactive web's content creation, collaboration and exchange by participants and the public in social networking.
- New media:** Refers to the concept of new methods of communicating in the digital world allowing smaller groups of people to congregate online and share sell and swap goods and information. It also allows more people to have a voice in their community and in the world in general
- Peace building:** Is a process involving activities which aim to reduce tension and to end or prevent violence. It takes place after a violent conflict and supports the conditions, attitudes and behaviors which lead to peaceful development.
- Positivism:** Is a believe that objective accounts of the world can be given and that the function of science is to develop descriptions and explanations in the form of universal laws; that is, to develop homothetic knowledge.
- Conflict management:** Refers to a variety of activities aimed at anticipating and averting the broad outbreak of violence.
- Conflict transformation:** Refers to a process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests, discourses and if necessary the very constitution that supports the continuation of violent conflict. It is

based on the notion that conflict is normal in human relationships and that conflict is a motor for change.

Early warning: Refers to provision of information on an emerging-dangerous circumstances where that information can enable action in advance to reduce the risk involved.

Crisis management: Refers to an umbrella term that encompasses all activities involved when an organization prepares for and responds to a significant critical incident.

Crisis communication: Refers to the public relations aspect of crisis management. It involves communicating both internally and externally about what happened and what the organization is doing to manage the crisis.

ABSTRACT

The Social Networking Sites (SNS) are providing cost-effective platforms to communicate with large population with zero-time difference. Noting that media is a powerful tool of communication, media literacy is an issue that cannot be ignored. It is therefore pertinent to evaluate the potential impacts that social media play especially facebook in propagating hate speech and hate messages. The media can play its important role of being the watch dog of the society, by exposing to the masses what is essential but hidden; however, the same media may also be used to mobilize masses to violence. Since conflict has been a major problem in many countries, this study therefore bridges the gaps between sociology and communication sciences by analyzing the ways in which social media can contribute to peace building and conflict prevention in Kenya. The main aim of this study was to find out how social media has been used as a proactive actor in conflict management. The study was guided by the following objectives; to assess the achievements of Ushahidi platform with regard to conflict prevention and management in Kenya from 2007, to find out the rate of satisfaction of information consumers of the Ushahidi platform since 2007, to find out the challenges facing Ushahidi platform as a proactive actor in conflict prevention in Kenya since 2007 and to determine how mainstream media can be used to enhance the visibility of Ushahidi a social media platform as a tool for conflict prevention in Kenya. The approach used for this study is mixed method. The philosophy adopted for this study was pragmatism. The study adopted three theories namely: agenda setting theory, conflict theory and rational choice theory. The population size was 333 respondents who included students from the universities within Nairobi County who use Kenya's Ushahidi Platform in Kenya, the proprietor, Technical advisor, Lead developer, Team leader, corporate account managers, Project manager and Technologists. This study adopted the stratified sampling technique. Sample size was 100 respondents. The researcher systematically organized the data by coding it into themes. The results were organized around the objectives of the study. Questionnaires, key informant interviews and focus group discussions were used as data collection instruments. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The study revealed that Facebook and WhatsApp were the most popular social media tools with 41.1 percent and 30 percent of the respondents having accounts on each platform respectively. The study revealed that Conflict information management ethics is a key competence, since information needs to be verified and authenticated before it can be released to the masses. Qualitative data revealed that in relation to training, there is need for general public awareness campaign aimed at educating the public on the threats of the social media on the national security. Emphasis should be focused on the consequences of perpetuating hate speech. This study concluded that social media is an important communication tool among young adults. Social media responds to the youth's desire for communication; it is affordable and has the opportunity for instantaneous communications. The study recommends that Ushahidi platform should be seen as an agent of social change and should act as a means of social mobilization. The study further suggests that if we can look at Ushahidi platform as a development agent, can we then take this a step further and ask, or try to find, a methodology that looks at the Ushahidi platform as peacemaking agent, or to assist in the maintenance of peace in a post-conflict situation thereby tapping into Ushahidi platform's full potential.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Overview

Social media and other new media tools have been used to help hold governments accountable, bring citizens together to protest violence, coordinate relief efforts, empower citizens, provide information to reduce tensions, and build bridges of understanding across boundaries. This chapter discusses the background to the study, problem statement, aim of the study, specific objectives, research questions, assumptions of the study, justification of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Technology has advanced considerably over the past few years and it has enabled us to change how we perceive the world's means of communications, and even expression. Through this, new media has emerged. This advancement has given birth and rise to an internet phenomenon known as social media, which comprises of everything that has to do with the internet. Social media has increasingly become the go-to medium for not only information, but a wide variety of communication and relations among people. "It differs from conventional media in various ways such as in reach and usability; quality and permanence; and mostly, immediacy and permanence. Traditional media, in contrast, operates under a one-way communication model - from one informer to numerous recipients" (Haythornthwaite, 2005). In the early 2000s, as the broadband internet expanded, websites that allowed users to create and upload content began to emerge. "By the end of that millennium, social networking sites (SNS) were more accepted, with

services acquiring a big number of users" (Broders, 2009). Various dynamics have furthered the increase of social media involvement: most are based in addition to an increase of broadband access, the development of powerful computers and mobile devices and enhancement of software means. "On a social note, younger age groups have also gained the ability to rapidly absorb social media and comparably, economic factors such as the cumulative affordability of computer hardware and software, and growing commercial interest in social media sites" ("Publications du gouvernement du Canada," 2013).

Peace is a relevant factor for social economic development, and conflict on the other hand undermines development efforts and policies. Thus preventing the outburst of armed conflict should be high on the agenda of international organizations, regional organizations and governments or states. The successive evolution in information communication technology has significantly altered the conduct of conflicts, warfare, and conflict resolution. Compared to people of earlier ages, people around the world today know much more and much sooner about major developments in international issues including conflict (Gilboa, 2009). There are millions of global news networks that broadcast live from all corners of the world and via the internet, hence providing immediate access to unfolding events and, under certain conditions, influencing the way those events develop and end. Currently the common man is able to contribute to the news flow as opposed to the past where a journalist was the initiator of communication messages in a traditional media house.

Social media is modern tool for communication, which spreads information and connects people very rapidly. Meanwhile, its role in the conflict and post-conflict situations is not

properly appreciated. Existing studies and researches mostly underline negative role of media during conflicts, few ones focus on the role of social media in the reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction activities and trust building processes. Social media is a powerful tool and new opportunity for conflict resolution. During last decade civil societies, activists, representatives of the governments and political parties actively use it as a communication means with their audiences.

In the post-conflict situations social media becomes an early warning system. People can immediately post news about affairs in the conflict zones. Georgian and international organizations train and equip people in such areas to report about their everyday lives or suddenly emerged threats. Online portals, networks, blogs, Whatsapp and Facebook groups serve as an excellent information sources about conflict regions. They connect people from different sides; reflect daily happenings of the refugees or peace initiatives. In other words, social media is a rapid and effective communication mechanism for the conflict regions.

There has been a dominance of what is referred to as mainstream media, which include broadcast media (Television and Radio) as well as print media (newspapers, reviews, magazines etc.). Main stream media are in most cases very structured and owned by the elite in Africa. In Kenya too this is the case. More recently there has been the emergence of the new media which is also referred to as social media. It has complemented main stream media in relaying information to the masses. The mostly used social media platforms include; Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Google chat, Skype, Yahoo chat and Blogs. In March 2010 there were a little over two million Facebook accounts according to the then Communication Commission of Kenya (CCK). This accounted for about five

percent of the entire population. These numbers are much large now with more and more Kenyans joining Facebook and other social networks. A great majority of those on social media are the youth.

Currently social media is more decentralized and distributed than traditional media (Cole & Meier, 2009). The reason for their popularity has been attributed to the easy access from cell phones. Today with a smart phone one can access and share a lot of information including information that can promote conflict. There is a Short Message Service SMS to Facebook for instance, that sends a text to the users on every time something happens on Facebook. More importantly there is an application called Facebook zero, a text only free version of Facebook launched in 2010 in collaboration with mobile providers. This has brought Facebook to a larger number of people who prior did not have access. In addition to those who access social media websites on their phone there are those who are computer literate. According to a 2008 Consumer Insight Limited study, 74 percent of the population in Nairobi had used a computer at least once in their lives (CIL 2008). Synovate on other hand has estimated that in 2009, 30 percent of the Kenyan urban population used the internet weekly (ITU 2010). As a rule, all who use the internet regularly also do have a Facebook account or have accounts on other social media platforms.

The use of mobile phones, social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, and user-generated content (UGC) like blogs and YouTube videos in the protests in Tunisia and Egypt, as well as throughout the wider middle-east and North Africa (MENA) region have shown how ICTs can complement and augment the exercise of our rights to freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of peaceful assembly (Comninos,

2011). The “Arab spring” has in turn provided a plethora of examples on the use of ICTs by protesters and by government during conditions of societal conflict and democratic transformation. Online mapping, GIS technology, increasing mobile penetration, social networking and the growth of UGC have contributed to the growth of a fourth generation of conflict early warning initiative. These “fourth generation initiatives” make use of free and open source software and web technology, utilize web based platforms, and crowd sourcing (sourcing of voluntarily contributed information from a community of users (Meier, 2011).

There have been assertions in many spheres on what constitutes hate messages. Developing countries especially in Africa have been hard hit with violence and uprisings in the recent past to what could be blamed to such. However, what can be drawn and asserted to lead to advocacy of national, ethnicity, racial or and religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, prohibited by Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) often precedes mass atrocities like genocide, civil wars, mass and forceful displacements of populations and war (ICCPR, 1966).

Some scholars argue that there should be more restrictions levied on some speeches and freedoms of media at particular social settings in order and specific dimensions to prevent such atrocities and enhance peace prosperity. To the contrary, other commentators argue that not all hateful speech reaches the level of prohibited hate speech and a clear threshold must be developed (Ringera, 2010). It is worth noting that, for instance in Kenya, there is a National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), tasked with a mandate to ensure Kenyans live amicably without such issues as hatred, discrimination

among others and also send early warnings to the government of the day in case such magnitudes of hate speech and hatred crop up (NCIC, 2008).

Throughout history, information is a key factor in beginning of conflicts around the World. The media plays an important role of a watchdog in the society; exposing to the public what is essential but hidden, however, it can also be used to mobilize for violence and or hatred. There is the mainstream media also known as traditional media and social media. Social media can act as a tool for widening the democratic space; however, it can also lead to destabilization of peace and spring of violence. Messages and information are instant; newsrooms, as places for editing news are being overtaken; raw information is sent by anybody to everybody unedited. Journalism has been stolen! Information, whether likely to generate hate or bring peace goes out uncensored (Jeffrey, 2002).

Moreover, the growth of Social media enthusiasm in the world has been tremendous with the rapid growth in technology. Gizmos that are internet enabled and availability of cheap internet are key factors. Therefore, then social media is coming up as a fast growing tool to reach out to people especially the youth. The Social Networking Sites (SNS) are providing cost-effective platforms to communicate with large population with zero- time difference. Noting that media is a powerful tool of communication, media literacy is an issue that cannot be ignored. It is therefore pertinent to evaluate the potential impacts that social media play especially facebook in propagating hate speech and hate messages (Marinkovic & Rowe, 2013).

Incitement to violence or ethnic hatred, including by ordinary citizens or politicians, community leaders or journalists, has actually resulted in massive violence and mass killings in many countries across the continent. Rwanda presents the most extreme

examples of how the relationship between a government, the media and politics can go horribly wrong. But throughout the continent, there are sporadic instances of alleged incitement resulting in massive violence, such as in Kenya, Ivory Coast, Uganda, Burundi, Nigeria, etc. Unfortunately, the jurisprudence on incitement cases remains very limited, with the exception of South Africa. Many charges of incitement have never been actually investigated or pursued to the end in a court of law.

Many countries in Africa share a similar history of colonialism and white supremacy characterized by abuse and misuse. These regimes were characterized by the divide and rule policy which was a human rights abuse; this aimed at ensuring white hegemony and dividing population along racial and ethnic lines. The legacy of these violations still persists in the region and is often manifested in deep divides in the societies, especially in the Southern African region. The 1994 genocide in Rwanda spurred by ethnic hatred is a case for reference. Moreover, during the colonial and apartheid time, the calls for national liberation or against white oppression were prosecuted under incitement laws (Marinkovic & Rowe, 2013). For example, in South Africa, the laws prohibiting racial hostility were, according to available information, only applied against anti-apartheid opponents of the government. A large number of laws still on the book in many African countries, including those related to incitement to hatred, or those regulating the media, dates back to colonial regimes and thus to political regimes that had enshrined racism as a core value (e.g. Zimbabwe). Even if the laws in question are not used, their continuing existence is highly problematic at many levels.

Further, the emergence of social media, has dared to liberalize communication; this is due to the involvement of the mass or individual audience in the creation and dissemination

of information perhaps from an individual to mass or otherwise through incidental messages. This has thus altered the role and design of traditional media in information dissemination and created a room to what is referred to as citizen journalism. Social media has provided a means of constant and immediate communication, which link individuals and persons globally and locally; anybody can publish anything from anywhere. Kaplan, and M. Haenlein 2010, argue that social media has caused a shift in the communication environment which was previously dominated by the mass media, in fact breaking news are no longer such. In my opinion, Social media has implications for power relations. It has posed a challenge to the traditional media; it is diluting the mainstream media's monopoly of information transfer and dissemination. Progressively, every day, it is tricky for those in power to bury or manipulate information since breaking news are no longer breaking news with social media. This defragmentation of the traditional media spells huge 'power' of the new media.

The crisis mapping platform Ushahidi is an example of a platform often used in fourth generation conflict management. These systems tend to be people-centered and "are less about advocacy and more about direct, first responder intervention." While traditional information management systems are typically closed and controlled, Ushahidi is open and decentralized. These technologies allow for empowerment and ownership at the local community level (Stauffacher et al., 2015). Unlike other and more traditional systems, Ushahidi closes the feedback loop in such a way that information collected can be communicated directly to those who most need to use it" (Communication for Peace building, 2011). Ushahidi can be used in the context of a community not just for sourcing

information to a community (“crowd sourcing”) but also to feed information back to that community popularly referred to as “crowd feeding” (Meier, 2009).

Crowd sourcing and crowd feeding are greatly complemented by SMS technology. For example, Front Line SMS software was designed to help NGOs in developing countries improve their communication and increase their capabilities through a simple and cost-effective system of SMS. Since its development, Frontline SMS has been adapted to the needs of peace building to provide election monitoring, to enhance local radio programming, and to continue to improve NGO peace building efforts. For example, the African Great Lakes Initiative has used Frontline SMS to monitor the elections in Burundi and prevent violence from breaking out recently used in US by ushahidi. The possibilities for cross collaboration between development and peace building communication initiatives are a vital way for peace building efforts to develop their communication capacities (Stauffacher, 2015).

Ushahidi itself was originally created to deal with conflict prevention and response (it was first developed for the 2008 Kenyan post-election violence). Fourth Generation conflict and early warning tools like Ushahidi are being used in post-conflict peacebuilding; however, there are few cases at the moment of such use. Information collated by Ushahidi platform then was shared and this enabled the authorities to take necessary action.

During a natural disaster or in the midst of civil violence, the immediate need for those caught up in the situation is to escape and find a safe haven. But oftentimes in such chaos, information is difficult to come by and unreliable. One such crisis propelled the formation of a software platform called “Ushahidi,” which combined Google Maps with

crowd-sourced information to pinpoint safe havens. First developed within a matter of days during the aftermath of the post-election violence in Kenya in 2008, today the technology is used all over the world.

Users in the Middle East have adapted the software platform for their causes. Activists track casualties in Syria with Syria Tracker and Shamiyaat, and harassment in Egypt with HarassMap. The platform was used in the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake to find survivors and the 2011 Japanese tsunami to visualize information about what was going on there. Since 2008, Ushahidi has had 2 million users and 17 million unique visitors. The word “Ushahidi” means testimony in Swahili.

Ushahidi (meaning “testimony” in Swahili) is a simple web-based mapping platform originally designed to map reports of human-rights abuses using text messages (SMS), e-mails, and information submitted via an online form. The first Ushahidi map was created to show Kenya’s post-election violence in January 2008. Bloggers in Kenya and from the Kenyan Diaspora launched the platform to map human-rights violations that would otherwise have gone completely undocumented by the mainstream media and official election observers. Ushahidi Inc., a nonprofit technology company, was created several months after the elections to improve the mapping platform and make it free and open-source and thus widely usable. Several subsequent versions of the platform have since been used to create more than ten-thousand live maps in more than 140 countries. Those engaged in these mapping projects have included humanitarian and human-rights organizations, media companies, civil society groups, political and environmental activists, and distributed volunteer networks. The Ushahidi platform was particularly

used as “liberation technology” in Egypt during the country’s parliamentary elections in the fall of 2010.

The platform represents an important convergence of new technologies. SMS, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, smartphone apps, voicemail, and email can all be combined with Ushahidi. Examining Ushahidi instead of studying the impact of certain tweets or YouTube videos in isolation allows for a focus on broader multimedia content. Focusing on the Ushahidi platform also facilitates the study of concrete uses of social media, such as election monitoring. Ushahidi platform can be viewed as an example of a liberation and accountability technology. This is according to Larry David (2013). What is missing, however, is research to support these claims. Hence the relevance of this research

The Ushahidi platform is free and open-source mapping software that allows anyone to create a live and rich multimedia map of an event or situation. Unlike the standard Google Maps, the Ushahidi platform allowed witnesses in Kenya to text in their reports of human-rights violations using SMS. A simple SMS “short code” was set up with the telecommunications company Safaricom to make this happen. The bloggers shared the map on their blogs to get the word out and thus began to crowd source crisis information. They documented information on human-rights violations that would otherwise have gone largely unnoticed by mainstream media and election-monitoring organizations.

The Ushahidi software has gone through several important upgrades over the past three years. The platform can now be integrated with SMS, Twitter, e-mail, voicemail, Facebook, and soon Flickr and YouTube. Ushahidi Inc. has also developed dedicated smartphone apps for the platform. These are freely available for the iPhone, Android, and other java-enabled phones. In 2010, the company released Ushahidi 2.0, which allows

third-party developers to develop customized apps or plug-ins for the core platform, thereby extending the platform's capabilities considerably. This latest version of Ushahidi makes it easier to map multimedia content such as photographic evidence and video footage. In addition, Ushahidi recently launched Crowdmap, a hosted version of the Ushahidi platform that further reduces the barriers to creating live maps.

The Ushahidi platform has been deployed in over forty countries for a wide range of uses, including election observation, human-rights monitoring, disaster response, civil resistance, and environmental-impact reporting. For example, civil society groups have used the platform to observe elections in Afghanistan, Burundi, Egypt, India, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, the Philippines, Mexico, Mozambique, Sudan, and Tanzania. Ushahidi has also been used for disaster response and human rights monitoring in Australia, Chile, the Czech Republic, Haiti, Pakistan, Poland, South Africa, Tunisia, and the United States, and to map the protests that unfolded during the recent revolutions in North Africa.

The impact of Ushahidi platforms, however, has been unclear. Very few evaluations let alone rigorous ones have been carried out. Several groups that have used the Ushahidi platform claim that its impact is obvious. But the evidence remains largely anecdotal and the analysis rather thin. Egypt was selected as a country case study for this thesis for three reasons. First, the Ushahidi platform has been used multiple times in Egypt since the 2010 parliamentary elections. Thus, insights can also be drawn from more recent examples, such as the protests during the 2011 revolutions in North Africa. Second, Egypt under Hosni Mubarak qualified as a repressive state. This is an important criterion given the focus on social media as a liberation technology in authoritarian contexts.

Third, the Egyptian group that has repeatedly deployed the Ushahidi platform is continuing to do so, not only in Egypt but now also in Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. Hence, interested scholars and practitioners will be able to draw on the findings from this thesis to inform future research on and applications of the technology in Egypt and beyond.

The U-Shahid (shahid means “witness” in Arabic) project in Egypt which is run by the Development and Institutionalization Support Center (DISC), an Egyptian organization based in Cairo. This organization first used Ushahidi during parliamentary elections in November and December 2010. Just days after Internet access was restored during the civil-resistance movement in early 2011, DISC used the platform again to map the protests against the Mubarak regime and its human-rights abuses. The Egyptian group has since launched Ushahidi platform to map feedback on constitutional amendments, and it plans to use Ushahidi to map corruption as well. A separate Cairo-based group also began using the Ushahidi platform in 2010 for a project called Harassmap, which enables Egyptian women to report cases of harassment and increase the visibility of this chronic problem.

The emergence of social media or new media as it is sometimes referred to, has dared to defragment communication. This has occurred through the involvement of the audience in the creation and dissemination of information. This has thus altered existing structures and created a room to what is referred to as citizen journalism (Wambiya, 2013). Social media has provided a means of constant and immediate communication, which link globally and locally. It has caused a shift in the communication environment which was previously dominated by the traditional mass media such as radio, television and

newspapers. Social media has implications for power relations (ITU, 2010). The prime example is how social media is diluting the mainstream media's monopoly of information. It is therefore becoming progressively more difficult for those in power to bury or manipulate information.

On January 1, 2008, as word spread throughout Kenya that incumbent presidential candidate Mwai Kibaki had rigged the then presidential election, text messages urging violence spread across the country and tribal and politically motivated attacks were perpetrated throughout Kenya. By January 9, as the violence escalated out of control in the Kibera slums in Nairobi and other towns such as Kisumu, Kakamega, Eldoret, and Naivasha in the Rift Valley, a group of Kenyans in Nairobi and the Diaspora launched Ushahidi, an online campaign platform to draw local and global attention to the violence taking place in their country. Within weeks they had documented in detail hundreds of incidents of violence that would have otherwise gone unreported, and received hundreds of thousands of site visits from around the world, sparking increased global media attention. Both of these anecdotes illustrate what Yochai Benkler calls the 'networked public sphere,' the notion that our information environment is characterized by both the potential for many-to-many communications (instead of just one-to-one or one-to-many), and the near elimination of the cost of communication (Goldstein and Rotich, 2008).

In Kenya just prior to the 2013 March 4th general elections the social media was polarized with propaganda, hate speech, statements of negative ethnicity and incitement. These were emanating majorly from the supporters of the two major antagonizing political blocks. Social media was home for verbal conflict that never resulted into physical violence, during the whole electioneering period, the time awaiting the ruling of the

Supreme Court on the petition challenging the outcome of the presidential election results, up until the swearing in of the new president. There are still groups in the social media that give constant updates with doses of speculative information that might amount to incitement and hate speech.

Throughout history information is a key factor in beginning conflicts around the world. The media can play an important role of a watch dog of the society, by exposing to the masses what is essential but hidden, however it can also be used to mobilize for violence. Social media can therefore act as a tool for widening the democratic space, but can also lead to destabilization of peace. It can also be used as an early warning system for conflict occurrence and subsequent management.

1.2 Problem Statement

While there is no consensus on the sole role the social media played in the Arab uprising, there is considerable debate of what credit properly goes to the social media compared to other factors in precipitating this wave of political unrest. Despite the lively debate, there is little systematic research on this area. The few resources are specific to conflict environment and how social media was used for coordination during the violence. There is inadequate material on the use and role of social media for conflict prevention and peace building. This could be partly explained by the lack of control over the research environments, rapid shifts of public attention, difficulties in measuring the casual impact of media intervention, and the heterogeneity of conflict environments and changing objectives in the conflict torn countries. This study therefore will bridge the gaps between sociology and communication sciences by analyzing the ways in which social media can contribute to peace building and conflict prevention in Kenya.

Studies have then been undertaken on the Ushahidi social media platform as well as conflict prevention. Goldstein and Rotich (2008) undertook a study on Digitally Networked Technology in Kenya's 2007–2008 Post-Election Crises. Using the lens of the 2007–2008 Kenyan presidential election crisis, this case study illustrated how digitally networked technologies, specifically mobile phones and the Internet, were a catalyst to both predatory behaviors such as ethnic-based mob violence and to civic behavior such as citizen journalism and human rights campaigns. Otunba (2010) looked into Preventing Interstate Armed Conflict: Whose responsibility? The study discovered that no single institution has the responsibility to prevent interstate armed conflict but rather conflict prevention can only be achieved by collective efforts of the international community involving both state and non-state actors. Lastly the study showed that quite a lot is being done in this area of conflict prevention but there is room for improvement.

Wambiya (2013) looked into the role of social media as a tool for peace building and conflict prevention in Kenya, the case of Nairobi County. The study found out that over 80 percent of the respondents were on social media. Majority of the respondents had a circle of social media friends of about 101-1000. The study also established that mainstream media (televisions and newspapers) was used by respondents to complement social media in giving political updates. Kiplagat (2014) undertook a study on the role of media in conflict management: the case of electoral conflict in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The study found out that media played both conflict escalation and de-escalation roles during 2007/08 Post Election Violence. Some of the negative media roles include encouraging hate speech, running parallel tallying centers, misrepresentation of information, and incitement. Some positive roles included conducting civic education,

preaching peace, fair coverage of political campaigns, and fair coverage of contentious issues during peace negotiations.

The studies reviewed above seem to have neglected the area of social media and conflict prevention and particularly the case of Ushahidi platform. This is why this research study seeks to bridge this gap.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to establish how social media has been used as a proactive actor in conflict management: a case study of Ushahidi platform from 2007.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- i. What are the achievements of Ushahidi platform with regard to conflict prevention and management in Kenya from 2007.
- ii. To find out if the consumers are satisfied with Ushahidi platform since 2007.
- iii. What are the challenges facing Ushahidi platform as a proactive actor in conflict prevention in Kenya since 2007
- iv. To find out how mainstream media can be used to enhance the visibility of Ushahidi a social media platform as a tool for conflict prevention and management in Kenya.

1.5 Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the following assumptions: -

- i) All the respondents were to be co-operative and honest and provide objective information pertaining to the use of Ushahidi as a social media platform as a proactive actor in conflict prevention and management in Kenya and beyond. This assumption was made considering the fact that respondents who are cooperative and honest have higher chances of giving reliable information and thus higher chances of getting reliable results with regards to the use of Ushahidi as a social media platform as a proactive actor in conflict prevention and management in Kenya. This assumption was confirmed after field study.
- ii) All respondents were competent enough to understand the questions. Those who were not competent were to seek clarification from the researcher. The competency of respondents helps the researcher in achieving the study objectives since they will be able to interrogate the research questions and give reliable information based on the research question. This is the reason that the researcher assumed the respondents were competent. This assumption was confirmed after field study.
- iii) The data provided from the respondents was to be taken to be reliable. Reliability is highly important for any academic research. This is because it tests if the study fulfills its predicted aims and hypothesis and also ensures that the results are due to the study and not any possible extraneous variables. This is the main reason why this study assumed that the data collected was reliable. This assumption was confirmed after field study.

1.6 Justification of the Study

There are wide theoretical gaps between the fields of conflict studies and communication studies. There have been few studies targeting social media users in Nairobi's East-land's

areas, Kibera and other slum areas which are hot-spots for conflict especially during electioneering period. The few studies that have been conducted have been keen on the use of ICT and new media for crisis management as opposed to peace building and conflict prevention

This study will contribute to a better understanding of the role of social media in conflict prevention and peace building which will offer insights to the formulation of effective strategies on conflict prevention to policy makers and peace stakeholders. The contribution of this study will thus be to showcase the relevance of social media in peace building and conflict prevention.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Media is considered to be the 4th pillar (estate) of society after legislature, executive and judiciary as it plays an important role in shaping peoples' perceptions and lifestyles. Indeed, media influences every part of our lives (thoughts, attitudes, choices, lifestyles, decision making, etc) through education, information and entertainment. Given this important role, media could be used as a tool for conflict transformation and peace building through objective reporting and peace journalism. However, media could also be used to promote conflicts. For instance, subjective reporting could polarize a nation hence promoting or escalating conflicts. This study therefore focused on the fundamental understanding of how social media has been used as a proactive actor in conflict prevention with a focus on Ushahidi platform in Kenya.

The study also adds to the body of knowledge relating to social media operations and conflict prevention as well as promoting aspects of peace journalism in times of conflict.

It also provides information that would enable security policy makers, law enforcement and political leadership to make better decisions about how to prevent conflicts through early warning and sensitizing the media on how their actions can result in conflict escalation.

As a tool for enhancing peace, the study may encourage media practitioners to embrace set policies and ethical standards which regulate the conduct of the media fraternity and more specifically social media platforms.

1.8 Scope of the Study

Geographically, this research was based at Ihub, Nairobi where Ushahidi platform is housed. Ihub is situated in Lavington area of Nairobi County. Ushahidi is an organization that deals with mapping of conflict messages using relevant software. The idea behind Ushahidi is anchored on the concept of crowd sourcing (UMATI) where conflict related messages are tapped and relayed to policy makers for action. This was widely used during the post-election violence in Kenya in 2007-2008 by Ushahidi.

In terms of methodological scope, this study adopted a mixed methods approach. This means that the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative techniques to generate the required data. The researcher started with interviewing respondents on their knowledge about the operations of Ushahidi as a social media platform engaged in conflict prevention. These interviews are anchored on qualitative technique. Later the researcher distributed questionnaires to the respondents which reinforced the information provided by the interviewees. Basically, the degree of triangulation was nearly 50 percent qualitative and 50 percent quantitative.

In terms of Content scope, the study specifically looked into the level of use of Ushahidi platform, the strengths and challenges of Ushahidi platform as a proactive actor in conflict prevention from 2007 up to date in Kenya and at the end of it suggest polices that can be adopted by media industry to ensure that Ushahidi platform is used effectively as a proactive actor in conflict prevention in Kenya. The researcher specifically was interested in assessing the role of social media in conflict prevention and management. It is worth noting that social media can be applied in many areas such as entertainment, social networking among others. However, this study was specifically interested in social media as a proactive actor in conflict prevention and management in Kenya.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

a) Social media is a global concern which can't be effectively studied on a small scale basis. However, the sample for the purpose of this research was taken from selected areas in Nairobi. These are notably Ushahidi and ihub. These are institutions that have been specializing on the research around the use of social media for conflict management in Kenya. Most members of Ihub where Ushahidi is based are experts in conflict mapping and crowdsourcing concept. Hence the choice of the center has been done purposively. This may be quite limiting and it may not be quite representative. However, the findings were used as a guiding point and the methods used by the center can be replicated in other areas both locally and globally.

b) Due to enormity of this topic, funds to undertake a comprehensive study were not easy to come by. That is why the study involved only Ushahidi and ihub in Nairobi. Ushahidi is accessible to the researcher because it is situated in Lavington area of Nairobi County

and therefore data gathering did not demand too much. This further justifies why the study was quite purposeful.

c) Some respondents were quite reluctant to answer many questions due to the sensitivity of the topic under study- that is conflict management. However, the researcher assured these respondents that the findings were to be confidentially handled and that the study was purely academic devoid of political underpinnings.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the background to the study and describes the enquiry as an attempt to fill some of the gaps left by the previous studies in investigating contribution of social media platform in conflict management: a study of Ushahidi platform from 2007 to present. Several issues were discussed in this chapter. These included background to the research problem, statement of the problem, and the objectives of the study. Other issues include the study rationale, assumptions of the study, methodology, definition of key concepts, study scope and limitations. One of the key issues that emerged from Chapter one is that social media platform is a vital tool for conflict prevention and management.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Overview

This chapter reviews the existing relevant literature on how social media has been used as a proactive actor in conflict prevention and management. It commences with the analysis of the concept of conflict prevention and the methods of conflict prevention, concept of social media, social media and conflict prevention and Social Media and Post-Election Violence in Kenya that happened in 2007 and 2008. This chapter also discusses theoretical framework of the study which is based on the conflict theory and agenda setting theory.

2.1 Conflict Prevention

Lund (2002) defines conflict prevention as any structural or intercessory means to keep intrastate or interstate tension and disputes from escalation into significant violence and use of armed forces, to strengthen the capabilities of potential parties to violent conflicts for resolving such disputes peacefully, and to progressively reduce the underlying problems that produce these issues and disputes. Conflict prevention refers to a variety of activities including and not limited to early warning, crisis management, conflict resolution, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace building activity and all activities and expenditures aimed at strengthening international and regional systems and capacities in these fields. Structural prevention addresses structural drivers of conflict, that is, poverty, horizontal inequality elite capture of the state of economy at the expense of the people

(Lund, *ibid*). Indeed, there are strong correlations between Internet access and wider patterns of poverty, inequality, socio-economic class and urbanization.

The term conflict prevention suggests different things to different people and there is no agreed upon meaning among scholars. However, Munuera (1996) defines it as the application of non-constraining measures (those that are not coercive and depend on the goodwill of the parties' involved, primarily diplomatic in nature).

While some progress has been made over the past decade on preventing violent conflicts, the International community has done more to improve its collective ability to bring violence to an end than it has to prevent its outbreak. In reality, political decision-making processes are still rarely influenced by existing conflict-prevention and early-warning systems-generation, the so called "Warning-response gap". Statistics have contributed to a widespread belief that there is both moral and fiscal value in prevention (Letouzé Emmanuel, 2013). Countries like Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama and Uruguay have one cell phone per inhabitant with smartphone ownership increasing rapidly. It was predicted that by end of 2016, the smart phones capable of accessing high-speed Internet would have accounted for over 50% of all cell phones sales in the region. This is also true in East Africa Kenya included.

Conflict prevention activities can incorporate a variety of elements, according to UN Secretary-general including early economic, social and development engagement in the relevant country. Today the UN and regional multilateral organizations are demonstrating that preventive action can accommodate a range of interventions that go beyond traditional preventive diplomacy. Conflict prevention does not come without challenges. One of the major challenges is the overarching private issues defined by the International

Telecommunication Union (ITU) as the “right of individuals to control or influence what information related to them may be collected and disclosed (International Telecommunications Union, 2015).

In arbitration as a mechanism of conflict management, the parties choose their own judges. These are called arbitrators. The parties and the arbitrators agree on the rules of the game, and in this way can avoid some of the technicalities of litigation in the courts, especially slow, expensive, and time consuming procedures. The arbitrator listens to both sides and then gives an arbitral award. On the other hand, negotiation is a process by which the parties in a conflict sit down by themselves and talk it out. It is a non-coercive method of conflict management because the parties decide to manage their conflict jointly. Mediation has been defined by mediator Mwagiru Makumi, (2006) as the continuation of negotiation by other means. The need for mediation arises when the parties to a conflict have attempted negotiation, but have reached a deadlock. In such circumstances, they may agree to use a third party to help them negotiate the conflict, and to break the deadlock. In this situation, they agree on a third party to be the mediator. In this sense, mediation is a voluntary process, because the parties have to agree both to mediation and on the mediator (Mwagiru Makumi, 2006).

Carnegie Commission (1997) defines it as the preventive actions that prevent the re-emergence of violent conflict from spreading or prevent the re-emergence of violence. Lund (2002) define it as any structural or inter-sectary means to keep intrastate or interstate tension and dispute from escalating into significant violence and the use of armed forces to strengthen the capabilities of parties to possible violent conflicts for

resolving their disputes peacefully and to progressively reduce the underlying problems that produce those tensions and disputes.

Preventing a war has been one of the major issues of focus of international relations; it was the dominant theme at the Congress of Vienna in 1815 which put into effect a number of measures, such as mutual consultations, the establishment of neutral states and demilitarized zones, and the peaceful settlement of conflicts, (Craig and George, 1995). It may also be right to say the African union, European Union, United Nations and some other regional organizations were founded with the major goal of preventing conflict through interstate interaction and cooperation. Further affirming the importance of conflict prevention in the world today, is the United Nations, which made Conflict prevention a central feature in its Charter; Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter contains a series of preventive devices such as fact-finding, negotiation, mediation, conciliation, judicial settlement, and arbitration. This shows that the international community understands the importance of conflict prevention and the need for the establishment of early warning systems which in fact is the main focus of the Ushahidi platform upon which this research is anchored.

Historically during the Cold War, many practitioners and academics viewed preventive action as synonymous with pre-emptive strikes but after the Cold War the means of preventing conflicts changed to a more peaceful way of preventing interstate conflict. Originally the term preventive diplomacy was used officially for the first time in 1960 by then UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld. He emphasized on keeping regional conflicts localized so as to prevent their violent spillover into the superpower arena. This may arguably be the birth of conflict prevention because after him his successors

continued to emphasize the importance of preventing conflict before the escalation of violence. In 1992 Boutros-Ghali went further to list five specific measures: confidence building, fact-finding missions, early warning networks, preventive deployment, and demilitarized zones (Wallensteen, 2006). Continuing the efforts by previous secretary generals in conflict prevention, Kofi Annan moved the United Nations from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention by spelling out some of the primary requirements for preventive action. This approach was quite proactive. Annan has also argued for the UN's moral responsibility in preventing large-scale violence, such as genocide as evident in his conflict report of 2001 (Evans, 2009).

Today conflict prevention still doesn't have a universally accepted definition because it means different things to different people. This has led to diverse definitions for conflict prevention, among the diverse definitions for conflict prevention have been advanced by various scholars as follows: According to Boutros-Ghali, (1996), conflict prevention is the use of diplomatic techniques to prevent disputes arising, prevent them from escalating into armed conflict and prevent the armed conflict from spreading. According to Miall et al, (1999) these are actions which prevent armed conflicts or mass violence from breaking out. According to Lund, (2002) it is any structural or inter-sector means to keep intrastate or interstate tensions and disputes from escalating into significant violence and the use of armed force, to strengthen the capabilities of parties to possible violent conflicts for resolving their disputes peacefully, and to progressively reduce the underlying problems that produce those tensions and disputes. According to Carment & Schnabel (2003), it is a medium and long-term proactive operational or structural strategy

undertaken by a variety of actors, intended to identify and create the enabling conditions for a stable and more predictable international security environment.

Some of these definitions make conflict prevention too wide, thereby making the concept consist of a wide range of issues and they differ according to the aim of prevention from reducing violence to resolving the conflict. Lund argues that a more rigorous definition should distinguish conflict prevention from other close related concepts such as preventive diplomacy, foreign policy and intervention.

In order to define conflict prevention in the context that embodies armed conflict. This thesis has adopted the definition of conflict prevention as the “wide range of actions, interventions, programs, activities, mechanisms and procedures that address structural risks, prevent the escalation of tension into deadly and destabilizing conflict in addition to preventing the continuation of conflict or the reoccurrence of armed conflicts in post-conflict situations”. This definition of conflict prevention I have adopted encompasses both methods of conflict prevention thereby making the definition a full representation of conflict prevention in all of its methods of prevention which will be discussed in the next section of this thesis to give a clearer picture of this complex and commonly misunderstood concept.

Conflict management entails conflict prevention, conflict transformation, conflict resolution and modern conflict mechanisms like arbitration, negotiation and mediation. The charter of the United Nations specifies the methods of the peaceful settlement of disputes. These are negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or any other peaceful means of their own choice (UN, 1992; Merrills, 1993). Also, the Charter of the African Union

(AU) specifies the methods in article 3(4). These are negotiation, mediation, conciliation and arbitration.

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rapidly. Conflict prevention activities can incorporate a variety of elements, according to UN Secretary-general including early economic, social and development engagement in the relevant country. Today the UN and regional multilateral organizations are demonstrating that preventive action can accommodate a range of interventions that go beyond traditional preventive diplomacy. Conflict prevention does not come without challenges. One of the major challenges is the overarching private issues defined by the International Telecommunication Union as the “right of individuals to control or influence what information related to them may be collected and disclosed (International Telecommunications union, 2015).

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2.1.1 Methods of Conflict Prevention

Preventing conflict between states has been a central aim of the United Nations (UN) since the end of World War II. The UN Charter, however, does not extend deeply into situations of civil war. With the end of the Cold War, and in the light of the war in the Balkans, the genocide in Rwanda and other intrastate conflicts, the international community has become increasingly involved in addressing internal conflicts. While no one suggests that preventing war or promoting peace is easy, there is nonetheless a growing consensus that violent conflict is not and should not be considered inevitable. The challenge, however, is not a lack of information or knowledge about a brewing conflict. It is the lack of political will on the part of national leaders and the international community to proactively seek to diffuse and resolve a situation before it escalates into violence.

Structural prevention: structural prevention (or root causes prevention) — addressing root causes such as poverty, political repression and uneven distribution of resources, which can, if left unattended, escalate into violence. Long-term prevention includes efforts to reduce poverty and achieve broad-based economic growth. Preventive strategies should also promote human rights, protect minority rights and institute political arrangements in which all groups are represented (e.g. promoting democratic government so that opposing parties can state their views, resolving differences through dialogue and cooperation or ensuring that legislation does not discriminate against one sector of society). Although the goals are the same, operational versus structural prevention are radically different, with one focusing on short-term and targeted approaches, while the other requires a longer-term and more comprehensive approach. Women and civil society

in general have been more active in structural prevention, typically through promoting development, the rule of law, human rights and poverty alleviation. However, at the local level such groups can and are increasingly becoming more involved in taking non-violent action in response to crises, and are themselves engaging in mediation efforts (see below and chapter on peace negotiations).

Targeting the causes of conflict is the most important factor in determining which method or approach should be used in conflict prevention. As earlier mentioned, Boutros-Ghali listed early warning, mediation, confidence building measures, fact-finding, preventive deployment, and peace zones as factors to be considered in determining preventive measures. Although the UN policy papers of the 1990 such as the Agenda for Development greatly expanded preventive measures to policies that address the institutional, socio-economic, and global environment within which conflicting actors operate as diverse as humanitarian aid, arms control, social welfare, military deployment, and media. These wide ranges of actions, interventions are often divided into two categories: Direct Prevention and Structural Prevention.

Direct conflict prevention refers to measures that are aimed at preventing short-term, often imminent escalation of a potential conflict. Also included in direct prevention are the withdrawals of military forces or the involvement of mediators as seen in the present attempt by US, China and others to ease the rising tensions associated with border lines which is an inherited grievance from the previous Korean War in the Korean peninsula.

Structural prevention focuses on more long-term measures which deal with the causes of a potential conflict along with potentially escalating and triggering factors. An example

of this kind of measures includes economic development assistance and or increased political participation. These kinds of measure are most effective in intra state conflict.

An intrastate conflict may lead to an interstate conflict, since conflict can spread to neighboring states due to ethnicity as seen in most conflicts in Africa especially in Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Hence structural prevention avoids the spread of conflict, thereby serving the purpose of a long term prevention of interstate conflict.

2.2 Role of Media in Conflict Prevention and Management

In order to objectively understand the nature and the role of media in peace and conflict management, it is important to understand the various ways through which media influence conflict and conflict management. Newbold (1995) points out that majority of scholars and researchers have concentrated on the role of media in economic, social and political issues affecting states with little attention being given to conflicts. Further, he posed that media impact on conflict management is an emerging area that has been under studied due to lack of multidisciplinary models and concepts that would view media's role from peace and conflict realm.

The total number of conflicts today remains at a significantly lower level than at the end of the Cold War. According to the Conflict Data Project (CDP) - a data collection project on organized crimes and armed conflict, Uppsala University, Sweden, it is estimated that for the year 2001, there were 34 ongoing armed conflicts in the world; a number that roughly reflects the average number of ongoing conflicts recorded since the mid-1990 to 2001 including armed conflicts in Eritrea-Ethiopia, India (Manipur), Sierra Leone,

Uzbekistan among others. Africa is the most war-torn continent with a total of 19 major armed conflicts in the last 12 years (Eriksson, Sollenberg, & Wallensteel, 2002).

The general statistic overview of armed political conflicts provides a basic understanding of the situation today in terms of destruction, loss of human lives and suffering. Several scholars have insisted on the fact that globalization has led to important qualitative changes in the purposes and dynamics of violent conflict. Some of these scholars such as Kaldor (2001) argue that it is the revolution in information technology during the 1980's and 1990's that has led to a particular type of globalization, which in turn, has led to the need for a redefinition of what we think of as media and conflict. Even though the media can give us the intensity of the violence, where they are fought, why, how and who does the fighting, the biggest problem of media influence on people which ultimately determines conflict direction has not been determined. With the emergence of social media this scenario is further compounded.

The majority of violent conflicts are asymmetric in character, and most of these take place within state borders. For instance, the 2007 and 2008 post-election violence in Kenya which is the basis of this research occurred within Kenyan borders. What is important to point out particularly in relation to the role of the media is winning the "hearts and minds" of the people. Because a state is almost always militarily superior, non-state actors are more dependent on psychological warfare, which entails influencing the attitudes and perceptions of a population for example through the media. Social media in particular is also very important with this regard. Therefore, the media dimension has become increasingly important and it is no coincidence that media assistance emerged,

and has been increasing in importance, since the end of the Cold War (Price & Thomson, 2002).

The media has a very complex role to play that, unfortunately, is often taken for granted by political decision-makers and the military. Statements claiming the media's impressive effects are often heard from decision-makers. Political practitioners, and even researchers, most often assume the effect of news media in political conflicts. An example of the extent is reflected in a 1995 survey, in which 64% of American military officers still believed that media had the prime responsibility for ruining the war effort in Vietnam (Taylor, 1997). In light of this, it is surprising, and perhaps even alarming, that relatively little in terms of research and resources has been allocated to improve the understanding of the media's role in armed conflicts and democratizing states.

Another aspect that has important consequences for media in violent conflict pertains to the recent surge in democratization. It began before the end of the Cold War, but since then a "fourth wave" of democratization has begun (Ottaway, 1997). Democratizing states are involved in a complex process of re-adaptation of traditional political structures and attempting to incorporate democratic institutions and norms. Incorporating an editorially and economically independent, responsible and pluralistic media is essential to democratization. Political change often stimulates hope and provides unique opportunities for different, and often previously marginalized groups in society to influence political dynamics while on the other hand, those who control power may find it difficult or inconceivable to let go (Ottaway, 1997). Often letting go may even be a question of threat to individual security. In such a situation, media could play an invisible role of dividing the groups in society in terms of social status. For instance, most

conflicts in Africa are as a result of the struggle for power, for instance the case of Rwanda, Congo, Sierra Leone, etc. The discrimination of the marginalized, ruled by the political elite, could provide a suitable ground for media to create and further both conflict facilitating and triggering factors by use of “oppositional metaphors” (“us” vs. “them”), (Dijk, 1997) . However, this indirect influence of media on conflict has not been properly brought out, hence the need for more research.

A number of case studies from around the globe can be used to illustrate the role media plays in countering political and tribal conflicts. Pakistan has a vibrant media landscape, which in spite of political pressure and direct bans that they are sometimes subjected to from the state, the media enjoys independence to a large extent. After having been liberalized in 2002, the television sector experienced a media boom. In the fierce competitive environment that followed commercial interests became paramount and quality journalism gave way to sensationalism. Although the radio sector has not seen similar growth, independent radio channels are numerous and considered very important sources of information especially in the rural areas (Muhammad, 2008).

Pakistan ranks as the deadliest country in the world for journalists. The security and safety situation in the conflict-affected areas, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and North West Frontier Province (NWFP), are the most grievous. Here journalists face propaganda, threats, coercion, and targeted killings. Some areas are effectively no-go areas for journalists; and the journalists working in the conflicts epicenters have adapted to self-censorship in order not to antagonize the conflicting parties (Husain, 2005). The media coverage of the regional conflicts within Pakistan and how these relate to the conflict in Afghanistan is either very rudimentary or stereotypical,

and does not contribute to a greater understanding of the interwoven challenges from extremism that the two neighbors face. In a sense, Pakistani print media came into existence with a mission to promulgate the idea of Pakistan, which was seen as the best national option for the Muslim minority in British India and as a form of self-defense against suppression from the Hindu majority (Stephen, 2004).

The Pacific Region has experienced growing instability and political unrest over the past 20 years. Some of the worst conflicts in the region occurred in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Bougainville in Papua New Guinea between 1987 and 2000. Although the media has largely portrayed these conflicts as inter-ethnic and pro-indigenous in nature, there are other causes which have found expression in political and armed rebellion. Sensitive questions of land rights, unequal distribution of political power and economic resources, and endemic corruption are at the core of the conflicts. The ensuing breakdown in law and order has had a sustained negative impact on the operation of local media and media practitioners (Riccardo, 2004).

In Fiji the media came under intense pressure during the coups of 1987 and 2000. In 1987, following the military coup d'etat led by Lieutenant-Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka, armed troops and police occupied the offices of the two daily newspapers, The Fiji Times and the Fiji Sun and ordered them to cease publishing indefinitely. Then owners of the Fiji Sun decided to close down their operation rather than publish in an environment of self-censorship. In the civilian coup d'etat of May 2000, the television studios of Fiji TV were attacked and destroyed after the station aired a scathing analysis of the coup. Many senior journalists left Fiji following the coups in 1987 and again in 2000. The journalists

who are currently employed are relatively young compared to their counterparts in Australia and New Zealand (David, 2004).

Reporters and photographers went through a big change in the Vietnam War and changed the style of reporting the war for future journalists. They went from reporting directly of press releases and forming happy, enthusiastic stories to investigative reporting and writing cold, hard truthful stories. The stories that came from Vietnam war- zones and the photos coming from the front line did more than sway public opinion, they helped end the war. The Vietnam War was fought between 1957 and 1975 on the ground in South Vietnam and bordering areas of Cambodia and Laos and in bombing runs over North Vietnam. The Vietnam War is often called the most unpopular American war of the twentieth century. It resulted in nearly 60,000 American deaths and an estimated 2 to 4 million Vietnamese deaths. Estimating the number killed in the conflict is extremely difficult, the true death count will probably never be known (James, 2004). From these figures it is evident that early conflict detection is very important because it can inform on better ways to prevent escalation of such a conflict which ultimately lead to deaths of millions of people. Ushahidi platform is a noble concept because if appropriately tapped it can be effectively used as an early warning system for conflict management.

The media began to report the true awfulness of war and the politics behind it to the American public. Because of the effort to reveal the truth from correspondents, many Americans began to doubt the government and the war. The media and the American people alike began losing hope in the government and war. The credibility of the American government suffered their biggest loss when the Pentagon Papers information was leaked to the public. The Pentagon Papers were published in the New York Times,

and later the Washington post and as well as other newspapers. The Pentagon Papers, revealed by journalists, contained numbers from the war that included far higher rates of American casualties and far less successful battles than the officially released government statistics had indicated. These documents were top-secret historical studies, contracted by the Pentagon, about the war, that showed how the government was misleading the US public, in all stages of the war (Gentzkow, 2004).

In order to objectively understand the nature and the role of media in peace and conflict management, it is important to understand the various ways through which media influence conflict and conflict management. Newbold (1995) points out that majority of scholars and researchers have concentrated on the role of media in economic, social and political issues affecting states with little attention being given to conflicts. Further, he posed that media impact on conflict management is an emerging area that has been under studied due to lack of multidisciplinary models and concepts that would view media's role from peace and conflict realm.

The general statistic overview of armed political conflicts provides a basic understanding of the situation today in terms of destruction, loss of human lives and suffering. Several scholars have insisted on the fact that globalization has led to important qualitative changes in the purposes and dynamics of violent conflict. Some, such as Kaldor (2001) argue that it is the revolution in information technology during the 1980's and 1990's that has led to a particular type of globalization, which in turn, has led to the need for a redefinition of what we think of as media and conflict. Even though the media can give us the intensity of the violence, where they are fought, why, how and who does the

fighting, the biggest problem of media influence on people which ultimately determines conflict direction has not been determined hence need for more research.

The majority of violent conflicts are asymmetric in character, and most of these take place within state borders. What is important to point out particularly in relation to the role of the media is winning the “hearts and minds” of the people. Because a state is almost always militarily superior, non-state actors are more dependent on psychological warfare, which entails influencing the attitudes and perceptions of a population for example through the media. Therefore, the media dimension has become increasingly important and it is no coincidence that media assistance emerged, and has been increasing in importance, since the end of the Cold War (Price & Thomson, 2002).

The media has a very complex role to play that, unfortunately, is often taken for granted by political decision-makers and the military. Statements claiming the media’s impressive effects are often heard from decision-makers. Political practitioners, and even researchers, most often assume the effect of news media in political conflicts. An example of the extent is reflected in a 1995 survey, in which 64% of American military officers still believed that media had the prime responsibility for ruining the war effort in Vietnam (Taylor, 1997). In light of this, it is surprising, and perhaps even alarming, that relatively little in terms of research and resources has been allocated to improve the understanding of the media’s role in armed conflicts and democratizing states (Taylor, 1997).

Another aspect that has important consequences for media in violent conflict pertains to the recent surge in democratization. It began before the end of the Cold War, but since then a “fourth wave” of democratization has began Ottaway, (1997). Democratizing

states are involved in a complex process of re-adaptation of traditional political structures and attempting to incorporate democratic institutions and norms. Incorporating an editorially and economically independent, responsible and pluralistic media is essential to democratization. Political change often stimulates hope and provides unique opportunities for different, and often previously marginalized groups in society to influence political dynamics while on the other hand, those who control power may find it difficult or inconceivable to let go, Ottaway (1997). Often letting go may even be a question of threat to individual security. In such a situation, media could play an invisible role of dividing the groups in society in terms of social status. For instance, most conflicts in Africa are as a result of the struggle for power. The discrimination of the marginalized, ruled by the political elite, could provide a suitable ground for media to create and further both conflict facilitating and triggering factors by use of “oppositional metaphors” (“us” vs. “them”), Dijk, (2013), However, this indirect influence of media on conflict has not been properly brought out. This calls for a need to do further research especially now with the emergence of social media.

The media in conflict-ridden countries often play a significant role in creating and furthering both facilitating factors and triggering factors linked to internal and external issues or threats facing the nation. According to Terzis & Melone (2002), media can create divisions by not reflecting pluralism in the social and political structures. This could be achieved by contributing to the creation of an informed critical citizenry within a country by acting as a mouthpiece for ethnic power circles. Thus, she concluded that a deliberate distortion of news coverage for particular interests easily exacerbates the tension between opposed factions and becomes a major trigger of violent conflicts.

However, this study did not analyze how human factors can be influenced by the media. Television has been considered to be the most important source of news for the public, and possibly, the most powerful influence on public opinion itself. In 1950, only 9 percent of homes owned a television in America. By 1966, this figure rose to 93 percent, Bonior, Champlin, & Kolly, (1984, p. 18). Coupled with this revolution was the Vietnam War, in which American military intervened to restore peace. Since no military restriction was established, journalists could follow the military into combat and report their observations without formal restriction. Thus, as journalists saw grislier combat, they presented the public with more graphic images and, for the first time, interviewed soldiers expressed their frustration with the progress of the war, which were contrary to official progress reports by the state. By the fall of 1967, 90 percent of the evening news was devoted to the war and roughly 50 million people watched television news each night and read newspapers (Bonior, et al, 1984). The result was reduced support for the US foreign intervention policy by the public and Congress (Bonior, et al, 1984). This demonstrates the compelling power of the media in shaping attitudes and influencing decisions. It also shows how media can act as an agenda setting platform. With the advent of social media platforms today, this power is even more pronounced.

The other most influential acts of media during the war was the decision of Life Magazine to fill one edition of its magazine with photographs of 242 US soldiers killed in Vietnam in a one week of fighting. Halli, (1986). It was this type of reporting that encouraged General William Westmoreland, commander of the US troops in Vietnam, to accuse the mass media of helping to bring about a National Liberation Front victory.

The 1990's humanitarian intervention into Somalia, led by the US, was the result of media influence, but since it was reactive rather than proactive, it was not well conceived, making it extremely vulnerable. The media, of course, offers few suggestions, merely the cry of 'do something!' As Sir Michael Howard noted:

“television brings a crisis closer to governors but provides no new means to resolve it.”

Gowing (1994). This intervention was influenced by the CNN effect, which argues that the media drives Western conflict management by forcing Western governments to intervene militarily in humanitarian crises against their will, Jakosben, (2000).

The causal mechanism of the CNN effect is usually conceived in the following way: Media coverage (printed and televised) of suffering and atrocities → journalists and opinion leaders demand that Western governments “do something” → the (public) pressure becomes unbearable → Western governments do something Jakosben, (2000). Many decision makers have lent credence to this view. For example, John Shattuck, once a US Assistant Secretary of State for human rights and democracy, claimed that: “The media got us [the USA] into Somalia and then got us out” Shattuck, (1996).

Because of this forced intervention, the US government had taken a clear position on Somalia and thus could not begin preparing the US public for their role, duration and eventual winding up of its commitment in Somalia. The result of this intervention was far reaching. For instance, the highlighting of images of dead servicemen caused a powerful impact on the public fueling pressure to the state to withdraw troops Gowing, (1994). So, in this case, the media was placing an otherwise ignored policy issue on the public agenda, and almost forcing the administration to react. Therefore, what is sometimes termed as the "CNN effect" is usually necessary to mobilize pressure on (the Western)

governments to act. However, the study didn't specify which variable of human factors were mostly affected. Possibly more research is needed to bring to light the said human factors.

Television coverage is thus a powerful influence in problem recognition, which in turn helps to shape the foreign policy agenda. But television does not necessarily dictate policy responses Gowing, (1994). Also, the media does not necessarily express the wants and vision of the public. More often, it serves to shape their wants. Therefore, if governors do react to the media in a direct fashion, they move even further away from public opinion than they might be otherwise. In essence, the media can serve to shape both public opinion and government policy, but need not do either so blatantly and thoughtlessly. As well, the media should not be relied upon for influence on either party, as its resources are limited, and so is the breadth of its attention, perhaps even more so than the general public.

History has shown that media can incite people towards violence. Hitler used the media to create hatred for Jews Vladimir & Schirch,(2007). Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda, masterminded the most effective effort of mass persuasion, heavily relying on propaganda messages in motion pictures and radio broadcasting. Aware of the importance of media, Goebbels controlled the press school for journalists and had a hold over radio broadcasting Cole, (1998). He induced the industry to produce affordable radio sets, installed loudspeakers in public places and sent "radio wardens" to monitor the use of those radios Jowett & O'Donnell, (1999). Between 1933 and 1942, the German radio audience increased from 4.5 to 16 million Thomson, (1997). The Nazis mastered the use of slogans and bold-colored visuals, but most importantly perfected the use of town

rallies arousing emotional frenzy and support for Hitler. Furthermore, the town rallies were then reproduced in Nazi newsreels and shown to audiences all over Germany. This kind of propaganda was exceptionally persuasive, as manifested by the historical persistence of the symbols such as the swastika in popular culture more than 50 years later Jowett & O'Donnell, (1999).

In the 1992 to 1995 Balkan conflict, electronic and print media helped promote ethnic conflict and hatred leading to violence. While the explicit broadcast of hate messages was rare, the cumulative impact of biased coverage fuelled the hatred over a long period of time Buric, (2000); Sadkovich, (1998). Broadcasters polarized local communities to the point where violence became an acceptable tool for addressing grievances Vladimir & Schirch (2007). More than 150,000 were killed in the Bosnian civil war between Serbs, Bosnians and Croats. The Dayton Peace Agreement ended the violence in 1995 by instituting a provisional, internationally-run governing body in charge of peace implementation (the Office of the High Representative, OHR). One of OHR's initial assessments of the Bosnian conflict was that all three sides in the conflict utilized radio and television broadcasting to further their conflict goals and demonize their opponents Buric, (2000); Thompson M, (1977)

In the past two years, the African continent experienced several political uprisings in Arab countries. Some of these uprisings were claimed to be engineered and subsequently escalated by media. Using the Libyan civil war as a case study, Viggo, (2011) explored the media's role in modern conflicts. Particular emphasis was placed on the media's shortcomings in its reporting and analysis of the conflict, highlighting the double standards that the media gave by drawing parallels between the wars in Iraq and Libya in

an effort to illustrate the errors repeatedly carried out by mass media. Even though media managed to polarize the nation into the ruled and the political elites by use of “oppositional metaphors” (us vs them), its impact on social status, gender, age groups and other human variables was not clearly highlighted.

The Libyan revolution was grouped together with those revolutions of the rest of the Arab world. What the media failed to point out was that, unlike the revolutions of Egypt or Tunisia, the Libyan uprising was, from the outset, violent in nature. Viggo (2011) concluded with reference to Muammar Qaddafi’s capture and subsequent killing on October 20, 2011 that the power of media in conflict cannot be assumed. For instance, commenting on the speed and technology with which images of the event recorded on cell phones were transmitted around the world via social media platforms, and widely disseminated even before Qaddafi’s death was confirmed, and immediately sparked international debate regarding the circumstances and legality of his killing, the media played a key role in restoring peace and de-escalating conflict thus setting the new agenda for discussion.

During the 2010 general elections in Côte d’Ivoire, the media landscape was rife with partisan polemic and misinformation from opposing sides and incitements to violence, while members of the media themselves were frequent targets of violence and intimidation (Media Foundation for West Africa 2011). During the post-election crisis that followed after the announcement of the presidential results, the print media and public television were used by both presidential candidates Laurent Gbagbo and Alassane Ouattara as a tool for propaganda and a means for mobilizing their electorate against their opponents. This is according to Electoral Reform International Services,

(2011). The media occupied a central role in the post-election crisis and the descent into civil war that saw the displacement of more than 1 million people, the effective termination of many government services in parts of the country and further economic decline. This was quoted by the Electoral Reform International Services, (2011).

A characteristic of the Ivorian civil war was a power-struggle between forces backing Gbagbo and Ouattara to control the media. In response to the pro-Gbagbo biases of the state-run *Radio Télévision Ivoirienne* (RTI), which is the most widely accessed source of news in the country, the Ouattara camp created *Television Côte d'Ivoire* (TCI) in early 2011 (Media Foundation for West Africa, 2011). Both television outlets incited violence against their opponents and attacked media outlets or journalists of their opponents. There is widespread consensus that certain media outlets played an important role in exacerbating the political, social and ethnic tensions in the country, Reporters without Borders, (2011).

In the Central African Republic, hate speech spread through the media and targeted attacks during 2013 were responsible for exacerbating, with little precedent, a sectarian climate that resulted in the displacement of almost one million people and 75,000 refugees MRG, (2013). In the midst of an otherwise non-sectarian conflict, hate speech urging revenge between Muslims and Christian anti-balaka groups in media and online platforms gained prominence and it became easier for members from both communities to regard the other group as collectively responsible for individual acts of violence. The impact of hatred spread through the media may extend beyond discrimination to more visible extremes, as in the Democratic Republic of Congo where it drives the continuation of inter-ethnic conflicts MRG, (2013).

In 1994, the Rwandan *Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines* played a crucial role in initiating the slaughter of more than a half a million people in less than one hundred days. The broadcast messages explicitly calling for the murder of the Tutsi population were believed to have contributed to the massacre Metzl, (1997); Kirschke, (1996). This came to be referred to as the Rwanda genocide. The effect of this was the displacement of millions of people and an emergence of a refugee population which is evident to date. Hence media can be very helpful if professionally and ethically used but the same media can be very destructive if used aimlessly during conflict situations. With the advent of social media, the danger is even more pronounced.

In Uganda, inadequate media coverage has been blamed for the conflict in Northern Uganda where for more than two decades, the war between Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF) and Lord Resistance Army (LRA) has not been covered adequately Okumu, (1997). This has made it difficult for the international community to intervene. Similarly, Somalia and Darfur conflicts were too under covered until recently when they hit the world headlines. Okumu (ibid) criticized the international media for failing to adequately cover the emerging conflict situation in Rwanda which resulted in the lack of prompt intervention by the international community. Indeed, he argues that a more comprehensive and objective reporting about the Rwandan conflict could have averted the 1994 genocide. This study too did not state how the media impacted on people to resort to conflict.

Tensions frequently escalate in situations where information is scarce Dijk, (1997); Graber, (2002). Offering a variety of information which contains a range of facts, perspectives and opinions would therefore be a de-escalating measure. "*The media*

cannot be neutral towards peace” Dijk, (1997); Graber, (2002). While this might oppose the media professional objectivity above everything else, they must realize that the way in which they report on and about a certain conflict can drastically affect the audience’s perception of the situation and thus may influence further development of the conflict.

Media has also been used in several cases to promote peace and reconciliation. For example, in Northern Uganda, media has been used to create the common good for the people to promote peace Struges, (2007). Mega FM has promoted peace in Northern Uganda with positive effects since 2002. Evidence also suggests that the station played a major part in encouraging LRA members to come out of the bush. Struges (2007) further noted that the LRA leadership was encouraged to listen to the station and on a number of occasions joined radio phone-in talk shows and held discussions with government and civil society representatives, a good step in peace building. Thus mass media played a role in creating peace.

Open Broadcast Network (OBN), a media network established in Bosnia two decades ago, is one of the most ambitious and earliest intentional media attempts to reduce violent conflict. To this day, it remains the only television network established to promote peace and reconciliation. OBN was a product of the Dayton Peace Agreement reached in 1995, when the Serbs, Croats and Bosnians came under pressure to end their three-year-long violent conflict by instituting a provisional, internationally-run governing body (the Office of the High Representative, OHR) in charge of peace implementation. Following the initial assessments of the Bosnian conflict that propaganda, through ethnic television stations, was instrumental in spreading messages of hate that incited and fueled the conflict, the OHR developed and promoted “unbiased media” to combat persisting

propaganda. As a result, the new national television network Open Broadcast Network, (OBN) was launched in 1996 Sadkovich, (1998).

Since then, OBN has promoted peace journalism by focusing on the efforts of community leaders to promote peace during violence. It has also pioneered a number of programs aimed at promoting cross-national understanding. The programs provided practical advice about reconciliation and repatriation. OBN editors categorically refused to employ the overt nationalistic bias of other networks, which carried verbatim, on-air reading of partisan press releases; coverage of parties, bombastic press conferences; and unedited open letters Sadkovich, (1998). OBN's news and information division set the standards for professional reporting in general by avoiding many similar traps of war journalism, but take steps toward open promotion of peaceful reconciliation Sadkovich, (1998).

Search for Common Ground (SFCG), a US based NGO dealing with conflict resolution, launched Studio Ijambo in 1995 at the height of ethnic and political violence in Burundi and neighboring Rwanda. The studio was established with the intention of promoting reconciliation, understanding and foster nonviolent conflict resolution SFCG, (2004). Since its inception, Studio Ijambo has had a significant positive impact in mitigating conflict by catching and holding the attention of the majority of the radio-listening population. It employed an ethnically balanced team of journalists to produce high-quality radio programs that promoted reconciliation, dialogue, and collaboration, in addition to its credible, unbiased programming which included news, special features, round-table discussions, telephone call-ins, music, and highly popular soap-opera series Slachmuijlder & Nkurunziza, (1972). In addition to providing quality standards for

broadcasters and producers, Studio Ijambo also played a central role in the capacity building of radio professionals through training SFCG, (2004).

In February 2002, MONUC (the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo) and Hironnelle Foundation, a Swiss NGO, set up Radio Okapi as a means of promoting peace and reconciliation in DR Congo. With a staff made up of mostly native Congolese journalists and broadcasters, Radio Okapi produced news, music, and information on MONUC activities. Radio Okapi has been on air for over 13 years now and has contributed a lot towards reunification of the country (DR Congo) by way of program broadcasts across the frontlines in both government and rebel-held territory. Since its inception, Radio Okapi has enlightened listeners on the peace process - its successes, failures and hopes. In addition, it has explained the mandate of United Nations in the DR Congo and the limits of that mandate Betz, (2004). Other than peace process, Radio Okapi has also developed programs dedicated to health, education, human rights, culture and music, the last of which is crucial in gaining the interest of the Congolese radio listeners (Betz, 2004).

Equally, Radio Ndeke Luka (RNL), a radio station focusing on development and peace in the Central African Republic (CAR), was established by the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) and managed by Hironnelle Foundation to promote peace and reconciliation in CAR. Since its inception, the station has managed to contribute to peace-keeping as well as democratization and socio-economic development. It has highlighted on issues relating to human rights and human rights abuses, the search for peace and initiatives in favor of peace. It has also promoted vocational training for

journalists and technicians of Central African Republic resulting in the creation of a positive impact on local media Betz, (2004).

Social media could also be a powerful tool, focusing worldwide attention on armed conflict and international humanitarian law (IHL). Due to its scale and the ability to easily and exponentially reproduce information, as we saw with the massive viewership of the Kony 2012 video, social media is useful for quickly and efficiently publicizing events and information which can be used to generate public interest, to bolster advocacy campaigns, and to educate about the law Koni, (2012).

Conflict is one of the main sources of news stories for journalists from time memorial. This is because the media is interested in the events and happenings that make news. The news worthiness of a story depends on its timeliness, proximity and conflicts among others. In particular, conflict that is developing has it been resolved or does anybody care whether it involves people, governmental bodies or sports team is often considered newsworthy (Itule & Anderson, 2008). As the old adage goes “bad news” is good news, conflict being bad news because of the level of destructions involved and sometimes even deaths, it becomes important news for the media. One important adage for journalistic practice is that if a dog bites a man that is not news. However, if a man bites a dog the society regards that as big news.

Mass media operates within society. Their performance is judged by society in terms of what the media ought to do that is their expected role in society. Media performance can be good or bad, acceptable or unacceptable (Oosthuizen, 2002). In many occasions, the media have been condemned rightly or wrongly for escalation of conflicts in the society. They have also been accused of failing to consider peace initiatives whenever violence

and conflicts erupt in communities. Also, some conflict events around the world have been 'mediatized' by journalists paying more attention to certain issues than others (Cottle, 2006). During violent conflict situations, the relationship between media and audience grows as Kuusik (2010) adds. Lack of information can at any stage of a conflict make people desperate, restless and easy to manipulate. Bratic (2006) suggests the potential of mass media in peace building. Despite the situation that "media are more likely to escalate a conflict than to pacify it", media have been utilized to promote peace environment and building communities that have undergone violent conflicts (Wolfsfeld, 2004).

While the media have the responsibility to inform the public about the happenings in the environment, the way in which they discharge their duties would sometimes have profound influence on the audience. In many cases, the media have been accused of escalating conflicts by engaging in irrational and sensational reporting of incidents of conflicts or violence in society. In this case there is need for the media to be responsible while at the same time being candid in its reportage of conflicts so as to avoid glorifying incidents of violence. As Wolfsfeld (2004) has stated, media can also be used successfully to promote peace and harmony in the society; for example, in the case of former Yugoslavia in Western Europe and closer here in Rwanda after the infamous 1994 massacre.

Concerns about media's coverage of violent conflicts were raised way back in sixties with commission tasked to investigate the riots in United States of America unearthing several un- doings by the media. The team found that many of the inaccuracies of facts, tone and mood were due to the failure of reporters and editors to ask tough questions

about official reports and to apply the most vigorous standards possible in evaluating and presenting news (Kerner, 1968). The report further pointed out that adequate coverage of different cultures and races requires reporters permanently assigned to this beat and the media needed to hire more minorities for in depth reporting and for the understanding on minority affairs. If future journalists are to meet the challenges of improved coverage of minorities, there is need for training in cultural sensitivity so as to understand better their culturally diverse society (Itule & Anderson, 2008). There is need to examine intercultural issues in conflict reporting scenarios. According to Bramlett-Solomom, a journalism professor at Arizona State university, as quoted by the above authors, cultural sensitivity training can help journalists learn not to rely on long held impression about particular social groups thus helping move journalists past stereotypes and prejudices. The media practitioners as the voice of the people or citizens have no option, but to understand their subjects thoroughly well and always be sensitive to the plight of the people they are serving. Therefore, a thorough audience research and analysis is very important for journalists dealing with conflict reporting and management.

Itule and Anderson (2008) note that in many newsrooms it is true that standards are unclear, given recent evidence, wildly inconsistent. Editors routinely talk about the gap between the journalistic values they hold dearest and those they think guide the reporters they work besides: Ironically for a profession whose commodity is the truth, journalism is increasingly being distrusted by the public. Journalists need to be very concerned about their credibility. News organizations sell truth and if the public does not trust what they report, journalists' livelihood is in jeopardy. The journalists have to accept that they are

not going to be loved by the public but still cannot afford to stop trying to improve their credibility in the eyes of the public.

In this regard, the media organizations have to put their house in order by providing their employees, especially those who are directly involved in production of media contents, with clear guidelines on how to go about discharging their daily tasks. Credibility is earned and not dished out to individuals; therefore, media practitioners must work hard to prove to their audiences that they are credible men and women who are at the service of the public. In fact, journalists as professionals, have a code of ethics which should guide and police their conduct. In the Kenyan situation, a proposal by the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) to develop standard policy framework to be used by the practitioners would go a long way in enhancing the role of professionalism in the practice of journalism in the country.

The search for truth even when it is unpopular is what distinguishes journalism from other forms of communication, they need to think of audiences, not only as customers, but as clients to be served in a professional and balanced way, just as a doctor serves his or her patients by telling them what they need to know and not necessarily what they would like to hear (Itule & Anderson, 2004). Journalists have the professional and moral responsibility to provide well researched, factual, balanced and truthful contents which would serve the information needs and expectations of their target groups.

According to Itule and Anderson (2004), the newspapers (media) are unfair when they focus too much on what is wrong, violent and bizarre; and that they never print 'good news' could be the longest-running complaints of the public. Much as the media are interested in what is newsy, the focus should not be only on the negative side of the

incidents or events. The media can break the same item from different perspectives and angles without losing the gist of the story and compromising on the standards of the media outlets. With this approach, they can easily build public confidence, by giving them some hope especially when they are in a state of despair and hopelessness. During times of conflict this desperation is normally very high and therefore a journalist must be extremely careful because his reporting can easily flare a given conflict to unprecedented levels. The way a news item is packaged before it is disseminated to the audience matters a lot, therefore the same conflict or cattle rustling and incidents of clan rivalry can be approached from an angle of inspiration and hope.

In modern society, effective and democratic media are an essential part and indispensable for societies trying to make a transition towards peace and democracy. Harry S. Truman, former USA president, once said “You can never get all the facts from just one newspaper, and unless you have all the facts, you cannot make proper judgments about what is going on” as quoted by Kuusik (2010). This statement confirms the need for free access to unbiased information, so that citizens can freely speak their mind and believe in media freedom while constructively criticizing.

Not giving people the possibility of political participation, and not allowing them to express themselves freely is a significant cause of conflict. On the one hand free, independent and pluralistic media provide a platform for debate and dialogue on different opinions. These same media can also be misused for propaganda purposes, to incite hatred and spread rumors, creating unnecessary tensions (Wolfsfeld, 2004). It is true that the media (conventional mass media and lately social media) have been accused of disseminating contents that are likely to cause tensions and sometimes even degenerate to

violent conflicts. Specifically, social media has been blamed for all sorts of evil and particularly for encouraging or fanning conflict not only in Kenya but many other parts of the world.

Journalism does not need justification for its existence. Its service to society is a justification in itself. Journalism can not only help to distribute information but also counter hate-speech and create an environment of balanced opinions, thereby creating information equilibrium (Ronald, 2004), as cited by Kuusik 2010. This sentiment is not far from truth as the media plays critical role in the functioning of a democratic society in which citizens can exercise their constitutional rights of access and freedom of information for them to make sound and informed decisions. However, what needs to be emphasized at this juncture is that the players in the industry have also a responsibility of serving the society well and in an objective and in a balanced manner.

Although it is not usually the defining factor in determining whether violence will or will not occur, the role of media is a significant aspect of the overall context. During the 2007 general election, Kenyan media also engaged in a form of political propaganda based on ethnicity where politicians and some citizens utilized media to mobilize political violence. The mushrooming of local language media in the country was also cited as the possible source of the problem. Local language media were used by politicians as a tool for ethnic mobilization and political control in certain areas (Selemani, 2012). Specifically, KASS fm was singled out and their journalist was listed in the suspects who were taken to International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague. KASS fm was accused of broadcasting propaganda and hate messages during the 2007 and 2008 post-election violence in Kenya which informs this research. Kenyans are polarized along ethnic lines

by the main political contenders. The media also fall prey to this by engaging in a lot of propaganda which heightened tensions and subsequent violence witnessed in that election. One of the reasons for this is that the media in the country is either owned by the politicians or those who are affiliated to them.

The media, both print and electronic, stood accused of stirring up cultural prejudices in the way they framed and reported news. They have a moral responsibility to change negative values while ensuring accountability for those who commit social and economic evils (MPNDV report: 2009). This can be attained by avoiding negative ethnicity and instead striving to build one cohesive Kenya without paying much attention to ethnicity or creed. According to Ogola, as cited by Selemani (2012), most of the journalists who were in the local language media were not professionally trained: Lack of training opportunities for media practitioners meant that presenters working for most frequency modulation (F.M) radio stations lacked the necessary skills and largely got their jobs on the basis of being widely known or having competency in the local or native languages where these radio stations were domiciled. The lack of training was especially evident in the talk shows where hosts failed to moderate debates leaving callers to vent their frustrations sometimes by suggesting and encouraging violence against opponents (Selemani, 2012, p 16).

What Selemani (2012) has pointed out is matter of grave concern that the media council of Kenya (MCK) and other stakeholders need to move with speed to reign in the quacks and untrained practitioners, as they have no business damaging this noble profession, when the country boasts of highly trained and skilled middle level media graduates as well as hundreds of young fresh university graduates who are currently jobless or are

working as casuals to make ends meet. The bad 'manners' are mostly common among the employees of F.M radio stations in the country. Besides, the media council of Kenya (MCK) and the relevant government agencies must fully enforce the rules and regulations governing the practice of the profession in the country. There is need for FM vernacular stations to show greater responsibility when they are broadcasting in languages those other communities do not understand.

Stremlau and Price (2009) recognize the influence of new media technology in stoking conflict. The social media especially twitter, Whatsapp and face book, can easily be used to mobilize the masses and cause tension among the population. This was proven to during the run -up to the just concluded (2017) general elections in Kenya and period before and after the determination of presidential election petition by the Supreme Court of Kenya in which Raila Odinga challenged the election of President Uhuru Kenyatta. Both Raila Odinga and Uhuru Kenyatta were the main contenders in 2017 general elections. During this period, the social media as well as cell phone's short message service (SMS) platforms were awash with messages laced with hate speech, propaganda and falsehood that almost caused major problems were it not for the swift action taken by the government mercinery to contain the situation.

However, conflicts in Kenya are mainly reported among the hitherto pastoralists communities, though it is also a common feature between those who are perceived as pastoralists and the farming communities. Disputes among the latter groups mostly occurs when the neighboring communities who practice different economic activities clash for example; there are perennial conflicts between the Orma and Pokomo in Tana

River County, Maasai and Kisii in Transmara, Boran and Meru in Isiolo and Meru counties, Maasai and Kipsigis in Mau region to mention but a few.

In the Marsabit situation, the area doesn't normally attract much media attention. The county is classified as arid and semi-arid area in terms of productivity. Since mostly bad news is good news, the county was on the spot light during the infamous Turbi massacre and subsequent Bubisa killings in 2005, and inter-community conflicts in Moyale between 2011 and 2013. The otherwise quiet and passive county enjoyed unprecedented media coverage during the said conflicts with both local and foreign media heavily represented in the area. On Turbi killings for example, the mission team appointed to investigate the matter pointed out that while media played a role in informing the country about the conflict, the reportage was partly biased and the presentation of facts tended to exacerbate rather than minimize the conflict. There is need for conflict sensitive approach. The team further noted that while there were clear early warnings of a looming violence, the government machinery and civil society actors supporting peace building on the ground failed to respond in good time. Political elites have seized, owned and now control community affairs thereby usurping the role of government and traditional authority systems. There is also the problem of identity crisis among the local communities; for instance; the Gabra, who are traditionally regarded as young brothers by the Boran, are persistently pursuing the process of upsetting the status quo (Mission team, 2009).

According to Omdado (2011), periodic journals have come up with articles and publications in regards to the war-torn Somalia conflict stating that the civil war have caused regional instability and acts as a major hindrance for development within the East

African region. From insecurity within the Indian Ocean waters by Somali pirates to the safe haven for Al-Qaeda militants within the region. However, not any have argued outside the “black box” and try to figure out whether stability within the region may not be a merit for political, economic and social-cultural development in Kenya.

The Somali Civil War is an ongoing civil war taking place in Somalia. The conflict, which began in 1991, has caused destabilization throughout the country and instability within the East Africa region, with the current phase of the conflict seeing the Somalia government losing substantial control of the state to rebel forces. The unrest initially consisted of a series of clashes between various tribal factions, but with time it took a militant Islamist tone. Al Qaeda and the Al Shabaab terror groups got involved. These groups are known to apply social media platforms to recruit, indoctrinate and even coordinate terror activities in Somalia. These terrorists have even invaded Kenya several times especially in Lamu area of the Kenyan coast. Somalia's government declared state of emergency in June 2009, requesting immediate international support, and the military intervention of neighboring East African states. However, since the political instability within the region have been an impediment to regional security and stability more so to front line states like Kenya, Ethiopia and both South and Northern Sudan (Omdado, 2011).

The geographical factor that Kenya enjoys includes the fact that Kenya and Somalia are marked as littoral zone or states. These states enjoy the benefit of being within the regional waters and have a bargaining power toward the regional waters. Since most East African states are landlocked countries, they depend on the Indian Ocean as the only regional water in terms of shipping products. Since Somalia is at civil-war, Kenya

becomes the last option from the region because of the regional geographical territory which is also considered a good area for the establishment of most United Nations regional headquarters for easy distribution of relief aid and is located at the center of the flying zone within the region for easy access by international airlines. This has influenced most international communities to consider Kenya as a soft and a strategic spot for setting up their regional offices. Most powerful countries such as USA and Britain have their Embassies in Nairobi Kenya, showing the strategic importance accorded to Kenya.

These benefits are enormous to the point that when Kenya experienced political instability (2007-2008) most of the international bodies came in to be able to establish political stability in Kenya leading to a coalition government of Party of National Unity (PNU) under Mwai Kibaki as the president on one side and Orange Democratic Movement under Raila Odinga on the other side of the coalition as a prime minister. This may not be the case when there was a stable political system within the region more so in Somalia. If this were not the case, we may be ignored like any other regional governments to establish an internal solution which may not be a lasting solution to Kenya government without the international support. From the regional perspective, media role in peace and conflict can be analyzed from different cases that had happened since the 20th century to present. It is argued that Africa has experienced more of this internal conflict probably more than any other continent in recent history (Rioba, 2012). According to his thesis, Rioba pinpoints the key sources to African conflicts which include feelings of being excluded, issues on identity, and the frustration of basic needs under conditions of under-development and the crumbling hold and legitimacy of a poor state.

Stremlau and Price (2009) recognize the influence of new media technologies in inciting conflict. Therefore, they suggested that in the process of regulating or controlling media on post violence era of certain countries, new media must be considered (Stremlau & Price, 2009). While governments control the media for a political reason, with the era that new media grow each day and that people use different tools that can support connectivity; governments and any media regulatory bodies should also think on how to manage new media regulation.

In quoting Onadipe and Lord (1997), Rioba elaborates other perspective of sources of conflict in Africa as being caused by political, economic, historical, social, cultural and psychological reasons. It is argued that media reporting in conflict can end up making the situation more negative. To some extent, media interest is on conflict than peace, as Wolfsfeld (2004, p.30) argues that with a peace process, the more likely the news media are to play a negative role in the process. In other words, when things are bad, the news media often make them worse. Here it means that, the media can act as a catalyst for instigating more conflict. Despite the situation that media are more likely to escalate a conflict than to pacify it (Wolfsfeld, 2004, p.19). Media have been utilized to promote peace environment and building communities that have undergone violent conflict. Adam & Holguin (2008) ascertain that media can play a good role in peace building in places that are surrounded by structural conflict. Identity conflicts can coincide with limits on political participation and uneven distribution of scarce resources, as can be observed in many conflicts in Africa (Rioba, 2008, p.65).

Rioba (2008) goes on to explain that another factor that is considered as the source of conflict is the effect of colonialism that was inherited by indigenous Africans. The

colonial divisions over the African culture and identity, plus the geographical locations has brought about tensions on ethnicity and issues on resource availability and sharing among people within the country and outside the respective country. Yet leadership system, poverty and illiteracy level have been associated with the emergence of prolonged conflicts in Africa (Rioba, 2008). Because of the above dynamics, conflict in Africa has become an endless history for decades. As a result, Africa's success stories have generated little media interest (Stock, 2004, p.35).

The Kenyan media includes more than 90 FM stations, more than 15 TV stations, and an unconfirmed number of print newspapers and magazines. Publications mainly use English as their primary language of communication, with some media houses employing Swahili which is the Kenyan language. Kiswahili and community-based languages are commonly used in broadcast media; mostly radio (LoC, 2013). The media in Kenya is regulated by a statutory body called the Media Council of Kenya. The Media council of Kenya is an independent national institution established by the Media Act, 2007 as the leading institution in the regulation of media and in the conduct and discipline of journalists. It is mandated amongst other things to register and accredit journalists, register media establishments, handle complaints from the public and create and publish yearly media audit on the Media Freedom in Kenya. During accreditation the journalists agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct and Practice of journalism in Kenya, which was created by media practitioners and stakeholders with the view of making journalism in Kenya a more professional and respectable field (MCK, 2013).

The questions of how culture and identity shape peoples view in regards to conflict are very similar questions in the Kenyan context, and have their roots in their tribal identity.

Political parties in Kenya typically fall under tribal lines, valuing ethnicity above political ideology and policy. This is due to the perception that the party offers the best hope for one within the tribe to assume power and then share state resources with tribal members (Mutua, 2008). The result of this view has historically been tribalism or prejudice across tribes, and favoritism within the tribe. Kenyan culture is deeply tribal. The average person identifies with the tribe and values the tribe. In addition to this, Kenyans are an inherently agrarian society (Cussac 2008). This means that land is very important. Indeed, the topic of land has been an acute issue in the majority of conflicts since Kenya got independence from the British government in 1963. Conflict in Kenya is informed by a history where the original communities to these lands were forcefully removed to give way to large scale farming for white farmers. After independence, restitution was never pursued; hence communities continue to clamor for ancestral land as part of their identity and political rights. Many people including political leaders continue complaining about historical injustices via the traditional media and more currently through social media platforms. This is a conversation that many a times creates fertile ground for conflict.

One of the key drivers of conflict in Kenya is the dimension of community identities which is closely related to the issue of land, borders and associated historical grievances plus a challenging regional environment and political transition. With diverse language and cultural groups and a dispersed geography, the region's media have struggled to develop effective communication channels to serve the region.

According to the Kenyan Daily Post, March 2013 the foreign reporters came to Kenya to cover the General elections and they were expecting violence like 2007/2008 but Kenyans maintained peace throughout the electioneering period. CNN had sent numerous

reporters who posted a story about Kenyans preparing for violence somewhere in Rift Valley then posted a video clip with three characters armed with crude weapons rolling on the ground. Social media platforms were awash with posts of a possible conflict taking place in Kenya then. These posts escalated tensions in many parts of the country especially conflict hot spots in Kenya such as slum areas of urban centers and parts of Rift valley which had witnessed widespread conflict during the 2007-2008 post-election violence. The Kenyan government ordered CNN to give evidence of violence leading to the clip plucked out from its website and even issued an official apology to Kenyans. Kenyans condemned the CNN video that said Kenyans were heavily armed ahead of the 4th March 2013 general elections. The report, by CNN's international correspondent Nema Elbagir said Kenyans were arming themselves for their own protection in case post-elections violence like that witnessed after the 2007 general elections erupted after March 4th. Many Kenyans took to social media to condemn the "Armed as Kenyan vote nears" video, dismissing it as a negative and incorrect portrayal of the reality in Kenya. Most Kenyans who condemned the video were convinced there will not be a repeat of the chaos experienced in 2007 regardless of who emerges winner of the presidential election. According to reports by CNN concerning the 2007/2008 post-election violence showed horrific scenes which were seen by a large number of Kenyans and triggered widespread clashes around the country. As a result, the media's reporting of a conflict became central to the unfolding of the conflict itself. While technology has reduced the tyranny of distance, the commercial realities of news gathering have also affected the reporting of conflicts. The higher cost of news gathering in remote regions, coupled with the geopolitical and economic priorities of the West, mean that conflicts occurring at close

proximity to the metropolitan centers receive more and detailed coverage at the expense of those occurring further away in less developed regions of the world. However it is worth mentioning here that with the advent of social media platforms the immediacy of information has greatly reduced because of citizen journalism. With the social media phenomenon, conflict news can now be captured as they happen through smart phones and be disseminated to the audience at a greater speed. This can alter conflict reporting and conflict management in general.

In Kenya after the 2007 general election, media was also engaged in the form of political propaganda based on ethnicity. In the report of the workshop based on a comparative framework of election experiences of Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Somaliland, Tanzania and Sudan; Stremlau and Price (2009) discussed the situation in East Africa on the competitive nature of elections in the region. The discussion is on the engagement of both mainstream media and some new media such as mobile phone technology in spreading of hate messages against a certain ethnic tribe in Kenya. In short, politicians and some citizens of Kenya utilized media and especially social media for political violence mobilization. In addition, the mushrooming of local language media in Kenya was another additional source of problem. The vernacular media's programs targeted the ethno-political communities; meaning that the media practitioners in such media were favoring the ethnic tribes that they (journalists and broadcasters) belonged to. Local language media was a tool used by politicians for ethnic mobilization and political control in a certain area. Also most of the journalists who were working in local language media houses or establishments were not professionally trained (Ogola, 2011). On the same footing most people who posted messages on social media platforms contributed to

the escalation of violence and conflict. This adds credence to the need to ask how the social media platforms potential can be harnessed to play a proactive role in conflict prevention and management in Kenya and other parts of the world.

2.2.1 Media Convergence and Social Media

The terms new media and old media have been associated with different meanings depending on the level of predisposed technological knowledge. The change brought about by the development of new media is the shift from one-way mass communication between the medium and the user (Livingstone & Bovill, 1999). Today, interactivity has now focused the attention on the relationship between the user and the medium. Interactivity incorporates several dimensions, which characterize the changing models of involvement in media. With old media, standardized content was beamed out to a mass audience and relatively small opportunities for choice were available.

According Livingstone & Bovill (1999), the only options that mass audiences had were limited choice and had no control over content. With the introduction of new media popularly referred to as social media, it is now possible to choose and control media content. Citizens are now active participants in the collation and dissemination of information including reporting on violent and conflict occurrences. New Media platforms such as the social media have also created a shift from how the media access information and news. The news audiences and the consumers are no longer passive. They are actively involved in the news production and dissemination process. Conflict issues can no longer be washed under the carpet by management. This explains why it is important to tap the potential in social media to conflict prevention and management

which is the central theme addressed in this thesis. This emphasizes the proactive potential of social media in conflict prevention and management.

The Personal Computer (PC) and its associated innovations (new media) is the new market screen that will remain central to the changing media environment. This electronic screen is the focus of the convergence of broadcasting, telecommunications and computing. Screen media include familiar and new technological developments in Information Communication and Technology (ICTs), which have contributed to a radical shift towards convergent forms. The notion of timeliness of news has been completely redefined with the advent of Information Communication and Technology (ICTs). Development in technology has allowed news organizations to transmit information almost instantly from any part of the globe. Audiences have thus been conditioned to expect immediate coverage of any breaking news event (Craig, 2005).

In past years, publishing major international news stories within a few days of their occurrence were considered timely but that is not the case anymore. When the dependence on traditional media of communication was high, information travelled far more slowly than it does today. The invention and subsequent development of satellite communication brings events and reports of their occurrence to the media audiences without delay (Craig, 2005). Information services such as media, information and telecommunication services have become interconnected. This convergence has created a paradigm shift in the way that audiences get information including conflict issues.

This facilitated by the emergence of more recent media, PCs and Internet has led to convergence of media forms (Livingstone & Bovill, 1999). According to Kolodzy (2006), convergence in journalism requires changes in how news organizations think about their

news coverage, how they produce the news and how they deliver the news. Most convergence in journalism however focuses on collecting and delivering news to a larger audience and sourcing of breaking news from eyewitnesses almost instantly.

The media in conflict-ridden countries often play a significant role in creating and furthering both facilitating factors and triggering factors linked to internal and external issues or threats facing the nation. According to Terzis & Melone (2002), media can create divisions by not reflecting pluralism in the social and political structures. This could be achieved by contributing to the creation of an informed critical citizenry within a country by acting as a mouthpiece for ethnic power circles. Thus, she concluded that a deliberate distortion of news coverage for particular interests easily exacerbates the tension between opposed factions and becomes a major trigger of violent conflicts. This underscores the potential of social media platforms in conflict escalation. However, this study did not analyze how human factors can be influenced by the media. Possibly there is need to do more research towards this end to bridge the information gap.

Television has been considered to be the most important source of news for the public, and possibly, the most powerful influence on public opinion itself. In 1950, only 9 percent of homes owned a television in America. By 1966, this figure rose to 93 percent, (Bonior, Champlin, & Kolly, 1984, p. 18). Coupled with this revolution was the Vietnam War, in which American military intervened to restore peace. Since no military restriction was established, journalists could follow the military into combat and report their observations without formal restriction. Thus, as journalists saw grislier combat, they presented the public with more graphic and vivid images and, for the first time, interviewed soldiers expressed their frustration with the progress of the war, which were

contrary to official progress reports by the state. By the fall of 1967, 90 percent of the evening news was devoted to the war and roughly 50 million people watched television news each night and read newspapers (Bonior, et al, 1984, pp. 4-5). The result was reduced support for the US foreign intervention policy by the public and Congress. This demonstrates the compelling power of the media in shaping attitudes and influencing decisions. It also shows the potential of the media as an agenda setting agent. It is worth noting that with the advent of social media as an agenda setting agent especially with regard to conflict prevention and management it has been escalated or reinforced.

The other most influential acts of media during the war were the decision of Life Magazine to fill one edition of its magazine with photographs of 242 US soldiers killed in Vietnam in a one week of fighting (Hallin, 1986, p. 106). It was this type of reporting that encouraged General William Westmoreland, commander of the US troops in Vietnam, to accuse the mass media of helping to bring about a National Liberation Front victory. Today with the advent of social media, thousands or even millions of photos of the dead and injured during a conflict situation can be streamed on line especially by use of smart phones. This can easily alter the dimension of the existing conflict.

The 1990's humanitarian intervention into Somalia, led by the US, was the result of media influence, but since it was reactive rather than proactive, it was not well conceived, making it extremely vulnerable. The media, of course, offers few suggestions, merely the cry of 'do something!' As Sir Michael Howard noted "television brings a crisis closer to governors but provides no new means to resolve it." (Gowing, 1994, p.12). This intervention was influenced by the CNN effect, which argues that the media drives

Western conflict management by forcing Western governments to intervene militarily in humanitarian crises against their will (Jakosben, 2000, p. 132).

The causal mechanism of the CNN effect is usually conceived in the following way: Media coverage (printed and televised) of suffering and atrocities → journalists and opinion leaders demand that Western governments “do something” → the (public) pressure becomes unbearable → Western governments do something (Jakosben, 2000, p. 132). Many decision makers have lent credence to this view. For example, John Shattuck, once a US Assistant Secretary of State for human rights and democracy, claimed that: “The media got us [the USA] into Somalia and then got us out” (Shattuck, 1996).

Because of this forced intervention, the US government had taken a clear position on Somalia and thus could not begin preparing the US public for their role, duration and eventual winding up of its commitment in Somalia. The result of this intervention was far reaching. For instance, the highlighting of images of dead servicemen caused a powerful impact on the public fueling pressure to the state to withdraw troops (Gowing, 1994, p. 67). So, in this case, the media was placing an otherwise ignored policy issue on the agenda, and almost forcing the administration to react. Therefore, what is sometimes termed as the “CNN effect” is usually necessary to mobilize pressure on (the Western) governments to act. However, the study didn’t specify which variable of human factors were mostly affected. This may call for more in -depth interrogation and research to fill in the existing gap.

Television coverage is thus a powerful influence in problem recognition, which in turn helps to shape the foreign policy agenda. But television does not necessarily dictate policy responses (Gowing, 1994, p. 18). Also, the media does not necessarily express the

wants and vision of the public. More often, it serves to shape their wants. Therefore, if governors do react to the media in a direct fashion, they move even further away from public opinion than they might be otherwise. In essence, the media can serve to shape both public opinion and government policy, but need not do either so blatantly and thoughtlessly. As well, the media should not be relied upon for influence on either party, as its resources are limited, and so is the breadth of its attention, perhaps even more so than the general public.

History has shown that media can incite people towards violence. Hitler used the media to create hatred for Jews (Vladimir & Schirch, 2007). Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Minister of Propaganda, masterminded the most effective effort of mass persuasion, heavily relying on propaganda messages in motion pictures and radio broadcasting. Aware of the importance of media, Goebbels controlled the press school for journalists and had a hold over radio broadcasting (Cole, 1998). He induced the industry to produce affordable radio sets, installed loudspeakers in public places and sent "radio wardens" to monitor the use of those radios (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999). Between 1933 and 1942, the German radio audience increased from 4.5 to 16 million (Thomson, 1997). The Nazis mastered the use of slogans and bold-colored visuals, but most importantly perfected the use of town rallies arousing emotional frenzy and support for Hitler. Furthermore, the town rallies were then reproduced in Nazi newsreels and shown to audiences all over Germany. This kind of propaganda was exceptionally persuasive, as manifested by the historical persistence of the symbols such as the swastika in popular culture more than 50 years later (Jowett & O'Donnell, 1999). In the 1992-5 Balkan conflict, electronic and print media helped promote ethnic conflict and hatred leading to violence. While the explicit

broadcast of hate messages was rare, the cumulative impact of biased coverage fuelled the hatred over a long period of time (Buric, 2000; Sadkovich, 1998). Broadcasters polarized local communities to the point where violence became an acceptable tool for addressing grievances (Vladimir & Schirch, 2007). More than 150,000 were killed in the Bosnian civil war between Serbs, Bosnians and Croats. The Dayton Peace Agreement ended the violence in 1995 by instituting a provisional, internationally-run governing body in charge of peace implementation (the Office of the High Representative, OHR). One of OHR's initial assessments of the Bosnian conflict was that all three sides in the conflict utilized radio and television broadcasting to further their conflict goals and demonize their opponents (Buric, 2000; Thompson M. 1977). Possibly this catastrophe would have been worse if social media was developed then and effectively utilized.

2.2.2 Evolution of the New Media

The New Media has become a critical source of news and information in the lives of individuals and organizations in the contemporary world. New Media can generally be described as a means of communicating in the digital world, which includes publishing on CDs, DVDs and, most significantly, over the Internet. But importantly, New Media implies that the user obtains the material via desktop and laptop computers, smart phones and tablets (Rodney, 2005).

Straubhaar & LaRose (2004) define the New Media as the concept of new methods of communicating in the digital world allowing smaller groups of people to congregate online and share sell and swap goods and information. It also allows more people to have a voice in their community and in the world in general. Various New Media tools like

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace and Whatsapp are utilized in both interpersonal communication and organizational communication.

Successive evolutions in communication technologies have significantly altered the conduct of conflict, warfare, and conflict resolution. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, compared to people of earlier ages, people around the world today know much sooner about major developments in international issues. Global news networks that broadcast live from all corners of the world and via the New Media provide immediate access to unfolding events and, under certain conditions, could influence the way those events develop and end. Evolutions of the New Media in communication technologies have changed the meaning of power in international arena, the number and nature of actors participating in international political processes, and the strategies these actors employ to achieve their goals.

Rodney (2005), governments have lost much of their monopoly on information and non-state actors and individuals have become much more active and significant participants in world affairs both in warfare and conflict prevention, management and resolution. State and non-state actors are increasingly employing new media technologies, which integrate soft and hard power, and public diplomacy, which could translate soft power assets into concrete actions.

New media tools such as smart phones can help hold governments accountable and coordinate relief efforts, for example, but they can also convey inaccurate information and promote violent agendas. This thesis examines both the positive and negative effects of the new media and its potential for use in peace building and its use as a proactive actor in conflict prevention and management.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are used in various ways and with varying degrees of success to promote democracy, development, rule of law, and transparency in non-permissive environments. The 2011 revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East represent the most striking recent uses of ICTs to drive political change in repressive environments. But ICTs have also been used to monitor and address issues related to corruption, unemployment, elections, public health, and local governance in dozens of countries around the world. Ushahidi platform has actively been engaged in this since 2007.

Mobile-communication technology has been the most rapidly adopted technology in history, far outpacing adoption rates of other technologies, even the Internet. The latest statistics from the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) counted more than five-billion mobile phones worldwide at the end of 2010, a 25 percent increase over just the previous year. Half a billion people worldwide now access the Internet by mobile phone, and it was estimated that this number had doubled by 2015. By the end of the decade, some expect the number of mobile wireless devices to pass 50 billion, a staggering tenfold increase. The technology-adoption statistics for Africa are equally astounding, with users of mobile-communication technology soaring from 2 percent to nearly 30 percent of the population in the first decade of this century.

New ICTs are radically different from traditional communication tools. Radio and television have been owned and controlled by the very few especially the elite in society, and the telephone and telegraph did not have broadcasting capabilities. By contrast, the majority of content created and shared online today is generated by a vast multiplicity of users, allowing the many to converse with the many without undue centralization and

control. The scaling of these conversations is where some believe their power lies, since access to conversations is more important politically than access to information.

2.3 Achievements of Ushahidi Platform with Regard to Conflict Prevention

Communities everywhere are the original first responders in any crisis, before the emergency services, before the army arrive – in those places where official responders exist, are not parties to conflict, and can get there in time. And communication technologies are the tools of those communities of first responders. From the riotwombles of London organising the post-riot community clean-up to bloggers in Kenya, the ‘Peace Provocateurs’ of Ambon to the violence interrupters of Chicago, communities are increasingly organising rapid responses to violence with their own means of broadcasting and sharing. In perhaps the well-documented case of citizens taking action in the face of escalating violence, a group of Kenyan bloggers responded within days to the post-election violence of January 2008, by developing a platform to connect real-time reports of incidents via SMS and online to an open and live map. That collective and spontaneous response to help fellow citizens in the midst of a media blackout and widespread panic, has evolved into a disruptive and inspiring non-profit technology company – Ushahidi, continuously developing their tools for use by everyone and anyone, whether for tracking violence, harassment, election corruption or tasty burgers.

Ushahidi in turn was used by brave individuals working together on the Syria Tracker project, submitting, collecting and verifying as far as possible, eyewitness reports of violence, death and torture, in a place where little information was allowed to leak out, and disinformation a currency of the conflict. In the face of freelancing fighters, external forces pressing in from Russian arms, Hezbollah to funding from Qatar and Saudi Arabia,

individuals have emerged both within and outside Syria who were trying to bring a clearer picture to the wider world of what was happening there during the conflict period. In Coventry, Rami Abdul Rahman has become a one-man reporting band (aka the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights), spending his days processing reports, information from his network of contacts inside Syria to document casualties, and becoming a source that had proved vital to mainstream news media. In the first months of protest in Syria in 2011, Rami Nakhla was based in Beirut, and played a crucial role as curator of citizen reports through Skype tweets and videos until threats to his life from pro-government agents forced him to flee Lebanon. Ushahidi has developed from a group of bloggers and programmers to an agile and responsive tech company, responsive and dedicated to its community of users and connected to a wide network of volunteers both on and offline. This culminated in a massive collaborative conflict prevention exercise during the most recent Kenyan elections in March 2013 – Uchaguzi, a large -scale deployment with hundreds of online volunteers from all over the world, connecting citizen reports via SMS, email, twitter, with emergency services and election monitors. One of the most striking aspects of the deployment was the huge number of messages from people across Kenya, reporting calm in their area and urging peaceful elections. The silent majority who want to live in peace, made loud.

And people are connecting to crises and conflicts thousands of miles away – the Standby Task Force provides 24 hour instant collective brain power to support humanitarian efforts online. It was formed to develop the huge global volunteer engagement in translating and geo-locating SMS calls for help following the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and a growing network of crisis mappers, The group has processed hundreds of thousands

of tweet reports on violence in Syria (testing the Crisis Tracker platform) and worked on breaking down the massive task of analyzing satellite imagery to assess bomb-damage in Libya through a crowdsourcing platform. In June 2010, as ethnic tension and violence rapidly spread across Southern Kyrgyzstan, thousands were killed, neighborhoods burned and hundreds of thousands of ethnic Uzbeks fled their homes. In response to the violence, where the international community could not move fast enough to take preventive action, individuals across Kyrgyzstan connected to each other in a spontaneous chat group on Skype of concerned citizens and civil society groups numbering 2000 within hours of forming. They used the network to verify and check dangerous false rumors in real-time, countering reports of a cross border attack by a particular ethnic group, through a contact based at the border crossing and disproving rumors of poisoned humanitarian aid through connections with a telecoms company with information on the SMS source of the rumors. In Ambon, Indonesia, in response to violent clashes in September 2011 between local Christian and Muslim communities, a group of local activists of both faiths calling themselves 'Peace Provocateurs' formed a network to check out stories and broadcast information through social media and SMS. In one case when rumors began to spread that a church had been destroyed, one member of the network photographed the church with his phone and immediately circulated the picture proving it still intact and undamaged. Mexico's 'narco-bloggers' have become a vital source of information as citizen reporters on the drug war that has seen traditional media and journalists silenced by assassinations. Their huge popularity in the face of great danger, demonstrates that communities want the truth, refusing to accept the dominance of cartels, violence and corruption in their society. Through the act of bearing witness to numbers of deaths,

helping to direct people to places of safety and refuge, countering dangerous rumor, recording the means of violence (and the use of chemical weapons, as in Syria), individuals are quietly playing their role to support the more visible international structures of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, from international indictments to arms embargoes and diplomacy. The heavy focus on government, NGO, international organization activities and institutional responses to violence and conflict has left us with a blind spot when it comes to understanding communities and individuals on the ground, facing the real and everyday spiraling of divisions that lead to violence. Communities experiencing violence understand its subtleties and its horrors in a way that external institutions can learn from. How can we better understand the role of the ordinary citizen acting as an individual in response to violence in their hometown, home country, or on the other side of the world and the role of their actions as a conflict escalates or subsides; the methods and tools used; the risks involved; the special local understanding that equips communities that act to prevent violence or build peace in their neighborhood? What leads people to attempt to interrupt or calm the escalation of violence and how can we encourage the development of resilience and resistance to violence? The risks involved in institutional embrace or dependence on individual actors are many and often cited for the lack of engagement – the risk of misinformation, the dangers of mistakenly identifying an individual reporting on violence in their neighborhood, or engaging with parties to the conflict in a way that compromises neutrality. The ‘Do No Harm’ approach, which rightly frames conflict prevention and peacebuilding doesn’t mean that there should be no listening or engagement. Local communities are a vital resource for each other as well as for wider conflict prevention structures, and will communicate independently, externally

and increasingly as access to mobiles, and platforms for sharing information proliferate. In response to changing and more networked communities, institutions are increasingly recognizing local information needs and information resources – two recent reports from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Peace Institute together with UNDP and USAID explore developments in communication technologies and their use by local conflict-affected communities in detail. What happens to an individual when they suddenly become a conduit for news of atrocities, a source of information on loved ones, evidence of illegal weapons uses? Should institutions and governments that have been the more visible primary actors for conflict prevention support individual initiatives, figure out ways to maintain that flow of information and support, without putting an individual at risk or making them party to the conflict? By acting to disrupt the violence, the dread processes of fear and atrocity, the individual becomes an actor in the complex unraveling of a conflict, but also a force for change. In the asymmetry of modern conflict, the asymmetric actor for peace – the citizen – is ever more important, acting with lightning speed and agility, and amplifying their own voice with their own technology. This justifies the assertion that with the development of social media platforms, conflict can be easily detected and communicated fast enough. This potential can be exploited in conflict prevention and management.

New media technologies have opened avenues for the African people to participate more directly, and more strategically, in public affairs. A closed door of morbid silence has suddenly been flung wide open, and different people-centered initiatives are emerging as the African general public utilizes these new technologies to address societal issues. One

exciting and timely “bottom-up” innovation being used as a method of conflict transformation is the Ushahidi crowdsourcing platform in Kenya.

During the post-election violence in Kenya in 2007-2008, a team of concerned bloggers formed the Ushahidi crowdsourcing platform to “map” the crisis online, creating a graphic representation of the violence and its magnitude. Through planned collaborative efforts, the Ushahidi team and Kenyan citizen journalists were able to gather data for documentation and public alertness purposes, and to generate global awareness. Significantly, this allowed for an open account of what transpired after the 2007 general elections in Kenya, essentially enabling the citizens to reclaim some of the narrative that had been hijacked by leaders. This source of evidence was considered by the Ushahidi team to be an avenue for seeking justice and reconciliation.

This momentous initiative has now matured into a global nonprofit technology organization, and thus institutionalized the Ushahidi platform. Several notable innovations, including (free) open-source software, have been developed to offer solutions to difficult challenges. Since 2008, Ushahidi has provided services to over 159 countries (mostly in Africa) in thirty-one languages and produced over 60,000 successful interactive mapping representations. Ushahidi has extended its services to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Liberia, for example, where students, academics, and other cross-sector partners have worked together to provide communities with support for epidemic crisis tracking. Likewise, countries such as Chile and Haiti have benefited from crowd sourced mapping of earthquake disasters for humanitarian assistance, and the software has been adopted and used to monitor gender-based violence, human rights abuses, and violent conflicts in India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and South Africa. These,

along with other important contributions, have been acknowledged worldwide through the Global Adaptation Index and the MacArthur and Omidyar Network awards.

Since 2008, the *Ushahidi* team's conflict transformation innovations have also advanced. Presently, a "participatory governance" project is underway with such reputable organizations as the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya. The project goal is to make everyone's voice count in political matters. Additionally, over one thousand East African youth have become technology entrepreneurs and secured employment via the *Ushahidi* innovation hub (iHub), thereby supporting the creation of a powerful technology community in the region. A future project at *Ushahidi* is the interactive mapping of online ethnic hate speech, which is intended to be an early warning mechanism to help governments proactively mitigate discontent and crisis.

Ushahidi is not, however, the only organization at the fore of the people's new media revolution in Kenya. The *Uwiano* platform is a multi-stakeholder medium facilitated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for early warning coordination, among other activities. *Uwiano*, which uses the crowdsourcing principle of *Ushahidi*, was launched in Kenya in 2010 for a referendum on whether to adopt a new constitution; it is currently part of joint, multilevel stakeholders' efforts on early warning and conflict prevention in Kenya. As more and more members of the public are coming up with groundbreaking ideas on how to participate in and contribute to peacemaking efforts using crowdsourcing platforms, it clearly demonstrates how integral people's voices are in producing solutions to society's problems.

In Africa, the potency of new media technologies cannot be underestimated. Numerous revolutionary concepts, such as those embodied in demands for a democratic state, have sprung from the general public. A key example is the Arab Spring, in which new media was utilized to organize and sustain a large protest in Egypt. According to Fackson Banda, who is the SAB Ltd-UNESCO Chair of Media and Democracy at the Rhodes University School of Journalism and Media Studies, Grahamstown, South Africa, new media has offered a progressive platform for people to participate in democratic processes in Africa. Gradually, some rural areas are joining urban centers in accessing and participating in the global digital space, either through mobile or online technologies. Women and women's groups are also utilizing new media in both their public and private lives. For example, the Women of Uganda Network empowers women through e-agriculture, and the Association of Progressive Communication in South Africa provides training for women in using new media technologies for social, political, and economic activism at the grassroots level.

Clearly, the new media technologies have become powerful tools in the hands of the African people. Governmental censorship, unreasonable restrictions, and frustrating infrastructure notwithstanding, Africans are thriving and pushing forth constructive change. It is through excellent initiatives such as the *Ushahidi* crowdsourcing platform, which is dedicated to and supported by the effective actions and contributions of citizens themselves, that lasting and sustainable peace, can come forth.

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In June 2015 during the demonstrations which went on revolving around the corruption at NYS, Kenyans took to social media under the hashtags # Kibera and # NYS Transformation to condemn residents of Kibera for the uncouth and uncivilized behavior that they demonstrated after a group of marauding youths set ablaze projects initiated by Former Devolution Cabinet Secretary (CS), Ann Waiguru, through the NYS. The youths who were demonstrating against Waiguru, torched clinics, toilets and vandalized water tanks and blocked major roads leading to the slums. The vandalism came a day after a group of other youths took to the streets in a peaceful demonstration in support of

Waiguru, after she had been put on the spotlight over corruption allegations at NYS. Some of the tweets by Kenyans over the saga were:

Sang Busienei: #NYS Transformation two demos were unnecessary. Why demonstrate when a leader is asked to be probed and why destroy useful facilities in retaliation?

Boniface Mwangi: Advice to #Kibera, protestors burn what you bring to a protest. We burn stuff that we bring.

Mtendawema: Remember when #Jokisumo looted and burnt supermarkets only to wake up jobless? #Kibera just did that...no clinic...no toilet.

Tim Njiru: We're back to flying toilets and NGO's purifying their money in # Kibera (Kenya Forum, 2015).

Shirky, in his publication, *The Political Power of Social Media* analyses the impact of social media with reference to the use of text messaging and online social networks by political activists in the Philippines, Moldova and Iran and argues the benefits of social media in advancing civic engagement. His first example shows how a simple forwarded text message ("Go 2 EDSA. Wear blk") galvanized over a million Philipppians to join a protest march during the 2001 impeachment trial of their president, Joseph Estrada. Shirky notes that the event "marked the first time that social media had helped force out a national leader" (Shirky, C. 2010). He gives further examples of the citizen use of social media tools to force political change. Successful ones as in Spain in 2004 and Moldova in 2009 and unsuccessful ones in Belarus 2006, in Iran 2009 and in Thailand 2010, when civic action was followed by government and rarity of relevant events has made it difficult to answer the question "do digital tools enhance democracy?" Shirky argues that

communication tools aid the transfer of power, they do not cause it. They provide a space for discussion which may lead to action among already politically engaged citizens. He referenced Katz/Lazarsfeld's "two-step process" of making political decisions in framing his argument that social media "allows people to privately and publicly articulate and debate a welter of conflicting views" and thus to forming political opinions. Access to information is far less important, politically, than access to conversation.

2.4 The Concept of Social Media

Social media refers to the means of interaction among people in which they create share and or exchange information ideas in virtual communities or networks using technology - based applications. Micheal Heanlein defines social media as a group of internets- based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of the web and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. The content might include text, video, images, podcasts and other multimedia communications. The most prominent examples of social media include, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Reddit, Google + Google talk, Yahoo chat, Skype, Whatsapp. Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. Twitter is a free micro blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other user's tweets by using multiple platforms and devices. Wikipedia is a free, open content encyclopedia created through the collaborative effort of a community called the Wikipedians. Anyone registered on the site can create an article for publication. Registration is not required to edit articles.

Furthermore, social media depends on mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals and communities share co-create, discuss and modify user generated content. It introduces substantial and persuasive changes to communication between organizations, communities and individuals.

It is argued that social media has introduced positive effects such as allowing the democratization of the internet while also allowing individuals to advertise and form friendships. Much of the criticism of social media has been that it has decreased face-to-face interactions, there have been issues of trustworthiness and reliability of information presented, concentration, ownership of media content, and the meaning of interactions created by social media.

Facebook is just one of the many social media being used all over the world. Facebook was started by a Harvard student, Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 and had 845 Million active users by 2012 and this number had increased to 1.7 Billion users in the whole world. In Kenya, according to Internet World Statistics (2017), there were over 5,500,000 Facebook users. Currently this figure should be much higher. If Facebook were a country, it would be the third largest from China and India.

In 2006, twitter was launched and had over 300 Million users by 2011 according to account tracker Twopcharts. In 2014, this number of twitter account owners had gone up to 982 Million accounts (Edwards, 2014). It is an online social networking and micro blogging service that allows users to exchange photos, videos and messages of 140 or less characters. YouTube was founded in 2005 by Steve Chen and Chad Hurley. It provides a forum for the distribution of video content ranging from cute kittens sleeping to first-run television programs to eyewitness video of political protests (Safranek, 2012).

While no medium of mass communication can create the conditions and variables that compound into revolution, social media has served as the catalyst which has helped mobilize disenfranchised populations to express their frustrations about the economic and political status quo and ultimately lead to populist dissent (Nardi et al, 2015). Social media has been particularly valuable in countries where state control of the media is inflexible and unwilling to cater to dissenting voices. It is here that social media provides a much-needed platform for expression. In Egypt, the government capitalized on the emergency laws in effect after President Anwar Sadat's assassination in 1981 to thwart political opponents, stifle the media, and derail efforts for electoral pluralism. These laws provided the security apparatus with sweeping powers to detain and interrogate dissidents, and intimidate journalists, without judicial oversight. It was in such repressive environments that social media provided many Egyptians and Tunisians with the only unrestricted outlet to them (Robertson, 2010).

Social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter and the various blogging facilities have since 2004 slowly been lifting the veil on societies once accustomed to conservatism and silence. It was through the disseminative power previously concealed issues started to inform societies of the malaise they were suffering. By 2007, blogging had effectively broken socio-political barriers and was beginning to irritate authorities from Morocco to Bahrain (Stahl, 2006).

Authorities in the Middle East and North Africa were taken by surprise by blogger-activists and were unprepared on how to deal with them. Critical of their governments and continuing to highlight state corruption, mismanagement and vote-rigging, these bloggers who were often accused of "harming the public interest", were blacklisted,

intimidated, detained, tortured, and in some countries, killed. Nevertheless, the popularity of social media increased exponentially (Vatrapu, 2006).

The common yet indigenous, denominators, political and economic disenfranchisement and disdain at rampant corruption, between countries of the region were conveyed through social media networks, helping to create a momentum that seized popular anger and provided it with a dynamic that produced mass mobilization on the streets of such cities as Tunis and Cairo early this year (Viegas, 2004).

Social media platforms have also made information and communication rapid, based on the different ways in which they are structured, to allow users to select their preferred means of receiving or sending out messages. " Social Network Sites (SNS) have the functions of enabling users to come together through generation of personal profiles, where they are at liberty to invite friends, who will then have access to their profiles hence they can then send emails and instant messages to one another" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). Facebook and Twitter, for example are the most widely used social media platforms due to the amount of traffic they generate, based on their accessibility and the service they offer. "Recent social networking sites focus more on the aspect of direct interaction by providing consumers an interaction realm where they are at liberty to present them. MySpace by 2005, reported that it attained more page visits than even Facebook and Google

"Facebook is defined as a SNS where people express their social networks and end up forming and sustaining links to others" (Ellison & Boyd, 2006). Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook has described it as a social utility that allows one to communicate more effectively with friends, family and coworkers.

On Facebook, users create personal profiles where they can put up not only photos and video as well keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues by sending messages. This platform includes a number of public features and is also available in various languages. Within these personal profiles, there are several key components, such as the Wall, which is easily the most popular. It is basically a bulletin board in the virtual realm that a member can post messages to another's Wall in text, video or photos. The most common profile feature however is the status updates that allow a user to transmit short statements to their friends. All these exchanges are circulated in real-time, on a member's news feed.

Twitter another online social networking service, allows for the transmission of "tweets", which are short 140-character messages" ("Wiki books," n.d.). Twitter members interact by sending tweets to each other through multiple platforms and devices. By default, Twitter is a public space and one can merge tweets into a thread or connect some tweets to a general topic. Tweets give the illusion of real time because they appear like instant messages especially to a novice user. Tweets are also searchable and permanent

There are many other social media platforms, each with their own specifications and audience need: LinkedIn is a business-oriented platform mainly used for professional networking; "Instagram offers online photo and video-sharing where users do take pictures and videos, and disclose them either publicly or privately, directly or via other social network sites" (Frommer, 2010); Google Inc coined Google+ (Google Plus) which is a platform that possesses the ability to group different types of relationships into Circles where one can post status updates, photos and instant messages. "It has video chat

capability as well as a feature that allows the editing and uploading of media to remote cloud-based folders" (Simmonds Leadership & Coach, 2016).

Throughout all areas of society, the effect of social media on our ability to interact and communicate with one another is observed; it cuts across all venues and ages and affects how we engage with one another. "The style of that communication has changed, where even though face-to-face communication has decreased, people are becoming more interactive with one another" (Keller, 2013). People are more inclined to mediated communication, rather than face to-face interaction, hence the shift in the way we communicate. Social media has made this increasingly easy, where networks of people are made available to users at their fingertips – meetings are reduced to e-mails, zoom meetings and even phone-calls have been modified to text messaging. "Around the globe, this new method has affected interpersonal communication, with scholars proving that people spend less time talking to others based on the large amount of time that they spend on the internet" (Turnbull, 2010). As this should be seen as a positive element of bringing the human race closer, it is also through this online interaction that conflicts amongst one another can be bred due to many factors such as availability, anonymity, accessibility, response rate, etc.

A social media platform displays a social network site's user-specific and technological characteristic. It offers the capacity to create social media websites and services with complete social media network functionality. For the purposes of this study, Facebook and Twitter has been identified as the most popular social media platforms in terms of usage and/or traffic, with Whatsapp and Snap chat being defined for comparative purposes.

Facebook, launched in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg and his Harvard College roommates was initially limited in membership to Harvard students, but later expanded it to higher education institutions. It then progressively allowed students from other universities to come onboard, then later high school students were brought on board which revolutionized communication. "By 2006 depending on the applicable local laws, individuals older than 13 years had been allowed registration to the website." (Facebook, 2015).

On registration, user profiles allow one to add other users as "friends" to exchange messages and post status updates, and share media. They can also use various apps to receive notifications when others update their profiles. Additionally, these users can identify common-interest and develop groups either organized by workplace, school, or other characteristics; one may also categorize their friends into lists. An incredible function of a centralized newsfeed, Facebook keeps track of what users in your networks are doing.

Arguably, the simple and ordered profiles mark a major attribute of Facebook's success, which is not the case on most other online networking sites; such as restrictive profile design offering a uniform interface to all members making it is easy to look for things in other users' profiles. Having a Facebook account is now a probable part of being online for a majority of internet users comparable to having your own email address. Other websites have worked to integrate Facebook due to its popularity, offering that one can use a single Facebook account to sign in to diverse services across the internet. Things posted on Facebook are more public than on email or instant messaging - which are relatively private. This means that posts that are put up will usually be seen by many

others. The site is designed to be more open and social than traditional communication tools, although it also offers privacy tools to help limit who else can see the things you share.

Accessible through the web, SMS or mobile device application, Twitter is an online social networking service that enables users to publish short 140-character messages called "tweets". These users can read and post tweets and those who are unregistered can only read them. It was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey and his business partners but launched in July 2006. "By March 2016, Twitter had more than 300 million monthly active users" (Twitter, 2016). Twitter's big appeal is how rapid it is as it happens in real time and about relaying short messages to the world, with the hope that your messages are useful and interesting to someone. To receive Twitter feeds, one can simply 'follow' someone interesting and subscribe to their tweet micro blogs. To weave tweets into a conversation thread or connect them to a general topic, members can add hashtags to a keyword in their post. Anyone can follow anyone on public Twitter. According to a recent report published by Kenyan technology writer and industry expert Moses Kemibaro (2014), Kenya has a verified more than 700,000 active users monthly on Twitter. This number is obviously substantial and quite critical during conflict situations.

In 2009, Whatsapp Inc. was founded by former employees of Yahoo! It is a cross platform, instant messaging platform for smart phones (Metz, 2016) that uses the internet to send text messages and other media to users using their standard mobile numbers. "One billion users of Whatsapp were recorded as of February 2016, making it the most popular messaging application" (Sun, 2016). The firm is based in California, United States and was since acquired by Facebook Inc. in 2014.

"It creates a user account using one's phone number as the username upon installation and then automatically compares all the phone numbers from the mobile device's address book to automatically add contacts to the user's Whatsapp contact list. Multimedia messages are sent by uploading the image, audio or video to be sent to an HTTP server and then sending a link to the content" (Venomous, 2012).

Headquartered in California, USA, Snap chat is an image messaging and multimedia mobile application created by students at Stanford University. It has evolved into a mix of private messaging, photo-sharing and public content, including brand networks, publications, and live events such as sports and music."Snap chat is primarily used for creating multimedia messages referred to as "snaps" which can consist of a photo or a short video which can be edited to include filters and effects, text captions, and drawings". Friends are added via usernames and phone contacts, using customizable "Snapcodes". Snaps can be directed privately to selected contacts, or to a semi-public "Story" (Etherington, 2013). In contrast to other messaging apps, Snapchat's messaging functions are considered to be "conversational," rather than "transactional," as they sought to replicate the conversations engaged in with friends (Hamburger, 2014).

2.4.1 Social Media and Conflict Prevention

The fourth estate genre like newspapers, radios, televisions, journals and magazines has received much recognition and seminal attention but social media such as telephone, twitter, facebook, instagram, youtube, skype, blogs, google, linkedin, friendster, spoke, tribe networks and other internet- based media are becoming more popular media of information dissemination especially in conflict situations across any country (Felix, U.A. et al, 2013). The global number of Internet users also continues to grow rapidly. By

the end of 2011 more than a third of the world's population was online with 63% in the developing countries. While internet penetration levels in the developing regions rose to 26% by end of 2011 and further rose to 28.3% by end of 2015, they remained below 15% in the Sub-Saharan Africa. Kenya in particular has demonstrated a vast growth with 69.6% internet penetration by end of 2015 (Internet World stats, 2017). Obviously, this number is currently much higher.

Several scholars have documented how social media was used as the main medium of communication that brought change to political leadership in Northern African states and the Middle East. The studies have shown how social media was instrumental in coordinating the protests during the uprising. They have also documented how civilians in authoritarian regimes relied on social media to champion their political rights. Middle East countries and Northern African countries have been further discussed in this study because they exemplified the most recent ways in which social media has been used to coordinate uprisings that later became revolutions. These regions have exposed the potential of social media in coordination and how social media finds its place during conflicts.

Facebook and twitter have enabled users to collaborate on issues they feel strongly about. The first step towards collaboration is shared awareness. An important component in understanding influence is to detect sentiments and opinions. Aggregated opinions over many users are predictors for convergence of interest in a community Java (2007). Considering that 89% respondents in Egypt during the revolution had twitter accounts against a near perfect 99% who had Facebook accounts. 66% of the people in Cairo used twitter to follow the latest news on the Egyptian revolution. The message has been clear.

Young people armed with little more than laptops and mobile phones can help amplify popular voices of freedom and justice Harsh (2011).

Social media helps angry people achieve shared awareness about how people are angry and helps those people to take action Clay Crovitz (2011). The Middle Eastern countries showed how weak ties between people initiated on the web can become strong ties and can forge close relationships that are effective in organizing for social change, Tapscot (2011). Shared awareness gives people courage to act in ways they wouldn't otherwise. "Twitter and Facebook let us show people the size of the demonstration", said Jiji Ibrahim, a university student at the university of Cairo Harsch, (2011). These platforms are empowering people to become the new influencers Breakendge& Solis, (2009). These could be considered as one of the strong points of social media as a tool for influencing change. With shared awareness comes the collective strength of the crowd "young activists in Egypt as in nearby Tunisia and elsewhere in the region, were able to use their access to new social media tools to publicize demands, call demonstrations and win support from broader sectors of the population." Harch,(2011).

Thanks to social media's increasing popularity and ability to connect activists to ordinary people, "Egyptians are protesting police brutality in unprecedented numbers" Eltahaway, (2010). Many believed that Khaled Said's fatal beating sparked a virtual revolution that is affecting Egypt's tightly controlled society. Thanks to social media's increasing popularity and ability to connect activities to ordinary people, the photograph of Said's battered corpse which disseminated through Facebook and twitter prompted a protest outside the interior ministry in Cairo, the largest in living memory against police brutality Eltahaway, (2011). The social media tools gave Hosni Mubarak's opponents

unprecedented ability to share information and organize their activities including the massive protests which riveted the world attention, Tapscott, (2011).

As hundreds of thousands of Egyptians in Cairo 's Tahrir square celebrated the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak on 11thFebruary 2011, some wielded signs proclaiming "Thank you Facebook" Harsch (2011). Bouazizi's suicide tragically brought to light many of the long- standing problems. Tunisia's youth now face government cronyism, corruption restriction of civil right and unemployment rate of 30% Wambugu, (2011). With these problems on their mind, angry Tunisian's used twitter to organize their protest and inform the outside world of their activities, Tapscott, (2011). These protests which were largely organized by the apparent leaderless online activists, asked people to stand up, showing the world that they are not a cowardly submissive people, Wambugu (2011). In addition to generosity shared awareness and collective strength, Facebook and twitter have delivered increasing visibility to the world. Twitter is the first platform that people have as a common man broadcast medium.

The power of Facebook and Twitter to coordinate is certainly a threat to the authoritarian government. For many years' political violence upheavals, nuclear proliferation and international terrorism have posed the biggest threats to the nation state. We are now in an era in which the internet has been added to that arsenal. Where millions of fingers plucking and poking at touch screen phones, a logging in posting, can bring down a government as they did in Egypt Countemanche, (2011). "I've always said that if you want to liberate a society just give them the internet" said Wael Ghonim a Google executive and the administrator of Facebook page Ghannam, (2010). After many years of built-up repression, people equipped with social media tools have begun to stand up for

themselves and have their rights. These tools provide a two-way conversations unlike the mainstream media, making it easier to mobilize a group Wafula, (2011).

While Facebook and Twitter have made it easier to assemble activists, they have made it harder for authoritarian governments to steer the public. In the past such governments took control of television, newspapers and controlled the public knowledge and behavior. But internet is interactive and decentralized; it is a model to share information from many people to many people. Finally, civilians have found their voice and they are certainly using it. Few can deny that social media has enabled the most significant advancement in freedom of expression and association in contemporary Arab uprising, Ghannan, (2010).

The swift and unexpected overthrow of 23-year-old regime in Tunisia and the mass unrest in Egypt have sparked debate on how far social media networks can challenge governments around the world Wambugu, (2011). It is unclear to say that the initiative to go to the protests were originating from the social media especially in communities like Egypt where the pre-dominant population had a relatively low degree of internet penetration and internet access. Facebook and Twitter have their place in social change but the real revolution happens in the streets, and thus to prove that communication via the new media or social media is actually what brings people to the streets is difficult. Because it is no surprise that authoritarian government in the Middle East and North Africa tried to restrict internet freedom. Arab leaders have long recognized the threat posed by the internet and most have instituted filters and legal restrictions in attempts to control online activities. Hosni Mubarak's government tried to stifle the protests by shutting off internet indefinitely, after the demonstrations in Libya started up. Internet access and cell phone services had severely deteriorated however shutting down internet

backfired for these governments as people went on with the protests and they even got more escalated and intensified. When people had their tools of communication such as Twitter and Facebook taken away from them, they had no choice but to come to the street and communicate. So, this had the effect of stimulating mass action in the street Tapscott (2011).

Even on the streets people were continuing to collaborate in ways other than social media to unite, social media was replaced by the analogue equivalent Twitter. Handheld signs held aloft at the demonstrations, with the information of where and when people should gather the next day Beaumont, (2011). Though soon enough the civilians received a helping hand. In Egypt for instance, when the last internet operator in the country was ordered to shut down all services. Google and Twitter joined together to establish three mobile numbers for people to call and record tweets as voice messages. These voice messages were then made available to users. They could listen to the tweets instead of reading them. The new audio tweets instantly gave the content a more personal feel as users could hear the voices of the tweeter and the surrounding background sounds. It was the first time that leading internet search engines and social media combined forces amid widespread upheaval to keep information flowing despite state efforts to shape the public narrative, Joudon, (2011). Google's blog referred to this project as the new weapon against repression.

Communication scholars have argued that conflicts between people could be due to communication breakdown or lack of effective communication among the parties concerned. Media play crucial role in promotion of national cohesion. They are a double-edged sword, capable of both supporting and also subverting social cohesion. According

to Lasswell (1997), the main functions of media in society are surveillance of the environment, correlation of the parts of society in responding to its environment and transmission of the cultural heritage.

Wright, (1960) latter described other effects of the media and added entertainment as another key media function and a final role is mobilization, which is designed to reflect the wide spread application of mass communication in the field of political and commercial propaganda. The media are assumed to have a potential for significant influences, but it is particular ideas and values conveyed by the media which are seen as primary causes of social change irrespective of who owns and controls them (McQuail, 2010). Therefore, media are quite instrumental in articulating issues of concern to the society thereby influencing public opinion towards the subject under discussion. The media, especially mass media, and lately the social media are a powerful tool of communication that can be used to set the agenda for the public. The media can serve to repress as well as liberate, to unite as well as fragment society, to promote as well as hold back change.

The information, images and ideas made available by the media could as well be the main sources of awareness of a shared past time and present social location (McQuail, 2010). They are also a store of memories and a map of where we are and who we are, and provide materials for orientation to the future. McQuail argues that media help the society to mirror itself by providing information about the events happening locally and as well as updating them on issues unfolding in far distant places. In this regard McQuail is advocating for a media system that is operated according to the same basic principles

governing the rest of the society in relation to justice, fairness, democracy and reigning notions of desirable social and cultural values.

The media need to provide content that would help the local communities understand and also appreciate each other's diversity. They must play their rightful roles of advocating for national cohesion within the country. The content presented by the media should be able to promote social cohesion and integration by avoiding publication or broadcasting contents bordering on hate messages and rumors.

Further, media practitioners should engage in responsible and professional journalism, that is objective, accurate and that promotes fairness to all stakeholders. They should also focus more on developmental reportage while highlighting positive trends. The media can also be used to promote the role of local opinion leaders in conflict resolutions in order to achieve community cohesion. Media are also a tool for social integration. The link between popular mass media and social integration are easy to perceive in terms of both negative impact such as crime and immorality and also positive contribution to cohesion and community expected from modern communication (McQuail, 2010). This can be identified as some of the possible effects of the media on their audiences which may be both desirable and undesirable. McQuail noted that mass media are a potential force for a new kind of cohesion as they are able to connect scattered individual in a shared national, city and local experience. They could also be supportive of new democratic politics and social reform movements.

However, there is a concern about the weaknesses of the ties that bind individuals together and to their society, the lack of shared values, lack of social and civic participation and decline in what has been called social capital (Putnam, 2000). This

argument advances the possible side effects of the media in society, more so when they are perceived to be serving the interest of the powerful individuals.

The media have brought messages of what is new and fashionable in terms of products, ideas, techniques and values from city to the country side and from social top to the base. They have also portrayed alternative values system, potentially weakening the hold of traditional values (McQuail, 2010). While the media are important sources of information and ideas to the people, they could also have effects on the society in particular on the cultural and moral values of recipients. Locally, much of media content, for example TV, is foreign. The entertainment programmes for example, are from Western, Latin American and Asian countries. When the audience is exposed to these contents more frequently, there may be erosion of societal moral values in long run.

Media have a capacity to unite scattered individuals within the same large audience; to integrate newcomers into urban communities and immigrants into new country by providing a common set of values, ideas and information; and helping to form identities (Janowitz, 1952; Clark, 1969; Stamm, 1985; Rogers, 1993), as quoted by McQuail, 2010. In this case the media help in formation of social groups as well as the preservation of cultural values and traditions within the society.

The idea that the news media powerfully controlled people's attitudes, beliefs and behaviour might not hold any water, but the press obviously brings to their attention a selected agenda of topics and issues for the audience to respond to and think about (Lowery & Defleur, 1995). Of course, the media audiences in this era are seen to be active users of media products or contents. The audiences know what they need from the media and where to find it; that is, they are able to make their own choices on what to

look for and what to do with what they are looking for. But the main hindrance is that they have to contend with the choices that the media have already prepared and packaged for them.

There is some evidence that media can contribute to the occurrence of a riot event by publishing incidents which are themselves causes of riot behavior, by giving advance publicity to the likely occurrences of rioting (Singer;1970). The media have the capacity to define the nature of events, even if they are on the side of the established order. They can unintentionally increase the degree of polarization in particular cases.

Violent acts may be spontaneous, but they are more often the product of a longer sequence of historical decisions and political actions (Anderson & Lochery, 2008). In Kenya, which experienced large scale violence during and after the 2007 election period, it was argued that there had been a failure to develop a national identity while ethnic communities had formed a multitude of nations within imposed colonial boundaries. The government had not been able to bring groups together into national entity because ethnic mobilization provided a mean to attain political power (Stremlau and Price, 2009). While it might be true that the country had been polarized along ethnic lines by the politicians for their own political survival, the problem could also be attributed to the colonial system and legacy which divided the country along tribal lines for easy administration and manipulation of the subjects. The colonial government actually applied the divide and rule principle. Even after independence, the successive regimes did not do much to build one coherent and cohesive nation. In fact, no mention of national cohesion and integration of the country were ever heard of until after the violent incident of 2007 general elections.

The role of media in violence as a platform for expression of political messages, in particular, the use of phone-in radio shows has been heavily implicated in contributing to violence. The spread of rumor, using mobile phones, and the use of internet and blog to spread information, fuelled violence (Anderson & Lochery, 2008). As already noted, most of the problems of inter-ethnic conflicts during elections have been blamed on the political elites and the media. The media, civil society and the interest groups can also preach messages of political tolerance, peace and dialogue in order to build one cohesive nation whether it is polls time or not. In addition, the media have to take the responsibility of fostering peace and stability in areas that are perceived as hot-spots and conflict prone zones. Thus, there is need to ‘de-tribalise’ the Kenyan politics by advancing issue-based arguments as opposed to ethnic- inclined approaches which are a threat to community cohesion. Kenyan leaders should make efforts to place their nation before their ethnic groups as demonstrated by African role models like Mwalimu Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Nelson Mandela of South Africa (s report, 2009).

Part of the attraction of these social media services and independent blogging is that the average person, with little or no advanced computer skills, can have good success using them. Content can be created and accessed with as little as a smartphone and it can be easily intertwined. Links to video posted on Youtube can be embedded in blogs, facebook, WhatsApp, instagram or twitter. A twitter post can appear on a facebook page. Social media is becoming a ubiquitous tool. In other words, large numbers of people can be easily and inexpensively contacted via a variety of services.

Social media also lowers traditional socio-economic barriers to commanding the spotlight. One doesn’t have to be “somebody” on social media. The internet, you tube,

twitter, facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram have reconstituted, especially among young people, how social relationships are constructed and how communication is produced, mediated and received. The internet users have doubled in the last five years. There are 12 million text messaging data being produced every minute and there are 2 billion you tube views per day (Letouzé Emmanuel, 2013).

Social media is being used at a communication level to try and mitigate causes of violence. The extent to which this is at work in the field every day wherever cell phones are found cannot be overstated. It is an invaluable tool in bridging and enabling successful bottom up-top -down violence prevention campaigns. Some of the major trends in this field include fostering interethnic dialogue, managing elections of different countries, preventing gang violence, preventing resource disputes, constitution building and protesting violence among others. Social media is affecting not only private enterprises but also government and policy decision makers, creating a stir that has an impact on the global political arena. People, who didn't use to have access to internet, including those who can't afford computers and laptops, nowadays are able to connect through devices such as cell phones. According to World Bank, Sub-Saharan Africa now has over 650M mobile phone subscribers, a number that exceeds the US and European Union, and this signifies an outstanding boom in the growth, use and popularity of new communication technologies in the developing countries (Peace Direct, 2013).

Social media is being used, especially by the youth, to foster inter-ethnic dialogue through bridging divides between adversaries. This is aimed at getting ahead of cycles of conflict. In Kenya for example, voting is actively being monitored for everything from violence to fraud using a range of social media platforms. On the other hand, social

media like twitter has been used successfully to prevent gang violence in a country like Brazil. Communities in Brazilian shantytowns say it has been a game-changer in helping bring down both gang and police violence. In Sub-Saharan Africa, there have been early warning networks like CEWARN (Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism) being set up to leverage social media along with other forms of satellite information and traditional media reports to prevent conflict over land, water and other resources. Social media is also being used in transitional nations like Egypt to help build constitutions with public input. A young Columbian Engineer, Oscar Morales, who used facebook to rally people all across Colombia and the world, against the violent tactics of the guerilla group commonly known as the FARC in 2008 clearly demonstrated how the use of social networks can bring people together to protest against violence (USIP,2012)

Latin America is the developing World's most digitally connected region, but also it is most violent. Indeed, Latin America is witnessing a digital revolution: almost half of its population is online, and the continent is fast becoming the planet's largest producer and consumer of social media. Yet, it also features the world's highest rates of organized and interpersonal violence, with most perpetrators and victims under the age of thirty which constitutes roughly, two-thirds of the total population. Government and civil society are evolving new and dynamic approaches to mobilizing information and communication technologies to strengthen the voice and capabilities of citizens to prevent and reduce violence (Gustavo, 2012).

Social media can also prevent political violence, as in the case of the March 2013 Kenyan elections. Through the social media monitoring technology, developed by iHub in 2013, the Kenyan Government was able to foster civic participation, transparency and

accountability during the elections. Non-Governmental initiatives bolstered the reporting process, while citizens were involved in proactively disseminating information and messages of peace using SMS, twitter and the internet (Peace Direct, 2013)

The researcher proposes the use of social media as a remedy to violent conflicts. Candan et Reeve in their report “Working with Media to Prevent Conflict” proposes that it is possible to harness these networks to disseminate peace reinforcing messages, to rebut destabilizing rumors and to connect citizens to the state and security service providers, including as a means for early warning and response (Candan, 2012). Social media has a capacity to have a positive impact in conflict areas. For this reason, it is fundamental to invest in those people and organizations who are most affected by conflicts, empowering communities through the use of social media and enabling them to bring positive change. It is the ordinary citizens, the change makers at grassroots level that are a key to effective action. Engaging them and making them aware of the power of social media is a crucial step in transforming communities and preventing violent conflicts (Peace Direct, 2013)

Shirky, in his publication, *The Political Power of Social Media* analyses the impact of social media with reference to the use of text messaging and online social networks by political activists in the Philippines, Moldova and Iran and argues the benefits of social media in advancing civic engagement. His first example shows how a simple forwarded text message (“Go 2 EDSA. Wear blk”) galvanized over a million Philipppians to join a protest march during the 2001 impeachment trial of their president, Joseph Estrada. Shirky notes that the event “marked the first time that social media had helped force out a national leader” (Shirky, 2010). He gives further examples of the citizen use of social media tools to force political change. Successful ones as in Spain in 2004 and Moldova in

2009 and unsuccessful ones in Belarus 2006, in Iran 2009 and in Thailand 2010, when civic action was followed by government and rarity of relevant events has made it difficult to answer the question “do digital tools enhance democracy?” Shirky argues that communication tools aid the transfer of power, they do not cause it. They provide a space for discussion which may lead to action among already politically engaged citizens. He referenced Katz/Lazarsfeld’s “two-step process” of making political decisions in framing his argument that social media “allows people to privately and publicly articulate and debate a welter of conflicting views” and thus to forming political opinions. Access to information is far less important, politically, than access to conversation

Social media plays a particular role in increasing “shared awareness” in coordination action “by propagating messages through social networks.” Tools specifically designed for dissident use are politically easy for the state to shutdown, whereas tools in broad use become harder to censor without risking politicizing the larger group of otherwise apolitical actors. Shirky goes on to look at the arguments against social media as a tool for change in national politics starting with the “slactivism” of low-commitment, low-cost “bumper sticker” actions but counters the fact that barely committed actors cannot click their way to a better world does not mean that committed actors cannot use social media effectively. In Kenya, in the 2013 Presidential elections, twitter was used precisely for purposeful sharing and real time information in crisis contexts. An analysis of tweets or blog entries of hate speech was conducted to detect rising tensions, frustration or even calls to violence (Drazen Jovic, 2013).

One of the main areas that has threatened national security is occurrences of disasters and that requires quick responses by the military and disaster teams to save on lives. For

example, from the Haiti's earthquake to the Japan's tsunami, from the Katrina hurricane to the Californian wildfires, from the Virginia Tech shootings to the Norwegian island massacre, from the upheavals in the Middle East to the English riots, peer-to-peer communications, through mobile phones and social media, text and instant messaging applications, blogs, wikis and web forum, become the designated ways for citizens to be involved and active in society, in crisis events (Moon, 2010)

Citizens' engagement, strongly enabled by social media and mobile technology, is supporting the dissemination of information, often critical and accurate, into the public sphere, providing eyewitness accounts, sending alert messages, exchanging evacuation and rescue experiences, searching and publishing event-related information, volunteering goods and services, collecting donations. More than mere information distribution tools, these technologies connect people and information, establish collaboration mechanisms, create informal networks and build no boundary communities. With a strong emphasis on real-time, new mobile and online technologies have significantly improved the affected citizens' and the victims' capability to help each other and themselves, with their messages enabling improved situational awareness amongst Public Protection and Disaster Relief (PPDR), guaranteed by the gathering of a wide variety of data and information, an activity coined as crisis informatics (Hodge, 2010)

Indeed, several initiatives, mostly private, leverage the real tributes of citizenship and volunteering towards crisis response efforts, whether on web-based crisis management systems, mobile applications for emergencies, location awareness technology in crises, Rich Site Summary (RSS) feeds, social networking platforms or web citizenship on security. Web-based systems for crisis, such as Ushahidi and Sahana, contribute to the

permanent monitoring of the evolution of crisis events, enabling crowd mapping functions, reports tracking on maps and calendar, alert services and the interaction with multiple sources of information (text messages, email, tweets, web forms).

Also in this field, Google's Crisis Response is a free portal service applied in past crises Like Chile, Haiti and Japan to enable donations, alerts and infrastructure status reports, as well as satellite imagery and the Google Person Finder, whereas Open Street Map provides free worldwide geographical data created by a community of volunteers. According to Forrest, (2010) web-based systems started off as project-oriented initiatives and since evolved to accommodate the requirements of several other crises. Other projects remain confined to the specifics of determined events, namely the Katrina Help Wiki dedicated to the Katrina hurricane or DigiCel's Mission 4636, launched as a free phone number to meet the urgent needs of the Haitian people to provide medical care, food, water, security and shelter through SMS messaging. Even the U.S Department of Homeland Security (DHS) launched the Haiti Social Media Disaster Monitoring Initiative to assist the Haiti response and recovery effort, creating a situational awareness vehicle able to monitor the publicly available online forums, blogs, and websites and message boards to collect critical information.

Addressing social media tools for crises, it is quite clear that the relevance of mobile applications for affected citizens to contact closed ones and authorities, to send and receive text messages or to access platforms like Ushahidi or Google to know and provide critical up-to-date information. Today, mobile technology supports advanced functions for improved user experience, a benefit exploited by applications published by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the North Dakota State University

(NDSU), Ushahidi and the Pacific Disaster Centre, providing citizens useful crisis-related information and upholding built-in bi-directional communication. A notable initiative recently undertaken by the North Yorkshire Police Authority (NYPA) resulted in the first police mobile app to be launched in the UK, which was shortlisted for the Good Communication Awards 2011. The NYPA application offers numerous functions, including news, contact numbers, alerts and online maps and it is well integrated with Facebook, Twitter and YouTube platforms, accessible by different smart phones and tablets.

As Guadin (2010) explains, mobile application Gaia Global Positioning System (GPS) has a special version dedicated to the Disaster Relief, interfacing with Open Street Map to retrieve map and satellite information and associated geo-localized data, to provide lat-long coordinates location and guidance to waypoints and along tracks. Indeed, location awareness services are valuable for crisis response efforts, namely search and rescue actions, particularly in what concerns automated location-based services for directed messaging and alerts generation. In this context, governmental approach has been careful and even conservative, considering not only the legal framework involved but also the pertaining ethical considerations. Nonetheless, mobile phones can be located using the equipment's own capabilities like GPS receiver and/or existing communications infrastructure like cellular and Wi-Fi, a functionality widely accessible through the Google Latitude service, by which citizens share their location and visualize it over a map. This application ensures that communication is done in improving the security of a nation while fighting disasters that come as a result of terrorism attacks.

Lindgren and Bandhold (2010) stated that Apple followed the example and is now offering the Find My Friends' service allowing users to share their location and the Find my iPad service for users to locate their Apple devices like iPad, iPhone and Mac Book something which ensures there is security in a nation since the find my friends application can locate where an individual is in case of a crisis. Additional commercial solutions exist to locate mobile devices in cooperative and non-cooperative modes and to provide automatic alerts especially when a phone enters or exits a zone, when a phone is nearby and when a phone is turned on by means of Short Message Service (SMS) or email.

The cooperative mode enables users to provide their location as explicit content and 'opt-out' at any time, whereas the non-cooperative mode uses the phone's beacons for real-time location, a method that requires legal authorization and data from telecommunication operators, thus being primarily used for law enforcement and security purposes. These features' benefits in crisis response actions are relevant for their life saving potential, provided suitable legislation and ethical principles are safeguarded. Initially created to connect those with common relationships or interests, these sites have become ambiguous reference and, as a result, also present in times of crises. During the 2011 Japanese Earthquake, YouTube had extensive video footage of the Haitian and Japanese crises. Notably, these social media platforms successfully attained mobile reach, enabling users to easily post text, messages or videos.

Moreover, citizens prove to be highly promiscuous in launching and contributing to innovative security-related initiatives, such as the portals and websites created by volunteers in the aftermath of major crises to coordinate assistance and help rebuilding

efforts, or the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting Wikipedia page composed by 1500 individuals, the wide collection of tweets posted by citizens to assist firefighters and citizens during the 2007 Californian wildfires (Cragg, 2010). However, the presented ICT tools, platforms and services require communications to be accessible to those located within affected areas. And after large crises, it is often the case that communications infrastructures are damaged or destroyed.

These incidents indicate that social media may have a beneficial role in military relief operations. Pillay, van Niekerk, and Maharaj (2010) suggest that military units participating in such activities should incorporate social media platforms into their communication procedures to improve their ability to communicate, coordinate, and share information with other national military and civilian relief workers. However, they suggest that it may be difficult to keep military movements secret due to mobile devices with integrated digital cameras and social media applications. Anyone with such a device could take a photo and upload it onto the social media platform, possibly with geo-location information. Once the photos have been uploaded and the movement becomes common knowledge, others may keep watch and take photos. This could provide intelligence just as satellite photos do. Mobile phone cameras may be able to capture unit insignia, and with geo-location data and multiple uploads, the movements of these units could be traced. Although the military may attempt to control the postings of soldiers, it is more difficult to control what is uploaded by outsiders. A denial-of-service attack against popular social media websites could slow the propagation of such images. However, this would require a coordinated network warfare attack with the physical movement of forces.

Research into how social media can impact national security started with studies of propaganda. Propaganda is the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols (Lasswell, 1997). There is an abundance of literature about how public opinion was systematically changed from the French revolution to current events. Of late, the most influential of these works have perhaps been the studies of the Balkan wars and the infamous the Radio Libre des Mille Collines prior to the Rwandan genocide in 1994. These studies have focused on the ways in which propaganda can be used to construct the other and incite for violence in ethno political conflicts (Hallin 2004). Hermon and Chomsky (2010) have advocated the propaganda model. The model argues that media function as central mechanisms of propaganda in the capitalist democracies, which perpetrates the power relations of the status quo and undemocratic forces. According to Klaehn (2012) Propaganda is, nevertheless, moving to the background as a topic research, perhaps due to the intensification of the 24-hour news cycle.

The Vietnam War (1955-1975) coincided with the oppositional youth movements and virtually every home acquiring a television set. As a result, every American was faced with the tragedy in their living rooms. The socio-structural changes of that time also meant the emergence of a new generation that opposed their parents' values as well as the war. When the United States lost the war, the blame was partially put on social media, whose negative reporting of the war was seen as part of the cause for the retreat from Vietnam (Roach 1993). The thought of social media impacting political decision-making through popular opinion was later dubbed the Cable News Network (CNN) effect. As observed by Gilboa (2009), the concept was initially suggested by politicians and officials haunted by the Vietnam media myth, the confusion of the post-Cold War era,

and the communications revolution. Despite evidence to the contrary, many leaders still believe that critical television coverage caused the American defeat in Vietnam.

The initial studies into the CNN effect saw the implications as quite linear. There was also much difficulty in defining this new concept in a useful universal way. Wolsfeld (2004) has observed that the simpler notions about the CNN effect are most likely misguided. Livingston (2006) managed to identify three different aspects to the CNN effect. It is an accelerant to decision making, an impediment to the achievement of desired policy goals, and a policy agenda-setting agent. Policymakers have no choice but to redirect their attention to the crisis at hand or risk unpopularity, whether or not such revision is merited by policy consideration (Neumann, 1996).

Social media platforms are also believed to have helped extend the reach of hate groups more broadly. Christopher Wolf (2010) has observed that, the online world 'has become a technology embraced by racists, anti-Semites, homophobes and bigots of all kinds to spread their message of hate'. Holocaust deniers, the Identity Church, KKK Members, neo-Nazis and racist skinhead groups are all believed to be particularly active. Lynda Peters (2012) for example, drew much inspiration and impetus from his interactions online, including from the new 'Counter-Jihad movement' – an international collection of Islam bloggers, which, according to Hope Not Hate, comprise over 200 organizations worldwide.

No research was found that comprehensively measures the amount of hate speech that occurs online. The Simon Wiesenthal Centre's annual Digital Terror and Hate Report from 2012 were based on 15,000 'problematic' websites, social networks, forums, online games and apps. They believe this has seen an increase of around 3,500 problematic

outlets since 2010. Similarly, the International Network Against Cyber hate, 2013 has argued that over recent years ‘the amount of cyber hate has grown to enormous proportions’, with ‘Islam, Jews, lesbians and gays, blacks, Roma, liberals’ and ‘left-wingers’ representing the main targets of online abuse. It is worth noting that of all the referrals made by the UK’s counter-terrorism internet Referral Unit (which seeks material that glorifies terrorism and asks for its removal from internet service providers), Facebook, Twitter, Blogger and/or BlogSpot were most frequently identified as the hosts of the problematic, referred material. Another study, found that false rumors are questioned more on Twitter by other users than true reportage. Using topically agnostic features from the tweet stream itself has shown an accuracy of about 85 per cent on the detection of newsworthy events (Castillo, Mendoza, & Poblete, 2011).

The study under the subject, “Twitter under crisis”, asked whether it was possible to determine ‘confirmed truth’ tweets from ‘false rumour’ tweets in the immediate aftermath of the Chilean earthquake. The research found that Twitter did tend toward weeding out falsehoods: 95 per cent of ‘confirmed truth’ tweets were ‘affirmed’ by users, while only 0.3 per cent was ‘denied’. By contrast, around 50 per cent of false rumour tweets were ‘denied’ by users. Nevertheless, the research may have suffered a number of flaws. It is known, for example, that the mainstream media still drives traffic and that tweets including Uniform Resource Locator (URL) links tend to be most re-tweeted, suggesting that many users may have simply been following mainstream media sources. Moreover, in emergency response, there tends to be more URL shares (approximately 40 per cent compared to an average of 25 per cent) and fewer ‘conversation threads’ (Umati 2013).

In late 2007 and early 2008 most Kenyans didn't have access to the Internet. Not even through cell phones as today. Those who were online experienced a wave of heightened activity. Many experienced the down side of uncontrolled communication, but others were able to even save lives through their blog posts. There was a strong intertextuality within these communications and SMS messages have therefore been included in this section. However, according to a report released in May 2013 by Umati, an online monitoring firm that documented some of the hate messages circulated; there was a dramatic rise in online offensive speeches circulated mainly through Facebook between the month of March 2013 (the election month) and February 2013, the month prior to the elections. In February 2013 there were 197 extremely inflammatory speeches which rose to 321 in March and general offensive messages rose from 122 in February to 405 in March (Umati Report, 2013)⁵⁸. During these political events, Makinen and Kuiru (2008) argue that social media functioned as an alternative medium for citizen communication or participatory journalism but it was also used as channels for biased information, tribal prejudices, and hate speech. Digitally networked technologies were a catalyst to both predatory behaviors such as ethnic-based mob violence and to civic behavior such as citizen journalism and human rights campaigns' during the post-election crisis. According to waMungai, (2010) there was a strong intertextuality between sources of information. Mass e-mails were shortened to fit SMS, tweets mixed with rumor. Like SMS, cyberspace-based discussions were also fed on rumor and misinformation from the press. Due to the rampant spread of SMS messages, the government decided despite a weak legal standing on the issue, to send a warning that it advises that the sending of hate

messages inciting violence is an offence that could result in prosecution (Mäkinen and Kuira, 2008). Many of the citizens were wary in fear of government action.

2.4.2 Social Media Revolution Criticism

Some critics argue that social media tools are ineffective; Christensen for instance claims that social media platforms are built around weak ties and are only effective at increasing participation and on the other hand they lessen the motivation the participation requires. He says that people need close personal connection in order to get them take action, especially if it is announced through social media and the nature of action is risky and difficult. Then there are also logistical issues that arise, there were only 20% of the entire population that used internet in the Egyptian revolution (most concentration being in Cairo). Despite the limited access to the social media like Facebook and Twitter, there was a tremendous amount of pressure generated from the onset Cairo. There was the unofficial role played by the trade unions in the protests that was downplayed, away from the trade unionists there were drivers, factory workers and the Suez Canal laborers, nurses, doctors who finally brought down President Hosni Mubarak. Political theorists also claim that techno-utopian overstate the affordability of the new technologies while understating other underlying factors of their acquisition and use. Economic or gender issues for instance could affect their accessibility as well as other prevalent conditions in the country.

In Libya and Yemen for instance the severe totalitarian regimes stymied reform efforts, and at the core of the revolution there was a force that was more willing to criticize the authority and tolerates diversity than perhaps the mainstream public opinion. The case in Lebanon was different; the activists began to unite with the goal of outdoing the sectarian

system. They managed to reach about 15000 people through a Facebook group entitled “In favor of ousting the Lebanese sectarian system toward a secular system”, the group comprised of youths from different sects, regions and cultural backgrounds. It is thus the sectarian and divided nature of the Lebanese youth partisanship that rendered it difficult to use social media to mobilize the young people through a common goal. This is clear illustration that the prevailing conditions can affect the outcome of the use of the social media when rallying behind a common goal. Questions also arise, once the dust of the revolution has settled where does social media fit into the new paradigm? Social media help push for a revolution but without creating the expected kind of long- term structures which for instance can become political parties after the regimes have toppled.

Clay Shirkeley believes that the most promising way to look at social media as a peace building tool is to view it as a long- term tool that can strengthen the civil society and the public sphere. There is powerful evidence that social media can improve understanding and help establish ties between traditionally opposing groups. Facebooks own project in partnership with the Peace Pot Initiative at Stanford University called “Peace on Facebook”. The initiative counted new friendship formation on the site between people who come from groups with a history of difficult relations. The count is done in revealing connections established across geographic division, e.g., friends between antagonizing political blocs, different ethnic groups or religious groups. On March 11th 2012, there were 123 844 online connections which were made between conflicting Muslims and Jews. It would be a gross oversimplification to suggest that these counts necessarily represent concrete progress towards greater real-world harmony. However, they do

reflect the way that social media can help to maintain relationships online that may prove difficult in person due to social censure, political or logistical constraints.

The use of social media tools as a means to raise awareness and mobilize the masses against the status quo of a given country or regime is certainly not new. Social and political activism has had very significant episodes throughout the twentieth century, from non-violent civil disobedience in India to civil right movements in the US among many others, yet social media have given social movements useful tools to coordinate and to undertake collective action. Clay Shirky's analysis on the power of social media in enhancing democracies is probably one of the best attempts at glorifying social media movements (Shirky 2010).

Shirky believes that social media have a key role in echoing public opinion. To him, access to conversation is far more important than access to information. In the long run, he argues, social media may help increase freedoms as the printing press, postal service or the telegraph did before. Internet has benefited grassroots movements by providing new possibilities for citizens to organize even under authoritarian regimes.

As Yochai Benkler argues, with the inclusion of Internet in the framework of social mobilization, there has been a qualitative change represented in the experience of being a potential speaker, as opposed to simply a listener (Benkler 2006). According to him, Internet has not only reduced the cost of producing and publishing media content but it has also decentralized media production, making it much harder for authoritarian regimes to control and censor media outlets. Nevertheless, there are many detractors of this uncontested role of social media. Malcom Gladwell (2010), whose criticism of online

activism became clear in his article ‘Why the revolution will not be twitted’, disregards of the role of social networking in effecting social and political change (Shirky 2010).

2.4.3 Social Media and Conflict Prevention in Kenya

In late 2007 and early 2008 most Kenyans didn’t have access to the internet as they do presently Saila, (2012), not even through cell phones as today. Those who were online experienced a wave of heightened activity. Many experienced the down side of uncontrolled communication, but others were able to even save lives through their blog posts and social media accounts. There was a strong intertextuality within these communications and SMS messages have therefore been included in as the new media (Iraki, 2010). Mäkinen and Kuira argue that ‘the social media functioned as an alternative medium for citizen communication or participatory journalism’ but it was also used ‘as channels for biased information, tribal prejudices, and hate speech. Goldstein and Rotich continue in the same vein by stating that digitally networked technologies ‘were a catalyst to both predatory behavior such as ethnic-based mob violence and to civic behavior such as citizen journalism and human rights campaigns’ during the post-election crisis Goldstein and Rotich (2009).

According to Wa-Mungai there was a strong intertextuality between sources of information and the means used to disseminate the information. Mass e-mails were shortened to fit SMS and Twitter accounts and mixed with rumor. Wa Mungai says that ‘Like SMS, cyberspace-based discussions were also fed on rumor and misinformation from the press.’ wa-Mungai, (2010). The majority of those who participated in these discussions were pro-Raila Odinga and expressed despair for the ‘failure of democracy.’ wa-Mungai, (2010) Due to the rampant spread of SMS messages the government

decided, despite a weak legal standing on the issue, to send a warning: ‘The government of Kenya advises that the sending of hate messages inciting violence is an offence that could result in prosecution.’” wa-Mungai, (2010). This warning did not ring on empty ears as many of the respondents stated clearly that they were wary in fear of government action.

Face book zero FB zero (a free application) together with the spread mobile devices has increased the number of users of social media especially those from the urban poor. As a result, when one talks of social media in Kenya they primarily talk about Facebook, Twitter, blogs Whatsup. Majority of the youth in Kenya have mobile phones which facilitate their access to social media.

There are also a number of ICT initiatives and other ICT initiatives like Ushahidi and Uwuiano peace platform going on which are crisis mapping platforms. These are platforms that were created to help in crisis management, which are short term initiatives in conflict management. When talking about the impact of social media to politics, the political discussions are carried majorly on social media. Most researchers are however skeptical about the impact of spreading ICTs and state a number of obstacles. Politicians are also starting to take note of the social and most now have Facebook or Twitter accounts, as well as blogs that they use for campaigns. There are signs that government is taking online activism seriously and taking action in scrutinizing content online. The audiences are aware of this and some of them fear that the state machinery have expressed the possibility of a repetition of the post-election violence and incitement towards ethnic divisions. However there has been caution for those who are posting content online with political sensitivity to exercise self-censorship.

There is thus a huge opportunity to shift paradigm and start to look at the tool of ICT, so far, the focus has been on ICT for development and crisis management. However, when social media tools are built to promote peace and co-existence, there will be an enabling environment for development and the atmosphere for conflict prevention. This angle of looking at things will bring light to what researchers have not shed much light on in the past.

Stogyte (2013) investigated how the cultural values of technology developers determine the design of information and communication technology (ICT) for crisis communication by performing the case study of a specific crisis communication ICT – the Ushahidi platform. The findings of this research demonstrated that the design of the Ushahidi platform highly reflects the cultural values of its developers through the functionalities implemented in it, a flexible interface design (which allows adjusting the platform to various specifications via customizable options), and a variety of digital objects. Further, the awareness of the context of a user is usually related to the values found in the open-source software development as the developers are driven by the goals that their created product is designed to deliver and/or serve. In the case of Ushahidi, these goals stand for the values and beliefs the whole community is working for.

Politicians are also starting to take note of the social media platforms and most now have Facebook or Twitter accounts, as well as blogs that they use for campaigns. There are signs that government is taking online activism seriously and taking action in scrutinizing content online. The audiences are aware of this and some of them fear that the state machinery have expressed the possibility of a repetition of the post-election violence and incitement towards ethnic divisions (Sid, 2010). However there has been caution for

those who are posting content online with political sensitivity to exercise self-censorship. For instance, the Gatundu South MP hon. Moses Kuria is alleged to be notorious of hate content on social media particularly a facebook account purported to be his.

Kuria's statement referring to Hon. Kaluma's decision to reject the said statement is a twin hate on politics and ethnicity. However, reactions from one respondent notably Kaberia Laikanya "kuria u are in the same league with Alshabaab, Boko Haram and Islamic state. "Radical tribalist". This comment brings an aspect of religious hate to the effect by linking Islam as a religion to terrorism. To infer how hate speech is spread, the post has been 'shared' by 265 persons and liked by 461 persons on social media from the time it was posted to when the study used it; 4th September 2014 and 23rd August 2015. This shows that to the minimum over 1000 persons read this post. Another notable example of hate content on social is by a political analyst Mutahi Ngunyi on his social networking site twitter: Mutahi's comments came after turbulence in political balance in the alleged corruption in the Ministry of Devolution and Planning in 2015 department of National Youth Service, where funds were alleged to have been lost through corrupt and shady deals. Raila Odinga being the leader of the opposition was vocal in calling on the resignation of the then Cabinet Secretary in the docket. The posts above are a combination of religious, political and ethnic hatred.

The former Nairobi mayor George Aladwa is alleged to have spoken words dubbed hateful in Kenya's Kibera slum in an opposition rally during the Kenya's Mashujaa day celebrations on the 20th October 2015. Kenyans took on twitter to quote him and even upload videos on social media. A notable example is one Collins Okello as above, who quoted a portion of alleged hateful content and even uploaded the clip, "hata sisi tuko na

makende mbili kama wao...”. ‘wao’ in this context may be taken to refer to Kikuyu and Kalenjins if taken in the context of Kenya’s political ethnic base and environment of the speaker at that time.

In Kenya, post-election violence (PEV) experiences defined the pathway for the adoption of UNSCR 1325. Following the PEV, former South African first lady Graca Machel encouraged women civil society activists to present a memorandum to the AU mediation team led by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Under the banner of Kenya Women's Consultative Group (KWCG), they presented issues that had been of specific concern to women during the PEV. One of the main recommendations in the memorandum presented on 25th January, 2008 was the adoption of the UNSCR 1325 in Kenya. This was said to be the critical missing link towards ensuring women's participation in decision-making processes, and which could contribute to conflict prevention and ensuring that women are involved as equal partners in their protection from GBV and other forms of violations.

The presentation of this memorandum reinvigorated the country's interest and resolve towards adoption and implementation of the UNSCR 1325. The development of the National Plan of Action on UNSCR 1325 in Kenya began with a commitment for collaboration between the Government of Kenya and the Government of Finland through a twinning process that is mutually beneficial, whereby the global south and north would learn from one another. It then went to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development who delegated the National Gender and Equality Commission to oversee the process of development of the Kenya National Action Plan (KNAP) with support

availed by UN Women that is mandated to oversee implementation of UNSCR 1325 in member states.

KNAP is premised on the four UNSCR 1325 pillars, namely, prevention, protection, participation, relief and recovery. It is unique in the sense that it is anchored on a human security framework. This embodies efforts by government and other stakeholders in Kenya to address root causes of the economic and socio-political issues around peace and security. The overall goal of the KNAP is to mainstream UNSCR 1325 into national development, diplomacy, gender, conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peace, security and reconciliation strategies and ensure implementation of existing commitments by government to promote gender equality and women's participation and leadership in public affairs at all levels. In consideration of the three dilemmas that face effective implementation of action plans, the Kenya National Action Plan has proposed a distinct UNSCR 1325 coordination unit within a ministry that will mainstream the Resolution's strategies and plans among various institutions responsible for its implementation within the government set up.

The positioning dilemma is indeed a challenge for the plan. Initially it was hosted by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development. After further consultations with National Security Council, the organ responsible for making security decisions in the government of Kenya and various stakeholders, it was decided that the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government would host the plan given that it adopts a human security framework, which emphasizes equal protection of individual citizens and endeavors to better understand and address the root causes of socio-economic and political inequalities around peace and security issues faced by women.

Following the 2013 elections, however, there was need to align the new government priorities and structures (devolved structures) in the KNAP. The plan has been aligned to the Medium- Term Plan II (MTP II), Vision 2030, government structure and to emerging security priorities of Kenya. It has been observed that in Western countries such as Finland, implementation of action plans has been most successful when hosted by either of the two ministries.

The stakeholder participation dilemma has not been faced in Kenya. This is because the government has been open to both national and regional civil society organizations, which have been included as members of the steering committee and as experts, right from the start of the process. Furthermore, through a national consultative process, the steering committee documented the UNSCR 1325 activities that the civil society organizations were carrying out in a process aimed at strengthening the collaborative efforts between the government and the civil society in anticipating and preventing violent conflicts in Kenya

Implementation of KNAP has been going on and can be credited for the successful conflict prevention during electioneering in Kenya, starting with the 2010 referendum on the Constitution.

Ahead of the 2010 referendum on the Constitution of Kenya, Ushahidi and Uwiano platforms carried out extensive conflict-prevention work with the support of UN agencies and other partners. These interventions came at a time when there were genuine fears and evidence of renewed political grandstanding and violence. The Ushahidi (Swahili word for 'witness' or 'testimony') platform had initially been designed for humanitarian early warning and response following the 2008 post-election violence. The platform employs

crowd sourcing strategies to gather reports submitted through the web and mobile telephones. These reports help to map incidents of violence and peace efforts throughout Kenya. The Ushahidi platform has helped civil society organizations (CSOs) to connect with each other and exchange information. The Uwiano (Kiswahili word for 'cohesion') was launched ahead of the 2010 referendum on the Constitution. The initiative was designed by Kenya and international institutions including the Directorate of peace building and Conflict Management, the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), Peace Net Kenya, and the United Nations Development Programme in Kenya. The platform organized a system to collect up-to-date information on tensions, hate speech, incitements, threats, and violence throughout Kenya, and to relay the information to security institutions and local peace structures that are best placed to carry out appropriate actions, including mediation. Peace advocates were trained to ensure immediate response to conflict. This joint initiative was supported by the government, local communities, local civil society and religious groups, and international development partners

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This section discusses theories that this study has been based on:

2.5.1 Conflict Theory

Conflict theory, first purported by Karl Marx in 1996, is a theory that society is in a state of perpetual conflict because of competition for limited resources. Conflict theory holds that social order is maintained by domination and power (rather than consensus and conformity). According to conflict theory, those with wealth and power try to hold on to

it by any means possible, chiefly by suppressing the poor and powerless. A basic premise of conflict theory is that individuals and groups within society will work to maximize their own benefits.

This theory was propounded by three sociologists namely: Karl Marx, Simmel and Coser. It was developed as an alternative to Structural Functionalism Theory (Ritzer, 1996). Conflict theory is a perspective in sociology that emphasize the social, political, or material inequality of a social group, that critique the broad socio-political system, or that otherwise detract from structural functionalism and ideological conservatism. Conflict usually occurs primarily as a result of a clash of interests in the relationship between parties, groups or states, either because they pursue opposing or incompatible goals. According to this theory, the society is full of conflicts and this has to change if peace and harmony is to be realized.

Conflict theory has been used to explain a wide range of social phenomena, including wars, revolutions, poverty, discrimination, and domestic violence. It ascribes most of the fundamental developments in human history, such as democracy and civil rights, to capitalistic attempts to control the masses (as opposed to a desire for social order). Central tenets of conflict theory are the concepts of social inequality, the division of resources, and the conflicts that exist between different socioeconomic classes.

Many types of societal conflicts throughout history can be explained using the central tenets of conflict theory. Some theorists, including Marx, believe that societal conflict is the force that ultimately drives change and development in society.

Marx's version of conflict theory focused on the conflict between two primary classes. Each class consists of a group of people bound by mutual interests and a certain degree of property ownership. Marx theorized about the bourgeoisie, a group of people that represented members of society who hold the majority of the wealth and means. The proletariat is the other group: it includes those considered working class or poor.

C. Wright Mills is known as the father of modern conflict theory. According to Mills, social structures are created through conflict between people with different views, opinions, interests and resources. Individuals and resources, in turn, are influenced by these structures and by the unequal distribution of power and resources in the society. According to Karl Marx, conflict is a product of an unjust social system where resources are unequally distributed (Farey, 1992). According to Marx, conflict not only leads to ever changing relations within the existing social structure but the total social system undergoes transformation through conflict. Each social system contains elements of strain and of potential conflict. If in the analysis of the social structure of a system, these elements are ignored; if the adjustments of patterned relations are the only focus of attention, then it is not possible to anticipate basic social change (Coser, Sept 1957).

In the context of conflict theory, consensus is euphemism for ideology. Genuine consensus is never achieved as the society is constantly in conflict but rather the more powerful in societies are able to impose their conceptions on others and have them accept their discourse. Consensus does not preserve social order, it entrenches stratification. There are two types of conflicts: endogenous and exogenous conflict. Endogenous conflict denotes the cause of self-directing social change that occurs within a social system. Some of the contributing factors are conflict of values, views, opinions and

conflict between groups in the society. Exogenous conflict is attributed to conflict outside the social relationship such as conflicts and war between nations. Other perspectives of conflict theory include: Critical theory, Feminist theory, Post-modern theory, Post-structural theory, Postcolonial theory, Queer theory, World systems theory and the Race-Conflict Approach. When addressed, conflict has a number of benefits such as defining and clarifying group boundaries within the social system. It may also help to establish unity or to re-establish unity and cohesion where it has been threatened by hostile and antagonistic feelings among the members. Internal conflicts that concern goals, values or interests tend to make possible the readjustment of norms and power relations within groups in accordance with the felt needs of its individual members or subgroups. Conflict also produces integrative consequences where all social elements are integrated into the new system (Farey, 1992).

Max Webber (1864-1920) saw societal relationships as best characterized by conflicts, as did Karl Marx. Karl Marx however emphasized on economical conflicts by emphasizing on the social class differences of the bourgeois and the proletariat based on the exploitation. He argued that individuals or groups use their material or non material resources (such as power) to exploit those who have less of those material or non material resources. Webber however saw conflict arising from multiple sources with economic conflicts just being a subordination of other conflicts. While Karl Max envisioned the end of conflict with destruction of capitalism, Max Webber contended that conflict will always exist regardless of the economic or political nature of society. Even though individuals and groups enjoying great wealth, prestige, and power have the resources necessary to impose their values on others with fewer resources, Weber viewed the

various class divisions in society as normal, inevitable, and acceptable, as do many contemporary conflict theorists Curran & Renzetti, (2001).

As opposed to Karl Marx's concentration on two great classes (the bourgeoisie and the proletariat) based only on economic interests, Weber focused on three types of social group that form and dissolve as their interests change—class, party, and status. A class group shares only common economic interests, and party refers to political groups. Status groups were the only truly social groups because members hold common values, live common lifestyles, and share a sense of belonging. For Weber, the law is a resource by which the powerful are able to impose their will on others by criminalizing acts that are contrary to their class interests. Because of this Weber wrote that “criminality exists in all societies and is the result of the political struggle among different groups attempting to promote or enhance their life chances” Bartollas, (2005).

Like Weber, Karl Marx viewed conflict as normal and socially desirable. Conflict is a way of assuring social change, and in the long run, a way of assuring social stability. Any Society that stifles conflict in the name of order stagnates and has no mechanisms for change short of revolution. Since social change is inevitable, it is preferable that it occur peacefully and incrementally (evolutionary) rather than violently (revolutionary). Even the 19th-century arch conservative British philosopher Edmund Burke saw that conflict is functional in this regard, writing that “A state without the means of some change is without means of its conservation” Walsh & Hemmens, (2000; pg. 78).

The strength of conflict theory is that it seeks moral ends: the emancipation of humanity from false claims of “universality.” Universality is when one group takes power and seeks to justify it on the grounds that it represents “freedom for all.” The reality is that it

is “freedom for them.” Using universalist rhetoric to disguise specific domination is a common means of controlling discourse and political debate. This mode of “unmasking” is one of the most attractive elements of critical/conflict theory.

Conflict theory's connection with socialism and statism is its greatest weakness. The ultimate vision of the conflict school is to see a society where all can freely cooperate in the production of social goods. But this assumes that all anti-social elements in the population are based on class rule and its cognates. It assumes, without argument, that human nature is generally good but corrupted by “civilization” in its varied forms. Hence, once “domination” is eliminated, people will then begin to cooperate. This is the “weak link” in the argument of the conflict school.

This theory is applicable for this study because it is virtually impossible not to have beliefs and values about the role of conflict. Some people say that all conflict is destructive and should be avoided at all cost. But there are some conflicts that are beneficial to societies and individuals alike. Conflict can be beneficial to those dissatisfied with the status quo (those who wish to keep things as they are). Too often managing or preventing conflict have sometimes just deferred or postponed the needed change in the power relations. In some cases, conflict management or reduction are productive and the researcher chose to use this theory as a guiding point on how use of social media can be used proactively not only to detect potential conflict but also act as an early warning system for conflict management. Ushahidi platform was then identified as an early warning tool that can guide policy makers coming up with ways of encouraging beneficial change to society. In other cases, it is best to escalate conflict and contest for power. The elite who owns the mainstream media in Kenya and most African

states usually control this media including newspapers, magazines, radio stations television channels and outdoor media to keep or maintain their socio- economic status and party interests to their own advantage. Sometimes this tendency alienates them from the have nots or the masses who are the majority especially in developing countries Kenya included. Internet and social media which presents a decentralization and defragmentation of communication would thus present opportunity for wider democratic space which might result to evolutionary conflict (resulting to beneficial change) as opposed to contest and revolutions which might result to violent conflict as the masses are dissatisfied with the constant doses of manipulated information and exploitation over the years as it happened in the Arab world. This theory is important to this study as it tries to justify why social media platforms potential can be used not only to detect conflict but be used proactively to bring in evolutionally change that does not create a lot of harm to the majority than revolutions and abrupt changes which lead to conflicts that may cause displacement of citizens like it happened in Kenya during the post-election violence (PEV) of 2007-2008.

2.5.2 Agenda Setting Theory

This is the second theory that the researcher felt that it is quite relevant in guiding and interrogating this research.

The agenda setting theory associated with Shaw and McCombs (1972) explains the strong media effects, closely linked to the ability of the media to reproduce social and cultural aspects of society, through the publication of information. The agenda setting principle in this context refers to the salience or importance of issues and not a pre-determined goal of the media to influence audiences. The model suggests that the media

affects the scope of the public thinking. If applied to the post-election crisis witnessed in Kenya like many other countries in Africa and elsewhere, we find that through daily reporting over time, issues (agenda) covered in the media were transformed to public agenda. Here the media gatekeepers deliberately or unconsciously set the agenda for discussion by the public. With the advent of social media platforms this factor has further been escalated because there is absolutely minimum control of what goes out at any given moment.

By generating discussions on peace-building, journalists and policy makers can collectively shape the public agenda to more constructive dialogues. Contrary, to a general assumption that the media has power to directly inject behaviors and attitudes in the minds of people, the model suggests that the media affects the scope of their thinking. This argument is also reflected in Bernard Cohen's 1963 statement that "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling readers what to think about" (Cohen 1963 cited from Rogers & Dearing, 2001).

In essence, through daily reporting over time, the media agenda becomes the public agenda. The theory tends to imply that in an environment of conflict, the media mirrors the disorder in society and does not necessarily brew conflicts. This assumption then challenges the idea otherwise that the media can directly foment conflicts, but provides a good scope in the analysis of inherent socio-economic and political set up of the media in Kenya. Agenda setting operates under two assumptions. First, the media does not reflect reality they filter and shape it. Secondly, the media concentration on a few issues and

subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues (McQuail & Windhal, 1993).

The agenda setting theory has been challenged for portraying the public as a passive receiver (Hall, 1998 cited from Street, 2001:243). In view of this, this researcher argues that the media does not passively relay information from sources; they select or reject it according to the reality of the day, or the particular slant of the media house. In the absence of effective guidelines on conflict sensitive journalism, practitioners are likely to infuse their own biases in news commentaries. This can be supported by what happened in 2007- 2008 where a radio presenter in Eldoret was accused at the International Criminal court (ICC) of fanning ethnic hatred via his programs or broadcasts at the time.

This theory explains the strength and the ability of the media to replicate social and cultural aspects of society through the provision of information. The agenda in this context refers to the dominant issue, which is not a pre-determined goal of the media to influence audiences. This theory suggests that media has the power to affect people's thinking. When this theory is applied to the post-election crisis, through daily reporting of the election's agenda tends to transform to public agenda (Shaw, 2003). Therefore, if the agenda being set by the media is on peace-building, then the stakeholders are able to collectively shape the public agenda to foster positive and constructive dialogues to the benefit of the larger society. The perception here is that the media has power to directly change behaviors and attitudes in the minds of people. This theory merely suggests that all the media does is to affect the scope of their thinking. This argument is furthered by Bernard Cohen (1963) in a statement that "the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling readers what

to think about.” This means that through the daily reporting, over time, the media agenda will eventually become the people’s agenda. With regard to social media, renowned bloggers and prominent people in society such as politicians can easily influence their followers or supporters by what they post in their platforms such WhatsApp, Facebooks and other social media platforms. Ushahidi platform therefore becomes relevant here by crowdsourcing what has been posted and act as an early warning system to inform policy makers of an imminent conflict before it gets out of hand. This informs why the researcher settled on Ushahidi platform which was established during the 2007-2008 post-election violence. This platform was able to filter what the social media sites including SMS were communicating to the general public. These posts actually set the agenda for conflict escalation which eventually led to internal displacement of over 300000 people in Kenya and death of thousands of Kenyans.

This theory operates under two assumptions. First, the media does not reflect reality. They filter and shape it the way they deem fit to their advantage. Secondly, the media concentration on a few issues and subjects that leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues. This results to the media portraying the public as a passive receiver. Hence mainstream media house editors also known as gatekeepers and social media bloggers can easily alter or shape an agenda including fanning or escalating a conflict.

The agenda-setting effects of the news media on people's attention to, comprehension of, and opinions about topics in the news have been widely studied in political communication settings as well as in business communication. According to Ghorparde as quoted in Nayyar (2007), “agenda-setting is a relational concept that specifies a

transfer of salience from agenda primers (media) to agenda adopters (consumers)”. The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about. The world will look different to different people depending on the map that is drawn for them by writers, editors, and publishers of the paper they read Cohen, (1963). On the other hand, social media users especially opinion leaders and bloggers can also shape public agenda to suit their own selfish interests if need be.

Agenda-setting research has shown that there is a correlation between what the media deems important and salience in the public mind. In simpler terms, agenda-setting claims that what the media finds important will eventually be mirrored in what people think are important. It is important to note that the notion of agenda-setting is positive association between the media and the audience. From agenda-setting assumptions, stems the formation of public opinions and the distribution of pros and cons of particular issues relayed to public or media consumers. Agenda-setting shifts the focus of attention away from immediate effects on attitudes and opinions to longer term effects on cognitions Nayyar, (2007). The agenda setting function of the media, therefore, refers to the media’s capability, through repeated news coverage, of raising the importance of an issue in the public’s mind Tankard, (2001). It is a process in which the media selects news, issues and events and gives them prominence to the exclusion of the others. This means that a media house may wish to come up with an issue and give it a lot of attention such that all other stories get very minimal coverage.

A characteristic of agenda setting is that the media determines issues that are regarded as important by the masses or audience and the agenda set through the media tends to be

believed by the majority of media consumers or the audience. The agenda-setting theory says that because of newspapers, television, and other news media including social media platforms, people are aware or not aware, pay attention to or neglect, pay up or downgrade specific features of the public scene. People tend to include or exclude from their cognitions what the media include or exclude from their content. People also tend to assign an importance to what they include that closely resembles the emphasis given to events, issues and persons by the mass media Shaw, (1979).

The agenda setting theory says that the media (mainly the news media) aren't always successful at telling us what to think, but they are quite successful at telling us what to think about. This is also applicable to the new media (social media) which is the foundation of this research. This theory is good at explaining why people with similar media exposure place importance on the same issues. For instance, Facebook users or users of Whatsapp share same ideas. Although different people may feel differently about the issue at hand, most people feel the same issues are important. The theory decisively moved away from the magic bullet theory which did not address the question of interpretation, unlike the agenda-setting theory.

Agenda-setting is not the goal of news media but it is "the inadvertent by-product of news coverage. News media should become the forerunners of the issues that are important to the public. News media must take a more active role in planning the overall community agenda through what is called public journalism. Littlejohn (1983) summarizes this well - the prevailing opinion now among media researchers seems to be that the media can have a powerful effect on the public agenda but not always. The power of media depends on such factors as media credibility on particular issues at particular times, the extent of

conflicting evidence as perceived by individual members of the public, the extent to which individuals share media values at particular times and the public's need for guidance. When media credibility is high and factors such as the extent of conflicting evidence are reasonably low, then the media are probably powerful in establishing the public agenda.

The agenda-setting role of the news media is not limited to focusing public attention on a particular set of issues, but also influences our understanding and perspective on the topics in the news. This becomes clear when we think about the concept of an agenda in abstract terms. Theoretically, the items that define an agenda are "objects." In most agenda-setting research, these objects are public issues such as politics, conflict news, but they also could be public figures, organizations, countries or anything else that is the focus of attention. In turn, each of these objects has numerous "attributes," those characteristics and traits that describe and define the object. While some attributes are emphasized, others receive less attention, and many receive no attention at all. Just as objects vary in salience, so do the attributes of each object. Thus, for each object there also is an agenda of attributes, which constitutes an important part of what journalists and, subsequently, members of the public have in mind when they think and talk about news objects. The influence of the news agenda of attributes on the public is the second level of agenda setting. The first level, of course, is the transmission of object salience. The second level is the transmission of attribute salience.

During an election, campaign managers seek to build the salience, the prominence, of their candidates among voters (first-level agenda-setting). They also strive to build an image of their candidates in which specific attributes become particularly salient (second-

level agenda-setting). For example, during the 1996 general election in Spain, McCombs and his colleagues (Mc-Combs, López-Escobar & Llamas, 2000) compared the descriptions by voters in Pamplona of the three major party leaders after the elections with the presentation of these men before the election in seven major news sources, including local newspapers, national dailies, national television networks and televised political advertising. This comparison of the public agenda with the media agenda of attributes revealed a strong second level agenda setting influence. Second-level effects also exist for public issues which is the traditional domain of agenda-setting research. This may emphasize which aspects of an issue are covered in the news, and the relative emphasis on these various aspects of an issue, makes a considerable difference in how people view that issue. Evidence of attribute agenda-setting was found by Sebastián Valenzuela and Teresa Correa (2006) in the presidential election in Chile. Here voters' description of Michelle Bachelet, Sebastián Piñera and Joaquín La-vín corresponded very closely to the previous pattern of descriptions for these three candidates in the main metropolitan newspapers. Among the attributes that were similar on the media and public agendas were leadership, charisma, compassion, competency and honesty.

The agenda-setting role of the mass media converges with many other paradigms in the communication field, including framing, priming, gatekeeping, cultivation and the spiral of silence. The similarities and differences between agenda setting and framing are currently one of the most discussed of these theoretical connections. However, the existence of multiple definitions of framing and the lack of consensus among scholars of what aspects of perceived reality are properly designated as frames makes any comparison between agenda setting and framing rather a difficult task. Moreover,

theoretical efforts to demarcate the boundary between agenda-setting and framing (Price & Tewksbury, 1997) on the basis of the two aspects of knowledge activation (Higgins1996) accessibility (linked to agenda setting) and applicability (linked to framing) have found limited success.

In conclusion therefore, media does not passively relay information from sources; they select or reject it according to the reality of the day and its credibility. All the content relied to the public passes through quality check point as per the media houses guidelines. In the absence of effective guidelines on conflict sensitive journalism, practitioners are likely to infuse their own biases in news commentaries. With regard to this research agenda setting theory principles can be applied with regard to how social media sites can be used to set an agenda for conflict and consequently how Ushahidi platform can tap the information on various social media sites to proactively inform the government and other policy makers of a potential conflict with a view to formulating the most appropriate way of dealing with the problem at hand. Hence the researcher posits that agenda setting theory is extremely important and relevant in informing the findings of this research. The theory forms the foundation upon which the findings of this research are anchored.

2.6 Research Gap

In Kenya just prior to the 2013 March 4th general elections the social media was polarized with propaganda, hate speech, statements of negative ethnicity and incitement (Obare, 2013). These were emanating majorly from the supporters of the two major antagonizing political blocks. Social media was home for verbal conflict that never resulted into physical violence, during the whole electioneering period, the time awaiting the ruling of the Supreme Court on the petition challenging the outcome of the presidential election

results, up until the swearing of the new president. There were still groups in the social media that gave constant updates with doses of speculative information that could have amounted to incitement and hate speech. During this moment Ushahidi had marshaled enough volunteers to identify potential hot spots for violence. Fortunately, although there were very few incidents of violence reported, government agencies were marshaled in good time to bring order and peace.

Throughout history information is a key factor in beginning conflicts around the world. The media can play an important role of a watch dog of the society, by exposing to the masses what is essential but hidden, however it can also be used to mobilize for violence. Social media can therefore act as a tool for widening the democratic space, but can also lead to destabilization of peace.

While there is no consensus or sole role of the social media played in the Arab uprising, there is considerable debate of what credit properly goes to the social media compared to other factors in precipitating this wave of political unrest. Despite the lively debate, there is little systematic research on this area. The few resources are specific to conflict environment and how social media was used for coordination during the violence. There is inadequate material on the use and role of social media for conflict prevention and peace building. This could be partly explained by the lack of control over the research environments, rapid shifts of public attention, difficulties in measuring the casual impact of media intervention, and the heterogeneity of conflict environments and changing objectives in the conflict torn countries.

This study therefore bridged the gaps between sociology and communication sciences by analyzing the ways in which social media can contribute to peace building and conflict prevention in Kenya.

2.8 Conclusion of the Study

Growth in social media is a constituent of quick information spread for purposes of sharing, educating each other, of sharing knowledge and as a way of warning (Semple, 2009). Organizations' that are mandated to respond to disasters ought to have a plan to manage crisis and social crisis is part of it. Such organizations act as key pillars in managing disasters and crisis communication. They are quick to respond to situations where disaster arises through facilitating Medicare and settling displaced population. Ushahidi platform was originally formed on the basis of this assumption or idea especially settlement of displaced people by disasters or political upheavals. The government is also involved in providing relief to disaster -stricken areas through volunteering in responding to disasters and giving financial support and resources to the affected communities. Social media provides a platform for communication. Social media can also help in disaster detection, early warning and most important in coordination. Similar to corporation crises, government institutions and emergency relief require a centralized and sufficient crises communication strategy in times of tragedy, for their social network tactics. In this regard Ushahidi platform has proved very useful in providing warning as well as coordinating efforts during such crisis in various countries Kenya included.

The emergence of social media or new media as it is sometimes referred to, has dared to defragment communication. This has occurred through the involvement of the audience

in the creation and dissemination of information. This has thus altered existing structures and created a room to what is referred to as citizen journalism. Social media has provided a means of constant and immediate communication, which link globally and locally. It has caused a shift in the communication environment which was previously dominated by the traditional mass media platforms of radio, television newspapers among others. Social media has implications for power relations. The prime example is how social media is diluting the mainstream media's monopoly of information. With the advent of social media many people who were excluded from accessing information have in fact become initiators and creators of information. It is therefore becoming progressively more difficult for those in power to bury or manipulate information. Currently with social media platforms we can't isolate anyone from accessing information as long as the person has the necessary equipment such as a smart phone which is now affordable to majority of Kenyans including majority of the youthful population.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the detailed description of the locale of the study, research design, sample size, sampling techniques, variables, instrumentation, and procedures for data collection, data analysis and interpretation. It is worth mentioning that research methodology consists of the assumptions, postulates, rules and methods or the blue prints or simply put the roadmap that I followed to render my work open to analysis, critique, replication, and adaptation. It also highlights the ethical considerations which were adhered to in the research process.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Research paradigm refers to perceptions, beliefs and assumptions of how knowledge is obtained. Two broad categories of research philosophy have been proposed namely positivism and interpretivism. This is meant to interpret elements of the study, thus interpretivism integrates human interest into a study.

In Interpretivism, the researchers assume that access to reality (given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments. Interpretivism is “associated with the philosophical position of idealism, and is used to group together diverse approaches, including social constructivism, phenomenology and hermeneutics; approaches that reject the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness”. According to interpretivism approach, it is important for the researcher as a social actor to appreciate differences between people. Moreover, interpretivism studies usually focus

on meaning and may employ multiple methods in order to reflect different aspects of the issue.

Positivists argue that using scientific method and language to investigate and write about human experience is supposed to keep the research free of the values, passions, politics and ideology of the researcher. To achieve the objectives of the study; hypotheses were deduced operationalized, tested and inferences drawn from the data analysis results which formed a basis for generalization.

The research paradigm adopted in this study was This research adopted pragmatism research philosophy which is premised on a reasonable and logical way of doing things or of thinking about problems that is based on dealing with specific situations instead of on ideas and theories. Pragmatism is an American movement in philosophy founded by Charles Sanders Peirce and William James and marked by the doctrines that the meaning of conceptions is to be sought in their practical bearings, that the function of thought is to guide action, and that truth is preeminently to be tested by the practical consequences of belief (Orlikowski 2008).

3.2 Research Approach

The study used mixed methods. The choice of these methods is influenced by the perceived varying degrees of opinions, views and perception of divergent respondents sampled. Mixed methods are defined as research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in a single study or program of study (Creswell, 2003). Three ways are apparent in the mixed methods literature for mixing the

quantitative and qualitative data; by combining or integrating them, by connecting them from the data analysis step of the first source of data to the data collection step of the second source of data so that one source builds on the other or helps to explain the other and by embedding one secondary or supporting source of data into a larger source of data to provide additional information in a study.

In the process of research, these three forms of mixing-merging, connecting or embedding will occur during various stages of the research such as during data collection, data analysis or interpretation (Creswell, 2003). Creswell (2009) argues that qualitative research design is suitable in natural settings. Since the study mostly focuses on respondents' perceptions of media and conflict management issues, qualitative approach gives more room for interpretation and understanding. Strauss & Corbin (1999) have further shown that those who use qualitative research obtain satisfactory results and appropriate answers to the central research questions being investigated.

This approach has been chosen because of its usefulness in obtaining an overall picture of the study. In addition, quantitative research consists of those studies in which the data concerned can be analyzed in terms of numbers. Quantitative research is based more directly on its original plans and its results are more readily analyzed and interpreted (Best and Khan, 2009). Qualitative research is more open and responsive to its subject.

In this study the researcher collected both qualitative and quantitative data concurrently or at the same time and merged the data to form one interpretation of the data. This interpretation would then provide both qualitative and quantitative information about magnitude and frequency as well as qualitative information from individual perspectives from participants and the context in which they were commenting on the research

problem. This design is called the triangulation or concurrent mixed methods design. This means that the quantitative data and the qualitative data are merged by the researcher in the analysis

3.3 Research Method

The research method was a correlational design utilizing cross-sectional survey methodology and included a number of survey instruments. Cross-sectional surveys are studies aimed at determining the frequency (or level) of a particular attribute, such as a specific exposure, disease or any other health-related event, in a defined population at a particular point in time. This design also corresponds to what Bryman describes as Cross-sectional research design that aims at getting data from multiple cases at a given point in time so as to analyse relationships across a number of variables of interest (Bryman, 2004). This study was based on such a design because; its quantification characteristic helps in consistent benchmarking (Bryman, 2004). However, cross-sectional studies usually lack internal validity (Bryman, 2004) and this study tried to respond to this concern through the qualitative component of this study. In this study therefore, the qualitative data was used to enrich the descriptions generated by, and or from the quantitative data.

3.4 Study Site

The study was conducted in Nairobi County. The County is one of the 47 counties of Kenya. The smallest yet most populous of the counties, its capital is Nairobi, which is also the capital and largest city of Kenya. Nairobi County was founded in 2013 on the same boundaries as former Nairobi Province, after Kenya's 8 provinces were subdivided

into 47 counties. The county is composed of 17 Parliamentary constituencies. Nairobi has experienced one of the most rapid growths in urban centers. This is unlikely to slow down any time soon because the population in Kenya increases by an average of about 3% i.e. 1 million each year.

The county was viewed as hosting the Ushahidi platform headquarters. The Ushahidi platform for crisis communication is the case study selected for this research. There are several reasons for purposefully selecting a case study, based on whether it is information-rich, critical, relevant, unique, or extreme Stake, 1995, Patton, (1990).

The Ushahidi platform was selected because it is an open-source organization, encouraging collective engagement. Therefore, its products are the result of collective contributions by ICT specialists from different parts of the world with different socio-cultural environments and perceptions; the Ushahidi platform is deployed in variety of cases and socio-cultural contexts. It was first introduced in 2008, during Kenya's post-election violence period (PEV) and has been already applied in various contexts of crisis situations and beyond; the platform aims to gather crowd-sourced data, or, in other words, information from general public. This approach is particularly focused on users and it encourages public involvement and participation and the platform implements multiple communication channels (SMS, email, twitter, and the web) and therefore provides a broad picture on supporting and carrying out the communication process during crisis events.

3.3.1 Research Population

Population can be defined as all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people, event or objects to which a researcher wishes to generalize the results of the study. In total 333 respondents, team was targeted. This is according to Macdonell, (2015). The study population included Students from University of Nairobi who used Kenya's Ushahidi Platform in Kenya, Sole proprietors, Technical advisors, Lead developers, Team leaders, corporate account managers, Project managers and Technologist as indicated in the table below

The study purposively selected 63 students from the University of Nairobi in the School of Journalism who visited Ushahidi Platform at the time the study was being undertaken. Ushahidi Platform had 270 employees at the time the study was being undertaken which were distributed as 10 Sole proprietors, 27 Technical advisors, 47 Lead developers, 33 Team leaders, 13 corporate account managers, 53 Project managers and 87 Technologist. This formed the target population of the study.

Table 3.1: Target Population

	Population size
Students from University of Nairobi	63
Sole proprietor of the Ushahidi platform	10
Technical advisor of the Ushahidi platform	27
Lead developer of the Ushahidi platform	47
Team leader of the Ushahidi platform	33
Corporate account manager of the Ushahidi platform	13
Project manager of the Ushahidi platform	53
Technologist of the Ushahidi platform	87
Total	333

3.3.2 Sampling and Sampling Techniques

Sampling is the process of selecting the people who participated in a study. This process should be representative of the whole population. Sampling is hence the procedure, process or technique of choosing a sub-group from a population to participate in the study, (Ogula, 2005). A sample is a smaller group or sub-group obtained from the accessible population (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). This study adopted the stratified sampling technique. From the possible 333 target population, stratified random sampling was employed to select a total of 100 sample population. This is 30% of the total population. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) states that in stratified sampling where population within each strata is known, a sample of 10-30% is adequate representation for data collection. Quantitative data was collected from Sole proprietors of the Ushahidi platform, Technical advisors of the Ushahidi platform, Lead developers of the Ushahidi platform, Team leaders of the Ushahidi platform, Project managers of the Ushahidi platform, Technologist of the Ushahidi platform and Students from University of Nairobi while qualitative data was collected from Corporate account managers of the Ushahidi platform.

Table 3.2: Sampling and Sampling Techniques

	Population size	Sample ratio	Sample Size
Students from University of Nairobi	63	30%	19
Sole proprietors of the Ushahidi platform	10	30%	3
Technical advisors of the Ushahidi platform	27	30%	8
Lead developers of the Ushahidi platform	47	30%	14
Team leaders of the Ushahidi platform	33	30%	10
Corporate account managers of the Ushahidi platform	13	30%	4
Project managers of the Ushahidi platform	53	30%	16
Technologist of the Ushahidi platform	87	30%	26
Total	333		100

3.4 Variables

This study used the independent and dependent as the two major variables to help the researcher to analyze and interpret the data. According to Gray (2009), an independent variable is the one used to explain or predict outcome on the dependent variable while the dependent variable is one that forms the focus of research and depends on independent or explanatory variable. In this study, the independent variable was how social media has been used as a proactive actor in conflict management. The dependent variable was conflict prevention.

3.5 Data Collection Methods and Tools

Triangulation is used in social sciences for supporting the validity of results by adopting different methods of researching an issue or a research question. In this thesis, questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions and content analysis of the Ushahidi platform are chosen as the tools of data collection.

3.5.1 Use of Questionnaires

Given the sample of respondents participating in this research, using questionnaires as instruments of data collection was considered to be ideal. The researcher considered this instrument since it ensures that confidentiality was upheld and it saves time. The questionnaires mostly consist of structured questions and fewer open-ended questions. Structured questions compel the respondents to provide specific answers, while the few open-ended questions allowed for diverse responses, both approaches are essential for variety and getting the respondent's perception of the phenomena being investigated. Administering questionnaires generally allowed for information to be collected from a

large sample and in diverse locations. 100 questionnaires were used with 90 returned duly filled in making a response rate of 90%. This was for quantitative process.

3.5.2 Key Informant Interviews

A qualitative interview is characterized by interactions between a researcher(s) and one or more participants whereby exchange of information assists in constructing scientific or contextual meanings (Edwards & Holland 2013). The writers explain further that interviews can be a face-to-face affair, or it can be set as questionnaires or take the form of a narrative or thematic or topic centred approach. The goal of qualitative research is to construct meaning from the perspectives of the interviewees to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under examination. This was for qualitative process.

This is a conversational practice where knowledge is produced through interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee or a group of interviewees. Unlike everyday conversations, the research interview is most often carried out to serve the researcher's ends, which are external to the conversation itself (Creswell, 2003). Most qualitative research interviews are semi-structured as a consequence of the agenda being set by the researcher's interests yet with room for respondent's participation and engagement. The researcher used face to face interview methods to collect a wide range of information on the role of social media as a proactive tool for conflict prevention. The Key informants were drawn from the field of peace studies and conflict prevention, as well as in the field of social media. A social media expert was interviewed; this expert has also taken part in the development and operationalization of the Ushahidi Crisis Mapping and Reporting platform. (Marshall and Rossman 1999) state that qualitative data is often dependent on key informant interview, interviews allow the researcher to understand the statistical data

collected from quantitative research by explaining the figures and giving further information beyond the figures. Key people at Ushahidi were interviewed. These were five senior employees in the platform. In addition, youths who use Ushahidi platform were also interviewed, particularly university students and Kibera youth leaders among other slums in Nairobi which are prone to conflict especially during electioneering period. Ushahidi platform engages youths from these slum areas.

3.5.3 Focus Group Discussions

The researcher held focus groups discussion in each of the four locations. Each focus group constituted of 5 to 7 youths. Focus groups allow the researcher to get the participants perspective, attitudes, experiences and reactions on the phenomena of interest by way of interaction and discussion with the participants. Focus groups have a high apparent validity since the idea is easy to understand, the results are believable, are low cost and helps in getting quick results. The selected members for focus group discussion were very cooperative and resourceful. In total, 16 FGDs were conducted. This was for qualitative process.

3.6 Pilot Testing of the Instrument

This involves checking for the suitability of the questionnaire. The quality of research instrument determines the outcome of the study (Alan & Emma, 2011). The questionnaires were administered to 10 project managers in Ushahidi platform. The project managers were conveniently selected and were not included in conducting the final research. The selected individuals for piloting were expected to respond to the items in the questionnaires. Piloting established whether the instrument was able to measure the

construct adequately; established whether the respondents found the items easy to respond to; established whether the instrument was comprehensive enough to elicit the intended information and the level of the respondent; and established whether the time allocated for the data collection was adequate. The respondents in the piloting exercise were not included in the final administration of the questionnaires.

3.6.2 Validity of Instruments

Validity is described as the degree to which a research instrument measures what it intends to measure and performs as it is designed to perform (Cherry, 2015). In general, validity is an indication of how sound the research is. As a way of ensuring validity, the researcher discussed the questionnaires with the supervisor. A content validity, consisting of a match between test questions and content of the subject area of social media and conflict management. Content validity is an important research methodology term that refers to how well a test measures the behavior for which it is intended (Lune, Parke, & Stone, 1998). As such only inferences related to the variables under discussions were considered during the match between test questions and content of the social media and conflict management. When a test has content validity, the items on the test represent the entire range of possible items the test should cover. In an event where a test measured a construct difficult to define, the researcher rated each item's relevance.

3.6.2 Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results. Orodho (2004) defines reliability as the degree to which the particular measuring procedure gives similar results over a number of repeated trials. To establish the

reliability of the instrument, the researcher used the split-half reliability method. The test was first divided into halves and administered to the total respondents in the pilot study and scored separately. The scores of one halves of test were then compared to the scores of the remaining half to test the reliability (Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2001). The method was chosen because it is a useful when it is impractical or undesirable to assess reliability with two tests or to have two test administrations (because of limited time or money) (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2001). Cronbach's Alpha (α) was used to test the reliability of the items in the instrument. Larry (2013) indicates that Cronbach Coefficient is used to test internal consistencies of items/traits of a construct when a research instrument has Likert scales with multiple responses for data collection. Therefore, it was the most appropriate for this study since the instrument had Likert scale with multiple responses. Creswell (2012) indicates that a reliable research instrument should have a composite Cronbach Alpha, α of at least 0.7 for all items under study. Thus, reliability coefficient, α , of 0.7 was considered acceptable.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the mass of collected data (Marshal and Rossman, 1999). In order to bring order, structure and interpretation to the collected data, the researcher systematically organized the data by coding it into categories and constructing matrixes. After classifying the data, the researcher compared and contrasted it to the information retrieved from the literature review. After administering the questionnaires, the researcher used codes and had data converted into numerical codes for statistical analysis. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics were computed for all

the variables to ensure quality of data. The results from the sample were then generalized to the study population. The researcher then organized the results around the objectives of the study. The researcher used descriptive statistics to show distribution, relationships between variables under study, proportions in terms of texts, percentages, charts and tables.

3.7.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data

The process of data analysis involved several stages; the completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency, checked for errors and omissions and then coded. Descriptive analysis was employed. Coding was done in computerized form, analyzed and the output interpreted in frequencies, percentages, mean scores, standard deviation and rankings. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the demographics of the various firms surveyed. The descriptive statistics included: measure of central tendency which examined the mean, mode and median and dispersion which measured the spread of the values around the central tendency using the standard deviation.

3.7.2 Analysis of Qualitative Data

The emphasis on the qualitative data was on the stated experiences of the participants and on the stated meanings they attach to the issues being studied. One important way of handling the qualitative data was by considering fully the categories spontaneously used by the respondents before the researchers develop their own categories.

The researcher gathered the information from the respondent, taking note of key words. The information items were then organised into various groups in a preliminary way. The next step was to take account of the categories or groupings suggested by the

respondents. The final step was to form a set of categories based on the information obtained from the previous steps. However, the researcher was likely to change some of the categories if additional information comes to light. The researcher was not only interested in the number of items or statements falling into each category but the variety of meanings, attitudes and interpretations found within each category.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The implementation of ethical standards is a requirement throughout the research process, from the design to the recommendations Fossey, et al. (2010). A research letter was obtained from the university and the ministry of Education which authorized the researcher to undertake the study. The major ethical issues in this study were privacy and confidentiality of the respondents and the institutions they represent.

Interview pre-testing was done to avoid possible unbiased data. The pilot study was done among the non-sample population in the study and unmasked any unethical or threatening questions for correction. A question is unethical or threatening when 20% or more of the respondents feel that most people would be very uneasy talking about the topic Gall, (2006). Any information collected was handled confidentially and at the end of the exercise, the research feedback was shared with the respondents' unit trusts.

The participants were made aware of the purpose of the study and the intended use of the information that was collected from them, prior to beginning of the data collection, surveys and interviews. The researcher reassured the participants of the confidentiality of the data collected. The participants were informed that there were no direct benefits or compensations for participating in the study. The researcher briefed the participants on

their rights to voluntarily participate in the study and they thus had the right to stop the survey at any moment or skip any questions they did not wish to answer. The participants were shown the channels of communication they could use to address any question, complain arising from the data collecting exercise and the study in general.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the overview of the research methodology, research design, sample size, sampling techniques, variables, instrumentation, and procedures for data collection, data analysis and interpretation. It is worth mentioning that research methodology consists of the assumptions, postulates, rules and methods or the blue prints or simply put the roadmap. The next chapter presents data presentation and analysis

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents results arising from the analysis of data collected using questionnaires. The data was analysed based on the objectives of the study. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods for each variable and the findings presented in tabular summaries, and their implications discussed. This chapter presents analysis and findings of the study as set out in the research objectives. The results were presented on how social media has been used as a proactive actor in conflict management: a case study of Ushahidi platform from 2007 to 2017. The chapter covers the personal information, and the findings based on the stated objectives. The chapter covers the profile information about the Ushahidi officials and different respondents and the findings are based on the objectives. The study made use of frequencies on single response questions. The findings are presented in tables, graphs and charts as appropriate with explanations being given in prose thereafter.

The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze quantitative data. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics whereby frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations generated from the various data categories were computed and presented in graphs and tables. On the other hand, qualitative data was analysed using Nvivo 9 software. Information relating to identified themes was coded based on the responses from the interviewees on the contribution of social media platforms in conflict management: a study of Kenya's Ushahidi platform in Kenya.

4.1.1 Response Rate

Among the target population of 100 respondents selected, 90 respondents completed and returned the questionnaires duly filled in making a response rate of 90%. The high questionnaire response rate (90%) resulted from the method of administration of the instrument, which was in this case researcher administered. This is acceptable according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). This method also ensured that the respondents' queries concerning clarity were addressed at the point of data collection; however, caution was exercised so as not to introduce bias in the process. It also reduced the effects of language barrier, hence, ensuring a high instrument response and scoring rate. The researcher was able to guide the respondents in answering questions as well as clarify questions to respondents who seemed not to clearly comprehend questions stated in the questionnaires.

4.2 Demographic Information

4.2.1 Respondent's Designation

The study sought to establish the respondent's designation. The study findings are as presented in table below:

Table 4.3: Respondent's Designation

Category	Frequency	Percent
Students	17	19%
Proprietors	3	3%
Technical advisors	7	8%
Lead developer	13	14%
Team leaders	9	10%
Corporate account manager	4	4%
Project manager	14	16%
Technologist	23	26%
Total	90	100%

Based on the study findings, majority of the respondents (26%) were technologists, 19% were students, mostly drawn from Nairobi slum neighborhoods such as Kibera, Mathare and Mukuru slums, 16% were project managers, 14% were lead developers, 10% were team leaders, 8% were technical advisors, 4% were corporate account managers, while 3% were proprietors. This is an implication that majority of the respondents were technologists and students and thus higher chances of getting reliable information with regards to the topic of research which is contribution of social media platforms in conflict management: a study of Kenya's Ushahidi platform in Kenya

4.2.2 Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

The study sought to establish the distribution of the respondents by gender. The researcher felt that consideration of gender balance was good to increase the validity of the research outcome. The study findings are as presented in figure below:

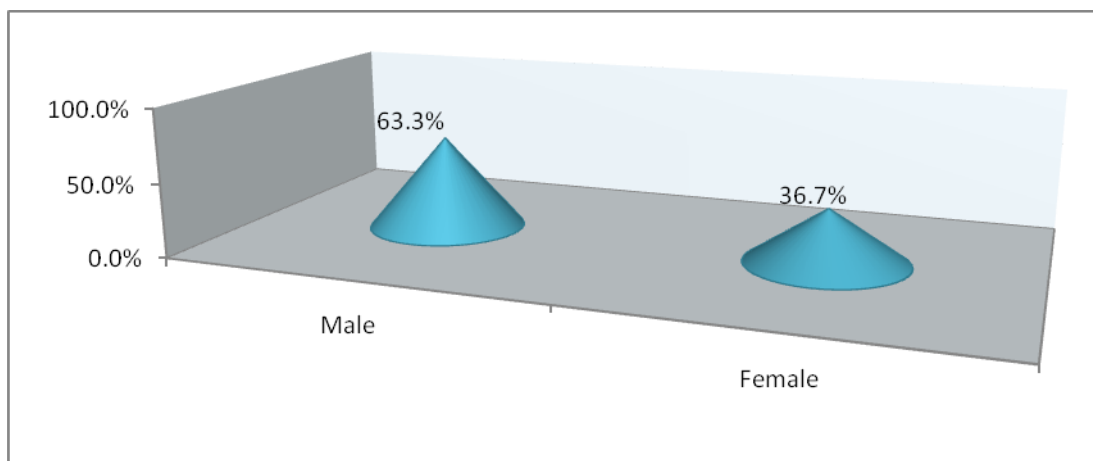


Figure 4.1: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

The study revealed that 63.3 percent of the respondents (57) were male while 36.7 percent (33) were female. This shows that gender differences were taken into consideration in an attempt to ensure that the study wasn't biased towards one particular gender.

4.2.3 Distribution of Respondents by Age

The respondents were to indicate the age bracket that they belonged to. The findings are as shown in Table 4.2 below:

Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents by Age

	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20	20	22.2
21-30	33	36.7
31-40	13	14.4
41-50	11	12.2
51-60	8	8.9
Over 60	5	5.6
Total	90	100.0

Based on the findings, majority of the respondents 36.7% were aged between 21-30 years 22.2% were aged below 20 years, 14.4% were aged between 31-40 years, 12.2% were aged between 41-50 years, 8.9% were aged between 51-60 years, while only 5.6% were aged over 60 years. This depicts that majority of the respondents were the youths who have higher chances of using social media and thus higher chances of giving reliable information with regard to the use of social media platforms for conflict prevention and management.

4.2.4 Distribution of the Respondent by Level of Education

Figure 4.3 below indicates the percentage distribution of the highest level of education among the respondents:

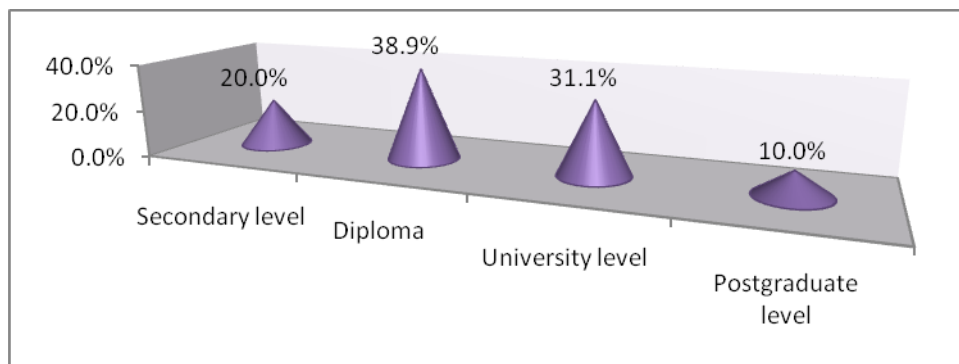


Figure 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Highest Level of Education

According to the study findings, majority of the respondents (38.9%) had Diploma, 31.1% were at the University level, and 20.0% were at Secondary level, while 10.0% were at Postgraduate level. This is an indication that most of the respondents were well educated and hence the responses given were reliable because majority of them could understand the questions or issues presented.

4.3 Achievements of Ushahidi Platform with Regard to Conflict Prevention and Management in Kenya from 2007

This study sought to establish the achievements of Ushahidi platform with regard to conflict prevention and management in Kenya from 2007. The study findings are as presented in subsequent subheadings:

4.3.1 Popularity of the Social Media Platforms among the Respondents

The study sought to find out the strengths of social media platforms as tools of conflict prevention and peace building. It was thus important to look at the penetration and popularity level of the social media platforms amongst the respondents.

Table 4.5: Popularity of Social Media Tools amongst Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage
Twitter	10	11.1
Facebook	37	41.1
Whatsapp	27	30.0
Google Chat	7	7.8
Yahoo Chat	6	6.7
Migg 33	3	3.3
Total	90	100.0

The study revealed that Facebook and Whatsapp were the most popular social media tools with 41.1 percent and 30 percent of the respondents having accounts on each platform respectively. The other social media tools which were represented by 28.9 percent included; Twitter, Google Chat, Yahoo Chat and Migg 33. Majority (54.4 percent) of those respondents, who frequently used Facebook, had more than 100 to 1000 friends or followers whom they frequently communicated with.

During a focus group discussion, information from the social media expert a key informant in this study indicated one of the factors that the popularity of Facebook can be attributed to the incorporation of the social media on the mobile phone menu. He had this to say:

“The availability of Facebook on the phone menu facilitates its access. Users simply need to be online and they sign in to start using it. Other social media platforms need to be downloaded first and installed on the cell phone before they could be used. The downloading procedure complicates the process for some people and they opt just to have Facebook account which is easier to register on”.

The expert further explained that the interface for each social media platform is unique. Some platforms have limitations, for instance Twitter has a limit of 250 words that one can post on their profile and one cannot upload photos and other multi-media supports. Such limitations are not present on Facebook, and thus for exchanging social pleasantries Facebook serves them best, hence its popularity. Owing to the unique interface of each social media platform, most people on social media platforms like Whatsup, Twitter also have a face book account almost as a pre-requisite. FGDs also revealed that Twitter is perceived to be a little elitist compared to Facebook, a focus group participant said: *“FB ndio mambo yote Twitter ni ya wasomi”* meaning “Facebook is our thing, it is the in thing especially for the majority while Twitter is for the elite.” This shows the different perceptions the youth have on the social media platforms that could have led to the popularity of facebook.

4.3.2 Access of Different Forms of Social Media

Respondents were kindly requested to indicate how often they accessed different forms of social media. The study findings are as shown in the table 4.4 below:

Table 4.6: Access of Different Forms of Social Media

	Facebook	Twitter	Whatsup	Google Chat	Yahoo Chat	Migg 33
Never	2%	13%	6%	56%	68%	73%
Hardly	11%	19%	9%	29%	36%	47%
Often	67%	47%	55%	21%	8%	16%
Very often	86%	67%	78%	7%	12%	9%

Based on the study findings shown above, majority of the respondents (86%) indicated that they very often accessed face book, 78% indicated that they accessed WhatsApp while 67% indicated that they used twitter. On the other hand the social Media which have been rarely used by the respondents includes Migg 33, Yahoo Chat and Google Chat where majority of the respondents as indicated by 73% indicated that they have never used Migg 33, 68% indicated they had never used yahoo chat, while 56% indicated that they had never used Google Chat. This is quite an indication that the most accessible social Media includes face book, Whatsapp and twitter.

In an interview schedule done with peace expert, another key informant in the study revealed that it is easier for the social media users to take part on a peace building activity online than in an outdoor event or setting. This is because the decision to take part in an event is informed by the accuracy of the information on the event provided and the logistical issues to be overcome. As it stands now most users don't give in to participate in events that will involve major logistical implications and thus the easiest option they have is to take part online.

4.3.3 Strengths of Social Media as a Tool for Peace Building and Conflict Prevention

An FGD was conducted and respondents were kindly requested to indicate what they consider to be the strengths of social media platform as a tool for peace building and conflict prevention. One of the key informants affirmed that:

“The potential of social media as a tool for peace building is evident by the elaborate penetration of social media as a communication tool. However, at present social media is not very popular beyond exchanging pleasantries in Kenya. There is need to leverage on mainstream media to create awareness on how they can be used for peace building”. He explained further that: *“Social media can be effective because it is communication built primarily on relationships and deals with the user’s circle of influence”.*

Another FGD participant simply stated that:

“Si Kwa ubaya lakini mimi lazima niangalie FB ndio nipate uhondo wa siasa kabla ya kuwatch news”

Meaning “Me I need to consult Facebook to get the gist of politics before watching news”. This shows that main stream media and social media complement each other when it comes to relaying political content or news. Television still dominates in reporting on politics since the most mainstream media are owned and or controlled by the elite whose proximity to power is undoubted.

The peace building expert from an interview schedule further explained;

“Even though mainstream media dominates in covering the political arena, the social media platforms also never miss the trending political issues and current affairs. This is because of the solid presence of mainstream media on social media. Journalists and almost all media houses give constant information feeds on developing stories on social media. Sometimes these stories run on social media even before they are broadcast on television or radio”.

Sometimes social media sets the agenda that form the basis for the conversation engaged in the mainstream media. This simply shows the complementing roles that mainstream media and social media need to play. He concluded that:

“Social media has a great potential of destabilizing peace and generating political tension because of unethically guided users. These users can use it for politically instigated incitements or spreading rumors with proposed actions which might be detrimental to peace”.

One of the key respondents from FGDs indicated that:

Social media increasingly plays a role in conflict and contentious politics. Politicians, leaders, insurgents, and protestors all have used it as a tool for communication. At the same time, scholars have turned to social media as a source of new data on conflict. I provide a framework for understanding social media's influence on conflict through four interrelated points: (1) social media reduces the costs of communication, (2) it increases the speed and dissemination of information, (3) scholars should focus on the strategic interaction and competitive adoption of actors in response to information communication technology changes, and (4) the new data that social media provides are not only an important resource, but also fundamentally change the information available to conflict actors, thereby shaping the conflict itself. In sum, social media's influence on conflict defies simplistic explanations that argue that it privileges incumbents or challengers

4.3.4 Achievements of Ushahidi Platform in Peace Building and Conflict Prevention

The study sought to establish the achievements of Ushahidi platform in peace building and conflict prevention. The study established that through use of Ushahidi platform, today, people are able to create and share digital content, which facilitates open participation, collaboration and collective knowledge creation through the Internet. Through these means, communities and groups can record, analyze, and discover a variety of patterns that are important in their lives. By means of messages, blogs, micro-blogs (tweets), pictures, videos, audio recordings, SMS's, GPS's and other ways of conveying information, it is possible that communities and individuals can actively participate in sensing, communicating and analyzing aspects of their lives on a continuous basis, acting less and less as passive consumers of information. With emergent of social media platforms, majority are active contributors of what is trending.

Further, the study revealed that in its current form, Ushahidi is a collaborative mapping platform that enables real-time aggregation of SMS's, tweets, emails, photos, videos, comments and also voice recordings, with location, time and date marks. After an initial

categorization, reported events or incidents are accumulated or clustered graphically on a map. The result is a dynamic situational map updated through participatory sensing from the grass roots as events unfold. In the aftermath of the crisis the resulting map becomes a searchable repository or memory of an event, something that has extraordinary implications for future evaluations, legal purposes or historical accounts. Hence the information collated through Ushahidi platform can be used to inform policy decisions taken by various stakeholders with regard to conflict prevention, management and most important peace building.

In addition, the study established that Ushahidi disrupted the established informational paradigm by providing a platform that allowed free, open and easy data entry by the general population and open downloads of all the available information for free by whoever needed it. By eliminating privileged access, it has provided an innovative first experience in the democratization of crisis information access, the possibility of auditing a response effort, of discovering where aid is needed during conflict situation and how to distribute it. The receptivity of communities of entrepreneurs in different countries that have implemented the platform has been astonishing, which demonstrates that the old wineskin needed to be changed. It was also revealed that a key component of Ushahidi is the ability to use mobile phones as a primary means of both sending crisis incidents and receiving updates. The Internet can be difficult to access or completely unavailable in some parts of the world, so the platform was created with the mobile phone as a foundational element. One may find himself in a remote area where there is a crisis with a mobile phone and use it to communicate to the whole world of that crisis instantly. This

potential has been tapped by Ushahidi platform hence the motivation to do an in- depth study of this phenomenon.

One of the key respondents from interview schedule indicated that:

Ushahidi itself was originally created to deal with conflict prevention and response (it was first developed for the 2008 Kenyan post-election violence). Fourth Generation conflict and early warning tools like Ushahidi are being used in post-conflict peace-building; however, there are few cases at the moment of such use. One example of the use of Ushahidi was by the Liberian peace building office. There is a need to integrate the knowledge and practice on the use of ICTs in conflict prevention with emerging knowledge and practice on the use of ICTs for peace building.

4.3.5 Extent of Ushahidi Platform Accessibility to Kenyans

The study sought to establish the extent of Ushahidi platform accessibility to Kenyans. The study revealed that Ushahidi, which means “testimony” in Swahili, is a platform that was initially developed to map reports of violence in Kenya after the post-election fallout at the beginning of 2008. The volunteer team behind Ushahidi rapidly developed a tool for Kenyans to report and map incidents of violence that they saw via SMS, email or the web. Within a week Ushahidi had gone from a basic idea to live deployment. Ushahidi now serves as a prototype and a lesson for what can be done by combining crisis information from citizen generated reports, media and NGOs and mashing that data up with geographical mapping tools. The team behind Ushahidi became an organization that created a free and open- source mapping and content management system which can be used by organizations worldwide in similar crisis-related situations. The main goal of the organization is to create a system that facilitates early warning systems and helps in data visualization for response and recovery. The concept of Ushahidi has been applied in several other countries. The researcher posits that this potential can be further harnessed

to improve the concept of early warning system with regard to conflict management and peace building in Kenya and globally.

4.3.6 Stage at which Ushahidi Platform Intervened in Conflict Prevention

The study sought to establish the stage at which Ushahidi platform intervened in conflict prevention in Kenya from 2007. The study revealed that after being applied in 2008 post-election violence in Kenya, in 2010 Ushahidi collaborated with partners to create the Uchaguzi-Kenya platform (an Ushahidi instance). It provided a channel for Kenyan citizens to communicate openly about the 2010 Kenyan referendum. The project was a success and opened up opportunities for future learning. The Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, Knight Foundation and Ushahidi came together to identify these successes and challenges with a view of improving the platform to be more responsive to emerging issues especially with regard to early warning system and conflict management. The outcomes of this learning and evaluation project aim to help plan for future Uchaguzi instances and share learning to the broader user community both in Kenya and globally.

4.3.7 Initiatives Undertaken by Ushahidi Platform

The study sought to determine the Initiatives undertaken by Ushahidi platform. The study revealed that the Ushahidi platform added new communication pathways (e.g., SMS, twitter, facebook, Whatsapp, Linkldin, email, web entries, etc.) to provide more efficient and near real-time access to referendum/election information. Future projects should identify and consider integrating existing information flows to avoid duplication. For example, partnering with media organizations, such as radio stations and television stations, can have a broader reach with the community. Strongly consider creating a

communications strategy (including campaign & feedback loops) at the assessment/planning stage. When using short code, consider coordinating with other organizations that may be using similar short codes. Consider designing messaging campaigns together to minimize confusion with the public. Consider a simulation exercise to test information flows, communication, technology, and building of volunteer teams.

4.4 Assessing Satisfaction of Information Consumers of the Ushahidi Platform since 2007

The second objective of the study sought to assess satisfaction of information consumers of the Ushahidi platform since 2007. The study findings are as shown in the subsequent subheadings.

4.4.1 Importance of Information Shared by Social Media

Respondents were kindly requested to indicate how important they considered information shared by social media. The research findings are as presented in Table 4.5

Table 4.5: Importance of Information Shared by Social Media

	Frequency	Percentage
Seriously and they can prompt me to take an action	38	42.2
Seriously but they cannot prompt me to take action	19	21.1
Casually, I use it only for entertainment	25	27.8
I don't care at all about the discussions	8	8.9
Total	90	100.0

Based on the study findings, majority of the respondents 42.2% considered information shared by social media seriously and they can prompt them to take an action, 27.8% considered it casually, and that they use it only for entertainment, 21.1% considered it to be taken seriously but they cannot prompt them to take action while 8.9% considered it that they don't care at all about the discussions. This is an indication that Ushahidi platform considers information shared by social media seriously and they can prompt them to take an action

The peace building expert from FGD affirmed that:

“The potential of social media as a tool for peace building is evident by the elaborate penetration of social media as a communication tool. However, at present social media is not very popular beyond exchanging pleasantries in Kenya. There is need to leverage on mainstream media to create awareness on how they can be used for peace prevention and building”.

He explained further that:

“Social media can be effective because it is communication built primarily on relationships and deals with the user's circle of influence”.

Of late majority of the people have accepted and adopted the use of social media and the time to harness its potential is here with us. From the findings the researcher proposes that social media can now be effectively used to detect crisis and provide an avenue to manage conflict and escalate conflict prevention and peace building efforts in the long run.

4.4.2 Social Media Scenario Presently in Kenya

Respondents were kindly requested to describe the social media scenario presently in Kenya. One of the respondents indicated that currently in Kenya, the social media has a

lot of new users coming in everyday with lots of content, however many are not aware of how to utilize the social media for conflict reporting purposes. The social media expert from interview schedule said:

“The penetration of social media is owed to the growing affordability of internet. Internet is now retailed in small units of as little as Ksh 10. Meaning that even the most economically challenged person could periodically afford to buy internet bundles, since they only pay for it when they need it. They buy prepaid bundles only when they can afford it”.

Due to its affordability social media can be meaningfully used by policy makers for peace building and conflict prevention and more importantly conflict management. This potential has been demonstrated by the development of Ushahidi platform.

One of the interviewees revealed that she no longer buys newspapers, instead she spends the sixty shillings which is the selling price of an average newspaper Kenya for buying internet bundles and reads online version of the newspaper and eventually connect to social media to see what her friends are saying about the political conversations and developments and other social issues both locally and internationally. This shows that social media provides an active medium for feedback on political issues which is interactive as opposed to main stream media which could be passive and less interactive. Mostly conflict issues are politically tied. Another participant in focus group discussion said:

“I follow groups on Facebook that talk ill about my political party and ethnic group to enable me know how they think about me, I need to understand what my enemy thinks about me so that I may be politically prepared for the worst and Facebook helps me achieve that”.

This clearly demonstrates how social media has widened the communication sphere of most people today. If its potential is carefully tapped, it can be used in conflict detection, prevention, management and peace building in Kenya and globally.

With a population of slightly over 45 million, Kenya is among the countries experiencing the fastest mobile phone and Internet penetration in sub-Saharan Africa. By the end of 2015, Kenya was ranked the highest African country in terms of the percentage of population that had access to the Internet. The mobile phone penetration in Kenya stood at 87.7 per cent by December 2015, with more than 82.6 per cent of the population having access to the Internet (Communications Authority of Kenya [CAK] 2015). More than half of its population had an active Internet/data subscription. These figures have obviously grown higher. This rapid upward trend in Internet penetration may be attributed to increased access to low -cost smartphones and the competitive pricing of data bundles by mobile phone companies in Kenya such as Safaricom and Airtel among others. Kenya has several mobile phone companies who compete and this has led to decrease in pricing of air time to the advantage of social media users.

Structural reforms undertaken in the past twenty years have transformed the ICT infrastructure in Kenya making it an attractive destination for hi-tech companies. Global technology giants such as Google, IBM, Intel, Microsoft and Nokia have all established presence in Kenya in recent years, owing to its modernized ICT environment. Kenya is now popularly referred to as the 'Silicon Savannah' owing to its rapidly expanding ICT infrastructure that has spurred innovations such as M-Pesa technology and Ushahidi platform (Benequista 2015). M-Pesa, a mobile money transfer service that allows people to deposit, send and receive money using their mobile phones, was invented in Kenya and

has now become a leading mobile phone-based service in the global South (Jack and Suri 2010). Similarly, the Internet-based crowdsourcing innovation, Ushahidi (Swahili word meaning ‘testimony’), combines the use of ‘geomapping’ with other mobile-based technologies to allow ordinary citizens to document corruption, human rights abuses, and to map crises around the world. Ushahidi was developed by bloggers within Kenya and diaspora Kenyans to map the spread of violence during the 2008 violence that followed the release of the contested presidential election results (Meier 2012). Several versions of the platform have since been used in more than 140 countries to map a variety of situations including the earthquake crisis in Haiti in 2010, and the parliamentary elections in Egypt in the same year. The platform was also very instrumental in tapping crisis issues in the Arab spring.

Facebook remains the single most popular social networking site in Kenya. A report released by Facebook in 2015 indicated that there were more than 4.5 million monthly active Facebook users in Kenya, and that 95 per cent of these were active on the mobile platform. The report further indicated that 2.2 million Facebook users were active on a daily basis. Kenyans, especially the young people use Facebook as a tool to connect and maintain contact with their friends, family and colleagues, and as an online public sphere through which they discuss issues affecting them in their everyday life. Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are the main sources of news for young people who rarely pay attention to news emanating from the mainstream media outlets (Otieno and Mukhongo 2013). Another popular social media network is the Whatsapp which has penetrated in Kenya very highly. However, the interface between mainstream media and social media discussion is evident in many Facebook and WhatsApp

discussion groups formed to provide digital public spaces where young people interrogate issues represented in the mainstream media such as radio television and newspapers. Stories picked from other media outlets and posted in the Facebook chat groups often generate huge online discussions among the participants, hence providing a space through which young people not only access and discuss events of the day, but also do contest ideologies represented in the mainstream media through interactions in social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp.

Like in other parts of Africa, Twitter remains an integral aspect of Kenya's socio-political dynamics that is often appropriated by young people in galvanizing and channeling public discontent, mobilizing for civic action, and creating civil awareness. A report published by Portland Communications indicates that Kenya is amongst the top five tweeting African countries, which include Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya and Ghana respectively (Portland Communications 2015). Portland Communication's analysis further indicate that 60 per cent of Africa's Twitter users were younger (21–29-year-olds) compared to global Twitter average of 39 years old, and that Twitter was mainly used in Africa for social conversations, but also as a news source.

Kenyans on Twitter, a collective group of Twitter users popularly referred to as KOT, is one of the most outspoken social media groups in Africa. KOT is not only renowned for its sharp criticism of the political class in Kenya, but also for Twitter wars popularly referred to as 'tweets' with social media users in other countries in the region. Kenyans have also used Twitter to challenge western media coverage of Kenyan issues, particularly those that are perceived to have presented Kenya in unfavourable terms. Recent examples include KOT's criticism of CNN reference to Kenya as a 'hotbed of

terror', on the eve of President Barack Obama's visit to the country in 2015. Using the hashtag #SomeoneTellCNN, Kenyans used Twitter to ridicule CNN's sensationalism in its reporting about Kenya. The ensuing Twitter outcry forced the CNN news channel's managing director to travel to Kenya to offer an apology. Another trending Twitter in 2015 was #garissaattack, a response to a terrorist attack on Garissa University. This was then a constituent campus of Moi University where this research is domiciled. Major trending Tweets in Kenya were in the spheres of politics, lifestyles, sports, terrorism and entertainment (Portland Communications 2015). This shows that whenever there is a crisis, Social media is extensively used to highlight such issues and sometimes register discomfort on particular issues that affect Kenyans. Ushahidi platform can hence be strengthened and its visibility enhanced to help it reinforce its early warning capability.

4.4.3 Comparison Social Media in Kenya to 5 Years Ago

The study sought to establish from the respondents, how they would compare Social Media Scenario Presently in Kenya to 5 years ago. Respondents indicated that Social media scenario presently in Kenya as compared to five years ago, has improved greatly. Businesses and individuals are more aware of social media and its impact. Currently, Facebook has more than 3.4 million users in Kenya, more than one fourth of total Internet users. Around 1.2 million of these users range from 25 to 35 years old, over a million of these are University graduates. Other social media like Twitter and Instagram are popular too, and they became center of many online conversations especially on issues concerning political discourse. Nowadays everybody is into social media which has been contributed by the availability of internet for instance free wifi.

Social communication has experienced a major paradigm shift in recent years, owing to the proliferation of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp, among others. The rapid expansion of low- cost smartphones has facilitated ubiquitous access to the Internet, hence making it possible for people to share information about their lives with a wide audience through social media. Social media use has thus had a tremendous impact on various facets of society including social relationships, business and politics among others. It has boosted collective capacity of individuals to recreate their social realities, and to share it with people across the globe. Individuals are making use of the opportunities offered by the Internet (Wellman and Haythornthwaite 2002), social media, mobile phones as well as other electronic tools and devices to access global and geographically dispersed connections that would have previously not been considered as ‘community’ (Foth 2003). This has, however, prompted some scholars such as Putnam (2000) to argue that the spirit of community is declining and could be on the brink of collapse, and that society is increasingly becoming one with members disconnected from one another. The fact that people now communicate more online has also sparked remarkable interest from researchers and academics in various disciplines including psychology, sociology, communications, politics and education (Swigger 2012). Access to social media means that people are now exposed to more information than ever before. Lea and Spears (1995) and O’Sullivan (1996) note that studies on how relationships are formed and maintained online has brought into focus previously unconsidered assumptions and biases in our traditional face-to-face communication. Of particular concern is the assumption that face-to-face interactions, physical proximity and nonverbal communication are essential to the processes of interacting with each other

effectively. Online interactions, instead, provide a setting where interactions and relationships play by different rules, and with different outcomes. Fowler and Kam (2007) and Sigel (2009), for example, argue that like in offline interactions, social networks and interactions create a norm that the individual is expected to live up to, such that if an individual's network values participation and constantly communicates about this value, the individual will become more likely to participate in order to meet their network's norm. The affordances that social media channels present complicate identity negotiation processes in online relationships compared to offline situations. Social media users have more leverage over the self-presentational content they provide and share with others such that various identity cues such as age, ethnicity and gender, that would be quite difficult to hide or manipulate in face-to-face interaction, are masked or misrepresented in the online context (Ellison 2013). Since individuals inherently want to create positive impressions and (appear to) act in ways consistent with this goal, they will therefore take advantage of all and any opportunities that computer-mediated communication presents.

Mobile telephones are steadily increasing connectivity densities amongst young people in Kenya and thereby enhancing their ability to communicate anytime across all forms of boundaries. Data generated from FGDs (focus group discussions) suggest that WhatsApp groups were mainly useful as platforms through which youths could (re)establish and maintain contacts with their former classmates, current classmates, and family members, among others. Typically, participants were often members of several WhatsApp and Facebook groups which were constituted for specific purposes: One of the key informants from FGDs indicated that:

I am in a computer science group which is my class group, also a home church group, my internship colleagues' group, a group of colleagues I worked with in Greenbelt group called 'Specimen' and the rest are dormant I don't even remember them.

Some social media groups exist for a long period of time while others are formed for a specific short-term activity, and are therefore discontinued as soon as the activity is completed. For instance, WhatsApp groups established for fundraising are often discontinued as soon as the targeted funds have been realized. This is common for raising money to offset medical bills, prepare for weddings and even funeral arrangements. Social media platforms thus enable new forms of socialization where young people are able to engage in real-time conversations with other participants irrespective of their geographical locations with the capabilities of simultaneous group communication among people in geographically dispersed locations. Social media provides platforms through which young people conduct activities that would previously require face-to face interactions. Several participants talked of incidents where they have held discussions and conducted fundraising activities or planned weddings, class parties and similar other activities without having to meet physically. Related new media applications such as M-Pesa, a money transfer technology that allows mobile phone subscribers to send and receive money using mobile phones, provide necessary support services for online fundraising activities. Thus, as the social media becomes pervasive to young people in developing countries like Kenya, they arguably transfigure time and space in communication. The social media have also increased the possibilities for new forms of communication, participation and engagement. Previously, communication across national boundaries was not only expensive, but also slow in terms of the time it took to receive feedback. Social media platforms have, however, increased possibilities

affordable real-time interaction across countries and continents. Young people are now able to interact with their friends and peers across the globe at affordable rates as one respondent in the FGD commented concerning Facebook:

‘it has opened our democratic space in that it has given us freedom of speech such that you can speak anywhere, anyhow and about anything.’

This shows how social media has expanded frame of reference in terms of both interpersonal communication and group communication dynamics.

4.4.4 Contributing Factors to the Expansion of Social Media in Kenya

The study sought to establish from the respondents, what they would describe as the contributing factors to the expansion of social media in Kenya. Respondents indicated that the contributing factors to the expansion of social media in Kenya include, Cheap Chinese phones, accessibility of internet, and increased knowledge and exposure to ICT. In addition, the study revealed that Most Kenyans use social media for marketing their products however many respondents argued that social media is mostly used in passing information on a variety of topics including conflict related issues.

4.4.5 Social Media Scene during the 2013 General Elections in Kenya

Respondents were kindly requested to explain how they would describe the social media scene or environment during the 2013 general elections. According to the participants social media was used as a platform for spreading hate speech, propaganda, stereotypes and ethnicity leading to polarization of the nation. According to martin a 25-year-old student in the FGD;

“Social media use during the 2013 elections was pathetic as Kenyans spread hate speech causing friends supporting opposing parties to clash. “What was said on social media polluted minds, I can imagine my twelve-year-old niece going to

the social media to see the kind of updates that were being shared” This would have caused a psychological upheaval” said Maria a participant in this research.

According to the participants of focus group discussion, Kenyans used social media to keep informed by accessing real time news updates on their preferred political candidate and sharing opinions on various political party manifestos. This was confirmed by a 23 years old social media user who said:

Today if you want to keep up with current affairs go to social media.

This is a clear indication that social media has a lot of influence in Kenyan’s decision-making process especially with regard to politics.

Similarly, the various participants indicated that Kenyans used social media to campaign for their preferred presidential candidates by updating their updates and profiles to reflect their stand, sharing messages, videos and photos.

“I used social media to campaign for my preferred presidential candidate through updating my status to reflect my political stand and sharing materials”

The study further revealed that politicians used social media to call their supporters to actions by asking them to register for voting. They also used social media to inform their supporters where their campaign trail was headed. According to the participants various politicians used social media differently as others focused on two step flow of communication, where information generally moved from top-down while others focused on a horizontal approach. Thus, some politicians failed to understand this platform. Politicians also used bloggers and various party admin accounts on social media to sell their agenda through use of propaganda, stereotypes and ethnicity either directly or indirectly. Politicians also used their Facebook pages and twitter handles to create an interpersonal relationship with their supporters through answering their queries on

various issues and soliciting for suggestions. Politicians used social media to sell their manifesto through use of photos and other means.

4.5 Challenges facing Ushahidi Platform as a Proactive Actor in Conflict Prevention in Kenya since 2007

The third objective of the study sought to find out challenges facing Ushahidi platform as a proactive actor in conflict prevention in Kenya since 2007. The study findings are as shown below

4.5.1 Weaknesses of Social Media with Interest to Peace Building and Conflict Prevention

Respondents were kindly requested to say what they consider to be weaknesses of social media with interest to peace building and conflict prevention. The peace building expert in the FGD explained:

“In order for one to report violence, they need to be assured of their security and they must also trust that action will be taken once they filed any report on violence. What this means, is that citizens will be both the generators and the consumers of the information on violence if they use social media”.

Conflict information management ethics is thus a key competence, since information needs to be verified and authenticated before it can be released to the masses. At present very few people trust that action can be taken by government official if they reported violence through social media. For social media to be effective for early warning there has to be an assurance of accessing accurate information so that they could take precaution. The social media platforms must be seen to be giving accurate information

about violence for users to trust it. He concludes that platforms must also have user friendly interfaces and easy to remember procedure.

One major weak point social media as a tool for conflict prevention is the lack of ethical standards and professionalism for the users. It is too liberal and thus can be used to spread unverified information and distorted facts that might be detrimental to peace building and conflict prevention. This has led to some of the users already questioning the credibility of the information that is circulated through social media

The other weak point about social media as tool for peace building is that it is dependent to a major extent on the access to internet. The availability of internet in low units doesn't necessarily mean cheap access. So over time the high cost of internet might affect the efficiency of the social media as a tool for conflict prevention and management. This scenario is even more pronounced in remote location with poor internet connectivity or electricity supply challenges.

4.6 How Mainstream Media can be used to enhance the Visibility of Ushahidi a Social Media Platform as a Tool for Conflict Prevention in Kenya

To find out how mainstream media can be used to enhance the visibility of Ushahidi a social media platform as a tool for conflict prevention in Kenya

4.6.1 Coherent Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Strategy for a Conflict Setting

The study sought to establish the respondent's rate of agreement with regard to statements relating to coherent conflict prevention and peace building strategy for a conflict setting. To what extent were they adopted by your organization for conflict prevention? The study findings are as indicated in Table 4.6 below

Table 4.7: Coherent Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Strategy for a Conflict Setting

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Looking at how prosperous the country is	3.6444	1.23898
Endowment with human, capital and natural resources on which it can draw to increase the population's well-being	3.2667	1.15923
Availability of competitive, market-governed processes for production and distribution of commodities, land and labor services	3.1111	1.36113
Distribution of possession of resources and the ability to control the means to produce wealth	3.8222	1.08698
The society's economic, ethnic, religious, regional, occupational and other groups organization into active associations or other institutions that protect and advance their interests while offering opportunities for individuals to move in and out of part	3.0000	1.16117
Responsiveness of the regime to citizens' needs	2.7111	1.03038
Existence of pre-democracy, democratizing, consolidating democracy, or an institutionalized democracy	3.533	1.3998
Presence of civic associations and social institutions that are independent of the regime	3.0444	1.37319
Provisions in place for multi-party elections, with an institutionalized ability to establish political parties and field candidates	3.4333	1.34122
Whether the political regime embody representation, collaboration and mechanisms for negotiation among diverse social forces, or is the government dominated by one party or social group	3.1444	1.01185
Presence of knowledgeable, trained civil servants' staff at the national and county government level.	4.1000	1.01727
Anticipating and heading off mass violence, arming of militias, and suppression of minorities.	3.4222	1.34062
Avoiding exacerbating tensions that could break out in violent conflicts.	4.2778	.94842
Setting goals towards anticipating and heading off mass violence, arming of militias, and suppression of minorities	3.8667	1.13375

Based on the study findings, majority of the respondents strongly agreed Ushahidi platform avoids exacerbating tensions that could break out into violent conflicts (mean=4.2778), Presence of knowledgeable, trained civil servants staff at the national level and at the county government level (mean=4.1000), Setting goals towards anticipating and ending off mass violence, arming of militias, and suppression of minorities (mean=3.8667), and Distribution of possession of resources and the ability to control the means to produce wealth (mean=3.8222). Further, respondents agreed that Ushahidi platform Looks at how prosperous the country is (mean=3.6444), Provisions in place for multi-party elections, with an institutionalized ability to establish political parties and field candidates (mean=3.4333), Anticipating and heading off mass violence, arming of militias, and suppression of minorities (mean=3.4222), Existence of pre-democracy, democratizing, consolidating democracy, or an institutionalized democracy (mean=3.533), Endowment with human, capital and natural resources on which it can draw to increase the population's well-being (mean=3.2667), Whether the political regime embody representation, collaboration and mechanisms for negotiation among diverse social forces, or is the government dominated by one party or social group (mean=3.1444), Availability of competitive, market-governed processes for production and distribution of commodities, land and labor services (mean=3.1111), Presence of civic associations and social institutions that are independent of the regime (mean=3.0444), The society's economic, ethnic, religious, regional, occupational and other groups organization into active associations or other institutions that protect and advance their interests while offering opportunities for individuals to move in and out of part (mean=3.0000), Responsiveness of the regime to citizens' needs (mean=2.7111).

The peace building expert in the interview schedule explained:

“In order for one to report violence, they need to be assured of their security and they must also trust that action will be taken once they file report on violence. What this means, is that citizens will be both the generators and the consumers of the information on violence if they use social media”.

Conflict information management ethics is thus a key competence, since information needs to be verified and authenticated before it can be released to the masses. At present very few people trust that action can be taken if they reported violence through social media platforms. For social media to be effective for early warning there has to be an assurance of accessing accurate information so that they could take precaution. The social media platforms must be seen to be giving accurate information about violence for users to trust it. He concludes that platforms must also have user friendly interfaces and easy to remember procedure

4.6.2 Polices to ensure that Ushahidi Platform is used effectively as a Proactive Actor in Conflict Prevention in Kenya

Respondents were kindly requested to suggest polices that can be adopted by media industry to ensure that Ushahidi platform is used effectively as a proactive actor in conflict prevention in Kenya. Respondents indicated that in relation to training, there is need for general public awareness campaign aimed at educating the public on the threats of the social media to the national security and stability. Emphasis should be focused on the consequences of perpetuating on hate speech through legal basis. More important, the government should educate citizens on refraining on joining suspicious social media sites/ groups with extremist agenda and use social media responsibly. One of the participants indicated that Ushahidi platform should install soft-wares that monitor hate

speech and act on information gathered with firmness, through legislation, interception & censorship, taking punitive measures against persons identified with spreading of propaganda, hate speech, Liaising with owners or administrators of social media platforms to monitor and shut down sites deemed to be propagating criminal activities. Constant monitoring of misuse of social media, coming up with policies to guard against misuse of social media, having necessary laws or legal framework to guide and control people on how to use social media, mechanisms to trace social media inciters in place, educating the public about the use of social media without hate speech, block sources of threat in the social media, campaign for positive use of social media and prosecute hate speech mongers and peddlers of propaganda that may cause discontent among various groups in society.

One of the key respondents in the FGD indicated that:

Ushahidi itself was originally created to deal with conflict prevention and response (it was first developed for the 2008 Kenyan post-election violence). Fourth Generation conflict and early warning tools like Ushahidi are being used in post-conflict peace-building; however, there are few cases at the moment of such use. One example of the use of Ushahidi was by the Liberian peace building office. There is a need to integrate the knowledge and practice on the use of ICTs in conflict prevention with emerging knowledge and practice on the use of ICTs for peace building.

The peace building expert further explained; *“Even though mainstream media dominates in covering the political arena, the social media also never misses the trending political issues and current affairs.*

This is because of the solid presence of mainstream media on social media. Journalists, media houses give constant information feeds on developing stories on social media. Sometimes these stories run on social media even before they are broadcast on television or radio”.

He concluded that:

“Social media has a great potential of destabilizing peace and generating political tension because of unethically guided users. These users can use it for politically instigated incitements or spreading rumors with proposed actions which might be detrimental to peace”.

4.7 Conclusion

According to this chapter, social media is an important communication tool among the youth and young adults. Social media’s popularity can be attributed to certain key elements which include: it responds to the youth’s desire for communication; it is affordable and has the opportunity for instantaneous communications. Most of the youths in the study bought internet bundles to connect to social media and those who didn’t relied on their friends and relatives to connect. This means that internet has been made available in units that can be afforded by the users especially those hailing from area with socioeconomic challenges

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS

5.1. Overview

This chapter provides an interpretation of research findings highlighted in the previous chapter four. The purpose of this study is to explore how social media has been used as a proactive actor in conflict management: a case study of Ushahidi platform from 2007 to 2017. This was done by investigating the achievements of Ushahidi platform with regard to conflict prevention and management in Kenya from 2007, the rate of satisfaction of information consumers of the Ushahidi platform since 2007, challenges facing Ushahidi platform as a proactive actor in conflict prevention in Kenya since 2007, and how mainstream media can be used to enhance the visibility of Ushahidi a social media platform as a tool for conflict prevention in Kenya

5.2 Discussion of Findings

5.2.1 Achievements of Ushahidi Platform with Regard to Conflict Prevention and Management in Kenya From 2007

The study revealed that Facebook and Whatsapp were the most popular social media tools with 41.1 percent and 30 percent of the respondents having accounts on each platform respectively. This is quite an indication that the most accessible social Media includes face book, whatsApp and twitter. It was also established that Social media can be effective because it is communication built primarily on relationships and deals with the user's circle of influence. The study established that through use of Ushahidi platform, today, people are able to create and share digital content, which facilitates open participation, collaboration and collective knowledge creation throughout the Internet. In

tandem with the study findings, a report by Search for Commonality, (2013) states that “With its focus on user-generated information, Ushahidi is designed to be adaptable to SMS, mobile phone usage, and internet posts. While traditional information management systems are typically closed and controlled, Ushahidi is open and decentralized. These technologies allow for empowerment and ownership at the local community level. Unlike other and more traditional systems, Ushahidi closes the feedback loop in such a way that information collected can be communicated directly to those who most need to use it.” Ushahidi can be used in the context of a community not just for sourcing information to a community (“crowdsourcing”) but also to feed information back to that community (“crowd feeding”).

Crowdsourcing and crowd feeding are greatly complemented by SMS technology. For example, FrontLineSMS software was designed to help NGOs in developing countries improve their communication and increase their capabilities through a simple and cost-effective system of SMS. Since its development, FrontlineSMS has been adapted to the needs of peace building to provide election monitoring, to enhance local radio programming, and to continue to improve NGO peace building efforts. For example, the African Great Lakes Initiative has used FrontlineSMS to monitor the elections in Burundi and prevent violence from breaking out. The possibilities for cross collaboration between development and peace building communication initiatives are a vital way for peace building efforts to develop their communication capacities.”

Ushahidi itself was originally created to deal with conflict prevention and response (it was first developed for the 2008 Kenyan post-election violence). Fourth Generation conflict and early warning tools like Ushahidi are being used in post-conflict peace-

building; however there are few cases at the moment of such use. One example of the use of Ushahidi was by the Liberian peace building office. There is a need to integrate the knowledge and practice on the use of ICTs in conflict prevention with emerging knowledge and practice on the use of ICTs for peace building.

Several scholars have documented how social media was used as the main medium of communication that brought change to political leadership in North African states and the Middle East. The studies have shown how social media was instrumental in coordinating the protests during the uprising. They have also documented how civilians in authoritarian regimes relied on social media to champion their political rights. Middle East countries and Northern African countries have been further discussed in this study because they exemplified the most recent ways in which social media has been used to coordinate uprisings that later became revolutions. These regions have exposed the potential of social media in coordination and how social media finds its place during conflicts.

Saila (2012) noted that in late 2007 and early 2008 most Kenyans didn't have access to the internet as they do presently, not even through cell phones as today. Those who were online experienced a wave of heightened activity. Many experienced the down side of uncontrolled communication, but others were able to even save lives through their blog posts and social media accounts. There was a strong intertextuality within these communications and SMS messages have therefore been included in the same category as the new media.

Similarly, Goldstein and Rotich (2009) noted that the social media functioned as an alternative medium for citizen communication or "participatory journalism" but it was

also used “as channels for biased information, tribal prejudices, and hate speech”. Digitally networked technologies ‘were catalyst to both predatory behaviour such as ethnic-based mob violence and to civic behaviour such as citizen journalism and human rights campaigns’ during the 2007 and 2008 post-election crisis in Kenya.

According to wa-Mungai (2010) there was a strong intertextuality between sources of information and the means used to disseminate the information. Mass e-mails were shortened to fit SMS and Twitter accounts and mixed with rumour. (Wa-Mungai 2010, 237) says that ‘Like SMS, cyberspace-based discussions were also fed on rumour and misinformation from the press.’ The majority of those who participated in these discussions were mostly pro-Raila Odinga and expressed despair for the ‘failure of democracy.’ (wa-Mungai 2010, 238).

5.2.2 Rate of Satisfaction of Information Consumers of the Ushahidi Platform since 2007

The study revealed that Ushahidi platform considers information shared by social media seriously and they can prompt them to take an action. Further it was established that currently in Kenya, the social media has a lot of new users everyday with lots of content, however many of these users are not aware of how to utilize the social media for conflict prevention and management purposes. Social media scenario presently in Kenya as compared to five years ago, have improved greatly. Businesses and individuals are more aware of social media. Currently, Facebook has over 3.4 million users in Kenya, more than one fourth of total Internet users. Out of about 1.2 million of them aged from 25 to 35 years old, over a million are actually University graduates. Many respondents indicated that the contributing factors to the expansion of social media in Kenya include,

Cheap Chinese phones, accessibility of internet, and increased knowledge and exposure to ICT. In addition, the study revealed that Most Kenyans use social media for marketing their products. However social media is also mostly used in passing information. This information could be socio-economic and sometimes political where conflict related information is included. In line with the study findings, Sabato (2011) believes that social media have a key role in echoing public opinion. To him, access to conversation is far more important than access to information. In the long run, he argues, social media may help increase freedoms as the printing press, postal service or the telegraph did in the past. Internet has benefited grassroots movements by providing new possibilities for citizens to organize even under authoritarian regimes. The use of social media tools as a means to raise awareness and mobilize the masses against the status quo of a given country or regime is certainly not new. Social and political activism has had very significant episodes throughout the twentieth century, from non-violent civil disobedience in India to civil right movements in the US among many others, yet social media have given social movements useful tools to coordinate and to undertake collective action. Sabato analysis on the power of social media in enhancing democracies is probably one of the best attempts at glorifying social media movements (Sabato, 1991).

The use of social media and its effect has many interpretations and it all depends on the context where it is being applied. The potential impact and limitations of social media on political change make new digital applications a powerful tool to those who consciously decide to make use of them. It has vastly been argued that new media tools help social movements in organizing and disseminating information, as seen above. However, much has also been argued about the perverse effects of the social media. Evgeny Morozov

may well be one of the leading pioneers of this wave of school of thought, clearly arguing that technological advances do not translate into democratic transformation. His skepticism is well depicted in his masterpiece “The Net Delusion”, in which he holds the argument that social media and Internet, in general can be as effective in helping political activists achieve their demands as powerful in backing up authoritarian regimes (McChesney, 1999).

This critique of social media is based on the hypothesis that authoritarian regimes can be as quick as activists in using new media tools for their own interest, as a means of monitoring and controlling societies with increasingly improved mechanisms. Recent studies and extensive evidence also indicate that Internet control mechanisms have improved and that more governments use more sophisticated methods to filter and monitor web-based contents, like targeting local languages and websites of opposition movements (Einstein, 2004).

5.2.3 Challenges facing Ushahidi Platform as a Proactive Actor in Conflict Prevention in Kenya since 2007

The study revealed that Conflict information management ethics is a key competence, since information needs to be verified and authenticated before it can be released to the masses. At present very few people trust that action can be taken if they reported violence through social media to the authorities. The study concludes that social media platforms must also have user friendly interfaces and easy to remember procedure. Additionally, respondents indicated that lack of a clear goal was the main challenge affecting Ushahidi platform as a proactive actor in conflict prevention in Kenya since 2007. In tandem with the study findings, Miall, (2014) observed that Conflict prevention and peace building

practitioners can best utilize the media if they are clear about their goal (their product) and also know who, specifically, they want to communicate to through the media. Social marketing is never aimed at the 'general public.' A sophisticated and strategic use of the media is more focused on particular target and segment audiences. For example, if the goal of a social marketing campaign is to stop littering, first research needs to be done to determine who is littering the most and where. In many cultures, young men are the chief culprits. In this case, young peoples are the 'target audience.' Successful media campaigns aimed at stopping littering use specific messages like 'littering isn't cool' and target magazines, radio programs and billboards seen by young men.

Additionally, Ramsbotham, Miall, & Woodhouse, (2011) opined that if a peace building organization wants to promote cross-cultural dialogue between ethnic groups, they should think about who, in particular, they would like to join the dialogue. The media can be used successfully only when peace building organizations have done the hard work to narrow down their goals and target audiences. Knowing the specific goals and the audiences required to meet their goal enables peace building professionals to be more sophisticated in their choice of when and where to use the media. The media can help achieve goals in conflict prevention and peace building when paired with approaches or strategies. The media is not appropriate for all peace building efforts however. Highly-sensitive negotiations, for example, are often best kept quiet without the pressure brought by media seeking to highlight areas of conflict (which helps them sell their media products) rather than serve to foster a focus on common ground, a problem-solving orientation, and hopefulness required for diplomacy.

5.2.4 How Mainstream Media can be used to enhance the Visibility of Ushahidi a Social Media Platform as a Tool for Conflict Prevention in Kenya

The study established that in order to enhance the visibility of Ushahidi a social media platform as a tool for conflict prevention in Kenya, Ushahidi platform should avoid exacerbating tensions that could break out in violent conflicts, ensure Presence of knowledgeable, trained civil servants staff at the national and county government, Set goals towards anticipating and heading off mass violence, arming of militias, and suppression of minorities, and ensure Distribution of possession of resources and the ability to control the means to produce wealth. Further, in relation to training, there is need for general public awareness campaign aimed at educating the public on the threats of the social media on the national security. Emphasis should be focused on the consequences of perpetuating on hate speech on legal basis. The study also established that Ushahidi platform should install soft-wares that monitor hate speech and act on information gathered with firmness, through legislation, interception & censorship, taking punitive measures against persons identified propaganda hate speech, liaising with owners of social media platforms to monitor and shut down sites deemed to be propagating criminal activities. Similar to the study findings, Shirky (2010) opines that the use of social media tools as a means to raise awareness and mobilize the masses against the status quo of a given country or regime is certainly not new. Social and political activism has had very significant episodes throughout the twentieth century, from non-violent civil disobedience in India to civil right movements in the US among many others, yet social media have given social movements useful tools to coordinate and to undertake collective action. Clay Shirky's analysis on the power of social media in

enhancing democracies is probably one of the best attempts at glorifying social media movements.

Shirky believes that social media have a key role in echoing public opinion. To him, access to conversation is far more important than access to information. In the long run, he argues, social media may help increase freedoms as the printing press, postal service or the telegraph did before. Internet has benefited grassroots movements by providing new possibilities for citizens to organize even under authoritarian regimes. As Yochai Benkler argues, with the inclusion of Internet in the framework of social mobilization, there has been a qualitative change represented in the experience of being a potential speaker, as opposed to simply a listener (Benkler 2006). According to him, Internet has not only reduced the cost of producing and publishing media content but it has also decentralized media production, making it much harder for authoritarian regimes to control and censor media outlets. Nevertheless, there are many detractors of this uncontested role of social media. Malcom Gladwell (2010), whose criticism of online activism became clear in his article 'Why the revolution will not be twitted', disregards of the role of social networking in effecting social and political change (Shirky 2010). Viggo (2011) concluded with reference to Muammar Qaddafi's capture and subsequent killing on October 20, 2011 that the power of media in conflict cannot be assumed. For instance, commenting on the speed and technology with which images of the event recorded on cell phones were transmitted around the world via social media platforms, and widely disseminated even before Qaddafi's death was confirmed, and immediately sparked international debate regarding the circumstances and legality of his killing, the

media played a key role in restoring peace and de-escalating conflict thus setting the new agenda for discussion.

5.3 Summary of Findings

5.3.1 Achievements of Ushahidi Platform with Regard to Conflict Prevention and Management in Kenya from 2007

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5.3.2 Assessing Satisfaction of Information Consumers of the Ushahidi Platform since 2007

The study revealed that Ushahidi platform considers information shared by social media seriously and they can prompt them to take an action. Further it was established that currently in Kenya, the social media has a lot of new users everyday with lots of content, however many are not aware of how to utilize the social media for monetary purposes. Social media scenario presently in Kenya as compared to five years ago, have improved greatly. Businesses and individuals are more aware on social media. Currently, Facebook has about 3.4 million users in Kenya, more than one fourth of total Internet users. 1.2

million Of them from 25 to 35 years old, over a million graduated from University. Respondents indicated that the contributing factors to the expansion of social media in Kenya include, Cheap Chinese phones, accessibility of internet, and increased knowledge and exposure to ICT. In addition, the study revealed that Most Kenyans use social media for marketing their products. Social media is also mostly used in passing information. In line with the study findings, social media can also serve as an early warning system for conflict prevention and management in Kenya and globally.

5.3.3 Challenges Facing Ushahidi Platform as a Proactive Actor in Conflict Prevention in Kenya since 2007

The study revealed that Conflict information management ethics is a key competence, since information needs to be verified and authenticated before it can be released to the masses. At present very few people trust that action can be taken if they reported violence through social media. The study concludes that social media platforms must also have user friendly interfaces and easy to remember procedure. Additionally, respondents indicated that lack of a clear goal was the main challenge affecting Ushahidi platform as a proactive actor in conflict prevention in Kenya since 2007.

5.3.4 How Mainstream Media can be used to enhance the Visibility of Ushahidi a Social Media Platform as a Tool for Conflict Prevention in Kenya

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towards anticipating and heading off mass violence, arming of militias, and suppression of minorities, and ensure Distribution of possession of resources and the ability to control the means to produce wealth. Further, in relation to training, there is need for general public awareness campaign aimed at educating the public on the threats of the social media on the national security. Emphasis should be focused on the consequences of perpetuating on hate speech on legal basis. The study also established that Ushahidi platform should install soft-wares that monitor hate speech and act on information gathered with firmness, through legislation, interception & censorship, taking punitive measures against persons identified as promoting propaganda as well as hate speech, liaising with owners of social media platforms to monitor and shut down sites deemed to be propagating criminal activities.

5.4 Conclusion

Based on the findings in this research project, the study concluded that social media is an important communication tool among the youth and young adults. Social media's popularity can be attributed to certain key elements which include: it responds to the youth's desire for communication; it is affordable and has the opportunity for instantaneous communications. Most of the youths in the study bought internet bundles to connect to social media and those who didn't relied on their friends and relatives to connect. This means that internet has been made available in units that can be afforded by the users especially those hailing from area with socioeconomic challenges. For instance, with as little as Ksh 10 a youth can buy internet bundles and connect to social media, like wise they may connect in a cybercafé which costs about 50 cents to Ksh 1 per minute in the study location.

These attributes present the strong points in which social media can be used as a tool for conflict prevention and peace building, because it reduces the cost of coordination and increases awareness. The study revealed that social media has majorly been used for social reasons and not much in conflict prevention and peace building. Social media therefore presents a great potential for scaling up peace building initiatives and peace building among the youth and young adults who in the past have played a critical role in creating conflict, and thus should be target for conflict prevention and peace building. There is however need to popularize the use of social media as a tool for conflict prevention with very user-friendly interfaces for it to be an effective tool for conflict prevention and management.

The study also concluded that the increase in penetration of mobile telephones among the youths especially those represented in this study provides the opportunity to integrate mobile telephony and internet based social media platforms to increase the participation level of the youth in reporting violence and taking part as well as reporting peace building activity. This move will enable those who possess ordinary mobile phones (which cannot connect to internet) to participate, since they can simply use SMS to report violence or peace building activities. Likewise, they can receive warning and alerts for conflict and take precaution.

The study also concluded that information credibility is essential if social media as a tool is to be effective in conflict prevention and peace building. The nature of social media which allows for anonymity of identity gives room for unverified information to be floated around the social media networks. This can be detrimental to the conflict prevention and peace building initiatives. There is therefore need for information

verification and authentication by a trusted agent, to offer information appertaining to violence, conflict prevention and peace building on the social media platforms.

5.5 Recommendations

In line with the findings and conclusions of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations as a precursor to improving the effectiveness of social media a tool for conflict prevention and peace building:

The study recommends that Ushahidi platform should be seen as an agent of social change and should discuss the social mobilization which may be able to bring about. The study further suggests that if we can look at Ushahidi platform as a development agent, can we then take this a step further and ask, or try to find, a methodology that looks at the Ushahidi platform as peacemaking agent, or to assist in the maintenance of peace in a post-conflict situation thereby tapping into Ushahidi platform's full potential.

The study further recommends that when peace agreements are reached, efforts to sustain peace building and enhance reconciliation and reconstruction are crucial. Ushahidi platform interventions can take the form of Ushahidi platform training, especially in the fields of impartial or inter-ethnic news reporting. This is news reporting that adequately reflects the ethnic make-up of a country and the true diversity of opinions. Programming aimed at sustaining peace through building support for peace agreements and focusing on reconciliation and supporting development of free media through policy and legislative reform and other measures

There should be a mounted campaign by peace stakeholders, the National Steering Committee on Conflict Prevention and Peace building, the Criminal Investigation

Department and the National Intelligence Services, to popularize the use of social media for promoting peace building activities and reporting on violence and conflict.

The security agencies should be trained on conflict information management to enhance their efficiency in handling information from the public which on most cases need to be verified and authenticated.

The police as a security agent should have a permanent presence on social media platforms. This will give the citizens a reliable and credible avenue on social media through which to report violence.

Leading mobile phone operators should partner with the police to help disseminate early warning messages on violence. The study revealed that there is a high trust level of messages on early warning systems diffused through the mobile operators by the mobile phone users.

5.6 Recommendation for Further Research

The researcher recommends that further research be carried on the role of media in post-political conflicts and how the media use different strategies to counter the effects. The study further recommends a similar study should be done on a different political block for comparative purpose.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire for Students

I am a PhD student at Moi University studying Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in communication studies. As part of the requirement for the award of the degree I am required to undertake a research. To fulfill this requirement, I am carrying out a survey on the CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: A STUDY OF KENYA’S USHAHIDI PLATFORM IN KENYA. Your input is not only critical to the study but also highly appreciated. Kindly take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire as guided. All the information received will be handled with confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this as a respondent.

SECTION A: GENERAL /DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Respondent’s designation: -----

Name of the Company:

Please indicate your selection by marking “X” in the space provided.

1. Gender

i) Male ii) Female

2. Please indicate your age group in years

i) Below 20 ii) 21-30 iii) 31-40

iv) 41-50 v) 51-60 vi) Over 60

3. Please indicate the highest level of education you have ever attained

i) Secondary level ii) Diploma iv) University level

v) Postgraduate level

SECTION B: HOW SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BEEN USED AS A PROACTIVE ACTOR IN CONFLICT PREVENTION: A CASE STUDY OF USHAHIDI PLATFORM BETWEEN 2007 AND 2013 IN KENYA

4. Of the following social media platforms which ONE do you use the MOST?

Twitter	Facebook	Whatsapp	Google Chat	Yahoo Chat	Migg 33	Others, please specify below

5. How often do you access different forms of social media such as?

	Facebo ok	Twitter	Whats up	Googl e Chat	Yahoo Chat	Migg 33	Others Please specify below []
Never							
Hardly							
Often							

Very often							
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6. What about during conflict

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How important do you consider information shared by social media?

Seriously and they can prompt me to take an action	
Seriously but they cannot prompt me to take action	
Casually, I use it only for entertainment	
I don't care at all about the discussions	
Others, please specify	

7. The following statements relate to coherent conflict prevention and peace building strategy for a conflict setting. To what extent were they adopted by your organization for conflict prevention?

	1	2	3	4	5
Looking at how prosperous the country is					

Endowment with human, capital and natural resources on which it can draw to increase the population's well-being					
Availability of competitive, market-governed processes for production and distribution of commodities, land and labor services					
Distribution of possession of resources and the ability to control the means to produce wealth					
The society's economic, ethnic, religious, regional, occupational and other groups organization into active associations or other institutions that protect and advance their interests while offering opportunities for individuals to move in and out of particular groups					
Responsiveness of the regime to citizens' needs					
Existence of pre-democracy, democratizing, consolidating democracy, or an institutionalized democracy					
Presence of civic associations and social institutions that are independent of the regime					
Provisions in place for multi-party elections, with an institutionalized ability to establish political parties and field candidates					
Whether the political regime embody representation, collaboration and mechanisms for negotiation among diverse social forces, or is the					

government dominated by one party or social group					
Presence of knowledgeable, trained civil servants' staff central and local government					
Anticipating and heading off mass violence, arming of militias, and suppression of minorities.					
Avoiding exacerbating tensions that could break out in violent conflicts.					
Setting goals towards anticipating and heading off mass violence, arming of militias, and suppression of minorities					

8. Please suggest polices that can be adopted by media industry to ensure that Ushahidi platform is used effectively as a proactive actor in conflict prevention in Kenya.

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THE END!!!!

Appendix II: Interview Schedule for Key Informants

1. How do you describe the social media scenario presently in Kenya?

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2. How would you compare it to 5 years ago?

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3. What would you describe as the contributing factors to the expansion of social media in Kenya?

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4. How would you describe the social media scene during the 2013 general elections?

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5. What do you consider to be the strengths of social media as a tool for peace building and conflict prevention?

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6. What do you consider to be weaknesses of social media with interest to peace building and conflict prevention?

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7. What is the extent of Ushahidi platform accessibility to Kenyans?

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8. What bracket of the Kenyan population utilize the social media most and why?

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9. At what stage of the conflict did your intervention occur?

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10. Was the intervention appropriate?

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11. What kind of initiatives did you take?

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12. What degree of involvement took place and how did you as the intervener avoid entrapment?

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13. What were the interests of your organization (Ushahidi) as a third-party intervener?

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14. What were the goals of the interventions?

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15. How is the initiative being sustained?

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16. What were the costs of the initiative and its chances for success?

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17. Was there a plan B if an initiative fails?

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18. Did the Ushahidi platform initiatives have political backing?

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19. Please suggest policies that can be adopted by media industry to ensure that Ushahidi platform is used effectively as a proactive actor in conflict prevention and management in Kenya.

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Appendix III: FGD for Key Informants

1. How do you describe the social media scenario presently in Kenya?

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2. How would you compare it to 5 years ago?

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3. What would you describe as the contributing factors to the expansion of social media in Kenya?

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4. How would you describe the social media scene during the 2013 general elections?

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5. What do you consider to be the strengths of social media as a tool for peace building and conflict prevention?

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6. What do you consider to be weaknesses of social media with interest to peace building and conflict prevention?

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7. What is the extent of Ushahidi platform accessibility to Kenyans?

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8. What bracket of the Kenyan population utilize the social media most and why?

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9. At what stage of the conflict did your intervention occur?

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10. Was the intervention appropriate?

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11. What kind of initiatives did you take?

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12. What degree of involvement took place and how did you as the intervener avoid entrapment?

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13. What were the interests of your organization (Ushahidi) as a third-party intervener?

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14. What were the goals of the interventions?

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15. How is the initiative being sustained?

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16. What were the costs of the initiative and its chances for success?

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17. Was there a plan B if an initiative fails?

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18. Did the Ushahidi platform initiatives have political backing?

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19. Please suggest polices that can be adopted by media industry to ensure that Ushahidi platform is used effectively as a proactive actor in conflict prevention and management in Kenya.

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Appendix IV: Research Authorization from NACOSTI



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 3310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

9th Floor, Utalii House
Uhuru Highway
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No **NACOSTI/P/17/60544/19247**

Date: **22nd November, 2017**

Njeru Abraham Kirea
Moi University
P.O. Box 3900-30100
ELDORET.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Contribution of social media platforms in conflict management: A study of Kenya’s Ushaindi Platform,”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nairobi County** for the period ending **20th November, 2018**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a **copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

G.P. Kalerwa

GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.


COUNTY COMMISSIONER
NAIROBI COUNTY
P. O. Box 30124-00100, NBI
TEL: 341666


The County Director of Education
Nairobi County.

Appendix V: Research Permit

CONDITIONS

1. The License is valid for the proposed research, research site specified period.
2. Both the Licence and any rights thereunder are non-transferable.
3. Upon request of the Commission, the Licensee shall submit a progress report.
4. The Licensee shall report to the County Director of Education and County Governor in the area of research before commencement of the research.
5. Excavation, filming and collection of specimens are subject to further permissions from relevant Government agencies.
6. This Licence does not give authority to transfer research materials.
7. The Licensee shall submit two (2) hard copies and upload a soft copy of their final report.
8. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of this Licence including its cancellation without prior notice.


REPUBLIC OF KENYA


NACOSTI
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT

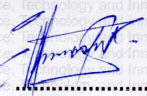
Serial No.A 16589

CONDITIONS: see back page

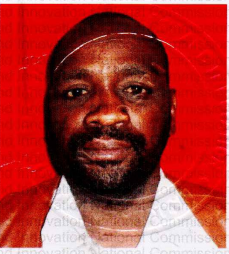
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. NJERU ABRAHAM KIREA
of MOI UNIVERSITY, 6428-100
nairobi, has been permitted to conduct
research in Nairobi County

on the topic: CONTRIBUTION OF SOCIAL
MEDIA PLATFORMS IN CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT: A STUDY OF KENYA'S
USHAINDI PLATFORM

for the period ending:
20th November, 2018


.....
Applicant's
Signature

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/17/60544/19247
Date Of Issue : 22nd November, 2017
Fee Received :Ksh 2000


.....
Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

Appendix VI: Research Authorization from State Department of Basic Education



Republic of Kenya
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

Telegrams: "SCHOOLING", Nairobi
Telephone: Nairobi 020 2453699
Email: rcenairobi@gmail.com
cdenairobi@gmail.com

REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION
NAIROBI REGION
NYAYO HOUSE
P.O. Box 74629 – 00200
NAIROBI

When replying please quote

Ref: **RCE/NRB/GEN/1 VOL. I**

DATE: **1st December, 2017**

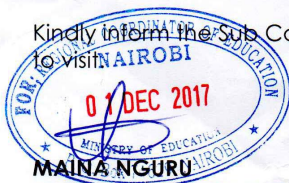
Njeru Abraham Kirea
Moi University
P O Box 3900-30100
ELDORET

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

We are in receipt of a letter from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation regarding research authorization in Nairobi County on "**Contribution of social media platforms in conflict management: A study of Kenya's Ushaindi Platform**".

This office has no objection and authority is hereby granted for a period ending **20th November, 2018** as indicated in the request letter.

Kindly inform the Sub County Director of Education of the Sub County you intend to visit.



MAINA NGURU
FOR: REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION
NAIROBI

C.C

Director General/CEO
Nation Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NAIROBI